TO:        HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:     CITY MANAGER       DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES
DATE:     DECEMBER 12, 2005        CMR: 458:05
SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF PEACE

RECOMMENDATION
The Human Relations Commission (HRC) recommends that the City Council approve the adoption of a resolution supporting the creation of a federal department of peace.

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION
The HRC invited Mike Abkin from the Peace Alliance Foundation, an organization that is organizing support for the creation of departments or ministries of peace in all the countries of the world, to make presentations. Currently, five countries have working groups conducting campaigns for ministries or departments of peace: Australia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Mr. Abkin said that the department of peace initiative states that violence of all kinds is increasing and that there is an urgent need to find responsible solutions, expanding on past and present peace-building successes. The international initiative will provide resources and support for existing national department of peace campaigns and assist new ones as they appear in other countries.

While the exact role of the department will differ in each country, its basic functions will be the same:

- To foster a culture of peace;
- To research, articulate and help bring about non-violent solutions to conflicts at all levels;
- To provide resources for training in peace-building and conflict transformation to people everywhere.

Nationally, ten cities have passed a resolution supporting this effort: Berkeley, CA; Cambridge, MA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Hamtramck, MI; Kauai County, HI; Lincoln City, OR; Oakland, CA; Sebastopol, CA; and San Jose, CA.

Mr. Abkin stated that we couldn’t have peace worldwide until we have peace at home. HRC Commissioners asked Mr. Abkin what concerns he has heard about creating a federal department of peace. He responded that some people have expressed that there will be duplication of responsibilities with the State Department. He explained that the new department would have responsibilities entirely focused on peace initiatives.

After further discussion Chairperson Shauna Wilson entertained a motion by Commissioner Atito and seconded by Commissioner Lenior to adopt a resolution in support of creating a federal
department of peace and to recommend that the Palo Alto City Council adopt a resolution for the creation of a federal department of peace as well.
The motion passed unanimously.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

The impact to City staff will be minimal.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Resolution Supporting the creation of a federal Department of Peace
Attachment B: Draft minutes of the November 10, 2005 Human Relations Commission meeting

**PREPARED BY:** ____________________________________________
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Director of Human Services

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** _______________________________________
RICHARD JAMES
Director of Community Services

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:** _______________________________
EMILY HARRISON
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