

SPIRIT OF GENEVA HOUSE MEETING GUIDE

**Brit Tzedek v'Shalom
The Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace**



**BRIT
TZEDEK
V'SHALOM**

JEWISH ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE & PEACE

House Meeting Table of Contents

Overview: Spirit of Geneva House Meetings 3

10 Steps to Organizing a House Meeting

1.	Recruit and Train a Team of House Meeting Speakers, Facilitators, and Organizers	4
2.	Recruit House Meeting Hosts	4
3.	Set a Date and Location	5
4.	Work with Hosts to Develop Invitation List	6
5.	Send out Invitations	6
6.	Make Follow-up Calls to Prospective Guests	7
7.	Gather Background Information about Anticipated Audience and Customize Program	8
8.	Prepare for Meeting and Make Reminder Calls	9
9.	Hold House Meeting	9
10.	Follow-up after House Meeting	9

Attachments:

Spirit of Geneva Talking Points	10
Presentation Overview	14
Executive Summary: Hope Renewed: The Spirit of the Geneva Accord	15
Frequently Asked Questions about the Geneva Accord	16
Recent Israeli-Palestinian Peace Initiatives	18
The Road Map Explained	19
Brief Chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	20
House Res. 479 and Senate Res. 276 and Co-sponsors	24
Letter Writing Instructions	26
Sample Letter to Your Representative	27
Sample Letter to Your Senator	28
Sample Letter to the President	29
Sample Letter to a Jewish Leader	30
Follow-up and Reminder Calls Tracker	31
House Meeting Sign-In Sheet	32
J, The Jewish News Weekly: <i>Wake up, Sharon — here is a chance for progress</i> by Marcia Freedman	33
Jewish Exponent: <i>A Rare Dose of Hope Illuminates Switzerland</i> by Steven Masters	35
Forward: <i>Geneva Coalition to Push Peace Initiative</i> by Marc Perelman	37
Boston Globe: <i>A New US Movement for Middle East Peace</i> by Stephen P. Cohen	40
Geneva Map	42
Printed Geneva Map and Spirit of Geneva Video	Contact Brit Tzedek Office

Overview: Spirit of Geneva House Meetings

General Description:

House meetings are wonderful opportunities for small groups of people to gather in informal settings to examine and discuss models for a negotiated, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as the Geneva Accord and other recent peace initiatives. The intimate setting of a house meeting offers the opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and feelings about the current situation in the region and Brit Tzedek's perspective on it. These gatherings are more easily executed than similar events held at synagogues and community centers, which often require a great deal of advance planning and authorization.

House meetings also function as opportunities for interpersonal connection and networking, which are critical first steps in breaking the isolation that so many Jews have experienced within their own communities around these issues. House meetings help people develop an understanding that each of us can make a difference if we speak up and act together; they can empower people to join our movement and to take immediate and affirmative steps to achieve its goals (such as writing a letter to elected officials).

Purpose of Spirit of Geneva House Meetings:

- Build our base of supporters and members.
- Increase the level of participation of our base in support of a negotiated, two-state resolution.
- Educate our supporters on the current situation and the role of recent peace initiatives.
- Educate our supporters on the structure and functioning of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom nationally and locally, and help them identify ways they can be further involved.

Why Spirit of Geneva?

- We take our inspiration from the example of a negotiated two-state final peace agreement that the Geneva Accord models. This two-state solution allows both the Israelis and Palestinians to realize their own rights to self-determination and security in the recognized homelands of their respective people.

1. Recruit and Train a Team Of Speakers, Facilitators, Lead Organizers And Organizer Assistants For House Meetings

Speakers should be Brit Tzedek members with strong presentation skills. Recruit and train one speaker or a team of speakers who can learn to:

- Describe and respond to questions about the Spirit of Geneva.
- Flexibly adapt the presentation to the audience.

Note: Speakers do not need to be policy experts. This packet includes talking points on the presentation, resource materials, and commonly asked questions.

Facilitators are speakers or other Brit Tzedek members who can:

- Facilitate warm-up, wrap-up, and other activities.
- Make participants feel welcome.
- Encourage active participation of guests and keep the event on track (on theme and on time).
- Facilitate letter writing.
- Politely interrupt disruptive speakers.
- Adapt program as appropriate.

A lead organizer oversees all components of the house meeting, but may recruit assistants to perform any of the following tasks:

- Make reminder and/or follow-up calls prior to the event.
- Copy and bring literature and letters.
- Circulate sign-in sheet and make sure information is complete and legible.
- Greet and converse with guests before and after the meeting.
- Assist guests with letter writing.
- Collect all materials at the end of the evening and forward data to the national office.
- Administer a house meeting evaluation.
- Conduct follow-up with guests.

2. Recruit House Meeting Host(s)

There are many ways to identify potential hosts:

- Make calls to members or supporters within your chapter's pre-existing social-, professional-, or synagogue-based network.
- Make calls to people with an appropriate home for a meeting who might be able to host or co-host with someone else.
- Make cold calls to members and supporters to ascertain interest.
- Request references from sympathetic Jewish religious and/or community leaders.
- Send email solicitations to members and supporters.
- Place ads in synagogue or other organizational bulletins.

What to communicate to potential hosts:

What is a Spirit of Geneva house meeting?

An intimate gathering to educate people about recent peace initiatives and build an activist base of American Jews to promote them.

Why are house meetings important?

They provide information and concrete steps people can take to advance the peace process. They help build a movement of American Jews who, together, can make a difference on one of the key issues facing Jews worldwide.

What benefit do hosts receive?

An opportunity to share with your community of friends, family, and acquaintances your commitment to making a positive contribution to peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

What are the expectations of hosts?

- Develop a list of 10-100 potential guests. (You generally need to send out 2-3 invitations for every person who ultimately attends.)
- Send out invitations and make follow-up calls immediately after.
- Provide the home for the meeting or the guest list for a co-Host.
- Serve appropriate refreshments.
- Provide space for literature, television, and VCR.

What does Brit Tzedek provide?

- Structured program including speakers, literature, and video plus assistance in planning.
- Set up and clean up, if needed.
- Follow-up.

3. Set a Date and Location

In setting a date, consider the following:

- Allow sufficient time for host(s) to create a guest list, send invitations, and make follow-up calls—a minimum of 2-3 weeks.
- Make sure that the host will be available to respond to inquiries prior to the event.
- Check the availability of your speakers, facilitators, and organizers.
- Avoid scheduling house meetings on Shabbat or Jewish holidays that have the same ‘non-work’ standards as Shabbat, in order to be inclusive of diversity within our community. Please consult a Jewish calendar before confirming a date, as there are many holidays that are not well known or observed by many Jews but do have significance to other Jews.

In reviewing the appropriateness of a location, consider the following:

- Public transportation accessibility, parking, parking permits, etc.
- Transportation resources of guest list.
- Multiple Hosts at a single location.

4. Work With Host(S) To Develop Invitation List

Help your host(s) brainstorm an invitation list of potential Jewish supporters:

- *Family*: parents, grandparents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws.
- *Friends*: your own friends and those of other friends or family members.
- *Social Acquaintances*: friends you see only on occasion; friends from college/school; friends from your old job; the parents of your children's friends; people you've met at classes or your gym; people with whom you shop, garden, vacation, go to protests, or share holidays.
- *Neighbors*: on the block, upstairs, downstairs, down the hall.
- *From Synagogue*: your rabbi; synagogue activists; people you see regularly or occasionally; parents of religious school students.
- *From Work or Community Work*: teachers, secretaries, school colleagues, classmates; former colleagues, partners, or clients; colleagues from community, political or charity work.
- *Members of*: your block association, political organization, community group, food co-op, local peace or environmental group, PTA, or union.
- *Professionals You Know Personally*: your lawyer, dentist, doctor, chiropractor, pharmacist, or stock broker.
- *People on Lists You've Made In The Past*: people you invited to your last party; your holiday card list; the program from your last reunion; your rolodex (home or work); your personal phone book.

In addition to people your host's invitation list, you can invite Brit Tzedek members and supporters who live close to the host. This is a way to potentially activate members and supporters in your local chapter and also to integrate their experience in broadening Brit Tzedek's network. Please check with the host to make sure s/he is comfortable with expanding the invitation list in this way.

Note: Our target audience is American Jews, but we also welcome non-Jews, recognizing that they are often part of our families.

5. Send Out Invitations

You can invite guests by email or snail mail. Generally, email is the easiest, with snail mail as a back-up given its cost and the work involved. A sample invitation is below:

Jan and Robert Gold

Warmly Invite You to Their Home for a Spirit of Geneva House Meeting

When: March 8th, 7:00 to 9:30pm

Where: 900 River Drive, New Haven

Speakers: The House Meeting will be facilitated by the New Haven chapter of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, a national organization of Jews committed to a negotiated, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What: A House Party to learn about the Spirit of Geneva Campaign. Many of us long to see a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but are discouraged by the news of continuing violence and hatred. The Geneva Accord and other recent peace initiatives give us a glimpse of a different path. Learn about these sparks of hope and how you as an American Jew can join with others to make a real difference in bringing peace to the region.

RSVP and questions: jrgold@xnet.net or (000) 888-9999

Directions: By public transportation... From the north...

One popular e-mail method for invitations is evite, found at:

<http://www.evite.com/pages/homepage/index.jsp>. This site helps create attractive invitations and helps Hosts easily monitor RSVPs. Because its unique features stand out from ordinary e-mail, even people who are inundated with e-mails will take notice and respond to an evite.

6. Make Follow-Up Calls With Prospective Guests

A personal connection can make the difference in a person deciding to attend a house meeting. It is preferable that your Host(s) makes follow-up calls to invited guests.

- Call at least ten days in advance to give people time to plan their calendars.
- Call at different times until you reach your prospective guests. For example, call before you go to work in the morning and again in the evening. **The point is to reach people directly** on the phone. Leave a message *only as a last resort*. In the voice message, let people know you'll try to reach them again when they're home or that they can call you.
- Keep track of all responses - positive, negative or undecided.

Follow-up Phone Calls

Below is a sample script for follow-up phone calls to prospective guests. Convey in your own words why the meeting is important to you and how each person's presence will make a difference. Once you have a prospective guest on the phone, you can try to turn "maybes" into "yeses".

Hi, this is _____. How are you? Did you get the invitation I sent you a few days ago?

Great! Then you know I'm having a house meeting on the Spirit of Geneva.

I'm really concerned about the growing stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I heard through Brit Tzedek v'Shalom about several recent peace initiatives that could have promise. We as American Jews can play an active role in advancing these initiatives. What do you think of that? (pause) Well, if you're skeptical, I invite you to learn more. I'd really like you to come to my house on _____ to learn more. Can you come?

