

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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ARIEL SHARON MOVES TO CENTER STAGE

Ariel Sharon is a pragmatic expansionist who views Israeli settlement in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights as both an ideological imperative and a security asset. As the recently elected prime minister of Israel, Sharon faces the challenge of integrating these objectives into an overall policy toward Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and the three million Palestinians under Israeli occupation who oppose Israel's colonization policies.

Sharon rejects absolutely the premise underlying the diplomatic efforts of the Barak government—beginning with the activation of the Stockholm channel in spring 2000 and ending in January 2001 at Taba—that it is possible and preferable to make the territorial sacrifices required to “end the conflict” with the Palestinians. The aftermath of former prime minister Ehud Barak's resounding electoral defeat has revealed that a

majority within his own Labor party supports Sharon's view.

Sharon is one of the three or four Israelis who have had the most influence on the creation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories since 1967. “Were there not Jewish settlements today on the Golan Heights in Judea and Samaria,” Sharon noted in 1995, “Israel would long ago have returned across the Green Line. The Jewish settlements are the only factor that has prevented the agreement of this [Rabin] government to withdraw and [has] created difficulties for it in the negotiations.”

Each of these outposts represents a symbol of Sharon's effort to mold politics, demography, and geography according to Zionist preferences, and he is not prepared to surrender them easily. From Sharon's perspective, former U.S. president Bill Clinton's acknowledgment that the demographic transformation created by settlements is the basis for Israel's territorial claims in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, can be viewed as a victory and a continuing challenge for Israeli expansionists.

Sharon's leadership has been especially important in the creation of what former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin derisively termed “political settlements”—those sparsely populated outposts that dot the central highlands running in a north-south line between Jenin and Jerusalem. These settlements, which Rabin numbered at around 60, were conceived by Sharon to explicitly forestall the creation of a territorially

viable Palestinian entity and to serve the tactical security function of dispersing the Israel Defense Forces throughout the entire region.

The Oslo process accommodated these settlements as well as the larger outposts—Ma'ale Adumim, the Etzion bloc, Ariel—historically favored by much of Israel's ruling establishment. The map created by the Oslo II accord in September 1995 and last modified in March 2000 is almost a mirror image of Sharon's cantonization plan, which envisaged the creation of noncontiguous Palestinian cantons in the West Bank and Gaza Strip surrounded by Israeli settlements and roads. In contrast, the map of the Palestinian state proposed by Barak at Taba (see pages 4 and 5) acknowledges that about 100 of these outposts fail to pass both the demographic and territorial preconditions for annexation by Israel.

At this early stage in his tenure, and as distasteful as the notion is to Israeli policymakers today, Sharon has chosen not to alter the assessment upon which Israel's participation in the Oslo process is based—that is, that Arafat and the security apparatus he heads remain partners in the effort to secure Israel's settlement and security interests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Partners must be accommodated if they are to remain partners. As a minister in the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, Sharon, in discussions with both Palestinian and U.S. officials,

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SHARON, continued on page 7

TO OUR READERS

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon's vision of Israeli-Palestinian relations, discussed in this issue, is a recipe for more conflict, not peace. Sharon would reverse the clock and ignore Ehud Barak's Camp David proposals, Bill Clinton's more generous ideas, and the proposals put forth at Taba in January. Sharon's promise to limit the Palestinians to 41 percent of the West Bank, preserve all settlements, and yield nothing on Jerusalem preserves the volatile status quo that underlies the collapse of the peace process. The Bush administration has dismissed the Clinton proposals and would prefer to let the parties slug it out alone. Instead, it should reengage soon.

Sharon's statement that new peace talks require an end to the violence is a more serious proposal. The Oslo promises to forswear force and negotiate in good faith were sound and must be resurrected by both parties. Violence breeds fear and hatred and undermines the moderates on both sides. Stopping it is a two-way street.

