

Text of Dear Colleague Letter Initiated in The House by Congressman Amory Houghton The Senate by Senator Lincoln Chafee

DEAR COLLEAGUE,

We are pleased to be writing to you with the good news of American citizens and constituents of all of us acting together in a cause helpful to the United States and helpful to the peace of the world.

We want to give support and encouragement to the wonderful hopeful work of the National Interreligious Leadership Delegation which is coming to Washington on December 2, 2003 in an unprecedented act of multi-faith cooperation in support of peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

This delegation, unprecedented in the stature and breadth of the leadership figures involved, includes leaders of organizations that represent over 100 million Christian, Jewish and Muslim Americans. Protestant leaders in the Delegation include the national heads of the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, the Disciples of Christ Church and several leading evangelical institutions. The Jewish leaders include Rabbis who head national Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbinic and congregational associations. The Muslim leaders include the national heads of the Islamic Society of North America, the United Muslims of America, and the Islamic Circle of North America. The Catholics are represented by the two Cardinals from Baltimore and Washington, and the Orthodox community by the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

The delegation has come together in active support of the Road Map. They applaud President Bush's initiative in meeting with regional leaders at Aqaba, and wish to provide broad public support for continued U.S. leadership of the peace process. They are calling now for the immediate end of all violence, and for the President and the parties to do all they can to reach now for the full implementation of the Road Map up to and including the Permanent Status Agreement which would mean the emergence of a viable, independent Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel. They are calling for broad bi-partisan support of the required U.S. leadership.

At a time of so much Middle East strife and so much concern about religious extremism, it is an inspiring sign of the pluralism and religious tolerance of America that such a joint interfaith effort should be mounted and brought to the Capitol. This letter is a show of Congressional support for such interfaith cooperation in facing up to one of the world's most intractable problems.

Members who signed this letter:

Amo Houghton (R-NY) \*

Henry Hyde (R-IL) \*\*

John Lewis (D-GA)  
Nancy Johnson (R-CT)  
Xavier Becerra (D-CA)  
Norm Dicks (D-WA)  
Zach Wamp (R-TN)  
Michael Bilirakis (R-FL)  
Jim Leach (R-IA)  
George Nethercutt (R-WA)  
Mike Castle (R-DE)  
Howard Berman (D-CA) \*  
Robert Wexler (D-FL) \*  
Bill Delahunt (D-MA) \*  
Rahm Emanuel (D-IL)  
Lois Capps (D-CA)  
Barney Frank (D-MA)  
Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) \*  
John Dingell (D-MI)

\* Member—House International Relations Committee

\*\* Chair—House International Relations Committee