If they say YES:

Great. I'm really glad you'll be there to learn about this initiative.

If they're NOT SURE:

I know this is a busy time for you. Understanding this issue is crucial to us as American Jews and to our relationship with Israel. We're having house meetings across the country to reach thousands of Jews. It would be wonderful if you could join us. Can I count on you to be there?

Reminder Calls

Below is a sample script for reminder phone calls or confirmed guests. You can leave a message.

I look forward to seeing you at our House Meeting tomorrow night at 7:00pm at 999 N. South St. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (888)555-3333 or to email me at me@me.com

7. Gather Background Information about Anticipated Audience and Plan Customized Program

Background information about your potential audience is helpful in customizing your presentation. Prior to the house party, ask your host to share some information about the background of the expected guests: age; synagogue affiliation; level of observance; domestic politics; relationship with Israel; understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; previous political activism.

Use this information to customize your program to the audience so that your message is more effectively communicated.

Programs generally are organized according to the following outline.

SPIRIT OF GENEVA PROGRAMMING OUTLINE

1. Socializing and Sign-in (15 minutes)

- Brit Tzedek volunteers introduce themselves and speak with the guests.
- Ask people to sign in and give complete information.
- Follow up with people who arrive late or sign in with incomplete information.

2. Introductions (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce Facilitator and Speakers.
- Ask guests to share name, affiliation, and/or something about themselves OR
- Have people ask ice-breaking questions in dyads or small groups.

Sample Questions:

- What is your relationship with Israel?
- What has motivated your commitment to supporting Israeli-Palestinian peace?
- What has been most difficult for you about the current situation?
- What gives you hope about the current conflict?
- Share your name and one thing you are hoping to learn at this meeting.

3. Introduction to Spirit of Geneva Campaign and Video (10-15 minutes)

(See Talking Points)

4. Video Presentation (20 minutes)

5. Distribute Hand-outs (Geneva Map, FAQs about the Geneva Accord, Executive Summary, Recent Israeli-Palestinian Peace Initiatives, The Road Map Explained, articles, etc.)

7. Facilitate discussion; take questions (30 minutes)

- Ask people to try to be succinct in their comments and questions.
- Try to let everyone who wants to speak do so once before anyone speaks twice.
- Praise people for asking questions.
- Listen carefully for the underlying concerns expressed when people speak. Try to respond to these concerns.
- Communicate our message that a two-state resolution is possible and that we American Jews can play an important role in bringing it about.

8. The Importance of the American Government and American Jews (5 minutes)

(See Spirit of Geneva Talking Points)

9. Brit Tzedek's Strategies and Role (5 minutes)

(See Spirit of Geneva Talking Points)

10. Together There is Much We Can Do (10 minutes)

(See Spirit of Geneva Talking Points)

8. Prepare for Meeting and Make Reminder Calls

A House Meeting checklist:

- Host has checked that TV/VCR functions.
- Literature is prepared: Brit Tzedek brochures, articles, Executive Summary, sample letters (customized if possible), sign-in-sheets, etc.
- Host has purchased snacks --Kosher and/or vegetarian snacks as appropriate-- preferably served on paper plates.
- Reminder calls have been placed to all who have RSVP'd in the three evenings immediately preceding your house meeting, excluding Friday night (Shabbat).
- Copies of sample letters have been customized to area Senators, Representatives, and Jewish leaders (if appropriate).
- Reminder calls have been placed to speakers and other volunteers.

9. Hold House Meeting

- Show your enthusiasm about Brit Tzedek.
- Show your hope that the situation can shift.
- Demonstrate your confidence that together we can make a change.
- Enjoy getting to know the guests.
- Be prepared to go with the flow.
- Keep good records of who attends and who volunteers to do more.
- Appreciate your host(s)!

10. Follow-up after House Meeting

Follow up with all guests, both those who volunteered on the spot to do something and those who just attended.

Send the national office and chapter leadership your new house meeting contacts for our database and general listserv.

Spirit of Geneva Talking Points

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRIT OF GENEVA CAMPAIGN AND VIDEO (10 minutes)

Introduction to the Spirit of Geneva Campaign

- Brit Tzedek is organizing grassroots support among U.S. Jews for what we are calling the Spirit of Geneva. The campaign has two key points:
 - A peaceful negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is possible in the here and now.
 - American Jews can play a key role in bringing peace to the region.
- We call our campaign Spirit of Geneva because we are inspired by the Geneva Accord, a model of a negotiated final peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that addresses every outstanding issue in great detail. The Accord represents a compromise: it is the maximum Israelis are willing to give up and the minimum Palestinians are willing to accept. It is being used as a grassroots organizing tool to stimulate discussion--in Israel and the occupied territories, as well as internationally-- about what a final resolution of the conflict might look like and the how to go about achieving it in the here and now.
- The "spirit" of our campaign refers to the renewed hope and successful compromise that has been sparked by several recent extra-governmental peace initiatives based on a negotiated two-state peace agreement.
- In the U.S., we hope to engage the hearts and minds of the American Jewish community by discussing the current situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories and the possibilities presented to us by recent peace initiatives. We believe that Israelis and Palestinians deserve a steadfast partner in the American Jewish community in their quest to achieve a just and sustainable peace. We hope to spark new hope in our community that we can together help bring a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As American Jews we can make a difference.
- The current situation is not only painful and dangerous for both sides but at this point dire.
 - In the absence of negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, a cycle of violence and retribution has taken over resulting in the tremendous loss of lives on both sides. (892 Israelis and 2975 Palestinians as of May 18, 2004.) For updated conflict statistics, see http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/resources/mrates.asp
 - The conflict has impacted the economic situation of Israelis and Palestinians.
 - 1.3 million Israelis live below the poverty line or nearly one in five Israeli families and one in three Israeli children. This reflects a 5% increase from 2002 to 2003. (National Insurance Institute figures for 2003)
 - Nearly half of the Palestinian population is currently living below the poverty line of \$2 per day. Per capita income has dropped by half since the beginning of the *intifada* and is now approaching \$900. (World Bank 2004)
 - In Israel over the past year an unusual chorus of voices, including prominent security, political and military leaders with long histories of commitment to both Zionism and Israel, offered strong critiques of current government policy relative to the conflict, saying it was counter to Israel's best interests and leading the country to disaster. (Read one of the quotes below and allow time for people to reflect on it.)
 - Avraham Burg, an Orthodox Jew who is a member of Knesset (Labor) and former Speaker of the Knesset, offered a stern warning: "We cannot keep the territories and preserve a Jewish majority in the world's only Jewish state-not by means that are human and moral and Jewish...there may well be a Jewish state here, but it will be a different sort, strange and ugly."
 - Former Foreign Ministry Director General David Kimche (from 1980-1987, under Likud Prime Ministers Begin and Shamir) issued this warning: "The Zionist ideal is now in danger. We are heading with the speed of an express train towards a bi-national state in which we, the Jews, will be a minority. Within five or six years the Palestinian Arabs will be in a majority in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. We will then be faced with a choice: either live as a minority in a democratic state characterized by "one man one vote," or we will, as a minority, rule over an apartheid, non-democratic state. As a Zionist, I want neither. They do not fit into the ideology that brought me to this country. Yet unless we leave the territories the only other option will be the transfer of the Arab population, which is an unthinkable choice both for moral and for political reasons."

- How can we Israel be brought out of this quagmire? This last year saw the emergence of three serious non-governmental Israeli and Palestinian bilateral peace initiatives. They all demonstrate that there are concrete, tangible paths out of the current mire through the only path that will lead to a long lasting peace--a negotiated two-state resolution.
 - *People's Voice* is an Israeli-Palestinian petition campaign based on a declaration of principles authored by Sari Nusseibeh, the President of Al Quds University in East Jerusalem, and Ami Ayalon, former head of the Shin Bet (Israel's internal security service equivalent to the American FBI). Four other distinguished former leaders of Shin Bet have also endorsed the People's Voice Initiative.
 - The *One Voice Initiative* gives Israelis and Palestinians the opportunity to cast ballots in a public referendum on key issues at the heart of the conflict as the basis for devising a proposed resolution.
 - The *Geneva Accord* is the most detailed of them all. The Geneva Accord or Initiative was negotiated over a two-year period by Israeli and Palestinian political, security, and grassroots leaders. In December 2003, the negotiators organized a commitment ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland.
- There is a growing ground swell of support for these initiatives:
 - 183,200 Israelis and 140,000 Palestinians have signed the People's Voice Initiative. This is the numeric equivalent in the U.S. to over 9 million signers (as of 5/25/04).
 - Roughly 30% of Israelis and Palestinians support the Geneva Accord, but when they are told what the Geneva Accord's principles are, those numbers rise significantly (by around 20%).
- Why is a negotiated peace process necessary?
 - A negotiated peace process gives both sides a stake in working for a viable resolution they will be invested in upholding.
 - A negotiated peace process ensures that fundamental needs on both sides are met. This entails mutual compromise (much of which is likely to be both painful and difficult for both sides). It rejects winner-takes-all, maximalist notions of Greater Israel or Greater Palestine.
 - A negotiated peace process, that is: one agreed to by both sides, engages the international community to provide an extra level of oversight and enforcement to ensure that the terms of the agreement are upheld.
 - A unilateral approach in which one side imposes a resolution on the other side without their participation is problematic in bringing a final resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sharon's recent proposal to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip can be a positive step if it leads to negotiations. If Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip and a small percentage of the West Bank without future negotiations as to the status of the rest of the territories, bitterness and hatred will continue to foment among Palestinians and an ongoing military defense will be needed. This does not constitute peace.
- Why is a two-state solution necessary?
 - The majority of Israelis and Palestinians and the international community recognize two states as the only viable resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Note: In 1988 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) recognized the State of Israel within pre-1967-borders.
 - It allows both Israelis and Palestinians to realize their own rights to self-determination and security in the recognized homelands of their respective peoples.
 - A two-state solution offers the only opportunity to ensure that Israel, the Jewish homeland, will remain both Jewish and democratic on account of very real and pressing demographic concerns. Without such territorial concession, Israel will soon govern an area in which non-Jews outnumber Jews by 20%.

Introduction to Video

- This video features one of the Geneva negotiators, Member of Knesset Amram Mitzna, describing the Accord during his keynote speech at Brit Tzedek's annual conference in November 2003 in Boston.
- The video also includes footage at the commitment ceremony in Switzerland, featuring excerpts from the speeches of Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo, the chief co-architects of the Geneva Accord.

