

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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THE ROAD MAP TAKES A DETOUR AROUND SETTLEMENTS

By *Geoffrey Aronson*

The Bush Administration's road map was launched with great fanfare at the June 2003 Aqaba summit. Nevertheless, the temporary reduction in killing and mayhem it achieved has been erased by a resumption of violence and terror. The road map's failed diplomatic and security agenda may well be resurrected. But it cannot succeed if it continues to focus on the violent symptoms of the conflict and ignores the issue at its heart—the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians for control of land and its resources.

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon

has rejected a comprehensive halt to settlement expansion and frustrated the evacuation of settlement “outposts” established after March 2001, both of which are required by the road map. As the statement by the U.S. State Department spokesman on page 3 illustrates, the United States, which claimed sole diplomatic responsibility for superintending the road map, is complicit in Sharon's success, and diplomacy's failure. The Bush administration has refused to confront the territorial essence of the conflict and to employ the road map's own requirement to establish the elements of an effective settlement freeze, oversee its implementation, and verify Israeli compliance.

Sharon has succeeded in blunting feeble diplomatic efforts to constrain Israel's hold on the occupied territories. His government is undertaking massive, unprecedented efforts beyond the construction of new settlement housing, which proceeds apace, to put the question of its control of these areas beyond the reach of diplomacy. For Sharon, this is the only reliable strategy. In a lifetime on the political stage, he has never demonstrated any interest in fashioning with the Arab world political solutions of any kind, let alone one that would establish genuine Palestinian sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

Many months ago, Sharon made headlines when he confidently declared that the road map was meaningless. More recently, he remarked that Israel had given the Palestinians “nothing” in the way of substantive change in the

status quo mandated by the road map.

Sharon's diplomatic achievement emptied the road map of the “political horizon”—a sovereign, independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories—that is required in order to build a Palestinian constituency for peace.

On the ground Israel has relentlessly increased both the territorial control and growth of settlements, and in so doing compromised not only the prospect for genuine Palestinian independence but also, in ways not seen in Israel's 36 year occupation, the very sustainability of everyday Palestinian life.

The Israeli organization B'TSELEM reports that 43 percent of the inhabitants of Hebron's Old City near the enclave of 500 Jewish settlers have abandoned their homes since the start of the intifada in September 2000.

“According to our investigation, 73 of the 169 families living in these streets have left, while some 2,000 shops and businesses in the Casbah (Old City) have closed,” said the coordinator of the study, Shlomo Suissa, as reported by AFP on August 19, 2003.

B'TSELEM cites “violence by the settlers and the lack of law enforcement” among the reasons which led to the departure of the families. “The ongoing abuse of Hebron's Palestinian population results from the settlers' presence in the city,” the report stated.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reports that close to 1,200 Palestinian homes have

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TO OUR READERS

U.S. officials, echoing Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, blame the collapse of the short-lived cease-fire and the current impasse on the Palestinian Authority's failure to destroy HAMAS and other such groups and on Yasser Arafat's refusal to give unified control over Palestinian security forces to former prime minister Mahmoud Abbas. The assumption, however, that any Palestinian leader, including Prime Minister-designate Ahmed Qurai', would risk possible civil war now with the rival extremist factions is unrealistic. The Palestinian leadership, notwithstanding other internal divisions, agrees that without strong public support, a military showdown with the militants would likely fail. Unless the Palestinian people believe that their reward will be liberation in a genuine Palestinian state, they will not support a violent internecine struggle.

Sharon offers no such reward. His vision is still the defeat of the Palestinians through continued settlement and confinement to less than half the territories in a

quasi-state behind a massive security barrier. Until the Palestinians have good reason to expect liberation, they will avoid an internal reckoning.

Leaders of other divided national liberation movements have often chosen to avoid confrontation with radical rivals until after victory. In the 1940s David Ben Gurion's policies often mirrored Arafat's today. Ben Gurion cooperated with the British against Jewish militants when British policy toward the Zionists was forthcoming, but he abandoned cooperation when the British turned against Zionist aims by limiting Jewish immigration. In addition, Ben Gurion did not move decisively to disarm his radical challengers until June 1948, after the British had left and the state of Israel had been established. Only then did his forces attack and destroy the *Altalena*, a ship carrying guns and fighters for the Irgun militia led by Menachem Begin.



