

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEWS

As this issue of the *Settlement Report* goes to press, the region is marking the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty and the convening of the North Africa-Middle East summit in Casablanca.

Peace and economic development, however, remain hostage to the central issues still dividing Israelis and Palestinians.

Stories beginning on this page recount disturbing developments in U.S. policy toward settlements and the Rabin government's continuing settlement drive.

The UN General Assembly is also an important forum where changes have been announced in U.S. policy on issues central to the Israeli-Arab conflict. (See page 3.)

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U.S. POLICY SHIFTS ON SETTLEMENTS

By Geoffrey Aronson

U.S. opposition to settlement construction has undergone a substantial, continuous erosion in the period since the election of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in July 1992. This pattern has been consistent, notwithstanding the introduction of "settlement penalties" that have resulted in the deduction of \$437.5 million and \$216.8 million from U.S. loan guarantees in autumn 1993 and 1994, respectively.

No longer are settlements an "obstacle to peace"—the formula established during the 1980s by successive Republican administrations. This formulation itself represented a diminution of a

policy established during the Carter administration, which also defined settlements as "illegal."

Today, settlements are a "complicating factor"—to use a term consistently employed by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Robert Pelletreau in testimony before Congress.

In addition, U.S. policy provides for the expansion of settlements due to "natural growth"—a term that entered the U.S. diplomatic lexicon in March 1993 when Assistant Secretary Edward Djerejian testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the

U.S. POLICY, *continued on page 6*

CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES IN WEST BANK

The recent consideration of the loan guarantee "settlement penalty" and a number of revelations about new building in West Bank settlements have raised questions about Israel's current policy toward settlement construction in the West Bank

Exactly what did Prime Minister Rabin promise President George Bush and President Bill Clinton?

It is widely believed, incorrectly, that Rabin committed Israel to a freeze on all new settlement construction. In fact, the most that Rabin promised was an end to the creation of new settlements—long a marginal aspect of Israel's settlement policy. Indeed, in his discussions with President Bush in August 1992, he reaffirmed his intention, and won U.S. con-

sent, to build where the pressures of "natural growth" required the expansion of existing settlements and to lend government support to settlement construction generated by market forces. The massive construction in east Jerusalem, more extensive than in the rest of the territories combined, was not even addressed in the bilateral talks.

In the period since Rabin's election, the settler population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has increased from 112,000 to 140,000.

The settler population is increasing at a faster rate than anywhere in Israel itself, and few settlers are abandoning their homes. Fewer than 150 families

WEST BANK, *continued on page 7*

TO OUR READERS

Events in recent weeks have demonstrated both the promise and the pitfalls of the diplomatic process begun three years ago at Madrid.

The Israeli-Jordanian treaty is the most conspicuous achievement of the process instigated by Secretary of State James Baker in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

Long-standing differences over water resources and land appear to have been resolved to the satisfaction of each party. Minor border rectifications including the exchange of territory and long-term leasing of Jordanian land by Israel were critical elements to the resolution of Jordanian-Israeli differences.

These policy innovations, however, have limited application to Israel's outstanding territorial disputes with the Syrians and the Palestinians.

Syrian President Hafez al-Assad has denounced King Hussein's decision to lease Jordanian territory to Israel. Assad also rejects an agreement on the Golan Heights that permits Israel any territorial rights.

The continuing presence of Israeli settlers in Gaza is one of the principal complaints of Hamas (and most Palestinians), whose violent opposition to the self-rule agreement has dominated the news of late.

This problem cannot be solved by a formula that provides for the continuing existence and expansion of the settler presence in

Gaza—a presence that requires the Israeli army to patrol one-third of Gaza. And as Israelis and Palestinians confront the extension of the Palestine National Authority's powers to the West Bank, they will encounter problems related to protecting 140,000 settlers living in 150 settlements that will make the trouble in Gaza pale by comparison.

As long as Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are employed as a rationale to deny Palestinians true control over territories they claim as their own, Palestinian leaders will labor with increasing difficulty to win the support of their people.

