

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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EVACUATION OF ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENTS ON OLMERT'S AGENDA

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was keenly aware that the execution of Israel's "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip and a portion of the northern West Bank was critical if Israel is to continue to dominate the diplomatic playing field and maximize its security and settlement interests in the occupied territories. Sharon's exit from Israeli politics came far sooner than he had anticipated, but as he intended, the process he set in motion, and the principles that he established, cannot be ignored by his elected successor, whatever his party affiliation.

Sharon initiated a revolution in two central aspects of Israel's settlement policy—he forced a reluctant Israel Defense Force (IDF) command to change its security doctrine regarding the occupied territories and thereby transformed the relationship between Israeli security and settlements; he also began to undermine the shared interests between the key elements of the settlement enterprise and the state.

It would not only be premature but

also fundamentally incorrect, however, to suggest that the changes wrought by Sharon have dealt a death blow to settlements. Neither he nor his successor harbors any such intention, even in many areas east of the separation barrier and certainly not in East Jerusalem, the "seam zone" west of the barrier, and the land-hungry settlement "blocs" where the majority of the almost one half million Israeli settlers live. Israel's settlement enterprise has been decades in the making. Billions of dollars have been allocated by the government, and the private sector is heavily invested.

National institutions, laws, and political parties have been created and mobilized to nurture and expand settlements. A significant number of Israelis, many of them settlers, have a direct investment in national policies supporting their maintenance and expansion. Even if they desired, and as yet they do not, Israel's political and security leadership cannot easily undo what their predecessors have long labored to make permanent. Nor can Palestinian opposition of whatever form, or policies of the international community, easily compel an Israeli retreat of dimensions necessary to establish the territorial basis for stable, peaceful relations between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors.

Settlements Not a Security Asset

Disengagement from the Gaza Strip marked the birth of a new defense concept and military deployment for Israel's territorial perimeter with the Gaza Strip, with significant implications for

the West Bank as well. In Gaza, the protection of Israel's security is no longer based on civilian Israeli settlement and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF's) direct physical control of Gaza and its border with Egypt. In its place, Israel now depends on perimeter security and the calibrated use of intensifying levels of airborne firepower and artillery to deter Palestinian violations of the border. The transformation is only beginning in the West Bank, where Israel evacuated less than 1,000 civilians from four small settlements in the Jenin region but maintained full Israeli security and civil control in the evacuated area (Area C).

For almost four decades Israel based its defense doctrine in the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank on the creation of a symbiotic relationship between Israeli civilian settlement and the IDF. This relationship was actually strengthened during the Oslo era, at great cost to Palestinians, as Israel redeployed within the area in a manner that boosted settlements and its overall strategic control of all the occupied territories.

Settlements and the IDF's expansive deployment and operational control within Gaza itself—the two key foundations of previous Israeli policy—have been abandoned under this new post-disengagement policy. Absent too is an Israeli intention to exercise absolute control over those elements of Gaza's external perimeter not immediately adjacent to Israel, including the Gaza-

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TO OUR READERS

In this *Report*, Jeff Aronson describes the new IDF strategy that, if implemented, abandons forty years of doctrine that settlements are vital to Israel's security. This is a historic watershed that, logically, should help speed the end of the ill-fated settlement adventure. By uncoupling settlements from security, their rationale becomes territorial aggrandizement or Messianic Judaism that only a minority of Israelis support.

Nevertheless, the vision of Ariel Sharon, which his heir, Ehud Olmert, has embraced, is that Israel will keep the most populous settlements and East Jerusalem west of the separation barrier. Israel would unilaterally withdraw from unspecified settlements to the east and perhaps in the Jordan Valley to reduce the Palestinian population under its control, and annex the big block settlements and East Jerusalem.