If Yasser Arafat is to crack down on Palestinian violence, there must be major reciprocal steps by Israel. Responsibility for the violence lies not just with Palestinian militants who foolishly believe they can defeat Israel, and with Arafat's apparent paralysis, but also with Israel's unprecedented harsh and lethal tactics. More fundamentally, mutual violence is inherent in the occupation relationship in which Israel holds a monopoly on power and has used it, unilaterally and in violation of its own Oslo promise, to force its goals in the territories, foremost, by continuing to seize land and build settlements. Violence is, however, only a symptom of the conflict. Preaching against it is useless without dealing with the causes, a challenge that now awaits Prime Minister Sharon.



During his February visit to Israel, Secretary of State Colin Powell was told by prime minister-elect Ariel Sharon that Israel intended to keep its settlements in the Jordan Valley as well as those located along the mountain ridges east of the Green Line.

"We learned a lot from you Americans," Sharon explained. "We saw how you moved West using this method."

Ha'aretz, February 26, 2001

Ma'ariv: In the Army's view, is there room for the evacuation of isolated settlements as part of an agreement with the Palestinians?

Deputy Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon: From the tactical security point of view, the evacuation of settlements today could provide some advantage, but from a strategic vantage, it would be a

terrible mistake. It would mean that we are withdrawing as a consequence of violence. To my sorrow this happened to us [in October 2000, when the IDF, under fire, evacuated] Joseph's Tomb, and we have seen how much this action raised Palestinian spirits.

Ma'ariv, February 16, 2001

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SHORT TAKES

The intifada can have the potential to unsettle the stability of the Zionist enemy and deter him by hitting at his soldiers and settlers. Consequently, it will achieve a similar result to what Hizballah achieved in South Lebanon, namely, the unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza without us having to relinquish our claim on 80 percent of Palestine. Thus it is better to build a state in the Jabalya refugee camp without conceding our right to Palestine, than to establish a state in the West Bank and Gaza while giving up on 80 percent of Palestine. This is the basic rule. We are not for giving up Palestine.

Why are we asked about killing heavily armed settlers occupying our land who have a free hand to do as they please and take our lands by force—calling them civilians? The truth is that there is not one civilian in the Zionist entity. They are all soldiers carrying arms. He who finishes his military service joins the reserves until the day he dies. The question about killing civilians should be addressed to the Israeli side—we are defending ourselves: I want to ask you—[settlers] who have been killed in Gaza recently—what are they doing here? Several dozen settlers take over more than one-third of the Gaza Strip's 360 square kilometres, while one million Palestinians live in the rest.

Abdelaziz Rantisi, Hamas spokesman, *Falastin al-Muslima / Mideast Mirror*, February 16, 2001

“The Sharon era will not be one of stability and security as the criminal Sharon claims,” said a leaflet distributed last week in Bethlehem by the Fatah political party. “The settlements that he spent his life building and establishing at the expense of Palestinian land will become hell and fire.”

Philadelphia Inquirer, February 19, 2001

We were calm for seven years in order to give a chance to the negotiations, of which I have been a keen supporter. But the Israelis used that time in order to negotiate interim agreements that were never implemented and to continue their policy of a *fait accompli* on the ground: the new settlements, the expropriations, the confiscation of land, the keeping of prisoners in the jails. Why should calm now be restored? So that they can resume the same policy? We have the right to self-determination, like all the peoples of the world.

Marwan al-Barghuthi, Fatah secretary general in the West Bank, *Le Monde*, October 26, 2000

Residents of Gush Etzion, following their successful efforts yesterday, attempted to continue blocking the highway there to Arab traffic this morning. Police intervened, however, and even arrested Women in Green leader Nadia Matar. She later explained, “Chief of Staff Mofaz gave clear instructions that two or more Arab men in private cars are not to drive on the roads of YESHA, while Arab families and Arab taxis are allowed. So we were basically forcing the army and the police to do their job.”

Arutz Sheva News Service, February 13, 2001

Former president [Bill] Clinton offered his ideas to assist the parties in their efforts, and the former president himself made clear that the ideas would leave with him when they left office.

Richard Boucher, spokesman,
U.S. Department of State, February 9, 2001

Just as we set a limit to Lebanon and had the strength to leave it, and as we set a limit to the recession and had the strength to take the country out of the recession and bring it to a state of growth, we shall also have the strength to take our boys out of Judea and Samaria.

