

Two States for Two Peoples: A Vision Rapidly Eroding

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The Present Situation

Without fanfare, drum rolls, or extensive public and media attention, a new (some would say old) reality is taking root regarding Jewish settlement in the West Bank. One primary index is the impressive growth in the area's Jewish population. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, a total of 261,600 Jews lived in Jewish settlements in the West Bank in 2006. By the end of 2007, this number rose to 275,200. The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies reports a total of 184,300 Jews living today in Greater Jerusalem outside the Green Line. The annual growth in recent years (2001–2005) of the Israeli population in West Bank settlements was 5.5 percent. High birth rates among the local population and continued relocation by Israelis from sovereign Israeli territory to the settlements account for this extremely high rate. In comparison, the annual general growth rate of the overall Israeli population during these years was 1.8 percent.¹

The Jewish settlement movement in the territories has continued over four decades, since the end of the Six Day War. It has known highs and lows, changes in its numbers and its geographic disposition, but over the years it has consistently enjoyed direct or indirect government support. Sometimes support was intensive and broad; sometimes it was given to a lesser degree and through relatively low profile measures. Most of all, however, the key agents behind the settlement enterprise in the West Bank are the Yesha Council [the umbrella organization of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip] and associated

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groups. For years, the Yesha Council was the dominant body in shaping Jewish settlement in the territories – sometimes in conjunction with the government, sometimes not. Since the 2005 disengagement from Gaza and four settlements in northern Samaria, signs of internal rift have emerged among the community of settlement residents. The radical wing, made up primarily of young people, seeks to fulfill the vision of settling the Land of Israel at any price, including resistance to and circumvention of state institutions.² More established circles seek to continue the settlement enterprise through coordination and broad understandings – as much as possible – with the political-security establishment. These two camps are far from monolithic and encompass a range of opinions.

At first glance, this division within the right seemingly undermines the power of those who support continued settlement. In fact, however, it seems that both sides complement one another and are actually boosting the scale of construction in the settlements. The longstanding leadership continues with the construction endeavor based on formal agreements and permits, while more radical activists are unilaterally going out and creating new facts on the ground. In this way they further the construction enterprise that is based on official permits.

This phenomenon is creating more and more territorial facts with far reaching strategic implications. If it continues at its present pace, let alone broadens beyond today's projection, prospects will begin to collapse for realizing a political accord between Israel and the Palestinians in the spirit of President Bush's vision of two states for two peoples, which in recent years has also been embraced by Israeli governments. In late August the secretary-general of Peace Now underscored, "The Green Line has been almost totally blurred, and settlement blocs are swallowing up the isolated settlements. Israel is expanding the settlements and turning the longed-for separation from the Palestinians (through the establishment of a Palestinian state) into an impossible task."³

This essay examines the nature of Jewish settlement in recent years beyond the Green Line, the factors that shape its dimensions, and its political-strategic implications. The primary question is whether and to what degree the continuation of Jewish settlement in its current format is likely to foil the establishment of two states for two peoples.

Government Positions

From the Olmert government's perspective and based on official statements of key figures, the policy on construction in the territories comprises several basic elements. In the first place Israel has made it clear that it is not establishing new settlements. At the same time, it is not prepared to commit to refrain from expanding existing settlements. The government has confirmed that it initiates public construction based on defined criteria, which generally involves construction within the boundaries of the security fence, i.e., in the settlement blocs that are considered to be within the consensus of Israeli public opinion. Israeli officials generally claim that these criteria are compatible with the understandings previously reached with the Bush administration before the implementation of the disengagement plan and highlighted in President Bush's letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on April 14, 2004.⁴

Government spokespersons also stress that the process of expanded construction in the West Bank is a function of practical constraints: fortifying the Jewish presence in the large settlement blocs (in accordance with the understandings reached with the American administration) and meeting the needs of settlement residents based on natural growth. Informal statements have also acknowledged a hidden agenda: the need to appease right wing circles in the government, mainly Shas, so as to preserve coalition stability. At any rate, government spokespersons stress that Israel is careful not to build on land expropriated from Palestinians, and government authorities have tightened supervision over private construction.⁵

