



## Middle East Network Newsletter

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April 15, 2009

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### **Holy Land Bishop Munib Younan's Easter message, "Hope renewed after visit with the women to the tomb"**

In this time when fear is a uniting factor, let us as Christ's church proclaim the message of the empty tomb – the message of hope. And let us do so not just at the triumphal end of holy week. Let us do so even during the darkness of Good Friday. The world needs this hope now more than ever before. Let us witness for this hope of resurrection for both peoples, the Palestinians and the Israelis, and for the three religions. Let us affirm that it is possible to live in peace. It is possible that our children may live together and may share Jerusalem. As long as there is a living Lord, hope is ever revived. Please pray for peace with justice for Jerusalem and all of the lands called holy.

[Click here](#) for full text. (Check back later for text and photos featuring Easter morning on the Mount of Olives.)

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**CMEP's 2009 Advocacy Conference "Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Hope for Things Unseen" in Washington, D.C. on June 7-9, 2009** at the Kellogg Conference Center at Gallaudet University. Plan also to attend the ELCA-sponsored dinner and program on Monday, June 8. Details will be sent in a later mailing. [Register](#) now for the conference.

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### **The Challenge Facing Obama; Foundation for Middle East Peace Settlement Report March-April 2009**

George Mitchell's appointment as Middle East peace envoy has strengthened expectations that President Barack Obama will revitalize American diplomatic leadership committed to making peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

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Mitchell inherits a complex diplomatic framework established during the Bush years to support the Road Map and the Annapolis process. The Quartet seems set to continue as an important vehicle for mobilizing international support for U.S. diplomacy. Security assistance to Palestinian security services has been the key element in the U.S. policy arsenal and may even be

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expanded. Gen. Keith Dayton's tenure as the head of this effort has just been extended by two years and he is set to serve as Mitchell's full time security deputy. It remains unclear, however, how a U.S.-supported security effort aimed at least in part at protecting a government led by Mahmoud Abbas against Islamist opponents can be squared with a massive release of Palestinian prisoners now being discussed by Israeli and Hamas representatives in Cairo or with support for Palestinian national reconciliation that will necessarily reflect the increased power of Hamas on the Palestinian national scene. Mitchell will also be challenged to leverage the successes of the security program—in maintaining West Bank quiet during the Israeli assault on Gaza earlier this year and in dismantling the Islamist-run social safety net—to win tangible security and political concessions by a new Israeli government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defense Ehud Barak.

[Click here](#) for full text.

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## **Americans for Peace Now National Journal: "One Nation, Irreconcilable"**

A campaign by Jewish settlers and their supporters in Israel's Housing Ministry to rapidly populate traditionally Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is a metaphor for the difficult road to peace. Peace Now's Hagit Ofran is quoted as saying, "The official, though little discussed, policy of the Israeli government has long been to approve thousands and thousands of homes for Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem.". To read the full article, go to the [Peace Now](#) Web site.

## **Briefing Call with Danny Seidemann**

*Jerusalem Expert and Founder of "Ir Amim"*

Discussion of challenges facing current and future Jerusalem given the incoming Israeli government. To listen, go to the [Peace Now](#) Web site.

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## **J Street: Pro-Israel, Pro Peace**

From the website: J Street was founded to promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts peacefully and diplomatically. We support a new direction for American policy in the Middle East and a broad public and policy debate about the U.S. role in the region.

J Street represents Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own - two states living side-by-side in peace and security. We believe ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the best interests of Israel, the United States, the Palestinians, and the region as a whole. For more on J Street, go to the [J Street](#) Web site.

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