SPECIAL REPORT

CROSSROADS OF CONFLICT
Israeli-Palestinian Relations Face an Uncertain Future

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THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND CAMP DAVID—ANATOMY OF FAILURE

Who is the world leader who in the past year has met most often with U.S. president Bill Clinton, leader of the world's greatest power?

It is not President Vladimir Putin of Russia, whose nuclear missiles are a constant reminder of Moscow's lingering great power status, or the leaders of China, targeted as Washington's most potent nemesis in the twenty-first century. The leaders of NATO allies in London and Berlin are only rarely invited for tete-a-tetes, to say nothing of the French. Close allies in Turkey and Egypt are barely on the political radar screen. Even Ehud Barak, who has strained to win a coveted designation for Israel as Washington's "strategic ally," cannot claim this prize of U.S. attention, although he can console himself that he is number two. Who then is the man, and by extension the issue, that commands the most time and attention of the president of the United States?

Yasser Arafat is the man and the Palestinians the problem that preoccupy Bill Clinton.

This level of concern has proven both a blessing and a curse to the Palestinians and the prospects for making peace with the Israelis. Clinton's interest is a blessing because it has granted the issue a high public and diplomatic profile, adding to the sense of urgency about its solution. But Clinton's extraordinary personal involvement in negotiations has also proceeded in a manner that often reflects this administration's shortcomings and misapprehensions rather than the requirements of the Israelis and Palestinians themselves.

Ariel Sharon's provocative ascent to the Haram al-Sharif provided the match that sparked the violence, which commenced the day *after* his visit when seven Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers. And the aging Israeli warrior is an easy target for those looking for an identifiable face upon which to pin the blame for the death and destruction that followed in his wake.

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HOW GENEROUS IS GENEROUS

These are momentous days in the history of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The July summit at Camp David and the battles that have been raging in its aftermath have opened a new chapter not only in the process begun after the 1991 Gulf War, but also in the long history of antagonism between Israel and the Arabs.

Determining the exact nature of the progress achieved by negotiators has proven difficult not only for the public at large but also for the negotiators themselves. Israel's acting foreign minister, Shlomo Ben Ami, has spoken of "the collective memory of Camp David." Yet, in the months since the summit, it has become manifestly clear that there is less a collective memory of what was on offer than a myriad cluster of memories that agree on some points and clash on many more.

The ambiguity inherent in negotiations conducted at and since Camp David, however, has not prevented a conventional view from emerging in Washington of what exactly transpired, and who in fact is to "blame" for their failure. Proponents of this view consider the offer that Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak put on the table to be "generous" and "unprecedented." Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's rejection of the "fair compromise" on offer is evidence of the tragic Palestinian insistence on "never missing an opportunity to miss an opportunity," as Abba Eban once charged.

The reference by Eban is instructive in another way as well, for, in its time, it formed the core of an Israeli strategy aimed at delegitimizing the Palestinian view of the world and of their predicament as well.

The conventional wisdom about

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JERUSALEM DIARY

Jerusalemites have long existed in a series of parallel universes, living lives next to but apart from each other. The main divide in modern times has always been the one separating Arabs from Jews. But there are others that through the centuries have enabled Armenians and Copts, Christians and Muslims, secular and observant Jews from inhabiting the same city almost without reference to their neighbors across the divide, down the street, or even next door.

The al-Aqsa intifada has added disturbing dimensions to the lives of city residents, dimensions shaped by the battlefields that have opened in certain locations throughout the city. Count among these the Jewish residents of the Israeli settlement of Gilo, a neighborhood of some 30,000 people constructed in the years after 1967 on land belonging to the Palestinian residents of nearby Beit Jala.

The town of Beit Jala faces the southern perimeter of the settlement across a narrow valley some 400 meters wide. During the al-Aqsa intifada, Palestinian gunmen armed with Kalashnikovs fired from time to time across the valley into the outermost block of apartment buildings located on Hanafe Street.

The small windows of the street's fortress-like dwellings are covered from the inside with plastic. Kalachnikovs cannot do much physical damage to buildings constructed of Jerusalem stone, but that offers little comfort to residents, who appear to have all but abandoned the homes on the street rather than risk becoming yet another casualty.

Further up the hillside children continue to go to their school, around which has been placed a concrete barrier composed of two meter-high blocks. Many now carry cell phones stuffed into their school bags by worried parents. When daytime fighting commenced for the first time the school was a cacophony of electronic distress calls as parents signaled their intention to remove their children from the place.

