

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

FIRST DRAFT- REALITY GAME

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ABSTRACT:

The world today is experiencing the prevalence of domestic rather than interstate violent confrontations that result in high numbers of non-combat civilians' deaths. Religious antagonism is often one of the main reasons that trigger and then fuel the disputes. It is no wonder that the vibrations of conflicts are reaching inside of American universities, often leaving current students, who are tomorrow's leaders, with insufficient tools on how to build unity within religious diversity. This project seeks to decrease biases among Christian, Jewish and Muslim students through game stimulation by helping students to learn about each other respective religions, recognize similarities, and move towards working together on taking a stand on the issue of violence against non-combatative civilians across the world. It is expected that the new expressions of common ground will be accompanied with team-building among the students participating in the project, and the consensus could be expanded through a structured dialogue to their peers domestic and internationally.

BACKGROUND

Within the current violent conflicts, on the global level, the overwhelming numbers of victims are civilians. Intra-state wars have replaced nearly all of inter-state wars. While it is estimated that about 90% of the victims in WWI were military, now the statistics are nearly reversed. Most of the victimizers and victims are young. Those, under the age of twenty five constitute in many of the protracted communal conflicts, the majority of the population.

The majorities of such societal wars are not principally ideological conflicts, but identity driven conflicts. And religion is the more silent dimension among those ethno political conflicts. In United States, universities have often become a place with difficult dialogues over religions, and more often than not, the religious based groups from outside and inside campus have been more part of the problem than the solution.

The purpose of this project is to initially engage Muslim, Christian and Jewish students within the United States to learn about "the other" side, and recognize that all religions share common messages, problems, and goals, and open a safe forum to learn about "the other" side through a game simulation. The goal of the exercise is to help students to come to consensus building that while all religions carry positive and negative messages, the contemporary universal values do not legitimate the killing of innocent civilians or non-combatants.

While starting at home, it is expected when common ground is attained with students of the three mentioned religions, that the process itself will empower the participants to engage in a dialogue and even face-to-face contact with their peers in other parts of the world (Middle East in particular), with the purpose of incorporating them into the circle that endeavors to work towards the same goal.

This "game" is set to move from 1) a classic board game into 2) an intellectual discussion, 3) consensus building and 4) an action plan to enlarge the basis of support of their shared goals domestic and internationally. The first three stages are estimated to be

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

played during two-to-three hour modules, either in consecutive weeks or during a semester. The fourth stage is open ended and the action plan is to determine its individual or group-work nature and frequency of interaction. What follows is a short description of the Abrahamic Religions “reality game”. This is still work in progress that is circulated with the purpose of enrichment and critical feedback.

The experimental stage is planned for Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, and be offered to MIT, Wellesley College Tufts, Brandeis and University of Maryland “core groups” of the interfaith Campus Dialogue project, and coordinated by the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) at the University of Maryland. Universities participating in the “Difficult Dialogues” project sponsored by the Ford Foundation will also be invited to test the product. Costs are minimal, and the initial training of facilitators and coordination is to be conducted by the Center of International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) at the University of Maryland

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

SCHEDULE TABLE:

Time Schedule	Objective	Process	Outcome
Session 1	To educate students that all religions share in their holy texts sources that either encourage peace or violence, and that moving forward is reducing conflict	Play a game with a deck of cards that are made of positive and negative messages from all three religions	To generate awareness between the students about the contending voices and elicit a shared need of working together in overcome obstacles being faced in their religions
Session 2	Through contemporary messages, texts and statements of spiritual leaders and religious organizations focusing on peace and violence encourage an introspect of the students and their peers into the internalization of the power of such messages	Have an open discussion on the subject of positive and negative messages made by various religious leaders from three religions and the problems they generate to their own communities	The intellectual discussion that can be followed informally outside the session framework is to encourage the decision to move on into the search for common ground for a shared vision of their religions and ways of action
Session 3	To reach consensus building among the students on willingness to become engaged in a dialogue within the United States and regions at risk virtually or directly communicating with peers towards an understanding of refraining from violence against innocent civilians	Training into creative thinking and brainstorming leading into critical thinking and an innovative consensus building strategy	A consensus document among the participants that could be used for dissemination within their own campuses, communities, and relevant partners elsewhere.

STAGE 1: THE BOARD GAME

- Rules of the game can be explained by the facilitator or self-explanatory if the participants are reading the instructions
- Physical components of the game:
 - A board divided in approximately 50 steps, 10 steps will be contain questions marks ?, the frequency of such steps will increase as the players are getting closer to the end
 - A single dice
 - 3 sets of cards, totaling 60 cards, containing negative and positive religious quotes (equal numbers of both as reproduced from holy texts such as the

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

Q'oran, Jewish Bible and New Testament (See APPENDIX 1) The twenty quotes for each will be in different colors: Blue for Judaism, Green for Islam, and White for Christianity

- 3 pawns
- Dynamics of the game:
 - Selection of players:
 1. Divide participants according to religious groups
 2. Assign colors to the participants within the groups (minimum three), ensuring diverse teams made of all religious groups
 - Rules of the game:
 - Initially players roll a dice (highest number goes first) , and move their pawns forward
 - If players find themselves at question mark, they have to pick a card
 - Players will have a choice to pick a card from either religion
 - Player have to read the quote out loud for everyone
 - If a card contains a positive quote, the players move forward according to the number they rolled
 - If a card contains a negative quote, the players move backward according to the number they rolled
- The winner is the first to reach the end step. The game is to be followed by a debriefing which should be conducted with all participants together (any number smaller than thirty)

STAGE 1: DEBRIEFING

- Debrief after the game through addressing three questions/topics either through facilitation or the participants themselves:
 1. Can participants see the positive and negative aspects of their own individual religions, and recognize that other religions struggle with the same positive/negative duality as well?
 2. Can participants recognize and agree that all three religions face common problems?
 3. Are we facing a more serious problem that needs to be further explored and not remain as a fortune game only?
 4. Do participants recognize the need to work at these issues together as one?
 5. Other comments (at this stage feedback from improvement of the game is welcome).
- Once the first stage is over, prepare for the second stage: Provide participants with readings on negative and positive opinions currently expressed by known spiritual leaders from all three religions
 - Material: (See APPENDIX 2).
- The readings have to be completed before the second part of the workshop

STAGE 2: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

- This stage is a full day discussion workshop that is conducted with all participants together
- Open the discussion by having the participants to answer following questions:
 - Are the readers requiring an additional explanation or comments?
 - In your own judgment how did you feel about reading messages of violence made by the religious leaders from your religious community? How did you feel about reading messages of peace made by the religious leaders from other faiths addressing your own community?
 - What weight do you think these messages carry for the members of your religion?
 - Looking at the violence speeches made by the religious leaders, do you think these messages carry more weight in USA or in the Middle East?
 - How did you feel about reading violent messages against you made by other religious leaders? How did you feel about reading peace messages made by other religious leaders?