For this reason, we view with some concern the disturbing evolution of U.S. policy on settlements outlined in the stories beginning on page 1. The more benign view of settlements now being expressed by Washington, and indications of a change in U.S. policy at the United Nations, risk emboldening the Rabin government to continue settlement expansion and convincing Palestinians that diplomacy will not halt this central element of their dispute with Israel. Neither of these developments is in U.S. interests or in the interest of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.



NEWCOMERS TO EAST JERUSALEM

The number of immigrants settling in east Jerusalem since 1991 fell markedly, even as hundreds of new apartments in that sector have become available. The decrease is a consequence of overall reduction in immigration to Israel in recent years.

There are no figures available for immigrants settling in other occupied territories.

The following charts, compiled from monthly reports published by the Jerusalem Project on Immigrant Absorption, illustrate immigration and settlement trends.

Immigration to Israel 1990-1994

	<i>National</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>		<i>East Jerusalem</i>	
1990	199,578	13,418	[6.7%]	7,700	[3.8%]
1991	156,168	11,835	[7.6]	6,813	[4.3]
1992	72,253	6,619	[9.2]	3,335	[4.4]
1993	82,636	5,825	[7.0]	2,964	[3.4]
1994 [Jan.-July]	41,291	3,033	[7.3]	1,637	[4.0]

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U.S. SAYS UNITED NATIONS NO LONGER RELEVANT TO ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The Palestine Liberation Organization, already operating without the safety net of Arab solidarity, has lost the support of the United States in its effort to confront Israel with an international consensus opposed to its settlement policies in the occupied territories. The United Nations General Assembly is the main arena where this change in U.S. policy is now being implemented.

The U.S. is adding its voice to Israel's in suggesting that after Oslo, the UN no longer has any role to play on central settlement-related issues such as the legality of Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, and Palestinian sovereignty. These concerns will be resolved in "final status" negotiations to commence in two years and are therefore, according to Washington's reasoning, no longer the concern of the international community.

But the Oslo Accord does not materially change Israel's international standing as occupying power, nor lessen its legal obligations to Palestinians in the territories. Israel is not absolved of its responsibilities as defined by the UN, the Geneva Convention, and other expressions of international consensus simply because it has agreed to resolve such issues as settlements and the status of Jerusalem in the future.

The United Nations Role

The UN has historically been at the center stage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. UN resolutions marked the beginning of international concern about the fate of Palestine, and they established the United Nations—the representative body of the international community—as responsible for establishing the norms of international legality against which all developments in the Arab-Israeli arena would be judged. UN decisions also symbolized the internationalization of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the entrée of the UN as an interested party to the conflict.

These norms have evolved over the decades since 1947. The partition resolution—together with resolutions concerning Jerusalem, and Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the Golan Heights—form the foundation for the Palestinian right to sovereignty as well as for Arab claims against Israeli efforts to "create facts" in the territories occupied in June 1967.

With some notable exceptions, UN actions on the Palestine question reflect the sober consensus of the international community on the just requirements for a resolution of Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab antagonisms.

It is the UN General Assembly that has rejected Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, that has called upon Israel to respect the Geneva Convention, and that has reaffirmed that settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and an obstacle to peace. Although these positions lack the authority invested in Security Council resolutions, they are vital indicators of international sentiment.

This consensus, indeed the very principle of UN involvement in the central issues that have long-defined Arab-Israeli affairs, is now being rejected by the Clinton administration as passé.

The first suggestion that Washington viewed the Oslo agreement as an opportunity to circumscribe the UN role in the resolution of the conflict occurred almost one year ago when a U.S. delegate to the UN argued that Jerusalem, as a final status issue, should not be addressed by UN bodies. During last year's General Assembly, the U.S., for the first time, abstained on the vote reaffirming Resolution 194, which establishes the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or to receive compensation. After the Hebron massacre last February, this new U.S. position appeared in Security Council deliberations.

