

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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RUNNING IN PLACE: U.S. POLICY RUNS OUT OF STEAM

By *Geoffrey Aronson*

It is a measure of the stalemate now defining the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that the mere reassertion by US and Israeli leaders of long-held, if conflicting, views is counted as news. In a series of speeches in late May, President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu each sought to make his case before an international audience whose frustration with U.S. leadership and Israeli rejectionism has increased the prospect of support for UN action on the creation of a Palestinian state in September.

On the eve of a visit to Washington, Netanyahu, in a May 16 speech before the Knesset, outlined his response to what Defense Minister Ehud Barak evocatively termed the “diplomatic tsunami” due to crest in September. Just as the Palestinians have agreed upon an uneasy and untested reconciliation, Netanyahu sought to unify Israeli ranks in anticipation of an upcoming visit to Washington, where officials awaited his views on the political process in the aftermath of Obama’s failed effort to premise negotiations on a settlement freeze. Each leader in his own way, and each for his own reasons, appears determined to move in a direction that the U.S. president opposes.

Netanyahu’s views are somewhere to the right of Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David in July 2000—where the idea of annexing settlement blocks and establishing a military presence—without settlements—in the

Jordan Valley was mooted.

“[M]ost people,” Netanyahu declared,

are [also] united in regard to my viewpoints on the issue that seems to be in dispute, the political process with the Palestinians. The citizens of Israel are much more united than is commonly believed, and much more united than the political parties that are supposed to represent them here in this house. There are consensus regarding the basic issues:

First, about my demand that the Palestinians recognize the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people.

Second, about my view, which is shared by many here, that the agreement between us must end the conflict and end the demands from the State of Israel.

Third, that the problem of the Palestinian refugees will be resolved outside of Israel and not within its borders.

Fourth, that a Palestinian state only be established under a peace treaty that will not compromise the safety of Israel. I believe there is agreement on this, and I stress that this state must be demilitarized, with practical security arrangements, including long term IDF presence along the Jordan River.

Fifth, we agree that we must maintain the settlement blocs. Many of us agree that the settlement blocs must remain inside the borders of the State of Israel.

Sixth, that Jerusalem remain the united and sovereign capital of the State of Israel.

These are the principles that guide my path, our path.

After the speech, complaints by right-wing and settler organizations

prompted Netanyahu to clarify that his definition of settlement blocs was “broad.” The settler-run Web site Arutz 7 observed that the Knesset speech was “less defensive and more confident on this [settlement] issue [than his Bar Ilan speech one year ago], raising the ante and announcing that Israel would insist on keeping the large settlement blocs in its possession.”

Netanyahu reprised these themes in a speech before a rapturous joint session of U.S. Congress on May 24, where he acknowledged that not every settlement could be annexed to Israel. He noted that,

The status of the settlements will be decided only in negotiations. But we must also be honest. So I am saying today something that should be said publicly by anyone serious about peace. In any peace agreement that ends the conflict, some settlements will end up beyond Israel’s borders. The precise delineation of those borders must be negotiated. We will be very generous on the size of a future Palestinian state. But as President Obama said, the border will be different than the one that existed on June 4, 1967. Israel will not return to the indefensible lines of 1967.

There is a consensus in Israel that, as former Mossad chief Ephraim Halevy explained, “[Israel’s] room for maneuver is narrowing and the Quartet’s ability to affect peace talks is diminishing.” The response of the right-wing, including government ministers from the Likud, is

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TO OUR READERS

There is still time for the United States to rescue peace for Israel and Palestine and restore U.S. credibility in the region. President Obama did not meet this challenge during the recent visit of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu by offering, as many had hoped, a comprehensive American peace initiative.

The President edged the ball forward a bit in his May 19 speech, saying himself, as other U.S. officials have in the past, that talks on borders and land swaps should start with the 1967 line, and that peace will require “full” IDF withdrawals and credible security arrangements. But his proposal for postponing talks on refugees and Jerusalem until borders and swaps are resolved—Jerusalem is also a border issue—seems unreasonable. An integrated approach is needed.

Obama’s challenge is whether to risk provoking a painful and unprecedented confrontation with Netanyahu’s government and the latter’s American right-wing Jewish and Christian allies, including congressional Republicans, in an election year. An American policy, to prevail, would have to confront and reverse Israeli policies

embedded for more than 40 years in occupation, settlements, and Jerusalem. To win support from the Israeli public, over time, the American policy would have to convey a tangible promise of peace, and, with stark clarity, that Israel’s current policies threaten not only its interests as a Jewish, democratic state but also its vital interests with its best friend.

In the meantime, the U.S. could avoid further embarrassment and isolation by at least abstaining on a proposed UN Security Council resolution declaring Palestine a member state. If, apart from Israel’s objections, the U.S. believes that the symbolic and juridical impact of such UN action would be harmful to peace, or would challenge the need for ultimate negotiations, Washington could deal with such problems by negotiating on the text of the resolution. If the U.S. remains unwilling to propose a U.S. peace policy that could preempt the UN agenda, engaging constructively in the UN process would better serve American interests than rejecting it with further ritual statements on the exclusivity of direct negotiations.