- Yossi Beilin was formerly a Knesset member, justice minister and deputy foreign minister from the Labor Party. He served as the chief negotiator for Israel in the Oslo accords and currently leads the *Yachad* political party (a union of *Meretz* and *Shaar*).
- Yasser Abed Rabbo is a former Minister of Information and Culture of the Palestinian Authority and a close confidante of Yasser Arafat. Abed Rabbo served as a member of the Palestinian peace negotiations team for the Oslo accords and at the Madrid Peace Conference.
- The film concludes with remarks by former member and Deputy Speaker of the Knesset Naomi Chazan (Meretz/Yachad), who was interviewed immediately following the ceremony.

ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF AMERICAN JEWS (5 minutes)

Critical Role of the American Government in Advancing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

- U.S. administrations under both Clinton and Bush have advocated for an end to the conflict that includes security for Israel and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank.
- The U.S. administration has historically played a leading role in brokering peace agreements between Israel and the Arab world, as in the Camp David Accords with Egypt (withdrawal from the Sinai), the peace treaty with Jordan, and the Oslo accords.
- Israelis, Palestinians, and most of the international community recognize that the U.S. has more power to advance the peace process than any other country in the world.
- The joint citizens' peace initiatives compliment the Bush Administration's efforts to promote the Road Map as the path to peace. The Road Map is a multi-stage plan developed by what is commonly referred to as the Quartet: the European Union, the United States, the United Nations, and Russia. The Geneva Accord provides a framework for the final stage of the Road Map.

The Critical Role of American Jews

- The American Jewish community has strong ties to Israel as the Jewish homeland.
- By working for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, American Jews contribute to the well-being of all Jews.
- Although Jews are a minority in America, due to a high level of political engagement, we form an important block of voters, not to mention a significant portion of contributors to political campaigns.
- Currently, the Bush administration and Congress are overwhelmingly hearing the voices of American Jewish leaders who support the Sharon government and its policies without question. In the absence of a strong, united, and organized American Jewish voice that supports Israel but opposes the occupation, we leave the field to those Jewish leaders and organizations unequivocally supporting the policies of the government of Ariel Sharon. Yet we know from polling data (Peace Now Poll 12/02) that over 50% of American Jews support a two-state resolution that includes the evacuation of most settlements and sharing Jerusalem. This pro-Israel voice needs to be heard.
- American Jews who support Brit Tzedek's position play a potentially pivotal role in engaging American voters in support of an active US role in negotiating a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They do so because the strong presence of a Jewish voice that is at once pro-Israel and anti-occupation mitigates fears in the larger community that expressing criticism of the current Israeli government's policies is tantamount to anti-Semitism. This broadens the potential for building coalitions on this issue between Jews and others who share our concerns.

BRIT TZEDEK'S STRATEGIES AND ROLES (5 minutes)

- To reach out as broadly as possible to those millions of Jews who already agree with us and give them a simple way to identify themselves— by signing a petition, paying membership dues, and receiving and responding to our action alerts and updates. We began less than two years ago with 200 members and supporters, and today we have 16,000.
- To establish a broad-based, grassroots network that can work effectively on the local level within Jewish communities, as well as on the national level to influence public policy. We currently have 30 chapters throughout the United States.
- Brit Tzedek has added to the mix of American Jewish peace organizations by developing a genuinely grassroots base. We work in cooperation with MeretzUSA, Americans for Peace Now, the Tikkun Community, the Israel Policy Forum and others. We are also part of the Geneva Initiative-North America (GINA). We recognize that we share

similar goals with each of these organizations, but different strategies for reaching them, and together we constitute an American Jewish peace movement.

TOGETHER, THERE IS MUCH THAT WE CAN DO (10 minutes)

- As we grow larger, we grow stronger, and we need to make our voices heard. We hear again and again from our elected officials that they would like to publicly support our message, but they need to see the numbers. Show your commitment by joining Brit Tzedek as a member. Your contribution will enable our small professional staff to provide resources to our hundreds of volunteers across the country and continue to build an ever broader network. Our regular fee is \$35 per individual or \$50 for a household. We also have a low-income/ student fee of \$18. Please give as generously as you can. The blue brochures have a membership form. We invite you to write your check now, fill out the membership form at the end of the brochure, and turn them in to us at the end of the meeting. Recruit others through your network of family, friends, and colleagues.
- Sign our petitions. Our petition to Bring the Settlers Home to Israel has over 10,000 signers of American Jews. Please sign our new petition campaign, "A Letter to the Next President."
- Join our general listserv to receive Brit Tzedek updates and Action Alerts. Read the updates and respond to our regular Action Alerts on issues in the news. Then send them out to your own networks of friends, family, and colleagues so that we can maximize our influence.
- Let the President and your congressional representatives know where you stand. Send them letters that support Senate Resolution 276 and House Resolution 479. Ask your senators and representatives to sign co-sponsor these resolutions if they haven't already done so. We have sample letters that you can sign and Brit Tzedek will mail, or you can take them home with you and use them to craft your own personal letter. These parallel resolutions (1) applaud the courage and vision of Israelis and Palestinians who have pioneered these peace initiatives; (2) call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to capitalize on the opportunity offered by these peace initiatives; and (3) urge the President of the United States to encourage and embrace all serious efforts to move away from violent military stalemate toward achieving a negotiated Israeli-Palestinian peace.
- Send a letter supporting the Geneva Accord and similar initiatives to local Jewish leaders. Tell them that you would like these issues aired in respectful discussion within the community under the sponsorship of your own institutions.
- Join or help us organize home district lobbying teams to visit regularly with our elected officials in their local offices.
- Host a house meeting similar to this one to get your friends, family, and acquaintances involved.
- Become involved in activities of the local chapter of Brit Tzedek. Let us know if you are interested in getting more involved and one of us will contact you.

Presentation Overview

- I. Introduction to the Spirit of Geneva Campaign
 - A. Two-point program
 - 1. A peaceful negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is possible in the here and now.
 - 2. American Jews can play a key role in bringing peace to the region.
 - B. Rationale for “Geneva”: Accord that addresses every outstanding issue through compromise.
 - C. Rationale for “Spirit”: renewed hope and successful compromise in recent peace initiatives.
 - D. Win over hearts and minds of Jewish Community to work to bring peaceful resolution.
 - E. Current situation is dire.
 - 1. Cycle of violence and retribution; loss of life.
 - 2. Economic crisis for Israelis and Palestinians
 - 3. Recent strong critiques of Israeli government policy relative to the conflict by prominent security, political and military leaders with long histories of commitment to both Zionism and Israel. (Quotes)
 - F. Recent non-governmental Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives demonstrate negotiated two-state solution.
 - 1. People’s Voice
 - 2. One Voice Initiative
 - 3. Geneva Accord
 - G. Why negotiated peace process is necessary.
 - 1. Gives both sides a stake in solution invested in upholding.
 - 2. Through mutual compromise ensures fundamental needs on both sides are met.
 - 3. Engages international community to provide oversight and enforcement.
 - 4. Unilateral moves useful insofar as lead to negotiations.
 - H. Why two states is necessary.
 - 1. Support from majority of Israelis, Palestinians and world community.
 - 2. Allows Israelis and Palesinians self-determination in recognized homelands.
 - 3. Address demographic crisis while Israel remains Jewish and democratic.
- II. Introduction to video featuring Amram Mitzna, Yossi Beilin, Yaser Abed Rabbo and Naomi Chazan
- III. Show Spirit of Geneva video + discussion
- IV. Critical Role of the American Government in Advancing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process
 - A. U.S. advocate for Israeli security and establishment of Palestinians state
 - B. U.S. historic role in brokering peace agreements
 - C. Recent peace initiatives compliment Road Map
- V. The Critical Role of American Jews
 - A. Strong ties to Israel as the Jewish homeland.
 - B. As peace advocates American Jews contribute to the well-being of all Jews.
 - C. Important block of voters and significant political contributors.
 - D. Need to have voices of majority Jews who support Brit’s positions to be heard by the administration and Congress instead of ceded to leaders which uncritically supports Sharon government policies.
 - E. Brit Tzedek supporters play a potentially pivotal role in engaging American voters in support of an active US role in negotiating resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- VI. Brit Tzedek Strategies and Roles
 - A. Reach out to millions of Jews who agree with our position and help identify selves.
 - B. Establish grassroots network on local and national level to influence policy.
 - C. As grassroots organization plays key role among American Jewish peace groups.
- VII. Action Steps
 - A. Join Brit Tzedek and encourage others to do so.
 - B. Sign Brit Tzedek petitions and encourage others to do so.
 - C. Join Listserv, read updates, respond to Action Alerts forward to others.
 - D. Write letters in support of SR 276 and HR 479 to President, Congressional Reps, Jewish leaders.
 - E. Join or help organize home district lobbying team.
 - F. Send letters supporting recent peace initiatives to Jewish leaders
 - G. Host Spirit of Geneva House meeting
 - H. Become involved in local chapter.
 - I. You can make a difference!



Hope Renewed: The Spirit of the Geneva Accord

There is someone to negotiate with and there is something to negotiate about. The Geneva Accord provides new hope and new energy for a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict.

For more than two years, moderate Israeli and Palestinian politicians, security experts, grassroots leaders, and intellectuals met under the sponsorship of the Swiss government to negotiate a draft final status agreement that would satisfy the needs and conditions of each side. Continuing where previous negotiations left off, the negotiators created a draft agreement that specifies every last detail, with accompanying maps for a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While this extra-governmental agreement has no international legal standing, those who negotiated and signed the Geneva Accord include many recognized political and security leaders from both societies. On the Palestinian side, these include former ministers Yasser Abed Rabbo and Nabil Qassis; Palestinian Legislative Council members associated with the Fatah/Tanzim Qadoura Fares and Mohamed Horani; member of the Prisoners Committee Ghadi Jarei; and former Governor of Jenin and head of Preventive Security on the West Bank General Zoheir Manasra. On the Israeli side, the negotiators include former members of the Israel Defense Forces high command Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Giora Inbar, and Gideon Sheffer; former government ministers Yuli Tamir and Yossi Beilin, Members of Knesset (MKs) Yossi Sarid, Haim Oron, former Knesset Speaker MK Avraham Burg, and recent Labor candidate for Prime Minister MK Amram Mitzna.

The Geneva Accord has been mailed to every address in Israel and printed in Arabic in large-circulation daily newspapers read by Palestinians. (The full text of the Geneva Accord can be found at www.heskem.org.il/heskem_en.asp) As Israelis and Palestinians are reflecting on the possible final resolution of their conflict, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom encourages Americans to do the same.

