

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace

Volume 21 Number 6

November-December 2011

MADRID'S LEGACY—BUILD SETTLEMENTS, WEAKEN THE PLO

By *Geoffrey Aronson*

The Madrid Peace Conference convened two decades ago in a spirit of great optimism. However it was Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, dragged to the meeting by President George H.W. Bush, who offered the most prescient commentary on Madrid's troubled legacy.

"I would have carried out autonomy talks for ten years," he remarked in June 1992, "and meanwhile we would have reached one half a million people in Judea and Samaria."

After twenty years of negotiations the occupation is as firmly entrenched as ever. Settlements have always been a key barometer of Israel's intentions. According to this standard, Israel's commanding presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has only gone from strength to strength as the settler population exploded from 231,000 when Madrid convened to more than half a million today. Israel's "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip in 2005 only highlighted the critical role of complete settlement evacuation as a key element signaling a change in Israeli policy.

American leadership, so critical to bringing hesitant and suspicious leaders to the negotiating table at Madrid, is more notable today for its shortcomings. The initial effort of the Obama administration to end occupation and create a Palestinian state has been abandoned in favor of a "full court press" against UN recognition of a Palestinian state, condemned by Washington as an unaccept-

able "short-cut to statehood." (The PLO leadership turned to the United Nations only after Washington's diplomatic effort to win a settlement freeze collapsed in mid-2009.)

Palestinians Are Not Finns

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral determination to break with all of Oslo's conventions in 2005 led in Gaza to the first evacuation of settlements since Israel's peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 and the empowerment of the PLO's nemesis, the Islamic Resistance Movement—*Hamas*. Dov Weisglas negotiated the text of an April 2005 letter from President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon offering U.S. support for the Gaza withdrawal. He later explained that "we effectively agreed . . . with the Americans . . . that part of the [West Bank and East Jerusalem] settlements [blocs] would not be dealt with at all, and the rest will not be dealt with until the Palestinians turn into Finns. That is the significance of what we did. The significance is the freezing of the political process. . . . This whole package that is called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed from our agenda indefinitely. . . . And all this with authority and permission. All with a presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress. What more could have been anticipated? What more could have been given to the settlers?"

Commenting recently on the freezing of the diplomatic process that he did so much to encourage, Weisglas soberly

observed that, "the Palestinian street is liable to deduce that violence pays off. *Hamas's* approach currently appears to be far more beneficial than the PA's policy of zero violence and zero terrorism. In addition to other failures by the Palestinian Authority, such as the complications their UN bid has run into, the deadlocked negotiations with the Netanyahu government and continued Israeli construction outside the settlement blocs—it is no wonder that its standing has been so badly degraded."

Obama's Retreat

There is no questioning the Obama administration's retreat from active and determined diplomatic engagement to end occupation and create a Palestinian state. U.S. policy has been reduced to half-hearted suggestions from the State Department about "quiet" and "partial" settlement freezes. Bill Burns, the U.S. undersecretary of state, was in Israel during November to promote negotiations and to prevent *Fateh* from forming a unity government with *Hamas*. Quartet envoys come and go without noticeable impact. The president's inadvertently public remarks to President Nicolas Sarkozy betrayed his long-evident frustration with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Yet administration officials, not to mention leading figures in Congress, openly convey a desire to "punish" PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority for what the State Depart-

MADRID'S LEGACY, continued on page 8

TO OUR READERS

In 1980, Professor Jacob Talmon, a renowned Israeli historian, sent a now-famous letter to Prime Minister Menachem Begin warning that Israel's settlement project, which was still in its early stages, would corrupt Israel's goals of a Jewish and democratic state and end in "catastrophe." Israel's efforts to subjugate the Palestinians, he wrote, were a "time bomb" and "a trap, a burden, not to be borne without degradation, corruption, and perhaps even collapse." Talmon was clairvoyant.

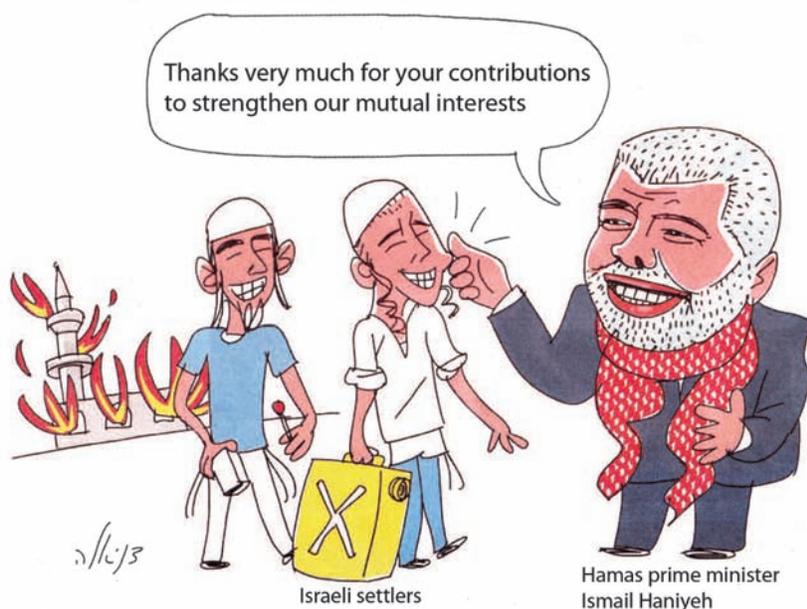
Today, although the majority of Israelis have turned against settlement and occupation as threats to Israel's future, these policies are deeply entrenched. Liberal and pragmatic politics have long been eclipsed by settlement interests, advanced by religious and extremist parties enabled by Israel's dysfunctional parliamentary system. The result has been four decades of dispossession and control of the Palestinians, and the transformation not only of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, but of Israel itself. Today, Israel's military and security, bureaucratic, economic, religious, and legal institutions are heavily penetrated by settlement interests.