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WHEN MONTGOMERY COMES TO NABI SALEH

By Mark Perry

On March 24, the Israeli government arrested Bassem Tamimi, a 44-year-old resident of the small Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh, which is just west of Ramallah. Tamimi was arrested for leading a group of his neighbors in protest marches on the nearby settlement of Halamish that had “expropriated” the village’s spring—the symbolic center of Nabi Saleh’s life. . . .

The arrest of Tamimi marked only the most recent escalation in Israel’s campaign to suffocate the Nabi Saleh movement: in the two months prior to his arrest, Israeli officials detained more than 18 Nabi Saleh youths; over the last two years, nearly 15 percent of Nabi Saleh’s population has spent time in Israeli jails; half of those arrested have been under the age of 18 and the youngest of them was 11. But what is extraordinary about the Nabi Saleh campaign is its effectiveness. The protestors are trained in non-violent tactics. “Our strategic choice of a popular struggle—as a means to fight the occupation taking over our lands, lives, and future—is a declaration that we do not harm human lives,” Tamimi has said. “The very essence of our activity opposes killing.”

Tamimi’s arrest has not stopped the movement. On the morning of April 8, about 80 villagers marched from Nabi Saleh’s main street towards the settlement. As they crossed into some nearby fields, they were attacked by IDF soldiers with teargas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades. The villagers fled, but then reorganized themselves, defiantly linking arms in front of the soldiers. Again, the IDF responded harshly and, by that evening, had arrested six villagers. But these are small incidents in a continuing battle. The protests go on day after day, week after week—and have over the course of the last four years.

Nabi Saleh does not stand alone. The non-violent protests actually began eight years ago in small communities near Israel’s security wall, then took root in the villages of Mas’ha and Budrus; the protests have now spread to towns and villages across the West Bank, encompassing mass rural movements from Hebron in the south to Nablus in the north. The protests have involved dozens to hundreds, and on rare occasions, thousands of villagers. But pride of place for this widespread non-violent resistance movement belongs to Bil’in, a village that (like Nabi Saleh) has seen much of its land taken over by a settlement. The leader of the Bil’in protests is Abdallah Abu Rahmah, the head of Bil’in’s Popular Committee Against the Wall. Like Tamimi, Abu Rahmah has trained his young activists in the principles of non-violence, sparking

movable protests that the IDF has found impossible to suppress. . . .

Abu Rahmah has become a symbol of the protests. While in prison, he smuggled letters to his supporters, including one—written this last February—that has become a kind of “Letter from Birmingham Jail” of the movement. “Ofer is an Israeli military base inside the occupied territories that serves as a prison and military court,” he wrote. “The prison is a collection of tents enclosed by razor wire and an electrical fence, each unit containing four tents, 22 prisoners per tent. Now, in winter, wind and rain comes through the cracks in the tent and we don’t have sufficient blankets, clothes, and other basic necessities. Food is a critical issue here in Ofer, there’s not enough. We survive by buying ingredients from the prison canteen that we prepare for our tent. We have one small hot plate, and this is also our only source of warmth.”

One month after penning this letter, Abu Rahmah was released, but it’s only a matter of time before he’s arrested again—and shut inside one of the half-dozen Israeli military prisons and administrative facilities that dot the West Bank. Israeli tactics, the mass arrests, and the use of live fire have been condemned by a long list of human rights organizations. But not by the United States. . . .

Unfunded and unnoticed, Bassem Tamimi, his cousin Naji, Abdallah Abu Rahmah, and a handful of others have organized and trained battalions of young men and women in the art of non-violent resistance. Bassem Tamimi’s

arrest has not stopped the protests. They are growing, and spreading. The movement is now in the hands of Bassem’s wife, Nariman, who vows to fight on. She has already spent time in an Israeli jail, but remains undeterred. “There is no knowing what the future holds,” she says from her home in Nabi Saleh, “but our path is clear and so is our goal. We know well that it is possible to achieve it, and we will continue to fight for it. To a great extent, the question of our victory is also one that should be directed to the American people and their government—are you on the side of justice and victory, or on the side of continued oppression?” . . .

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“Our strategic choice of a popular struggle—as a means to fight the occupation taking over our lands, lives, and future—is a declaration that we do not harm human lives. The very essence of our activity opposes killing.”

Bassem Tamimi,
resident of Nabi Saleh

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

January 2 *Ma'ariv* reports on the Jerusalem Municipality's decision to change the original route of the first international Jerusalem marathon following indications from Adidas that it would withdraw its sponsorship if the race passed through Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the Green Line.

January 7 Knesset member (MK) Nahman Shai of Kadima cancels a proposed meeting of Kadima MKs and local settler council chairs with Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas because of Abbas's refusal to meet with settler leaders. (Israel Radio)

January 9 *Ma'ariv* reports that bulldozers are in place to demolish the Shepherd Hotel in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. One hundred twenty housing units are to be constructed at the site.

Ha'aretz reports on a boycott by 155 Israeli professors against the Ariel College in the West Bank.

