

# The Shimon Peres Legacy of Peace through Fourteen Historical Speeches

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Shimon Peres' birth

David Fernández Puyana and Daphné Richemond-Barak (eds.)



University for Peace



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SHIMON PERES



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# **The Shimon Peres Legacy of Peace through Fourteen Historical Speeches**

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## Forewords

# What My Dad Shimon Peres Taught Me About Israel and the World<sup>1</sup>

*Chemi Peres*

Chairman of the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation

“He doesn’t lie. He doesn’t say bad things. And when he knocks on my door, he usually has a new idea.” That would be David Ben-Gurion’s response when approached with skepticism from those who took issue with the young, seemingly inexperienced upstart on whom Israel’s first prime minister had come to rely.

That young upstart was my father, Shimon Peres.

It is no surprise that the skeptics failed to see in him what Ben-Gurion saw — an extremely rare quality that might be humanity’s most valuable resource and is certainly the key to transformational leadership: the ingenuity of a visionary driven by optimism and inspired by hope.

Today the name Shimon Peres encapsulates the legacy of a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, a statesman and an innovator. And indeed, my father always had the vision and charisma of a leader, but in his early years he was very content with the idea of working the land and being a shepherd as a young kibbutznik. While he was confident in his abilities and deeply motivated, he understood the weight of the responsibility placed on his shoulders when he was appointed by Ben-Gurion as the director general of Israel’s Ministry of Defense at the staggeringly young age of 29.

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1 This article was originally published in the [New York Post](#)

One of his first and most significant tasks was to help engineer and implement the Sinai-Suez campaign, among the most daring and unlikely military triumphs of the postwar era. It was 1956 and as the campaign unfolded, my father had something of an epiphany. “I came to understand the choice at the heart of leadership,” he writes in “No Room for Small Dreams,” his intensely personal memoir, which he finished writing weeks before his passing in 2016. “To pursue big dreams and suffer the consequences, or narrow one’s ambitions in an effort to get along. For me, there was only one choice.”

This understanding of what leadership was to him, and of what kind of leader he wanted to be, altered not only my father’s life but also shaped the State of Israel, the region and in many cases changed the world. In the midst of the Suez campaign, my father began to act on this idea in a way that would change the strategic equation for Israel.

Like Ben-Gurion, my father understood the profound, game-changing impact nuclear technology could provide a country almost completely lacking in energy resources. But the idea that the fledgling Jewish state — not yet a decade old, still under an arms embargo by much of the world, and struggling to feed its rapidly growing population — could initiate (let alone complete) a nuclear program was one of almost breathtaking chutzpah. This is exactly why my father knew he had to chase it down.

At a villa in Sèvres, France, where Israeli, British and French officials had gathered to finalize planning for the campaign, my father, then 33 years old, approached the French foreign and defense ministers and made a proposal everyone “knew” would be rejected out of hand. To everyone’s surprise (including his) the French officials agreed: France would help Israel establish its own nuclear-energy program.

Looking back over the expanse of six decades might make it all sound easy. It was anything but. Obstacle after obstacle had to be overcome, including resistance from the majority of Israel’s leadership, the fall of the French government that promised the

assistance, Soviet spying on the construction site and serious concerns on the part of the US government culminating in a tense sit-down between my father and President Kennedy.

What carried him through each successive trial, and what served as the rocket fuel for his stratospheric dreams, was an unflinching optimism and his belief in the cause he was serving. He paid a price for this optimism, detailing in “No Room for Small Dreams” how he was accused of “dreaming irresponsibly” and was often “ridiculed, attacked and discounted, seen as dangerously naive.”

Nevertheless, through my father’s unique blend of optimism — a combination of creativity, innovative thinking and the courage to take responsibility — he continued tackling some of Israel’s most dire and pressing crises. As prime minister, he brought inflation down from 400 percent to 1.5 percent in a little more than a year. He built the foundations of Israel’s defense industry and worked tirelessly to kick-start Israel’s “startup nation” phenomenon, which 30 years ago was seen as an impossibility but today helps define Israel as a global leader.

When he knew that Israel was secure, he worked to forge peace with countries that had been Israel’s declared enemies. Whether through his work as a statesman, or through strategic grass-roots initiatives, he worked tirelessly to build peace, prosperity and a better future for all. He did it all by dreaming big and working hard.

One of profound progress and unrelenting innovation. He trusted that we all have within us a fearless leader marked by courage, ability and a relentless pursuit of peace and prosperity. He knew that it My father strongly believed that “the hidden treasures within ourselves are far greater than anything found in the ground” and that we all have inside of us the power to innovate, cooperate and muster the willpower and determination that change requires. He believed that we are entering a new era, one of turbulence and uncertainty but more importantly rests with us to uncover the optimism and hope to dream bigger and better and pursue those dreams until they become reality.

It's been a year since his passing and his voice is still clear and bright — a voice that calls everybody to discover the best of us, to create a better world, to dream and to serve a greater cause. If there is one lesson my father's life of monumental achievement can teach us, let it be this.

I wish that the new publication “The Shimon Peres Legacy of Peace through Fourteen Historical Speeches” can help to mobilize in 2023 and beyond the efforts of the international community to promote peace and trust among nations based on, inter alia, political dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the University for Peace and the Reichman University for leading this research. My deepest gratitude goes to the co-editors of the book, Dr. David Fernandez Puyana & Dr. Daphné Richemond-Barak, for their tireless efforts in the preparation of this book. The Peres Center for Peace and Innovation is happy to join this publication. This shows again the importance of creating global partnerships between the United Nations, governments, academia and civil society.

## **Education for Peace and a Culture for Peace: Fundamental Instruments in the Face of Hate Speech**

*Francisco Rojas Aravena*  
Rector of the University for Peace

We live in a world plagued by conflicts and tensions. Social networks and digital platforms – and now Artificial Intelligence – amplify them.

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, warned us that we are “one click away” from nuclear havoc. The war in Europe and tensions on the Korean peninsula opened the door to nuclear danger, to the mishap of human or technical error.

The hatreds generated in the war will be passed down through generations. The discourse of hatred will remain and is growing today. Warlike impulses in the world generate more war.

In addition, humanity is moving towards the Anthropocene. Humanity is responsible for the destruction of the planet. Time is running out. Biodiversity is being destroyed at every moment. Scientific denialism generates polarization and destructive politics. There is no more room for recovery for many species. It is the equivalent of hate speech and violence with the planet.

The impacts of the pandemic are strongly felt in all societies. It shows us the depth of our vulnerability. And yet, cancellation policies close the doors to scientific knowledge, to the advancement of vaccines, and often leads to violence. It is the rancor that spreads from various platforms and encourages mass deaths.

The trend of de-democratization and the instability of the rule of law, as a result of corruption and the erosion of organized crime, produce deep crises, with increasing violence and death. The state response is either weak or authoritarian; in both cases, society is left unprotected and fundamental rights are violated. Human rights violations become crimes against humanity or the preamble to civil wars, with the participation of a plurality of national and international actors.

There is no reaction to the European war, to the climate emergency, to the pandemic, to authoritarianism. There is no solidarity. There is no collective response from “humanity”, which is what should identify us. It is the “globalization of indifference”, as highlighted by UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. This indifference has unleashed violence with a hatred of the most vulnerable, reflecting the vulnerability of education systems.

Building pathways from ideas and words to effective action for peace is a bumpy road. It requires a concerted effort to combat hate speech, xenophobia, racism, the erosion of democratic institutions, and multilateralism. In this, education is the central instrument of change.

The values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, dialogue, mediation, and negotiation, which come together under the mission of the University for Peace, make it possible to establish spaces for educating on the bases for the prevention, mitigation, and peaceful transformation of disputes.

Building trust makes it possible to foster confidence. From it, change can be brought about through words instead of bullets and violence. Teaching at the University for Peace focuses on experiential learning, which is fundamental for the successful training of future leaders for peace. Open, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue is part of the daily life of our students.

Faced with increasingly complex contexts, with the participation of a wide variety of actors, in hybrid wars where time and space variables become global and instantaneous, it becomes imperative to

educate people with holistic views of the world and new conceptual maps, new ways of analyzing and defining problems.

This leads to new forms of action – through mediation and negotiation – which must be inclusive. Without effective inclusion, there will be no stable peace. There can be serious regressions, with the re-emergence of hate speech and all its consequences.

Hate speech opens the door to the trivialization of violence. Violence only brings more violence. It eliminates cultural diversity, social cohesion, and erodes the rule of law and democratic governance. It disintegrates society. It enables civil wars their internationalization. Early warnings and prevention strategies are essential to put an end to these grave dangers to humanity and human rights.

Prevention can take different forms: using new technologies; analyzing the deep roots of disputes; establishing specific strategies in the face of the re-emergence of hate speech and of actions that lead to serious human rights violations - racism, sexism, slavery, and impunity, especially against women, children, and the elderly.

It is about de-escalating tensions at an early stage. In this, confidence-building is essential. The development of mutual trust measures plays an essential role. So does the use of prevention institutions, from mediation and good offices to judicial settlements, both national and international.

The legacy of hate speech hinders ceasefire processes, peace agreements and, above all, national reconciliation processes, and thus the protection of human rights in these highly vulnerable situations.

Accurate information and transparency make it possible to detect hate speech, whatever its basis, at an early stage, and prevent the emergence of violence. Small arms control plays a central role in stopping violence and facilitating public safety.

National reconciliation processes and the keys to post-conflict lie in developing new educational frameworks in which different actors can establish a shared narrative - a common history - of the conflict.

It is imperative to establish new ways to build partnership and strengthen institutions to overcome resentments with actions that lead to the building of a collaborative identity.

The role of peace education is crucial, as is the preparation for interreligious dialogue and the development of advocacy and state-building skills. Experiences in which people from diverse backgrounds can exchange experiences plays a fundamental role. Our training programmes – for diplomats, civilian and military government officials, and civil society leaders – provide this knowledge and transmit these skills.

Our experience as a global educational entity focusing on key issues such as conflict prevention, human security, environmental security, human rights, and peacebuilding has shown us that the exercise of “Track II Diplomacy” is decisive in bringing diverse actors together and gathering options for building pathways that can lead to successful partnerships. This is also part of our daily work.

This book on “The Shimon Peres legacy of peace through fourteen historical speeches” is a good practice for the promotion of the education for peace. I would like to recognize that great leaders as Shimon Peres are nowadays an example for many people in this planet. I want to congratulate the co-editors of this book, Dr. David Fernandez Puyana and Dr. Daphné Richemond-Barak for their efforts. This book is also the fruit of an excellent cooperation with our partners in this endeavor, The Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, World Jewish Congress and the Reichman University.



## Shimon Peres in the Pursuit of Peace

*Annyssa Bellal*  
Executive Coordinator  
Geneva Peacebuilding Platform

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a daunting task for any peacemaker. Indeed, peacebuilding is a long-term process of encouraging people to talk, repairing relationships, but also addressing affected communities' feelings of injustice and demands for accountability. Making peace in such a tormented context requires extraordinary courage and commitment. In addition, it requires a firm, balanced and visionary leadership. Shimon Peres was such a leader. Indeed, if many world leaders pursue power, he pursued peace.

The publication of *The Shimon Peres legacy of peace through fourteen historical speeches*, by the University for Peace, Reichman University, the World Jewish Congress and the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, gives us a much-needed guidance, inspiration and even hope, to find pathways to peace in this particularly complex conflict, but also in other parts of the world. For the wisdom and intellectual leadership of Shimon Peres are universal. Shimon Peres' vision and legacy, as expressed in this beautiful book, also serve as a beacon of light that encourages all peacebuilders, be them political leaders, practionners or policy makers, to never give up finding solutions even if the most difficult situations.

One of the key mandates of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is to spread knowledge, as well as to allow voices and experiences on peace, to be heard and shared among all of us. We are thus proud to support the ambitions and efforts of the publishers of this book to remind us that Peace is possible, everywhere and for everyone.



## Lifelong Shimon<sup>2</sup>

*Pierre Besnainou*  
Honorary Fellow  
Reichman University

Shimon Peres is no longer with us for over a year, and yet I still have the impression that he is there, close to us, close to me, with his outlook on life so generous and just. His disappearance was a shock. For his family who loved him so much, for Israel that rediscovered him as President of the State, and for me who lost a spiritual father. I naively thought that as long as his work was not completed, as long as a lasting peace was not established on this land which called out to him with all her might, he would still be there working, advising, acting, and also that he was ... immortal. A childhood dream, which we caress for those that we love and respect profoundly, and without whom we lose all our bearings.

I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Shimon Peres in 1993, during the Oslo Accords where I served as an intermediary between him and the authorities of my native Tunisia, which had welcomed Yasser Arafat and the PLO in 1982, at the end of the Lebanon war.

I knew him for more than twenty years and I have always been fascinated by the charisma, the benevolent authority, the unique personality of a rabbi's grandson, Torah and Leo Tolstoy reader, francophone and francophile in this soul, who, in his early childhood, wanted to be a poet and a shepherd, and who managed to combine religious traditions and contemporary culture.

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<sup>2</sup> This text was originally published in *Dis Moi, Shimon...*, authored by Pierre Besnainou and published by BibliEurope in 2018. It has been translated from French by Yehudit Sim'ha Saday.



Credits: Pierre Besnainou

Born in Poland in 1923, he moves to Eretz Israel in 1934, and lives with his parents in Tel Aviv, before joining Kibbutz Geva, and later, in 1947, Kibbutz Alumot, of which he is one of the founders. Director General of the Ministry of Defense at the tender age of 29, labor deputy, minister, party leader, diplomat, and Prime minister, he went through the second half of the twentieth century, accompanying Israel in each stage of its development, to become, with the advent of a new century, President of the state that he had helped establish.

This fascination for the man, whom I met in a political context, gave way very quickly to a deep friendship with the one who became a spiritual father to me. And in 1996, after the electoral defeat of the Labor Party against the party of Benjamin Netanyahu, when he invited me to become one of the founding members of the Peres Center for Peace, I accepted with enthusiasm! Despite our differences in age, culture, and tradition, we had, each in our own way, the same passion for peace with the Palestinians and Arab states, *this idea* – who never left him, just as it does not leave me today – to work with all our forces, and sometimes against all reason, to establish a lasting peace with those who seventy years of wars seem to have transformed into our lifelong enemies, as if centuries of coexistence, proximity, and exchanges had been erased.

When we met, I was always curious to know his opinion on news events. What did he think about this or that? What was his opinion on this or that leader? How was he going to carry out this or that project? How did he explain his character strength, his enthusiasm, his determination, and his unshakable optimism? How did he manage to overcome obstacles, solve problems along the way, and take on such challenges? How could such complicated and complex conflict with the Arabs be resolved? What were his pragmatic solutions to achieve a lasting peace? How to avoid the creation of a binational state? Who to form alliances with? Etc. etc. Every time, I asked the same question: "Tell me, Shimon, what do you think about ..." and he answered thoroughly and in detail, with the patience and kindness of a master for his student.

In the coherent sequence of his ideas, and in his way of thinking, he was extremely convincing. His answers and analyses were crystal clear. He used short sentences, full of meaning. He found the right and precise word. Frequently, he amused himself by advocating contradictory proposals to better highlight the justness of his own reasoning. He quoted proverbs, poems, and classical authors with a smile on his face. He also related anecdotes and wonderful Jewish jokes and laughed before he even had a chance to finish them. Sometimes, in a bad mood, he remained silent for long moments. He would later respond with irony, but always kindly.

I listened to him carefully and enjoyed his words of wisdom for more than twenty years. At first, his reasoning and judgments might have seemed surprising to me, but as he developed his thinking, I realized the extraordinary logic of his words and the precision of his analytical mind. With him, a generation of political leaders disappears – and it is doubtful that the new one will have even a hundredth of this man's culture.

Since his death on September 28, 2016, 25 Ellul 5776, a few days before the Jewish New Year, his absence feels like an injustice. Through a gesture, a word, some music, he appears in my memory, only for a brief moment, and I am reminded of our long and intimate conversations which were conducted in a spirit of fidelity and

fraternity. They testified to his true line of thought, yesterday as today. He had become “my friend Shimon.” I was “his friend Pierre.”

Death spares no one. The disappearance of a loved one or a faithful friend confronts us with mourning, affliction, and sadness, whatever our situation. We must resign ourselves and continue to live without forgetting, and this memory may accompany and strengthen each of our gestures and actions when we finally manage to overcome the pain.

The day after the thirty days that followed the death of “my friend Shimon”, I was alone in his office, at the Peres Center for Peace located by the sea, in Jaffa. In the icy silence of this orphaned room, I deeply felt his absence. Sitting in front of his desk, my gaze was fixed on the empty seat of the missing friend. My throat was tight, my eye shining with tears that did not flow, like an orphan once again and disarmed by pain. I suddenly had an irrepressible urge to talk to him, to resume the dialogue, to debate philosophical and existential questions, as we had done on many occasions. I suddenly imagined him there, close to me, “Lifelong Shimon”, continuing the conversation where we had left off.

## Shimon Peres: A True Statesman

*Meirav Eilon Shahar*

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations Office  
and other international organizations in Geneva

Shimon Peres remains one of the most important and influential figures in Israeli history. His words and speeches continue to inspire countless Israelis and people around the world to this day. He was deeply committed to the state of Israel from a young age and played a critical role in its development and prosperity throughout his life. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, it is essential to remind ourselves of how Peres contributed to its very foundations.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Peres as a young cadet in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when he served as Foreign Minister. I was struck by his unwavering optimism and his belief in the power of human potential. He spoke passionately about overcoming the challenges that Israel faced and harnessing the creativity of its people. He firmly believed that young people held the key to Israel's future - a belief that I share to this day - and he encouraged all of us in the room to pursue our dreams and work towards building a better future for all.

I was honored to meet him several times thereafter. Peres was a relentless advocate for peace with our neighbors. He was a key architect of the Oslo Accords and set the groundwork for Israel's future relations with the Arab world. He worked tirelessly to promote Israel's engagement with the international community and he remained a true believer in diplomacy and international cooperation all his life. Peres was also a visionary leader who understood the

importance of innovation and technology. He tirelessly worked to promote Israel and set the groundwork to make it one of the most dynamic and innovative countries in the world today.

Throughout his career, Peres was known for his inspiring speeches. He was a gifted orator who had a way with words that captivated audiences. He spoke with passion and conviction and his speeches are a testament to his vision and commitment to the State of Israel. This book, which features fourteen of his speeches and testimonies from those he inspired, is a fitting tribute to his legacy. It showcases Peres's finest moments and provides insight into his thinking and his dreams for Israel's future. He will always be remembered as one of Israel's greatest leaders, and his actions, as well as his words, will remain an inspiration to many Israelis, including myself, for years to come.

He was a true statesman.



## Introduction

*David Fernandez Puyana and Daphné Richemond-Barak*

In January 2023, Reichman University and the University for Peace signed a Memorandum of Understanding to further increase academic cooperation in the region.

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980, the University for Peace (with a campus in Costa Rica) offers graduate programs related to peace and conflict resolution, environment and development, and international law.

At its only partner in Israel, Reichman University will contribute to develop activities with other key higher education institutions in the Middle East as well as international organizations in Geneva and UNESCO.



Credits: Yoiam Frum

Reichman University, formerly known as IDC Herzliya, is a private university with the mission to train tomorrow's leaders, peacemakers, diplomats, and other decision-makers. Thanks to its focus on theory and practice, the Lauder School of Government,

Diplomacy and Strategy at Reichman University is a natural home for the study of Shimon Peres's legacy, speeches, and vision. The Raphael Recanati International School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in English in the field of Government, Diplomacy, and Middle East studies and we are proud to welcome hundreds of international students every year.

Both Reichman University and the University for Peace look forward to a new era of cooperation, which will benefit students and faculty in our respective institutions. Together, we look forward to developing this relationship and promoting the key role of diplomacy in the achievement of peace and stability.

The book entitled “The Shimon Peres Legacy of Peace through Fourteen Historical Speeches” realizes the vision of Reichman University and University of Peace and embodies our first joint endeavor – the first of many, we hope. We are honored that leading scholars, high-level diplomats, UN officials, and distinguished academics have agreed to share their memories and thoughts on the work of Shimon Peres. By doing so, they have contributed to the education of the world’s new generation of thinkers and practitioners.

The first part of the book brings together their contributions and reflections on Shimon Peres and his legacy in the field of peace.

The second part of the book compiles a selection of fourteen historical speeches delivered by Shimon Peres during his long career.

As a whole, this book connects the past to the future, in the hope of a better present.

We wish to thank our respective institutions for their forward-looking vision and their support for this project. We also express our most sincere gratitude to the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, the World Jewish Congress and the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation for their invaluable friendship and partnership along the way. Also our gratitude goes to UNITAR for the technical support. This project would not have seen the light without the participation of the permanent missions in Geneva who kindly agreed to share with all of us how the work of Shimon Peres has made and continues to make the world a safer and more inspiring place.

University of Peace and Reichman University share the most sincere hope that we all shall live by Shimon Peres’ vision, words, wisdom, creativity, and constant search for peace.

## Part I

# Voice of Calm and Reason<sup>3</sup>

*Antonio Gutierrez*

Secretary-General of the United Nations

I join with you today in sorrow for the loss of Shimon Peres, and gratitude for a life so extraordinarily lived. Throughout my tenure as Secretary-General, I had the privilege to benefit from his wisdom. He was a constant source of optimism and hope, and inspiration.

Like so many millions, I deeply admired and respected his leadership and many decades of service for his beloved country, Israel, and for the cause of peace throughout the Middle East.

We often met in times of great challenge. In one especially poignant visit, I met him in Israel on 23 July 2014, just one day before he stepped down as President.

Regardless of the difficulties, he was always a voice of calm and reason. And as a leading global statesman, he was a welcome and frequent visitor to the United Nations.



Credits: Peres Center for Peace and Innovation

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<sup>3</sup> Statement delivered by the Secretary-General, at Memorial Ceremony, Remembers Israel's Former President Shimon Peres as Global Statesman. The Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations has been informed about the use of the statement in this book on Shimon Peres. Original statement can be found at: <https://press.un.org/en/2016/sgsm18161.doc.htm>

In addressing the General Assembly, he once directed his remarks to all the people of the holy land: “We read our holy books in different languages,” he said, “yet we pray to the same heavens. The descendants of Abraham should behave like a family — with tolerance and solidarity.”

That simple message has never been more important in the region and in our world. That clear-eyed perspective — of reaching across the table, of compromising with your neighbour, of finding common ground for the greater good — has never been more needed. That kind of leadership is one that we long for — and one that we will surely miss.

With his passing, let his dedication to peace inspire us to realize the dream of justice, security and dignity for Israelis, for Palestinians and for our world.

## The Peres Philosophy and its Impact on my Career<sup>4</sup>

*Nadav Tamir*

The Peres Center's senior advisor  
for governmental and international affairs

-Former personal adviser of Shimon Peres for diplomatic affairs

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August we will mark 100 years since the Shimon Peres' birth, a founding parent of Israel whose lifelong dedication to his country led him to become the only Israeli leader to serve as both President and Prime Minister, as well as many more leadership positions. I had the privilege to serve on his team of advisors when he was Foreign Minister and President. The following is a description of the enduring impact he's had on me and my country.

The two main pillars of Peres's vision for the future of Israel were peace and innovation. Under Peres's leadership, Israel saw a swift climb to the forefront of innovation in science and technology, his aspirations for peace were more difficult to realize.

