REPORT ON
ISRAELI SETTLEMENT
IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEWS

Israel and the Palestinian Authority have begun implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh memorandum. On September 10, Israel transferred 7 percent of the West Bank to Palestinian civil control (Area B).

On September 13, ceremonies marking the renewal of final status talks were held. Continuous and acrimonious discussion of final-status issues, among them the future of the approximately 200 settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, with a combined population of nearly 400,000, can be expected in the coming months.

The PA ban on Palestinian labor in settlements and settlement enterprises is reported on page 3. Anecdotal reports suggest that the ban has been ineffective.

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THE SHARM EL-SHEIKH MEMORANDUM AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

The agreement signed on September 4 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, has numerous clauses relating to all manner of issues outstanding between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Land and territory, however, remain the fulcrum of Israeli-Palestinian relations. The "Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on Implementation Timetable of Outstanding Commitments of Agreements Signed and the Resumption of Permanent Status Negotiations" reaffirms Israel's commitment, first made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu almost one year ago, to reduce the area of the West Bank under exclusive Israeli control from 72 percent to 59 percent.

Netanyahu committed himself in October 1998 to transfer 41 percent of the West Bank to some measure of Palestinian control (Areas A and B) before the third redeployment called for in the now almost-forgotten Oslo II agreement. Soon after his election, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak put PA chairman Yassir Arafat on notice that he intended to offer only 35 percent before a final-status agreement is reached. The territorial dimension of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement, however, while dividing the second withdrawal called for in the Oslo II accord into three phases instead of the two phases outlined in the Wye accord, does not change the figure agreed upon at Wye and remains subject to a timetable independent of progress on final status issues.

Barak is faced with implementing agreements reached with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the United States by his predecessors. Like Netanyahu before him, Barak is determined to refashion these agreements in his own image. Just as "Wye" took the place of "Oslo" in the lexicon and implementation of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy, so too does Barak intend for "Sharm el-Sheikh" to dull memories of Wye.

But just as the most recent agreement signifies Barak's "ownership" of the diplomatic framework, it also demonstrates his endorsement of it, despite longstanding concerns.

According to the Interim (Oslo II) Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, signed in September 1995, the first of three "further redeployments" was scheduled to begin in October 1996. All three redeployments were to have been completed, according to the Oslo II timetable, by October 1997. A final-status agreement was to have been completed by October 1999.

The Wye River Memorandum, signed on October 23, 1998, divides Oslo II's second "further redeployment"—scheduled for April 1997—into three phases. Wye makes no mention of a date or the territorial extent of the third redeployment called for in Oslo II that was to have been implemented in October 1997. Nor does the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement.

WYE, *continued on page 8*

TO OUR READERS

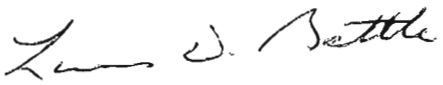
There is a palpable improvement in the mood of those Palestinians charged with negotiating with Israel now that they are no longer sitting across the table from former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The situation with regard to the settlements, however, remains grim, with slim prospects of an improvement during the Barak era. The machinery of settlement expansion and the constellation of the new government all but guarantee the future growth of settlements and the attendant increases in the settlement population, now approaching 200,000 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip alone. The 150-odd settlement master-plan areas include barely 5 percent of the West Bank. On the face of it, this is not a significant percentage. However, the planning areas of all 450-plus Palestinian villages and towns comprise a similar percentage. Within the areas allocated to settlements, Israel can settle one million people. Not only that, these settlements are located in many cases on top of critical aquifers and at other strategic topographical sites.

In Israel, Ehud Barak's victory is viewed by his supporters and most of the Israeli press as not only a political transformation, it is also understood as something akin to a moral reaffirmation of the legacy left by his slain predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin.

Barak can take advantage of this reservoir of support among the majority of Israelis who voted for him; even for those who voted against him, Barak engenders none of the hostility once sparked by Rabin. This is particularly the case among settlers in the West Bank and their supporters. Barak, unlike Rabin, has no antipathy for these people. He "feels their pain" and has promised not to harm their interests. This commitment, of course, constrains his ability to undertake a radical revision of Israel's policy of settlement expansion of the kind demanded by the Palestinians.

Barak's post-victory visit to the United States was in part aimed at defusing the increasingly vocal U.S. opposition to settlement expansion voiced in the last months of the Netanyahu government. Barak has no doubt promised to work with the Washington on the "big picture"—the overall strategic cooperation in the region between the two countries—vis-à-vis Iran and Iraq, for example, as well as on overall issues of peace between Israel and the Arabs. Both the U.S. and Israel view settlement expansion as a small piece of this larger mosaic, and one that, during Barak's tenure, can be managed without too much difficulty.



