

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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ISRAEL READIES RETREAT FROM GAZA AND CREATES NEW FACTS IN THE WEST BANK

By Geoffrey Aronson

After almost five years of grim determination and little but promises of “blood, sweat, and tears,” Israelis and Palestinians sense the beginning of a new phase in their struggle. For the moment, dialogue and handshakes have replaced threats and armed confrontation. Yet Israelis and Palestinians have learned from hard experience that smiles and vague proclamations can conceal radically different agendas.

Israel’s retreat from the Gaza Strip and its redeployment from an undetermined part of the northern West Bank continue to dominate its domestic agenda. Having established the political muscle to ensure the plan’s execution, the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is now completing the operational aspects of evacuating settlements in these areas and compensating those

settlers affected by it.

Settlers now realize that the disengagement train has left the station. All but the most fanatical among them understand that the settlement enterprise in Gaza is ending and that the Gaza Strip will be foreign territory by year’s end, all the more so if an Israeli–Egyptian agreement can be reached for Israel’s surrender of the “Philadelphi” border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. The most politically astute settlers continue to oppose the plan not because they believe that it can be stopped—20 percent of Gaza’s 1,200 settler dwelling units are already empty—but because they suspect that their homes in West Bank settlements like Ofra and Elon Moreh and dozens of others deep inside the West Bank are next on Sharon’s agenda. These are not the settlements that U.S. President George W. Bush has blessed as incontrovertible facts on the ground—Ma’ale Adumim, Modi’in Ilit, and others where the bulk of Israel’s 415,000 West Bank and East Jerusalem settlers reside—but those that Yitzhak Rabin once called “political settlements” established along the hilltops that dot the West Bank heartland.

Indeed, the alliance that the settlement leadership built over many decades with politicians like Sharon (and before him Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres) and with Israel’s security establishment has suffered a blow far more damaging as a consequence of Sharon’s disengagement plan than anything that preceded it. Commentator

Nahum Barnea, whose words appear on page 6 in this issue, noted on February 21, “an authoritative military source, [described] this revolutionary change in the settlers’ position: that after 37 years of gnawing away at the power of the state, the state is trying to return authority to itself.”

Yet disengagement from Gaza does not signal the beginning of the end of the settlement enterprise—not by a long shot—nor does it portend an irrevocable split between the partisans of settlement on the one hand and Israel’s security-political establishment on the other. The ties that bind these three critical power centers in Israel in a joint pursuit of territorial expansion in the West Bank have been forged over almost four decades. Just as it made no sense to expect the resolution of claims that had festered for half a century in a few days of discussions at Camp David, it would be wrong to interpret Sharon’s disengagement plan as a mortal blow to the settlement lobby and the beginning of the end of Israel’s commanding presence in the West Bank.

Sharon, more clearly than most of his predecessors, sees settlers as instruments in the execution of a geo-strategic vision on the West Bank that accommodates Palestinian national demands only insofar as they do not contradict Israel’s strategic domination of the area. That Sharon’s preference to remain in the Gaza Strip was confound-

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TO OUR READERS

The election of President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan, a cease-fire, and President Bush's renewed support for a viable contiguous Palestinian state are welcome developments. But as Jeff Aronson points out in this issue, they do not represent a fundamental turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or justify complacency.

Some optimists interpret Sharon's decision to withdraw from all Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements after a lifetime of promoting settlements as the beginning of the end of settlements. But the route of the separation barrier, even with modifications, and rapid expansion of settlements west of the barrier indicate that Sharon's plan is only tactical.

Neither Abbas nor any Palestinian leader could accept the rump "state" cut off from Jerusalem that Sharon has in mind. Without renewed hope that Israel will accept a much wider evacuation of West Bank settlements resulting in only minor and reciprocal border adjustments along the June 1967 border line and the establish-

ment of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, the conflict may erupt again. Palestinian militants, absent evidence that non-violence and a commitment to negotiate have transformed Israeli policy, may defy Abbas and return to the gun and the bomb. The more radical HAMAS will compete in forthcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections. And those Palestinians—fortunately still a minority—who believe that Israeli "facts on the ground" are now irreversible and advocate a single binational state will be emboldened. It will not be enough, therefore, for Washington to simply encourage full implementation of the Gaza disengagement plan and a sustained effort by Abbas to institutional reform and dismantling violent groups. A broader horizon of hope for a real and sustainable two state peace agreement is essential, or a new crisis will surely erupt. Only the United States can offer this hope.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