The President [George W. Bush], when [Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud] Abbas was in [Washington] last week and they talked about settlements and they talked about prisoners. The president kept saying over and over, kept interrupting the conversation to say, "I understand. But it begins with security."

"Well, we need more on settlements," [Abbas said.] "I understand, [replied Bush], but it begins with security."

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell,
Ma'ariv, July 31, 2003

The administration views the settlement freeze as less critical at this point than changing the course of the fence, State Department officials told Arab diplomats [in Washington, D.C.]. The fence is visible, and changes to it are tangible and hence more likely to strengthen Abu Mazen, while a freeze on settlement activity is "unenforceable and unmonitorable," officials reportedly told the diplomats.

Ori Nir, "Bush Eases Pressure on Both Sides over Peace Plan," *Forward*, August 8, 2003

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THE STATE DEPARTMENT DEFINES A SETTLEMENT FREEZE

Question: Has the State Department made an assessment about what more would be required in the first phase to be considered a sufficient settlement freeze?

Boucher: There—some of the outposts were taken down, but there are more to be taken down. And I think the Israeli government has said it has a comprehensive plan to do that. There is the issue of settlements freeze as well, where I'd say it's not settled at this point exactly all the details of how that can be implemented. So settlements is an ongoing issue that remains under discussion.

Question: Do you consider that you have a commitment from the Israelis to freeze settlements or not?

Boucher: We have a commitment from the Israelis on the road map. We have a commitment from the Israelis to take steps that move along the process described by the road map. They have made very clear in public their commitments on taking down outposts. And the issue of settlement activity remains one of discussion with the Israelis on how that can be implemented as well. . . .

Question: Maybe I'm misunderstanding this. . . . The Israelis—either you stop—either you stop or you don't stop, you know. There isn't any other little discussion. There is nothing—there is no room for discussion.

Boucher: I know that sounds great rhetorically in the briefing room. But you all know enough about this subject to know that this issue has been discussed for many years, that there are very involved aspects to this of funding, of so-called natural growth, of so-called, you know, questions of children, questions of cousins, questions of schools, questions of perimeters, questions of land. You know that's been the discussion in the past, and it shouldn't be any different now.

Question: So your understanding, do you have a position on what freezing settlements means? What is it?

Boucher: We have a position that this matter is still under discussion with the Israelis.

Question: Well, does that mean that natural growth, which is what the Israelis have said, is it something that you're willing to accept under the terms of the road map, or the road map could encompass that?

Boucher: Road map doesn't say that.

Question: I know it doesn't.

Boucher: Road map says "freeze on settlement activity."

Question: Well, now you're the one who is making the rhetorical point. Either there is a freeze or it's not, right?

Boucher: I'll finish the sentence. Okay? The road map says "freeze on settlement activity." We're in discussions with the Israelis about how exactly that can be implemented. That's where these other questions arise.

Question: And is it possible that building 22 housing units at the settlement in Gaza would be compatible with a commitment to freeze settlement activity, as the road map says?

Boucher: We are in discussions with the Israelis about how to implement the question of settlement activity.

Question: But it could be—that could fall within the parameters?

Boucher: I am not saying it could or it couldn't.

Question: I think what's confusing to some of us is that previous U.S. policy had been that natural growth within settlements was not necessarily something that the U.S. supported.

Boucher: I didn't say it was necessarily something the U.S. supported today. I said these matters are under discussion.

Question: But it was not under discussion before.

Boucher: Whether you call it natural growth, whether you call it, you know, perimeters and children and subsidies and, you know, building new floors versus building out, there are discussions, there are subjects that need to be discussed. The road map calls for a freeze on settlement activity. That subject remains under discussion.

Question: It wasn't under discussion before, Richard. It was a stated U.S. policy that you did not agree.

Boucher: It remains a stated U.S. policy that a settlements freeze is part of the road map and we expect the parties to abide by the commitments in the road map. We are talking with them about how they should do that.

Question: In previous statements you have said that the freeze on settlements includes a freeze on natural growth. Can you say that again today?

Boucher: I don't think I've said that, frankly, Jonathan. I'd have to look it up. But in any case, that, in itself, doesn't answer the question. We need to reach understandings on how exactly the settlements freeze would be implemented. The United States supports a freeze on settlements. I don't think we are saying anything new today.

