



Mandy Patinkin

“Who am I
to talk about the
situation in the
Middle East?”



Dear Friend of Israel,

I'm not a professor of Near Eastern Studies. Or a fellow at a prominent think tank. Or a journalist who has observed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the ground. I am not an Israeli. I am an American Jew who cares deeply about a secure, thriving Israel.

I don't think you have to have a Ph.D. in political science to reach three major conclusions about the Arab-Israeli conflict:

- Israel may not be able to reach a negotiated settlement with the current terror-prone Palestinian leadership of Yassir Arafat.
- Israel will not find a satisfactory negotiating partner—someone to replace Arafat – if the Israeli government continues to build and expand settlements in the occupied territories.
- Any solution to the conflict will require vigorous American participation.

That's my lay view. It's also the view of *Shalom Achshav*, Israel's Peace Now movement. And it's also the position of **Americans for Peace Now (APN)**, which represents *Shalom Achshav* in the United States.

By attaching my name to these veteran organizations, I am one additional American Jewish voice strengthening the message that Israel can achieve peace and security—even if it means criticizing the Israeli government when necessary and urging the U.S. Administration to push both sides to abandon activities that are anathema to a final settlement.

Analysts worry that time may be running out to reach a settlement.

Why?

• **Because Israel's continued building of outposts and expansion of settlements is slowly squeezing out the territory where a Palestinian state could exist.** *Shalom Achshav's* Settlements Watch documents the grim facts:

"Today, 102 outposts exist in the occupied territories. (During 2003) the Israeli government continued to avoid fulfilling its promises to dismantle all outposts established since March 2001. In fact, only one outpost of any significance has been dismantled to date.

"In 2003, work began to create permanent settlements out of a number of existing outposts. Twelve outposts were connected to the central electricity system; eight outposts had main roads laid leading to their entrances; and 15 outposts began permanent construction on the ground."

And in February, after questioning by an attorney acting on behalf of *Shalom Achshav*, **the Israeli government admitted for the first time that settlement outposts are being built on Palestinian land** and the Israeli Civil Administration never gave





permission for construction or for residents to move into the outposts that *Shalom Achshav* inquired about.

- **Because the Palestinian population is growing at such a rate that, when coupled with Israel's Arab citizens, Arabs will soon constitute the majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.** If Israel continues its hold on the territories, it may become a Palestinian state by default and lose its Jewish character. And if Israel retains control of the Palestinian population indefinitely, it will lose its democratic character, depriving the majority of the people within its borders of their rights.

- **And because Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is using the security fence now under construction as a way to slice up the Palestinian population in the West Bank.**

As Yossi Alpher, veteran defense analyst and former head of the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, said recently: "Sharon initially rejected the fence idea precisely because of its political ramifications for the settlements that would lie beyond it. Eventually he changed his mind, but only because he believed he could hijack the idea of the fence and run it deep inside the West Bank to encompass as many settlements as possible, then use it to delineate a non-viable Palestinian enclave on about half of the West Bank".

The role of Yassir Arafat in fomenting terror goes without saying. And with vigorous U.S. support, Sharon won his goal of isolating Arafat and forcing changes on the Palestinian Authority. Yet when the bulldozers dismantling Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah ceased their work, Sharon had no political plan to support the first Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas. In the end, Abbas, a serious, credible partner for Israel, was undermined, both by Arafat and by Sharon, who did not permit Abbas any tangible gains to show his people.

The result is that terrorist forces such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, groups that refuse to negotiate with or even recognize Israel, are growing in strength. It almost seems like Sharon doesn't want a viable Palestinian leadership that can negotiate with Israel. Why else did he complete a prisoner swap in February with the Lebanese terror group Hezbollah, releasing 400 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, when he had refused to release these prisoners to Abbas?

As Tom Friedman pointed out in the *New York Times* on February 5, the prisoner exchange was "something he was never ready to do with moderate Palestinian leaders. The message he sent is: use violence, as Hamas and Hezbollah do, and you get results from Israel. Adopt moderation, and you get nothing."

American public opinion is so important to what happens next. The sad reality is that



most American Jewish groups would cry *Gevalt!* if the U.S. government pressured Sharon to get on the peace track, to stop the settlement drive and build Israel's security fence as close as possible to the pre-1967 Green Line. The sad reality is that most American Jewish groups are reluctant to criticize even the most self-destructive policies of Israel.

But I agree with Americans for Peace Now in believing that the stakes are too high to follow Sharon blindly. Sharon, who came to power promising security for Israelis, has not delivered that security and is squandering even the most minimal openings for an agreement with the Palestinians.

That's why the U.S. government must become involved—not only to force the Palestinians to quash the terrorists in their midst, but to let Sharon know in no uncertain terms that the planning and expansion of outposts and settlements must end... That the security fence must adhere to the Green Line as closely as possible, and not become an instrument to forestall a Palestinian state... And that any unilateral acts Sharon may eventually take to evacuate settlements in Gaza must not make future territorial changes more difficult.

Who am I to be advocating these far-reaching actions?