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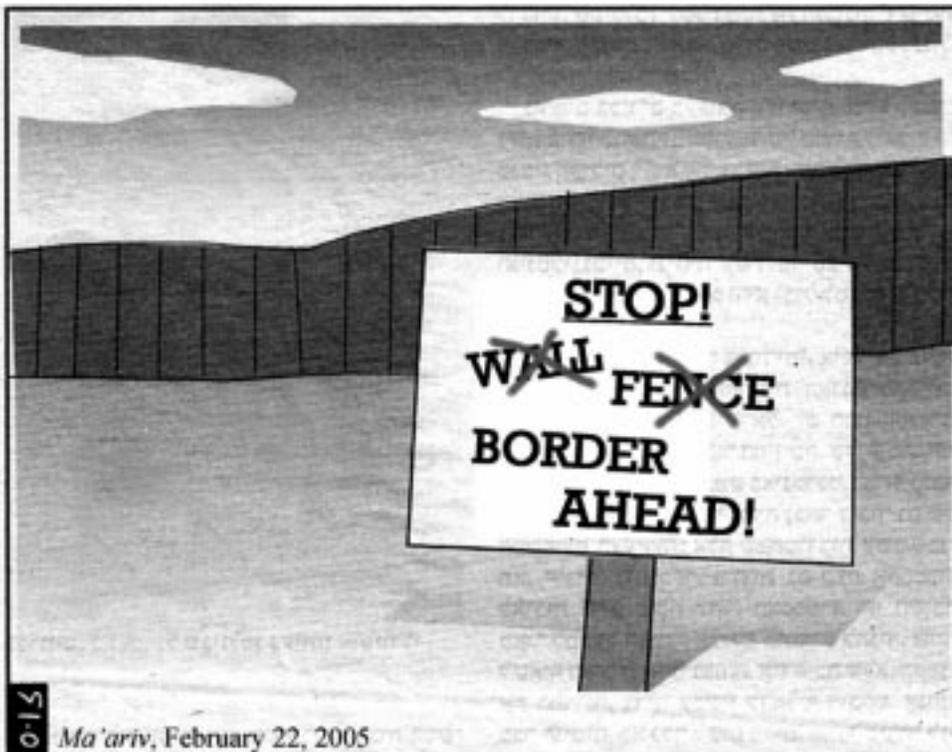
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SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

November 1 The U.S. government is reported to have rejected as inaccurate the list of settlement outposts supplied in July by Israel's Defense Ministry, which cited the establishment of 21 outposts since March 2001. Washington believes that the actual number is far higher. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 2 The Bush administration chooses not to deduct from annual loan guarantees an amount equal to Israel's expenditures on settlement expansion. In 2003, \$170 million was deducted as a "settlement expansion penalty" from available guarantees.

November 3 Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reports the sale of 306 new units in West Bank settlements from January to August 2004, a 33% increase compared with sales from the same period in 2003, and surpassed only by the 42% rate increase in Tel Aviv, where 2,077 units were sold. (*Arutz 7*)

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz confirms Israel's intention to complete the separation barrier in the Hebron region by August 2005.

November 4 The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) restrict the powers of settlement security coordinators to cover only the area within settlement perimeters. Because of past abuses, coordinators were stripped of jurisdiction over neighboring Palestinian areas in non-life threatening situations. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 5 Israel's Committee for the Rights of the Child criticizes the IDF for its failure to prevent the continuing harassment of and attacks on Palestinian children on their way to school by settlers in the Moan region, south of Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 6 The IDF kills two Palestinians as they approach the Gaza Strip settlement of Gadid. (*Arutz 7*)

South of Jerusalem, the Israel Land Authority uproots olive trees belonging to refugees in the Aida camp. The authority maintains that an Israeli court ruled against the Palestinians' ownership claims. (*Kol Ha'ir*)

November 7 Residents of the Israeli town of Nirit petition the High Court to prevent the establishment of Nof HaSharon as a new West Bank settlement. Although formally part of the settlement of Alfe Menashe, the new settlement will depend upon the services and infrastructure of Nirit, whose residents oppose being "half of a settlement"

and providing services outside the borders of Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 11 *Yediot Abaronot* reports that the IDF Southern Command plans to construct a second, supplemental fence around the Gaza Strip after disengagement.