Government spokespersons insist that Israel is a law abiding state and is adamant in ensuring that its laws are enforced. Any settlement erected unlawfully will ultimately be dismantled. In practice, however, the government is in no hurry to implement this principle. Here and there it has flexed its muscle regarding the pinpoint handling of a particular illegal outpost. According to a statement on Kol Yisrael radio by Eitan Broshi, the defense minister's advisor for settlement affairs, 26 illegal outposts were

If the settlement enterprise continues to flourish, prospects will begin to collapse for realizing a political accord in the spirit of President Bush's vision of two states for two peoples.

established and home to 1,500 people. Of these outposts, three have been evacuated. Peace Now data charts 102 unauthorized outposts in the West Bank, 50 of them erected since March 2001 (the date specified by the Roadmap). During the year 125 buildings were added in illegal outposts.⁶

Government spokespersons stress that unlike the past, Israel is not acting secretly on this issue with the aim of circumventing external and internal parties. Israel operates in the West Bank with all its cards on the table. The settlements, stress government representatives, will not stand as obstacles to an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. The Israeli leadership has insisted that Israel is working honestly and in good faith to achieve a political solution with the Palestinian Authority. In the past, Israel perhaps engaged in dialogue with the Palestinian Authority primarily for the purpose of pacifying the American administration and the EU as well as left wing circles in Israel. The goal was to stage a peace process that was alive and well. Then it was possible to discern foot-dragging in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, since in reality there was no effort to advance negotiations toward concrete decisions.⁷

Today, government spokespersons urge, a different trend prevails. Israel now has placed on the negotiating table the core issues dividing Israel and the Palestinians: borders, refugees, and perhaps even the status of Jerusalem. Had Israel wanted the negotiations to drag on, it could have insisted that these issues be debated only when agreement was achieved on less complex questions. This is how previous Israeli governments tended to maneuver. Moreover, Israel is no longer demanding, as it used to, that the Palestinian Authority fight terror infrastructures as a condition for the continuation of negotiations.

According to the first stage of the Roadmap the Palestinians committed to implement reforms in government and hold elections for their political institutions, wage a fight against terror, and prepare a sustainable state infrastructure. In his speech at the Herzliya Conference on December 16, 2004, Prime Minister Sharon explained he had reached an understanding with President Bush: "In accordance with the Roadmap – any steps towards realizing the political outlook offered to the Palestinians first obligates them to take genuine action against terror until it is eliminated and stopped, advance real reforms and stop teaching hatred towards Israel." Had the government of Israel insisted on fulfillment of these terms, the Bush-led American administration

would have been hard pressed to contest this condition. Certainly much time would pass until a beginning of any concrete political process. The fact that Israel is not opting for this course implies it has no intentions of hindering the political process, and in fact is eager to bring it to its successful conclusion.⁸

Representatives of the Israeli government argue that the ultimate future of the settlements will be based on borders agreed upon by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israel also affirms that no unilateral action on the part of any of the sides may prejudice the outcome of negotiations. Israel has already proven its ability to disengage from territories it controlled (e.g., southern Lebanon) and to evacuate thousands of people (as in the 2005 disengagement plan) – even without compensation and not as part of an arrangement. All the more so would Israel be able to do this within the framework of a peace arrangement. At a press conference with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said:

While negotiating the final status issues, the borders and the territory of the future Palestinian state, we clearly showed, especially in the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip, that settlements were not obstacles ... when there was a need for Israel to withdraw and to send a message of peace, we dismantled the settlements... . Israel is going to implement its obligations according to the Road-map. There is no new construction of new settlements according to Israeli government policy. Israel stopped confiscating new land from Palestinians for purposes of building settlements or expanding settlements... . I can assure you that Israel has no hidden agenda. Our idea is to reach an understanding, to find a way to define the future borders of the Palestinian state while, of course, giving an answer to Israel's security needs and other issues that are part of our concern, including the need to end the conflict by defining the future Palestinian territory.⁹

