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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
EVANGELICALS**

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS/1430 K Street NW/Ste. 900/Washington, D.C. 20005/(202) 628-7911

NEWS RELEASE
October 5, 1983

**CONTACT: NAE OFFICE
OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**NAE OPPOSES DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE VATICAN**

WASHINGTON — The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is steadfastly opposed to any diplomatic ties between the U.S. government and the Vatican, said an NAE spokesman today. The possibility of establishing ties moved a step closer today following a U.S. Senate vote.

The Senate adopted an amendment (#2189) by Senator Lugar to the State Department Authorization Bill which would repeal an 1867 ban on federal appropriations for a diplomatic mission to the Vatican. If the Lugar amendment to the Authorization Bill is sustained in Conference, and the President signs it, the White House would then be permitted — although not required — to extend diplomatic relations to the Holy See. The amendment adopts identical language found in S. 1757 and H.J. Res. 316.

"Over the years the NAE has positionalized itself numerous times against any official relationship between our government and the Vatican," according to Forest Montgomery, Counsel to NAE's Office of Public Affairs. "The NAE first took such a position in 1943 and has reaffirmed it as recently as 1969," he said.

"While the NAE recognizes that the Vatican is engaged in many meaningful political and diplomatic exchanges," Montgomery said that "the central function of the Vatican is to serve as the headquarters of a church. Establishing diplomatic relations with it would give appearance of the imprimatur of the United States upon the head of a church. We think that is both inappropriate in a nation which has guarded its religious liberty, always opposing the preference of one religion over others, and an affront to the time-honored principle of the separation of church and state."

"Diplomatic relations with the World Evangelical Fellowship and the World Council of Churches would be equally inappropriate," Montgomery said.

The NAE joins a broad spectrum of the religious community in opposing the Lugar amendment. Other groups include the Americans United For Separation of Church and State, Baptist Joint Committee, the National Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventists.

■ NAE COMMISSIONS Commission on Chaplains Evangelical Churchmen Commission
 Evangelical Social Action Commission Evangelism and Home Missions Association Higher Education Commission
 National Christian Education Association Stewardship Commission Women's Fellowship

■ AFFILIATES American Association of Evangelical Students Evangelical Foreign Missions Association National Religious Broadcasters

■ SUBSIDIARY CORPORATION World Relief of NAE

■ SERVICE AGENCIES Evangelical Adoption and Family Services, Inc.
 Evangelical Child and Family Agency Evangelical Purchasing Service

■ NATIONAL OFFICE: 450 E. Gunderson Drive/Carol Stream/IL/60188
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Reagan open to full relations with Vatican

By A WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF WRITER

The White House for the first time yesterday said it has no objection to full diplomatic relations with the Vatican, while several major religious organizations have started campaigns, including mass mailings, to block the change in Congress.

"We have no objection to the Senate legislation that is pending," Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes told reporters in response to a question.

President Reagan was thought to be sympathetic to ending the 116-year-old prohibition on diplomatic recognition of the Vatican, partly because of Pope John Paul II's political pressure on Poland's communist government, but until yesterday the administration was not on record.

But yesterday a spokesman for the National Association of Evangelicals said the association started a mass mailing to more than 100 member churches in Indiana to generate constituent pressure on Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., who has sponsored the change in the Senate, and Sen. Dan Quayle, R-Ind., to drop their support.

Lugar attached an amendment to a State Department authorization bill to repeal the 1867 law prohibiting U.S. diplomatic ties with the headquarters in Rome of the worldwide Catholic Church. More than 100 other nations have formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

The bill cannot clear the Senate until next week at the earliest, and Richard Cizik of the evangelicals said his group hoped to block the Lugar amendment when the bill goes to conference with the House, which has not considered the matter. However, 25 of the 37 members of the House Foreign Affairs committee have co-sponsored a repeal proposal, including the chairman and the ranking Republican member.

Opposition to diplomatic relations with the Vatican focuses on two main points, according to Cizik. They include the constitutional requirement for separation of church and state, which he said would be violated by formal governmental relations with the Vatican, and an objection to the U.S. government's having that level of relationship with only one of the world's churches.

Cizik added that years ago many people opposed diplomatic status for the Vatican out of prejudice but that "latent anti-Catholicism" has not been an issue in the United States for years. He said the Vatican has been a religious authority with almost no civil authority since 1871.

Cizik said his organization has 3.5 million members nationwide and that Reagan's support for the repeal could affect their level of support for him if he seeks re-election in 1984.

Other religious groups opposed to the change include the National Council of Churches, with 40 million members; groups representing Seventh Day Adventists; and many Baptist groups.

Cizik and Dr. James Hamilton of the National Council of Churches have both objected to changing such a long-standing law without first holding congressional hearings.

A similar proposal was rejected in a conference committee in 1977 after it had been attached to legislation on the Senate floor by then Sen. Richard Stone, D-Fla.

The United States is represented at the Vatican by William Wilson.

— Thomas D. Brandt

THE WASHINGTON POST

Thursday, October 6, 1983

A31

Protestants Speak Against Vatican Ties

United Press International

Major Protestant groups yesterday urged defeat of a Senate proposal that would allow full U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican, saying it would violate the constitutional ban on church-state ties.

"The central function of the Vatican is to serve as the headquarters of a church," said Forest Montgomery, spokesman for the National Association of Evangelicals. "Establishing diplomatic relations with it would give the appearance of an imprimatur of the United States upon the head of a church."

The Protestant spokesmen, who represented conservative groups as well as liberal, at the

Capitol Hill news conference said their opposition was not motivated by prejudice against Roman Catholics.

Bert Beach, a spokesman for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said the opposition "is based on the American tradition and is in harmony with the constitutional provision of separation of church and state."

Beach said he thought the citizenship of U.S. cardinals could become an issue if ties with the Vatican were established because cardinals elect the pope, the head of a "foreign state."

Representatives of most U.S. Baptist groups, the National Council of Churches and Americans United for Separation of Church and State also announced their opposition to the Senate amendment. The amendment would remove an 1867 prohibition on full diplomatic relations with the Vatican.