November 12 *Kol Ha'ir* reports settlers from Yitzhar shooting out the tires of an IDF ambulance transporting a Palestinian man whom they had shot. The man died enroute to the hospital.

November 17 Seventy settlers from Itamar disrupt an olive harvest conducted under IDF protection by villagers from Awarta, near Nablus. The settlers claim that the trees are located in a "special security zone" and that the presence of Palestinians there endangers them. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 19 Three plans are approved for the construction of 800 dwelling units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev. (*Yerushalim*)

The IDF announces that the Erez industrial zone will soon reopen to Palestinian laborers. Most of the businesses there have moved or closed permanently.

November 21 The IDF is reported considering ordering the eviction of officers living in unauthorized West Bank outposts. A number of career army officers live in them. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 25 Knesset MK Haim Oron calculates that each settler living in predominantly Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem costs Israel approximately \$4,100 a year for security. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli High Court denies the petition of residents of Sur Baher in East Jerusalem to change the course of the separation barrier in their area.

The YESHA Council declares a boycott of the Tnuva company after its chairman asserts that Israel should leave the occupied territories in order to strengthen its economy.

December 1 *Ha'aretz* reports 4,813 shells and rockets launched at the Katif bloc during the al-Aqsa intifada. One hundred dwellings in Gaza settlements have been directly hit; 300, indirectly.

December 3 *Kol Ha'ir* reports the Jerusalem municipality's approval of a \$116,000

budget to fund the demolition of illegal Palestinian construction.

Kol Ha'ir reports an ongoing conflict between residents of the settlement of Giva Benjamin (Adam) and the Israeli government over the tripling of the settlement of 500 families. Residents oppose the new construction for ultra-orthodox members of the Haredi sect, arguing to the High Court that political reasons, including the reluctance of officials to openly declare the creation of a new settlement or the expansion of Jerusalem, led to the decision to include the construction as part of Giva Benjamin and thus dramatically change the character of their settlement.

December 6 The Association for Civil Rights in Israel reports that in retaliation for acts against Israelis, since October 2001 Israel has demolished 628 Palestinian residences, making homeless about 4,000 people. (*Ha'aretz*)

Demolition of houses constructed without permits in Anata, near Jerusalem, leaves 200 Palestinians homeless. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 7 A Jerusalem magistrate sentences Shahar Dvir-Zeliger to eight years in jail for belonging to a terrorist organization aimed at carrying out attacks against Palestinian civilians and for the unlawful possession of weapons stolen from the IDF. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 8 Two Israeli children are treated for shock after Palestinians fire two anti-tank rockets at a day-care center in the northern Gaza settlement of Nisanit. Palestinians fire two shells at the Slav/Pe'at Sadeh hothouses in the Katif bloc as well as into Neve Dekalim, damaging one house. (*Arutz 7*)

December 10 HAMAS members fire mortar shells at the Gaza Strip settlement of Neve Dekalim, seriously wounding a young boy. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers destroy more than one hundred olive trees belonging to Palestinian residents of Jayous near Qalqilya and on land incorporated by Israel within the planning area of the settlement of Zufin.

December 12 *Yediot Abaronot* reports that an Israeli attempt to assassinate Abu Samhdana, a prominent Palestinian militant, led to the mortar fire on Neve Dekalim in which four residents were injured as well as

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to a Qassam rocket being fired toward Israel. The Israeli response killed a Palestinian girl.

