

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY



*Advancing
Trust and
Reconciliation
Among
Palestinians
and Israelis*

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
AND INTERFAITH
COOPERATION
INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

Eleven U.S. Presidents have failed to help Palestinians and Israelis secure peace among their people. Key issues remain the division of land, the status of Palestinian refugees, access to holy sites, the status of Jerusalem, settlements, terrorism and continued threats to Israel's security. The Camp David Agreement, Oslo Accords, shuttle diplomacy, Arab League initiatives, the role of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the appointment of envoys, the Quartet's 2002 Roadmap for Peace, the Annapolis Summit—all of these efforts and countless others have fallen short of resolving the conflict. At the national level, Palestinians and Israelis still struggle for security and prosperity; at the personal level, even simple daily routines are disrupted: the ability of a Palestinian to walk to work without encountering an Israel Defense Force checkpoint, a mother from Gaza finding food in the market, or an Israeli sitting in an open-air restaurant without fear of a rocket attack or suicide bomber.

Walls have been built. Settlements dismantled. Words exchanged in hope, hate and anger. The hours spent fighting in the street are exceeded only by the hours spent in meetings by people hoping to end such violence.

After the 2000 Camp David hopes were shattered, the 2002 Roadmap for Peace raised expectations among some that an agreement could be reached that would give the Israelis peace and the Palestinians their own state. In 2005, Israel withdrew from Gaza and a democratic vote was held to determine Palestinian leadership. Within months, democracy's first-born turned into a civil breach: Hamas seized Gaza, and Fatah ruled the West Bank. Political negotiations became even more complex, and a peaceful future for the region grew even more difficult—but not impossible—to envision. Recently, Israel engaged in indirect talks with Hamas and Syria, and the United States remains committed to peace in the region.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY VOICES

Despite setbacks and challenges, countless Palestinian and Israeli leaders remain committed to cooperating across divides and paving the way toward a more peaceful and prosperous future. These leaders are prepared, at considerable risk to themselves, to build and to model in their respective communities the cooperation and mutual support that is so lacking at the national level. Only by pressing forward on this front will trust and reconciliation—the themes of this Center for the Study of the Presidency initiative—be realized at the national level.

Experience demonstrates that fostering trust and reconciliation requires a focused long-term effort to create and sustain informal, joint projects. Such projects must be developed by respected local organizations and institutions that have a demonstrated record of practical, action-oriented service in their communities. Such leaders must be encouraged by their counterparts in other parts of the world to model the trust and cooperation needed to support a lasting program of reconciliation and development.

By telling their stories, we hope to interest you in sustaining the efforts described below. As you will see, a more moderate Palestinian voice than typically is heard in the media is emerging, as local groups work to develop a true civil society and to build local communities on constructive values and actions necessary for lasting growth. Similar sentiments and constructive attitudes are evident in Israel and in the United States, voices at once fragile and vitally important. We invite you to listen, learn and participate in efforts to build a better future for people of this region and the world.



THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY



Dr. David Abshire, Center President

During 2007-2008, the non-partisan Center for the Study of the Presidency (CSP) led a two-pronged effort to advance trust and reconciliation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Conceived by Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) and endorsed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, this informal diplomatic effort was supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). At the request of Dr. David Abshire, the Center's President, Ambassador Dennis Ross led an effort to foster socio-economic development, including cooperation on health, medicine and science projects in collaboration with Dr. Susan Blumenthal and Maxmillian Angerholzer. In a parallel effort, Ambassador Tony Hall and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, with assistance from the Interdisciplinary Program in Law and Religion at the Catholic University of America, promoted interfaith cooperation in the region.

These efforts were assisted by members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the Department of State and USAID officials, the American Task Force on Palestine, the American Jewish Committee, the Church of Norway, and numerous Palestinian and Israeli community, scientific, medical and other organizations.