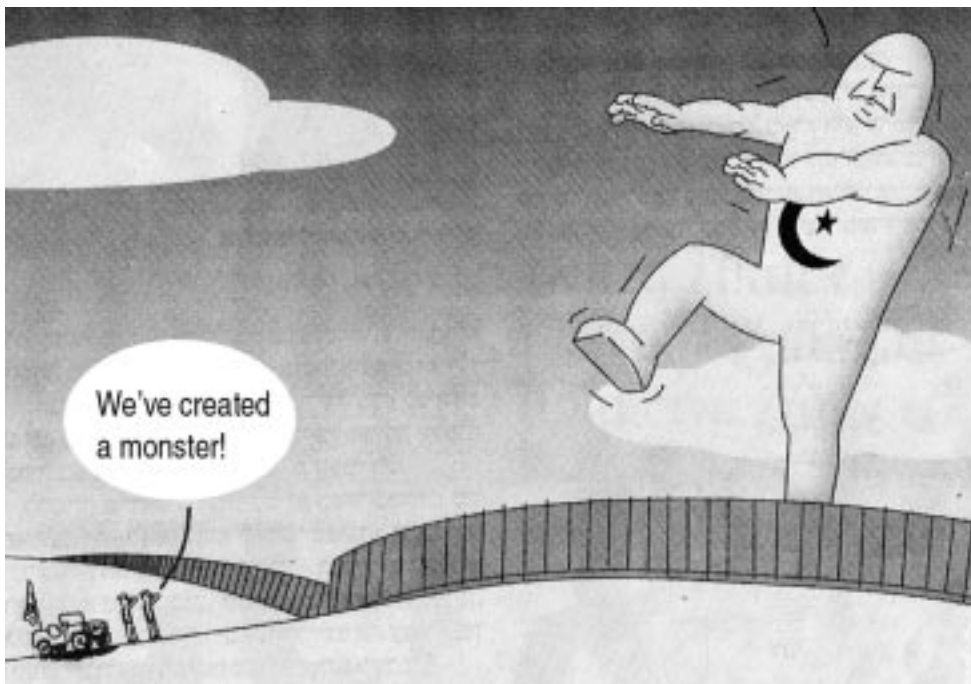
This vision is strategically untenable. Even with evacuations of settlements east of the barrier, the misshapen Palestinian area remaining, deprived of vital access to water and arable land and absent its breath-

ing economic and political heart in East Jerusalem, could not be a viable state acceptable to any Palestinian leadership. If this outcome were imposed, violent conflict would continue. Israel would forfeit the chance for peace, security, and fruitful relations with the Palestinians—and Arab states—that only a negotiated peace promises. A vengeful, armed and extremist leadership, Islamist or otherwise, would take root, threatening not just Israel, but perhaps Jordan and Egypt as well.

Olmert wants America's blessing for such a unilateral plan. Instead, Washington should work for a return to diplomacy and an end to unilateralism. Of course, the advent of a Hamas government makes renewed negotiations even more complex. But there is no other route to peace and security for Israelis and justice for Palestinians.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

ISLAMISTS ON THE MARCH



Ma'ariv, January 29, 2006

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HOW MUCH DO THE SETTLEMENTS COST?

The big settlements have cost hundreds of millions of dollars each. The small settlements—of a few houses or tens of caravans and a road—cost between \$2 and 5 million. In total, the state of Israel has built 39,483 apartments in the West Bank for \$4.3 billion. It spent an additional \$4.7 billion on 18,462 housing units.

Comparing Governments: Who Invested the Most?

In investigating previous governments' level of investments in the settlement enterprise, the researchers found that the most ardent investor to be that of Menachem Begin, who between 1977 and 1983 erected 56 percent of the settlements. After Begin, Labor and Likud governments alike continued to invest in the territories. The government of Ehud Barak invested more heavily in the settlement enterprise than did

the government of Ariel Sharon. The lowest investment period fell under Rabin, who developed 183,000 square meters in the territories in 1995.

This research was conducted in secret during the past year by a large team from the Israeli Institute for Economic and Social Research. Heading the team was economist Roby Nathanson, a former director of research for the Histadrut who during the Rabin government was director of research on Israel after the Oslo accords in the Prime Minister's Office.

