



www.rachelcorriefoundation.org

P.O. Box 12149 Olympic

Congressman Norm Dicks
2402 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 4, 2007

Dear Congressman Norm Dicks:

We are writing this letter to follow up on our previous discussion about the possibility of you or a senior member of your staff traveling on a Congressional Accompaniment Project (CAP) fact-finding trip to Israel/Palestine. The CAP 2008 tour is tentatively scheduled for **March 14-24**, during the Congressional spring recess. We understand that this may be the best time for Congressional fact-finding trips of this sort.

This tour is strictly educational and non-partisan. It is not limited to travel in only one part of Israel/Palestine or to learning about one side of the issue at the exclusion of the other. It is our expectation that local Washington residents will accompany you or your staff person and other Congressional members and aides to visits in both Israel and the Palestinian Territories with U.S. Consular officials, government figures from Israel and the Palestinian Authority, other professionals, religious leaders, human rights workers, merchants, Jewish settlers, Palestinian residents of refugee camps, and members of International NGOs.

The tour will be funded by members of your Washington constituent base who are concerned about lack of progress towards a just and lasting peace in the region. In supporting this effort, our purpose is to offer a hands-on view of the facts on the ground in Israel/Palestine that will assist you in developing an informed and fair perspective on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict—one that will be useful as you continue to respond to this vital area of U.S. foreign policy.

The individuals and groups sponsoring this CAP trip are all U.S. citizens. CAP was initiated by the Peacemaking Task Force of the Presbytery of East Iowa and the S.E. Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church ELCA. Many others affiliated with religious, human rights, and peace groups across the nation are helping to fund the tour. CAP receives no government or corporate monies.

We have read Congressional rules governing travel reimbursements and are confident that the CAP trip is in full compliance. CAP is not a registered lobby and has no paid staff.

For additional information about CAP, please see the website: <http://www.middleeastawareness.org>
I will contact your office soon to learn of any questions you or your staff may have and, if possible, to arrange an appointment to discuss this possibility further.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this opportunity. Our local CAP Committee is eager to support this educational project and looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rochelle Gause
Congressional Accompaniment Project – Washington State Committee
(360) 754-3998

Attached please find the list of endorsing organizations and individuals, additional information about the Congressional Accompaniment Project, and a sample itinerary.

The Congressional Accompaniment Project-Washington State is a project of the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice and is endorsed by the following cosponsoring organizations:

Friends of Sabeel North America

ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions) - USA

Northwest Middle East Peace Forum

Olympia Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Olympia-Rafah Sister City Project

Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace

Reverend Arthur Vaeni
Olympia Unitarian Universalist Church

Palestine Solidarity Committee, Seattle

People for Peace Justice and Healing, Pierce County

Sabeel Ecumenical Christian Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem

Students Educating Students About the Middle East (SESAME), The Evergreen State College

Vancouver for Peace

Veterans for Peace Chapter 109, Olympia

Veterans for Peace Chapter 134, Tacoma

Voices for Change, Olympia

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation

Women in Black, Seattle

And growing...

Additional Information about the Congressional Accompaniment Project

<http://www.middleeastawareness.org>

The Congressional Accompaniment Project is a hands-on educational experience for members of Congress, their Foreign Policy Aides and their local constituents.

The Congressional Accompaniment Project is an program by which Americans, concerned for a just peace in Israel/Palestine, can assist their Congressional representatives and/or their foreign policy Aides to be more informed regarding the “facts on the ground” in Israel/Palestine.

In the midst of this highly charged and crucial area of global peacemaking, the Congressional Accompaniment Project offers an opportunity for local church, ecumenical or community groups to accompany their own Congressional representatives or their principal Aides on a guided fact-finding tour to Israel and Palestine led by the staff of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.

The Congressional Accompaniment Project can be a powerful tool toward assisting members of Congress achieve more informed, fair and even handed attitudes and policy-making in the Middle East. This, in turn, will help to bring an end to the violence, enable just peacemaking in the region, and contribute toward making the American people as well as the people of Israel and Palestine more secure, and the United States more respected among the world of nations.

The Congressional Accompaniment Tour includes meetings with both Israeli and Palestinian governmental officials, American Consulate staff, as well as non-governmental professionals, educators and people in all walks of life. It will include travel in Israel and within the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Occupied Territories to visit areas of conflict and dispute –refugee camps, the “Wall,” housing demolitions, “settlements,” security checkpoints, sacred sites, etc.

This effort is endorsed by a number of religious & human rights groups. It is conducted in accordance with the purposes and goals of the Presbyterian Church (USA) among others.

Contact sue-dy@avalon.net for further information. The 2008 tour, open to all, is scheduled for the congressional spring recess, March 14 - 24, 2008.

