

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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NEWS

Israel is set to undertake the first of three "further redeployments" in the West Bank. If the Palestinian response to Israel's decision to build a settlement at Har Homa in East Jerusalem is muted, the March redeployment is expected to occur on time. It will result in the transfer of more than 4 percent of the West Bank now controlled by Israel (Area C) to Palestinian civil and Israeli security control (Area B) and the transfer of a further 4 percent of Area B to full Palestinian control (Area A). See stories opposite.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his aides have warned that the March redeployment will not be implemented as planned if Palestinians react violently to Israel's decision to construct thousands of dwelling units on the Har Homa site.

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THE BEILIN-EITAN AGREEMENT ON PERMANENT STATUS AND ITS TRUE ANTECEDENTS

By Geoffrey Aronson

One of the issues at the top of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's agenda during his February visit to Washington was the extent of Israel's planned redeployments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which are scheduled to take place in three stages during the next 18 months, beginning on March 7.

Israel remains in exclusive control of more than 72 percent of the West Bank's Area C and it exercises security control over another 27 percent of Area B. (See *Settlement Report*, March 1996, page 3 map.) In Gaza, Israel continues

to control around 40 percent of the land.

Netanyahu intends to cede as little of this territory as possible in the course of the three stages of "further redeployment." First, he is loathe to surrender any part of the "Land of Israel" to "foreign sovereignty." Second, he wants to retain as much territory as he can for bargaining when he and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat begin to negotiate a "final status" arrangement, set to be completed in May 1999.

Netanyahu's intentions received a big domestic political boost with the

AGREEMENT, continued on page 6

HEBRON AGREEMENT SETS TIMETABLE FOR FURTHER REDEPLOYMENT

The central factor in the evolving rapprochement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is Israel's withdrawal from lands captured in the June 1967 war. The timing and extent of Israel's redeployments are at the heart of this critical aspect of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy.

The recently signed Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron enabled the fulfillment of the Israeli commitment to redeploy in Hebron. This pledge appeared in the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of September 28, 1995. According to the original timetable, the Hebron redeployment was to have been completed by March 28, 1996.

The redeployment in Hebron, carried out on January 16, 1997, left the Israel Defense Forces in exclusive security control of approximately 20 percent of the city, where more than 20,000 Palestinians and 400 Israeli settlers reside.

The 1995 Interim Agreement outlined three "further redeployments" from unspecified areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that were to occur during the period of September 1996 through September 1997.

The "Note for the Record," prepared as part of the Hebron agreement by Dennis Ross, the U.S. special Middle East coordinator, together with the

REDEPLOYMENT, continued on page 7

TO OUR READERS

The improvement in Israeli-Palestinian relations resulting from Israel's peaceful redeployment in Hebron has been needlessly jeopardized by Israel's decision to permit construction of a new settlement area in annexed East Jerusalem.

The new settlement of Har Homa, with a projected population of 25,000, represents a continuation of the effort to "create facts" that will preempt any diplomatic solution other than the one preferred by Israel. In the case of Jerusalem this means exclusive Israeli sovereignty over a city whose boundaries are to be unilaterally determined by Israel.