> I have no opposition to [the PA's ban on Palestinian employment in settlements] and I will even be a bit glad if they do it. Israel has 300,000 foreign workers who aren't threatening our lives. If [Palestinians] want thousands of more unemployed, then that is their problem. We've got Romanians, Turks, Chinese and others.
>
> Pinhas Wallerstein, chairman of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (YESHA)

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY BANS PALESTINIAN LABOR IN SETTLEMENTS

Palestinians have traditionally made up the bulk of the work force engaged in the construction and daily maintenance of settlements throughout the occupied territories. Palestinians working in Israeli settlements number between 10,000 and 12,000 in more than 100 Israeli enterprises, including 3,500 in the Erez industrial zone and settlements in the Gaza Strip, and 8,500 in industrial parks and settlements in the West Bank, not including those working in the settlement communities of East Jerusalem. The number of such workers has risen by around 50 percent since the imposition of the closure in 1993, paralleling an increase in Israeli-owned factories in the occupied territories.

By Saud Abu Ramadan, reprinted from the Palestine Report, *published by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, June 25, 1999.*

Isma'el Abu Taha, 26, is married and has four children. To support his young family, Abu Taha helps to build the Israeli settlement of Morag, northeast of his own town of Rafah.

"Basically, we do not like to work in the Jewish settlements, but we do now because we have no other choices and no other job opportunities," said Abu Taha.

The 18 Israeli settlements in Gaza employ more than 4,000 Palestinian workers in construction and agriculture. In 1998, more Palestinians were working on settlements than at any time since the signing of peace agreements between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority is trying to stop all that. In a police order carried out [in late June], the Palestinian Authority made it illegal for Palestinians like Abu Taha to go to work. As part of its campaign to stop the growth of settlements, the Palestinian Authority wants to hurt Gaza settlers economically by cutting off their source of cheap labor.

Khalid al-Khatib, the spokesman of the Palestinian National and Islamic Committee for Settlement Resistance, said that this step was taken by the committee in cooperation with the Palestinian police.

"The Committee for Settlement Resistance recently urged Palestinian laborers who work in the Jewish settlements to stop working there in order to stop indirectly contributing to the growth of settlements in Gaza," said al-Khatib.

Palestinian security forces confiscated working permits which enable them to enter and work at the Jewish settlements of Morag, Gush Katif, Neve Dekalim, and Netzarim.

Laborers were required to sign an understanding that a violation of the ban on settlement labor holds a penalty of six months in jail and a fine of $500.

Palestinian security officials said that workers could continue to labor as farm hands in the settlements, but not in construction. Aiding the expansion of settlements violates the Palestinians' national interests, they said.

The Palestinian cabinet rubber-stamped the police order, voting its approval in the West Bank city of Ramallah [and extending it to agricultural as well as other workers].

Some doubt the effectiveness of the move. Abu Taha said that Jewish settlers at Morag warned the workers that if they do not return to work in the settlement, they will be replaced by foreign workers from Thailand and lose their working and compensation rights. According to Israeli law, if a worker is fired he or she must be compensated a set amount for every year of work.

The settlers who employ Palestinians in the settlements humiliate them, overwork them for more than eight hours a day and pay each worker only $10 a day, said Abu Taha. While construction workers employed by Palestinians make a similar wage, those lucky enough to receive permission to work inside Israel can make as much as nearly $40 per day.

The workers said that some settlers were holding their working permits at the gates of the settlement, claiming that they were keeping the workers' permits from being confiscated by the Palestinian police.

"If the Palestinian Authority wants us to quit working in the settlements, it should create new jobs," said Abu Taha.

The committee behind the move has officially asked Palestinian businesspeople and factory owners to find a space for the more than 2,000 workers who are employed in construction in the Israeli settlements, said al-Khatib.

The workers, many who have labored on Jewish settlements for over 10 years, usually come from the central and southern parts of the Gaza Strip. They are often the children of farmers or laborers who work in Israel.

Rasim al-Biari, head of the Palestinian trade union, said that his union has repeatedly asked Palestinian workers to stop working in the settlements and to try to find jobs in the Palestinian private sector.

"If they continue working in the settlements, it will be very dangerous—those settlements may turn into joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zones," said al-Biari. He fears that workers on the settlements help to legitimize their existence at a time when the Palestinian leadership is preparing to push for settlement removal in final-status talks.

"But if we ask those laborers to stop working in the settlements, we have to find them the alternative," al-Biari said. ◆

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

March 29 The Knesset Finance Committee allocates a $14 million subsidy for the construction of 600 dwelling units in the West Bank settlements. An additional $75 million is allocated for settlement infrastructure and new construction.

April 4 The planning council of the civil administration approves a $4 million project to improve the 4.5 km road between Israel and the industrial park near the northwest West Bank settlement of Shaked.

April 11 *Ha'aretz* reports that the Israel Land Authority estimates that there is a potential for the construction of 8,000–12,000 dwelling units in Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem, less than the expected demand. During 1999, land for new construction is expected to be offered principally in the East Jerusalem settlement communities of Har Homa and Pisgat Ze'ev.

April 13 A hilltop outpost is established 1.5 km southeast of the West Bank settlement of Karnei Shomron. Settlement officials note that the new site is within the planning boundaries of Karnei Shomron.

A hilltop outpost in the Hebron area near the Tene and Omarim settlements is reestablished, with Israel Defense Force permission, one day after being evacuated.

April 14 *Ha'aretz* reports that U.S. satellite photo reconnaissance revealed the establishment of 12 hilltop settlements and access roads in the West Bank since the Wye accords were reached in October 1998. Six additional outposts were established immediately before the talks began.

