

SOJOURNERS & FAITHFUL SECURITY

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For Immediate Release

Words, Not War, With Iran

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
(*Isaiah 2:4*)

(Washington, September 27, 2006) Over one hundred Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religious leaders released a statement entitled "Words, Not War" calling for direct talks with Iran and condemning military action as a solution to the nuclear standoff.

In a conversation with the press, Jim Wallis explained, "We, as people of faith, take the threat of nuclear weapons very seriously. But in the present nuclear standoff and showdown between the U.S. government and Iran, we don't believe there are any military solutions."

While explicitly rejecting anti-Semitism and threats against Israel, the religious leaders agreed that direct talks with Iran are the only solution to the nuclear standoff. Dr. Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Chair in Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, stated: "My hope is the United States can find the right kind of language—the language of diplomacy and the language of the heart—to try to avoid military conflict with Iran."

Dr. Trita Parsi, President of the National Iranian-American Council and an expert on the nuclear standoff with Iran, described efforts within the Senate to scuttle negotiations with Iran by promoting a policy of regime change. The religious leaders encouraged Congress to let diplomacy work and exercise its power to prevent the administration from making the same mistakes in Iran that were made in Iraq.

"Many Americans, and many Muslim Americans, are alarmed that the administration appears willing to repeat the mistakes of the Iraq war . . . [which] has already demonstrated that relying on military power is wrong," stated Dr. Louay Safi of the Islamic Society of North America. Author and Pastor Dr. Brian McLaren agreed. "The Kingdom of God is about peace and reconciliation, not violence and domination."

The religious leaders signing the statement include heads of denominations, faculty at seminaries and religious schools, and the heads of state councils of churches, regional religious bodies, and national religious groups. Over one hundred clergy within the United States have also signed onto the statement, and people of faith everywhere are invited to sign on at www.wordsnotwar.org.

The full text of the statement, along with names of the religious leaders who have signed on, is available at www.wordsnotwar.org. Jim Wallis, Dr. Susannah Heschel, Dr. Brian McLaren, Dr. Louay Safi, and Dr. Trita Parsi are available for interviews. Please contact Alex Howe at Fenton Communications, 202-822-5200. To listen to the press call, click here: <http://www.fenton.com/talk-to-Iran/>. The statement was organized by Sojourners (www.sojo.net) and Faithful Security (www.faithfulsecurity.org).

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