

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace

Volume 12 Number 4

July-August 2002

“SEPARATION THREATENS TO UNDERMINE SETTLEMENTS”

By *Geoffrey Aronson*

“THEY ARE A F R A I D,” screams a blood-red headline in a recent edition of the Israeli newspaper *Ma’ariv*. The accompanying article seeks to answer this question: Who among Israeli performing artists “doesn’t come to perform in the settlements during these difficult days”?

According to one Gaza settler involved in planning such visits, “If I begin I won’t be able to finish. It’s much easier to say who does come.”

“It is difficult for them,” says another settler, “Our families won’t come to visit either.”

The continuing Palestinian intifada against Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has sparked the most significant reassessment of the role and value of settlements since June

1967. Palestinian attacks in Israel as well as on settlers and settlements are forcing unprecedented changes in Israeli perceptions of the settlement enterprise. They are also altering perspectives on the relationship between settlements and Israeli security as understood by policymakers and the public. It is still too early to conclude how or whether the settlement enterprise will adapt to the challenge posed by the intifada or be undermined by it.

The link between civilian settlement and Israeli security requirements was first forged in the early years of Israeli occupation. Leaders who believed in the necessity of remaining in military control of the area west of the Jordan River viewed the creation of Jewish settlements in the newly captured areas as a means of establishing domestic political support for their military strategy. Their approach promised to transform the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), at least in the eyes of the Israeli public, from an army occupying foreign land—the West Bank and Gaza Strip—into an army protecting Israeli citizens—the growing numbers of settlers—in its homeland.

By the late 1970s the settlement lobby itself had emerged as a political power. Expanding the settlements no longer needed to be justified on security grounds. Indeed, to such partisans of settlement as Gush Emunim, “security” as understood by Israeli military officers was not even a consideration for those charged with realizing God’s promise to the Jewish people.

During this period, even when expanding the civilian settlements proved on the tactical level to lack any security value, for the IDF there was really no price to be paid for settling anywhere in the West Bank or Gaza. The public, while largely disengaged from this enterprise, was nevertheless sympathetic to the patriotic imagery surrounding it. As more Israelis moved across the Green Line in search of “quality of life” and as long as Palestinians were quiescent, the average Israeli saw no reason to question the status quo.

In this triumphant atmosphere, even the demographic challenge posed by a seemingly unassailable Arab majority in the territories was dismissed. Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon’s September 1977 plan, “A Vision of Israel at Century’s End,” called for a settler population of 2 million by 2000. Ezer Weizman, before he became defense minister in 1976, explained that “the demographic problem will disappear the moment we unite all the territories with the State of Israel.”

Settlements and settlers were also not a major security burden during the first intifada, which erupted in December 1987 and ended with the bargain struck between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at Oslo in 1993. Despite the unprecedented nature of Palestinian roadside attacks on settlers, the Palestinian arsenal during this uprising was limited to stones.

Also in this issue:

Settlement Population and Construction Update 3
Short Takes 4, 5

Visit our website, www.fmep.org, for back issues of the *Settlement Report*, maps, and current analyses and commentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The first in a series of Arabic and Hebrew translations of the *Settlement Report* can be viewed at www.fmep.org.

SEPARATION, continued on page 7

TO OUR READERS

President George W. Bush's June 24 speech confused and disappointed many who had hoped to hear a coherent plan for an Israeli-Palestinian peace that would break the current violent impasse. Instead, Bush demanded Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's departure, reform of the Palestinian Authority, and a crackdown on terrorism as preconditions for negotiations. Although Bush indicated that Israel would eventually have to withdraw from the territories it occupies, for the present he asks nothing of Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, whose forces now reoccupy the West Bank and have crippled Palestinian security and government institutions.

The lack of realism in Bush's one-sided approach is breathtaking. Yes, Palestinian institutions need reform and, ultimately, new leadership. It is naïve, however, to expect such developments without a parallel political process that resolves the issues of occupation, borders, refugees, settlements, Jerusalem, and Palestinian statehood.

What is needed is an American plan

outlining solutions for these problems and a negotiating timetable. Such a plan is the only way to renew hope for peace and the only alternative to the violence that traumatized majorities on both sides of the conflict now support by default. Without such hope, Palestinians are unlikely to rally against terrorism, and Israelis will not challenge Sharon to compromise with the Palestinians or face electoral defeat.

