

National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East

For Release: December 5, 2008

Contact: Ron Young (425) 327-7545

Jewish, Christian and Muslim Leaders Write President-Elect Obama: Leaders See “A Window of Hope for the Peace of Jerusalem”

Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, described the current situation in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict as “a window of hope for peace in the Holy Land.” He joined with Jewish, Muslim and other Christian religious leaders in calling for “engaged, urgent U.S. leadership for peace by President-Elect Obama as soon as he takes office.” *The complete statement and list of endorsers is attached.*

On November 21, a delegation of religious leaders from the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East met with Undersecretary of State William J. Burns, the latest in a series of such meetings initiated by Secretary of State Rice. In a letter to President-Elect Obama, the religious leaders said they look forward to an early opportunity to meet with him and to continuing these high level meetings at the State Department with his Administration.

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said, “Despite continued violence, including renewed shelling from Gaza, further expansion of settlements and the actions of extremists on both sides, I also see signs of hope in the current situation.” Saperstein said, “There’s been some progress in direct Israeli-Palestinian talks and indirect Israeli-Syrian talks hosted by Turkey, but active U.S. leadership will be essential to help these negotiations reach acceptable and secure peace agreements.” He added, “We are confident that President-Elect Obama can count on substantial majorities in synagogues, churches and mosques across the country to support active U.S. leadership for peace.”

Dr. Sayyid Syeed, National Director of the Islamic Society of North America, noted that “the Arab Peace Initiative, led by Saudi Arabia, offers the promise of negotiations to achieve comprehensive, conclusive Arab-Israeli peace.” Syeed also said, “Both formal and informal Israeli-Palestinian negotiations tell us that there are practical ideas for resolving even the most difficult and emotional issues, including refugees and Jerusalem.”

Reverend Leighton Ford, Director of Leighton Ford Ministries and a member of the Board of World Vision US, said, “As religious leaders, we are people of hope. We will continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and urge our political leaders to work urgently in the coming months for a two-state solution. Our nation and the world will be much safer with the achievement of peace in Jerusalem. The time for peace is now!”

E-Mail at: usicpme@aol.com

Website: www.nili-mideastpeace.org