



October, 2006

Dear Friend,

American Jews witnessed a summer of violence and fanatic fervor. With a mixture of horror and helplessness, they followed the flaring up of yet another Arab-Israeli war, the deterioration of the bloody civil war in Iraq, and the often absurd reactions of fanatics to defamatory cartoons or to the Pope's quotation of a medieval Emperor. From Kabul to Cairo and from Baghdad to Beirut, extremists have captured the headlines.

American Jews and Israelis have their fundamentalists and extremists too. It is our duty not only to repudiate them and expose them for what they are, but to offer a sound, credible alternative.

When (Ultra- Nationalist) Knesset member Effie Eitam says—as he recently did—that “We have to expel most Arabs from Judea and Samaria,” it is our responsibility not only to refute such outrageous remarks but to make our opposing opinion heard loud and clear.

[Now is the time for cooler heads to prevail.](#)

It is time for you to express your opinions in constructive ways: [Americans for Peace Now and Shalom Achshav provide such a way.](#)

In the United States, Americans for Peace Now—the sister organization of *Shalom Achshav*—is the preeminent organization among American Jewish groups in reminding U.S. decision makers and the Jewish community about the continued importance of the peace process. Its newsletters, opinion pieces, and web site are simply the best resources for the pro-Israel pro-peace community.

Through all the ups and downs in the Middle East—through the good times and the very bad—the one thing that has remained consistent is the unflagging efforts of *Shalom Achshav*, the Israeli Peace Now movement, in promoting peace in the region. [Today, Shalom Achshav is the only major Israeli Jewish organization that is working hard to maintain public support for the peace process and fighting against those obstacles to peace that remain.](#) The fact that opinion polls consistently show broad Israeli support for the peace process—even during these difficult times—is a testament to the effectiveness of the organization.

[And then came another war....](#)

This summer's war against Hezbollah in Lebanon demolished the credibility of the latest approach to solving Israel's problems with its Arab neighbors. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his Kadima party won a strong vote of confidence from Israelis in elections in March based on Olmert's commitment to the unilateral withdrawal approach of Ariel Sharon, his predecessor. If there is no one to talk peace to, the argument ran, Israel will make decisions based on its own interest,

on its own schedule. As Sharon unilaterally moved Israel out of the Gaza Strip, Olmert would withdraw from portions of the West Bank in a way that best suited Israel, leaving the rest for the Palestinians.

The idea that unilateral withdrawal can solve Israel's security problems—like the Greater Israel concept before it—has proved a failure. Palestinians still launch rockets from Gaza. On June 25, Hamas terrorists kidnapped an Israeli soldier from an IDF post inside Israel, and killed two others. Then on July 12, Hezbollah terrorists entered Israel and attacked an IDF patrol, capturing two soldiers and killing eight others. Israelis suddenly awoke to the fact that there was a Hezbollah state-within-a-state in Lebanon.

We, like many of you, supported Israel's immediate and fierce reprisal against Hezbollah's violation of Israel's sovereignty and violence against our citizens. Lebanon, as the host of this Iranian proxy, bore the brunt of Israel's response. We voiced our concerns as well during the war. We knew that Israel could not achieve its objectives by force alone. Diplomacy is needed to get the job done.

But the cost was high. Israeli territory was pierced by rocket fire to an extent that even the Arab states were unable to do in 1967 or 1973. More Israeli civilians died in the Hezbollah attacks than were killed by Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles during the first Gulf War. More than 1,000 Lebanese people died, many of them civilians, as Israel sought to eliminate Hezbollah.

Two things are now clear:

- Israel can unilaterally withdraw to any line it chooses, but that line will remain vulnerable unless it is the result of a negotiated agreement with an Arab peace partner. In other words, there is no substitute for peace agreements.
- The Israel Defense Forces, after 39 years of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, have become more and more a gendarmerie, a police force trained to respond to intifadas, and less and less a military that can defend our country from strategic enemies, such as an increasingly bellicose Iran.

These are the lessons of the summer of 2006.

The plan for 2007 must be a return to the only formula that has produced a stable peace for Israel—face-to-face negotiations with Arab parties who can deliver peace. Call it an international peace conference. Call it what you like. It is the only approach that has a chance of long-term success.

This formula must include the vigorous participation of the only country that has the power and influence to cajole, maneuver, and push all the parties to talk and perhaps to agree—the United States.

Such a conference is in Israel's interest. It would include the moderating influences of Israel's peace partners, Egypt and Jordan. Despite Hamas' election win, Mahmoud Abbas still heads the Palestinian Authority, and he is committed to the Palestinians' previous agreements with Israel.

Hardest to swallow, the conference must include Syria. The thuggish regime in Damascus is anathema to everyone who believes in democracy. But history is clear: While Syria cannot beat Israel on the battlefield, it plays its role as a spoiler with finesse. Terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad would wither without Syrian backing. And as long as Syria supports them, Israel will not be rid of their terror.

Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Oslo Accords, put it this way: "The strategic key for Israel is to put an end to the war situation in the inner circle"—Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians—"so that war here will not create a pretext for those who want to fight forever."

In our frustration and grief, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture. Uzi Arad, an aide to former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was quoted calling for a “more flexible” policy toward the Palestinians, if only to help advance international efforts to confront the Iranian nuclear threat.