Corrupting aspects of denying freedom

to Palestinians are evident on many fronts: dual, unequal legal systems for Jews and Palestinians under occupation; wholesale and unchecked abuse of Israeli law to enable the building of settlements and outposts; settler violence in the territories and in Israel; and an aggressive campaign in the Knesset to pass legislation that would undermine due process and freedom of speech and assembly, impose loyalty oaths, institutionalize discrimination against Palestinian Israelis, and weaken peace and human rights groups. One of the most egregious initiatives would politicize the selection of Supreme Court justices.

Is this tragic process—which is mortgaging the futures of Israelis and Palestinians and threatening other, including U.S., interests—now irreversible, ending the dream of a two-state peace? An internal political convulsion in Israel to change the status quo and an unprecedented change in U.S. policy toward strong, effective diplomatic intervention seem unlikely. Without these pressures to force change, however, the future looks bleak.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.



Source: *Yediot Aharonot*, October 5, 2011

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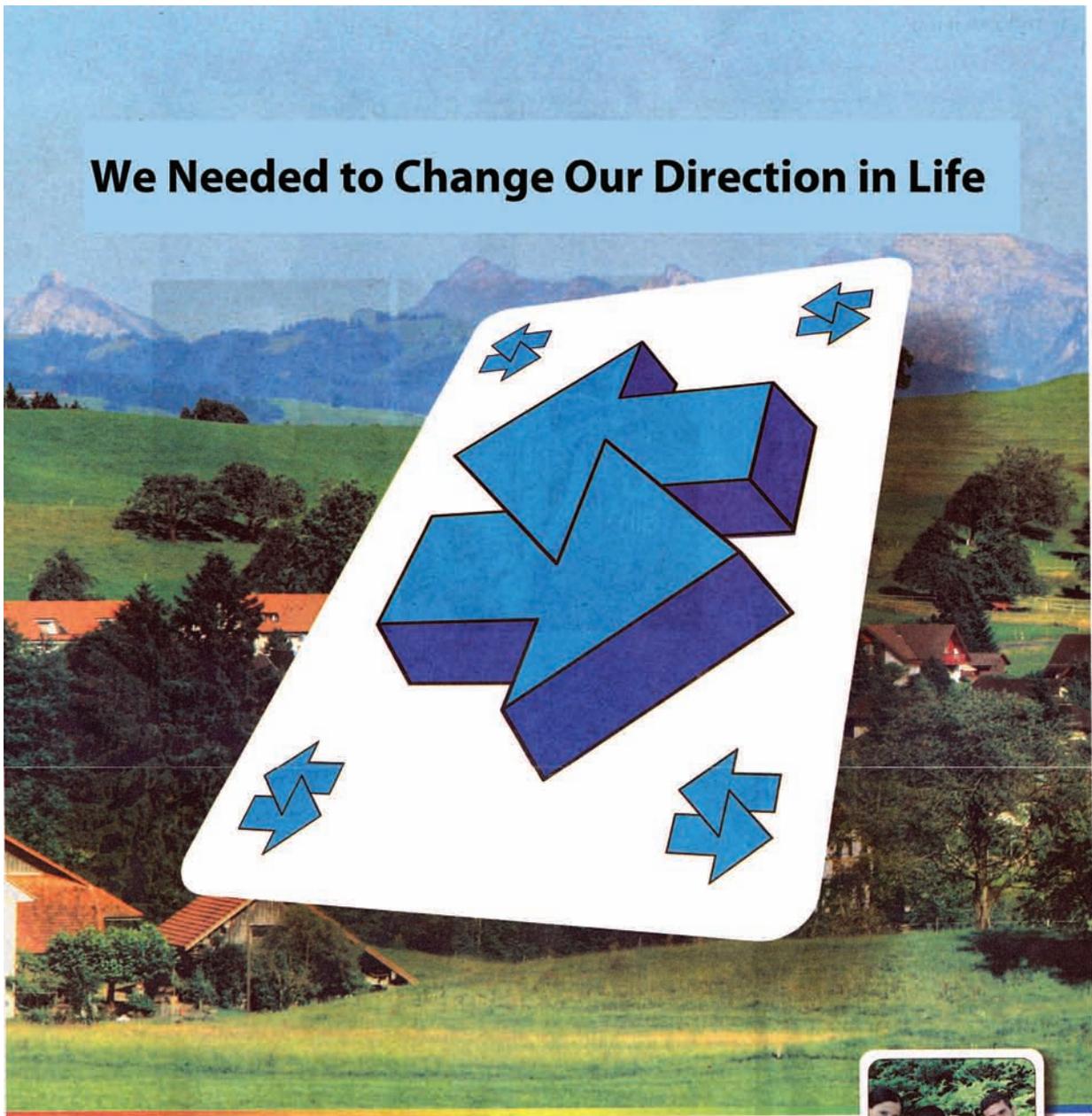
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We Needed to Change Our Direction in Life



משה ארנון

We would never have believed how much our family would enjoy our move to the Golan from Holon. The kids are very happy and wake up everyday with a big smile.

