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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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SHARON AND SETTLEMENTS

THE END OF THE OSLO ERA

From Settlement Report, January–February 2002.

In Ariel Sharon's first public address after Yasir Arafat's December 2001 call for an end to the armed Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, the Israeli prime minister displayed the elements that have long defined his public image as a pragmatic expansionist.

The forum was Jerusalem's Hall of the People, where Sharon was to bestow the Begin Prize to Ze'ev Hever, head of Gush Emunim's settlement arm, Amana. Among his other duties, Hever spearheads the creation of new settlement "outposts." Sharon, then a minister in Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet, was one of the first after the Wye Agreement in October 1998 to urge Amana to "grab and settle."

The audience was full of Gush Emunim patrons, the heart and soul of the settlement enterprise, the critical force that has urged the government since September 2000 to militarily defeat the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Here, of all places, noted a report in the right-wing daily *Qol Hazeman*, "the prime minister supplied the settlers with reasons only to worry."

"We have a commitment to make peace, including its painful price," explained Sharon. He immediately added that former prime minister Menachem Begin had himself declared that national unity was the supreme value and that under no circumstances would there be a war pitting "brother against brother."

In Israel's political lexicon, Sharon was reaffirming his commitment to support the creation of a Palestinian state on territories that his listeners, and he as well, consider to be part of Israel's patrimony.

"The talk about peace, in such a warlike time, left the settlement leaders in the room aghast," reported *Qol Hazeman*. "They were the last to believe that the prime minister would 'save' Arafat."

Like his audience that day, Sharon, in his heart of hearts, is a true believer in the continuing struggle of the Jewish state to define its borders in the face of the existential antipathy of Palestinians and Arabs generally. He opposes the two basic premises upon which Oslo is based: he does not believe that Arafat and the PLO can sponsor an agreement defining relations with Israel, nor does he think that the PA and its security arms can be partners in protecting Israeli security. Left to his own devices, Sharon would gladly turn back the clock to an era when the PLO was best negotiated with through the barrel of a gun. What sets apart Sharon's public career, how-

ever, is that his often destructive and radical impulses can be contained by domestic and external forces more powerful and committed than those he can bring to bear.

For example, Sharon's contribution at the Wye Plantation talks in October 1998 was recognized by Washington, which had shunned him since Sabra and Shatila. And at a time when he considered inevitable the creation of a Palestinian state, Sharon became one of the first Israeli politicians to articulate the need to define the borders of the prospective state in such a way as to preserve his expanded notion of Israeli settlement and security interests. Sharon's map was hardly the same one as Arafat's, but it offered evidence that Sharon could be compelled to adapt to a diplomatic framework he opposed, forcing him to operate tactically within a strategic framework fashioned by others.

Sharon's year-long tenure as prime minister, however, has been defined by the strategic vacuum created in the aftermath of the failure of the Taba talks and the progressive failure of either the Bush administration or Arafat to rescue the Oslo understandings from Sharon's heartfelt preferences. Under such circumstances Arafat could sing the Israeli national anthem, "Hatikva," and it would be to no avail.

In recent months, Sharon has had one overriding objective—preventing the presentation of a U.S. plan establishing a framework for a resumption of diplomacy and offering an outline for its implementation. The events of 11 September, and the early assumption that U.S. coalition building would necessarily come at Israel's expense, lent this objective even greater import. Sharon faced the prospect of an Israel isolated not only locally and regionally, but also strategically, from the most significant U.S. policy initiative since the Gulf War.

"There is a certain moment when you discover they are working behind your back," noted Sharon in early October 2001, shortly after he astonished Washington by likening President George W. Bush's policies regarding Israel to Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Nazi Germany.

The instructive example of former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir is closer in time and relevance to Sharon's personal experience. Shamir, who bowed to U.S. pressure not to enter the Gulf War, was forced to go to the Madrid peace conference in October 1991 before being defeated by Yitzhak Rabin,

who, unlike Shamir, championed the American initiative. Sharon, who viewed Shamir's undoing first hand, is determined not to suffer a similar fate.