The IDF set up a position on a terraced field below the school from which the far heavier bombardment of Beit Jala has been directed. The Barak government is wary of turning the settlement, which resembles a modern suburban neighborhood far more than some hill top outpost surrounded by barbed wire, into a fortified camp. There are no checkpoints marking out the areas within range of Palestinian gunmen, but it is difficult for these middle-class families to pretend that the heavy guns and occasional tank, not to mention helicopter gunships firing across the valley into homes of erstwhile neighbors, do not exist. Gilo residents have adamantly refused to endorse a higher military profile, which would be a harsh reminder that Gilo too is occupied territory—a fact that until the bullets started flying had all but disappeared from Israeli consciousness.

Occasional shots have been fired at the nearby settlement of Har Homa, which rises like the lost city of Atlantis atop Jebel Abu Ghneim. Located on the other side of the main Jerusalem-Bethlehem road and behind the monastery of Mar Elias, no one as yet lives in the 1,700 apartments now nearing completion, most of which have already been sold, no doubt to Israelis who never conceived that their new homes could one day guard a contested frontier.

The intifada has lead to the postponement of a public tender for the construction of "phase two" at Har Homa. In any case, until Israeli contractors can round up enough Romanians, the absence of Palestinian construction workers has produced an unofficial "time out" in settlement construction everywhere.

The heroic effort to live normally in abnormal times is familiar to many from Sarajevo to Beirut. Life in Jerusalem, even at its worse, has yet to approach their desperate awfulness. Yet in the cafes and restaurants along Emek Refa'im in Jerusalem's German Colony, the insistent pursuit of the good life—a cup of espresso, a vintage Merlot from a Chilean vineyard—allows Israeli patrons a momentary respite from the disturbing reality of battles nearby.

Geoffrey Aronson

FOR ISRAEL, LAND OR PEACE

The following remarks are excerpted from an article that appeared in The Washington Post, *November 26, 2000.*

By Jimmy Carter

An underlying reason that years of U.S. diplomacy have failed and violence in the Middle East persists is that some Israeli leaders continue to "create facts" by building settlements in occupied territory. Their deliberate placement as islands or fortresses within Palestinian areas makes the settlers vulnerable to attack without massive military protection, frustrates Israelis who seek peace and at the same time prevents any Palestinian government from enjoying effective territorial integrity.

At Camp David in September 1978, President Anwar Sadat, Prime Minister Menachem Begin and I spent most of our time debating this issue before we finally agreed on terms for peace between Egypt and Israel and for the resolution of issues concerning the Palestinian people.

The bilateral provisions led to a comprehensive and lasting treaty between Egypt and Israel, made possible at the last minute by Israel's agreement to remove its settlers from the Sinai. But similar constraints concerning the status of the West Bank and Gaza have not been honored, and have led to continuing confrontation and violence.

The foundation for all my proposals to the two leaders was the official position of the government of the United States, based on international law that was mutually accepted by the United States, Egypt, Israel and other nations, and encapsulated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. Our government's legal commitment to support this well-balanced resolution has not changed.

It was clear that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were a direct violation of [Resolution 242] and were, according to the long-stated American position, both "illegal and an obstacle to peace."

[At Camp David] I informed [Begin and Sadat] that "the position of the United States on Jerusalem remains as stated by Ambassador Arthur Goldberg in the United Nations General Assembly on July 14, 1967, and subsequently by Ambassador Charles Yost in the United Nations Security Council on July 1, 1969." In effect, these statements considered East Jerusalem to be part of the occupied territories, along with the West Bank and Gaza.

With the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, there was a period of relative inactivity in the Middle East, except for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent expulsion of PLO forces from Beirut. President Reagan used the announcement of this event on Sept. 1, 1982, to address the nation on the subject of the West Bank and the Palestinians. His speech included the following declarations:

"The Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza will have full autonomy over their own affairs."

"The United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period. Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs that a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated."

In 1991 there was a major confrontation between the governments of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and President George Bush concerning Israeli settlements in the West Bank, with U.S. threats of withholding financial aid if settlement activity continued. At a press conference on Nov. 1, Secretary of State James Baker said, "When we negotiated with Israel, we negotiated on the basis of land for peace, on the basis of total withdrawal from territory in exchange for peaceful relations. . . . This is exactly our position, and we wish it to be applied also in the negotiations between Israelis and Syrians, Israelis and Palestinians. We have not changed our position at all."