Today, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, argues that the historical UN interest in these issues is a relic of the past; the established principles for the resolution of the conflicts over Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements are now the bilateral concern of Israel and the PLO. The UN, she argues, should limit its involvement to resolutions supporting reconciliation and economic development.

This change in the U.S. position raises the question whether the U.S. will abstain from voting on resolutions regarding final status issues when they are introduced in the General Assembly this autumn or will vote against them.

The PLO, in a letter now circulating at the UN, responds that, "illegal actions remain illegal, and the illegal settlements in the occupied territories, for instance, do not become less illegal with the beginning of negotiations."

In a letter to Ambassador Albright, the head of the PLO UN delegation, Nasser Kidwa, noted his "shock" at the U.S. position. Implementation of the new U.S. policy, wrote Kidwa, "would be tantamount to forsaking international law and international legitimacy and effectively allowing the illegal, de facto situation created by Israel, the Occupying Power, to prevail when the time for negotiation arrives. . . . Suggestions that the General Assembly has no business to do with final status issues cannot and should not be accepted."

The PLO's own negotiating strategy, however, has not tied itself to the enforcement of UN decisions. The multilateral talks on refugees, for example, make no reference to the implementation of UN resolutions. Nor is there any reference in the Oslo or Cairo agreements to relevant UN decisions or international law on such final status issues as Jerusalem or settlements.

The Clinton administration would circumscribe the historical responsibilities of the UN toward many of the defining issues of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Whether it will succeed or not depends on how much political capital the U.S. delegation is prepared to invest in undermining the General Assembly's traditional support of these guidelines. ♦

HEARING OF THE EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

On October 4, 1994, the Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, chaired by Lee Hamilton (D.-Ind.), heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Robert Pelletreau. The following are excerpts from the hearing:

Hamilton: I understand that, as part of the loan guarantees for Israel, we've decided to deduct \$311.8 million from the \$2 billion that they're eligible to borrow in fiscal year '95. . . And that figure represents the non-security-related government expenditures in the West Bank and Gaza? . . . And what does non-security mean there?

Pelletreau: Well, it means government settlement activity or activity that supports settlements or supports non-security-related infrastructure.

Hamilton: . . . I was informed last week that the administration intended to offset a portion of that \$311 million loan guarantee deduction in order to help Israel meet some of its costs associated with the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. . . So what then is the total amount being deducted from the loan guarantees?

Pelletreau: With the waiver of \$95 million, the final amount to be deducted for Israel's FY '95 loan guarantee authority would be \$216.5 million. . .

Hamilton: Now, the loan guarantee legislation requires the president to deduct from the guarantees an amount equal to all Israeli government non-security-related expenditures. . . And the purpose of that deduction is to discourage Israeli settlement activity.

Pelletreau: Certainly that is the message that the deduction sent, and the fact that Israeli expenditures have gone down is an indication that that message is being heard.

Hamilton: Now, the \$95 million offset from the loan guarantee is a gesture of support . . . for the Rabin policies; correct?

Pelletreau: Yes, that is correct.

Hamilton: Does that not have the effect of weakening further U.S. opposition to Israeli settlement activity?

Pelletreau: That is not our intention, Mr. Chairman.

Hamilton: I understand it's not your intent, but isn't that the effect of it? It weakens further U.S. opposition to Israeli settlement activity, doesn't it?

Pelletreau: No. The deduction for the settlement activity is still there. . .

Hamilton: I think there would be broad agreement that we want to try to help here the Israelis with these extra expenses. But why do you choose this means of doing it? Because it

seems to me that by doing it, you are in effect weakening further U.S. opposition to Israeli settlement activity. Why not try something else? Why focus on this way of doing it?

Pelletreau: We looked at different ways of making this recognition and gesture to Israel. To state it frankly, we thought we could do it through this vehicle without eroding—the message we are sending with respect to sanctions by making it separate actions, and we knew that doing it in this way would not entail a separate charge against the U.S. budget, and we thought that was important as well.

Hamilton: Aren't we acquiescing to \$95 million worth of non-security expenditures in the territory?

Pelletreau: No, we are not. We're not acquiescing in any non-security expenditures in the territory.