Ehud Barak, Israeli prime minister, *Jerusalem Post*,
January 31, 2001

Every Republican administration, like that of the elder Bush in 1991, and the new one, eventually reaches the connection between oil barrels and settlements.

MK Uri Savir
Ha'aretz, March 1, 2001

During the period of September 29, 2000-January 15, 2001, the Israeli occupation forces razed 6291.5 dunams of land in the Gaza Strip, about 4776.5 dunams (76%) of which were agricultural lands, and about 1515 dunams (24%) were wooded and sandy areas. During the period of December 19, 2000-January 15, 2001, the Israeli occupation forces razed 1835.5 dunams of land, about 1240.5 dunams (67.6%) of which were agricultural lands and 595 dunams (32.4%) were wooded lands. These figures do not include houses and civilian and agricultural facilities established on these properties, which were also razed and demolished. Bulldozers of the Israeli occupation forces also demolished 88 Palestinian houses on razed areas during the period of September 29, 2000-January 15, 2001, making their residents homeless.

“Uprooting Palestinian Trees and Leveling Agricultural Land,” the fourth report on Israeli land sweeping and demolition of Palestinian buildings and facilities in the Gaza Strip, by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, January 26, 2001

DECONSTRUCTING THE TABA TALKS

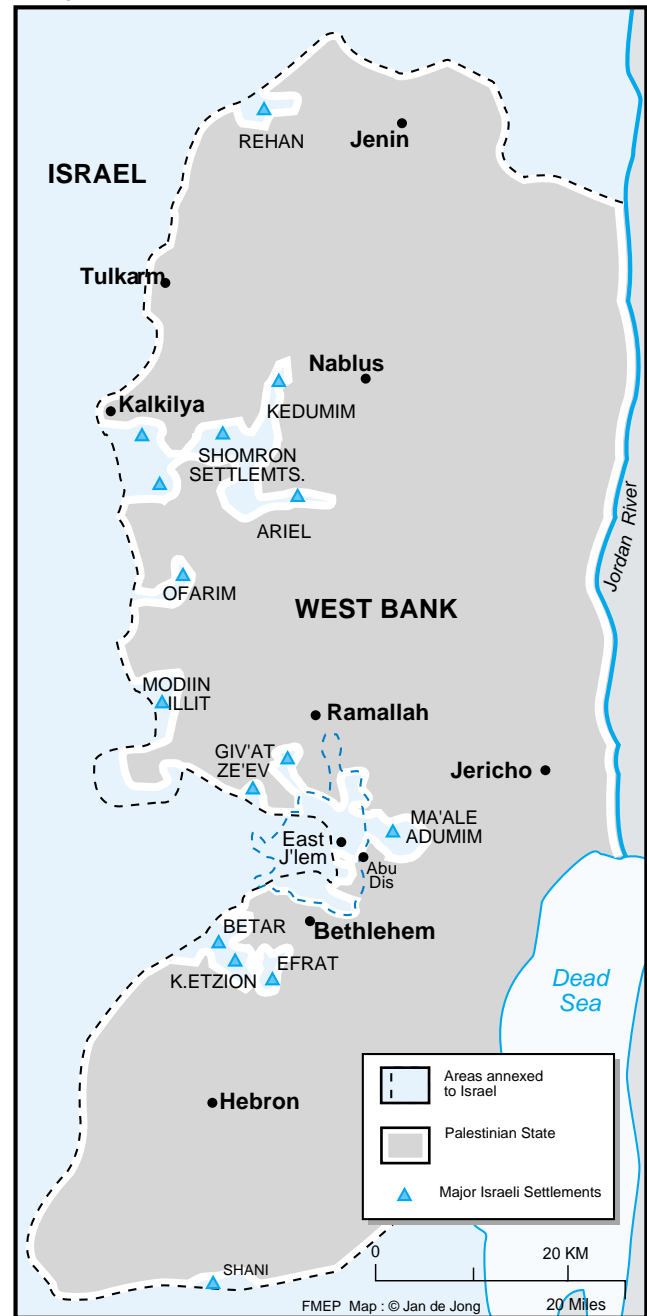
The talks at Taba and Eilat conducted by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the waning weeks of the Barak government achieved both a conceptual and practical breakthrough on the central question of the territorial dimensions of a Palestinian state and the corresponding extent of Israeli annexation of territories occupied in June 1967. The Barak government, in a departure from positions put forward at the Camp David and Washington negotiations, modified long-standing territorially-based security demands, allowing for a significant transformation of its settlement-related requirements. The Palestinians, in turn, for the first time presented a map acceding to Israel's annexation of some West Bank (and East Jerusalem) territory where settlements had created demographic realities that were hard to ignore, in return for land of equal value in Israel. Despite what Palestinian negotiator Abu Ala described as "very tangible progress," considerable obstacles remained to resolving contradictory Palestinian territorial and Israeli settlement demands.

