

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEW “OUTPOSTS” LEAD SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

By Geoffrey Aronson

A sidebar in the July 30, 2002, edition of the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* reported, “Tal Benjamin, a military outpost established next to Ofra eighteen months ago after the murders by Palestinian gunmen of Benjamin and Talia Kahane [the son of Meir Kahane and his wife], has been transformed into a civilian location. This week [Minister of Defense Benjamin Ben Eliezer] decided to respond positively to the settlers’ request to civilianize the outpost.”

Settlers from Ofra had claimed the site immediately after the Kahane killings before turning it over to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Tal Benjamin is a short walk from the “mother” settlement and overlooks Road 60, the main north-south thoroughfare through the heart of the West Bank, opposite the Palestinian village of Ayn Yabrud on the other side

of the road.

I visited Tal Benjamin in November 2001, walking the kilometer or so from Ofra, up a dirt road and past Ofra’s new residential development of tidy, red-roofed homes before passing through groves belonging to Ayn Yabrud residents, who dared not try to tend to them in the months after the IDF’s arrival. Home sales at the new development have been slowed by the intifada and by Israel’s recession. Even so, Ofra’s population increased by 6 percent, to 2,000, in 2001. The new neighborhood boasts its own synagogue, which some long-time residents view as yet another indication of Ofra’s bittersweet transformation from an intimate cluster of like-minded zealots into a successful town.

Ofra traces its own origins to an “unauthorized” outpost settled in 1976, and in that sense Tal Benjamin is a throw back to Ofra’s own beginnings. In November 2001, Tal Benjamin was little more than a fortified observation point with a storehouse, a mangy dog or two, and a canopy covering the twenty chairs used by Sabbath worshippers from Ofra.

When I next visit Tal Benjamin, I expect that the first mobile homes will be in place. This template for its expansion has been used by settlers and their government and military supporters for more than three decades.

“There is here a long-term, timeless cooperation,” explained a senior Defense Ministry official to *Ma’ariv*. “The settlers have grown accustomed to creating facts on the ground, to capture

the hilltops and to show the flag, after which the government cleans up after them in triplicate, laundering all the business, approving it *ex post facto*. No one has the strength to do the right thing, that is, to evacuate our good friends from the land.”

If Ofra symbolizes one end of the scale of Israel’s dynamic settlement enterprise and Tal Benjamin the other, then Emmuna lies somewhere in the middle. Emmuna, situated on a hilltop overlooking Ofra to the west, was among the first of the settlement outposts established in 1996, when the latest chapter of this method of settlement expansion began. The road to Emmuna leaves from Ofra, climbing to the top of a hill that boasts splendid views east to Jordan and north to the next hilltop, Ba’al Hatzor, where the IDF operates an important intelligence-gathering site.

Over the years, young singles gave way to 18 married couples living in ramshackle caravans. On my last visit a new playground had just been built.

Development of Emmuna was to have been “frozen” under an October 1999 deal between the settlers and Prime Minister Ehud Barak that “legalized” 32 of 42 outposts established in contravention of Israeli planning procedures.

When one of Emmuna’s residents met the Prime Minister Sharon recently, he asked, “Why haven’t you begun to construct permanent housing? You’ve already been there for quite a while.”

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TO OUR READERS

President Bush's policy of demanding, as the price for U.S. reengagement in peace diplomacy, the ouster of Yasser Arafat, an end to Palestinian violence, and Palestinian reform, while asking little of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, is not working. Palestinian terrorists have recently killed over ten Israeli civilians after six weeks of "relative calm." (69 Palestinians, including civilians, have been killed during this period.) Sharon's decision to virtually imprison Arafat, further humiliate him, and destroy the remnants of his shattered Authority have boosted Arafat's waning popularity and curtailed nascent reform efforts. Drastic curfews and controls have fragmented the West Bank at huge human and economic cost. And Sharon continues expanding settlements, pouring fuel on the flames of Palestinian anger and despair.