January 10 Two Israeli companies, Teldor and Ytong, sign contracts to assist in construction of the new Palestinian city of Rawabi in the West Bank. Companies involved in developing Rawabi have agreed to contract language prohibiting the use of settlement products or services. Knesset Economics Committee chairman Carmel Shama says, "Those who think it will pay . . . to overtly do business against the State of Israel should realize how much this won't pay. . . . There are a lot of government [agencies], I assume, that buy from Ytong and Teldor. We won't fine them. We'll simply stop working with them." (Army Radio)

The Jerusalem municipality rejects a European Union (EU) proposal to send inspectors to prevent home demolitions and forcible evictions and arrests of Palestinian residents. (Israel Radio)

January 11 Settlers successfully argue that Palestinian businessman Bashar al-Masri be prevented from purchasing Dugal, the bankrupt real estate development company responsible for the new East Jerusalem settlement of Nof Tzion. The settlers were concerned that Masri would sell the remaining apartments to Arabs rather than Jews. Masri rejected this claim. An attorney representing the settlers had demanded that Dugal's creditor, Bank Leumi, refuse to accept Masri's offer because it would allegedly violate a law

When the Oslo accords were drafted, we made a very big mistake. Settlements are not just the construction of houses—this is a really big enterprise. Our leadership thought that the territory would gradually be a state, but on the ground, we were not in control of our land. This was to the benefit of Israel. At that time, it was believed that Israel would be pushed to stop expanding settlements, and we merely said [in the agreement] "no unilateral steps." But in practice, Israel controlled everything. At that time, we could have succeeded in a campaign to dismantle the illegal settlements, but now it is much more complicated. We missed a very big opportunity.

Issa Samandar, *Bitterlemons*,
April 18, 2011

against money laundering. (Arutz 7)

January 12 Young stone-throwing settlers and Palestinians clash at the Esh Kodesh outpost, near the Shilo settlement. Several people sustain minor injuries. (Ynet)

January 14 *Ha'aretz* reports on a Jerusalem municipality decision to remove scaffolding from an area in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City near the Temple Mount. The organization Ateret Cohanim had been lobbying for years to have the scaffolding removed so that Jewish worshippers could pray in closer proximity to what had been the holiest spot in the ancient temple. The Jerusalem Waqf, which has authority over the Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, opposed the move.

Israeli attorney general Yehuda Weinstein informs Jerusalem mayor Nir Barakat that his unwillingness to abide by a court order to remove settlers illegally occupying an Arab home in Silwan could be interpreted as a criminal act. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 17 The Jerusalem municipality's Planning and Construction Committee approves the construction of 92 housing units in East Talpote and 32 units in Pisgat Ze'ev. Elisha Peleg of Likud comments, "The fact that the construction is beyond the

Green Line is of little importance since it is clear that the only available land is in that area." (Ynet)

January 21 *Ha'aretz* reports that the Israeli Housing Ministry has sold 120 apartments in 20 buildings in the settlement of Elon Moreh without a tender and with the approval of Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, for an average price of \$78,000 for each unit.

January 24 Israeli infrastructure minister Uzi Landau announces sanctions against Israeli firms that agree to boycott settlement products pursuant to their contracts concerning developing Rawabi. Landau says, "The Ministry of National Infrastructure under my leadership will not tolerate discrimination between different groups of citizens that is contrary to the basic values of the State of Israel." A spokesperson for Ytong, one of the companies reported to have a contract for work in Rawabi, says the firm "refuses to participate in any boycott of Israeli [products]." (Arutz 7)

January 27 Settlers from Yitzhar shoot and kill a 19-year-old Palestinian near the village of Iraq Burin, in the northern West Bank. The victim's brother says a group of four settlers opened fire on them from a nearby hilltop while the two were tending to farmland. (Ma'an News)

January 28 Settlers from Kiryat Arba open fire at a group of young Palestinians, severely wounding a 17-year-old, who was later pronounced brain dead. Khirbet Safa residents say about 150 settlers descended on their village to instigate violence; the settlers claim that the Palestinians had thrown stones. Peace Now secretary-general Yariv Oppenheimer calls on the police "to collect most of the weapons held by settlers and act with an iron fist against any trigger-happy citizen who kills Palestinians for no reason." (Ynet)

January 31 Possible U.S. presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, MKs, rabbis, and Jerusalem city council members attend the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the construction of 24 housing units in Beit Orot on the Mount of Olives. Huckabee says, "As an American, it is inconceivable that there is even a question about whether a Jew may or may not live in various parts of Jerusalem." (Arutz 7)

February 1 The Israeli civil administration announces its intention to seize some 600 dunams of land southwest of Bethlehem.

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The notice, published in Arabic newspapers, asserts that "agricultural land will be used for an educational institution according to article 20/24 of construction law number 79 of the year 1966." Residents have 60 days to contest the seizure in Israeli courts. Resident Mahmoud Awwad says his family owns 400 dunams of the land and that their certificates to it were registered under Ottoman, British mandate, and Jordanian administrations. (Ma'an News)

February 4 Israel Radio reports on a proposal by right-wing organizations to expand Jerusalem's municipal borders to Beit She-mesh in the west, the Dead Sea in the east, the Etzion settlement bloc in the south, and Beit El in the north. They reject any division of Jerusalem. The plan was mapped by Gertner Architects and initiated by Australian businessman Kevin Bermeister.