Some of the salient points of the Accord:

- The Accord is an end-of-conflict agreement that replaces all previous agreements and UN resolutions.
- The Accord recognizes Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people, with a sovereign Palestinian state established alongside Israel. The permanent borders of Israel and Palestine will be the 1967 borders, with 1:1 adjustments. Approximately 2.5% of the West Bank will be annexed to Israel, and an equal amount of Israeli land will be annexed to the new state of Palestine. Seventy-five percent of the Israeli settlers will remain in densely populated settlement blocks close to the '67 border—blocks that will be annexed to Israel. Other settlements are to be evacuated, with their infrastructure left intact for Palestinian use. Israel will be responsible for resettling those settlers who will need to be evacuated.
- Jerusalem will be divided according to its already separated neighborhoods, and each state will exercise sovereignty over its holiest site. In the Old City, in which no borders will be erected, the Jewish Quarter will be under Israeli control, and the Muslim, Christian, and Armenian Quarters will be under Palestinian control. Each state will control the gates to its respective quarters in the Old City, while the Jaffa Gate will be under international supervision.
- Palestine will be demilitarized, and Israel will have special security guarantees. Palestine and Israel will be required to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of the other, and to avoid joining or supporting any coalition of a military character with hostile objectives against the other. Both countries will work to prevent the formation of unauthorized forces.
- Palestinian refugees will have the unlimited right to move to the new Palestinian state. They may request to remain in countries in which they currently reside, move to a third country, or move to Israel. Israel, like every other country that agrees to accept Palestinian refugees, will have the right to decide how many refugees it admits. In accordance with UN resolutions 242 and 194, Palestinian refugees are entitled to rehabilitation assistance and compensation for property lost and harm incurred due to their refugee status.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Geneva Accord

1. Why is the Geneva Accord important?

- The Geneva Accord is a very close approximation of what a negotiated final status peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians will look like. It represents the meeting ground between Palestinian and Israeli needs—the maximum that the Israelis are willing to give up and the minimum the Palestinians are willing to accept as determined by respected political, civic, and security leaders from both sides.
- The Accord proves that there is both a partner and a path to peace, that there is someone to talk to and something to talk about. If Palestinians and Israelis sit down and put all the issues on the table, agreement is possible on even the conflict's seemingly irresolvable issues, including the status of Jerusalem, the status of refugees, and the future of settlements and security during and after implementation. This shows that if the political will were present, the resolution to the conflict is not only possible but well within reach today.
- The Accord shows us in detail what a two-state resolution would look like that allows both the Israelis and Palestinians to realize their own rights to self-determination and security in the homelands of their respective people.
- The Accord has received widespread international support as an important model of conciliation by many Arab leaders, the European Union, and many U.S. elected officials, including prominent Jews with strong pro-Israel records, such as Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Representative Rahm Emanuel (D-IL).
- The Geneva Accord is being used as an organizing tool among Palestinians and Israelis, as well as in the American Jewish community, to reawaken awareness that a negotiated two-state resolution of the conflict is possible and that this is the only resolution that offers both sides a very real stake in the future, a resolution in which they would have an investment in protecting.
- Prime Minister Sharon's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip came in response to the international recognition and outpouring of support for the Geneva Accord. Sharon shifted the focus away from bilateral negotiations and territorial compromise to a plan that could either be used as a step towards a negotiated resolution or a plan to indefinitely delay the only process that can resolve the conflict in an internationally binding agreement—a negotiated final status resolution.

2. What is the relationship between the Geneva Accord and the Road Map?

- The Geneva Accord is not an alternative to the Road Map; it is a model for its third and final stage. The Road Map, a peace proposal from 2003 designed and supported by the Quartet (European Union, United States, United Nations, and Russia), has three distinct phases: (1) end the violence and terrorism; (2) reach a final comprehensive resolution of the conflict 2005; and (3) create an independent and democratic Palestinian state. As Naomi Chazan told the participants in our national conference last year, "The Road Map ends in Geneva."

3. Is there support for the Geneva Accord and other peace initiatives among Israelis and Palestinians?

- Presently 183,200 Israelis and 140,000 Palestinians support the One Voice Initiative which is based on the same underlying principles as the Geneva Accord (as of 5/25/2004). This is the numeric equivalent to over nine million Americans.
- Public opinion polls in Israel and the Palestinian territories consistently show 60%-70% support for a two-state resolution based roughly on the 1967 borders.

4. How will the terms of the Accord be enforced to assure Israel's security?

- Those who took part in the Geneva negotiations on the Israeli side include many former high-ranking military and security professionals who believe that Israel's security will be enhanced, not compromised, by the Geneva Accord. They unanimously agree that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will have an easier time protecting the citizens of Israel when there is a clear border between Israel and the Palestinian state. A fence along agreed-

upon borders will serve the purpose of separating Israelis and Palestinians and will subsequently be much more defensible than a fence where Israelis and Palestinians live on both sides.

- The security arrangements agreed to by the Geneva Accord include a demilitarized Palestinian state, Israeli control of Palestinian airspace, international monitoring by a multilateral force under U.S. control, two early-warning stations in the West Bank, cooperation in dismantling terrorist organizations, and a limited but continued Israeli military presence in the Jordan Rift Valley.

5. Can we trust an agreement signed by the Palestinians, given their internal leadership crisis?

- The Palestinian Authority is internationally recognized as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and is thus the entity with which Israel must deal. Subsequently, it is critical that any resolution include strong and specific security arrangements, in addition to a detailed plan for enforcing them. It is not a matter of trust, but of reaching a viable and enforceable agreement that will become law and thus supersede the power of any one leader. The Geneva Accord can potentially do this.
- While we would welcome the emergence of a more accountable Palestinian leadership, it is unlikely that will happen under the desperate current conditions, which compel extremism. If a negotiated compromise were in progress, the potential tangible benefits of peace to the Palestinian populace would likely strengthen the forces of moderation and hasten the emergence of leadership therein. But time is not on our side—the longer the current ‘war’ continues the greater the support for Palestinian extremists, Hamas in particular.
- Peace-making is an inherently risky undertaking because, by definition, you make peace with your enemies. Although we have come to take for granted the endurance of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, which has never once been violated, prior to the signing at Camp David, Egypt was considered a dangerous enemy, against whom Israel had fought four bloody wars. In fact, when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his historic trip to Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin stationed sharp shooters on the roofs surrounding the runway, in case the trip proved to be a military hoax. Undeniably, the acceptance of this peace treaty entailed great risk and sacrifice for both parties, but has proved well worth it. Likewise, the value of taking a risk to implement a bilateral agreement along the lines of the Geneva Accord far outweighs that of indefinitely perpetuating the current cycle of violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

6. What can American Jews do to support the Geneva Accord?

There is a great deal American Jews can do to help build a large movement of those of us who support a negotiated agreement and a genuine, viable and long-lasting two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- Support American Jewish peace organizations, including Brit Tzedek v'Shalom.
- Join Brit Tzedek's email distribution list, sign our petitions, and respond to our Action Alerts. Sign up at www.btvshalom.org. Stand up and be counted in all the possible ways. Always try to push yourself one tiny step beyond your comfort zone (e.g., "I never sign petitions...")
- Find others in your community who agree with you, and together, speak out to your rabbis and other community leaders about the need to air all points of view with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Join Brit Tzedek at www.btvshalom.org and make a tangible contribution to our work towards a negotiated, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and encourage others to do the same. Get involved at the local or national level with organized efforts to build an alternative Jewish community voice. Become active in your local Brit Tzedek chapter, or, where there isn't one, start your own. For more information, write to chapter@btvshalom.org.
- Keep current on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Subscribe to Brit Tzedek's daily newsdigest by sending a request to info@btvshalom.org or view the Meretz USA weekly news digest at <http://www.meretzusa.org/>

Recent Israeli-Palestinian Peace Initiatives

The past year has seen the emergence of a series of bold and bilateral Israeli and Palestinian citizen's initiatives. These three initiatives share two very important characteristics: (1) they are all the outgrowth of joint negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians; and (2) they all set two states for two peoples as the ultimate goal. The development of these models show the potential for redrawing the line of the conflict so that it is clear that the game plan no longer has to be Israelis versus Palestinians, locked in a zero-sum game in which there is one winner and one loser. These models of conciliation have, in no uncertain terms, shown Israelis and Palestinians alike that there is both a partner and a path to peace; there is someone to talk to and something to talk about.

Geneva Accord

- URL:** http://www.heskem.org.il/index_en.asp
- Negotiators:** Lead architects former Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo and former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin were joined by many recognized political, security, and grassroots leaders from both sides.
- Method:** The Accord is a jointly negotiated draft proposal for a future permanent peace agreement that addresses every detail, including the conflict's most intransigent issues. The draft proposal has been mailed to every Israeli home, and it has been printed in Arabic in large circulation daily newspapers read by Palestinians. It is the centerpiece of an organizing campaign in the region and internationally.
- Supporters:** British Prime Minister Tony Blair; Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak; King Mohammed of Morocco; former United States (U.S.) President Bill Clinton; Nobel Laureates former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela, former Prime Minister of Poland Lech Walesa, and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter; and European Union (E.U.) Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana.

One Voice: Silent No Longer

- URL:** <http://www.silentnolonger.org/>
- Negotiators:** A team of Israeli and Palestinian political, civic, and business leaders who were involved in past Israeli-Palestinian negotiations
- Method:** A one-page, 10-point plan was developed that serves as the basis for a series of questions to be voted on by both Israelis and Palestinians. The results of this extra-governmental multi-stage polling process are intended to demonstrate the prevalence of moderation on both sides. The findings will then be synthesized in order to develop a proposal acceptable to the majority of both peoples.
- Supporters:** In the region: Likud Deputy Public Security Minister Michael Ratzon; Labor lawmaker and former General Matan Vilnai; Shinui Member of Knesset (MK) Etti Livni; former Cabinet Minister Michael Melchior; Chairman Arafat's brother Fathi Arafat; the son of former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Yasser Mahmoud Abbas; Palestinian journalist and Envoy Hanna Siniora; and former MK Mahammed Darwshe. In the U.S: Actors Danny Devito, Rhea Perlman, Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, Jason Alexander; boxer Mohammed Ali; Jewish business and community leader Edgar Bronfman Sr.; and former senior White House Aide and Deputy Cabinet Secretary Stuart Eisenstat.

People's Voice Initiative

- URL:** www.mifkad.org.il/eng/
- Negotiators:** Sari Nusseibeh, President of Al- Quds University, and former PLO member, and Ami Ayalon, former Head of the General Security Service (the Shin Bet).
- Method:** A one-page "Statement of Principles" was developed that addresses the fundamental issues at the core of the conflict, but leaves room for negotiation for the authorized decision-makers. While less detailed, the Statement of Principles outlines a model for resolution that is very similar to that of the Geneva Accord. The Statement of Principles serves as the basis for a petition signed by both Israelis and Palestinians. The signatures will then be submitted to the leaders of both sides as a tangible expression of the will of the majority of both peoples, and with a view to changing diplomatic policy.
- Supporters:** 181,360 Israelis and 140,000 Palestinians have signed (as of 5/19/04). Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz met with Ayalon and Nusseibeh in October 2003 and has praised the plan.