Israel's positions with regard to the settlement project are also dictated by its sense of the endeavor as an expression of longstanding ideological norms in Israel; an awareness of its influence on the future determination of Israel's borders; and its being a potential solution for the socio-economic hardship of various population groups in Israel, since housing east of the Green Line is generally cheaper than to its west. On the whole, the current Israeli government stresses that in principle it does not view itself as opposed to the settlement endeavor; on the

contrary. Even so, it seeks to establish a more defined framework than in the past and draft clearer criteria for continued settlement activity.

At the same time, the positions of all Israeli governments concerning the settlement project have also been dictated by political considerations. The settlement enterprise is an expression of the aspirations, beliefs, and interests of powerful political-economic forces in Israel. These forces represent a wide range of decision-making loci, including in the Israeli government and the Knesset. The fact that the settlement enterprise continues and has even gained momentum, including under left-leaning governments not overly sympathetic to the cause, is indisputable proof of this.

Currently one of the government's major dilemmas concerning settlement stems from the fact that a certain portion of this project is being carried out by political bodies and by individuals acting in disagreement with and perhaps even contrary to parameters acceptable to the government. Specifically, there are reports of new illegal outposts, unauthorized expansion of existing settlements, takeover of land belonging to Palestinians, and violence against Palestinian residents. This situation confronts the government with difficult challenges and undermines its internal credibility – and vis-à-vis the American administration and the Palestinian Authority – as able to effectively control the country. The continuation of this phenomenon may well jeopardize the option of Israel separating from the Palestinians and the realization of the vision of two states for two peoples, particularly as long as there is no strong, highly authoritative government capable of taking and implementing a bold decision in settlement evacuation.

Despite the Israeli government's awareness of this phenomenon, it has broadcast, at least since the evacuation of Amona in February 2006, its desire not to destroy relations with the settlement population. The dominant trend among state authorities has thus been to arrive to the greatest degree possible at understandings with the settler leadership and to avoid as much as possible a physical confrontation over the scale of construction, its location, and its timetable. The assumption is that such understandings can prevent a serious physical conflict with the more radical groups opposed to any compromise on settlement. In justifying their flexible stance regarding the enforcement of the law, those responsible for the settlement enterprise argue that there is a need

to be patient. So long as the issue isn't on the agenda and no concrete decision is necessary, it is senseless to take radical actions. Aggressive activity would only increase tensions and, practically speaking, it is doubtful whether it would bring about the stated objectives, namely, permanent removal of illegal outposts that would not be rebuilt.¹⁰

This policy is also dictated by a sober recognition of the limitations of power in all matters connected with removing settlements. It is clear to the decision makers in Israel that the IDF is the only force in Israel capable of implementing the task of massive evacuation of settlements and their residents. No other organization in the country, including the police, has this ability. However, the prevailing atmosphere among senior IDF circles opposes assigning responsibility to the IDF for this task. According to various reports, senior echelons in the IDF, at least since Gabi Ashkenazi assumed the post of chief of staff, have expressed reservations over the policy of involving IDF soldiers in settlement evacuations.

Following the evacuation of Gush Katif and the removal of Amona, the prevailing assessment within the IDF stresses the increasing difficulty of including soldiers in direct evacuation activity – as distinguished from providing indirect support for that activity. This attitude stems from the sense that the IDF's massive involvement in the disengagement did not help its image as a body that exists above the country's political disputes. It may even have harmed the process of preparedness for military battles. According to the Winograd Commission:

The IDF fulfills a variety of secondary roles in Israel and is not only a fighting force. However this should not blur the fact that the first and primary role of the IDF is to be prepared for war in order to defend the country and its inhabitants and to achieve victory. Some of the flaws found in the IDF's actions in the Lebanon War were connected to the fact that alongside this central purpose, the IDF was also engaged for ongoing actions unconnected to real fighting. This is true for policing and security actions in Judea and Samaria, for some aspects of the war against terror, and for actions such as accompanying the disengagement in summer 2005.¹¹

