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Evangelicals laud Obama's Nobel

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WASHINGTON -- When President Barack Obama was declared this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner Oct. 9 for his work to create a world free of nuclear weapons, U.S. Evangelical leaders gathered in the Washington suburb of Landover, Md., congratulated him, calling the abolition of nuclear weapons a moral issue of highest importance.

Here is the news release from the Evangelical Leaders Forum of the National Association of Evangelicals:

Christian leaders gathered at the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) Evangelical Leaders Forum at the First Baptist Church of Glenarden congratulated President Barack Obama for the announcement that he will receive the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. In their consideration of the award, the Nobel Committee cited "special importance to Obama's vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons."

Leith Anderson, President of the NAE, said: "I first heard the call for a world free of nuclear weapons from President Ronald Reagan when he addressed the National Association of Evangelicals over twenty-five years ago. The Nobel prize for President Obama acknowledges and perpetuates the Reagan vision."

Joel Hunter, pastor of Northland Church Distributed, a member of President Obama's Faith Advisory Council, and an NAE Board Member, said, "The ambition to free future generations from the fear of indiscriminate destruction is a truly nonpartisan ambition that resonates with our deepest moral convictions. President Obama is to be congratulated for setting a course so that the generation that had school drills to hide under our desks in case of nuclear attack should be the source of a permanent recess from fear for our grandchildren."

Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, founding director of the Two Futures Project, remarked, "There is much to be

done and the road to a world free of nuclear weapons is daunting and long. But this Nobel Prize highlights the importance of setting that goal to guide our steps in the short term as we seek to shape a more secure world. To prevent nuclear terrorism, we must make progress toward the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. A new generation needs to deal once and for all with the legacy of the Cold War. The Two Futures Project, a confessional Christian movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons, is sponsoring a track on preventing nuclear terrorism at today's NAE-sponsored Evangelical Leaders Forum.

Jo Anne Lyon, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church and an NAE Board Member, said, "The work to reduce the nuclear threat and abolish nuclear weapons is a moral issue that stands at the center of the call to be pro-life. It is a goal that all American Christians, regardless of party, can and should support."

The NAE has a long history of speaking out on nuclear issues. Its 1986 "Peace, Freedom, and Security Studies" called for the need to balance disarmament goals with a concern for human rights and freedom. More recently, the NAE co-sponsored a 2008 consultation at the Hoover Institution with Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz, to explore the need to re-engage the nuclear issue in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 era. Evangelical leaders including Joel Hunter and Jo Anne Lyon attended the consultation. Mr. Shultz has been at the vanguard of a group of former Cold Warriors calling for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as imperative for American national security.

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