

Report – October 2007

On October 15th, I participated in an impressive meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the US Consulate in Jerusalem in advance of next week's visit to Washington, DC, of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land which I have helped establish. The Council consists of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel; the Shaaria Courts and Waqf (Muslim Religious Trust) of the PA; and the Christian Ordinaries of the Holy Land (i.e. the Patriarchs and main Bishops) and has three main purposes - to keep open lines of communication between the religious leaders of the Holy Land; combat incitement and misrepresentation by and of the religions; and support political efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and promote peace and reconciliation. The meeting received coverage in both local and international press and I was interviewed on Israeli television and radio about it.

On October 21st I was at Emory University, Atlanta, to participate in a panel at Emory University with the Dalai Lama, as well as Prof. Raj Ghandi, Sr. Joan Chittester and Prof. Abdullah AnNaim, on Religion and Peacemaking. The stimulating successful event (that had more of an atmosphere of a pop music festival than an academic seminar !) was attended by many thousands and may be viewed on line on Emory University's website.

As with most of my visits to the US, I used the opportunity to service AJC Chapters during the following days of the week – in this case, in Atlanta, Boca Raton and Miami. These visits included speaking engagements, media interviews and meetings with key religious figures.

On October 30th in my capacity as Chairman of IJCIC (the International Jewish Committee that represents World Jewry to other world religions and is the official partner of the Vatican in Catholic-Jewish dialogue) I presided together with Cardinal Walter Kasper over the meeting in Jerusalem of the International Jewish Catholic Liaison Steering Committee – the body that deals with the ongoing bilateral relationship.

The following day, October 31st, the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Chief Rabbis of Israel took place. This was the official reciprocal visit emerging out of the summit held last year in Lambeth Palace in London where they established a Permanent Bilateral Anglican-Jewish Commission and committed themselves to annual reciprocal visits. In addition to facilitating this historic process I am also a member of the Bilateral Commission and Interfaith Advisor to the Chief Rabbinate and accordingly participated in all these meetings and was interviewed in the press about them.