

PART TWO

Facts on the Ground

Chapter 4

Within the Confines of Palestine

Two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets.

—Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil* (1845)

Those analysts who seek to explain the Arab-Israel conflict as an out and out political struggle have it only half right. We would do better to see it as the geopolitics of Palestine.

Territorial compromise, as its name suggests, addresses the territorial dimension of ethnic conflict. The fate of partition-based constructs depends upon whether negotiators are as skilled at mapmaking as they are resolute decision makers. And whether they give geographic and demographic realities due weight when tabling their respective nationalist aspirations and political demands.

Among these landscape realities: the nature and extent of the land to be divided, the different ethnic subpopulations resident on the land and their dispersal patterns, the natural resources located within a given territory and their allocation; also, what to do about particularly sensitive religious or historical sites. Of these intruding variables, certainly the most difficult for partitionists to solve is the demographic one. Here the contrast between 1993 Czechoslovakia and Palestine 2000, for example, could not be sharper.

The Czech and Slovak “gentlemen’s partition” was made possible not because they are any more civilized than other peoples but only because a clean line could be satisfactorily drawn, which left ethnic Czechs only 1 percent of the population in the Slovak Republic, while Slovaks comprise no more than 3 percent of those residing in the Czech Republic.

In most cases where national conflicts are thought to have been “solved” through the medium of partition, members of the rival nationalist group-

ings are hopelessly interspersed, thus making a real parting of the ways difficult if not impossible without widespread internecine warfare, forced expulsion, and “ethnic cleansing.” Consequently, the partitioning of Thrace between Greece and Turkey (1923), India (1947), Palestine (1948), and Bosnia, to name but a few, not only involved significant loss of life at the time but left a legacy of hatred among those refugees uprooted and displaced. The historical record of such territorial separations is, to be sure, at best mixed. However warranted in the longer run, at the time they took place their short-term costs were appalling and seemed prohibitive.

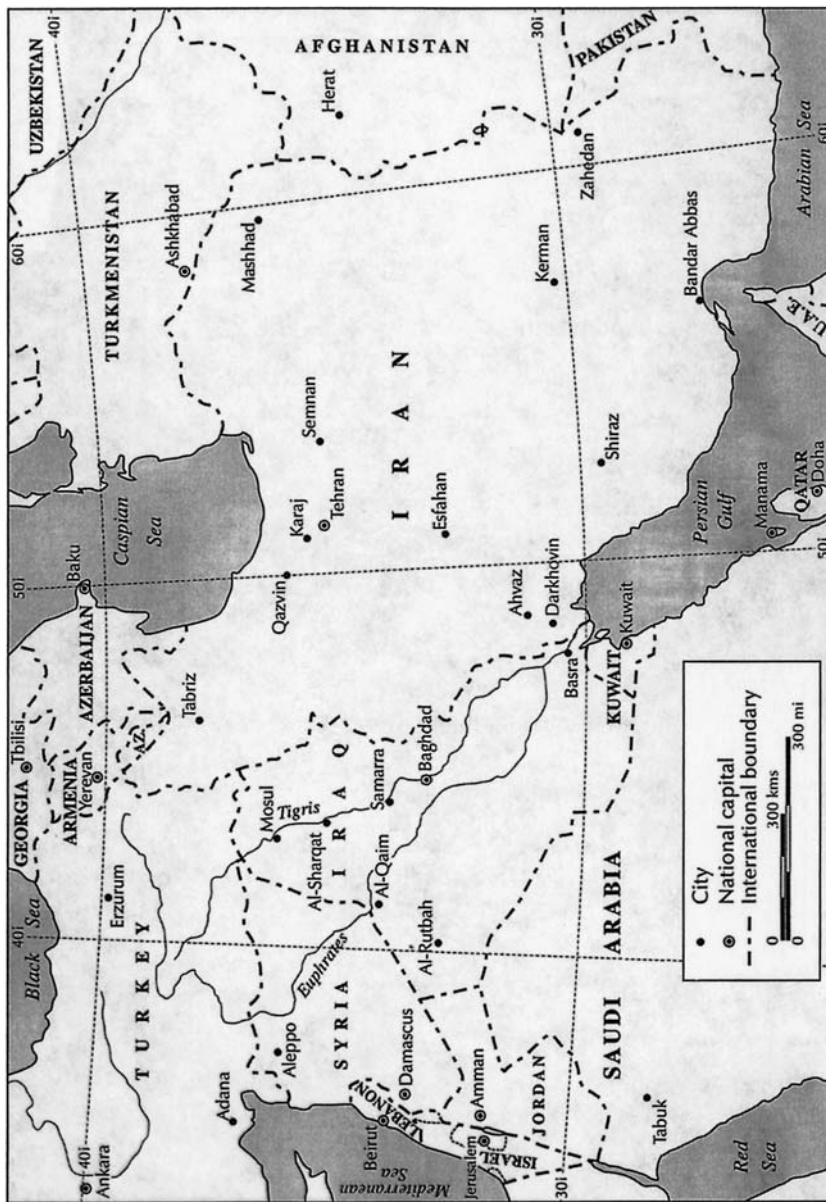
At one end there are large-sized minorities, ethnic pockets, and hostage communities left behind the jagged dividing lines. At the other extreme, large-scale population transfers. These poor demographic solutions ordinarily suffice to vitiate partition’s prospects. However, if maximum separation is designated the supreme objective, then an orderly and agreed population exchange, while difficult to achieve and even more difficult to carry out, cannot not be excluded from consideration.