- **I'm no expert**, but the experts—such as four former Shin Bet chiefs—have warned that Ariel Sharon is leading Israel to catastrophe by failing to pursue peace with the Palestinians. "We are heading downhill towards near-catastrophe... If we go on living by the sword, we will continue to wallow in the mud and destroy ourselves," said one of the former chiefs, Yaakov Perry, in a recent interview in the Israeli daily *Yediot Acharonot*.

- **I'm no expert**, but I follow the news from Israel. The recent Geneva Agreement and the Nusseibeih-Ayalon Accord—both bilateral frameworks for peace negotiated by leaders outside of government—prove there is someone to talk with on the Palestinian side. And many recent polls show a majority of both Israelis and Palestinians want peace now.

Like you, I'm an American Jew who loves Israel and wants to see a secure, flourishing, democratic and Jewish state.

That's why I invite you to add your voice to mine and thousands of others in supporting the work of Americans for Peace Now, in my view the most important group fighting for Israel's future.

Join us in telling Prime Minister Sharon and President Bush: *Because we love Israel, we want to see settlements rolled back, not more and more outposts planned or built.*

Join us in telling the international community: *Because we are committed to Israel's security, we want to see a security fence that will help protect Israelis from terrorism,*

but not one that cuts so deeply into the West Bank that it will sacrifice security in favor of settlements, and make a contiguous Palestinian state impossible.

Join us in telling Congress and the Administration: *Because we understand the real dangers that Israel faces, even today, we want Israel to concentrate its military on very real geo-political threats, not on guarding handfuls of settlers in isolated outposts.*

Join us because the dollars that Americans for Peace Now grants to *Shalom Achshav* immediately translates to facts on the ground in Israel—whether it is through a publicity capturing street demonstration for peace or extending the reach of Settlements Watch by allowing it to purchase an armored vehicle. Americans for Peace Now is the only U.S. based charitable organization that has granted millions of dollars to support the moderate, common sense agenda and activities of our Israeli counterparts.

The louder our voice, the better we will be heard in the halls of Congress, where we need to convince its members to support a genuine peace in the Middle East. And in the White House, where we must demonstrate to the Administration that there is wide and deep support for the Road Map, and a need for the president to back up his words with strong action. And in the American Jewish community, where our magazine advertisements and weekly e-mail reports help educate the public about the real facts of life in Israel today.

Join us and make our voice louder as we say to our friends, our families, our rabbis, our community leaders—all of whom love Israel as much as we do: ***The actions of the Sharon government are condemning Israeli Jews to becoming a minority in their own country.***

It doesn't take a Ph.D. to recognize the stark truth. But it will take our voices, and the voices of many others, to send the message that there is another way to ensure Israel's future.

Please make your tax-deductible contribution today to Americans for Peace Now. Exercise your right to speak up about what needs to be done in the Middle East.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this personal message and to further show you just how important it is to me, I have arranged to make it possible for Americans for Peace now to send everyone who donates \$100 or more a free copy of my CD "Mamaloshen" to show you my thanks.

Exercise your right to speak up about what needs to be done in the Middle East.

Sincerely,



Mandy Patinkin



SHALOM ACHSHAV (PEACE NOW)

In 1978, 350 senior army officers came together to call for peace between Israel and Egypt. The subsequent work of these Zionists led to the creation of *Shalom Achshav*. Back then, the notion that peace was a realistic possibility seemed implausible to most people. Yet over the years, and in no small measure because of *Shalom Achshav's* dogged persistence, the national agenda was revolutionized, and Israel has signed treaties with her Arab neighbors that have stood the test of time. Today, *Shalom Achshav* is recognized as Israel's premier peace movement.

AMERICANS FOR PEACE NOW

Just as *Shalom Achshav* is Israel's most potent advocate for a negotiated solution, so Americans for Peace Now (APN) is the premier address in the United States for Americans who support a politically negotiated solution. APN's activities include our Action Network, Government Relations, American Jewish Community Outreach, Media Outreach and Monitoring, Public Outreach, and support of *Shalom Achshav*.

Yes, I want to join with APN to make our voice heard loud and clear.

\$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other _____

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Please send my thank you copy of "Mamaloshen" to:

The above address OR send it instead to:

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A full description of Americans for Peace Now (APN) and its programs, and a financial statement, are available from APN upon request at 1101 14th Street, Washington, DC, 20005. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN FLORIDA 1-800-435-7352.

Maryland residents may obtain information from: Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401. The official registration and financial information of APN may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. INFORMATION FILED WITH THE NEW JERSEY ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL BY CALLING 201-504-6215. New York residents may obtain financial information from the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. Financial information about APN and a copy of its license are available from the North Carolina State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-733-4510. The official registration and financial information of APN may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free in Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Virginia residents may obtain a copy of financial documents from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Consumer Affairs, PO Box 1160, Richmond, VA 23209. Washington State residents may obtain a copy of APN's latest financial report, by contacting Washington Secretary of State at 1-800-332-4483. West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. REGISTRATION WITH, OR A LICENSE FROM, ANY STATE DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.