

# REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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## NEWS

The Stage II redeployment outlined in the Sharm al-Sheikh agreement has been postponed due to Palestinian objections about the lands Israel has marked for transfer. The chart below right outlines the changes in the territorial division of the West Bank resulting from executed and planned redeployments.

The map on page 3, copied from the official Israeli map presented to the Palestinians, illuminates the transfer of civilian powers in West Bank territory completed in September.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak has become reconciled to the new outposts established during the last eighteen months of the government of Benjamin Netanyahu. The story on page 5 offers an analysis of the future of these settlements.

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## SETTLERS MOBILIZE TO PREVENT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

The election of Ehud Barak as prime minister has focused renewed attention on the question of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights as part of a peace agreement with Syria.

The 17,000 Israeli residents of the 33 Golan settlements established throughout the 60 x 20 km plateau (454 sq. miles) will necessarily be affected by any agreement. Indeed, even the public diplomacy now being conducted around a resumption of long-recessed official talks has forced settlers, as well as the Israeli public at large, to consider the implications of a peace treaty with Syria.

Among the territories still occupied

by Israel, the Golan Heights also has a particular place in the popular Israeli imagination. The Golan is home to the first outpost established in territories conquered in June 1967—Merom Golan, founded by activists from the ranks of Israel's secular Zionists, rather than the messianic romantics of Gush Emunim, who focused their intentions in the West Bank.

Golan settlers have traditionally been drawn from the Labor side of Israeli society. For them, and for those in government who sent them, their efforts, while certainly part of the ful-

*GOLAN, continued on page 6*

## Territorial Division of the West Bank

(excluding East Jerusalem)

	Areas [percent]		
	A <i>Palestinian Civil/Security Control</i>	B <i>Palestinian Civil Control Israeli Security Control</i>	C <i>Israeli Civil/Security Control</i>
Redeployments undertaken in 1995–1996, according to Oslo II	2.0	26.0	72.0
Stage I of the Wye redeployments November 16, 1998	9.1	20.9	70.0
Stage I of the Sharm al-Sheikh redeployments September 10–13, 1999	9.1	27.9	63.0
Stage II November 15, 1999	11.1	28.9	60.0
Stage III January 20, 2000	17.2	23.8	59.0

## TO OUR READERS

As President Bill Clinton embarks upon his final year in office, he has made the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict one of his top policy priorities.

The form that such a resolution of this century-old conflict will take—and the standard against which success or failure will be measured—is a “final status” agreement providing a roadmap for solving the related problems of Israeli security, Palestinian sovereignty, the status of Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements.

No one any longer expects that these issues will be completely resolved any time soon. The term that a final status agreement will run, if it can indeed be consummated—will be measured in years if not decades, certainly beyond Clinton’s term in office. Given such a timetable, a final status agreement will not mark the end of the story but, one hopes, the beginning of the end.

A “framework agreement”—the first way station to this sought-after understanding—is due in February. Until then,

the president has scheduled an extraordinary number of top-level meetings with the region’s principals, particularly Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who is the international figure most frequently in Clinton’s company. Clinton has once again placed Martin Indyk in Tel Aviv, an indication that the White House intends to keep its hand in the day-to-day running of policy, not just on the Arab-Israeli track but also on the expansion of the Israel-U.S. strategic partnership.

These measures offer an unmistakable signal of Clinton’s high hopes for a historic agreement in the twilight of his political career. Less apparent is the administration’s concept of the territorial concessions necessary to satisfy Israeli security concerns and Palestinian expectations of a viable and sovereign state.