Yet if the U.S. campaign against Osama Bin Laden had the potential to disrupt U.S.-Israeli relations, it also presented Sharon with an opportunity to expand his campaign against Arafat and the PA. On 17 September, IDF chief of staff Shaul Mofaz declared, "Now, after the terrible injuries in the United States, we have to strengthen the delegitimization of the Palestinian Authority as an organization that encourages terror and gives it sanctuary, not to ease up on it.

"Immediately after the event," Mofaz continued, "I telephoned the American chief of staff with my condolences. He thanked me and said, 'Who but the Israelis can understand what is in our hearts?'" Indeed, since 11 September Sharon's preferences appear to have been realized. The concern about a regional U.S. strategy prejudicial to Israeli interests has receded. Closer to home, fears of a U.S. negotiating road map for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been assuaged by entirely manageable statements from Washington, including Bush's "vision" of Palestinian sovereignty, and limited diplomatic initiatives lacking energetic White House patronage. These developments have proceeded in tandem with growing U.S. sympathy with the operational elements of Mofaz's campaign of delegitimization, including extended incursions into PA-controlled area A.

The only red line President Bush articulated at a 9 December 2001 meeting was to ask Sharon to refrain from deliberately harming Arafat. At a subsequent cabinet meeting, Sharon explained, "I promised Bush I would not touch Arafat, but I can get close to him."

Settlers were the first to advocate that Israel defeat the PA militarily. Over the months they have expanded the notion of "letting the IDF win." Today the settler agenda includes disarming all Palestinians, physically removing Arafat and the PA leadership, and reoccupying area A cities in the West Bank. There are far fewer references specifically to Gaza, where 7,000 settlers are vastly outnumbered by more than 1 million Palestinians. After all Palestinian elements are disarmed, settler leaders propose that the IDF withdraw from Palestinian cities and, presumably, the Palestinians will be permitted to attend to their everyday, local affairs.

"I believe that Sharon, too, is interested in disarming the Palestinian Authority, but he believes that he is not strong enough to manage such a step. I fear that he will wait until 70 Jews are killed in one strike," observed Adiel Mintz, a settler from Dolev, near Ramallah, and the recently appointed director general of YESHA.

The Bush administration appears satisfied with a role that recalls the activity of U.S. diplomacy in the 1980s more than Washington's activism during the Madrid-Oslo period. This posture has presented Sharon with unprecedented freedom to promote his own vision of the future. Within days of his meeting with Bush, Sharon redefined the PA as "an entity supporting terror" and declared Arafat to be "irrelevant." Removing the PA and Arafat from the equation deals a death blow to the entire diplomatic, security, and political framework established, with U.S. support, during the last decade.

Arafat has facilitated this process by failing to challenge Israeli policy in such a manner that would force Sharon to refashion his policies or compel the Bush administration to intervene actively on the Palestinians' behalf.

Sharon's intent to undermine the PA can be confronted. Until now, however, Arafat has not been up to the task, and the Bush White House has not been convinced of the need to do so.

ESTABLISHING NEW OUTPOSTS

From Settlement Report, January–February 2002.

Every Israel government since the election of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has committed to refrain from the construction of new settlements in the occupied territories. This commitment has not included the expansion of existing settlement communities, whose population has increased to more than 400,000 in more than 200 officially recognized locations in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. For example, since May 2001 the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has published tenders for the construction of 746 apartments in West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements and overseen the construction, from January through June 2001, of 832 new dwelling units.

Despite this ban on new settlement construction, successive Israeli governments since 1996 have overseen, provided protection to, and in many cases formally recog-

nized, the creation of new settlement outposts. In other instances, settlements ordered "frozen" have nevertheless expanded and developed, adding new, permanent housing and infrastructure.

On 21 August 2000, a month before the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada, MK Mossi Raz of the Meretz party observed that settlers "continue to exert organized control over land in an illegal manner. Their clear intention is to cause an outbreak of violence in the territories that will harm the chance for an agreement. It is time that the army, the police, and the government [then headed by Ehud Barak] stop their groveling surrender to the criminal settlers."

