



MEDIA ADVISORY
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NEW AMERICAN POLITICAL VOICE ON ISRAEL LAUNCHES

100 Distinguished Americans Establish J Street PAC and Lobby to Promote Security through Peace

WASHINGTON— “For too long, the loudest ‘pro-Israel’ voices in this country have been those on the far-right,” says Jeremy Ben Ami, who today announced the launch of J Street—the first PAC with a corresponding lobby to give pro-peace, pro-Israel Americans a voice in American politics and in the policy process.

J Street will advocate in the political arena, in the media and in Congress that a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and its neighbors are essential to the security and national interests of Israel, the United States and the broader Middle East.

“The term ‘pro-Israel’ has been hijacked by those who hold views that a majority of Americans—Jews and non-Jews alike—oppose, whether supporting the war in Iraq, beating the drums for war with Iran or putting obstacles in the path to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” said Ben Ami, a former senior White House staff member in the Clinton administration and Policy Director for Howard Dean’s presidential campaign. “It is time that mainstream, pro-Israel Americans made it clear that the single most pro-Israel thing any American politician or policy maker can do is help to bring about a two-state solution and a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and her neighbors.”

J Street is backed by an advisory council of more than 100 former elected and government officials, prominent political donors, rabbis, organization heads, and academics. Among many others, it includes a former U.S. Senator and two former Members of Congress, three Nobel laureates, former DNC finance chair Alan Solomont, Democracy Alliance board members Deborah Sagner and Gail Furman, Jewish community leader Hannah Rosenthal, Corporation Counsel for the City of New York Victor A. Kovner, MoveOn’s executive director Eli Pariser and former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Sam Lewis. For a full list of the advisory council, go to [http://www.jstreet.org/supporters/advisory_council].

“Negotiations facilitated by the United States have long proved the only successful means of achieving enduring peace for Israel and her neighbors,” said advisory council member Sam Lewis, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel. “The rapidly closing window of opportunity for a viable, two-state solution makes it all the more pressing that we get our ducks in a row at home to do all that we can to bring an end to this conflict.”

This ground-breaking effort adds a political dimension to existing advocacy to change the direction of American policy in the Middle East and will help to broaden the public and policy debate in the U.S.

about the Middle East through targeted political giving, lobbying and netroots activism. To mark its launch, J Street released a new video to introduce its multifaceted approach to the public, [<http://www.jstreet.org/>].

“There is already broad agreement among mainstream Americans who support and care about Israel, its neighbors and US interests in the region about what a peace deal with the Palestinians and with the broader Arab world will look like,” said advisory council member, Victor A. Kovner, former Corporation Counsel for the City of New York. “What we need now is to establish that there is political will to support strong American leadership in bringing real peace and real security to the region.”

The establishment of J Street was also welcomed by a group of more than 20 leading Israeli security officials, generals, diplomats and politicians, who stated in a letter: “We see in the creation of J Street, an expression of support for and commitment to the State of Israel and to a strong and enduring U.S.-Israel relationship.” Signers include former Speaker of the Knesset and Chairman of the Jewish Agency Avrum Burg, former Foreign Minister and Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben Ami, former Member of Knesset and Deputy Minister of Defense Dalia Rabin and former IDF Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. To read the full text of the letter, and a list of all its signers, go to [<http://www.jstreet.org/page/israeli-supporters-list>].

J Street aims to challenge conventional political wisdom that in order to ensure the support of the American Jewish community and its allies, candidates must only take hawkish, right-wing positions on Israel to prove their “pro-Israel” credentials.

“Most American elected officials and policy makers understand that substantive U.S. engagement in bringing about a negotiated resolution to Israel’s conflict with her neighbors is the right course of action for Israel and the United States,” said advisory council member, Alan Solomont, a former finance chair for the Democratic National Committee. “J Street will mobilize popular and financial support behind candidates willing to stand up for an agenda that is at once proactive, pro-peace, and pro-Israel, making it smart to do so not only in a policy way, but in a political one as well.”

In the 2008 election cycle, J Street’s PAC will endorse and raise funds for several congressional and senatorial candidates to demonstrate to candidates and elected officials that there is political and financial support for those willing to take strong “pro-Israel, pro-peace” positions. In addition to conventional fundraising methods, the PAC will also borrow a page from other successful netroots efforts in cultivating a large online list of Americans willing to make small contributions and take action to demonstrate the breadth of support for J Street’s agenda.

