

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEWS

Implementation of the first stage of the Oslo accords—Israel's redeployment in the Jericho region and Gaza—will probably begin in May. According to the agreement, all settlements in Gaza will be protected. Israel, under international law, will continue to be responsible for the welfare and protection of all Palestinians in the territories. (See page 1.)

The commission of inquiry into the February 25 killings in Hebron has illuminated the relationship between the Israeli army and armed settlers in the occupied territories. Israel has long followed a policy of arming settlers for security and vigilante actions. (See page 1.)

Despite the recent focus on restraining settlers, during 1993 the settlement population increased at a greater rate than the population in any region within Israel. (See page 3.)

The Clinton administration's policy toward settlements recently came under congressional review. The State Department expects expenditures on settlements to "decrease somewhat" this year. (See page 7.)

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ISRAEL REQUIRED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW TO PROTECT PALESTINIANS UNDER OCCUPATION

The massacre by an Israeli settler of nearly 40 Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Hebron in the early morning hours of February 25 has called into question Israel's ability to fulfill its obligation to protect the 2 million Palestinians of the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. And for the first time in the almost 27-year occupation of these areas, critical international attention has focused on the threat that officially armed Israeli civilians, among a settler population of 300,000, pose to their Palestinian neighbors.

Israel's rule of the West Bank and Gaza is defined as a "belligerent occupa-

tion" by the body of international law developed after World War II. Its responsibilities toward the Palestinian population under its occupation are codified in both The Hague Convention Regulations (1906) and the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (1949). Israel does not recognize the applicability of these international conventions to its rule, but has nevertheless agreed to honor them.

In its role as occupying power in the territories, Israel is charged under the law with three basic responsibilities:

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ISRAEL'S POLICY OF ARMING ISRAELI SETTLERS ENDANGERS PALESTINIANS IN THE TERRITORIES

Israeli settlers have been authorized to carry weapons from their earliest days in the occupied territories. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issued Uzi and M-16 machine guns to early settlers. As the settlement enterprise became more firmly established and the numbers of settlers grew, their institutionalized security role has been expanded by the IDF.

Less than a week before the massacre in Hebron, Minister of Police Moshe Shahal announced the formation of civil guard units in all major settlements in the occupied territories. The first of the units was established in the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, east of Jerusalem, in December 1993. Composed of settler-

residents, the units have been granted authority to detain Arabs, but operate within settlement confines only. Settlers have been armed in the following manner:

■ Under the District Defense Regulations established in 1973, settlers are required to perform their annual reserve duty in the area in which they live. This regulation has resulted in armed, militant settlers like Meir Kahane, the founder of the recently banned Kach Political Party, patrolling the streets of Ramallah during their annual reserve assignments and participating at checkpoints and with patrols.

SETTLERS, continued on page 4

TO OUR READERS

One of the most important effects of the agreement initiated by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization last September has been to create debate in Israel on such subjects as the future of settlements—an issue critical to peace in the region.

The Oslo accords postponed negotiations on this central issue, but events have forced settlements to the top of Israel's domestic political agenda.