Hamilton: What kind of a message do you think we send here with this \$95-million offset about our commitment to discouraging Israeli settlement expansion in the territories?

Pelletreau: I think the message that we intend to send by this offset is we recognize that Israel has had

additional and unusual extraordinary burdens with respect to its parts in carrying out the Gaza-Jericho agreement and the early empowerment agreement, and we wanted to recognize that.

Hamilton: Now last week the Israeli government announced that it intended to approve 1,000 house construction contracts that had previously been canceled in the West Bank settlement of Alfe Menache—that's east of Tel Aviv—and the Israelis describe this project as lifting of the freeze on construction in this settlement. What message do you think it sends that in the same week that Israel announces it's going to approve for construction one thousand previously frozen housing contracts, the administration reduces the loan guarantees deduction for settlement construction by \$95 million?

Pelletreau: There was obviously no connection between our action and these particular news stories about what Israel may be intending to do.

Hamilton: Now wait a minute—Mr. Secretary, how can you make that statement that there's no connection? . . . There's a connection in everybody else's mind in the world but yours. . . These events are happening together. You can't ignore them. . . By deducting only for government-funded expenditures, do we, in effect, encourage the Israeli government to

THEN . . .

"I emphasize, as did Mr. Goldberg, that as far as the United States is concerned such unilateral measures, including expropriation of land or other administrative action taken by the Government of Israel, cannot be considered other than interim and provisional and cannot affect the present international status nor prejudge the final and permanent status of Jerusalem. The United States position could not be clearer."

William Scranton, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, before the UN Security Council, March 23, 1976.

HEARING, continued on page 5

approve privately-funded expansion?

Pelletreau: That is not our intent, Mr. Chairman.

Hamilton: Does the loan guarantee agreement between the United States and Israel say anything about privately funded settlement expansion that's been approved by the Israeli government?

Pelletreau: Not to my best recollection, but I'll go back and review the test.

Hamilton: What is the administration's view of privately funded settlement expansion in the West Bank that has been approved by the Israeli government?

Pelletreau: We would like to discourage such activity.

Hamilton: . . . Do you think it has an adverse impact on the peace process?

Pelletreau: Yes, we feel that it would be a complicating factor in the peace process.

Hamilton: Do you do anything to discourage the privately funded settlement construction?

Pelletreau: We have sought some clarifications from the Israeli government with respect to the latest announcement and we are studying the information that they gave us. We understand that this has not been a fully approved action.

Hamilton: Do you think the use of the privately funded settlement [expansion] violates the loan guarantees agreement?

Pelletreau: I don't believe that it violates the agreement as such, no. But we would still like to discourage such activity.

Hamilton: I understand. Now why do you think the Israeli government has decided to move ahead on those housing contracts I referred to a moment ago in Alfe Menache?

Pelletreau: I think there has been some particular pressure from the inhabitants of this area. . . . I think they're trying to relieve overcrowding in this particular area. And as I understand it, and subject to further clarification that we receive from the Israeli government, this is not involving any expropriation of land, or any public expense. But that doesn't mean that we condone it.

Hamilton: Do you consider the action that they took—the Israeli government—to be consistent with the Declaration of Principles?

Pelletreau: The Declaration of Principles declares settlements to be an issue for final status negotiations.

And I think the implication of that is that there would not be actions taken that would prejudice that issue.

Hamilton: With regard to that announcement on those housing contracts in that settlement, have we said anything to the Israeli government about that?

Pelletreau: Yes. We have sought clarifications on that.

Hamilton: Have we expressed our disapproval?

Pelletreau: At this point we have only sought information on what is being intended. The news stories were incomplete.

Hamilton: Will you let me know what you conclude with respect to that?

Pelletreau: I would be pleased to.

Hamilton: When would you expect to make a judgment about it?

Pelletreau: I would say within a month, but I say that advis-

edly because I understand that the approval process is a very lengthy one and we could be in something that would take as long as six months.

