

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace

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NEWS

Israel's concerns about settlements and security have generated a stalemate over the next stage in Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement: redeployment of the IDF in the West Bank and holding elections for the Palestinian Authority. (See page 1.)

The Rabin government continues to believe that it can maintain and expand settlements while negotiating a stable basis for peace with the Palestinians. (See pages 1 and 2.) This assessment is particularly apparent in East Jerusalem and its West Bank environs, where thousands of dwelling units are currently under construction.

Recently released statistics also demonstrate the continuing growth of the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (See page 4.)

Also in this issue:

Loan guarantee update 8

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SETTLEMENTS FORCE ISRAELI DEMAND TO CHANGE OSLO ACCORD

In mid-1994, on the eve of negotiations for the transfer of certain powers to the Palestinian Authority (PA), the "early empowerment" talks, it was reported that Israel would present the Authority with a choice: The PA could either accept the Israeli offer quickly and then proceed to negotiations for its elections and Israel's redeployment in the West Bank, or it could enter into protracted negotiations. The latter choice, Israel argued, would ultimately confront the Authority with a similar dilemma—accept Israel's offer or concede a ruinous stalemate.

Now as the two sides discuss elections and the Israel Defense Forces'

redeployment in the West Bank, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has once again tabled a similar proposition: Accept Israel's demand to hold elections without the concurrent redeployment of Israeli soldiers from population centers in the West Bank, or be prepared for lengthy negotiations on both issues.

"What we must decide," Rabin said in mid-December, "is are we going to enter into negotiations on the whole arrangement at this stage or are we going to find a solution to advance elections without requiring a withdrawal from population centers."

NEGOTIATIONS, continued on page 6

NETZARIM—THE TRUE TEST OF ISRAEL'S INTENTIONS ON SETTLEMENTS

By Geoffrey Aronson

The isolated Israeli settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip has become a critical factor in shaping both Israeli and Palestinian attitudes about the viability of the Oslo agreement. As long as Netzarim exists, the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace will remain hostage to Israel's continuing desire to control the occupied territories.

In incidents during November at the Netzarim junction, manned by both Israeli and Palestinian troops, four Israeli soldiers were killed by Palestinian attackers, two of whom were also killed. These dramatic incidents, along with deadly clashes between the IDF and

Palestinian police over the New Year, were potent reminders that Israel has not withdrawn from the Gaza Strip. The incidents once again raised questions about Netzarim's future during the interim period as well as about the Palestinian Authority's ability to prevent Palestinian attacks on Israeli targets in areas under its jurisdiction. The latter responsibility has emerged in Israeli eyes as the litmus test for assessing the success of the rapprochement with the PLO. Israel's conclusion that the Palestinian Authority is failing to meet this responsibility has led to a reevaluation of its commitment in the Oslo accord to

NETZARIM, continued on page 7

TO OUR READERS

The prospect for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians is now at its lowest point since the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993.

Many of the central elements that formed the foundation of the accord—the assumption that “confidence building” would take place as the interim agreement was implemented; that economic assistance would flow in sufficient quantities to convince Palestinians that “peace pays”; that Yasser Arafat would crush his opponents; and that the Oslo agreement would establish the framework for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories—have either been undermined or called into serious question.

In recent weeks we have witnessed the declaration's shortcomings. Elections for a Palestinian Authority, originally scheduled to take place last year, are indefinitely postponed, hostage to Israel's refusal to abide by its pledge to redeploy its military forces out of Palestinian towns. Instead of enhancing security cooperation, Israeli and Palestinian troops have been shooting at each other in Gaza, where Israeli troops, in uniform and undercover, now routinely operate within

the area under the Palestinian Authority's nominal control.

Palestinian villagers, however, appear to have made a calculation most critical to the prospects for peace. The conflict between Israel and Palestine remains at its essence a battle for control of the land. Palestinians assumed that the Oslo process would end, if not reverse, the loss of lands to Israeli settlements suffered since 1967. Recent protests against new settler construction near the West Bank settlement of Efrat demonstrate that neither Oslo nor Yasser Arafat has slowed Israel's settlement juggernaut.