משפחת יצהרי, אודם

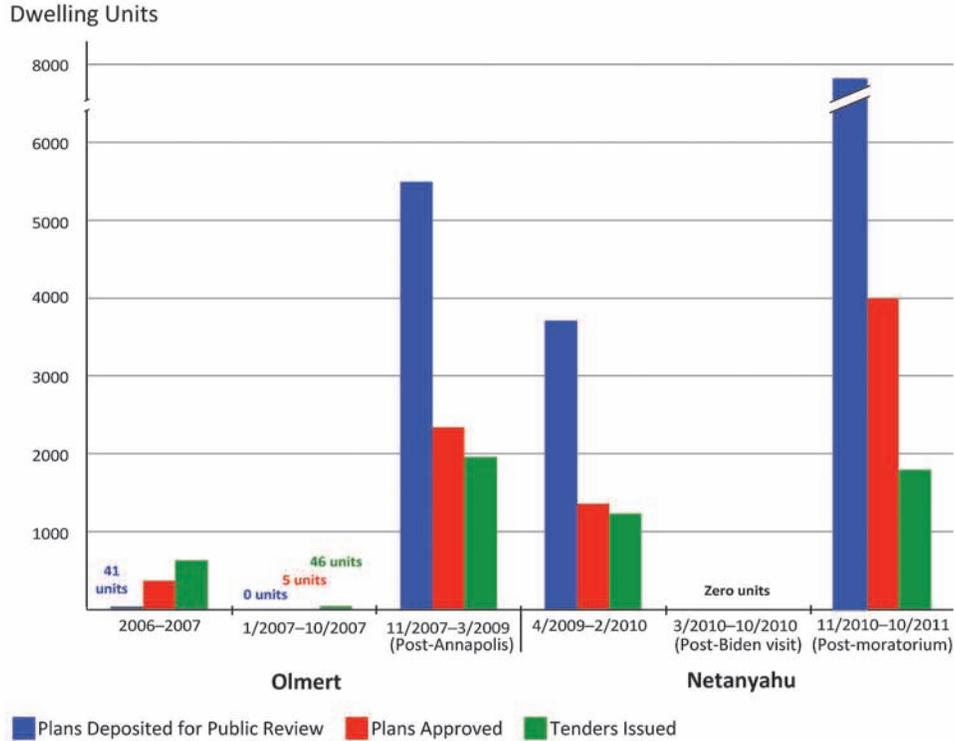


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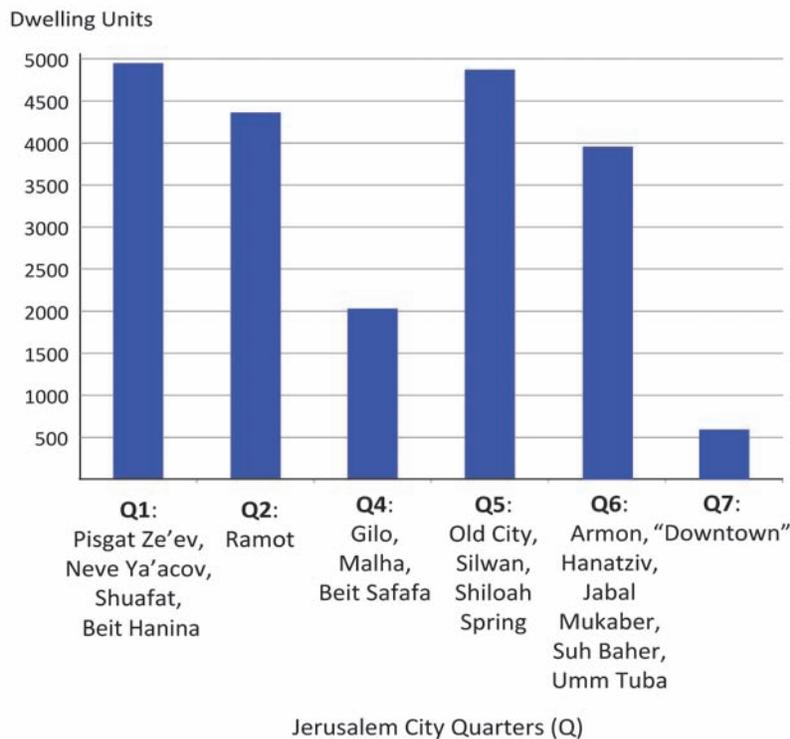
Source: *Ma'ariv*, October 30, 2011

East Jerusalem Settlement Construction – Olmert and Netanyahu



Source: “East Jerusalem: Developments and Trends.” Terrestrial Jerusalem, November 15, 2011