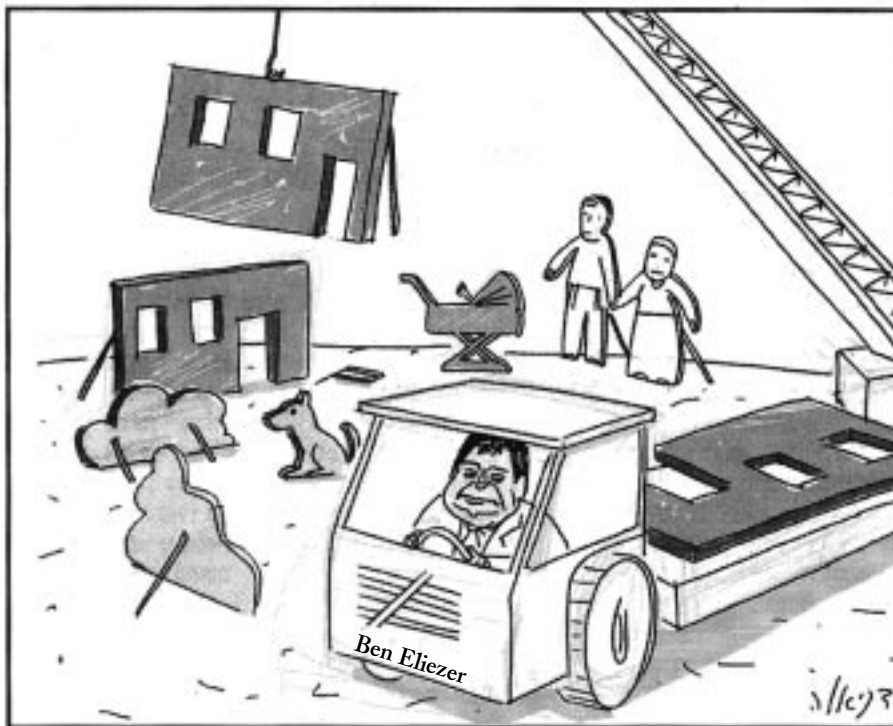
Washington's expectation that Arafat can crack down on terrorism, now being carried out mostly by his Islamist enemies, after Sharon has virtually destroyed Arafat's

security apparatus and replaced it with Israeli occupation forces, is surreal. So is Bush's demand that Palestinians create a democracy and choose new leaders while Israel's harsh military occupation persists.

The Bush Administration has criticized the IDF's new assault on Arafat's compound, which threatens U.S. efforts to win support for UN action against Iraq. But basic U.S. policy is unchanged. The White House keeps quiet on settlements, and Secretary Rumsfeld muses about "so called occupied areas," which Israel "won" in war. Meanwhile, Israelis and Palestinians continue to bleed, America's stock in the region sinks to a new low, and the war against terrorism, which requires, above all, help from the Arab and Muslim world, is at risk.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

Ben Eliezer and the "Dummy" Outposts



Ha'aretz, July 2, 2002

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The Chief of Staff Speaks

Ya'alon: The campaign is between two societies that are competing for territory and, to a certain degree, for existence. I don't think that there is an existential threat to the Palestinian society. There is an existential threat to us. In other words, there is asymmetry here, but it is reversed: Everyone thinks we are Goliath and they are David, but I maintain that it is the opposite.

The War of Independence was the most important event in our history and this war was the second most important event.

Ha'aretz: Even more important than the Six-Day War or the Yom Kippur War?

Ya'alon: Of course, of course. Because we are dealing with an existential threat. There was an Israeli attempt to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by means of a territorial compromise, and the Palestinian reply was war. So this brings us back to the confrontation of the pre-state period, the partition proposal and the War of Independence. The facts that are being determined in this confrontation—in terms of what will be burned into the Palestinian consciousness—are fateful. If we end the confrontation in a way that makes it clear to every Palestinian that terrorism does not lead to agreements, that will improve our strategic position. On the other hand, if their feeling at the end of the confrontation is that they can defeat us by means of terrorism, our situation will become more and more difficult. Therefore, I say that we must not blur the weighty meaning of this confrontation. When you

grasp the essence, it's clear to you what you have to do. You have to fight for your life.

Ha'aretz: Does that mean that any move involving unilateral withdrawal before the confrontation is resolved and before the violence ends is dangerous?

