

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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CAN BUSH'S DIPLOMACY END OCCUPATION?

As Annapolis, Maryland prepares to host U.S. President George W. Bush's belated and undefined effort at Israeli-Palestinian peace-making, Camp David, Maryland, the site of President Bill Clinton's disastrous Israeli-Palestinian summit, stands as a cautionary symbol of the costs of failure. After more than seven years of intifada, terror, and deepening conflict, Washington has embarked on a far more modest initiative. In a July 16 speech, Bush called for "an international meeting this fall of representatives from nations that support a two-state solution, reject violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and commit to all previous agreements between the parties. The key participants in this meeting will be the Israelis, the Palestinians, and their neighbors in the region. Secretary [of State Condoleezza] Rice will chair the meeting. She and her counterparts will review the progress that has been made toward building Palestinian institutions. They will look for innovative and effective ways to support further reform. And they will pro-

vide diplomatic support for the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations, so that we can move forward on a successful path to a Palestinian state."

As the *Settlement Report* went to press, no invitations had been issued. It remained unclear which countries would attend and at what level. Even the meeting date had yet to be set, although November has most frequently been mentioned.

There is little reason to believe that diplomats will bridge the chasm between expectations accompanying this diplomatic process and the relentless dynamic of continuing lawless occupation and settlement. In such an environment the facts of everyday life under occupation count for far more than diplomatic abstractions.

On August 8, the Ma'an Press Agency reported charges by Salah al-Ta'mari, the governor of Bethlehem, that Israel has increased the number of military checkpoints in the Bethlehem area. "Ta'mari said that the Israeli military procedures are destroying the daily lives of residents of the governorate. Soldiers humiliate Palestinians forced to cross the checkpoints and detain them for hours without justification. Reports in the press about a reduction in the number of West Bank checkpoints are false, he noted, complaining that 'temporary' checkpoints in the governorate have separated Bethlehem from the surrounding villages and the southern West Bank city of Hebron."

Later in August, Ma'an reported a demonstration by Palestinians "to

protest the extension of Israeli settlements and to try to prevent the confiscation of 500 dunams" on lands belonging to the village of Mazra'a al-Qibliyya," where settlers are said to have already begun planting crops.

"The governor of Ramallah told demonstrators that PA president Mahmoud Abbas was very angry about the land confiscation and declared that it was Israel's aim to transform Palestine into a purely Jewish state at a time when everybody is talking about reviving the peace process."

According to a recent report by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), West Bank settlers vandalized 643 olive trees belonging to Palestinians in the first half of 2007. An additional 1,100 trees were destroyed by fire of undetermined origin. Most of the incidents took place in the Ramallah and Nablus regions, according to a *Ha'aretz* report on the study, "in particular in the areas around illegal outposts that control land adjacent to Palestinian orchards."

Israel's state prosecutor has informed the High Court that documents presented by Hebron settlers as proof of their ownership of a building that they occupied in March are "forgeries, or there is grave doubt about their authenticity." Nevertheless, the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has not prevented what are now 25 families from squatting in the building, where religious instruction is also being held. The Defense Ministry, which issued an

East Jerusalem settlement
population: 184,057
East Jerusalem Palestinian
population: 244,800

Also in this issue:

Updated Separation Barrier Map 3
East Jerusalem Settler Population 5
Jerusalem Population Chart 8

BUSH'S DIPLOMACY, continued on page 6

TO OUR READERS

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's hope that Israelis and Palestinians should move beyond a "peace process" and agree on a "political horizon" reflects a lesson about the failure of previous peace efforts. A "political horizon" that offers hope for peace and defines it in a way appealing to both sides would create political momentum for implementing negotiations to succeed. Without such hope, extremist minorities—Palestinian Islamists and Israeli settlers who oppose a two state peace—will continue to control the agenda, as they did in destroying the open-ended Oslo peace process.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders have thus far proved themselves unable to agree on a clear "political horizon" that would break the logjam, notwithstanding polls showing that majorities on both sides would welcome an agreement along the lines of the Clinton parameters, the Taba agreement and the Geneva Accords. As noted in this *Report*, in the run-up to President Bush's fall meeting, Prime Minister Olmert and

President Abbas are still far apart on the basic issues these former plans address—Jerusalem, settlements, borders, and refugees.