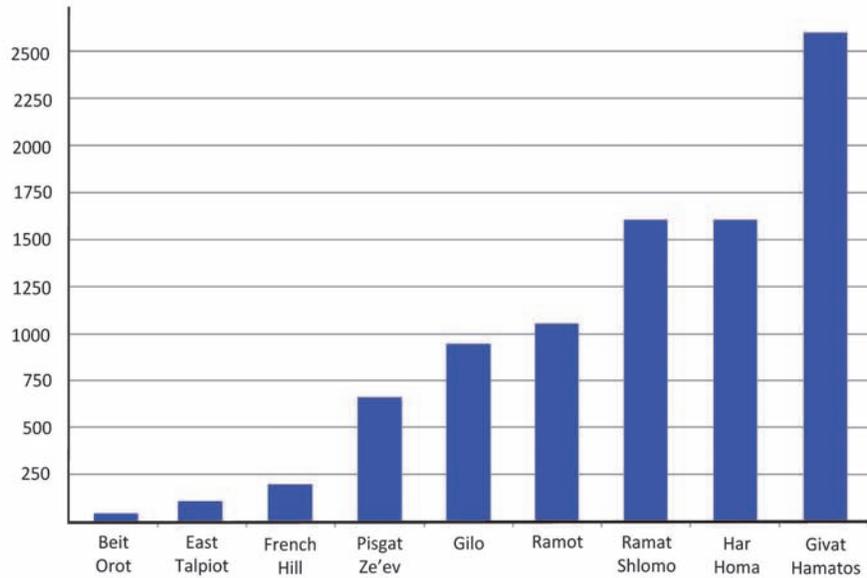
East Jerusalem Settlement Expansion – Approved Plans, 2011



Source: *Ma’ariv*, November 6, 2011

East Jerusalem Settlements – New Construction Approvals, 2011

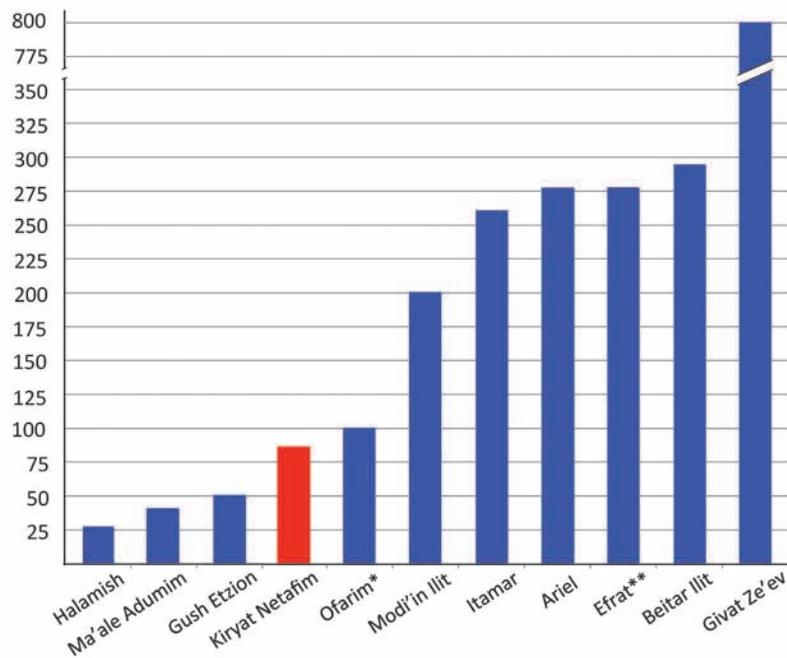
Dwelling Units



Source: *Settlement Report* vol. 21 nos. 3 through 4; Peace Now Settlement Watch; Terrestrial Jerusalem

West Bank Settlements – New Construction Approvals, 2011

Dwelling Units



■ Approval of Construction
 ■ Retroactive authorization of construction

* Includes immediate construction of a bypass road between Beit Aryeh and Ofarim

** Includes the construction of a yeshiva campus south of Efrat and commercial center in the Givat Hazayit area

Source: *Settlement Report* vol. 21 nos. 3 through 4; Peace Now Settlement Watch; Terrestrial Jerusalem

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

August 2 Following repeated delays by the state to remove settlers from Ramat Migron, the Israeli High Court of Justice again orders the demolition of the outpost, by 2012. (*Ha'aretz*, Arutz 7)

Forty-two members of the Knesset submit a petition to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stating, “[T]o solve the housing shortage throughout the country we . . . urge you to include . . . housing for tens of thousands of citizens in [the West Bank and East Jerusalem].” (Arutz 7)

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issues restraining orders for twelve settlers from Yitzhar suspected of involvement in a number of mosque burnings and other acts of vandalism and violence against Palestinians. Three of the settlers are barred from entering the West Bank at all. (Ma’an News)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) releases a report citing a link between the displacement of Palestinians and the expansion of settlements in the West Bank. Some 700 Palestinians had been displaced to date in 2011 compared with a total of 594 in all of 2010. The report also revealed that 356 Palestinian dwellings were demolished in the first half of 2011 compared with 431 in all of 2010.