Question: Well, but the problem is that it sounds as though you're willing to accept that a freeze doesn't necessarily mean a freeze.

Boucher: A freeze means a freeze. And we want it to be clear what that is, and that's why you have to discuss these things to make sure that we have a common understanding that a freeze is a freeze, and it's not a freeze that results in continued expansion or growth.

Question: Would you say that their commitment to the road map is not a commitment to implement it immediately, because how can they be committed to the road map and everything within it if they are blatantly disobeying it.

Boucher: As you know, the road map is a road map. It's not a pile of things in one place; it's movement down a set of steps, and different things happen at different phases and different times in the road map.

Question: But this is one of the first ones.

Boucher: It's one of the first ones. It's one of the things in Phase I. And we're currently in discussions with the Israelis on how it can be implemented.

Department of State spokesman Richard Boucher, daily press briefing, Washington, D.C., July 31, 2003

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

April 1 *Ha'aretz* reports that six Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers are guarding a lone settler living on a West Bank hill at a cost of approximately \$43,000 per month.

April 2 *Ma'ariv* reports that 600 IDF soldiers are guarding outposts and isolated settlements in the occupied territories.

Several families move into the settlement of Ma'ale Ha'Zeitim, in East Jerusalem adjacent to the Arab neighborhood of Ras al-Amud. About 35 of the 51 completed apartments have been purchased. Another 68 apartments are scheduled for construction. (*Ha'aretz*)

April 3 *Hear Palestine* reports that in Sur Baher, near the Har Homa settlement, 16 Palestinian homes are scheduled to be demolished for "construction without permit." More than 35 homes have been demolished in Jerusalem since the beginning of the year.

Israel's Ministry of Housing reports that its per unit investment cost in settlements is equal to or less than many locales in Israel. Investment costs are highest in the Negev (\$121,000/unit) compared to West Bank and Gaza settlements (\$33,000–\$40,000/unit). (*Ha'aretz*)

April 5 Arutz 7 reports members of the civil emergency team at the settlement of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, killing one Palestinian and capturing another attempting to infiltrate the settlement.

April 6 In the East Jerusalem settlement of Gilo, a guard patrol thwarts a Palestinian youth attempting to launch grenades. (Arutz 7)

The IDF expels a Palestinian family from their home near the settlement of Kiryat Arba and turns another Palestinian home into a military camp. Bulldozers level land in order to increase the "security belt" surrounding the settlement's fence. (*al-Ayyam*)

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon decides to delay approval of the central section of the separation barrier to run from Rosh Ha'ayin to the Judean Desert. He does not present it for approval at the weekly cabinet meeting. (*Ha'aretz*)

Acting U.S. consul-general Jeffrey Feltman tells Jerusalem mayor Uri Lupolianski that the entry of Israeli families into the Ras al-Amud area is problematic, especially in this

"sensitive" period. (*Jerusalem Post*)

April 7 *Ma'ariv* reports settlers establishing four outposts, including four that were dismantled under former defense minister Benjamin Eliezer. The YESHA settler council claims that the actions were coordinated with the defense establishment.

Two Breslover Hassidim are beaten after visiting Joseph's tomb in Nablus. There have been 52 Israelis arrested since the beginning of the year for attempting to pray at the tomb. (*Ma'ariv*)

April 8 *Hear Palestine* reports that Tekoa, in eastern Gush Etzion, has gained 10 new families in three months and another 20 are expected in the coming months.

April 9 The Palestine Center for Human Rights reports that the rate of demolitions of Palestinian homes has increased in the Gaza Strip in 2003, compared with previous years. Approximately 233 dwellings were demolished in Gaza between January 1 and March 24, and 1,672 dunums of land were leveled.

April 10 The European Union formally protests the route of the separation barrier, calling it an attempt to unilaterally establish facts on the ground. (*Jerusalem Post*)

Ha'aretz reports that there are 8,000 weapons in the hands of West Bank settlers and another 2,600 weapons owned by settlers in Gaza. In addition, settlement guard units have heavy arms, machine guns, and mortars.

