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policy, 1971-1980.

NCC GOVERNING BOARD MOVES AHEAD ON NEW MIDEAST POLICY STATEMENT

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, May 12 (JTA) -- The governing board of the National Council of Churches (NCC) has completed the "first reading" of a proposed new policy statement on the Middle East which calls on the Arabs to recognize Israel "as a Jewish State" and on Israel to recognize the right of Palestinians to "national self-determination" including "a sovereign state."

The 26-page draft discussed at the board's semi-annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana last week, calls on all parties to end violence; urges Palestinians and Arab states to recognize Israel as a Jewish State with secure, defined and recognized borders; and urges Israel to withdraw from occupied territories and recognize Palestinian rights to "national self-determination" and "a Palestinian entity, including a sovereign state."

It also calls for international guarantees of security for Israel and any Palestinian entity created by negotiations as well as solutions to the problems of displaced refugees.

An NCC spokesman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the committee which drafted the resolution will now consider changes proposed by board members during the Indianapolis meeting and by any of the 32 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox church groups which are members of the NCC. The committee will then present the statement for a second and final reading at the board's meeting in November.

ADL Critical Of Report

Meanwhile, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has criticized as "naïve" a report on the Middle East also presented to the NCC's governing board at the Indianapolis meeting.

While saying that the document contains "certain positive elements," Nathan Perlmutter, ADL national director, declared that "it strains credulity for a panel of the National Council of Churches, itself a religious body, to call for U.S. dialogue with the PLO terrorists and murderers who are allied with the America-hating, fanatical Ayatollah Khomeini and with the Soviet Union, religion's sworn enemy."

Perlmutter said that instead of charging that the Camp David agreement is "fundamentally flawed," the report would have been far more constructive had it urged the rejectionist Arabs to join the Camp David peace process.

Report Termed Guidance, Not Policy

The report was made by the NCC's Middle East Panel which earlier this year made a two-week fact-finding visit to Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. The NCC spokesman told the JTA that the report was not policy but given to the governing board for "guidance" in considering the proposed policy statement. He noted that the policy statement does not mention the PLO but speaks in more "general" terms only of Palestinians.

Perlmutter said that "we appreciate that the panelists call upon the PLO to renounce violence, change the PLO covenant and accept the legitimacy of Israel." But, he added, "In spite of this, illogically, the report encourages the PLO in its intransigence because it calls for open dialogue whether or not these changes are made. We also reject its call for Palestinian self-determination, a code phrase for a PLO state, and

changes in UN (Security Council) Resolution 242 which scuttle the sense of the resolution."

He said that in urging Palestinian self-determination, the NCC panel "is inviting the establishment of a state which, as a surrogate for the Soviet Union, would be allied against American interests."

The NCC decided last November to draft a policy statement on the Middle East after it rejected a resolution by the Antiochian Christian Archdiocese of New York and All North America accusing Israel of violating human rights. The Antiochian Church group has repeatedly sought to get the NCC to adopt anti-Israel resolutions. The NCC spokesman said today that once a policy statement is adopted, that will be the policy of the NCC for the next 10 years.

In making the decision last November to draft a policy statement, the NCC also voted to send a fact-finding panel to the Mideast. Prior to its trip, the committee held hearings in New York and Washington which were boycotted by Jewish organizations because they considered that the NCC had demonstrated a pro-Arab bias. However, Jewish groups met in late March with the NCC's human rights committee to discuss the proposed policy statement.

2 ISRAELI SOLDIERS HELD IN CONNECTION WITH A CACHE OF ARMS

JERUSALEM, May 12 (JTA) -- Police are holding two Israeli soldiers arrested over the weekend in connection with a cache of weapons and explosives found on the roof of the Yeshivat Hakotel in the Old City. A warrant officer (the top rank of non-commissioned officer) was detained last Friday and a corporal was taken into custody Saturday. Their names have not been made public, but neither was said to have any connection with the religious school.

Rabbi Yeshayahu Hadari, principal of the yeshiva, summoned police last Thursday after students reported seeing two young uniformed men carrying boxes to the roof. The boxes were found to contain 100 kilograms of high explosives, 15 hand grenades, 14 rifle grenades and a variety of fuses and detonators. An investigation established that the arms were stolen from the military base where the warrant officer served.

The purpose of the cache was not clear. But the authorities assume that they were intended for acts of sabotage against the Arab population in retaliation for the terrorist ambush killings of six yeshiva students in Hebron on May 2. According to the police, their investigation has found no connection between the two men detained and any other persons.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- A non-alcoholic wine has been developed by two Tel Aviv University scientists which, they say, mimics the color, taste and aroma of regular wine but will cost less. According to Profs. Henry Margulis and Avraham Lifshitz, their facsimile is made from natural substances that are a by-product of the wine industry. They envision a market for it among people who must limit their alcoholic intake for reasons of health, religion or ethics.

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Americans visited Israel in record numbers during the first quarter of 1980, an impressive 10 percent increase over the same period of 1979, it was reported here by Israel Zuriel, Israel's Commissioner for Tourism to North America. Last year 300,000 American tourists, more than ever before, vacationed in Israel, he said. He predicted that low Apex scheduled fares and low-cost charter flight programs to Israel will encourage the growth of U.S. tourism to Israel during the rest of 1980.

NCC GG paragraphs

Certain elements of the NCC Report, ~~no matter how well~~ intended, are in fundamental error and ~~are~~

~~seriously under-~~mine the ~~prospects~~ prospects for peace.

The call upon the United States Government "to engage in open dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization" prior to any action by the PLO to give up its commitment to the destruction of Israel, ~~will strengthen the PLO belief that it~~ can achieve its aims through U.S. ~~pressure~~ *and help* on Israel rather than through a fundamental change in PLO policy.

~~The NCC Panel Report misunderstands the crucial importance of the Camp David process and~~

~~By characterizing the United States as a~~
~~Threat to the peace and stability of the Middle East~~
~~significantly undermines the process~~

P The NCC Panel Report's characterization of the Camp David Accords as "fundamentally flawed" shows the NCC's ^{fundamental} misunderstanding of the nature of the process. After acknowledging that the Camp David accord and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace treaty "demonstrated that differences can be resolved by negotiation rather than war," the NCC report reaches the fallacious conclusion that the Camp David process "indicates the role that a third party such as the United States must play in bringing the principal parties to negotiation." ^[NCC emphasis] This disregards the crucial point that peace between Egypt and Israel only became possible after President Sadat took the historic decision to come to Jerusalem and declare that Egypt was

NCC

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prepared to make peace with Israel and ~~recognize Israel~~ welcome the Jewish state into the family of Middle East nations. ~~He arrived without any prior Israeli~~ It was this fundamental change from hostility to reconciliation that was the precondition for successful negotiations ~~on the outstanding issues~~. The United States served a useful ancillary role as mediator, facilitator and source of material assistance to the parties.

ДѢЛЪ ПРАВОСЛАВНАГО КРАСНАГО ЦРКВНАГО

Calls

~~Demands~~ for cessation of Israeli settlement activity,
return of oil fields, ~~etcetera~~
withdrawal from territory, ~~demilitarization~~
~~etcetera~~ acknowledgement of the right of the Palestinian
people to participate in the determination of their future ~~was~~ --
in the course of negotiations
these were all legitimate demands for Sadat to make ~~as a~~ and
he received positive responses from Israel on all of them (2)

The If the NCC wishes truly to advance the course of peace in the Middle East then it should ~~xxx~~ direct its influence towards the Palestinians, Jordan and the other neighboring states to make immediate and clear affirmations of their acceptance of Israel's right to exist in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, ~~and objectively the NCC correctly views as an important element of~~
~~xxx will represent the Palestinians in the negotiations~~

Only after ~~When~~ the PLO takes this ~~a~~ historic decision or it is replaced by ~~and from the PLO to the PLO~~ other Palestinians who are prepared to act courageously can ~~from settlements to water rights~~ a genuine dialogue begin on ~~the~~ specific points of dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. ~~What is lacking is~~ The Camp David Accords provide an adequate and useful framework. What is needed is not a change in the process but a change of heart by the Palestinians and the neighboring Arab states. We hope the NCC will redirect its efforts in this direction.

"While positive and constructive ~~in~~ in a number of respects, the Report of the Middle East Panel of the National Council of Churches is of deep concern in its call for ~~the~~ U.S. government "open dialogue" with the PLO and because it undermines the Camp David peace process.

*without
preconditions*

de claratory
One can only welcome the Panel's call for an end to Arab demands for the destruction of Israel and for its perception that Arab unwillingness to recognize Israel has been a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East, and its

It is regrettable, on the one hand,
that the NCC ~~calls~~ the U.S. government to engage in dialogue with the PLO and immediately to press for Palestinian self-determination, and
and without renouncing of terrorism.
without condition, will surely strengthen the PLO belief that it can achieve its aims without making any concession, through U.S. pressure on Israel rather than any shift in PLO policy.

Camp David
Such American government action would negate the present proper and sound U.S. stance that the PLO must recognize UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 on which the entire Camp David peace process is based, as well as recognize Israel's right to peaceful existence, before any U.S. dialogue with the PLO can exist.

(2)

A number of sections of the Panel's report certainly are to be commended for their insights and recommendations. Thus, the Panel expressed support for "the ^{absolute} right of the State of Israel to exist as a Jewish state in peace with its neighbors, within secure and recognized borders."

The Panel pointed out, too, "that a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East has been the unwillingness of Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs to recognize Israel's right to self determination as a Jewish state which deserves the respect of the entire family of nations as a member of the world community and whose secure and defined borders must be recognized."

The NCC Panel's call that the same standards of judgment be applied to all Middle East countries in questions of human rights is one we hope will have wide impact and support.

There is a serious imbalance, however, ~~the AJC declared~~, in certain other elements of the report, as where the Panel demands that Israel change its West Bank settlement policy, ~~or suffer U.S. government re-evaluation of its policies toward Israel.~~ Such a demand fails to take into consideration Israel's basic security needs, ~~where settlements are so directed,~~ and ~~would constitute~~ ^{that} ~~intimidation which~~ would vitiate the U.S. role in the M.E.

We recognize that the report

The American Jewish Committee wishes to acknowledge the integrity of the N effort ~~undertaken~~^{of} the NCC Panel to acquaint itself first-hand with the complex realities of the Middle East situation. ~~The report~~^{The report we recognize} ~~represents a significant undertaking~~^{represents a serious approach attempt} on the part of the NCC to contribute to the cause of peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, an effort we know to be a serious one even as we ~~point to~~^{regret concerned over} its deficiencies.

The American Jewish Committee believes that/the Camp David agreements ---which have broken the tragic and senseless cycle of war and terror the NCC abhors---as "fundamentally flawed" and thus ~~move away from them~~^{undermine them}, Christian leaders and all other American citizens should support and encourage this first realistic peace plan to emerge in thirty years of Middle East conflict, and urge our government to stand firmly behind them.

Report of the Process of the Middle East Panel
of the
National Council of the Churches of Christ
Prepared by Claire Randall

In November 1979, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches approved the process that the Middle East Panel proposed for its work. The Panel has since then followed that process step by step. The approved process was very specific but the results of that process were considered to be open ended. Briefly, the process was:

"Hearings" based on a pattern of congressional hearings were to be held in order to permit any group that chose to, to have opportunity to speak to the Panel. In every way the Panel wanted to make clear they were open to hear from any group.

A "Fact Finding" trip to the Middle East would be made. The Panel recognized such a trip would not tell the group everything that was required and they would need to look at other factual information. At the same time, they understood the necessity to be in a place if they were to consider it.

"Conversations" were to be held upon their return with the Jewish organizations with whom we have worked for many years and with American Palestinian groups with whom we also have contacts. These meetings were for the purpose of sharing what had been learned or observed in the Middle East and listening and conversing with these groups on the issues the Panel was exploring.