Israel's response to the protests—to continue building but at a different site—is yet another confirmation that the Rabin government still views its relations with Palestinians as a zero sum game and sees settlements as the key instrument for securing its interests in territories Palestinians claim as their own. This view will have to change if the high hopes of Oslo are to be realized.



HOW PERES SEES THE FUTURE

What is Israel's vision of the “final status” of the West Bank and Gaza Strip? An interesting insight into Israeli thinking was offered by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at a UNESCO conference in Grenada in December 1993. Peres, generally considered to be the Palestinians' greatest champion among Israel's leadership, offered the following scenario.

The West Bank, in Peres's view, will have a different political future than the Gaza Strip. Gaza will progressively obtain the attributes of statehood, while the West Bank will develop as an autonomous polity composed of Israeli settlers and Palestinians.

The autonomous authority will be responsible for all internal matters. Security and foreign affairs will remain in Israel's hands. A local parliament will be estab-

lished for the West Bank, in which both Palestinians and Israeli settler candidates will stand for election, their respective representation determined by the relationship of the relative populations.

Peres contended that aside from questions of security and foreign affairs, the settler and Palestinian communities have mutual interests on tax, infrastructure, health, and environmental issues.

Each community will maintain its national identity. Settlers will continue to be Israelis and vote in Knesset elections. Palestinians will vote for candidates to the Jordanian Parliament.

For Peres—Yet Another Vision,
in the “I Saw I Heard” column
by Amnon Brazili,
Ha'aretz, November 28, 1994.

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PEACE OF DEFEAT, PEACE OF SATISFACTION

Yehoshafat Harkabi was a former chief of Israel's Military Intelligence and the intellectual godfather of Israel's rejection of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In recent years, he emerged as the Israeli establishment's most tireless advocate of rapprochement with the PLO. Excerpts from an essay that appeared in Ha'aretz, September 1, 1994, shortly after Harkabi's death in August, highlight the need for Israelis to reassess the future of settlements.

Israel will not be able to approach the final stage of negotiations dealing with a permanent solution to the conflict until the Israeli public understands that the settlement enterprise was a grave and terrible mistake. Many already understand that Jericho and Gaza are only the first installment, and that Israel will have to make additional concessions, particularly the dismantling of settlements. I believe that unless a searching, internal debate over the settlement question occurs in Israel, the Israeli leadership will not be able to proceed to the final stages of negotiations. And, for the moment, it seems that our leaders have no interest in such a debate on this sensitive problem. . . . Settlement in conquered territory was, is, and will be an unsustainable enterprise.

One has to take into account the tragedy of many Israelis—the settlers—from the moment that their settlements are dismantled. These settlers will feel like victims and be alienated from the State of Israel. We, who made possible the settlement enterprise, also caused their distress. . . . It seems that our leaders believe it is in their power to prevent such a debate [on settlements]. . . . People will remind them of their previous stands [in support of settlement]. They prefer that the public convince itself by the power of the facts themselves of the need for Israeli concessions. . . .

I believe that a debate on the settlement issue is nonetheless necessary for the protection of the current government, now and in the future. It is the only way to make clear to Israelis why achieving peace, at such a heavy price, is necessary, and why the policy of settlement was so mistaken. . . .

It is necessary to explain the difference between the “Old Zionism” and the “New Zionism” which rose to power in Israel in 1977.

Settlers in the days of the “Old Zionism” attempted to realize for Jews a land as large as possible, but recognized early on that Zionism and Jewish exclusivity in the Land of Israel could not be accomplished at one stroke. Herzl in his time already recognized the status of Arabs in a Jewish state, and realized the impossibility of Jewish political exclusivity. Beginning in 1937 [with the publication of the Peel Commission report], Zionism was reconciled with the division of the country.

More than that, the Balfour Declaration [issued on November 2, 1917] awarded international recognition of Zionism

according to the principle that there would not only be a Jewish state. The Balfour Declaration did not grant the Land of Israel to Jews: it granted to Jews the right to establish their national home in the Land of Israel—not in all of it. One of the clauses of the declaration notes specifically that the status of other communities will not be harmed.