The final status map presented by Israeli negotiator Gilad Sher in January 2001 proposed Israel's annexation of 5 percent of the West Bank. A reconstruction of this proposal, based upon extensive investigation, appears on the page opposite. The map is significant in a number of respects. On a conceptual level, it disaggregates Israeli security demands from territorial/settlement issues. Israel dropped demands for extensive lease-back arrangements in the Jordan Valley, along the southern West Bank perimeter and around Kiryat Arba, in contrast to the map presented by Israel in December 2000. (see page 4 of the January 2001 *Report*). Instead, there were far more productive discussions about the creation of discreet, limited security points in the Jordan Valley, arrangements which would have no territorial or settlement dimension and which would not be conditioned on Israeli control of principle transport routes.

This new Israeli policy also established the basis for the reduction in Israel's territorial demands along east-west corridors in the Ariel and Ma'ale Adumim regions, a reduction that markedly increases the territorial continuity of the prospective Palestinian state. Corridors reaching to Keddumin and Shavei Shomron west of Nablus, to Shilo and Eli across Route 60, from Ma'ale Adumim to Bet El and Ofra northeast of Ramallah, and east of Ma'ale Adumim towards the Jordan Valley are no longer included in territory claimed by Israel. These settlement corridors protrude like slender but lengthy territorial 'fingers' deep into Palestinian territory, controlling all its key crossroads and functionally cantoning it into sections that can be controlled much more easily than one contiguous bloc.

Israel's more restrictive application of this geopolitical mechanism made impossible the realization of another key element of Barak's settlement program—the incorporation of at least 80 per cent of West Bank settlers into Israel, not counting those in annexed East Jerusalem. The Taba map

Projection of the Abu Mazen-Beilin Map

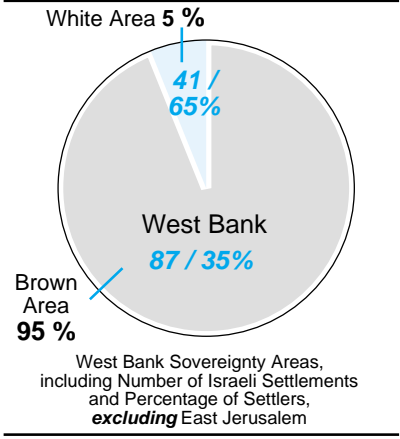
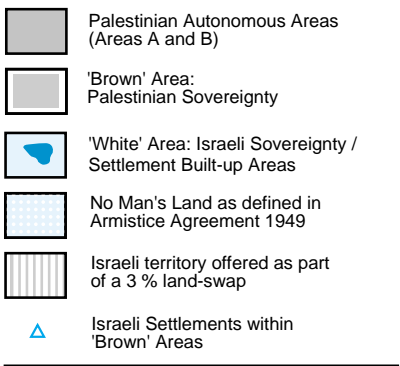


would lower this threshold to 65 per cent of West Bank settlers, excluding those in East Jerusalem. The Taba map signified that more than one third of Israeli settlers, living in 87 West Bank settlements, would have to be evacuated. The value of real property in these outposts would be deducted from the compensation claims of Palestinian refugee property in Israel.

