

**SPEECH AT GENEVA ACCORD PRESS CONFERENCE
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**GIDON D. REMBA
PRESIDENT, CHICAGO PEACE NOW**

I and Chicago Peace Now, along with our national movement in the United States, Americans for Peace Now, call upon the Bush Administration to build on the upcoming meeting between Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Geneva negotiators and incorporate the principles of the Geneva Accord into the Road Map for peace.

The Road Map has led to a dead end after a brief and hopeful start. Neither government, Palestinian or Israeli, seem willing to take the difficult first steps called for in that plan so long as neither believes the other will deliver at the end on the painful compromises that are required of both sides to reach a final and comprehensive peace agreement that would end the conflict for the moderate majorities in both societies—on final borders, the settlements, security and anti-terror arrangements, the creation of a viable territorially contiguous Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, the refugees, Jerusalem. The Israeli government has so far proven unwilling to dismantle the settlement outposts and freeze settlement growth in the West Bank and Gaza where most Palestinians seek their own independent state next to Israel, because they lack faith in Palestinian willingness to dismantle & disarm the Palestinian terror groups. And the Palestinian Authority has so far proven unwilling to dismantle those terrorist groups because it believes Israel will never remove settlements in the midst of Palestinian areas. Welcome to the Middle East Catch-22. And so the vicious circle of Mideast violence remains unbroken. But there is a way out and Geneva shines a bright light towards that way.

Carmi Gillon, former chief of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, reminded us of this when he joined three other former Shin Bet chiefs and told the Israeli public in an interview with *Yediot Ahronot*: "As of today, the only political agenda formally on the table is the Road Map. The problem is that all of the plans in the last ten years were plans of stages [which always deferred the final status issues until the never-reached end]. The stages were created in order to build trust between the sides. And in these ten years, this [approach] failed—it didn't work. And that is why I think that the change that the Ayalon-Nusseibeh Voice of the People initiative, and the Geneva initiative, bring is that they are coming and saying: okay, this way failed. We tried it for ten years, and no trust was built. Now, instead of building trust, let us build agreements. ***This is a different way of tackling the conflict. Instead of trying to build trust and then agreements, we make the agreements now, and then roll the carpet back and begin to deal with [implementing] the stages in the agreement. . .***"

We stand here today to call upon the Bush Administration to spell out clearly just what a two-state solution to the conflict really means, so that the true price of peace—the shape of peaceful compromise—as well as its rewards, will be clear from the get go to Palestinians and Israelis alike. We call upon the Bush Administration to remove all

doubt and demonstrate in both deed and word to Palestinian and Israeli leaders that it will put the full prestige, power and influence of the United States of America behind the realization of that clear vision of a peaceful solution, just as President Carter did when he helped bring a lasting peace to Egypt and Israel. Without these steps, the Roadmap is likely to fail for the very same reasons that the Oslo Accords did. Not because the other side doesn't want peace, as so many have been misled to believe, but because neither had the strength to commit upfront to exactly where they were headed, and to be guided by that destination when extremists challenged and undermined the moderate forces in both societies. After 3 years of senseless bloodshed, the time to find that strength and the courage it requires is now.

The Geneva Accord creates hope in a time of despair, reminding us that peace is possible, that there is a partner, and that by renewing the political dialogue on the basis of the Geneva ideas, both Palestinians and Israelis can chart a course, with US help, which will bring them to the safe harbor they so desperately seek. I join my fellow American Jews, my fellow Palestinian and Arab Americans, Muslims and Christians, standing here today, and affirm with them: by working together, mobilizing the moderates in our communities across Chicago and America, we can help re-orient the course of our government, and with our families & friends in Israel and Palestine, help re-launch the Palestinian and Israeli governments towards Peace Shalom Salam. Thank you.