Ambassador Tony Hall and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick



Ambassador Dennis Ross



(Photo: courtesy of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy)

Project Organization

Grantor: United States Agency for International Development
Grantee: Center for the Study of the Presidency
Program Officer: Dr. Thomas M. Kirlin, Vice President & CFO

Amount: \$1,000,000
Dates: August 2007- May 2008
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NGO MAPPING	HEALTH & MEDICINE	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	INTERFAITH COOPERATION
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<p>PURPOSE: Strengthen a community of moderate Palestinian leaders who are responsive to the needs of their people through community-based NGOs</p>	<p>Identify and engage organizations and individuals in joint Palestinian/ Israeli health activities, foster dialogue and cooperation, and highlight future opportunities</p>	<p>Meet with Palestinian and Israeli scientists and explore ways to extend current dialogue</p>	<p>Find or build a network of religious leaders who are committed to interfaith cooperation on practical issues: open access to the Old City and religious sites, education for religious tolerance, and joint response to religious intolerance</p>
<p>METHODOLOGY: Identify effective Palestinian NGOs that provide community services, particularly in areas where the Palestinian Authority has limited reach and Hamas operates extensive charitable operations; initiate network development among NGOs; bring a representative group of such NGOs to the United States to meet donors and the Washington policy community</p>	<p>Map current cooperative Palestinian/Israeli health projects and create a selected inventory of these programs; meet with Israeli and Palestinian Ministry of Health officials; visit hospitals and convene working group meetings of health and medical experts in Israel and Palestine; apply information technology and build an internet workspace to improve health and enhance cooperation</p>	<p>Travel to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and West Bank to discuss initiatives with leading scientists</p>	<p>Personal visits to religious leaders and holy sites; invite group of religious leaders to U.S. and arrange visits by American religious groups and leaders with the Council of Religious Leaders of the Holy Lands and its members; agree to joint statement on specific common goals and projects</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS: Conducted detailed survey of 55 NGOs selected by Palestinian research team; commissioned 12 focus groups with 125 NGO beneficiaries, experts, and employees throughout the West Bank; hosted a group of NGO activists and members of project research team in Washington for a week of meetings with the policy and donor communities</p>	<p>Identified ongoing projects and built a cooperative network of Palestinian and Israeli health experts; developed a selected inventory of cooperative projects in the region; produced a set of recommendations for future health and medicine cooperative projects; developed a model e-health commons internet workspace for sustaining health cooperation and networking in the region</p>	<p>Organized roundtable discussions at Al-Quds University and the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization on possible joint research in such areas as genetics, nanotechnology and agriculture</p>	<p>Identified the Council as a powerful voice in region; brought 12 members to the U.S. for 4 days of meetings with Congress and American Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups; negotiated a joint communiqué that set forth five goals to be achieved through interfaith cooperation; organized ongoing collaboration with American faith-based groups</p>
<p>NEXT STEPS: Help establish formal networks or coalitions among moderate NGOs in the West Bank; develop the capacities of moderate NGOs; enhance their outreach and communications efforts; execute one national level project through the network, such as educational summer camps</p>	<p>Enhance cooperation among Israeli and Palestinian health experts; promote cooperative health initiatives; implement selected recommendations of working groups; expand inventory of cooperative health projects; enhance utilization of e-health commons to foster cooperation and health information sharing; identify additional sources of funding for health cooperative projects; build a health portal for knowledge exchange</p>	<p>Help find additional sources of funding for science and technology exchange; foster civil discourse among parties through common scientific interests</p>	<p>Strengthen the Council as an independent institution; link American religious groups with their institutional counterparts on the Council; provide human capital to assist in Council administration and projects; support the Council's program of "education for tolerance"</p>

Project Activities

NGO MAPPING

One of the most important but often under-emphasized elements to advancing peace is the strengthening of political moderates and their ties to their communities. Unfortunately, the 2006 Palestinian legislative election demonstrated that Hamas, and not the moderate political parties, had developed stronger, better-organized followings. One of the means Hamas employed to increase its political support was the use of an active social services network that attracted Palestinians in need of better educational services, health care, and poverty relief. At the same time, Palestinian moderates developed a vibrant civil society, but one that did not reach the grassroots by impacting daily lives.



NGO delegation with the Ambassador of Denmark to the United States at his Washington residence.

Formal research initiated by Ambassador Dennis Ross and a team of American and Palestinian experts confirmed these findings. While only a small fraction of the most active organizations were affiliated with Hamas, these Hamas-run NGOs accounted for the majority of effective social service programs and activities.