A private Israeli security company employing 1,000 guards in settlements voids its contracts under pressure from its Danish partner, Group 4. (*Yediot Abarnot*)

April 15 IDF Radio reports Israel stepping up its establishment of outposts in the West Bank and the World Zionist Organization settlement division's financing of generators, water tanks, mobile homes and other infrastructure costing approximately \$228,000. (*Mideast Mirror*)

At the Karni crossing, on the Gaza-Israel border, a Palestinian gunman opens fire, killing two Israelis and wounding three others before an IDF soldier kills him. (Arutz 7)

A settler from Adura convicted of selling ammunition to Palestinians is sentenced to a prison term of five years.

April 19 Arutz 7 reports that a Palestinian

Islamic Jihad member is shot and killed by IDF soldiers after opening fire in the northern Shomron's Shaked Industrial Park, wounding three Israelis.

April 20 IDF soldiers kill a Palestinian throwing firebombs at Israeli cars on the settlement road to Kedumim. (Arutz 7)

Two settler youths are arrested after Hebron settlers clash with Israeli police while attempting to reestablish an outpost on "Worshipper's Way." (*Jerusalem Post*)

April 21 Two left-wing Israeli activists are wounded by settler gunfire near the Ma'on Farm outpost in the southern West Bank.

Knesset speaker Ruby Rivlin of the Likud visits Shilo and Beit El, the evacuation of which Prime Minister Sharon has mentioned as potential concessions in a future agreement. Construction of a new neighborhood in Shilo is under way that will consist of 40 new homes, representing a 20 percent increase in Shilo's population. Rivlin called the evacuation of settlers from their homes an act of transfer, "and as far as I know, the Likud is against transfer." (Arutz 7)

April 27 The IDF destroys an empty caravan and antenna set up near the Adoraim army base in the Mount Hebron region. (Arutz 7)

Peace Now reports that there are 108 outposts, 72 of which were built after Prime Minister Sharon took office. Eleven have been dismantled. (*Jerusalem Post*)

April 28 Arutz 7 reports mortar shells launched toward the settlement of Neve Dekalim, a shooting attack near the settlement of Kadim, and a firebombing in Tulkarem. No one was hurt.

The IDF dismantles an outpost near the settlement of Pnei Hever, east of Hebron, where two Israeli guards were accidentally killed by friendly-fire a month prior. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 1 *Ha'aretz* reports a Palestinian being killed while attempting to infiltrate the settlement of Hermesh, in the northern West Bank.

May 2 The IDF stages a "mock" settlement dismantling exercise for senior commanders. (*Yediot Abarnot*)

Ha'aretz reports that some settlement out-

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posts will not be dismantled because settlers have bought the land on which they were established. The report notes that the dire Palestinian economic situation has made such purchases easier.

In Gaza, several mortar shells are fired into the southern Katif bloc settlements. No one is hurt. (*Arutz 7*)

May 4 The Israeli company Soda Club, under pressure from EU tax authorities threatening to end preferential tariff treatment of Israeli companies exporting from the settlements, has moved its production facilities from the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, where it employed 300, to Israel. The value of Israeli exports from facilities in the occupied territories totals \$100 million. Removing free trade considerations will cost exporters \$8 million. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 5 Gunmen kill a settler traveling by car near the Ahiya outpost, northeast of Ramallah. (*Kol Yisra'el*)

May 7 The cornerstone for 72 new housing units is laid in the West Bank settlement of Beit El, near Ramallah. (*al-Quds*)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) announces that 12,000 Palestinians have been made homeless by the IDF since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada through the rise of home demolitions, from around 30 homes per month at the start of the uprising to almost 75 homes per month more recently. (*Hear Palestine*)

Settlers set up a new outpost near Shvut Rahel to be called Ma'ale Gidon, while Nofei Nechemiah, an outpost near Rechelim, is reoccupied by six families. The outpost had been evacuated six months prior and a military presence established there. (*Ma'ariv*)

May 11 A 53-year-old settler from Givat Ze'ev is killed in a shooting attack near the settlement of Ofra, in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 14 The IDF announces that since the beginning of 2003, 80 mortar shells have been fired at settlements and IDF positions in the Gaza Strip, wounding 14 civilians and soldiers. Some 1,300 shells have been fired at Israeli locations in Gaza since the al-Aqsa intifada began. (*Israel Line*)

In Gaza, four Palestinians are killed while attempting to infiltrate the Netzarim settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

May 17 *Ha'aretz* reports the IDF killing of two Palestinians attempting to infiltrate the Sha'arei Tikva settlement, on the Green Line.