Ya'alon: Of course. That would give a push to the struggle against us. Even if tactically it appears right to withdraw from here or from there, from the strategic perspective, it is different. That was my argument when the question arose of withdrawing from Joseph's Tomb [in Nablus]. It was clear to me that leaving the tomb would be an incentive for the Palestinians, whereas others thought that leaving the site would neutralize a point of friction. But those who thought in those terms were thinking like Israelis, not like Palestinians.

Ha'aretz: So that means that in the present situation, leaving settlements would be a mistake with potentially catastrophic implications?

Ya'alon: Of course. I'm not talking about the political solution. I am not saying what will be right and what will not be right after the violence ends. That's not my affair. When asked, I will give my security recommendation. But today, any such departure under terrorism and violence will strengthen the path of terrorism and violence. It will endanger us.

Ha'aretz: In other words, as chief of staff, you are saying that even if you need a battalion to hold an isolated settlement, if we leave it we will need a great deal more?

Ya'alon: Correct.

IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon,
interviewed in *Ha'aretz*, August 30, 2002

Ever since the occupation of the territories began, the settlers of Hebron have been noteworthy for their militancy, their racist hatred against Palestinian residents of the city and the violent contempt that they and their children demonstrate toward the rule of law and every person in uniform who acts in its name.

But those in uniform, and especially the men in blue, Israeli police have seemed throughout these years to be at a loss in the face of these settlers' determination to make their neighbors' lives unbearable, while trampling on every law and desecrating every Jewish and human value. The acts of these boors have blackened, and continue to blacken, Israel's name. And these serial rioters' stated reliance on the tradition of the patriarch Abraham, a figure described as having "a kindly eye and a humble spirit," is nothing but a gross distortion.

The Civil Administration recently drafted a report that documents some of the acts of the Hebron settlers (*Ha'aretz*, August 11, 2002). This document, which was submitted to the prime minister and the defense minister, notes in detail how this unique Jewish settlement rears "shock troops" of boys and girls, steeped in hatred and arrogance, who torment

the Palestinians and oppress them in various ways. The graduates of these operations, the young couples, serve as reserves for breaking into Palestinian houses adjacent to the Jewish neighborhoods in order to evict their occupants and annex these houses to the Jewish settlement. "No one dares to deal with them," one security official confessed to a *Ha'aretz* reporter.

The settlers' brutal vandalism reached its disgraceful peak during the funeral of soldier Elazar Leibowitz, a Hebron resident who was murdered in a shooting attack on a road outside the city. Dozens of residents of the settlement and their guests from outside rioted, shot at Palestinian houses, killed a Palestinian girl and wounded others, beat up passersby and destroyed property. The rioters also faced off with the police, who failed in their efforts to contain or restrain the violent rampage. Colonel (res.) Moshe Givati, an adviser to the public security minister, termed the settlers' assault a "pogrom"—a loaded word that Jews do not lightly apply to the acts of other Jews.

"The Rulers of Hebron," *Ha'aretz*, August 13, 2002

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June 2 Arutz 7 reports that 1,200 shells have been fired at residents of the Katif bloc in Gaza, since October 2000.

Israel fences 115 dunams of Palestinian land in Jabal al-Mukkar, in East Jerusalem, for the construction of a new 200-unit settlement project. (*Palestine Report*)

June 3 The *Economist* reports that since the Israeli invasion of the West Bank on April 24, there have been 83 incursions into Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps.

Hear Palestine reports armed settlers carrying out attacks in villages surrounding Nablus. Agricultural land in Asira al-Qabaliya and Orif villages are set on fire and dozens of sheep stolen.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) detonate a 40-kilogram bomb planted on a road near the settlement of Dugit, in Gaza. It is similar to bombs that have damaged IDF tanks in the past. (*Israel Line*)

Israeli attorney general Elyakim Rubinstein accuses suspected members of a Jewish extremist group of responsibility for a bomb placed in a schoolyard in Sur Bahir, East Jerusalem, in March 2002 that injured 11 Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*)

A tender is published in *Yediot Abaranot* for the construction of 48 dwelling units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev.

June 4 Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon endorses a plan for the construction of a 110-kilometer fence that will run from Kfar Salem to Kfar Kassam. The course of the fence approximates the Green Line. (*Ha'aretz*)

Work is suspended at the Jabal Mukkar settlement site when Palestinian residents protest.