Researchers initially attempted to obtain data in the field, but the settlers refused to cooperate for fear that the study was in preparation for a future evacuation. The bulk of the research is thus based on 207 aerial photographs taken specifically for this study. ♦

Settlement	Population	Apartments/ Cost		Housing/ Cost		Trailers/ Cost		Roads (km)/Cost		Commercial/ Cost		Synagogues/ Cost		Public/ Cost		Schools/ Cost		Factories/ Cost		Total Cost
Alfe Menashe	5,500	757	113.5	519	194	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	.618	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	3.3	245
Ariel	17,000	3,909	469	238	71.4	322	1.4	NA	NA	10	23	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	823
Beit El	4,500	389	42.7	248	78	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	11.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	11	20.2	6	11.6	195
Beitar Illit	21,000	9,364	749	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	32	3	2.4	74	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	835
Efrat	6,800	2,005	261	168	54.6	149	.67	NA	NA	2	4.4	22	2.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	370
Elkana	3,000	NA	NA	477	179	165	.74	NA	NA	3	1.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	7	2.7	147
Etzion Bloc	10,000	1,618	178	830	187	831	3.7	54	61	12	7.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	645
Givat Ze'ev	11,000	4,787	655	341	119	NA	NA	NA	30	NA	NA	NA	NA	11	4.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	840
Giva'ot	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	26	.12	1.5	1.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.8
Itamar	500	166	19.9	39	11.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39.5
Karnei Shomron	6,100	1,424	171	349	104	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	6.9	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	.67	28	9.3	338
Kedumim	2,800	473	61.4	291	94.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	12.2	NA	NA	6	4.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	203.5
Kefar Tapuah	400	NA	NA	128	38	NA	NA	5.3	1	NA	NA	4	4.4	6	2.8	6	3.3	NA	NA	49
Kiryat Arba	6,600	1,396	139.6	75	18.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	4.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	222.3
Ma'ale Adumim	30,000	4,715	566	227	68	NA	NA	NA	51	15	12.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	9	11.7	123	115	899
Maon	300	NA	NA	50	12.5	27	.12	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	.55	NA	NA			NA	NA	13.9
Modi'in Illit	22,000	4,166	333	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	18	5	8.8	27	31.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	408
Rehalim	NA	NA	NA	14	4.2	34	.15	NA	NA	1	27,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5.4
Shavei Shomron	600	NA	.960	140	42	42	.19	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	1.7	NA	NA	54.6
Shilo	1,700	18	1.9	262	72	NA	NA	NA	26.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.5	NA	104

* Cost measured in US\$ million.

Source: "Expensive Settlers," *Yediot Aharonot*, February 3, 2006.

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

December 2 The United Nations General Assembly adopts six resolutions stressing the need for Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. Six countries, including Israel and the United States, oppose the resolutions. (IPC)

December 4 Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz appeals to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz to allow the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to resume home demolitions of Palestinian suicide bombers and their families. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 5 After a suicide bombing in Netanya, Defense Minister Mofaz orders a full closure of the occupied territories. The IDF adopts a new policy of directing fire not only at open Palestinian areas but also populated areas following Qassam rocket fire into Israel from Gaza. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 7 Israeli deputy chief of staff Moshe Kaplinsky discloses at a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meeting that 35%, or 275 kilometers of 759 kilometers, of the separation barrier has been constructed. The cost of the barrier stands at \$2 billion. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF issues orders to confiscate 85 dunams of land at the intersection of al Khader and Husan in Bethlehem for the construction of a tunnel to connect Bethlehem to its western villages after the separation barrier is complete. (OCHA)

Yediot Aharonot reports that the current plan for the separation barrier's route near the Etzion bloc will be 50 meters from the homes of residents in the settlement of Efrat. Settlers oppose the route on the grounds that it does not provide adequate security for them and is meant as a political boundary.

December 8 A Palestinian stabs and kills an Israeli soldier at the Qalandiya checkpoint in East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 10 Land is leveled for the construction of a fence around the settlement of Adora after confiscation orders were issued for the expansion of its security buffer zone. (OCHA)

December 12 In Jerusalem's Jabal al-Mukabir and al-Tur neighborhoods, the IDF demolishes two Palestinian houses and damages another for lacking building permits. (OCHA)

Settlers from Kefar Tapuah cut down olive trees belonging to Palestinians from the Yasuf village. (OCHA)

December 13 Housing construction and land leveling continues in the Efrat settlement and the two nearby settlement areas of Givat Hatamar and Givat Hadagan. (OCHA)

December 14 Reuters reports that Defense Minister Mofaz has approved 200 dwelling units for Ma'ale Adumim as well as preparatory steps for expanding the settlements of Bracha and Nokdim.