February 8 Israeli police issue an arrest warrant for Rabbi Dov Lior for his refusal to submit to police questioning. He is suspected of giving his blessing to *Torat Hamelech*, which justifies the killing of non-Jews. (Israel Radio)

February 10 Accompanied by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), three Israeli ministers from Likud and the National Home parties visit Joseph's Tomb as part of the site's inauguration after it was rebuilt by the IDF and Samaria Regional Council. It is the first such visit since the IDF evacuated the site in 2000. (Israel Radio)

February 11 Ze'man Yerushalaim reports on plans for the construction of an auditorium and 320 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramot.

February 15 The Israeli Ministry of Education announces plans for a program beginning in 2012 that will allow Israeli students to visit the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports on plans by the IDF to remove the Hawara checkpoint, between Ramallah and Nablus, allowing unrestricted traffic between the two cities for the first time in a decade.

February 20 Settlers from an outpost in the northern West Bank uproot 270 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from the villages of Duma and Qusra. (Ma'an News)

February 21 Israeli crews dismantle the Bedouin village of Amniyr, north of Susiya,

[S]ettlements are not only symbolic. They are facts on the ground. And as settlers have gained, they have grown greedy and demanded more power. . . .

People are frustrated. More and more farmers are being hit. The impact of the wall on them is entirely clear. One farmer lost his land; he says that even his dignity is being targeted. . . .

We see that nobody can change this but us. We have to do this ourselves.

Issa Samandar, *Bitterlemons*,
April 18, 2011

in the south Hebron hills. The small community, composed of five tents, was home to 50 people. Israeli forces also uprooted olive trees and filled its well and cistern with earth. The Bedouins had moved to the site following settler harassment at a location about a kilometer away. (Ma'an News)

February 25 Settlers from Yitzhar vandalize property belonging to Palestinian residents of Burin, south of Nablus. (Ma'an News)

More than 1,000 Palestinians protest in Hebron to mark the seventeenth anniversary of the shooting deaths of 29 Palestinians at the Cave of the Patriarchs by Baruch Goldstein, a settler. Minor clashes break out between protestors and Israeli security forces. (Ynet)

February 28 Israeli security forces arrest eight settlers from the Havat Maon outpost after clashes between residents and civil administration officials inspecting the site. (Army Radio)

March 1 Hundreds of settlers throw stones at Palestinian vehicles and attempt to block traffic following an Israeli government effort to dismantle structures at the Havat Gilad outpost. The incidents are part of the "price tag" policy adopted by some settlers, who respond to IDF actions against them with vigilante action against Palestinians and their property in the West Bank. (Ma'an News, *Ma'ariv*)

The *Jerusalem Post* reports that in 2010, Israel demolished 430 non-Jewish residential

structures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The total represents a 60 percent increase over demolitions in 2009.

March 2 The Jerusalem Municipality approves the construction of 14 apartments in a former police compound in the Ras al-Amud neighborhood of East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

March 3 Settlers expand an outpost north of the Eli and Shilo settlements following an announcement by the Israeli government that outposts built on private, Palestinian-owned land would be dismantled. The announcement also states that outposts determined to be on "state land" would be legalized. (Ma'an News)

March 7 Security forces dismantle four structures at the Givat Menachem outpost, next to the Nahliel settlement. (Israel Radio)

Following criticism over the use of plastic bullets against settlers protesting the dismantling of Havat Gilad, a police inquiry found that the officers' use of non-lethal projectiles was "proportionate, restrained and professional." The officers were confronted by settlers throwing stones and glass bottles. (Israel HaYom)

The Knesset passes, by a large majority, a bill outlawing boycotts against the state of Israel. The legislation pertains to anyone or any party that sponsors or encourages boycotting individuals, factories, companies or organizations in Israel or in settlements. The law also prevents any Israeli company participating in such a boycott from bidding on government tenders. (*Israel HaYom*)

March 8 Five Palestinians are injured in clashes between residents of the village of Kursa, settlers from Shilo, and IDF soldiers. (*Israel HaYom*)

Settlers at the Havat Gilad outpost rebuild dismantled structures and erect additional ones on land belonging to residents of the village of Jit. According to Jit residents, the civil administration was informed about the settlers' activities but nothing had been done. Settlers at the Givat Menachem outpost were also reported to have rebuilt demolished structures. (Ynet)

March 9 *Ha'aretz* reports on efforts by the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter to expel

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a Christian man from his residence because he is not Jewish.