A new settlement is reported 750 meters west of the Etzion bloc settlement of Ma'ale Amos. Although within the latter settlement's boundaries, the outpost—Avei Hanahal—has won "independence in infrastructural matters" from Israeli officialdom.

April 16 *Kol Ha'ir* reports that Deputy Minister of Housing Meir Porush, visiting Hebron, declared, "The Ministry of Housing has plans to enlarge the Hebron [settler] community. The way to strengthen the city of our fathers is to build more houses and more neighborhoods."

April 19 *Ha'aretz* reports that Israel's attorney general has temporarily frozen the publication of criteria, which exclude Arabs, governing the purchase of property in Jerusalem's Old City Jewish Quarter.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip grew by 7 percent in 1998 to 172,000, an increase of 11,000, compared with 9 percent in 1997 (13,000) and 9.4 percent in 1996. In contrast, the population of Israel as a whole increased by 2.3 percent in 1998.

An interministerial committee on Jerusalem recommends that, in order to maintain a 70/30 percent Jewish majority in Jerusalem, Israel needs to build 116,000 new dwelling units in the city for Jews by 2200, an annual rate of 5,500, far higher than is currently the case.

The CBS reports that construction starts in West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements increased by 105 percent during the last year, from 1,900 in 1997 to 3,900 in 1998, comprising 10 percent of residential construction in Israel.

April 23 *Ma'ariv* reports that rabbis have approved the construction of settlement infrastructure and roads by non-Jews on the Sabbath [Saturday]. Continuation of work on the Sabbath would enable settlers to "create facts on the ground" and to bypass the civil administration, which does not work on the Sabbath and does not operate a helicopter used to discover illegal construction in settlements.

Yerushalim reports the completion of an interministerial multiyear plan calling for allocations of more than $125 million in "civilian assistance" for settlements. The budget calls for the expansion of industrial parks in settlements.

Yerushalim reports that the Ministry of Housing has added 20 West Bank settlements to the list of "A" development areas. Home buyers in these settlements are eligible for a $10,000 "local loan."

April 26 Residents of the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Levona establish a hilltop encampment.

The government gives final approval for the building of six new settlements: two in the Negev, three in the Galilee, and one in the Jordan Valley.

April 28 Work is reported to have begun on a new settlement area next to the settlement of Ofarim, near the Green Line. The new settlement, approved in 1991, will be populated by ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim) in 2,000 units, along with 6,000 units for secular Israelis. The urban settlement, with a projected population of 34,000, is aimed at "strengthening construction along the Green Line," explained a housing official. Some settlers in Ofarim oppose the creation of a religious town in their midst.

April 29 *Ha'aretz* reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu violated a secret commitment not to expand settlements. The promise—believed to restrict expansion to areas adjacent to existing construction—was first made to President Bill Clinton in the summer of 1997 and repeated at the Wye plantation in October 1998.

The most complete statement of the U.S. view came from the U.S. embassy spokesman in Tel Aviv, who explained, "The prime minister told us, at every level and on many occasions, that as a matter of policy there will not be new settlements, and that there would be no expansion of existing settlements beyond their contiguous periphery. But, in contrast to what was said to us, we see an acceleration of actions that include Israeli construction and new settlements, and also expansion of existing settlements beyond their contiguous periphery."

Netanyahu's spokesman, David Bar Ilan, explained that "it is true that the construction in settlements is not contiguous. We thought that it [the commitment] was part of the whole, which was not implemented. Therefore we didn't feel obligated. There are no new settlements, and the expansion of existing settlements is only in areas that are part of their master plans."

Ma'ariv reports that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Council advisor Sandy Berger complained to Israeli minister of defense Moshe Arens that at a time when the United States is attempting to preempt the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state, Israel is undertaking unilateral actions in settlements by condoning the creation of new hilltop outposts. They demanded that the settlements be removed.

The civil administration dismantles an unauthorized hilltop dwelling located outside the planning boundary of Ma'ale Levona days after evacuating a site nearby.

May 2 The Knesset Finance Committee approves the transfer of $20 million to settlements in fulfillment of the coalition

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

agreement reached on the eve of the passage of the 1999 budget.

May 3 The Israeli government's approval of the construction of a joint Palestinian Authority–Israeli industrial park on a 1,200-dunam (300-acre) plot of land south of Nablus is reported. The new commercial site is located in Area B.

The municipality of Jerusalem demolishes two Palestinian houses in Jabal al-Mukabir. Ten houses in Jerusalem and ten in the West Bank have been demolished since the beginning of the year.

An on-site survey of settlement expansion carried out by Peace Now reveals that 6,500 housing units are under construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a 14 percent increase over a year ago.

Harei Zahav, a new settlement west of Eli Zahav, is established. Initial plans for what settlement leaders describe as a "new neighborhood" of Eli Zahav calls for the construction of 200 dwelling units undertaken by the private sector. The area has a capacity for 1,000 units.

One Israel's Shlomo ben Ami, in a visit to the Etzion bloc, states, "Not only is a return to the 1967 border unacceptable to us, the mass evacuation of settlements is also unacceptable."

May 4 Prime Minister Netanyahu admits that settlers are occupying West Bank hilltops outside existing settlements, but denies the actions violate promises made to the United States.