These conditions influenced the political direction of Jewish settlement. During the era of “Old Zionism,” settlements were established—but not everywhere. The Old Zionism intended to minimize the Arab sector and to extend the sector of the Jewish state, but it was reconciled to the presence of Jews and Arabs together.

Of course, there were hopes and dreams of a different map in the future, but [the leadership] didn't relate to dreams but to reality. Those who opposed partition stressed that the moment partition was accepted it would no longer be possible to change it.

But everything changed in 1977 [when the Likud came to power]. While there were settlements estab-

lished before 1977, the numbers of settlers did not exceed 3,000 to 4,000. A political revolution began in 1977—settlements began to be used as an instrument to prevent the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian authority west of the Jordan River, that is to say, as an instrument for an exclusively Jewish state. . . . [Settlements] would destroy the potential for a future Palestinian entity, for a national authority cannot live without territory.

So although Arabs were reconciled to the results of the 1949 war and the cease-fire lines, there was no chance at this stage that Palestinians would be reconciled with the occupation of the entire Land of Israel in 1967 and, in fact, their own disappearance from the horizon of history. . . .

The principal claim of the settlers is that they represent the genuine continuation of the original settlement movement. From a physical standpoint, there is no difference between the movements—both constructed houses and settlements. The big difference lies in the realm of intention. The Old Zionism acknowledged the Arab problem, even if it looked for ways to avoid it. Not so the “New Zionism,” whose attitude produced an entirely different response among the Palestinians and the Arabs generally. ♦

[Settlements] would destroy the potential for a future Palestinian entity, for a national authority cannot live without territory.

ISRAELI CONSTRUCTION IN EAST JERUSALEM: PROJECTS AND PLANS, 1995

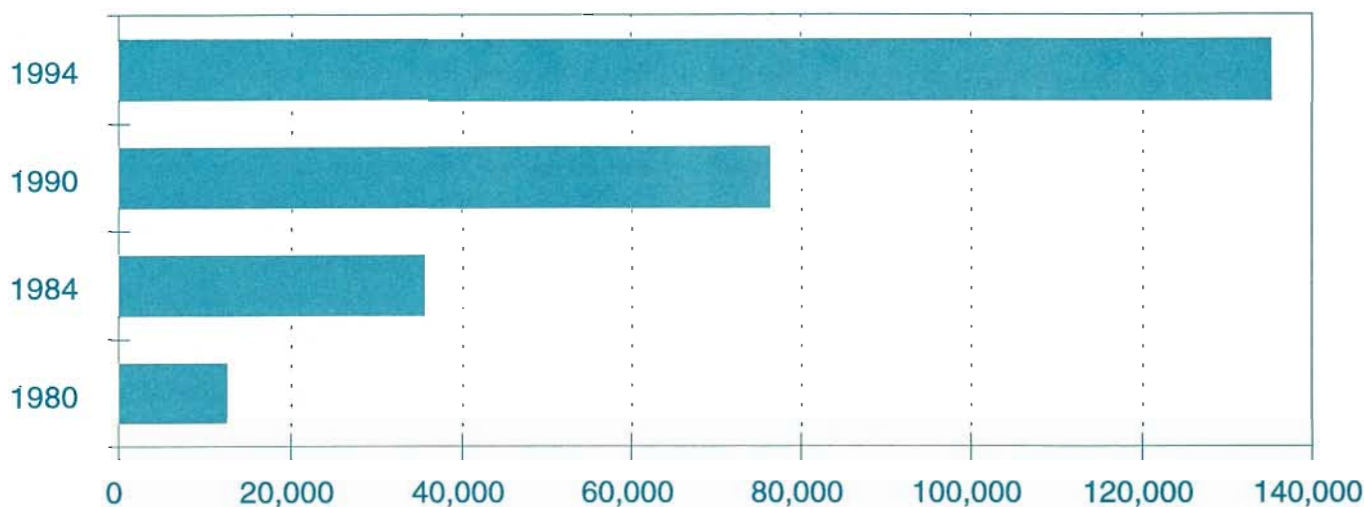
In late October 1990, plans were announced for the construction of 15,000 new dwelling units in East Jerusalem's settlement communities. The intention was to increase the population of these areas—then 120,000—by 60,000 in three years. Minister of Housing and Construction Ariel Sharon explained at the time that, “we are going for a massive construction plan in the heart of Jerusalem, at least 5,000 [units] a year for the next eight years, most of it in East Jerusalem.”