Reservations over using the IDF to evacuate settlements were recently expressed by Maj. Gen. Elazar Stern, former head of the IDF

Human Resources Directorate, upon his retirement from army service: “The evacuation of settlers,” he said, “should not be imposed upon the IDF, but if such a task is imposed on us in the future we will carry it out fully. Even then [during implementation of the disengagement] I thought this was not an IDF mission and I still think so today.” This comment embodies the prevalent mood of the IDF senior command. Clearly these reservations will not be the factor that ultimately determines whether or not the IDF sends forces to evacuate settlements. The IDF is subordinate to the political level; if that echelon decides to evacuate settlements and imposes this task on the IDF, the IDF command must fulfill it, even if it is not inclined to do so. Presumably no senior IDF officer would convey potential resistance decisions of the political echelon.

Still, the IDF has proven in the past that beyond the formal parameters of subordination, it does not ordinarily act as a passive body that awaits political decisions. The IDF is a body that involves itself actively and intensively in strategic decisions reached by the political echelon. Thus the particular IDF mindset described above is regularly brought to the attention of members of the government. It certainly constitutes a compelling force, though its extent is difficult to estimate, in the (non) restriction of building in the territories and within the context of future decisions on the evacuation of settlements and their residents.¹²

After the harsh events that accompanied the evacuation of Gush Katif and Amona, and due to serious fears of even more violent responses in similar future events, it is apparent that the IDF senior command is loath to enter an extensive confrontation over one illegal outpost or another, especially since in some cases, groups have returned and restored evacuated outposts within a relatively short time.¹³

The American Administration

The administration possesses detailed information on developments in the settlements and all aspects of new construction, even on the most limited scale. Nonetheless, in recent years the American administration has essentially turned a blind eye to construction activity in the settlements. From time to time it has criticized events, demanded an explanation from Israel, and protested the violation of international law and steps that it often termed as tantamount to obstacles to peace. Hence, for example, on a recent visit to Israel Condoleezza Rice

contented herself with a mild statement about settlement activity: "What we need now are steps that enhance confidence between the parties, and anything that undermines confidence between the parties should be avoided." In practice, such statements generally remain at the rhetorical level and are not backed by practical steps that lend them any real substance.¹⁴

Though the American administration has assumed this posture for quite some time, it is especially poignant now that the Bush administration is in effect a lame duck government. A study of the administration's policy regarding settlement activity reported Rice's acknowledgment that in the eight years of the Bush administration "U.S. remonstrations to Israel about settlement construction go no further than 'pressing the case' – the long-standing pro forma effort to convey to Israel that the U.S. views settlements as problematic and that 'it is in Israel's interest to do everything that it can to promote an atmosphere of confidence.'"¹⁵

Apparently from Israel's point of view, the American administration is not imposing stringent constraints on the continuation of the present settlement policy. The Israeli government thus assumes that barring a dramatic development, this policy will continue at least until the end of the current administration's term. The administration's positions on the issue of the settlements, especially since the beginning of Olmert's term as prime minister, can be explained as follows:

1. Settlement activity generally proceeds along the lines of understandings with the American administration, as expressed for example in the letter of President Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in April 2004. So long as the main flow of settlement activity is confined within settlement blocs and west of the security fence, the administration has no interest in taking Israel to task and getting into a serious conflict over the issue. The administration is aware that settlement activity also trickles beyond those understandings, but at this stage, doesn't view this as a process of massive construction that could drastically change realities on the ground.¹⁶
2. The administration understands that construction in the settlements is approved by coalition considerations, something nearly unavoidable for every government in Israel. This is certainly true for Ehud Olmert's government, which was generally viewed by

many as unstable. The administration was likely to have assessed that real pressure on the government to cease construction would result in a coalition crisis, the toppling of the government, elections, and perhaps the rise of a much more hawkish leadership. Even with the election of Tzipi Livni as head of Kadima, it appears there are still fears in the administration that massive pressure on Israel over settlements would strengthen right wing circles in Israel, enabling them to form a government following a victory in general elections or via other coalition arrangements.