To address this challenge, the NGO Mapping Project sought to identify moderate, effective, community-based Palestinian NGOs. Through a series of interviews, surveys of civic leaders, and commissioned focus groups, the Ross team compiled detailed information on 55 NGOs throughout the West Bank that can be used by donors seeking to design more effective civil society programs through local partnerships. These organizations are active in such areas as youth issues, education, and women's empowerment, improving community health care, and tending to needs of Palestinians with disabilities. Some of the most effective and locally respected NGOs are nascent organizations with limited ties to outside donors. Therefore, the NGO guide will best serve donors seeking to expand the range of their grantees beyond Ramallah and into the Palestinian communities with the greatest need.

Most importantly, the project sowed seeds for unprecedented networking among moderate NGOs in the West Bank. Convening initial

meetings with local and national NGOs generated great interest in collaboration. The further development of this network will help its members share expertise, enhance their voices as political advocates, and expand the reach of their activities. Moreover, expanding cooperation among these organizations will enhance the culture of moderation as Palestinians work to develop their nation and limit the influence of extremism.

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“Just as diplomats have hammered out treaties over the centuries to build bridges between nations, public health and medical experts participating in this initiative have begun sharing best practices and technology in an effort to build a new kind of bridge to foster peace and development in this region of the world.”

**Susan Blumenthal, MD, MPA, Director,
Health and Medicine Program,
Center for the Study of the Presidency,
Former U.S. Assistant Surgeon General**

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Health is essential to the economy, well-being, national security, and future of the Middle East region. The goal of the Palestine/Israel Health Initiative (PIHI) was to foster collaboration and increase interaction between medical, public health, academic, NGO, and scientific experts in Israel and Palestine to improve the health of people in the region as well as to promote increased cooperation and understanding.

A series of meetings with more than 60 Palestinian and Israeli leaders in health and medicine were organized by Project Director Susan Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.A. working with

Project Manager Stephanie Safdi and CSP Health Policy Fellow Beth Hoffman, assisted in the region by Dr. Michael Silberman. This initiative produced recommendations to improve primary care, disease prevention, and emergency services, and to create new models for cooperation in research, education, training, and the delivery of health services. Health experts from Israel, Palestine and the United States participated in the exchange, as did officials from the World Health Organization, USAID and the U.S. Embassy in the region.

Other activities included mapping of cooperative health programs currently underway



Dr. Blumenthal and PIHI participants visiting with staff at Augusta Victoria Hospital, East Jerusalem, where joint training and patient care programs with Hadassah Medical Center in Israel are underway.

“Thank you for your leadership and inspiration in helping to build a positive relationship in the Middle East region.”

**Dov Tamir, MD, MPH, Director,
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Unit,
Faculty of Health Sciences, Ben Gurion University**

“The acronym ART (Appreciation, Respect and Trust) is a pre-requisite to any collaboration among partners living in conflict areas.”

**Ziad Abdeen, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor of Public Health,
Al-Quds University Medical School**

Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. health experts in working group meetings in East Jerusalem.



between Palestinian and Israeli medical and public health professionals and scientists. The PIHI initiative also identified innovative opportunities to apply information technology and new media to improve public health in Palestine and Israel, including building an internet-based e-health commons for networking Israeli and Palestinian health and medical experts. Recommendations from the project provide a framework for future work and initiatives to improve health in the region.

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Rear Admiral Susan Blumenthal, M.D.
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“We thank you for this initiative, which promotes joint Palestinian-Israeli activities. The meetings...enabled the participants to learn of things that are being done, which are not known to the general public. These are people to people projects in the health sector, true cooperations...”

**Simon Fisher, JD, Executive Director,
Save a Child's Heart Foundation, Tel Aviv**



Dr. Susan Blumenthal with Palestinian, Israeli and U.S. health experts
Dr. Hasan Dweik, Dr. Dov Tamir, Dr. Ziad Abdeen, and Dr. Hani Abujudeh.

Participants in an Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization workshop in Antalya, Turkey.

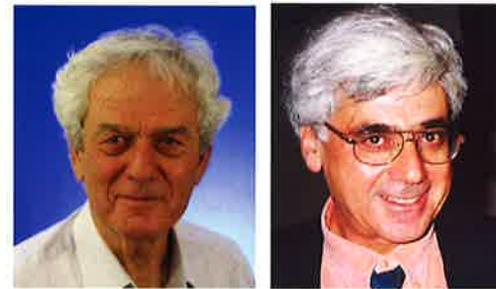
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Led by the Executive Director of the Richard Lounsbery Foundation, Maxmillian Angerholzer, this portion of the Center project built trust and reconciliation among Palestinians and Israelis by tapping into each group's historic interest in the sciences and their current need to apply science to health, economic, social and general welfare issues.