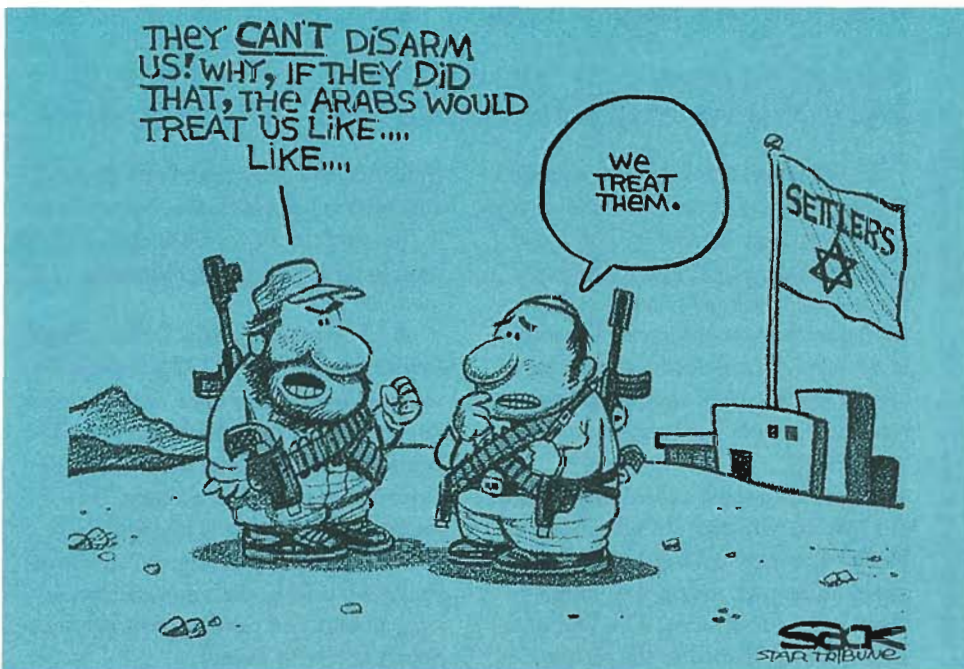
This is underscored in an important speech by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin before a key organization of Israeli settlers on April 21 in which he told the settlers what they least wanted to hear. "Settlements may be removed for peace," he said, "and I am for removing settlements for the sake of peace—which is more important for the future of the State of Israel than one or another group of settlements." Rabin's statement shocked his audience. It broadened language he had used in public a few days earlier which offered to remove settlements from the Golan Heights for peace with Syria.

After the massacre in Hebron, Rabin's government decided against consolidating

or removing some 450 Jewish settlers from Hebron, a clear statement of Rabin's settlement policies. It buttressed his argument that the Oslo accords do not require Israel to remove settlements during the interim period of West Bank and Gaza autonomy for Palestinians. He is opposed in that view even by some in his government who believe Hebron was an event that requires Israel to do more now about removing settlements (see the article on page 8).

Since his welcome statements, it is less clear where Rabin stands on settlements. Following his election in 1992, he has acted to expand and preserve them. But his new view expresses willingness to sacrifice settlements in exchange for peace. He now encourages hope that he is ready at last for substantive change in settlement policy—change that makes sense in the very terms of his recent public assertions.

From this point forward, the prime minister will be watched closely for actions that speak louder than his words.



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SETTLER POPULATION GREW BY 10 PERCENT IN 1993

Israel's settler population in the occupied West Bank (excluding annexed East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip grew 9.3 percent to 115,000, an increase of 10,000 in 1993, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics—a growth rate higher than for any region in Israel.

According to the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip (YESHA), the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza now numbers 136,415. The figure represents an increase of 11,280, or 9 percent, over the YESHA's October 1992 estimate and a 136 percent increase since the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada in late 1987.

All settler population numbers are necessarily approximations, reflecting informed estimates as well as the political bias of the reporting organization. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reports the official estimate of the settler population of the West Bank and Gaza—115,000. YESHA's figures, which are based on local tax records, are usually higher than those of the Bureau of Statistics or the Peace Now organization.

But it is noteworthy that for the first time YESHA is reporting that some of the regional councils into which all settlements are grouped have experienced a loss of population.

For example, Kiryat Arba, a settlement adjoining Hebron and the scene of some of the most violent opposition to the Declaration of Principles, suffered a loss of 17 percent, or 1,200 people in the last year. Ariel, near Nablus, whose Likud mayor has been in the forefront of opposition to the Rabin government's settlement construction cutbacks in some areas of the West Bank, lost 100 people.

Since the agreement with the PLO, however, housing demand has revived in the city of Ariel. Purchasers hope that they will make a profit if the settlement is dismantled in the context of a peace agreement. Apartment prices in Ariel are also relatively low. It is possible to purchase a two-family cottage with a private garden for \$80,000.