Norwegian mediators forged an agreement in September 1993 between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat committing both sides to a staged peace process. Although U.S. officials were not involved in this effort, our government commemorated the Oslo Accords in a ceremony at the White House, and built subsequent peace talks on its terms and those of the Camp David Accords.

So far, these efforts have not succeeded, and this year there has been a resurgence of violence and animosity between Israelis and Arabs unequaled in more than a quarter of a century.

The major issues still to be resolved remain unchanged: the final boundaries of the state of Israel, the return of, or compensation for, Palestinians dislodged from their previous homes and the status of Jerusalem. It seems almost inevitable that the United States will initiate new peace efforts, but it is unlikely that real progress can be made on any of these issues as long as Israel insists on its settlement policy, illegal under international laws that are supported by the United States and all other nations.

There are many questions as we continue to seek an end to violence in the Middle East, but there is no way to escape the vital one: Land or peace? ◆

ISRAEL'S DETERRENT POWER FAILS THE TEST OF PALESTINIAN OPPOSITION

In July, as Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. leaders sought an agreed upon framework for the next stage in Israeli-Palestinian relations, Iran successfully tested its Shihab 3 intermediate range ballistic missile. This test was followed in September by Syria's test launch of an advanced Scud missile.

On September 14, Israel successfully tested its Arrow anti-ballistic missile system over the Mediterranean. For the first time, the Arrow successfully targeted an incoming projectile simulating a Scud missile, locked on it, and destroyed it.

Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ehud Barak described the test as "a vital component in maintaining Israel's deterrent ability [which] will make a significant contribution to the State of Israel's military and strategic strength."

The Palestinians, as they embarked on their extended confrontation with Israeli military forces in late September, were unimpressed with this latest demonstration of the deterrent power of Israel's nuclear and missile arsenal. For Israel, the al-Aqsa intifada has highlighted more starkly than ever both the limited ability of Israel's military power to the most immediate threat to national security—adamant Palestinian opposition to the maintenance of Israel's settlement and military presence in lands Palestinians claim as their own.

Israeli Policies

For more than a decade Israel's foreign and military policies have been conditioned on several assumptions. Israel's deterrent capabilities, both conventional and nuclear, have convinced its Arab enemies of the necessity of ending their military confrontation against the Jewish state. These capabilities, in Israel's view, permit it an unprecedented degree of flexibility in recasting its territorial requirements, enabling it to withdraw from Sinai, the Golan, and parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The diplomatic arrangements fashioned to accommodate these withdrawals also form the foundation of a strategic partnership with the United States, whose principal aim is to establish the diplomatic, political, and military framework for Israel's continuing strategic superiority throughout the region.

The utility of this strategy has now been called into question by Barak himself, one of its most enthusiastic proponents, who described Israel's situation at the end of October, after one month of confrontations, as a "sensitive state of national emergency."

The main source of Barak's extraordinary anxiety is the al-Aqsa intifada. Hizballah's efforts to write the rules of engagement in the aftermath of Israel's withdrawal from most of south Lebanon and the wave of popular Arab and Muslim identification with both of these campaigns complete the circle. Together they have relentlessly exposed—as did the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the original intifada, and the Gulf war itself—both the conceptual and practical shortcomings at the heart of Israel's deterrent power. Israel has been able to deter if not eradicate the existential threats to its existence, but its deterrent power against less powerful but nonetheless grave challenges and the grand U.S.-led diplomatic strategy accompanying it have been found wanting. The failure of the strategy of deterrence to prevent the al-Aqsa intifada has shaken both the Israeli public and its policymaking elite. The Israeli right-wing, and settlers in particular, have leveled the most severe indictment of this failure.

"Ehud Barak will fall," noted Israel Harel, an architect of the settlement movement, "because most Jewish citizens of the state reject him because of his inability to end the war that damages their safety, welfare, and honor.

"This weakness and debility, along with a puzzling acceptance of failure by the chief of staff and minister of defense, puts in doubt Israel's ability to fight in the war we will be forced to face—a war also caused by that very weakness.

"Arafat, like [Hizballah leader] Sheikh Nasrallah, achieves objectives because he has a goal worth fighting for, because his nation is willing to fight and make sacrifices for his goal, and because he has succeeded in co-opting international and Arab support for his cause and his war."

