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Settlement Monitor

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SETTLEMENT MONITOR

EDITED BY GEOFFREY ARONSON

This section covers items—reprinted articles, statistics, and maps—pertaining to Israeli settlement activities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Unless otherwise stated, the items in this section have been written by Geoffrey Aronson directly for this section or drawn from material written by him for Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories (hereinafter Settlement Report), a Washington-based bimonthly newsletter published by the Foundation for Middle East Peace. JPS is grateful to the Foundation for permission to draw on its material. Major documents relating to settlements appear in the Documents and Source Material section.

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WHITTLING DOWN THE MAP OF PALESTINE

ISRAEL'S PLANS FOR "FURTHER REDEPLOYMENTS"

From Settlement Report, March 1997.

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.

Following the recently signed Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron, Israel fulfilled its commitment to redeploy in Hebron, as originally agreed in the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995. According to the original timetable, the Hebron redeployment was to have been completed by 28 March 1996.

The redeployment in Hebron, implemented on 16 January 1997, left the IDF in exclusive security control of approximately 20 percent of the city, in which over 20,000 Palestinians and 400 Israeli settlers reside.

The Interim Agreement of September 1995 outlined three "further redeployments" from unspecified areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that were to occur in the period September 1996–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 U.S. "Letter of Assurance" from Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, established a new timetable for this three-phased redeployment. According to the Christopher letter, the final redeployment must be completed "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." This represents a delay of about one year from the originally agreed upon timetable. This delay should be seen in the context of the postponement of almost every timetable in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin having noted that no dates are "sacred."

There is no formally agreed upon 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 forthcoming redeployments. At the conclusion of this process, the Palestinian Council's jurisdiction will extend over an unspecified area of the West Bank, excluding "specified military locations" and issues to be negotiated in the

final status negotiations [i.e., settlements, Jerusalem, and borders].

The Netanyahu government's endorsement of the Hebron protocol on 15 January notes that "details of the next stages of further redeployment in Judea and Samaria will be determined by the government of Israel."

In this context, 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 enjoyed 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 which 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 Dennis Ross explained, "Borders and further redeployment are not necessarily synonymous."

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

The Christopher "Letter of Assurance" to PA Chairman Yasir 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. Palestinians dispute Israel's right unilaterally to determine 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 exercised little influence. Israeli foreign minister David Levy acknowledged this Palestinian role in a 22 January 1997 interview with *al-Sharq al-Awsat*:

The prime minister said that under the original agreement Israel is the one to decide the area of the land needed to protect its own security. Security is the main thing. But this does not mean that the Palestinians will respond by saying yes to everything we tell them. There is give and take. If we succeed together in

securing suitable conditions for peace, without violence and with more trust between the parties and tangible relations of peace, everything will be easy, and you would find us all looking for means to bring us closer to one another.

Palestinians assert that Israel should redeploy from all but 10 percent of the West Bank—the area controlled by settlements—by the end of the third redeployment. The United States reportedly believes that the first redeployment 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 interests in the West Bank. The maps now under review by the Netanyahu government were initially prepared by the Planning Branch at Yitzhak Rabin's request during the Taba talks preceding the Oslo II accord.

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 further 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; rather, they are separated by Jewish settlements and areas under IDF control. For example, the entire Jordan Valley appears in the map as an area to remain under IDF control. The map includes border adjustments along the Green Line as well as additional areas slated for the development of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

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 10 February. These requirements include: 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; control of the Jordan Valley and the border with Jordan. Based upon these requirements, Likud ministers estimate

Israel will permanently retain 51.8 percent of the West Bank, with the Palestinians controlling about 48 percent after the third stage of further redeployment is completed.

According to a report on Israeli television, "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."

A LABOR-LIKUD CONSENSUS ON THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE?

From Settlement Report, March 1997.

One of the top items on Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's agenda during his recent visit to Washington was the extent of Israel's planned redeployments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which are scheduled to occur in three stages during the next eighteen months beginning on 7 March.

Israel remains in exclusive control of over 72 percent of the West Bank (area C) and exercises security control over another 27 percent (area B). In Gaza, Israel continues to control around 40 percent of the land.