It is probably too much to hope that these leaders can agree, in the weeks before the meeting, on a substantial outline for peace that has always eluded previous efforts. What is needed, therefore, is for President Bush to offer a bold and unprecedented American vision of peace defining solutions to the major final status issues and pledge determined U.S. leadership to implement this "political horizon." Both Olmert and Abbas would be obliged to take this seriously. If presented with skill and empathy and pursued with determination, such an initiative could mobilize political support among Israelis, Palestinians, the international community, and no less important, Americans. It is not too late for such a transforming American initiative.



The main challenge for Palestinian recovery remains the comprehensive restrictions on movement and access imposed by Israel, which go beyond concrete and checkpoints to a set of collective policies that combine to stunt economic growth. . . .

The commitments entered to by Israel under the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) remain as unfulfilled as they are critical. The AMA must be implemented immediately.

Analysis of movement and access restrictions suggests that they primarily serve to expand and protect settlement activity and the movement of settlers and other Israelis in and out of the West Bank. There are currently 149 settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and roughly 100 "illegal outposts" that lack Israeli government approval, but that nevertheless remain. The approximately 450,000 settlers living there are 63% more than at the time of the Oslo Accord period in 1993. Some 38% of the West Bank has been confiscated for current or future settlements, outposts, closed military areas, municipal boundaries, and settlement regional jurisdiction. The result of this is that a vast amount of Palestinians cannot access homes and services, land, domestic and international markets, water and other natural resources, and even donor finance in areas C.

"Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery,"
The World Bank, September 24, 2007

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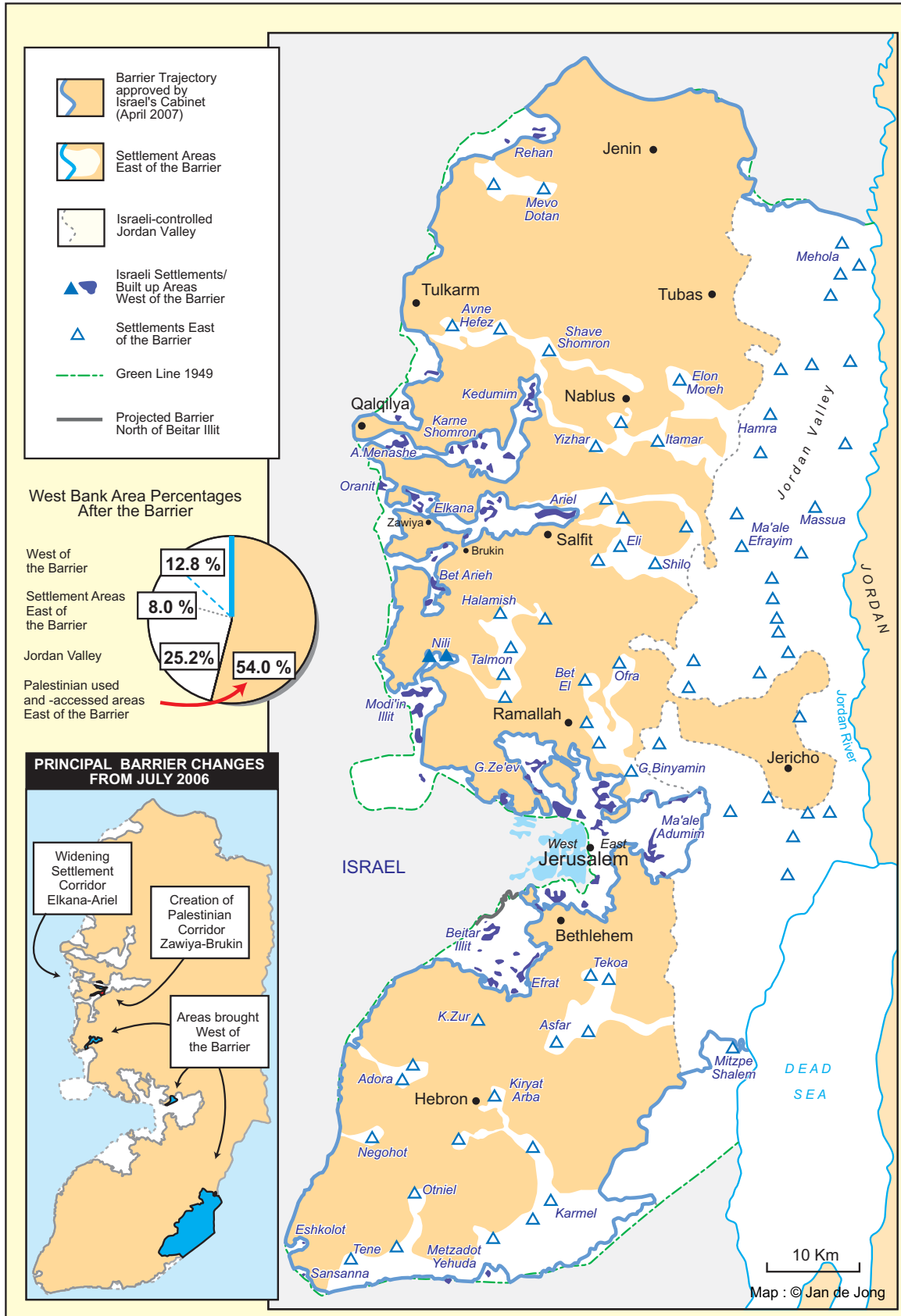
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West Bank Separation Barrier - April 2007



SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

April 25 Israel's High Court of Justice rejects a petition by Palestinian residents of Dir Kadis opposing the route of the separation barrier near the West Bank settlement of Modi'in Illit. The barrier annexes 1,680 dunams of their farmland. The court stated, "We were convinced that the considerations for the barrier's route were not political but a result of the serious issue of terrorist attacks." (*Ha'aretz*)

April 29 Settlers squatting in a Hebron building receive evacuation orders from the Defense Ministry. [See March 19, 2007 entry, July-August 2007 *Report*]. Although the house may have been purchased legally from a Jordanian businessman, the settlers did not receive permission from the ministry to move into the house. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 2 The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issue three eviction orders to Palestinian farmers from Beit Furik, Nablus, because it considers the area a closed military zone. The area is planted with olive and almond trees. (OCHA)

May 3 The IDF issues 12 demolition orders against a Roman Orthodox Housing Complex in Beit Sahur, Bethlehem, for being built without permits in Area C. (OCHA)

May 4 The IDF issues a demolition order to the owner of a house under construction in Jinsafut, Qalqiliya, for being built without a permit in Area C. (OCHA)

May 5 The IDF orders the remaining 30 residents of al-Hadidiya to leave the area following a High Court ruling that they are a threat to the safety of the Ro'i settlement in the Jordan Valley. (OCHA)

May 6 Three settlers from Mazadot Yehuda attack and injure a 17-year-old Palestinian boy from Jinba, Hebron. The settlers steal his donkey. (OCHA)

Settlers from Kiryat Arba and Karmeit Tzur establish a new outpost by squatting on a hilltop overlooking Road 50 near Hebron. (OCHA)

May 7 Ma'an News reports an Israeli military order confiscating land for the construction of an army road near the village of Kafr Qaddum. The road will separate the village from the settlement of Kedumim. Settlers from Kedumim have uprooted hundreds of trees belonging to the Palestinian village of Jit.

May 8 A settler is injured when a Palestinian stones her car at the entrance to the settlement of Efrat. (Arutz 7)

The Jerusalem municipality demolishes a building in east Jerusalem that had served as a residence for handicapped Palestinian children. The district court had declared the building illegal. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF issues six demolition orders in al-Aqaba village, declaring the area a closed military zone. Twenty-eight structures in the village received demolition orders. (OCHA)

May 10 *Ha'aretz* reports the Jerusalem Planning and Construction Committee's approval of a plan to build three new settlements in East Jerusalem. The plan includes building up to 10,000 housing units in Walaja, Givat Alona, and the Atarot airport area. The committee's decision will be sent to the planning authority that approves the Jerusalem outline plan.

