Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Special Assistant to US President

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On February 9, 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, visited the US National Security Council to meet with Mr. Michael McFaul, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and senior director of Russian and Eurasian affairs at the **National Security Council**.

Answering numerous questions from the high representative of the US National Security Council, the DECR chairman stressed that the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church was not limited to one country but embraced several former republics of the Soviet Union, which are now independent states.

At the same time, His Eminence noted that neither in Russia nor in any other country as part of its canonical territory was the Russian Orthodox Church involved in political struggle. While independent from the state, it maintains cooperation with the state in the spheres related directly to people's everyday life, such as ethical formation and education, demography, culture.

Asked about the work of the Russian Orthodox Church in the post-Soviet space, Metropolitan Hilarion told his interlocutor about distinctive features the church life has in various regions. He put a special emphasis on the peacemaking initiatives of the Moscow Patriarchate. In this context, His Eminence cited regular meetings between religious leaders in Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the Russian Orthodox Church – which certainly contributes to the process of reconciliation between these two countries and peoples.

The DECR chairman expressed the conviction that dialogue between Christian confessions and various world religions should bear a closer relation to people's real life.

During his visit to the US National Security Council, Metropolitan Hilarion was accompanied by Archpriest Igor Vyzhanov of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. Nicholas in New York, representative of the World Russian People's Council at the UN, and Mr. A. Timofeyev, a counselor of the Russian Embassy in Washington.

Participating in the discussion were also Mr. Kyle Scott, director of the Department of State's Office of

Russian Affairs, Ms. Caroline Savage, National Security Council director for Russian and Central Asian affairs, Mr. John Bernbaum, President of the Russian-American Institute and Mr. Bob Foresman, CEO of Barclays Capital Russia.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/56002/