STAGE 2: DEBRIEFING

- Debrief after the game through addressing following questions/topics:
 1. Are the participants motivated to admit that there are burning issues in their respective religions?
 2. Connect and process the religious messages through personalizing them via participant's individual identity
 3. Work on facing the issues together, specifically recognize the value of working together
 4. Lead to getting participants to brainstorm on how to reach out to others to convince them of the need of having to work together

STAGE 3: CONSENSUS BUILDING

- This stage is focusing on the search for common ground:
- The end product is a joint statement that can be as short as a sentence, for example: "We are firmly convinced that our three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam do not legitimate the killing of innocent civilians. We join our voices to the spiritual leaders in our faith who have been bringing such message to our communities and the world".

STAGE 2: DEBRIEFING

Debrief by working on the document that can be the outcome of four steps process:

1. The generation of innovative ideas, and the shaping of consensus on those ideas acceptable to the group as a whole
2. Moving from quantity to quality ensures that the final product is a doable proposition
3. Once agreed upon it should encourage implementation
4. On going support (**See APPENDIX 3**)

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

APPENDIX 1

QUOTES FROM JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM SOURCES

Cards for board game:

- Each religion is assigned a color
- Upper part will have a question mark “?”

JEWISH QUOTES PRAISING PEACE	JEWISH QUOTES ADVOCATING VIOLENCE
<p>Proverbs 3:17: Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness, And all her paths [are] peace</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 20:10-16: But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the LORD your God gives it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword, but the women and the little ones, the cattle, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here. But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save nothing that breathes</p>
<p>Isaiah 2:1: Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war</p>	<p>Daniel 2:44: And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break into pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever</p>
<p>The Mishnah (Psalm 29:11): The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace</p>	<p>Numbers 31:7-18: [The Israelites] warred against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and slew every male.... And the people of Israel took captive the women of Midian and their little ones; and they took as booty all their cattle, their flocks, and all their goods. All their cities in the places where they dwelt, and all their encampments, they burned with fire, and took all the spoil and all the booty, both of man and of beast ...Moses said to them,</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

	<p>"Have you let all the women live? ...Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."</p>
<p>Deuteronomy 20:10: When approaching a town to attack it, first offer them peace GREAT</p>	<p>Isaiah 60:10-12: Foreigners (Gentiles) shall rebuild your walls, and their kings shall minister to you ...Your gates shall be open continuously; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you; shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste</p>
<p>Zechariah 8:16: Rabbi Shimon ben (son of) Gamliel said, on three things does the world endure: justice, truth and peace, as the verse states, 'Truth and judgments of peace judge in your gates'</p>	<p>Prayer said on the eve of Passover (Pranajtis: Christianus in Talmudae Judeorum, quotations from: Synagogue Judaica): We beg Thee, O Lord, indict Thy wrath on the nations not believing in Thee, and not calling on Thy name. Let down Thy wrath on them and inflict them with Thy wrath. Drive them away in Thy wrath and crush them into pieces. Take away, O Lord, all bone from them. In a moment indict all disbelievers. Destroy in a moment all foes of Thy nation. Draw out with the root, disperse and ruin unworthy nations. Destroy them! Destroy them immediately, in this very moment!</p>
<p>Numbers 6:22-27: The Lord spoke to Moses: Speak to Aaron and his sons: Thus shall you bless the people of Israel. Say to them: May the Lord bless you and protect you May the Lord deal kindly and graciously with you May the Lord bestow his favor upon you and grant you peace</p>	<p>Zohar, Toldoth Noah 63b: The Feast of Tabernacles is the period when Israel triumphs over the other people of the world. That is why during this feast we seize the loulab and carry it as a trophy to show that we have conquered all other peoples, known as "populace"...</p>
<p>Avos 1:12-14: Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow</p>	<p>Zohar, Vayshlah 177b: Happy will be the lost of Israel, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has chosen from amongst the</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

<p>creatures WEAK</p>	<p>Goyim, of whom the Scriptures say: "Their work is but vanity, it is an illusion at which we must laugh; they will all perish when God visits them in His wrath." At the moment when the Holy One, blessed be He, will exterminate all the Goyim of the world, Israel alone will subsist, even as it is written: "The Lord alone will appear great on that day!"</p>
<p>Talmud, Shabbat 31a: What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary.</p>	<p>Choshen Ha'mishpat 425:50: Kill the Goyim (Gentiles/Non Jews) by any means possible</p>
<p>Talmud: For the sake of peace one may lie, but peace itself should never be a lie.</p>	<p>Yalkut 245c: Everyone who sheds the blood of the impious [non-Jews] is as acceptable to God as he who offers a sacrifice to God.</p>
<p>Talmud, Mishna, Sanhedrin: Whoever destroys a single life is as guilty as though he had destroyed the entire world; and whoever rescues a single life earns as much merit as though he had rescued the entire world.</p>	<p>Zohar, Shemoth: Extermination of the Christians is a necessary sacrifice</p>
	<p>Soferim 15, Rule 10: Even the best of the Goyim (Gentiles) should be killed</p>
<p align="center">ISLAMIC QUOTES PRAISING PEACE</p>	<p align="center">ISLAMIC QUOTES PRAISING VIOLENCE</p>
<p>Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 13: Not one of you is a believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.</p>	<p>Quran 2:191: And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith</p>
<p>Quran: 025.063: And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"</p>	<p>Quran 2:216: Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