All of these steps were seen as necessary to the Panel's work and were carefully carried out.

The Middle East Panel was given some specific tasks but beyond that it was to find its further contribution, if any. The focus of the Panel was to be on only part of the total issues in the Middle East because the National Council of Churches has on-going committees that are regularly responsible for our relationships to the Middle East. The Panel was asked to focus on the tensions around the inter-relationships of Israel, the Arab States and the Palestinians.

In order to facilitate its work, it broke the problems into five major parts that the Panel perceived were the central issues. These five parts were spelled out briefly in order to understand their scope.

Within this focus the Panel was to carry out certain specific tasks. They were:

To review the proposed Middle East Policy Statement and make proposals for adjustments to the Policy Task Force, if this were deemed wise. They were to work with the Policy Task Force in any way that would be useful in helping the NCCC get a sound Policy Statement. In doing this they were to

bear in mind that the Policy Task Force, as a broadly inter-unit group, had been working carefully for two years to produce the Policy Statement that the Panel would be responding to.

To explore two matters specifically that had been put before the Council. One was the Resolution on Human Rights in Israel, presented by the Antiochian Orthodox Church. The other was the questions regarding the PLO which principally had been raised in the Fall by the resignation of Andrew Young from his post as Ambassador to the United Nations.

Beyond this the Panel was expected to proceed in any way it felt useful and important for the NCCC. At the very least, the Governing Board would benefit from an overall, comprehensive view from such a Panel on a subject that recurs at Governing Board meetings. The Board would also benefit, in the long run, from having a group of members who are more fully informed in a broad way on this complicated and inter-locking issue.

With this background in mind, let us review how this process has been carried out by the Panel. As has been indicated, the Panel has carefully followed the proposed procedure all the way.

Following the November Governing Board meeting, the complete action of the Governing Board about the Panel's work was sent to Jewish organizations with whom we regularly work and with whom a group appointed by the President of the Council had talked before the Panel was proposed. This material was sent to them in order to ask for their guidance regarding which Jewish groups should be informed about the hearings and offered an opportunity to participate in them. They were also asked to review the material looking toward assisting us in making plans for our Israel visit. Similarly, we worked with an American Palestinian umbrella organization.

The Synagogue Council of America, the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish groups gave us names of organizations to invite to the hearings. The American Jewish Committee in particular, because they have an office in Jerusalem, began to help us in contacts in Israel for our visit there. The Synagogue Council also gave us assistance, as did William Weiler and others. The Middle East Council of Churches was contacted immediately to assist us in making arrangements for our visit in other parts of the Middle East.

Before the open hearings were held, several Jewish organizations informed us that the written elaboration of the five issues that the Panel was to explore, a copy of which had been sent to all who were to present information at the hearings, was written in such a way as to be insensitive to certain of their understandings and did not in some instances adequately cover the issue. Recognizing that there was some validity in the points raised and wanting to be as fair as possible, the definitions of the issues were rewritten, although any error or insensitivity in the original was unintentional. The result was pronounced very satisfactory by those who had raised the matter with us.

The afternoon before the first open hearings were scheduled, the NCCC was informed that the Jewish groups that are in the umbrella organization, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (which includes American Jewish Congress, American Zionist Federation, B'nai B'rith -- Anti-Defamation League, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Hadassah, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., National Council of Jewish Women, Rabinnical Council of America, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, United Synagogue of America, Women's American ORT, Zionist Organization of America) had been meeting and had decided that they must boycott the hearings. A letter announcing this and stating reasons was signed by the following:

Henry Siegman, American Jewish Congress
Rabbi Joseph P. Sternstein, American Zionist Federation
Rabbi Solomon S. Bernards, B'nai B'rith -- Anti-Defamation League
Jerome Malino, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Bernice S. Tannenbaum, Hadassah
Donald S. Slaiman, Jewish Labor Committee
Harris B. Stone, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
Marjorie Merlin Cohen, National Council of Jewish Women
Rabbi Bernard Rosenswig, Rabinnical Council of America
Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Julius Berman, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Rabbi Benjamin Z. Kreitman, United Synagogue of America
Beverly Minkoff, Women's American ORT
Ivan Novick, Zionist Organization of America

As can be noted, the American Jewish Committee and the Synagogue Council did not sign the letter but felt, for the sake of the unity of the Jewish community, they should not testify. The AJC sent in their written testimony.

The basic objection of the Jewish groups that proposed the boycott was that there should be dialogue not "testimony." It was clear from the beginning in the defining of the Panel's process, that dialogue was in the process after the return from the Middle East. The hearings were clearly in the same framework as congressional hearings and were for the purpose of allowing anyone who wished to speak to the Panel to have opportunity to do so. There was, therefore, clearly a misunderstanding of the purpose and interest of the NCCC in this process. Private discussions have clarified the situation and in all but one case have apparently overcome the strain imposed by the boycott action. Part of the misunderstanding may be because the NCCC has had previous relationships with only three of the signers.

The fact finding trip was carried out in a most satisfactory way with the help of the Middle East Council of Churches and the Jerusalem office of the AJC. The staff of both these organizations were extremely helpful in setting up an appropriate program for the Panel and in personally assisting the Panel in every country that was

visited. The Panel proved to be a remarkable group - open, competent, serious, hard working and caring for each other and for all those they contacted. The Panel's report of its trip reflects the breadth of experience that they had. The consensus report will reflect the hard thinking and soul searching of the Panel.

The conversations with Jewish organizations and the Palestinian Congress of N.A. were carried out soon after the return of the Panel from the Middle East. Because many Jewish groups with which the NCCC had not previously had on-going contacts were involved in calling for a boycott of the hearings, the conversations with Jewish groups were broadened to include these organizations. The conversations were pronounced good by the participants and it obviously became apparent to most of the representatives of Jewish organizations that the Panel was indeed open-ended and struggling to find the directions it should take, given all that it had heard and was hearing.

The conversation with the American Palestinian group was full and searching also. Although there are not as many American Palestinian organizations, a broad group of representatives of their organizations were in the discussions. Both groups had had opportunity to review the report of the Panel's trip before the conversations took place. They were able to offer comments specifically as well as to enter into discussion with the Panel.

Having completed its agreed upon process of search and receiving input, the Panel had two scheduled meetings, with group work taking place between, to prepare their consensus report and any recommendations to the Middle East Policy Task Force and the Governing Board. They have seen this work as also being background to possible strategies and programming in the future that may be more urgent than any statements that might be made to or by the Governing Board.

The Panel has understood and articulated for itself that it is dealing with what are life and death issues to those people most intimately involved in the Middle East situation. We are not those people but we are people of churches and of a nation that have connections and responsibilities that bear on the lives of people of the Middle East. For the Panel this is a sobering matter and has caused them to give a depth of seriousness and care to their work that it is hoped will be recognizable to others as they hear and read the Panel's reports and see the result of their very hard work.

We deplore the attack on Israeli settlers in Hebron on Friday, May 2, 1980 and express our grief for the lives lost. This latest action is another tragic chapter in a cycle of violent provocation and retaliation that has destroyed so many lives in the Middle East.

In the coming days, the National Council of Churches' Middle East Panel will be speaking more about the many forms of violence it found in the Middle East. We are convinced that the extremism typified in the events in Hebron in no way serves the cause of peace about which so many persons - Israeli and Palestinian - voiced their hopes to the NCC's Panel during its Middle East visit.

May 5, 1980



NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIPS

1809 Tower Building, Dallas, Texas 75201

FIFTH NATIONAL WORKSHOP
APRIL 28 - MAY 1, 1980
DUPONT PLAZA HOTEL
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5TH NATIONAL WORKSHOP

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We regret that the Anti-Defamation League has chosen not to participate in the 5th National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations held in Dallas this month. However, it is the only Jewish organization which has chosen not to participate in this event. Its opinions about the workshop are not shared by other Christian and Jewish groups who have participated actively in the planning and implementation of the conference. It is the belief of the national and local participants that the workshop offers a framework for exploring issues and reaching a common agenda as befits neighbors and mutually respectful friends.

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STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL
TUESDAY, MAY 6, p.m.

NCC LEADERS PROPOSE PATH TOWARD PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 6-----A high-level National Council of Churches panel, including the leaders of major Protestant and Orthodox communions, will underline the need for urgent new Middle East peace initiatives by the U.S. government in its report to the NCC Governing Board tomorrow.

To break the current impasse in negotiations over the West Bank and Gaza strip, the church leaders believe, the U.S. must find a way to make reciprocal gestures of conciliation possible between the nation of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. While the panel does not advocate U.S. recognition of the PLO, it does stress that if the U.S. and Israel are to negotiate with the Palestinians they must speak with the PLO.

After a two-week fact-finding trip of the region, plus extensive hearings and meetings in this country, the panel believes the key compromises needed to break the deadlock are:

- *a public commitment by the PLO to cease all acts of violence and renounce its rejection of the existence of Israel;
- *recognition by the Palestinians and the Arab states, as well as the entire world community, of Israel's right to self-determination as a Jewish state with secure and defined borders;
- *public recognition by Israel of Palestinian national rights, coupled with an announcement that Israel will establish no more settlements on the West Bank or Gaza strip.

At present, the report points out, neither party will consider such major steps without prior action by the other. To break the impasse, third parties such as the United States "must play a catalytic role."

As one step, the report says, "the U.S. should be engaged in open dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization to help clarify its (the PLO's) position with regard to Israel and to help bring these two contending parties into negotiation for mutual recognition."

Lasting peace and stability in the region, the panel believes, will be impossible without such negotiations. Because "true security can ultimately be found only in relationships of trust," the end result must be some kind of entity acceptable to the Palestinians, probably on the West Bank and Gaza strip, coupled with guarantees of recognition and security for Israel.

"There is deep longing and desire for peace in the Middle East," the panel stresses.

"The agreement reached at Camp David and the subsequent withdrawal by Israel from the Sinai have demonstrated that differences can be resolved by negotiation rather than by war. Further, the Camp David process, as an important first step, indicates the role that a third party such as the United States must play in bringing the principal parties to negotiation."

"This opportunity for the development of trust, peace and thus security must not be missed."

News and Information

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The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America is a cooperative agency of Christian communions seeking to fulfill the unity and mission to which God calls them. The member communions, responding to the gospel revealed in the Scriptures, confess Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, as Savior and Lord. Relying on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the council works to bring churches into a life-giving fellowship and into common witness, study and action to the glory of God and in service to all creation.

(Preamble, NCC Constitution)

LIST OF MEMBER COMMUNIONS

THE 32 MEMBER COMMUNIONS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

African Methodist Episcopal Church	National Council of Community Churches
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	Orthodox Church in America
American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.	Patriarchal Parishes of the
The Antiochian Orthodox Christian	Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A.
Archdiocese of North America	Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the
Armenian Church of America	Religious Society of Friends
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	Polish National Catholic Church of
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	America
Church of the Brethren	The Presbyterian Church in the
Coptic Orthodox Church in North America	United States
The Episcopal Church	Progressive National Baptist
Friends United Meeting	Convention, Inc.
General Convention, the Swedenborgia	Reformed Church in America
Church	Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North	Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
and South America	Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America	United Church of Christ
Lutheran Church in America	The United Methodist Church
Moravian Church in America	The United Presbyterian Church in the
Northern Province Southern Province	United States of America
National Baptist Convention of America	
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	

The NCC has publicly called since 1968 for mutual recognition of the right of Israel to exist within secure borders and the right of Palestinians to self-determination. A new policy statement, to be given a "first reading" by the council's Governing Board at its May 7-9 meeting and voted on next November, reiterates that position.

The special Middle East Panel, which is distinct from the committee that drafted the new policy statement, was created last fall to deal in depth with the Israeli-Arab conflict. Its report to the board goes into far greater detail on that conflict than the proposed new policy statement, which is designed to articulate the broad principles supported by the council on a wider range of Middle East issues.