Netanyahu intends to cede as little of this land as possible in the course of the three stages of "further redeployment." First, he is loath to surrender any part of the "Land of Israel" to "foreign sovereignty." Second, he wants to retain as much territory as possible for bargaining purposes when he and PA Chairman Yasir Arafat begin negotiating "final status" arrangements, set to be completed in May 1999.

Netanyahu's intentions received a considerable boost with the publication in late January of the "National Agreement Regarding the Negotiations on the Permanent Settlement with the Palestinians"—otherwise known as the Beilin-Eytan agreement [see Doc. B2]. The agreement is named after Yossi Beilin, former minister in the governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres and a driving force behind the Oslo negotiations, and Michael Eytan, head of the ruling Likud's parliamentary faction.

The document has been widely interpreted as a less forthcoming version of the arrangement reportedly worked out between Beilin and the PA's Abu Mazin [Mahmud Abbas] in the days before Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in November 1995. Proponents believe that it offers a road map for Israeli negotiators as they approach the final status talks.

Such a view is misleading in important respects. 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 thirty years ago. Its true origins can be found not in the Beilin-Abu Mazin text, which called for a Palestinian state with a flag flying over al-Aqsa and an Israeli withdrawal from all but 6 percent of the West Bank, but 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 extensive protections awarded settlers by the Beilin-Eytan document suggest the continuing relevance to Israeli policymakers of Golda Meir's famous dictum—"the frontier is where Jews live, not where there is a line on the map."

The Beilin-Eytan 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 characteristic of the Israeli political scene. Far more than a road map to the next stage of Israeli-Palestinian talks, Beilin-Eytan reflects the latest of Beilin's efforts to heal the breach between Labor and Likud that was ripped open by Rabin's murder.

Beilin began this effort at national reconciliation within days of Rabin's assassination, which occurred just three days before Rabin was to have been presented with the Beilin-Abu Mazin document. Peres, more opposed to Palestinian sovereignty than Rabin and opposed to the agreement's call for an Israeli withdrawal from the Jordan Valley, rejected the work of Beilin and Abu Mazin. Instead he placed Beilin in charge of winning over the bloc of religious parties—led by the National Religious Party—to the broader coalition he wanted to forge in the wake of Rabin's death.

The deliberations focused on the fate of Israel's more than 150 settlements and 150,000-plus settlers in the final status talks. In the months following the assassination, Beilin—first with NRP leader Hanan Porat and later with Rabbi Yoel Ben Nun, a veteran leader of West Bank settlers—moved the Peres government more explicitly than ever in 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's 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 understanding with Abu Mazin.

This conclusion becomes clearer when the text itself is examined [see Doc. C3 in this issue]. The agreement's prologue recounts the bitter domestic political debate that created the context for Rabin's assassination—the "grave political polarization" which centered around, in the author's words, "giving up parts of the homeland." The agreement declares the need for Israel to 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."

This formulation is distinctly nonnational, at least as far as Palestinians are concerned. The text's resurrection of the appellation made famous by Menachem Begin—"Arabs in the Land of Israel"—suggests a consensus Israeli view prepared to deny Palestinians a national identity equal to that pursued by the "Jews in the Land of Israel," whose political expression is the State of Israel. Israel's demand for "reciprocity" is absent.

The nonnational destiny of the Palestinians becomes clearer when the authors enumerate the three principles around which an Israeli national consensus is to be built. The first notes that if Israel seeks to secure the advantages offered by its presence in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, it will have to "permit" the creation of a Palestinian "entity" of undetermined status. Whether this entity is called a "state," as Beilin is prepared to concede, or an "enlarged autonomy," as Eytan prefers, extensive Israeli limits on anything approaching sovereign powers remain constant.

The second principle is a demand for continuing Israeli strategic control over whatever territory is transferred to the Palestinian entity. Israel, the author's note, "must preserve its ability to prevent every attack or risk of an attack on its territorial integrity, [and] the safety of its citizens and their property."