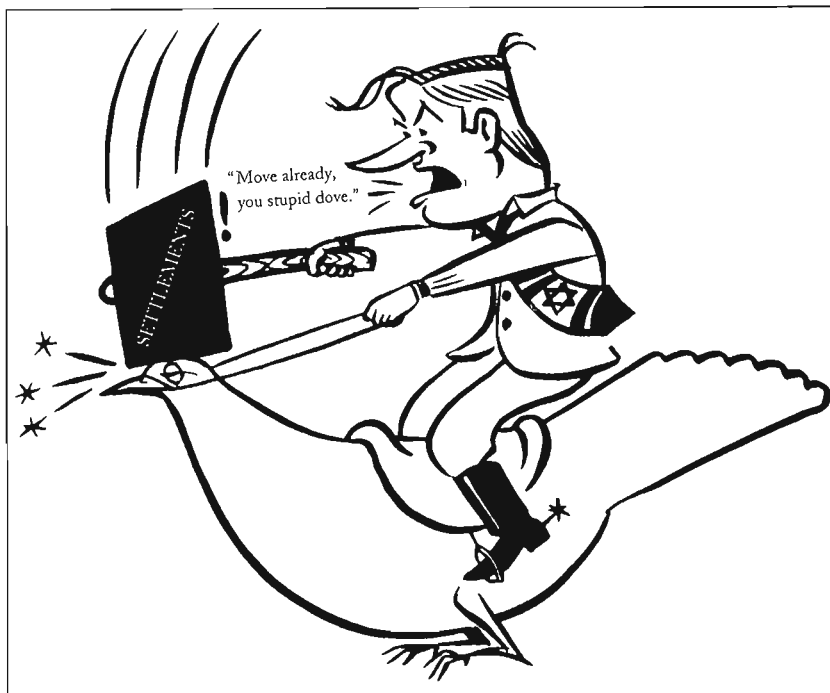
The Palestinians, no doubt, will lead the opposition to Israel's designs. But the United States and the international community also have an obligation to be forthright in their defense of the longstanding policy endorsed by successive U.S. administrations as well as by the UN Security Council. Israel remains an occupying

power in East Jerusalem and therefore has no recognized right to transfer its population there.

The Clinton administration has proven reluctant to reaffirm many aspects of U.S. policy as it relates to settlements. When confronted almost two years ago with another ill-considered plan to expropriate Palestinian land in Jerusalem, the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution calling upon Israel to rescind the expropriation, only to be embarrassed when the Rabin government itself canceled its plan.

Today, Washington has another opportunity to demonstrate that American, Israeli, and Palestinian interests call for forceful U.S. efforts to forestall the expansion of settlement in annexed East Jerusalem.

Lucius D. Battle



Ha'aretz, December 12, 1996

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FROM THE PALESTINIAN PRESS

Unilateral and Illegitimate Measures

The Israeli practice of land confiscation, whether near Tulkarem or in Jahalin Arabs' campsites, shows no real inclination on the part of Israeli officials toward a just peace, because these practices apparently signify the continuation of the policy that prevailed during the Israeli occupation. That policy was based on usurping Arab land from its legitimate owners under various pretexts. The real aim of the current practices is clear—namely, control of as much Palestinian land as possible, the creation of settlement facts on it, and emptying it of Arab residents. After the Israeli army bulldozers, backed by Israeli security forces, evacuated Jahalin Arabs from their campsites and tents near Abu Dis and transferred them to a new location in which, according to Israeli sources themselves, their minimal health and environmental needs are not met, scores of Israeli soldiers began to guard the surveyors who are drawing up maps to set up seven quarries near Tulkaram. The land used for this purpose will be expropriated from its owners. What happened in Abu Dis and Tulkarem are definitely two links in a series of Israeli measures that began with the occupation in 1967 and which resulted in the confiscation of large tracts of Palestinian land, which either were used to set up settlements and military

bases, were fenced in and their owners forbidden from using them for agricultural purposes, or were used to put up houses and various buildings. This caused economic suffering and a nationwide shortage of agricultural products.

The odd thing is that these practices are going on even when there is talk about the final settlement negotiations and implementation of the next three redeployment stages in the West Bank. If we add to the overall picture, however, the recently announced Israeli plans to take over a major part of the West Bank and annex it to Israel, what the Israeli authorities are doing here and there seems to be in total harmony with those plans. The Israeli side is ignoring the fact that the plans were drawn up unilaterally or individually without consultation with the Palestinian side or without taking its well-known views into account. Consequently, there is no legal or legitimate basis for these plans or for those measures being carried out by the Israeli authorities in a bid to preempt the final talks and impose a unilateral solution that is unacceptable to the Palestinians and will under no circumstances win the international community's agreement.

Editorial in *al-Quds*, February 13, 1997

Israel's Final Status Map

Interview with Khalil Tufakji, Head of the Geographical Maps Department at Jerusalem's Arab Research Society

Interviewer: Has Israel already begun to formulate the final status map?

Tufakji: Yes. The new green line will be parallel to the old, running from Baqah al-Sharqiyah to Latrun, from Bethlehem to Jaba', and from Idnah and South Yattah in the direction of Umm al-Khayr. This new line has thereby been drawn a further three meters inside the West Bank lands.