Today, as the table below illustrates, East Jerusalem's Israeli population has increased by 40,000 since 1990. Five thousand units are currently under construction, with another 23,000 planned.

Name	Population	Units under Construction	Existing Units	Units Approved for Construction	Plans under Consideration	Future Plans
Airplane Hill	5,000	--	caravans	3,000	--	--
East Talpiot	18,000	42	3,976	175	971	--
French Hill	8,300	--	2,024	--	468	--
Gilo	30,000	132	6,544	888	--	--
Har Homa (A) (B)	--	--	--	5,500 (A)	--	3,500 (B)
Old City (including Jewish Quarter)	2,300	--	435	--	--	--
Ma'alot Dafna	4,606	--	1,001	--	--	--
Neve Ya'acov	19,300	--	4,202	--	120	--
Neve Ya'acov Army Camp	--	--	--	1,100	--	--
Pisgat Ze'ev	30,100	2,130	7,157	214	4,327	--
Ramat Eshkol	6,300	--	2,302	--	--	--
Ramat Shoufat	--	2,200	--	--	--	--
Ramot	37,900	561	5,870	--	--	--
Ras al-Amud	--	--	--	--	120	--
Settlement “X” (between Har Homa and Airplane Hill)	--	--	--	2,000	--	--
TOTALS	161,806	5,065	33,511	12,877	6,006	3,500

Source: *Yediot Aharanot*, November 24, 1994; “Dwelling Potential in Jerusalem,” April 1994, Municipality of Jerusalem; “Jerusalem Report #1,” published by *IrShalem*, December 1994.

END-OF-YEAR SETTLER POPULATION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP*



*Does not include Israelis living in annexed East Jerusalem. Population figures vary—sometimes by as much as 20 percent—depending on the source.

SETTLEMENT SNAPSHOTS AROUND JERUSALEM

The newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported on November 14 that "the numbers of settlers [in the Jerusalem region] will grow larger in the near future. The Ministry of Housing has put out for bid contracts for the construction of 1,050 dwelling units in Betar, a settlement located southwest of Jerusalem. The construction of some of these units has already begun. In recent weeks about 250 were sold." In January 1995, an additional 600 units will be put out to bid. Construction costs of \$1,000/square meter are cheaper than in Jerusalem or in the Etzion bloc, promising that apartment prices in Betar will be relatively inexpensive.

As the units now under construction are completed during the next 18 to 24 months, Betar's population is expected to double to 12,000. Plans call for a city of 60,000.

In the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, a community of 22,000 just east of Jerusalem, 1,200 units are under construction, with work on an additional 733 to begin soon. During 1995, the settlement's mayor estimates that permits for another 6,200 units will be granted and contracted by developers.

In Givat Ze'ev, the third suburban anchor for Israeli settlement in the "greater Jerusalem" area, 170 of 600 units currently under construction have been sold. During 1995, 1,300 new units will be under way. Givat Ze'ev has a population of more than 7,200. ♦