Deterrence Fails

The al-Aqsa intifada is unprecedented in scale, character, and duration. The mere fact that it occurred attests to the failure of Israeli deterrence. Yet notwithstanding the number of Palestinian casualties, and the preponderance of young, unarmed people killed by deliberate Israeli sniper fire, it is also important to recognize that the destruction and loss of life could have been much greater had the IDF not been constrained by Barak's continuing fidelity to this very strategy. These considerations include a requirement that there be no Kfar Kana—like massacre of Palestinians that would overshadow other dimensions of Israeli policy; that military actions not preempt diplomacy, and that the conduct of operations be calibrated to minimize the number of Israeli military and civilian casualties. At times these requirements are incompatible, most notably at Joseph's Tomb, where an injured soldier died while awaiting evacuation coordinated with Palestinian security forces. At other times they produce almost surreal situations, as when Israel notified Palestinian security forces that their offices were about to be attacked.

This "last campaign in the war for the Land of Israel," in the words of Israeli deputy defense minister Ephraim Sneh, "will not be decided on the battlefield. It will be decided elsewhere. And it will be won not only by whoever is stronger—and we are much stronger—but by whoever is cleverer." Barak's "clever" policy, described by its proponents as one of ever-escalating "measured response," is not applauded by many on Barak's team or in the IDF.

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"We are at war, declared Minister of Communications and reserve IDF general Benjamin Ben Eliezer on November 1, "and we can't restrain ourselves."

For their part, the Palestinians' conduct of the fighting has been shaped not only by their capabilities but also by an appreciation of Israeli power, and its limitations. For example, throughout the al-Aqsa intifada, among the thousands of shooting incidents recorded by the IDF, there have been few direct and coordinated Palestinian military assaults on Israeli military or settlement-related targets involving more than a few sources of fire. During the first two months of fighting regular Palestinian police and military forces were not mobilized to confront Israeli forces or to undertake offensive operations, which were led by irregulars of Fateh's Tanzim. Even as both the nature and pace of the fighting escalated, the relatively small number of Israeli casualties was, in part, a reflection of the enduring deterrent value of Israel's formidable arsenal.

Gilo Under Fire

The continuing failure of the IDF to force an end to the fighting—indeed, violence near settlements like Gilo and other coordinated attacks against settlement-related targets escalated as the intifada has continued—resulted in a declaration on October 30 by Israeli chief of staff Shaul Mofaz, promising more aggressive Israeli attacks. Additional measures to curtail the Tanzim's infrastructure, restrict Palestinian economic interests, and fight Hamas were also threatened. This declared policy change was followed by a critical meeting of Barak's security cabinet during which an escalation in tactics, including the seizing of sources of Palestinian fire in refugee camps and towns, was approved.

In full knowledge that Barak was planning to escalate, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat agreed to yet another attempt at a cease-fire and a reimposition of the discipline of the Oslo process, including another and subsequently fruitless pilgrimage to Washington.

On the Lebanese frontier, the status of Israeli deterrence is if anything even more ambiguous. Barak's withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon in the spring was accompanied by warnings to both Lebanon and Syria that a resumption of military operations against Israeli targets would not be tolerated. Indeed the withdrawal was in part aimed at securing more favorable circumstances, political and otherwise, for the next round.

Hizballah Attacks

Operations by Hizballah against Israeli troops stationed in the Sheba farm area attest to Israel's failure to dictate new rules of the game, not only to Hizballah but to Damascus as well.

"Hizballah started very high on the ladder of escalation, and Syria okayed this," explained a source knowledgeable about Syria. "They wanted to test Barak, after the withdrawal from Lebanon. They tried him, tested him, and he failed the test. Now they're saying, 'He is all talk.'"

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Israel's failure to respond to the capture of its soldiers by Hizballah forces even as the al-Aqsa intifada raged has both tactical and strategic dimensions. Barak does not desire to open another front of confrontation. Nor should the deterrent value represented by Hizballah's improved ability to shell Israeli territory, particularly at a time when Israelis already feel themselves under siege, be dismissed.