	you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not
Quran 022.001: O people! Guard against (the punishment from) your Lord; surely the violence of the hour is a grievous thing.	Quran 3:151: Soon shall We cast terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers, for that they joined companions with Allah, for which He had sent no authority: their abode will be the Fire: And evil is the home of the wrong-doers!
Al-Ma'idah 5:15-16: Surely there has come to you from Allah a Light and a Clear Book. Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His good pleasure to the ways of peace, and leads them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light and guides them to a Path that is Straight	Quran 3:157: And if ye are slain, or die, in the way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could amass.
Quran 13:29: "For those who believe and work righteousness, is (every) blessedness, and a beautiful place of (final) return."	Quran 4:76: Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith Fight in the cause of Evil: So fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan
Quran 49:10: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.	Quran 4:101: For the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies
Quran 7:26: O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best garment is the garment of righteousness. These are some of God's signs, that they may take heed.	Quran 5:33: The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter
Sura Al Ma'aidah: Ayah 32: Whoever kills another one without justifiable cause, surely he is killing all of humanity. And whoever saves the life of another one, surely he saves the lives of all of humanity.	Quran 5:38: As to the thief, Male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power
Prophet Mohammed's last sermon: Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you... All	Quran 9.61: They shall have a curse on them: whenever they are found, they shall

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

<p>mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action</p>	<p>be seized and slain (without mercy)</p>
<p>Quran 2:190: Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loves not aggressors</p>	<p>Quran 33:5: But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful</p>
<p>Hadith: "Allah will not give mercy to anyone, except those who give mercy to other creatures." (Abdullah b. Amr: Abu Daud & Tirmidhi)</p>	<p>Quran 47:4: Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are ye commanded): but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others</p>
<p>Hadith: "O Lord, grant me your love, grant me that I love those who love you; grant me, that I might do the deeds that win your love. Make your love dearer to me than the love of myself, my family and wealth." (Tirmidhi)</p>	<p>Quran 33.29: Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.</p>
<p>Quran 010.025: And Allah invites to the abode of peace and guides whom He pleases into the right path.</p>	
<p>CHRISTIAN QUOTES PRAISING PEACE</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN QUOTES PRAISING VIOLENCE</p>
<p>King James: Matthew 7:21: Because of</p>	<p>1. Deuteronomy 3:1-7: Next we</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

<p>the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good</p>	<p>headed for the land of Bashan, where King Og and his army attacked us at Edrei. But the LORD told me, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have given you victory over Og and his army, giving you his entire land. Treat him just as you treated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon.' So the LORD our God handed King Og and all his people over to us, and we killed them all. We conquered all sixty of his towns, the entire Argob region in his kingdom of Bashan. These were all fortified cities with high walls and barred gates. We also took many unwalled villages at the same time. We completely destroyed the kingdom of Bashan, just as we had destroyed King Sihon of Heshbon. We destroyed all the people in every town we conquered – men, women, and children alike. But we kept all the livestock for ourselves and took plunder from all the towns.</p>
<p>King James: John 14:27: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid</p>	<p>Kings 18:36-40: At the customary time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself." Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the ditch! And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces and cried out, "The LORD is God! The Lord is God!" Then Elijah commanded, "Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

	<p>escape!" So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there.</p>
<p>King James: Isaiah 32:17-18: And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places</p>	<p>Chronicles 25:11-13: Then Amaziah summoned his courage and led his army to the Valley of Salt, where they killed ten thousand Edomite troops from Seir. They captured another ten thousand and took them to the top of a cliff and threw them off, dashing them to pieces on the rocks below. Meanwhile, the hired troops that Amaziah had sent home raided several of the towns of Judah between Samaria and Beth-horon, killing three thousand people and carrying off great quantities of plunder.</p>
<p>King James: John 4:16: And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him</p>	<p>Psalms 68:21-23: But God will smash the heads of his enemies, crushing the skulls of those who love their guilty ways. The Lord says, "I will bring my enemies down from Bashan; I will bring them up from the depths of the sea. You, my people, will wash your feet in their blood, and even your dogs will get their share!"</p>
<p>King James: Thessalonians 3:12: And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you</p>	<p>Zephaniah 3:6-10: "I have wiped out many nations, devastating their fortress walls and towers. Their cities are now deserted; their streets are in silent ruin. There are no survivors to even tell what happened. I thought, 'Surely they will have reverence for me now! Surely they will listen to my warnings, so I won't need to strike again.' But no; however much I punish them, they continue their evil practices from dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn." So now the Lord says: "Be patient; the time is coming soon when I will stand up and accuse these evil nations. For it is my decision to gather together the kingdoms of the earth and pour out my fiercest anger and fury on them. All the earth will be devoured by the fire of my jealousy. "On that day I will purify the lips of all people, so that everyone will be able to worship the Lord together. My scattered</p>

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

	people who live beyond the rivers of Ethiopia will come to present their offerings.
King James: John 4:8: He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love	Zephaniah 1:2-6: "I will sweep away everything in all your land," says the Lord. "I will sweep away both people and animals alike. Even the birds of the air and the fish in the sea will die. I will reduce the wicked to heaps of rubble, along with the rest of humanity," says the Lord. "I will crush Judah and Jerusalem with my fist and destroy every last trace of their Baal worship. I will put an end to all the idolatrous priests, so that even the memory of them will disappear. For they go up to their roofs and bow to the sun, moon, and stars. They claim to follow the Lord, but then they worship Molech, too. So now I will destroy them! And I will destroy those who used to worship me but now no longer do. They no longer ask for the Lord's guidance or seek my blessings."
King James: John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment	Exodus 15:3: The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.
King James: Galatians 5:14: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself	Jeremiah 13:14: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling
King James: John 15:17: These things I command you, that ye love one another	Romans 3:8: Let us do evil
King James: Matthew 7:21: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good	
23rd Psalm: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and	