3. The fear of humiliation and loss of credibility: if pressure is exerted on Israel to halt construction in the settlements, the administration will have to intensify its threats if Israel doesn't comply with US demands. It is almost certain that the president himself would have to put his personal prestige on the line in order to spell out to Israel the great importance the administration attributes to the issue. Under such conditions the administration must assume that ultimately and against its will, construction in the settlements will continue; if this occurs, it will become evident that the administration has no maneuvering room or effective tools to force Israel to halt construction. Such developments are liable to harm the leverage of the administration and the president over the Israeli government.
4. Israel has taken upon itself to fulfill the basic principles agreed upon at the Annapolis summit: (1) to engage in vigorous, ongoing, and continuous negotiations with the Palestinian Authority; (2) to be willing to discuss core issues, with the exception perhaps of the particularly sensitive issue of Jerusalem; and (3) to make an effort to arrive at an agreement before the end of 2008. Under these circumstances, the administration presumably feels that some sort of agreement between the sides may be achieved. It is possible the administration shares the declaration made by the prime minister: "Never have we been so close to an Israeli-Palestinian agreement." If an agreement is reached, it is obvious that Israel will have to dismantle settlements that have been erected; and Israel has already proven it is capable of implementing moves for withdrawal and evacuating settlements. Therefore in the administration's view it is perhaps senseless to pressure Israel right now; it would be better to await the results of the dialogue: "The issue here is to try to get

back to a place that there is some confidence that Israel's settlement program is not an effort, in some way, to dictate or prejudice the final status issue and to prejudice the final status outcome."¹⁷

5. On the administration's agenda are issues far more critical to Israel-US relations, particularly Iran and the possibility of a military option, the issue of terror, and others. The settlements have been an issue for almost 40 years and can wait a few months until the picture become clearer vis-à-vis burning issues on the agenda, such as Iran. That being the case, it is not worthwhile as far as the administration is concerned to waste energy and resources on relatively marginal disputes that might sabotage the achievement of more urgent objectives.¹⁸

The Palestinian Authority

From the perspective of the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority is a fairly comfortable party for continuing the existing framework of Israel's settlement activity in the territories. The Palestinian Authority has made it clear it severely opposes the continuation of Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank. Nevertheless, the revolutionary zeal that once characterized the PA's activity during the term of Yasir Arafat and more than once led to heavy international pressure on Israel on the issue has almost completely faded away. PA protestations over settlement activity are feeble and in any case not effective. The agreement by the Palestinian president to frequent meetings with the prime minister, which have assumed a celebrity if not cordial character, cannot but help create the impression: the Palestinian Authority is, at least at this stage, choosing not to break down its dialogue with Israel, despite its awareness of processes evolving on the ground.

It is quite possible that the positions of the Palestinian Authority are dictated by its appraisal that it has no real option, and that its maneuvering room is quite narrow in its struggle against construction in the territories. The PA's status and authority as a governmental body are weak and unstable, given the fear of a Hamas takeover of the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority

The disengagement process proved that political-military and internal Israeli circumstances can bring about dramatic decisions on radical changes in the Jewish settlement map in the West Bank.

is undoubtedly well aware that Israel's massive actions against Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the West Bank are to a large extent the factor that neutralizes the danger it faces. It is almost certain that if Israel has to withdraw by virtue of an agreement, the threat to continued Palestinian Authority rule in the West Bank would increase.