In January 2008, Mr. Angerholzer met with more than three dozen Israeli and Palestinian scientists and academics, hosting one roundtable session in the West Bank with Palestinian professors and a second with Israeli and Palestinian scientists. He briefed officials from the U.S. Embassy and Consulate on these meetings, which explored such issues as genetics, nanotechnology, medicine, public health, and agriculture.

Public/private and international partnerships will be key to sustaining this dialogue, which reaches across several disciplines and has an established history of successes.

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Menahem Yaari and Sari Nusseibeh, Co-Founders of the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization;
Max Angerholzer with members of the Science and Technology roundtable.

“The advantage with scientists over politicians is that scientists tend to agree on what the issues are.”

Menahem Yaari, President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

“Menahem and I believe that peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is only a question of how much pain both sides are prepared to bear to get there. We wish to shorten the pain.”

Sari Nusseibeh, President of Al-Quds University



The Chief Rabbis of Israel, Chief Judges of the Shari'a Courts of Palestine and other members of the Council after meetings with Members and Senators on Capitol Hill.

"We accordingly commit ourselves to using our positions of leadership, and the influence of our good offices, to advance these sacred values, to prevent religion from being used as a source of conflict, and instead serve the goals of just and comprehensive peace and reconciliation."

**Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land
November 2007 Communiqué**

INTERFAITH COOPERATION

Ambassador Tony P. Hall and Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick's vast experience in inter-religious cooperation provided a strong foundation for the Center's Interfaith Cooperative Initiative (IFCI). Supporting this effort were: Senior Advisors Prof. Marshall Breger; Prof. Robert Destro; Mr. John Nakamura; Mounzer Fatfat, Ph.D.; Judy Hanna, Esq.; Mr. David Austin; staff of the Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion of the Catholic University of America (CUA) and its Columbus School of Law. Even before the effort was formally launched, the IFCI team identified the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, a nascent organization in the region, as a model of multi-level, interfaith cooperation. The Council grew out of the Alexandria Declaration of January 21, 2002, in which religious leaders in attendance made a "commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed that denies the right to life and dignity" in the Holy Land. Council members represent the key religious institutions of the Holy Land, and include such leaders as the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Supreme Judge of the Shari'a Courts in Palestine, the Meeting of Heads of Local Churches, and the Patriarchs of the Latin and Orthodox Churches of Jerusalem.

The primary objective of the interfaith team has been to support the integration, expansion, development and interfaith cooperation



Cardinal McCarrick (left) with Council members.

"We are here to say that we are not the problem. We are part of the solution."

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, who is based in Jerusalem, at the Council meeting in Washington, DC, November 2007



Chief Sephardic Rabbi Shlomo Amar (left) and Oded Weiner (right) of Israel's Chief Rabbinate with CUA's Dr. Ahmad Irvani (center) at the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States' reception for the Council.

“...if you do not engage the moderate voices, then you’re actually leaving the public space exposed for the extremists to assume it. Therefore that is a crucial facilitator of that religious support for peace initiatives.”

Rabbi David Rosen, member of the Israeli delegation to the Council meeting in Washington, DC, November 2007

activities of the Council. Toward this end, IFCI team members traveled to the region several times to attend Council meetings, meet individually with its members, learn about Council priorities, and understand the practical problems that make its work both challenging and important. A November 2007 visit of twelve Council members to Washington, DC, was a hallmark event of this IFCI initiative. During this visit, the first joint trip by the Council, members identified common objectives, met with their American counterparts, and reached agreement on a joint communiqué.

This historic communiqué states that the Council is committed to “prevent religion from being used as a source of conflict, and instead serve the goals of just and comprehensive peace and reconciliation.” The joint communiqué also identifies a specific agenda for the Council, including the establishment of “hot line”



Secretary Rice meets with the Council in Jerusalem.

procedures to respond to religious incitements; mechanisms to monitor media on both sides for derogatory representations of religion; discussions and reflections on the future of Jerusalem; and the promotion of education for mutual respect. The IFCI team continues to actively assist these projects.

This communiqué, the visit to Washington, and the continued efforts of the members of the Council, the IFCI team and such partners at the Church of Norway and A Different Future make clear that the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Lands has become an active venue for sustainable interfaith cooperation on a range of local and regional issues.