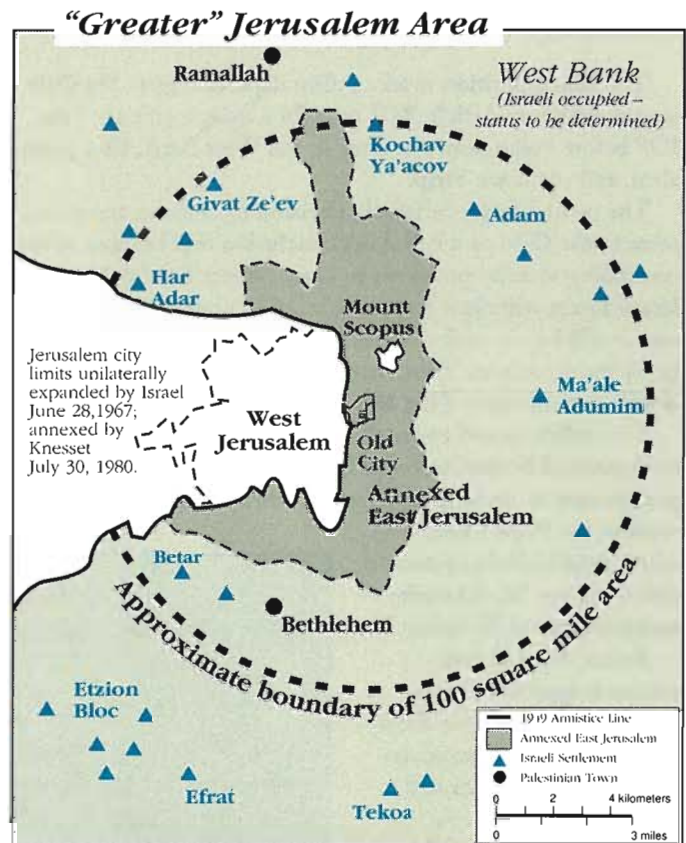
SETTLER POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW UNDER RABIN

The Rabin government has not slowed the continuing growth in Israel's settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) reports that the settler population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip increased by 10.4 percent during 1993. This figure is lower than the rate of growth registered in 1992 (12 percent) and 1991 (15 percent).

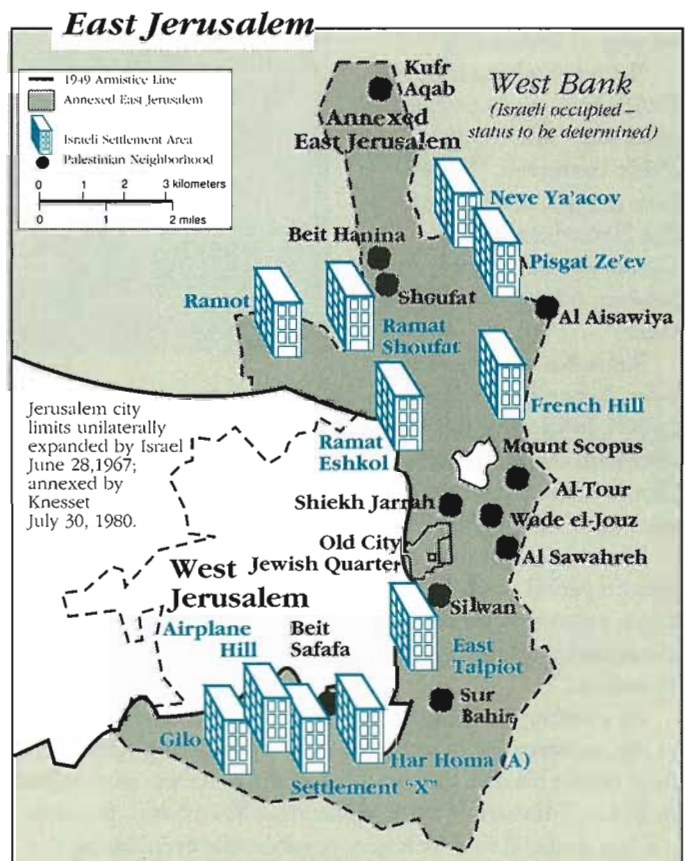
The annual increase in the absolute number of new settlers, however, has remained stable, notwithstanding the declared change in national priorities of the Rabin government. In 1993, the first full year of the Rabin government, 13,800 Israelis, including 1,000 immigrants, moved to these areas, compared to 14,000 in 1992 and 12,300 in 1991.

