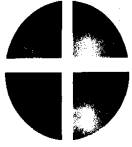


UNITED STATES
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE



NEWS

Office for Media Relations

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DATE: March 15, 1995

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LETTER ON JERUSALEM STATEMENT SENT TO JEWISH LEADERS

WASHINGTON--Cardinal William H. Keeler, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference, has released the text of a letter he sent to Jewish leaders who visited with him on Monday, March 13 at his residence in Baltimore. The Jewish leaders were invited by Cardinal Keeler to the meeting to share their concerns over a statement on Jerusalem signed by the Cardinal along with seven other Christian leaders on March 6. The letter is a follow-up to understandings and clarifications reached at the Baltimore meeting, which both Catholic and Jewish leaders called warm and extremely helpful to both groups.

In releasing the letter, Cardinal Keeler said, "It was an excellent meeting on Monday with the Jewish leaders. It was clear that they had some misperceptions about aspects of the statement. But once we were able to put it in context, they were able to see where we are coming from.

"I felt that the initial statement (of March 6) needed to be put in a context. It needed to be understood within the larger framework of the Conference's positions on the issue, especially our 1989 Statement on the Middle East. We certainly hope that when finally the settlement comes, Christians will have a voice with respect to their own civil and religious rights, as we hope all religious bodies will have full civil and religious rights," Cardinal Keeler continued.

Present at the meeting representing the Jewish community were

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Rabbis A. James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee, Leon Klenicki of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, David Saperstein of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Mordecai Waxman of the Rabbinical Assembly and Jack Bemporad of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding at Sacred Heart University of Connecticut. Mr. Phil Baum, executive director of the American Jewish Congress also participated. Mr. Jerome Chanes of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council helped to coordinate the meeting on the Jewish side. Also present were Dr. Arthur Abramson of the Baltimore Jewish Council and Dr. Michael Kotzin of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Chicago.

Attending the meeting with Cardinal Keeler was the other Catholic signer of the March 6 statement, the Very Rev. Gerald L. Brown, S.S., President, Roman Catholic Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Institutes, and Bishops' Conference staff persons, Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., Director of International Justice and Peace for the U.S. Catholic Conference, and Dr. Eugene Fisher, Associate Director, Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, NCCB.

The full text of the letter is attached.

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