Peres's philosophy is sorely lacking in today's political landscape. The unique elements of his philosophy have immense potential for turning Israel into an innovator and initiator of proactive diplomacy for peace. The approach described below distinguished him from other Israeli leaders who often treated any development in the Middle East with alarm and hostility, blinding them to potential opportunities to advance peace.

After many years working alongside him, I've boiled the "Peres Philosophy" down to the following four core elements: Responsibility

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4 This article has been modified from the original one published in the Times of Israel

and Initiative, Win-Win Perspective, Everlasting Optimism, and Orientation Towards the Future.

Credits: Peres Center for Peace and Innovation



### How the Peres Philosophy Shaped my Politics & Diplomatic Approach

I was first introduced to the “Peres Philosophy” of leadership and diplomacy in March 1993, when I completed the new diplomats’ cadet course at the Israeli Foreign Ministry and

was sent to the Foreign Minister’s office as a junior staffer. This was a pivotal moment early in my career that shaped my approach as a diplomat, foreign policy advisor, and later as an advisor at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, where I continue to promote Shimon Peres’s vision.

My journey by President Peres’ side is perhaps surprising given my early political influences. I was raised on Kibbutz Manara, founded by my parents on the border with Lebanon. As a young man, I was strongly influenced by my father, an active member in the Kibbutz and Labor movements on issues of defense and, as a fluent Arabic speaker, relations with Arab communities. My father was close to the leaders of the Haganah and the Palmach, the pre-state Jewish paramilitary organizations that preceded the IDF. These early leaders included Yigal Alon, Israel Galili, and eventually Yitzhak Rabin, whose sister Rachel was, along with my parents, part of the group of pioneers who founded Kibbutz Manara in 1943. All of these figures were political rivals of Ben Gurion’s camp, of which Shimon Peres was a part.

I was also strongly influenced by my service as an officer in the IDF, where I became an admirer of the masculine leadership style of former military Generals like Rabin. Conversely, I saw Peres as a politician with an awkward accent, not a powerful leader.

Nonetheless, it was to the office of then-Foreign Minister Shimon Peres that I was sent. My placement there wasn't more than a coincidence. Peres's chief of staff, Avi Gil, wanted to add someone young and fresh to the team, someone without the baggage of the Foreign Ministry's organizational culture. Apparently, the training department thought that I was ripe enough.

Despite my preconceptions, I felt from my first days on Peres's team that I had the best job in the world. Peres's Foreign Ministry was leading the Oslo peace process—a unique situation in Israel's political history which has seen the Foreign Ministry typically marginalized from matters of national security. But I also felt fortunate to be working alongside a talented team hand-selected by Peres: Yossi Beilin as Deputy Minister, Uri Savir as Director General, and Avi Gil as Chief of Staff. These were not military men with the kind of outward machismo I had once identified with strong leadership.

Following Rabin's assassination, Peres became Prime Minister and I remained in the Foreign Minister's office under Ehud Barak, who entered politics after a decorated military career that culminated in his serving as IDF Chief of the General Staff. For Barak, the Foreign Ministry was a mere political springboard for him to become Prime Minister and under him the Foreign Ministry was no longer at the center of the peacemaking process.

What made Peres so different?

To understand what made Peres a unique leader, one must first understand something about the Israeli psyche. Why is it that Israelis— who are so creative, risk-taking, and dynamic when it comes to technology, art and, culture— are so fearful, risk-averse, and rigid when it comes to security and diplomacy?

The answer is that most of us are a traumatized people. Our collective past—the Holocaust, the pogroms, and the antisemitism that Jews encountered in exile—is present in every conversation about Israel's national security and is the root of our obsession with security and self-sufficiency.

I first came to this realization on an educational trip to the Nazi death camps in Poland. The reactions of most of my peers showed me how they carried the trauma of the past, from generation to generation. I felt differently because I was raised on a Kibbutz, where I was taught that Israelis were a new kind of Jew: strong workers of the land with nothing to fear. It was on that trip that I learned that most of us are, however, still mentally in the 'shtetls' of Europe.

Peres should have been as traumatized as anybody else. He had come to Israel from a 'shtetl' at age 11 and the grandfather he had so admired, the Chief Rabbi of Vishnieva, had been burned alive by the Nazis in his synagogue along with his entire congregation. And yet, Peres strongly believed that it was not enough for Zionism to bring the Jew out of the 'shtetl' to Israel, but that we must also take the 'shtetl' out of the Jewish mentality. Peres believed that the Jews of Israel had to learn to leave this trauma in the past, as it was unhelpful emotional baggage to carry in the present.

With this understanding, I came to subscribe to a new leadership style embodied by Peres. He rejected the sense of victimhood felt amongst the Israeli public, abstaining from manipulating it to his advantage as other Israeli leaders had.

### Responsibility and Initiative

Peres believed that the role of Zionism was to empower the Jews to act as writers of their own destiny, rather than as passive recipients of history. With our own state, we can define our own fate; Peres believed it was time for us to take the initiative in leading ourselves.

Peres was influenced in this regard by his mentor, Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, who insisted on declaring Israel's independence despite knowing that it would mean war with all her neighbors.

An extension of this attitude, Peres had no patience for the repetitive 'blame game' where Israel blamed its problems on Arab terrorism and European antisemitism.



Peres didn't think that Israel needed to wait for the Middle East to become Scandinavia in order to achieve peace, he believed in initiating and achieving peace with our neighbors as they existed, tough as they may be. He always said that there are two things in life that one couldn't achieve unless they close their eyes a little bit — love and peace; if you look for perfection, you will achieve neither.

My first foreign post as a political advisor was to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C. There, I learned much about diplomacy and applied some of the insights I had gained from Peres and his team, the most valuable being a sense of responsibility and initiative over our diplomatic relations.

I was serving then under the first Netanyahu Government that replaced the Peres Government. I saw how Israel neglected its own faults and present itself to the world as infallible. Playing the “blame game” was the main strategy of Israeli “Hasbara” (public diplomacy) and it seemed counterproductive to me. Instead of playing a major role in reaching peace with our neighbors, we invested our energy in proving to the world how evil they are and why it is their fault that there is no peace.

When blaming others, you often shirk accountability for your own contribution to an issue. Peres believed that in order to improve Israel's external relations, it must first improve internally, beginning with the acknowledgment of its own faults.

He believed in taking initiative and responsibility over Israel's international relationships. Whether it be between national governments or spouses, a sense of proactivity and personal accountability can go far.

### Win-Win, not Zero-Sum

When I returned to Israel from Washington in August 2001, I was happy to rejoin Peres's Foreign Ministry as policy advisor to his Director General Avi Gil. But when the Labor party left the Sharon government and Peres left the Foreign Ministry, I decided to pursue my master's degree at Harvard's Kennedy School for

Government thanks to a generous fellowship I received from the Wexner Foundation. During my studies, I began to internalize another important lesson Peres had taught me: the importance of avoiding zero-sum thinking.

Peres always looked for win-win opportunities and avoided zero-sum predicaments. Human instinct draws us to try to win in totality rather than choosing mutually beneficial solutions. Perhaps this instinct made sense when humans were survivalists in the wild, but it no longer serves us in the modern world. For me, this concept came into perspective during a negotiation workshop at Harvard in which my classmates and I were told to pair up for an arm-wrestling tournament with a \$10 prize for each match won. Only a few in the class understood that we could win more money through cooperation rather than competition; by letting each other succeed, we could win more matches and share the prizes.

It didn't take a Harvard education for Peres to understand that there is no inherent conflict between empathy and advocacy. He used to inquire before and during every meeting about the other side's culture and interests. He pushed me to conduct extensive research before each of his diplomatic meetings, fascinating exchanges that always began with a compliment and sincere attention to the needs of his interlocutors.

I saw how this approach made Peres's meetings so much more productive than those I had participated in with other statesmen who always focused on their own talking points and achieved far less.

Because of this approach, Peres understood well that peace is made between former enemies and not current friends. He tried to find common ground even with his worst rivals and understood that relations can be complex, an enemy on one issue can be a friend on another.

I found this approach very relevant to public diplomacy throughout my career as a diplomat, though it was completely counterintuitive to everything I had been taught at the Foreign Ministry. Most

politicians and the public in Israel expect diplomats to “win the debate” in order to achieve positive public opinion for Israel. But I learned through experience what Peres understood intuitively – that more important than “winning the debate” was “winning hearts and minds.” Whereas debate can be satisfying, it is dialogue and honest engagement even with those who think differently than yourself which wins hearts and minds.

### Everlasting Optimism

The next time I had the privilege to work with Peres was during his presidency. I had been serving as Consul General to the New England region and felt at the time that I was at the top of my career and completely “in my element” as a diplomat. But this sense of fulfillment came to a screeching halt when the Netanyahu government took office again in 2009.

It became difficult for me to represent the government’s foreign policy agenda and, in an attempt to influence the system from within, I sent a controversial internal memo that criticized the manner in which our government was dealing with the Obama administration. The memo was leaked to the Israeli media and I was reprimanded by the Foreign Minister.

I returned to Israel from Boston quite depressed, knowing that there would be no plum position waiting for me at the Foreign Ministry after this incident. I also knew that I could not in good conscience continue working as an obedient civil servant for a government that was, in my opinion, leading Israel in the wrong direction.

Just when I thought my career as a diplomat had reached a dead end, I received a call from the Director General of the Presidency, Efrat Duvdevani, who encouraged me to apply for an open position as diplomatic advisor to President Shimon Peres. I got the position, and my life was transformed. Because no door was ever closed for Shimon Peres, and because every leader was eager to benefit from his wisdom, I had the unique privilege of meeting nearly all of the world’s leaders as I advised Peres over the final three years of his Presidency.

Peres's ability to build bridges, even between those with competing interests, was an extension of his lifelong optimism. He used to say that both pessimists and optimists die the same way but live very differently. To be an optimist, he said, is to live a more constructive, healthy, and fun life. Peres came to work every day full of energy and his optimism alone could make things happen. I learned from him that optimism is not just a way to perceive the world, but a way to impact it.

It was apparent to Peres that the self-fulfilling prophecy is a very common phenomenon, and this is a lesson I learned myself throughout my diplomatic career. When we say that we have no partner for peace, we create a situation in which we indeed have no partner. When we say that the world is against us, we behave in a way that, indeed, turns the world against us. When, on the contrary, we embrace hope and optimism, good things happen. And despite the fact that our national anthem itself ("Hatikva") calls for us to be hopeful, Israelis somewhere along the way seem to have forgotten the constructive power of hope.

Peres's optimism was not to be mistaken for naivete, however. He was, in fact, the architect of some of Israel's most advanced defense capabilities.

Peres used to say he had a license to be optimistic – he was, after all, here when Israel was little more than a barren land with no natural resources, out-gunned, out-manned, and surrounded by enemies. But we nonetheless turned the desert and the swamps into a blossoming garden and developed into one of the most vital economies in the world. These accomplishments are mind-blowing when you think about where we were just 70 years ago.

The same is true when it comes to peace. For years, many said that we would never make peace with our neighbors. But we recently marked 40 years of peace with Egypt and 25 years of peace with Jordan – both our former nemeses with whom we have fought multiple wars. So how is it that we continue to be so pessimistic as a country when the story of Israel is so optimistic?

Until his last day, Peres was completely certain that we could, we should, and we would one day achieve peace with the Palestinians, and I share that belief.

### Look to the Future, Not to the Past

In 2014, Peres ended his seven-year tenure as the 9th President of Israel, capping off more than 70 years of state service. It was at that point that I, too, decided to leave civil service and continue working alongside Peres to implement his vision of peace and innovation outside the government.

I joined a group of talented colleagues who had all worked alongside Peres in various capacities over the course of his long career – almost all of them women – along with other creative, determined, and like-minded professionals at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. Our work at the Center is a valuable opportunity to help Peres implement his grand vision for a prosperous Israel in a peaceful region.

Peres was often asked what he considered his greatest achievement, and his answer was always the same: “My greatest achievement is what I am going to achieve tomorrow.” Even at more than 90 years of age, Peres was always young at heart.

“The way to determine if you are young or old is not by counting how many years you’ve lived, but by counting your achievements and comparing them with your dreams. If you have more dreams than achievements,” he said, “then you are still young, because you are still looking forwards and not backwards.”

Because he focused on the future, Peres was skeptical of so-called experts who would tell him that something couldn’t be done based on their knowledge of the past. In his view, change was not a linear concept that could be used to extrapolate future predictions, it was an exponential force beyond human understanding. Those who tried to extrapolate from the past, he believed, were basing their predictions on anachronistic paradigms.

I learned this insight time and time again in my own experiences. Looking back on our attempts to analyze the impact which the 2010-2012 Arab Spring would have on Israel, I understand now that the experts who predicted that the movement would change nothing in the Arab world were completely wrong because their estimations were based on the past. They claimed that Egypt has always had a Pharaoh, and that its modern Pharaoh Mubarak would survive the Tahrir Square demonstrations. They were wrong – and we understand now the role that the Arab Spring played in changing the face of the Middle East.

I look back on my own predictions on the outcome of the 2016 US Presidential Elections, and how I repeatedly claimed that Trump would not be elected, and I see that my mistake was basing my analysis on my past experience. I made my predictions according to everything I knew about the demographic changes taking place in America at the time, especially in the swing states, but I was completely wrong. I didn't consider the changes in the American psyche – the backlash to the long liberal trajectory in American politics and the antagonism towards globalization that threatened peoples' identities.

From those experiences I learned that Peres was right – a leader today must be more of a learner than a knower. In this rapidly changing world, we need to be flexible both intellectually and operationally in order to understand the future. Curiosity will serve us far more than reliance on experience or knowledge will.

### Conclusions – “Think Big”

Peres always said that if we would dream more and remember less, the world would be a better place. In his last book *No Room for Small Dreams*, Peres describes how Israel's most significant achievements – for example, peace with Egypt and Jordan, or a booming economy in a desert that became blooming by agricultural production – at one time seemed like impossible fantasies, but were realized with creativity, imagination and determination.

Peres's mantra, "Dream Big", embodies Israel's innovative spirit and serves as a leading principle of the Peres Center, which is today the cornerstone of the intersecting worlds of peace and innovation in Israel. I am proud to say that at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, we are working diligently to keep Peres's philosophy, legacy, and vision alive. It is what guides us every day. We firmly believe that Peres's vision of peace and innovation is necessary to lead us to peace with our neighbors, a better world, and a safe and prosperous Israel.

But Peres' philosophy is still sorely needed in today's political landscape. Israel needs a leader like him now more than ever – a leader with the great combination of a critical mind and hopeful heart. A leader who understands that we have to employ Responsibility and Initiative, Win-Win Perspective, Everlasting Optimism, and Orientation Towards the Future in order to achieve peace. A leader with deep roots and wide wings.





## Shimon Peres, Visionary of Peace<sup>5</sup>

*Miguel Angel Moratinos*

High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations  
EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process  
(1996 – 2003)

I have personally known Shimon Peres since the state visit made by Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain to Israel in November 1993. Since then, it was a privilege to maintain a very intense relationship with this great Israeli statesman.

Thousands of hours of conversations, negotiations, secret meetings, and imaginative proposals have developed in me a strong sense of friendship, as well as a deep admiration for this person. Many political analysts will recognize today that Shimon Peres was one of the fundamental architects of the creation and consolidation of the State of Israel. I still remember the speech he gave on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish state, when I was Spanish Ambassador in Tel Aviv. He then delivered an extremely clear message by affirming that Israel's challenge would be to achieve peace and reconciliation with its Arab neighbors.

No doubt, Israeli citizens will express their gratitude for his decisive contribution to the construction of their State. For their part, Spanish citizens should remember that he was, in January 1996, the signatory of the agreement for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and Israel.

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<sup>5</sup> This article was originally published in French in the book: Miguel Angel Moratinos, "Ma mission de paix au Proche-Orient", L'Harmattan, Paris, 2019. This is the presentation of the English version for the first time.



Credits: Miguel Angel Moratinos

His long political career, during which he successively assumed the main ministerial functions and the office of Prime Minister, ended with service as the President of the State of Israel.

His deepest concern and his most decisive contribution has been to work for peace with the Arabs and the Palestinians. It is his vision of peace in the region that I believe should endure as his main legacy. He understood immediately that it was necessary to negotiate with the Palestinians and he had the courage and the imagination to convince Yitzhak Rabin, the other great hero of peace, to negotiate secretly, without the knowledge of the United States, to bring the beginning of reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Oslo negotiations were an innovative and unexpected initiative. Held following the Madrid Peace Conference, they made it possible to imagine that peace between these two peoples was possible. Since then, and until his last activities as President, Shimon Peres always sought a political and negotiated solution. It is worth recalling on this subject the proposal of Shimon Peres-Abou Ala which, in my opinion, can still serve as a basis for any definitive agreement. Shimon Peres had no difficulty negotiating and talking to Yasser Arafat with whom he had a relationship of mutual respect and recognition. His relations with Mahmoud Abbas, the current President of the Palestinian Authority, were imbued with the same courtesy. He acted in the same way during the affair that I had the honor of negotiating with him following the siege of the Church of Nativity.

As President, he has repeatedly tried to convince Israel's most recent prime ministers to seek solutions and make innovative proposals.

The only flaw we could fault Shimon Peres with was his immense, panoramic view of the future. He was simply ahead of his time: he dreamed of building a Middle East of peace and prosperity inspired by the European model, in which Israelis, Palestinians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese could freely move, trade, and exchange ideas. His affirmations always had a visionary character. His quotations were many, famous to the point of becoming in Israel “Sayings of Peres”, or, “Peresim”. He said in particular: “The twentieth century will be the last century of agriculture and borders. Our century will be one of ideas, information and communication that cannot be blocked by physical barriers”. He was convinced that the next wars in the Middle East would not be made to recover land, but water. Another of his favorite quotes, which he never said in public, was: “There are two things you cannot do on camera: love, and peace in the Middle East”. He always surprised his interlocutors with his colorful way of using language and he even used it in his official speeches and interventions.

I was honored by the extremely sensitive way in which he wanted to thank me at the end of my mission as the European Union’s special representative in the Middle East. It is true that we had become true collaborators, and, within the framework of my activities, we had got into the habit of meeting every Friday in his office in Tel Aviv, before the Sabbath, to take stock of the events of the week and to plan constructive action together.

Until the end of his days, Shimon Peres was eager to see the “two-state solution”, through which living in peace and security would become a reality. He left us without his dream having been able to come true. In his last writings, he had approached the study of the brain and said: “Brain science is our next great frontier”, but science did not arrive in time to cure him of his latest stroke disease....

I conclude these lines of gratitude and admiration by delivering one of his quotes which impressed me the most when he denounced the horror of war and terrorism: “In times of peace, children bury their parents, but war alters this natural order and makes it the parents who bury their children”.

We buried Shimon Peres, but not his ideas, his legacy and his vision of peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

## **Shimon Peres: A Statesman, a Poet, a Dreamer, and a Doer**

*Eytan Naeh*

Ambassador of Israel to the Kingdom of Bahrain

I first met Shimon Peres in Ankara in April 1993; I last met him in London in 2015 – a year before he sadly left us.

In 1993, we met at the funeral of the President of Turkey. During his visit, he invited the Turkish Foreign Minister at the time, Hikmet Chetin, to visit Israel. The visit materialized in November 1993 and signaled the beginning of very close and intimate relations between Israel and Turkey throughout the 90's.

It is there, pacing behind him and my ambassador at the time, the late David Granit, that I met the statesman that he was. I got to witness first-hand the “Shimon Peres effect” on politicians, diplomats, and journalists. I delighted in his ability to talk about matters of state – and then, poetically, about the beauty of the sunset and its reflection on the old city of Jerusalem, when talking to the Turkish PM.

Twenty-two years later I was Chargé d’Affaires in London. Shimon Peres was the Former President. On this visit to the United Kingdom, he spoke to a captivated and charmed audience, about “dreaming big to achieve big.”

In between, in 2009, I heard him speak to Azeri students of Hebrew in Baku, Azerbaijan. With much patience and many details, he elaborated on his vision for a world of technology – which he referred to as “green technology” – where the sun, water, and

humans are harnessed together in order to better humans' life and protect our globe.

This is Shimon Peres: A statesman, a poet, a dreamer, and a doer.

## Shimon Peres: Legacy and Leadership that Led to the Abraham Accords<sup>6</sup>

*Ronald S. Lauder*  
President of the World Jewish Congress

Peres was a man of peace who never lost hope that Israel would one day live in harmony with its Arab neighbors.



President Shimon Peres was a renaissance man of breathtaking intellectual horizons. One of the architects of the rebirth of the Jewish people in its homeland, Shimon was a man of peace who never lost hope that Israel would one day live in harmony with its Arab neighbors. His legacy and leadership set the stage for the momentous signing of the Abraham Accords by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain. Awarding him the Herzl Prize of the World Jewish Congress was but a small token of gratitude for his many contributions to the well-being of the Jewish people and the Jewish state.

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6 This article was originally published in the Jerusalem Post





## The Shimon Peres Dream for a New Middle East<sup>7</sup>

*David Fernandez Puyana*

Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the University for Peace  
to the United Nations in Geneva

### I

Although I did not have the privilege of knowing Shimon Peres on a personal level, his teachings and work have inspired me since my adolescence. I want to confess that when I visited the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv-Yafo in April 2022, accompanied by Ambassador Aviva Schechter and Mr. Nadav Tamir, I deeply felt that the memory of Peres and his energy was still very palpable. As a result of this touching and deep experience, I wrote the following reflection titled “The Shimon Peres Dream for a New Middle East”:

The Biden administration recently visited the Middle East on 13-16 July, 2022. In particular, the president visited Israel, the Palestinian territories (West Bank), and Saudi Arabia. In the context of this trip, this article reflects on this historic trip for the prospect of peace in the region, taking into account the past, present, and possible future of the Middle East. A special reference will also be made to Peres’s aspiration to peace, which is the dream of many people in the Middle East.

The Jewish connection to the land of Israel is over 3,000 years old and includes a 1,000-year legacy of a rich and thriving civilization. A significant part of the nation’s long history was enacted in this

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<sup>7</sup> This article has been modified from the original one published in the Times of Israel

land, of which the first thousand years are recorded in the Tanakh, through which the nation's cultural, religious, and national identity was formed—one that is not incompatible with co-existence with Arabs in this sacred land.

Credits: David Fernandez Puyana



In accordance with history and archaeological research, Moses lead the Israelites from Egypt, followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert. He received the Torah, including the Ten Commandments, on Mount Sinai. Around the 13th-12th centuries B.C.E., the Israelites

settled in the Land of Israel. Later, in c. 1020 B.C.E., the Jewish monarchy was established under Saul, the first king. And around c. 960 B.C.E., King Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem, the national and spiritual center of the Jewish people.

Located also in Jerusalem, the Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam. Muslims believe that Muhammad was transported from the Great Mosque of Mecca to this location during the Night Journey. Islamic tradition holds that Muhammad led prayers towards this site until the 16th or 17th month after his migration from Mecca to Medina.

## II

Israel was born as a new State on 29 November, 1947. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 called for the establishment of two states for two peoples – Jewish and Arab – between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, each fulfilling the national aspirations of its respective populations. The experience of the Holocaust only accelerated the process by which the colonial powers believed that the Jews needed their own homeland and State.

