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July 20, 2008: More on the Interfaith Meeting in Spain

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7/20/2008--Another report from Rabbi Arthur Waskow and Rabbi Phyllis Berman from the Shalom Center on the Saudi-sponsored inter-faith dialogue in Spain. For more information, go to the Shalom Center website,

<http://www.shalomctr.org/>*****The most fiery moment of the gathering came when one Muslim speaker, discussing Christian-Muslim-Jewish dialogue, cast doubt on whether Jewish-Muslim dialogue was possible. He also asserted that while Judaism is a religious path, Zionism is a political construct. Jews and Muslims rose to correct him, reporting that in many cultures -- North and South America, Britain, Western Europe, Sarajevo in Southeastern Europe -- Jews and Muslims were already carrying out various forms of dialogue and shared action. That was when Arthur described not only the process but also the results of the Tent's work - including our stimulating major organizations of all three Abrahamic communities to oppose the US government's invasion and occupation of Iraq. Moreover, Rabbi David Rosen spoke to the Judaism/ Zionism question, saying that true dialogue requires understanding the Other as the Other sees (him/her)self and that most of the Jewish community sees the connection between the People Israel and the Land of Israel as a religious matter, even when some disagree with the behavior of any political or governmental expression of that bond. These disagreements with the original speaker were met with openness: considerable applause, some doubt. The fact that Muslims themselves testified that Jewish-Muslim dialogue not only was possible but had been happening for years was clearly news to some of the more cloistered Muslims present. *****As the report states, some people have looked at this conference with skepticism. But Rabbis Waskow and Berman are quite hopeful.