Hamilton: About last year only \$6 million of the \$437 million deducted from Israeli loan guarantees reflected Israeli government spending in east Jerusalem, according to the information we have. Now, that means that we calculated that the Israeli government spent only \$6 million in non-security expenditures in Jerusalem in the previous year. Is that correct?

Pelletreau: I'm not sure I have that specific calculation here.

Hamilton: What portion of this year's deduction of the \$311 million reflects Israeli government spending in Jerusalem? Do you know that? Maybe you can furnish that for us.

Pelletreau: I would have to look further for that.

Hamilton: Now, when you testified before us last time, you said that U.S. policy toward Jerusalem is that Jerusalem is a final status issue pursuant to the Declaration of Principles and we do not want to characterize Jerusalem in any other statement or form. That was your position, as I understood it.

Pelletreau: That's correct.

Hamilton: It's my understanding that under previous administrations, U.S. policy was that we oppose unilateral actions taken by any party regarding the ultimate disposition of Jerusalem prior to negotiations to determine Jerusalem's final status. Is that your view also?

Pelletreau: I would—my view would continue to be the way I stated it to you in previous testimony. ♦

... AND NOW

Hamilton: What is current U.S. policy with regard to unilateral actions by any party that could affect the final status of Jerusalem prior to final status negotiations?

Pelletreau: I think the implication of the Declaration of Principles is that there would not be actions taken that could prejudice the final status negotiations.

Hamilton: Does the Israeli construction in East Jerusalem qualify as unilateral action?

Pelletreau: I think we'd want to look at the specific activity involved, sir.

Hamilton: Well, the specific activity is construction. And the question is, does construction qualify as unilateral action?

Pelletreau: It certainly could qualify as unilateral action, yes.

Hamilton: But you haven't made a determination that it does?

Pelletreau: No, we have not made such a determination.

Hamilton: Is it under consideration?

Pelletreau: It has not been under active consideration in our recent deliberations, no.

Middle East.

“There is some allowance [in U.S. policy] for—I wouldn’t use the word “expansion” but certainly continuing . . . construction activities in existing settlements. And that’s basically in terms of . . . natural growth and basic, immediate needs in those settlements,” explained Djerejian.

The source of these changes in policy was the loan guarantee agreement reached in August 1992 between President George Bush and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. No official record of the terms of their agreement on U.S. policy toward settlement construction has been published. (See *Settlement Report*, January 1994, p. 7.)

One verifiable aspect of the regression of U.S. policy on settlements is the practical removal from the U.S. agenda of settlement construction in east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. In both of these areas, the Rabin government has continued to encourage settlement growth through new housing and ancillary infrastructural improvements. In 1993, the U.S. exacted only a symbolic \$6.5 million penalty for settlement construction in east Jerusalem and ignored the Golan entirely. In its 1994 assessment, no deductions for east Jerusalem were made whatsoever, according to Israeli press reports.

In Assistant Secretary Pelletreau’s October testimony before Congress, persistent questioning by Rep. Lee Hamilton further illuminated the evolution of U.S. policy. The administration’s decision to compensate Israel for redeployment costs in the Gaza Strip and Jericho areas reduced the amount of the \$311.8 million settlement penalty by \$95 million. Hamilton observed that this decision “weakens further U.S. opposition to Israeli settlement activity.”

Pelletreau also noted that the U.S. is no longer maintaining its historical policy of opposing unilateral actions—such as Israeli settlement—that are aimed at determining the final status of Jerusalem. Indeed, Pelletreau refused to characterize settlement per se as a unilateral action prejudicial to Jerusalem’s final status.

Defining Construction

In recent months, U.S. policymakers have attempted to establish a distinction between public construction, that is, settlement building undertaken by government entities, and so-called private construction undertaken by Israel’s private construction sector in the occupied territories. According to one well-informed U.S. diplomat, the latter type of settlement construction—which comprises most of the settlement growth in the occupied territories (and in Israel proper) since Rabin took the government out of the housing construction market in

1992—is viewed far more leniently by the State Department than is direct government-funded development. And in assessing settlement penalties outlined in the loan guarantee legislation, Washington has excluded from its calculations all such “private” settlement development.