May 12 The IDF issues 11 stop-construction orders against houses in Khirbet Salama and Fuqeiqis, Hebron, for being built without permits in Area C. (OCHA)

Settlers from Gil'ad outpost physically assault a 45-year-old Palestinian woman from Far'ata, Qalqiliya as she is working her land. Two settlers from Susiya attack a Palestinian shepherd from Yatta, south of Hebron. (OCHA)

May 13 Approximately 30 rabbis, accompanied by police, visit the Temple Mount. (Arutz 7)

May 14 B'tselem and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel report that Palestinians have abandoned more than 1,000 homes and at least 1,829 businesses in the center of Hebron because of pressure by the IDF, the police and settlers, particularly during the second intifada. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 16 OCHA reports that the IDF has not dismantled the road barrier along Road 317 despite a High Court ruling on December 14, 2006, ordering it to do so. Instead the IDF closed gaps in the barrier where Palestinian herders crossed to reach their lands.

The Knesset approves a bill requiring a referendum before land in the Golan, Jerusalem, or parts of Israel can be evacuated. The legislation must pass additional Knesset readings before becoming law. (Arutz 7)

May 19 Two international activists are injured by settlers from Tel Rumeida, Hebron, when they try to stop settlers from beating Palestinian children. (OCHA)

May 20 The IDF uproots 28 apricot trees in Artas village, Bethlehem, as part of the construction of the separation barrier around the settlement of Efrat. The IDF and settlers use force to remove the Palestinian landowners along with their international and Israeli supporters who have been camping at the location since May 16. (OCHA)

Karmi Tzur settlers unleash a dog on a Palestinian from Halhul, Hebron as he worked his land. (OCHA)

May 21 Arutz 7 reports the creation of a task force in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to handle such West Bank settler issues as those involving the construction and development of settlements, checkpoints, the separation barrier, and new laws on settler issues. Kadima MK and West Bank settler Otniel Schneller will head the committee. Schneller is the former secretary-general of the Yesha Council.

May 22 Thousands of settlers and right-wing activists march to the ruins of the West Bank settlement of Homesh despite orders not to from the defense minister and IDF chief of staff. (*Ha'aretz*)

May 26 Palestinian gunmen shoot and injure an Israeli private security guard and a border policeman near the Sheikh Sa'ad checkpoint, Jerusalem. A 14-year-old Palestinian bystander is killed in the crossfire. (OCHA)

May 27 Israeli authorities demolish an uninhabited Palestinian house in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Safafa for being built without a permit. (OCHA)

May 28 Four Palestinian men are injured at the Reikhan checkpoint, Jenin, when IDF soldiers open fire at Palestinians from Barta'a protesting against new checkpoint procedures. (OCHA)

Israeli authorities demolish a Palestinian home in Jerusalem's Old City, another in Jerusalem's Sharafat neighborhood, one in Beit Safafa, and partially demolish an uninhabited Palestinian house in al Baqa, Hebron, for being built without permits. (OCHA)

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

May 29 *Ha'aretz* reports Interior Minister Avi Dichter as preventing the burial of Muslims near the Temple Mount.

May 31 The Israeli Housing Administration publishes tenders for 20 housing units in the settlement of Karnei Shomron. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 5 Israel's Army Radio reports 100 new housing units being built in the West Bank by Amana, the construction arm of Gush Emmunim. Most of the units have already been sold. (MidEast Mirror)

June 6 Israel's High Court of Justice orders the state to explain why Palestinians cannot travel on the section of West Bank Road 443 connecting Jerusalem to Modi'in and why roadblocks preventing access to the road from Palestinian villages have not been removed. The IDF has prohibited the travel of Palestinians on the road, by foot or by car, since September 2000 without an official or legal order. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 9 *Ha'aretz* reports that a directive issued by Defense Minister Amir Peretz to end the ban on Palestinians from entering the Jordan Valley has been only partially implemented. The IDF had begun allowing Palestinians who do not live in the Jordan Valley to pass through checkpoints, but only on foot. In 2005, the IDF had banned Palestinians from entering the Jordan Valley, except for 27,000 Palestinians registered as living there, but the closure of the valley and Highway 90 to Palestinian traffic was never formalized in a military order.