An Israeli settler couple is killed when a suicide bomber blows himself up in Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 18 Israeli settlers from Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, attack Palestinian homes on al-Shallala road and around the Ibrahim mosque, where a suicide bombing had recently taken place. (*Hear Palestine*)

A Palestinian disguised as an Orthodox Jew boards a bus at Jerusalem's French Hill intersection and blows himself up, killing 7 people and injuring 20.

May 19 Two mortar shells are fired at the Katif bloc in Gaza. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel annexes 1,700 dunums of land in the villages of Nahlin and Housan to the Betar Iit settlement. In addition, settler bulldozers level land in both villages to create a security zone and open a new settlement road. (*Hear Palestine*)

May 22 A tender for the construction of 502 dwelling units in Ma'ale Adumim is published. Tenders for 635 settlement units have been issued since January 2003. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 23 In Gaza, an explosion near a bus carrying settlers to Netzarim injures 9 people. The Izzedin al-Qassam Brigade claims responsibility. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 28 In the West Bank, five caravans, a water tank, and basic supplies signal the rebuilding of the Ma'on Farm outpost, which was dismantled three months prior. (*Hear Palestine*)

A bus traveling from Jerusalem to the settlement of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, is shot at near the Halhul bypass road. Two passengers are wounded. (*Hear Palestine*)

May 30 The Council of YESHA Rabbis issues a statement calling for the establishment of Israeli sovereignty on the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) and its opening to Jewish prayer. "The Temple Mount belongs solely to the Jewish people," noted the statement, "and there is no room on it for cooperation with strangers." (*Ha'aretz*)

June 1 Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, head of the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva and rabbi of the

Bet El settlement, asserts that the road map is "wicked foolishness who likes have not been seen since the concession of part of Czechoslovakia to Hitler, which did not bring peace." (*Ha'aretz*)

June 4 *Ha'aretz* reports 20,000 settlers rallying in Jerusalem's Zion Square to protest the deal struck at the Aqaba summit between Israel and the Palestinians to implement the road map.

The Moledet faction of the National Union Party dedicates a new branch office in Shimon HaTzaddik, located opposite the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem. (*Hear Palestine*)

Ma'ariv reports the arrival of 40 Indians who will convert and join brethren in the settlement of Shavei Shomron. Seven hundred Indians have preceded them. All live in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

June 6 The Council of YESHA Rabbis issues an extraordinary statement declaring that "as a result of the Aqaba summit, secular Zionism has completed its task and now it is the turn of religious Zionism." (*Ha'aretz*)

June 9 *Hear Palestine* reports the IDF's demolition of 13 homes in Izbat Beit Hanoun in Gaza. More than 60 homes have been demolished there in recent months.

The IDF issues an order for the confiscation of 54 dunums of land in the Hebron area of Dura, west of the Neguhot settlement. The land will be used to build a road linking Beit Awa, al-Majd, and al-Thahiriya to the settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

In East Jerusalem, settlers confiscate a home in Sheikh Jarrah, claiming that their ownership is "legal." (*Hear Palestine*)

The IDF begins construction on a settlement road in Gaza that will link the Matahin road to the settlement bridge constructed a year prior that links the Katif bloc to Kisosfim. (*Hear Palestine*)

Hear Palestine reports IDF soldiers shooting and killing two Palestinians attempting to infiltrate the Netzarim settlement in Gaza.

Ten vacant outposts are dismantled, including Neve Erez, south of Michmash; caravans in Amona, east of Ofra; Einav South in north-central Shomron; a hilltop near Elon Moreh; Shacharit, near Bruchin; Mitzpeh

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Shabo, near Itamar; and an industrial storage container in Karnei Tzur South, south of Gush Etzion. One to three structures is removed from Neve Menachem South, near Karnei Shomron; Beit Horon South, near Givat Ze'ev; and Ein Horon, near Nablus. (Arutz 7)

June 10 The Independent Palestinian Institution for Human Rights reports that 228 Palestinian civilians, including 48 children, were killed between January and March 2003 by Israeli troops. In addition, 22 people were assassinated, 205 homes were demolished, and more than 1,000 dunums of land were bulldozed in Gaza. (*Hear Palestine*)

June 11 A press release from UNRWA asserts that between September 2000 and May 2003, 1,134 shelters, home to more than 10,049 refugee and non-refugee Palestinians, were destroyed or damaged beyond repair in Gaza.