A report by Physicians for Human Rights—Israel notes that the number of patients from Gaza and the West Bank treated in East Jerusalem fell from 344,172 in 2002 to 177,500 in 2003. (PHR)

Ha'aretz reports the illegal construction of hundreds of dwellings in the West Bank settlement of Modi'in Illit with the full awareness of the Israeli government.

December 16 Palestinian gunmen kill a settler from the West Bank settlement of Beit Hagai in the southern Hebron Hills. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's High Court prevents the start of construction for the separation barrier around Gush Etzion following the submission of a petition by Gush Etzion residents to change the route of the barrier. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 20 The IDF starts leveling land around the West Bank settlement of Shavei Shomron for a security barrier around the settlement. (OCHA)

The far-right Loyalists of the Land of Israel, lead by Daniella Weiss and Rabbi Moshe Levinger, reveals plans to build 15 new settlement outposts across the West Bank by the following week. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 21 The IDF issues three military orders requisitioning approximately 232 dunams for a "protective barrier" to run between the settlements of Karmel and Shani and along Roads 317 and 60. (OCHA)

December 23 *Yediot Aharonot* reports that the IDF has withdrawn 15 troop units from the West Bank and plans further redeployment in early 2006. Settlers are reportedly preparing to arm and protect themselves in light of decreasing IDF protection.

December 26 The Israeli Housing and Construction Ministry issues 228 tenders for housing units in West Bank settlements: 150 units in Beitar Illit and 78 units in the Givat Ha'Zait neighborhood in Efrat. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers from Yitzhar cut down 90 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from Burin village. (OCHA)

Ha'aretz reports that the Israel Land Administration has received bids averaging \$125,000 on 27 of 80 half-dunam, single-family plots in the settlement of Har Adar.

December 27 Hundreds of young settlers erect 14 outposts in the West Bank in an effort to expand existing settlements. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 28 Israel destroys three houses in East Jerusalem's Beit Hanina neighborhood because they were built without permits. (OCHA)

Yediot Aharonot reports that 1,000 olive trees belonging to West Bank Palestinian farmers were destroyed by settlers in preceding weeks.

December 29 Approximately 30 settlers erect three tents on a hillside near the Palestinian village of al-Mughayyir and the settlement of Shvut Rachel. (OCHA)

Israel publishes tenders for construction of 96 housing units in the Golan settlement of Katzrin. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 30 The IDF dismantles three outposts in the West Bank outside the settlements of Shvut Rachel and Beit El. (*Ha'aretz*)

In Abud, Ramallah a Palestinian is injured and detained by the IDF during a demonstration opposing the construction of "special security arrangements" around the settlements of Beit Arye and Ofarim. (OCHA)

January 1 Settlers from Matan attack Palestinians from Kafr Thulth. (OCHA)

Settlers beat three Palestinians after pulling them from their car on the Ramallah-Nablus road near the settlement of Shilo. Israeli forces arrived at the scene but did not intervene. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 2 The IDF removes 26 settlers who returned to the evacuated West Bank settlement of Sa-Nur near Jenin. (*Ha'aretz*)

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

January 3 Amidst clashes between settlers and IDF soldiers, the IDF serves eviction notices to eight Israeli settler families living since 2001 in buildings in the old market of Hebron in violation of Israeli rulings. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF dismantles an unmanned settler outpost near the settlement of Pnei Khever east of Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ma'ariv reports that the sale of a building in the Old City of Jerusalem five years ago to the "Esh Ha'Torah" yeshiva is worsening Israel's relations with the Vatican and the Christian world.