\* Hilltop Settlements

Ha'aretz, October 15, 1999

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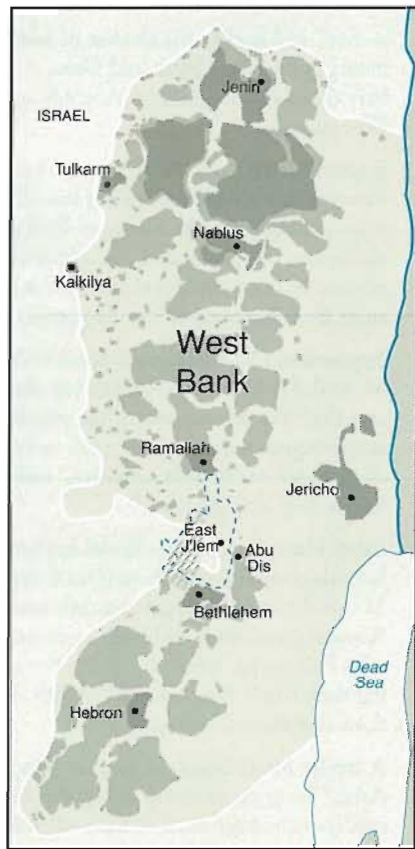
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# The West Bank

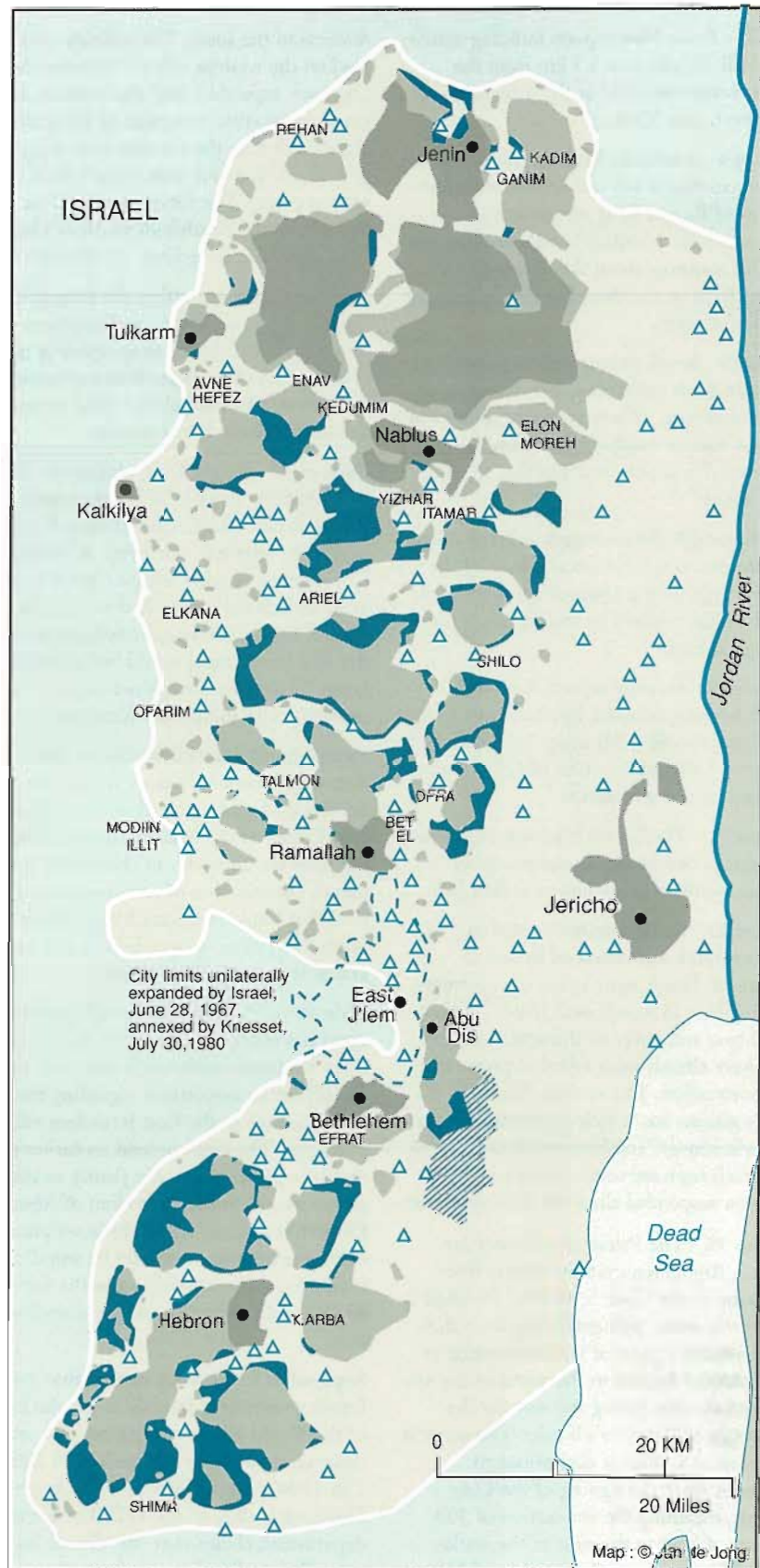
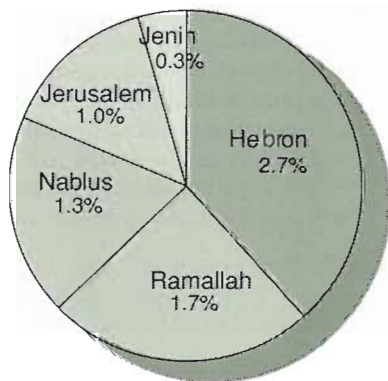
After the First Israeli Redeployment

