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## About That Settlement Freeze

MICHAEL J. TOTTEN - 09.15.2010 - 8:32 AM

Israeli historian Yaacov Lozowick [is in favor of continuing the settlement freeze](#) that's set to expire later this month — as long as the freeze is only in West Bank settlements that are actually up for discussion and that might plausibly be dismantled in a future peace deal with Palestinians. "Not in Modi'in Illit," he said, referring to an ultra-Orthodox settlement immediately adjacent the Green Line, "which will remain in Israel no matter what, and certainly not in any part of Jerusalem."

Israel annexed all of Jerusalem decades ago. And while very few Jews move to and build in Arab neighborhoods, enormous Jewish neighborhoods have been constructed on land that used to be empty. There is no chance these places will ever be part of a Palestinian state unless the Palestinians first conquer Israel. It doesn't matter if Israelis should or should not have built in these areas. The fact is that they did. Hundreds of thousands of people live there today.

The same goes for some of the settlements near the Green Line, such as those in Gush Etzion. They have not been formally annexed to Israel like Jerusalem has, but because they can be annexed without disrupting or fatally compromising a Palestinian state in the future, they will be. Last year, after Jimmy Carter visited the Gush Etzion settlement of Neve Daniel, he said, "This particular settlement area is not one that I can envision ever being abandoned or changed over into Palestinian territory. This is part of settlements close to the 1967 line that I think will be here forever."

Imposing a building freeze in areas that will never be Palestinian is actually a little bit dangerous. It puts these places on the table, so to speak, and tells the Palestinians they stand a chance of acquiring them as parts of their own state down the road if only enough pressure can be brought to bear.

But it isn't going to happen. Israel is no more likely to uproot all these people than the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Hebron will voluntarily transfer themselves to Jordan. The only way to permanently relocate that many people in the Middle East is with an invasion or a ruthless campaign of mass murder.

Christopher Hitchens once wrote that "terrorism is the tactic of demanding the impossible, and demanding it at gunpoint." The Palestinians need to understand that conquering areas where hundreds of thousands of Jews live is impossible. Many among them will continue insisting on it at gunpoint regardless, but at least they won't be inadvertently egged on by the White House.

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