The transfer of military government offices from Nablus to Ariel has also brought military forces and a large number of state employees who work for the military government to purchase apartments in the settlement. Another reason for the renewed interest in the settlement is the promise of a return of all benefits attending Ariel's designation as a development town—a result of the success of its mayor, Ron Nachman, in a Supreme Court case against the state.

Most regional councils in the territories reported population increases. Perhaps the most surprising is in the Gaza settlements, whose numbers increased by 20 percent—from 4,905 to 5,900—as housing completed by the Rabin government came onto the market.

Settlements in the area of greater Jerusalem also continued to record above-average population growth. The Benjamin region, north of Jerusalem, increased by 25 percent—from 16,004 to 20,430; the city of Ma'ale Adumim, adjoining Jerusalem, expanded by 18 percent, and, with a population of 19,870, continued to be the largest West Bank settlement. The

bedroom community of Efrat, south of Bethlehem, grew by 34 percent from 3,807 to 5,100. The religious settlement of Betar near Bethlehem increased by 56 percent—from 3,524 to 5,540.

"Givat Ze'ev, Mevaseret Zion, and Ma'ale Adumim are the bedroom communities of the capital. Even without the peace that is ripening, they are booming, and the talk of autonomy only pushes [apartment] prices higher," noted an article in the newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*. "A three-room apartment costs \$110,000 in Givat Ze'ev, \$135,000 in Mevaseret Zion [an Israeli suburb of Jerusalem]. In Ma'ale Adumim it's all but impossible to find an apartment, not to mention a house."

A recent poll by the Ministry of Housing and Construction and the Ministry of the Interior revealed that the West Bank boasts 15 of the top 100 places where Israelis live in terms of income, education, and employment. ♦

Settler Population 1992–1993

Council Name	Settlement Population	
	Oct. 1992	Dec. 1993
Gaza	4,905	5,900
Benjamin	16,004	20,430
Shomron	12,921	11,150
Kaddumim [part of Shomron]		2,900
Mt. Hebron	3,046	2,900
Etzion Bloc	6,800	6,700
Jordan Valley	3,800	3,800
Ma'ale Adumim	16,757	19,870
Ariel	13,026	12,900
Elkana	3,331	3,400
Alfe Menache	3,525	4,005
Emmanuel	4,803	4,700
Ma'ale Efrim	1,819	2,100
Givat Ze'ev	7,100	7,200
Efrat	3,807	5,100
Bet Arie	1,757	1,950
Oranit	3,402	4,100
Kiryat Arba [incl. Hebron]	7,107	5,900
Betar	3,524	5,540
Magilot	700	900
Karnei Shomron	5,050	4,970
TOTAL	123,184	136,415

Source: YESHA, *Ha'aretz*, December 27, 1993.

■ Military Order 898 of March 1981 expanded the settlers' powers by permitting them to require Palestinians suspected of violating any military order to produce identification cards; to arrest Palestinian suspects without warrant; and to participate in the "Regional Defense Network," formed by settlers residing in the string of small Gush Emmunim settlements throughout the West Bank heartland.

This security innovation was endorsed by Raphael Eitan during his tenure as chief of staff in the early 1980s. The system of territorial defense organized these settlers in "organic military units stationed in their own areas under their own command." Weapons, training, and equipment were provided as part of a program aimed at increasing the participation of settlers in the conduct of military security operations.

In June 1988, soon after the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada increased the confrontation between settlers and Palestinians, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin authorized "civilians living in the territories who see Arabs holding petrol bombs . . . to shoot at them." He was also reported to have said that civilians may shoot in response to other, unspecified "imminent dangers."

Settlers' Informal Duties

Given the security-related powers formally granted to settlers, it is often difficult to determine which settler actions have been undertaken as a function of that authority and which of them belong to the category of vigilante or underground operations. The rules of engagement regulating settler enforcement of security responsibilities, are, in practice, less strict than those governing regular forces.

