

International Organization for Peace

Letters of support

www.ioforpeace.org

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STANFORD
UNIVERSITY

RABBI PATRICIA KARLIN-NEUMANN
Senior Associate Dean for
Religious Life



Omer Salem
Managing Director
The International Organization for Peace
PO Box 1218
Palo Alto, CA 94302

4 March 2009/8 Adar 5769

Dear Omer and The International Organization for Peace,

Thank you for your initiative and the vision set out in the White Paper in creating the Solh/S'likhah/Reconciliation Project for the International Organization for Peace.

In a world in which listening to the already converted--whether to a religion or a political position--too often takes precedence over understanding and expanding perspectives, the vision of Solh/S'likhah/Reconciliation that you have set out for the International Organization for Peace is a welcome one. I know from our work at Stanford with multi-faith dialogue in the Fellowship for Religious Encounter and other settings, that building trust across divides can change the way potential leaders think, feel and lead. I heartily endorse your desire to apply that capacity for listening to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As educator Parker Palmer has said, "You can't hate someone once you know his or her story." We know that listening leads to empathy and doing so, creates understanding. If this is true among individuals, your efforts to multiply this wisdom to communities and nations, is sorely needed.

I particularly appreciate the business aspect of your overture, as we learn that building together crosses boundaries and uproots stereotypes. It is fitting that this initiative finds fertile soil in Palo Alto, a community that values entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to seemingly intractable problems, and one that encourages education and creativity as a means to address them.

I wish you God/Allah Speed in the project and am pleased to see the wide variety of people and expertise that are engaged in this effort.

Best wishes for Shalom/Salaam/Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Karlin-Neumann".

Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann
Senior Associate Dean for Religious Life

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February 23, 2009

Omer Salem, Managing Director
International Organization for Peace
P.O. Box 1218
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Dear Omer:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss the International Organization for Peace (IOP). I was impressed by your vision, and wish you all the best in bringing about informal talks, input and proposals from Palestinians, Israelis, Westerners, Muslims, Jews and Christians.

Although the dialogue is just in its early stages, and there will no doubt be many difficulties to overcome in the years ahead, this promises to be a breakthrough in the long struggle to achieve a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Thanks to the efforts you and the Commission have made in facilitating informal dialogue, formal talks are more likely to take place between Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

May your efforts be crowned with success. and may the prayers of all who desire peace, especially those who have suffered war and repression for so many years, be finally answered.

Be assured that I will continue to support you and the IOP peace projects. If I can be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to let me know,

With sentiments of deep respect and admirations, I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,



Peter Drekmeier
Mayor



March 25, 2009

The Church of the Nativity

Mr. Omer Salem, Managing Director
International Organization for Peace
380 Hamilton Ave., #1218
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Omer,

I was very pleased to be able to speak with you about IOP and the very admirable goals it has of bringing about peace and reconciliation among all the people of the Holy Land. It is certainly the fervent hope and prayer of all people of good will and faith to wish that true and lasting peace can be established among the people who share belief in the One God.

I admire your commitment to this wonderful goal and wish you much success in your efforts. As, yourself a man of faith, you know that real peace is God's gift to us. We must work to make that gift a reality to the benefit of all. Prayer is one of the most important means of achieving this peace. All other efforts: education, communication, cultural awareness, etc. can bear fruit if in accord with God's will.

I especially admire your emphasis on reconciliation and forgiveness. I believe these efforts, carried out with transparency and frankness on a personal level will bring about change. The many years of violence and astringency have produced nothing toward a culture of justice and peace. Non-violent understanding is the only secure path for people of reason and faith.

Please know that my prayers accompany you on your upcoming trip to the Holy Land.

Sincerely,

Msgr. Steven D. Otellini
Pastor

Congregation Emek Beracha

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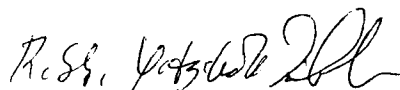
March 4, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

In every era, there are individuals and groups that are willing to play the role of *Avram Halvri*, Abram the One Who Crossed (to the Other Side). This is a reference to the Torah's use of this phrase in Genesis, 14:13, when Our Father Avraham was sought out to save his nephew Lot from captivity. He is referred to by this name here because it denotes one who is willing to dwell on one side of the river even while all of the great personages and institutions of the day are arrayed on the other side. It is to such a man of fortitude and faith that one looks when one needs a daring and difficult deed.

One such organization willing to play that lonely role is the International Organization for Peace (IOP). For a few years now, it has sought a just and peaceful solution to the insoluble conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. By working persistently and patiently with all sides of the conflict, and by insisting that there must be a non-violent way to express differences, the organization is unique and welcome in its attempt to mediate some kind of a solution to the conflict.

We wish them well and hope that they find a way to prevail in this formidable endeavor.



Rabbi Yitzchok Feldman
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Sheldon Lewis, Rabbi Emeritus

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March 21, 2009

26 Adar 5769

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very pleased to write on behalf of the International Organization For Peace (IOP). I have been involved in its founding meetings, and I am deeply impressed by the depth of its commitment to finding a just and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israel conflict and beyond. The effort is truly interfaith, inclusive, and open. Muslims, Jews, and Christians are among its members. Its vision is very ambitious, growing as it is from the grass-roots. I find the people involved to be completely genuine and able to listen closely to the often conflicting narratives surrounding this conflict. I am also convinced by its insistence that there are shared dreams and values beneath the many layers of pain and loss upon which a lasting solution can be found. I find inspiration also in the conviction by the founders that bedrock religious values in each of our faith traditions can support a secure and peaceful future.

I heartily support the IOP.

Cordially,



Omer Salem
IOP
PO Box 1218
Palo Alto, CA 94302

Dear Br. Omer

I wanted to extend to you my gratitude and that of our mosque for the extremely important and timely venture you have embarked upon.

We live in a time where most people in the world have grown extremely skeptical about any possibility of peace in the Middle East. There are some that keep perpetuating the grim notion that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is inevitable, considering the inherent struggle between Muslims and Jews.

We certainly believe that this is utter falsehood and your efforts is a great testament that peace is not only attainable, but within reach.

As Muslim Americans, we need to understand that our presence in this great land is a privilege and a responsibility. Our government can do much more to broker honest and just peace between Palestinians and Israelis and I think your effort is setting the standards for that kind of activism in our community.

We applaud your efforts and pronounce our support to your endeavors in anyway possible.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help this great venture.

M. A. Azeez

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