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.	
Romans 12:18: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.	
Matthew 5:39: When someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and let that person slap you on the other cheek (Jesus Christ's saying)	

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APPENDIX 2

QUOTES FROM CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM, JEWISH CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUAL LEADERS
ON PEACE AND VIOLENCE

(Preliminary list, to be completed, equal numbers for each religion)

Christian Religious Leaders for Peace:

1. **Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury:** It is rather that Jew and Christian share a conviction that they have one calling — to be the place where wisdom and justice make their home in history, on earth; in the light of that, they have the freedom to call each other to account, despite their differences. Something of this enters in also to the relation of Jew and Muslim, to the extent that they too partially share some common history of covenant and prophecy; but I cannot do anything like justice to this matter in a short reflection here.
http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons_speeches/2004/040414.html
2. **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: Famous rights activist and Christian preacher:** Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.
3. **Ralph Waldo Emerson, Famous Economist and Christian:** The real and lasting victories are those of peace, and not of war
4. **The following is a summary of a lecture by a western islamologist and theologian which has been given to a Christian student group:** Christianity and Islam share much common ground. Both trace their roots to Abraham. Both believe in prophecy, God's messengers (apostles), revelation, scripture, the resurrection of dead, and the centrality of religious community. This last element is especially important. Both Christianity and Islam have a communitarian dimension: what the church is to Christianity the "umma" is to Islam. Despite these significant similarities, however, these two world religions have a number of significant differences as well. I would like to comment on these -- not to engage in any kind of polemic (since I consider polemic a sign of religious immaturity) but to foster better understanding. A true dialogue between religions can be built only on nuanced understanding and not caricature...Let me conclude on a theme that reverberates in the hearts of both Muslims and Christians: religious community. What the church is to the Christians is what the "umma" is to Muslims. Christians and Muslims both consider themselves as accountable to a community of faith. It is not enough to believe in isolation; we must link our lives to brothers and sisters in the faith. <http://answering-islam.org/Intro/comparison.html>
5. **Pope John Paul II:** My words are addressed to you, the Leaders of the nations, who have the duty of promoting peace! To you, Jurists, committed to tracing paths to peaceful agreement, preparing conventions and treaties which strengthen international legality! To you, Teachers of the young, who on all continents work tirelessly to form

consciences in the ways of understanding and dialogue! And to you too, men and women tempted to turn to the unacceptable means of terrorism and thus compromise at its root the very cause for which you are fighting! All of you, hear the humble appeal of the Successor of Peter who cries out: today too, at the beginning of the New Year 2004, peace remains possible. And if peace is possible, it is also a duty!

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20031216_xxxvii-world-day-for-peace_en.html

6. **Pope Paul VI:** The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the Day of Judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

7. **Cardinal Roger Etchegaray:** For me, Christianity cannot think of itself without Judaism, it cannot do without Judaism. From the beginning of his pontificate (March 12, 1979) in Magonza, Pope John Paul II dared to declare «Our two religious communities are tied to the same level of their identity». I remind once again (I was there) his striking words in the great Synagogue of Rome on April 13, 1986: «The Jewish religion is not to us "extrinsic" but, in a certain way, it is "intrinsic" to our religion. Therefore we have towards it relations which we do not have with any other religion. You are our favorite brothers, and, in a certain way, we could say our older brothers... From every Christianizing theology on Judaism and from every Jewishizing theology on Christianity, I tried to witness all that Martin Buber expressed so well: it is the Alliance of the same living God who makes us exist, Jews and Christians, and who creates a community beyond the breakage. «Judaism and Christianity - writes professor Karl Thieme - are both eschatological, but at the same time they have a place in the design of God. And from there derive the differences which separate the Jews and the Christians and the relations which unite them.

http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01111997_p-24_en.html

8. **Address of the Holy Father Paul VI to King Hussein Ib Tallal of Jordan:** The problem of peace in the troubled area of the Middle East is, as you know, a source of lively preoccupation and constant concern to the Holy See. Knowing Your Majesty's

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

commitment to the search for a peace based on a well-balanced recognition of the legitimate demands of the various parties, we wish to declare to you our heartfelt desire that the leaders concerned may come decisively to grips with the crucial issues of the conflict, and through wisdom and good will find a speedy solution to them. In particular, we once again express the hope that a just end may be put to the sad situation of the Palestinians, and that Jerusalem, the Holy City for the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, may really become the “high place” of peace and encounter for peoples from every part of the world who, in spite of their diversity, are joined in brotherhood by the worship they offer to the one and only God.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1978/april/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19780429_re-hussein-giordania_en.html

Christian Religious Leaders for Violence:

1. **Pastor Mark Downey:** The point of this message, however, is that if people knew the truth about Jews, they would hate them just as I do, and would be committing 'hate speech' by rejecting the idea that Jews are God's Chosen People. God has chosen Jews to fulfill a role, but it is the complete opposite of what they purportedly represent. What they represent is the evil and wickedness of an antichrist nature in the world. They are perpetually engaged in damage control from generation to generation, if they are not being purged en masse from an entire country. Through their efforts, darkness covers the earth. Jews are a dead end for this planet.
<http://www.kinsmanredeemer.com/>
2. **Silas, Maranatha:** We've examined the historical and scholarly Islamic documents related to 9:5 and jihad and there is only one conclusion that can be drawn: 9:5 was meant to be both offensive and defensive and was meant for worldwide application. The theology of jihad is composed in part of verse 9:5 and in particular this verse applies to "polytheists". Corresponding to 9:5, 9:29 issues a similar edict of war upon Jews and Christians, forcing them to bow the knee to Islam in humility, pay extortion, or die. True Islam, real Islam, Muhammad' Islam, is a poison in humanity's soul. In this case it subjects man to a satanic brutality, "believe or die", where son will turn against family, friends against friends, and blood spills if one challenges the belief of Muhammad's dominance. <http://answeringislam.org/Silas/swordverse.htm>
3. **Dr. David R. Reagan, Minister:** All of those who survived Muhammad took up the sword, as directed by the Koran, and devoted themselves to advancing Islam through military might. The resulting spread of the religion was phenomenal. Within a century, Islamic forces had conquered Saudi Arabia, the entire Middle East, Central Asia, and large parts of India. The armies raged through Egypt and across North Africa, destroying corrupt Byzantine Christianity in their path. Westerners tend to view religion as something intensely personal and private, and not as a cultural phenomenon. For example, Christianity is “supra-cultural” in that it allows people to live, dress and eat in accordance with the culture in which they exist. This is not so with Islam. In Islam there is no “secular realm” that is free of religion. Islam regulates