January 4 The IDF declares a closed military zone in the eastern part of Gaza's Beit Hanun. The IDF announces that Palestinians should keep a 150-meter distance from the separation barrier in the northern and eastern regions of the Gaza Strip. The enforcement of a "no-go" zone in northern Gaza area of al-Siafa continues. (OCHA)

In Anata, Palestinians throw rocks to protest the construction of the separation barrier being built there. The IDF responds with tear gas and rubber bullets. Two Palestinians and one Israeli policeman are injured. (OCHA)

Construction begins along a 2.5km stretch of the separation barrier south of the settlements of Ma'ale Adumim and Kedar. The construction follows the projected barrier route with the exception of an area northeast of al-Azzariya near Ma'ale Adumim. (OCHA)

The IDF demolishes a house in al-Walaja village, Bethlehem, for being built without a permit. (OCHA)

January 5 *Ha'aretz* reports that the Israeli Defense Ministry has terminated a lease with the Hebron municipality allowing Palestinian merchants to work in the city's market. The move makes it impossible for the merchants to return to the area after the evacuation of Israeli squatters, who will be allowed to return by agreement with Israeli authorities.

Settler gunmen wound two Palestinians in Huwwara, near Nablus. (OCHA)

January 6 Settlers cut down one hundred two olive trees belonging to Palestinian farmers from Yatta near the settlement of Ma'on. (OCHA)

January 8 Defense Minister Mofaz increases the number of security forces patrolling areas in the West Bank where more than 2,000 olive trees belonging to Palestinians have been destroyed. (*Ha'aretz*)

In the settlement of Tapuah, the Israeli police raid far-right group The Hebrew Regiment on charges that it is an illegal organization. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports that the number of settlers in the West Bank rose by 6,370 or 2.6% in the last six months of 2005. The national Israeli growth rate is half that. The West Bank settler population now stands at 253,748, an increase of 18,600 since December 2004.

January 9 *Yediot Aharanot* reports Defense Minister Mofaz calling for an investigation into the destruction of 2,400 olive trees in the West Bank.

January 11 Twelve settlers are injured as police destroy a house, stable, and foundation for a new house in the settlement outpost of Sede Boaz north of Neve Daniel. Police use tear gas and pepper spray. (Arutz 7)

January 14 In Hebron, 300 settlers throw stones, eggs and paint at soldiers. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

A Palestinian is injured in Hebron's Old City during a settler protest against evacuation, and two uninhabited houses in the wholesale market area of Hebron are set on fire by settlers. (OCHA)

January 15 The IDF demolishes three Palestinian houses in Jerusalem for being built without a permit. (OCHA)

January 16 IDF Central Command Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh declares the Jewish areas in Hebron a closed military zone in an effort to quell settler violence against plans to evacuate the market area. (*Ha'aretz*)

"Father of the Hilltops" Avri Ran, who was arrested on charges of beating three Palestinians, is acquitted and released from jail where he has been since his arrest in March 2005. (Arutz 7)

January 17 The IDF sets up roadblocks leading into the neighborhoods of Tel Rumeida, Beit Hadassa, Beit Romano and Avraham Avinu around Hebron's Jewish

quarter to prevent criminal acts by settler youths. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF chief-of-staff Dan Halutz criticizes radical settlers in the West Bank for their violent behavior and Israeli security agencies for turning a blind eye to it. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

Acting Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert orders security forces to evacuate settlers squatting in the old market in Hebron and the Amona settlement outpost. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 19 The Israeli Defense Ministry hands to a private company, White Snow, responsibility for operating the renovated Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel. Operation of the Sha'ar Ephraim crossing in the northern West Bank is transferred to a different company. (Associated Press)

January 23 A Tel Aviv district court judge rules that the 1950 Absentee Property Law cannot be applied to West Bank lands. The decision affirms Attorney General Mazuz's rejection of a government decision to apply the law to East Jerusalem property owned by West Bank Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 27 *Ha'aretz* reports that five Israeli Arab families have offered to purchase new homes built in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa. The deal would include five abutting buildings valued at \$1 million.