The Road Map Explained

The Road Map is a performance-based and goal-driven proposal for peace developed in 2003 under the auspices of the Quartet [the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia]. This plan designates clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks. The Road Map lays out reciprocal steps by the two parties in the areas of political structures, security, economic arrangements, humanitarian concerns, and institution-building. The end goal is a negotiated settlement resulting in a final and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state existing side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors.

Phase I: Ending Terror and Violence, Normalizing Palestinian Life, and Building Palestinian Institutions

- Palestinian leadership issues an unequivocal statement of Israel's right to exist in "peace and security" and calls for an end to violence and terrorism.
- Israeli leadership issues an unequivocal statement of support for an independent, viable Palestinian state and calls for an end to violence against Palestinians.
- Palestinians undertake comprehensive political reform in preparation for statehood, including appointing a prime minister, drafting a constitution, and holding free elections
- Israeli government dismantles settlement outposts, freezes settlement activity, and takes measures to improve the humanitarian situation.
- Palestinians and Israelis resume security cooperation to end violence, terrorism, and incitement through a restructured and effective Palestinian security service.

Phase II: Transition

- Following elections, the new democratic Palestinian constitution is ratified.
- Ongoing Palestinian institution building and political reform is emphasized.
- Quartet convenes an international conference to support Palestinian economic recovery and to launch preliminary negotiations on the provisional borders of an independent Palestinian state.
- The emphasis in laying out the aforementioned borders would be on territorial contiguity.
- Comprehensive security performance continues with an enhanced international monitoring role by the Quartet.
- Quartet members promote international recognition of Palestinian state, including possible UN membership.

Phase III: Permanent Status Agreement and End of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- At an international conference convened by the Quartet, Israelis and Palestinians reach a final and comprehensive permanent status agreement that ends their conflict through a negotiated settlement based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397.
- Final agreement will resolve all outstanding issues, including refugees, the status of Jerusalem, settlements, and resource allocation.
- Arab states accept full and normal relations with Israel and security for all states in the region in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.
- Advances in reform and stabilization of Palestinian institutions and economy are sustained and consolidated.
- Effective Palestinian security performance will be maintained, as will continued security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian state.

Summarized from "A Performance Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli Palestinian Conflict" issued by the US Department of State on April 30, 2003

Brief Chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

1882

The first wave of modern Jewish immigration to Palestine, spurred largely by Zionism, begins. The immigrants were predominantly from Europe, and they joined a small but longstanding Jewish community already in place.

1896

Theodore Herzl, an Austrian journalist publishes a book *Der Judenstaat*, "The State of the Jews" calling for a Jewish state to solve the growing problem of anti-Semitism.

1897

The first Zionist conference convenes in Basel, Switzerland. Political Zionism begins.

1906-1914

After a failed revolution in Russia and a wave of pogroms and intensified anti-Semitism, a new wave of immigration to Palestine begins motivated by the principles of Socialist Zionism.

1917

Britain issues the Balfour Declaration calling for "support of the establishment in Palestine of a national homeland for the Jewish people."

1920

Britain assumes mandatory power over Palestine, Iraq, and Transjordan (modern day Jordan), formerly held by the Ottoman Empire which has ruled the region since 1516.

1947

The United Nations (UN) Special Committee on Palestine recommends that the territory be divided into two separate Arab and Jewish states, with Jerusalem and vicinity maintained as an international zone under permanent UN trusteeship. The British cabinet approves this recommendation (effectively setting an end-date for the Mandate), as do Zionist leaders, the United States (US), and the UN (November 29).

1948

The State of Israel is proclaimed, in accord with the UN plan for partition, as British withdrawal begins (May 14).

Five Arab countries—Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon—invade Israel simultaneous to United States (U.S.) recognition of the new state. War ensues, during which 6,000 Israelis and an undisclosed number of Arabs were killed and 700,000 Palestinians displaced (May 15).

1949

Israel signs formal ceasefires with Egypt, Transjordan, and Syria, leaving Israel in control of about 80% of the former Palestinian Mandate; Egypt in control of the Gaza Strip; Jordan in control of the West Bank; and Jerusalem divided between Israel and Jordan, west and east respectively. These armistice lines form the basis for what becomes known as the "Green Line."

1950

In 1950, the Knesset passes the "Law of Return," which entitles any Jew to full Israeli citizenship.

1950-1967

A military government is imposed on most Arabs living within Israeli borders.

1956

Israel attacks Egypt, ostensibly to provide diplomatic cover for a British and French invasion. The invasion had been intended to reopen the Suez Canal to international commerce after Egypt's President Nasser had nationalized it.

1964

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is founded, with the stated aim of "destroying Israel."

1967

Israel launches a preemptive attack against Egypt, initiating the start of the "Six Day War," which also engages Jordan and Syria. In six days, Israel seizes control over the Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, Syria's Golan Heights, and the entirety of the West Bank including East Jerusalem which had been held by Jordan. The war roughly triples the amount of land Israel holds.

Israel refuses to withdraw to 1949 lines due to the absence of direct negotiation with its Arab neighbors, before which they must recognize Israel's "statehood, sovereignty, and international rights." The Arab countries continue to refuse Israel formal recognition.

Jerusalem is "unified" under Israeli control and declared to be Israel's "eternal, undivided capital." Israel announces that it will move settlers into the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem (November).

UN Resolution 242 is passed, calling for the "withdrawal from the territories occupied in the recent conflict... [and] the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure recognized boundaries free from threat or acts of force." This resolution, with its formula of "land for peace," becomes the basis for all subsequent peace negotiations between Israel, the Palestinians, and surrounding Arab states (November).

1970

In response to the PLO's direct challenges to King Hussein of Jordan's authority and power (attempted assassination and attacks on Israel from Jordan), the King declares war on the PLO, and the ensuing battle causes 3,000 deaths, ultimately forcing the PLO to move its headquarters and operations to Lebanon.

1973

Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, initiating the "Yom Kippur War." Despite being caught off-guard, Israel, with the help of a massive airlift of weapons from the US, gains more land than it loses.

The UN Security Council passes Resolution 338, which calls for an immediate cease-fire and the immediate commencement of negotiations toward the implementation of UN Resolution 242 (October).

Israel reaches a ceasefire agreement with Syria and Egypt, signed on October 29th and November 11th, respectively, following substantial "shuttle diplomacy" by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

The Arab oil embargo begins against the US in retaliation for aid to Israel during the Yom Kippur War (October). It lasts for five months.

Approximately 1500 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1974

Israel, Syria, and Egypt agree to disengagement plans brokered by Kissinger.

1978

After lengthy negotiations mediated by President Jimmy Carter, Israel and Egypt sign the Camp David Agreements, entailing the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and full recognition and relations between the two. Another clause included a vague plan vis à vis the inhabitants of the occupied territories to resolve the location of boundaries and security arrangements and to foster "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." The cabinets of both countries approve the agreements, but Egypt is expelled from the Arab League.

1982

Israel invades Lebanon in retaliation for repeated attacks on Israel launched by the PLO from Lebanon. Israel's stated intent is to establish a 25-mile security zone between the two countries, but the IDF advances much further into Lebanon and occupies the capital, Beirut. While Israel withdraws from Beirut in October 1983, the IDF continues to occupy Southern Lebanon until June of 1985, at which point a security zone on the border between the two countries is established.

The PLO is evacuated from Lebanon to Tunis under cover of United States marines (August).

1987

The *intifada*, a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the territories, begins in Gaza and spreads quickly to the West Bank. The sustained and widespread uprising lasts five years and marks the first time that those Palestinians living in the occupied territories become significantly involved in the movement against Israeli occupation.

1988

PLO leader Yasser Arafat condemns all forms of terrorism and recognizes the State of Israel within pre-1967-borders. Israel continues to refuse negotiations with the PLO, but the United States opens a dialogue with the PLO.

Jordan renounces all claims to the West Bank, paving the way for a Palestinian State.

1991

The Madrid Peace Conferences commence under the auspices of the US and the USSR, marking the first time that Israel and its Arab neighbors (with the exception of Egypt) engage in face-to-face negotiations. The Palestinians are represented in a joint delegation from Jordan.

94,100 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1993

Secret negotiations between Israel and the PLO culminate in the signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat. Israel recognizes the PLO and gives it limited autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In return, the PLO gives up its claims to Israel's territory as defined by its borders before the 1967 war and agrees to end the *intifada* and establish security in the West Bank. The agreement between the two sides to make gradual steps towards a final settlement of the conflict becomes known as the "Oslo Peace Process."

116,400 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1994

Israel and the PLO sign the Cairo agreement, in which the two sides agree on limited self-rule for the Palestinians in the West Bank city of Jericho and 60% of Gaza (May).

Arafat leaves Tunis to take up residence in Gaza and assumes his new position as head of the Palestinian Authority, the representative body formed under the Oslo agreements.(PA) (July).

Jordan and Israel sign a comprehensive peace treaty (October).

1995

Israel and the PA sign the "Oslo II" Agreement, which creates a schedule for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from six West Bank cities and 400 villages by early 1996, after which Palestinian presidential and parliamentary elections would be held (September). The elections are held on January 20, 1996, and Yasser Arafat is elected President of the PA.

PM Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by an orthodox Jewish student opposed to Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank (November).

1997

Israel and the PA sign the Hebron Agreement, according to which Israel will hand over 80% of the West Bank city of Hebron to Palestinian rule, but maintain the remainder because several hundred Jewish settlers live there amongst 20,000 Palestinians. The city is to be monitored by a temporary international presence.

1998

Israel and the PA sign the Wye River Memorandum, outlining further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, after US pressure to end 18 months of stagnation on the Israeli-Palestinian peace track.

1999

The Israeli Knesset votes to move elections forward to May 17 after the government coalition collapses in disarray over implementation of the Wye deal. Israel suspends the Wye timetable.

The Israelis and Palestinians sign a revised deal aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process, based on the stalled Wye River Accord.

Final status talks commence between the Israelis and Palestinians, but are stalled by a Palestinian withdrawal in protest over the building of new settlements in the West Bank. Israel responds the following day by announcing a freeze on the addition of 1,800 more houses to Jewish settlements around Jerusalem.

2000

A summit between Israelis and Palestinians breaks up over a disagreement on a promised Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank under the revised Wye Accord. Israel hands over West Bank territory to the Palestinians amounting to 6.1% of the West Bank --the last part of a transfer originally agreed upon at Wye River (February).

A peace summit at Camp David in the United States ends without agreement after two weeks of intensive negotiations. The negotiators are unable to come up with a formula to reconcile their competing claims to

Jerusalem. Palestinians and Israelis accuse each other of intransigence, but promise to continue working towards a permanent peace agreement (July).