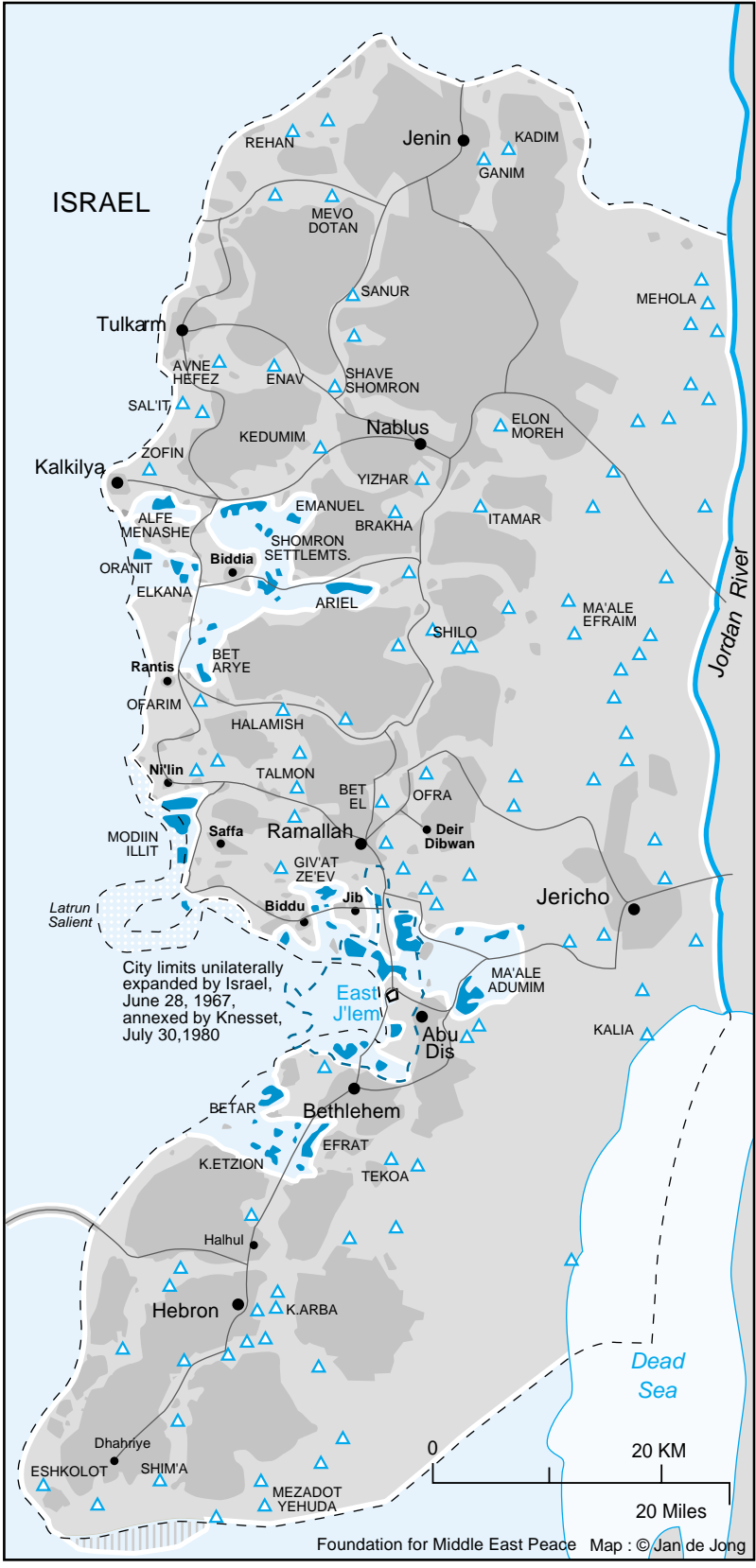
TABA TALKS, continued on page 7

Final Status Map Presented by Israel — Taba, January 2001

Based on a 5% – West Bank Territorial Transfer to Israel



A Palestinian State – Historical Comparison



SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

October 25 Gunshots are fired at Psagot; the Israel Defense Force responds with three tank missiles. Exchanges of fire also take place at the Ayosh junction north of Ramallah, at a roadblock in Bethlehem, and the Elisha military outpost near Jericho.

Artuz-7 reports the planting of a roadside bomb and shooting by Palestinians on an Israeli convoy en route to Morag. No injuries are reported.

The IDF fires four mortar shells into al-Bireh after shots are fired into the Psagot settlement.