This demand goes far beyond the recent negotiations over Israel's right of "hot pursuit." The use of such language in the context of defining Israel's interests in territory outside its formal sovereignty highlights the extent to which Israel views the rapprochement with the Palestinians as a vehi-

cle for preserving, rather than reevaluating, its security interests in the territories it occupied in June 1967.

The third guiding principle, which follows from the second, concerns the future of settlements anywhere in the "Western Land of Israel." 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 maintain Israeli citizenship, but also 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.

These three elements of Israel policy for the final status of the occupied territories resemble nothing so much as the principles first formulated by Yigal Allon and later Moshe Dayan decades ago. Far from representing a break with the past—as did the Beilin-Abu Mazin understanding—the "National Agreement" falls 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 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 Mazin text, according to which 100 of 140 West Bank settlements, with a population of 40,000, would eventually come under Palestinian sovereignty. Were this understanding 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 set 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 to of the West Bank, this means that over the next year and a half, Israel should 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.

PEACE NOW REPORT ON WEST BANK SETTLEMENT HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

From Settlement Report, January-February 1997.

A November 1996 "Report on Building in Settlements" by the Israeli organization Peace Now disclosed that there are 4,094 dwelling units under various stages of construction in thirty-one West Bank settlements. Half the construction now under way is located at the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim near Jerusalem. Virtually all of the construction reported was initiated by the previous Labor government led by Shimon Peres.

The report's authors have acknowledged that more than 50 West Bank settlements and all Gaza Strip and Golan Heights settlements were not included in the survey. Nevertheless, the report provides the most accurate estimates to date of the settlement construction program inherited by the Netanyahu government.

By way of comparison, when Yitzhak Rabin assumed power in mid-1992, he approved the completion of 9,850 units then under construction in the West Bank, 1,200 in the Gaza Strip, and 1,200 in the Golan Heights. That is, Netanyahu inherited less than one-third the number of units approved by Rabin.

WEST BANK SETTLEMENT UNITS

	Under Construction	Empty Units
Adam	14	
A dura		30
Alei Zahav	3	
Allon Moreh		100
Almog	15	
Ariel	400	
Avnei Hefez	100	33
Beitar	50	
Beit Aryeh	44	
Beit Haggai		47
Beit Horon, new neighborhood		20
Dolev		
Efrat	35	
Einav		19
Elazar	62	
Elkanah	20	
Emanuel	160	
Etaniel		50
Etz Ephraim	15	
Ganim		35
Givat Ze'ev	889	

Givon Hahadasha	19	
Givon Hayeshana		30
Hananit		8
Har Bracha	4	4
Hashomonaim	23	
Homesh		50
Kaddim		46
Kalyia	12	
Karmel		10
Karnei Shomron	10	
Kfar Adumim	3	5
Kfar Tapuah		20
Kiryat Arba		150
Kiryat Netafim		8
Kiryat Sefer	30	
Ma'ale Adumim	2,000	
Ma'ale Machmesh	10	
Ma'ale Shomron	10	
Maon		40
Matityahu		20
Mevo Dotan		21
Mitzpe Jericho	54	
Na'ale		20
Na'ama		5
Neve Daniel	10	
Nofim	11	
Nokdim		10
Ofarim	12	20
Oranit	36	
Pnai Haver		10
Shama		15
Sharei Tikva	26	
Shavei Shomrom		5
Shvut Rachel		20
Sussiya		17
Talmon	10	
Tekoa	7	
Tomer		12
Yitzhar		30

Total Units Under Construction: 4,094

Total Empty Units: 910

SETTLEMENT CHRONOLOGY

17 November 1996

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai approves a \$37-million project that includes the construction of 1,200 units at the settlement of Emanuel, southwest of Nablus. One hundred fifty units are unfrozen immediately. The second stage will see 500 units constructed, followed by a third stage of 700 units.

24 November

Traffic jams are caused at Gaza's Netzarim junction by Palestinian vehicles to force a change in an Israeli decision of November 1994 to close the road to Palestinian vehicles. Settlers are confined to Netzarim during the action.

25 November

Israeli forces move additional troops and tanks to the Nahal Oz area, just outside the Gaza Strip.