One reason Bush has rejected such activism is his mistaken belief that pressing Israel to negotiate now would "reward terrorism." Yet postponing diplomacy leaves the initiative with the terrorists and extremists on both sides. The late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin understood this when he said, "We will fight terror as if there are no negotiations and negotiate as if there is no terror." President Bush should resurrect Rabin's approach when his next speech is written.



It is getting to be impossible to continue this way, where we have to stop our lives so often in order to run and find shelter. An unbelievable number of 1,200 shells have been fired at us in the past months, and we will not let this continue. The army must take much more offensive actions, but meanwhile the Supreme Court, refusing to recognize that we are at war, doesn't even let the army destroy houses used by the terrorists to shoot at us. I should note that these 1,200 shells explode not only on us, but also on the very idea of erecting a partition along the Green Line. We are used as an example of a "successful" partition (because terrorists don't often infiltrate from Gaza), but the fence here certainly does not keep out the mortar shells. Are those who favor physical barriers along the Shomron truly willing to have the rest of Israel be a target of shells like we are?

*Eran Sternberg, Gaza Coast Regional Council spokesman,
Arutz 7, May 31, 2002*

FOUNDATION FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Merle Thorpe, Jr.
Founder
(1917-1994)

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.
President

Geoffrey Aronson
Director, Research and Publications, Editor, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories*

Mallika Good
Editorial Assistant

Holly Byker
Intern

ADVISERS

Lucius D. Battle
Landrum R. Bolling
Peter Gubser
Jean C. Newsom
Gail Pressberg
Nicholas A. Veliotos

TRUSTEES

Peter M. Castleman
Chairman
Lucius D. Battle
Calvin H. Cobb, Jr.
James J. Cromwell
Stephen Hartwell
Richard S.T. Marsh
Richard W. Murphy
William B. Quandt
Sally S. Thorpe

The Foundation, a non-profit, I.R.C. 501(c)(3) organization. It supports peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians through mutual recognition and a negotiated division of historic Palestine. It publishes the bi-monthly *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*.

Copyright © 2002

SETTLEMENT POPULATION AND CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, JULY 2002

Settlement Control of West Bank Territory

Settlement built-up areas	1.8%	100,058 dunams
Settlement planning areas	6.8%	378,000 dunams
Regional/local council jurisdiction*	35.1%	1.963 million dunams

Source: Yehezkel Lein, "Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy on the West Bank," B'tselem, May 2002.

*Regional/local councils have no planning authority in these areas, most of which are located in the Jordan Valley.

Settlement Expansion in the Gaza Strip and West Bank

(excluding East Jerusalem)

New settlements/outposts established, February 2001-March 2002	34
Dwelling units completed, June 1967-September 1993	32,750
Dwelling units completed, September 1993-October 2001	20,371
Dwelling units started, January-December 2000	4,499
Dwelling units started, January-June 2001	832
Dwelling units started, October-December 2001	250
Dwelling units under construction, June 2001	6,593
Land marketed for residential construction (dwelling units) February 2001-October 2001	1,359
Ministry of Housing and Construction budget, 2000	
Settlement infrastructure	\$61 million
Development	\$15 million
Tenders issued for new construction (units), 2001	810
Tenders issued for new construction (units), 2002	957
Efrat	339
Beitar Ilit	244
Ma'ale Adumim	224
Giva Benjamim	76
Har Adar	74

Source: *Ha'aretz*, October 17, 2001, May 20, 2002, May 24, 2002; Peace Now data.

20 Largest Settlements, by Population, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2002

Settlement	Population		Region
	2000	1999	
1. Ma'ale Adumim	24,900	23,800	Benjamin
2. Modi'in Ilit	16,400	13,000	Benjamin
3. Betar 'Illit	15,800	12,700	Etzion bloc
4. Ariel	15,600	15,100	Samaria
5. Giv'at Ze'ev	10,300	10,000	Benjamin
6. Efrat	6,430	6,230	Etzion bloc
7. Kiryat Arba	6,380	6,240	Mount Hebron
8. Karnei Shomron	5,890	5,590	Samaria
9. Oranit	5,070	4,780	Samaria
10. Alfei Menashe	4,580	4,410	Samaria
11. Beit El	4,120	3,800	Benjamin
12. Sha'are Tikva	3,380	3,220	Samaria
13. Emmanuel	3,040	3,150	Samaria
14. Elkana	2,990	2,940	Samaria
15. Allon Shevut	2,680	2,230	Etzion bloc
16. Kedumim	2,660	2,540	Samaria
17. Beit Arye	2,380	2,330	Samaria
18. Neve Dekalim	2,280	2,230	Gaza
19. Eli	1,900	1,730	Samaria
20. Ofra	1,880	1,870	Benjamin
Total	138,660	127,890	