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

every aspect of life to the point that religion, politics, and culture are inseparable. Islam is thus fueled by a subtle form of racism in which 7th Century Arab culture is to be imposed upon all other cultures. Here are some examples of the cultural nature of Islam: Political Structure — The tribalism of 7th Century Arabia is the political structure sanctioned by the Koran. The chief has absolute authority. There is no concept of civil rights. This principle is reflected today in the reality that all Islamic countries are ruled by dictators, and civil liberties, like freedom of speech and religion, do not exist. Women — what an illiterate, nomadic tribeswoman wore in the desert in 7th Century Arabia is what is mandated for Muslim women today. The plight of women in Islamic countries today is despicable. They can be kept prisoners in their homes. They cannot appear in public without a covering. They are usually denied the right to vote. They are often denied anything more than a rudimentary education. In strict Islamic countries, women are generally treated as sub-human.⁵ Sura 4:34 says, “Men are the managers of the affairs of women . . . Those women who are rebellious — admonish them, banish them to their couches, and beat them.” <http://www.lamblion.com/New08.php>

4. **Abdullah Al Araby, is a pen name. He is a Christian who was born and lived a considerable part of his life in the Islamic world. He is both knowledgeable in the Islamic and Christian theology. He is college graduate and have extensive theological training:** Islam teaches that a wife is subject to punishment by her husband. As a punishment, beating a wife or abstaining from sexual relations with her is allowed.

"...As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, Admonish them, refuse to share their beds, beat them,..." Surah 4:34 "For those who take an oath for abstention from their wives, a waiting for four months is ordained; if they return, God is oft-forgiving, most merciful." Surah 2:226..... There are many countries today that rule, to different degrees, by Islamic laws. Some of the countries that rigidly apply Islam are: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The condition of these countries speaks for itself; human rights violations, violence and terrorism, oppression and persecution. Most Islamic countries are economically bankrupt. <http://www.islamreview.com/articles/issuesoflife.shtml> and <http://www.mfc.org/contents/article.cfm?id=424>

Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace:

1. **Sheikh Al-Qaradawi:** "Then all of the affairs are shared between us since we are the sons of a single land, our destination is the same and our Ummah is one. I say about them, ‘Our Christian brothers’ and some people reject this from me and say how can I say that they are our Christian brothers? [Allaah says] "Verily the Believers are but a single brotherhood". Yes, we are believers and they are believers from another angle". <http://islamicweb.com/?folder=beliefs>
2. **Stephen Schwartz:** As a Sufi adherent of Islamic spirituality, and as Executive Director of the Washington-based Center for Islamic Pluralism (CIP), I have long been accustomed to "living an interfaith life," by cultivating close relations with

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

Christian and Jewish believers, and their religious leaders... I believe in a dialogue between Muslims, Jews and Christians that will bring all believers closer to God. I also believe fervently in a Muslim defense of Judeo-Christian society against the extremist assault. <http://sharingla.org/cgi-win/LAstub.exe?sn=000-02034QLBCM&s=0&pt=il&a=lk&it=0001000100TzVS1ZwzSpe7X>

- Bahraini Liberal Author Dhiyaa Al-Musawi: We Hang Our Thinkers on the Gallows of Ideology. I Listen to Music and Placed Pictures of Jesus and Martin Luther King in My Home:** We must have the courage to get rid of the "backward" cholesterol of ideology... We need to reform and to reshape religious thinking... but who pays the price? The country, society, civil society, and the young man, who is being told that the black-eyed virgins await him at the gates of Paradise, and that all he has to do is kill himself, to slaughter himself. He might blow up his family and children to get the virgins of Paradise. This is the language and culture of death. We were not born into this world in order to die this way. The beauty of Man lies in his living for the sake of his homeland, not in dying while booby trapping others... we have religious clerics who are beacons [of knowledge], but I think the problem is that we are constantly intimidating the public. We talk only about Hell, and not about Paradise at all. The Koran is balanced... I put up a picture of Jesus, because whenever I look at his picture, worlds of peace and love open up before me. It was Jesus who said: "Love thy enemies, bless them who curse thee." We need this beautiful language in our society. I also have a picture of Gandhi, whom I consider to be a very fine person, and whose [image] we should plant in the minds of our youth... Some of us say: "May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, the offspring of apes and pigs." Is this the language of progress? Is this the language of enlightenment and tolerance? If you had been born in Rome, you would have been Christian, if you had been born in Tehran, you would have been Shiite, and if you had been born in Saudi Arabia, you would have been Sunni, and so on. How wonderful it would be if all these people could gather in love around the table of humanity.
<http://www.memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=1363>
- Columnist Omar Dahbi for Moroccan daily Aujourd'hui Le Maroc:** To be against terrorism means to denounce any harm to human life as such, and to condemn the ambiguity of the discourse of hatred and intolerance. Glorifying acts of carnage elsewhere and denouncing them in one's own home is an act of hypocrisy that should no longer be tolerated. <http://memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD153407>

Muslim Religious Leaders for Violence:

- Sheik Abdullah El-Faisal, an Imam from South London:** "Kill the pagans (Christians) wherever you find them. You can use biological warfare and chemical warfare - weapons of mass destruction - providing you use them against the soldiers of the disbelievers." "Should we hate Jews and when we see them on the street, should we beat them up? You have no choice but to hate them. How do you fight the Jews? You kill the Jews."