It is possible, then, that the Palestinian Authority views the current government in Israel and its policy as the least undesirable option. It fears that intensifying the tone of protest as well as pressures on Israel might possibly destabilize the current government and lead to the establishment of a government reliant to an even greater degree on right wing elements, which is liable to change the existing West Bank settlement reality dramatically. A clear expression of the moderate character of the Palestinian Authority's attitude to the issue of the settlements was given recently by Nabil Abu Rudeina, Abu Mazen's spokesman, when he made the familiar but unimpressive declaration: "The settlements represent a true obstacle to peace," calling on Israel "to take responsibility for the faltering negotiations." Rudeina claimed: "We are committed to agreements; but Israel is interested in additional territory and in establishing further settlements." In this situation, when the main victim of the settlement phenomenon does not raise any real cry, it is obvious that the impetus for other parties to act, among them the EU, the Arab League, and others, has lessened.¹⁹

Conclusion

Three years after the implementation of the disengagement plan, which many hoped, would be followed by similar move in the West Bank, a settlement reality has become further entrenched. If the present reality continues along its existing lines, and certainly if it assumes wider scope, it will likely have far reaching implications for the option of an Israeli-Palestinian arrangement, primarily for the vision of two states for two peoples. The continued existence of this reality is conditional, among other things, on the following key factors:

1. Awareness on the part of the settlement leadership and their supporters of the limitations of force and the need to maintain as low a profile as possible regarding construction activity and settlement expansion, while making sure not to press the establishment too far. Just how much this leadership is able to guarantee this stance,

both among the established settlement population and among the more militant circles opposed to a pragmatic and compromising policy, is unclear.

2. The degree of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue over the main points on the agenda, and certainly on the issue of borders, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem. The prime minister declared: "We are closer than ever to an agreement. We still have a number of very fundamental disputes, but I believe we will be able to overcome these disputes within the set framework of time for negotiations, which is, we hope, by the end of the year." If this is indeed the case, it is obvious that achieving an accord will necessitate an essential change regarding current construction and settlement trends.²⁰
3. The character of the new government: it is very possible that a new government will adopt a different line of action on the issue of construction in the settlements. Nevertheless, the maneuvering room available to any government in Israel concerning the expansion or reduction of settlements is not wide. The most striking proof is that the process of settlement expansion has continued throughout the years, even when the leadership was composed mainly of dovish figures.
4. The US presidential elections, and the meteoric rise of Barack Obama: Obama has criticized the lack of more active involvement on the part of the administration in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. With Obama elected, it is possible he will decide on a policy of massive involvement in the fashioning and materializing of an Israeli-Palestinian accord. In this context a dramatic change could very well occur in the positions of the administration on the issue of settlements. This change would likely have far reaching implications for the settlement enterprise.²¹

In conclusion, if no dramatic changes occur in the forthcoming period and the existing policy on continued construction in the West Bank continues, it will have broad strategic implications beyond the internal political-social aspect. Currently being built on the ground is an array of settlements that will almost certainly receive increasing legitimacy as time passes, on an internal Israeli level and to a large extent on the international level. History has shown that the international community in general and the American administration in particular tend to come

to terms with “facts” created on the ground, even when begun to their original displeasure. Rice herself admitted that President Bush’s letter to Ariel Sharon in April 2004 recognized “acknowledged population realities” in the West Bank, although the American administration decried the settlement endeavor from its start, routinely declaring it as an obstacle to peace.²²

As opposed to what supporters of the settlement enterprise might hope for, this reality is not irreversible. The disengagement process explicitly proved that political-military and internal Israeli circumstances can bring about dramatic decisions on radical changes in the Jewish settlement map in the West Bank, and in this regard, massive evacuation of settlements and their residents. Even the negotiations underway with Syria take into account the need to evacuate the Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights. Though those settlements are home to a much smaller number of residents than in the West Bank, they enjoy a much wider national consensus, and their evacuation will probably be faced with a wide scope of opposition.

Still, a continuation of existing trends in the sphere of settlement will intensify the difficulties involved in changing it – if concrete change is necessary for the purpose of achieving an Israeli-Palestinian accord. The solidity of this settlements framework calls into serious question the realization of the vision of two states for two peoples that has accompanied the American administration and Israeli governments for several years.