Yet, for American diplomats implementing a U.S. policy opposed to settlement construction, there are a number of reasons why the distinction between private and public residential construction in the occupied territories is irrelevant:

- The occupied territories are defined in international law as territories under belligerent occupation. That being so, it is evident that the actions of the occupier or its agents (in this case, private construction firms) can only occur as a result of decisions by the relevant political authority (the military government or Israel’s civilian ministries).

In areas under military occupation, to speak of private and therefore autonomous actions by Israelis simply makes no sense. Given that resettlement of citizens of the occupying power in lands under military occupation is a violation of international law—and opposed in principle by the United States—how can the violation of this law by Israeli entities occur except through government endorsement and protection? Relevant international and Israeli law as well as every Israeli settlement

plan (in which construction capacity of all figures are determined) also make the point that settlement construction is first of all a *national* enterprise.

- U.S. policy toward issues relating to settlement construction have never been conditioned on the public/private character of such

housing. Indeed, Washington has traditionally objected to Israeli efforts to “privatize” the occupation. For example, Washington has opposed decisions permitting the private purchase by Israelis of West Bank land and has opposed the arming of non-military forces. Why should the Clinton administration object to these actions, while considering, *as a matter of policy*, the actions of private construction firms to be qualitatively different from those of Israel’s Ministry of Housing?

- If there is any housing market in the world that is government-directed, it is the Israeli housing market—within Israel as well as in the occupied territories. From the distribution of land for construction to financing and planning, the Israeli housing market is a creature of state planning.

- The involvement of the state in housing construction decisions in settlements in occupied territories is even more intrusive than in Israel. “State land” for settlement construction is leased but never transferred outright to corporate or private ownership; all construction conforms to government or the quasi-official World Zionist Organization master plans. And considerable sums appropriated directly by government agencies are critical to construction and financing. ♦

The distinction between private and public residential construction in the occupied territories is irrelevant.

who have returned are receiving government housing subsidies.

"The policy of the government," explained Housing Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer, "was, and remains, not to effect any action that will result in settlers leaving Judea and Samaria or cause the dismantlement of the settlements."

In the West Bank, Rabin has completed the construction of 11,500 units inherited from the Likud government, while, without fanfare, he has initiated extensive new building in the largest and most successful settlements around Jerusalem.

Two recent decisions will add further to the stock of available housing in settlements. The first decision formally expands the area of favored new construction from the environs of Jerusalem to a corridor along the eastern edge of the Green Line, the term used to describe the pre-1967 border that separates Israel from the West Bank.

The second decision makes available for rental some of the thousands of government-owned housing units in settlements throughout the territories that the Rabin government has until now kept empty.

New Settlement Around Jerusalem

Ma'ale Adumim. The mayor of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement, just east of Jerusalem, noted recently that the outpost's development momentum has not slowed in recent years, and lately the surge in construction has even increased, along with budgets for development and infrastructure. These factors, the mayor concludes, are evidence of the government's intention to encourage settlement there.

Ma'ale Adumim has a population of 18,000, making it the largest settlement outside Jerusalem. New construction at this location is resulting in its expansion to the outskirts of Jerusalem itself. Plans for a new neighborhood, in which 91 homes will be built next year on 16 acres, were recently announced.

Givat Ze'ev area. A new settlement site is being developed on lands under the jurisdiction of the Givat Ze'ev settlement just west of Ramallah. Known as Mt. Shmuel, these 200 units across the road from Givat Ze'ev are being developed by the former minister of the interior, Arie'el Deri. Within Givat Ze'ev, population 6,500 and growing, construction continues apace. The head of the local governing council announced in August plans to construct 750 dwellings opposite Mt. Shmuel.

Har Adar. Har Adar is located at the junction of the two principal settlement initiatives of the Rabin government. Less than 10 miles from downtown Jerusalem, the settlement, population 2,000, is at the southern end of what the Rabin government intends to be a line of thriving settlements—including Kiryat Sefer, Oranit, and Alfe Menache located along the

Green Line.