The Israeli organization Betselem reports that since 1993 Israel has established 33 new settlements in the occupied territories, 17 of which were established in the period just prior to and after the signing of the Wye memorandum in October 1998.

Emunah Elon, a resident of the settlement of Beit El, tells Arutz 7, "We must face the reality, that most of the [Israeli] population does not care about the future of settlements. It's not that they hate us or anything, they are simply not particularly concerned what a Palestinian state will mean for the settlements. We must clarify to them that a Palestinian state does not only endanger us, but even more so the rest of Israel."

May 6 *Ha'aretz* reports that the Jerusalem municipality and representatives of the residents of the East Jerusalem neighborhoods of Jabal al-Mukabir and Arab al-Suwarha have reached a "gentleman's agreement" aimed at halting house demolitions and illegal construction. The parties agreed that no homes will be destroyed and no structures will be erected without permits until planning teams from both sides examine existing zoning plans.

A tender for the construction of 802 dwelling units at Har Homa is published.

May 7 *Hadashot* reports that from August 1998 thru April 1999 the IDF installed 800 mobile homes in more than 50 West Bank settlements. Peace Now reports 3,712 empty units in West Bank settlements.

May 9 Arutz 7 reports that Israeli police and civil administration officials evacuated Hill 10, east of the West Bank settlement of Shilo. One settler notes that the site "is on state-owned land, and the outpost was established there several days ago. The Arabs around us are engaged in the planting of a million trees on state-owned lands, in order to grab these lands for themselves, and the civil administration is not doing anything about it. A few students went out to the outpost and made their home in an old bus. The authorities moved in and evacuated the students."

The IDF dismantles a hilltop settlement, Hill 824, near the West Bank settlement of Shvut Rachel. At the new Brukin settlement, near Eli Zahav, 15 mobile homes are installed with IDF approval.

Infrastructure work commences at a 900-dunam site of an industrial park north of the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba.

The IDF issues an order to evacuate "Givat Erez," 1 km from the settlement of Ma'ale Mikmash. The site had been occupied for less than one week.

The Netanyahu cabinet approves a $5,000 grant to purchasers of new apartments in new Jerusalem neighborhoods. The program will run until the end of 2000.

Ha'aretz reports that Prime Minister Netanyahu intervened on four occasions to prevent the evacuation of unauthorized hilltop settlements throughout the West Bank, including Tene-Omarim near Hebron, at Har Bracha near Nablus, and twice at Hill 777 (Gidonim) near Itamar.

May 10 *Ha'aretz* reports that military sources have criticized the establishment of the new industrial zone near Kiryat Arba, calling it "an unnecessary development the sole purpose of which is to make the planned withdrawal from the area extremely problematic."

May 11 Settlers residing in the northern Gaza outpost of Dugit tear down the settlement's perimeter fence to protest the IDF's refusal to permit the expansion of the settlement's boundaries. The IDF had earlier stopped an attempt to move the perimeter fence 200 meters beyond its agreed-upon location.

The first settlers arrive at Dagan Hill, near the West Bank settlement of Efrat.

The five kilometer, $60 million Ma'ale Adumim-Jerusalem road, which includes a 500-meter tunnel under Mt. Scopus, is dedicated by Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert.

The Knesset Finance Committee approves the transfer of $3 million to settlements in order to "enable the creation of 32 new neighborhoods in settlements."

May 12 *Ha'aretz* reports that Minister of Defense Arens told Secretary of State Albright that the rate of increase in the settler population since the call for new Israeli elections had been no more than 1 percent, or 2,000 people.

The IDF removes settlers from an unauthorized outpost near the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar. The outpost, which had been established only a few days earlier, is the second outpost evacuated by the IDF in recent days.

Scores of Arab demonstrators block the entrance to the Gaza settlement of Netzarim, preventing trucks with building materials from entering the community.

Ha'aretz reports that private investors plan to invest $125 million in the Golan Heights settlement of Katzrin. Planned projects include a 150-room hotel and a shopping mall.

Ha'aretz reports that U.S. ambassador to Israel Ned Walker has quietly established a secondary residence in Jerusalem, where he has privately entertained U.S. Jewish groups. Walker's new secondary residence, leased by

TIMELINE, *continued on page 6*

the U.S. embassy earlier this year, is an apartment in the condominium wing of Jerusalem's Hilton Hotel.

May 14 State Department spokesman James Rubin states, "Ambassadors to Israel have routinely leased hotel apartments or suites for their use in visits to Jerusalem and for security, convenience and meetings; that continues to be the case. Maintaining these arrangements does not represent a change in our position on the issue of moving the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem."

Yerushalim reports that the Local Council for Planning and Building has approved construction of 900 units in the Palestinian village of Anata, part of which lies within Jerusalem's municipal border. There are currently 200 dwelling units in the village. Authorities authorized far less dense construction than in nearby Israeli settlement communities in East Jerusalem.

May 15 Palestinian demonstrators clash with Israeli troops in scattered West Bank protests. Several hundred Palestinians gather at the settlement of Brukin, pressing for the removal of caravans set up by settlers.

May 16 An authorized outpost with 10 mobile homes is established by settlers on a hilltop near the settlement of Halamish, northwest of Ramallah.