According to the Sharm al-Sheikh Memorandum - September 1999



- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area A; Full Civil and Security Control)
- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area B; Full Civil Control, Joint Isr. / Pal. Security Control)
- Area C; Israeli Civil and Security Control
- Israeli Redeployment from Area C Changed to Area B
- Designated Nature Reserve Area B
- Israeli Settlement

Israeli Redeployment According to Percentage in Palestinian Districts (Total: 7%)



## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

**July 23** Peace Now reports building activity at Hill 777, located 5.5 km from the Itamar settlement, and at the settlement of Shalhevet, near Yitzhar.

**August 4** American Muslims for Jerusalem announces that it will call for a worldwide boycott of Burger King restaurants in response to the company's decision to ignore Muslim concerns about the opening of a Burger King in the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim.

**August 9** Israeli deputy defense minister Ephraim Sneh criticizes the situation in Hebron, stating, "There are more soldiers in Hebron than in southern Lebanon, and therefore the settlers have nothing to complain about."

Palestinian Muslims attempt to break open an entrance to the Haram al-Sharif at the Hulda Steps on the plateau's southern wall. Israeli police respond by sealing the entrance during the night.

**August 10** *Ha'aretz* reports that since Israeli housing minister Yitzhak Levy took office, the Housing Ministry "has published tenders for the construction of 1,339 housing units in the settlements."

**August 11** The Israeli Ministry of Interior demolishes two houses in the village of Wallaja, south of Jerusalem near Beit Jalla.

**August 23** Settlers demonstrated in the West Bank settlement of Rehan to protest the Israeli army's plan to construct an army base in woods near Jenin. The proposed base will cover 60 dunams, and 750 trees have already been felled in preparation for construction. The settlers claim that the army's actions are "a violation of their 'natural environment'" and have taken the case to the Israeli supreme court. Work on the site has been suspended since the demonstration.

**August 25** The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reports that settlers from Netzarim in the Gaza Strip have installed a 450-meter water pipe extending from their settlement to a piece of land (estimated at 500 dunams) located to the south of the settlement, thereby paving the way for the expansion of Netzarim's border. The move is the latest in a series of expansions to Netzarim since the signing of the Oslo accords, including the annexation of 300 dunams of land to the west of the settlement, 150 dunams to the north, and 250

dunams to the south. The military post situated on the western side of Netzarim has also been expanded, and construction activities were recently witnessed in the settlement, including the erection of a synagogue and 35 additional houses, all of which remain empty. The future port of Gaza will be built on the beachfront south of Gaza City, only 3km away from the Netzarim.

*Palestine Report* notes that the Palestinian District Planning Office in Bethlehem is in possession of an Israeli map detailing the construction of an expanded checkpoint at the entrance to Bethlehem—that is, one similar to Gaza's Erez crossing.