A joint attack by HAMAS and Fateh members kills five soldiers from an IDF reconnaissance unit at their base in the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 14 A Thai worker is killed when two mortar shells strike the hothouse of the Gadid settlement in the Gaza Strip. Three other Thai workers are wounded. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Knesset Finance Committee authorizes a budget of \$460,000 for tourism in the occupied territories, including \$92,000 for Gaza settlements. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 15 Dozens of farmers from Gaza settlements call on the IDF to take measures to halt the increasing number of Palestinian attacks. (Arutz 7)

Islamic Jihad and Fateh members open fire on IDF and civilian vehicles on the road leading to the Katif bloc settlements in southern Gaza. Six Israelis are wounded. (*Ha'aretz* and Arutz 7)

December 16 As part of the settler campaign against disengagement, 11 families move into the northern Gaza settlement of Nisanit with the assistance of the settler organization, Amana. (Mideast Mirror and *Ha'aretz*)

Hundreds of Palestinians flee their homes seeking refuge when the IDF enters Khan Yunis in an operation aimed at ending mortar and rocket attacks against nearby settlements. In the week leading up to the raid, Palestinians fired 50 mortar shells at settlements and military posts. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 17 *Yerushalim* reports the Jerusalem Planning Committee approval of a plan by Palestinian investors to construct three buildings in the Atarot industrial zone.

Yerushalim reports that the Amidar Company has presented a claim in court charging that the West Bank settlement of Metzad owes \$460,000 for the rental of 216 caravans and that of Barkan owes \$230,000 for rentals on 75 caravans.

December 18 At least 11 Palestinians are killed and 50 wounded in the IDF operation in Khan Yunis. Israeli forces demolish 39 houses there. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians fire two Qassam rockets at the western Negev town of Sderot, a frequent

target of mortar and rocket fire. There are no injuries. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 21 Palestinian shelling of Neve Dekalim diminishes as Palestinian operations appear to shift to other settlements. (Arutz 7)

To protest the Israeli plan to disengage from Gaza, settlers in the Katif bloc wear orange stars, reminiscent of the yellow stars the Nazis forced Jews to wear during the 1930s and 1940s. (Arutz 7)

Settlers from the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar cut off the water supply to the IDF soldiers who guard them and vandalize a jeep belonging to the company commander after the army shuts off water to an unauthorized outpost nearby. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

Unilever, parent company of Bagel, located in the West Bank settlement industrial area of Barkan, decides to move the company to Israel. *Yediot Abaronot* reports that the company is not interested in operating beyond the green line.

December 22 The IDF launches another raid into Khan Yunis in response to 15 missiles and rockets fired at Israeli settlements in the preceding days. Israel expands "no-go" zones around its positions and settlements. (*The Guardian*)

December 23 Palestinians fire 26 mortar shells at the Katif bloc settlement of Netzer Hazani. One person is wounded. (Arutz 7)

Rabbi Yosef Al-Nekaveh, a Katif bloc rabbi, informs IDF chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon that if the IDF does not stop Palestinian militants from launching attacks, settlers will manufacture shells in the metal factory in Neve Dekalim and "do what the army is not doing." (Arutz 7)

December 24 Planning has begun for construction of a visitors' center at Rachel's Tomb, in Bethlehem, on 10 dunams purchased from Palestinian landowners. (Netto)

December 28 Settlers block the road near Shavei Shomron for two hours to prevent the passage of a busload of 50 Israeli officials, army officers, and infrastructure, electric, telephone, and other personnel on their way to survey the West Bank settlements to be evacuated under the Israeli disengagement plan. (Arutz 7)

December 30 The IDF enters Khan Yunis for the third time in a month in response to

the more than 60 rocket and mortar shells launched from there during the preceding week. (Arutz 7)

December 31 IDF chief of staff Ya'alon orders a review of the policy of house demolitions.

Jerusalem's Planning Committee approves the construction of 165 dwelling units in Bet Hanina as part of an arrangement to legalize the status of 30 Palestinian dwellings constructed without proper permits. The committee also authorizes construction of a road linking Har Homa to the planned eastern ring road. (*Kol Ha'ir* and *Yerushalim*)

January 2 About 200 settlers disrupt the evacuation of the unauthorized Givat Shalhevet settlement near the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar. An IDF soldier and resident of Yitzhar on leave from service (but dressed in his army uniform) is arrested when he joins the protesters and calls on other soldiers not to participate in the evacuation. The settlers clash with security forces. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli Defense Ministry will spend \$6.9 million to harden roofs on settlement dwellings to protect against Palestinian mortar and Qassam rocket attacks.