In early September, Rabin's deputy, Nach Kinarti, approved the implementation of Part II of the settlement's master plan calling for the construction of 700 new houses, enough to increase the population of Har Adar by 3,000. The development's cost is estimated at \$30 million.

This construction is proceeding according to an enlarged master plan that was approved earlier this year, additional evidence of the current government's intent to expand the stock of available housing in its preferred settlements. Government officials explain that, like Ma'ale Adumim, Har Adar is part of "Greater Jerusalem," as defined by the prime minister.

Alfe Menache. Although these developments were prominent among numerous settlement initiatives that proceed without public attention, the publication of Rabin's approval of 1,000 new housing units at the Alfe Menache settlement in late September did not pass unnoticed. Implementation of the plan will double Alfe Menache's population of 4,350 within three years, according to its mayor.

Housing decisions in Rabin's preferred areas—east Jerusalem, its West Bank hinterland, and along the Green Line—are proceeding without reference to ongoing Israel-PLO negotiations. Housing-construction decisions in these regions are dictated primarily by domestic considerations such as market demand and party politics.

Government plans indicate that Rabin intends to build where the stock of housing inherited from the

Shamir government and completed by Rabin has been sold. Indeed, Housing Minister Ben Eliezer argued that the new housing was approved "to suit market demands."

According to a report in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, "Ben Eliezer said that Alfe Menache is one of a number of settlements that are not negotiable as far as Israel is concerned. The minister said that this also applies to Ma'ale Adumim, Betar, and Givat Ze'ev. The Construction and Housing Ministry would allocate "state lands" controlled by the military government for the building of hundreds of housing units in these settlements as part of its multi-year plan."

Alfe Menache is more than two kilometers from the Green Line border. In July 1992, Rabin approved the completion of 260 units then under construction in the settlement and froze 145 others, according to a Ministry of Housing document. The decision to build 1,000 units therefore represents more than simply "unfreezing" planned units.

In nearby Oranit, located in what was disputed territory abutting the Green Line, construction proceeds unhindered. The Ministry of Education recently allocated \$1.7 million for the first stage in construction of a regional high school there; Rabin's office has approved the construction of 270 new units. ♦

"The policy of the government," explained Housing Minister Ben Eliezer, "was, and remains, not to effect any action that will . . . cause the dismantlement of the settlements."

SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION DURING THE RABIN ERA (1992–1994)

The government of Yitzhak Rabin is presiding over a significant increase in the number of Israelis living in occupied territory. Since July 1992, 50,000 Israelis have moved to these areas, bringing the total Israeli settler population to more than 300,000.

The chart below, compiled from official and unofficial Israeli sources, together with press reports, offers a snapshot of the continuing settlement momentum initially established during the last years of Likud rule.

West Bank/Gaza Strip (excluding east Jerusalem)		East Jerusalem (annexed by Israel in 1967)	
Likud-era housing units pledged for completion by Rabin government in August 1992	11,500	Likud-era units under construction in August 1992	13,000
Housing units completed but unoccupied (November 1, 1994)	3,900	Construction planned for east Jerusalem, including "Greater Jerusalem" settlements Ma'ale Adumim and Givat Ze'ev—1993–1997	15,000
Housing units populated since July 1992	7,600	Israeli population	170,000
Labor-initiated housing units planned or constructed since July 1992	4,000	Population increase during Rabin era	22,000
Current settlement population	140,000		
Population increase during Rabin era	28,000		

“The Israeli Government and the Israeli public must realize that in the end it’s going to be either peace or settlements. . . . they know very well that the choice must be made.

When they started their policy of settlements it was a different world. Today we are living in a different world totally than that of the settlements era. . . . [Settlements] will just add more obstacles to a very difficult task ahead of us.”

*Sa’ib ‘Urayquat, Chairman, Palestinian Election Commission,
Jerusalem Voice of Israel, September 29, 1994.*

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