This resolution was rejected by the local Arab population and the Arab States. After its recognition by the United Nations, a devastating legacy of endless wars in the Middle East have cost thousands of lives and countless resources, such as Israel's War of Independence (1948–49), the Suez Crisis (1956), the Six-Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Lebanon War (1982), the First Intifada (1987-1993), the Second Intifada (2000-2005), the Lebanon War (2006) and the Gaza War (2008-09).

Despite this global tragedy in terms of human cost from all sides, there have also been important peace landmarks, such as the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty (1979) signed by the Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Anwar Sadat, or the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty (1994) signed by Isaac Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat. Under the patronage of different US Presidencies, the latter three statesman displayed tireless efforts in achieving a peaceful solution of the conflict, and thanks to their achievements, were awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize.

Later, in August 2020, the Abraham Accords were announced, which normalized diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Israel. The US administration again played a leading role as broker of the peace deal. The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, applauded this initiative as an opportunity for advancing the peace agenda. This historic accord put another stone on the edifice of the endless aspiration for peace in the Middle East since the birth of Israel.

This historic accord strengthened the parties' relationships and cooperation in the fields of technology, science, and innovation. In his statement delivered at the Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony in 1994, Shimon Peres stated that science must be learned; it cannot be conquered. An army that can occupy knowledge has yet to be built. He also added that "Science, technology, and information are – for better or worse – universal. They are universally available. Their availability is not contingent on the color of skin or the place of birth.

Scientific and technological progress could be used to promote peace, but they cannot make political peace redundant. The normalization process in the region, which is happening due to the desire of certain Arab countries to cooperate with Israel economically, can be leveraged to bring about a political horizon to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The concept of using the normalization as a by-pass to a solution of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict is an illusion. However, Israel might utilize its status as a “Start-up Nation” in order to escape the predicament of the ongoing conflict.

### III

The Israeli – Palestinian conflict is still a pending issue to be settled through peaceful means and diplomatic negotiations. In this respect, some options were proposed by the Arabs in 2002, such as the Arab Peace Initiative. The initiative calls for an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and the normalization of relations between Israel and the entire Arab world. After 20 years since its enactment, this initiative may not necessarily be the outline for a lasting solution, but it could help to identify some political actions in this regard.

The Arab Peace Initiative is a 10-sentence proposal for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict that was endorsed by the Arab League in 2002 at the Beirut Summit, and re-endorsed at the 2007 and 2017 Arab League summits. This initiative came from then-Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. As representative of the birthplace of Islam and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the Saudi leadership claims the role as the leader and mediator of the Islamic world.

Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia underlined that “...only within the context of true peace can normal relations flourish between the people of the region and allow the region to pursue development rather than war”. President Shimon Peres told world leaders in 2008 at an interfaith dialogue in New York that the Arab Peace Initiative must be earnestly considered as “a serious opening for real progress” in Middle East peace.

We cannot change the past, but we can reshape the future. Young people and new generations have the opportunity to create a happier, better, and more vibrant future in the Middle East, in which the Israelis and the Palestinians can exercise their fundamental right to live in peace, ordained in the Security Council Resolution 242 (1967). As one of the pillars of the United Nations, the concept of 'security for everyone', alongside the other pillars of human rights and development, is necessary to advance for a final settlement to this painful and agonizing conflict.

In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly emphasized in its resolution on "promoting inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech" the importance of respect for religious and cultural diversity, as well as interreligious, interfaith, and intercultural dialogue aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and respect among individuals, societies and nations. Due to the growing manifestations of intolerance based on religion or belief, the hatred and incitement to violence among individuals is dramatically increasing.

Preserving the values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is fundamental to promote and support three pillars of the UN - peace and security, development, and human rights. In this sense, the future cooperation between the Palestinians and Israelis will stress the importance of the use of multilateral decision-making and diplomacy in achieving peaceful resolutions.

All actions should be focused in supporting international efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in which Palestinians and Israelis can live side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, within secure and internationally recognized borders. Until that long-awaited day arrives, future generations of Palestinian and Israeli citizens should be equipped with the proper knowledge and necessary information to promote among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among the different peoples of the Middle East.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, peace will not be complete in this wonderful region. Peres taught the new generations that for complex problems, we need solutions based on empathy, partnerships, creativity, and courage. He also underlined that peace needs determination, dedication and conviction.

Let's dream BIG! Let's dream of PEACE!

## Shimon Peres, the Shepherd

*Enrique Barón Crespo*

President of the European Parliament (1989-1992)

The first time I heard of Shimon Peres was in the summer of 1964. I was preparing my thesis on collectivist farming in Israel after my studies in the ESSEC, a French Business School. I was working in the Kibbutz Kinneret, in the Sea of Galilee. He was one of the founders of the neighbouring one, Alumot, when, as a settler, he wanted to live as a shepherd and a poet. They were proud of this young brave fighter and politician who had managed the decisive effort to build the impressive Israeli Defense Force.

From his family name, I thought that perhaps he was of Sephardic origin, until I learnt that he had shortened his Ashkenazi name from Perski to Peres. At that time, I was trying to expand my knowledge of the history of the three religions of the Book while studying the progressive case of collective farming in Israel. In fact, my trip had begun in Lebanon, and going through Syria, and then Jordan, I came into Israel through the Mandelbaum Gate.



Credits: Enrique Barón Crespo

We met personally many years later, when I launched, as President of the European Parliament, a process of accompanying the Madrid Conference for Peace in the Middle East. It took place the on the same week that I addressed the Knesset, on October

29th 1991. At the time, he was the leader of the opposition. We invited the leaders of the process to address the EP- King Hussein, President Mubarak, Premier Shamir. Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat also participated in the debates.

We met regularly. He frequently visited the EP and participated actively in the meetings of the Socialist International. As President of the Socialist Group, I invited him to heated political debates. He was known as the leader who gave more answers than questions. The last time we met was for his 80th birthday celebrations.

He was a great statesman and a fighter for his people's survival , with a deep conviction that peace was achievable. He fully deserved to be honoured with the Nobel Peace Price that he received in 1994, together with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.



## Peace is Possible<sup>8</sup>

*Federico Mayor Zaragoza*

President of the Foundation Culture of Peace

Director-General of UNESCO (1987-1999)

December 9, 1989. Meeting with Shimon Peres at the Weizmann Institute in Tel Aviv.

For a few months, my contacts had increased with Shimon Peres, Israel's Labor leader (which was at that time in opposition), then Minister of Foreign Affairs, then Prime Minister, and finally, President.

I stayed, upon my arrival, at the Dan hotel. That same evening, at eight o'clock, I spoke at the opening of the Forum in the WIX Auditorium of the Weizmann Institute, in Rehovot, in the presence of Yizhak Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel. One of the issues addressed was the communication of scientific knowledge. Later, Prof. Haim Harari, president of the Weizmann Institute of Science, invited me to the dinner he was hosting in honor of the participants of the Forum on Science and Government. I had dinner next to Shimon Peres, with whom I had held several exchanges during the day, some of them in the presence of the US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, in which I discussed the need to advance in the process of rapprochement and reciprocal understanding between the Israelis and Palestinians.

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<sup>8</sup> This article has been modified from the original one published in Spanish in Federico Mayor, "La paix demain?", Domino Flammarion, 1995. This is the presentation of the English version for the first time.



December 8-10, 1993. Meeting held in Granada, with intellectuals and artists, on “Peace the day after”, attended by Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres.

Both Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres agreed that it was necessary to show that the Washington agreements were being put into practice. As Director-General of UNESCO, I believed that Granada was a symbolic city –like

Córdoba and Toledo- that should return the keys to the city to the Arabs and Israelis.

And so, at the initiative of UNESCO, from December 8 to 10, 1993, intellectuals and artists from Israel, Palestine, the Arab countries, and also from Europe and North America met in Granada in order to reflect on how to contribute to the establishment of a climate of peace in the Middle East. The negotiations that began in Oslo between the Israeli government and the PLO culminated

in the agreement signed in Washington on September 13, 1993. This declaration of principles on the self-government of Gaza and Jericho constitutes the first peace document between the State of Israel and the Palestinian National Movement.

The Agreement was approved by the Council of the Arab League, the Maghreb countries, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, but Iran, Libya, Iraq, and Syria rejected it. On September 23, the Knesset ratified it by 61 votes in favor, 50 against, and 8 abstentions.

On December 8 of the same year, barely three months after the Washington Accords, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat shook hands again at the “Peace the Day After” meeting. “Everything is possible in Granada, whose walls, gardens and fountains...”, as I said in my welcome remarks, “...are imbued with the memory of Al-Andalus, that privileged place where communities lived for centuries, talked to each other and respected each other”. This city –said Yasser Arafat

in his reply- “constitutes the symbol of brotherly coexistence among the children of Abraham, the peoples of the three monotheistic religions”. And Shimon Peres added: “From here, in Granada, where the past is offered to us with its load of nostalgia, we see that the time has come for a new journey, a journey towards peace and prosperity, towards the elevation of the spirit and towards a new era”.

I presented the meeting as an action of intellectual accompaniment to the agreements, an accompaniment without which the agreements concluded between the political leaders would hardly reach the affected populations. In order to overcome the tragedy of resentment and mistrust, and in perfect accordance with the UNESCO Constitution, I recalled that “what is essential lies in the deepening of the idea of peace and in the intensification of the moral and intellectual solidarity of the people and the towns”. I quoted the great Aimé Césaire at that time: “Man is distinguished by this particular attitude: to go against fate and transform it into history.”

May 22, 1994. In Tel Aviv, with Shimon Peres and Dani Karavan.

The meeting took place at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the International Congress on Architectural Styles. The next day, I visited the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, in Jerusalem. We projected the construction of the “Square of Tolerance”, designed by Dani Karavan, to be located in the UNESCO compound at the Paris headquarters.

September 13 and 14, 1994. Oslo. Concert for Peace.

The Shalom-Salaam concert, which took place on September 13 at the Freds Koncerten, was announced the following way: “Welcome to Oslo, the city of peace. There is no greater honor for a city than to be known for its efforts and activities in favor of peace. Through the Oslo Agreement between Israel and the PLO, the city has given its name to current peace efforts. On behalf of the people of this city, I extend a warm welcome to those who attend this concert in Oslo, the city of peace”. This salutation was signed by the mayor, Rune Gerhardsen.

Welcoming words were delivered by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bjorn Tore Godal, the Mayor of Oslo, and myself as director of UNESCO and organizer of the event. Yasser Arafat, president of the PLO, and Israel's foreign minister at the time, Shimon Peres, addressed the public at the opening ceremony as guests of honor.

May 18, 1995. UNESCO.

Rabin confirms to Arafat that the peace process can be concluded with the shared capital of Jerusalem between two States. In my UNESCO office, in the afternoon, there was a meeting with Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat. They agreed on the last fringes of the different and multiple issues raised. Yitzhak Rabin concluded by saying that, due to the settlements, it was very difficult to establish borders: "We will be two states that live together – as is the case now – and will have the same capital, because there is Al-Aqsa and the Temple." Yasser got up and hugged Rabin. Then the eight of us - accompanied by our wives - went to dinner at a well-known restaurant near the Champs-Élysées. In the following weeks, the completion of the peace process would be announced by both parties.

August 9, 1995. Letter from Y. Rabin replying to mine about attacks in Israel, telling me: "I will persist in mutual understanding for a peaceful coexistence."

August 29, 1995. New letter in which, in the face of serious provocations, he confirms that he will continue to fight against those who want to kill peace.

November 5, 1995. Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv. In the *Journal du Dimanche* of November 6, 1995 it was read:

Rabbin assassinated. The Israeli prime minister succumbed yesterday, hit by three bullets fired by an extremist. Shock around the world. With tears in his eyes, Clinton greeted the peacemaker.

May 1, 1996. Inauguration of the Yitzhak Rabin Square of Tolerance in the UNESCO compound.

Faced with great expectation, with the assistance of the ambassadors – permanent delegates to UNESCO, among whom stood out – without missing a single one – those of the Arab countries, I began my speech like this:

“No, we must not let emotions fade. Peace must be achieved through conviction, spiritual strength and perseverance that only vivid and profound memory confers on our daily behaviour. No, we must not allow the unforgettable to be forgotten. It is because of the rejection of the horror caused by violence that, in the hearts of all, the “Never Again!” that I proclaim here and now can be a source of hope and strength. More than ever, I reiterate the commitment to promote the culture of peace...

In the presence of Leah Rabin, I firmly declare that the reason of force must be replaced in the minds of all by the force of reason. The culture of war and imposition must be replaced by the culture of peace and dialogue.

Tolerance does not mean concession, indulgence or submission, but to permanently take the other into account.

The power of the word...! Words are the only strength of UNESCO.”

June 22, 1999

Peres addressed a very affectionate letter to those who organized the tribute ceremony that was offered to me at the end of the period in which I exercised the functions of Director General of UNESCO: “Federico Mayor has placed education and peace as priorities of his agenda, aware that both constitute the key to a better future for humanity”.

He passed away on September 28, 2016, at the age of 93. His funeral, in the Israeli national cemetery on Mount Herzl, was attended by President Obama, former President Clinton, multiple personalities from around the world... and the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmud Abbas. I will never forget: “Prejudice and fear will remain as long as we don't work together.... Creativity is essential to find unsuspected paths towards the future”.

Peace is possible: this was the conviction that united the four of us. This was the solution that was reached thanks to the vision and intrepidity of Yitzhak Rabin. This cost him his life. But we will not give up: we will continue working every day in favor of the power of the word. And one day, not too far away, the weapons will fall silent at once and only the word will be heard.

## **Shimon Peres: My Memories and the Legacy of a Statesman**

*Alexandros Papaioannou*  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Greece to the United Nations Office  
and other international organizations in Geneva

To write about Shimon Peres, whose birth 100-year anniversary we are celebrating this year is an honour and may I add a challenge.

It is an honour because Shimon Peres was a figure we all remember as a Statesman, at least those of us who lived while he was active in politics.

And there are many of us, since he was a Member of the Knesset for almost half a century and for several years before he held important positions in the Ministry of Defence and of course later as President of Israel.

It is also a challenge because many books and articles have been written about him and as is always the case, many, most of them praised him and his work, others less so.

Furthermore, Shimon Peres has also written extensively, among others about his spiritual father, another towering figure of Israel's independence David Ben Gurion.

For many of us, Shimon Peres will be remembered as one of the most important players, if not the key player in the process that led to the Oslo Accords.

For others, he may also be remembered for his actions during his tenures in the Defence Ministry and as Prime Minister.

History will identify the place of Shimon Peres. And contrary to Winston Churchill, Peres did not write history so as to ensure that she will be nice to him.

However, since I was given the privilege of writing about him, I would like to share my own experience, my own personal view of Shimon Peres.

In a sense, our paths crossed four times. And I would like to say a few words about each of them.

First, I had the opportunity to greet him, more than two decades ago, I think it was spring 2000, when in a visit to Athens, as Minister of Regional Cooperation in the Ehud Barak government, he met with the then Greek Foreign Minister George A. Papandreou.

When I heard that he was coming to the Foreign Ministry, I, a young diplomat, had asked to go and welcome him, because he was already in my mind a living legend. I still remember greeting him in Hebrew saying Shalom -Peace.

I could not imagine back then, that ten years later, when he was President of Israel, the foundations for the development of a strategic partnership between Greece and Israel would be laid.

A partnership that has grown substantially and which remains as strong and vibrant as ever today.

I was also not aware of a story about his father Yitzhak Persky, who was fighting for the British army and who was parachuted in Greece in 1942.

The second encounter, if I can call it like that, was by discovering in books the primordial role Shimon Peres played during some crucial moments in Israel's history.

Such as the deal he helped broker between his country, France and the UK in 1956.

Later, as Defence Minister in 1976, he was the one who pushed for a bold decision that led to the operation to liberate the hostages held in Entebbe airport.



I had first heard about the Operation as a student of Public International Law, where it was a case study on the defensive use of force against another country.

However, I had to read a book in order to understand Shimon Peres' role in the operation.

I had heard and read a lot about Shimon Peres' role in the Middle East Peace Process, first with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and subsequently Jordan.

Many have spoken about the Oslo process and how Peres had the vision and courage to pursue this track, giving his full backing in a period when such an endeavour would be considered very risky.

Shimon Peres, along with Yitzhak Rabin and many others paved the way. They have shown that an end to the conflict in the region is possible.

The third encounter I had with Shimon Peres was, if I recall correctly in early 2010, when I heard him speak about his vision of the future at the Herzliya Conference.

That was a time when Oslo was considered a dead letter and an impasse existed, an environment all too familiar unfortunately.

However, Shimon Peres spoke about Israeli innovation and how Israel had managed to transform desert into arable land. And how new technologies could help bring peace, by bringing people together and creating solutions to common problems.

It was a bold statement, I presume, not in line with day-to-day politics.

Some might have thought that he was day-dreaming.

But, aren't visionaries often accused of dreaming? Because they see beyond the challenges of the day.

My last encounter with Shimon Peres, or rather his legacy, took place last May when I visited for the first time the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, located in Jaffa.

There, I had a first-hand opportunity to see and hear about the vision of Shimon Peres of how science and innovation can help promote peace.

This was a completely different, may I say iconoclastic approach to Peace.

A vision of people working together to address common global challenges.

Because in the end of the day, today's and tomorrow's challenges are not national or regional, but global.

Shimon Peres, a man born a century ago had clearly seen and understood this. And he had the vision to propose solutions.

Winston Churchill said that: "the politician thinks about the next election. The Statesman thinks about the next generation".

Churchill, when he uttered these words did not have Peres in his mind.

But these words fit with my memory of Shimon Peres.

## Shimon Peres' Leadership Style and Legacy

*Alex Mejía*

Director, Division for People and People Inclusion,  
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

I was standing on the balcony of a hotel in Sodeco, in the heart of Beirut, when the phone call came. The person calling from Geneva wanted to know my views on whether to include a case study on the Oslo Accords in a new training programme on negotiation that was to be offered to young diplomats at the Palais des Nations a few weeks later. I gave an initial reaction and said that we should indeed include it, but the reaction was not positive as the caller said that most scholars in the 21st century see them as a short-lived attempt to lasting peace in Palestine. I said that in my opinion the Oslo process itself was worthwhile and that it was indeed based in two United Nations Security Council resolutions that should not be ignored when analyzing the background to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I also remembered that thanks to this effort, Israel had had been formally recognized by Palestinians and that the Palestinian National Authority had been created.

But as soon as I hanged up my mind was flooded with ruminations around what I had in front of my eyes: an old, abandoned building, still showing some of its original French art nouveau architectural design, but now silent, riddled with bullet holes and signs of a bomb explosion; a clear and visible reminder of the scourge of war, in this case one of the many iterations of the Lebanese wars from previous decades. The legacy of the Oslo process and the influence of Israel and the Palestinian actors in this region of the world is rather difficult to reconcile in the setting that my balcony was prompting me to observe. And I decided to include it in this writings because we are talking about the influence that Shimon Peres' leadership accrued for more than half a century. This great statesman and

international operator, one of the architects of the Oslo Accords, left behind a legacy not only for Israel but for many other countries in the Middle East.

His legacy could hardly be ignored when you think of the travails that Lebanon has suffered throughout the end of the past century, with Beirut's airport bombarded in 2006 and several other cities in Lebanon receiving strikes as recently as last year. But Israel sees its actions as legitimate because its Arab neighbours and Palestinian organizations -some of them labeled as terrorists- have not wavered in its efforts to exact revenge for what they call the occupation of their lands, maintaining hostilities throughout the years. The Israeli government and its leaders, included during Peres' presidency from 2007 to 2014, have consistently committed to protect Israeli civilians from organized operations from Palestinian belligerents, in a prolonged conflict that has tested the tenets of their leadership.

To know thyself

I am writing in my personal capacity, but I do work in a United Nations entity with a mandate to build capacity and offer training to government officials and to anyone in a position of leadership -mainly in the developing world-; my job is to advance sustainable development and foster the skills needed to ensure progress where is most needed. One of the most successful types of training we organize is on Leadership, as we offer training workshops, seminars, e-learning courses, and many other instances where we share the principles of leadership and methods to develop a person's ability to improve its impact in society by leading others towards a common and shared goal. The basic component of every Leadership training programme that we have involves focusing on who you are as a person, so you can understand how your personality traits affect your ability to become -or better perform- as a leader. In any context, in any organization, in any country, you should get to know yourself better if you want to develop your leadership skills. As Thales de Miletus implied in the 3rd century B.C., this is not an easy task. He famously asked: "what is the most difficult thing for man?". And he also answered: "to know thyself."

I admire Shimon Peres as a leader because I believe he achieved that difficult task: he knew who he was. And he also knew how

his personality affected his leadership style. I believe he achieved so much in his lifetime precisely because he knew how to conduct himself and what his role should be, permanently using his personal attributes to lead his nation to a better place. His leadership skills were first appreciated by the founding father of Israel, David Ben Gurion, who appointed him early in his career in the 1940s -prior to the creation of the State of Israel- to military and diplomatic posts that allowed him to make a name as a reliable operator that achieved what was needed. And after Israel was founded in 1948, he began a career at the Ministry of Defense that saw him in leadership posts during the 1956 Suez War, and later during the Entebbe rescue operation of 1976 as Minister of Defense.

A great orator and a natural leader, Shimon Peres also benefitted from an acute understanding of people's political mood. He served two times as Prime Minister of Israel in the 1980s and the 1990s, and finally as its President from 2007 to 2014. From his first election to the Knesset in 1959 until he arrived at the Presidency in 2007, he served for almost half a century as a representative of five different political parties. He has been the longest serving member of Parliament in Israel's history. And his service was recognized with a Nobel Peace Prize in 1994, when he was honoured together with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat for the Oslo Accords.

But as this is not a summarized biography and most readers would know his many achievements and the milestones of his career, we must note instead that he was a leader with a unique ability to be a visionary. He is widely considered as one of the founding fathers of the Start-Up Nation, as during his prolific career in government he promoted Israel's transition from an agricultural and centralized economy to a technological and economic powerhouse based in innovation and creativity. If you go to Israel today it will be more than apparent that he was one of the architects of what you see everywhere, a vibrant, modern, and highly competitive society.

As important as his political legacy is what he did after his service in government. I see this as a great component of his legacy. In that phase of his life, perhaps the most visible achievement is the expansion of the Peres Center for Peace, a not-for-profit NGO he had created long before his retirement, back in 1996, to advance his vision for a peaceful and prosperous future for Israel and the

Middle East. The Peres Center is globally recognized as a center of excellence for the study of peace, and for successful projects in the fields of medicine, education, business, and the environment for both Israelites and Palestinians.

### A unique leadership style

Peres' leadership style in negotiating the 1993 Oslo Accords is what we would normally characterize in our training programmes as a "collaborative leadership" approach. I argue that because we now know that to support in secret the negotiations between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat (PLO), Peres conveyed the importance of building trust as a pre-requisite to cast a shared vision that would allow for the construction of a new Middle East.

We must remember that fruitful negotiations are built on understanding each stakeholder's needs, their conflicting views, some potential common ground, their best alternative to a negotiated agreement, and anticipating the other's strategies to reach their goals. Scholars assume that Shimon Peres was aware of these factors when negotiating the Oslo Peace Accords and also assume that this structured approach to negotiations should have been rooted in his strong emotional intelligence. He went beyond the need to "know thyself", to also understand the need to "know thy country" and in that light, the urgency of a peace agreement. He understood his country's needs for survival and recognition, as well as the need of its leaders to self-regulate retaliatory impulses and show empathy in the face of what could be perceived as transgressions.