26 November

PA's Yasir Arafat meets for 90 minutes with a delegation of ten settlers. Discussion focuses on joint business development opportunities and Hebron. YESHA (Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip) denounces the meeting.

2 December

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approves construction of 350 units and occupation of 100 previously "frozen" units in Jordan Valley settlements during a meeting with their settlers.

5 December

Israeli government spokesman David Bar Ilan says that permits have been given to occupy 100 empty units at the West Bank settlement of Kedumim. He denies other reports that approval had been given to construct 700 new units, but explains that licenses had been requested for 100 new units.

8 December

The Jerusalem District Planning Commission approves the construction of 132 units on 14 dunams in East Jerusalem's Ras al-Amud neighborhood. Ministerial approval is required for construction to begin.

11 December

Two Israeli residents of the West Bank settlement of Beit El are killed in a drive-by shooting near the settlement.

13 December

The Netanyahu cabinet approves the restoration of unspecified levels of benefits and subsidies to settlers and to manufacturing, industrial, and commercial enterprises locating in settlements, which will now enjoy "A"-level national priority area status. The Rabin government had earlier canceled or reduced some of these incentives.

18 December

Settlers from Beit El lay symbolic claim to a location east of their existing West Bank settlement on Artis Hill. The proposed new settlement—Maoz Tzur—is named after settlers killed on 11 December.

25 December

Netanyahu decides not to support the approval of construction of 6,500 planned units at Har Homa in East Jerusalem.

26 December

Settlers from Netzarim lay a cornerstone of Netzarim B adjacent to the existing settlement, where they plan to construct 160 units. No new construction had been approved by the government.

Arafat tells legislators that former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assured him that the Hebron redeployment would lead eventually to the transfer of Hebron settlers to the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba.

1 January 1997

An off-duty Israeli soldier wounds six Palestinians in a shooting attack in Hebron.

2 January

Finance Minister Dan Meridor announces that \$33 million of the newly approved 1997 budget is to be allocated for settlement expansion in the Golan Heights and Jordan Valley, including construction of 300 units in the Golan.

Seven mobile homes are placed at Maoz Tzur [Artis Hill] near Beit El.

3 January

The protocol of the ministerial committee on settlement, chaired by Prime Minister 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."

5 January

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

8 January

A few dozen religious school students moved into a recently purchased building in the Jerusalem Old City's Christian Quarter.

14 January

The forced removal of 400 bedouin from lands earmarked for the expansion of the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim continues.

16 January

The Netanyahu government, after approving the redeployment from Hebron, notes in an announcement 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 IDF redeploys in Hebron, transferring control of 80 percent of the city to the PA.

20 January

The "Settlement Forum" under the direction of an assistant to DM Mordechai approves construction of 60 units in the settlement of Ma'ale Ephraim at the northern terminus of the Allon Road paralleling the Jordan Valley. (Founded in 1978, Ma'ale Ephraim is the largest settlement in the Jordan Valley area, with a current population of 1,720 in 390 units, all of which are currently occupied.) The construction plans are part of a larger plan for the construction of 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 for the construction of an additional 200 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 2 January).

22 January

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.

26 January

Eight hundred trees planted by Palestinians near Janin are uprooted by Israeli officials, who claim that the planting took place on state land and is therefore 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 Beit El. The expansion of the Beit El settlement was promised in the aftermath of

the killing of two Israeli settlers by Palestinian attackers in December 1996.

28 January

The IDF orders a halt to all Palestinian building and renovation in the H-2 area of Hebron, which Israel controls.

29 January

Eighty-four settlements are to be classified as priority "A" development areas, entitling them to an increased level of a range of state benefits. Thirty-nine settlements are already designated as "A" development locations.

30 January

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.

4 February

Housing Ministry announces a plan to sell 5,000 building plots within and 'near' existing West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements during 1997. Implementation requires Defense Ministry approval.

9 February

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

10 February

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 the permanent arrangement, while the Palestinians will retain 48.2 percent.

11 February

Seven Palestinians are injured during a protest against the confiscation of land near Tulkarm for the creation of five stone quarries. The confiscation order dates to 1994.