The IDF informs residents of Issawiyeh, East Jerusalem, that 40 dunams of land between their town and the Ma'ale Adumim-Jerusalem road will be confiscated for military purposes.

June 5 *Hear Palestine* reports that the IDF has dug a ditch from west of al-Matahin to the beach in al-Mawasi to isolate Gaza's Deir al-Balah from al-Mawasi.

June 6 *Ma'ariv* reports that the Gittit, Homesh, Mevo Dotan, Nativ Hagadud, and

Sa Nur settlements have asked, or are considering asking, Gush Emunim's Amana to find settlers willing to move to the settlements.

Ha'aretz reports that an Israeli youth was shot and killed while traveling north of the Ofra settlement. Fifteen Israelis have been killed in attacks in the area since October 2000.

June 8 Two gunmen kill three Israelis and wound three others in the Karmeit Tzur settlement, near Hebron. Another gunman wounds four Israeli soldiers in Yitzhar, near Nablus, before being shot and killed. Yitzhar settlers retaliate by setting fire to crops and a house in three neighboring Palestinian villages. (*Palestine Report*)

June 9 Residents in Neve Dekalim were asked by the IDF to spend the night in shelters in anticipation of a Palestinian attempt to "imitate the success" of previous infiltrations at Adura, Karmeit Tzur, and Itamar.

Ha'aretz reports that the Jerusalem Planning and Construction Council has approved the construction of 750 units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramot.

June 10 According to Israeli security officials, 61 illegal outposts have been established in the occupied territories since 1995, 15 of which were built during the al-Aqsa intifada. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports Jewish Agency sponsorship of a program that relocates entire foreign Jewish communities to both sides of the Green Line. Of nine groups slated to relocate, 3 communities are to be sent to settlements.

IDF officers warn that the settlements are targets for terror attacks. Many have no serious security and are easily infiltrated. The YESHA Council demands that reservists be called to guard settlements against attacks instead of dismantling illegal outposts. (*Yediot Abaranot* and *Ma'ariv*)

June 11 The IDF demolishes six homes in Sur Bahir, in East Jerusalem. Israeli forces have destroyed 33 East Jerusalem homes since January 2002. Seventeen Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem were demolished in 2001. (*LAW*).

June 12 The IDF bulldozes land near Beni Zeid to expand the settlement of Halamish.

Neighboring Palestinian villages also report that Halamish settlers, under the protection of Israeli soldiers, have confiscated more than 400 dunams of land. (*Hear Palestine*)

Residents of Mazra'a al-Sharqiya village report the IDF setting up a tent on their land and closing the village's garbage facilities. (*Hear Palestine*)

Yediot Abaranot reports the establishment of an outpost settlement "very close" to Singil, north of Ramallah.

Yediot Abaranot reports the fears of attorney general Rubinstein that the construction of settlements in Jerusalem may precipitate charges in the International Criminal Court. Rubinstein warned of the possibility that senior IDF officers and politicians may find themselves in danger of arrest abroad for their actions in this regard. A special department is to be established in the Ministry of Justice to address these issues.

June 13 The Knesset votes in favor of establishing a judicial commission of inquiry into the Oslo agreements. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres declares, "If there has to be an investigation, it should be into those who halted the process and the illegal settlements that were established in contravention of Israel's commitments and security needs." (*Mideast Mirror*)

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that since October 2000, Palestinians have killed 20 Israeli civilians and 35 soldiers in Gaza, many of them traveling to and from the Katif bloc settlements.

June 14 The Israeli government decides that settlements and industrial areas in the occupied territories will continue to benefit from the highest level of subsidies granted to Priority A areas.

Reversing a 35-year policy, the United Jewish Communities in the United States announces that it will provide funds to Jews living in settlements. The organization will use these monies to increase settlement security and rehabilitate "victims of terror and their families."