Concerning Jerusalem, the Israelis intend to pave new roads, open new police stations, build and expand new settlements and transfer Israeli institutions to East Jerusalem. In compliance with its decisions, the Israeli government will provide the Jerusalem municipality with \$43,000,000 in a bid to maintain Jewish sovereignty over the city.

It should be noted that there are already three police stations in East Jerusalem, located on Salah al-Din Street [and at] Ra's al-'Amud and Jaffa Gate. The Israeli Ministry of Internal Security is located in the Shaykh Jarrah area of East Jerusalem, while the Israeli Ministry of Justice is located on Salah al-Din Street.

Interviewer: What is the ultimate goal of the Sharon Seven Stars Plan which was presented at the beginning of the nineties?

Tufakji: The plan's objective is to join the settlements in Israel and those in the West Bank, causing them to meet at the green line. The plan poses a serious threat to the Palestinians,

as it aims to create a new demographic situation which will leave the greater part of the Palestinian land useless and unable to be used for either agriculture or building. Several new settlements have already been built on Palestinian land: Shoham, built on Dayr Tarif village; 'Ofarim, built on Luban al-Gharbi village; and Yarhiv, which crosses the green line and reaches the border of the village of Hiblah.

Interviewer: By the time final negotiations begin in May 1999, what will be the likely situation in Jerusalem?

Tufakji: According to Israel, Jerusalem is one city and 80 percent of East Jerusalem is under Israeli control. The Israeli government seeks to destroy Palestinian aspirations of having East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. The number of Jews living in the city has increased, while the city borders have been enlarged. Already, 34 percent of East Jerusalem has been confiscated, which doesn't include the confiscated lands that are now part of the Jewish Quarter in East Jerusalem and other houses and land in the immediate vicinity of the Old City walls. Apart from enlarging the Hadar Betar and Givat Ze'ev settlements in the northwest of Jerusalem, the government is also constructing the settlement of Neve Shmuel on confiscated lands belonging to the villages of Biddu and Qatannah. It is very well known that the new Israeli settlements and bypass roads are intended to join existing settlements, and that this will create a new reality regarding what is referred to as Greater Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Times, February 7, 1997

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

January 1, 1997 An off-duty Israeli soldier wounds six Palestinians in a shooting attack in Hebron.

January 2 Finance Minister Dan Meridor announces that IS100 million (\$33 million) is to be allocated for settlement expansion in the Golan Heights and Jordan Valley.

Seven mobile homes are placed at Maoz Tzur (Artis Hill) near Beit El.

January 3 The protocol of the Ministerial Committee on Settlement, chaired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, commits the government to "full development of the Jordan Valley as a wide strip of settlement comprising the eastern portion of the State of Israel. This commitment is expressed in the paving of Road #90 during 1997 and its completion in 1998, and the development of the settlement of Ma'ale Ephraim as the regional city of the Jordan Valley."

January 5 The mobile homes are removed from Maoz Tzur as part of an understanding with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to enlarge the settlement of Beit El.

January 8 In Jerusalem, a few dozen religious school students move into a recently purchased building in the Old City's Christian Quarter.

January 14 The forced removal of 400 Bedouin from lands earmarked for expanding the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim continues.

January 15 Agreement is reached on the Israel Defense Forces' redeployment in Hebron. A U.S. "Note for the Record" on non-Hebron issues and U.S. letters to Israel and the Palestinian Authority establish a timetable for three "further redeployments" from unspecified portions of the West Bank, beginning in March 1997 and ending in mid-1998.

January 16-17 The Netanyahu government approves by a vote of 11 to 7 the IDF redeployment in Hebron. An announcement after the vote notes that the government will "work to protect the conditions and necessary requirements for the existence, security, and livelihood of the Jewish community in Hebron." The government decision notes that "details of the next stages of redeployment in Judea and Samaria will be determined by the government of Israel."

The IDF redeploys in Hebron, transferring control of 80 percent of the city to the Palestinian Authority. (See map, page 5.)

