

Multifaith group urges fast against war
<http://interfaithfast.org>

NEW YORK, Sept. 11 A multifaith coalition including Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Jewish groups called on American people of faith to observe a one-day fast in October to protest the war in Iraq. The dawn-to-dusk Oct. 8 fast is intended for U.S. religious communities to "act as catalysts to transform the meaning of the day from one of conquest to community, and from violence to reverence," Ecumenical News International reported Tuesday.

In a statement, organizers assert, "American culture, society and policy are addicted to violence at home and overseas. In our time, the hope of a decent future is endangered by an unnecessary, morally abhorrent, and disastrous war."

The organizers explain that the event is scheduled for October because different faith traditions, in "an unusual convergence," share a "season of sacred self-assessment and self-transformation." The holy season includes the month of Ramadan and the Night of Power (Islam), the High Holy Days and Sukkot (Judaism), the Feast Day of Francis of Assisi and World Communion Sunday (Christianity), and Pavarana/Sangha Day (Buddhism).

Groups calling for the fast include the American Friends' Service Committee, the National Council of Churches, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the Council on American Islamic Relations, the Episcopal (Anglican) Peace Fellowship, Pax Christi USA, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

STATEMENT AND CALL TO FAST

“We call on all Americans to join in fasting from dawn to dusk on Monday, October 8, to call for an end to the Iraq War. On this day, people of faith in local communities across our nation will act as catalysts to transform the meaning of the day from one of conquest to community and from violence to reverence. Just as Isaiah called the People Israel to hear the Yom Kippur fast as God’s call to feed the hungry, just as Jesus fasted in the wilderness, just as Christians through Lenten fasting and Muslims through Ramadan fasting have focused on spiritual transformation, just as Mohandas Gandhi, Cesar Chavez and others drew on fasting to change the course of history, so we call on all our communities of faith to draw now on fasting as a path toward inner spiritual transformation and outward social transformation. Ending this war can become the first step toward a policy that embodies a deeper, broader sense of generosity and community at home and in the world.”