On a strategic level, however, Barak appears intent not to disturb the regional environment, where Israel's military deterrent and the web of alliances that accompany it have proven most effective. Iraq's seasonal maneuvers near the Syrian frontier were absolutely inconsequential. An Iraqi scenario considered more probable by Israel—an attack on the Dimona nuclear reactor—has not occurred. Both Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak's summary dismissal of calls to confront Israel, and the related program adopted at October's Arab summit in Cairo and November's Islamic Conference Organization in Doha attest to the enduring power of Israel's deterrent capability in this critical, regional dimension.

On the Palestinian front, however, Israel's failing deterrent power cannot substitute for a return to negotiations. Palestinians are trying to confound Israel's insistence, also trumpeted during the original intifada, that the "Palestinians must learn that they will obtain nothing through violence." The Palestinian Authority, having come to a different conclusion, is trying to rewrite the rules of the diplomatic game as the battle for a final status agreement is once again joined. ◆

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But Sharon's visit, as well as the calculations that inspired and facilitated it, were part of a dynamic that was created in the preceding months by the prospect of the imminent establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the U.S.-led diplomacy at Camp David in July, whose aims were to force upon PLO chairman Yasser Arafat a postponement of the declaration of a state on September 15; provide a boost to the failing political fortunes of Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak; and brighten the legacy of President Clinton.

In May, the Nakba demonstrations by Palestinians, limited as they were, had offered both a warning and a lesson for those who are today on opposite sides of the barricades. Faced with the possibility of a general deterioration, President Clinton bowed to the wishes of Prime Minister Barak and summoned a reluctant Arafat to attend the summit at Camp David. But instead of reducing the prospect of violent confrontation, the discussions at Camp David confirmed the descent into the current crisis.

Clinton noted on October 11 that the violence during the first two weeks of the al-Aqsa intifada would have been worse had the summit at Camp David not taken place. Perhaps, but Camp David established the critical context in which the current crisis occurred. A few days after this remark, Clinton called upon both Israelis and Palestinians to "move beyond blaming each other." Yet it was just such an indulgence by the president himself—who, in a post-Camp David interview on Israeli television singled out Arafat's responsibility for the summit's failure to produce an agreement—that convinced the Palestinian leader that he could expect little help from Washington to win a more forthcoming proposal from Barak.

Among the myriad problematic notions of Camp David embraced by Washington, perhaps the most lethal was the manner in which the subject of Jerusalem was introduced in the last days of the marathon negotiations. Woefully unprepared Israeli and American organizers placed the status of the Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount before astounded Palestinians as the centerpiece of what was portrayed (incorrectly) as the last remaining obstacle to an agreement. Washington stood by as Jerusalem and control of the site was allowed to be framed by each party as a religious one, surely its most emotive and combustible aspect. This strategy has been condemned publicly by former prime minister Shimon Peres, and quietly by others on both sides of today's barricades.

The Clinton administration, having brought the parties together at Camp David, and having unnecessarily raised popular expectations, and fears, of a comprehensive agreement, permitted them to depart without establishing agreed-upon conditions to realize this lofty and admirable aim. Indeed the opposite occurred, with the failure to establish what Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben Ami has called the "collective memory" of the talks, along with a hardening of public rhetoric, all centered around the religious symbolism of control of Jerusalem's Haram al- Sharif.

The White House, having bowed to Israel's determination to establish the parameters of an acceptable agreement at Camp David, failed in its aftermath to assume the burden of U.S. responsibility for engaging the vast resources at the president's command to produce an accord.

As the days of September passed, and as the preparations of both sides for a military confrontation increased, expectations of an American bridging document went unfulfilled. The leadership that Clinton appeared to have assumed by his sponsorship of Camp David, highlighted by the extraordinary investment of presidential time and energy, proved illusory, disheartening both Israelis and Palestinians. When strong American leadership was required in order to fashion a mutually acceptable document, Washington proved unable to contend with the heavy responsibilities implied by its sponsorship.

In this vacuum of leadership there was no shortage of other, lesser players anxious to skew the agenda in their favor. Count Ariel Sharon among these, but also disaffected parties in Arafat's own entourage and others too numerous to detail.

In any negotiation, the parties are motivated not only by the prospect of the rewards attending success but also the certainty that there are costs to be borne by failure. The dynamic established by American diplomacy at Camp David was characterized by a postponement of both Palestinian sovereignty and the implementation of the third and final Israeli redeployment established in the Oslo II accords; a growing Palestinian crisis of confidence in U.S. mediation and Israeli intentions; Israeli and U.S. exasperation with the lack of Palestinian readiness for concessions that they both demanded; Washington's internalization of Israeli views of what was required for a deal; and finally, the Clinton administration's inability to wield American power in order to produce an agreement, any agreement.