IDF officers serving in the Hebron region report a drop in the number of incidents involving encounters between settlers and IDF troops and police. According to *Ha'aretz* "Teenagers have been responsible for a large share of the incidents in the region in recent years. Some of them are settlers from Hebron and Kiryat Arba, while others are 'hilltop youth' from Samaria who came to Hebron and the outposts around the city." Such youths were reported leaving the area during the preceding two months. In the northern West Bank there are signs of a similar phenomenon, with the teenagers re-locating to the Katif bloc in southern Gaza to disrupt the disengagement. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF conducts raids in Beit Hanun and Jabalya similar to the ones it launched in the southern Gaza town, Khan Yunis, aimed at ending mortar and rocket attacks. (Arutz 7)

The Israeli government later orders the IDF to withdraw from Gaza cities. Immediately following IDF withdrawal, Palestinians fire

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TIME LINE, *continued from page 5*

nine mortar shell attacks at Katif bloc settlements. The Erez industrial park is also targeted. (Arutz 7)

January 6 The IDF kills a bomb-carrying Palestinian who entered a hothouse in the Katif bloc. (Arutz 7)

The Israel Land Authority publishes a tender for the sale of 63 building lots in the settlement of Givat Ze'ev. An earlier effort to market the project failed for lack of demand. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

January 11 Israeli military planners are reported seeking permission to destroy 200, 700, or 3,000 Palestinian homes, depending on one of the three options being considered to build a trench to halt weapons smuggling along the Philadelphi corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border. (Associated Press)

January 12 Palestinians detonate a large explosive and open fire on an IDF vehicle driving in the southern Gaza Katif bloc settlement of Morag, killing a founding member of the Ganei Tal settlement in the Katif bloc and injuring three other people. (Arutz 7)

January 13 *Ha'aretz* reports Israel requesting \$180 million from the United States to finance the construction of crossing points along the separation barrier.

January 14 *Ha'aretz* reports that in 2003 less than 4 percent of new immigrants from North America settled in the occupied territories (excluding East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights).

January 18 A report by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies notes that thousands of Palestinians holding Jerusalem identity documents are returning every month from the West Bank to live within the municipal borders of the city. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 19 The Palestinian Authority deploys security officers in northern Gaza to stop the firing of rockets at Israel and the other settlements. Palestinians fire an anti-tank missile at the settlement of Netzarim and a mortar shell which severely damages a house at the settlement of Dugit. They are reported to have launched a total of 5,250 Qassam rockets and mortar shells since the onset of the al-Aqsa intifada in September 2000. (Arutz 7)

January 21 Israel reopens the Rafah crossing on the Israeli-Egyptian border, which was closed on December 12 after a tunnel filled with explosives was blown up under an IDF post near the terminal, killing five soldiers. The closure had stranded up to 10,000 Palestinians in Egypt. Abu Holi, the Katif bloc intersection, is re-opened to north-south Palestinian traffic. (*Jerusalem Post*)

January 25 The IDF Binyamin region

brigade commander confirms to Machsom Watch, a women's group monitoring checkpoints, that starting in July, East Jerusalem Palestinian residents will not be able to travel freely into Ramallah. Travel to Jericho already requires permission from the IDF. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 26 IDF troops kill a six-year-old Palestinian boy when they open fire on what they contend is a crew launching mortars into a settlement in southern Gaza. (Mideast Mirror)

Katif bloc settlers attack Palestinian police who are coordinating with IDF officers for the transfer of security responsibility in southern Gaza to Palestinian control. Later the settlers clash with the police who come to disperse their demonstrations. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

January 30 Himnuta, a subsidiary of the Jewish Agency, secretly buys more than seven acres of land in Gaza and is negotiating to buy more. The fund is also reported buying large amounts of land throughout the West Bank in an effort to connect settlements or join them to towns within the pre-1967 border. The fund thus far has bought more than 5,000 acres in the West Bank and Gaza. (Arutz 7)

More than 100,000 demonstrate in Jerusalem against the disengagement plan.

OUTPOST OBSERVATIONS

"I would not be confiding a great secret if I were to tell you that the entire settlement enterprise in the territories, under both right-wing and left-wing governments, was promoted with a wink of duplicity: the governments wanted to maintain the facade of legality.