According to NCC General Secretary Claire Randall, the board will not be asked to vote on the panel's report. Rather, the panel's findings and experience are designed to offer the council and its member communities guidance as they deal with issues concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict from a comprehensive point of view, both now and in the future.

In dealing with the PLO, the panel concluded on the basis of its fact-finding trip that "the PLO functions as the only organized voice for the Palestinian people and appears to the panel to be the only Palestinian body likely to negotiate a settlement on their behalf."

"We believe it is futile to claim that there are other Palestinian representatives as long as the Palestinian people, by the imperfect legislative and political means at their disposal, do not indicate themselves that they wish other representatives, the report adds."

At present the Palestine National Covenant calls for the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state, a fact cited often to explain Israel's refusal to talk with the PLO. In its report the panel argues that "either the Palestine National Covenant itself must be amended, or some clear, unambiguous declaration must be adopted by the PLO specifically denying the continued relevance of those sections of the Palestine National Covenant that commit the Palestinian national struggle to the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state, either in the immediate future or ultimately."

The report is firm in its insistence on guarantees of Israel's security. "The commitment to a national identity and to self-reliance that manifests itself in the urgent Israeli concern for security is understandable," the report says, "and this panel expresses its absolute support of the right of the state of Israel to exist as a Jewish state in peace with its neighbors, within secure and recognized borders."

"The panel therefore concurs with the Israeli perspective that a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East has been the unwillingness of Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs to recognize Israel's right to self-determination as a Jewish state which deserves the respect of the entire family of nations as a member of the world community and whose secure and defined borders must be recognized."

Israel's policy of continuing to establish settlements on the West Bank, however, is described as an obstacle to peace.

"The settlements are clearly seen by the Palestinian Arabs and many others as a strategic initiative of Israel to populate and colonize, to control water and other resources, and to destabilize the predominantly Palestinian population during a critical period of transition," the report says.

Because such perceptions exacerbate already hostile relations between Palestinians and Israelis, it continues, "the panel believes that further expansion of settlements, even for the sake of security, threatens the long term security of the state of Israel."

"Any successful peace process will require Israel to end its current policy of establishing new settlements and to desist from expropriating or confiscating private or 'state-owned' land in these areas. Further, Israel should declare its intention to negotiate with the recognized representatives of the Palestinians about which settlements should remain--and under what conditions--within the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement."

The panel adds, however, that for security reasons Israeli military installations should be permitted to remain on the West Bank and Gaza strip "for a period of time after formal conclusion of the military occupation." When they are withdrawn, "The military security of Israel and its neighbors

must be guaranteed. The entire area of presently occupied territories should be demilitarized for a fixed period of time under international auspices."

In addition to security, Palestinian self-determination and settlements, the report also deals with human rights issues and religious questions.

In its treatment of human rights, the panel notes that many nations in the region--as in the world--violate one form of human rights or another. Because of this, the report "strongly underscores the need to apply the same standard of judgement to all countries of the Middle East in questions of human rights and to resist singling out any one country for particular focus."

In dealing with Jerusalem, the panel takes no position on the ultimate sovereignty of or national jurisdiction over the city. It does believe, however, that the city should remain unified, with a government structure representative of all of its residents, Israeli and Palestinian.

"Unless (the Palestinians) actively and freely participate in all necessary decisions and actions," the report says, "mutually acceptable agreements cannot be found that respond to the needs and rights of all the people in the city...."

The report also offers strong support for the present policy of keeping the city's historic Holy Places--so important to all three of the region's major faiths--open.

"The panel expresses the hope that the rights of the worshiping communities around the Holy Places will remain inviolable, in an environment in which worshiping communities will have free access to the Holy Places and feel welcome and at home in the area," it says.

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The panel members are:

Chair: The Rev. Tracey K. Jones, Jr., NCC First Vice President; General Secretary, Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church
Bishop Maximos Aghiorgoussis, NCC Third Vice President; Bishop of Pittsburgh, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America
The Rev. James E. Andrews, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
Sonia J. Francis, NCC Vice President for Communication; Assistant Press Officer, Office of Communication, The Episcopal Church
The Rev. M. William Howard, President, National Council of Churches; Executive Director, Black Council of the Reformed Church in America
The Rev. William R. Johnson, Head of the Delegation to the NCC Governing Board of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Bishop Chester A. Kirkendoll, NCC Recording Secretary; Chairperson, General Board of Evangelism, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Dorothy J. Marple, NCC Second Vice President; Assistant to the President, Lutheran Church in America
The Most Rev. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America
The Rev. Robert W. Neff, General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren
The Rev. Avery D. Post, President of the United Church of Christ
The Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers, NCC Vice President for Faith and Order; Assistant General Secretary, Ecumenical and Interreligious Concerns, United Methodist Church
Dr. Claire Randall, NCC General Secretary
The Rev. George B. Telford, Jr., NCC Vice President for Church and Society; Director, Corporate and Social Mission, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
William P. Thompson, Immediate Past NCC President; Stated Clerk, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Staff for the panel are:

Kenyon C. Burke, Associate General Secretary, Division of Church and Society, NCC
J. Richard Butler, Director, Middle East and Europe Office, Division of Overseas Ministries, NCC
The Rev. Joan B. Campbell, Assistant General Secretary, Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism, NCC
Alice Wimer, Staff Associate for International Affairs, Division of Church and Society, NCC

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE
TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES MIDDLE EAST PANEL REPORT

- - - - -

While welcoming a number of positive, new, and constructive positions expressed by the National Council of Churches' Middle East Panel, the American Jewish Committee strongly objects to a serious imbalance and lack of evenhandedness in some sections of the "Report of the Middle East Panel" presented to the NCC Governing Board on Wednesday, May 7, currently meeting in Indianapolis.

Among the constructive contributions to the cause of promoting Middle East peace which the American Jewish Committee welcomes are the following positions affirmed in the NCC report, some of which represent new definitions of NCC consciousness:

*The Panel "expresses its absolute support of the right of the State of Israel to exist as a Jewish state in peace with its neighbors, within secure and recognized borders."

*The Panel "concurs with the Israeli perspective that a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East has been the unwillingness of Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs to recognize Israel's right to self-determination as a Jewish state which deserves the respect of the entire family of nations as a member of the world community and whose secure and defined borders must be recognized."

*The Panel calls for "a public commitment by the PLO to cease all acts of violence and renounce its rejection of the existence of Israel," by amending or making "some clear, unambiguous declaration that must be adopted by the PLO specifically denying the continued relevance of those sections of the Palestine National Covenant that commit the Palestinian national struggle to the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state." The American Jewish Committee believes this to be

the first time that the National Council of Churches or any major Christian body has addressed such a claim publicly to the PLO and therefore constitutes a significant initiative which hopefully will be followed by other religious and civic bodies/ in the United States, Western Europe and elsewhere.

*The Panel acknowledges "the extent to which Israel has sought to provide as many (human) rights as possible" to Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza, including freedom of press, freedom of speech. The Panel points out that "criticism of Israel is always more intense with regard to the denial of human and civil rights in Israel than in other countries of the Middle East, precisely because of Israel's claim to be a democratic state." Significantly, in AJC's judgment, the Panel "strongly underscores the need to apply the same standards of judgment to all countries in the Middle East in questions of human rights and to resist singling out any one country for particular focus." That position constitutes an important rejection of recent efforts of some Arab Christian bodies to single out Israel for condemnation for alleged violation of human rights while totally ignoring the denial of the rights of Jews, Christians, and other Muslims in many Arab countries.

*While the Panel calls on Israel "to end its current policy of establishing new settlements" on the West Bank, ~~that~~ it urges at the same time that "the Palestinians to make clear that Jews are not, in principle to be excluded from settlements anywhere within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel will not accept a peace settlement, nor should it, which makes any area, especially in historic Palestine, Judenrein. Jews should be free to live within a Palestinian entity with the same liberties, privileges and rights granted to Palestinian Arabs within the State of Israel," the Panel asserts.

*The Panel attests to the freedom of religion assured by Israel to Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Jerusalem, declaring, "The Panel rejoices in the fact that the above State Quo (guaranteeing the rights of the three monotheistic religions' claims to the Holy Places in Jerusalem) is presently respected by the Israeli government, and that it has given guarantees that it will continue to do so in the future...It (Israel) has maintained careful respect for the historic religious sites of the city. Access to the city's places of pilgrimage is guaranteed for all people, and the government has engaged in major archeological and reconstruction projects so as to preserve an ancient history which belongs to humankind itself."

The Panel also "believes that Jerusalem should be physically unified," but "this does not mean that it supports unilateral actions of the occupying power."

*The Panel also expressed its concern over manifestations of Christian anti-Semitism among some Middle East Christians, indicating that "the seeds of religious alination can be carried throught the churches themselves." The Panel "feels that it is of crucial importance that there be further discussion and study of this theological issue (of religious anti-Semitism reinforcing ideological anti-Semitism) with religious scholars and theologians from the Middle East."

These affirmations by the NCC Panel are vital clarifications of views on central issues in the present Middle East situation, and if taken seriously by the PLO, Arab states, and Israel could contribute to the improvement of the public atmosphere within which negotiations for peace should continue to take place. At the same time, there is a danger that these positive features of the statement could be countervailed by a number of disturbing assertions which reflect double standards toward Israel.

Among the most troubling of these "one-sided" positions are the following:

*The American Jewish Committee finds disturbing the dichotomy between the immediate demands made on Israel vis-a-vis long-range demands made of the PL), with most of the initiatives for peace assigned to Israel. Thus, peace will "require" Israel to change its settlement policy forthwith, while the PLO must amend its Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel - or adopt some declaration accepting Israel's continued presence in the Middle East - "either in the immediate future or ultimately."

*The Panel urged that "the U. S. should be engaged in open dialogue with the PLO" without any preconditions, while proposing that the U. S. Government should "reevaluate its policies toward Israel" if Israel does not change "its policy regarding the building of new settlements" on the West Bank.

No penalties are suggested by the NCC Panel for Jordan, which receives massive American aid, and which has boycotted the Camp David process, or against those United Nations agencies, heavily financed by the U. S., which underwrite much of the propagandist campaign against Israel by the PLO.

These are distressing examples of the report's lack of evenhandedness and reveals an inclination to be one-sided in its demands on Israel than on the rejectionist position of the PLO and most Arab states.

Among the most important of these "one-sided" positions are the following:

*The American Jewish Committee finds a troubling dichotomy between the immediate demands made on Israel vis-a-vis long-range demands made of the PLO, with most of the initiatives assigned to Israel. Thus, peace will "require" Israel to change its settlement policy forthwith, while the PLO must amend its Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel - or adopt some declaration accepting Israel's continued presence in the Middle East - "either in the immediate future or ultimately."

*The Panel urges ^{that} the ~~N~~ U. S. should be engaged in open dialogue with the PLO" without any preconditions, while proposing that the U.S. Government should "reevaluate" its policies toward Israel" if Israel does not change "its policy regarding the building of new settlements" on the West Bank. This is a distressing example of the report's lack of evenhandedness and reveals an inclination to be one-sided ~~and~~ in its demands on Israel than on the rejectionist position of the PLO and most Arab states.

*The American Jewish Committee is also deeply disturbed over the NCC Panel's downgrading of the Camp David accords. Rather than describe the Camp David agreements as "fundamentally flawed," - a process which has broken the tragic and senseless cycle of war and terror that the NCC abhors - the American Jewish Committee believes that American citizens, including Christian leaders - should support and encourage regional cooperation with this first realistic peace plan that has emerged ~~since~~ during the past 30 years in the Middle East conflict.