In 1993, there was a 62 percent increase in the number of Israelis leaving these areas. Six thousand eight hundred settlers left the occupied territories, compared to 4,200 in 1991, the last full year of the Shamir government. When the natural increase of 3,300 is factored in, the CBS estimates that the West Bank and Gaza had a net increase of 10,900 Israelis.

The CBS reports that, at the end of 1993, 116,400 Israelis were residing in the occupied territories (excluding East Jerusalem): 111,600 in the West Bank and 4,800 in Gaza. The figure is 23,600 less than that claimed by Yesha, the settlements' governing council. Yesha maintains that its figures are based on more accurate indices. In October 1994, Yesha estimated a settler population of 140,000. (See bar graph, opposite page.) ♦



SOURCE: Foundation for Middle East Peace.



SOURCE: Foundation for Middle East Peace.

The Israeli position marks a clear departure from the Oslo accord, which in Article XIII calls for a redeployment of the IDF before Palestinian elections in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

The central factor in Israel's decision to demand an amendment to the Oslo pact is Rabin's conclusion that because of the continuing security problems in Gaza, where in May 1994 Israeli forces withdrew from major Palestinian population centers, it will be impossible to maintain protection in the infinitely more complex West Bank—where 140,000 settlers live in 150 settlements—if the IDF redeploys in similar fashion.

The difficulty and expense in protecting the tiny, isolated settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip has led the Rabin government to demand a postponement of the IDF redeployment in the West Bank, where Israeli officials estimate that there are "60-80 settlements similar to Netzarim."

Rabin, himself, has acknowledged that "Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] is where there is a particular burden on the regular and reserve army forces . . . because the planning of settlements there was not for the security of settlements."

"I am not talking about the Etzion bloc, or about Ariel or other large communities," Rabin continued. "We will have not just two settlements like Netzarim and Kfar Darom [in Gaza] but between fifty to seventy like them."

Rabin has refused to consider dismantling settlements during the interim period. The critical decision on this issue was made in March 1994. In the aftermath of the massacre at Hebron's Ibrahimia Mosque (Tomb of the Patriarchs), Rabin considered, and rejected, the removal of 400 settlers living in the middle of Hebron.

The continuing maintenance of all settlements during the interim period, explained Rabin, "is part of the [Oslo] agreement, a part that we demanded. We don't want to dismantle communities [settlements] in the framework of the interim agreement."

By insisting on the primacy of the Oslo accord as it relates to the maintenance of settlements, Rabin is facing opposition from within his own cabinet. One of the members most valued by Rabin, Minister of the Environment Yossi Sarid, for example, has declared that "it is very possible that even during the interim period, there will be a decision on a change in the sta-

tus of several settlements, whose isolation in the area is especially problematic and whose location requires security arrangements that are absolutely unthinkable."

Nevertheless, Rabin has never let his decision on such issues be influenced by his cabinet. His refusal to relocate or dismantle settlements can be expected to prevail.

In light of the experience in Gaza, where protecting the area's 6,000 settlers living in 15 settlements has emerged as one of the critical shortcomings of the Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement, Rabin has bowed to the assessment of military advisers like former Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and Director of Military Intelligence Ori Sagui.

These and other advisers have argued since the publication of the Oslo accord that redeploying in the West Bank and maintaining the security of Israelis living there are irreconcilable objectives. They have warned Rabin that an extension of

Yasser Arafat's control in the West Bank will lead to more Israeli casualties in that area as well as in Israel itself.

"Those who say that it is impossible to assure settlers' security after a redeployment outside Arab population centers is saying that we need to choose between [dismantling] settlements and ruling over almost one million Arabs of the West Bank," contends Yossi Beilin, deputy minister of foreign affairs. "The Oslo agreement is based upon the premise that during the interim period there will not be work on settlements . . . and that the army will not remain in populated areas."

Beilin argues that the investment of time and energy required to implement the interim period would be better spent on a direct jump to final status negotiations.

The continuing existence of settlements during the interim period is acting like "a bone in the throat" of the Palestinian Authority, undermining both its power and its ability to implement effective security measures.