20 Smallest Settlements, by Population, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2002

Settlement	Population		Region
	2000	1999	
1. Sa Nur	52	54	Samaria
2. Beit ha'Arava	55	45	Jordan Valley
3. Niran	56	45	Jordan Valley
4. Dugit	61	53	Gaza Strip
5. Telem	97	101	Mount Hebron
6. Gittit	100	109	Jordan Valley
7. Pe'at Sadeh	110	106	Gaza Strip
8. Mekhora	113	120	Jordan Valley
9. Yitav	114	107	Jordan Valley
10. Rehan	120	100	Samaria
11. Yafit	125	118	Jordan Valley
12. No'omi	127	133	Jordan Valley
13. Rafiah Yam	129	127	Gaza Strip
14. Na'aleh	137	105	Benjamin
15. Netiv HaGedud	139	143	Jordan Valley
16. Ro'I	141	133	Jordan Valley
17. Beqa'ot	144	144	Jordan Valley
18. Morag	146	142	Gaza Strip
19. Hamra	147	149	Jordan Valley
20. Kaddim	148	138	Samaria
Total	2,261	2,172	

Source: *List of Localities: Their Population and Codes, 31.12.1999* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2000); *List of Localities: Their Population and Codes, 31.12.2000* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

SHORT TAKES

Each side needs to make painful concessions on the road to peace. Israel will evacuate settlements in the Gaza Strip and isolated settlements in the West Bank, after the Palestinian Authority abandons a policy of terror.

Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer,
al-Quds, June 27, 2002

The president has already said in the April 4th statement and in other settings that his view [is] that Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza is unhelpful, not conducive to making progress. And he's even said flatly that settlement activity must stop. I think the president's view on current settlement expansion, the creation of new settlements, is very clear. The issue of settlements in the context of a final agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is obviously going to be an important topic that would need to be addressed in whatever framework or set of ideas that we put forward.

Briefing by a "senior American official,"
June 6, 2002

The Tel Aviv Left regards the settlers of Telem-Adura [near Hebron] as lepers, while the nationalists treat them like forgotten pawns on a chessboard after a particularly embarrassing move. And while the international community is coming close to defining them as war criminals, and the media finds it difficult to have any compassion, and the human rights community proposes to evict them down to the last one, the 50 to 60 families of Adura-Telem find themselves all alone. Behind closed doors. Alone with fear of the nights.

So they are leaving. One after the other, they are leaving. According to Adura's secretary, Sigal Amrani, by the end of the summer vacation about a quarter of Telem's residents and about a third of Adura's will be gone. According to some of the youngsters, more than half the residents will be gone by the end of the year. Already, there are streets where every other house is shuttered. Every other house is empty.

Ari Shavit, "Sharon's Pins in the Map Come Unstuck,"
Ha'aretz, June 6, 2002

Gazans often call the Gaza Strip their "giant prison." The name reflects the crowded, tense quarters where 1.1 million people live on some 360 square kilometers. The Israeli army surrounds the Strip, preventing Palestinians from leaving the area without special permits that are granted only in emergency situations.

Even within Gaza's borders, its people are confined. Israel has divided the strip into three zones of Palestinian towns and

refugees that are surrounded by Israeli military hardware. Travel between the areas is allowed only at certain times, and at the whims of the Israeli troops manning the checkpoints very much like prison guards.

The Strip is easily divided into three areas because of the Jewish settlements embedded in its heart in the most strategic areas. There are currently 7,000 settlers living in 19 settlements across the Gaza Strip.

If the Gaza Strip is a prison, its solitary confinement area is the agricultural part of al-Mawasi, just west of Khan Yunis. al-Mawasi is effectively controlled by settlers and surrounded by the settlement of Gush Katif from the east and the sea from the south. The people of al-Mawasi can neither leave their area nor distribute their agricultural produce except by special permission from the Israeli authorities.

