

National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East

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April 14, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20270

Dear Mr. President,

The launching of a new peace initiative by a group of former Israeli government, intelligence and security officials prompts us to write to you as leaders of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim national religious organizations who are committed to strong U.S. leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace

Given the current stalemate in negotiations, the threat of escalation of violent confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians, and the goal and expectation that peace can be achieved this year, we believe the Israeli peace initiative, the earlier Arab Peace Initiative, and the Geneva Accord, taken together, offer key principles and ideas for negotiations to achieve comprehensive Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The main elements of these peace initiatives reflect years of official and informal, unofficial negotiations and include: creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, based on the 1967 borders with possible limited land swaps as mutually agreed; a fair negotiated resolution of the issue of refugees that does not threaten the demography of Israel; the sharing of Jerusalem by Israel and the Palestinian state with both having their capitals in the city; and Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights as part of a peace agreement with Syria. We believe the United States, in coordination with the Quartet, should support these elements being addressed in negotiations on an urgent basis. In addition, of particular concern to our communities are guarantees for free access to Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy places.

We encourage you to visit Jerusalem and the region soon to meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to discuss next steps toward achieving peace based on the principles and ideas in these peace initiatives.

We pledge our prayers and public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership in this urgent endeavor. We believe you can count on substantial support from members of churches, synagogues, and mosques across the country.

Sincerely yours,

(List of Endorsers follows)

Cc: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
National Security Advisor Tom Donilon

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Letter to President Barack Obama, April 14, 2011

Robert Small 4/16/11 2:02 PM

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List of Endorsers

Christian Leaders:

His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington *
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Fr. Mark Arey, Director, Office of Ecumenical Affairs, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*
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The Reverend Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ USA*
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The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA)*
Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church*
Richard Stearns, President, World Vision United States*
The Reverend Leighton Ford, President, Leighton Ford Ministries, Board Member, World Vision US*
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Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Rector, American Jewish University*
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*Organizations for Identification Only