Any Middle East partition plan is going to be unbelievably hard to carry out, even with mutual consent, if only because demography is terribly mixed up with geography, just as the Jewish and Palestinian communities are themselves so hopelessly thrown together. But also because living together on the land has not meant growing together. Still, it should be possible to avoid the scale of inhumanity and violence typically associated with partitioning if human, political, and geographic constraints are given full prior consideration.

Our feasibility study of partition thus shifts from partitioning in the abstract to (a) surveying physical characteristics of the area lying between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, and to (b) situating the Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations.

The Physical Landscape

Like Gaul under the Romans, geographic, historic, demographic Palestine divides into three parts moving from west to east: Israel, the West Bank (cis-Jordania), and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (trans-Jordania). The total land area of Israel in its pre-1967 borders is 20,330 square kilometers (7,847 square miles). If we include the narrow Gaza Strip, and the rest of the west bank up to the Jordan River annexed in 1950 by the Hashemites but then forfeited by them in 1967, plus the entire east bank originally within the British Mandate, the total figure is still only 115,214 square kilometers (44,472 square miles)—roughly the size of Missouri.



6. The Middle East Regional Map

TABLE 4.1. Land Area

	Israel	Gaza Strip	West Bank	Jordan	Total
Square kilometers	20,330	360	5,640	88,884	115,214
Square miles	7,847	139	2,177	34,309	44,472

A second distinguishing physical attribute: this overall territorial unit encompasses regions of varying altitude and terrain, beginning with a relatively flat coastal plain along the Mediterranean (including all of the Gaza Strip), then rising to the rugged hills in the central highlands of western Palestine, including the east-west ranges of the lower and upper Galilee and the hills of Judea and Samaria in the West Bank. In the south the rolling hills of the northern Negev give way to the barren desert hills and mountains north of the Red Sea. Proceeding further eastward, elevation drops precipitously as we enter the Great Rift Valley (the Dead Sea region being the lowest place on earth not entirely covered by water). Still further eastward, the valley gives way to the eastern and southeastern desert plateau that comprises most of Jordan's territory.

The implication in qualitative terms is that much of this territory is arid desert: large parts of southern and eastern Jordan, Israel's Negev region, and the Gaza Strip. The latter, sometimes referred to derisively by Palestinian critics as "Arafat's kingdom by the sea," is 55 percent or more barren coastal sand and dunes. Western Palestine, on the other hand, although comparatively small in size, nevertheless has significantly higher percentages of arable land suitable for agriculture. Which makes it all the more desired economically, and not only politically or militarily. Much of the coastal strip is highly suitable for farming, as are the valleys of the Galilee, both sides of the Jordan River and the western highlands of Jordan.

The amount of arable land in the region has increased with the introduction of modern farming and irrigation techniques. Israel irrigates approximately 2,140 square kilometers (1,337 square miles) and Jordan some 570 square kilometers (356 square miles), with about 115 square kilometers (71 square miles) of land under irrigation in the Gaza Strip. In short, while farmland does exist to differing extents in Israel, the territories, and Jordan, water is nonetheless a precious commodity. Its control and equitable distribution constitute an acutely sensitive problem.