June 12 In East Jerusalem, Knesset members of the Likud pay a "solidarity visit" to the Ir David settlement, in Silwan, where 27 families reside. MK Gideon Saar states, "There is no chance that a place like Ir David would ever be given away. Jerusalem is first and foremost here, David's city. When you walk here and see our roots, and the dramatic Jewish renewal here—half or more of this neighborhood is already Jewish—then you can really understand our bonds with this city." (Arutz 7)

Two settler women are wounded in a drive-by shooting near the Neve Tzuf settlement in the West Bank. (*Kol Yisra'el*)

June 13 A Netanya resident is shot dead by a Palestinian in the northern West Bank village of Yabed, near Jenin. (*Hear Palestine*)

June 15 Peace Now reports the building or rebuilding of outposts south of Rechelim, between Ariel and Shilo; east of Elon Moreh, near Nablus; southeast of Ofra; and south of Kokhav Hashachar.

The head of the Council of YESHA Rabbis, Rabbi Dov Lior, calls for the transfer of Palestinians to Arab countries in a commentary that endorses "the right of return by Arabs to Arab countries." (*Yedi'ot Aharnot*)

June 17 The IDF releases a list of 19 settlement outposts to be evacuated, including 5 that are populated. Of the army's list, the

unpopulated outposts had already been dismantled. Remaining outposts were supposed to have been dismantled the preceding week, but legal proceedings forced a postponement. (*Ha'aretz*)

Labor Knesset member Eitan Cabel introduces legislation providing compensation for settlers who have lived in a settlement for at least three consecutive years but want to move inside the Green Line. In addition, Infrastructure Minister Yosef Paritzky suggests the preparation of a plan for resettling Israelis from the West Bank to the Negev and the Galilee. "I believe that the Negev and the Galilee present an attractive destination for those requesting to settle in an excellent environment with a high standard of living and surrounded by much greenery," he said. "As such, I will thank you if you start preparing, as soon as possible, a settlement program, both within current towns and establishing new ones, for absorbing those uprooted from Judea, Samaria and Gaza." (*Ha'aretz*)

June 19 *Hear Palestine* reports the wounding of three Palestinians in Yatta, south of Hebron, when a group of 20 settlers from the Ma'on Farm settlement attack them. In addition, 70 dunums of land northeast of Kiryat Arba are surrounded by barbed wire for confiscation.

Hatzofe reports the opening of a new bypass road in the West Bank connecting Route 60, between Rechelim, south of Tapuah junction, to the industrial zone in Ariel.

June 20 A 47-year-old settler from Eli, in the West Bank, is shot and killed near Ramallah. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli company argues in court that a 550-dunam parcel of land expropriated from it by the Israeli government for settler housing construction at Har Homa is worth \$323 million, not the \$13.75 million paid by the state.

June 22 A top YESHA official reports that 10 new outposts, most of them unpopulated, were created in the last two weeks. He notes that during the same period, the IDF dismantled 10 uninhabited sites and one populated location at Mitzpe Yitzhar. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 23 Palestinians fire five mortar shells at the Katif bloc, damaging a fence. An 18-year-old Palestinian is wounded while attempting to infiltrate the S'lav settlement,

in the southeastern part of the Katif bloc. (Arutz 7)

June 24 An IDF source reveals that the June 19 evacuation of the Givat Yitzhar outpost, occupied by several dozen settlers, cost \$550,000 and included 1,200 IDF and police personnel. (*Ma'ariv*)

June 29 *Hear Palestine* reports the total destruction of 40 homes and the partial destruction of 550 homes in Beit Hanun during occupation by IDF troops. More than 2,500 dunums of agricultural land were bulldozed and 8 water wells were destroyed. Twenty-five Palestinians were killed and around 280 were wounded.