**August 26** Burger King announces that it has canceled the right of Israeli franchisee Rikamor Ltd. to operate a Burger King food in Ma'ale Adumim, northeast of Jerusalem. The company's press release cites "a breach of its franchise contract and misrepresentation. Rikamor falsely informed Burger King that the [restaurant] would be located in Israel." The restaurant, however, continues to operate under the Burger King logo.

**September 2** *IsraelWire* reports that Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein has informed Minister of Industry and Trade Ran Cohen of the Meretz Party that he does not have the authority to change the government's classification of settlement areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Cohen had wanted to reduce state subsidies and benefits available to many settlements.

*Ha'aretz* reports that the Israeli supreme court has ruled in favor of the al-Abasi family in its dispute with the Ir David (City of David) settler association regarding the family's residence in the East Jerusalem village of Silwan. The court upheld an earlier ruling that "the property belongs jointly to family members and to the Custodian of Absentee Properties and any rights the association may have been given should be annulled." Ir David has been ordered to pay the family \$5,000 and the State must pay a similar sum.

**September 7** *Ha'aretz* reports that the Israeli government intends to cut the budget of the World Zionist Organization's settlement department to \$25 million in 2000. The 1999 budget is \$47 million. Avraham Duvdevani, chair of the WZO settlement department, claims that "the drastic budget cut will virtually wipe out the settlement

section" and lead to the demise of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, particularly those affected by implementation of the Wye accords.

**September 10** *IsraelWire* reports that Yasser Arafat's delay in signing the official maps appended to the Sharm al-Sheikh agreement has postponed the scheduled 7 percent Israeli withdrawal from West Bank lands from September 9 to September 10.

**September 13** Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), PA chairman Arafat's top deputy, says that "the resumption of the permanent status negotiations requires a full cessation of all Israeli settlement activities," including "expanding existing ones."

Faisal Hussein, the PA official in charge of Jerusalem affairs, says there is no future for Ma'ale Adumim residents but evacuation. "Creating a mixture of Israeli settlements with Palestinian cities is nothing but a ticking time bomb that will only lead to situations like those in Kosovo."

A tender for 12 units is issued in Kiryat Arba, bringing to 2,604 the total number of tenders issued for units in the settlements since the Barak government assumed power.

**September 14** At a cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Barak sets out Israel's positions at the final status talks: no return to the 1967 borders; all of Jerusalem as Israel's capital; no foreign army west of the Jordan River; most Israeli settlement blocs to remain under Israeli sovereignty.

At the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, Barak states that the settlement will remain "part of the State of Israel and part of Greater Jerusalem forever. We, the new government, will continue to strengthen the State of Israel and its hold on the Land of Israel, and we will continue to strengthen Ma'ale Adumim. Every tree you plant, every house you build is part of the State of Israel forever. Period. We are not going to move settlements of 25,000 people whom the Rabin government and all governments nurtured. You are part of Greater Jerusalem! You will be part of the State of Israel in every permanent arrangement." ♦

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## BARAK FAILS THE TEST OF HILLTOP SETTLEMENT REMOVAL

By Geoffrey Aronson

In 1975, Israeli settlers, with the connivance of then-defense minister Shimon Peres, established a “work camp” a few kilometers northeast of Ramallah. Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister at the time, was furious, but he made an uneasy peace with the creation of this fact on the ground. Twenty-five years later, the “camp” at Ofra has long since been transformed into the permanent settlement it was always meant to be. Rabin’s heir, Prime Minister Ehud Barak, has declared Ofra to be now and forever part of sovereign Israel. The settlement today boasts more than 2,000 residents, including children of the founding generation who are now manning some of the hilltop outposts recently in the news.

The settlement of Ma’ale Adumim, northeast of Jerusalem, began under similar circumstances. Wildcatting trespassers were removed by Israeli soldiers from a windswept hilltop a few kilometers east of Jerusalem on more than one occasion, only to return. Today the once lonely and bedraggled outpost is the most populous West Bank settlement outside East Jerusalem. Its 25,000 residents swim in new sport centers, eat at Burger King, and shop in a modern mall. The settlement has a planning area larger than Tel Aviv, and it stands as a self-described barrier to the joining of Palestinian-controlled cantons north and south of Jerusalem.