"When harvesting season approaches, we start to panic," says Abu Ibrahim, a farmer from al-Mawasi. "We pay a lot of money for our produce and in the end we are not allowed to bring it out into the local market. We are forced to feed it to the animals," he laments. "Never mind the destruction periodically wrought on our crops by the settlers."

Abu Ibrahim says all this is unbearable and humiliating. "The settler who stole my land enjoys his freedom. But I, the owner of the land, cannot even leave my house without a permit. It is the age of wonders!"

Safwat Al Kahlout, "Trapped in Misery,"
Palestine Report, May 29, 2002

The percentage of support for armed attacks against Israeli soldiers and settlers inside the West Bank and the Gaza Strip remained as high as it was in December 2001—92 percent and 89 percent, respectively.

Opinion poll no. 4, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, May 15–18, 2002.

"The United States does not object to the settlements from a moral standpoint," U.S. ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer explained. "Our opposition to the settlements is political. Washington feels that Israel would be better protected and more accepted inside borders where there are no settlements, so a decision on their future must be accepted on the basis of their feasibility. It is a fact that we have opposed the settlements for decades and you continue to build them and we have done nothing untoward to you [in response]. If Israel wants, it can even expand to the borders promised in the Bible. The question is whether it is able to do so from a security and political standpoint."

Ha'aretz, May 29, 2002,
Nekuda, May 2002

SHORT TAKES

Anyone expecting Palestinians to quit killing settlers, should have a few words with Aziz Amaru, deputy minister for Waqf affairs in Hebron. Amaru has been spending the past several days running back and forth between the downtown wholesale market in the old city of Hebron and the local police station. All he wants is for the Israeli authorities to enforce the law against the settlers who have squatted in the shops of the wholesale market, which is [the] property of the Muslim religious trust.

After Baruch Goldstein's 1994 Purim day massacre of praying Muslims in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, Israel ordered the shops of the wholesale market shuttered; since then, the shops, next to the Avraham Avinu Jewish neighborhood, have been closed. A few months ago, Hebron settlers took over one of the buildings and turned four shops into apartments and a kindergarten. In the past few days they've taken over four more shops in an adjacent building.

Amaru says the Waqf complied with the suggestion by the police that they weld the doors of the shops shut. Yesterday morning, settlers used force to chase off the welders and the police who were guarding them, and locked up the Waqf officials on the second floor of the building.

Palestinian Hebronites are asking themselves if the police would have behaved with the same measure of restraint if it had been Palestinians marching into a Jewish-owned shop. The settlers' behavior, and the equanimity, in the best of cases, of the security forces toward Jewish lawbreakers in the territories, strengthens the hand of those Palestinians who support the armed struggle. Their analysis of the spreading expropriations, closures of land, and tree uprootings is that war against the settlers is a battle for their homes.

Even the muezzin is not allowed to call the people to prayers anymore in Hebron. The soldiers explained to the Waqf that the traditional calls, made from the minarets of Hebron for hundreds of years, "disturb the peace."

It is becoming ever more reminiscent of the Algerian campaign against the French colonists. Even if someone upstairs decides to stop the suicide bombers on their way to Petah Tikva, there's no chance that any Palestinian leader will condemn a Hebronite who decides to shoot a settler who invades his home.

Akiva Eldar, "As Usual, Policy Is Set by the Settlers," *Ha'aretz*, May 30, 2002

Apart from a few who couldn't take it anymore and left, most of the residents of the northern Gaza Strip have adjusted to living in constant jeopardy. There is less talk about leaving. People are no longer in such a rush to take refuge inside the Green Line. The feeling nowadays is that the whole country is a battleground, that every city is a target for suicide bombings, and there isn't much difference between living in

Gaza and living in the heart of Tel Aviv. Not only that, but people feel safer. The settlements are encircled by fences and watchtowers and guarded by soldiers day and night, a deluxe defense system that has dropped into the lap of settlers who have squatted on someone else's land.

Daniel Ben Simon,
"Digging in at Dugit,"
Ha'aretz, May 31, 2002

Arik Sharon is responsible, [along with Yasser Arafat] for the spilling of blood of hundreds of citizens who could have been with us today. He continues to abandon the security of most of the state's citizens on the alter of his ideological outlook. He has also abandoned the settlers who are begging to leave the territories and are unable to leave now only because of economic reasons.