As the AJC's recent policy statement on the Middle East declares, "Firm commitment to the Camp David accords, their spirit and implementation represents the surest available way to peace in the Middle East. Any attempts to undermine these accords or the Camp David peace process --whatever the

source or reason -- can only be detrimental to the cause of peace."

Finally, the American Jewish Committee wishes to acknowledge the seriousness of the effort undertaken by the NCC Panel to acquaint itself first-hand with the complex realities of the Middle East situation and to refuse to capitulate to the one-sided pressures incessantly mounted against the NCC by pro-PLO forces in this country and abroad. With the deficiencies that we have noted, this report represents a significant undertaking on the part of the NCC to ~~contribute~~ contribute to the cause of peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, ~~and~~ and. The AJC takes the role of the NCC in American life seriously, and through the presence of AJC's interreligious affairs specialists as ~~official~~ *Rev. H. Tannenbaum and James Rudin* official Fraternal observers at NCC Governing Boards and through other many cooperative programs, we plan to continue our creative collaboration in areas of common concern not only for the promotion of peace in the Middle East but for the ~~well~~ common welfare of all Americans and the troubled world community.

serious problems even tho good things

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES MIDDLE EAST PANEL REPORT

While acknowledging a number of positive, ~~new, and constructive~~ positions expressed by the National Council of Churches' Middle East Panel, the American Jewish Committee strongly objects to a serious imbalance and lack of evenhandedness in some sections of the "Report of the Middle East Panel" presented to the NCC Governing Board on Wednesday, May 7, currently meeting in Indianapolis.

The Committee finds disturbing the dichotomy between the immediate demands made on Israel vis-a-vis long-range demands made of the PLO, with most of the initiatives for peace assigned to Israel. Thus, peace will "require" Israel to change its settlement policy forthwith, while the PLO must amend its Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel -- or adopt some declaration accepting Israel's continued presence in the Middle East -- "either in the immediate future or ultimately."

Another disturbing element suggested by the Panel is that "the U.S. should be engaged in open dialogue with the PLO" without any preconditions, while proposing that the U.S. Government might have to "reevaluate its policies toward Israel" if Israel does not change immediately "its policy regarding the building of new settlements" on the West Bank.

settlement The report ^{*suggests*} ~~hints at~~ ^{*might*} penalties to be imposed on Israel for not changing present policies, but no penalties are suggested by the NCC Panel for Jordan, which receives massive American aid, and which has boycotted the Camp David process, or against those United Nations agencies, heavily financed by the U.S., which underwrite much of the propaganda campaign against Israel by the PLO.

^{*several*} These are ~~distressing~~ examples of the report's lack of evenhandedness and reveals an inclination to demand more of Israel than of the PLO and the rejectionist Arab states.

The American Jewish Committee also expressed grave concern at the downgrading of the Camp David accords by the NCC Panel. Rather than describe the Camp David agreements as "fundamentally flawed," -- a process which has broken the tragic and senseless cycle of war and terror that the NCC abhors -- the American Jewish Committee believes that American citizens, including Christian leaders -- should support and encourage regional cooperation with this first realistic peace plan that has emerged during the past thirty years in the Middle East conflict.

As the AJC's recent policy statement on the Middle East declares, "Firm commitment to the Camp David accords, their spirit and implementation represents the surest available way to peace in the Middle East. Any attempt to undermine these accords or the Camp David peace process -- whatever the source or reason -- can only be detrimental to the cause of peace."

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director of Interreligious Affairs, and Rabbi A. James Rudin, National Assistant Director of Interreligious Affairs, ^{both} speaking for the Committee ^{acknowledged positive} ~~did praise~~ certain sections of the Panel's Report, ^{"absolute of"} ~~However~~ particularly the Panel's expression of support for the right of the State of Israel to exist as a Jewish state in peace with its neighbors, within secure and recognized borders. ^{welcomed} They also ~~expressed satisfaction with~~ the statement that the Panel ["] concurs with the Israeli perspective that a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East has been the unwillingness of Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs to recognize Israel's right to self-determination as a Jewish state which deserves the respect of the entire family of nations as a member of the world community and whose secure and defined borders must be recognized."

The American Jewish Committee believes this to be the first time that the National Council of Churches or any major Christian body has addressed such a call publicly to the PLO and this, therefore, constitutes a significant initiative which hopefully will be followed by other religious and civic bodies.

of whom are ~~Official~~ ^{Internal Observer} at the NCC Governing Board --

Finally, the American Jewish Committee wishes to acknowledge the integrity of the effort undertaken by the NCC Panel to acquaint itself firsthand with the complex realities of the Middle East situation and to refuse to capitulate to the one-sided pressures incessantly mounted against the NCC by anti-Israel forces in this country and abroad. With the deficiencies noted, the report represents a significant undertaking on the part of the NCC to contribute to the cause of peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. ~~The AJC takes the role of the NCC in American life seriously, and~~ through the presence of AJC's interreligious affairs specialists as official fraternal observers at NCC Governing Boards and through other many cooperative programs, plans to continue our creative collaboration in areas of common concern not only for the promotion or peace in the Middle East but for the common welfare of all Americans and the troubled world community.



Draft of Proposed Resolution on the Middle East

1 Firm commitment to the Camp David accords, their spirit 1
2 and implementation, represents the surest available way to Arab- Israeli 2
3 peace in the Middle East. Any attempts to undermine these 3
4 accords or the Camp David peace process--whatever the source 4
5 or reason--can only be detrimental to the cause of peace. 5
6 To defend the accords is to defend American geo-political 6
7 interests. The U.S. has a vital security stake in Israel, 7
8 America's most trustworthy ^{democratic} ally in the Middle East. The 8
9 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the anti-Americanism of Iran, 9
10 the internal fragility of a host of Arab states emphasize the 10
11 value of Israel to America, as our country seeks to counter de- 11
12 stabilizing forces in the Middle East, ^{and prevent Soviet Union} 12
to the ^{directly} a new ^{role} ^{about} ^{status}
13 That those intent on destroying Israel should seek to 13
14 undermine the Camp David accords and UN Security Council Reso- 14
15 lutions 242 and 338 on which they are based was to be expected. 15
16 The current attempt to do so, however, comes from another source, 16
17 namely, Western Europe, whose nations are engaging in patent 17
18 appeasement of the Arabs at Israel's expense for reasons of oil 18
19 and hoped for economic gain. 19
20 This appeasement is fraught with danger not only for 20
21 Israel but for West European states as well. Introduction of a 21
22 PLO, pro-Soviet client state in the Middle East creates more 22
23 favorable conditions for Soviet ^{power} (hegemony) there, which would pro- 23
24 foundly change the world balance of power at the expense of all 24
25 Western democracies. 25
26 The tragedy of the Western European initiatives is that 26
27 while they cannot contribute positively to the peace process, 27
28 (for Western European states have nothing to offer any of the 28
29 parties involved) ^{but} they can seriously damage it. Such enhanced 29

30 support for the PLO can only make Israel feel more vulnerable 30
 31 and less ready for concession. It can mislead Palestinians into 31
 32 believing that outside influence, rather than their own direct 32
 33 participation in the Camp David process, can bring meaningful 33
 34 autonomy.

35 Unfortunately those opposed to the Camp David agreements 35
 36 have been encouraged by U.S. inconsistency in their implementa- 36
 37 tion. On the one hand President Carter and top administration 37
 38 officials time and again affirm their support for the accords and 38
 39 the UN resolutions on which they are based. Regularly they de- 39
 40 clare the U.S. will not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as 40
 41 long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and 41
 42 agrees to UN Resolutions 242 and 338. On the other hand there 42
 43 was the administration's vote for UN Security Council Reso- 43
 44 lution 465 which attempted to amend Resolution 242, prejudging 44
 45 ultimate sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza, ^{and the United States of Jerusalem} damaging the 45
 46 eventual status of Jerusalem and negating the validity of the 46
 47 Camp David negotiations. Former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's 47
 48 testimony on Resolution 465 before a Congressional committee left 48
 49 U.S. policy murky, for he defended much of its substance even as 49
 50 he took responsibility for the "communications gap" that led to 50
 51 the resolution's disavowal by President Carter. 51

52 United States action in the UN and elsewhere must be con- 52
 53 sistent with Camp David policy if that policy is to succeed. Our 53
 54 government should veto, not abstain or approve, UN General 54
 55 Assembly or Security Council resolutions that include any 55
 56 language contradicting the Camp David agreements or violative 56
 57 of its spirit. And it is incumbent on the U.S. to reaffirm to 57
 58 the nations of Western Europe as to all other states that it will 58
 59 not swerve from the firm implementation of the peace process for 59
 60 which it laid the groundwork. 60

* * *

61 Emphasis by the U.S. on the alleged illegality of Israeli 61
 62 settlements in occupied territories serves no useful purpose. 62

63 In fact, a substantive body of reputable legal opinion does not 63
 64 agree with this view--nor do we. We believe that settlements are 64
 65 not contrary to international law where required for security pur- 65
 66 poses. We further believe that Jews have a right to live on the 66
 67 West Bank. 67

68 There has been much criticism in Israel and abroad in 68
 69 recent months as to Israeli settlements on the West Bank. [Among 69
 70 the critics have been Jews and non-Jews, including strong sup- 70
 71 porters of Israel.] In the end, however, only Israel can decide 71
 72 through its democratic process what its settlement policies 72
 73 should be. Nonetheless, to prevent erosion of support we 73
 74 would hope that Israel, its rights notwithstanding, will show re- 74
 75 straint in the creation of new settlements at this time. 75

76 The principle obstacle to Middle East peace is not Israeli 76
 77 settlement policy which is peripheral but, rather, the continuing 77
 78 refusal of Arab states other than Egypt to recognize Israel and 78
 79 to negotiate with her within the Camp David framework or on any 79
 80 other terms. Instead, they support the PLO in its commitment 80
 81 to the destruction of Israel. It is to their intransigence, 81
 82 to the unwillingness of Jordan to enter into the Camp David 82
 83 process and of other states like Saudi Arabia to engage in 83
 84 peaceful resolution of the conflict that the pressure of the 84
 85 United States and other governments as well as world public 85
 86 opinion ought more properly be directed. 86

* * *

87 True peace depends on the relations that will be estab- 87
 88 lished between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Israel has demon- 88
 89 strated the kind of sacrifices it is ready to make for peace. 89
 90 It already has returned most of the Sinai to Egypt, including 90
 91 precious oil fields and the new cities and settlements it de- 91
 92 veloped. Israel, however, cannot be the only party asked to 92
 93 make concessions. It cannot be expected to recognize or deal 93
 94 with organizations pledged to its destruction or which con- 94
 95 tinue to engage in terrorist acts. The Palestinians and the 95

96 nations in the area must recognize that there can be no compre- 96
97 hensive peace unless Israel's legitimate security needs are met. 97
98 ~~It is equally necessary that the kind of autonomy~~ ^{So for the nature agrees upon} ~~set forth~~ for 98
99 the West Bank and Gaza ^{will we are consistent} be consistent with the basic human rights 99
100 and aspirations to dignity due any individual or group. 100
101 It is understandable that the negotiations on autonomy 101
102 concerning the West Bank and Gaza and their residents are complex 102
103 and arduous. Key matters still in dispute such as security, use 103
104 of water and the source of ^{authority} ~~sovereignty~~ of any administrative 104
105 council to be set up are difficult to resolve. May 26, 1980 105
106 is a target date, not a deadline. All issues may not be re- 106
107 solved by that time. It does, however, provide an opportunity 107
108 to demonstrate new, substantive progress, to confound enemies 108
109 and contradict critics of the Camp David accords. 109
110 The Camp David process already has great accomplishments 110
111 to its credit. Israel and Egypt are at peace for the first 111
112 time since the Jewish state came into being. Normalization pro- 112
113 gresses. Both states have gained significantly in many ways. 113
114 To those who would deny or impede such progress there can 114
115 be but one reply: reaffirmation of the Camp David agreements, 115
116 and their translation into a wider and enduring peace. 116

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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date January 18, 1980
to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
from Rabbi A. James Rudin
subject

Here is a tentative outline of the April meeting with the NCC's Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism. It is tentatively scheduled for April 14, 1980, but we have a room problem in our building since 800 A and B will be used during the lunch hour.