These facts are a useful reference point from which to consider the recent decision of Prime Minister Barak concerning the 42 new settlement locations established during the Netanyahu government. Thirty-two of these places, all resembling the earliest days of Ofra and Ma’ale Adumim, with at best a few solitary caravans and a handful of young occupants, have been unconditionally blessed by the new Israeli government.

After doing some elementary math, it becomes apparent that Barak decided to evacuate only one of the inhabited outposts, Mitzpe Kranim near the Allon Road. A few others will be relocated some meters one way or another in order to satisfy Israeli lawyers, if not Palestinians, that they are not trespassers. Five of the forty-two are uninhabited, and their dismantling will dishearten only those zealots for whom every water tower and generator marks the sovereign territory of the Land of Israel.

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Those familiar with the history of places such as Ofra and Ma’ale Adumim can be forgiven for being skeptical that even Barak’s limited intentions will be realized. Israeli governments in the past have decided to dismantle similar outposts, only to shrink from the consequences of their decision. It will be remembered that the “unauthorized” settlement outpost in Hebron, whose establishment in 1979 was championed at the time by David Levy, the current foreign minister but at the time housing minister, was condemned by none other than Prime Minister Menachem Begin himself, who declared that, “No one will tell the government how, when, and where to settle.” Begin is long gone, but his protests find an equally plaintive and impotent echo in recent statements by Israel’s

current leader. Let us wait some months before we declare Barak “victorious” in his pathetic strike against those whose most heartfelt desire is to prevent the creation of a truly sovereign Palestinian state.

No doubt the U.S. government will be impressed by Barak’s resolve and will forget earlier admonitions by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Benjamin Netanyahu to dismantle all of these outposts. The settlers’ official representatives are, to their compatriots, downplaying their first-ever collaboration in a government decision to remove a settlement by noting that their rights to the disputed lands have been recognized, that they have negotiated with the government as equals, and that, all in all, Barak’s offer is a fair price to pay to secure the future of those

that will remain. For other settlers, among them the balding “pioneers” of an earlier era, the settlers’ approval of the evacuation of even one outpost, no matter how threadbare or empty, is an unprecedented and dangerous precedent as Barak confronts Palestinian demands for independence.

These ideologues were heartened by the growing signs of mobilization intended to confront and defeat the evacuation. Today this place is no more than a few kids living under the stars. However, both the patrons and opponents of settlements know that such a nucleus could be transformed over the years into a town if not a city of thousands. ♦

fillment of the Zionist imperative to settle the land, were nonetheless predicated more on considerations of security and strategy than divine right. The sense that the settlement enterprise on the Golan was an instrument—a card to be played in eventual negotiations with Damascus—was far more articulate than in any other settlement domain. In contrast to settlement elsewhere, where the policy of “creating facts” became an end in itself, settlement in the Golan has proceeded at a far more measured pace under direct government sponsorship. The plateau’s 17,000 Israeli settlers represent an increase of 18 percent since 1994. The settler population of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) has almost doubled to 200,000 during the same period. This lackluster pace is in no small part due to the location and relative demographic insignificance of the 17,000 Syrians remaining after 1967, clustered in four villages at the plateau’s northern tip.

Those Israelis who have come to live in the Golan are therefore viewed in the popular imagination as less like the “cow-boys” waging land wars in the West Bank than patriotic Israelis doing their part to assure Israeli security while searching for the good life. As Israel Harel, a prominent West Bank settler leader observed with some envy, Golan settlers “went with the goodwill of all Israelis.”

That is not to say that Israelis have not been drawn to the region by its historical Jewish associations. There is hardly a Jewish citizen who has not visited the remnants of the ancient Jewish fortress at Gamla, where battle was waged against the Romans. But for most the Golan’s terrain and ecology, its open spaces and wonderful scenery are what animate Israeli interest.

The perception of the Golan as an environmental paradise is encouraged by builders seeking buyers for new homes on the plateau. The 200 cottages being built in the settlements of Bene Yehuda, Gamla, Had Nes, and Kidmat Zvi were described by their builder earlier this year as “real estate with a quality of life like Switzerland.” For Israelis this association rings true.

