

## Summary Talking Points on Israel-US “Arrangement” on Settlement Activity September 2009

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### **Bottom Line**

- The proposed arrangement would not fulfil either of the two main reasons for a freeze (setting aside the illegality of settlement activity, etc.):
  1. *Salvaging the credibility of the peace process:* Any endorsement or acceptance of such a flawed arrangement will only undercut the credibility of the process and increase Palestinian, Arab and internal cynicism. Such partial “freeze” and loophole-ridden arrangements have been tried in the past—and have repeatedly *failed*.
  2. *Mitigating physical harm/prejudice to the two-state solution:* Even if (a big if!) Israel were to abide by the arrangement (as flawed as it is) until the end of 2011, **there would be no significant impact on the ground with respect to housing construction until 2012 (and no impact on any other kind of construction)!** In essence, it is little more than the promise of a partial “freeze”, and based on our past experiences with Netanyahu (Wye Memo, etc.), there is little reason to believe he would live up to his obligations this time.

### **Main Problems**

- The #1 problem with this proposed arrangement is the **exclusion of settlements in and around East Jerusalem**. → It makes no more sense to exclude Jerusalem from a settlement freeze than it does to exclude it from PS negotiations. If you reject the latter (as the U.S. does), then you must also reject the former:
  - East Jerusalem settlements accounts for about **one-fourth** of settlement housing construction (starts and completions). Moreover, EJ settlements account for about 37% of settlement housing units sold (2001-2007), 42% of the units currently being marketed by the GOI, and 40% of the total settler pop.
  - This arrangement would do nothing to prevent the **ongoing expulsions/demolitions** of Pals from EJ in connection with settlement activity, and actually **emboldens the 2000 violent and extremist settlers** now living in heavily populated Pal areas (*e.g.*, Muslim Qtr, Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan, etc.), as demonstrated by this past weekend’s violent provocations extremist settlers at the Haram.
- The arrangement **excludes the two areas with the most intensive settlement activity**. In addition to Jerusalem, the proposed arrangement also exempts some 2,500 units that are “in the pipeline”, most of which are in the big settlement ‘blocs’. In other words, Israel would be required to “freeze” only those settlements it *no longer wants*, including the failed settlements it was prepared to evacuate unilaterally in the “convergence” plan.
- The arrangement **covers only some aspects of one component of settlement activity**—housing construction.

- Even if housing starts are phased to zero, there would be **no significant impact on the ground on housing completions** (which is conveniently missing from the U.S. chart). Moreover, it **ignores construction of infrastructure** (roads, fences, sewage, etc.) the Wall, as well as public, commercial, industrial and agricultural facilities.
- The settler population would continue to grow at substantially disproportionate rates. *In addition* to the 2,500 units “in the pipeline”, which would add 10,000-12,500 new settlers over the next two years, there are **another 1,400 units that are currently being marketed in the West Bank (excluding EJ)**, which would bring an additional 5,600-7,000 new settlers.
- The arrangement also ignores all of the other aspects of settlement activity – namely, planning and financing/incentives.
- The arrangement would only be **temporary**. Hence, by mid-2010, Israel would **likely resume construction at the previous (or even accelerated) pace**.