According to the Addameer Association, the IDF twice shells the village of Beit Jala and the nearby Aida refugee camp from the Gilo settlement; residents of Beit Sahour are shelled once by tanks as well.

According to the Addameer Association, Israeli settlers attack Palestinian villages in Hebron, Hossan, and Tekou in the Bethlehem region, and Beit Furik, Burin, Huwarra, Qaryout, and Yitma near Nablus. Many Palestinians report injuries as a result of these attacks.

The Addameer Association reports that the homes of some Palestinian residents of Hebron are being used by the IDF as new military outposts. Palestinians under Israeli control in Hebron [H-2] remain under curfew for the 26th consecutive day.

Ha'aretz reports that the settlement outpost of Mitzpe Hagit on the Allon Road is being resettled one year after it was evacuated as part of an agreement with the government of Ehud Barak.

October 26 Palestinians shoot at the settlement of Gilo. The IDF responds with machine-gun fire and shells. According to *Ha'aretz*, many families who live in the southeast portions of Gilo have temporarily left; families who have stayed sleep in rooms on the western side of their homes.

Amnesty International reports more than 130 Palestinian deaths, 40 of them children at the hands of Israeli security forces.

Amnesty also claims that Israeli security forces have persistently used excessive force.

October 27 Palestinians throw rocks at Israeli vehicles near Bethlehem and the Jordan Valley, injuring four people.

Palestinians fire on Gilo from Beit Jala, hitting nine homes.

Ha'aretz reports that the IDF will invest \$6.25 million in armored ambulances, buses, and other vehicles, bulletproof vests, bulletproof windows for houses facing Palestinian areas, concrete blocks, and night-vision and other optical equipment. One thousand reservists residing in settlements have been called up for service in the preceding month.

October 28 Palestinians shoot at Israeli targets and settlements including Adura, (south of Hebron), the Atarot airport in East Jerusalem, Gilo, the Katif bloc, and Kadim.

Al-Ayyam reports that the IDF destroyed a Palestinian farm and orchard for the protection of the Morag settlement in Gaza.

October 29 *Arutz-7* reports three fire-bombs are thrown at Neveh Dekalim in Gaza. No injuries are reported.

Clashes erupt in Nablus and the Netzarim junction in Gaza, killing four Palestinians and wounding more than 50 others. Two Israelis are wounded.

Palestinians fire at the control tower of the Atarot airport in East Jerusalem. No injuries are reported.

Palestinians fire on Psagot and engage Israeli soldiers near the Ayosh junction and IDF checkpoints near Hebron, Kalkilya, Nablus, and the settlement of Vered Jericho.

Fifteen Israeli tanks and armored vehicles engage in a nine-hour gun battle with Palestinians in efforts to open the Karni-Netzarim road in Gaza.

The Rabbis Union, led by former chief rabbi Abraham Shapira, states, "The rights and obligations of the Nation of Israel to sovereignty over the Land of Israel and to the settlement of the land are an eternal command by the Creator to the entire nation, for the entire land, throughout all the generations. Every concession weakens us, and gives our enemies more strength and confidence to fight us."

Ha'aretz reports that in the wake of Hizballah's capture of three Israeli soldiers, the IDF has closed the tourist facility at the Golan settlement of Neve Ativ.

October 30 The IDF accuses the Palestinian Authority of violating agreements prom-

ised to keep the Netzarim corridor in Gaza open to Israeli traffic.

A roadside bomb detonates next to an Israeli bus near the Morag settlement in Gaza. No injuries are reported.

Shooting incidents occur at al-Haddad, near Jerusalem, and the Ayosh junction north of Ramallah.

Palestinian gunmen shoot and kill two Israelis at the National Insurance Institution in Jerusalem.

Palestinian police release the body of an Israeli civilian found in Beit Jala near his home in Gilo.

Yediot Aharanot reports that settlers have established a Web site, www.helpingisrael.com, to encourage contributions to settlement efforts to defend against Palestinian attacks. Items requested include night-vision equipment and armored playgrounds.

October 31 Palestinians shoot at an Israeli bus near the settlement of Alfei Menashe, injuring one passenger.

