

Time for Truth-time to change the lexicon
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“Forget the settlements. If the world truly wants to identify an obstacle to peace, it could do much worse than cast its eyes toward Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa”¹.

Thomas L. Friedman wrote in October 2000: "This war is sick but it has exposed some basic truths." In particular, Friedman wrote, "To think that the Palestinians are only **enraged about settlements is also fatuous nonsense.** Talk to the 15-year-olds. Their grievance is not just with Israeli settlements, but also with Israel. Most Palestinians simply do not accept that the Jews have any authentic right to be here."²

At the same time, President Obama is wrong to consider "settlements" as an obstacle to peace... In September 2005, Israel uprooted 25 Jewish communities from Gaza and Samaria. Gaza became Judenrein, in order to, ostensibly, advance peaceful coexistence... President Obama defines "settlements" as the root cause of Arab hostility toward the Jewish State. However, the Arab-Palestinian offensive against the Jewish State was not ignited by "settlements." In fact, "settlements" were established in Judea and Samaria after the wars of 1967, 1956 and 1948, after the sustained 1949-1967 campaign of Arab terrorism, after the 1964 establishment of the PLO, after the 1929 slaughter of the Hebron Jewish community and the 1929 expulsion of the Gaza Jewish community, after the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s slaughter of the Jewish community of Gush Etzion, etc³

Who and what are we discussing? Settlers are Israeli citizens choosing to live inside the **disputed territories** of Judea and Samaria (J&S). We no longer live in the other disputed territory known as Gaza. Israel, founded and recognized as a legal country in 1948, has engaged in multiple wars since its inception. Jordan illegally “annexed” J&S shortly after the creation of the Jewish state and held control of it until we defeated them during the 6-Day War in 1967. Since the 1967 Arab - Israel War, successive Israeli governments have promoted the settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israeli citizens. The initial movement was known as the Allon Plan, after its initiator Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon. The settlement blueprint was a minimalist one aimed at constructing a line of agricultural settlements along the new eastern border in the Jordan valley. This was part of a concept that assumed that civilian settlements contributed to the defensive posture of the country and that it was necessary to ensure defensible borders between Israel and Jordan. The Allon Plan also proposed the establishment of additional settlements around Jerusalem and in close proximity to the Green Line border as a means of ensuring future territorial changes in favor of Israel.⁴

It is important to remember that at that time the Jordan Valley was sparsely populated other than Ramallah and Jericho. One should also acknowledge that this territory was not part of any sovereign state and was initially labeled as “disputed” and legally continues to be so identified today. Accurate reading of UN 242, often cited as justification Israel is an

occupying nation, demonstrates just the contrary. Let' briefly review two parts of UN 242.

1.b. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

Part c. For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones.

Thus "Statements 1b and 2c of resolution 242 are clearly the responsibility of the Arab states that don't acknowledge Israel's existence to a large extent. These resolutions were not unilateral - Israel was to pull out on the condition that the Arab responsibilities were fulfilled."⁵

The Arabs to this day have not fulfilled their responsibilities.

I am addressing the nature of Israeli citizens living in disputed territories. One must be clear that even today these remain disputed areas and Israel has legal rights to this land, as do Arabs. It is worthwhile remembering Eugene V. Rostow, Professor of Law, who was the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Control Group responsible for preparing, proposing, and supervising the execution of the U. S. Government's plans for dealing with the Middle East crisis at this time in history. Rostow explained, "one of the things the international community said clearly in Resolution 242 was that this time Israel would not be required to withdraw without a prior agreement of peace".⁶

Peace continues to be elusive. This fact does not dismiss Israel's claim to lands in these disputed territories of Judea and Samaria. For historical perspective I remind you that following the Arab - Israel War of October 1973, a new religious nationalist movement, Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful"), was established with the objective of promoting settlement throughout the West Bank and Gaza.⁴ Settlement activity took off vigorously in the early 1980s when the planning regulations and restrictions were lifted to make it easier to create suburban communities as an alternative to agricultural and socially controlled small settlements. Under the slogan of "five minutes from Kfar Saba," Israelis were now able to build detached houses on large land plots which they received at a low cost and, at the same time, retain their places of employment in the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem metropolitan centers. During the 1980s and 1990s, the road and transportation infrastructure linking Israel to the West Bank was improved, thus enhancing the appeal of the region for many Israelis **who were attracted to settle there for economic rather than ideological or political reasons.**⁴

It is important to understand that the new villages, towns and now cities were offered and developed by ascending Israeli governments, i.e., they promoted development in these areas as they knew they were disputed and according to international law Israel had rights to these properties.