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“We, believers from three religions, have been placed in this land, Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It is our responsibility to find the right way to live together in peace rather than to fight and kill one another.”

**Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land
November 2007 Communiqué**



Lord Alderdice, Middle East Forum moderator, with participants at the Meridian International Center.

MIDDLE EAST FORA

The Center for the Study of the Presidency continues to pursue initiatives in the region that compliment the USAID-funded effort described here.

NOVEMBER 2007 MIDDLE EAST FORUM

In November 2007, on the eve of the Annapolis summit, the Center for the Study of the Presidency, Meridian International Center and RTI International co-sponsored a one-day dialogue to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants included non-governmental Palestinian and Israeli representatives and distinguished Americans, and drew upon the insights in conflict resolution that Lord John Alderdice had gained when helping to negotiate peace in Northern Ireland.

This roundtable produced a number of recommendations, including general agreement that:

- Most Israelis and Palestinians want peace and will agree to a reasonable settlement of their current differences;
- Israel is increasingly willing to engage in a political settlement with its many Arab neighbors, but needs to maintain certain territorial holdings;

- Hamas leaders can impede any agreement that leaves them out, so informal or non-governmental conversations and agreements should be explored in order to increase the possibility that any agreement brokered between Israel and the Palestinian Authority might have a reasonable chance of success;
- Continued active U.S. involvement in the peace process is essential, as is continuity of effort between the current U.S. Administration and the next; and
- A semi-permanent conference or commission, overseen by an international body, is required to sustain the dialogue needed to resolve this 60-year-old conflict.

The Center for the Study of the Presidency is pleased to include the work of Lord Alderdice and other participants of the forum in its ongoing efforts to educate and engage the next Administration and Congress about a conflict that shapes much of U.S. foreign policy, the attitude of other nations toward the U.S. and such non-governmental issues as global trade, energy and travel.

AGENDA 2008

The Center for the Study of the Presidency will include the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in its Agenda 2008 activities, which examine the key national and strategic challenges the next President will face. Discussions among regional and issue working groups composed of policy experts from academia, government, and the business community will be followed by a comprehensive assessment of national interests. This assessment will tie together key recommendations of various issue groups, and share these findings with Congress and the next Administration.

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY

Founded in 1965, the non-profit, non-partisan Center for the Study of the Presidency serves as the institutional memory of that high office, and applies the lessons of history to the challenges faced by the President and Congress.

First and foremost, the Center aims to strengthen Presidential leadership. The award-winning *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, now in its 38th year, is the premier academic journal on the American Presidency. *Triumphs and Tragedies of the Modern Presidency: Seventy-Six Case Studies in Presidential Leadership*, prepared just prior to the 2000 election, provides historical examples of transformational Presidential leadership to White House and Congressional leaders, key agency officials and a growing number of college and university students.

The Center also seeks to improve government by better organizing for leadership. CSP President David M. Abshire, former U.S. Ambassador to NATO and co-founder of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has written a book on this issue titled *A Call to Greatness: Challenging our Next President*. Additionally, the Center's Agenda 2008 initiative identifies national policy challenges and convenes subject matter experts on science, health, education, climate change, finance, global trade, Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and other topics to identify breakthrough ideas

that Congress and the next Administration might embrace to regain our unity of purpose, freedom of action and widespread public support around the world.

Moreover, because the Office of the Presidency is maximized when the Executive and Legislative Branches work together, the Center seeks to strengthen Legislative-Executive relations while promoting bipartisan cooperation among the branches of government and within Congress. Recent examples of Center programs in this area include the current USAID effort in Palestine and Israel, an initiative to reform the national security interagency process, and an effort to build a new public diplomacy instrument, the Foundation for International Understanding—all of which have received Congressional funding and seek to strengthen the effectiveness of U.S. leadership at home and abroad. More broadly, the Center helped organize, co-sponsor and participated in the December 2006 *Iraq Study Group Report*, and, this year, produced the *Afghanistan Study Group Report*, which was released on Capitol Hill.

Lastly, the Center seeks to encourage public service and foster leadership among young Americans through its Presidential Fellows Program, which attracts exceptional students from 85 top colleges and universities, and its National Consortium on Character-Based

Leadership, which helps college and high school teachers and administrators share their best ideas and practices in applied ethical leadership through conferences and a website.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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