Settlers insist that their settlement efforts are coordinated with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). "All that has been done has been done with the army's knowledge and in full coordination with them," explained a settlement leader.

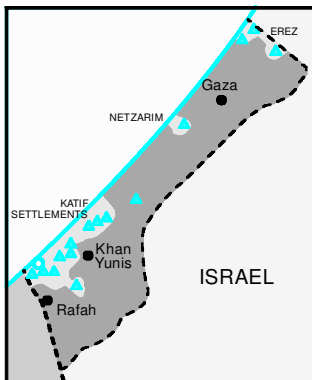
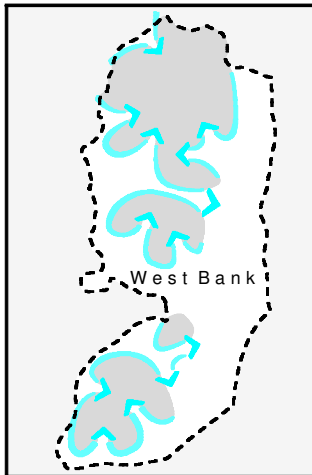
Government officials and settlers themselves do not define the locations as new settlements. They point out that they are located, for the most part, within the planning areas of existing settlements. Some are located a few hundred meters from existing construction, yet others are up to 4,000 meters distant. In an earlier era of settlement expansion, during the tenure of Prime Minister Menachem Begin in the late 1970s, officials also argued that existing settlements were simply being "thickened" by the creation of new settlement locations during a short period when a ban on new settlements was government policy.

On 12 October 2000, Prime Minister Ehud Barak recognized thirty-two of forty-two such settlements established before and during the tenure of his immediate predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu. Of these, fifteen were legalized; thirteen were "frozen," but more than half of these continued to develop, adding houses and infrastructure; three were moved to new locations nearby; two were moved temporarily; water tanks were removed from three uninhabited locations; two were already empty; and four were scheduled for evacuation but remain in place today.

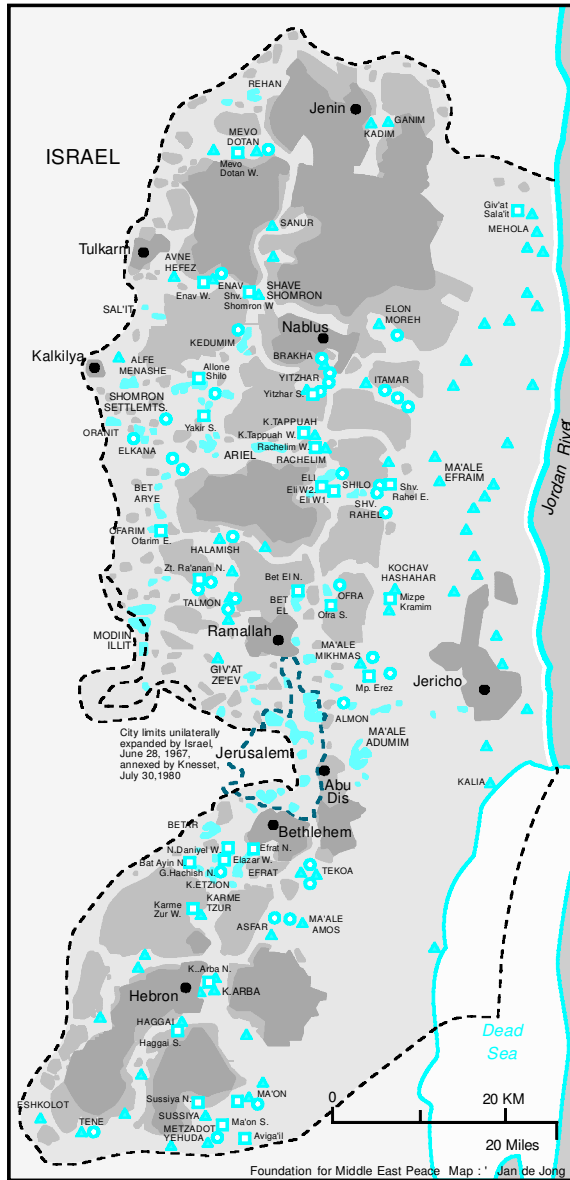
In June 2001, the IDF reported sixty-six distinct outposts. Almost half of them have been established since the beginning of the intifada in September 2000. *Ha'Aretz* reported on 21 November 2001 that twenty-six new sites had been settled since Sharon assumed power in February 2001.