"Under the table they financed, maintained and secured a national enterprise that is, in its entirety, in violation of the law. It wasn't the settlers who invented the duplicitous wink: they would have preferred to annex the territories, remove the residents and settle there openly. But they took this arrangement and turned it into an ideology. And this is the situation: There are between 150 and 250 Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The numerical disparity is part of the duplicitous wink: since promises were made to the Americans not to build new settlements, they established hump-settlements. Under the name Eli, ten new settlements were built: Eli A, B, C, D, etc. Under the name Talmon six were built. . . . Illegal settlement outpost, says a military official, is a phrase that was

invented by journalists. There isn't a single settlement that is really legal. To be legalized, he says, settlements need to meet at least three criteria: they need to be built on state land, be subject to a planning process, and receive the government's approval. The Civil Administration passes on to the political echelon every settlement-related dilemma. Sometimes the political echelon decides, one way or the other. Often, however, it prefers not to decide, and all the parties interpret the wink as they see fit. . . .

"The settlers are now waging a bitter battle against disengagement from Gaza, I said. If you really intend to change the rules of the game, you're pushing them up against the wall. [One official] reassured me by saying: 'In the past two years, construction plans that hadn't been approved for years were approved by the defense minister. They have that to spend their energy on.'"

Nahum Barnea, *Yediot Aharonot*,
February 21, 2005

ed by a combination of factors that he was unable to control only suggests the tremendous upheaval that will be required to establish minimal conditions for genuine Palestinian sovereignty in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Sharon's readiness to impose upon Palestinians authority over 50 or even 80 percent of the West Bank does not meet this test. Israel continues to expand settlements in the West Bank. President Bush's statements of a year ago are portrayed by Sharon as a U.S. certificate of approval for settlement expansion on the almost 10 percent of the West Bank west of the emerging security barrier (see map, page 3). Occasional, muted U.S. disapproval has had no significant impact on this effort. Witness the continuing consolidation of more than 100 new settle-

ments—deceptively termed “outposts”—established during the last decade in an ongoing process that violates not only an international consensus embodied in the stillborn Road Map but also Israel's own laws and procedures.

These efforts, blessed by governments led by Likud and Labor over the last decade reflect the conviction of Israel's military and political establishment that the continuing zero-sum struggle for control over land that lies at the heart of the conflict can be won. The return of Palestinian police to Tulkarm and the beginning of the IDF's withdrawal from other Palestinian urban areas do not alter Sharon's long-term ambition for the consolidation of Israeli control over critical areas of the West Bank—and all of Jerusalem—where the next chapter of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is being written. ♦

SASSON REPORT ON OUTPOSTS FOCUSES ON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

On March 10, 2005, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon published a report by former prosecutor Talia Sasson on government involvement in the establishment of settlement outposts. Excerpts from the report, which can be viewed at <http://www.fmep.org/documents/sassonreport.html> follow.

■ “As far as law enforcement is concerned, the political echelon sends a message of no enforcement when it comes to the territories. Felons are not punished. The overall picture draws the conclusion that no one seriously wants to enforce the law.

■ “Some of the land confiscation and illegal construction [for outposts] was done with the unauthorized aid of the Ministry of Housing and the Settlement Division, while violating the law publicly; the State of Israel finances at least part of the establishment of unauthorized outposts; the Civil Administration overlooks for years neighborhood expansions, either nearby or far away from settlements, done without a lawful detailed scheme, sometimes over private Palestinian property; does not supervise construction there; refuses to give information regarding outposts, with excuses such as the definition of an outpost, claiming not to have such information because of the limitation of its supervising powers—which it “stretched” way beyond its instructions; the Ministry of Defense sometimes permit caravans to enter Judea, Samaria and Gaza even when there is no legal planning for their destination.

■ “Assistant to Defense Minister for Settlement Affairs certifies to other State authorities that unauthorized outposts are settlements eligible for an emblem (which means eligibility for local authority budgets from Ministry of Interior Affairs), while the Minister of Defense publicly declares them as unauthorized; thousands of [outpost] destruction orders remain unexecuted for years; the outposts keep increasing and getting thicker, while no delimiting [evacuation] orders are issued, not even regarding outposts mentioned in the March 2001 list, which Israel took upon itself an explicit political

obligation to evacuate; delimiting orders issued and approved by the High Court of Justice remain unexecuted (four outposts, plus two more previously evacuated and returned); orders necessary for law enforcement are not legislated, as well as amendments to existing orders.

