

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 Ronald J. Young The Reverend Charles Gibbs
National Co-Coordinator

enc: List of Endorsers follows

CC: U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

**National Interreligious Leadership Initiative
For Peace in the Middle East
List of Endorsers**

Christian Leaders

His Eminence, Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
Archbishop of Washington

His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, Primate
Greek Orthodox Church in America

His Eminence, William Cardinal Keeler
Archbishop of Baltimore

His Eminence, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Armenian Apostolic Church in America

Most Reverend William Skylstad,
President United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold III, Presiding Bishop
Episcopal Church

Bishop Thomas Hoyt, Jr. President
National Council of Churches

The Reverend Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Reverend John M. Buchanan, Editor and Publisher
Christian Century

The Reverend John Thomas, General Minister & President
United Church of Christ

Richard J. Mouw, President
Fuller Theological Seminary

Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, Sec. of the Council of Bishops,
The United Methodist Church

Reverend Leighton Ford, President
Leighton Ford Ministries

The Reverend Chris Hobgood, General Minister, President
Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

David Neff, Editor and Vice-President
Christianity Today

Richard E. Stearns, President
World Vision

Jewish Leaders

Rabbi Harry K. Danziger, President
Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)

Rabbi Peter S. Knobel, Board of Trustees
Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform)

Rabbi Paul Menitoff, Executive Vice President
Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)

Rabbi Janet Marder, Past President
Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)

Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, Executive Vice President
United Synagogue Council (Conservative)

Rabbi Merle S. Singer
Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, Florida (Reform)

Rabbi Amy Small, President
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Rabbi David E. Stern

Temple Emanu-El, Dallas, Texas (Reform)

Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Rector
University of Judaism (Conservative)

Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Dean
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies (Conservative)

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director,
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Rabbi Alvin S. Sugarman, Vice President
A Different Future

Muslim Leaders

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, Secretary General
Islamic Society of North America

Naeem Baig, General Secretary
Islamic Circle of North America

Dawud A. Assad, President Emeritus
Council of Mosques, USA

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, Leader
The Mosque Cares

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, Founder
American Sufi Muslim Association

Imam Hassan Qazwini
Islamic Center of America

Iftekhhar A. Hai, Founding Director
United Muslims of America

Nahid Angha, Ph. D., Co-Director
International Association of Sufism (IAS)

Imam Yahya Hendi, Chaplain
Georgetown University

*Organizations for Identification Only