Shimon Peres efficacy as a leader was enhanced later in his life by a win-win perspective, as he sought to resolve conflicts by finding common ground and making friends with Israel's foes. He famously said "... You don't make peace with friends; you make it with unsavory enemies". This evolution in his leadership style implied collaboration -as opposed to obliteration of the enemy-, and it is interesting for me to correlate that with part of our training methodology, as it includes three fundamental principles of collaboration that we call the 3 C's: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. It seems that Peres understood that to arrive at collaboration, he first needed to cooperate to some minimum degree, and then coordinate a common path towards peace that would be developed through collaboration.

Another important side of his personal traits -that affected his leadership style- was his unwavering optimism, expressed by this phrase of his: "... optimists and pessimists die the exact same death, but they live very different lives!". And perhaps as important was his ability to see himself as young and to always look forward and not back, as evidenced by this phrase: "... you're as young as your dreams, not as old as your calendar". His optimism gave him the aura of a man that could lead towards a better and brighter future for Israel. His visionary leadership acted as the guiding thread to navigate the complexities of relations in the Middle East. And those that knew him said he remained young at heart. No better way to express this idea than another of his famous phrases: "... count the dreams of your mind; if the number of dreams exceeds your achievements, you are young".

#### A legacy built the right way

Research in this field identifies tools and techniques for effective leadership that Shimon Peres used throughout his career. He established shared goals and partnerships during his political life, by finding common ground for the greater good. He was a great team leader, who led by example, assigning roles and responsibilities by matching people's skills and strengths, mobilizing support by building relationships with supporters and stakeholders, and working together by building coalitions with partners and communicating effectively with his team members. Former colleagues witnessed how Peres fostered solid commitment towards a goal through active communication and by recognizing and celebrating the contributions of everyone involved.

But to achieve as much as he achieved, you need institutions -military or civil, domestic or international-, that can provide support to the leader in his quest to achieve a goal for his organization or his nation. He was not only a leader but a skillful manager. Peres created a culture of positivity and growth within his teams, inspiring them to do the impossible and to feel fulfilled in their mission. He valued his colleagues and their contributions, creating a sense of belonging and camaraderie that helped to build a strong and dedicated team. Peres also created an organizational culture that was open, transparent, honest and collaborative. By empowering his team members, breaking down rigid hierarchies, and

encouraging collaborative decision-making, he was able to prevent administrative and information barriers within the organizations he led. For example, Peres broke down silos by being open to providing access to Israel's thriving technological and agriculture industry. He was glad to share this with everyone because, in his view, "poverty is more dangerous than anything else".

Peres was a great advocate of the role of coalitions throughout his career, as the best way to share common ground and overcome barriers. Throughout his political career, he created political coalitions in the Labour Party, bipartisan endeavors in the Knesset, and international partnerships -including with U.S President Bill Clinton and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat-, that brought to fruition what many believed was beyond the realm of the possible: peace (at least temporarily) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

His legacy transcended Israel, as he remains an inspiration for many in the 21st century. His views on the challenges that threaten humanity remain valid, and his words resonate in many capitals: "Countries used to divide the world into their friends and foes. No longer. The foes now are universal -- poverty, famine, religious radicalization, desertification, drugs, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and ecological devastation. They threaten all nations, just as science and information are the potential friends of all nations."

In conclusion, Shimon Peres was a visionary leader who made significant contributions to Israeli society and politics. His leadership style was characterized by his ability to build consensus, promote peace, and encourage innovation. His legacy continues to inspire current and future generations of political leaders around the world, and his contributions to Israeli society will be remembered for years to come.

We shall benefit from studying his life and his leadership style. I can attest to that.



## Peace, Innovation and the Synergy between them: the Peres Center<sup>9</sup>

*Nadav Tamir*

The Peres Center's Senior Advisor for  
Governmental and International Affairs

Former Personal Adviser of Shimon Peres for Diplomatic Affairs

Twenty-five years ago, the Peres Center for Peace was established and since then it has completed amazing work, which is unfortunately not known to the public.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the Center's accomplishments, and to answer the questions of many of my friends in the field of peace activism as to why the Peres Center doesn't promote political views or policy recommendations to end the conflict. The answer is that while Shimon Peres dedicated his career to promoting a political solution to the conflict the Peres Center was established to complement the political approach not to replace it as I will explain below.

Many think that we turned our focus to innovation because peace was too hard and too controversial. The truth is very different, we never stopped promoting peace and the addition of innovation to the mission of the Center was not meant to replace the efforts to promote peace but rather to enhance them.

In 1996, Peres founded the Peres Center for Peace as a non-for-profit NGO in order to advance his vision for a peaceful and prosperous future for Israel and across the Middle East. Finding himself in the unfamiliar position of being out of elected office, Peres sought to answer the question of how he could promote peace with other means.

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<sup>9</sup> This article was originally published in the Times of Israel

Thinking innovatively as usual, and as a lesson learned from his work on the Oslo Accords in 1993 and from the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, Peres came to realize that peace could not be achieved solely from the top down and that political efforts must be complemented with a bottom-up approach that promotes person-to-person connections to build passionate constituencies for the political peace.

Seeking to promote peace in an apolitical manner, the Peres Center began connecting Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, on the ground, building relationships between would-be strangers based on common interests and shared challenges. Through a variety of immersive programs aimed at breaking down the existing barriers to peace, the Peres Center developed unique methodologies that today remain a world-class example of impact-focused peace and capacity building.



Credits: Peres Center for Peace and Innovation

During its 25 years of existence, the Peres Center conducted projects in the fields of medicine, education, business and the environment. The Peres Center brought more than 13,000 Palestinian children for lifesaving treatment in Israeli hospitals; trained hundreds of

Palestinian physicians in Israeli hospitals, where they specialized in medical fields that they could not learn in Gaza or the West Bank; enabled thousands of youth, Israelis and Palestinian, Arab and Jews to connect through 'Education for peace' programs developed and managed by the Peres Center using sports, art and innovation; constructed a network of young people from across the Middle East and North Africa to study journalism and innovation together; led projects to identify obstacles for the Palestinian economy and how to overcome them by business relations between Palestinians and Israelis; and is now helping to develop the innovation ecosystem in Palestine and to connect the geographic and demographic periphery in Israel with the high-tech sector.

Shimon Peres is indeed well-known all over the world primarily as a result of his Nobel prize-winning work in the pursuit of peace, but his legacy is not complete without recognizing his role as one of the founding fathers of the Start-Up Nation. During his prolific career in government, he promoted Israel's transition from an agricultural and centralized economy to a technological and economic powerhouse. Throughout his career, he pushed Israel to be at the forefront of science and technology. In developing Israel's defense infrastructure, in saving Israel from hyperinflation, and in peacemaking, Peres's mind was constantly innovation-oriented. Throughout his career, he pushed Israel to be at the forefront of science and technology. He always said that though our nation was too small to offer a significant market or industry to the global economy, we could export our ideas to the world.

After seven years as president and 70 years serving the Israeli people in government, Peres took office at the Peres Center for Peace for the first time in 2014. That year, the Center expanded into "The Peres Center for Peace and Innovation." Innovation was always a clear part of Peres's vision for peace and he strongly believed in the synergy between peace and innovation. He believed that peace is made possible not only through innovative diplomacy, but that innovation in science and technology could help subdue the underlying motivations for conflict itself.

With approximately 60% of the Middle East's population aged under 30, Peres believed that a vastly more innovative landscape in the region would ensure a prosperous future for all. If we can help our neighbors create an ecosystem of innovation similar to what we have in Israel, they will be less attracted by the influence of extremists and jihadists, and instead harness the energy of future generations and channel it toward positive and constructive causes. Peres strongly believed that both morally and strategically, it is not good for Israel to be an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty.

By expanding the mission of the center, Peres was able to realize his vision of an educational hub for innovation. The Innovation Center also filled a gap felt during Peres's presidency. When hosting world

leaders, Peres had many places to exhibit Israel's past, but nowhere to showcase the modern, future-oriented Israel.

The Peres Center had an amazing facility in Jaffa which was underutilized then due to the bulk of programming being implemented in hospitals, schools, businesses, and on sports fields across the country and not in the building. There was an opportunity to transform its headquarters on the shores of Jaffa into the Israeli Innovation Center, which today stands as a unique "one-stop shop," showcasing the role of Israeli innovation in making the world a better place and in shaping a peaceful future.

Peres strongly believed that the world is transitioning away from an understanding of growth based on expanding physical territory to a new reality based on the expansion of the human mind, science, technology, and innovation. He believed that the new world could be more peaceful if it abandoned the zero-sum rationale of old paradigms in which countries needed to conquer new territory and exploit natural resources from others in order to grow themselves. In this new "win-win" world of science, one does not become great at the expense of others; everyone can grow simultaneously. Peres was adamant that Israel has all the tools to lead this paradigm shift and succeed in this new world.

Israel is indeed considered the "Start-Up Nation" because it has more start-ups per capita than any other country in the world, more companies registered on NASDAQ outside the US, and more patents registered per capita, among many more amazing achievements. The three driving forces behind Israel's creative and innovative spirit are necessity, diversity and audacity – or as we call it, chutzpah.

The necessity to innovate can be traced back to our arrival in our ancient homeland. We made our way out of Egypt only to find that what was written in the Bible was not exactly true – Israel wasn't the "Land of Milk and Honey," but more a land of swamps in the north and deserts in the south. If Moses had a GPS, he would probably have taken the Jewish people anywhere else, rather than

bringing us to the only place in the Middle East without natural resources. While most of our neighbors are “oily” countries, we got stuck with being a “holy” country, which is not helpful economically. In the end, however, it was a blessing in disguise, because without natural resources we were forced to be creative and focus on our human capital.

Israel is a country of a multitude of people of diverse backgrounds who must be entrepreneurial by nature. In order to address the many needs and challenges facing them, they must have been able to start from scratch and develop a can-do attitude against all odds. Because of our diversity, we have a remarkable fusion of people speaking different languages and offering new perspectives, which enriches and contributes to our creative energy.

The final piece of the puzzle is Israelis’ audacity – our rebellious spirit and our undisciplined character. Israelis don’t respect authority and don’t like to play by the rules. We don’t pay too much attention to titles and rank and we challenge absolutely everything. All these characteristics may make us quite obnoxious some of the time, but very innovative most of the time. More than 360 multinational technology companies have established their R&D centers in Israel because they know that Israelis will challenge even the most basic assumptions of the company, which is exactly what you need in order to disrupt and innovate.

In its inaugural year, the Israeli Innovation Center drew 100,000 visitors – from Israelis and tourists of all ages, genders and backgrounds, to heads of state and esteemed business delegations – inviting them to explore the past, present and future of Israeli innovation through an immersive state-of-the-art experience. Serving as a national and international hub for knowledge and innovation, we promote innovation-collaboration agreements with international partners and serve as a bridge between the global community and the Israeli ecosystem, offering a direct channel to Israel’s leading experts and most innovative startups, and to opportunities for business development and mutual learning. A big emphasis is put on the values of diversity and inclusion, as

well as an effort to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in younger generations through the development of educational tools for students, providing them with the skills they need to become agents of positive change in their communities.

Peres believed that the correct formula for a more peaceful world is the combination of the values of peace and tikkun olam, alongside science and technological advancements. These are two sides of the same coin because technology without values can be very dangerous and values without technology don't lead to progress.

Israel needs urgently to come up with a political initiative to end the conflict. The damaging predicament in which we are stuck is not morally or strategically sustainable. However, the political initiative is not the mission of the Peres Center and that is why I am involved with other organizations that focus on political policies. Each organization should bring its comparative advantage and added value, and the Peres Center is doing exactly that.

You are invited to visit the Center and witness firsthand how we are utilizing the Israeli innovative spirit to promote peace and the values of "Tikkun Olam." We invite all our visitors to partner with us in our peacemaking projects. When you visit, I promise that you will find an inspiring experience and an energizing call for action.

## **Shimon Peres and the Promotion of the Freedom of Religion and Belief**

*Carmen Parra Rodríguez*  
Chair, UNESCO Chair on Peace,  
Solidarity and Intercultural Dialogue  
University Abat Oliba CEU

Shimon Peres was one of the architects of the Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians, reached in 1993 and 1995. The agreements were intended to lead to a final peace agreement. Peres was foreign minister under his Labour party rival Yitzhak Rabin. Both men along with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat won the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize for their work on Oslo.

The Oslo peace accord reaffirmed “their determination to put an end to decades of confrontation and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security, while recognizing their mutual legitimate and political rights” and also recognized “that that the peace process and the new era that it has created, as well as the new relationship established between the two Parties as described above, are irreversible, and the determination of the two Parties to maintain, sustain and continue the peace process”.

It should be also recalled the desire of parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.

In light of the Accords, Israel and Palestine commit to exercise their powers and responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement with due regard to internationally-accepted norms and principles of human rights and the rule of law. Among these important rights the freedom of religion and belief should be underlined.

Religious freedom is an inherent right of the human person by its own nature and dignity, showing itself as one of the first rights with respect to which its recognition, respect and guarantee has been claimed in history. It has been defined as the right that a person has to have the faith they want, or to be an atheist or agnostic, as an inner belief; but it is also the possibility of externalizing those religious feelings.

International Law has dealt with its regulation by incorporating it into its most relevant instruments in defense of Human Rights, where a series of universal and regional standards stand out through which mechanisms are sought to avoid confrontation for religious reasons when at the same time that it guarantees individual respect for the religion that each person chooses.

Shimon Peres understood perfectly that for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East the freedom of religion and belief should be fully implemented and fulfilled by all parties.



## Part II

# Knesset Debate on the Peace Treaty with Egypt Opposition Leader Shimon Peres'

March 20, 1979

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset,

The alignment will raise its hand today, in this important debate, in favor of approving the peace treaty with Egypt. We did not reach this conclusion unanimously, and we did not decide in its favor lightheartedly. But we will vote as a movement, and not just as individuals. Not unanimously because not only the chance for peace, but also its price, were weighed carefully. And for that matter, the program offered by the government does not kindle our imagination. Not lightheartedly because the concessions in the Sinai and the serious problems connected with autonomy are difficult to exaggerate in their seriousness. We resolved to support the peace treaty despite our being in the opposition, and our concern for the manner in which it will be implemented does not stem from our being the opposition. The good of the people, national considerations and not partisan considerations, guide us at this grave and momentous hour. We have resolved to support the peace accord as it was proposed, because it is the only realistic plan for trying to achieve peace available at this time. If it falls, peace will fall, and non-peace, like peace, has dynamics of its own. Non-peace may push the Middle East to the brink of war, while the peace treaty with Egypt may open up opportunities for a more far-reaching peace. When war breaks out, the entire nation stands united. When peace is made, the entire nation must make it. Now, there is no way of undoing the shortcomings of this treaty without doing away with the treaty itself. The Israeli labour movement considers peace to be the supreme value. It reflects the historical desire of the Jewish people and expresses a profound need of the state of Israel. The

innovation is not, therefore, our attitude toward peace, in the fact of the Arab world, Anwar Sadat, have tuned for the time from the bays of war to the shores of peace.

But even though we are critical of the government for the way it has conducted the negotiations, we honor its decision which was taken after considerable inner conflict and sometimes at the price of its basic principles to follow this path, and turn to a realistic policy, to translate the policy of peace into the language of international treaties. Our reservations, as well as our respect, stem from the contradiction with which we are faced. We do not have the necessary number of votes in order to free ourselves from this contradiction, and we have no desire to free ourselves of the need for a responsible and definite, resolute and clear decision.

In the debate of the Camp David agreements, we raised a proposal of our own, aimed at preventing the evacuation of the settlements and the fields. This proposal was defeated. There is no share in being a minority, but it would be wrong not to admit it. This time as well, we shall make a proposal of our own. It pertains primarily to the future of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, which will come under discussion in a month's time by no means a long time.

Mr. Speaker, there is an opposition within the government itself, which assumes that nothing will come of the autonomy. It makes things easy for itself: first of all, it casts aspersions of the intentions of the government and its decisions, and it guesses at the future according to what suits its needs for the moment.

United States then increase its support for us? Will the Arabs be reconciled? And, most important, what of us? Would we want the IDF to rule forever over the fate of a population which does not want to be ruled by it? After the government of Israel has accepted a binding document in English at Camp David, a temporary self-government, as a transition to permanent self-government, will we now tell them to forget it, and once again appear with the flags of the military government, as something which expresses our deep desire? A fair solution of the problem of the million and some inhabitants living in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza is not required in

order to do justice by the Palestinian Arabs. We ourselves require it in order to give expression to the concepts of justice of the Jewish people. We are a nation which does not want to rule over the others, a nation which does not want to be harmed by another, but which does not wish to use its force to hurt another. I say this, despite the fact that the autonomy plan as presented by the government is, in our opinion, the gravest of all the errors this government has made. No one asked them for such a plan not the residents of the territories, not Egypt, or Jordan, or the United States. I think that the government itself did not actually have in mind this plan.

The autonomy, fellow Knesset members, was in its first incarnation an innocent lamb of cultural autonomy. But already when it first went to graze in the pastures of negotiations, it was reincarnated as administrative autonomy, and even before it crossed the threshold of reality it was once again born in Camp David as self-government for the residents of the administered areas. And this was not the end, for the government has already made the commitment at Camp David that, after a period of time, “the solution must recognize also” here, Mr. Prime Minister, I have reached the word “also” “must also recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements”. The government, Mr. Speaker, is “due consideration to the security concerns of the parties involved” holds the prospect of balancing out the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people”. Let us imagine that on one side of the balance we place the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian people, its just requirements, its self-government, and its security concerns for its security concerns are assured and on the other side of the balance we place the security concerns which are not exclusive, according to the Camp David agreements of Israel. Which side would outweigh the other?

The government spokesmen are attempting to console whomever is ready to be consoled, that the reference is to autonomy for the residents, and not for the areas this does not conform to what was said at Camp David. And, Mr. Prime Minister, it does not conform to what you have said here, at the Knesset, in Hebrew translation and permit me since we are all familiar enough with both English and

Hebrew to compare these: the reference is not to “administrative autonomy”, but to “self-government”, and there is a difference. It is true that, in parentheses, the term “administrative” is mentioned, but where is the “legislative”? There is none. And when there is self-government, even in an administrative sense, and there is no one else, legally speaking, there is the exclusive government.

Peres: if it said “local”, you would be correct. But “self-government” means self-governance, period. It says, “self-governing authority”, the authority for self-government, not self-administration.

Members of the Knesset, the question is not merely one of semantics. How, actually, can one separate between a person and his home? A farmer and his field? Can one in all earnestness say, about Nablus, for example, “you determine your fate in Nablus, but you will not govern Nablus itself?” then who will govern in Nablus? The military government which must withdraw? And who will govern the areas of the State of Israel, which is not the sovereign? Neither are others, but it is not the sovereign of the Nablus land.

After we have agreed to put off our claim to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza till the Messiah comes, How can we rule another’s land, when we promised to rule his person?

Mr. Prime Minister, the government may make concessions, but it should not describe concessions as non-concessions, or say to itself and to others that actually the concessions only sound like concessions, they may seem like concessions, but, in fact, they are not. The lexicon must be reliable, otherwise we will delude only ourselves, confidence in our state will be undermined, and each man will mistrust his fellow.

Egypt left Camp David with the impression that self-government is nothing but a prelude to Arab Palestinian sovereignty over all of the areas, according to the '67 boundaries. The government of Israel left with the impression that it is perhaps a prelude to Israeli sovereignty. This contradiction between impressions will begin to be clarified when the discussion opens on the question of the authority

of the Palestinian self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza. This will happen in a few weeks.

The alignment has held to and still holds to territorial compromise. Not because it is fond of compromises, not even because it cedes our historical right to the land of Israel, but because it thinks that the alternative to territorial compromise is ceding the territory in its entirety, giving up everything. It is true that the Arabs do not accept a territorial compromise. Why? Because they hope to get everything.

Mr. Speaker, I voted in favor of this, and I have explained why. We were faced with a dilemma: we had to choose between voting against peace or for maintaining the settlements, and we did not want to vote against peace, or the other way around. Whichever way we would have voted, we would have had to relate to the contradiction you offered the Knesset.

Peres: we did not adopt it. But we are aware, Mr. Prime Minister, that the Knesset approved the autonomy plan. As a responsible party, we accept the Knesset decisions and we are proposing, within the framework of autonomy, things which seem to us essential to the future, under the assumption that territorial compromise is the only permanent solution which does not entail giving up all of Judea and Samaria, which ensures defensible boundaries, and which in the future will find the Arab partner needed for it.

We believe that the real choice is between compromise for the sake of peace, or a decision through war. And on this question, our choice is clear.

Members of the Knesset, the alignment is proposing, in a separate motion, that the Knesset instruct the government today as to the minimum conditions in its negotiations on the future of the West Bank, Judea and Samaria under autonomy. We will not content ourselves with that the cabinet will resolve, because it decided, and withdrew within twelve days from its very own decision. It may be said that today is not the day, but it can be said also that yesterday was not the day either.

Mr. Prime Minister, when I heard some of the declarations you made today and I don't want to repeat them about a preemptive war.

Peres: a counter-attack, if we are attacked yesterday I heard the declarations made on your behalf by cabinet member David Levi on the matter of Judea and Samaria. So if you go with such maximalist declarations, the Knesset is permitted to provide the government with guidelines. And I want to say: not one of them presents an ultimatum. But it states in advance that there are essential matters with respect to which no concessions can be made, and that the Knesset insists on this minimum.

We propose that the Knesset instruct the cabinet to conduct the negotiations so that the autonomy arrangement be only a transitional arrangement, that it not preclude a permanent settlement based on territorial compromise within defensible boundaries; that the Jordanian-Palestinian option be preferred to the danger of establishing an Arafat-PLO-Palestinian State; that the defense of the country against hostility from without and terrorism from within remain in our hands; that the security areas will not be "hustels" for the IDF's camps and its bases, but will be under Israeli control, and that they include the settlement areas in the Jordan rift, Gush Etzion, and South Gaza; that cooperation in the development of water sources be assured, and, of course, that Jerusalem, the united capital of Israel, will remain under Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration.

Members of the Knesset, this is a great hour for the state of Israel. Israel of the seventies is not the Israel of the 1940's. Today we are a strong and experienced country. It is precisely thanks to its strength that Israel can afford to take the risks entailed in peace, and we mean a just and comprehensive peace.

We can see – as the prime minister noted earlier- the risks as well: the northeastern front, and the calls for murder by the PLO and its leader, which are directed against Arabs and Jews alike. The PLO wants to argue with Katyushas, to murder its opponents,

to assassinate peace. This PLO does not stand a chance, whose breadth of vision is as wide as the caliber of its sub-machine gun, whose length of sight is the range of a Kalashnikov. But in rejecting the PLO we do not deny the rights of our neighbors, the Palestinian Arabs. We wish them well, and we wish them well being and respect, respect for them, their identity, their heritage, their children, and their future.

