**National Interreligious Leadership Initiative**

**for Peace in the Middle East**

**Website:** [**www.nili-mideastpeace.org**](http://www.nili-mideastpeace.org)

**E-Mail: usicpme@aol.com**

July 26, 2013

Secretary of State John Kerry

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, NW

Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write as members of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI), including present and past heads of national denominations and faith organizations. We support the President’s commitment to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority of U.S. policy. Recognizing, as you do, that the passage of time makes achieving a viable two-state solution increasingly difficult,we have voiced strong support for your determined initiative for peace.

We warmly welcome your announcement on July 19 that agreement has been reached “that establishes the basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.” Looking forward,we appreciate that over the years there has been intermittent progress toward resolving final status issues in both unofficial talks and formal negotiations. While these talks and negotiations have yet to yield a blueprint for peace, they have identified ideas for addressing key issues that must be resolved in a manner acceptable to both sides.

As Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, we are committed to mobilizing broad public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for peace. We offer our prayers for your efforts and we are prepared through the national organizations we represent to activate members of synagogues, churches and mosques across the country to support bold American leadership.

We know the path to peace is complex and challenging, but peace is possible. We pledge our support and request a meeting with you to discuss specific ways we can help.

**List of Endorsers follows.**

**Christian Leaders:**

Bishop Richard E. Pates, D.D., Chairman, USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace

Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington

Bishop Denis J. Madden, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore

Archbishop Vicken Aykasian, Director, Ecumenical Affairs, Armenian Orthodox Church in America

Fr. Mark Arey, Director, Office of Ecumenical Affairs, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Kathryn Mary Lohre, President, National Council of Churches of Christ USA

Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate, Episcopal Church

Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Reverend Geoffrey Black, General Minister & President, United Church of Christ

Reverend Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister, President, Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church

Richard Stearns, President, World Vision US

Reverend Leighton Ford, President, Leighton Ford Ministries, Board Member, World Vision US

David Neff, Former Editorial Vice-President, Christianity Today

**Jewish Leaders:**

Rabbi Richard J. Jacobs, President, Union of Reform Judaism

Rabbi Richard A. Block, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis

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

Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Ph.D. Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, American Jewish University

Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, Professor, Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Rabbi Peter Knobel, Past President, Central Conference of American Rabbis

Rabbi Amy Small, Past President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Rabbi Alvin M. Sugarman, Rabbi Emeritus, The Temple, Atlanta, Georgia

**Muslim Leaders:**

Imam Mohammed Magid, President, Islamic Society of North America

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, National Director, Islamic Society of North America

Naeem Baig, President, Islamic Circle of North America

Imam Yahya Hendi, Muslim Chaplain, Georgetown University

Dawud Assad, President Emeritus, Council of Mosques, USA

Eide Alawan, Interfaith Office for Outreach, Islamic Center of America, Dearborn, Michigan

Iftekhar A. Hai, Founding Director, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance

Organizations for Identification Only