12 February

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

SETTLEMENT BRIEFS

"Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reports that the number of Israeli settlers with the right to vote [all persons aged 18 and over] was 73,990 in the May 1996 elections,

or 2 percent of all voters. This figure represents an increase of 26,990 voters registered at the time of the 1992 elections, when the number was 47,000 (a 57-percent increase). In 1988, there were 28,000 eligible voters in the settlements."

Ha'Aretz, 29 May 1996.

"People haven't lived here for thousands of years. Look at these barren hills. Have we deprived anyone of anything? Barren land. You know what, if we hadn't come here it would have stayed barren for another 2,000 years."

PM Netanyahu during a visit to the settlements of Ariel and Eli on 26 November 1996.

"A few weeks ago [Israeli defense minister Yitzhak] Mordechai took a walking tour from Beit Hadassah to the Avraham Avinu neighborhood [settlement areas in Hebron]. As he inspected the market, due to be reopened with implementation of the redeployment agreement, I shook his hand, welcomed him to Hebron and pointed out to him that the market, located on Jewish property, was stolen from us following the expulsion of the Jewish community in 1929. His response: 'And how much land did we take from them?' Shocked at this answer, especially because in Hebron we didn't take any land from the Arabs, I responded, 'But they murdered us and then stole our land.' Mordechai retorted, 'You're looking at this from an historical perspective; where does that historical perspective begin?' This is the Israeli Likud minister of defense, who we put into office."

David Wilder, a member of the Jewish community of Hebron, Gush Katif, e-mail edition, 27 December 1996.

"Jews living outside of Israel have raised \$40 million over the past three months to buy up land from Arabs in the Hebron, Golan Heights, Negev, and Jerusalem areas. Hundreds of properties have already been purchased from Arab owners in Hebron and East Jerusalem. The land purchases are being carried out with discretion to avoid involvement of political figures. Sources close to Deputy Housing Minister Rabbi Meir Porush have stated the deputy minister is aware of the transactions and has given the green light.

Yedi'ot Aharonot, 3 December 1996.

"Israel has confiscated more than 75,000 acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza in the last three years, according to a report submitted by the Palestinian Author-

ity [PA] Ministry of Information to PA Chairman Yasir Arafat. The report added that Israel has confiscated since 1967 almost 750,000 acres of the 1.5 million acres comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip (74 percent in the West Bank and 40 percent in Gaza). The PA states that in the 1993-96 period Israel confiscated 47,975 acres in the West Bank for rock quarries; 3,000 acres for nature reserves; and 5,500 acres for the network of bypass roads to Israeli settlements."

Palestine Report, 13 December 1996.

"As you must have heard and seen in the media, Kfar Darom was actually attacked by an Arab mob, and worse, by the Palestinian police using weapons supplied to them by the previous government. The residents were besieged in their houses while snipers armed with semiautomatic weapons arranged themselves opposite the community, waiting for living targets to come within their sights. There are still a number of families living in trailer homes. As you can imagine, their situation was even more dangerous. Netzarim is isolated at the best of times. At that point [the September 'mini-intifada'], it was completely under siege, since the junction leading to it is controlled by the Palestinians, and not by a joint patrol of Palestinians and Israel Defense Forces, as it should have been. . . . Only after many long hours, after proper authorization was obtained from the army, the regional council organized and began to transport people . . . to and from the roadblocks, in buses with special protection."

From a letter by a resident of the Katif Bloc, Gush Katif, e-mail edition, 29 December 1996.

"Question: Have you seen the cabinet statement by the Israeli government declaring that the settlements in the occupied territories are now a national priority, which will be followed up?

"Mr. Nicholas Burns: We've seen the statement. Frankly, it's troubling. As I said before many times, settlement activity is unhelpful. Settlement activity clearly complicates the peace process. Let me make a general point, that we haven't always made before. There is no doubt that when either side says or does things that are seen to preempt the outcome of a negotiation, it makes it that much more difficult to achieve progress in those negotiations."

State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns, State Department briefing, 13 December 1996.