

## June 11, 2001: Kazemzadeh, Stith, Named to Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Firuz Kazemzadeh, Ph.D., of Alta Loma, California, and the Rev. Charles R. Stith of Boston, Massachusetts, have been appointed by Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The two will serve until May 14, 2003. Dr. Kazemzadeh served on the Commission from May 15, 1999 to May 14, 2001. Commissioner Kazemzadeh, the Commission's outgoing Vice Chairman, is a Senior Advisor for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. He was appointed to his first term on the Commission by President Clinton. He is Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University, having taught Russian history there from 1956 until his retirement in 1992. During his tenure at Yale, Dr. Kazemzadeh also served variously as Director of Graduate Studies in Russian and Eastern European Studies; Chair of the Committee on Middle Eastern Studies; Director of Graduate Studies in History; and Master of Davenport College. He is the author of several books relating to Russia and Central Asia. Commissioner Stith served as United States ambassador to Tanzania from 1998 to January 20, 2001. He is the founder of the Organization for a New Equality, a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for people historically excluded from the economic mainstream. Ambassador Stith served as senior minister of the Union United Methodist Church in Boston and was a member of the President's special delegation to monitor South Africa's first multiracial elections. He received a bachelor's degree from Baker University and graduate degrees from the Interdenominational Theological Center and Harvard University Divinity School. The Commission consists of nine voting Commissioners and the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, who is a non-voting member. Three Commissioners are selected by the President, two by the leaders of the President's party in Congress, and four by the congressional leaders of the other party. Commissioners serve for a two-year term and are eligible for reappointment. Dr. Kazemzadeh and Ambassador Stith join Dean Michael Young, who was appointed by Senate Republican leader Trent Lott, and Nina Shea, who was appointed by Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert.

Felice D. Gaer

- Firuz Kazemzadeh Leila Nadya Sadat Dean Michael K. Young Nina Shea Rev. Charles R. Stith Steven T. McFarland, Executive Director