August 3 An Israeli military court convicts Hakim Awad and Amjad Awad, from Awarta village, in the murders of the Fogel family in Itamar settlement in March 2011. (Ma’an News)

August 4 The Israeli Interior Ministry grants final approval for the construction of 930 dwellings in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa. (Arutz 7)

August 5 European Union (EU) foreign policy head Catherin Ashton, responds to the Israeli approval of expansion in Har Homa, stating that, “the [EU] has repeatedly urged the government of Israel to immediately end all settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. . . . Continued settlement undermines trust between the parties and the efforts to resume negotiations. This is especially true with regard to Jerusalem.” (Ma’an News)

August 8 Israeli security forces arrest two settlers from Yitzhar suspected of involvement in a series of attacks on mosques in the West Bank. (Ma’an News)

August 9 White House advisor Tommy Vietor expresses the administration’s concern with the Israeli announcement of construction expansion in Har Homa, stating that the U.S. has “raised this issue with the Israeli government,” and that, “unilateral actions work against efforts to resume direct negotiations and contradict the logic of a reasonable and necessary agreement between the parties.” (*Israel HaYom*, Ma’an News)

What I do see as growing, as gaining much more attention in the newspapers and among politicians and communities, is a different phenomena. . . . It is the problem within Europe of tension, hatred and sometimes even violence between some members of Muslim communities or Arab immigrant groups and Jews. It is a tension and perhaps hatred largely born of and reflecting the tension between Israel, the Palestinian Territories and neighboring Arab states in the Middle East over the continuing Israeli-Palestinian problem. . . .

August 11 Final approval is given for 1,600 new homes in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramat Shlomo. (Ma’an News)

In an interview with *Ma’ariv*, Settler Council Chairman Danny Dayan, responding to questions regarding the housing and economic crisis in Israel, claims that the settlements are not a burden on the Israeli budget. He stated that not only is there “no excessive investment, there is insufficient investment in [settlements].”

August 16 Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak approves construction of 277 dwellings in the settlement of Ariel. A hundred of the units are intended for former residents of Netzarim, the evacuated Gaza Strip settlement. (*Ma’ariv*)

The Samaria Residents’ Council distributes flyers to housing crisis protesters in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Modi’in advocating that Israelis seeking housing look to the West

Bank. The flyer reads, “Residences . . . in the center of Israel have become unattainable, [but in the West Bank] a variety of religious and secular communities will be glad to absorb you. . . . All this at a reasonable price.” The flyer advertises a 1,120 square foot home in Avnei Hefetz settlement for \$195,400 and a similarly sized home in Shavei Shomron settlement for \$145,250. (Arutz 7)

August 17 Settlers from the Esh Kodesh outpost uproot 80 olive trees near Nablus. (Ma’an News)

August 19 Settlers from an outpost near Beit El torch a car belonging to a Palestinian in Dura al-Qara, east of Ramallah. (Ma’an News)

August 20 Israeli security forces arrest 13 residents of Ramat Migron outpost suspected of involvement in the beating of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy. The settlers allegedly attacked the boy with metal rods and slingshots. (Arutz 7, *Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Aharonot*)

A new light rail system is opened in Jerusalem. Its nearly 9 mile route begins along Jaffa Street in West Jerusalem and terminates at the East Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze’ev. (Ma’an News)

August 21 A settler from Kiryat Arba runs over a 12-year-old Palestinian girl in the al-Salayma district of Hebron. (Ma’an News)

August 23 Settlers from Bat Ayin uproot olive, plum, and grape trees in the village of Beit Umar, northwest of Hebron. (Ma’an News)

Israel’s High Court of Justice cites security concerns in rejecting an appeal by residents of the Palestinian village of Wallajah challenging the route of the separation barrier. (*Makor Rishon-Hatzofe*)

August 25 Settlers torch more than 100 olive trees in Mikhmas village, southeast of Ramallah. (Ma’an News)

August 26 A Palestinian man from Nablus is injured in clashes with Israeli settlers and security forces as he attempts to protect his olive trees. (Ma’an News)

August 31 More than 1,000 settlers demonstrate against the court ruling on the demolition of Ramat Migron settlement. Members of Knesset Aryeh Eldad and

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

Yaakov Katz of the National Union party attend and show their support, “There is broad consensus among the MKs to arrange [the status of] this settlement. . . . Heroes live in Migron.” (*Israel HaYom*)

September 1 *Ha’aretz* reports that the IDF is training and supplying settlement security chiefs and their teams in preparation for any unrest that may occur in late September when the PA makes its bid for UN recognition.