January 20 The "Settlement Forum," under the direction of an assistant to Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai, approves construction of 60 units in Ma'ale Ephraim. The construction plans are part of a larger plan to construct 632 units first approved in 1991. The head of the local settlement council explains that if half of the 60 units are sold, approval will be granted to construct an additional 200 units.

Ma'ale Ephraim—at the northern terminus of the Allon Road paralleling the Jordan Valley—was founded in 1978. The largest settlement in the Jordan Valley area, it has 1,720 residents in 390 units.

Construction begins on expansion of a number of Golan Heights settlements and the establishment of new settlement locations under the rubric of "expanding existing settlements." Six hundred new units are to be built (see January 2).

January 22 The Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem meets to discuss strengthening Israeli sovereignty over the city. Among the recommendations is the creation of a territorial link between East Jerusalem and the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim.

The National Agreement Regarding the Negotiations on the Permanent Settlement with the Palestinians is published, outlining principles to guide Israeli policy in final status negotiations and signed by Labor and Likud politicians.

January 26 Eight hundred trees planted by Palestinians near Jenin are uprooted by Israeli officials, who claim that the planting took place on state land and is illegal.

Fifty-five parcels of land are offered as part of the "build your own house" campaign in the settlement of Kedumim near Nablus. Settlement officials had earlier claimed that 750 new units would be constructed in the settlement, a claim denied by the Defense Ministry. Planning is also going ahead for the construction of dozens of new units on land currently used by the IDF base at Bet El. The expansion of the Bet El settlement was promised in the aftermath of the killing of two Israeli settlers by Palestinians in December 1996.

January 28 Israel prohibits new Palestinian construction in the Hebron casbah, which remains under exclusive Israeli control.

January 29 Eighty-four settlements are to be classified as priority "A" development areas,

entitling them to an increase in a range of state benefits. Thirty-nine settlements are already designated as "A" development locations.

January 30 The Copenhagen Declaration supporting Palestinian independence and a freeze on settlement expansion is signed by individuals from Jordan, Egypt, and Israel and by Palestinians.

Minister of National Infrastructure Ariel Sharon decides to construct a rail link between the settlement of Ariel and Tel Aviv, and a Tel Aviv-Jerusalem route that passes through the West Bank.

February 4 The Ministry of Housing announces a plan to sell 5,000 building plots within as well as "near" West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements during 1997. Implementation requires Defense Ministry approval.

February 9 Finance Minister Meridor requests Knesset approval of government loan guarantees for 85 percent of investments in settlement industries. Meridor requests state guarantees of \$8 million.

February 10 The IDF presents a final status map to the cabinet. With this map as a guide, cabinet members estimate that Israel will retain 51.8 percent of the West Bank in any permanent arrangement, while the Palestinians will retain 48.2 percent.

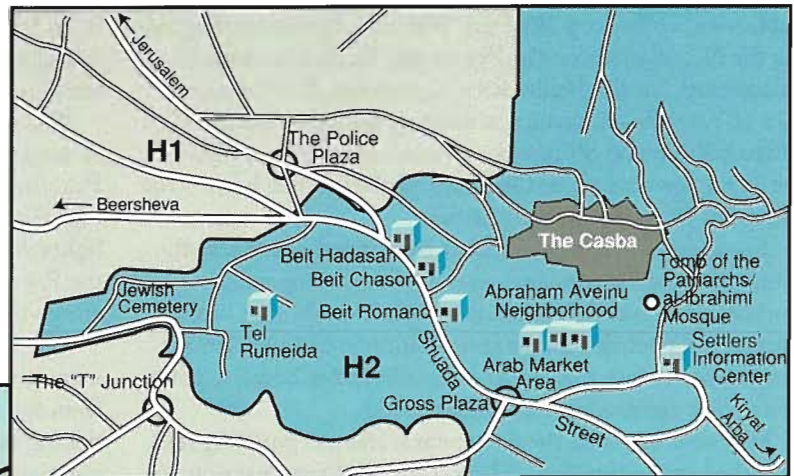
February 11 Seven Palestinians are injured during a protest against the confiscation of land near Tulkarem for the creation of five stone quarries.

February 12 One hundred twenty dunams belonging to the village of Karawit Beni Hasan near Tulkarem are declared a closed military zone. Construction of a new bypass road to the settlement of Burka is planned.