May 18 *Ha'aretz* reports that settlement construction in the East Jerusalem neigborhood of Ras al-Amud has commenced on a 3.5-acre site. A settlement of 130 units is to be constructed.

May 19 Labor MK Shimon Peres states that it is likely that some settlements will eventually come under the authority of the PA, explaining that this would be no different than some of the Arab villages in the occupied territories that are under Israeli control today.

Israel's civil administration uproots saplings planted by Palestinians near the West Bank village of Beit Dajan, claiming that they are on "state land."

May 23 The Knesset Finance Committee approves the transfer from the state budget of $5 million for the settlement of Ariel.

May 24 *Ha'aretz* reports that Palestinian villagers from Dir Qadis were protesting settlement development work on land 50 meters from village homes. Palestinians claim ownership of the disputed territory, which is being developed as a new neighborhood of the Kiryat Sefer settlement.

May 25 *Ha'aretz* reports that the civil administration has begun expanding the municipal boundary of the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, "including lands claimed by Palestinian owners that were previously declared to be beyond the settlement's municipal limits."

May 27 The joint Israeli-Palestinian civilian affairs committee meets to hear complaints of Palestinians from the Jordan Valley village of Nu'ema, who charge that settlers from nearby Na'ami placed mobile homes and a water tower on their agricultural land. Israel maintains that the disputed land is "state land."

May 28 *Ha'aretz* reports that the civil administration's High Planning Council expedited approval of 15 to 20 building plans for settlements in the months preceding the elections. Sources in the council are reported to believe that if a freeze in construction is ordered by the new government of Ehud Barak, it will not affect plans already approved.

The newly elected head of the Etzion bloc council states his opposition to "the new exhibitionist settlements. It's better to build in more appropriate locations." He promises to "double the bloc during my term, and not to talk too much."

May 30 The Palestinian National Committee Against Settlements calls upon Palestinians "to take active part in the demonstrations at Ras al-Amud against the attempts to establish a settlement in the heart of the holy city." "Public clashes" are planned in places that "face the burning threat of land expropriations and the construction of settlements." The committee calls these activities the "active beginning of the popular fury that can be called the 'uprising of the land.'"

June 2 *Ma'ariv* reports that Israeli contractors fear the effects of a reduction or cancellation of settlement construction subsidies. "Cancellation of the subsidy for purchasers of apartments beyond the Green Line will harm our investments. We will not shrink from making claims against the state for compensation," explained the head of the contractors' association.

"We can't build new apartments, or continue existing construction, without knowing exactly that the subsidy that potential purchasers receive will not be harmed." The subsidy for land development alone runs from $10,000 to $17,000 per unit.

The Ministry of Housing's five-year plan calls for the construction of 12,000 new dwelling units in West Bank settlements, including 3,000 in Ma'ale Adumim, 2,000 in Kiryat Sefer, and 1,500 in Ariel.

June 3 The "Day of Rage" against settlements called for by the PA passes, according to *Ma'ariv*, "in relative quiet and without severe protest."

Ha'aretz reports 18 Palestinian injuries and 6 Israeli military injuries in nine separate protests throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip in which 5,000 Palestinian demonstrators participated.

"The Palestinian Authority does not really intend to struggle against settlements," explained one veteran member of the land defense committees established to organize popular opposition to settlement expansion. "It only wants to move Barak to renew the negotiations."

An IDF statement reports that, during the course of the day, there was total cooperation between Israeli and PA security forces.

A second tender of 800 apartments at Har Homa is reported to be fully subscribed. Seven hundred of the original 800 units tendered have been sold.

Outgoing deputy minister of housing Porush, in an Arutz 7 interview, advises potential home buyers in settlements to take advantage of benefits offered by the Netanyahu government. "There won't be a [settlement] freeze [by the Barak government]," he estimates, "not only because Barak does not want one, but principally because today, unlike 1992, most of the construction in YESHA is private and not part of the state budget, and is therefore very hard to freeze."

June 7 In an interview with Israel Radio, Prime Minister-elect Barak notes, "I don't think anyone thinks that a government headed by me will continue the settlement drive on hills around Nablus."

June 8 *Ha'aretz* reports that 15,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union live in West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements.

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

June 11 *Kol Ha'ir* reports that a special $6.2 million allocation will be made to affected settlements as compensation for the Wye accord. The funds were agreed to in late 1998. An additional $12 million allocation was made shortly after Netanyahu's May electoral defeat.

Kol Ha'ir also reports the discovery of a large cache of weapons in a cave near the Hebron area settlement of Maon that were stolen from the IDF. Police believe that the cache was assembled by settlers.

June 13 Five mobile homes are placed in the "120" section of Elon Moreh, outside the settlement's master plan area, on land owned by Palestinians from the nearby village of Dayr al-Khatib.

June 18 President Clinton signs a waiver of legislation requiring the United States to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Kol Ha'ir reports that due to budgetary considerations, the Jerusalem municipality has frozen the planning of a new settlement area in Abu Dis, reversing a decision made on May 5.