November 1 Palestinians shoot at IDF outposts and settlements at Atzmonah in Gush Katif, the Ayosh junction, the Degan hilltop in Efrat, Karni junction, and Rachel's Tomb. Residents of Jelazun burn tires and throw rocks and firebombs at IDF soldiers near the Beit El settlement.

The Tunnel Road closes to traffic. *Ha'aretz* reports that the IDF is advising the construction of a western alternate to the highway. The proposed road would run from the Jerusalem neighborhood of Malha via Wallaja to the al-Hadar intersection north of the Etzion bloc.

An IDF officer tells *Ha'aretz* that journeys of residents to and from Netzarim are now being taken under fire. Settlers travel in armored cars provided by the IDF.

Artuz-7 reports an IDF plan to cut its forces in the West Bank and Gaza by 20 percent. A YESHA council spokesman states the decision is "illogical, ignores the state of war in YESHA, and will invite further attacks by Palestinians on Jewish residents."

According to IDF Radio, Hamas and the Tanzim jointly declare that the intifada will operate in East Jerusalem and that lives of the Jewish settlers "will become hell."

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

The IDF lifts the curfew on the Palestinian residents of Hebron.

Palestinians fire on the Gilo settlement from Beit Jala. According to an IDF officer, the firing “was the most massive and intense . . . since the beginning of the current violence.” The IDF responds with machine-gun fire, missiles, and helicopters. No injuries are reported.

While touring the Gilo settlement, Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert and senior police officers come under Palestinian fire. Olmert demands that the IDF take a more forceful policy on Beit Jala, stating that the army “should retake Beit Jala” if necessary and impose a closure in order to prevent attacks on Gilo. Prime Minister Ehud Barak orders an aid package for residents of Gilo and other border neighborhoods.

TABA TALKS, *continued from page 4*

Israel’s Taba map is both conceptual-ly and territorially reminiscent of the Abu Mazen-Beilin Plan of 1995, which established a Palestinian willingness to consider trading settlement blocs for equivalent Israeli land. A map illustrating the Plan’s principles was never disclosed and remains controversial to this day.

The final status map suggested by Israel at the Taba talks begins to address Palestinian concerns that the scale of Israel’s settlement-related demands would decisively prejudice the territorial cohesion of the West Bank and that Arab East Jerusalem would be fragmented, jeopardizing the socio-economic viability of a Palestinian state. Although improving Palestinian territorial contiguity and unhindered road passage, Barak’s map would nevertheless not solve remaining defects impacting upon both territorial continuity and transport corridors in crucial locations near Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Kalkilya and Nablus.

The map presented by Palestinian negotiator Abu Ala aimed at addressing these deficiencies. The Palestinian map represents a significant historical and diplomatic landmark. As Prime Minis-

ter Barak noted, it marked the first time that the Palestinians had incorporated the principle of Israeli annexation of West Bank territory into a formal proposal.

ter Barak noted, it marked the first time that the Palestinians had incorporated the principle of Israeli annexation of West Bank territory into a formal proposal.

Palestine Report claims that the Israeli army has opened ten new bypass roads on Palestinian land classified as Area A.

Palestinians in Abu Sneinah shoot at residents of the Abraham Avinu settlement in Hebron.

Two Israeli soldiers are killed attempting to rescue wounded soldiers at al-Hadar, near the Tunnel Road. One other Israeli soldier dies near Elisha, outside Jericho.

Ha’aretz reports that plans for the expansion of the Golan settlement of Katzrin have

ter Barak noted, it marked the first time that the Palestinians had incorporated the principle of Israeli annexation of West Bank territory into a formal proposal.

The Abu Ala map illustrated three important Palestinian objectives: reducing the area to be annexed by Israel to twice the settlements’ current built-up areas; minimizing the number of West Bank Palestinians to be annexed by Israel from more than 20,000 projected by Israel’s Taba map to practically zero; rejecting the annexation of any part of the Jerusalem area settlements of Ma’ale Adumim or Givat Ze’ev.