Israeli Settlement Outposts - January 2002

- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area A; full civil and security control)
- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area B; full civil control, joint Israeli-Palestinian security control)
- Israeli civil and security control (Area C)
- Israeli Settlement / Built-up Area
- Settlement Outposts established 1996 - February 2001
- Settlement Outposts established since February 2001



Sources: Palestine Land Defense Committee, Peace Now, Ha'aretz, November 21, 2001



Many are located at sites along roads and intersections where settlers have been killed by Palestinians. Some are no more than temporary, rudimentary encampments. The placement of most of these outposts, however, reveals a strategic intent as well. The Barak government was prepared to surren-

der all settlements to the east of Route 60, which runs in a north-south direction from Jinin to Hebron. Settlers and Israeli officials intent upon complicating such a withdrawal have focused the creation of new outposts in the areas near the settlements of Itamar-Yitzhar and Shilo-Kfar Tapuach along this

route. These new settlement locations define areas of future settlement expansion in an attempt to remove from settlements like Yitzhar and Itamar the potentially fatal designation as “isolated settlements.” A similar logic is apparent in the Talmonim bloc, northwest of Ramallah. New settlement areas in the south Hebron hills and the Etzion bloc, on the other hand, appear aimed at making political statements about the vitality of the settlement enterprise.

Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer declared on 25 June 2001 that fifteen of these outposts were security risks and would be dismantled. The IDF reported in July that twelve outposts, most of which were uninhabited, had been evacuated voluntarily, including five that were subsequently occupied by IDF personnel. Peace Now reported in October 2001, however, that only one settlement site had been evacuated. U.S. sources confirm that an undetermined number of these outposts remained under settler control. At others, civilians were replaced by military personnel. Past experience suggests that civilians will eventually return to these sites.

“Our position is simple,” explained Pinchas Wallerstein, head of a regional council of settlements in the central region of the West Bank. “Outposts that arose for security purposes, which the army is willing to take over, we have no objection to their removal. But regarding those that arose for settlement purposes there is no way that we will agree to evacuate them.”

In early December, it was reported that more than fifty outposts will be connected to Israel’s national electricity grid, a move described by *Qol Hazeman* as “another step in cementing their viability as [settlement] communities.”

“An outpost is like a baby,” explained Avigdor Lieberman, a member of Sharon’s cabinet. “Connecting them to the electricity network is like growing teeth. Ehud Barak granted the outposts a seal of approval, and everything that has happened since is both natural and acceptable.”

New Settlement Outposts	
Year	# of New Outposts
1996	8
1997	2
1998	13
1999	19
2000	29*

* Including one in the Gaza Strip.

INTIFADA REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, OCTOBER 2000–DECEMBER 2001

From Settlement Report, January–February 2002.

- Firing incidents at settlements: 736
- Firing incidents at Israeli vehicles: 1,369
- Mortars fired at Gaza settlements: 600
- Incidents involving grenades: 778
- Roadside explosive devices: 447
- Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli civilians: 13. One was an infant.
- Israeli civilians killed in the Occupied Territories by Palestinians: 83. Nine were minors under the age of 17.
- Injuries to Israelis in Occupied Territories: 555
- Injuries to Israelis within Israel: 443
- Reported breaches of law by settlers:
 - West Bank: 140
 - Gaza Strip: 10
- New apartment sales in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, January–August 2001: 507 (5 percent of national total)
- New housing starts in settlements, January–June 2001: 832
- Settler Population (excluding East Jerusalem):
 - 1 January 2001: 203,067
 - 1 January 2002: 213,672

SHORT TAKES

“Whoever wants a full democracy with a Jewish majority cannot hold onto the entire land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, because it is a land that has people of another nation with different national aspirations. And whoever wants the whole land and a Jewish majority must give up on democracy, and instead have a dark and oppressive regime. And whoever wants a democracy and the entire land, must give up on his idea of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority.”

Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg (Labor) Arutz 7, 19 November 2001

“Burg’s premise is wrong, as we are not demanding the entire Eretz [Land of] Yisrael. Most of this area, 78 percent of it, already has a Palestinian state—Jordan. We must make it clear that Eretz Yisrael has two sides of the Jordan [River] and that if the Arabs

want a Palestinian state, it already exists in the form of Jordan.

"Our solution [the voluntary exodus of Arabs out of Judea and Samaria] will lead to real peace, with a democratic Jewish state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. Gandhi [the assassinated Rehavam Ze'evi, founder of Moledet] taught us that there are different types of transfer: The forcible type, which is not desirable or democratic, occurs during wartime. It is sometimes justified as a form of punishment to those who start a war. Just as in the War of Independence, when they brought upon themselves a "nakba" (catastrophe) and we celebrated our independence. If they continue to war with us, then that is what will happen again.

"On the other hand, we are willing to negotiate with them over some form of autonomy, with its capital in Amman, and connected culturally and municipally and in other ways to Jordan, but with Israel in control of the borders, sovereignty, and the Jordan Valley. This can be done if they are willing to live with us in peace. But if they are not willing to do so, then the painful price they will have to pay will be transfer."

*Tourism Minister Benny Elon (Moledet)
Arutz 7, 19 November 2001*

"Two major questions face us: What will be the final borders of Israel, and what will happen with the Arab residents of YESHA? We haven't given an answer to these questions because we don't want to—because if we say that we want our final borders to include all of Judea and Samaria, then the Arabs living there become our headache.

"Regarding the Arabs of YESHA, we must say clearly, yes, they are our responsibility. This will be a heavy price for us to pay in order to hold on to the Land of Israel, but we have to pay it. This doesn't mean that I would rule out transfer, and I don't think it's an unethical solution, but I do think that it's not realistic for the next few decades at least. The main thing is to say that we refuse to give up on the Land of Israel and that we are willing to admit that these 2 million Arabs of Eretz Yisrael are here and they are our headache."

*Uri Elitzur, head of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bureau
Arutz 7, 18 November 2001*

"If Israel announces immediately that she recognizes an independent Palestinian state

and calls for its international recognition, she will serve her own interests and make it hard for Arafat and his friends. She will divest herself of responsibility for Palestine's economy, place in the international community's hands supervision of the maintenance of the law and international agreements, and the main thing—Israel will decide the essence of her relations with such a state according to the criterion of the hostility or cooperation it demonstrates toward her.

"Separation between the two national entities—to include a security fence and a buffer zone, the consolidation of Jewish settlement in blocs, detachment from the Palestinian population in the territories and control of the border crossings—would be more significant if it were carried out between two recognized states. The boundary between the two states will be a security border, the diplomatic borders will be determined in the future in the framework of a peace agreement between the two states."

*MK Haim Ramon (Labor)
Ma'ariv, 19 November 2001*

"The Six-Day War was forced upon us; however, the war's seventh day, which began on June 12, 1967, and has continued to this day, is the product of our choice. We enthusiastically chose to become a colonial society, ignoring international treaties, expropriating lands, transferring settlers from Israel to the occupied territories, engaging in theft and finding justification for all these activities. Passionately desiring to keep the occupied territories, we developed two judicial systems: one—progressive, liberal—in Israel; and the other—cruel, injurious—in the occupied territories. In effect, we established an Apartheid regime in the occupied territories immediately following their capture. That oppressive regime exists to this day.

"This is the harsh reality that is causing us to lose the moral base of our existence as a free, just society and to jeopardize Israel's long-range survival. Israel's security cannot be based only on the sword; it must rather be based on our principles of moral justice and on peace with our neighbors—those living next door and those living a little further away. An occupation regime undermines those principles of moral justice and prevents the attainment of peace. Thus, that regime endangers Israel's existence."

*Michael Ben-Yair,
Attorney General, 1993–96
Ha'Aretz, 3 March 2002*