The costs being paid by the failure of American-led diplomacy—from Camp David to Paris, Washington, and Sharm al-Sheikh—are all too apparent. The Clinton administration too must be counted among those with a share of responsibility for this failure—a failure characterized by the refusal to see the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as something other than a confidence-building exercise, by the singular inability to use the vast repertoire of powers and incentives at American command to cajole and when necessary compel less powerful Palestinian *and* Israeli supplicants, and lastly by the profligate investment of presidential capital on peripheral and often pointless diplomacy that ultimately reduced the president of the United States to merely one of a number of players at the table. One must assume that the architects of U.S. diplomacy understood, and accepted, that there would a price to be paid if Camp David, and the president, the summit's master of ceremonies, failed. It is clear, however, that they did not imagine that the price would be so high and that it would come due so quickly. ◆

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Camp David and the violence that followed in its wake, promoted most assiduously in Washington and Jerusalem, has a similar purpose—to paint the Palestinians, Arafat in particular, as responsible for rejecting a fair deal that is the best offer that he is likely to see from an Israeli leader, and whose inability to compromise has understandably left Israel no choice but to halt the Oslo process.

Unlike all of his predecessors, Barak believes that he can win Palestinian acceptance of a final status agreement that will legitimize long-standing Israeli territorial, strategic, and settlement objectives and formally end all Palestinian claims against Israel. An Israeli offer conditioned by this intention is described as generous and unprecedented. Had offers in this spirit been put to Israel's other Arab neighbors, Jordan and Egypt, it is certain that Israel would still be facing their armies across a hostile frontier.

A close look at what was on offer at Camp David II on the subjects of territory and Jerusalem should force a reconsideration of the prevailing one-sided and self-interested view. Barak's "offer" at Camp David, to the extent that the imprecise, unrecorded discussions could be construed as such, included the following:

> Barak, who wanted to do right by the settlers as well as the keepers of the holy places, and also wanted to boast about not having made any concessions, tried to dictate an agreement, with Clinton's help, that Arafat could not accept.
>
> Joel Marcus, *Ha'aretz*, November 24, 2000

Territory

- Barak made two imprecise territorial offers at Camp David, according to Israelis and Palestinians participating in or advising the talks. The first proposed Israel's annexation of 10.5 percent of the West Bank and Israeli security control over an additional 8.5 to12 percent (the "green areas") with no provision for making reciprocal land trades of a like amount and quality of Israeli territory. One variant of this proposal was said to have included Israel's annexation of a narrow strip of territory along part of the Jordan River. A second offer is said to have proposed Israel's annexation of 9 percent of the West Bank in return for 1 percent of compensatory Israeli land (without any reference to the land's quality) to be annexed by Palestine.
- The status of settlements located within the territory of the Palestinian state—estimated at around 60 with a population of 40,000, and a key factor in assessing the degree of Palestinian sovereignty—was not addressed. Provisions for the security of all settlements, including those that may be placed under nominal Palestinian sovereignty, is expected to form an important component of Israel's negotiating position. Israeli statements subsequent to the summit suggested that no settlement will be evacuated, ever, as part of a pact with the Palestinians.

Jerusalem

- The parameters of Israel's offer on Jerusalem have been the subject of much discussion. According to Israeli and Palestinian reports as well as discussions with negotiating principals and their advisors, Israel proposed Palestinian sovereignty over some outlying Palestinian suburbs and administrative control over other neighborhoods near and in the city center. In return Israel demanded Palestinian acknowledgment of Israeli sovereignty over at least one-third of East Jerusalem, where almost 200,000 Israelis reside, as well as the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, where Israel, incredibly, also demanded Palestinian agreement to the construction of a synagogue. The precise sovereign and administrative division of East Jerusalem, including the disposition of its critical green areas where construction is currently prohibited, was not addressed. Barak also offered Palestinians dedicated "local safe passage" to the Temple Mount. Barak's plan for the Haram al-Sharif, with the prominent exception of the demand for a synagogue, has been described in Israeli reports as consecrating the status quo on the Temple Mount.

