

## To Israelis and Palestinians: A Statement of Support | Robert S. McNamara

Robert S. McNamara : 6-8 minutes

---

On the occasion of the signing on December 1 of the “Geneva Initiative”—a blueprint for peace negotiated by teams of Israelis and Palestinians led by former ministers Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo—we express our strong support both for this and the “People’s Voice” petition initiated by Ami Ayalon and Sari Nusseibeh.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has taken far too great a toll already. Both peoples have paid dearly in lives and livelihood in a war which both are losing. Every passing day undermines the prospects for a peaceful, two-state solution. As long as the conflict endures, it will be a source of instability and violence for the region and the international community as a whole.

We believe that the best way to move forward is to address at the outset, not at the end of an incremental process, all the basic principles of a fair and lasting solution. Postponing the final outcome makes any progress hostage to extremists on both sides. A process must be devised to give practical and political expression to the heartfelt desire of clear majorities on both sides to end this conflict once and for all.

The Geneva and People’s Voice initiatives both reflect that public opinion, and can help give it new momentum. On the Israeli side, they can help undo the myths taking hold since the collapse of the peace process and the onset of violence: that the Palestinian people are not prepared to accept a two-state solution and Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. On the Palestinian side, they can offer an alternative to the current mindset that sees in violence the only possible means of ending the occupation. They send a powerful signal that an alternative to the current situation exists. They have the potential to transform the domestic political dynamics on both sides.

International support will be crucial to translate these endeavors into a concrete mechanism to bring about a lasting peace. The international players most relevant for this purpose—the US, the EU, Russia, the UN “Quartet,” and the members of the Arab League—should wholeheartedly back these initiatives. They should urge both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to be guided by the outcomes most of their peoples want. And they should make clear their own willingness to lend all the political, economic, and military support needed to help implement a comprehensive peace agreement.

The Israeli and Palestinian peoples, by making clear their belief in the Geneva and People’s Voice initiatives, can help turn the principles embodied in them into reality. You can count on our support in this endeavor.

Hon. Richard V. Allen  
Former National Security Advisor to the President

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski  
Former National Security Advisor to the President

Hon. Frank C. Carlucci  
Former Secretary of Defense

Hon. Warren M. Christopher  
Former Secretary of State

Dr. W. Anthony Lake  
Former National Security Advisor to the President

Hon. Robert C. McFarlane  
Former National Security Advisor to the President

Hon. Robert S. McNamara  
Former Secretary of Defense

Thomas R. Pickering

Former Ambassador to the United Nations

Martti Ahtisaari  
Former President, Finland

Ali Alatas  
Former Foreign Minister, Indonesia

George Alleyne  
Former Director, Pan American Health Organization

Oscar Arias Sánchez  
Former President, Costa Rica, Nobel Peace Prize 1987

Lloyd Axworthy  
Former Foreign Minister, Canada

Alexander Bessmertnykh  
Former Foreign Minister, Soviet Union

Carl Bildt  
Former Prime Minister, Sweden

Boutros Boutros-Ghali  
Former UN Secretary-General

Lakhdar Brahimi  
Former Foreign Minister, Algeria

Fernando Henrique Cardoso  
Former President, Brazil

Ingvar Carlsson  
Former Prime Minister, Sweden

Lord Carrington  
Former Foreign and Defense Secretary, UK, and NATO Secretary-General

Jorge Castañeda  
Former Foreign Minister, Mexico

Claude Cheysson  
Former Foreign Minister, France

Jacques Delors  
Former President, European Commission

Jirí Dienstbier  
Former Foreign Minister, Czechoslovakia

Ruth Dreifuss  
Former President, Switzerland

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen  
Former Foreign Minister, Denmark

Gareth Evans  
Former Foreign Minister, Australia

Mark Eyskens  
Former Foreign and Prime Minister, Belgium

José María Figueres  
Former President, Costa Rica

Malcolm Fraser  
Former Prime Minister, Australia

Hans-Dietrich Genscher  
Former Foreign Minister, Germany

Bronislaw Geremek  
Former Foreign Minister, Poland

Mikhail S. Gorbachev  
Former President, Soviet Union, Nobel Peace Prize 1990

I.K. Gujral  
Former Prime Minister, India

Bob Hawke  
Former Prime Minister, Australia

Bill Hayden  
Former Governor-General and Foreign Minister, Australia

Raffi K. Hovannisian  
Former Foreign Minister, Armenia

F.W. de Klerk  
Former President, South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize 1993

Wim Kok  
Former Prime Minister, Netherlands

Masahiko Komura  
Former Foreign Minister, Japan

Budimir Loncar  
Former Foreign Minister, Yugoslavia

Barbara McDougall  
Former External Affairs Secretary, Canada

Gianni de Michelis  
Former Foreign Minister, Italy

Boyko Noev  
Former Defense Minister, Bulgaria

Sadako Ogata  
Former UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Lord Owen  
Former Foreign Secretary, UK

Surin Pitsuwan  
Former Foreign Minister, Thailand

Augusto Ramírez-Ocampo  
Former Foreign Minister, Colombia

Fidel V. Ramos  
Former President, Philippines

Jerry John Rawlings  
Former President, Ghana

Mary Robinson

Former President, Ireland

Michel Rocard  
Former Prime Minister, France

Nafis Sadik  
Former Executive Director, UN Population Fund

Salim Ahmed Salim  
Former Prime Minister, Tanzania, and Secretary-General, OAU

Cornelio Sommaruga  
Former President, International Committee of the Red Cross

Kalevi Sorsa  
Former Prime Minister, Finland

Eduardo Stein  
Former Foreign Minister, Guatemala

Pär Stenbäck  
Former Foreign Minister, Finland

Max van der Stoep  
Former Foreign Minister, Netherlands

Thorvald Stoltenberg  
Former Foreign Minister, Norway

Hanna Suchocka  
Former Prime Minister, Poland

Alex Sceberras Trigona  
Former Foreign Minister, Malta

George Vassiliou  
Former President, Cyprus

Hubert Védrine  
Former Foreign Minister, France

Franz Vranitzky  
Former Federal Chancellor, Austria

Ernesto Zedillo  
Former President, Mexico

*(This letter was circulated by the International Crisis Group, an independent, nonprofit multinational organization dedicated to the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict.)*