We congratulate the Egyptian people and its leaders. They too have known war, and they, like ourselves, have decided to give precedence to enlightened hope and human civilization. We recall appreciatively President Sadat's important visit to Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, we congratulate the government of Israel and its Prime Minister. We did not spare them the rod of our criticism, and we will continue to call a mistake, and a blunder a blunder. But today we congratulate them on the very decision –not a simple one– which was made after long and careful consideration, and is headed in the right direction.

We will act throughout the world, among our friends and foes alike, so that they come to recognize that there is no other genuine steps towards peace except the one taken by the State of Israel and the United Arab Republic of Egypt, with the assistance of the United States.

Members of the Knesset, war breaks out, but peace is made. The Labor Movement, together with the entire nation, has done its utmost in the face of war. It has also made a great contribution to building the country so that it may be strong enough to invite peace. And this time, too, in the opposition, we will extend a responsible hand and contribute to the making of peace: peace with security, independence, justice, and mutual respect among all peoples of the Middle East.





## **Speech by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres**

**United Nations General Assembly**

**48<sup>th</sup> Session, New York**

**September 28, 1993**

Mr. President, Congratulations upon your unanimous election to preside over the the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations.

We feel strongly that the time has come for all of us -- communities, nations, peoples, families -- to finally lay down the last collective wreath on the tombs of the fallen combatants and on the monuments of our beloved. It is the right way to honor their memories and to answer the needs of the newly-born. We have to lay the foundations for a new Middle East.

The peace agreement between us and the Palestinians is not just an accord signed by political leaders. It is an ongoing profound commitment to the next generation -- Arabs and Israelis, Christians, Moslems, Jews, all other faiths.

We know it is not enough to declare an end to war. We have to try to eradicate the roots of all hostilities.

If we shall only be trying to bring down violence, but ignore misery, we may discover that we have traded one menace for another peril.

Territorial disputes may have been the reason for wars among nations Poverty may become again the seed of violence among peoples. While signing the documents on the lawn of the White House, I could almost sense the breeze of a fresh spring and my imagination began to wander to the skies of our land that may have become brighter to the eyes of all people agreeing and opposing. On

the lawn you could almost hear the heavy tread of boots leaving the stage after a hundred years of hostility. You could have listened to the gentle tiptoeing of new steps making a debut in the awaiting world for peace.

Yet, we couldn't depart from reality. I know that the solution to the Palestinian issue may be the key to a new beginning, but it is no way the answer to the many needs awaiting us upon returning home.

The last decade was comprised of great changes. It saw the finale of East-West confrontation. It opened the gradual disappearance of the North-South polarization. The great continent of Asia, the picturesque continent of South America, introduced the dynamics of an economic making of their own. The dramatic event in South Africa is a declaration to the same effect. So, contrary to all assumptions it derived from peace are even higher – a new spirit, a new ray of hope. Thus, it is essential that Jews everywhere will give their wholehearted backing to the establishment of these roots for peace in the Middle East.

In this new era, we seek a partnership with you in which we can support one another, encourage one another and strengthen the Jewish people as one people, as Israel.

## Remarks by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at the Signing Ceremony of the Gaza-Jericho Accord Cairo

May 4, 1994

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The reason for the conflict in the Middle East was the unhappy encounter between the Jewish and Arab renaissance - at the same time, in the same place. Thus, for almost half a century, we experienced blood and hatred, terror and war. Today, we declare that the conflict can be over. Today, we have agreed to promise mothers and children, Arab and Jewish, that no finger will pull a trigger to endanger the lives, or to affect the dignity or happiness, of their children.

Less than a year has passed since the night in Oslo, where Israelis and Palestinians gathered secretly to initiate a dramatic turning point in the history of their people. What seemed in the eyes of many to be utopian, becomes today a reality. I recall the strenuous days and endless nights needed to cross the valleys of misery and suffering. And again, we did it. We responded to a dual commitment - the moral history of our nation and the need of the people in the region. Our position stems from a moral call: govern yourself; don't rule others.

So the agreement today is not a submission to the threat of weapons. It is in reality a return to the values of our heritage. We do not want to be the governor, the judges, or the police of the Palestinian people. It is for the Palestinians to elect their leaders, nominate their judges, appoint their policemen. All we wish is to become their friendly neighbours. All we hope is to see them as our good

neighbours. Today we welcome you, the Palestinian people, as neighbours.

We must look ahead. We state earnestly to the Arab people that you and we need a new Middle East, a geography of peace, a territory of prosperity, a community based on market economy, responsible diplomacy, and a land that will regain its fertility.

We assure you that we shall not stop here – that we shall achieve peace with Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and make it comprehensive and durable. We shall continue to negotiate with the Palestinians for a permanent solution. Relations are more telling than borders. We are mapping today our relations, so that we shall be able to map borders in the future.

With the exception of war, the greatest menace is poverty. Nobody should pay for folly and belligerence. We can put to the right use our available resources – the water we possess, the land we own, the knowledge we acquire – for the benefit of our people. A Middle East for the people and by the people. The story of modern society is not of national separation, but of economic cooperation. No nation can dominate, and yet every nation must compete – and ably so. We know already that computers are mightier than guns. We know that the new opportunities reside in the campuses of the scientists, rather than in the camps of the army.

Ladies and gentlemen, the future is inevitable, just as peace is inevitable – and for all of us. A year ago, a meeting like that of today would have been perceived as unreal. Yet today, it is reality. Alongside the magic river that held the cradle of Moses, at the foot of the pyramids that withstood the test of time, to see such a distinguished and unique gathering, like you and us here today, carries a new promise. The President of Egypt, the Foreign Ministers of the co-sponsors – the United States and the Russian Republic – as well as the Foreign Minister of Norway, respected delegates of Arab countries and Europe, sponsors and 3 donors from all continents – we thank you for a fresh beginning, for a new image and a new era for the people of our region.

Much work still lies before us. Many are the enemies, and many are the obstacles on the road of peace. Yet, if we do all we must, we can make this concrete beginning into a brilliant future. Then, looking upon the horizon, we shall know that the reddish lining is not of blood, but of a rising dawn.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah:

In place of brass, I will bring gold. In place of iron, I will bring silver. Violence shall no more be heard in your land. No desolation, no destruction within your borders. (Isaiah 60:17-18).

Long live peace for us all.



## **Address by Mr. Shimon Peres**

**Foreign Minister of Israel  
on October 26, 1994  
at the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty Signing Ceremony**

Your Majesty, King Hussein, The President of the USA, The President of the State of Israel, The Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, The Prime Minister of Jordan, my colleagues, foreign ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

In addition to expressing my thanks to the President of the USA, for his tremendous contribution in the signing of this peace accord, and to His Majesty King Hussein, for his outstanding display of leadership, I shall do something which may seem improper, and say a word about my own Prime Minister: He did a great job, manifesting exceptional character and much wisdom (Applause).

Our first agreement is that we were born as sons of Abraham. If this is the case, the time has come to behave like brothers, members of the same family, the family of Abraham (Applause).

As a consequence of the background of our birth, and in spite of our different outlook, let us now agree that the attitude of one person to the other will be that of a host and not a hostage; that we shall strive to understand one another, and pray together so that there is no more bloodshed. Let us pray in unison for a lasting peace, for a respect for life, for a respectful life.

This is not just, as it was stated, a peace of the brave. Permit me to say that this is a peace of mothers, of mothers and children - born and still unborn - who embrace the peace of today and look towards the peace of tomorrow (Applause).

We see the Arava desert before us. Nature painted it brown. Science will turn it green. War killed it. Peace will give it life. And an entirely new landscape will take shape before our very eyes - an invitation to us and to our neighbours - a landscape to be shared by neighbours (Applause).

This is our third step towards peace. Yet it is not the end of the road. I hope that what is happening here today, as a result of the brilliant leadership of King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin, will continue, move on, march on, to repeat itself in other venues, and focus on other issues, until finally the whole of the Middle East will become a region where peace becomes a reality, and not only one where the promise of peace was born. A Land of Promise, not only the Promised Land. A valley of prosperity, not just a desert of poverty (Applause).

And now, please remember that I am a Foreign Minister, and I shall use this privilege to thank the Foreign Minister of Egypt, the first country to make peace, and that has supported peace all along the way (Applause).

I would also like to thank the foreign ministers of Europe and their current chairman, Dr. Kinkel, for their continual efforts, not just to regard the issue of peace as a matter of policy, but as a statement of a new reality. Many thanks for their generous support (Applause).

We want to thank the USA for opening a new chapter in the annals of the old Middle East. No other power in history used its tremendous might to bring about peace - free of charge - as did the USA (Applause).

It is a pleasure to watch as the USA and Russia work together in the cause of peace. This was not always the case in the Middle East. This is a new development, which we welcome with all our heart (Applause).

We see here among us other candidates for peace. I sense that politically, it is still too early to specify who they are. So let me just say, welcome to the club - the sooner, the better (Applause).



Ladies and gentlemen - this is a great day. It is a moving occasion. For many of us who dreamed of it, this is an emerging reality. For it is not just an end of hostilities, it is the beginning of a partnership. Let us take out our old prayer-books, and pray together anew. Let us dream together. We have earned the licence to do so (Standing ovation).



## Remarks by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace Oslo

**December 10, 1994**

Your Majesties,  
The Chairman and Members of the Nobel Committee,  
Prime Minister Brundtland,  
Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin,  
Chairman Arafat,  
Members of the Norwegian Government,  
Distinguished Guests,

I thank the Nobel Prize Committee for its decision to name me among the laureates of the Peace Prize this year.

I am pleased to be receiving this prize together with Yitzhak Rabin, with whom I have labored for long years for the defense of our country and with whom I now labor together in the cause of peace in our region. This is a salute to his daring leadership.

I believe it is fitting that the prize has been awarded to Yasser Arafat. His quitting the path of confrontation in favor of the path of dialogue, has opened the way to peace between ourselves and the Palestinian people, to whom we wish all the best in the future.

We are leaving behind us the era of belligerency and are striding together toward peace. It all began here in Oslo under the wise auspices and good will of the Norwegian people. It is a privilege for me to say thank you to the Norwegian people for its great auspices.

From my earliest youth, I have known that while obliged to plan with care the stages of our journey, we are entitled to dream, and

keep dreaming, of its destination. A man may feel as old as his years, yet as young as his dreams. The laws of biology do not apply to sanguine aspiration.

I was born in a small Jewish town in White Russia. Nothing Jewish remains of it. From my youngest childhood, I related to my place of birth as a mere way station. My family's dream, and my own, was to live in Israel, and our voyage to the port of Jaffa was a dream that came true. Had it not been for this dream and this voyage, I would probably have perished in the flames, as did so many of my people, among them most of my own family.

I went to school at an agricultural youth village in the heart of Israel. The village and its fields were enclosed by barbed wire which separated their greenness from the bleakness of the enmity all around. In the morning, we would go out to the fields with scythes on our backs to harvest the crop. In the evening, we went out with rifles on our shoulders to defend our lives. On Shabbat we would go out to visit our Arab neighbors. On Shabbat, we would talk with them of peace, though the rest of the week we traded rifle fire across the darkness.

From the Ben Shemen Youth village, my comrades and I went to Kibbutz Alumot in the Lower Galilee. We had no houses, no electricity, no running water. But we had a magnificent view and a lofty dream: to build a new, egalitarian society that would ennoble each of its members.

Not all of it came true, but not all of it went to waste. The part that came true created a new landscape. The part that did not come true resides in our hearts to this very day.

For two decades, in the Ministry of Defense, I was privileged to work closely with a man who was and remains, to my mind, the greatest Jew of our time. From him I learned that the vision of the future should shape the agenda for the present; that you can overcome obstacles by dint of faith; that you may feel disappointed -- but never despair. And above all, I learned that the wisest consideration is the moral one. David Ben-Gurion has passed away,

yet his vision continues to flourish: to be a singular people, to live at peace with our neighbors.

The wars we fought were forced upon us. Thanks to the Israel Defense Forces, we won them all, but we did not win the greatest victory that we aspired to: release from the need to win victories.

We proved that aggressors do not necessarily emerge as the victors, but we learned that victors do not necessarily win peace.

It is no wonder that war, as a method of conducting human affairs, is in its death throes, and that the time has come to bury it.

The sword, as the Bible teaches us, consumes flesh, but it cannot provide sustenance. It is not rifles but people who triumph, and the conclusion from all the wars is that we need better people, not better rifles -- to avoid wars, to win peace.

There was a time when war was fought for lack of choice. Today peace is the "no-choice" option for all of us. The reasons for this are profound and incontrovertible. The sources of material wealth and political power have changed. No longer are they determined by the size of territory won by war. Today they are a consequence of intellectual potential, obtained principally by education.

Israel, essentially a desert country, has achieved remarkable agricultural yields by applying science to its fields, without expanding its territory or its water resources.

Science must be learned; it cannot be conquered. An army that can occupy knowledge has yet to be built. And that is why armies of occupation are passed. Indeed, even for the defense of the country you cannot rely on the army alone. Territorial frontiers are no obstacle to ballistic missiles, and no weapon can shield a nation from a nuclear device. Today, the battle for survival must be based on political wisdom and moral vision no less than on military might. Science, technology, information are -- for better or for worse -- universal, not national. They are universally available. Their availability is not contingent on color of skin or place of birth. Past

distinctions between West and East, North and South, have lost their importance in the face of a new distinction: between those who move ahead in pace with new opportunities, and those who lag behind.

Countries used to divide the world into their friends and foes. No longer. The foes now are universal -- poverty, famine, religious radicalization, desertification, drugs, proliferation of nuclear weapons, ecological devastation. They threaten all nations, just as science and information are the potential friends of all nations.

Classical diplomacy and strategy were aimed at identifying enemies and confronting them. Now they have to identify dangers, global and local, to tackle them before they become disasters.

As we leave a world of enemies, as we enter a world of dangers, the future wars which may break out will not be, probably, the wars of the strong against the weak for conquest, but the wars of the weak against the strong for protest.

The Middle East must never lose pride in having been the cradle of civilization. But though living in the cradle, we cannot remain infants forever.

Today as in my youth, I carry dreams. I would mention two: the future of the Jewish people and the future of the Middle East.

In history, Judaism has been far more successful than the Jews themselves. The Jewish people remained small, but the spirit of Jerusalem -- the capital of Jewish life, the city holy and open to all religions -- went from strength to strength. The Bible is to be found in hundreds of millions of homes. The moral majesty of the Book of Books has been undefeated by the ups and downs of history.

Moreover, time and again, history has succumbed to the Bible's immortal ideas. The message that the one, invisible God created man in His image, and hence there are no higher and lower orders of man, has fused with the realization that morality is the highest form of wisdom and, perhaps, of beauty and courage, too.

Slings, arrows, gas chambers can annihilate man, but they cannot destroy human values, the dignity and freedom of the human being.

Jewish history presents an encouraging lesson for mankind. For nearly four thousand years, a small nation carried a great message. Initially, the nation dwelt in its own land; later, it wandered in exile. This small nation swam against the tide and was repeatedly persecuted, banished, downtrodden. There is no other example in all history -- neither among the great empires nor among their colonies and dependencies -- of a nation, after so long a saga of tragedy and misfortune, rising up again, shaking itself free, gathering together its dispersed remnants, and setting out anew on its national adventure. Defeating doubters within and enemies without. Reviving its land and its language. Rebuilding its identity, and reaching toward new heights of distinction and excellence.

The message of the Jewish people to mankind is that faith and moral vision can triumph over all adversity.

The conflicts shaping up as our century nears its close will be over the content of civilization, not over territory. Jewish culture has lived over many centuries; now it has taken root again in its own soil. For the first time in our history, some five million people speak Hebrew as their native language. That is both a lot and a little: a lot, because there have never been so many Hebrew-speaking people; but a little, because a culture based on five million people can hardly withstand the pervasive, corrosive effect of the global television culture.

In the five decades of Israel's existence, our efforts have focused on re-establishing our territorial center. In the future, we shall have to devote our main effort to strengthen our spiritual center. Judaism -- or Jewishness -- is a fusion of belief, history, land and language. Being Jewish means to belong to a people that is both unique and universal. My greatest hope is that our children, like our forefathers, will not make do with the transient and the sham, but will continue to plow the historic Jewish furrow in the fields of human spirit, that Israel will become the center of our heritage, not merely a homeland

for our people; that the Jewish people will be inspired by others, but at the same be to them a source of inspiration.

The second dream is about the Middle East. In the Middle East most people are impoverished and wretched. A new scale of priorities is needed, with weapons on the bottom and regional market economy at the top. Most inhabitants of the region -- more than sixty percent -- are under the age of eighteen. The Middle East is a huge kindergarten, a huge school. A new future can be and should be offered to them. Israel has computerized its education and has achieved excellent results. Education can be computerized throughout the Middle East, allowing young people, Arabs and others, to progress not just from grade to grade but from generation to generation.

Israel's role in the Middle East should be to contribute to a great, sustained regional revival:

- A Middle East without wars, without enemies, without ballistic missiles, without nuclear warheads.
- A Middle East in which men, goods and services can move freely without the need for customs clearance or police licenses.
- A Middle East in which every believer will be free to pray in his own language -- Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, or whatever language he chooses -- and in which the prayers will reach their destination without censorship, without interference, and without offending anyone.
- A Middle East where young men and women can attain university education.
- A Middle East where living standards are in no way inferior to those in the world's most advanced countries -- may I say, a Middle East very much like Scandinavia.
- A Middle East where waters flow to slake thirst, to make crops grow and deserts bloom, in which no hostile borders bring death, hunger, despair or shame.



- A Middle East of competition, not of domination. A Middle East in which men are each other's hosts, not hostages.
- A Middle East that is not a killing field, but a field of creativity and growth.
- A Middle East that honors so much its history, that it strives to add to it new noble chapters.
- A Middle East which will serve as a spiritual and cultural focal point for the entire world.

While thanking you, for the Prize, thanking the many people in uniform and civil dress in many nations, for arriving to this moment of happiness and hope, I believe that all of us remain committed to the process. I thank my family that stood behind me for such a long journey, and are convinced, as I am that this is the best option.

We have reached the age where dialogue is really the only way to run the world.

Your Majesties, ladies and gentlemen, May I wish all of you a Happy New Year, a year of hope and peace.



## **Eulogy at Yitzhak Rabin's funeral, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, November, 6, 1995**

We have not come to cover your grave, we have come to salute you, Yitzhak, for what you were: a valiant soldier, who bequeathed victories to his people: a great dreamer, who forged a new reality in our region.

Last Saturday night, we joined hands and stood side by side. Together we sang "Shir Hashalom - the Song of Peace," and I sensed your exhilaration. You told me that you had been warned of assassination attempts at the huge rally. We didn't know who the assailant would be, nor did we estimate the enormity of the assault. But we knew that we must not fear death and that we cannot be hesitant in seeking peace.

One day earlier, we met privately, as we often did. For the first time, you remarked that the work is arduous, but peace obliges us.

I knew your temperance and consequently your refusal to be swept away, not even by peace. I knew your wisdom and hence your caution against premature disclosures. These were the qualities of a captain and a captain you were since your early adulthood. A daring captain on Israel's battlefields and a great captain in the campaign for peace in the Middle East.

To be a captain is not a light task. And you were not a lighthearted person. Earnestness became second nature to you and responsibility your first. These two traits made you a rare leader, capable of uprooting mountains and blazing trails; of designating a goal and achieving it.

I did not know that these were to be the last hours of our partnership, which knew no bounds. I sensed that a special benevolence had descended upon you, that you could suddenly breathe freely at the sight of the sea of friends who came to support your chosen course and to cheer you.

The peak to which you led us opened wide and from it you could behold the landscape of the new tomorrow, the landscape promised to the new Israel and its youth.

Yitzhak the youngest of Israel's generals and Yitzhak, the greatest of peacemakers: the suddenness of your passing illuminated the abundance of your accomplishments.

You resembled no one; nor did you seek to emulate anyone. You were not one of the "joyous and merry."

You were one who made great demands - first of yourself and therefore also of others.

You refused to accept failures and you were not intimidated by pinnacles. You knew every detail and you grasped the overall picture. You shaped the details one by one to form great steps, great decisions.

All your life, you worked hard, day and night, but the last three years were unparalleled in their intensity. You promised to change priorities. Indeed, a new order has arrived, a priority of openness.

New crossroads have been opened, new roads paved; unemployment has declined; immigrants have been absorbed; exports have increased and investments expanded; the economy is flourishing; education has doubled; and science has advanced.

And above all, perhaps at the root of it all, the mighty winds of peace have begun to blow.

Two agreements with our neighbors the Palestinians will enable them to hold democratic elections and will free us from the necessity of ruling another people - as you promised.

A warm peace with Jordan invited the great desert between us to become a green promise for both peoples.

The Middle East has reawakened and a coalition of peace is taking shape: a regional coalition supported by a world coalition, to which the leaders of America and Europe, of Asia and Africa, of Australia and of our region standing alongside your fresh grave bear witness.

They came, as we did, to salute you and declare that the course that you began will continue.

This time, Leah is here without you, but the whole nation is with her and with the family.

I see our people in profound shock, with tears in their eyes, but also a people who know that the bullets that murdered you could not murder the idea which you embraced. You did not leave us a last will, but you left us a path on which we will march with conviction and faith. The nation is shedding tears, but these are also tears of unity and spiritual uplifting.

I see our Arab neighbors and to them I say: The course of peace is irreversible. Neither for us, nor for you. Neither we nor you can stop, delay or hesitate when it comes to peace - a peace that must be full and comprehensive, for young and old, for all the peoples.

From here, from Jerusalem, where you were born, the birthplace of the three great religions, let us say in the words of the lamentation of Rachel, who passed away on the very day that you were slain:

“Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded and there is hope for thy future, saith the Lord.” (Jeremiah 31: 16-17)

Good-bye my older brother, hero of peace. We shall continue to bear this great peace, near and far, as you sought during your lifetime, as you charge us with your death.



## **Oslo - 10 Years Later September 15, 2003**

People who have made mistakes their whole life through, term the Oslo Accord an error. Those that advocated a “Great Israel,” the ones that opposed a Palestinian State (and changed their minds in the last year), are the very ones that created the greatest illusion in the annals of Zionism. Namely, that it is possible to maintain a Jewish and democratic state on all of the territory that lies between the river Jordan and the sea. On this stretch of land live 5.5 million Jews and 4.5 million Palestinians. If a division of territory is not effected, within a decade the Arab minority will have become an Arab majority. Israel will no longer be a Jewish State or, alternatively, will stop being a democratic State.

A Jewish State is not a religious notion but a democratic one: the creation of one place in the world, where the Jewish people are in the majority. Should the Jewish people lose their majority – they will turn into exiles in their own country. And the 100-year effort, to build a Jewish and democratic State, will have gone down the drain. And if an attempt will be made to rule, not by the strength of a majority, but by the strength of force, then we shall have betrayed the ethical values of the Jewish people. The Jewish people were not born, nor did they choose, to rule others. In Egypt, we revolted because we did not want to be slaves. We built a democratic country and have no wish to be a nation of masters.

It is only in the last year, that the political right wing in Israel finally understood, that if the territory is not divided, and in the absence of a Palestinian state, we shall be unable to reach peace, and will fail to accomplish our goal – that of a Jewish state with a democratic majority. While defined as Jewish, a state ruled by an autocratic minority will be in complete contrast to our heritage.

The dreamers of a Great Israel neglected to consider the concrete ramifications of ruling over a large Arab public. Provide for their livelihood, ensure healthcare services and education for their children, and force them to agree to the occupation. This is a pipe-dream.