Between the sea and the Jordan River there are today 53 percent Jews and 47 percent non-Jews. Within five to ten years the situation will worsen to the point where the Palestinians will be in the majority. If I were a Palestinian, I wouldn't engage in terror, I wouldn't enter into negotiations, nor would I kill Jews. I'd just sit patiently, like Nelson Mandela did, and finish the democratic, Jewish state.

In a situation where Israel has no partner to an agreement, [Israel must] establish a separation fence and create a temporary border along what was once the Green Line. A 400 km border in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that no one can cross without permission of the state of Israel. In addition to Ariel and Alfe Menashe, I would annex most of the Etzion bloc and the Jerusalem envelope, Beitar Ilit, Ma'ale Adumim, and Givat Ze'ev. All in all I would annex 15 percent of the West Bank, which includes 75 percent of the [Israeli] residents who are over the Green Line. This is the solution, including the evacuation of all settlements in the Gaza Strip. I will not leave even one settlement there. Gaza is one of the biggest scandals ever of Jewish morality. There are 6,000 Jews living in an area with 1.2 million Arabs, controlling one-quarter of the Arabs' land and one-quarter of Gaza's water. This is a normal situation? This is something moral? I will return to Israel these settlers who endanger their lives, the lives of their children, and the lives of thousands of soldiers who defend them. The IDF will leave there and defend Israel from the border.

Interview with Labor Party MK Haim Ramon,
Yediot Aharanot, May 16, 2002

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

May 1 The Israel Lands Administration publishes a tender for 20 housing units in the settlement of Efrat.

May 2 An Israeli development company publishes a tender for the sale of the right to construct 74 dwelling units in the settlement of Har Adar.

May 7 Arutz 7 reports that only three families and ten seminary students currently live in the settlement of Sa Nur, near Jenin.

An attempted infiltrator into Nisanit, in northern Gaza, is killed. (Arutz 7)

May 8 Israeli economics professor Haim Ben-Shahar estimates that the cost of providing alternative housing in Israel for 80,000 settlers would be \$2.4 billion. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 9 Two families move into the East Jerusalem settlement of Nahlat Shimon. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 10 The previously unknown Fighters for the Kingdom of Israel claim responsibility for the killing of eight Palestinians and the wounding of ten others during the preceding eighteen months and urge young settlers to join their efforts.

Ha'aretz reports that four settlers have been detained for planning an attack against Palestinian residents of al-Tur, in East Jerusalem.

Yerushalim reports that the industrial park in Mishor Adumim has suffered the closing of 32 concerns employing 600 people during the preceding 12 months of the al-Aqsa intifada. Eighty businesses continue operating in the settlement.

May 11 Some 60,000 to 80,000 Israelis attend a demonstration calling for the dismantling of settlements and an end to the Israeli occupation.

May 12 A Palestinian gunman kills his employer, an Israeli resident of Pe'at Sadeh, in southern Gaza, at a checkpoint near Rafiah Yam.

Ha'aretz reports Katif bloc settlers oppose strict examination of Palestinian laborers by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) because they need help to farm their land.

An Israeli court orders the removal of a settler from an Arab home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. (*al-Quds*)

The Israeli Interior Ministry freezes Palestinian applications for Israeli citizenship due to the rise in the number of applicants. (*al-Quds*)

The Likud Central Committee adopts a resolution rejecting a Palestinian state. (*Ha'aretz*)

Arutz 7 reports Palestinian Authority secretary-general Ahmed Abdel Rahman calling for Palestinians to focus attacks on settlers.

May 13 Arutz 7 reports Palestinians shooting at settlers manning the Haramiya checkpoint, north of Ramallah.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reports that in the preceding two years, seven Palestinians have been killed and ten others wounded in suspected attacks by Israeli civilians.

May 14 *Yediot Aharanot* reports that IDF reserve soldiers drafted by emergency order are guarding settlement outposts with as few as two residents.

May 15 "Make a Dream Come True," a million-dollar campaign for the sale of 1,000 housing units in the Golan by the end of the summer, receives a boost when 40 immigrant families from Argentina announce their plans to move to Katzrin. (Arutz 7)

May 16 Israel's Ministry of Housing and Construction issues tenders for the construction of 957 new housing units in West Bank settlements, including 76 in Giva Benjamim (Adam), 244 in Betar Ilit, 224 in Ma'ale Adumim, and 339 in Efrat.

May 18 A Palestinian from Dura al-Kara infiltrates Beit El and stabs a security officer. The attacker is shot and killed. (Arutz 7)

May 19 *Ha'aretz* reports that the IDF has begun to demand that Palestinians apply to the Civil Administration for permits to travel between West Bank cities.

