

Churches for Middle East Peace



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Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service
Committee

Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America

Armenian Orthodox Church

Catholic Conference of Major
Superiors of Men's Institutes

Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Common Global Ministries Board

Church of the Brethren

Church World Service

Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

Franciscan Friars (OFM)
English Speaking Conference,
JPIC Council

Friends Committee on National
Legislation

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America

Maryknoll Missioners

Mennonite Central Committee

Moravian Church in America

National Council of Churches

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Reformed Church in America

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ
Common Global Ministries Board

United Methodist Church
General Board of Church and Society
General Board of Global Ministries:
Women's Division

August 23, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President,

Churches for Middle East Peace commends you for lifting hopes among all who long for Israeli-Palestinian peace – and a comprehensive regional agreement – with your announcement on July 16th of an international meeting this fall. Real progress toward a viable Palestinian state would bolster moderation among Palestinians, help Israel gain security and transform America's standing in the region. This will require your continuing engagement and strong leadership. Sustained U.S. diplomacy, coupled with the promising potential of the Arab Peace initiative, can restore confidence that peace is possible and can be achieved.

Confidence and hope are diminished, however, by the recently announced plan to greatly increase the flow of weapons to the Middle East through new U.S. arms sales and increased military aid. This massive infusion of sophisticated armaments to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states is likely to result in a new and dangerous regional arms race and increased tensions between Iran and other states in the region as well as with the United States. This influx of arms is more likely to embolden those Iranians who want to pursue nuclear weapons than to help recipient states counter the influence of Iran and militant groups. Promises to increase military aid to Israel and Egypt over the next 10 years carry similar dangers and also call into question the strength of the U.S. commitment to robust diplomacy toward achieving a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is the best and only hope for a lasting and secure peace.

Churches for Middle East Peace asks you to reinforce your strategy of peace making and demonstrate American values through bold diplomatic outreach – combined with a 10 year commitment of United States' contributions to the considerable costs that would flow from peace agreements between Israel, the future state of Palestine and their Arab neighbors. True security in the region will not come from further buildup of arms, but rather from just relationships between nations, economic development and respect for human rights.

We appreciate your, and your Administration's, attention to our concerns and continue to hold you in our prayers as we pray for peace in the Holy Land.

Sincerely,

Maureen Shea
Chair

Corinne Whitlatch
Executive Director