IDF sappers destroy a 40-kilogram bomb found near the Dugit settlement in the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 15 Israel begins digging a ditch near Kfar Sur to separate more than 800 dunams of cultivated land south of Tulkarem in

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

Far'un, Jbara, al-Ras, and Kfar Sur villages. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 16 Yizhar settlers set fire to seven dunams of olive trees and cultivated land near Hawara village. (*Hear Palestine*)

Israel demolishes greenhouses and a sand barrier located near a Palestinian security checkpoint in the Absan area. (*Hear Palestine*)

June 17 Settlement leaders and heads of local councils in Israel agree to a policy on construction of a separation fence. Its path will seal off as many West Bank Palestinians as possible from Israel and some settlements. (*Ha'aretz*)

Two Meretz MKs submit legislation for the evacuation within 60 days of the settlements of Baracha, Elon Moreh, Ganim, Hebron, Itamar, Kadim, Kfar Darom, Netzarim, Psagot, Tapuah, and Yizhar. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 18 A Palestinian kills 19 people and wounds 70 others when he blows himself up on a bus traveling on the Gilo road in East Jerusalem. Hamas claims responsibility.

June 19 A Palestinian suicide bomber kills six Israelis and injures more than fifty in East Jerusalem's French Hill. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 20 Peace Now reports that 44 settlement outposts have been established since Ariel Sharon's election in February 2001, contrary to his statement that only 13 such sites have been established during his tenure.

The Israeli cabinet, responding to Palestinian suicide bombings, declares, "Israel will respond to acts of terror by capturing PA [Palestinian Authority] territory. These areas will be held by Israel as long as terror continues. Additional acts of terror will lead to the taking of additional areas." The PA describes the decision as "destroying the Oslo agreement and canceling the powers of the authority."

A Palestinian kills five settlers and wounds two others at the Itamar settlement. IDF forces shoot and kill the gunman. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claims responsibility. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

June 21 Settlers from Elon Moreh, Itamar, and Yizhar enter Hawara and Burim villages, setting fire to stores and cars and killing one Palestinian. Settlers also attack Yanun, near Itamar. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel uproots cultivated land on the outskirts of Qalqilya to accommodate the separation wall. (*Hear Palestine*)

Kol Ha'ir reports that the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction has spent \$9 million in the preceding 18 months to guard buildings inhabited by Israelis in East Jerusalem. The Ministry of National Infrastructure is financing electricity to settlement outposts that Benjamin Ben Eliezer, minister of defense, has repeatedly promised to evacuate.

Kol HaZeman reports the installation of security cameras around the settlement of Kedumin because settlers had opposed a perimeter fence for ideological reasons.

June 22 A settler is arrested for involvement in the violence in Hawara and Burim and the death of a Palestinian. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 23 The Knesset approves the construction of a 115-kilometer fence along the "seam line," near the 1967 borders at a cost of \$115 million. Labor's Peres is the only minister to vote against the fence. He also opposes an unsuccessful attempt by minister of defense Ben Eliezer to win approval of a "security zone" in the Jordan Valley comprising 22 percent of the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 25 IDF forces increase security at settlement outposts in the West Bank to prevent Palestinians from infiltrating them. (*Ha'aretz*)

Sharon tells the Knesset Security and Defense Committee that during his last White House visit, it was agreed that the topic of settlements would be addressed only in final status talks. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 26 Construction of the "Jerusalem Envelope" fence begins after the expropriation of Palestinian land for the project.

The settler arrested June 22 for the murder of a Palestinian is released on \$500 bail after promising not to visit the northern West Bank during the next month.

June 27 Israel bulldozes 11 Palestinian homes in the Rafah refugee camp. Some 330 homes have been demolished in the camp since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada. (*Palestine Report*)

June 28 Israeli uproots 40 dunams of olive and almond trees north of Khan Yunis to

expand the Ganei Tal settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

The IDF blows up the PA's Hebron compound. The blast also destroys fifteen homes. (*Hear Palestine*)

June 30 The IDF closes the PA's Bethlehem liaison office and replaces Palestinian flags with Israeli ones.

July 1 Military sources report that the YESHA Council has evacuated 11 illegal outposts, but settlers maintain that only 3 have been abandoned, with 9 others scheduled for evacuation. The IDF later acknowledges that 2 of the 11 remain inhabited.

