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California Polytechnic State University

May 24, 2002

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speakers To Address History and Peace in Middle East

Two speakers will give different perspectives on current conflict in the Middle East in a three-hour program titled "History and Its Impact on Peace in the Middle East" on June 5 at Cal Poly.

As'ad AbuKhalil, associate professor of political science at CSU Stanislaus and a research associate at UC Berkeley's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, will speak first, beginning at 6 p.m. in Harman Hall in the Christopher Cohan Center, and then take questions from the audience.

Mark Paredes, press attaché at the Consulate General of Israel in Los Angeles, will then speak and answer questions.

"The purpose of this program is to learn what has happened in the past that has led to the current situation," said Greg Siragusa, student director of Raise the Respect, a program of Cal Poly's Student Community Services and Multicultural Center.

" 'Their' tragedy has become 'our' tragedy, too," said Cal Poly Dean of Liberal Arts Harry Hellenbrand, referring to the events of Sept. 11. "We suffer no delusion that one conversation will solve the controversies in the Middle East. But we also know that without conversation there will be no end to the bloodshed and despair, there and elsewhere. We need to understand the facts and passions."

AbuKhalil, born in Lebanon, is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on Middle Eastern affairs. He will explain the views and history of the Arab nations and Palestinian people. He has written numerous articles, book chapters and encyclopedia entries as well as three books, including "Bin Ladin and Taliban: The New American War Against Terrorism," published this year. He has appeared on such talk

shows as CNN's "Crossfire," "Prime Time Live," "Politically Incorrect," "The Today Show" and "Hardball with Chris Matthews," as well as on the CBS Evening News and National Public Radio.

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in political science at the American University of Beirut and his doctorate in comparative government in 1988 from Georgetown University. He has taught at Georgetown, Harvard, George Washington University and several other schools.

Paredes, an American citizen and former U.S. Foreign Service officer, will explain the issues facing the Israeli people and the history behind them as well as the concerns that guide the actions of the Israeli government. Among his assignments in the Foreign Service, he was stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel. In Israel he also appeared on that country's leading talk show and was featured in several Israeli publications. He speaks seven languages, has studied law, and is now pursuing a career in entertainment in Los Angeles.

The event, a project of Raise the Respect, is co-sponsored by the university's College of Liberal Arts and Newman Center. For more information, call Siragusa at 756-5834.

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