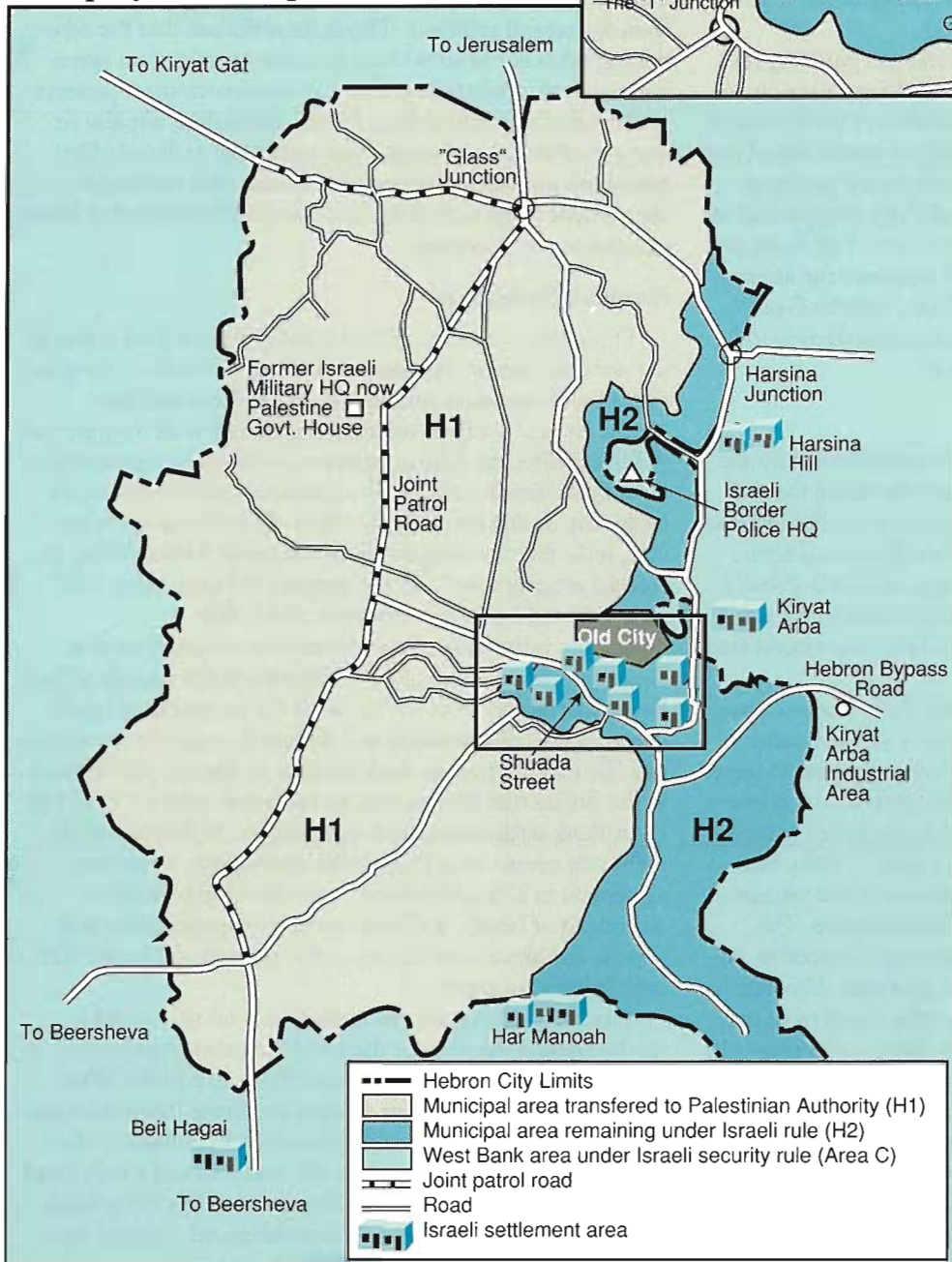
February 16 Talks resume on implementing outstanding elements of the Oslo I and II accords.