May 20 *Ha'aretz* reports that Defense Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer opposes removing \$150 million in tax benefits to settlements.

May 23 A tender is published for the construction of 31 new housing units in Ma'ale Adumim; a permit is issued for the construction of 16 housing units in the settlement of Tel Rumeida in Hebron; and in Elkana work begins on 480 housing units. (Peace Now)

May 24 *Kol Ha'Ir* reports the demolition of two Palestinian houses in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Hanina. The action was ordered by Israel's Ministry of the Interior.

Yerushalim reports that two new tenants have signed leases in the Mishor Adumim industrial park. Every company signing a five-year agreement gets one year rent free.

May 26 Residents of Beit Surik and Badu villages protest the construction of a new road along the Har Adar settlement.

A local planning committee approves plans for the construction of 2,330 housing units at Airplane Hill, north of Gilo in the southern part of East Jerusalem, and 740 units in the settlement neighborhood of Ramot.

May 27 The Binyamin Regional Council launches a new initiative, "Benjamin, Absorption Without End," to bring 1,000 new families to communities in its jurisdiction, especially to new settlement outposts.

Arutz 7 reports that 1,200 mortar shells have fallen in Gaza since October 2000, but very few people have been wounded.

May 28 Three seminary students in the West Bank settlement of Itamar, south of Nablus, are shot and killed by a gunman, and one settler is killed in a drive-by shooting near the Beit El settlement.

Settlers set fire to land cultivated with olive, almond, and fig trees in Iraq and Burin villages, south of Nablus. (Hear Palestine)

Ha'aretz reports that the Knesset Finance Committee has approved \$1.4 million for the construction of 14 new housing units in the occupied territories, \$600,000 for the development of infrastructure in the Tel Zion settlement, and \$600,000 for six housing units in the Golan Heights.

May 31 Yosef Barel, the new director of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, prohibits the use of the term *settlers* on radio and TV broadcasts. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports a Palestinian man killed after he opened fire and threw grenades at a kindergarten and homes in the West Bank settlement of Shavei Shomron.

Work resumes on the Beit Sahour bypass road after a hiatus of some months. The \$14 million road will link Tekoa and Nokdim with Har Homa. (*Ha'aretz*)

The security of settlers, then far fewer in number than today, was more easily secured by the IDF, which found that settlements offered a useful and cost-efficient infrastructure to support its own expanded deployment. Throughout the intifada, the number of settlers and settlements continued to increase.

The Oslo period did not challenge the conventional wisdom regarding the security value of settlements. On the contrary, the map created from 1994 to 2000 reflected the continuing centrality of settlements to Israel's political and security doctrine concerning the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During this period, the settler population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip doubled to 200,000 and not one settlement was evacuated. Sharon was not the only Israeli leader who understood that but for the settlements, the IDF presence in the occupied territories lacked a politically justifiable *raison d'être*, and Israel would have been compelled to withdraw completely.

A breach between settlements and security would open only following an Israeli redeployment from the more than 40 percent of the West Bank and 80 percent of Gaza nominally controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA). As the Camp David talks convened in July 2000, Israeli public opinion, including major elements in the settler community, had become reconciled to the evacuation of some settlements in the context of an agreement with the PA. The maps presented by the government of Ehud Barak to the Palestinians from May to December 2000 reflected the proposition, already apparent on the border with Egypt and in failed talks with Syria, that Israeli security could be *enhanced* by an agreement that necessarily included withdrawal from most of the territory captured in June 1967 and the evacuation of most settlements. The final status map presented by Israel at Taba also reflected the revolutionary notion not only that Israeli security control of the Jordan Valley could be ceded over time but that the presence of the IDF in the area could be rooted in an agreement with the Palestinians rather than in Jewish settlement. Both of these concepts, championed by Barak's foreign minister Shlomo Ben Ami, were openly opposed by the IDF in January 2001.

The al-Aqsa intifada has emerged in the wake of the failure of the Oslo process as the driving force in Israeli-Palestinian relations. The phenomenon of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians in particular has done what Oslo failed to do—mobilize a groundswell of popular Israeli support for a physical “separation” from the Palestinians in the occupied territories that separation's opponents cannot defer.