One settler said, for example, "We go into a village, shoot a little bit at the windows, we scare the villagers, and go home to our settlement. We do not kidnap people, but sometimes we grab a kid for throwing stones and take him to the settlement, rough him up a little, and then hand him over to the army so that they can finish the job."

Military authorities, out of sympathy with settler objectives and mindful of the power that settlers exercise at the political level, have traditionally supported their formal and informal security functions.

The Karp commission, established in April 1981 by the Israeli government to inquire into settler violence against Palestinians, reported that allegations of settler misconduct were not investigated because settlers "are not perceived by the police as offenders in the usual sense. . . . The [Inquiry] Team formed the impression that the police investigations in the sphere of our interest were carried out in an ambivalent manner, as is evident from the results of our investigations."

The U.S. State Department noted in 1982 that "settlers who are alleged to have been implicated in acts of violence against the persons or property of West Bankers, are rarely questioned about these incidents, are more rarely subject to legal proceedings, and almost never convicted."

Attempts to subject settlers to the rule of law are hobbled by the peculiar legal status of settlers as well as the officially sanctioned coddling.

According to an article in *Davar* by Israeli reporter Yoram Levi on December 12, 1993, "investigations of [settler] violations of law face formidable obstacles if undertaken by the police. The religious settlers refuse to cooperate and deliberately sabotage any investigation by hiding the weapons used in any shootings so as to prevent ballistic tests and by coordinating testimony with each other in order to manufacture alibis and other tricks. The epitome was the action of the settlers of Ma'ale Amos, who simply locked up the policemen who had come to the settlement to arrest suspects in the shooting at Arab homes. The imprisoned police finally agreed not to carry out any arrests."

Avigdore Feldman, an Israeli attorney, contends that no special law permits settlers, even those who have not done IDF service, to carry weapons at all times. The army allows them to do so as part of their duties in the territorial defense system. "It is well known that there is no shortage of weapons in those places [the Jewish settlements]. Seldom is a Jewish settler seen walking around unarmed. Nobody has so far explained to me by what criteria those weapons are distributed. Who is entitled to get an Uzi, who gets an M-16, and from which age? And what about those who have not served in the army?"

Right-wing Violence

Kahane was assigned to do army reserve duty in Ramallah during the spring of 1982 despite a court order forbidding his entry into the city. Convicted members of the Jewish underground responsible for car bomb attacks against the mayors of Ramallah, Nablus, and El Bireh in June 1981 were reintegrated into their regional defense units after receiving presidential pardons.

When two settlers from Ofra shot and killed Rabah Hussein Muhammad Ghanem from the West bank village of Beitteen and injured another resident in January 1988, General Amran Mitzna, the Israeli commander in the West Bank, indicated that their action must have been in self-defense since settlers are "very familiar with all the rules of behavior."

Avrahami Kol, from the Israeli village of Kibbutz Yifat, who did his reserve duty as an infantry commander in the Shilo area the following March, explained that he "was forced to report to the police on several confrontations [between reserve soldiers and] the Jewish settlers. The result was that our company got a 'bad reputation' as sentimental leftists."

The admitted failure of the Israel Defense Forces to anticipate settler violence against Palestinians, revealed to the commission of inquiry established after the Hebron massacre, masks a deeper, more deliberate, and dangerous policy assumption. In view of that incident, and countless examples of unprovoked settler violence against Palestinians undertaken during Israel's 27-year-rule in the occupied territories, one can only conclude that the IDF, *as a matter of policy*, has chosen to permit such actions. ♦

WORLD EDITORIAL OPINION TURNS AGAINST SETTLEMENTS

The Hebron massacre drew the attention of editorial writers across the country and abroad. The following excerpts offer a sampling of editorial opinion on the relevance of settlements to the current peace talks.

One Law for Arabs, One for Israelis?

Never shoot at a Jewish settler. Not even if he is firing on Palestinians.