■ To this I should add the security concept that wherever an Israeli is placed in the territories—he should be protected. Thus, IDF soldiers will arrive at any place where someone decided to build an outpost, and protect him.

■ “Therefore it seems that law violation became institutionalized. We face not a felon, or a group of felons, violating the law. The big picture is a bold violation of laws done by certain State authorities, public authorities, regional councils in Judea, Samaria and Gaza and settlers.

■ “The message is that settling in unauthorized outposts, although illegal, is a Zionist deed. Therefore the overlook, the “wink”, the double standard becomes [the method of operation].” ♦

Jerusalem's Population, 1967–2003

	Total (000s)	Jews (000s / %)	Arabs (000s / %)
1967	266.3	197.7 / 74.2	68.6 / 25.8
1977	376.0	272.3 / 72.4	103.7 / 27.6
1987	482.6	346.1 / 71.7	136.5 / 28.3
1997	622.1	429.1 / 69.0	193.0 / 31.0
2001	670.0	454.6 / 67.9	215.4 / 32.1
2002	680.4	458.6 / 67.4	221.9 / 32.6
2003	693.2	464.5 / 67.0	228.7 / 33.0

Increase 160.3% 135.0% 233.4%

Source: *Kol Ha'ir*, January 14, 2005.

Housing Starts in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip Settlements,* 1990–2003

Year	Israel and Settlements (Dwelling Units)					Settlements (Dwelling Units)					Settlement Construction/ Total Construction**		
	Public	Private	Total	Change from previous year %		Public	Private	Total	Change from previous year %		Public %	Private %	Total %
1990	19,380	23,030	42,410	-	-	830	980	1,810	-	-	4	4	4
1991	61,730	21,780	83,510	41,100	97	7,040	1,070	8,110	6,300	348	11	5	10
1992	22,700	23,330	46,030	-37,480	-45	5,000	1,210	6,210	-1,900	-23	22	5	13
1993	6,820	30,160	36,980	-9,050	-20	400	1,830	2,230	-3,980	-64	6	6	6
1994	11,130	32,490	43,620	6,640	18	600	720	1,320	-910	-41	5	2	3
1995	27,460	41,440	68,900	25,280	58	1,870	660	2,530	1,210	92	7	2	4
1996	19,440	36,500	55,940	-12,960	-19	1,040	640	1,680	-850	-34	5	2	3
1997	15,700	36,330	52,030	-3,910	-7	1,000	900	1,900	220	13	6	2	4
1998	10,197	33,714	43,911	-8,119	-16	2,023	2,327	4,350	2,450	129	20	7	10
1999	9,637	29,313	38,950	-4,961	-11	1,769	1,378	3,147	-1,203	-28	18	5	8
2000	14,694	31,063	45,757	6,807	17	2,773	1,969	4,742	1,595	51	19	6	10
2001	7,331	24,465	31,796	-13,961	-31	826	809	1,635	-3,107	-66	11	3	5
2002	7,714	24,711	32,425	629	2	807	562	1,369	-266	-16	10	2	4
2003†	7,358	22,314	29,672	-2,753	-8	1,154	695	1,849	480	35	16	3	6

* Excluding East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. ** The population of Israel and the settlements is 6.75 million. The settler population in the West Bank and Gaza is approximately 226,000 or 3.4% of the total Israeli population (Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel) 2004. † Provisional data. Sources: *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1992–*(Table 22.5).

The Israeli government has proven itself capable, at least for a while, of understanding that the bludgeon neither wins nor overwhelms, but only emboldens. It has understood, after a 36-year delay, that the settlement enterprise is a monster that is intent on rising up against its master. It avers, nominally at least, that it has recognized that there is no way of ruling over another people and surviving. There is only one thing it hasn't managed to do. To take all of those lessons that were learned at a tremendous investment of work and blood, to put them all together and to draw from them the fundamental conclusion that clearly stems from them all: as long as the occupation is not brought to a complete end, and not just one-third or one-eighth, we will continue to eat our sour grapes and we will continue to bludgeon until we find ourselves banished. That still lies beyond its grasp. — B. Michael, *Yediot Abaronot*, February 22, 2005

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