

National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East

April 14, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write on behalf of the thirty-eight Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders of the National Interreligious Initiative for Peace to commend the clarity and resolve of your commitment to achieving Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace so evident in your meeting this week with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon. We are confident you will bring equal clarity and resolve to your meeting with Palestinian President Abbas.

As you may know the National Interreligious Initiative, composed of leaders of more than two dozen diverse national religious organizations, was formed in late 2003 to support U.S. leadership, in coordination with other members of the Quartet, in pursuing implementation of the Road Map to Peace. We continue, despite differences in perspective and constituency, to be united in support of the Road Map, including a negotiated timetable for specific reciprocal steps and effective monitoring of its implementation. We commend you for reiterating your clear commitment to the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

We are united in supporting your insistence that both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority carry out their commitments in the Road Map and not engage in unilateral actions which might jeopardize the goal of negotiated peace. We commend your strong support for Israel's plan to withdraw from Gaza. We support your call for Israel to meet its Road Map obligations regarding settlements in the West Bank and to work with Palestinian leadership to improve the daily lives of Palestinians. Looking forward to your meeting with President Abbas, we support your call for increased aid to the Palestinian Authority and your call for the Palestinian Authority to meet its Road Map obligations regarding democratic reform and financial accountability, and effective action to prevent violent attacks against Israelis.

Clearly, Prime Minister Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza and abandon some settlements combined with President Abbas' commitment and actions to prevent violent attacks on Israelis present a new opportunity for progress toward peace. It is hopeful that since their Summit in January there has been less violence than at any time since the Summit you hosted at Aqaba. Yet it is clear that the new

opportunity is fragile and will not last without active fair and firm high level U.S. leadership.

We continue to look forward to a meeting with you and with Secretary of State Rice to show the breadth and depth of interreligious support for your vision and leadership, and to discuss how we can help you complete the process of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Respectfully,

Bruce E. Wexler and Ronald J. Young
National Co-Coordinator

The Reverend Charles Gibbs

Enc: List of National Leaders