That, incredibly, is the rule for Israel's security forces in the occupied territories, according to a border police commander who testified last week before an Israeli government commission investigating the massacre of about 30 Arabs in a Hebron mosque. "Instructions are to take cover, wait until the clip is empty or the gun jams and then overpower him," he said. "Even if I had been (in the mosque where Baruch Goldstein opened fire Feb. 25), I could not have done anything—there were special orders."

. . . The border police commander painted an ugly picture of unequal and therefore unjust treatment of residents of the Israeli-administered territories: Jewish settlers get away with taking the law into their own hands while Arabs are subject to frequent crackdowns, curfews and the like.

"It cannot be that there is one law for an Arab and one law for a Jew," an Israeli lawyer said.

That's correct. But now the popular impression is of a double standard, one for the dominant Jews and one for the dominated Palestinians. Whatever the actual details of the soldiers' instructions, and despite ambiguity in their interpretation, this impression will be a hard one for Israel to rectify. . . .

Chicago Tribune, March 14, 1994

Israel's Obligation

. . . The sad truth is that the settlers have been armed, ostensibly for their own protection, but too many see their role as keeping the Palestinians cowed and in their place. The hard truth is that there is one law for settlers and another for Palestinians who receive long prison sentences if they are caught with a gun. . . . When a settler shoots a Palestinian, the chances of a light sentence—or getting off altogether—have been far greater than when a Palestinian harms an Israeli.

As an occupying power, the state of Israel has an international obligation toward its captive subjects, and physical protection is high on the list. It is not tolerable to have settlers—a law unto themselves—able to walk into downtown Hebron and shoot an Arab on sight, as had been done in the months and years before the massacre in the mosque. . . .

No doubt the settlers need protection—especially after Hebron—but that should be the job of the Israeli security forces, not the vigilantes.

The Boston Globe, March 8, 1994

Israel's Price of Unfair Treatment

. . . . Israeli government policy presumed that the threat would always come from Arabs against Jews, not vice versa. The Hebron massacre . . . laid bare the bias of Israeli policy. While higher-ranking officers denied that Jews who committed murder would not be shot, in fact the presumption of the Israel legal system generally has been in favor of Jews and against Arabs.

Under international law, Israel is required to maintain order in the occupied territories. It has no authority to establish settlements. It did so to increase its bargaining power if the time for withdrawal came and to ensure its hold on the territories if withdrawal was unlikely. Few countries willingly withdraw from captured territory, but Israel always has kept alive that possibility. Its treatment of the two peoples under its control—Jews and Arabs—has not been even-handed, which makes the present impasse much more difficult to overcome.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 13, 1994

Fiddling While Peace Burns

Jewish settlements . . . preclude peaceful self-rule. Clashes are inevitable; the Israeli army sticks around, protecting the settlers—sometimes, as in Gaza, shooting to kill anyone it believes endangers settlers' lives. To provide a buffer round the settlements, ever more land is being sliced off from Palestinian use to be turned into expanded security zones. . . .

Trying to talk about settlement policy before the Gaza-Jericho deal is fixed would mean that it was never fixed; the procrastination would be endless. The settlement issue could, however, be put on the agenda for immediately afterwards. Israelis, who would like to postpone thinking about all such things . . . for as long as possible, argue that everything depends on how the first years work out, that the Palestinians are on probation. But with settlements unresolved, the test is weighted against success. . . .

People who have been planted somewhere for a political or strategic purpose cannot brutally be uprooted. But they can be encouraged to leave with the offer of compensation. All new building should cease, as it is supposed to have done. Gun-control laws should be applied to settlers who choose to remain. And some particularly provocative settlements, such as the 400 Jews in central Hebron, need to go at once. It is looking-glass logic and has Hebron's 150,000 Arabs locked up for a month while a handful of Jews roam free. . . . Mr. Rabin has yet to show that he has his priorities worked out.

The Economist, April 2, 1994

- maintaining the security of the territories,
- insuring public order and safety, and
- acting for the welfare of the local population.