Ariel Sharon, the leader of the right-wing Israeli opposition, visits the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). Against the background of a failing peace process, the visit sparks a violent and sustained uprising known as the second *intifada* (September).

The US presides over a summit at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh which produces a plan to bring to an end weeks of Palestinian-Israeli violence. The plan unravels soon after it is agreed upon (October).

2001

Six days of intense peace talks between Israel and the PA in Taba, Egypt end without an agreement that Israeli Prime Minister Barak had hoped to present to voters for his re-election February 6th (January).

Ariel Sharon is elected Prime Minister of Israel (February).

Israeli troops seize territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority, including Gaza. This marks the first time that Israel reoccupies land ceded in the course of the Oslo peace process (April).

The Mitchell Commission, assembled by former President Bill Clinton to investigate the causes of violence and make recommendations, calls for an immediate ceasefire, an end to settlement expansion, and a more determined action against violence by the PA. The goal of the commission is to facilitate confidence-building measures and ultimately renew negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians (May).

The Israeli security cabinet votes to give the IDF a broader license to target Palestinian terrorists. Formerly, the IDF was only permitted to assassinate terrorists actually en route to committing an attack. The new guidelines allow the IDF to act against known terrorists even if they are not on the verge of committing an attack (July).

President Bush announces that he is prepared to back the creation of a Palestinian state (October).

208,300 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

2002

Israeli warplanes fire missiles at and level the headquarters of the Palestinian police in the city of Ramallah and shell Arafat's compound. Israel occupies major Palestinian cities for various periods of time, including Jenin, Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, and Tulkarm, with the stated purpose of destroying terrorist infrastructure (August).

2003

The European Union (EU), Russia, the UN, and the US introduce the "Road Map for Peace," which is a three-phase plan to: (1) end the violence and terrorism; (2) reach a final and comprehensive resolution of the conflict by 2005; and (3) create an independent and democratic Palestinian state.

The Aqaba Summit convenes in Jordan between Israel and the Palestinians, mediated by the United States. Israel agrees to support the formation of a Palestinian state and to remove "unauthorized outposts" in the Occupied Territories.

Ami Ayalon, the former chief of the General Security Services (Shin Bet), and Sari Nusseibeh, the President of Al-Quds University, negotiate a broad statement of principles on which a two-state resolution could be based. It becomes the basis for the People's Voice Initiative petition campaign.

The Geneva Accord, a model peace plan negotiated by moderate Israeli and Palestinian political and security leaders, is introduced. In December, the details of the plan are published in wide-circulation Palestinian newspapers and mailed to every Israeli address as the basis of a grassroots campaign.

2004

The One Voice ballot initiative is launched with the intent that through a referendum Palestinians and Israelis can demonstrate to one another the prevalence of moderation on both sides (February).

Prime Minister Sharon and President Bush discuss Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The US publicly supports withdrawal and for the first time announces that it does not support a Palestinian right of return (May).

In a party-wide referendum, the members of Prime Minister Sharon's Likud party overwhelmingly vote down his proposal for Israel to withdraw from Gaza (May).

108th CONGRESS
1st Session
S. RES. 276 (introduced November 25, 2003)
H. RES. 479 (introduced December 8, 2003)

Expressing the sense of the Senate/House of Representatives regarding fighting terror and embracing efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace.

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate/House of Representatives regarding fighting terror and embracing efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. Whereas ending the violence and terror that have devastated Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza since September 2000 is in the vital interests of the United States, Israel, and the Palestinians;

Whereas ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict strengthens extremists and opponents of peace throughout the region, including those who seek to undermine efforts by the United States to stabilize Iraq and those who want to see conflict spread to other nations in the region;

Whereas more than 3 years of violence, terror, and escalating military engagement have demonstrated that military means alone will not solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

Whereas despite mutual mistrust, anger, and pain, courageous and credible Israelis and Palestinians have come together in a private capacity to develop serious model peace initiatives, like the People's Voice Initiative, One Voice, and the Geneva Accord;

Whereas those initiatives, and other similar private efforts, are founded on the determination of Israelis and Palestinians to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity, and security, based on a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace and achieving historic reconciliation;

Whereas those initiatives demonstrate that both Israelis and Palestinians have a partner for peace, that both peoples want to end the current vicious stalemate, and that both peoples are prepared to make necessary compromises in order to achieve peace;

Whereas each of the private initiatives addresses the fundamental requirements of both peoples, including preservation of the Jewish, democratic nature of Israel with secure and defensible borders and the creation of a viable Palestinian state; and

Whereas such peace initiatives demonstrate that there are solutions to the conflict and present precious opportunities to end the violence and restart fruitful peace negotiations: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate--

1. applauds the courage and vision of Israelis and Palestinians who are working together to conceive pragmatic, serious plans for achieving peace;
2. calls on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to capitalize on the opportunity offered by these peace initiatives; and
3. urges the President of the United States to encourage and embrace all serious efforts to move away from violent military stalemate toward achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace.

SENATE SPONSORS AND COSPONSORS (Effective 5/04)

Senator Chafee, Lincoln D. [RI]
Senator Dodd, Christopher J. [CT]
Senator Feinstein, Dianne [CA]
Senator Jeffords, James M. [VT]
Senator Lautenberg, Frank R. [NJ]
Senator Leahy, Patrick J. [VT]
Senator Nelson, Bill [FL]

CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SPONSORS AND COSPONSORS (Effective 5/04)

Rep Baird, Brian [WA -3]
Rep Baldwin, Tammy [WI -2]
Rep Blumenauer, Earl [OR -3]
Rep Carson, Julia [IN-7]
Rep Clay, Wm. Lacy [MO -1]
Rep Davis, Danny K. [IL -7]
Rep DeFazio, Peter A. [OR -4]
Rep Delahunt, William D. [MA -10]
Rep Dingell, John D. [MI -15]
Rep Farr, Sam [CA-17]
Rep Filner, Bob [CA -51]
Rep Gonzalez, Charles A. [TX -20]
Rep Grijalva, Raul M. [AZ -7]
Rep Hinchey, Maurice D. [NY -22]
Rep Houghton, Amo [NY -29]
Rep Jackson, Jesse L., Jr. [IL -2]
Rep Johnson, Eddie Bernice [TX -30]
Rep Kaptur, Marcy [OH -9]
Rep Kelly, Sue W. [NY -19]
Rep Kind, Ron [WI -3]
Rep Kucinich, Dennis J. [OH -10]
Rep Leach, James A. [IA -2]
Rep Lee, Barbara [CA -9]

Rep Markey, Edward J. [MA -7]
Rep McCarthy, Karen [MO -5]
Rep McCollum, Betty [MN -4]
Rep McDermott, Jim [WA -7]
Rep McGovern, James P. [MA-3]
Rep Millender-McDonald, Juanita [CA -37]
Rep Miller, George [CA -7]
Rep Moran, James P. [VA -8]
Rep Norton, Eleanor Holmes [DC]
Rep Olver, John W. [MA -1]
Rep Owens, Major R. [NY -11]
Pascrell, Bill, Jr. [NJ -8]
Rep Pitts, Joseph R. [PA -16]
Rep Price, David E. [NC -4]
Rep Rahall, Nick J., II [WV -3]
Rep Simmons, Rob [CT -2]
Rep Solis, Hilda L. [CA -32]
Rep Stark, Fortney Pete [CA -13]
Rep Tierney, John F. [MA -6]
Rep Udall, Mark [CO -2]
Rep Udall, Tom [NM -3]
Rep Walsh, James T. [NY -25]
Rep Woolsey, Lynn C. [CA-6]

THE SPIRIT OF GENEVA: LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

PURPOSE

Letter-writing is an important tool to bring the message of the Spirit of Geneva campaign to Congress, the Administration, and Jewish community leaders. We believe this letter writing campaign will:

- Heighten our visibility as an organization.
- Mobilize our members and supporters.
- Spread the word about the "Spirit of Geneva."
- Exert pressure on the particular people we choose to target.

LETTERS

Brit Tzedek has developed four sample letters. Chapters should address the letters to the appropriate Senators, Representatives, and Jewish community leaders. The text can also be customized to your audience if appropriate.

Letters can be printed on blank paper or Brit Tzedek stationary. They can also be customized by individual letter writers by hand at the meeting using the model or by word processor. The latter is recommended if the letter writer can use letterhead with an impressive affiliation, i.e. a Jewish organization or a university.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Letters to Senators and Representatives can be mailed either to their home district or their Washington, D.C. offices, faxed, or delivered by hand. Mail to home district offices arrives much more quickly than mail to Capitol Hill, where mail is subject to elaborate security.

To get contact information for your state's Congressional delegation, go to <http://www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm>. Simply click on your state and all members of your state's congressional delegation will appear in a list. Click on each member's name to find their home district and Capitol Hill office addresses and fax numbers.

If you expect residents from different congressional districts at an event, you can customize letters to a few different House Members or provide information for participants to do it themselves.

We encourage you to list the specific contact information for your state's congressional delegation on your chapter website.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR JEWISH LEADERS

We encourage each chapter to decide which Jewish leaders in your local community it makes sense to target. Examples are the leaders of the local Federation, Board of Rabbis, and Jewish Community Relations Council.

DISTRIBUTION AND MAILING/FAXING

Distribute the letters at house parties, chapter events, and any other occasions in which time can be set aside to thoughtfully write and send them out.

We are asking chapters to supply stamps, envelopes, and printing costs. Money can be raised at an event, or individuals can be asked to contribute one dollar for every letter sent.

At each event, we recommend setting aside time for writing the letters. To assure that the letters are mailed/faxed in a timely manner, it is preferable if someone from the chapter is responsible for collecting the letters in individual envelopes and mailing them.

TRACKING LETTERS

It is preferable if someone from the Chapter can track the number and destinations of the letters and report this to the national office.

Dear Representative _____:

As an American Jew who is deeply concerned with the future, security, and democratic nature of the State of Israel, and who condemns the use of violence on both sides, **I urge you to support the recent peace proposals—the Geneva Accord, the People's Voice Initiative (a.k.a. Ayalon-Nusseibeh Plan) and the One Voice campaign—that resulted from impressive efforts of recognized Israeli and Palestinian leaders.**

All of these recent initiatives demonstrate that a negotiated, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only possible, but well within reach now. They convincingly demonstrate to people on both sides of the conflict that there is someone to talk to and something to talk about.

Polls have shown that a solid majority of Israelis and Palestinians support the principles of pragmatic compromise which underlie these grassroots initiatives. Recent surveys have also shown broad support for these initiatives amongst American Jews and Arabs.

A renewed sense of hope is emerging that this intractable and violent conflict can finally be resolved. However, it will take the concerted efforts of the United States government to make these peace initiatives a reality.