June 11 For the first time, the IDF grants permission to the Yesha Council to rally at the evacuated West Bank settlement of Homesh. During the past year, other protesters had sponsored illegal rallies and marches at Homesh. (*Ha'aretz*)

June 22 Settlers from Tekoa set fire to 300 dunams of land owned by Palestinians from the nearby village of Tuqu', damaging some

400 olive trees. (OCHA)

June 25 IDF soldiers and security personnel guarding the Susiya settlement prevent a surveyor hired by Palestinians from surveying their lands in preparation for a presentation to the Israeli High Court. (OCHA)

June 26 Settlers from Susiya force Palestinian landowners off land located near the settlement. (OCHA)

Settlers from Hebron's Beit Hadassa assault and injure a 13-year-old Palestinian boy from Hebron City. (OCHA)

June 28 OCHA reports on an investigation by the IDF into the uprooting of 300 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Qaryut, Nablus. The IDF discovered that the trees had been uprooted by settlers from the Shilo outpost and 140 of them were replanted in the outpost. The IDF returned the trees to the farmer.

East Jerusalem Settler Population, 1972–2005

	Year Estab.	2005	2004	2003	2002	2000	1999	1998	1997	1992	1988	1981	1977	1972
East Talpiot	1970	12,158	12,238	12,439	12,591	12,845	13,050	13,184	13,348	15,200	13,700	14,882	4,486	126
French Hill (Givat Shapira)	1968	6,589	6,630	6,628	6,631	8,193	8,347	8,469	8,599	9,000	9,100	8,397	6,681	1,978
Gilo	1971	27,258	27,309	27,425	27,569	27,637	27,459	27,068	26,604	30,400	27,400	-	-	-
Giv'at Ha-Matos, Har Homa	1997	4,604	3,354	2,152	1,125	763	1,363	1,596	1,197	0	0	0	0	0
Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, Ramat Eshkol (east)	1968	2,912	2,959	2,958	2,948	2,912	2,922	3,001	3,145	16,600	15,000	16,600	13,295	6,232
Ma'alot Dafna, Kiryat Arye	1968	3,675	3,647	3,664	3,617	3,645	3,646	3,589	3,666	-	-	-	-	-
Neve Ya'akov	1970	20,156	20,218	20,306	20,250	20,288	20,209	20,031	19,960	29,400	20,300	16,836	7,097	50
Jewish Quarter (Old City)	1968	2,476	2,451	2,387	2,348	2,279	2,288	2,306	2,282	2,300	2,200	1,583	730	263
Pizgat Ze'ev	1985	41,208	40,665	39,747	38,684	36,469	34,789	32,475	31,150	-	-	0	0	0
Ramat Allon	1970	40,367	40,027	39,383	38,992	37,934	37,673	37,339	37,167	38,100	29,300	-	-	-
Ramat Eshkol (west)	1968	3,252	3,180	3,123	3,046	2,917	3,000	3,045	3,196	-	-	-	-	-
Ramat Shlomo	1990	14,318	13,888	13,390	12,822	11,348	10,330	8,759	6,098	-	0	0	0	0
Sanhedriyya	1968	5,084	5,021	4,999	4,994	5,018	5,047	5,105	5,165	-	-	-	-	-
Total		184,057	181,587	178,601	175,617	172,248	170,123	165,967	161,577	141,000	117,000	58,298	32,289	8,649

*Settlement population is left blank in some years because of changing administrative boundaries and neighborhood categories in the Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem. For those years, the population is accounted for in the total population number by adding it to another settlement.

Observations:

- Continuing expansion in Pizgat Ze'ev.
- Declining or stagnating population in the older settlements of Ramat Eshkol, Neve Ya'akov, and East Talpiot.

eviction order months ago, is prohibiting building improvements, explaining that any change in the status quo would be a violation of a court order. As reported by *Ha'aretz*, "Orin Struk, a senior member of the committee of Hebron Jews, said that the requests to install windows, insulate the roof and hook the building up to electricity are not intended to influence the question of ownership on the building but are rather for humanitarian reasons only. According to Struk, the building is inhabited by several children whose health must be looked after, and it must be fixed in order to avoid floods and disease." If past is prologue, the squatters will remain.