With Oslo, we once again applied the basic moral values of the Jewish people – not to rule over another people against their will. Build our relations with our neighbors on the basis of an agreed peace and mutual respect. Replace terror by negotiations. Agree to the map which will serve as the basis to peace. We identified the PLO as a suitable negotiating partner (preferable to Hamas); to be noted is that the PLO agreed to the 1967 map, according the Palestinians 24% of the West Bank, as opposed to the 1947 map that granted the Palestinians 55% of the territory. The Oslo Accords aroused global enthusiasm. And it garnered the support of the major part of the Jewish public and most of the Palestinian public.

The Agreement generated a drop in terrorist activities. The Israeli economy, and at the same time, the Palestinian economy, started to bloom. For the first time in history, regional conferences were held, with the participation of thousands of political and economic leaders from the world over, from the Jewish and Arab world both. We created a Donors' Fund that enabled the Palestinians to start building an infrastructure of their own. In the aftermath of Oslo, we signed a Peace Treaty with Jordan, and the threat of a regional war faded almost totally.

The Oslo Agreement engendered such a positive response, that Arik Sharon and Binyamin Netanyahu – and not only Yitzhak and myself – met with Arafat to discuss its implementation. What, then, went wrong? Basically, on our side, accelerated settlement activities. And on the Palestinian side, an unwillingness or inability, to clamp down on the terrorist militias that, through their actions, derailed the peace agenda.

If those that encouraged the wave of settlements, had understood a quarter of a century ago what they now know (that maintaining a



Jewish Israel necessitates a Palestinian state), they would not have established hundreds of settlements that created a map difficult to integrate into the peace map. And they would have also avoided the considerable expense of investing in these territories, that rather than generate development, generated antagonism.

And had Arafat, that headed the Palestinian Authority, implemented his commitment to put a stop to terror, by outlawing the terrorist organizations and putting their leaders in prison – an independent Palestinian State would have been established long ago. A country that would have prospered economically and engendered respect politically.

Nothing undermined the aspirations of the Palestinian people more than the terror attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. When they murdered Israeli women and children – they also killed the motivation and rhythm of a process that aimed at putting a stop to the ongoing conflict, granting the Palestinians their independence.

A Road Map delineating a path to peace has been outlined nonetheless. This map, endorsed by both sides, demonstrates that an agreement exists in principle regarding the character of a future solution. The obstacles to its realization are the errors of the past.

Democracy allows for errors. But in a democracy they need to be rectified. Israel has corrected a basic mistake when it recognized the need for the establishment of a neighboring Palestinian State. On their side, the Palestinians are required to stamp out terror, which threatens to destroy their own future, even as it is in the making.

I engaged in negotiations with Abu Mazen and also with Abu Ala'. Neither are Zionists. Both are ardent Palestinian patriots. Yet they identified peace as a Palestinian interest. And I saw how they acted on its behalf. Arafat, who signed on the Oslo map (with little enthusiasm), headed the Palestinian revolution. Yet when he had to start operating by the rule of the law rather than the law of violence, he failed the test. It appears as though his perception of a state is that it constitutes an extension to the underground. And

he tried to maintain an underground coalition with the terrorist organizations, ruled by the gun, alongside a political coalition, ruled by the majority. Bullets and ballot slips are not compatible.

A decade went by since we signed the Oslo Accord. Measured on a personal ruler, this is a long time. From a historical perspective, the time span is acceptable. No cause is forever lost, even if some lose their faith. Quite the contrary – 10 years after Oslo, and we possess a map that makes peace possible on the basis of two states for two peoples. As 5 Palestinian prime minister, we stand a good chance of finding in Abu Ala' a worthy partner.

On the Israeli side, there is a wide consensus in support of such a solution. On the Palestinian side, the Palestinian society is moving towards democracy, highlighted by the fact that even Arafat was forced to agree to the establishment of a Palestinian government he did not want, with a prime minister elected by a democratic body. The international community is in agreement that this is the right solution. Terror is a disaster for the two peoples, for all peoples.

The Camp David peace accord with Egypt had to overcome many obstacles, but became a permanent feature in the Middle East. President Mubarak expressed himself very eloquently against any further wars. There is peace with Jordan. It also traveled a bumpy road, but finally it too endured. The specter of a comprehensive war in the Middle East is fast disappearing.

The main problem afflicting the Middle East is also a global one: terror – fanned by fanatics that seek to prevent peace. These terrorist gangs are driven by hatred and lack any vision. And even if they breed murderers – murder has no future, and terror is murder.

The peace process is presently in crisis. Anyone with eyes in their heads knows that we must not succumb to it. Peace will prevail. It started in Oslo, and at the end of the day, it will prove to be the only option for all of the peoples of the Middle East who choose life.

**Conference: Vision and Reality, Tel Aviv University,  
September 22, 2003**

SHIMON PERES: Thank you very much. I want to say that I am by far much better than my three predecessors because they didn't leave to anybody else to receive a Nobel Prize. I still promise there is room for a future Nobel Prizes. We didn't finish the conflicts, we did it gradually.

And really I mean that we have heard three outstanding chapters in human experience. Solving one is a racial problem, the other is the largest world problem and then a religious problem. These are three of the most basic conflicts that exist in our experience. And I think that the lessons and advices we heard are of great importance and we are very very grateful for you participation.

In away we have all those three in Israel combined in a strange way. You know I am for the Quantum Theory that says that size has nothing to do with strength. The size of the conflict, physically, is a very small one, but the strength of the conflict is unbelievable. Over the last half century the Palestinian Israeli conflict was one of the two or the three major issues concerning the world. It was an issue in the Cold War, actually the conflict of the Middle East was making a living of the Cold War. It was an issue in the relations between Islam and non-Islam, Arab and non-Arab and directly there are five conflicts at the same time, with Egypt, with Jordan, with Syria, with Lebanon, and with the Palestinians. They are separated and connected and you can hardly deal with them as though they were totally separated. And may I say also Israel itself, I can see two different sensitivities. I mean it is less dramatic concerning the Egyptians and the Jordanian and the Lebanese and the Syrian conflict because we don't have a claim on their land historically. The conflict is really about the Holy Land. And that's what makes the Palestinian story so central and so burning.

The first 25 years of Israel as demonstrated in '48, there was no chance for peace in my judgment for the simple reason that the Arabs did believe that they can overpower the young State of Israel and bring an end to it. It's only after 1973 that a slight change in the orientation started, and for the last 30 years we have a mixture of attempts to overpower Israel by terror and maybe come to an agreement with Israel about her existence. In those 30 years we tried to solve the first, in my judgment, maybe the crucial issue of peace with Egypt. We have had to give to Egypt the most, but then Egypt was the most important Arab country. We gave back to Egypt the whole Sinai Peninsula, and Egypt is a key. Without Egypt the Arabs cannot make peace and the Arabs cannot make war and we cannot make peace.

I want to remind that the peace with Egypt was done in three stages. The first stage was the separation of forces between our armies and the Egyptian army and, as it was said at the time, better an open canal and a closed conflict than a open conflict and a closed canal, and the canal was opened. Then we have had a second agreement – it is the separation of forces where the Israeli army has withdrawn to the center of the Sinai Peninsula. And the third crowning agreement that was headed by our late Prime Minister Menachem Begin, concluded this chapter. So it was really done in three different stages. It took almost seven or eight years.

From there we move to Jordan – we tied our hands with Jordan. We always thought Jordan cannot be first, but Jordan can be second and we have negotiated a peace with the Jordanians, reached an agreement with King Hussein in 1987. It was rejected by the Likud party.

Here I want to say that one of the problems is the party structure. When it comes to war, all of us are united – no problem. We pay the same the same risk, and we may share the same applause. When it comes to peace, it's very complicated, because while war winds up with a victory, peace calls for concessions all the time. Who likes concessions? And when it comes to the Palestinian problem, the structure of the Israeli political life for the important parties, and

when you negotiate and you make concessions, people are saying, why are you giving away so much. Are you crazy? Now, if you want to win all the points, you will never have a partner. But if you want to meet your partner in half the way you will not necessarily have a partnership in your own country.

So every time we started with the Palestinians and the Jordanians, the split, the historic allegiance split came in. – said that the interesting part of it that the two nations, that the two peoples, shall I say, did not exist as such at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jewish people were still a Diaspora, basically. The Palestinians were a group of people and they didn't have any recognition. The problem for us was to become a people in international terms and a state in political terms. It took us a lot of time. And may I say that until Oslo, nobody recognized the Palestinian people as a people entitled to have a state, including our own probably. Now, I'm looking back and I say with Egypt we reached a peace and with Jordan we reached a peace, basically because of Oslo. We couldn't have reached a peace before or without Oslo. So at least there is a little bit of justification for our humble price – one peace.

But then with the Palestinians. I want to be honest. I don't care what people will say. I believe that Arafat – it was right to give him the Nobel Prize. He did three things that no other Palestinian leader ever did. A. He declared publicly that he recognizes the State of Israel. I know there are many people who say it's not enough, it's not good enough, but no other Palestinian leader ever dared doing so publicly. Let's say it to his credit. Secondly, he said that he will go out of terror to the domain of negotiations. No other Palestinian leader did it before him publicly and clearly. And then the third point which I want to say, which maybe was daring on his side, he agreed that the peace will be based on the map of 1967 and not on the map of 1947, which means that instead the Palestinians will have 55 percent of the land, they will have only 24 percent of the land.

For us it was easy. I don't think it was easy for him. And until this very day, those three elements are still in existence. I think

the mistake of Arafat was that he didn't dismantle the terrorist organizations. He spoke against their role, but he didn't do in order to stop it. And for him it was extremely difficult to go about from a life in the underground, to a statehood. And there he failed in my judgment, to be fair and to be honest.

And now may I say on our side, and clearly when I say on our side, I mean first of all Yitzak Rabin and myself. We had to do things that were also extremely unacceptable. There wasn't a readiness to recognize the PLO. It was against the law. Let's not forget that when we started negotiations, the PLO was outlawed. We agreed to a Palestinian state that at that time people would never think of. We agreed to give back the land, or most of the land, as a continuity and we did it – I am not sure - while having a clear majority among ourselves.

You know, the task of politicians is not necessarily to represent the majority but to create new majorities. Not to represent the existing majority, the existing feelings, but change them. It is the change which is so difficult. I'm afraid today there is a feeling in the country that, get rid of Arafat and all the problems will be solved. They say about it very much. But we have to solve the problems before we refer to the people or to the people only.

That's also the reason why we don't have yet a national unity government. I must say I see it as a great achievement that the right and the left in Israel, and that makes me even more optimistic, did agree that there is no solution but by the partition of the land and the establishment of a Palestinian state. So then we have a breakthrough but we still have to negotiate the remnants of the past. And I don't envy the Palestinian side - they are in the Arab world that doesn't support them. In fact, would the Arab world support the Palestinians as the Jewish world supported Israel, the fate of the Palestinian would be different. We have a Muslim world, some of them very extreme, and they have been introduced a terror that nobody until now on their side can stop it. So I must say in 1996 there was the very serious attempt by the PLO, the Palestinian Authority, to stop it.

I know I'm limited by time, so I don't want to over do it. But I want to tell you. Today the future is clear. It's clear to all of us, namely: a. we need a Palestinian state, b. there cannot be a Palestinian state unless we shall give back the land or unless the land of '67 with alternations and swaps as it is needed, three, we must have recognized and agreed borders. We have to have a creative solution to the settlements, and I know we can find it.

And now the only thing is time. Maybe the greatest argument I am having with Arik Sharon is about time. He thinks we possess time, and I think time is running out. And we may reach a crucial point when we may agree about time to discover that the solution is no longer available. We have an opening, we have a window of opportunity and I'm sitting here and doing whatever I can together with many other people. You don't want to postpone it. The breakthrough will stand. I know the Egyptians are supporting very much the Palestinians to stop the terror and to go for a compromise. May I say the same is true about the Jordanians. The same is true about many other Arab countries who don't want the fanatic groups inside their own midst to put an end to their hopes and future.

May I say just one word about terror. Contrary to all the ideologies in the 20th century - communism, capitalism, fascism, Nazism - this fight is not an ideological one. Terror is a protest by an outgoing generation not to let an incoming generation and a new age take over. They are afraid that this will kill their traditional way of life. This is the reason in my judgment. But you cannot live in the traditional way of life, there's no chance. You cannot live just on agriculture, agriculture today is not more than 1 or 2 percent of economy. You cannot continue to discriminate women 50 percent of your people. You cannot continue with unelected governments which eventually are leading to corruption, and the future is not with the terrorists because they don't have a message. It's difficult to overcome them particularly I am talking about suicide bombers - it's very complicated. Now we cannot fight and I have again to say the truth - we cannot fight the suicide bombers without the participation of the people from whom they are coming. You can put an end to it, if you will put an end to the reasons for it, and to

put an end of the reasons for it is to have the population stopping them from doing it. Our armies, I think are fighting very hard and they have the highest appreciation, but we need the end of the motivation for acts of terror or the mobilization of a motivation by the Palestinian people not to allow it.

I must say I'm in the opposition, I have the highest respect of the people in the government and even if I argue, I argue because I am convinced that this is the right way. So this is a conflict that shadows the world for 60 years. The Cold War, the Arab world, the Muslim world, history, religion, everything. And when I look back I feel I have reasons to remain optimistic. When I look ahead I have reasons to act with full strength to further the peace that was started in the past. Thank you.

Shimon Peres Conference: Vision and Reality Tel Aviv University  
Leaders Insight - Shimon Peres Last session

(NOTE: The following statements were translated from Hebrew)

SHIMON PERES: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, my friend, Arik Sharon on his good and endearing words, at any rate, regarding everything that was directed at me. This is a mutual respect. I have very deep respect for the contribution of Arik in the history, wars, and horizons of the State of Israel. And whoever wants to take an extreme stance will not persuade any one of us.

There are times when you have to be together - surely in times of peril. There are times when you can be together, and there are times when everyone has to stand his ground. In all of these three situations, I do not think that one should be caught up in personal hatred, or personal negation, or to an incorrect evaluation.

I have experienced these three things, and since Arik has experienced these three things - we have succeeded to cooperate, to try and cooperate, and also to disagree with each over the other's opinion without getting caught up in contempt, or hatred, or exaggeration.



In addition to all the virtues that Arik is already known for, he also has that great virtue of a very touching personal behavior, and I thank him deeply for it. (applause)

I worked with another friend, who regrettably, is no longer with us - Yitzhak Rabin. He was a bit older than me. Now I am working with Arik, I worked with Arik, who is younger than me. And I thought that at our age, we face one real question - not what will be left from us, but what will we leave to our children? For all that we have done in the past, is not necessarily good for those following us.

We all know, that sometimes the accomplishments of yesterday are the problems of today. And we need to prepare the ground for a new generation, for a new situation, for a new age in the world. Arik spoke of Ben Gurion, as the most important prophet of our lives, after Herzl. And I know that Arik very much admired Ben Gurion, and Ben Gurion loved Arik very much.

I also want to relate – in a few sentences - to a personal aspect in this matter. I knew Ben Gurion's philosophy while I was a youth in at the agricultural boarding school in Ben Shemen even before I met him. After meeting him, he made an impression on me, regarding two or three things that, since – I think - I have not deviated from. The first is that it is not possible to establish a Jewish state without establishing another state – a Palestinian state alongside it. It could be Jordanian, it could be Palestinian (applause). And I want to tell you. It is easy to admire Ben Gurion. My friend, Yitzhak Navon is also sitting here, who worked closely with him. One needs to understand that for Ben Gurion it was as hard as hell in a lot of instances. I remember that we went to the World Jewish Congress, Moshe Dayan and myself, as delegates of the Workers Party – Mapai at that time - Ben Gurion was alone in the Biltmore Plan. He found it so difficult to explain that it is better to have a sovereign state in part of the land of Israel than the entire land of Israel, without a state (applause). And what can I say, that this truth stretches along our entire path. And in the middle was the holocaust. Ben Gurion was concerned that there would be no one to absorb the refugees from the Nazi holocaust. He called for a

state as fast as possible so they will have where to go to. Afterwards there were wars, and he expressed himself before them, and after them. This fundamental line remained – and if I may say so – I remained a follower of this line.

The second thing that he taught us all was really that the moral consideration is the decisive one. Ben Gurion did not want us to be called a socialistic movement. He called it, the Workers Movement, the Labor Movement. The reason was because he thought the source of socialism was in the Bible. We do not need to import, and do not need imitation. And the two greatest prophets in his opinion – this is what it seems to me – were Amos the Prophet, as a Socialistic prophet, and Isaiah, as a political prophet. Amos when saying: do not sell the needy for a pair of shoes – spoke against the rich living in the mountains of Samaria – on the (inaudible) of ivory, and eating (inaudible) flesh, and drinking wine from a cup, and they do not care what happens to the people. This is actually the basis of the Labor Movement in the State of Israel. We very much care what happens to the poor, and we are looking with a criticizing eye on the mountains of Samaria and its riches. (applause).

And the third thing is that nation will not take up sword against nation. It may be that when the Prophet Isaiah spoke, a lot of people thought he fantasized. He may have been a fantasizer. Today it is a reality. There is no point in swords when it is possible to live without them. Human history was written in red ink – for people lived off the land which they wanted to protect, to expand. And now they have discovered that the real existence is not only off the earth, but even more so – from science and technology, and therefore the historical reason for war, such as the war for land, made room for a new scientific potential.

These three things remained engraved in my heart. As far as I am concerned, there is no movement. There are tactical movements to here and there, but this combination, that we are living next to another people - we have no choice. And we cannot relate only to the past, not only what will remain from us, but we must relate to the future - what shall we leave after us. And the social sensitivity

of Amos, and the burning belief of Isaiah – by the way, without the prophets' vision Western civilization has no basis. Take the Ten Commandments from Western civilization and there is no Western civilization. The Ten Commandments, are perhaps 340 words – and that is it. And now, I would like to tell Arik something. Arik you know that we do not have a choice, but that a Palestinian State will be established. (applause).

I must say to Arik's credit, that he said this of his own opinion. He did not ask me, and therefore I am not standing here as a preacher at the gate. I am just saying that there is no choice, and I know that there are many – and I can also tell you that the dilemmas of the Palestinians are very difficult – as us, they are divided. As us, there is competition amongst them. Arafat has not succeeded in placing his hand on the separate organizations of the terrorists, and that was his biggest mistake – as a Palestinian.

But we are both facing a very tight schedule. I will begin with the Palestinian schedule. I am speaking to the Palestinians as a man who understands that we will have to live with them. You do not have a lot of time left for terror. In the 21st Century – more than there is war between armies, more than there are classical wars, there is a war against terror. If you continue with the terror, you will be the next target of the world. (applause). You will have a clash, not only with the State of Israel, not with the Israeli army, but with many other countries. It will begin with money, it will begin with economics, and if you continue – there will also be a military clash. And therefore – there are a lot of Israelis here who say - can we believe the Palestinians? The Palestinians, like us, do not live in an a void. They live, in new international conditions, where at the end of the day terror is not tolerated. Therefore, I am not accepting all those theories that Arafat is almighty and he can turn left, and he can turn right. Arafat is not the Master of the World. There is a Master in the world and this is the destiny of the world – what is happening to them. Therefore, let us not feel ourselves alone.

We all know that we have a clock and we have a clock, a demographic clock. Today, five and a half million Jews, four and a half million non-Jews live between the Jordan and the sea, while the natural

population increase on the Arab side is great than ours, and a situation could occur were a Palestinian state will not be created, and no border will be created, but we will lose the majority in this country. We too do not have time. They do not have time – for they are provoking the world. We do not have time - for we are provoking demographics.

But it is not that we are sitting in the Waiting Hall of history and waiting – this waiting is catastrophic for us, and catastrophic for the Palestinians. It costs human lives, money, weapons, mothers care, grief of sons, and loss of time. And I ask myself, and I also ask Arik - how long do you want us to wait in the waiting room? For what? (applause). I would be very grateful if you do not applaud. I have not come here to make some demagogic speech, and I would very much appreciate if you can wait to applaud only at the end and let me voice my words without this accompaniment. This will make it a lot easier for me to express myself.

I know that Arik is a wise man, and I dare to tell him – Arik, you know that we do not have a future in the Gaza Strip. You know this deep in your heart. It is impossible otherwise. The entire Strip is 360 kilometers. There are 1.2 million Palestinians there, 7,000 settlers. The Palestinian settlement in the Gaza Strip, doubles itself every two years, 12 years (chuckle) – sorry. Meaning, in 12 years, there will be 2.4 million people. Can you imagine that we will close on them from the south, close on them from the north, close on them from the east, we will close on them from the sea. And from what will they live? From poverty? From suffering? From hate? From hunger? From terror? What will we tell the children? I mentioned Ben Gurion, he never wanted to enter the Gaza Strip. Never. And he hurried to leave it, during the Kadesh Campaign. What good will they do to us, that number of outposts that we have? I know that. I do not want to quote. Let us say a security authority told me – any one can guess who – that if the Palestinians will build a port next to Netzarim, the outpost in Netzarim will supervise the port. First of all, I do not see the Palestinians building a port, but even they do build one, for this we need children, for this we need settlers? If we will want to supervise the port we have other things to control with.

And if someone with a ticking bomb will hide in the Gaza Strip, and the explosion of the bomb will want to be prevented, there is no need for a visa. It can be carried out without a visa. We also did it in (inaudible). Why should we sit in Gaza, with two regiments of soldiers defending Netzarim, children driven in armored cars. But not only Netzarim! I am telling you, your test, the test of all of us, is an a.s.a.p. decisive resolve that will not be different than what destiny has already decided in our place. Let us not put it off. And I am saying to do it, even without asking for anyone's permission. It will be accepted as it should be accepted. I know that the situation in Judea and Samaria is much more complicated, and I am not of the frivolous kind, who says: do this and do that.

I know that this is VERY difficult. It is very difficult to fight terror, and it is very difficult, very difficult, to settle what has been done in the past. The past was different. For 25 years - all of us in one voice, me too, thought that we must do everything to make Israel fortified, including with outposts around Jerusalem. From my point of view this was when there was no chance. Today, you know, and you have also said it, that a Palestinian State cannot be without continuity, without granting it territorial continuity, and these conclusions need to be resolved.

In my opinion what you face is the decision to reject, and in my opinion, you know the price of this rejection, or to decisively resolve – and I know the price of the resolution. I can only tell you that if you resolve there will be partnership, if you reject, we will continue to argue. I am really talking to you as a friend, as a comrade, I have never seen that Israel is not important to you, or that peace is not important to you. Everything is important to all of us. I believe in the patriotism, and in the dedication – in general, in my life, I prefer to fall prey to an earlier belief than to fall prey to unjustified suspicion. I gained more when I believed. I lost less when I suspected. And I am saying: let us go, for that you do not even need us in the government. Resolve, and we will support. Resolve quickly and the people will support. Currently, the people are very confused, and I really turn to you, as a friend, as a leader, as an elected Prime Minister - it is time to act. And you know that time will not change, we will change with time. And we want more immigration.

And perhaps one more sentence I would like to say - I certainly agree, in general, in 1948. We were 650,000, today we are 6.5 million in the country. Meaning, today we have a tenth of the land we had for each one, a tenth of the water, a tenth of the air, a tenth of the space. Everything became small. Not only that, we must allocate more land for roads, for electricity. We have been left with almost no land, but we do have the only thing that ensures a future - human resources, not natural resources. What is located between the ears is the largest natural resource that every person in the world has, including us. Let us eliminate what must be eliminated, and let us be available for what we need to be available for. Let us invest more in education, more in science, more in research.

