

# Israel's "Greater Jerusalem" Engulfs the West Bank's Core\*

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*The following special report, published by the Foundation for Middle East Peace in the summer of 1997, was written by Jan de Jong, a researcher for the Palestine Geographic Research and Information Center in Jerusalem.*

In 1995, an Israeli interministerial committee finalized a new large - scale development plan for a region covering 40% of the West Bank and encompassing an equal percentage of its Palestinian residents. The "Metropolitan Jerusalem Plan" significantly enlarges the scale of previous Israeli planning efforts for the Jerusalem region. Promulgated by the government of Yitzhak Rabin two years after the signing of the Declaration of Principles with the PLO established a framework for resolving competing claims over the occupied territories, the plan contemplates little territorial compromise with the Palestinians across a large swath of the West Bank. If implemented, this plan will irrevocably compromise the last remaining prospects for the socioeconomic rehabilitation of the Pales-

tinian territories in the crucial core area of Jerusalem and preclude a meaningful degree of Palestinian sovereignty in Jerusalem and its environs.

Although not yet formally endorsed, the plan formulated guidelines that are followed in a series of local and regional land use schemes for the area. As an instructive guide to Israeli intentions, the plan offers Israel's comprehensive developmental vision of Jerusalem and its hinterland, enabling the alignment and adjustment of all separately designed proposals for housing, industries, roads, and tourist and recreational facilities.

The implementation of the Israeli plan will drastically alter the landscape and livelihoods of the West Bank's core area and its Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants. The scale of settlement building and road construction achieved during the past three decades within the unilaterally extended city limits of Jerusalem - most notably the settlement of more than 160,000 Israelis in annexed parts of the city - may be repeated in half that time and on a scale twice as large in terms of settler population and three times as large in terms of area.

As the metropolitan and Greater Jerusalem map illustrates, the central planning area has been designed by Israel as Metropolitan Jerusalem, where the Israeli and Palestinian populations are in rough parity. Metropolitan Jerusalem measures 950sq. km., only 30% of which is within pre-1967 Israel. A sense of the scale of Israel's planning effort can be noted by the inclusion of the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Bethlehem in the Israeli planning area.

The plan's target area is Greater Jerusalem - the inner metropolitan core around

Jerusalem beyond the Green Line. Greater Jerusalem comprises an area of 440sq. km., of which less than a quarter is within pre-1967 Israel. This area is characterized by a majority Palestinian population in its West Bank and East Jerusalem dimensions, where 300,000 Palestinians and 200,000 Israelis reside, but it is increasingly dominated territorially by rapidly growing Israeli settlements. Roughly one-quarter of the Israelis live in 20 settlements beyond the municipal borders of Jerusalem. The urban sprawl evident in the new Israeli neighborhoods and settlements built within the municipal boundary of East Jerusalem since 1967 provides a yardstick to measure Israel's intention to maintain its exclusive sovereign hold over Jerusalem. The projections of the metropolitan plan indicate a similar determination, but this time focused far beyond the city itself to the area around Jerusalem, strategically positioned between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

### **Jerusalem Before and After 1967**

The map of Jerusalem before and after 1967 shows the major rupture in the city's metropolitan status occasioned by Israeli decisions in the wake of the June 1967 war. Depicted in the map are both the Arab city scheme before 1967 and the city borders fixed by Israel.

The Kendall Town Scheme, commissioned by Jordan in 1966, envisioned the urgently needed consolidation of an Arab city in and around Jerusalem proper by linking all scattered Palestinian residential areas within one integrated planning area. Had it been implemented, the scheme - named for Henry Kendall, a city planner who had been working in

Palestine since the time of the British Mandate - would have created space for industrial and commercial areas and thousands of new dwellings. It also would have provided for the crucial conditions necessary to reinvigorate not only East Jerusalem, but also the surrounding rural Palestinian countryside.

The map also illustrates the direction taken by Israeli development in the city after 1967. Instead of consolidating East Jerusalem as one contiguous city and upgrading its indigenous housing and socioeconomical capacity as projected in the Kendall Town Scheme, Israel's extension and annexation of East Jerusalem excluded half of East Jerusalem's suburbs from Jerusalem, and its expropriation of land deprived Jerusalem's Palestinian citizens of approximately 30 sq. km. of territory capable of supporting at least 30,000 new dwellings, as well as vital commercial and industrial areas.

The 30,000 dwellings envisioned by the Kendall scheme have been built - for Israelis - in the years since 1967, along with another 20,000 in adjacent areas zoned in the Kendall plan for purpose such as agriculture or public institutions. In addition, 2.5 sq. km. of industrial space in five separate areas in Arab Jerusalem were similarly removed from Palestinian development. Four of these areas are today the sites of the Israeli settlements of Gilo-East, Atarot-South, Pisgat Ze'ev - Central, and Rekhes Shuafat-South.