March 10 An Israeli court issues a decision allowing settlers to occupy part of an East Jerusalem home belonging to Palestinians. The ruling comes after an 11-year court battle between the Hamdella family, which claims ownership of the home, and settlement financier Irving Moskowitz. The Hamdellas have lived in the dwelling since 1952, but an earlier court decision had forced them to evacuate two structures built in 1989 as well as a room in the main house built at that time. The settlers are set to move into the evacuated structures and room on March 14. (Ma'an News)

March 12 Assailants invade the home of the Fogel family in the Itamar settlement and kill a three-month-old baby, two children aged three and eleven, and their parents. Settlers raid the Palestinian villages of Burin and Huwara in response. The IDF seals military checkpoints in the northern West Bank and restores checkpoints that had been evacuated in recent months, including at Hawara, Taneib, and al-Badhan. Soldiers place Awarta, the Palestinian locale closest to Itamar, under curfew and detain 20 Palestinians living there. They also arrest Thai workers employed in Itamar (Ma'an News)

Settlers in Hebron throw stones at a patrolling PA civil defense forces vehicle, injuring the driver. (Ma'an News)

Dozens of settlers throw rocks at Palestinian homes and storefronts in Beit Omar and Hawara, near Nablus, damaging private property. (Walla.co.il)

A group of 200 settlers wielding knives, stones, and guns attack and injure several Palestinian motorists on the road from Hebron to Jerusalem. Hebron residents also report that settlers set cars on fire in the Tel Rumeida neighborhood. (Walla.co.il)

March 13 Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Ministerial Committee for Settlements, including Ehud Barak, Matan Vilnai and MK Avi Dichter, approve plans for about 400 new housing units in West Bank settlements in response to the killings in Itamar. Two hundred of the homes will be built in Modi'in Ilit, 100 in Ariel, 40 in Ma'ale Adumim, and 50 car-

Nowadays, the villagers can't accept what the settlers are doing to them. They [the settlers] are always entering the village, sometimes attacking people, burning houses or cutting down trees—as if there is no Israeli military in the area.

The people are organizing to defend themselves. But the problem is that they are now in spots—one spot in Bethlehem, one spot in Maasara, one spot in Bilin. Slowly, everybody is getting to know each other. And I think this will lead to popular struggle.

Issa Samandar, *Bitterlemons*,
April 18, 2011

vans and permanent structures in Kfar Eldad in Gush Etzion. (Walla.co.il)

Ma'ariv reports that the IDF is reinforcing its presence along major transportation routes in the West Bank to prevent disturbances that could lead to violent escalations. The action is said to be in response to the Itamar murders and the price tag violence over outpost demolitions.

March 14 As part of the PA campaign against using settlement-based products, the Hebron consumer protection department of the Ministry of National Economy seizes 2.5 tons of raw plastics manufactured in the settlements. (Ma'an News)

The Israeli security firm Hashmira, owned by the Danish company G4S, announces that it will stop providing equipment for Israeli security installations in the West Bank. The shift followed public pressure in Denmark after the release of a report from the Coalition of Women for Peace, which monitors Israeli companies that operate in the occupied territories. Hashmira is the second largest security company in Israel. (*The Marker*)

The IDF orders residents of Awarta aged 15 to 40 to come to a schoolyard for questioning in the Fogel murders. Dozens of masked settlers throw stones and glass bottles at houses in Awarta. (Ma'an News)

Settlers throw stones at residents of Burin and set a house on fire. (Ma'an News)

March 15 Settlers from Itamar install caravans on land belonging to residents of Awarta to erect a new outpost in memory of the Fogel family. (Ma'an News)

March 16 IDF troops block access to agricultural fields belonging to residents of Beit Dajan, near Nablus, as bulldozers uproot dozens of olive trees. A Beit Dajan council member observes that there is "not even an Israeli settlement in the area." (Ma'an News)

March 17 Dozens of settlers uproot some 100 olive trees belonging to Palestinians four kilometers south of Itamar. (Ma'an News)

Settlers beat a Palestinian man working on a construction project in the West Bank settlement of Shilo. (*Ha'aretz*)

March 18 Settlers beat a Palestinian man with sticks near the Yitzhar settlement. (Ma'an News)

March 19 Settlers stop a Palestinian driving near Yitzhar, drag him from his vehicle, and beat him, seriously injuring his head and chest. (Ma'an News)

March 21 Settlers from the Havat Maon outpost stab a Palestinian resident of Khirbet al-Tuba in the south Hebron hills. (Israel Radio)

Two Palestinians from Beit Omar are shot after they allegedly threw stones at a passing settler car. Another resident of Beit Omar says the two men were attending a funeral when a settler arrived at the cemetery and began shooting. (Ynet)

March 22 Dozens of settlers enter unfinished apartments in Modi'in Ilit upon hearing rumors that Neot Hapisga, the company building them, was going bankrupt as a result of the settlement freeze. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

March 23 *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Robert Pactor, an owner of a company building in the Modi'in Ilit settlement, intends to sue the government for \$143 million as compensation for damage to his business as a result of the settlement construction freeze.

Ma'ariv reports on the successful campaign by the Palestine Society at the London School of Economics against the Israeli water company Eden Springs. The contract the company had with the university will not be renewed following protests against its operations on the Golan Heights.

to raise the specter of unilateral annexation of Area C, most likely by extending Israeli law and jurisdiction over the 59 per cent of the West Bank that comprises the area, along with all the settlements.