Acknowledgment of the shrinking prospects for realizing the vision has permeated the ranks of various figures on the Israel side and on the Palestinian side: “I greatly support this solution [two states for two peoples],” says Sari Nusseibeh, the man who for years, along with Ami Ayalon, spearheaded the two-state vision. “But when you discover that it is no longer practical, you begin to think of alternatives. A chasm has opened between the situation on the ground and the peace process. This isn’t a problem of synchronization between negotiations and reality, but rather a marching in two totally opposite directions. People say that if we are interested in a two-state solution, both sides must hurry up. In practice, in Israel and in the occupied territories, we are getting further away from this solution.”²³

Notes

1. Data of the Central Bureau of Statistics. According to a Peace Now report, there are currently 250,000 Jewish residents of the West Bank, with approximately an additional 190,000 in Greater Jerusalem beyond the Green Line. Indeed, the area over the Green Line with the most extensive construction consists of the Jewish neighborhoods of East Jerusalem: "the level of government activity related to construction in East Jerusalem has increased dramatically. Tenders have been published for thousands of housing units...The number of tenders in East Jerusalem has increased by a factor of 38 in comparison to 2007," <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/he/peace.asp?pi=62&docid=1498>. According to Yesha Council data, about 300,000 Jews currently live in the West Bank. This year 15,000 residents were added to settlements there; see <http://www.myesha.org.il/>. Data of the Ministry of Interior's Population Administration also indicates that the population in the territories grew by 15,000 in the past year, Rotter.net, July 24, 2008. According to Peace Now, settlement construction officially occupies less than 3 percent of the area of the West Bank, but in fact the area that settlements command is more than 40 percent. Similar data can be found at <http://www.btselem.org/Hebrew/>.
2. For radicalization among settlers see Uri Glickman, "Daniella Weiss to Soldiers: 'Refuse to Evacuate Settlements,'" NRG, January 3, 2005. See also Yishai Hollander, "They're Burning Pictures of Olmert and Sharon," Galei Tzahal, May 15, 2006.
3. <http://glz.msn.co.il/NewsArticle.aspx?newsid=26572>.
4. "As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders, which should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities." Letter of President Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, April 14, 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-3.html>. His positions were approved by Congress.
5. Roi Nachmias, "Olmert to Abdullah: Israel is Not Expanding Settlements," Ynet, May 15, 2007. According to a Peace Now report, there was construction in settlements beyond the fence as well. Dror Etkes and Hagit Ofran, "Summary of 2006 in the Settlements – One Year into Olmert's Term," Peace Now website. See also Eliel Shahrar, "Olmert: We Won't Establish New Settlements," Galei Tzahal, November 19, 2007.
6. Peace Now website <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/he/peace>.