Construction of a security fence is proceeding approximately along a line suggested by Barak at Taba that included lands to be annexed to Israel as part of an agreement with the PLO. Today's project, nominally part of Sharon's grander vision of security zones (see *Settlement Report*, May-June 2002), represents the imposition of a security concept by the public upon reluctant military and political officials who question its utility and cost effectiveness.

The prevailing popular perception that a security barrier can enhance Israeli security also has grave implications for settlements, which is why settlers are adamantly opposed to the concept, even as they are reconciled to its realization. It builds upon a notion first suggested at Oslo that the occupied territories are indeed a foreign country, not an unremarkable, integral part of the state of Israel.

“A fence is a fact on the ground. Like settlements. Only in the opposite direction,” wrote Uri Elitzur, a settlement leader, in *Yediot Aharonot* on June 14, 2002. “A fence declares, through the means of facts on the ground: until this point is ours, and from there and beyond does not belong to us. Settlers aspire to use the imagery of creating facts on the ground. This fence is no image, a fact is being established, and facts on the ground are the thing that determines the future.”

Even as Prime Minister Sharon declares that the subject of evacuating settlements will not even be raised during his term, a continuing series of leaks from “senior military officials” suggests that the army lacks the manpower to adequately defend some settlements and has advised that new outposts are a “headache” to defend and that some, particularly in Gaza, should be evacuated. One Israeli commentator has even joked that Israel needs a force as large as the Chinese army to defend the settlement outposts, a mission that undermines the IDF's ability to perform other missions.

The IDF campaign conducted through the press reflects, in part, a warning to the government that the military is being asked to perform missions—the defense of settlers, settlements, and the newly emerging security perimeter—beyond its available resources. It also reflects a growing and public perception for the first time since 1967 that there are significant security costs to be borne by settlement expansion, and that these costs are not suffered by anonymous soldiers, but by brothers, fathers, and sons ordered with increasing frequency to perform what many consider to be thankless reserve duty in defense of settlements. In recent weeks, the IDF has reduced such tasks, leading to complaints by settlement leaders. According to Avitar Cohen, head of security at Ofra, “The army has failed in assuring the security of settlements because it doesn't relate to this as a primary mission.”

Some proponents of separation anticipate that the construction of a security barrier will focus Palestinian attacks on settlers and settlements. In such a “war for the peace of the settlements,” popular pressure will grow for evacuation of the vast majority of settlements.

Settlers are understandably concerned by such a scenario. Never in its history has the settlement movement had to confront an Israeli public mobilized in such opposition to its agenda.

Nevertheless, settlers and their political allies have demonstrated a single-minded ability for almost three decades to turn circumstances to their advantage. A post-Oslo era superintended by Ariel Sharon is an unlikely setting for the settlements' demise. ♦

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY PRESENTS “NON-PAPER” TO BUSH ADMINISTRATION

In June, representatives of the Palestinian Authority presented Secretary of State Colin Powell with the “Palestinian Vision for the Outcome of Permanent Status Negotiations—Based on the Arab Peace Plan.” Highlights from the policy paper appear below.

■ The borders between the state of Palestine and the state of Israel will be the June 4, 1967, Armistice Line, though the two sides may agree to minor, reciprocal, and equal boundary rectifications that do not affect, among other things, territorial contiguity. The Palestinian and Israeli sides shall have no territorial claims beyond the June 4, 1967, borders. These borders will be the permanent boundaries between the two states.

■ There will be a permanent territorial corridor established between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip sections of the state of Palestine.

■ East Jerusalem will become the capital of the state of Palestine and West Jerusalem will become the capital of the state of Israel.

■ The Palestinian side will transfer sovereignty over the Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall section of the Western Wall in East Jerusalem to Israel, while retaining sovereignty over the remainder of the Old City. ◆

“I think they’ll win and get their state,” he said, waving a hand in the direction of the Palestinian territories not far from his home. “And the Jewish settlements? They’re coming apart already. Some will have to be evacuated and others will pack up on their own. I’ve been working with Palestinians for 25 years and I know what they want. We’re occupiers and this has got to end. They want to live with us in peace, but in their own state. I guess I can understand them.”

Ami Shavit, veteran resident of the Gaza settlement of Dugit, Ha’aretz, May 31, 2002

Foundation for Middle East Peace
1761 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: 202-835-3650
Fax: 202-835-3651
E-mail: info@fmep.org
Internet: <http://www.fmep.org>