REGISTRATION AND COFFEE, ETC.

GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Rev. Joan B. Campbell, Executive Director, Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism, National Council of Churches
 and
 Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director, Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee

TITLE: Christian Ecumenism and its Meaning for Christian-Jewish Relations

1. Dr. Paul Crow, Chief Ecumenical Officer, Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis, Indiana
2. Professor Krister Stendahl, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

LUNCHEON - Guest Speaker - "Religious Pluralism, the American Experience" or "Central Issues in Christian-Jewish Relations"

AFTERNOON SESSION

Current Status of Jewish Christian Relations. Panel composed of two Christians and two Jews who are active in the field.

CONCLUDING SESSIONS

Developing some Guidelines and some possible joint programming

Joan and I have discussed this as a one-day conference, and we need to set up our plans, budget, speakers as soon as possible. I would appreciate your suggestions and comments.

AJR:FM

cc: Judith Banki, Joel Gallob, Inge Gibel



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES DEFLECTS
ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTION PENDING REVIEW

By Religious News Service (5-9-80)

INDIANAPOLIS (RNS) -- A resolution calling for suspension of United States aid to Israel has been deferred a second time from consideration at the semi-annual National Council of Churches Governing Board meeting here until the board completes its reassessment of Middle East policy in November.

The resolution, sponsored by the Antiochian Orthodox Church, was originally submitted to the November 1979 board meeting in New York. It was deferred until the May meeting on condition that the NCC conduct a broad investigation of Middle East issues as part of its overhaul of the policy statement.

The measure will be re-submitted in six months to the New York meeting, according to the Antiochian Church's Governing Board representative, Dr. Frank Maria. By then, the debate on the "first reading" of the proposed Middle East statement will be finished, and a new policy will be set.

The Antiochian resolution calls for suspension of U.S. aid to Israel "until such time as an internationally recognized body affirms that Israel is in compliance with international law, and is guaranteeing the human rights of Christians and Muslims as well as those of Jews within Israel and in the occupied territories."

The measure, charging Israel with extensive human rights violations, was deferred again, "in view of the fact that the panel wanted to focus all attention on the new policy," said Dr. Maria. "We expect the new policy to be an improvement."

Dr. Maria, a lay leader, said he was encouraged by the report presented here by the NCC's Special Panel on Middle East/Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts which urges the U.S. and Israel to enter "open dialogue" with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The report, to be used as background material in the re-shaping of NCC Middle East policy, has drawn a more favorable response from the Arab community in the U.S. than it has from Jewish leaders.

A statement issued by the American Jewish Committee said "some of its recommendations would, in effect, undermine the Camp David peace process" between Egypt and Israel. Other Jewish agencies characterized it as a potential "step backward" from previous NCC Middle East statements. But Dr. Maria greeted the panel's findings as a "big, major step forward."

(more)

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The report emphasizes "dialogue" with the PLO, but backs off from urging U.S. diplomatic recognition. Nevertheless, "We believe the panel report substantially calls for recognition of the PLO," Dr. Maria said. "It can't mean anything else to anyone who can read words."

One of his few disappointments with the panel's efforts was "that they didn't put into words exactly what they were saying."

Dr. Maria also faulted what he said was an implied equation of the violence perpetrated by the PLO with that undertaken by the state of Israel.

"There's a difference between the violence that the slave has to go through to liberate himself and the violence of the oppressor," Dr. Maria said. "We've never done that in Zimbabwe, for instance. We always made a distinction between black liberation and the violence of the white-controlled state."

The American Jewish Committee statement on the other hand, welcomed the panel's "declaration that the same standards must be applied to all Middle East countries." The statement was issued by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, the committee's national interreligious affairs director.

Rabbi Tanenbaum, who has been a "fraternal observer" at NCC Governing Board meetings, said it was "regrettable" to recommend "dialogue with the PLO and press for Palestinian self-determination without any pre-conditions and without their first renouncing terrorism."

"This can only strengthen the PLO's belief that its aims can be achieved without any change in its policies, but rather through U.S. pressure on Israel," the statement continued.

The American Jewish Committee also "deeply regrets" the panel's characterization of the Camp David agreements as "fundamentally flawed."

But Rabbi Tanenbaum welcomed the panel's call for a PLO commitment to cease all terrorist acts and renounce its rejection of Israel. "Gratifying too, is the panel's declaration that the same standards must be applied to all Middle East countries in judging questions of human rights."

Moreover, the affirmation of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, had never been articulated with "such passion" before, Rabbi Tanenbaum said.

May 15, 1980

INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS - AN URGENT CONCERN FOR THE EIGHTIES?

Robert L. Turnipseed

Introduction

I. Why Are Interreligious Concerns Important Today?

A. For the sake of our life together in community.

Pressures toward new and more intentional interreligious relationships in our world as well as in our nation arise partly out of increased communication and travel resulting in more frequent interaction between religious communities across national lines, and partly out of the growth of diverse religious movements in the various countries. This growing religious diversity offers great potential for new and positive relationships and mutual enrichment. It also holds potential for the continuation of past tensions, and the outbreak of new hostilities. Dr. Will Herberg's description of the United States society in terms of "Protestant - Catholic - Jew" is no longer entirely accurate with the emergence of many new religious groups.

There are some 2 - 4 million Muslims in the U.S., about half of whom are immigrants from Middle Eastern, African or Asian countries. The other half of the Muslim community in the U.S.A. constitutes the World Community of Islam in the West, under the leadership of Dr. Wallace D. Muhammed. Past unfavorable stereotypes continue to influence American attitudes towards Muslims and the Islamic faith. Muslims newly arrived in the U.S.A. from nations where society is shaped by religion face many problems of adjustment to a predominantly secular society.

Many Jews and Christians are deeply troubled and perplexed by the myriad of "New Religions" developing in our midst, many of which are based on Asian Faiths, Hinduism and Buddhism. We do not yet know how to live together with these "new neighbors."

These illustrations of new interreligious encounters raise new questions for us. What does it mean to live together in a religiously diverse community? How do we prepare the members of our religious communities for this task?

As Jews and Christians, we stand under the same command - we are called to "love our neighbors" - including those who hold different faiths from ours. What does it mean to be a neighbor?

It means to meet other persons, to know them, to relate to them, to respect them and to learn about their ways which may be quite different from our own. It means to create a sense of community in our neighborhoods, towns and cities and to make them places in which the unique customs of each group of people can be expressed and their values protected. It means to create social structures in which there is justice for all, and in which everyone can participate in shaping their life together "in community." Each race or group of people is not only allowed to be who they are, their way of life is valued and given full expression.

Christians distinguish several meanings of "community." One definition expresses their relationships as members of one another in the Body of Christ, the Church, a people called together by Christ, a "communion of saints" who look to the coming reign of God. A broader definition points to the relationship that is shared with others in the wider human community, where Christians are concerned with others for peace, justice and reconciliation for all people.

As Jews, you have your understandings of "community." Other faiths also have their understandings. The vision of a "worldwide community of communities" commends itself to many Christians as a way of being together with persons of different faiths in a pluralistic world. That suggests that Christians and Jews and others - not just individually, but corporately - are called together to discover what it means to be neighbors, work together to create a human community, a set of relationships between people at once interdependent and free, and in which there is love, mutual respect and justice.

As Christians and Jews, we talk a great deal about pluralism and its values. However, if pluralism is to survive, there must be contacts and relationships, so that problems can be prevented or resolved.

Many tensions are as yet unresolved between religious communities. As you know, much remains to be done in Jewish-Christian relations. Continued Christian mis-interpretation of the Jewish religion - especially the role of law, the characterization of the Pharisees and our understanding of covenant - these all suggest that isolation from Jewish relationships has influenced Christian practice in detrimental. The significance of the holocaust for Christians, anti-semitism, Soviet Jewry and understandings of the State of Israel remain urgent concerns for Christian-Jewish dialogue.

The needs of our human society today are of such scope that no one religious faith can deal with them alone. No single religious group is alone in its desire for a just, participatory and sustainable society. Increasingly, persons of all faiths are taking seriously the political, economic and social realities of the world by which the majority of people are forced to live in poverty, have no voice in the direction of their lives, and find their very natural world threatened with destruction by rapid technological development.

It is imperative that persons of different faiths relate to each other so that they may cooperate in these urgent problems of human suffering. Each religion has its own resources and outlook for dealing with these problems. Sometimes our efforts compete with each other or contradict each other, or by working alone, efforts in the secular society are undermined or made less effective.

Is not one of our important tasks to remove the blocks to cooperation, to resolve interreligious disputes and tensions, and to seek more effective solutions to these complicated problems.

II. How Do We Understand Interreligious Dialogue - its nature and purpose?

A. The Challenge of Dialogue

1. Theological questions
2. Discovered in the encounter

B. Commitment to Dialogue

1. Dialogue about Differences as well as Commonalities

In the past, dialogue has tended to focus on the commonalities between religious groups, or upon issues and concerns faced in common. Although there were acknowledged differences on many issues, we have tended not to address these directly. It is significant that at an important international interreligious meeting last year, it was impossible to speak to issues of human rights, or social justice anywhere in the world except South Africa because of the differences between the representatives of the different faiths.

Today, we are called to address each other about those differences, to challenge

each other in love. We must engage each other on issues about which there is sharp disagreement and indeed where our views are in conflict. This dialogue may be more painful, but also may be more fruitful.

I suspect that in the future, there will be fewer preconditions for dialogue. The only precondition for dialogue will be a willingness to enter a relationship of mutual acceptance, openness, and respect. Effective dialogue requires that both partners have deep convictions about life, faith and salvation. True dialogue requires that these convictions not be suspended. However, it does require that each partner be open to the persons of other faiths, to their convictions about life, truth and salvation - that each partner be open to listen as well as speak.

2. Dialogue - a Mutual Witness

Some religions feel called to witness to their faith and teachings about the meaning of life. Is not this urge to witness an obstacle to interreligious dialogue. It often is, but need not be. Where there is listening as well as speaking, openness and respect as well as concern to influence, there is dialogue and witness. Indeed, dialogue at its most profound level is an exchange of witness. Participants share with each other their perceptions of the meaning of life, of ultimate reality, salvation and hope and their resources for enabling community. In genuine dialogue, we "witness" and are "witnessed to." The most effective dialogue takes place when both sides really do care that the other hear, understand and receive their wisdom.

Dialogue at these depths holds great promise. Long cherished convictions may be modified in the encounter with the others. Misunderstanding may be clarified, potential hostilities reconciled and new insights regarding one's own faith may

emerge in contrast to that of another. The depths of another's faith may be so disclosed that its power and attractiveness are experienced. Dialogue is a demanding process, requiring of each partner a thorough understanding of one's own faith, and clear articulation of it to the other person.

Dialogue creates relationships of mutual understanding, openness and respect. Witness presses dialogue to the deepest convictions about life, death and hope. Dialogue is not a subtle tool for conversion. The difference between dialogue and other forms of witness is that it is a context for learning from the other the truth and wisdom of the other faith as well as sharing with the other the truth and wisdom of our own. In dialogue, deeply held truths encounter each other in witness and love, so that larger wisdom and larger understandings of truth may emerge which benefit all parties in the dialogue. As we exhibit courtesy, reverence and respect and become neighbors, fears of each other are allayed and new gifts are received.