Through its lobby, J Street will demonstrate to members of Congress and their staff that there is a tremendous diversity of opinions about Israel among their existing donors and that the more conservative, established voices that claim to speak for the entire Jewish community actually do not accurately reflect the views of a large number of their existing donors.

While the majority of the advisory council is Jewish, J Street aims to represent all Americans, including Jews, who believe that the interests of Israel and the United States are best served by diplomacy and negotiation, rather than military confrontation. The make-up of the advisory council reflects the reality that many Americans look to the American Jewish community as a marker for what it means to be “pro-Israel.”

“For too long the ‘pro-Israel’ politics of the Jewish organizational world have lagged far behind the consensus of the people they claim to represent, the majority of whom believe that a negotiated two-state solution is in Israel’s best interest,” said advisory council member, Hannah Rosenthal, the former executive director of the Jewish Council on Public Affairs. “J Street represents a concrete opportunity

for us to bridge that gap; it is a vehicle for expressing the belief shared by the majority of American Jews and Americans alike that to be pro-Israel is to advocate for vigorous American leadership role in bringing peace and real security to the Middle East.

About J Street

J Street is the political arm of the pro-Israel, pro-peace movement.

J Street was founded to promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israel conflicts peacefully and diplomatically. We support a new direction for American policy in the Middle East and a broad public and policy debate about the U.S. role in the region.

J Street represents Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own - two states living side-by-side in peace and security. We believe ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the best interests of Israel, the United States, the Palestinians, and the region as a whole.

J Street supports diplomatic solutions over military ones, including in Iran; multilateral over unilateral approaches to conflict resolution; and dialogue over confrontation with a wide range of countries and actors when conflicts do arise. For more on our policy positions, click [here](#).

J Street will advocate forcefully in the policy process, in Congress, in the media, and in the Jewish community to make sure public officials and community leaders clearly see the depth and breadth of support for our views on Middle East policy among voters and supporters in their states and districts. We seek to complement the work of existing organizations and individuals that share our agenda. In our lobbying and advocacy efforts, we will enlist individual supporters of other efforts as partners.

J Street is itself a 501(c)(4) organization and is part of the J Street family of organizations, which includes an independent, legally unconnected Political Action Committee, JStreetPAC.

About JStreetPAC

JStreetPAC is the first and only federal Political Action Committee established to explicitly promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts peacefully and diplomatically.

The PAC's goal is to demonstrate that there is meaningful political and financial support available to candidates for federal office from large numbers of Americans who believe a new direction in American policy will advance U.S. interests in the Middle East and promote real peace and security for Israel and the region.

In 2008, the PAC will endorse and raise money for a small number of candidates for the Senate and House. Endorsements will be announced throughout the campaign year.

Individual contributors will be able to direct contributions to endorsed candidates through the PAC, thereby making an important political statement about the motivation for their support. JStreetPAC will solicit contributions to candidates both online and off.

The PAC's Finance Committee will recruit major donors who can make and raise larger contributions to candidates. The PAC's online fundraising campaign will mobilize large numbers of smaller donors to contribute to endorsed candidates as well. JStreetPAC may also hold fundraising events for endorsed candidates.

JStreetPAC, an independent federal Political Action Committee, is part of the J Street family of organizations, which includes J Street, a lobbying and advocacy organization.

Advisory Council

Over 90 prominent former public officials, policy experts, community and academic leaders are on the J Street Advisory Council.

(* PLEASE NOTE: Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only; individual involvement in this effort does not imply organizational support. Names are in alphabetical order.)

Eric Alterman
City University of New York

David Avital
MTP Investments

Judith Barnett
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Commerce for the Middle East and
Africa

Jeremy Ben-Ami
Former Deputy Assistant to the
President for Domestic Policy

Rabbi Don Berlin
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Oheb
Shalom, Baltimore

David Birenbaum
Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. for
U.N. Management Reform

Kenneth Bob
President, Ameinu

Ernest Bogen
Board Member, Harry S. Truman
Institute for the Advancement of Peace,
Hebrew University

Rabbi Marcelo Bronstein
Congregation Bnai Jeshurun, New York
City

Rabbi Sharon Brous
IKAR-LA

Martin Bunzl

Daniel G. Cedarbaum
Immediate Past President, Jewish
Reconstructionist Federation

Sen. Lincoln Chafee
Former Senator, Rhode Island

David Cohen
Co-Founder, Advocacy Institute,
President, Global Integrity and former
President, Common Cause

Rabbi Hillel Cohn
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Emanu
El, San Bernardino, CA

Rabbi Rachel Cowan
Director, Institute for Jewish Spirituality

Lynn Cutler
Former Deputy Assistant to the
President for Intergovernmental Affairs

Debra DeLee
President/CEO, Americans for Peace
Now

Rabbi Elliot Dorff
Rector, American Jewish University

Rep. Tom Downey
Former Member of Congress, New York

Albert J. Dwoskin
President/CEO, A.J. Dwoskin &
Associates, Inc.