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

2. **Abu Izzadeen, spokesman for British Islamic Group “The Strangers”**:...the 'kuffar' (non-Muslims) they had murdered were 'animals' and 'cowards'... all Christians and Jews are going to hell fire'... the 7/7 bombers were “completely praiseworthy”
3. **Dr. Yusuf al Qaradawi has said of Jews and Christians:**
"Oh God, destroy the usurper Jews, the vile crusaders (Christians) and infidels".
“There is no dialogue between us and the Jews except by the sword and the rifle”
<http://www.aina.org/news/20060918162544.htm>
4. **Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sudais Imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca:**
“Yesterday’s Jews are bad predecessors and today’s Jews are worse successors. They are killers of prophets and scum of the earth. God hurled his indignation on them and made them monkeys and pigs and worshippers of tyrants.”
5. **From the paper read in international congress of human rights and the dialog of civilizations in Tehran , May 6, 2001. Translated from Persian to English by Arash Khalatbari:** The non-Moslem whether he is a Christian, Jew or a Zoroastrian... and the other heathen are considered infidels deserving to be fought against. It is indispensable that they would be presented with Islam. If they accept then there is no problem but if they don’t accept then the holy war against them would be indispensable. Their wives and children would be slaves and all of their property and land would be confiscated as plunder. Even though the well known view point of the Shiite scholars impermissibility of the preliminary holy war is for the time of absence but today the permission of the preliminary holy war for the time of absence is also one of the important opinions. Therefore the non-Moslem not paying tribute who does not accept Islam does not basically have the right to live, and it is needless to say that he would be deprived of other rights as well, therefore the judgment for the infidels is completely in contrast with freedom of religion and belief.
http://www.nawaat.org/portail/article_imprimante.php3?id_article=214
6. **Fatwa issued by Sheikh Faysal Mawlawi, deputy chairman of European Council for Fatwa and Research:** "Martyr operations are not suicide and should not be deemed as unjustifiable means of endangering one's life. Allah says in the Glorious Qura'n: "And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for Allah loveth those who do good." (Al-Baqara:195). The verse obviously indicates that failing to spend in Allah's Cause is like casting oneself into ruin. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, strictly forbade suicide and made it clear that anyone who commits suicide would be cast into hell. But in such case suicide means Muslim's killing himself without any lawfully accepted reason or killing himself to escape pain or social problems. On the other hand, in martyr operations, the Muslim sacrifices his own life for the Sake of performing a religious duty, which is Jihad against the enemy as scholars say. Accordingly, a Muslim's intention when committing suicide is certainly different from his intention when performing a military operation and dying in the Cause of Almighty Allah. So it is natural that the religious legal status would differ in

each case, as Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him says in a Hadith: "Actions are but by intention, and every man shall have but that which he intended." <http://judaism.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.aish.com>

7. **Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi is among the top spiritual leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood movement:** The martyrdom operations carried out by the Palestinian factions to resist the Zionist occupation are not in any way included in the framework of prohibited terrorism, even if the victims include some civilians.... O God, destroy the Zionist, the American, and the British aggressors. O God, shake the ground under them and protect us from them. <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR3004>
8. **London Arabic-language daily Al-Quds Al-Arabi published bin Laden's declaration of Jihad:** The following are excerpts of this declaration: "Praise be to God, who brought down the Book, drives the clouds, defeats the factions, and says in His Book: When the sacred months are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them captive, lay siege to them and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush [*Qur'an* 5:9]... Prayers and blessings of peace upon our Prophet Muhammad, who said: I was sent with a sword in preparation for the Day of Judgment when God alone will be worshipped with none beside him. He assigned me a livelihood under the shadow of my spear and he assigned humiliation and lowliness to those who disobey my command... "Killing the Americans and their allies – both civilians and military personnel – is a commandment for every individual Muslim who can do this, in any country in which he can do this, in order to free the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Al-Haram Mosque from their grasp, and so that their armies will leave all the lands of Islam defeated and no longer a threat to any Muslim."... "Similarly, we also call on the Muslim *ulama*, leaders, youths, and soldiers to carry out a raid on the American soldiers of Satan and on Satan's aides, who have become their allies... "Allah also says, 'O ye who believe, what ails you that, when it is said to you: Go forth, all together, to fight in the cause of Allah; you are held down by your worldly interests? Is it that you prefer the hither life to the Hereafter? If so, you must remember that all this life has to offer is of little value in comparison with the Hereafter... [*Qur'an* 9:38]"
9. **Egyptian Mufti Sheikh Dr. 'Ali Gum'a:** Anyone who follows the news will discover that the Hebrew entity has turned into a [source] of [empty] talk, while the Arab discourse, which was characterized in the sixties [as empty talk], has developed significantly. [The Arabs] have learned a lesson and have moved from talk to action, and from the fostering of illusions to honesty, transparency, realistic goal-setting and ability to change. The Israeli discourse, [on the other hand], has turned to false declarations based on illusions, with wishful thinking taking precedence over facts. These lies have exposed the true and hideous face of the blood-suckers who were described by Filmange in his book *The Treasure Hidden in the Talmudic Laws* [sic], which tells how [the Jews] planned [to prepare] a matzo [unleavened Passover bread] using human blood. If we follow events, the most important thing [that we discover], in my opinion, is that the war going on [today] plants hatred in the next generations,

as though one of its goals is to perpetuate the conflict for many years to come.