February 26 The Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem approves a plan presented by Prime Minister Netanyahu for construction of 6,500 units in the settlement of Har Homa in annexed East Jerusalem. The first stage of construction calls for the building of 2,456 units. Plans also include the construction of infrastructure for 3,000 units for Palestinians in other areas of the city. ♦

City Center



Hebron Redeployment Map – 1997



publication on January 22 of the "National Agreement Regarding the Negotiations on the Permanent Settlement with the Palestinians," or the Beilin-Eitan agreement. It is the namesake of Yossi Beilin, former minister in the governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres and a driving force behind the secret negotiations in Oslo, and Michael Eitan, head of the ruling Likud's parliamentary faction.

The document has been widely interpreted as a less forthcoming (to the Palestinians) version of the arrangement worked out between Beilin and the PA's Abu Mazen in the days before Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in October 1995. Proponents believe that it offers a roadmap for Israeli negotiators as they approach the final status talks.

First and foremost, the document is less a negotiating text than the latest expression of Israel's national consensus on the need to remain in effective permanent control of the territories occupied almost 30 years ago. Its true origins can be found not in the Beilin-Abu Mazen text, which calls for a Palestinian state with a flag flying over Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque and an Israeli withdrawal from all but 6 percent of the West Bank, but rather in the Allon Plan, which in 1967 proposed the annexation of some 40 percent of the West Bank, half the Gaza Strip, and the establishment of an "autonomous framework" for the territories' Palestinian inhabitants.

The Political Factor

The Beilin-Eitan agreement is best understood within the context of domestic Israeli politics, where the desire for consensus among the major parties in the wake of the Rabin assassination remains a basic feature of the Israeli political scene. Far more than a roadmap to the next stage of Israeli-Palestinian talks, Beilin-Eitan reflects the latest in Beilin's efforts to heal the breach between Labor and Likud that was exacerbated by Rabin's murder.

Working first with National Religious Party leader Hanan Porat and later with Rabbi Yoel ben Nun, a veteran leader of West Bank settlers, Beilin moved the Peres government more explicitly than ever toward support of the permanent maintenance of all Israeli settlements under exclusive Israeli control, an objective Peres had sought since the outset of Oslo. Ben Nun was so convinced of Peres' commitment to the settlers' welfare that he came out in support of his reelection. The political pedigree of Beilin's latest achievement, therefore, is better traced to these efforts than to his pact with Abu Mazen.

The Beilin-Eitan agreement declares that Israel must reaffirm the "strategic decision" endorsed by Rabin and Peres—the construction of "a relationship of good neighbors between Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel."

The authors enumerate the three principles around which an Israeli national consensus is to be built. The first principle notes that it has become necessary for Israel—if it seeks to secure the advantages offered by its presence in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip—to "permit" the creation

of a Palestinian "entity" of undetermined status. Whether this entity is called a state, as Labor's Beilin is prepared to concede, or an "enlarged autonomy," as the Likud's Eitan prefers, the fact of extensive Israeli limits on Palestinian sovereign power remains constant.

The second principle is a demand for continuing Israeli strategic control over whatever territory is transferred to the Palestinian entity. This demand goes far beyond the recent negotiations over Israel's right of "hot pursuit," and it highlights the extent to which Israel views the rapprochement with the Palestinians as a vehicle for preserving, rather than reevaluating, its security interests in territories occupied in June 1967.

The third guiding principle concerns the future of settlements anywhere in the "Western Land of Israel," and it follows from the second principle. The authors declare that the continuing existence of all settlements must be part of an agreement with the Palestinians. Such an agreement must preserve settler rights not only to keep Israeli citizenship, but also to maintain their individual and communal ties to Israel. The preservation of these ties—personal, legal, and territorial—therefore becomes one of the basic security interests that Israel insists must be preserved.

Historical Background

These three elements of Israeli policy for the final status of the occupied territories resemble nothing so much as the principles first formulated years ago by Yigal Allon and later Moshe Dayan. Far from representing a break with the past—as did the Beilin-Abu Mazen agreement—the new agreement is securely within the historical consensus expressed by Israel's leadership during the last generation. The discussion of borders, including the designation of the entire Jordan Valley as a "special security zone" and the demand for continuing IDF supervision of borders, is evidence of this fact.