Israel decides not to ratify the 1998 Rome Treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. The government reportedly fears repercussions over its illegal settlement enterprise and the transfer of Israelis to the occupied territories.

The IDF announces plans for a special training facility to improve the performance of soldiers and civilians guarding settlements. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

July 3 *Ha'aretz* reports a group of 15 well-known rabbis, mainly from settlements, issuing a declaration imploring Israelis, "Do not employ Arab workers, or negotiate with Arabs. Give preference in commerce to those who do not employ Arabs and who don't sell Arab wares."

Hear Palestine reports that Israel continues to destroy cultivated land in northwest Khan Yunis and Beit Hanun.

July 4 Palestinian officials in Gaza report that the IDF has destroyed more than 3,500 dunams of agricultural land since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada, including 830 dunams in al-Sheikh Ajlin, one of the most important agricultural areas in Gaza. (*Hear Palestine*)

July 9 The IDF demolishes seven Palestinian homes and damages two in Rafah. (*Hear Palestine*)

Hear Palestine reports settlers from Adam confiscating agricultural land near Jaba village. Settlers are constructing a 12-meter-wide road west of the settlement.

July 14 *Ha'aretz* reports IDF West Bank commander Yitzhak Gershon volunteering

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SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

officers and soldiers for a week of duty at settlements because of a shortage of guards.

July 16 Palestinians kill eight Israelis and wound 20 others in an attack on a bus near the settlement of Emmanuel in the West Bank. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and Islamic Jihad all claim responsibility. (*Mideast Mirror*)

July 17 The IDF reports that additional outposts, most of them uninhabited and in the northern West Bank, have been evacuated in the preceding days as part of an agreement between the Defense Ministry and the YESHA Council to dismantle 20 outposts by the middle of the month.

Defense Minister Ben Eliezer promises \$25 million to increase security in West Bank settlements. (*Kol Radio*)

Shlomo Aviner, rabbi of the Beit El settlement and head of the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva, says that it is permissible to kill IDF soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied territories. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

The Knesset authorizes \$437,500 for greenhouses in the Katif bloc and an additional \$13 million for a new Ma'ale Adumim neighborhood. (*Ha'aretz*)

July 18 *Ha'aretz* reports Syria demanding that Israel return to the United Nations compensation paid by Iraq to the settlement of Hamat Gader in the Golan Heights for damages suffered during the Gulf War.

July 21 Peace Now states that not one unauthorized settler outpost has been dismantled.

July 22 The Gaza settlement of Netzarim celebrates its thirtieth anniversary.

July 23 *Ha'aretz* reports Israeli government approval for a new settlement, Kidmat Kinerret, in the Syrian section of the Golan DMZ.

July 24 An Israeli settler from Peduel dies when his car is ambushed near Alei Zahav. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claims responsibility. (*Mideast Mirror*)

A mortar attack near Ma'ale Levonah leaves two Israelis injured. (*Ha'aretz*)

A rocket attack injures two people at a settlement in north Gaza. (*Ha'aretz*).

July 25 YESHA spokesman Yehoshua Mor-Yosef announces that since January 2001 the settler population has increased by 7.7 percent. (*Jordan Times*)

Yediot Aharanot reports that the IDF has, for the first time, approved the establishment of a civil guard composed of Gaza Strip settlers.

July 26 Palestinian gunmen kill three settlers in a car near the Zif junction. The gunmen then ambush another vehicle near the Carmel settlement, killing one Hebron settler. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians fire an antitank missile at a bus on the Karni-Netzarim road in the Gaza

“What a joke this is. For those who haven't noticed, the occupation is already back. Just because it isn't feasible from a financial standpoint, doesn't mean that it isn't actually happening in practice.”

Zehava Gal-On, Meretz member of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, *Ha'aretz*, August 7, 2002

Strip. The attack, which caused extensive damage to the bus but no casualties, was the first of its kind.

Kol Ha'ir reports an IDF study concluding that it is permissible to expel Palestinians from Areas A and B in the West Bank in order to defend the Israeli civilian population. The study asserts that, according to The Hague convention, it is possible to declare captured territory to be a military area, and because of the high danger posed to civilians by attacks from such areas, to transfer the indigenous population to another region.