Maria Echaveste
Former Deputy White House Chief of
Staff

Peter Edelman
Board Chair, New Israel Fund

Sara Ehrman
Former Political Education Director,
AIPAC

Leonard Fein
Writer

Chai Feldblum
Professor of Law, Georgetown
University Law Center

Rabbi Tirzah Firestone
Board Member, Rabbis for Human
Rights

Dr. Franklin Fisher
Board Chair, Americans for Peace Now

Marcia Freedman
Founding President, Brit Tzedek
v'Shalom

Gail Furman
Board Member, Democracy Alliance

Larry Garber
Chief Executive Officer, New Israel
Fund

Jim Gerstein
Former Executive Director, Center for
Middle East Peace and Economic
Cooperation

Davidi Gilo

Michelle Goldberg
Author, Kingdom Coming

Rabbi Leonard Gordon
Chair, Rabbinical Assembly Social
Action Committee

Rabbi Arthur Green
Rector, Hebrew College Rabbinical
School

Mark Green
Former New York City Public Advocate

Robert Greenwald
Brave New Films

Morton H. Halperin
Former Director of Policy Planning,
Department of State

Arnold Hiatt
Former Chairman, The Stride Rite
Corporation

Stanley Hoffman
Professor of Government and Social
Studies, Harvard University

Fred Howard

Rabbi Steven B. Jacobs
Founder, Progressive Faith Foundation

Professor Robert Jervis
Professor of International Studies,
Columbia University

Robert H. Kapp
Founder and Co-President, International
Senior Lawyers Project

Ezra Klein
The American Prospect Magazine

Markos Kounalakis
President and Publisher, The
Washington Monthly

Victor Kovner
Former Corporation Counsel of the City
of New York

Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz
Congregation B'nai Yisrael

Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff
Past President, Central Conference of
American Rabbis

Luis Lainer

Professor Leon Lederman
Nobel Laureate, Physics; Director
Emeritus, Fermi National Accelerator
Laboratory

Lawrence I. Lerner
President, MeretzUSA

Daniel Levy
Former Advisor, Israeli Prime Minister's
office

Lawrence S. Lewin
Former President and CEO, The Lewin
Group

Hon. Samuel W. Lewis
Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel

Judy Lichtman

Rob Malley
Former Special Assistant to the
President for Arab-Israeli Affairs

Yaffa Maritz

Eric Maskin
Nobel Laureate, Economics; Professor,
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Steve Masters
President, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom
Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon
Congregation Bnai Jeshurun, New York
City

Avi Meyerstein
Founder, Alliance for Middle East Peace

Eli Pariser
Executive Director, MoveOn.org
Political Action

Robert Pastor
Former Senior Director, National
Security Council

Kathleen Peratis

Jeri Rice

Fran Rodgers

Norman Rosenberg
Former Chief Executive Officer, New
Israel Fund

Hannah Rosenthal
Former Executive Director, The Jewish
Council on Public Affairs

Alan Sagner
Organizer/First Chair, National UJA
Leadership Cabinet

Deborah Sagner
Board Member, Democracy Alliance

Mark Schneider
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State for Human Rights

Michael Shtender-Auerbach
Founder, Social Risks LLC

Henry Siegman
President, U.S./Middle East Project

Daniel Sokatch
Executive Director, Progressive Jewish
Alliance

Daniel Solomon

Alan D. Solomont
Former National Finance Chair,
Democratic National Committee

Rabbi Toba Spitzer
President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical
Association

Mary Ann Stein

Rabbi Jack Stern
Past President, Central Conference of
American Rabbis

Paula Stern
Former Chairwoman, United States
International Trade Commission

Rabbi Alvin Sugarman
Rabbi Emeritus, The Temple-Hebrew
Benevolent Congregation

Rabbi David A. Teutsch
Past President, Reconstructionist
Rabbinical College

Sidney Topol
Former Chairman/CEO, Scientific
Atlanta, Inc.

