



# Fall Report

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## A Word from the Directors

Greetings- As we come to the end of this eventful year and a new year is on the horizon, the Center has been reflecting on the various efforts made by its members to support research, education and action programs that promote successful conflict resolution and peace. The efforts of the Center members, friends, family and community were rewarded with the return of our dear friend and founding board member Ali Shakeri. Ali was released and returned home to his friends and family on October 9<sup>th</sup>. We are extremely grateful to all the many people who supported him with their letters, thoughts and prayers. After being held and interrogated in Evin Prison, Teheran for more than 140 days Ali returned not cynical towards his home country but rather with a renewed sense of belief in the need for dialogue between the U.S. and Iran. Ali expressed his belief that community grassroots efforts can play an important role in applying research and education in practice to accomplish peaceful conflict resolution. In keeping with this shared believe the Center too will continue to support research, education and programs that promote peace and dialogue. With your help we can continue to turn research into action for a safer world.

The Center thanks you for your support for all our programs and we welcome your feedback and participation in our activities. The Center is only successful with your support. Thank you for contributing towards a safer world. Please visit our website to stay informed about our upcoming events.

Happy Holidays.

In Peace,

*Paula Garb and John Graham*

Co-Directors, Center for Citizen Peacebuilding

### Center Administration

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**Student Representative:** [Daniel Wehrenfennig](#)

### Israel/Palestine student Initiative

Since last spring the Center had been working with Jewish and Muslim students to plan a trip to Israel and Palestine. This trip will give students who are interested in the region a chance to see for themselves what is happening there and make their own assessments. Students from the often dubbed "conflicting" student groups, such as Anteaters for Israel and the Muslim Students Union have been meeting regularly and working closely to discuss the trip goals and logistics. This is the first time that these two particular student groups have met regularly together for a common goal. With the help of their students, faculty, community members and other student groups such as the Society of Arab Students, the Middle East Studies Student Initiative and Spiritual Alliance, the group has made significant progress in planning the trip. In early December the students will meet with UCI Chancellor Drake to propose their travel plans. With the support of the community, the work of these students can result in a successful trip to the region in which students develop educated opinions about the conflict and citizen efforts for conflict resolution, and relay their findings to the UCI campus, their student groups and the community. We expect this initiative to result in sustained constructive dialogue between these campus groups and the community.

## RECENT EVENTS

### Jack Miles

#### “Will the U.S. Be Voted Out of Iraq?”

*October 4, 2007*

Jack Miles, Pulitzer Prize winning author of “*God: A Biography*” and Distinguished Professor of English and Religious Studies at UCI visited the International Studies Public Forum at an event co-sponsored by the CCPB, the Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies and the UCI International Studies Department, to discuss the future of U.S. involvement in Iraq. As one of the world’s leading experts on religion and international affairs, Miles serves as general editor of the Norton Anthology of World Religions and is a former member of the editorial board of the Los Angeles Times.

### Ali Shakeri

#### “An Informal Talk on Constructive Engagement with Iran”

*November 20, 2007*

Ali Shakeri, a founding CCPB board Member, is one of five US residents who recently returned from an unanticipated incarceration and interrogation in Evin Prison in Teheran. At this event cosponsored by the UCI International Studies department and the Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies Ali spoke of his belief that community grassroots efforts provide the vital cement between research, theory, and practice. Ali is an Iranian-American activist who advocates democracy in Iran and peace in the world. It is through dialogues and non-violent efforts that he sees a future that will expand and promote the values of collaboration, cooperation, and reconciliation in conflicted communities locally and internationally.

### Gang Intervention Grant Awarded

The JAMS Foundation awarded the Center with a grant to fund the development of model curriculum and the publication of a training manual and videos that provide dispute resolution training to mediators in schools and communities with high levels of gang violence across the nation. With the help of the JAMS grant the Center, in conjunction with the Edmund G. “Pat” Brown Institute for Public Affairs at UCLA will continue its support of the nation’s only certification program for gang intervention.

## Africa Wake Up – The Malawi Project

*By Daniel Wehrenfennig*

With the help of the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding and many more private funders we were able to complete the filming of the Malawi Documentary Project this past summer; capturing for the first time the nearly forgotten events that led to the peaceful transition from a 30-year dictatorship to a functioning democracy. Told through the words of the last surviving participants the history of Malawi goes against our conventional wisdom. An impoverished nation (the majority lives on less than 50 cents a day) democratized without outside help by forming a powerful citizen movement spearheaded by the effective cooperation of Christians and Muslims. This story has been now captured in English and Chichewa (Malawi’s national language). The many hours of film material are in the process of being edited into a movie to inform the West about this amazing story and to preserve it for the troubled nation of Malawi, to give hope and encourage its 12 million people to sustain and defend their democratic citizen rights. There is much more work to do and money to be raised before the documentary will be finished in 2008 and distribution can start. However, the whole project in itself has already been a great testimony to citizen peacebuilding and its importance and effectiveness for change today. We are very thankful for the Center’s support. For more information on the Malawi project please visit our website at <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~cpb/Malawi.html>.

*Daniel Wehrenfennig is a center fellow, UCI PhD candidate and a CCPB board member.*

### Alliance for Peacebuilding’s Iran Working Group

Recently, the Center has begun a new initiative in cooperation with the Alliance for Peacebuilding <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org>. The Alliance is an organization uniting all major peacebuilding organizations around the world. Our Center is participating in the Alliance’s Iran Working Group. The purpose of this initiative is to convey to policymakers in the US what our field’s best practices are an effective diplomacy that can prevent war with Iran. The Center invites you to participate with us in our actions to influence policy and decision makers in the United States and other countries on this important issue. Our Center has online talking points and policy papers that any citizen can use to persuade our representatives in government to utilize all effective diplomatic measures to prevent further tensions and war with Iran.