I want to conclude by saying that I know that the Prime Minister has to move – listen all, in the past we were all proud. We also believe that there are things from the past that need to be amended. We are also united by the vision. But the Jewish Nation has no time to waste. There is more time – a world of eternity – but there is no time to waste. Let us take control of our time, and lead the people towards the direction that we all know is the only one.

## **Overcoming Blindness, October 1, 2003**

New discoveries are not necessarily the equivalent of new creations. The truth of the matter is that all things exist in nature, and if some of them have not been discovered, it is due to the drawbacks of man, rather than the limitations of nature.

Man is born partially blind, or at least short-sighted. Discoveries first and foremost occur when blindness is overcome. In ancient times, when spectacles and binoculars were still non-existent, as were microscopes and telescopes, man attributed all that he did not know, which was considerable, to the work of idols. And later, to one invisible God. And as man's eyesight developed, the ratio between the power thought to be in the hands of the invisible God, and the ability of the advanced man to decipher the unknown, changed.

Indeed, everything we know stems from the sharpness of our vision, the keenness of our hearing and the acuity of our senses. From our ability to compute. With spectacles, we see more; with earphones, we hear more; with sensors, we sense more. And with a computer, we enhance the information we get, and process it more quickly. Yet, despite these tools, and notwithstanding the fact that man is the most developed creation in the universe, he is still partially blind. Even before deciphering the mysteries of the brain, the way the nervous system works and the internal control system of man, man was already able to create remarkable things, including the ability to clone himself; yet he is nevertheless unable to create millions of people that are considerably diverse one from the other, yet retaining an amazing balance at one and the same time.

Naturally, advances are made, and one advance leads to another. And every so often, a new discipline comes forward that deciphers another universal code. Yet, as has been said, man is an enigma that solves enigmas and still remains an enigma himself. Recently,

a revolutionary technology has come to the fore, that might again change our perspective in a major way - Nanotechnology.

All that man has created up to now was produced from elements visible to the eye – from trees, quarries, metals, air and water. And he built them going from top to bottom. Through Nanotechnology, on the other hand, it was discovered that the world was composed of elements invisible to the eye – atoms and molecules. And despite their miniscule scale – 100 to 10,000 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair – their power and properties are well beyond any we have known. It appears there is no connection between size and strength. And there is no limit to the range of possibilities they present. We became conscious of the strength of the atom when the first atomic bomb was dropped. The explosion force of this bomb derives from a chain reaction based on nuclear fission in two three-and-a-half kilos each of plutonium masses, able to destroy a whole city. Why is it not possible, theoretically at least, to use other seven kilos of plutonium, to build a whole city? Except that in order to produce such a bomb, all it takes is for the two masses to collide blindly. To build a city, it takes a controlled chain reaction. In other words, in order to build a nuclear bomb, man need not actually see the chain reaction caused by the collapse of the atomic order. To build a constructive – rather than destructive – nuclear framework, it is necessary for each and every step to be controlled. Meaning, that it is necessary to actually see the atomic particles, their formation, their course of action and reaction.

The atom is so small, it is practically invisible. And it is only as recently as a few years back that a microscope was built that made it possible to see it. And a whole new world came to light. A world free of the traditional measurement parameters used so far, and possessing properties different to the ones existing to date. The new technology enables the production of new and strong metals; engines so small they are barely visible; new instruments; new products. Nanometal is a hundred times stronger than steel. It could pave the way for the production of smaller cars and engines, and help save on fuel and reduce pollution. It could be instrumental in building robots the size of a hair, that will have the capacity to



travel through our body with no invasiveness or obstacles, coping with every cell, including cancerous ones. Man's perception may be revolutionized as a result. And the years man has to live may be longer and of higher quality. New techniques and minuscule and robust instruments could be produced to protect nuclear reactors. Or be used for desalination and a clean environment. Computers so small they are practically invisible, and weapons the naked eye can barely see, will make it possible to create armies with no soldiers. (In the eventuality that wars are still necessary). Biology may be able to draw on the properties of electronics, and the nervous system may be able to operate an artificial arm or leg. Clothes with electronic components may become available, serving as protection against pollution or radiation, keeping a tag on blood circulation and heartbeats as well. This sounds like a fantasy notion, but maybe the imagination finds it hard to keep up with the advances in store.

Building techniques will also undergo a change. Building, as it is carried out today, going from top to bottom, poses two limitations: The "top" is the starting point and the "bottom" the concluding point. When this will change, and building will go in the opposite direction, from bottom to top, at least the constraint created by "the top" will be eliminated. The sky is the limit. And we also know that even the notion of the sky is a perception and not a border. If the limitations imposed by "the top" are removed, this can generate growth, like the growth of a human being. There is also the possibility that man himself will learn to create things that grow upwards, from the bottom up.

Man is awakening at the dawn of this century (and until 2020 things will have become clearer) with amazing possibilities at his disposal. Atomic bombs on the one hand, and Nanotechnology on the other. He can destroy worlds and he can build worlds. What will prevent destruction? And who will ensure growth? None other than man himself. He must ascertain that the artificial intelligence he is building does not overpower the natural intelligence he possesses. Under no circumstances must artificial intelligence prevail over natural intelligence.

Man must know more; yet he must also be aware of the one thing that forms the basis of his being: the difference between right and wrong. Technology is not only a technical matter. It is not sufficient to procure a computer or get linked to the internet in order to make advances in this domain. It is above all necessary to assume certain values. For instance, to be a steadfast supporter of truth. It is impossible to associate science with lies. There is no untruthful science. It is impossible to ensure free science, amidst a society that is not free. (Which is the reason why 5 dictators cannot serve as chief scientists). Science cannot be caged, for science has no borders and is therefore global, rather than national. It is necessary to open borders, the skies and minds. Science requires investments. And the investor will examine the reliability of the investment, for proven results have still not been produced. In the absence of transparency and honesty, investments in science will not materialize.

Science calls for democracy. It makes the lives of dictators hard. Communication links in today's world make it difficult for tyrants to peddle their incessant lies, or blind their subjects forever. Science inconveniences fanatics, whose eyes, it seems, are at the back of their heads, for they only see the past, whereas science is the gateway to a new future, a view shared by the media, which is not prepared to dwell only on the past. Science shortens the life span of ignorance. For science creates new learning opportunities that serve to promote the democratization of knowledge – the way to acquire it and its dissemination alike. Yet we should not rest on our laurels, for breaches in equality and equal opportunities still exist. Inequality in the life of man starts in the baby's cradle. Today we know that unless an infant aged 0 - 3 receives the nutrients he needs for his physical and intellectual growth, he will become a problem to himself and the society in which he lives.

Today we know that in the absence of academic studies, young men and women will find it hard to teach themselves. And all those that do not learn throughout their life, will always be lagging behind, with little chance for renewal. The world is changing at an amazing pace. In elementary and high school, you are taught to know. At

university, you are taught to study. People must be the pupils of their teachers at school, and their own teachers all through their lives.

Discrimination is not only a matter of age. It is also a matter of place. For instance, the world has turned its back on a whole continent – the African continent. This is a very serious error. Anyone who wants to prevent local famine from turning into global violence, must understand that it is not sufficient to fight the manifestation of violence, it is also necessary to fight the reasons for the violence, namely: hunger, discrimination, ignorance.

And anyone who wants to stop the universe from going berserk, and wishes to protect the earth from the destructive effects of extreme heat or cold, must make sure that trees are not felled, rivers are not dried and pollution does not spread – throughout the globe. Global environment calls for global justice. Because the ones that fell trees and dry rivers are doing so because their livelihood is being threatened. Agricultural subsidies in advanced countries, for instance, prevent farmers in developing countries to sell their produce at equal conditions.

Clean air is a vital commodity in our era. Yet it cannot be distributed freely to the rich and be precluded from the poor. One environment for the entire world, to be protected by the rich and the poor alike.

We are investing, and quite rightfully so, large-scale capital in science and technology. This investment may become useless, if at the same time an investment is not made in he who determines how the amazing yields of the new discoveries will be used, for good or for bad: man. The fate of man is in his own hands. In his hands and in his mind. His hands must not tremble and his willpower become eroded, because he could not, or was unable to, tell between good and bad. Science without ethical values will create chaos in the world, dangerous for all, the rich and the poor, the developed and the developing. To man and the universe.

In the next twenty years, it will not be enough to make changes in the technological domain; a call for a revolution in education

will also be required. One without the other will lead either to backwardness or disaster. Most vital in the modern economy is the field of education. Learn how to know. Acquire an education and be able to discern right from wrong.

## **Remembering Ben Gurion by Shimon Peres, Jerusalem Post, December 3, 2003**

Israel reached its apex in the Six Day War. But the great military victory became an even greater political dilemma. In retrospect, we probably made two huge historical mistakes, whose price we are going to pay for a long time to come.

At the memorial service for Ben-Gurion a few days ago I thought to myself that with Ben-Gurion at the helm those two mistakes would have been avoided. What were they?

One is that we did not turn the military victory into a political gain. I am not referring to our declarations of willingness to make peace with the Arab countries based on the international borders. Those were empty words. Freight-cars of words without a real engine. Had we invested the necessary energy in making peace with Egypt after Nasser's death, or before the Yom Kippur War, we would probably have avoided that war and might have achieved a different kind of peace accord than we secured at Camp David.

But Ben-Gurion, who said that for real peace he would have given back most of the territories, was not at the helm. His words were heard, but as the words of a statesman, not as the commitment of a leader. Peace with Egypt would have led to peace with Jordan. And King Hussein would have dealt with the Palestinian issue (as was proved in the agreement I reached with King Hussein in London in 1987, an agreement that Yitzhak Shamir thwarted, and which I know many of his supporters regret to this day).

It might also have been an opportunity to reach full peace with Syria. And I know from my contacts with Hafez al-Assad through the U.S. that he was prepared to take an initiative that would have extended an agreement with Syria to an agreement with all the Arab countries.

We missed that opportunity. The leaders of those days had good will and good intentions. But they did not have what Ben-Gurion had in plenty: Foresight. The ability to make decisions. The ability to move away from the beaten path.

The second mistake was falling in love, without bounds, without demographic considerations, with the territories. I could not believe my ears when I heard Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declare at Ben Gurion's memorial service that: "A Jewish state without the wholeness of the land is better than the wholeness of the land without a Jewish state." And this, he said on behalf of the prime minister.

What a tragic missed opportunity. Had the Likud and its leaders accepted that Bengurionist view 25 years ago, the whole country would look, and live, differently.

The tremendous sums of money, estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars, that were invested in the territories, could have been invested in the Negev instead. Rather than fighting a cruel fight with our neighbors, we could have fought a different battle: with the Negev wilderness. The Negev could be blossoming. Embellished by lawns, groves, forests, ponds. And its magnificent dry climate would give life to hundreds of thousands of people who live in the crowded center of the country, choking from concrete and smoke.

The huge fortune we invested in the territories, which today Sharon and Olmert understand undermines Israel's existence as a state with a Jewish majority, could have been invested in the Negev, in the Galilee, in education, in creating jobs, in cultivating relations with our neighbors and in protecting our country's landscapes. The claim that Oslo is a crime is the sin in Israel's history. Holding on to our foothold in the territories did not give us security (because terrorism replaced conventional warfare) or peace (because without giving back the territories there will be no peace), nor a modern Israeli society (that has to exist in an open, global economy).

What a mistake! And how hard it is to correct today. The temporary wholeness of the territories led to a deep rift in the nation, a rift that makes it that much harder to repair the mistakes of war.

I know that Ben-Gurion would have been moved by the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union. He predicted it. He hoped for it. But if he were living among us he would have devoted all of his energy to promote further immigration and create the economic and political conditions for it to continue.

I am sure that were Ben-Gurion among us, he would make it Israel's top priority to become a country that excels at science. He would probably be interested in the evolving scientific revolution – the nano-technology revolution.

I may be able to testify to that better than any other person. I saw his tremendous interest in the human mind and the power of the atom. He studied and investigated this field and allowed me, against conventional wisdom, to bring that revolutionary technology to Israel. The nano is the complementary sequence to the secrets of the atom. An atomic bomb is a clash between two atomic systems that results in the outbreak of a destructive atomic reaction. The clash inside the bomb is blind. Today a microscope has been developed that allows us to see the atomic structure and as a result to organize it, to use it, not to destroy worlds but to build worlds. Nano-technology is not a new discovery but a new dimension. Unfortunately, unlike Ben-Gurion, few of our politicians understand the significance of science for the future of humanity and the future of Israel.

Curiosity, says Nabokov, is the beginning of non-surrender. I suppose Ben-Gurion is looking at us from above and saying to himself: "Look what we have come to. Man is standing with a tool in his hand to rebuild himself." Science has not grown in strength, man has. In terms of the choices he has too. And then he adds: "I always believed in the biblical promise that each person was created in God's image. Although man himself does not become God." Today he has powers that give him possibilities he never had since being evicted from the Paradise. "And allow me to say to you: be the Chosen People. A light unto the nations." The alternative to light is darkness. And man can either turn on a light or throw his world into darkness.

Therefore choose the right road.





**Address by the President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres  
at the German Bundestag January 27, 2010**

I stand here before you, as the President of the State of Israel, the home of the Jewish People.

While my heart is torn at the memory of the despicable past – my eyes envisage a common future for a young and enlightened world that is free of all hatred, a world in which the words “war” and “antisemitism” will be obsolete.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Bundestag,

In the Jewish tradition that accompanies us for thousands of years, there is a prayer in Aramaic recited when mourning the dead. It is a prayer in memory of fathers and mothers, children brothers and sisters.

Mothers whose infants were torn from their arms, fathers who watched in horror as their children were taken to the gas chambers and their bodies incinerated, did not have time to recite this ancient Jewish prayer. With your permission, ladies and gentlemen, I have the need to recite this prayer, here and now, in the name of the Jewish people, in memory of, and in honor of, the six million Jews many of whose bodies were reduced to ashes:

Mourner’s Kaddish

Glorified and sanctified be God’s great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingship and bring forth His redemption and hasten the coming of the Messiah in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation that are uttered in the world.

May there be abundant peace from Heaven and life upon us and upon all Israel.

The prayer concludes with the words that symbolize the aspirations of the State of Israel and the dream of the Jewish People:

He who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace upon us, and upon all Israel, Amen.

My friends, representatives of the German people:

In Israel, and around the globe, Holocaust survivors are gradually departing from the world of the living. Their numbers are diminishing daily.

Yet there are still men and women who took part in the most inhuman activity on earth – that of genocide – still living on German soil, in countries of Europe and in other parts of the world. I urge you to do all in your powers to bring them to justice.

In our perception this is not revenge. This is an educational exercise, an hour of grace for the young generation, who wherever they may be, should remember, and never forget; should know what took place, and will never, absolutely never, have the slightest doubt in their minds that there is another option, that of peace, reconciliation and love.

Today, the International Remembrance Day for the victims of the Holocaust is the date on which the sun shone for the first time sixty-five years ago, after six dark and evil years, its rays revealing the full extent of the destruction of my people.

On that same day, the smoke still rose above the bombed incinerators, and the blood and ashes still stained the soil of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. There was silence on the platform of the train-station; and the “selection ramp” was empty of people. A deceptive atmosphere of tranquility settled on the monstrous field of slaughter..

The ear absorbed only the quiet, yet from the depths of the frozen ground there erupted a scream that pierced every human heart,

and rose to the indifferent and silent heavens.

January 27th, 1945, was a date that came too late. Six million Jews, including one and half million children, were no longer among the living.

This day not only represents a day of solidarity with the memory of the murdered, not only the pangs of conscience of humanity in the face of the atrocity that cannot be comprehended, but also the tragedy that derived from delayed action.

This is the bitter lesson learnt from the world's lack of attention in the face of the rising flames, and the killing machine that operated day in, day out, year in, year out, without disruption.

Three years earlier, on January 20th, 1942, not far from here, in "Villa Wannsee," on the shores of the beautiful lake, a group of senior officers and bureaucrats, headed by Reinhard Heydrich, convened to devise and coordinate the operational "Final Solution" for the "Jewish problem."

Adolf Eichmann diligently produced a document that identified the target population intended for deportation and extermination.

It encompassed all the Jews of Europe from the millions living in Poland, Ukraine, and the Soviet Union, to the two hundred Jews living in tiny Albania.

Eleven million Jews were designated for death.

The Nazis were efficient, and from Wannsee paved the path to Auschwitz, with its gas-chambers and incinerators.

I stand here before you on this day and in this place, distinguished leaders and representatives of a different, democratic Germany, as the representative of the Jewish State, of the State of the Survivors, of the State of Israel.

I am humbled by the significance of this daunting and elevated position. I believe and I hope that you can feel this too.

I can see in my mind's eye, at this very moment, the imposing image of my deeply respected, handsome and dignified grandfather, Rabbi

Zvi Melzer. I was blessed to have been his beloved grandson, and he was my teacher and mentor.

He was the one who taught me Bible. I see him with his white beard and dark eyebrows, enveloped in his Tallith (prayer shawl), standing among the congregants, praying in the synagogue, in the town of Vishniev in Belarus where I was born.

I wrapped myself in the folds of his Tallith, and quivering with emotion listened to his clear and delightful voice, still ringing in my ears, as he recited the Kol Nidrei prayer of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, which according to his faith was the day on which the Creator of the World determined who would live and who would die in the year ahead.

I still remember him standing at the train station from which I, an 11-year-old boy, started on my journey from my village to the land of Israel, and his poignant embrace. I remember his last words to me: "My boy, always remain a Jew!"

The train whistled and started on its way. I continued to look from the window at my grandfather until he disappeared from sight.

That was the last time I saw him.

When the Nazis came to Vishniev, they ordered all the members of the Jewish community to congregate in the synagogue.

My grandfather marched in front, surrounded by his family, wrapped in the same Tallith in which I had enveloped myself as a youngster. The doors of the synagogue were locked from the outside and the wooden structure was set aflame. The only remains of the whole community were embers.

There were no survivors.

Distinguished gathering,

The Holocaust raises significant questions that touch on the infinite depth of the human soul. To what depth can the evil in man sink, and to what extent can a cultured nation that respected intellect, remain passive?

What kind of atrocities can be ignored? To what degree can a moral compass be silenced or a rational deliberation be crushed? How can any nation consider itself to be “a superior race” and determine that others are inferior and worthless?

There still remains the question to which I continue to seek an answer. Why did the Nazis regard the existence of Jews as a great and immediate danger?

What induced the Nazis to invest such extensive resources in the killing machine?

What motivated the Nazis to continue operating with such determination to the very end, even though their defeat was already obvious?

Was there a Jewish army threatening to obstruct the “thousand-year Reich?” Was the persecuted people, crushed by the boot of the oppressor, able to stop the hurtling destructive war machine of the Nazis? How many divisions were at the disposal of the Jewish communities in Europe? How many tanks, warplanes, guns?

Ladies and gentlemen:

The Nazi's rabid hatred cannot be solely defined as “antisemitism.”

This is a commonly-used definition that does not fully explain the burning, murderous, bestial drive that motivated the Nazi regime, and its obsessive resolve to annihilate the Jews.

The war's objective was to conquer Europe; not to settle scores with Jewish history.

And if we the Jews, constituted a terrible threat in the eyes of the Hitler regime, this was not a military threat, but rather a moral threat, in the face of the craving for the negation of our belief that all people are created in the image of G-d and are equal in the eyes of G-d

A Jew, even when unarmed, and unable to defend himself, will still bless the Lord, and remain true to his moral values.

From its very beginnings, the Jewish People were commanded: “Though shalt not kill!” “Love thy neighbor as thyself!”

“Seek peace and pursue it!”— in every situation, in every place.

This naïve and believing Jew I now see in front of me, in the form of my good grandfather, the most upright and beloved of men.

The Nazis tried to demonize him. They burned him and his brother alive. The flames burned their bodies, but not their spirit.

They tried to depict my people in horrible propaganda films and on the pages of “The Stürmer” as parasites, sewer-rats, and the spreaders of disease...

The Nazis forgot the values of justice and mercy, and also induced others to forget. As a Jew, I always carry the pain of the Holocaust endured by my brothers and sisters. As an Israeli, I weep over the tragic delay in the establishment of the Jewish State that left my people with no safe harbor.

As a grandfather I cannot come to terms with the loss of one and a half million children whose vast human and creative potential could have significantly changed Israel’s destiny.

I am proud that we are the arch-enemy of Nazi evil.

I am proud of the legacy of our forefathers, so diametrically opposed to the doctrine of racism.

I am proud of the revival of Israel, the moral and historic answer to the attempt to erase the Jewish People from the face of the earth.

I am grateful to the Lord in Heaven that other peoples rose and snuffed out the madness, the evil and cruelty. The Holocaust must always be prominent in our minds and in the conscience of humanity, to serve as an unequivocal warning in perpetuity, as a binding obligation to uphold the sanctity of life, equality among men, freedom and peace.

The murder of Jews in Europe by the Nazis should not be seen as a kind of astrophysical “Black Hole,” that ingests both the past and the future.

The Holocaust must not be allowed to become a barrier against faith in decency, hope and life.

I ask myself today on International Holocaust Memorial Day, how the Jews of Europe would have wanted us to remember them - only through the smoke of the incinerators? Or would they also want us to remember life before the Holocaust?

If there is a collective voice for the millions of European Jews, this voice calls upon us to look forward, and to be what the victims could have been and were not; to create anew what we lost when they were exterminated.

The contribution of German Jewry, who identified with their country, in fields such as culture, science, the economy, and the standing of Germany as a whole, was extensive, and disproportionate to the size of the community.

The Jews of Europe advanced and contributed to the development of science, technology, economy, literature and the arts.

They were able to accomplish so much because of the knowledge that they accumulated in their wanderings. When they were banished from their countries of domicile, they were forced into a nomadic lifestyle. Well-versed in literature, they were multi-lingual merchants and were blessed with professions in a number of fields, serving as doctors, writers, scientists and artists.

Many of their members played prominent roles in Germany's culture and contributed to the world at large.

My heart beats faster at the thought of the tremendous stream of visionaries and inventors that burst forth from the foundations of the Jewish towns, the Jewish ghettos and also from the homes of the Jewish bourgeoisie, when Jews were permitted to enter the gates of European and German universities.

Almost with the stroke of a wand, we saw the appearance of Albert Einstein Zygmund Freud, Martin Buber Karl Marx, Herman Cohen, Hannah Arendt, Heinrich Heine, Moshe Mendelson, Rosa Luxemburg, Walther Rathenau, Stefan Zweig, and Walter Benjamin.

What was common to all these disparate people was their tremendous contributions to human thought, and their contributions to modernism each in their own unique manner.

They steered German, European and world views to new perceptions of the past and the future.

We have been left with the decisive lesson: “Never again” – never again a racist doctrine and never again the principle of racial superiority.

Never again a so-called divine authority to incite, murder, scorn the law, deny God and the Holocaust.

Never again to ignore blood-thirsty dictators, disguised behind demagogical masks, who spew murderous slogans.

My friends, representatives of the German People:

Threats to annihilate a people and a nation are voiced in the shadow of the development of weapons of mass-destruction, in hands that are not to be trusted, and to be used by people whose judgment is irrational; and whose tongues do not speak the truth.

