

Secure Judea and Samaria now

written by David M. Weinberg | 02.11.2025

Reading the international press, and reading much of the overwhelmingly left-wing Israeli press, you inevitably get the impression that the threats to stability in Judea and Samaria stem from settler violence and settlement housing starts.

You would not know about the real sources of instability - which are sharply escalating Palestinian terrorism, a wild rash of Palestinian arson attacks, and surging illegal Palestinian construction in zones of strategic importance to Israel.

Israel must get a handle on these matters by acting forcefully against the terrorism and wildcat building, and it must buttress its long-term claim on Judea and Samaria by building strategically in accelerated fashion, especially in the Jerusalem envelope and Jordan Valley.

Everybody knows that Nablus and Jenin (and Tulkarem and Qalqilya and more) have become dens of hard-core, Iranian-supplied terrorist cells. The threat of terrorist assault from the western Samaria seam line into central Israel is concrete too, and already there have been scattered shootings over and through the security barrier into the Bat Hefer and Mount Gilboa areas.

The discharge of jailed terrorists into Judea and Samaria, part of the hostage release deal with Hamas, already is adding fuel to this fire.

So much for the Oslo Accords promise of a demilitarized and deradicalized Palestinian autonomous entity.

(And if you think that Indonesian and Azeri troops, alongside “neutral” Palestinian Authority administrators, and American, Egyptian, and European monitors sitting in an air-conditioned control center in Kiryat Gat are going to do any better in demilitarizing and deradicalizing Palestinians in Gaza - you’re apparently using hallucinatory drugs!)

Additionally, there are at least 90,000 defiantly built Palestinian homes and shanty towns that have cropped up illegally in Area C of the West Bank in recent years, almost all of which can be considered strategic threats to Israel.

These structures actively are changing the map of Area C, purposefully placing

Palestinians in areas that never before had an Arab presence, dividing the settlement blocs, encroaching on access routes (forcing the Israeli government to pave bypass roads to the bypass roads, which leads to accusations of land expropriation, etc.) – all in an attempt to prevent any future logical division of the territory into neighboring polities (for those who still believe in the wisdom of this).

In the seamline buffer zone (meaning adjacent to the security barrier that Israel constructed mostly along the Green Line over three decades) stretching from the northern tip of the Jordan Valley to Ein Gedi in the south, Palestinians and their European backers have built more than 17,000 illegal structures within a one-kilometer radius of security and border barriers.

In the Jerusalem envelope, Palestinians have grabbed over 2,600 dunam of land, and over the past decade built 1,500 unauthorized buildings in Shuafat and Kafr Akab alone, some 20 stories tall. (These were built without license and supervised engineering standards. God help residents of these buildings if an earthquake hits Jerusalem.)

And every single day, Palestinians and their extreme left-wing Israeli anarchist allies torch the grazing grounds of cattle in the central Binyamin and Samaria highlands where pioneering Israelis have established a string of some 130 ranches (in Hebrew: *havot*); or as Western media and hostile NGOs call them, “wildcat settler outposts.”

The grass and brush that grows in the vast and mostly unsettled parts of Binyamin and Samaria are “natural gold” for feeding these herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Burning the pastures is outright warfare, designed to firebomb Jewish “settler sheep” off the land and drive settlers from the area.

This is not too different from the devastation caused by thousands of incendiary balloons and kites sent over the Gaza border by Hamas since 2018, firebombs that destroyed tens of thousands of acres of nature reserves and farmland in southern Israel. (Experts say it will take years to rehabilitate the burned farm fields in southern Israel.)

SINCE DECLARATION of Israeli sovereignty over Judea and Samaria is not in the cards anytime soon, and alone this anyway won’t do much to improve the situation, what needs to be done now?

First, IDF Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth needs more troops, resources, and support for the aggressive counter-terrorist strategy he has adopted. This involves near-nightly interdiction raids into terrorist hideouts in large cities with brigade-level power and heavy engineering and air strike support. It also increasingly involves targeted assassinations (as opposed to arrests or re-arrests) of key terrorist operatives.

Second, the government needs to encourage young families to move into existing and expanded Judea and Samaria cities and towns by building homes rapidly and cheaply. Try caravans and high-rise buildings. Alas, it has simply become too expensive to move/live in Ariel, Gush Etzion, Maale Adumim, and other localities from which there is easy access to Gush Dan and Jerusalem work centers.

In this regard, the government must continue to cut the red tape that encumbers more massive settlement in Judea and Samaria. While it is considered politically incorrect these days to credit Minister Betzalel Smotrich with anything, here he can be saluted. He has brought about the legalization or establishment of 50 towns involving 45,000 potential building starts, invested NIS 7 billion in roads (that serve Israelis and Palestinians), secured the placement of dozens of towers for cellphone and other communications, and processed through legal approvals of 30,000 dunams as state land.

He now needs to initiate the planning of new strategic arteries like Highway 80 which would run from Arad in the Negev to Mishor Adumim; an international airport in the Horkania Valley between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea; and a major rail route through the Jordan Valley.

Third, the government should take over responsibility for key fields of governance in Areas B and C that long have been criminally neglected by the Palestinian Authority, like sewage treatment and management of waste dumps.

Fourth and supremely important, Israel must take control of Arab schools and classrooms in the broad Jerusalem envelope, where the teaching of hostile-towards-Israel materials is rampant. A recent report by the Ministry of Education found that dozens of eastern Jerusalem schools not only use PA textbooks but also teach physics through calculations of slingshot velocity and distance against Israeli troops, and teach literature through the genocidal poetry of Egyptian Islamist ideologues.

SO I ASK: As Israel heads into an election year, which of the candidates for prime minister is truly going to build in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, and who is going to bury the building in years more of sterile peace processing and doomed attempts to achieve “international consensus”? Who can most be trusted to capitalize on the opportunities before Israel for de facto advancement of long-term diplomatic and security control of Judea and Samaria?

Is Binyamin Netanyahu finally serious about significant building in the E-1 quadrant (something that is critical for Jerusalem’s growth and security) or is he just pumping out pre-election promises that will fizzle in the face of global diplomatic pressures and International Criminal Court threats?

Would his challengers Benny Gantz, Gadi Eisencott, Naftali Bennett, and Yair Lapid dare to finally build in E-1 and the settlement blocks, as they have claimed in the past? Or do they head a political groupings so riven with contradictions (including affiliation with parts of the hard Left) that would prevent movement in any coherent direction?

Could Yisrael Beytenu czar Avigdor Liberman be trusted to stand for building or deciding anything other than stoking his own ego and purveying a cynical hate-fear agenda, and then selfishly forcing Israel into yet another election campaign?

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