"If these two processes—the unity between Fateh and Hamas and the September declaration—become united, and a Palestinian state is established unilaterally and in a joint Hamas-Fateh regime, that will force Israel to take measures to administer Israeli sovereignty over the C areas," explained transportation minister Israel Katz in a May 17 interview in *Makor Rishon*. "At the same time, we will have to provide answers in the spheres of security and [Israeli presence], and strengthen the settlements."

On the eve of Netanyahu's departure for Washington, the government announced plans for the construction of 1,550 new housing units in Har Homa in southern Jerusalem and in Pisgat Ze'ev. Defense Minister Ehud Barak has signed documents approving construction of 294 new homes in the settlement of Beitar Ilit west of Bethlehem. A new outpost, one of many, was established in the E-1 area east of Jerusalem, violating promises made to Washington. A long familiar game of cat and mouse between settlers and the IDF is underway at the site. The IDF has removed settler tents. Settlers have vowed to rebuild. These actions, of a kind that one year ago sparked a major clash with Washington, passed without comment. Washington's silence regarding an issue that it had formally placed at the heart of its diplomatic strategy did not go unnoticed in Israel, where the settlement movement is feeling stronger and more confident, in practical terms regarding settlement expansion in existing settlements as well as in new settlement "outposts" and politically in the wake of Netanyahu's "victory" in the battle over a settlement freeze.

In two speeches in May, Obama stepped warily into a diplomatic arena increasingly resistant to American ideas. The May 20, 2011 resignation of special envoy George Mitchell highlighted the failure of Obama's peacemaking efforts until now. Washington's veto in February of a UN Security Council resolution decrying settlements highlighted its isolation from its European and international allies in the Quartet, the international address for Israel-Palestinian diplomacy since the adoption of the road map in 2003. For example, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov after meeting with Fateh and Hamas representatives in Moscow on May 23, praised the reconciliation agreement, a deal that Obama called an "enormous obstacle to peace" in the Middle East. A Hamas official said Lavrov repeated Moscow's support for a Palestinian declaration of statehood in the United Nations in September.

Against this background of disappointment and unrealized aspirations, the growing credibility of the PLO's intention to turn away from Washington and to look to the United Nations for leadership in its demand for ending the occupation and creating a state poses the most immediate and pressing challenge to Washington.

Most of the attention paid to Obama's remarks at the Department of State and before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) focused on his public support for explaining that the United States "believe[s] the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps," the first such public declaration of his presidency. The president's unequivocal dismissal of the PLO UN strategy, however, represents the more noteworthy policy announcement, and the most relevant to the diplomatic calendar.

"What America and the international community can do," declared the president in his May 19 speech at the Department of State, "is to state frankly what everyone knows—a lasting peace will involve two states for two peoples: Israel as a Jewish state and the homeland for the Jewish people, and the state of Palestine as the homeland for the Palestinian people, each state enjoying self-determination, mutual recognition, and peace." He continued:

So while the core issues of the conflict must be negotiated, the basis of those negotiations is clear: a viable Palestine, a secure Israel. The United States believes that negotiations should result in two states, with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine. We believe the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states. The Palestinian people must have the right to govern themselves, and reach their full potential, in a sovereign and contiguous state. . . .

These principles provide a foundation for negotiations. Palestinians should know the territorial outlines of their state; Israelis should know that their basic security concerns will be met. I'm aware that these steps alone will not resolve the conflict, because two wrenching and emotional issues will remain: the future of Jerusalem, and the fate of Palestinian refugees. But moving forward now on the basis of territory and security provides a foundation to resolve those two issues in a way that is just and fair, and that respects the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Obama left no doubt that he opposes the two main pillars of the current Palestinian strategy—reconciliation and the UN option, the latter of which he decisively rejected as a "symbolic action[s]" that will not advance the cause of Palestinian statehood. Obama's announcement of the principles upon which negotiations should be based marked not only a repudiation of his previous effort to anchor diplomacy to a settlement freeze but, more importantly, it also lacked any operational context. There was, for example, no call for a summit or international conference based upon the ideas he endorsed, no suggestion as to how these ideas could be turned into an effective diplomatic effort. "The administration's hope," reported Nahum Barnea and Shimon Shiffer in *Yediot Aharanot* on May 22, "is that if we make it through September in one piece, Abu Mazen will return to the negotiating

table even without a moratorium on settlement construction.”

Efforts during Clinton and Bush administrations to reach a final status agreement followed the prescription Obama outlined—both in terms of substance and in terms of sequencing the issues to be addressed. During the discussions that followed in the wake of the Annapolis summit of November 2007 in particular, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted that all parties, including the United States and Israel, agreed that:

- The 1967 line was the baseline for determining the border between Israel and Palestine, and

- The 1967 border would be modified by land swaps of an undetermined percentage, somewhere between the Palestinian proposal of 1.9 percent and the Israeli proposal of 8.5 percent of West Bank territory.