So, too, is the view of the settlements—even those that Israel is prepared to concede will lie outside the bounds of "full Israeli sovereignty"—as the rationale for far-reaching Israeli demands for military access and control throughout the territories. This view stands in stark contrast to the one put forward in the Beilin-Abu Mazen text, according to which 100 of 140 West Bank settlements, with a population of 40,000, would eventually come under Palestinian sovereignty. Were that agreement to be implemented, it would make possible a rethinking of Israel's traditional strategic requirements and impose real limitations on the authority exercised by the IDF over Palestinian areas.

The National Agreement notes that if no agreement is reached before the date for the third "further redeployment" in mid-1998, Israel will retain at least 50 percent of the West Bank as it enters final status discussions. Since Palestinian control in Areas A and B already approaches 30 percent of the West Bank, this means that over the next year and a half, Israel would surrender no more than 20 percent of the West Bank. Little wonder that the five Likud members who signed the agreement did so with Netanyahu's blessing. ♦

"Letter of Assurance" from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, established a new timetable for this three-phased redeployment: "twelve months from the implementation of the first phase of the future redeployments (the first week of March 1997) but no later than mid-1998"—a delay of about one year from the originally agreed upon timetable.

It will be remembered that the course of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy has been marked by the postponement or delay of almost every timetable. The new schedule of further redeployment, therefore, needs to be assessed in this context—which Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin aptly described as one where "there are no sacred dates."

There is no formally accepted determination of the territorial extent or location of the further redeployments Israel is committed to undertake. The language of the Interim Agreement and the method by which the initial redeployment maps for Gaza, Hebron, and the establishment of Areas A and B were determined suggests that Israel has a wide, if not unchallenged, latitude in determining the scope of the three redeployments. At the conclusion of this process, the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction will extend over an unspecified area of the West Bank, excluding "specified military locations" and issues to be negotiated in final status negotiations—settlements, Jerusalem, and borders.

The Netanyahu government's endorsement of the Hebron protocol notes that "details of the next stages of further redeployment in Judea and Samaria will be determined by the government of Israel." The letter from Christopher to Netanyahu, in which Christopher acknowledges Israel's right to determine the extent of its further redeployment, does not add materially to the prerogatives Israel has effected and the precedent already established.

Israeli officials believe that the letter nonetheless represents one of the Netanyahu government's most important achievements. Officials see the Christopher letter as the most significant U.S. recognition of Israel's right—at least during the interim period—unilaterally to determine its security needs in the occupied territories, security needs that are most visibly expressed in demands for territory.

In contrast to the interim period, Christopher does reiterate the traditional U.S. view that in final status talks Israel's "secure and defensible borders" should be the product of direct negotiations with its neighbors. As Ross explained, "Borders and further redeployment are not necessarily synonymous."

Notwithstanding the assurances in the Christopher letter, the State Department has been mildly critical of recent Israeli decisions to expand its road network in the West Bank.

The Christopher "Letter of Assurance" to PA Chairman

During the next 18 months, Israel intends to transfer no more than 20 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority.

Yasser Arafat has not been released, but it is said to include an American commitment to the Palestinians that Israel will indeed fulfill its pledge to redeploy.

The Palestinians dispute Israel's right to determine unilaterally the extent of its forthcoming redeployments, insisting that they will not allow Netanyahu to impose on them, as did Rabin, a redeployment map over which they exercise little influence. They assert that Israel should redeploy from all but 10 percent of the West Bank—the area populated by settlers—by the end of the third redeployment. Washington reportedly believes that the first of these redeployments should result in the transfer of 10 percent of Area C to Palestinian control.

The IDF's Planning Branch has recently submitted for cabinet discussion a "vital interests map" outlining Israel's concerns in the West Bank. The maps now under review by the Netanyahu government were initially prepared by the Planning Branch at Rabin's request during the Taba talks preceding the signing of the Oslo II accord in September 1995.

According to the Planning Branch's map, the PA will control 40 to 45 percent of the West Bank by the end of the third stage of the redeployment. The Gaza Strip is not addressed and presumably will be excluded by Israel from any additional redeployments.