Israel's obligation to protect residents of the occupied territories has been complicated by its policy of encouraging the transfer of large numbers of its Jewish citizens into the territories. This action is itself a violation of the Geneva Convention [Article 49(6)]. The settlers represent Israel's interest in remaining permanently in the territories, and their demands for resources (primarily land) and security have turned Israel's internationally-mandated security objectives on their head.

Never Shoot a Settler

Major General Danny Yatom, commander of Israeli forces in the West Bank, noted at the March 10 session of the official commission of inquiry into the Hebron massacre, that little consideration has been given by the Israel Defense Forces to the prospect of settler attacks against Palestinians, despite a long history of such violence. The inquiry also revealed what has long been inferred from IDF practice—Israeli soldiers serving in the occupied territories are under orders never to shoot a Jewish settler, even one who is himself firing on Palestinians. The result of this policy is that “there are many opportunities everyday [for settlers] to kill Arabs,” said an Israeli army officer.

The settlers have large numbers of personal weapons—M-16s, mortars, Uzis, and sniper rifles—but no armored vehicles or heavy weapons at their disposal. If the actions of the Jewish underground in the early 1980s are any guide, they also have access to explosives and detonators. A civil guard comprised of settlers is organized by settlement and administrative region. It has military communications equipment that permits settlers to monitor the entire IDF military communications network and to issue orders to military units in their vicinity. Settlers coordinate patrols of their own settlements, roads, and Palestinian villages with the IDF, but they also have the capability to act independently, evading military roadblocks, undertaking “retaliation” actions against villages and towns during curfews, ignoring army declarations “closing” areas, and patrolling areas where they believe the army has been lax.

“The moment of truth is approaching fast,” warned the influential commentator Ze’ev Schiff shortly before the Likud’s defeat in June 1992. “A further deterioration of the existing situations will lead to the Lebanonization of the territories. We will then belatedly realize that Jews are capable of creating their own Hizballah movement under rabbinical leadership. Anarchy will then be unavoidable.”

As the occupying power, Israel’s failure to protect those under its rule cannot easily be remedied or challenged by the international community. Although the Geneva Convention mandates an extensive series of protections, it lacks any enforcement mechanism.

The Geneva Convention includes a commitment made by

“High Contracting parties . . . to ensure respect for the Convention,” but this has never been interpreted to require the evaluation of, let alone the imposition of sanctions against, countries found to be violating the treaty.

The United Nations is constrained by the primacy international law confers on the occupying power as the source of sole and ultimate authority. On December 22, 1987, the UN Security Council directed the secretary-general to ascertain ways of insuring the physical protection of Palestinians in the wake of the outbreak of the intifada earlier that month. In his report to the secretary-general, Murrack Goulding, then under secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, noted that deploying UN forces in the territories to protect Palestinians against the IDF or replacing the Israeli army altogether “present very real difficulties.” Goulding wrote, “The occupying power is responsible for protecting the civilian population. The introduction of other forces into the occupied territories to provide physical protection would thus detract from the occupying power’s responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

The Israel-PLO declaration of principles provides for “a temporary international or foreign presence as agreed upon” in Gaza and the Jericho region, but Israel has declared that such a presence will have a limited mandate, not unlike UNRWA’s 21 refugee affairs officers, who since 1988 have provided passive protection for Palestinians during confrontations with settlers or the Israeli military. The agreement to introduce such a presence in Hebron is consistent with this view.

Protecting Palestinians

The accord itself does not materially change Israel’s international standing as occupying power, nor lessen its obligations to Palestinians in the territories. The decision to devolve certain security functions to a Palestinian police force, for example, is not inconsistent with its continuing responsibilities as occupying power. Unlike a UN or international force, the proposed Palestinian police envisioned by the Israel-PLO declaration of principles will look to Israel’s military forces as its source of authority and ultimate sovereign. By empowering a Palestinian police force during the period of Palestinian self-rule, Israel is not surrendering its commitment to protect the Palestinian population; it merely subcontracts it.

The incident in Hebron has highlighted Israel’s responsibility, in the words of a U.S. State Department spokesperson, “to prevent innocent Palestinian civilians from being attacked and murdered by extremist settlers.”

PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath insists that “we really have to protect Palestinians from the settlers and not just the other way around as the Israelis have been assuming all along.”

But Israel’s obligation to protect Palestinians in territories under its rule and its support for the expansion of a settler presence in these territories cannot be reconciled. International law recognizes this fundamental incompatibility and argues for an end to settlements. Without the will or the means to enforce its judgment, the international community must nevertheless count on Israel itself to reassess its policies. ♦

U.S. OFFICIAL REVISES GOVERNMENT VIEW OF SETTLEMENTS

On March 1, Robert H. Pelletreau, the newly installed assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, appeared before the Europe and the Middle East subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, chaired by Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.). Pelletreau avoided repeating the policy of previous administrations, which have characterized settlements as "an obstacle to peace." Pelletreau instead described them as "a complicating factor" in Israel-PLO negotiations. Excerpts from his testimony follow.

Hamilton: The declaration of principles, as I recall, does not call for taking up the question of the settlements until several years later, several years down the road or so . . . is it the position of the United States government that that question of the settlements ought to be deferred, as contemplated in the declaration of principles, or do you think that's a matter that should be reopened?

Pelletreau: The question of settlements, in its final aspects, is deferred by agreement in the declaration of principles. But in point of fact, various aspects of the settlements have to be dealt with in the immediate talks, which call for a turnover of authority. And part of that is what kind of protection and presence there will be around settlements and how large they will be and whether—what will be the regime regarding roads in and out of settlements. So settlements are being addressed in some of their aspects. . . .

Hamilton: Do you think that the question of the settlements will now be given a new urgency in this process?

Pelletreau: There's no question that the recent incidents have given new prominence to the question of settlements, but I think that they will remain to be addressed in their final form as part of final status negotiations . . .

Hamilton: And I guess the question is, do we think that Arafat needs some further concrete step on the settler issue in order to get the Palestinians back to the table?

Pelletreau: I think that the intensity of the reaction and the prominence of the question of protection of Palestinians makes it very difficult for the Palestinian negotiators to just come back to the table as though it were business as usual. Before steps are taken on the protection side which will be viewed by the Palestinian community as going in the direction of assuring greater security for them—and that is—I think the Israeli government recognizes that—those steps, a lot of measures are being taken. And we'll be in regular contact with the Palestinians and the Israelis on that subject.

Hamilton: So—so the U.S. position

and view is now that if the Israelis implement the plans that they have announced, that will be sufficient to bring Arafat and the Palestinians back to the table.

Pelletreau: If they implement them fully and if implementation goes beyond what I called "tokenism," just a few to really address the question of militant settlers. . . .

Hamilton: Now, it's my impression that, in spite of the freeze on the new settlements that was declared by the Rabin government, that expansion of existing settlements is going ahead at a fairly rapid pace, especially in East Jerusalem and its environs. Is that an accurate impression?

Pelletreau: When the Rabin government came into power, it announced a number of measures that cut back on settlement activity but did not stop completely settlement activity. And it is true that since a new mayor was elected in Jerusalem that there has been some increase in that activity.

Hamilton: And what are we saying to the Israeli government on the issue of settlement expansion?

Pelletreau: I think that will be an issue on the agenda for the upcoming visit of the prime minister, sir.

Hamilton: And what are we going to tell the prime minister?

Pelletreau: I'm not sure that we've completely—

Hamilton: That's not resolved—

Pelletreau: —worked out exactly what we will say.

Hamilton: Okay. Are U.S. assistance monies being used for settlement expansion?

Pelletreau: Not so far as I know, sir.

Hamilton: We deducted from the coming year's—\$437 million was deducted from the coming year's loan guarantees due to Israeli expansion—expenditures in the territories.

Pelletreau: Yes. That is correct.

Hamilton: Do you expect the level of spending to stay the same or to increase or decrease in this fiscal year—the coming fiscal year?

Pelletreau: I think it may—it may decrease somewhat, but it's too early for us to determine.

