

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 4, 2009

**CONTACT:** Jessica Rosenblum, Rabinowitz/Dorf Communications  
(202)265-3000/ (202)279-0005 (c)  
jessica@rabinowitz-dorf.com

**DELAHUNT RESOLUTION EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE  
ENVOY MITCHELL, SIGNALS BROAD SUPPORT FOR RENEWED U.S.  
LEADERSHIP IN RESOLVING CONFLICT**

WASHINGTON – The introduction today of a House resolution praising the appointment of Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace signals broad support in Congress for American diplomacy in the Middle East, according to a leading pro-Israel organization.

“There’s a fresh breeze blowing in Washington when it comes to American policy toward Israel and the Middle East,” said Jeremy Ben-Ami, executive director of J Street, of the resolution introduced by Rep. William Delahunt (D-Ma). “This resolution and last week’s letter to Secretary of State Clinton calling for humanitarian aid for Gaza demonstrate how broadly Congress supports the new administration’s effort to engage constructively in resolving the difficult conflicts facing the Middle East and earning the trust once again of all the parties to those conflicts.”

The resolution has 30 original co-sponsors from both parties. The diverse group includes senior Jewish members, committee chairmen and leading new members.

In addition to expressing support for the appointment of Senator Mitchell, the resolution calls for the House of Representatives to support the administration’s vigorous pursuit of a diplomatic resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution. It also reaffirms that peace between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and the Arab world are essential national security interests of the United States and calls on the international community to aggressively pursue efforts that facilitate a just and lasting resolution of these conflicts.

“We thank Congressman Delahunt for his leadership in organizing Congressional support for the Obama administration’s clear intention to vigorously pursue a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East,” Ben-Ami continued.

“The appointment of a vigorous envoy, the strong commitment promised by the President and Secretary of State and widespread support these efforts have in Congress all point to serious American intention to renew its diplomatic leadership in seeking resolution of the difficult conflicts in the Middle East peacefully and permanently,” added Ben-Ami.

In addition to the warm reception the resolution has received in Congress, a number of leading Jewish community organizations have joined J Street in pledging to build popular support for the resolution amongst their constituencies. The list includes: the Religious Action Center of Reform

Judaism, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, Americans for Peace Now and Israel Policy Forum. The Arab American Institute and Churches for Middle East Peace will also join the effort.

“The Jewish and pro-Israel communities in this country stand ready to work with the Administration and with Congress to turn the tide on the diplomatic neglect that has characterized American policy toward the Middle East in the recent past,” said Ben-Ami. “We will be actively supporting bold, proactive initiatives like Congressman Delahunt’s resolution, and believe it will be the first of many to advance U.S. interests in the Middle East, by promoting real peace and security for Israel and the region, “ added Ben-Ami.

###