The critical difference between the Annapolis discussions

in 2008 and Washington in 2011 is that Rice won agreement to these principals after much debate with Israeli leaders as part of what turned out to be a serious diplomatic process in which these elements featured prominently. In contrast, during two years of discussions with Palestinian and Israeli leaders, Obama administration officials did not reaffirm U.S. support for the language regarding the 1967 border similar to that used by Rice until the president’s recent public remarks. The context today is also entirely different. As the president himself noted, “[T]here is impatience with the peace process, or the absence of one.” Obama’s remarks on borders, settlements, and land swaps, as welcome as they might be, offered no hint as to how he plans to transform ideas into deeds.

“We want to see negotiations,” explained Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in a television interview on May 19, “but we’re not able to make those negotiations happen. But we know that without negotiations, there will be no end to the conflict, no end to the claims, and no two-state solution.” ♦

LAND SWAPS—A REVIEW OF RECENT PROPOSALS

	<i>West Bank Annexation by Israel (%)</i>	<i>Israel Annexation to Palestine (%)</i>	<i>Ratio of Swapped Territory (Israel : Palestine)</i>
The Barak Proposal (July 2000)	9	1	1 : 9
Israel’s proposal at Camp David included a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders, with Israel annexing the settlement blocs comprising nine per cent (500 sq.km) of the West Bank. For the first time, Israel agreed to offer compensatory land in Israel for its West Bank claims at an unequal ration of nine percent annexation to Israel to one percent compensation to Palestine.			
The Clinton Parameters (December 2000)	4–6	1–3	1 : 4 – 1 : 2
In December 2000, U.S. president Bill Clinton proposed that Israel withdraw to the 1967 lines, modified by the annexation of 4 to 6 percent of the territory of the West Bank. In return, Israel would compensate with an area of between 1 to 3 percent of Israeli sovereign territory.			
The Livni Version (2008)	7.3	5	1 : 1.5*
During the Annapolis talks in mid-2008, Foreign Minister Tzippi Livni proposed a return to the 1967 borders modified by Israel’s annexation of 7.3 percent of the West Bank. In return, Israel would cede an area equivalent to 5 percent of the West Bank, a ratio of 1:1.5. She suggested that by including the safe passage from Gaza to the West Bank, an equal land swap could be achieved.			
*The Palestinian Negotiations Support Unit (NSU) calculated that the proposed Israeli annexation comprised 9.2 per cent of the West Bank. Israel’s land calculations excludes already-annexed territory in and around East Jerusalem and the Latrun No Man’s Land. Using this formula the NSU calculated a land swap ratio of 1:1.8 or 1:3 with the safe passage.			
The Olmert Version (September 2008)	6.8	5.5	1 : 1.2*
Prime Minister Olmert proposed to PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas a return to the 1967 lines, under which Israel would annex 6.3 percent of the West Bank in return for Israeli land amounting to 5.8 percent of the West Bank plus a safe passage route.			
*The NSU calculated the proposed 6.8% annexation to equal 8.7 percent of the West Bank, in return for a swap of 5.4 percent, resulting in a 1:1.6 ratio.			
The Abu Mazen Version (2008)	2	2	1 : 1
The Palestinian agreement to base the border between Palestine and Israel on the June 1967 line, modified by a willingness to cede approximately 1.9 percent of the West Bank to Israel in return for an equal amount of Israeli territory, has been relatively consistent during this period.			

SUSYA RESIDENTS CONFRONT ARMY: “YOU’VE PUT US IN A GHETTO”

By Aryeh Ben Hayim and Gil Ronen

The decision on April 4 by the Hevron Brigade commander Col. Guy Hazut to allow the family of the [Palestinian] man who murdered Susya resident Yair Har-Sinai into the agricultural fields of Susya has the community up in arms. Susya is located on the southern edge of the Hevron Hills, between Kiryat Arba-Hevron and Arad. It is situated about one mile north of a separation fence checkpoint.

The field in question is a mere 300 meters away from the entrance to the community. The army has imposed a closure order around the entire area, allowing Jews to walk about freely only in Susya proper, thus threatening to turn it into a ghetto. In a confrontation between Hazut and residents of Susya on Shabbat (Saturday), the commander was accused of failing to relay to his superiors the security implication of the decision. The murderers have become sufficiently emboldened to threaten Susya residents with “another Itamar.”

Hazut was told that he was not in his position as a neutral U.N. mediator, but as someone whose job is to defend Jews. Hazut replied that it was the army’s job to prevent trespassing on a Palestinian’s land, thus accepting the Arab view that the land is theirs by default, although they have no legal title to the land and the Jews have held presumptive title for some time.

Arutz Sheva talked with Rabbi Eliezer Altshuler, spokesperson and rabbi for Susya, and asked him to provide further background on the story: “The murderer’s family had abandoned the area after the murder [which occurred in 2001 –

ed.] and this accounted for the relative quiet. The Arab family has a notorious reputation amongst those who deal with security in the region. Now the IDF hierarchy is letting them return to the places they abandoned. The Jewish community plans to thwart this. . . .

The unabridged version of this article appeared on Arutz 7, a settler-run Web site, on April 13, 2011

ARABS TRY TO GRAB LAND NEAR EFRAT

By Elad Benari

The phenomenon of Arabs one-sidedly claiming Jewish lands is nothing new, but it seems to have reached new heights in Efrat.

Noam Wassel, a resident of Efrat, has been seeing this occur with his own eyes, step by step, during the last few days.