January 30 Settlers occupying the old Palestinian market of Hebron agree to evacuate the area without resistance after being promised that they will be approved to resettle the area in the future. (*Ma'ariv*)

Settlers from the Amona outpost, near the West Bank settlement of Ofra, puncture tires of an army jeep and throw rocks at the IDF. Electricity supplies to the settlement are cut off. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers enter the Palestinian village of Ein Yabrud, next to Ofra, and throw stones at cars. Approximately 100 settlers block a road south of the Hawara roadblock near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

Egypt border and prospective sea and air links. As a consequence, Israel in practice has surrendered its longstanding demand for Gaza's demilitarization as a feature of a negotiated agreement—a key feature of the Oslo era—choosing instead to deploy deterrent, retaliatory, and special forces outside Gaza. In this sense, Israel's territorial relationship toward Gaza now exhibits a greater similarity to Israel's pre-1967 relationship than to the era of direct occupation from 1967 to 2005. Trade and labor relationships have also changed, although not as yet so radically. Israel has signaled its lack of interest in maintaining the single economic envelope including Israel and the occupied territories that was for decades at the heart of occupation policy and was formulated in the Paris Protocols of 1994. Israel is actively considering alternative economic and trade options to govern the new era.

As part of this policy, Israel is not only separating itself from Gaza. It has also isolated Gaza from the West Bank and begun to separate itself from parts of the West Bank as well. Restrictive controls on the movement of Palestinians, as well as goods and services, from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank define Israeli policy today, notwithstanding agreements and understandings to the contrary. Suggestions by Israeli officials that these increasingly draconian policies are a result of Hamas's popular victory in elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council are meant to give a politically palatable justification to a wideranging Israeli policy that proceeds without reference to Palestinian needs regardless of the Palestinian party in power. This concept has emerged incrementally over the last fifteen years to a point where a "hard" border, administered by Israel increasingly through international-like crossing points, now limits and frequently prevents Palestinian passage from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank.

Updating Israeli Security in the West Bank— Evacuate More Settlements, Maintain Troops

On December 14, 1997, Israel's minister of defense Yitzhak Mordecai presented to the cabinet of Likud prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu an updated "Security Interests" map initially prepared by the IDF Planning Branch at Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's request during the Taba talks preceding the signing of the Oslo II accord in September 1995. This map left some 45 of 144 West Bank settlements outside Israeli sovereignty, while providing for their extraterritorial status through unspecified "special arrangements." The 1997 Security Interests map marked the following areas for annexation to Israel:

- a 10 to 15 km wide strip along the Jordan Valley border
- a 3 to 7 km wide strip along the Green Line
- two roadways—one in the north and one in the south—running in an east-west direction across the West Bank.

In recent months, the IDF Planning Branch has revisited the issue, narrowing Israel's security interests in the Jordan Valley and noting a readiness to move the separation barrier

closer to the Green Line in some areas (perhaps south of Hebron) while pushing it to the east in others (near Ben Gurion airport for example). Building upon the premises of the Gaza disengagement plan, an authoritative March 6 report on the next stage of disengagement in the West Bank by *Ha'aretz* correspondent Aluf Benn noted, "The general view in the defense establishment is that settlements do not contribute directly to security and also force the IDF to deploy troops for their defense. Moreover, there is no particular settlement whose location is viewed by the IDF as critical to security."

These are remarkable words. Had such sentiments prevailed in the first decades of occupation, there would have been no justification for the entire framework of Israeli settlement.

Israel's defense establishment has not addressed directly the politically explosive issue of which settlements to evacuate, limiting itself to recommendations based on controlling topographical features and water resources. Almost all settlements west of the separation barrier as well as those around greater Jerusalem and Ariel, however, appear to be politically untouchable.

While supporting an unspecified degree of settlement evacuation from the West Bank, the IDF assessment, building upon the precedent established in the September 2005 West Bank disengagement, supports continuing Israeli security control over evacuated areas in the West Bank, in contrast to Gaza, where Israel withdrew settlements as well as armed forces.

This type of deployment—which would place Israeli occupation troops in "foreign" territory without what has long been the politically vital rationale of protecting Israeli settlements—was rejected by Israeli policymakers after the 1967 war as politically unsustainable. Its adoption today represents a clear break with a central assumption of Israeli occupation and security policy that transformed Israel's own understanding of its presence in the territories from hostile occupation of another people into the protection of its own citizens (settlers) in Israel's homeland. It is not clear at all that this is a politically sustainable option among Israelis not anxious to repeat the IDF's divisive experience in south Lebanon.