III. HOW DO WE AS PEOPLE OF FAITH RESPOND TO THE OPPRESSION, INJUSTICE AND SUFFERING IN THE THIRD WORLD.

- A. Why this is an important Concern for Christians.
- B. A Special concern for Christians, Jews and Muslims
- C. How can we work together and be mutually supportive of each other on these concerns?

Christian mission agencies have shifted away from direction and domination to working in partnership and empowering, to enabling self-determination. It is a significant fact that when the WCC Assembly met in Nairobi in 1975, for the first time the majority of delegates were from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Christians from affluent countries are attempting to empower and work as peers with Christians from poor and developing countries.

Second, a major debate in the Christian community concerns the need to shift

away from "bandaid" assistance to the poor of the earth, and toward dealing with root causes of hunger, poverty, disease and oppression. Just before coming here, I received a book from the Commission on the Churches Participation in Development of the World Council of Churches entitled "Towards a Church in Solidarity with the Poor." It contains solid biblical and theological foundations for its affirmation that "Churches are once again realizing that it is not possible to be the Church of Jesus if they fail to respond with love and justice to the challenge of the poor," (p. 18). The document affirms, "The churches must clearly express repentance of the way that they have accepted the plight of the poor, even within themselves. They have to make a concrete commitment to the poor for a just, participatory and sustainable society...This presupposes giving highest priority to the poor, to their hopes and their struggles to overcome injustice and eradicate poverty," (p. 10).

These ideas are not yet fully affirmed by all or even a majority of Christians. However, there is a growing number of people at all levels of the church's life who are struggling with these issues and developing commitments to this task.

It should not surprise us that these developments have influenced Jewish-Christian relations and increased the tension. Much of the tension has arisen from the fact that the Palestinian cause has been taken up by many Third World leaders, and the Israeli cause, rather than being seen as a movement of Liberation and a process of development, has been seen as part of the oppressing forces. Another source of concern is the presence in Third World Christians of traditional forms of anti-semitism in spite of their lack of contact with Jews.

How can we help each other in these concerns? How can we cooperate? Are we prepared to deal with the challenges presented to us by our Third World colleagues? Are we prepared to take seriously the poor and the oppressed and to challenge those structures which impose poverty and oppression? Are Christians prepared to look

at Zionism as a liberation struggle, and to see developments in Israel such as the labor and Kibbutz movements as models for development? Are Christians willing to press issues of anti-semitism with Third World Colleagues? Are Jews willing to listen to Third World critiques of western society, and to work with Christians in seeking a "just, participatory and sustainable society?"



IV. CAN THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION AMONG THE NATIONS?

- A. Religion as a Source of Tension
- B. Religious Resources for Peace
- C. The Middle East Conflict - a Case in Point

The tragedy is that what some Christians perceive to be efforts for justice for the Palestinians and security for Israel - is perceived by many in the Jewish Community as anti-Israel, and therefore tension between our communities risk further polarization and mutual antagonism that will be destructive for Jews and Christians alike in American society.

V. CAN WE CREATE INTERRELIGIOUS STRUCTURES FOR MORE EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

- A. Religious Structures for Interfaith Relationships
 - 1. In the Jewish Community - AJC, UAHC, ADL, SCA, etc.
 - 2. In the Christian Community
 - WCC - NCC (Office on Christian-Jewish Relations)
- B. Interreligious Structures
 - 1. World congresses of religions
 - 2. WCRP - World Conference of Religions for Peace
 - 3. Asian Conference of Religions for Peace
 - 4. 32 Interfaith councils in U.S.A.
- C. A New Possibility

There is at present no national interreligious agency through which local inter-religious groups can relate to each other, or through which national religious groups could relate to each other. There is need for structures to enable inter-religious contacts, mutual interaction and cooperation. The precise kind of inter-religious structures required is unclear and may require experimentation. However, without such structures, if relationships exist at all between persons of different faiths, they are likely to be casual, individual, unintentional and frequently added on to another concern. There will be continuing need for bilateral conversations and dialogues - however, there would be less diffusion and broader benefit if these could be related in some kind of interreligious structure.

The U.S. Committee of the World Conference of Religions for Peace is exploring this possibility. It already brings together Protestant and Catholic Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus as well as representatives of several local interfaith councils. Jewish leaders were prominent in the beginning of WCRP in the early '70's. It would be a significant development if a truly interfaith national organization could emerge, through which a wider spectrum of religious groups could meet and work together. I invite you to consider becoming involved in this experiment.

Anti-Defamation League



of B'nai B'rith

823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 212-490-2525 Telex 649278

LYNNE IANNIELLO
Director, Communications

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York, NY, May 9....The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has criticized the report of the National Council of Churches' Middle East Panel as a "naive misreading of the contending forces and issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict which can have mischievous consequences."

Nathan Perlmutter, ADL's national director, said "it strains credulity for a panel of the National Council of Churches, itself a religious body, to call for U.S. dialogue with the PLO terrorists and murderers who are allied with the America-hating, fanatical Ayatollah Khomeini and with the Soviet Union, religion's sworn enemy."

Acknowledging that the document contains "certain positive elements," he said, it "nevertheless corrodes the Camp David process which produced the first peace treaty in 32 years of conflict, by undermining those who have made peace and rewarding those who refuse to make peace."

The report embodies the panel's findings and conclusions after a two-week visit to five Middle East countries, consultations with Arabs and Israelis and discussions with interested American groups. It was submitted May 7 to the NCC governing Board in Indianapolis.

"We appreciate," Mr. Perlmutter said, "that the panelists call upon the PLO to renounce violence, change the PLO Covenant and accept the legitimacy of Israel."

(more)

"In spite of this," he went on, "illogically, the report encourages the PLO in its intransigence because it calls for open dialogue whether or not these changes are made. We also reject its call for Palestinian self-determination, a code phrase for a PLO state, and changes in U.N. Resolution 242 which scuttle the sense of the Resolution."

In his analysis, Mr. Perlmutter said the report acknowledges that PLO violence is directed not only against the State of Israel but against the Jewish people, yet, "incredibly, in the very next breath, recommends that the U.S. be engaged in open dialogue with these terrorists."

He added that in calling for Palestinian self-determination, the document is inviting the establishment of a state which, as a surrogate for the Soviet Union, would be allied against American interests.

ADL's national director also pointed out that the panel's charge that the Camp David agreement is "fundamentally flawed" undermines U.S. policy and impugns the credibility of Anwar Sadat, the Arabs' leading peacemaker."

He said, too, that the NCC panel's call for "outside guarantees of Israel's security doesn't recognize a fundamental principle: Israel's right to determine its own security needs and to defend itself -- rights granted to, and recognized for, every nation in the world."

In conclusion, Mr. Perlmutter said that the report would have been far more constructive had it urged the rejectionist Arabs to join in the Camp David peace process.

#

January 16, 1980

Dr. Tracey Jones
Chairman, NCC Middle East Task Force
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York, 10027

Dear Dr. Jones,

I am writing to express my concern over the resolution on "Violations of Human Rights and International Law" which was recently submitted to the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of New York and All North America.

I had hoped that this resolution would be rejected when it was first presented. Instead, I understand that it has only been withdrawn and that it will be revived when its sponsors deem necessary.

I have read the resolution carefully and I find that the charges made in it against Israel can in no way be substantiated. They rest upon misinformation and a distortion of facts. I feel confident that your Task Force on the Middle East will find this to be the case. Correct information will dictate that the resolution not be accepted.

I find it most unfortunate that this resolution which contains so many false and unjust accusations against Israel, should be given consideration at a time when Jewish-Christian relations are entering upon a new and promising phase and when the peace process between the Arab nations and Israel is moving through its initial and very delicate stages. What we need is for Christians to exhibit fair play and a spirit of reconciliation and not engage in such unfortunate efforts to heap undeserved blame upon our brethren. We need to support efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East. This resolution can only have the opposite effect.

It is my prayer and hope that the resolution will not be resubmitted for consideration. And if it is submitted, I hope that it will be quickly set aside. Ample evidence has been submitted by the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League and the Synagogue Council of America to justify the Governing Board in rejecting the resolution.

With every best wish, I remain

Respectfully yours,

(Rev.) Stanley A. Schmidt
Director



OFFICE OF

Handwritten signature of Stanley A. Schmidt

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

1020 East Burnett • Louisville, Ky. 40217 • (502) 636-3706

DOMESTIC SERVICE

-16-

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1977

JEWISH COMMITTEE LEADERS APPLAUD
NCC STATEMENT ON UNITED NATIONS

By Religious News Service (5-6-77)

NEW YORK (RNS) -- Two interreligious affairs officials of the American Jewish Committee have hailed the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches (NCC) for its new policy statement on the United Nations and an amendment to its constitution.

Both actions were taken at the Spring meeting of the NCC board in Cincinnati. They were hailed by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, and Rabbi A. James Rudin, assistant director of interreligious affairs and a fraternal delegate to the Governing Board meeting.

The Jewish Committee officials particularly praised a statement in the resolution on the United Nations which said, "It is imperative that confrontations over political and economic differences not lead to the exclusion of nation states from the United Nations or its specialized agencies either by denial of admission or the process of expulsion."

Rabbis Tanenbaum and Rudin expressed the hope that the statement "will contribute to an atmosphere that will put to an end at an early date the vigilante tactics and lynch-mob mentality which anti-Israel forces have created in recent years at the U.N., and among its specialized agencies."

They suggested that "if taken seriously, this position of the NCC that was overwhelmingly adopted would help contribute to the desperately needed credibility of the United Nations."

The Jewish Committee officials also welcomed the change in the NCC constitution which now permits the Governing Board to ask a member Church to "suspend for cause" a delegate. They asserted that the constitutional amendment "would make it impossible for former Nazis like Archbishop Valerian Trifa or racists to hold positions of honor and membership within the National Council of Churches."

Rabbis Tanenbaum and Rudin said they "look forward to an early action on the part of the NCC, based upon this bylaw, that will lead to the removal of Trifa, a former commandant of the Romanian Iron Guard, from the Governing Board."

The Orthodox Church in America has directed Archbishop Trifa not to exercise any of his functions on the board pending an investigation of the accusations against him.

Thursday, May 5, 1977

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Churches Call For Halt To Nuclear Bomb Tests

The National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCC) wants a full halt to explosive nuclear testing.

That was its message on the first day of the Board of Governors meeting in Cincinnati Wednesday, when about 150 delegates called on President Carter to push for a stronger nuclear test ban treaty.

THE GROUP'S stand was based on Mr. Carter's recent statement that he is in "favor of eliminating the testing of all nuclear devices, including underground explosions, instantly and completely," said Alice Wimer, international affairs executive of the council.

Wimer said the resolution is stronger than previous NCCC statements on nuclear testing because "there is always the danger of radiation and there is no such thing as nuclear testing without weaponry."

The NCCC also urged full support and dedication to the United Nations by member churches.

Speakers called for investigations of human rights violations and urged that the UN cease expelling some member nations as a form of political reprisal.

Rabbi A. James Rudin of New York, an observer from the American Jewish Committee, said the resolution concerning the UN will help fight the "lynch mob" mentality generated in the UN and some of its special agencies by anti-Israel forces.

PROFITING FROM commerce in South African nations which practice apartheid was condemned by the Rev. Clinton March, who said a new policy statement on the matter will be presented to the council later this year.

Today, the second day of the three-day meeting, delegates are expected to discuss federal support for day-care facilities and possible actions by member churches in all states that have not ratified the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution.

Council of Churches Opposes A Tests

CINCINNATI (AP) — Underground atomic tests should be eliminated and the U.S. should seek an investigation of human rights violations in other countries through the United Nations, the National Council of Churches says.

The stands were taken in resolutions supported at the council's policy-making governing board meeting here.

A ban of underground testing, said the Rev. Don Wilson of the council's nuclear test committee, would "eliminate the possibility of testing weaponry while saying it is for peaceful purposes when in fact it is not."

