

Evangelicals call for nuclear cutbacks

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WASHINGTON (RNS) The National Association of Evangelicals on Tuesday (Nov. 8) called for greater precautions with nuclear weapons and a renewed effort toward disarmament.

"The rules have changed in the past 25 years," NAE President Leith Anderson said. "Nuclear weapons don't serve as a deterrent to the dangers of our post-Cold War era, which include rogue nations and terrorist groups."

The resolution calls for taking a second look at the Cold War doctrine of deterrence in light of shifting global politics, and challenges the U.S. to pursue new negotiations with Russia and other nuclear countries.

It does not, however, call for unilateral disarmament.

The resolution also challenges the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, which would create significant impediments for countries to develop new, usable nuclear weapons. The U.S. is one of only nine remaining nations that must ratify the treaty for it to come into force.

The board of directors of NAE, which represents more than 45,000 churches from over 40 evangelical denominations, approved the resolution at its semiannual meeting in October.

Anderson said nuclear stockpiles should be "a matter of national attention" because "one of the greatest terrorist threats would be a dirty bomb or some rogue nation that used a nuclear weapon."

With the nation's current attention focused almost exclusively on the economy, NAE Vice President Galen Carey said a nuclear attack would cause tremendous economic devastation.

"Over time, if we're able to negotiate a multilateral reduction to nuclear weapons, it may also lead to some savings in the national budget," said Carey.