July 27 Israel bulldozes cultivated Palestinian land near the Netzarim settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

To save money, the IDF decides to increase the use of regular forces to guard settlements. (*Yediot Aharanot*)

July 28 Settlers rampage through Hebron, setting fire to houses and shops, stabbing two Palestinians and shooting and killing a 14-year-old girl. (*Ha'aretz* and *PHRMG*).

U.S. ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer recommends that Israel “improve the atmosphere” by freezing settlement expansion and dismantling recently established settlement outposts. (*Ha'aretz*)

July 30 Two Israelis, ignoring security warnings, are killed when they enter a West Bank village. (*Mideast Mirror*)

A Palestinian enters the Itamar settlement and stabs a couple. (*Mideast Mirror*)

Settlers from Yitzhar burn olive trees belonging to Palestinians in the Hawara and Burim villages.

Professor Zvi Eckstein, former head of Tel Aviv University's economics department, publishes a report stating, “The state budgets on average 17 times more money for settlers than for a Ramat Gan [Israeli town] resident.” He also reports that in 2000, West Bank settlements received an average of \$1,260.50 per resident from government ministries. Receiving the most that year was the Gaza Coast Regional Council, at \$2,505.25 per resident. Karnei Shomron followed with \$2,051; Kedumim, with \$1,826; Negev communities, with \$633.25; Haifa, with \$328.75 on average; Tel Aviv-Jaffa, with \$216.50; and Ramat Gan, only \$147. (*Ma'ariv* and *Ha'aretz*).

Ma'ariv reports that the settlement of Ofra has received permission from Defense Minister Ben Eliezer to settle an army post originally established by settlers to commemorate the death of Kach leader Benjamin Kahane and his wife.

July 31 Israeli police begin a special deployment to prevent acts of settler retaliation against Palestinians and their property after a week in which seven settlers were killed. (*Ha'aretz*)

Preparatory work has since begun for the construction of 19 permanent dwellings.

The story of Emmuna repeats itself throughout the West Bank, where virtually all of the outposts Barak ordered evacuated are today inhabited, and many others have been established. At Pelgei Ma'im, known as Mitzpe Shuna when it was established in early 1999, groundwork for the construction of 15 permanent houses has been completed. A similar process is underway at Mitzpe Keramim, Adei Ad, and Beruchim.

In July 2002, AMANA, the settlement arm of Gush Emunim, began a campaign to turn the outposts into settlements like all the others. The drive to assimilate new residents is proceeding under the slogan "Come and Claim the Land."

Since the national unity government headed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was formed in March 2001, more than 50 outposts have been established, according to Peace Now. The government acknowledged in July 2002 that 69 outposts had been established since 1996, but put the number during Sharon's tenure at 34. A June 2002 IDF report determined that 61 outposts were "illegal," that is, they were established in contravention of Israeli statutes regulating planning and construction. The violation of international prohibitions concerning settlement in occupied territory—which makes all Israeli settlement illegal under international law—is not a constraint upon Israeli officials, and certainly not a concern for settlers.

In late June 2002, on the eve of the Labor party convention at which Ben Eliezer faced criticism about his failure to move more aggressively against the settlers, the defense minister announced that 11 outposts would be dismantled with an additional 9 to follow.

An informal agreement between the Defense Ministry and the settlers, represented by the director of AMANA, Ze'ev Hever, a confidant of Sharon, provided for the removal of 20 outposts but the blessing of 22 others.

MK Zvi Hendel of the right-wing National Union-Israel Beitenu acknowledged that not one of the "evacuated" outposts had been inhabited. "Every outpost that was evacuated was an imaginary outpost, only some of which were from a planning standpoint meant to be outposts in the future. We

assumed from the beginning," he told Arutz 7 radio, "that there would come a time when such a big Zionist enterprise would not pass quietly. And in the same way as we pay a prostitute, we would have to give a little to the haters of settlement."

"Fuad [Ben Eliezer] is trying to stop the deterioration of the Labor party through the use of gimmicks that could make you cry," wrote columnist Haim Bar Am. "Ben Eliezer sends soldiers to evacuate a couple of imaginary houses, which were built expressly for this purpose, hoping that the settlers and their friends will protest. Their protests will serve the defense minister in two ways: he'll succeed in deceiving Meretz activists and what remains of the doves in Labor and strengthen his image in certain circles in the U.S. and Europe that persist in believing that there is a conflict between the Labor party and Likud."