As your constituent, I urge you to support these bold citizens' peace initiatives by:

- Co-sponsoring House Resolution 479, which applauds the efforts of Israelis and Palestinians working privately toward peace and urges President Bush and Israeli and Palestinian leaders to embrace these efforts.
- Writing a letter to President Bush and Secretary of State Powell urging the Administration to provide strong support for these initiatives.
- Publicly indicating your support by placing a statement in the Congressional Record and communicating your support to your constituents.

I look forward to learning about the positive steps you are taking to insure that Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

(indicate affiliations, particularly Jewish ones, and also membership in Brit Tzedek when signing the letter)

Dear Senator _____:

As an American Jew who is deeply concerned with the future, security, and democratic nature of the State of Israel, and who condemns the use of violence on both sides, **I urge you to support the recent peace proposals—the Geneva Accord, the People’s Voice Initiative (a.k.a. Ayalon-Nusseibeh Plan) and the One Voice campaign—that have come out of impressive efforts of recognized Israeli and Palestinian leaders.**

All of these recent initiatives show that a negotiated, peaceful two-state resolution among Israelis and Palestinians is not only possible, but well within reach now. They convincingly demonstrate to people on both sides of the conflict that there is someone to negotiate with and something to negotiate about.

Polls have shown that a solid majority of Israelis and Palestinians support the principles of pragmatic compromise which underlie these grassroots initiatives. Recent surveys have also shown broad support for these initiatives among American Jews and Arabs.

A renewed sense of hope is emerging that this intractable and violent conflict can finally be resolved. However, it will take the concerted efforts of the United States government to make these peace initiatives a reality.

As your constituent, I urge you to support these bold citizens’ peace initiatives by:

- Co-sponsoring Senate Resolution 276, which applauds the efforts of Israelis and
- Palestinians working privately toward peace and urges President Bush and Israeli and Palestinian leaders to embrace these efforts.
- Writing a letter to President Bush and Secretary of State Powell urging the Administration to provide strong support for these initiatives.
- Publicly indicating your support by placing a statement in the Congressional Record and communicating your support to your constituents.

I look forward to learning about the positive steps you are taking to insure that Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

(indicate affiliations, particularly Jewish ones, and also membership in Brit Tzedek when signing the letter)

Dear Mr. President:

As an American Jew who is deeply concerned with the future stability, security, and democratic nature of the State of Israel, and who condemns the violence on both sides, **I urge you to seriously direct the energies of this Administration back to real implementation of the Road Map, and to support the new peace initiatives that have come from the impressive joint efforts of recognized Israeli and Palestinians.**

These recent initiatives show that negotiating a peaceful two-state resolution between Israelis and Palestinians is not only possible but well within reach. They convincingly demonstrate that there is someone to negotiate with and something to negotiate about.

Polls have shown that a solid majority of Israelis and Palestinians support the principles of pragmatic compromise which underlie these grassroots initiatives. Recent surveys have also shown broad support for these initiatives among American Jews and Arabs.

A renewed sense of hope is emerging that this intractable and violent conflict can finally be resolved. However, it will take the concerted efforts of the United States government to make these peace initiatives a reality.

As you know, some members of Congress (via Resolutions introduced by Representative Louis Capps in the House and Senator Dianne Feinstein in the Senate), sensing both the urgency of the crisis facing Israel and the unique promise offered by the Geneva Accord, are leading a campaign to reinvigorate the stalled peace process through strong American support for these initiatives.

I urge your administration to support these bold citizens' initiatives by:

- Committing the time and energy it takes to insure that Israelis and Palestinians return to the negotiating table and achieve a comprehensive agreement that represents the interests of both peoples.
- Devoting sufficient resources to enable the Palestinian Authority to effectively combat terrorism.
- Exerting appropriate pressure on the Government of Israel to alter the path of the separation fence/wall so that it does not cut into the future Palestinian State.
- Insisting that the Government of Israel stop the building and expansion of settlements.

The American government can and must make a critical difference right now.
We cannot afford to wait.

Yours truly,

Name

Address

(indicate affiliations, particularly Jewish ones, and also membership in Brit Tzedek when signing the letter)

Dear Mr. (Ms.) _____:

As an American Jew who is deeply concerned with the future, security, and democratic nature of the State of Israel, and who condemns the use of violence on both sides, **I urge you to support the recent peace proposals—the Geneva Accord, the People’s Voice Initiative (a.k.a. Ayalon-Nusseibeh Plan) and the One Voice campaign—that have come out of impressive efforts of recognized Israeli and Palestinian leaders.**

All of these recent initiatives show that a negotiated, peaceful two-state resolution among Israelis and Palestinians is not only possible, but well within reach now. They convincingly demonstrate to people on both sides of the conflict that there is someone to negotiate with and something to negotiate about.

Polls have shown that a solid majority of Israelis and Palestinians support the principles of pragmatic compromise which underlie these grassroots initiatives. Recent surveys have also shown broad support for these initiatives amongst American Jews and Arabs.

A renewed sense of hope is emerging that this intractable and violent conflict can finally be resolved. However, it will take the concerted efforts of the United States government to make these peace initiatives a reality.

I urge you to join in supporting these bold citizens’ initiatives by:

- Speaking out publicly in support of the new peace initiatives.
- Encouraging dialogue and education about these initiatives in your (Jewish institution) (Jewish community).
- Publishing essays in the Jewish and secular press.
- Indicating your support for the initiatives to your Members of Congress.

I look forward to learning about the positive steps you are taking to insure that Israelis and Palestinians can finally live in peace.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

(indicate affiliations, particularly Jewish ones, and also membership in Brit Tzedek when signing the letter)



HOST: _____

DATE: _____

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom House Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Host a house meeting? **Y or N**

Jewish organization affiliation?



Wake up, Sharon — here is a chance for progress

December 4, 2003

Marcia Freedman

“There Is a Partner,” “There Is a Plan” and “Peace is Possible” read the banners adorning the stage at the ceremonies in Geneva inaugurating a new era of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. That is the hope of the Geneva Accord, an extra-governmental final status agreement negotiated by moderate Israelis and Palestinians that specifies every last detail with accompanying maps for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and lasting peace.

As hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians arrived at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva to mark a public commitment to working toward peace once more, the atmosphere was charged with a sense of hope and cautious optimism. That was in sharp contrast to the atmosphere here in Israel, where cab drivers and friends alike can talk of little else than economic hardship, fear and a sense that their government’s policy is bankrupt. The promise of peace and security upon which Ariel Sharon was overwhelmingly elected has turned out to be empty, and Sharon’s approval rating is plummeting downward.

The promise of the Geneva Accord is far from implementation. But what it demonstrates beyond any doubt is that if there was a political will on the part of the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, all outstanding issues can be resolved in a way that meets the basic needs and demands of both sides. The Geneva Accord is the third stage of the Bush administration’s road map to peace. All that remains is to restart good-faith negotiations.

The two-state solution is more than possible. The maps that delineate it have already been drawn. The state of Palestine will occupy 97.5 percent of the West Bank and all of the Gaza Strip. The state of Israel will include slightly expanded borders around Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that will allow three-quarters of the settlers to remain in place. Jerusalem will be divided in accordance with its already separate Arab and Jewish neighborhoods, with each state having sovereignty over its holiest sites. The Palestinians will have no right of return to Israel, but will be entitled to compensation and reparations.

Perhaps the most important thing about the Geneva Accord is the list of those who were involved in the negotiations. On the Israeli side, former Cabinet ministers, current members of the Knesset, and an array of military and security figures were represented in Geneva. On the Palestinian side, representatives of the leadership of both the old guard and the young guard of the Fatah leadership, security officials and those who are very close to Yasser Arafat, including Jabril Rajoub and Abed Rabbo himself. Perhaps most promising is the fact that Arafat himself sent a message of support for the Geneva Accord.

In contrast, the message from the Sharon government was to wholly reject both the details and the spirit of the Geneva Accord. This is not surprising. Ariel Sharon, the architect of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has dedicated his entire career to the dream of the “Greater Land of Israel.” He rejects any territorial compromise that would require the evacuation of even a single settlement. He still believes that there is a military solution in spite of the increasing cost to Israel in life and livelihood. The Geneva Accord is anathema to everything that Sharon stands for. But already one-third of Israelis fully support it, and another third are as yet undecided. Only a third of Israelis agree with Sharon and his right-wing government and the settler movement in opposing it outright.

The Jewish community in the United States bears a special responsibility. Without the active support of the United States, the promise of Geneva cannot be realized. We here in California must get behind the efforts of Sen. Dianne Feinstein to pressure the Bush administration to embrace the Geneva Accord. We must get him to work proactively and with determination to bring both the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel back to the bargaining table.

Marcia Freedman, who was in Geneva for the signing of the Accord, lives part time in Berkeley and part time in Israel. She is a former member of the Knesset and president of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace.

Copyright ©2003, San Francisco Jewish Community Publications Inc., dba J. the Jewish News Weekly of Northern California. All rights reserved.

A Rare Dose of Hope Illuminates Switzerland

January 15, 2004
Steven Masters

As a life-long Zionist, I went to Geneva earlier this month to witness whether it was true that Israelis and Palestinians, who had led their respective military forces against each other, had actually come together to embrace reconciliation and forgiveness.

What I witnessed exceeded any expectations I could have had.

When I came home, however, I was saddened to see critical headlines and articles in the Jewish Exponent, and the low profile given the ceremony in the U.S. mass media.

In Geneva, I met Israeli and Palestinian political, military and security leaders who had struggled through their frustration and anger to complete a comprehensive peace agreement to resolve outstanding claims between the two peoples. The agreement included solutions to issues such as the fate of Palestinian refugees and the sacred places in Jerusalem's Old City.

For me, the highlight of the ceremony was the emotional high shared by the Israeli and Palestinian delegations as they stood together and received a standing ovation from the crowd. As Israeli Yossi Beilin and Palestinian Yasser Abd Rabbo beamed, it felt as if the entire room joined in embracing these courageous peacemakers.

I knew that the negotiations had been contentious because we saw video clips of difficult sessions, where negotiators were unmistakably tense and frustrated. All of that was behind them. This was especially poignant when Israeli Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak and Palestinian Brig. Gen. Zuheir Manasra stood together on the stage; during the first intifada, Shahak had signed the order placing Manasra in administrative detention.

As a witness, I want to report the following. My ears are sensitive to anti-Israel rhetoric, and I did not hear any from the speakers in Switzerland. Israelis, world leaders and Palestinians called for an end to Palestinian terror. Rabbo devoted much of his talk to a special appeal to world Jewry to join together to make the spirit of Geneva a reality.