Rabbi A. James Rudin, attending as a fraternal delegate from the American Jewish Committee in New York, said the human rights resolution would "contribute to an atmosphere that will put an end at an early date to the vigilante tactics and lynch mob mentality which anti-Israel forces have created in recent years at the U.N. and among its specialized agencies."

The board put off until November completion of a policy statement regarding exploitation in Africa, particularly South Africa.

Washington Post



national council of the churches of christ in the u.s.a.

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MRS. THEODORE O. WEDEL, president

R. H. EDWIN ESPY, general secretary

THE REV. DAVID R. HUNTER
Deputy General Secretary

September 7, 1971

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Marc:

Word has come to me today that it may be possible for you to attend the meeting of our General Board in New Orleans as well as Rabbi Rudin. We would be delighted to have this happen.

Upon arriving at the Hotel Roosevelt, please introduce yourself at the registration table where you will be registered as an official visitor and will be given materials about the meeting. I am notifying the registration desk to this effect.

You are aware of the information about this meeting which I put in my letter to Rabbi Rudin and I shall not repeat it. We are not in possession of any knowledge at the present time to the effect that a possible resolution on the Middle East will be proposed. If such comes to my attention before leaving New York City I will be glad to let you know. We hope that there will be a progress report from our ad hoc task force on the Middle East which is in session here today in New York City. You will find enclosed a copy of the agenda.

My best to you and looking forward to seeing you,

Cordially,

David R. Hunter

DRH:dp
Encl.

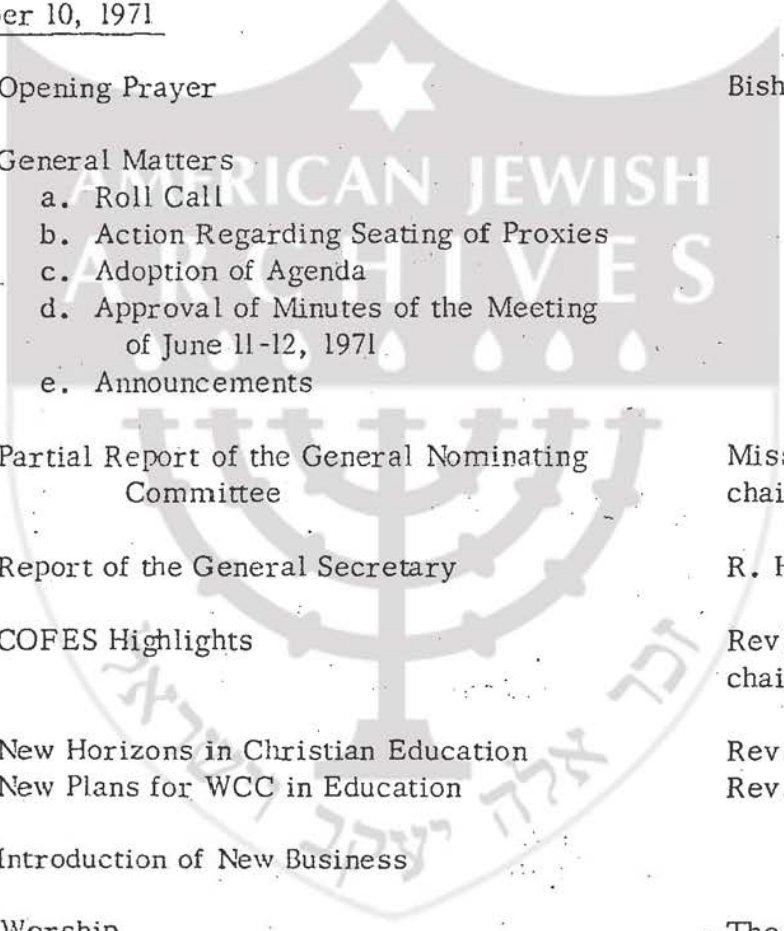
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GENERAL BOARD

AGENDA

The Roosevelt Hotel New Orleans, Louisiana
September 10-11, 1971

Friday, September 10, 1971

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- 9:00 A.M. I. Opening Prayer Bishop Frederick D. Jordan
- 9:05 II. General Matters
a. Roll Call
b. Action Regarding Seating of Proxies
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting
of June 11-12, 1971
e. Announcements
- 9:10 III. Partial Report of the General Nominating
Committee Miss Theresa Hoover,
chairman
- 9:15 IV. Report of the General Secretary R. H. Edwin Espy
- 10:00 V. COFES Highlights Rev. Thomas J. Liggett,
chairman
- 10:30 VI. New Horizons in Christian Education
New Plans for WCC in Education Rev. Gerald E. Knoff and
Rev. David R. Hunter
- 11:30 VII. Introduction of New Business
- 11:45 VIII. Worship
The Most Rev. Philip M. Hannan,
Archbishop of New Orleans
The Rev. G. Avery Lee,
Minister of St. Charles Avenue
Baptist Church
- 12:15 P.M. Luncheon Recess
- 1:30 IX. COFES Discussion Groups
- 3:30 X. Report of the General Nominating Committee Miss Theresa Hoover, chairma
- 3:45 XI. Christian Unity Panel Report - Faith and Order Bishop Stephen G. Spottswood,
chairman

General Board Agenda - p.2

4:15 P.M. XII. Proposed Policy Statement -
Health Care Concerns Roger Burgess, General Secretary,
United Methodist Board of Health
and Welfare Ministries

5:15 Dinner Recess

7:30 XIII. GAFB-GPPC Joint Presentation of
1972 Program and Budget Rev. Marion deVelder
William P. Thompson

8:30 XIV. Report of General Administration and
Finance Committee Rev. Marion deVelder,
chairman

9:00 XV. The New China Initiatives Rev. John F. Schaefer, chairman,
Division of Overseas Ministries

9:30 Benediction

Saturday, September 11, 1971

9:00 A.M. XVI. Meditation Mrs. E. C. Rowand, Jr.

9:05 XVII. Announcements

9:10 XVIII. Report Concerning the General Board
Action (June 11-12, 1971) Regarding
a Conference on Vietnam Rev. G. Edler Hawkins
chairman, Planning Committee

9:30 XIX. Report of the General Constituent
Membership Committee Rev. John S. Groenfeldt,
vice-chairman

9:40 XX. COFES - Action on Proposal Rev. Thomas J. Liggett

11:40 XXI. New Business

12:15 P.M. Luncheon Recess

1:30 XXII. Report of the General Personnel
Committee Bishop H. Thomas Primm,
chairman

2:00 XXIII. Report of the General Planning and Program
Committee William P. Thompson
chairman

including

Lay Ministry Progress Report

~~Richard Saltzman~~

Bruce Copeland

- 2:45 P.M. XXIV. Report of the General Constitution and Bylaws Committee Ivan Czap, vice-chairman
- 3:00 XXV. Report of Task Force on Jerusalem R. H. Edwin Espy
- 3:20³⁰ XXVI. New Business
- 3:55 XXVII. Highlights of this Meeting
- 4:00 Benediction



FEBRUARY 25, 1980

APPROACHING THE MIDDLE EAST FROM A DIALOGICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

Some Personal Reflections

Introduction

Today you will step into an opportunity for interreligious dialogue in its most profound sense. That is, you will meet and talk with persons of different faiths, of different ideologies, all of whom are living in an existential situation of pain, suffering and conflict. Yours will not be an academic dialogue, but one arising from the feelings, passions, hurts, as well as religious commitments of people. While this is not the only way to approach this trip, to approach it from a dialogical and interreligious perspective may have certain profound values for your task. It may bring a helpful dimension to your moral and ethical concerns. Therefore, I want to share personal reflections in three areas.

- (1) Reaching out in dialogue to Jews and Muslims in the Middle East;
- (2) Beginning a new dialogue with Christians in the Middle East; and finally
- (3) Searching for new spiritual resources.

Before turning to that however, four points about interreligious dialogue in general may be helpful to you.

- (1) Clarity regarding your own understanding of and commitment to your own faith is essential for effective dialogue.
- (2) Each partner must believe the other is speaking in good faith.
- (3) Each partner must strive for a clear understanding of the faith of the other and be willing to interpret it in its best light rather than its worst.
- (4) Each partner must forthrightly face the issues that cause separation as well as those that create unity.

These may seem rather mundane and common sensical. However, go through them and add the word "Jewish" or "Muslim" or "Christian" after each one and reflect on their implications. When faith is taken to include those moral and ethical commitments that shape and inform political and economic life, perhaps these guidelines take on new force.

Now some reflections from an interreligious and dialogical perspective.

I. REACHING OUT IN DIALOGUE TO JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Christians reach out in dialogue with persons of other faiths out of obedience to two of our Lord's commands - that we love our neighbors (even those of other faiths) and that we be witnesses to our Lord to all peoples. To love one's neighbor means to know them, to care for them, to be open to their hurts.

You are going to encounter people with deep hurts - whether a Palestinian family who have been uprooted from their home, placed in refugee camps, watching their children struggle for life and identity; or a Jewish home celebrating the Yahr Zeit (or anniversary) of the death of a loved one in one of the wars. You may see Jews, Muslims and Christians who have suffered atrocities at the hands of one another, almost an exchange of atrocities.

- You will encounter Muslims for whom the deeds of the Crusaders, who killed their brothers and sisters in the name of Christ, are still living memories. Others will recount how the western imperial nations colonized Islamic nations with the blessing of the church; and if you are fortunate, you may reach a level

of communication, where a Muslim will speak of the impotent rage at seeing Muslims - uneducated, illiterate, sick and diseased, being tempted to conversion through Christian schools, hospitals and service centers. You may be tempted to say, "I didn't do those things," or "the persons who did them were not real Christians." Dr. Marston Speight, a former missionary in Tunisia is helpful when speaking about the need for a change of the image of Christianity among Muslims he says, "One of the first steps to take is frankly to assume the burden of one's own history...(to say)...yes, I belong to the good and bad of my background. I am linked in religious solidarity with all that has happened in the past, and with all that is going on now, whether I agree with it or not."

The same attitude will be helpful when you approach Israeli Jews. You know many of their hurts - but can you hear them, feel them, receive them? One of the most difficult points of tension I've experienced in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict concerns the relevance of anti-semitism and the Holocaust to it.

Those who support the Arab cause generally refuse to take seriously the intertwining of anti-Zionism and anti-semitism, and often reject any relevance of the Holocaust to the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, this very history of anti-semitism and its intertwining with anti-Zionism is exploited by those who wish to deny in advance the right to criticize Israel at all. Both of these perspectives inhibit the search for peace, justice and reconciliation. The latter is obvious, the former less so.

Last year, a Jewish woman who is actively supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state, and recognition of the PLO as steps toward peace, was asked by an American Christian Peaceworker, "Why are American Jews so callous to the suffering of the Palestinians?" Her response seems helpful to me in understanding the relevance of anti-semitism to the conflict: She writes that she could have responded in detail describing the problems in the Jewish community, the various forces at work:

"Such answers might have persuaded (my friend) that American Jews are not unanimously indifferent to the suffering of the Palestinians but I could not give them because my fundamental response to her was emotional, simply as a Jew whose sub-liminal fear of anti-semitism was tapped by her blunt question. I could not help asking myself, 'Is she an anti-semite?'"

