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13 February 2007

Ms. Paula Dobriansky
Under Secretary, Democracy and Global Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 7250
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Dobriansky:

As consortia of US non-governmental organizations working throughout the world to respond to humanitarian emergencies and to seek protection for internally displaced persons and refugees, we write to express our support to you upon the establishment of the new Iraqi Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Task Force.

The establishment of this task force by Secretary Rice is a welcome indication of the recognition by the Administration of the deepening gravity of this humanitarian crisis, a concern that our members share. It is vital that the US move swiftly to mobilize the necessary resources and political will to meet the security and assistance needs of IDPs within Iraq, and to ensure the safety and well-being of refugees throughout the region, through the preservation of first asylum, the provision of humanitarian aid, and the strategic use of resettlement.

Many member organizations of InterAction and of Refugee Council USA have a long commitment to humanitarian programs in the Middle East, and are presently working to assist displaced Iraqis within Iraq and in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere in the region, often as partners with US government agencies or with international organizations. Others are currently carrying out assessments to determine how they might best respond to the growing needs. As your task force begins its important work, we hope to have future joint opportunities to discuss your plans and to share our perspectives.

Sincerely,

Sam Worthington
President & CEO, InterAction

Richard Parkins
Director, Episcopal Migration Ministries
Chair, Refugee Council USA