Outgoing YESHA council head Pinchas Wallerstein warns against Prime Minister-elect Barak's intentions in the West Bank. He adds that Barak plans to remove some 60 settlements. Wallerstein said, however, that YESHA residents should not independently "capture hilltops" without coordination with the YESHA council, because "if the struggle for the settlement enterprise is conducted in a non-uniform manner, it will fail."

Barak explains in *Ha'aretz* that "the Golan has a wonderful and important settlement enterprise, but it will not be possible to make peace there without a compromise. Judea and Samaria [however] is the birthplace of our history—it is more emotional, it is something else." Barak adds, "I am moved to tears when I stand on the northern slope of Mt. Eval [near Nablus], in the place where Joshua erected his altar."

Construction of an industrial park in Gaza's Katif bloc settlement of Neve Dekalim, comprising 5,000 square meters of space, is reported to be almost complete.

June 21 Forty contractors are reported to have bid on the third tender issued for residential construction at Har Homa in East Jerusalem, compared to 14 in the previous two rounds. More than 1,700 units have already been sold at the site.

The Palestinian organization LAW reports that 33 Palestinian dwellings have been demolished in Jerusalem and the West Bank since the beginning of 1999.

June 27 *Ma'ariv* reports that Defense Minister Arens and the head of Israel's Central Command, Moshe Ya'alon, approved a Ministry of Housing plan for the construction of 1,800 dwelling units in the West Bank adjacent to the East Jerusalem settlement suburb of Neve Ya'acov. The new construction will form a territorial link between the settlements of East Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Adam. The newspaper reports that the area will be annexed to Jerusalem upon the completion of construction.

Other construction in the area includes 450 units in Tel Zion (out of 1,000 approved) and 300 in Adam. Construction of the 1,800 units is expected to begin within weeks.

July 6 An Israeli family of 13 moves into a house in Jerusalem's Old City Uqbat al-Tikkiyah. area. The property was purchased by the settlement group Ateret Cohanim.

July 8 Interior Minister Natan Sharansky assures settlers that Prime Minister Barak has promised not to evacuate hilltop settlements.

July 11 At his first public meeting with Prime Minister Barak, PA chairman Yasser Arafat stresses that settlement activity is "contrary to the spirit of peace" and calls for a freeze on new construction. Barak replies that no new settlements will be built and none will be dismantled.

July 12 Minister of Trade and Industry Ran Cohen (Meretz) is reported to have instructed the Investment Center not to approve government funding for any additional new factories in West Bank settlement areas "until the government determines its new order of priorities."

Cohen called upon Israelis not to invest in factories located in West Bank settlement areas as "they don't supply work for the unemployed of the development towns."

Investment requests made after January 1998 have been frozen. Subsides for these investments total $90 million, of which more than $5 million comes from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Finance Minister Avraham Shochat noted, however, that such decisions are not in Minister Cohen's purview, but must be made only by the prime minister and the finance minister. The YESHA council announced, "It's ridiculous that the first step of the new 'government for all' is to freeze investments in YESHA."

Ariel mayor Ron Nahman said the decision to freeze the investments would be a blow to factories in the industrial area of Ariel. "The decision will deprive income from many workers who are residents of YESHA, citizens of Israel just like the citizens on the other side of what's known as the Green Line. This is a boycott—even discrimination," Nahman said.

The YESHA council chooses Benny Kashriel, mayor of Ma'ale Adumim, to succeed Pinchas Wallerstein as YESHA council chairman. The position of secretary-general will continue to be filled by Aharon Domb.

In separate meetings, Prime Minister Barak briefs settlement leaders of the West Bank and Golan areas. Golan leaders call upon the prime minister not to make a deal with Syria at the expense of the communities and residents of the area.

July 14 The convention of signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention opens symbolically in Geneva and adjourns indefinitely.

July 15 Settlers from the Gaza settlements of Dugit and Eli Sinai are reported in *Ha'aretz* to have constructed "summer homes" without permits on a nearby beach. The newspaper reports that "while much attention has been paid to settlement activities in the West Bank, settlers from [Nisanit and Dugit] do their part in trying to settle as much territory as possible, before the onset of permanent-status negotiations."

July 18 The PLO Executive Committee declares that all settlement activities must be halted and that Israel must implement the Wye accords.

July 19 Minister of Education Yossi Sarid instructs his ministry to declare West Bank settlements no longer eligible for free education for three-year-old children. ◆

WYE, *continued from page 1*

Unlike Oslo II and Sharm el-Sheikh, however, at Wye Israel did commit itself to a specific territorial dimension. By including two separate desertlike areas in the hilly region northeast of Hebron as "nature reserves" in the planned third redeployment, Israel met U.S. demands for a transfer of 13 percent of the West Bank. The choice of this territory enabled Netanyahu to avoid reducing the area of Israeli control north, east, and south of Ramallah and near Nablus, areas with numerous Israeli settlements.

Inclusion of the areas southeast of Bethlehem, however, was opposed by many Israelis, including Barak, as a violation of the territorial requirements of the Allon Plan, which has been at the heart of Israel's security doctrine since 1967.

Since entering negotiations with the Palestinians this summer, Barak has been challenged to find enough territory to fulfill commitments made in these two agreements without crossing the following self-imposed "red lines":

- intruding upon lands claimed by settlements;
- isolating settlements from transport and communication routes to Israel and other settlements;
- compromising the territorial requirements for Israel's defense as outlined in the Allon Plan and the IDF's "security interests" map.