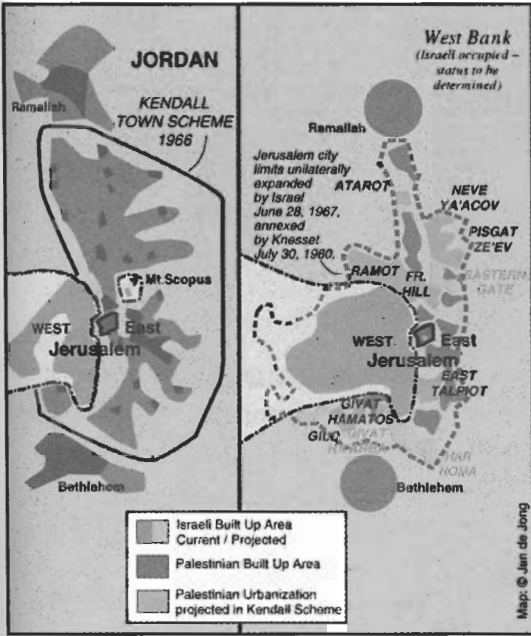
### **Metropolitan Jerusalem**

The map of Metropolitan and Greater Jerusalem illustrates the dramatic increase of Israeli settlement construction projected

Metropolitan and Greater  
Jerusalem - 1997



*Jerusalem  
Before and After 1967*



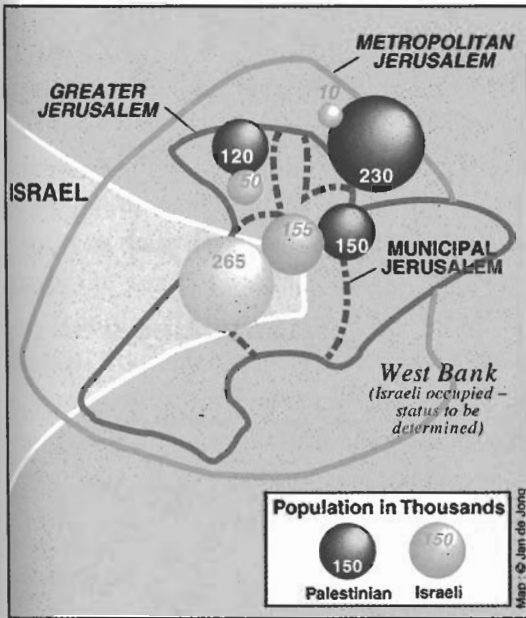
Map © Jan de Jong

by the latest metropolitan plan. The city - settlements established in East Jerusalem after 1967 serve as a springboard for large-scale expansion of similar Israeli suburbs in a second ring around all of East Jerusalem. These settlements are depicted on the map according to the metropolitan plan's recommendations in combination with the settlement's proposed local plan schemes.

Within the confines of Greater Jerusalem, the neighborhood schemes for the Palestinian localities are illustrated according to their future dwelling capacity. The illustration enables an illuminating comparison with proposed Israeli settlement expansion in Greater Jerusalem.

The distinction between planned Israeli settlement expansion and the projected living space for Palestinian locales (grey within the municipal city limits; grey and adjoining white in Greater and Metropolitan Jerusalem) is a stark feature of the metropolitan map.

*Population In and Around  
Jerusalem - 1993*



Map © Jan de Jong

Sources: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestinian Health Development Information Project, selected field check by PALGRIC 1993

**The Demographic Battle**

Demographic assessments for this contested area have always been a highly controversial subject, not the least because of unreliable statistical records, especially for the Palestinian sector. The demographic proportions shown on the map of population in and around Jerusalem, although based on careful inspection and weighing of available records, must be considered approximations, although in terms of pattern and proportion they are sound.

The area's population can be divided into three sections. The first concerns the population of municipal East Jerusalem within the borders established by Israel in 1967. The area of East Jerusalem contains

a slight Israeli majority. When West Jerusalem is factored in, the Israeli majority increases to approximately two-thirds of the total.

The current demographic composition of the West Bank areas of Greater Jerusalem (comprising three-quarters of all of Greater Jerusalem) reveals a solid Palestinian population majority. This majority becomes even more prominent in the outlying metropolitan sector, where populous Israeli settlements are relatively scarce.

Israeli planners soberly recognize that the high Palestinian birthrate will consolidate and even increase its distinct majority position in the metropolitan region of Jerusalem. This demographic reality will also be the case in most of Greater Jerusalem, if it is not countered by large-scale Israeli settlement expansion envisioned in the Metropolitan Jerusalem plan. The expansion effort is projected at key locations of the metropolitan plan--Giva't Ze'ev in the northwest, Ma'ale Adomim in the east, and Beitar and Efrat in the southwest. These settlements have enjoyed extraordinary growth rates, achieved mainly through immigration. Immigration has been facilitated by the highly improved accessibility of the outlying settlement made possible by construction of so called bypass roads around Palestinian locales.

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