In cabinet deliberations, Ben Eliezer argued that there was a need to remove outposts not only because they had been set up without proper planning, but also because they posed a security danger, requiring the IDF to expend limited resources protecting far-flung settlements oftentimes occupied by fewer settlers than soldiers protecting them.

"I have nothing against settlers," he argued, "but it is a shame that soldiers from the IDF busy in the fight against terror must station troops for the protection of law-breakers living in isolated outposts."

"This is not the time to give a prize to terror by removing outposts," complained Minister Without Portfolio Efi Eitam. "What about the illegal construction by Arabs?" argued Minister of

Public Security Uzi Landau.

Sharon was the minister of foreign affairs when he urged Israelis in the fall of 1998 to "run and grab the hilltops." He remains the patron of the outpost phenomenon, as he has been of most of the settlement activities in the central region of the West Bank, where settlement activity is concentrated. He presides over a government policy implemented by Ben Eliezer, in cooperation with YESHA, that, insofar as it "evacuates" outposts, assists Ben Eliezer in his internal political battles against his more left-wing opponents, while not materially affecting the creation of new settlements in areas targeted by settlers for expansion. ♦

Between August 1998 and May 1999, when Ehud Barak defeated Benjamin Netanyahu, 32 outposts were established.

By July 1999, there were 42 outposts, 29 of which had been established after the Wye Plantation talks in October 1998.

In June 2001, the Defense Ministry acknowledged the existence of at least 66 outposts, of which it declared 60 "illegal". Of this number, 24 had been established since October 2001. Fifteen of the 66 were to have been evacuated.

In July 2002, the Defense Ministry counted 69 outposts established since 1996, of which 34 had been established during the previous 12 months. Peace Now put the figure at 80. The ministry announced in late July that 19 outposts had been evacuated.

By September 2002, Peace Now was reporting the establishment of 8 additional outposts during August.

Population of Selected Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—December 2001

Name	2001***	2000**	1999*	1999-2001(%)
Alfei Menashe	5,000	4,580	4,410	13.4
Allon Shevut	2,900	2,680	2,230	30.0
Ariel	16,000	15,600	15,100	6.0
Bet Arye	2,400	2,380	2,330	3.0
Bet El	4,300	4,120	3,800	13.2
Betar 'Illit	17,300	15,800	12,700	36.2
Efrat	6,500	6,430	6,230	4.3
Elkana	3,000	2,990	2,940	2.0
Emmanuel	2,700	3,040	3,150	-14.3
Giv'at Ze'ev	10,500	10,300	10,000	5.0
Karne Shomron	6,100	5,890	5,590	9.1
Kedumim	2,700	2,660	2,540	6.3
Kiryat Arba'	6,400	6,380	6,240	2.6
Lapid	2,000	1,900	NA	NA
Ma'ale Adummim	25,800	24,900	23,800	8.4
Modi'in Ilit	19,200	16,400	13,000	47.7
Neve Dekalim (Gaza)	2,400	2,280	2,230	7.6
Ofra	2,000	1,880	1,870	7.0
Oranit	5,200	5,070	4,780	8.8
Sha'are Tikva	3,500	3,380	3,220	8.7
Total	145,900	138,660	126,160	15.6

Sources: 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 [**]; List of Localities: Their Population and Codes, 31.12.2001. Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002 [***].

Let's Make A Deal?

It is possible to divide Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] according to the principle that Clinton established for Jerusalem: "All that is Jewish will be Israeli and all that is Arab will be Palestinian." Most of the area of Judea and Samaria, more than 70 percent, is today absolutely empty. Neither Arabs nor Jews are living there. In the rest of the territory—Arabs hold around 25 percent, and the Jews 5 percent. We must construct a model which will describe how they will conduct their lives in that part of the area that is not ruled by us, and how we will divide the area in a manner that both sides can live with. There are models, even the maps are ready.

Uri Elitsur, settlement leader from Ofra, in Nekuda, September 2002

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