Fatah offers a truce conditioned on an immediate halt to the construction and expansion of settlements and construction of the separation wall. (*Palestine Report*)

June 30 *Hear Palestine* reports the wounding of three settlers in Hebron following a Palestinian attempt to remove a fence placed around 16 dunums of land in preparation for its confiscation and annexation to the Kharsina settlement.

A Bulgarian construction worker is shot and killed in Jenin. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claims responsibility for the attack. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel informs Palestinians in the village of Beit Ikksa, northwest of Jerusalem, that 14,000 dunums of their land will be expropriated for the construction of the new settlement of Alona.

Several groups of Jewish worshippers are granted permission by Israel to enter the Temple Mount after being barred from it for 33 months. (Arutz 7)

The IDF begins construction on a new settlement road north of the Morag settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

According to Wafa, 168 homes inhabited by 188 families have been demolished in the central Gaza Strip since the beginning of the intifada. In addition, 1,042 homes have been partially destroyed, 12 official buildings demolished, and 13 factories and workshops destroyed. Approximately 5,446 dunums of land have been bulldozed, along with 97,270 fruit trees, 280 greenhouses, and 1,350 water networks. The destruction has affected 7,485 Palestinians and caused unemployment to rise to 75 percent. (*Hear Palestine*)

been demolished by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the Gaza Strip since September 2000, leaving almost 10,000 individuals homeless.

“During the first two years of the intifada,” Peter Hansen, UNRWA’s commissioner-general has written, “the average number of homes demolished in Gaza—a statistical category both depressing and surreal—was 32 per month. Since the start of 2003 that average has risen to seventy-two.

“Very few of the demolitions target the families of suicide bombers or of those wanted by Israel. Instead the victims are simply people living in the wrong place at the wrong time. Those living near the Egyptian border in Rafah in the south of Gaza have the misfortune of being in a place where Israel feels the need to widen its security zone at the border. Hundreds of homes, dozens of small shops, mosques and communities that once huddled there against the border have been churned into rubble.

“In Khan Yunis, the residents of a refugee camp who have the bad luck to overlook the Gush Katif settlement block have similarly had their homes razed. Tanks and bulldozers come in the night. Instructions to evacuate are shouted through loudspeakers and families grab what meager possessions they can before their world comes crashing down. This is repeated over and over again, night after night, with an appalling regularity.”

Since 1967 Israel has demolished more than 10,000 Palestinian dwellings, reported veteran

Ha’aretz correspondent Danny Rubinstein on August 10, 2003, including 3,000 during the current revolt. Palestinians are forbidden to build near settlements or within 150 meters of the bypass roads that serve them. Construction of the separation barrier has also resulted in residential and commercial demolitions. On August 21, the entire commercial area of Naslat Isa, near Tulkarm, was razed. Almost 2,000 demolitions, including 450 in East Jerusalem since 1988, were undertaken because dwellings lacked proper permits. In the third week of August, 17 houses in the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Issawiya, Jabal Mukabar, and al-Salaha were destroyed, for a total of 85 since the beginning of the year.

Ziyad al-Hamuri, head of the Al Quds Center for Social and Economic Rights, noted that, “[August] was the height of house demolitions and land confiscation.”

South of Jerusalem, a new border is being fashioned out of concrete. The age-old entrance to Bethlehem is being rerouted to accommodate the extension of Israeli sovereignty to Rachel’s Tomb. The plan will remove 15 percent of Bethlehem’s land from its direct control and place 300 residents in a no-man’s-land between the roadblock controlling access to

Jerusalem and an eight-meter-high wall separating them from Bethlehem.

“The battle against this plan comes before the battle over releasing prisoners,” asserted Bethlehem mayor Hanna Nassar. “A prisoner who is not released this time will be released next time, but the wall is a tragedy for generations.”

South of Bethlehem, a new obstacle to Palestinian access to Greater Jerusalem is being constructed at the Migdal Oz junction. The site includes a processing center for Palestinians who want to travel north from the Hebron region, a large parking area, a lookout tower, and barricades.

Among other objectives, a permanent checkpoint in this location would complement the strategic Israeli plan to deny Palestinians free and unhindered use of Route 60, the sole north-south transport thoroughfare from Jenin to Hebron and historically the most important road in the West Bank. A similar process is well under way on the main north-south road in the Gaza Strip.