During the last year, ultra-Orthodox settlers comprised 40 percent of the increase in the West Bank settler population. In the coming year, their percentage is set to increase even more. High housing prices in Israel have in recent years led tens of thousands of these religious and relatively poor Israelis to cross the Green Line, where, as a result of settlement policies promoted by the Olmert government, there is plenty of available, inexpensive housing. Modi'in Illit is one of their principal settlements, along with Beitar Illit, whose municipal jurisdiction was recently linked by military order with that of nearby Jerusalem. Matityahu East is a new neighborhood in Modi'in Illit.

Although construction of the neighborhood on private land belonging to Palestinian residents of Bilin contravenes even Israel's legal code, the High Court, while acknowledging this, has nonetheless permitted the squatters to remain. As reported in *Ha'aretz* on September 6, "although the neighborhood was established in an illegal manner and without proper permits on land that belongs to the Palestinian village of Bilin, the already constructed part of the neighborhood will not be dismantled or destroyed. The meaning of the ruling is that the [putative Israeli] owners of the dwellings are able to remain in their apartments."

One day before this ruling, the same court, in response to a petition from Bilin landowners, ordered the IDF to reroute 1.7 km of the separation barrier near Bilin in order to reduce the villages' 1,600 dunams now west of the existing barrier. If the IDF reroutes the barrier, it is likely that villagers' agricultural land—the prospective site of an expansion of Matityahu East—will ultimately be east of the barrier. Losing only some of their land to the barrier is counted by beleaguered Bilin residents as a great, if bittersweet, victory.

Ha'aretz reported a claim by the Arab Hotels Company

that in Jerusalem, "the Israel Land Authority is working hand in glove with the Ateret Cohanim [settler organization] in order to dispossess Palestinian landowners of 30 dunams in East Jerusalem and transfer the parcel to Ateret Cohanim without a tender." A government official is reported to have explained that the contract with the association was signed in order "to keep the territory in Jewish hands."

These are the everyday realities at the heart of Israel's settlement enterprise. Not only do they pose a formidable, growing obstacle to an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, they also are a far more relevant indicator of the future than any diplomatic framework that the Bush administration, or any of its predecessors, has promoted.

In recent months, against a background defined by such daily realities as those noted above, and spurred on by

Washington, Israeli and Palestinian officials have for the first time since January 2001 been addressing core issues—Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, and borders. Despite much speculation, nothing definitive has emerged about the content of their discussions, or the form of whatever understandings they might produce—for instance, a new declaration of principles, a framework agreement on final status that Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas demands, or a broad statement of goals that the U.S. and Israel prefer.

The only new and dramatic idea this process is known to have produced is a controversial Israeli suggestion to include the "Little Triangle," a largely Arab Israeli region, in areas to be "swapped" for Israeli settlements west of the separation barrier. When Israel Beitanu leader Avigdore Leiberman first mooted this idea, it was widely derided as illegal and racist. MK

Otniel Schneller, Olmert's key advisor on settlement issues, voiced his support for the idea, stating, "[The Arabs of the Triangle] are angry that they do not live in a state of all its citizens. So we will live in a Jewish state and they will live in a state of all its citizens. There will not be a withdrawal from Judea and Samaria. There will be a redeployment whose signature is not bulldozers [as in Gaza] but concrete mixers [for barriers and roads]."

Schneller noted that "there is no possibility of reaching any agreement without leaving 13 percent of the area of the West Bank in our hands in settlement blocs. Such an agreement must proceed slowly, step by step." In the territorial domain, Palestinians are said to be demanding "Taba minus"—that is

[Israelis] feel that the division has already taken place. The disengagement from the Gaza Strip, the construction of a separation barrier—the problem is solved to our satisfaction. The settlers are conducting a settlement policy of their own, taking over new areas, expanding settlements, anything to prevent a permanent solution. They are also satisfied with the status quo that relies on the Shin Bet security service and the Israel Defense Forces. The de facto separation is today more similar to political apartheid than an occupation regime because of its constancy.

