



When Israel was established in 1948, its leaders proclaimed their desire to live in peace with the Arab countries and people around it and to help improve life

in the region.

Over the next fifty-five years, Israelis made tremendous contributions to the betterment of humanity, and we can take great pride in these accomplishments—the creation of a thriving democracy; the securing of a safe homeland for the Jewish people; and innovations in agriculture, the arts, science, and a host of other fields.

Life, however, has not been all “milk and honey” for Israel. The Jewish state was born in adversity and has known five major wars, two Intifadas, and innumerable terrorist attacks in its short existence.

Yet despite the turmoil that has surrounded Israel from its very beginnings, there have also been moments when the promise of the Israeli Declaration of Independence—of having its neighbors accept its hand extended in peace—have been fulfilled.

It happened with the Egyptians. It happened with the Jordanians. And it happened, for a time at least, with the Palestinians, too.

The challenge for Israel at 55 is to find a way to renew the drive for coexistence and acceptance that was central to the creation of the state—to once again pursue peace, good neighborliness, and the bonds of cooperation.

Never an easy task, it has been made even more difficult by the past few years of violence and the disintegration of trust that has taken place between Israelis and Palestinians.



Fortunately, President Bush’s Road Map to Middle East Peace can help Israelis and Palestinians return to the path of coexistence.

The Road Map lays out concrete steps for the Palestinians to take in the fields of security, political, and economic reforms. Unless they demonstrate a genuine commitment to end terrorism and incitement, the Road Map will not proceed. The very first phase of the plan requires the Palestinians to “undertake visible

efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere.” It insists on the consolidation of Palestinian security organizations within the context of a U.S. security plan designed to rebuild and retrain the security services. These retrained forces will be expected to resume cooperation with their Israeli counterparts, closely overseen by U.S. security officials. As Israel withdraws from locations occupied since the outbreak of the Intifada, Palestinian security forces will be obligated to redeploy there.



But insisting on 120% results from a weakened Palestinian Authority before starting the process is to set a performance standard that Israel itself has not achieved since re-occupying the West Bank and staging powerful incursions into Gaza during the past two-and-a-half years of the Intifada. Many equally unreasonable preconditions have been suggested by those who seek to stop the Road Map in its tracks.

*“...We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East...”*

*The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel — May 14, 1948*

The Road Map also calls for the Palestinians to tackle significant institutional reforms early on, such as drafting a democratic constitution, appointing an empowered interim prime minister, achieving a genuine separation of powers, establishing an independent election commission, meeting key judicial, administrative, and economic benchmarks, and holding free elections. These are significant reforms, some of which the Palestinians are already trying to carry out.

Israeli Military Intelligence Chief Brigadier General Aharon Ze’evi testified before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the appointment of Abu Mazen as Palestinian Authority prime minister has a “big chance” of bringing an end to the violent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and a renewal of peace talks. Ze’evi said the Palestinian leader has “serious intentions” to make positive changes in the PA.



At the same time, the Road Map asks Israel to take steps that can help the Palestinians succeed. As the Palestinians fulfill their

commitments, the Road Map asks Israel to agree to stop deportations and the demolition of Palestinian property, to gradually return to security cooperation with the Palestinians and withdraw from the territory reoccupied during the Intifada.

As part of the compromise inherent in the peace process, Israel also will be expected to end settlement expansion and take down illegal settlement outposts. If a truce emerges from these mutual efforts, and the Palestinians continue to meet their security, economic and political reform obligations, the Roadmap calls for the establishment of a provisional Palestinian state. As progress continues, Israel would in the final phase negotiate the terms for the creation of a permanent Palestinian state, as called for in President Bush’s June 24 speech.

But the plan does not make the creation of a Palestinian state inevitable. As the Road Map states, this is “a performance-based and goal-driven” framework. Yes, there are “clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks” included in the document. But it also says “non-compliance with obligations will impede progress.” At each stage of the Road Map, the United States and others must reach consensus on whether or not to move ahead. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians will be expected to blindly plow forward with the plan if the other side isn’t meeting its responsibilities.

The Road Map is not a perfect document, but it is far better than supporting policies that are condemning Israel to perpetual conflict and sapping its economic and military strength.

55% of the Palestinians and 61% of the Israelis support the Roadmap, while just 39% percent of the Palestinians and 35% of the Israelis oppose it, according to a joint survey of Palestinian and Israeli public opinion conducted by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah.



Americans for Peace Now supports efforts to make the vision enshrined in Israel’s Declaration of Independence a reality. Inspired by this vision, we join with Jews everywhere in celebrating Yom Ha’atzmaut.

**COME WALK WITH CHICAGO PEACE NOW AT THE WALK WITH ISRAEL  
SEND THE MESSAGE: TO BE PRO-ISRAEL IS TO BE PRO-PEACE!**

Chicago Peace Now is an official co-sponsor of the community-wide Israel Solidarity Day and Walk With Israel on Sunday, May 4 at McCormick Place. Two free buses to the event will transport supporters of Chicago Peace Now, departing from Evanston and Lakeview in Chicago. To reserve a space on one of these buses, or to arrange to march with us if you drive on your own, please send an email to [contactus@chicagopeacenow.org](mailto:contactus@chicagopeacenow.org)

To take action on this issue and to learn more about how you can help promote Shalom Achshav and Americans for Peace Now's efforts here in Chicago, across the US, with our elected officials in Washington, and in Israel, see our local web site at

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