<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP125506>

10. **Leading Saudi Imam Al-Sudayyis in Mecca:** The history of the [Jewish] people is written in black ink, and has included a series of murders of the prophets, the Mujahedin, and righteous people. This, although the book [that] descended upon Moses is all mercy. Allah has said: 'And [it] is preceded by the Book of Moses, which was a guide and a mercy for people before him...' So where is this mercy in all this barbarity, devoid of moral and human values? But maybe it is the beginning of their end... Oh brothers in the land of missions and the cradle of valor, oh sons of brave Mujahedin, oh descendents of conquering heroes... You have revived the hopes of this nation through your blessed Jihad. By Allah, be patient until, with Allah's help, one of two good things will be awarded you: either victory or martyrdom. Our hearts are with you; our prayers are dedicated to you. The Islamic nation will not spare money or effort in support of your cause, which is the supreme Muslim cause, until the promise made by Allah, who never breaks a promise, is fulfilled."
<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP93905>

Jewish Religious Leaders on Peace:

1. **Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld:** The answer is that the ultimate goal is truth, but the path that leads to it is one of peace. The scholar must know when to speak and when to remain silent. He cannot force the entire truth upon others, not all at once.
<http://www.torah.org/learning/pirkei-avos/chapter6-639-40.html>
2. **Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld:** Peace is the ultimate goal we want truth to bring about. A world of peace is not one in which we ignore truth, looking away from evil so as to avoid friction. And a world of truth is not one in which we force infidels to behave at the point of a sword. Truth and peace together imply that man not only acts with truth but appreciates that truth and Torah are the only meaningful ways to live. Scripture refers to the Torah's teachings as "ways of pleasantness" (Proverbs 3:17). The Torah is not only "truth". It is truth which is pleasant and beloved, and ultimately it is peace as well. <http://www.torah.org/learning/pirkei-avos/chapter6-639-40.html>
3. **Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth:** The rabbi has embarked on his most ambitious mission yet: to map out a way for different cultures to get along in a globalised world. God splits up humanity into a multiplicity of cultures and a diversity of languages." God's message to Abraham is: "Be different, so as to teach humanity the dignity of difference."
http://www.guardian.co.uk/religion/Story/0,2763,781133,00.html#article_continue
4. **Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger:** Certainly. Judaism educates all Jews on the important value of peace. ... Our foes teach the opposite, and as long as their educative material does not change to include teachings of brotherliness and good neighboring, it is doubtful that there will be peace in our area.

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?apage=3&cid=1167467746241&pagename=JPst%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

Jewish Religious Leaders for Violence:

1. **Rabbi Yosef, Former Chief Rabbi of Israel:** "It is forbidden to be merciful to them. You must send missiles to them and annihilate them. They are evil and damnable."
2. **Rabbi Yosef, Former Chief Rabbi of Israel:** "The Lord shall return the Arabs' deeds on their own heads, waste their seed and exterminate them, devastate them and vanish them from this world."
3. **Rabbi Yousef Falay, leader of of Yitzhar settlement in West Bank:** "We have to make sure that no Palestinian individual remains under our occupation. If they (Palestinians) escape then it is good; but if anyone of them remains, then he should be exterminated." <http://www.imemc.org/article/21527>
4. **Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook:** The difference between the Israelite soul... and the souls of all non-Jews, no matter what their level, is bigger and deeper than the difference between the human soul and the animal soul.
<http://www.revisionisthistory.org/essay6.html>
5. **Rabbi Meir Kahane:** 1) There are no meaningful Arab moderates who will permanently accept any Jewish state, of any size. The ultimate Arab goal is the elimination of any Jewish state. 2) There is no "Palestine people" or "Palestine" entity. 3) All of the Land of Israel belongs exclusively to the Jewish people.... There is no "Palestine" people and there is no "Palestine." We are not dismayed by the Arabs, we are not shocked, we are not confused. Above all, we are not fooled by them. Not by their vague and tantalizing hints of "recognition" not by their aura of "moderation" and not by their ingenious effort to create a camp of "extremists" versus "moderates." <http://www.kahanetzadok.com/palestine.html>

Muslim/Christian/Jewish interfaith Interaction: Positive Joint Declarations

1. **Declaration of Congress of Imams and Rabbis:** We, leaders, representatives, Rabbis and Imams of Muslim and Jewish religious communities who have assembled from all over the world for the first world congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace affirm our commitment to strive to end all bloodshed and attacks against innocent human beings that offend the right to life and dignity given by the Almighty to all human beings:
We call upon all people to combat hate, ignorance and their causes and to build together a world of peace, rich in diversity, in which all faiths and their practices are respected and protected.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Congress_of_Imams_and_Rabbis_for_Peace

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

2. **Christian/Muslim/Jewish leaders signers of of “Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: From Crisis to Hope”**: As religious leaders we commit ourselves to working with the Administration and the Congress to support active, fair and firm U.S. leadership to help Israelis, Palestinians and Arab states achieve a just peace. We will pray for God's blessing to sustain all those who seek to build a just peace and will work within and across our respective faith communities to build bridges of understanding and a shared commitment to a just peace for all of the peoples of the Middle East. We commit ourselves to building public support for peace with justice for all in the region. With the blessing of God, we are confident that this urgent moment of crisis can give way to genuine hope for all God's children in the Middle East.
<http://shire.symonds.net/pipermail/discuss/2006-December/000596.html>

APPENDIX 3: DETAILED EXPIATION OF STEPS

Step 1: Brainstorming

The brainstorming lasts from thirty to sixty minutes, depending upon the number of participants and the level of previous knowledge of the issues. Ideas should be stated briefly, without justification: one minute per idea. Two participants or facilitators should write down the ideas with proponents calling on the recorders alternatively, so that no the writing down of an idea will not slow the flow of ideas. If it seems as though the group is running out of ideas, and the facilitators would like to encourage more, they may announce how many minutes remain in the session, so that an extra effort can be made to generate more.

Quantity is no guarantee of quality, but a larger harvest may include more powerful and creative suggestions. It is difficult for many of the participants to refrain from offering comments or body language, either positive or negative, about another's ideas. For this reason, it is critical that the facilitators have the necessary skills to keep this activity on track and not allow any editorializing, including their own. It is easy to reassure the participants that there will be an opportunity for this at the appropriate time. If we sense that the Participants are not still in a brainstorming mood, we may be reminded that this exercise is designed to generate win-win situations, so that neither side will feel as though it has lost something while the other has gained. It is also important to remind the participants that unconventional ideas can generate solutions through the cross-fertilization of ideas

Principles for Brainstorming:

- All ideas are encouraged
- Record them for display
- No criticisms, justifications or discussion of the merits
- Avoid passing judgment either orally or through body language
- All is confidential
- Ideas are depersonalized by not attributing them to the proponent;
- Do not focus on substantive differences
- Keep the flow going
- OK to associate new ideas, adding a "footnote" or "hitchhike" idea
- Combine related propositions or expand propositions with improved options
- OK to change the flow to new lines of ideas;
- "Think big," "the sky is the limit" – encourage daring ideas, freewheeling imagination;
- Use techniques for creative thinking ("lateral thinking," "back casting," "expanding the pie," "compensation," "logrolling," "bridging," etc.)