Wassel described during an interview with Arutz Sheva’s Hebrew website how he sees almost every morning Arabs arriving at the Efrat North Junction in an attempt to establish facts on the ground and claim the land. The fact that there has never been Arab agriculture in the area and the fact that an IDF post is situated close by does not bother them, he said. Wassel described how last Friday, he traveled from his home towards Jerusalem, and during the ride he noticed young Palestinian Authority farmers working the land. This incident occurred after they were previously removed from the area by the soldiers who are stationed nearby to prevent stones and Molotov cocktails from being thrown by terrorists in nearby villages at Jewish vehicles traveling along the road. . . .

The soldiers said they would send someone to check it out, and one of them indeed went to check what was going on. When he saw the Arabs he pushed them away.” . . .

[O]n Monday morning as he was on his way to work, Wassel noticed that about twenty meters from the IDF station, Arabs had fenced off the land so they can work it. He said that the Arabs must have arrived overnight without the soldiers having noticed them. . . .

Arabs taking advantage of Shabbat to establish facts on the ground and claim land that is not theirs in southern Judea is also a common occurrence.

The unabridged version of this article appeared on Arutz 7, a settler-run Web site, on April 13, 2011

Settler Population Growth East and West of the Barrier, 2000–2009

	East of Barrier		West of Barrier	
	Population	Increase (%)	Population	Increase (%)
2009	70,051	1.1%	229,494	2.3%
2008	69,276	6.2%	224,323	5.4%
2007	65,246	6.3%	212,790	5.8%
2006	61,403	2.8%	201,053	5.6%
2005	59,709	5.9%	190,469	4.4%
2004	56,359	4.7%	182,456	5.6%
2003	53,823	6.0%	172,754	5.1%
2002	50,777	5.6%	164,379	7.4%
2001	48,088	4.6%	153,047	4.0%
2000	45,978	n/a	147,126	n/a

Source: List of Localities, their Populations and Codes," Israel Central Bureau of Statistics.

SHIMON PERES IS WORRIED

... In closed talks that the president has been holding in recent weeks, it turns out that he has changed some of his well-known positions. Yes, he still believes in peace, but no, he doesn't think that Israel is capable or should dismantle settlements in the framework of peace. Peres's formula is now "peace with settlements."

Ma'ariv reported this past year on the prime minister's musings on the outline of an arrangement with the Palestinians. Among other things, it reported that Binyamin Netanyahu does not want (and is not capable) of removing a single settlement, that he talks about the concept of "enclaves," that he thinks that all the settlements should be left standing, even in the format of a "balloon on a string." This means, for example, that Ariel would remain an Israeli city, but there would be no territorial connection with it. It would be an enclave with a single road leading to and from it, thus saving a lot of territory when making a land swap. The same for Hebron and all the other places in contention. Now it turns out that Peres thinks similarly. Which proves—and this is only an opinion—that not only does Peres pressure and influence Bibi, it could also be that Bibi pressures and influences Peres. Reciprocity at the top.

... Peres believes that Netanyahu is capable. Despite his age, Peres has not lost his innocence. The decision that Netanyahu must make, according to Peres, is simple: declare support for a Palestinian state in the 1967 territory. Not in the 1967 borders, the 1967 territory. The settlements will remain in Israel's hands, the Palestinians will receive compensation with areas that Israel will give them. This principle is recognized, it isn't new, but the fact that Peres accepts the non-removal of settlements is nothing less than astounding. Has he reached the conclusion that Israeli sovereignty is now incapable of undertaking a large-scale uprooting of settlements? Is the situation on the ground in Judea and Samaria irreversible, in Peres's opinion? It seems so.

And Jerusalem? Peres thinks that the solution must be postponed to a later date. The Palestinians can be given Abu Dis and other neighborhoods; there is no reason to annex hundreds of thousands of Arabs to Israel. The Old City will be mooted for discussion later. In the end, says Peres, the Old City is all of two square kilometers, there are hundreds of holy places there to the three religions, each religion can be given control of its sites. . . .

Ben Caspit, *Ma'ariv*, April 29, 2011

The United States believes that negotiations should result in two states, with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine. We believe the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states. The Palestinian people must have the right to govern themselves, and reach their full potential, in a sovereign and contiguous state.

As for security, every state has the right to self-defense, and Israel must be able to defend itself—by itself—against any threat. Provisions must also be robust enough to prevent a resurgence of terrorism, to stop the infiltration of weapons, and to provide effective border security. The full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces should be coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sov-

eign, non-militarized state. And the duration of this transition period must be agreed, and the effectiveness of security arrangements must be demonstrated.

These principles provide a foundation for negotiations. Palestinians should know the territorial outlines of their state; Israelis should know that their basic security concerns will be met. I'm aware that these steps alone will not resolve the conflict, because two wrenching and emotional issues will remain: the future of Jerusalem, and the fate of Palestinian refugees. But moving forward now on the basis of territory and security provides a foundation to resolve those two issues in a way that is just and fair, and that respects the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Remarks by President Barack Obama,
May 19, 2011, Washington, DC

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