Neither Sharm el-Sheikh nor Wye included a map detailing the areas to be transferred by Israel from its sole control (Area C) to complete (Area A) Palestinian control and partial/civil (Area B) Palestinian control. Wye was the first redeployment accord in which such a map did not form part of the official agreement. Nor does the official text of the memoranda include a description of specific territories or regions where redeployment will be undertaken, with the exception of the "nature reserves." Nevertheless, at Wye there were informal assurances that the transfer of land out of Area C would, in the first redeployment, take place mainly in the northern part of the West Bank, the second in the Ramallah area, and the third around Hebron.

Implementation of the second phase of the Wye redeployments required Israel to transfer 5 percent of the West Bank—approximately 275 square kilometers—from Area C to Area B. The first phase of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement (385 square kilometers) is also concerned exclusively with transfers to Area B.

The IDF is less concerned about this transfer, because Area B remains subject to overall Israeli security control, than are the settlers, who will lose all rights to areas no longer classified as Area C. In this sense, the second redeployment—the first that Barak must undertake—contained the potential to be far more painful for settlers than any previous transfer of land to the PA.

> The Government views all forms of settlement as a valued social and national enterprise, and will work to improve its ability to contend with the difficulties and challenges it faces.
>
> Until the status of the Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza is determined, within the framework of the permanent settlement, no new communities will be built and no existing communities will be detrimentally affected.
>
> The Government will work to ensure the security of the Jewish residents in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and to provide regular Government and municipal services—equal to those offered to residents of all other communities in Israel. The Government will offer a response to the on-going development needs of existing communities. Socio-economic standards will be equally applied to all communities everywhere.
>
> Excerpted from the "Basic Guidelines of the Government of Israel," July 6, 1999

A close examination of the lands in the Ramallah region, where many expected the 5 percent Wye redeployment to occur, reveals far less than 300 square kilometers of Area C suitable for transfer, principally because of the density of settlements. Barak reduced this figure in the critical Ramallah area to only 60 square kilometers—less than 1 percent of the West Bank.

In order to make up the deficit, and win Arafat's agreement to postpone the third stage of redeployment called for in Wye, Barak proposed a solution first outlined by Ariel Sharon.

In discussions with Palestinian leader Abu Mazen and others, as a minister in the Netanyahu government Sharon had offered to transfer "quality" territory that would increase the territorial continuity of Palestinian areas. In return, the Palestinians would moderate their demands for "quantity." In this way Sharon hoped to win a reduction from 13 percent to less than 10 percent in the territory offered in fulfillment of Israel's Oslo II pledge.

In the end, Barak failed to win a reduction in the amount of land scheduled for redeployment. Nor did he improve the "quality" of the land to be transferred.

From Barak's perspective, the September 1999 redeployment has the advantage of excluding the Ramallah region from substantial transfer, while focusing most transfers to the region south of Nablus and Hebron.

In order to offset the meager transfer around Ramallah, Barak decided at this stage to offer the smaller, northern

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WYE, *continued from page 8*

section of the "nature reserve" that Netanyahu originally intended to transfer in the third stage of Wye's implementation and to tempt the opposition of the small but politically vocal settlers around Nablus who are among the most active in the settlement right wing.

Arafat receives territory around Nablus that will increase the territorial continuity of the PA. But he conceded the further postponement of the scheduled transfers as well as the prospect of an increase of PA authority around Ramallah, as was anticipated after Wye, not to mention around Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. The desert territory he gains east of the settlement of Nokdim is only of symbolic value.

The new format splits into three parts Israeli redeployments that were to have occurred, according to Wye, in two phases and, according to Oslo II, in one phase. On September 15, 7 percent of the West Bank was to be transferred from Area C status to Area B. On November 15, an additional 3 percent will be transferred from Area C to Area B, with an additional 2 percent moving from B to A. On January 20, 2000 the third redeployment phase will see the transfer of an additional 1 percent of the West Bank from C to A status, while 5.1 percent is shifted from B to A status.

With few exceptions, settlements in affected areas will be connected by bypass roads, either existing or planned, to main transport routes to Israel. Twelve new bypass roads are in various stages of planning and construction, although work on the $70 million program has been impeded by Washington's refusal to supply the $1.2 billion aid package promised as part of the understandings reached at Wye. The aid was frozen when the process broke down in late 1998 and Congress recently passed up an opportunity to advance the money. In addition, new Israeli military bases are being established throughout the West Bank, according to the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharanot, "particularly next to isolated settlements. The intention is not to leave isolated settlements in the heart of Palestinian areas without an army base nearby. The camps to be established, therefore, will separate the territory under Palestinian control from the settlements." The $300 million cost of these military deployments "will arrive as American aid and has been planned to the last detail," according to the Israeli chief of staff.

