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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**U.S. BISHOPS/MUSLIM AGENCIES SPONSOR FIRST
NATIONAL LEVEL MUSLIM/CATHOLIC DIALOGUE**

WASHINGTON - Muslim and Catholic leaders completed an historic two-day dialogue by issuing a communique calling for increased understanding, respect for each other's faith, and continuing dialogue, especially on mission and da'wah, and increased cooperation. Da'wah is an Arabic word which Muslims use for presenting the invitation to Islam. The consultation was held at the Washington Retreat House and The U.S. Catholic Conference, October 21 and 22. This was the first national consultation between the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and Muslims. Co-sponsoring the dialogue were the American Muslim Council and the Muslim World League.

The Catholic Church has been active in Muslim-Christian relations since the Second Vatican Council, in the 1965 document Nostra Aetate, called for Catholics to step up the dialogue with Muslims. It is in the spirit of that document that the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA) convened consultations of Catholic specialists on Islam and relations with Muslims beginning in the Fall of 1988. The 1990 consultation was held as the crisis in the Gulf was unfolding. Much of that meeting was devoted to discussing the background of the Gulf crisis and the implications for the Islamic world in general and Christian/Muslim relations in particular.

Catholics and Muslims have been meeting in dialogue for many years in various U.S. locations, notably Los Angeles, Chicago,

New York and Detroit. These regional dialogues laid the groundwork for the first national dialogue.

In March of this year, Bishop Joseph Gerry, the first Episcopal Moderator for Interreligious Relations, NCCB, convened a special consultation of NCCB staff and consultants and invited Muslim guests to discuss Christian/Muslim relations in the aftermath of the Gulf war. That meeting also contributed to the current dialogue.

The major focus of this first national dialogue was how to sustain an ongoing dialogue and what general directions the dialogue should take if it is to be sustained. The sessions began with reports on the regional dialogues and included presentations on the challenges of Christian/Muslim relations in the U.S.. Encouraged, the participants decided that the dialogue be continued and dates were set for October 1992.

Attached is a communique issued jointly by the Catholics and Muslims participating in the dialogue and a list of participants.

The following may be contacted for further information:

Dr. John Borelli, Interreligious Relations, NCCB,
202-541-3020

Dr. Qutbi Ahmed, Director, Muslim World League,
703-351-5296

Mr. Abdurahman Alamoudi, Director, American Muslim
Council, 202-789-2262.

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In the Name of God
The Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

1. The Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the American Muslim Council and the Muslim World League jointly invited Catholic and Muslim leaders engaged in local interfaith dialogue to bring the conversation to the national level.
2. The first national dialogue brought together participants from the Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and Washington areas as well as scholars from colleges and universities and persons with leadership and staff positions in national organizations, to report on their experience of dialogue and to plan for a national consultation.
3. This national dialogue seeks to
 - listen to the wisdom that emerges from the local dialogues;
 - foster mutual respect and understanding;
 - work to end misrepresentation and stereotypes of each faith through review of the presentation of each other in Catholic or Muslim institutional publications;
 - engage in conversation about the meanings, methods and objectives of mission and da'wah;
 - to exchange and study significant documents of each tradition;
 - to join together for the realization of common values, in particular justice, peace, and respect for creation;
 - to collaborate for the achievement of peaceful coexistence between both communities in the U. S. and throughout the world.
4. The participants agreed that they are entering this dialogue out of the conviction that it is the will of God and the carrying out of the teachings of their faiths.

October 22, 1991

Participants in Islamic/Catholic Dialogue

Monday, October 21, Washington Retreat House

Bishop Joseph Gerry, O.S.B., of Portland and Episcopal Moderator
for Interreligious Relations
Dr. John Borelli, Interreligious Relations, NCCB
Fr. Elias Mallon, Graymoor Ecumenical Institute, New York City
Fr. Sidney Griffith, Catholic University of America
Dr. Jane McAuliffe, Associate Dean, Candler School of Theology,
Emory University, Atlanta, GA
Fr. Vivian Ben Lima, Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Fr. Tom Baima, Archdiocese of Chicago
Bro. David Carroll, F.S.C., Catholic Near East Welfare Association
Fr. Drew Christiansen, S.J., Director, International Justice and Peace,
U.S.C.C.
Dr. David Metzler, Church of the Brethren, Observer for
Dr. Marston Speight, National Council of Churches of Christ

Dr. Qutbi Ahmed, Co-Planner of Dialogue, Executive Director,
Muslim World League, Washington, D.C.
Mr. Abdurahman Alamoudi, Co-Planner of Dialogue, Executive Director,
American Muslim Council
Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, Director, Academic Outreach, International
Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon VA
Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Saud, Chairman, American Muslim Council
Dr. Sulayman Nyang, Department of African Studies, Howard University
Imam Muhammad Mardini, Director and Imam, American Moslem Bekaa Center,
Dearborn Center of Detroit, MI
Dr. Ghulam Aasi, Co-chair, Committee for Improved Relations
between Christians and Muslims, Chicago, IL
Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, Imam and Director, Islamic Center of Orange County, CA
and a Member of the Consultative Council, Islamic Society of North
America
Mr. Dawud Assad, President, Council of Mosques, U.S.
Shaikh Moizul Matin, Participant in the Muslim-Catholic Dialogue of New York