

**National Interreligious Leadership Initiative
For Peace in the Middle East**
Website: www.nili-mideastpeace.org

**After the Annapolis Conference: What Needs to Happen
Talking Points for Public Advocacy 12/07**

Active U.S. Leadership is Essential for Post-Annapolis Progress Toward Peace

From its founding in 2003, the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative (NILI), representing Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, including heads of twenty-five national organizations, has called for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace. After the Annapolis conference, NILI believes consistent, determined leadership by Secretary Rice and President Bush is essential for peace negotiations to succeed. NILI urges public support, including support by Congress, for active U.S. leadership to achieve the following.

Urgently Needed Reciprocal Steps by Israel and the Palestinian Authority

Consistent with the Road Map, the U.S. and Quartet should press for reciprocal, simultaneous steps by Israel and the Palestinian Authority to improve conditions on the ground and help restore hope that a peace agreement is possible. Steps should include achieving a comprehensive ceasefire in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza; the Palestinian Authority developing effective coordinated security and increased capacity for governance, blocking illegal arms shipments and disarming militias; and Israel freezing expansion of settlements, withdrawing “illegal outposts,” releasing Palestinian prisoners, and easing movement for Palestinians by reducing the number of military check points. Effective public monitoring of international aid and of implementation of these reciprocal steps is essential.

Agreement on Principles for Resolving Final Status Issues

On the matter of agreement on principles to guide negotiations to resolve final status issues, including borders, security, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem, NILI advocates public U.S. support for the benchmark ideas developed by Israelis and Palestinians in official and unofficial negotiations over many years, and reflected in public documents such as the People’s Voice initiative and the Geneva Accord. Public opinion polls consistently report majority support among Israelis and Palestinians for a peace agreement along these lines.

(For a Summary of the Geneva Accord go to: <http://nili-mideastpeace.org/geneva.html>.)

A United Palestinian Government for Peace

NILI is concerned that the split in Palestinian governance between the West Bank and Gaza is incompatible with a durable peace agreement. Acknowledging the sensitivity of this issue for the Administration and for their communities, NILI advocates U.S. support for efforts, probably by others, to help form a new unified Palestinian government capable of representing the West Bank and Gaza, and committed to rejecting violence and negotiating a two-state solution with Israel.

Progress Toward Comprehensive Arab-Israeli Peace

Appreciating the positive importance of the Saudi-led Arab Peace Initiative and Arab states’ participation in the Annapolis conference for encouraging the prospect of comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, NILI is urging the Administration to help restart Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli negotiations for peace. NILI leaders noted that U.S. hosted Israeli-Syrian negotiations in 1995 and 2000 achieved substantial progress on principles and practical ideas for a peace agreement.

What you can do – go to: <http://nili-mideastpeace.org/getinvolved.html> .