

World Leaders Declare Support

Former heads of state, government ministers, and other notables figures demonstrated their support for the Geneva Accord.

Poland's former President Lech Walesa personally addressed the ceremony, and offered the lesson of how his own Solidarity Movement was able to prevail through solidarity and nonviolence. John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party of Northern Ireland and one of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement there, also spoke. He offered not only the lessons of his own struggle in Northern Ireland, but the example of how the European Union enabled Europe to overcome the legacy of two world wars and build a powerful institution for economic development. Hume also cited the ideas of the United States' Founding Fathers, and President Abraham Lincoln.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and the European Union's foreign policy chief Javier Solana both sent messages of support to the event. Solana called the Accord "a powerful example of how civil society efforts can . . . show Israelis and Palestinians alike that there are partners for peace on the other side."

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton and former Czech President Vaclav Havel had messages read out at the ceremony. Former South African President Nelson Mandela

made a video presentation of his endorsement, which was shown.

The former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and former Russian Ambassador to the UN and Washington, delivered a message of support on behalf of the Club of Monaco. The latter is a group of close to 50 former heads of state, government ministers, diplomats, academics, and journalists formed in March 2002 to promote peace and stability throughout the Mediterranean. Both Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo are members, and received support from it for their efforts in drafting the Accord. Members include Prince Albert of Monaco; former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali; Claude Cheysson, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France; Prince Hassan of Jordan; Constantin Mitsotakis, former Prime Minister of Greece; Michel Rocard, former Prime Minister of France; and Mariou Soares, former President of Portugal.

Another statement of support was signed by 58 global leaders, initiated by the International Crisis Group based in Washington and Brussels, whose signatories represent a wide range of political views. Among the signers are Carl Bildt, former Prime Minister of Sweden; Lord Carrington, former Foreign and Defence Secretary of Great Britain and former NATO Secretary General; Hans-Dietrich Genscher, former Foreign Minister of Germany; Mikhail Gorbachov, former President of the Soviet Union; F.W. de Klerk, former President of South Africa; and former Philippines President Fidel Ramos.

implementation of the Accord. Copies of the Accord have been mailed to every household in Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, and it has already had an effect. A new poll published by the daily *Ha'aretz* found that 31.2% of Israelis support the Accord—including 13% of voters for Sharon's own Likud—with 37.7% opposed; but another 20% said they have not made up their mind. Beilin remarked, "If the *Ha'aretz* poll correctly reflects public opinion, then we are going in the right direction. If the public significantly supports the Geneva Accord, I think that the government, in the end, will have to listen," he stated in an interview given to Israel Army Radio.

Those opposed to the agreement, on both sides, have also begun to mobilize. In Israel, they are led by the Sharon government itself; Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, a crony of Sharon, denounced the intention of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell even to meet with Beilin and Abed Rabbo and others involved in drafting the accord.

On the Palestinian side, opposition focuses most on the refugee question and the right of return (see box on the Accord's provisions). Demonstrations were held against the ac-

cords on Dec. 2 in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

At a press conference on Dec. 2, participants in the drafting—including Labor Party Knesset Members Avraham Burg and Collette Avital, and Palestinian governor of Bethlehem Zuheir Al-Manassrah—spoke of their plans to take the Accord to their respective peoples. A massive information campaign is planned, with meetings and conferences throughout Israel and the Territories, aimed at pressure on the government. It is not out of the question that the Sharon government could collapse, since it currently is facing not only a security crisis, but the worst economic crisis since Israel's 1948 founding.

Nonetheless, the key actors realize that if U.S. policy does not change, the entire effort could fail. To a question by *EIR* on the role of the Bush Administration, Labor Party Knesset member Collette Avital replied that "without question" it is important to get a change in U.S. policy, and to impact American public opinion, especially in the Jewish community. All three at the press conference were going to America to mobilize support. As of Dec. 3, Beilin and Abed Rabbo were al-