Palestinian leader Nabil Shaath, in his February 2001 discussions with Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington, brought out both the Israeli and Palestinian maps to demonstrate how much the parties had improved upon the current territorial division of the West Bank. Powell, according to one source, had never before seen the maps. He explained that the Bush administration never said that Taba had not moved the parties closer. It had only noted that none of what transpired was binding upon the government of Ariel Sharon. ◆

become operational. The return to “business as usual” includes the construction of 1,500 dwelling units in the settlement, enough to increase the population of 7,500 by 50 percent, as well as infrastructural improvements. The settlement of Klia Elon has also won preliminary approval for 50 additional units.

November 2 A pipe bomb explodes underneath a car near the Jerusalem Theatre, injuring one person.

In Hizme Palestinians close the Jerusalem-Shomron road, which services traffic from Jerusalem to the Binyamin and Shomron settlements. ◆

SHARON, *continued from page 1*

endeavored to establish an agreed-upon basis for the creation of a Palestinian state, albeit one hobbled in both its territorial and sovereign dimensions by Israeli territorial and security demands. Sharon’s formula, however, was consistent with the Oslo process crafted for Rabin, with its focus upon “interim agreements” enhancing Israel’s settlement objectives and its overall security.

Since that time, Sharon has expanded his notion of the territorial dimensions of the state of Palestine to include the 41 percent of the West Bank now classified as Areas A (17.2%) and B (23.8%) and most of the Gaza Strip. While he does not come close to meeting minimal Palestinian demands for a final status agreement, Sharon also does not require the kind of Palestinian concessions—first among which is an explicit agreement to “end the conflict”—unsuccessfully demanded by Barak.

As Sharon sees it, the challenge facing both Israelis and Palestinians after the guns fall silent, a challenge that the parties have failed to meet since the opening of “final status” talks last year, is not to repudiate but to reinvigorate Oslo’s focus on interim solutions. The next step: the agreed-upon establishment of a Palestinian state that leaves Israel’s settlement and security objectives intact. ◆

BARAK'S SETTLEMENT LEGACY

Settler population in the West Bank and Gaza	203,068	in the Etzion bloc	299 incidents
Settler population increase during Barak's tenure, June 1999-December 2000	22,419	October 1, 2000-January 24, 2001: from Beit Jala toward Gilo at Rachel's Tomb	53 incidents 59 incidents
Distinct settlement locations in the West Bank and Gaza	200 sites	from Bet Sahour to Har Homa	10 incidents
Government tenders issued for construction in West Bank/Gaza settlements, June 1999-September 2000	3,499 units	Rock-throwing incidents against Israeli targets in the Etzion bloc, October 1, 2000-February 13, 2001	2,000 incidents
Building sites in the West Bank/Gaza sold by the Israel Lands Administration, 2000	2,804 lots	Closure frequency of Tunnel Road, linking the Etzion bloc to Jerusalem, September 28, 2001-February 13, 2001	91 times
Building permits issued by the Ministry of Housing and Construction in West Bank/Gaza settlements, January-October 2000	1,184 units	Percentage increase in traffic along the main Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway since the beginning of shooting incidents along Route 443, the secondary route through the West Bank	40 percent
Public construction starts in West Bank/Gaza settlements, 2000	1,943 units	Decrease in traffic along Route 443 since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada	80 percent
Shooting incidents against settlers/settlements			

U.S. president [George W.] Bush called to relay his good wishes. He told me of his desire for close cooperation with the government which I will head. He recalled a tour we went on together of Samaria and the Jordan Valley.

The government that I will lead will work towards restoring security to the citizens of Israel, and toward achieving genuine peace and stability in the region. I know that peace means painful compromises on both sides. Any settlements reached will be based on security for all peoples in the region. I call upon our neighbors the Palestinians to abandon the path of violence and return to dialogue and pursuit of a resolution to the disagreements between us in a peaceful manner. The government which I will lead will work toward a realistic settlement which will safeguard the existential and historical interests of Israel, and will be based on mutual respect and the fulfillment of reciprocal obligations.

The government that I will lead will raise the flag of social issues, alongside the flags of security and peace, with the top priority being education. Above these are the flag of Zionism, the flag of national honor, immigration, and settlement of the land. The government which I will establish will pursue the strengthening and building up of a united Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, and the eternal capital of the Jewish people for which we are forever obligated: "If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy."

Israeli prime minister-elect Ariel Sharon's victory speech, February 7, 2001

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