She continues, describing the gnawing fears that haunt Jews:

"Would America, thirty years from now, open its doors to fleeing Israelis any more freely than it did to fleeing European Jews thirty years ago?...Inevitably, the Holocaust comes up in any discussion of Jews and Palestinians, though Jews sense an increasing Christian impatience with that. It seems that Christians regard the Holocaust as a terrible aberration in history, a single incident but not a trend. Some seem to feel Jews have received ample public sympathy and are milking the Holocaust for all its worth. But for many Jews, the Holocaust was not an event but a recurring historic theme - and one with implications for the future. Jews have been threatened with extinction for 4,000 years...The comments of gentiles on this subject - like the peaceworker's question to me, - often omit any expression of

awareness of this subliminal Jewish fear...And much of the rhetoric on the Left identifies the Palestinians as the underdogs of the Third World and portrays Israel as a monolithic oppressor state on a par with South Africa. Those who champion the Palestinian cause often give Jews the feeling that Palestinians have replaced Jews in the Christian circle of concern, leaving Jews no allies but their own people...A lot more Jews would take dovish positions publically if they felt sure the non-Jewish community would continue to support Israel's right to exist. Christians have to take more principled stands against the notion that 'Zionism is racism' if they want Jews to have more guts."

I have quoted at length from this Jewish woman, because I do not feel that she is an isolated individual, nor is she suffering unduly from paranoia.

Are Christians prepared to assume this burden of our history, to acknowledge our solidarity with these events of the past, and to make unequivocally clear our commitment to eradication of anti-semitism. Are we prepared in dialogue with Jews to listen sensitively and empathetically to their concerns about anti-semitism and the Holocaust as they link them to the present conflict. Are we prepared to raise questions with those who continue to express a blatant anti-semitism?

Anti-semitism, just as racism, is very difficult to surface, to acknowledge and to deal with. Just as with racism we need persons of other races to help us identify it, so with anti-semitism we need Jews to assist us. I sense a rather determined resistance to this notion among colleagues in the Church; and, where there is no contact with Jews, there is a built in problem. Rosemary Reuther in an article in Christianity and Crisis points out how "an easy pro-Palestinian position, especially since 1967, furnishes an obvious cover by which Christians may excuse themselves from the necessity of confronting an anti-semitic heritage that still governs Christian theological discourse" (Nov. 26, 1973, p. 241). She concludes that "A new start must be based on the unequivocal concession from the Arab side of the right for Israel to exist, and Israel too must come to see that it cannot survive by military counter-attack forever...the development of new conditions for the Palestinian's existence and a commitment to Israel's secure survival are indissolubly yoked together."

I am not saying that because of anti-semitism and the Holocaust Christians should not criticize Israel, oppose its settlement policy or explore issues of violations of human rights. I am saying that unless Christians acknowledge and seek to deal with pervasive anti-semitism, it will infect and bias all our efforts toward peace, justice and reconciliation. It will also stiffen Jewish resistance to any initiatives we might take, even if they are correct. Our credibility will continually be suspect. I do not see any fundamental contradiction between a commitment to and struggle for justice and self-determination for Palestinians, and an open acknowledgement of and concrete effort to deal with Christian anti-semitism.. I doubt if a new start is possible without this.

Another principle of interreligious dialogue relevant here is that each partner allows the other to define himself or herself and each seeks to understand and appreciate that definition. In the present situation, this means that Christians must try to hear Jews when they speak of Zionism as the Jewish liberation movement, and talk of a unique relationship to the land. It means that Christians allow Muslims to define Islam as being linked uniquely to political and economic ordering of life. It does not mean that we accept these definitions as a basis for our own action, for we too are free to define ourselves. However, such empathy will open up new possibilities not only for mutual trust and understanding, but also options for resolution of conflict.

And what of our witness? Exemplifying attitudes just described already is a witness. How does our witness strengthen the faith of others and show love and respect for them? How does it include moral and ethical dimensions? How can we be more intentional in our witness? These and other questions will press upon you in your dialogue with persons of other faiths in the Middle East.

II. BEGINNING A NEW DIALOGUE WITH CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

You are going to the Middle East at an important time in NCCC relationships with Christians there. One of the significant new directions now being taken by the Division of Overseas Ministries, and reflected strongly in the new Middle East policy statement gives new prominence and influence to church relationships between USA churches in the NCC and Middle Eastern churches through the Middle East Council of Churches. The significance of this cannot be underestimated, and you will experience this in Lebanon. Suffice to say this development offers a great potential for moving beyond painful past missionary relationships, for mutual recognition and cooperation among the churches there, and the establishment of a significant new sign of unity in the Middle East. We give thanks to God for this achievement and must challenge our churches to give it wholehearted support.

From an interreligious perspective, however, this development does raise some danger signals of which we need to be aware. Will it mean that when we study the Middle East, with the Churches our major focal point, that we will not give adequate attention to the other faiths and cultures in the area? Because there are Muslims involved in some of our service projects, and because of numerous cooperative relationships between Christians and Muslims, we may expand our study to include them. However, because of the great separation between Christians and Jews, how likely is it that we will include Israel and Israelis as part of our study? Christians tend to visit only Christian service projects, and the Holy places. This will give them contact with Christians and Muslims, but none with Israelis. When we approach issues of human rights with Middle East churches, how will Muslim and Jewish voices be heard? Does not making the Middle East Council of Churches the primary focal point of our entry into the Middle East situation place American Christians immediately on one side of the conflict there? Will we be prone to accept the analysis and prescriptions of the MECC and to support them, with consequent possibilities of grave injustices to other peoples, especially the Jewish people? These are just danger signals of what we need to be aware of as we affirm and rejoice in this new relationship which should enable us to be mutually helpful to each other, and enter into new ventures of partnership.

III. SEARCHING FOR NEW SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

In a real sense, you are embarking on a spiritual pilgrimage. To move toward peace, justice and reconciliation in this conflict will require deep spiritual searching by all parties. The bitterness and hatred is deep on both sides of the conflict in the Middle East and among supporters of each side in the USA. The pain and suffering has been severe. Each group is committed to its own cause and willing to give its life for it. Only a new spiritual awakening offers hope of reconciling these hostilities.

What is going to change the "inherent bad faith model" (Kissinger) by which all parties resist change even when conciliatory gestures are made, - when each side stubbornly denies the existence of data which could disconfirm the bad faith it holds

regarding the other. Each side consistently ignores the positive aspects of the other, disregards or rejects praise of the other by third parties, and inflates negative manifestations of the other. What is going to free people to break through this self-perpetuating "inherent bad faith model?"

NCCC policy statements in the past have been rather consistent in affirming "the right of Israel to exist as a free nation with secure borders" and "the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a national entity." These statements of principle appear to be ones upon which many American Christians can agree, but problems arise when they are applied in the specific situation.

What does it mean to affirm peace, justice and security and the right of self-determination for the people of Israel, for Israelis? And what does it mean to affirm peace, justice, security and the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people? What role can American Christians play? Do we simply attack and seek to pressure Israel, and advocate for a Palestinian state? Do we simply attack and reject the Palestinians? Do we advocate for the recognition of Israel among Palestinians and Arabs, and advocate for recognition of the Palestinians among Israelis and Jews? The 1969 NCCC Policy Statement said, "Neither justice or peace is set forward by being simply 'pro-Arab' or 'pro-Israel'". Is not this perspective even more sound today? Will we not have to be critical of both sides, be supportive of both sides, and hold both sides and ourselves accountable to certain moral principles, taking great care to avoid double standards. This will require great clarity on our part as to our goals and commitments in the conflict, whether or not we are interested in the victory of one party over another, or genuine reconciliation and justice. It will press us deeply to our own spiritual resources.

Can the three Middle Eastern religions contribute to peace, justice and development in these countries. Can they provide the spiritual power for reconciliation? At this point, religions tend to be part of the problem rather than the solution. In all three faiths, religion is frequently used to support particular political, economic or social perspectives rather than to bring them under moral judgment. The power of religion in Middle Eastern countries has been amply demonstrated, but can it be harnessed for peace?

On the other hand, all three religions have powerful spiritual resources; all offer some recognition of the other; all claim to have spiritual resources for peace and justice. If these resources can be released many new fresh possibilities may emerge. But they must be in contact with each other. A young Palestinian said to me last summer, "We must now begin to prepare for the 80's. They will be a time not of dialogue but of trialogue, Christian, Muslim and Jewish." But how is it to begin?

The situation is not hopeful. In recent months, there is less, not more, dialogue. Many are suspicious of dialogue. And yet there have been significant experiences of new dialogues in Iran, in Lebanon and within the Jewish community.

We Americans cannot dialogue for Middle East Christians. We must take great care how we enter the Middle East since our actions affect each of the parties there. What steps can we take to initiate and stimulate the process of interaction between people who have long been enemies of each other? We do not know finally how God will use Christians or other faiths. But again, the words of a Palestinian Christian focuses the challenge for us - "How may we expose Christ anew, there and here?" For in seeking to expose Christ anew, we encounter the source, for Christians, of this spiritual power - the power to confess our sin, to forgive, to love, to be humble and self critical, to be fair and openminded, and in Christ we find guidance and healing.

Robert L. Turnipseed
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JEWISH GROUPS DECLINE PARTICIPATION IN NCC MIDEAST HEARINGS (620)

NEW YORK (NC) — Seventeen major Jewish organizations have declined invitations to address hearings held by the Middle East panel of the National Council of Churches (NCC).

A statement issued by 14 of the Jewish organizations described the panel's formulation of issues related to the Middle East as "a gross and deliberate misrepresentation of fact and history."

A statement submitted to the panel's hearing in Washington, D.C., by Rabbi A. James Rudin, assistant national director for interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, described the panel's presentation of five issues for consideration as "an unbalanced, grossly unfair, and ultimately self-defeating approach to the Middle East problems."

A concurring view was expressed at the Washington hearing by E. Stephen McArthur, executive director of the National Christian Leadership Conference on Israel, a coalition of clergy and laity supportive of Israel. Calling the hearings process "highly skewed," McArthur said it "should be carefully and more broadly redefined."

The Rev. Tracey K. Jones, chairperson of the NCC Middle East panel, issued a statement regretting that the Jewish organizations had chosen not to participate in the hearings. "We wanted to hear what they had to say," he said. "We hoped these particular Jewish groups who have refrained from participation will be able to be with us at a later time."

The five issues which the NCC Middle East panel proposed for consideration are: the right of Palestinian Arabs to national self-determination; security in the region; human rights issues; settlements on the West Bank; and religious issues. In a statement sent with the invitations to participate in the hearings, brief paragraphs on each of the issues raised questions to be considered in addressing them.

In addition to hearings in New York and Washington, the panel proposes to visit the Middle East from Feb. 25 to March 9. Between the New York and Washington hearings, the NCC panel revised its formulation of the issues in response to the criticisms of the Jewish organizations.

In his statement, Rabbi Rudin said: "One of the many distortions in the five points is the fact that only one Middle Eastern country, Israel, and only one Middle Eastern people, the Palestinians, is specifically even mentioned by name; but this despite the fact the mandate of this panel is to study the entire Middle East, this despite the fact the panel intends to visit Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, as well as Israel. Yet, only Israel and the Palestinians are considered as specific 'issues.' "

The rabbi objected to the panel's references to the Palestine Liberation Organization in relation to the Palestinian right to self-determination. "Nowhere in the document," he said, "do we find a parallel concern about the right of Israeli Jews to national self-determination in a permanent and secure Jewish state in the Middle East."

Rabbi Rudin accused the panel of bias in mentioning only Israel in connection with "alleged human rights violations." Calling the charges of Israeli violations of human rights "mostly false," he said resolutions on this issue in the past decade have ignored "the millions of Kurds, Coptic Christians, Maronites, Armenians, Jews (especially in Syria and Iraq) and others who suffered very real oppression at the hands of various Arab rulers and governments."

In his statement, McArthur objected also to considering only the five issues cited by the panel.

"The National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel," he said, "believes the National Council of Churches and this panel would do a disservice to the cause of peace in the Middle East if these are in fact the 'only' areas for immediate concern. Does this panel presume that it can find the answers to these complex questions in two days of testimony?"

McArthur noted too that the issues were "specific with regard to Israel, but not regard to anyone else." Christians around the country, he added, expressed concern that Israel seemed to be put on trial.