[Yet, others are responding to this summer’s events in the opposite way. They want to turn inward and conduct what amounts to symbolic attacks on our enemies: more settlements in the West Bank.](#)

“The settlements are Israel’s anchor in these places,” the *Washington Post* quoted Effie Eitam, a Knesset member from the far-right National Union, in September. “Israel is about to review its entire defense doctrine, and most Israelis understand it is time to rethink the whole paradigm of giving up land for things less certain.”

What Eitam calls “certain”—outposts built from shipping containers on West Bank hilltops—seems more like a nightmare to us. Yes, it demonstrates that Israel can still put facts on the ground. But 4,000 rockets shot into Israel from Lebanon resulting in 40 civilian deaths are most certainly also facts on the ground.

And the fact is that Israel committed to curtail its settlement activity as its contribution to President Bush’s Road Map for peace. As prime minister, Ariel Sharon promised the Bush Administration that Israel would demolish some sixty outposts erected since 2001. That commitment was never carried out. The endless expansion and spread of settlements was costly and self-defeating before Israel was converted to the idea of unilateralism. It remains costly and self-defeating now that unilateralism has been proven untenable.

The one organization that has consistently opposed settlements and that continues to monitor and report on their spread is *Shalom Achshav*—Israel’s Peace Now movement. One of us (Amos Oz) is among its founders and another (David Grossman) is a longtime supporter. [We are writing to ask you to renew your faith in the rational, constructive path *Shalom Achshav* continues to follow—toward a negotiated two-state solution—Israel and Palestine—with full security for Israel.](#)

As the U.S. sister organization of Peace Now, APN provides 60 to 90 percent of the funds that *Shalom Achshav* in Israel uses for its activities. APN is the gathering place for American Jews who believe there must be a better way than petty reprisals, the saber rattling of the frustrated, and the fatalism of simply waiting for the next war. APN is your home if you are searching for hope that is rational and constructive.

Your contribution to APN will help underwrite *Shalom Achshav*’s research and legal costs in Israel, and its most vital activity, **Settlement Watch**. With a bullet-proof car, a digital camera, and a laptop, the **Settlement Watch** staff constantly monitors the construction in settlements. This work provides vital information to the media, diplomats, Israeli officials, and the general public. Peace Now’s attorneys have also been able to make a difference on the ground. For example, a Peace Now legal petition resulted in a court order that froze construction of 3,000 homes in a new settlement “neighborhood.” The neighborhood was being built on lands owned by Palestinians living nearby. A criminal investigation is now underway to look into those responsible for approving this construction.

In the United States, APN is a tough, rational voice in Congress. On college campuses. In newspaper ads. And in the weekly updates that our members receive. On the APN website, those searching for answers to what appears an intractable situation can participate in APN co-founder Leonard Fein’s regular Friday blog.

We in Israel lived through the nightmare of this summer. There wasn’t a family here that went untouched. [Now we need your help. Your voice, through Americans for Peace Now, can urge the Bush administration to broker peace.](#) You can urge the American government to muster its unprecedented resources to bring Israel and its neighbors together and try to bridge their differences.

In his eulogy for his son, a tank commander killed in Lebanon hours before the August 12 ceasefire, David Grossman said this: **“We have to insist upon upholding our values in the face of temptation to give in to power and simplistic thinking, to give in to the corruption of cynicism and contempt for humanity, which are the true, great curse of those who have lived their whole lives in our disaster-prone region of the world.”**

We must simultaneously uphold our values and defend ourselves. Those are our marching orders, and yours. Please make your tax-deductible contribution today to Americans for Peace Now so another son—or daughter—won’t have to die.

B’Shalom,



David Grossman



Amos Oz

DAVID GROSSMAN'S honest explorations—in fiction and nonfiction alike—of the courage, pain and occasionally brutality of Israeli reality have earned him a reputation as one of Israel’s intellectual and moral leaders. Active in Israel’s Peace Now movement, he is committed to changing the environment in which Israelis and Palestinians live.

David has written six novels, a play, a number of short stories and novellas, and children’s books. He has also published four books of non-fiction, including interviews with Palestinians and Israeli Arabs.

David’s son, Uri, was killed in action while serving on the front lines during the Israel-Hezbollah war. He died on August 12, 2006, two days before the U.N.-brokered ceasefire took effect.

AMOS OZ is one of the most celebrated authors in the history of modern Israel, whose work helps us to understand the intimate human dimensions of life within a complex struggle. He has written over 20 books that have been translated into more than 30 languages. He has published over 500 articles and essays on literary, political and ideological topics in Israeli and international magazines and newspapers.

Following the Six Day War in 1967, Amos became actively involved in various activities of the then-embryonic Israeli peace movement. Amos quickly became a leading figure of Peace Now when it was founded in 1978. To this day, he remains one of Peace Now’s most articulate and passionate spokespersons.

Shalom Achshav (Peace Now)

In 1978, 348 Israeli army officers came together to call for peace between Israel and Egypt and warn against the dangers of occupation. The subsequent work of these Zionists led to the creation of Shalom Achshav. Back then, the notion that peace was possible 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, most Israelis have come to understand that the occupation burdens their country, and the treaties that Israel has signed with her Arab neighbors have stood the test of time. Today, Shalom Achshav is recognized as Israel’s premier peace movement.

Americans for Peace Now (APN)

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, Americans Jewish Community Outreach, Media Outreach and Monitoring, Public Outreach and support of Shalom Achshav.

Contact Americans for Peace Now (APN) at 1101 14th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005 for financial and registration information and a full description of its programs.