The IDF may be prepared to take greater control over a settlement map that over the last two decades has developed a life of its own. In contrast to its 1997 effort, the new IDF map sanctions evacuation of the settlements of the Jordan Valley. Military officials are apparently content with a limited "security belt" without civilian settlements in the Jordan Valley on the model presented at Camp David in July 2000. It also appears that the IDF is no longer committed to maintaining control over the west-east routes between Israel and the Jordan Valley running east from Ariel and Ma'ale Adumim a concomitant of its desire to remain in the Jordan Valley, which can be resupplied via the Israeli town of Bet She'an to

SHORT TAKES

YESHA Peace Plan

The YESHA Council has come up with its own “Peace Israel” plan. This plan proposes to annex 60 percent of the West Bank and to grant Israeli citizenship to 300,000 West Bank Palestinians.

The plan is based upon the following assumptions:

- Almost six million Jews live in Israel, so Israel can annex areas where hundred of thousands of Palestinians reside without affecting the state’s Jewish character.

- Since it is clear that the Palestinians will never curb terrorism, Israel will dismantle the Palestinian security forces and collect all of their weapons.

- The YESHA plan commences with a long-term interim phase: Israel will complete its separation between the Israeli and Palestinian populations and begin its annexation of 60 percent of the West Bank. These areas include all areas of current Israeli settlement as well as areas of security interest such as the Jordan Valley, southern Samaria, Benjamin, the Etzion bloc, and southern Mt. Hebron.

- Israel will annex approximately 300,000 Palestinians, residents of villages that are scattered near the large settlement blocs. This will increase the percentage of Arabs in Israel from 19.7 percent to 23.5 percent. Palestinians residing in territorially contiguous areas comprising 40 percent of the West Bank will be controlled by the Palestinian Authority as a confederate state with Jordan and will be citizens of Jordan. The status of Palestinians in Gaza will be determined through negotiations between the Palestinians and Egypt. Israel will ask Egypt to allow the Gaza Strip to expand eastwards, effectively annexing Egyptian territory in Sinai.

Ma’ariv, January 23, 2006

We Didn’t Notice There Were Other People Here

An interview with Adi Mintz, member of the YESHA Council.

“There are people who don’t understand that the process of returning Jews to “Eretz Yisrael” is a slow one, and one that also includes some withdrawals,” Mintz explained. “There is definitely a crisis about this. But this crisis has a flip side. The leadership that carried this struggle decided not to act with violence. There was an argument before the disengagement [from Gaza]. Elyhakim Ha’etzni said that we have to threaten [massive civil disobedience] with 10,000 people in jail. Now those people are coming to the YESHA leadership and saying, ‘You failed, leave your post, give us an opportunity to act the way we want to act.’”

Question: Maybe [Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon understood that public opinion has changed?

Mintz: In my mind, Sharon is responsible for the dramatic change in the public opinion. After all, he is the one that

came to power because of [Prime Minister Ehud] Barak’s failure. Public opinion was on the right.”

Question: Was it a mistake that you didn’t offer a national solution?

Mintz: “That was a colossal mistake. We didn’t listen in time to the whispers of public opinion. When Peace Now said in the 1980s ‘peace is better than a whole Israel,’ we didn’t recognize it. What’s more, when we built our settlement map, we didn’t look left or right. I don’t regret any settlement we built, but we did not consider the fact that there was another population living here. And these people need answers. Although it seems like ten years too late, now is the time to give those answers and give our alternative.”

Question: But it doesn’t seem like much of an alternative. You’re talking about absorbing 300,000 Palestinians in Israel. You’ll be told you’re crazy.

Mintz: The purpose of the plan is to be realistic. You’ll surely criticize it tomorrow, but the plan’s day will come because there won’t be another alternative. We are presently at a low point, but I think that we will rise from here. The public asked for quiet. For now the separation barrier provides that. But the public will eventually wake up.