North of Jerusalem, settlement outposts are increasing the prospect that another section of Route 60 will be denied to Palestinians and claimed by residents of the emerging Bet El–Ofra block of settlements. The Jewish National Fund and

Israel’s Ministry of Tourism invested more than \$200,000 to construct a promenade between Bet El B and the outpost of Givat Artis. Even the settlers acknowledge that “there is a problem with the legality of the land” upon which the route is located. In other words, it has been stolen from its Palestinian owners.

“Givat Artis is only the first step on a long road,” explained the head of the Bet El local council, a road of blood and tears that proceeds unhindered by the road map or the halting exhortations of the Bush administration. ♦

Land and territory are what the war is all about. Everything else, including the violence and terror that dominate diplomatic concern, is a function of this contest.

[Jordanian foreign minister Marwan Muasher] proposes that Israel undertake “a major initiative, like an immediate withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jordan Valley, which will be a very important message to all the Arab states about Israel’s peaceful intentions and guarantee the peace process doesn’t contract backward, even if something goes wrong on the way. If Israel continues building the settlements and postpones evacuating the outposts on the way, what is Abu Mazen supposed to tell the terrorists? He was named prime minister because of Israeli and American refusal to deal with Arafat. If he doesn’t get the proper help from them he will fall. I cannot see any Palestinians succeeding where Abu Mazen fails.”

Akiva Eldar, “It’s Time to Admit Jordan Knows What’s Good for It,” *Ha’aretz*, August 5, 2003

Israeli Civilians Killed by Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, September 28, 2000–August 26, 2003

<i>Area</i>	<i>Killed</i>	Year				<i>Total</i>
		<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	
West Bank		<i>West Bank/Gaza</i>	<i>West Bank/Gaza</i>	<i>West Bank/Gaza</i>	<i>West Bank/Gaza</i>	
Shomron/Immanuel	22					
East Jerusalem (ex Gilo)	20	Jan	5/1	2/0	4/0	11/1
Northern Hebron	18	Feb	3/0	10/1	0/0	13/1
Itamar/Elon Moreh	14	Mar	2/0	10/7	1/0	13/7
Shilo/Ofra	15	Apr	1/0	4/0	0/1	5/1
Ramallah	9	May	11/0	4/1	10/0	25/1
Southern Hebron Hills	9	Jun	5/0	13/0	2/0	20/0
Etzion bloc	7	Jul	6/0	15/0	0/0	21/0
Mevo Dotan/Hermesh	7	Aug	8/0	5/0	1/0	14/0
Sha'are Tiqva/Kfar Tapuah	7	Sep	6/0	3/0		9/0
Tulkarem	7	Oct	6/0	2/1	4/0	12/1
Giv'at Ze'ev	6	Nov	2/5	3/1	4/2	9/8
Northern Jordan Valley	6	Dec	5/0	9/1	2/1	16/2
Tekoa/Nokdim	5	Total	13/5	61/4	76/12	8/1
Kadim/Ganim	4					
Kedumim/Sa Nur	4					
Gilo	3					
Ofarim/Ateret	3					
Alfe Menashe	1					
Modi'in Illit	1					
Subtotal	168					
Gaza Strip						
Katif Bloc	17					
Northern Gaza	3					
Netzarim	2					
Subtotal	22					
TOTAL	190					

Source: B'tselem, "Israeli Civilians Killed by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories," www.btselem.org.

In the past couple of years I realized that I made a mistake; that, like the Palestinians, I too was taken in. I took Israeli talk seriously and didn't pay attention to Israeli deeds. When I realized, one day, that the settlements had doubled themselves, I also realized that Israel had missed its one hour of grace. Then I understood that Israel could not free itself of its expansionist pattern. It is bound hand and foot to its constituent ideology and to its constituent act, which was an act of dispossession. I realized that the reason it is so tremendously difficult for Israel to dismantle settlements is that any recognition that the settlements in the West Bank exist on plundered Palestinian land will also cast a threatening shadow over the Jezreel Valley, and over the moral status of Beit Alfa and Ein Harod [in Israel]. There is one historical continuum. And that continuity apparently cannot be broken.

Veteran Israeli activist Haim Hanegbi, quoted in Ari Shavit, "Cry, the Beloved Two-State Solution", *Ha'aretz*, August 8, 2003

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