Congressional Accompaniment Project, Sample Itinerary (based on the 2006 schedule)

Staying at Notre Dame Hotel & Conference Ct. Jerusalem

July 30, Sunday - Jerusalem

4:15 pm Arrival and Travel to Jerusalem

6:00 pm Orientation and Review of Schedule

7:00 pm Dinner

July 31, Monday – Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour

9:00 am The Situation of Christians in Bethlehem Today

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Director, International Christian Center of Bethlehem

10:30 am Overview of the Refugee Issue

Mohammed Jaradat at Badil – Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

11:30 pm Tour and lunch at the Dheishe Refugee Camp

2:00 pm The Wall and its Impact on the Bethlehem Community

George Rishmawi, Siraj, Center for Holy Land Studies

4:00 pm An Analysis of the Wall

Prof. Jad Issac, Director, Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)

5:30 Overview on Rights to Education

Ghassan Andoni, Public Relations Office, Bir Zeit University

7:00 pm Dinner in Jerusalem

8:00 pm Debriefing

August 1, Tuesday - Jerusalem

8:30 am The Politics of the Old City

Old City Tour : Christian, Muslim & Jewish Quarters

11:00 am Analysis from the Israeli Perspective

Rabbi David Rosen, American Jewish Committee, Jerusalem

1:00 pm An Analysis of the Status of Jerusalem

Lunch with Dr. Menachem Klein, Professor Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv

3:00 pm The Palestinian Christian Perspective

Cedar Duaybis and Samia Khoury, Sabeel Board of Directors

5:30 pm The Role of the Israeli Religious Left

Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Director, Rabbis for Human Rights

7:00 pm Dinner

8:00 pm Debriefing

August 2, Wednesday – Around Jerusalem

10:00 am Overview of the Humanitarian Crisis

Allegra Pacheco, U.N. Office Coordinating Humanitarian Affairs

1:00 pm Lunch with students and visit to Al Quds University, Abu Dis

2:30 p.m. Issues of Jerusalem for the Muslim Community

Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, President, Al Quds University

4:30 am Human Rights and Israel

Jessica Montell, Director, B'tselem. Israeli Human Rights

6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 Personal Cost of the Conflict

Robi Damlin & Nadwa Sarandah, Family Forum (formerly Bereaved Parents Circle).

8:00 pm Debriefing

August 3, Thursday - Meetings in Hebron

9:30 am Meeting with the Mayor of Beit Omaar, Farhan M. Alqam, member of PNC

11:00 am Walking tour of Hebron Old City including visit to Ibrahimi Mosque/ Cave of Machpelah

Rich Meyers, CPT

12:30 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Meet with Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT)

3:30 pm Problems of Rural Palestinians; Road blocks, By-pass Roads , Settler Harassment

Trip to At-Tawaney Village, southern Hebron Hills

6:00 pm Examine Problem of Home Demolitions

Dinner at Atta and Rodeina Jabber home, Hebron Hills

8:30 pm Debriefing

August 4, Friday – Jerusalem

8:30 am Presentation of film & discussion of Bedouin in Jerusalem

Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom founder, Rabbis for Human Rights and Yesh G'vul

11:30 pm The Grassroots Israeli Response

Meeting with Gila Svirsky, Coalition of Women for Peace

1:00 pm Stand with Women in Black, Jerusalem Chapter, in Zion Square

2:00 p.m. The Jerusalem Problem: Lecture and Tour

Jeff Halper, director, Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions

5:00 Discussion on the Question of Morally Responsible Investment

Naim Ateek, Director of Sabeel

7:00 pm Dinner at Sabeel

8:00 pm Debriefing

August 5, Saturday –Ramallah Visit

9:00 am Travel to Ramallah

10:00 am An Analysis of the Systems of Occupation

Professsor Khalil Shakaki, Chief, Palestinian Survey

11:30 am Overview on Rights to Education

Students and faculty at Bir Zeit University

2:30 pm The Role of Islam in Palestine

Sheik Tayseer Rajab Al-Tamimi, Head, Islamic Court of Justice

4:30 pm Analysis from the PA perspective

Greg Khalil & Maen Areikat, Palestinian Negotiation Affairs Dept.

7:00 pm Dinner at Philadelphia Resturaunt

8:30 pm Debriefing

August 6, Sunday - Jerusalem

Open morning: Options: worship service on your own

9:00 am Worship at Church of the Redeemer

11:00 am Worship at St. George's Cathedral

1:00 pm Meeting with Israeli Office of Foreign Affairs

Nimrod Barkan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inter-religious Affairs

3:00 pm Visit to Efrat Settlement in West Bank and Efrat Historic Show & Tour

4:00 p.m. Settler's Perspective

Bruce Brill from Takoa Religious Settlement in West Bank

6:00 pm Perspective from a IDF soldier

Representative, IDF Reserve Unit, "Breaking The Silence"

7:00 pm Dinner

8:30 pm Debriefing

August 7, Monday - Jerusalem

9: Visit to Abu Dis and the Impact of the wall in the Jerusalem Area

Terry Bulata, "Stop the Wall." organization

11:00 am US Consul General Office

Chris Stevens Consular for Political Affairs or Micaela Schweitzer-Bluhm, Consul for Cultural Affairs

12:30 pm Free afternoon

6:30 p.m. Closing Dinner at Ambassador Hotel , Jersuaem

August 8, Tuesday - Departure