Ha'aretz editorial, October 3, 2007

97 percent of the territory east of the Green Line and swaps compensating for 3 percent of West Bank territory ceded to Israel.

Even as Israel and the United States attempt to dampen expectations of a diplomatic advance, Abbas and his supporters view the process that Washington has jump-started as their best and perhaps last opportunity to win the battle for Palestinian public opinion and to enable Fatah's return to uncontested rule. The Palestinian leader has been weakened by the Hamas victory in Gaza and Israel's new policy designating Gaza an "enemy entity." He sees the diplomatic process now under way as a vehicle for producing "a final formula, an end game, and after that to think about implementation and a timetable for implementation on the ground." Advisor Yasser Abd Rabbo, a supporter of the president's hardline against Hamas and an initiator of the Geneva dialogue, explained that "all the international resolutions stipulate that a settlement should be based on the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, a fair and agreed solution to the refugee issue in accordance with Resolution 194, and security for all parties."

Washington's management of this process—a hands-off observation of Israeli-Palestinian efforts to reach an understanding, driven in large part by the U.S. president's commitment to a "meeting" with goals at least one step removed from substantive agreement on issues related to final status—is far different from the activism and the agenda that shaped the Madrid process shepherded by President George H. W. Bush and his peripatetic secretary of state, James Baker, 16 years ago.

The participation of Saudi Arabia is a key goal of the United States and Israel, but the Saudis hesitate to be part of a process that is so ill-defined. "We will see . . . whether for the intent of the conference [the Israelis] will take the measures of confidence-building . . . such as the freeze of settlements and stopping the building of the wall," Saudi foreign minister Prince Saud al-Faisal explained. "Because it will be curious for Abbas and the prime minister of Israel to be talking about peace and the return of Palestinian land while Israel is continuing to build more settlements. So at least a moratorium on the building of settlements will be a good signal to show a serious intent. . . . It is not too much to ask," he said, adding that this was a common Arab, not just a Saudi, position.

The diplomatic process is exciting little interest among Palestinians and Israelis, who share a scepticism about the kind of initiative now at diplomatic centerstage. "The Palestinian citizen," explained *al-Quds*, "senses a broad gap and a contradiction between the Israeli diplomatic discourse and the field reality." Israelis are not much bothered by the occupation. Nor do they see Olmert as they came to see Sharon, as the kind of figure with the political *gravitas* to challenge the policy of creating facts. ♦

Most Settlements Lie East of Fence, Most Settlers West

While only 48 of the 122 settlements in the West Bank are situated to the west of the separation fence route, these settlements house the vast majority of settlers, according to an analysis conducted by *Ha'aretz*. The analysis, which is based on Interior Ministry data, shows that 76.2 percent of all settlers—209,716 in number [excluding East Jerusalem's settler population]—reside in the 48 settlements that will be to the west of the [separation barrier], once it is completed. Only 65,440 settlers currently reside in the 74 settlements that lie to the east of the fence route, comprising 23.8 percent of the overall settler population in the West Bank.

However, some of those settlements [east of the separation barrier] have experienced an above average growth rate in 2006. Har Bracha, near Nablus, has expanded by 9.2 percent; Beit Hagai, in the southern Hebron hills, by 9.5 percent; Talmon, in the northern Binyamin region, by 8.1 percent; and Yitzhar by 12 percent. Negohot, the only West Bank settlement which is accessible exclusively through Area A, has expanded by 20.6 percent.

The settlement population west of the fence has increased by 11,338 between June 2006 and July 2007. The total population of the settlements east of the fence grew by 2,886 during the same period. . . .

Whereas the large, ultra-Orthodox religious settlements of Modi'in Illit and Betar Illit expanded by 10 percent, the larger secular settlements expanded less dramatically: Ariel by 0.7 percent, Givat Ze'ev by 1.1 percent, and Ma'ale Adumim, Efrat, Alfei Menashe, and Karnei Shomron each grew by 4.5 percent.