September 5 An estimated 200 settlers clash with security forces, resulting in light injuries and six arrests, when Israeli soldiers and police evacuate and demolish three illegal structures at the Ramat Migron outpost. (Israel Radio)

Settlers set fire to a mosque in the West Bank village of Qusra, south of Nablus. The Palestinian Authority announces that it is the twenty-fifth attack on a Palestinian place of worship in the West Bank since 2010. (*Ha’aretz*)

September 6 Brig. Gen. Moti Almoz, head of the civil administration, orders an end to the demolition of Palestinian structures built without a permit in Area C, which is administered by Israel and consists of about 60% of the West Bank. Almoz seeks to ensure “equality of enforcement,” and notes that the administration was “very far” from enforcing the law in settlements and outposts with regard to construction without permits. (Army Radio, B’Tselem)

Settlers break into the IDF Binyamin regional brigade base north of Ramallah and vandalize 13 jeeps and other vehicles. The assailants also spray graffiti on the walls, including a message against the commander of the brigade, Colonel Saar Tzur, claiming that he is, “bad for the Jews.” Other graffiti indicates that the attack is part of the ongoing “price-tag” policy carried out by extremist settlers following Israeli government demolitions of outposts and other settlement expansion—in this case, the recent demolition of the Ramat Migron outpost. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

September 7 Dozens of IDF jeeps and soldiers enter Nablus to escort 1,200 Israelis en route to Joseph’s Tomb. (Ma’an News)

September 8 Settlers near Nablus vandalize a mosque in Yatma village, spraying anti-Arab and anti-Muslim slogans on the walls.

Settlers also torch two Palestinian cars in the village of Qabalan and uproot 35 trees in the village of Huwwara. (Ma’an News)

September 11 Settlers deface the home of Hagit Ofra, director of Peace Now’s Settlement Watch program. The graffiti reads, “death to traitors” and “price-tag Migron.” Ofra tells police that she and her colleagues at Peace Now received multiple threatening emails and phone calls. (*Ha’aretz*)

[E]very new settlement announced in Israel, every rocket shot over a border or suicide bomber on a bus, and every retaliatory military strike exacerbates the problem and provides a setback here in Europe for those fighting hatred and bigotry here in Europe. . . . Peace in the Middle East would indeed equate with a huge reduction of this form of labeled “anti-Semitism” here in Europe.

U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Howard Gutman, Brussels, November 30, 2011

September 13 Settlers from Yitzhar settlement attack and injure two Palestinians from the Balata refugee camp near Nablus. (Ma’an News)

September 14 A West Bank military court sentences Hakim Awad to five consecutive life sentences for the murders of the Fogel family. (Israel Radio)

September 16 One Palestinian is shot, one settler is stabbed and others sustain light injuries in clashes between settlers from Shilo and Palestinians from Qusra. (Ma’an News)

The government of Israel announces a plan to retroactively legitimize structures built on private Palestinian land in the settlement of Ofra. More than 58% of the structures in Ofra are built on such property. (*Ha’aretz*)

September 18 An Adva Center report reveals that government subsidies for local authorities in the West Bank remain higher

than the national average. (Israel Radio)

Residents of Qusra village have formed a voluntary village guard following repeated settler attacks on their town including the burning of a mosque on September 5. (Ma’an News)

September 19 Israeli police arrest a 27-year-old settler from Eli in connection with the September 6 attack on an IDF base in the West Bank. (YNet)

Yediot Abaronot reports on the departure of the Director General of the Yesha Council Naftali Bennet at the end of the year after two years in the position. Bennet was responsible for the production of 100 Youtube videos on the Yesha Council and the establishment of the Yisrael Sheli (My Israel) organization.

September 21 Israel’s AHAVA cosmetics company closes down its London, United Kingdom, store as a result of protests held in front of the store every Saturday over the past few months. The protestors targeted the company for being headquartered in the West Bank settlement Mitzpe Shalem. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

September 23 Israeli police announce that a car crash that caused the death of a 25-year-old settler from Kiryat Arba and his infant son was the result of stones thrown by Palestinians. (Arutz 7)

IDF fire kills one Palestinian man and injures seven more during clashes between Palestinians and settlers south of Nablus. (*Ha’aretz*)

September 27 The Jerusalem Planning and Construction Committee approves the construction of 942 units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Gilo. (Terrestrial Jerusalem, *Yediot Abaronot*)

Ha’aretz reports on the recommendation of the Shin Bet security service to Israel’s Education Ministry to immediately halt funding of the Old Yosef Hai Yeshiva in the West Bank Yitzhar settlement. The Shin Bet reports that it received intelligence information that senior rabbis in the yeshiva are inciting violence against Arabs and that the yeshiva is involved in violent and illegal activities against Arabs and Israeli security forces.

ment derided as an effort to “establish statehood through the backdoor” via the United Nations, rather than confront Netanyahu’s opposition to U.S. policy. U.S. funding to Palestinians through the Agency for International Development (AID) has been curtailed or stopped. The U.S.-trained Palestinian security forces have had U.S. funding of \$197 million reluctantly restored after a cut off sparked by Abbas’ UN campaign, but continuing budget shortfalls have forced massive cuts in PA police and security budgets.

Washington’s disaffection with Netanyahu is shared by Europe’s top politicians. After the recent announcement of construction of 1,100 units in the East Jerusalem settlement neighborhood of Gilo, German chancellor Angela Merkel allowed that Netanyahu “is not serious and he does not intend to promote the basic and necessary conditions for renewal of the talks with the Palestinians.” Sarkozy, in inadvertently public remarks to Obama, simply described Netanyahu as a “liar.”