The three blocs of Palestinian-controlled territory in the West Bank outlined by the IDF map are not contiguous; they are separated by settlements and areas under IDF control. For example, the entire Jordan Valley appears in the map as an area that must remain under IDF control. The map includes border adjustments along the Green Line as well as additional

areas slated for West Bank settlement expansion.

The Planning Branch is also considering transferring 5 percent of Area B to Area A status after the first stage of further redeployment. During the second stage, the remainder of Area B would be awarded Area A status. This would give the PA both civilian and security control over 30 percent of the West Bank. Only in the third phase of further redeployment would Israel cede part of Area C.

A recent analysis of Israel's requirements in the "final status" was presented by the IDF to the Israeli cabinet on February 10. These requirements include the permanent presence of the IDF in settlement blocks in the northern West Bank and the Jerusalem region, control of major east-west and north-south West Bank arteries, and control of the Jordan Valley and the border with Jordan. Likud ministers estimate Israel will permanently retain 51.8 percent of the West Bank, with the Palestinians controlling little more than 48 percent after the third stage of further redeployment is completed.

Israeli television reported that "Netanyahu urged the ministers to stop talking about percentages. This is the map and these are our interests, he said. Stop talking about it, or else this map will serve the interests of the Palestinians." ♦

NETANYAHU DECIDES TO BUILD AT HAR HOMA

The Netanyahu government has approved landmark settlement construction at Jebel Abu Ghneim. The 1,850 dunam (4 dunams=1 acre) site in the southeast corner of annexed East Jerusalem, named Har Homa (Wall Mountain) by Israel, will eventually house more than 25,000 Israelis living in 6,500 units.

The decision is the latest chapter in Israel's long-pursued national effort to create an unassailable right to settle large numbers of Israelis in strategically significant areas of annexed East Jerusalem and its environs.

Har Homa is the linchpin development for completing the establishment of large-scale housing estates for Israelis all along Jerusalem's south, north, and east perimeters. When these estates are completed, Palestinian neighborhoods throughout East Jerusalem will have been all but cut off from their West Bank hinterland by a ring of settlements housing more than 200,000 Israelis.

On February 26, the Israeli cabinet approved construction of 2,456 dwelling units in the first stage of construction, which is expected to begin within weeks.

The new settlement is in West Bank territory, where Israeli rule was extended shortly after the June 1967 war.

The order for the land's expropriation was first issued in April 1991. Approximately 75 percent of the area involved is owned by Israeli individuals and corporations, who purchased almost one-half of the affected area in the post-1967 period.

Dozens of villagers from Bet Sahur, now part of Area A under the Palestinian Authority's control, and the Jerusalem village of Um Tuba, own 25 percent of the expropriated land.

The decision to approve construction at Har Homa is part of a package of important settlement-related decisions made by the Netanyahu government in the aftermath of the redeployment in Hebron. Other measures include the following:

- approval of the construction of another road linking the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway to northern Jerusalem;
- approval of construction of the Eastern Ring Road around Jerusalem;
- continuation of planning for Highway 80, particularly the section linking the West Bank settlement of Mishor Adumim with the Israeli town of Tel Arad in the Negev region;
- initiation of plans to create "territorial continuity" between the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat condemned the decision to build at Har Homa, as did the European Union, which noted that "settlements in the occupied areas contravene international law and are a major obstacle to peace." The U.S. response was considerably more restrained, noting only that it "would have preferred that this decision [to build at Har Homa] not have been taken." ♦

The Israeli government's measures to implement settlement programs are in fact a "declaration of war" made unilaterally by Israel. As long as we are talking about a peace process and Jerusalem, which is part of the solution for the transitional period, Israel cannot conduct unilateral measures that might affect the results of the negotiations.

There is a big difference between the peace mentality and the war mentality. Peace needs two sides while war can be decided by one party, as in the case of the present Israeli government which is using a war mentality in its planning. Based upon all this, we view the Israeli plans to build new settlements and open up new settlement roads as a "declaration of war."

Faisal Husseini, PLO Executive Committee member and unofficial Jerusalem Affairs minister in the Palestinian Authority, in "Palestine Report" (internet edition), February 19, 1997

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