

ARYEH RUBIN

August 24, 2001

Dear Friend:

Those of us who have been involved in promoting the peace process have been subject to an array of reactions from those on the right. The horror that has been unleashed by the Palestinians has been met with the polite, "I hate to say I told you so," or "do you still support Oslo?" The more extreme opine, "It's all your fault. You gave them guns, you are the traitors."

For my part, I am deeply pained by the course of events and like all of us, am numbed by the taking of innocent civilian lives. But I have no regrets for having donated my time and money to promoting the Oslo process. I am proud of the 70 percent of the Israeli electorate that favored the deal; for their own sake, for the Palestinian's sake and for its position in the international arena of public opinion. I believe an agreement at Camp David was inches away and blew up because Arafat, in the end, could not make a final peace with the Jews, and that agreement, no matter how fragile, would have been better than the current situation that Israeli intelligence believes could continue for several years. It was exactly this situation that I feared, and it could get worse.

In the interim, it's only Kach and Hamas who have put forth any sort of a solution other than a negotiated deal. The former wishes to transfer all the Arabs, and the latter calls for the destruction of the Jewish state. In the end, whether it's a negotiated agreement, a unilateral separation or a non-belligerency pact, the six million Israelis and three million Palestinians will still be there, and a deal, to my mind, is the only possible solution.

But my red lines have been crossed a long time ago. I have called upon the left American Jewish organizations committed to the peace process to take a stand that, in effect, sends a clear message to Arafat and his advisors. We on the left, who have met with you, supported you, and who have lobbied on your behalf to the White House for aid, now condemn you, and throw our full support, with no questions asked, to the Israeli government, be it left or right. Until you stop all violence, you have bankrupted your goodwill with the Jewish left.

With the influence that the collective American Jewish peace camp has on Capitol Hill, such a statement, I believe, would have a profound effect on the White House and Congressional attitudes in reacting to Israeli measures deemed necessary to halt the terrorism.

The unofficial response of the leaders of these organizations has been that their mission is to promote peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis; they do not wish to blow their own goodwill, not to mention the tens of millions of dollars they have spent in developing it, by

getting caught in the fallout.

I do not agree, and call upon these organizations to take a stand. And when the time comes that negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis start in earnest, then those who believe in it can revert to their roles of promoting peace.

Sincerely,

Aryeh Rubin

Aventura, Florida