The Clinton administration has internalized support for Barak's preferences, establishing a point of view that most Americans have accepted without criticism. The clearest expression of this support was offered by the oral presentation at Camp David of an "American plan"—the first time that a U.S. administration has presented its view of a final status agreement. This plan, the bridging proposals that Washington has developed but not publicized, and Clinton's unprecedented and outspoken criticism of Arafat as the cause of Camp David's failure convinced Arafat that the Clinton administration had all but lost its credibility as a mediator and its ability to fashion policies independent of those adopted by Barak. Palestinian despair about Washington's good offices was a critical factor transforming the violence that began in earnest on September 28 into the al-Aqsa intifada—Arafat's attempt harness a popular revolt to reshuffle the cards dealt to him by Clinton and Barak at Camp David in his favor in order to win a more explicit and expansive Israeli withdrawal from territories Palestinians consider to be their own. ◆

JERUSALEM IS NOT A MUSEUM

Jerusalem today has many defenders from many countries and many religions. It seems that everyone not only has an opinion about the city but also rights that must be recognized and accommodated before there can be a sustainable peace. Such claims are rooted in Jerusalem's bloody and contentious religious heritage, representing contemporary manifestations of sentiments and beliefs imbedded in history. Too often they spring from a fascination with Jerusalem's former glories more than they reflect a concern for its problematic future.

It is perhaps not so strange then that the current diplomatic debate on Jerusalem's future relates to the city as if it were a museum—a repository of ancient monuments to grandeur and piety—rather than the suffering metropolis of more than half a million people with problems rooted in the twenty-first century. Diplomacy and the public narrative that results focus on the right to rule the inanimate Jerusalem, while the living Jerusalem—its people, its lands, and its hope for dynamic development in the future—is all but ignored.

Certainly the question of sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif is an important issue, but the vitality of the presumptive Palestinian capital of East Jerusalem—an area that today is little more than a moribund collection of isolated neighborhoods—is no less important. How long can an Arab Jerusalem survive—even one defined as the capital of Palestine—if all that it has to commend it are the relics of its bygone magnificence?

Any visitor to East Jerusalem today can see the decline of the Arab city. It has been hostage to decades of neglect and discrimination. Jordan's Hashemite leaders favored Amman over Jerusalem. The city that had been split into two by war suffered further from official neglect. Israel, after its victory in 1967, set out to remake Arab East Jerusalem in its own image, and in so doing it has tried its best to pretend that Jerusalem's Arabs were not really there. Palestinian neighborhoods have been cut off from each other by Israeli settlements and roads. The depressing commercial district around Salah Eddin Street, starved of capital investment and infrastructure improvements, is more typical of an impoverished small town than a city of international stature. As Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem flourished, Palestinian Jerusalem languished. Commerce and culture fled north, to Ramallah, a process begun by Israel's policy of "closure" initiated during the 1991 Gulf War and hastened by the creation of Palestinian rule just north of the city. Today, a city all but on life support dies when the sun sets, its shops shuttered, its streets deserted.

None of the potential solutions for Jerusalem raised during these last months begin to answer the central question upon which the city's future rests: How can East Jerusalem be transformed into a thriving Palestinian metropolis? When Israel conquered the city in 1967, it expanded its boundaries by 70,000 dunams. One-third of this amount was confiscated for "public purposes" and now boasts neighborhoods where almost 200,000 Israelis live. These lands are forever lost to Palestinian development. Israel has allocated only 14 percent—less than 10,000 dunams—of the entire area it annexed for residential construction to meet the needs of a fast growing Palestinian community approximately equal to its Israeli neighbors. The remaining lands, vital for any Palestinian plan to revitalize the city, are off limits to Palestinian development. This dilemma is the real key to Jerusalem's future, yet there is no indication that diplomats have addressed this critical issue. Unless they do, it is not at all certain that the demise of Palestinian Jerusalem can be reversed. Under the best of circumstances the modern monuments of Israel's occupation pose a tremendous obstacle to the creation of a dynamic Palestinian urban area that can serve as the capital of a sovereign Palestine.

It is certain that "the best of circumstances" will never prevail. Can East Jerusalem then ever become a truly capital city? Sovereignty over al-Aqsa and pockets of Palestinian development scattered like stones throughout the city will not be enough to halt Arab Jerusalem's decline.

Jerusalem needs to be re-created as a metropolis that lives up to its lofty traditions and that provides a decent environment for all of its inhabitants. These are considerations that not only diplomats but also all those concerned for Jerusalem's future need to ponder as they seek to fashion a viable future for the city and its people. ◆

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