"There can be no real security in the absence of complete control on the ground," maintains Faisal Husseini, Arafat's representative in Jerusalem, "and there can be no real control without complete authority."

"Israel can best help us," Husseini said, "by pulling out its troops from the occupied Arab territories, disbanding settlements in Gaza, and staying away from acting as our custodian." ♦

Article XIII Redeployment of Military Forces

1. After the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and not later than the eve of elections for the Council, a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will take place. . . .

2. In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas.

Declaration of Principles on Interim
Self-Governing Arrangements
September 13, 1993
Oslo, Norway

extend its military redeployment to the West Bank.

Netzarim lies just south of Gaza City. It is home to 31 families—150 people, most of them young children. To protect the settlement and to assure the safety of settlers travelling from the settlement to and from Israel, the IDF established a fortified post, called the “death post” by some of its defenders, at the junction between the east-west road connecting the settlement to Israel and the main north-south route through the Gaza Strip. Two companies of reserve soldiers staff the post—20,000 reserve days costing \$5 million per year.

On three separate occasions since the May inauguration of the Palestinian Authority, IDF troops have chosen to withdraw from the post rather than fire at Palestinian crowds that overran the installation. At a meeting in late November, however, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin informed Palestinian Authority head Yasser Arafat that the IDF will now shoot at Palestinian protesters, and that Israel will hold the Palestinian Authority responsible for the resulting casualties.

“Without reference to the incidents,” wrote Israeli columnist Nahum Barnea, “the continuation of Netzarim in its current location is foolish. Settlers of course support this foolishness, but they are not responsible for it. Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres are responsible, because during the negotiations with the Palestinians they stubbornly refused to move any settlement, not even by a single centimeter. Rabin doesn’t want the settlements: he wants a good claim against the Likud [which removed settlements in Sinai in the context of peace with Egypt].”

Elements in the IDF believe that Netzarim is an unjustifiable security burden. “We will not have any choice but to relocate Netzarim to the Katif bloc [in southern Gaza], and so remove a heavy burden,” explained a senior IDF officer.

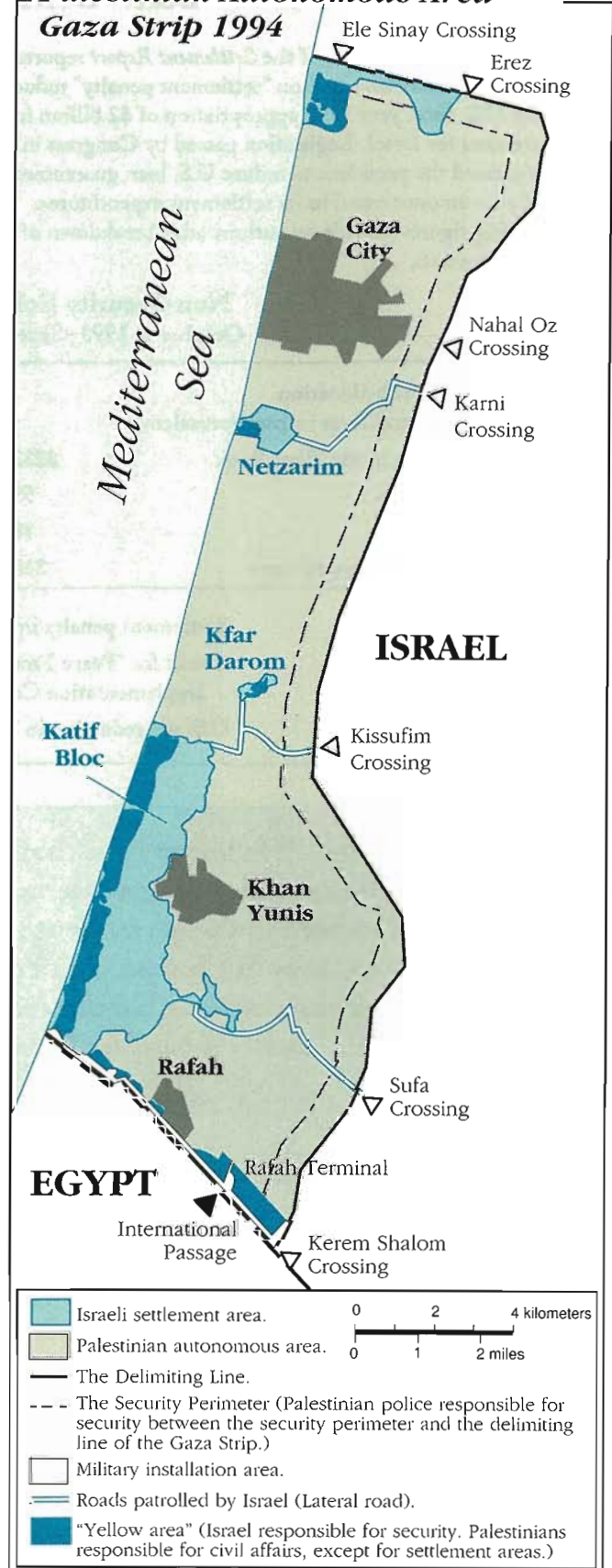
But Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres have ruled out any reconsideration of the Oslo accord’s affirmation that settlements will remain in place during the interim period.

