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**LEADERS OF REFORM RABBINATE, WORLD'S LARGEST GROUP OF
JEWISH CLERGY, SUPPORT PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL FOR ISRAEL TO
FREEZE SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY**

*Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) Sees Settlements as Obstacles to
Peace*

Adelphi, Maryland (June 10, 2009) – The leaders of the **Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR)**, which represents nearly 2,000 Reform rabbis, the world's largest group of Jewish clergy, issued a statement supporting the Obama administration's statements on the settlements in the West Bank and President Obama's call to freeze settlement activity in the occupied territory.

According to the statement, "We believe the President's position and outspokenness on this issue to be in the best interest of the United States, of the State of Israel, and of peace."

The statement acknowledges that the settlements are not the greatest threat to peace. "The Iranian regime's ongoing nuclear threats against Israel and its support for Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist groups pose the single greatest threat to peace." However, Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus and Rabbi Steven Fox, who head the rabbinical organization, declared: "the CCAR has also long seen settlements in the West Bank as potential obstacles to peace."

Following is the full text of the statement:

Reform Rabbinical Leadership Supports Obama Administration on Settlements

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the world's largest organization of Jewish clergy, has frequently lifted its voice to seek peace between the Jewish State of Israel and the Palestinian people. We have long supported a two-state solution and encouraged active engagement by the United States government toward achieving that goal.

The CCAR has also long seen settlements in the West Bank as potential obstacles to peace. Repeatedly, we have called for freezing settlement activity. Establishing new settlements or "outposts," or continuing to expand existing settlements, even by "natural growth," does not serve the cause of Israel or of peace.

Let us be clear: Israeli settlements in the West Bank are not the greatest threat to Middle East peace. The Iranian regime's ongoing nuclear threats against Israel and its support for Hezbollah, Hamas, and other terrorist groups pose the single greatest threat to

peace, to the United States, to the Middle East, and to Israel today. Moreover, Israel cannot be expected to make significant concessions when it remains under terrorist attack.

Most recently, President Barack Obama has insisted that Israel freeze all settlement activity in occupied territory. His call echoes those of the last two administrations, though admittedly with a new level of intensity.

We believe the President's position and outspokenness on this issue to be in the best interest of the United States, of the State of Israel, and of peace.

Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus
President

Steven A. Fox
Executive Vice-President

To arrange a conversation with Rabbi Dreyfus or Rabbi Fox, please contact Itay Engelman at Sommerfield Communications, Inc. at 212-255-8386 or itay@sommerfield.com.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, founded in 1889, is the oldest and largest rabbinic organization in North America. As the professional organization for Reform Rabbis of North America, the CCAR projects a powerful voice in the religious life of the American and international Jewish communities. Since its establishment, the CCAR has a rich history of giving professional and personal support to Reform rabbis, providing them opportunities for study, professional development and spiritual growth beginning while they are still in seminary, through mid-careers, and into retirement. The CCAR is uniquely positioned to meet the ongoing needs of its nearly 2,000 member rabbis (virtually the entire Reform rabbinat) and the entire Reform Jewish community.