Another claim I've read is that the initiative undermines Israeli democracy. What I saw in Geneva was democracy in action. In the face of three years of relentless violence and without any success at sustaining meaningful negotiations, the architects of the accord demonstrated their patriotism by reaching across the divide, and exploding the myths that have kept peace negotiations moribund since the collapse of the talks facilitated by President Clinton.

The Geneva Accord has brought an end to the accepted wisdom in Israel that "there is no one to talk to and nothing to talk about."

A poll from the Baker Institute for Public Policy found that 53 percent of the Israelis and almost 56 percent of the Palestinians support the spirit of Geneva. A similar peace initiative called the People's Voice — launched by former Mossad Director Ami Ayalon and Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Sari Nusseibeh — has garnered signatures from some 129,000 Israelis and 70,000 Palestinians.

Today, Israel is a nation whose citizens share an increasing sense of despair about their government's failure to protect them from suicide bombings and terrorist strikes via military actions alone. The Geneva Accord has provided a rare dose of hope for a future of security.

Israel's friends in Congress, such as Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), sensing both the urgency of the security crisis facing Israel and the unique promise offered by the Geneva initiative, introduced congressional resolutions to support the spirit of the Geneva initiative.

The Philadelphia Jewish community should raise its collective voice to urge our congressional delegation to co-sponsor these resolutions — and extend full U.S. diplomatic support for this vital peace initiative.

Steven Masters of Philadelphia is the national chair for advocacy and public policy of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace.

FORWARD

Geneva Coalition To Push Peace Initiative

New York Office Will Focus on Influencing Public Opinion in United States

April 30, 2004

Marc Perelman

The authors of the Geneva peace initiative are trying to revive their advocacy campaign just as the Bush administration is endorsing Ariel Sharon's Gaza disengagement plan.

The group, an ad hoc coalition of Israeli and Palestinian politicians, academics and retired military and security officials, is opening an office in New York that will coordinate efforts to influence American political decision-makers, Jewish groups and public opinion.

"We want to increase our exposure to the media, think tanks, Congress and the American Jewish community," said Gadi Baltiansky, the director of Education for Peace, an Israeli non-profit that coordinates Geneva outreach efforts to Israelis.

The American effort comes just as the Bush administration seems to have thrown its weight behind Sharon's vision of taking unilateral steps in the absence of a credible negotiating partner. The Bush-Sharon plan appears to contrast sharply with the Geneva initiative's premises of a two-state solution negotiated by both parties and based on the 1967 borders.

"It is especially important for us to get our message across, now that the Bush administration has made a critical policy shift by backing the Sharon plan," said Marwan Jilani, the initiative's executive director in the Palestinian territories. "The question now is how to translate our initiative into concrete positions that will influence the administration and the general public."

The initiative's current push appears aimed in part at recapturing momentum lost in the past half-year since the Geneva initiative was first launched, garnering worldwide attention. At the time of the December launch the initiative's leaders were received by Secretary of State Powell, and President Bush saluted it as a positive step. But the administration has since transferred its affections to the Sharon plan.

Yossi Beilin, the main architect of the initiative, claims he never expected a formal endorsement from the administration. Suggesting that the gap between his stance and the administration's is not as wide as commonly perceived, he questions the widespread assumption that Sharon and Bush see eye-to-eye. "I believe President Bush thinks neither Sharon or Arafat can bring a deal," he told the Forward.

Beilin stressed that the Geneva team continued to have regular contacts with the State Department's two top Middle East policy officials, Assistant Secretary of State William Burns and his deputy David Satterfield.

At the same time, Beilin and his colleagues emphasize the influence, even if a contrarian one, that the Geneva initiative has had on Israeli policy, noting that Sharon himself admitted he was presenting his own plan in order to prevent the kind of outcome envisioned by the Geneva understandings.

The Geneva team has also been meeting with members of Congress, as well as former President Clinton and his former national security adviser Sandy Berger.

In addition, they have had contacts with the John Kerry campaign through Alan Solomont, a top Kerry fundraiser who attended the signing of the initiative in Switzerland last December. In a sign of the

political sensitivities surrounding Middle East issues, Kerry initially endorsed the initiative but has since lined up with Bush to applaud the Sharon plan.

So have most Jewish groups, though Beilin claims a majority of American Jews support the initiative. "The right-wing stance of the Jewish leadership is a problem," he nonetheless acknowledged, noting that even centrist groups such as the Anti-Defamation League have criticized the initiative.

Asked whether the communal leadership was merely following a traditional policy of supporting the Israeli government, Beilin agreed, but said this was "more true" when a Likud government was in power than with a Labor one.

In an indication of the transatlantic divide over the Middle East, the initiative has been widely praised in Europe, where members of the Geneva team have been meeting with top officials over the past few months — even attending a Swedish cabinet meeting.

But while the German parliament unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the initiative, a similar effort in the U.S. Congress — introduced in the Senate by Dianne Feinstein of California and in the House by California Democrat Lois Capps and New York Republican Amos Houghton — has garnered little support.

Despite their international efforts, the Geneva advocates insist their priority is to reach the home audiences in the Middle East.

In Israel, Education for Peace has been organizing town hall meetings, seminars and school visits around the country, as well as advertising in the media. Baltiansky, the director, said the events have drawn significant crowds, pointing to the initiative's high name recognition and to polls still showing a sizable support for it.

The initiative's approval ratings have slipped from 40% last fall to the low 30s in recent months.

Still, Palestinian Geneva advocates are facing a much more daunting task, given what they describe as widespread anger and desperation in Gaza and the West Bank.

"The Palestinian mood is one of despair," said Jilani, formerly an independent member of the Palestinian legislative council. "It is feeding extremism and it is putting pragmatists like us on the defensive."

As the initiative's momentum has slowed, internal debates have opened among its advocates.

One of the issues is the initiative's growing politicization. Its two most prominent members are clearly identified with political movements. Beilin is head of the newly formed Yahad party, and has included the initiative in his party's program. His Palestinian counterpart, Yasser Abed Rabbo, is a longtime Fatah leader who served until recently as Palestinian minister of culture and information.

Giora Inbar, a former Israeli general who helped draft the Geneva document, told the Forward in a recent interview that the initiative's leaders should be trying to remain above the fray and give more prominence to the former senior Israeli security officials in order to attract mainstream support. Among the security officials involved in the Geneva effort in addition to Inbar are former chief of staff Amnon Lipkin Shahak, retired General Shlomo Brom and retired Colonel Shaul Arieli.

"I want to bring Geneva from politics to the civil society," said Inbar, who commanded the Israeli troops in Lebanon before their withdrawal in May 2000. "I love the fact that the initiative is called 'Geneva' rather than 'Beilin-Abed Rabbo' because it would then be painted as a left-wing move, and we need to speak to the center."

Beilin, questioned on Inbar's assertions, countered that "Geneva is politics" and that all the decisions regarding the initiative were made by a steering committee that met regularly.

"We did not do this in a partisan way, but many of us are former negotiators and maybe future ones," he said.

Baltiansky, who served as chief spokesman for the former Labor Prime Minister Ehud Barak, acknowledged that the initiative might be hampered by the fact that it was seen as "Beilin's baby" and that he was a polarizing figure in Israel.

"But," he said, "I really hope that people judge the message rather than the messenger."

The Boston Globe

A New US Movement for Middle East Peace

October 26, 2003

Stephen P. Cohen

With Israeli-Palestinian violence, including the horrible phenomenon of suicide bombing, raging since September 2000, it is often said that the Israeli peace movement has been shattered and reduced to a small coterie of diehards. Recently, though, there has been a modest revival of the Israeli peace camp, including the letter from Israeli pilots who refuse to bomb civilian population centers, the letters of protest from Avrum Burg, former speaker of the Knesset, and now the Geneva Accord reached between remnants of the Israeli left and a group of Palestinian officials and intellectuals.

Now the American Jewish peace camp has to be reenergized. Its importance is crucial, particularly since American Jewish opinion plays a significant role in persuading the Bush administration either to show leadership in the conflict or to pull back from any commitment that might be too costly in electoral terms.

Most American Jews and other Americans agree that suicide attacks must be abandoned. Yet there has been a persistent small voice that has argued that one cannot hope to stop terror unless one also provides the Palestinians with the hope for a just political solution. Whether that small voice can become a powerful force in an American Jewish peace movement in the coming year will be revealed in large measure at a conference this week in Boston.

A group of people from across the country has formed a Jewish peace organization called Brit Tzedek, which is Hebrew for a "covenant of justice." This new organization is made up of people concerned about peace and justice who haven't fit in with the present range of Jewish organizations. Brit Tzedek hopes to carry the message of a reemerging Israeli peace movement into the American political scene. It has made its first slogan "bring the settlers home," indicating its sensitivity to the human obstacle to peace that has been most problematic on the Israeli side.

This stance shows the acuity of Brit Tzedek in entering the greatest breach in the consensus of American Jews who are divided about the settlement issue and especially about the continued building of new settlements even while the "road map" and other peace proposals have been on the table.

It is clear that the strengthening of these settlements saps the belief of any Arab that Israel has the intention of allowing a viable independent Palestinian state to emerge.

Though Brit Tzedek has begun with the call for settlers to come home, it has a broader peace agenda. It has been one of the persistent groups of American Jews supporting the road map, which, for a time was the best hope of breaking the pattern of violence and revenge. Now the road map is in tatters.

There is, however, a new initiative on the table, the Geneva Accord reached by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators operating outside official processes. These understandings are far from an official agreement, but they represent the best news for peace since the *intifada* broke out.

There is, however, a new initiative on the table, the Geneva Accord reached by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators operating outside official processes. These understandings are far from an official agreement, but they represent the best news for peace since the *intifada* broke out.

They are the fruit of indigenous Israeli and Palestinian efforts to resolve the hardest issues that prevented an agreement under President Clinton when they were negotiating officially.

The accord addresses such historical issues as the future of Jerusalem and unresolved issues such as a map and borders, as well as the perennial deal breaker, the Palestinian refugees who have lived in exile since 1947 or 1949. These refugees are now in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria or in refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

If there is to be a revival of peace talks, it will require an American public willing to insist that its president put the Arab-Israeli peace process at the center of his agenda and commit to a just peace between a Palestinian state and the state of Israel.

When Americans make this demand, it will be thanks to groups like Brit Tzedek for taking the lead. They will have to be joined by American Christians, American Muslims, and Americans with no religious commitment but with a strong conviction about peace and justice.

Stephen P. Cohen is President of the Institute for Middle East Peace and Development and national scholar for the Israel Policy Forum.

© Copyright 2003 Globe Newspaper Company.

Proposed Land Exchanges under the Geneva Accord

(boundaries are approximate)

Geneva Agreement

- Annexed to Palestine
- Annexed to Israel