Hamilton: What—why do you think it might decrease?

Pelletreau: Because of the pattern that seemed to be emerging at the end of the period that we had under review last time and because of our discussions with the Israeli government on this subject.

Hamilton: What effect do you think the Israeli building in the West Bank and the government policy on settlements is having on the peace process?

Pelletreau: Well, I think it's a complicating factor, sir. But it—as I mentioned, it is being addressed in certain of its aspects in the negotiations, and the Israelis and the Palestinians have reached agreement on—their declaration of principles on full addressal of the settlements question in the final status talks.

Hamilton: And how would you describe the Israeli goals with respect to settlements today?

Pelletreau: My understanding is that a distinction is drawn by the current Israeli government between settlements that have a security purpose and those that might be founded for other purposes.

Hamilton: Do they have a goal of—I've heard the phrase "territorial continuity" between settlements, say, in the Jerusalem area and those elsewhere in the West Bank?

Pelletreau: I think that's a subject that we need to gain . . . greater clarification from them on.

Hamilton: Now, some Israeli officials have raised the possibility of providing financial incentives to settlers in order to encourage them to come back, to relocate inside Israel proper. What is our position with respect to that?

Pelletreau: I have to say I think this is an Israeli government decision and a matter for the Israelis to determine.

Hamilton: Would the administration be willing to see the U.S. loan guarantees used to finance the rehousing of settlers in Israel proper?

Pelletreau: So far as I know, that subject has not come up, but if it does . . . I think we would certainly be willing to look at it and consider it . . .

CLEARING THINGS UP AT STATE

The State Department's deputy press secretary, Christine Shelly, had just a bit of trouble at the Friday briefing for the news media when she was asked if there has been a "clear statement of [administration] policy on settlements in the occupied territories."

"Well, I think our position on settlements is, is well known," Shelly said.

"It certainly comes up from time to time in the context of, you know, testimony and other things," she continued. "We do—the briefers—also, from time to time, get those questions as well. As to—you know, nothing has changed on that in terms of our position and, you know, I think it's—you know, I can refer you to, you know, to probably to previous statements by officials on that. But I don't have anything—you know, I mean, you know, our—I think—I don't have—you know, I—we—usually we try to have, you know, a little bit of something on that. I'm not sure that it's going to be, you know, specifically what you're looking for. You know, generally speaking, our position that on settlements that it's the Palestinians and Israelis have agreed that the final status negotiations will cover these issues and, you know, that's—that's also our view."

"In the Loop"
The Washington Post, March 14, 1994

SETTLERS REMAIN IN HEBRON

The February 25 massacre of 30 Palestinians in Hebron sparked a whirlwind of attention about the fate of the 450 settlers living in five locations in the city.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has defied calls, including those by members of his cabinet and the leading newspaper *Ha'aretz*, to remove, disarm, or concentrate in more defensible locations the 80 Jewish families in the city who now require 1,500 soldiers to protect them.

Had a decision been taken to remove the zealots in the immediate aftermath of the bloody events of February, Rabin would have made both a political and security master stroke. The settlement movement and its political patrons were then unprepared for such a move, which would have won public support. The Israel Defense Forces would have been relieved of assigning its soldiers for the thankless and dangerous task of guarding the settlers.

The moment for such a decision has passed. The zealots have organized themselves against such a move, and prominent rabbis have sanctioned the refusal by soldiers to obey orders to evacuate any settlement. The settlement lobby is on the political offensive—warning of calamity if Rabin tries to remove the Hebron settlers. Rabin met with settlers recently to assure them that the status quo in Hebron would remain during the 5-year interim period of Palestinian self-rule. ♦

When this Jewish community in Hebron was established it was a crime against Zionism. It needs to be removed for compelling security reasons. . . . The need for evacuation is self-evident. Removal is not part of the negotiations with the PLO. It is not a result of a PLO demand, but because of our own requirements.

*Minister of the Environment Yossi Sarid,
Ha'aretz, March 7, 1994*

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