From after the 1967 war until the present time the legal battles have raged. So much deception and intentional misrepresentation of data, history, social and cultural distortions have plagued this part of the Middle East. If you use International law as your basis for supporting your argument, proper interpretation of these laws clearly support Israel's right to some of this still disputed land.

The concept of "ownership" deserves a separate post and I'll do so soon. If you use biblical resources as your basis of support the clear archeological evidence falls again with Israel. This does not mean to say or imply that Arab peoples also have no historical claims to parts of this area-they do. It is accurate and fair to say that both Jews and Arabs have inhabited these areas for hundreds and hundreds of years. With respect to the concept of state or national sovereignty it would be useful to settle on the vehicle one uses to make such declarations.

This notion of a state is clearly a human idea and has evolved over centuries. The current status of this concept requires application of agreed upon international rules. When addressing property rights and/or borders this assumes and requires nation states status-there is no sovereign state called Palestine-it is only a term used to define a geographic area. Furthermore, the land under question belongs to no current sovereign state and has been properly labeled "disputed territory". For political purposes this essential fact has been deliberately distorted over time. So many trees have died in order that pundits expound volumes on this alone. It is in the best interest of groups of people to continue using this same argument-the end game is power, money, control and employment.

The use of the "settlement issue" is clearly driven by political reasons and ultimately care about populations of people really do not matter-lip service can and is given to "the people" but the outcome is contrary to the words. The terms "settlements and settlers" have negative connotations. The words have a stigma attached to them and have been repeated time and again for such purposes. They are meant to inflame and incite so that the readers cannot "see past" the words. Fact is these terms establish the mind set stage for all as a story is read; a segment is viewed or listened to in the media. How many times have I heard many of my academic colleagues use the terms for purposes of demeaning and invalidating these people? Instead of listening one has been programmed to hear the message in a manner consistent with what one's negative view is of these good people. Next time you hear a tag line wait for the lead statement. Yet these individuals serve in the IDF at a disproportionate rate from Israeli proper population. They promote the national Israeli identity and work diligently for their families. Ask our corporations who our best, most efficient and effective workers are! All of this occurs and the pity is the greater message(s) is (are) lost as people are programmed to listen and hear incorrectly. You want to contribute socially to Israel? You do not have to march, protest or yell out on side walks-simply use correct language from this moment forward-Israeli citizens live in the disputed territories.

In an ongoing "good grief" moments the following data points indicate how inane certain arguments are with respect to Judea and Samaria.

- Settlements make up less than 2 percent of the West Bank.

- Settlements do not block the eventual establishment of a contiguous Palestinian entity.
- The Settlements are consistent with Resolution 242
- Settlements are consistent with the Geneva Conventions

Yes, each of the preceding points have been, are currently and I am sure in the future will be refuted by our antagonists. You are entitled to your opinions and when you write me argue from clarity rather than emotion.

Why all of this information if my main point is we should once and for all stop using the terms of settlements and settlers? Citizens from Israel **have settled** in towns and cities in the disputed territories. If one authentically wants resolution to this problem, then use the correct terms. To continue using politically charged terminology signals to the entire international community you are not serious about change. I have argued that Israeli citizens were encouraged by their government to inhabit land that legally remains in limbo and for all intended purposes is disputed territory according to all human designed laws. These Israelis are by definition citizens of Israel and ceased being “settlers” long ago. I have always found it curious that these terms are never used with any of the Arab peoples who also settled in the area and/or have recently moved into the disputed territories. I encourage the leaders, media and academic types to begin addressing these people in the proper dignified manner they deserve. In another “good grief” moment I have had writers tell me they agree with me but cannot get their pieces published unless they use these archaic terms. So our enemies are served and nothing changes. The beginning of a solution to this problem is to admit the truth, insist upon it being used every day-otherwise you reinforce inaccurate information and reward their political gamesmanship. You my dear friends and colleagues remain part of the problem-please do not go smugly into the night!

End Notes

1. Obstacle to Peace-Op-Ed

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1251804521506&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> 9-9-09.

2. Jeffrey Helmreich, **Diplomatic and Legal Aspects of the Settlement Issue**, *Vol. 2*, No. 16 19 January 2003

3. Ettinger, Yoram, “But, Settlements Obstruct Peace”, YNET, 6-14-09

4. Israeli Settlements, Newman, David. "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanisation: Reflections on Thirty Years of Jewish Settlement in the West Bank." *Israel Affairs* 3, no. 1(1996): 61 - 85.

5. United Nations-Model Organization?

6. Boris Shusteff (FREEMAN CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES),” The Truth Of 242” <http://middleeastfacts.com/Articles/the-truth-of-242.php>