Weaken the PA, Settle the Hilltops

The PLO, excluded from the Madrid process, stepped onto center stage in September 1993 at Oslo as the recognized representative of the Palestinian people. But Oslo also accommodated Israel’s refusal to freeze settlement or to support Palestinian statehood, grievous conditions that have haunted all subsequent diplomacy. Indeed, Oslo played a key role in enabling the expansion of settlement that continues to this day and in subjecting Palestinians to an endless progression of demands that have enfeebled the Palestinian Authority by failing to reduce Israel’s grip on the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

International law proscribes all civilian settlement in occupied territory. One of the enduring myths of Israel’s settlement efforts is that private Palestinian land is off limits for settlement. Israel’s High Court of Justice in 1979 ruled that privately-owned Palestinian lands could be confiscated for security-related purposes but not simply to establish civilian settlements. Nevertheless, private lands continued to be stolen from Palestinian owners by settlers and the IDF after the ruling. Beginning in 1996, the first Netanyahu government embarked on a still-continuing effort to “claim the hilltops” by establishing more than 100 new settlement outposts, many of them on private Palestinian land. In some isolated cases, Israel’s High Court, relying on its earlier rulings, has ordered a few of these outposts dismantled.

YESHA Council chairman Danny Dayan has led a campaign to legalize the land theft, most notably in the new settlement outposts. In a letter to government ministers and MKs, Dayan noted that more than 150 dwellings in which 1,000 Israelis, including serving IDF officers, reside, are scheduled for demolition in coming months.

“All of Givat Assaf could be erased by the end of 2011,” he warned. “Migron—by March 2012. The Ulpana neighborhood in Beit El, by April 2012. Amona’s fate could be sealed

in about a month. And the list goes on.”

The government is now attempting to remove the prohibition on the theft of private land for settlement in order to “launder” the many settlement outposts, not to mention veteran settlements like Ofra, that are sited on private Palestinian property.

Minister of Culture and Sport Limor Livnat has been charged by the prime minister with implementing this policy. She has noted that, “Beit El and Ofra are built on absentee-owner [Palestinian] land. Are we going to demolish them because that is absentee-owner land? There is no such intention. I remember our current president, Shimon Peres, dancing with a Torah scroll at Kedumim. [Peres as defense minister in the mid-1970s offered critical support to unauthorized settlement near Nablus] I was there.”

Israel Settles—A Zionist Response

After the failure of the settlement freeze effort, Netanyahu is no longer concerned about effective pressure from Washington to constrain settlement expansion. He remains opposed to the discussion of borders and security outlined by the Quartet. Pressed by market forces and public demands to increase housing construction throughout Israel, and ever-present settler demands, he is presiding over a new wave of relentless settlement expansion, particularly along the southern ring of East Jerusalem—Gilo, Har Homa and most notably at Givat Hamatos (Airplane Hill), the first new large-scale settlement in East Jerusalem since the development of Har Homa by the first Netanyahu government in 1996. Political pressure continues to advance large-scale settlement plans at the site of the now defunct Jerusalem airport at Atarot and in the E-1 area.

Settlers feel stronger today than at any time since Madrid. The United Nations has noted that the weekly average of attacks by settlers against Palestinians increased by 40 percent in 2011 compared to 2010, and by 165 percent compared to 2009. Settlers, some of whom during the late 1990s were prepared to consider the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, now call openly to establish a Palestinian state . . . in Jordan.

“The two-state solution,” wrote Adi Minz, former head of the YESHA Council, “was based on the existence of a moderate [Arab] axis, which is well and truly dead. They just haven’t signed the death certificate yet. The time is now right for a change of direction: sovereignty and security control over Judea and Samaria must remain in Israeli hands, since there is no room for another state between the Mediterranean and Jordan. The answer lies in Palestinian autonomy. A genuine Palestinian state will be established one day in Jordan and the Arab residents of Judea and Samaria will be its citizens.”

Settlers easily survived the ten month settlement moratorium during 2010 and enjoy strong support in the cabinet and Knesset. Longtime settler leader Benny Katz dismissed Netanyahu’s settlement campaign as insufficient.

“This is a miserable and insulting response. In the face of

Arab impudence, the government should have declared the abrogation of the Oslo Accords and announced the establishment of new settlements.”

Whither the PA

The November 1 decision to construct 2,000 settlement dwellings in and around Jerusalem was described as a “Zionist response” to “punish” the Palestinians for their admission as a member state to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization.

Netanyahu, along with many Israeli leaders, believes that instability in the Arab world has taken peace talks off the table for a “generation.” In an October 31 speech, he declared, “people make peace with the strong, not with the weak.”

His remarks on this subject might well have been directed at Abu Mazen, who was famously dismissed by Sharon as a “chick without feathers.” Netanyahu’s associates are reported to have described Abbas as “a peace rejectionist who is unwilling to return to the negotiating table even in a secret track.”

The PA is under broad assault from powers greater than itself, led by the United States and Israel.

Washington, despite its efforts to punish the PA, remains invested in the success of the institutions led by Abu Mazen and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Israel’s interests are more opaque. Abbas was reported to have said that Netanyahu wants to “slaughter” him.

Ha’aretz reported that “in closed meetings Abbas expressed the view that Israel is working . . . to strengthen Hamas and weaken him.”

This concern is shared by Jordan’s King Abdullah.