- asp?pi=62&docid=1498. See also Galei Tzahal, "Settlers Erase the Green Line" at <http://rotter.net/forum/scoops1/18668.shtml>.
7. On the extent of construction in the territories see Aluf Benn, "The Olmert Legacy in the Occupied Territories: Strengthening the Settlement Blocs," *INSS Insight* No. 65, July 27, 2008.
8. Sharon's speech at the Herzliya Conference, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Archive/Speeches/2004/12/speech161204.htm>. See also Knesset Library, Issues on the Agenda: The Roadmap; <http://www.knesset.gov.il/library/heb/docs/sif027.htm>
9. Joint press conference with FM Livni and US Secretary of State Rice, May 4, 2008, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/Foreign+Minister+Livni/Speeches+interviews/Joint%20press%20conference%20with%20FM%20Livni%20and%20Secy%20Rice%2004-May-2008>. See also Reuters, "Livni: 'Israel Must Evacuate More Settlements,'" March 13, 2008. See also Prime Minister Sharon's declaration at the Aqaba Summit stating that "no unilateral actions by any party can prejudice the outcome of our negotiations."
10. Interview with Eitan Broshi, Defense Minister's Advisor for Settlement Affairs, Kol Yisrael, August 20, 2008. On the Ministry of Defense policy on understandings with the settlers, see Guy Varon, "Barak and the Settlers Reach an Agreement on Voluntary Evacuation," Galei Tzahal, March 6, 2008.
11. Report of the Winograd Commission, <http://www.vaadatwino.org.il/>.
12. Yehoshua Breiner, "Major General Stern: 'The IDF Shouldn't Evacuate Settlements,'" Walla, July 17, 2008. See also Maj. Gen. Elazar Stern, "The IDF – An Army in a Jewish Democratic State," Education and Youth Corps website, June 2003; and Haggai Huberman, "When the Chief of Staff Refused an Order to Evacuate Settlers," *Hatzofeh*, July 18, 2008. On the effect of IDF involvement in the evacuation on recruits volunteering for combat units see Ilan Marciano, "The Chief of Staff: The Amona Outpost Will Be Evacuated Next Week," Ynet, January 24, 2008. On the decision to establish a parliamentary commission of inquiry, see Arik Bender, "Amona: Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the Evacuation," NRG, February 8, 2006. On conclusions of the commission of inquiry into Amona see Amit Segal, "The Amona Report: Olmert Misled Us," Galei Tzahal.
13. Amos Harel, "Assessment: Severe Violence if Outposts are Evacuated; The Security System: The Violence in Amona is Just 'Low Level,'" *Haaretz*, December 20, 2007. On the role of the police in evacuating settlers see "Minister Hanegbi: The IDF Must Evacuate Settlers," Ministry of Interior website, August 17, 2004. See also: "The Police in Amona Acted as in a War," July 10, 2008, Rotter.net; and Nadav Shragai, "The Deterrent Effect of Amona," *Haaretz*, May 27, 2008.
14. See Ethan Bronner, "Rice in Israel, Criticizes Surge in Settlement Construction," *New York Times*, August 27, 2008; Barak Ravid, "Rice: Settlement

Construction has 'Negative Effect' on Talks," *Haaretz*, June 15, 2008. See also Anat Tzuberi, "The U.S. Renews Pressure for Evacuating Outposts," *O'media*, October 31, 2007.

15. Geoffrey Aronson, "Where Will the Palestinian State be Established?" Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories, Volume 18, no. 4.
16. In mid-2008, one thousand buildings containing 2,600 housing units were under construction in the settlements. Fifty-five percent of construction, an increase of 1.8 times, is taking place in settlements east of the separation fence; Channel 10, NANA, "Peace Now Report: Significant Boost in Construction in the Settlements," August 26, 2008.
17. Condoleezza Rice to reporters on June 15, 2008, quoted in Aronson, *Israeli Settlement in the Territories*.
18. Rice: "Construction in Har Homa is not Helpful to Negotiations." The secretary of state met with Foreign Minister Livni in Brussels and criticized the plan to build approximately 300 housing units in the Har Homa neighborhood of East Jerusalem. She said, "construction like this...doesn't help to build confidence between the sides," *Ynet*, December 7, 2007.
19. Yasir Abd Rabo: "If Construction in the Settlements Continues, Negotiations will be Halted," *Rotter.net*, November 23, 2005; Nir Yahav: "Israel Drags its Feet in Negotiations," July 5, 2008.
20. Statements by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, July 20, 2008.
21. "Obama: Settlement Expansion Unhelpful, JTA, July 26, 2008. On the positions of Barack Obama and John McCain concerning the issue of settlements see Limor Simhony and Roni Bart, "John McCain and Barack Obama: The Middle East and Israel," *Strategic Assessment* 11, no. 1 (2008): 52-59.
22. Aronson: *Israeli Settlement in the Territories*.
23. Akiva Eldar, "No Room for Two: Sari Nusseibeh, the man who brought us (together with Ami Ayalon) 'The People's Voice' has despaired of the solution of two states for two peoples. It has no chance, he says; one country and that's it." *Haaretz*, August 16, 2008. See also Meron Benvenisti, "A Fruitless Discussion," *Haaretz*, August 21, 2008, and "The Moment of Truth: The Final Political Battle over the Two-State Principle," *Reut Institute*, August 2008.