“If this was the beginning of the process, that would be something else,” explained Minister of Housing Benjamin Ben Eliezer. “The removal of Netzarim at this time will be understood as a complete victory for Hamas. We have another 69 Netzarims in Judea and Samaria. If we remove Netzarim, we will erode the sense of security of these settlements.”

Rabin is committed to preserve both the settlements and their security while devolving power to the Palestinian Authority. As the parties consider the Oslo framework’s application to the West Bank, this contradiction, which lies at the heart of the agreement, becomes more evident.

Israel, nonetheless, is attempting to postpone the moment of truth when it must choose between settlements and establishing a firm basis for the Palestinian Authority. Rabin prefers instead to drag the Palestinian Authority into concessions that would enable the permanent presence of settlements and the Israeli army in the occupied territories. Netzarim is the metaphor for this policy. ♦

Palestinian Autonomous Area – Gaza Strip 1994



Source: Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area.

LOAN GUARANTEE UPDATE

The November 1994 issue of the *Settlement Report* reported the imposition of a \$216.8 million "settlement penalty" reduction in the U.S. fiscal year 1995 appropriation of \$2 billion in loan guarantees for Israel. Legislation passed by Congress in 1992 authorized the president to reduce U.S. loan guarantees to Israel by an amount equal to its settlement expenditures. The following figures provide an authoritative breakdown of the penalty amounts.

According to informed sources, when the final deduction was calculated, Israeli figures for certain non-construction categories were deemed more accurate, leading to a \$34 million reduction in the U.S. estimate.

The U.S. estimate was further reduced by an additional \$1.2 million to account for incorrect estimates in the FY1994 penalty.

Non-Security Related Settlement Budget October 1, 1993–September 30, 1994 (in \$ millions)

Israeli estimates by location (excluding expenditures in East Jerusalem):		U.S. Government estimates	
Expenditures in the West Bank	\$233.4	Construction costs, including East Jerusalem	\$145.0
Golan Heights	59.1	Non-construction costs	202.0
Gaza Strip	18.1	U.S. estimate of expenditures	347.0
Israeli estimate of expenditures	310.6		
Settlement penalty imposed		\$311.8	
Credit for "Peace Process Implementation Costs in the Gaza Strip"		95.0	
U.S. net reduction in loan guarantees		216.8	

"... I believe that it is imperative that the Palestinian Authority... state openly that Israel's actions [relating to settlements] constitute a violation of the Oslo agreement. Nowhere in the agreement is it written that Israel may go ahead with the settlement process within Jerusalem or outside it. The fact that the agreement states that the issue will be discussed in the second phase does not give Israel license to do as it pleases. This creates a conflict between Israel's talk about peace and the reality in the field."

*Dr. Haydar Abd-al-Shafi, former head of the
Palestinian delegation to negotiations with Israel.
Ma'ariv, December 2, 1994.*

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