The population decreased in 19 settlements and increased in 103 during the past year. In 44, natural growth was below the settlement average, which stands at 3.5 percent. According to Interior Ministry figures, the region that has seen the sharpest population decline is the Jordan Valley, which includes the settlements of Gitit, Hamra, Mehola, Na'amah, Niran, Netiv Hagdud, and Pazael. Overall, the number of settlers this year has grown from 260,645 to 275,156, which is a 5.45 percent increase, more than twice the growth rate of the Jewish population of Israel.

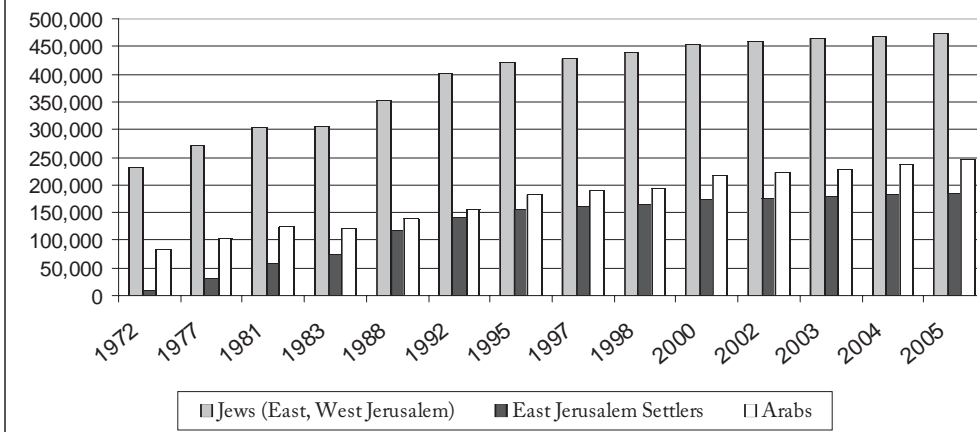
Nadav Shragai, *Ha'aretz*, August 16, 2007

Who Funds the Private Security Services in East Jerusalem?

Today, approximately 2,000 of East Jerusalem's settlers residing in small outposts in Silwan, the Old City, and Sheikh Jarrah are being guarded by an "army" of 350 highly trained and armed private security guards. This service costs the state \$3,800 per settler annually.

The Marker, June 15, 2007

Jerusalem Population, 1972–2005



Source: For settler population data and sources, see Foundation for Middle East Peace, www.fmep.org. Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, "Population of Israel and Jerusalem, by Population Group, 1922–2005," *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem*, 2006–2007, Table III/1.

In many ways, Shimon Peres was the founder of the settlement movement. Between 1974 and 1977, when he served as defense minister, he enlisted his department and the IDF to help facilitate settlements in the heart of Judea and Samaria [West Bank]. If it were not for Peres, there would be no Ofra, no Ariel and no Kedumim. He laid the foundations. The rest was up to Ariel Sharon.

Before [settlers] castigate Peres for Oslo, they should take a good look at what Oslo gave them. First of all, the massive and unprecedented boom in settlement construction, in the parts of the West Bank adjacent to Jerusalem from the ultra-Orthodox community of Tel-Tzion near Ramallah, via Givat Ze'ev, Ma'ale Adumim and Efrata, to the area south of Bethlehem.

Secondly, the impressive expansion made possible by the blind eye of the United States of all the other settlements. If the world had not been tearfully and magically intoxicated by the ceremony on the lawns of the White House, suc-

cessive Israeli governments would not have been able to invest so much in expanding the size of the settlements and the Jewish population of the West Bank. Oslo gave them the perfect cover story.

Thirdly, in the aftermath of Oslo, the governments of Peres and Rabin invested heavily in constructing bypass roads in the West Bank, earmarked for settlers alone. These roads brought the settlements closer to the Green Line than any of the slogans that the Yesha Council managed to come up with.

The Oslo Accord was the start of a process that failed. That, at least, is how we see things with the benefit of 14 years' hindsight. But the price of failure was paid by the people of two nations the Israelis and the Palestinians, not the settlers. Peres only built the settlements; he did not dismantle them. The only prime minister who dismantled settlements was Oslo's fiercest critic Ariel Sharon.

Nahum Barnea, *Yediot Aharonot*, July 16, 2007

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