From the ski slopes at Jabal al-Sheikh (Mt. Hermon) to the hot springs and ruins at al-Hama, Israelis take pleasure in visiting the area. This popularity distinguishes the Golan from the West Bank and even from Jerusalem’s Old City, which, especially since the intifada, have become terra incognita for the vast majority of Israelis.

The Golan’s secure place in Israeli popular culture and the particular nature of settlement expansion in the Golan have

long served as the foundation of efforts to prevent an Israeli withdrawal and the dismantling of settlements in the event of an agreement with Syria. These campaigns have depended far less than in the West Bank upon establishing “facts on the ground” than in mobilizing among the public at large to create a political critical mass opposed to withdrawal. This strategy of popular political mobilization, spearheaded by politically well-connected Golan settlers drawing upon their roots in Israel’s Labor party establishment, has kept the future of the Golan on the short list of items on Israel’s domestic political agenda.

On December 14, 1981, the Israeli Knesset passed the Golan Law annexing the area to Israel. In 1992, when the election of Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister raised the prospect of an agreement with Syria and a cancellation of the Golan Law, Golan settlers sponsored a nationwide campaign under the slogan, “The People are with the Golan.” Rabin later committed to holding a national referendum on any agreement reached with Syria, but he opposed efforts to

require a supermajority in the Knesset to repeal the Golan Law, a move championed by the parliamentary faction most closely associated with the Golan settlers, the Third Way party.

“Israeli history did not begin on the basalt rocks of the Golan. We did not conquer the Golan in order to annex it. We have all known that the Golan Heights was destined to become a strategic asset in the pursuit of peace,” explained Moshe Shahal, a Labor minister at the time.

Nevertheless, on January 26, 1999, during the last months of

the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Knesset approved legislation requiring that any withdrawal from “sovereign Israeli territory” win the approval of 61 members of the Knesset. If the current Knesset approves, the law will also require a public referendum to ratify any withdrawal.

Netanyahu’s commitment to keep the Golan was called into question when he described the area in a March 21, 1999, letter to settlers only as a “strategic and security asset to the state of Israel.” His statement did little to assuage doubts about his intentions, doubts sparked by the publication earlier this year of details of Operation Mango—a surreptitious government effort, begun by Rabin and continued under Netanyahu, to quantify Israel’s civilian investments in the Golan. According to *Yediot Aharanot*, the survey of civilian assets conducted at 29 of 33 settlements (but not at the largest, Katzrin, home to 7,500 residents) identified \$2.5 billion in civilian assets.

“Certainly I am troubled by the talk of withdrawing from the Golan,” explained a woman who has lived on the Golan Heights since the mid-1980s. “Personally I try to continue as always, because it is impossible to live in a state of uncertainty. Like many of my friends on the Golan, I have learned to push out such thoughts in the hope that we can continue to live here.”

Ehud Barak's election has only increased settler concerns. He was chief of staff under Rabin and Peres, and he negotiated directly with his Syrian counterpart, Hikmet Shihabi. His adaptation of Rabin's formula, declaring that "the depth of withdrawal will match the extent of peace and the quality of security arrangements," is understood by Israelis to imply a readiness to evacuate all settlements.

Barak's promise to withdraw from southern Lebanon within one year has also raised the profile of the interdependence between the unpopular and bloody occupation in Lebanon and that of the Golan, to the settlers' chagrin.

"The price of holding [Katzrin]," noted an unidentified member of Netanyahu's cabinet in February, "is probably thirty to forty dead [Israeli] soldiers a year in Lebanon." Should the Israeli public embrace this reasoning, the settlers' task will become that much more difficult. Barak's promise to leave Lebanon by next summer suggests that he is not prepared to pay such a price.

Golan settlers are now organizing for what they view as their most important challenge—preparing to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the public.

In July, 100 activists belonging to the Golan Settlers' Council adopted a new slogan—"I am with the Golan"—the centerpiece of what they promise will be a renewed popular effort to force the Barak government to rethink its willingness to enter into talks with Syria on the basis of withdrawal and evacuation and, failing that, to convince a public increasingly at ease with the concept of withdrawal from the area to vote No in the eventual referendum.