To prevent another Holocaust, we are obligated to educate our children to respect human life and to conduct peaceful relations between peoples with respect for individual cultures and universal values, to constantly refer anew to the Ten Commandments.

We must turn the torch on scientific secrets to unlock their mysteries and direct our microscopes and telescopes, to magnify the joys of scientific discoveries that will enable advancement into the realm of new remedies for human beings and their souls, food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, air to breathe, wisdom for humanity.

With the end of the British Mandate, David Ben-Gurion, leader of the newly revived Jewish nation, declared the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Arabs rejected the U.N. resolution for the Partition of Palestine and their armies attacked Israel.

Indeed, a few hours after Israel’s Declaration of Independence, seven Arab armies invaded Israel, with the object of destroying it even before it took its first breath.

We faced them alone, with no allies, with our backs to the last shores of hope that the Jewish People still maintained.



Had we been defeated in this war, it could have been the death knell of our people.

The Israel defense Forces – won this desperate battle, in which historic justice and human heroism joined forces. Holocaust survivors, who had barely arrived in the country were already serving in the IDF, and some fell in the line of duty.

While it was still licking its wounds, this small country, Israel, immediately executed its first priority to open its gates to the remnants of the Holocaust and the multitude of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. All other gates were closed to them.

Members of the Bundestag,

We remember well that as we were still bleeding from our wounds, help came from an unexpected quarter, from the new Germany.

Two leaders, prominent in the annals of history, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the father of the Democratic Federation of Germany, and David Ben-Gurion, the founding father and first prime minister of the State of Israel stretched out their hands to each other, from the two sides of the abyss.

On September 27th, 1951, Chancellor Adenauer spoke from the Bundestag podium about the responsibility of the German people for the crimes of the Third Reich against the Jewish people, and the intention of his government to devise a compensation agreement for stolen Jewish property and help in the revival process of Israel.

The decision of the government of Israel to hold direct negotiations with the German government naturally provoked a stormy reaction such as had never been previously experienced.

Holocaust victims with death camp numbers permanently tattooed on their arms were among the stone-throwers at the Knesset and there were those who sided with Ben-Gurion.

Ben-Gurion stood by his decision: There is a new, different Germany, with which we have to discuss the future and not only the past, he said.

The Knesset gave its pained consent. The restitution payments helped to rescue Israel from economic distress and contributed to its accelerated development.

As a young man, it was my privilege at the time, to serve as Ben Gurion's assistant, and later as his deputy at the Ministry of Defense. I learned that while Israel was building its home, it also had to defend its sons and daughters.

Here too we found an attentive German ear, providing us with arms. A very special relationship developed between Germany and Israel.

The friendship that was established was not at the expense of the memory of the Holocaust, but grew out of the memory of the dark hours of the past, in light of a joint and determined decision to look ahead – towards the horizon of good hope: to Tikkun Olam – putting the world aright.

The bridge built across the ravine was built by painful hands and shoulders that sagged with the burden of memory. But it rested on strong moral foundations.

We built a living memorial for our brothers and sisters using ploughshares that turned the arid desert into thriving orchards, laboratories that generated new life, and defense forces able to protect our survival. All this was on the pillars of uncompromising democracy.

We believed, and continue to believe, that the new Germany will be doing whatever needs to be done to ensure that the Jewish state will never again have to fight for its survival alone, and that murderous and arrogant dictatorships will never again raise their heads, in our times.

For that, I thank you.

Konrad Adenauer, who found a common language with David Ben-Gurion, Willy Brandt, who knelt in memory of the Warsaw Ghetto heroes, and you members of the Bundestag and Bundesrat from Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl along with other leaders, have all strengthened the foundations and added to the ties of friendship through social institutions, financial organizations, cultural centers,

intellectuals and activists, who contributed to the enrichment of these special relations.

Again, I thank you.

President Horst Köhler, you declared at the Knesset in Jerusalem that “the responsibility for the Holocaust is part of the German identity.” We greatly appreciate your having said that.

And you, Madam Chancellor, Angela Merkel, you have conquered the hearts of our nation with your sincerity and your warmth. You said to the American Senate and House of Representatives that “an attack on Israel will equate an attack on Germany.” We shall not forget this.

Distinguished Members of the Bundestag, Ladies and Gentlemen, almost sixty two years have passed since the founding of the State of Israel. We have withstood the test of nine wars.

We reached two peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan.

We gave back the territories which fell into our hands in war to the countries with which we made peace.

Our country is poor in natural resources, yet we were still successful in developing a model agriculture esteemed by many to be one of the best in the world.

We compensated for the lack of natural resources with cutting-edge scientific and technological advances that are at the forefront of scientific developments, and our accomplishments make up for the smallness of our land.

We have seen an ingathering of exiles. Today, the majority of the Jewish people can be found in Israel. We have returned to our language.

We are the only country in the region whose citizens speak the same ancient language that was spoken three thousand years ago – the Hebrew language, the language of the Bible.

Jewish history continues to move forward on two parallel tracks: the moral track, encapsulated in the Ten Commandments, inscribed some 3,500 years ago, with no need for change. This moral decree became the basis of western civilization.

There is also the scientific track, which unravels hidden secrets and breaks genetic codes, concealed in the past from the eyes of men. With each revelation our lives are changed.

Israel is a Jewish and democratic state, in which some million and a half Arab citizens live with equal rights. We shall not permit discrimination against anyone on account of nationality or faith.

We overcame the global economic crisis and are already seeing the signs of growth. Our culture is simultaneously modern and traditional.

Israeli democracy is ebullient, with never a dull moment, The effervescence never stops, not even in times of war.

Israel's victories did not put an end to the dangers it faces. We do not crave for land which is not ours, nor do we wish to rule other peoples. Neither do we have the right to close our eyes to the realities around us.

Our national ambition is sharp and clear, to attain peace with our neighbors.

Ladies and Gentleman:

As you know, Israel in principle supports a two states for two peoples solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We paid a heavy price in wars, and we did not hesitate to also pay a price for peace.

Today we are equally prepared to relinquish territories to achieve peace with the Palestinians, as a step towards the establishment of an— independent, prosperous and peaceful Palestinian State.

Like our neighbors, we identify with the millions of Iranians who reject dictatorship and violence.

Similarly, we condemn fanatical rule that operates in contradiction to the United Nations Charter, and is embodied with threats to annihilate another country. These threats are backed by nuclear reactors and missiles, and the instigation of terror at home and abroad. This kind of government constitutes a danger to the world at large.

We are eager to learn from the Europeans, who unshackled Europe from a thousand years of war, hatred and bitterness. They enabled Europe's young to substitute the hostility of their forefathers with fraternity.

It would be wise to learn from your experience, and dream about a Middle East in which its countries would also separate themselves from the conflicts of parents for the sake of peace for their children and would establish a modern regional economy that would fight new and common challenges: desertification, hunger, sickness and terror, promote scientific cooperation to improve the standard of living and a secure quality of life.

Our common god is after all the god of peace, not the god of war.

Distinguished Members of the Bundestag,

I stand here before you as a man who believes that it is in your power, and in our power, to contribute to the creation of a new history.

Existential threats to Israel will not divert its heart from peace.

And I believe that peace is attainable.

I stand here before you as the son of a people that aspires to contribute in every way possible to building a world which is enlightened and lucid for us all, where men will act as human beings towards one another.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day of communion and reflection.

An hour of education and hope.

I began with Kaddish and will end with our national anthem Hatikva, which means The Hope:

“In the Jewish heart, a Jewish spirit still sings,

And the eyes look east, toward Zion,

Our hope is not lost, our hope of two thousand years,

To be a free nation in our land,

In the land of Zion and Jerusalem.

We permit ourselves to dream, and I am certain that you will also allow yourselves to dream good dreams and to realize those dreams.

**Address by the President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres,  
at the conferment ceremony of the Presidential Medal of  
Freedom Washington, June 2012**

Mr. President,

I was profoundly moved by your decision to award me the Presidential Medal of Freedom. To receive it is an honor. And to receive it from you, Mr. President, is a privilege that I shall cherish forever. It is a testament to the historic friendship between our two nations.

When I was really young, the founder of the State of Israel, David Ben Gurion, called me to work with him. For sixty-five years, inspired by his leadership, I gathered strength for my country. Pursued peace for my people. I learned that public service is a privilege that must be based on morality.

I receive this honor today on behalf of the People of Israel. They are the true recipients of this honor. With this moving gesture, you are paying tribute to generations upon generations of Jews who dreamed of, and fought for, a State of their own.

A state that would give them shelter. A state that they could defend.

Mr. President,

You are honoring the pioneers who built homes on barren mountains, on shifting sands. Fighters who sacrificed their lives for their country. On their behalf, I thank America for days of concern, for sleepless nights, caring for our safety, for our future.

Tonight, Mr. President, you kindly invited outstanding personalities whose commitment to Israel is nothing less than heroic. I offer them the eternal gratitude of my people.

Present here is Dalia Rabin, the daughter of my partner, the unforgettable, Yitzhak Rabin, who gave his life for peace.

Mr. President,

You have pledged a lasting friendship for Israel. You stated that Israel's security is "sacrosanct."

So you pledged. So you acted. As a great leader, as a genuine friend.

Israel admires the United States, for being;

A land of the free.

A home of the brave.

A nation of generosity.

A world without the United States and her values would have been chaotic.

Moses began the journey to freedom by demanding "Let my people go." The prophet Isaiah promised: "Nation will not take up sword against nation." A biblical promise became a grand American reality.

When the Liberty Bell rang in Philadelphia, it resonated throughout the world. A tired world was surprised to witness, contrary to its experience, a great nation growing greater by giving, not by taking. By making generosity the wisdom of policy, and freedom as its heart.

Freedom from oppression and persecution.

Freedom from violence and evil.

Freedom from discrimination and ignorance.

Liberty that does not fear liberty.



Liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others. You introduced a constitution, based on balance, not on force.

Liberty is the soul of the Jewish heritage. We didn't give up our values, even when facing furnaces and gas chambers. We lived as Jews, we died as Jews, and rose again as free Jews. Israel did not survive merely to be a passing shadow in history, but as a new Genesis, a start-up nation.

We were faced with the worst in humanity. But also experienced the best in humanity.

When we discovered that we were short of land and water, we realized that we had a priceless resource: The courageous, undefeatable human spirit. We invested in knowledge and turned our attention to the ever-growing promise of science. Unlike land and water, science cannot be conquered by armies or won by wars. In fact, if applied rightly, science can make wars unnecessary.

Science provided Israel with unexpected economic growth. In the last twenty years our economy grew two hundred and seventy percent. Science has enabled us to build an agriculture based on technology, that yield ten times more than the norm. It has enabled us to build an effective defense against armies ten-times greater. Brave soldiers and sophisticated tools brought us victory.

But, we remained the people of the book.

Yes, my friends, Israel is the living proof that democracy means progress. Science means growth. Literature and arts means enrichment.

Israel today is an innovative, pluralistic society, where Christians, Arabs, Jews Bedouins and Druse live together in peace.

It is not yet perfect, but it is an example of what can be.

My Friends,

We are now witnessing the departure of one age and the arrival of a new one. The agricultural age lasted 10,000 years. The scientific age is still fresh. Yet in the last fifty years, the scientific age has achieved more than in the previous 10,000 years. This new age has brought new challenges, and new dangers.

It generated a global economy, but not a global government. It gave birth to the horrors of global terrorism, without global control.

The danger is today concentrated in Iran. The Iranian people are not our enemy. It is the present leadership that became a threat. It turned Iran into a danger to world peace. It is a leadership that aims to rule the Middle East. Spreading terror all over the world. They are trying to build a nuclear bomb. They bring darkness to a world longing for light.

We have a solemn responsibility to our own people, to our friends throughout the world, to posterity. The Iranian threat must be stopped. It cannot be delayed.

Mr. President, you worked hard to build a world coalition to meet this immediate threat. You started, rightly, with economic sanctions. You made it clear, rightly again, that all options are on the table.

Clearly, we support it.

Friends,

Extremists are using the conflict with the Palestinians to cover their true ambitions. The majority of people are tired of war. In many homes, families still mourn the loss of their loved ones. I believe that Peace with the Palestinians is more urgent than ever before.

It is necessary. It is crucial. It is possible. A delay may worsen its chances.

I remember that 19 years ago, on the lawn outside this house, President Clinton helped us initiate the peace process. Since then, Israelis and Palestinians have come a long way together, but still, hard work remains ahead.

Israel and the Palestinians are ripe today to restart.<sup>b</sup> A firm basis already exists. A solution of two national states: A Jewish state – Israel. An Arab state – Palestine.

The Palestinians are our closest neighbors. I believe they may become our closest friends. Peace with the Palestinians will open ports of peace all around the Mediterranean.

The duty of leaders is to pursue freedom ceaselessly, even in the face of hostility. Even in the face of doubt and disappointment. Leaders should not only try to rule from the top but also guide their people to move ahead.

Now the young Arab generation has opened its eyes and stood up against oppression, poverty, and corruption. They seek freedom. They understand that freedom begins at home. I pray for their success. It may become a success for all.

My vision is an Israel living in full, genuine peace, joining with all the people of the Middle East, former enemies and new friends alike.

Jerusalem becoming the capital of peace.

An Israel that is a scientific center, open to all, serving all. A green Israel in an increasingly green Middle East.

My vision is an Israel whose moral call is old as the Ten Commandments tablets and whose imagination is as new as a digital tablet.

Together, our ancient and modern vision can help bring Tikkun Olam.

I believe that in the coming decade, Israel will be a center of the latest developments in brain research. As the secrets of the human brain are revealed, people may improve their capacity to choose between right and wrong. In the absence of global government, the ability to govern ourselves can contribute to world peace.

Dear Friends,

My greatest hope is that a dawn will rise where every man and woman, Israeli or Palestinian, Syrian or Lebanese, young people, wherever they are, will wake up and be able to say to themselves:

“I am free to be free.”

Amen.

## **Food for Peace – a call for the mobilization of goodwill, 2013**

In today's changing world, food for peace has become a crucial and burning issue that needs to be urgently addressed. I cannot help but be reminded of John F. Kennedy's words which encapsulate the very essence of the role of food in our global society:

“Food is strength and food is peace and food is freedom and food is helping people around the world whose goodwill and friendship we want.”

Generations ago the source of livelihood and food supply was land, and therefore the main concern was territory – enclosed by borders and based on an economy that was national. Today, science and technology have replaced land as our source of livelihood and food supply, overcoming poverty and pointing to a tomorrow of hope and prosperity. Like a new and fresh wind they are blowing away borders, breaking down barriers, erasing distances, their influence is global, like today's economy.

Science enabled us to have a longer life expectancy and reduce child-mortality, which has led to a population growth that presented new issues that call for new answers. With the growing population, food consumption increases, and in the global era, expectations also grow, and finding the right answers to meet the surging demand for food is of the essence.

But the answers are few. Water is declining, desertification is spreading and people are becoming bitter. In other words, it is easier to produce children than to produce food for them. It is easier to promise dreams than to realize them.

The Middle East lives in a state of tension. It has been subject to conflict and war. Today it needs a hopeful tomorrow. It needs peace. It needs prosperity and well-being for its people. It needs food for

its children. And for this, goodwill and volunteers with this in mind have to be mobilized to work together towards a common goal.

There is no limit to human potential. Israel, a minuscule country with practically no natural resources, has proven this point. With little land, meager water supplies, and without a drop of oil, we had no choice but to give up the cultivation of land and replace it with the cultivation of hi-tech. Israel's agriculture is based more on technology than on land and water. As a result, we have increased our yearly crops by twenty using little water. With the power of innovation, countries can overcome deserts.

So we look upon science as a provider of food and existence. Decreasing water consumption, augmenting clean energy, developing plants that require little water, and recycling water for home consumption and agricultural use that boosts food supply, is all a matter of experience which we would be glad to share with everyone, because in our view, poverty is more dangerous than anything else.

Only 23% of the surface of the globe is being cultivated agriculturally, and we can improve on this. Matching the potential of water and land with the potential of science is a promise for the future. And my greatest hope is that we shall succeed in combining both these elements to meet the need for food, placing it as a priority above borders, above nationalities, above prejudice.

By placing food above politics, we can attain a better quality of life. Let us plant the seeds of innovation into the soil of human potential and we shall feed the children of the Middle East, and of the world, with hopes and dreams.

## **The President's speech at the state dinner for the President of the United States**

### **Barack Obama at the President's Residence**

**March 21, 2013**

My dear Friend,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you tonight. I was moved by the way in which you spoke to the hearts of the young Israelis . Our youngsters, in times of need, are always willing to stand up and defend their country. Today, you have seen how much the same young people long for peace. How enthusiastic they were, how engaged they were, listening to the vision of peace which you so beautifully portrayed .Mr. President,

This morning several rockets were shot from the Gaza Strip towards civilian targets, including Sderot, which you have visited. From here, in the name of all of us, I want to convey our love to the inhabitants of the South. Who carry this heavy burden so courageously. And continue to plow their fields, plant their trees and raise their children. It is an inspiration to each of us. Today the enemies of peace spoke in the only language they know, the language of terror. I am convinced that together we will defeat terror.

Dear Barack,

Your visit here is a historic event. We are so happy to receive you and your distinguished delegation. I am very glad to see Secretary Kerry. A reassuring friend. John, I know you and I know you will be successful .I am not sure that the prophets had speech-writers. But if they did, I imagine Isaiah would have said as he had said: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. Who proclaim peace. Who bring good tidings. Who proclaim salvation". Well, you'll have to be satisfied with my diet language.

It is my privilege to present you with our country's highest honor, the Medal of Distinction. This award speaks to your tireless work to make Israel strong. And peace possible. Your presidency has given the close ties between Israel and the United States a new height. A sense of intimacy. A vision for the future. The people of Israel are particularly moved by your unforgettable contribution to their security. To defending our skies. To the collaboration in the domain of intelligence, which is the right way to preempt bloodshed. The diplomatic and military bonds between us have reached an unprecedented level. When I visited you in Washington, I thought in my heart: America is so great and we are so small. But I learned that you don't measure us by size, but by values. When it comes to values, we are you and you are us. On occasion, when we were alone, you stood with us. So we were not alone. We were alone together. We shall never forget it. During your previous visit to Israel, you asked me if I had any advice to offer. It is not in my nature to let questions go unanswered. So I suggested that while people say that the future belongs to the young, it is the present that really belongs to the young. Leave the future to me. I have time. It was right. The moment you came into office, you immediately had to face daunting and demanding challenges. Day-in, day-out. I prayed that you would meet them with wisdom and determination. Without losing hope. Without allowing others to lose hope. The prayers were answered. After all, they came from Jerusalem. It is a tribute to your leadership. To the strength of your character. To your principles, that you have never surrendered to hopelessness. You stood and stand firmly by your vision. Your values serve your nation. They serve our nation. They serve all nations around the world. So I know that you will never stop to strive for a better world. Tikkun Olam. We have a rich heritage and a great dream. As I look back, I feel that the Israel of today has exceeded the vision we had 65 years ago. Reality has surpassed our dreams. The United States of America helped us to make this possible. Still the path to tomorrow may be fraught with obstacles. I believe that we can overcome them. By our determination and your commitment. I am convinced that you will do whatever is necessary to free the world's horizons and the skies of Jerusalem from the Iranian threat. Iran denies the



Shoah and calls for a new one. Iran is building a nuclear bomb and denies it. The Iranian regime is the greatest danger to world peace. History has shown, time and again, that peace, prosperity and a stable civil society cannot flourish where threats and belligerence abound. Tonight, the Iranian people are celebrating their New Year, Nuzuz. I wish them from the depth of my heart a happy holiday. A real freedom. Israel will seize any opportunity for peace. Being small, we have to maintain our qualitative edge. I know that you responded to it. The strength of the Israeli Defense Forces affords us the ability to seek peace. And, what America has contributed to Israel's security is the best guarantee to end the march of folly. Of terror and bloodshed. We watch with admiration the way you lead the United States of America. The way you stay true, time and again, to your bonds of friendship with us. Your commitment and deeds speak volumes about the principles that guide America to strive for freedom and democracy at home, and all over the world. What is uplifting is that the United States brought freedom to its own people but never stopped to help other people to become free. You represent democracy at its best. You have deepened its meaning. Namely, that democracy is not just the right to be equal. But the equal right to be different. That democracy is not just free expression, but self-expression. You exemplify the spirit of democracy by striving for justice and equality of opportunity in the American society. The world has now become global, and yet remains individual as well. You have shown global responsibility and individual sensitivity. On Monday night, we shall celebrate Passover. The Festival of Freedom. The celebration of spring. Our journey from the house of slaves to the home of the free started more than 3,000 years ago. We remember it every year. We are commanded to feel as though each of us personally participated in that journey. We shall not forget where we came from. And where we are headed towards. To make the Promised Land a land of promise. A land of freedom, justice and equality. While reality calls for vigilance, Passover calls for us to remain believers.

Israel is an island in a stormy sea. We have to make our island safe and we wish for the sea to become tranquil. We converted our desert into a garden. It was achieved by the talents of our people and the

potential of science. What we have done, Mr. President, can be done all over the Middle East, as you have said. Israel is described as a Start-Up Nation. The Middle East can become a Start-Up Region.

Dear President, You noted in your address today that peace is the greatest hope. I share your vision. Your call to reopen the peace process may pave the way for the implementation of the Two State Solution agreed by all of us. As you said: A Jewish state – Israel. An Arab State – Palestine. Next to you sits the reelected Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. He opened his address to the Knesset by reiterating his commitment to the Two State Solution.

Dear friends,

After everything I have seen in my life, I earned the right to believe that peace is attainable. As you felt today, I know this is the deep conviction of our people. With our resolve and your support, it will happen.

Mr. President, I am privileged to bestow upon you the Medal of Distinction. It was recommended by a committee of seven prominent Israeli citizens, headed by our former Chief Justice Shamgar, and including our former President Navon. It was my view and I was glad to accept their recommendation. You inspire the world with your leadership, Mr. President.

From a grateful nation, to a great leader.

“Every loss of human life is an unnecessary tragedy. It is up to us, the leaders, to save time, to save life, to introduce a new future, and for this we need your help, understanding and ideas. There is an Arabic proverb that says that “peace comes before words”, but this time, peace needs words. It is not only the maps and relationships that we must change: we must also transform opinions and consciences.

Peace is too precious and difficult to be left in the hands of politicians... and this is what a politician tells you! In this sense, our meeting, your presence in this meeting, reveals what will be the true source of power in the future: our minds, our spirit, our hope. The dialogue we maintain gives a human meaning to political agreements, lays the foundations of understanding, and paves the way for the reconciliation of hearts and minds.

Human beings tend to remember rather than to think; we remember the old shelters and fear the new horizons. It is your responsibility, poets, writers, artists, thinkers, to imagine this new horizon. It is time to think, to wait, to change, to urge, to move forward. From here, in Granada, where the past is offered to us with its load of nostalgia, we see that the time has come for a new journey; a journey towards peace and prosperity, towards the elevation of the spirit and towards a new era: a journey for our children who have not yet tasted the taste of sin or error, and who have the right to taste the taste of hope and happiness ”

Shimon Peres, Granada Meeting on  
“Peace the Day After”, December 8-10, 1993



University for Peace