The IDF is today Israel’s key institutional supporter of the PA, arguing against the segregation of tax funds and in favor of modest measures aimed at “strengthening” the PA and at reigning in the

excesses of settler attacks against Palestinians and the IDF itself. There is concern that Israel, principally the IDF, will pay the price of a reduction in the PA’s capacity, particularly in areas where Palestinian security forces have assumed most day-to-day security duties and provide helpful intelligence to the IDF.

Netanyahu’s advisors are far more sanguine. Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon recently voiced publicly what has only been reported off the record. “If the PLO wants to quit, Israel will look for international or local forces to take charge of the PA, and if they can’t find them and the PA collapses, that will not be the end of the world for Israel. The Palestinians have to know that they can’t scare us by threatening to disband the PA.” ♦

Top Ten Fastest Growing West Bank Settlements, by Population Increase, 2000–2010

1	Modi'in Illit	32,239
2	Betar Ilit	21,775
3	Ma'ale Adummim	10,773
4	Kokhav Ya'aqov	4,366
5	Geva Binyamin	3,350
6	Alfe Menashe	2,499
7	Ariel	2,068
8	Har Adar	2,006
9	Kefar Haoranim	1,741
10	Kefar Adummim	1,596

Top Ten Largest West Bank Settlements in 2000

1	Ma'ale Adummim	24,900
2	Modi'in Illit	16,400
3	Betar Ilit	15,800
4	Ariel	15,600
5	Giv'at Ze'ev	10,300
6	Efrat	6,430
7	Qiryat Arba	6,380
8	Qarne Shomron	5,890
9	Oranit	5,070
10	Alfe Menashe	4,580

Top Ten Fastest Growing West Bank Settlements, by Percent, 2000–2010

1	Na'ale	655
2	Geva Binyamin	328
3	Kokhav Ya'aqov	266
4	Eshkolot	262
5	Mevo Horon	256
6	Kefar Haoranim	227
7	Yizhar	198
8	Gittit	197
9	Modi'in Illit	197
10	Kefar Tappuah	195

Top Ten Largest West Bank Settlements in 2010

1	Modi'in Illit	48,639
2	Betar Ilit	37,575
3	Ma'ale Adummim	35,673
4	Ariel	17,668
5	Giv'at Ze'ev	11,764
6	Efrat	7,454
7	Qiryat Arba	7,248
8	Alfe Menashe	7,079
9	Qarne Shomron	6,284
10	Oranit	6,205

Source: List of Localities: Their Population and Codes. Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001–2010.

MKS TO BIBI—KEEP THE OUTPOSTS

On October 10, 2011, 38 members of the Knesset sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu in support of maintaining settlement "outposts."

Jerusalem
October 10, 2011

To: Prime Minister of Israel
MK Benjamin Netanyahu

[Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu],

Judging by recent discussions in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, media reports and conversations with Civil Administration officials, it appears that [the government plans] in the coming months to demolish tens or hundreds of permanent homes in outposts in Judea and Samaria, specifically in Givat Assaf, Givat Ha'Ulpana, Migron, Amona, and others. This destruction is a direct result of your guidance in the last year, according to which any structure that sits on private [Palestinian] land will be destroyed. This directive must be changed.

In your recent speeches, you mentioned more than once that the root of the conflict is not a territorial one, but it touches our very existence as the Jewish people in Israel. In light of this, we should openly declare that Judea and Samaria

are ours. Evacuation of outposts, no matter what the legal explanation or excuse, provides a de facto acceptance of the sovereignty claims of the Palestinians to Judea and Samaria.

It is obvious that the demolition of houses is not an attempt to settle an injustice with the landowners, since in many cases the previous owners do not exist, and even if they do, they can be compensated with alternative land close to their home. This is the right solution, and should be adopted instead of demolition of permanent homes and villages that were constructed under the auspices and encouragement of the state of Israel.

We would like to highlight that we see a government policy of demolishing outposts in Judea and Samaria as a red line. This is a direct contradiction of the values under which we have been elected to the Knesset, and we cannot support such a policy publicly and in the Knesset.

Following your most recent speeches, I and the cosigners of this letter are the first to praise you for your courage to say things as they are and your position on the legitimacy of the state of Israel as it is. We hope that you continue in your support by canceling the current and future plans for home demolition.

Arutz 7, November 10, 2011

Abu Mazen presented three options to President Obama. The first, to return to the negotiating table but under two conditions: a settlement construction freeze and a state based on the 1967 borders. Since I don't foresee Netanyahu accepting these principles, I don't see negotiations anywhere in the near future. The second option is to approach the UN General Assembly, where the United States has no veto, and if the Arabs and Europeans join forces and reach an agreement, Palestine will get a majority of 150 states.

The third option is to throw away the keys. When Netanyahu proposed to Abu Mazen that Israel maintain control of the Jordan Valley for the next 40 years, Abu Mazen responded by telling him that total occupation would be preferable to an agreement. He said that he would not accept any Israeli presence on Palestinian land. Therefore, I tell you that Netanyahu is not being honest, he does not want a Palestinian state, but rather a dwarf state bereft of sovereignty.

Israeli MK Ahmad Tibi, *Ma'ariv*, November 7, 2011

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