There is also an increasing readiness to cooperate with their counterparts in YESHA,

symbolized by the addition of the mayor of Katzrin to the membership roles of the organization. Rabbis have even been enlisted to give religious imprimatur to the rejection of withdrawal.

Yet as forces are mobilized for a public campaign the likes of which has not been mounted for five years, much of the conviction against the settlers' removal, if not energy, appears to have been lost.

An article in *Ha'aretz* noted, "The Golan Settlers' Council renews the struggle. Leaders proclaim militant slogans to the public, but inside they acknowledge that the game is lost."

There are reports of plans to resettle those from the Golan in the Galilee. The head of the Golan regional council is reported to have acknowledged that building plans in a number of settlements have been halted due to expectations of an eventual withdrawal.

Many if not most of those Israelis who answered the call of their government to settle on the Golan appear prepared, despite their misgivings, to accept the prospect of evacuation even if they, like most Israelis, remain skeptical about the prospect of an agreement with Damascus.

An indelicate headline in *Yediot Aharanot* summarized this sentiment: "We will not move from the Golan. Well maybe for \$2.5 billion." ♦



**Settlement Expansion in the Golan Heights, November 1999**

El Rom	12 houses to be built within a year
Ein Zivan	40 dwellings under construction
Kidmet Zvi	30 houses to be built
Katzrin	hundreds of homes under construction
Had Nes	25 dwellings expected within the year
Ma'ale Gamla	40 dwellings planned for the coming year
Kanaf	24 dwellings to be constructed
Bene Yehuda	52 houses to be constructed
Neot Golan	55 new dwellings recently completed
Ortal	115 new housing units approved

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## SETTLING THE GOLAN

*The following article by Ofer Patrasborg, appeared in Yediot Aharanot on September 29, 1999.*

### The New Craze—A Vacation Home with an Option for Compensation

Real estate experts report that the real estate market in the Golan has awoken in the months since the [May] elections, after a long period of stagnation.

The reason for this development, according to the experts: the discussion about the resumption of negotiations with Syria has transformed the purchase of property in the Golan into a good investment, with the anticipated compensation to be paid to property owners in the event of an Israeli withdrawal.

The construction company Yifrach Abraham, which is building a new neighborhood in Katzrin, sold ten town houses in the last two months. Every one of the buyers lives

in the center of the country.

Last week, the Motivation company sold 12 of 52 homes being built in a new neighborhood in the Bene Yehuda settlement. Tens of additional families are in the process of making a purchase; one-half of the 500 families that have requested information have come to visit. The houses are constructed on one-eighth of an acre (one-half dunam) at a price of between \$100,000 and \$115,000. The company's general manager has noted his surprise at the level of interest.

Of the 12 families who have recently bought a home in Bene Yehuda, almost half are purchasing a second home for investment.

A resident of the Dan region (around Tel Aviv) explained, "Why shouldn't I enjoy the best of both worlds? I will enjoy a family vacation apartment whose price may increase over time, and in the event of a withdrawal, I'll benefit from compensation. It is impossible to lose in such a business!" ♦

**"It is also demanded that the Israeli government immediately and decisively cease all of its measures which violate international relations, law, and covenants and which destroy the chances for achieving peace. At the forefront of such activities and measures are the settlement activities and the confiscation of land, especially in al-Quds al-Sharif [Jerusalem] and its surroundings, the siege of the city of Bethlehem, and the rest of the Palestinian territories. The continuation of these settlement policies and practices will severely diminish the hopes and expectations generated by the signing of the Sharm al-Sheikh Memorandum and destroy prospects for the final settlement negotiations, which began on the 13th of September. The cessation of all such measures is needed so that we can, together with my new partner [Ehud] Barak, continue the march of the peace of the brave that we began with my partner the late Yitzhak Rabin, who gave his life for this peace, and also with my partner Shimon Peres for a new Middle East."**

*From an address by Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, before the 54th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, 23 September 1999, New York*

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