Al Vorspan
Director Emeritus, Commission on
Social Action, Union of American
Hebrew Congregations

Edward Witten
Professor, Institute for Advanced Study,
Princeton

Rep. Howard Wolpe
Former Member of Congress, Michigan

Alan Wurtzel

Matthew Yglesias
The Atlantic

Mark Zivin

The following Israeli leaders have signed a letter in support of J Street. The text of the letter is reprinted on the following page.

Yossi Alpher

bitterlemons; former Senior Member of Mossad; former Director of the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies

Col (Ret) Shaul Arieli

Council on Peace and Security; former Commander Gaza Brigade; former Chief Administrator of Ehud Barak's "Peace Team"

Shlomo Ben Ami

Former Foreign Minister

Daniel Ben Simon

Journalist and commentator for Ha'aretz Newspaper

Brig Gen (Ret) Shlomo Brom

Avrum Burg

Former Knesset Member and Chairman of the Jewish Agency

Naomi Chazan

Former Member of Knesset

Galia Golan

Lecturer at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya

Tamar Hermann

Dean of Academic Studies, The Open University of Israel

Anat Hoffman

Executive Director of Israel Religious Action Center

Dave Kimche

Former Director General of the Foreign Ministry

Maj Gen (Ret) Amos Lapidot

Former Commander of Israel Air Force, former President of the Technion, Haifa

Alon Liel

Former Director General of the Foreign Ministry

Maj Gen (Ret) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak

Former Chief of the General Staff of the IDF; former Minister of Transport & Tourism.

Maj Gen (Ret) Amram Mitzna

Former head of Labor Party and Knesset Member; former Mayor of Haifa

Nimrod Novik

Former senior advisor to the Prime Minister Chairman of the Economic Cooperation Foundation

Brig Gen (Ret) Israela Oron

Former National Security Council's deputy adviser; former Chief of the Women's Corp

Brig Gen (Ret) Ilan Paz

Former Head of the Civil Administration in the West Bank

Ron Pundak

Director General of the Peres Center for Peace

Dalia Rabin

Chair of the Rabin Center; former Member of Knesset and Deputy Minister of Defense

Uri Savir

President of the Glocal Forum; former Member of Knesset

Alice Shalvi

Recipient of the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement

Text of Letter from Israeli Supporters of J Street

To the supporters of J Street,

As Israelis dedicated to our country, its future, security and progress, we are pleased to learn of the creation of J Street, a new American movement to support strong U.S. leadership in achieving immediate, peaceful resolution of Israel's conflicts with its neighbors.

Ending the Israeli-Palestinian and the broader Israeli-Arab conflict quickly and diplomatically is an essential national and security interest of the State of Israel – as well as of the United States, the Palestinians and the region as a whole. Only a negotiated, political resolution to these conflicts will ensure Israel's lasting security and viability as a democratic, prosperous home for the Jewish people.

Now more than ever, true friendship requires strong American leadership and engagement to move the sides toward a comprehensive two-state solution. With time running out, business-as-usual will not do.

To achieve these goals, all parties – including the United States – will be called on to demonstrate political will and courage. The emergence of a movement in the United States which understands and is willing to provide political support for difficult compromises is essential to fostering that political will. In our opinion, such a movement is in Israel's best interests.

We deeply value the historic role of the United States as a staunch ally and irreplaceable friend of Israel's. We also value the role the American Jewish community and other American friends have played in strengthening and deepening that bond.

Being a friend and ally – being "pro-Israel" – means caring enough to get involved, express views and concerns, and provide advice. It does not require rigid agreement with every decision ever made or every policy pursued by the government of Israel or of the United States. Debate and discussion are essential to democracy and should be part of the relationship between Israel and Jewish people elsewhere in the world.

The ideas that J Street is promoting (a viable two-state solution, regional peace based on withdrawal to recognized borders with strict security arrangements, and normal relations between Israel and the broader Arab world along the lines of the Arab-Saudi Peace Initiative) have become consensus positions among Israelis. Yet, within that consensus, there is always vigorous and open discussion in Israel over how best to promote our security and interests. Our country is stronger for the robustness of this debate.

There is every reason to believe that a similarly open discussion in the United States will also be in Israel's best interests. We see in the creation of J Street, an expression of support for and commitment to the State of Israel and to a strong and enduring U.S.- Israel relationship. Hopefully, your efforts will help us achieve our country's greatest hope: peace with our neighbors and permanent, recognized and secure borders through a diplomatic end to the conflicts that have plagued our people and inflamed the region for far too long.