Barak, like his predecessors, opposes placing any territorial constraints on the settlements' well-being, at least at this stage. Anticipated redeployments north of Jenin, close to the Israeli town of Mukabila; east and south of the Nablus area settlements of Itamar and Elon Moreh; between the settlements of Emmanuel and Yitzhar south of Nablus near Zeita; near Salfit; the "nature reserve" east of the Bethlehem area settlement of Nokdim; and areas south of Hebron near the Palestinian towns of Yatta and Samoa will have minimal impact upon settlements. The area near Ofra and the intelligence facility at Ba'al Hatzor has been reduced from its Wye dimensions to lessen settler concerns. ◆

AN END TO IDEOLOGICAL FERVOR

By Meron Benvenisti

The election of Ma'aleh Adumim mayor Benny Kashriel as chairman of YESHA, the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and new industry and trade minister Ran Cohen's announcement of a freeze on industrial investments in the territories happened on the same day. These two events are, of course, unrelated, but the timing signifies a noteworthy development: While the ideological Right, which is concentrated in the YESHA leadership, is attempting to distance itself from radical and hard-line positions and personalities, the ideological Left persists in clinging to hard-line positions and slogans disconnected from reality.

Indeed, the new YESHA council chairman's positions and responsibilities do leave him little time for ideological matters; after all, he heads a city whose municipal boundaries are larger than Tel Aviv's, with tens of thousands of residents and one of the highest growth rates in the country.

The man who has a status equal to that of the mayors of cities such as Netanya and Rehovot, and competes like them for public resources, no longer needs a revolutionary ideology: his revolution has succeeded.

Now is the time for pragmatism; and what is more natural than his election as YESHA council chairman, because, after all, every population sector represented in it (except for a minority of professional zealots), can, like Kashriel, present a "pragmatic" side. For someone able to raise funds (which are, naturally, government funds allocated to every Jew for every public purpose "on an equal basis" as well as some "special" allocations) and finance the establishment of dozens of large outposts, there is no time for ideology; on the contrary, it would only bother him. Everyone welcomes the "victory of pragmatism over ideology" and is moved to see how there has been a change, while the settlers see the Wye agreement as "a necessary evil that must be accepted."

Now that they have displayed pragmatism, the settlers and the prime minister can reach an agreement as equals: neither one will surprise the other; we will not establish outposts and you will not make decisions that harm us.

If there were no such person as Ran Cohen, the settlers would have had to create him. In order to implement his ideology, he rushed to freeze industrial development plans in areas beyond the Green Line.

The left must adapt to the new reality. Previously, while in the opposition, they did not have the tools to do this. Now that they are in power, they need to answer YESHA's pragmatism with a pragmatism of their own. The ideological fervor should be left to the revolutionary margins, on both sides. ◆

Ha'aretz, July 15, 1999

ZIGZAGGING STRONGHOLDS

The following interview with Khalil Tafakji, director of the Arab Studies Society Settlement Department and foremost Palestinian expert on Israeli settlement planning, appeared in Ha'aretz *on June 4, 1999.*

Question: What is meant by Israel's use of the term settlement blocs?

Tafakji: There are actually four large blocs: The first is in the western Shomron along the trans-Samaria highway until [the settlements of] Ariel and Tapuach. The second bloc is northeast of Latrun [the Modi'in bloc], where large-scale construction is now under way. The third bloc is in greater Jerusalem. Two urban settlements—Ma'ale Adumim and Givat Ze'ev—are at its center. The fourth bloc is the Etzion bloc [south of Jerusalem].

Smaller blocs are situated in the Jordan Valley, in the Ramallah area, in central and northern Samaria, and the Mount Hebron region.

Question: Have the large blocs been transformed into an integral part of the state of Israel?

Tafakji: It is possible to say this about the large blocs like the western Shomron and the Modi'in area that are contiguous with Israel, and less so in the case of the other blocs.

Question: Is it true that the West Bank is already divided between Israel and the Palestinians and what remains is only to announce this officially?

Tafakji: The matter is more complicated than that. Large Arab populations live within the settlement blocs. If you annex these blocs, Israel will have no choice but to annex their Arab communities as well. There are differences from place to place. Ma'ale Adumim, for example, can be annexed without including Arab communities. However, there is no possibility to do this in western Shomron, nor even in the Etzion bloc as well as other areas.

Within the Etzion bloc, there are Arab villages between the settlements, which are impossible to simply skip over and annex the remainder to Israel. You cannot draw the borders annexing the Etzion bloc to Israel without also annexing communities with a large Arab population. In areas like the western Shomron bloc, in order to annex its settlements Israel will have to annex an even larger population of Arabs.

Question: This week the Palestinian Authority has begun a campaign against settlements. There is a feeling that Palestinian behavior on this issue has become routine and we don't hear much about it.

Tafakji: This is incorrect. Every day the Palestinian press is full of articles with a background of land confiscation or settlement expansion. There are places such as Wadi Kana near Karnei Shomron, and near the settlement of Itamar, and also near the villages of Sa'ir and Shi'uch north of Hebron, where there are violent confrontations almost daily. It is correct that the Palestinian Authority sometimes calms the atmosphere for political reasons. ◆

"I think our position on the settlements has been clear. We don't believe that unilateral actions by any parties, including other interested parties like the United States, which compromise the capacity of the parties to the Oslo accord to reach agreement on final-status issues, should be taken, and that includes provocative settlement actions. We've made that clear and unambiguous. My views on the settlement question are well known and have not changed."

U.S. president Bill Clinton at a joint White House press conference with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, July 1, 1999

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