Step 2: Levels of Consensus

This ladder illustrates what different degrees of consensus may sound like, when we proceed to evaluating and deciding on the ideas to emerge from brainstorming. It moves from the clearest level of consensus to that showing most concern. #4 represents a minimum level for consensus; #5 and #6 may lead to majority vote, but no consensus.

1. "I agree wholeheartedly with the decision. I am satisfied that this decision was accepted by the group".

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

2. "I find the decision to be acceptable".
3. "I can live with the decision".
4. "I do not totally agree, but I will not block the decision, I will support it".
5. "I do not agree with the decision and wish to block the decision being accepted" (a reasoned and paramount objection, but ready to explore alternatives).
6. "I believe there is no unity in this group. We have not reached consensus".

Step 3: Implementation

If the participants decide to work together, there could be many alternatives for doing so either on their own campus, domestically in the United States or globally. For instance, they could decide to publish the consensus document in the local student newspaper; they could engage in a dialogue through the Internet with young people elsewhere, within and across communities. There are websites that are inciting towards the use of indiscriminate violence or justify specifically the targeting of innocent civilians. The participants can decide to develop a project that includes inviting student leaders from universities in regions/countries where such violence occurs, to meet together. Such project could be complex, requires fundraising and visas, and overcoming other foreseeable obstacles. Testing the limits of the possible or impossible is part of a successful process to advance new ideas. An Action Plan should be drafted dealing with the questions of WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and most importantly WHO? Undertaking personal responsibility for some of the follow up activities is often seen as a burden, and yet is a major component of team-building.

Stage 4: On-going network support and dissemination

It is important to realize that such commitment may need to be sustained, once the three stages are completed. Such re-entry process within the larger group of those who did not participate in the project has been described as a "culture shock" for the exposure to a sort of inquisition from others in a still hostile environment. Participants who wish to share new and moderate ideas from the brainstorming session may be regarded by some as fools, naive, or (even worse), as traitors and victims of brainwashing. Within one's family, tensions can be quite high when discussing how helpful the workshop was and how it has influenced their thinking. To avoid being perceived as proselytizing or preaching, the new "Participants" need to offer detailed pictures of their lessons learned, and to actively seek and receive feedback on these new perspectives.

Investment in personal transformation alone, when dealing with participants in ongoing conflicts, is not fully justified. Not only in terms of cost/benefit, but let's also bear in mind that the internalization of the experiential learning without the added phase of empowerment can result in frustration- inconclusiveness rather than sensing the fulfillment of growth. Hence, it is for the benefit of the individual as well that effective means for contributing to community transformation should also be planned. It is relatively simple to conceive of some follow-up activities, if participants put their heads together and time is allocated for that purpose.

This is an unstructured part of the project, and will largely depend on the outcome of stage three. The facilitator should assist in the implementation of the action plan, including

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

the effective use of the Internet, if needed. For consultation or more generic ideas (see **APPENDIX 4**) and please contact ekaufman@cidcm.umd.edu

APPENDIX 4:

GUIDELINES FOR RE-ENTRY

One of the main priorities is to be able to share with your peers locally and globally the experience of working together across the religious lines. And the challenge is even bigger one wants to dialogue through the Internet (and perhaps even personally) with students from other regions with a high level of violence, often legitimating the killing of civilians. Here are cues:

1. The more intense the experience has been for you the greater your "high" is and therefore the greater the chance for distress or dissatisfaction with any questioning about the "new you" when you communicate with peers of your own faith.. Allow more time than you think will be necessary before judging success or failure. While you are trying to connect with those who have views confronted with yours, seek colleagues and friends who do share your concerns and values. It is with these people that you will find the support necessary to implement change.
2. Because of the closeness established with other participants in a relatively short period of time, there may be an additional sense of loss if the relationship is not being kept, as well a sense of jealousy from those close to you. Don't set expectations which neither one can achieve. Also keep contact if possible with someone from your new network. They will probably be experiencing some of the same things. Although you have had time to process what you've learned, remember how you felt when you first arrived and how skeptical you were? Allow the same period of skepticism for colleagues and friends at home. It's a classical case of lag time between learning something in a cognitive way and experiencing it as reality.
3. As you describe what you've learned be aware of oversimplifying or under-simplifying things because you've "been there". Descriptions of past happenings bring visions to you that are impossible for those that were not there. Set a scene and then fill in the activity only to the level that you think is of common interest. Monitor how others receive your information and modify your descriptions accordingly. If you want to successfully incorporate what you've learned, you don't want to bore people or set unrealistic expectations with any proposed changes.
4. The understandings that you are bringing back home will be questioned. Avoid defending them, or defending the whole experience as the "right way of life." Sometimes it helps to share some of the negative aspects of your experience as well as the positive ones. It keeps your eye on reality and puts the whole experience it a more acceptable light.
5. Before moving into the consensus built on the issue of not killing innocent civilians, feedback is valuable. People will be more comfortable with you if they can tell you how your stories about your experience sound to them. It also provides an excellent way to modify any ideas that aren't accurately reflected.
6. Much learning takes place long after presentation of material. When certain things occur, you'll find yourself saying oh, now I understand more clearly

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: ARE THEY FOR PEACE OR FOR VIOLENCE?

what that's all about. This kind of realization is particularly true after laboratory or experiential learning. It's refreshing to know that learning of this kind is continuous and may be triggered at any time. Just appreciate it when it happens.

7. The culture of experiential learning is not accepted or understood globally. Be prepared to explain things in a very concrete sense. Avoid buzzwords or phrases and remember some of the more insignificant things about the experience for you might be quite powerful for others.