Ha’aretz, January 27, 2006

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the Valley’s north. In contrast to the 1997 plan, the heights and settlements if not military installations like the monitoring facility at Ba’al Hatzor west of the Jordan Valley along the route of the Allon Road, may also be dispensable. Evacuation of settlements along this route also suggests that the smaller settlement blocs between the Allon Road and Route 60 further west—traditionally the main north-south thoroughfare that Palestinians are all but prevented from using because of settlements sited along its route—could also be on the block. Indeed, Army Radio quoted former Security Service chief and Kadima Party star Avi Dichter as saying that among the settlements to be evacuated would be Elon Moreh, Yitzhar, Itamar, Shilo, Psagot, and Tapuah, all of which lie along this route. Evacuation of these settlements makes no sense without an eventual evacuation of Jordan Valley and Allon Road settlements. Dichter also mentioned additional settlements located south of Jerusalem—Tekoa, P’nei Hever, Nokdim, Ma’on and Otniel.

The settlement list noted by Dichter and other Israeli politicians should not be seen as authoritative, but rather as the first evidence of the furious jockeying to decide the scope of Israel’s next evacuation from West Bank settlements. As Sharon intended, further withdrawals are almost certain to come. And as he intended, they will not signal and end to the battle between Israel and the Palestinians, but rather yet another chapter in their continuing conflict. ◆

ABU MAZEN OPENS PALESTINIAN PARLIAMENT

I address myself to the Israelis, especially that they are on the verge of parliamentary elections. I guarantee to them that the path to security can only pass through a just peace. We are confident that there is no military solution to the conflict. Negotiations between us as equal partners should put a long-due end to the cycle of violence.

I tell them in all honesty and clarity that the continuation of occupation and settlement expansion with its latest attack targeting the Jordan Valley area to isolate it from the remainder of the Palestinian lands in the West Bank that checkpoints, arbitrary killings, the separation wall, and arrests will only lead to hatred, despair, and continued conflict.

I would like to stress, in particular, that the era of a unilateral solutions is over. Attempting to determine the future of our people through cantonization, reservations, the tearing up of the West Bank, a land grab in the Jordan Valley, the separation of Jerusalem, and the consolidation of settlement blocs

will close the window for a solution between us.

There is a Palestinian partner who is ready to sit at the negotiating table with an Israeli partner to reach a solution that is based on international legitimacy, the Arab peace initiative, and the road map, a solution that is based on respecting all previous agreements and commitments.

We want a just solution that guarantees the fulfillment of peace, not a unilateral, partial, or temporary solution that will kill the chance for peace, nor a state with provisional borders. We are awaiting the Israeli government to determine its direction and make its decision in this regard. Our decision is to be completely ready to start permanent status negotiations immediately.

Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority,
at opening session of the second Palestinian Legislative
Council, Ramallah, February 18, 2006

What did the Palestinian people do? They did two things. An enemy came and usurped their land, occupied them, evicted them, and attacked Jerusalem and Christian and Islamic holy places. Like any other people, the Palestinians rose against the occupier, resisted him, and sacrificed their sons and daughters, as all the peoples of the world do. What is strange in that, O Europe, O United States, O United Nations, and O Quartet?

The nation has had a bitter experience with you, the West. We no longer believe you or trust you. We will not wager or depend on you. We will depend on ourselves after God Almighty because your international community only respects force. Enough! You had more than 100 years during which you exploited the weakness of our nation, occupied our land, plundered our wealth, killed our people, and transmitted to us all your ills. You turned our countries into consumer societies, which are not good for agriculture, industry, technology, or anything else. Enough! You had a hundred years in which you plundered us, harmed us, and enslaved us. Today, the nation has awakened. The giant has come out of the bottle. Don't trouble yourselves. There is no going back.

Today, the nation tells you, we will not attack anyone. By God, we will not attack any state in the East or the West. We only want full sovereignty over our land and an independent decision to govern our resources, lands, and rights. We are ready to deal with you with the language of interests, international relations, and interaction between cultures, but from the position of equality, dignity, and honor. The era of subservience is over. You are not smarter than us or braver than us. In fact, we depend on a great history that is not owned by any other nation in the world.

Khalid Mish'al, Hamas Political Bureau chief, Khartoum, Sudan, February 14, 2006

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