

May 15, 2007

Dear [Congress representative or senator]:

On behalf of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), numbering some 3,500 Friends, I urge and pray for your vigilance and support for ending the war in Iraq and not expanding that war to the neighboring country of Iran. We watch our government deploy additional warships, including troops, to the region with continuing allegations of Iranian involvement in the fighting in the Iraq war. Friends are opposed to all forms of war, as evidenced by our testimony of 350 years. We call on you, as a member of Congress, to help stop this current looming danger of a tragic escalation to this present war.

The founder of the Religious Society of Friends, George Fox, wrote: "And all friends everywhere this I charge you...live in peace...and therein seek the peace of all men and no man's hurt...Therefore live in the peaceable life, doing good to all people, and seeking the good and welfare of all people."

In faithfulness to our testimony of peace, Friends call on the United States government to use diplomatic means, in concert with United Nations, to resolve issues with the government of Iran. Friends ask that our government disavow the use of military force in settling these issues, seeking a positive, cooperative relationship with Iran in good faith. Friends are urging Congress to pass bills H.J. Res 14 and S. 759, which require the president to seek congressional authorization before taking military action against Iran, noting that such authorization has not been given.

New York Yearly Meeting stands firmly with words of our *Faith and Practice* cautioning "against the taking of arms against any person, since 'all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons' are contrary to our Christian testimony." Our faith informs our actions. Friends are people full of hope and believe that our actions can help bring God's love into the world.

We trust in a power greater than we are, and we trust that the grace of God intervenes in the world through our and others' practice of hope to soften hearts, open eyes, and unplug ears.

Peace is possible.

With prayers for deep clarity and discernment,

Ernestine Buscemi
Clerk, New York Yearly Meeting