Topographic realities in western Palestine in general have always had a direct and invariably negative effect on conflict resolution. Especially those peace initiatives like the 1937 Peel plan and the 1947 UN resolution that were motivated by the fair share partitionist principle. First, Pales-

tine's diminutive size, especially when restricted to the area west of the Jordan; second, the disparities between coastal, mountainous, and desert regions; third, the notable paucity of natural resources.

These geographic determinants have had a major share throughout modern history in making the Arab-Jewish political contest for mastery over Palestine at once so restrictive, so disparate, and hence so ruthless and uncompromising. Nor will it be much different in the future. Even with war making replaced by "good faith" negotiation.

Quite literally, and in the most physical sense of the word, there is precious little room for compromise. Unlike other forms of "collective goods," there is only so much land and water to go around. This, even before making allowances for future population growth and economic expansion on the part of both the Israeli and the Palestinian communities.

The most basic physical attributes of geographic Palestine, in and of themselves, cannot help but have far-reaching implications for the final status talks. How much real estate? Which land? Where? Of what fecundity and arability? Salinity? Strategic value or vulnerability? Indeed, territorial possession has long been at the very core of the dispute, just as it must now dominate the search for a solution.

The Human Landscape

The population within the original borders of the Palestine Mandate today numbers close to 12 million people. Of these, approximately 7.5 million are Arab (overwhelmingly Palestinian) and some 5 million, Israeli Jews. Focusing exclusively on western Palestine (Israel and the territories), the ratio is now approximately 5 million Jews to 3.2 million Arabs (again, mostly Palestinians). Jews and Palestinian Arabs in western Palestine live in the closest proximity to each other. Either in "mixed" cities like Acre, Haifa, Hebron, Jerusalem, Lod, Nazareth, and Ramle or in adjacent villages and communities throughout the Galilee, the Wadi Ara region, the Little Triangle, and parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In addition, a sizable Palestinian Arab population lives to the east of the Jordan River. Ethnic Palestinians, for the most part refugees from the 1948 or 1967 fighting and their offspring, constitute well over half of the total Jordanian population. Estimates range anywhere from 50 to 65 and even 70–75 percent. But all such figures remain unconfirmed, given the understandable absence for many years now of an official Jordanian population census or questionnaire on this most sensitive question of perceived national identity and hence political allegiance.

Statistics aside, our point is that the politics of demography are neither simple nor straightforward. In reality, the political lineup is not dichotomous (bad enough in itself) but rather triangular, thereby involving three geographic entities—"Israel," "the territories" or "the Palestine Authority," and "Jordan." Also three national entities: "Jews," "Palestinian Arabs," and "Jordanians" (citizens of Jordan of Bedouin or native stock together with ethnic Palestinians identifying with the Jordanian state in national and not just civil terms). Paradoxically, there are no Jews permanently resident in Jordan and no "Jordanians" in Israel or the territories; there are, however, Jews in the territories and Palestinians in Israel, the territories, and Jordan.

The rationale behind partition-based constructs is precisely that: to divide heterogeneous units—plural societies and multinational states—into smaller but also more homogeneous ones. And in this way, with one fell stroke, to promote three political values esteemed in the present era: social order, national self-determination, and political legitimacy.¹

What necessarily derives from this is that as a policy partition must rest not only upon collective perceptions of national distinctiveness but equally firmly on hard demographic realities. Migratory and immigration flows, much like patterns of agriculture, land settlement, and urbanization in both eastern and western Palestine over the past century tended to reflect a combination of practical Zionism (creating facts on the ground) and Palestinian Arab social values.

All five processes profoundly transformed the country's traditional landscape. Yet they were entirely unplanned and unrationalized in terms of the country as a whole, its needs or absorptive capacity. Nor did they reflect demographic realities nearly so much as political agendas. Transjordan's earlier detachment from Palestine and creation as a separate political entity served British interests. The struggle for Jewish statehood and improved borders in the event of an early partition of Palestine largely dictated Zionist settlement policy both before and after independence in 1948. So, too, thereafter did maintaining rather than eliminating the refugee camps serve Arab and Palestinian leaders. Similarly, post-1948 West Bank and Gaza Strip frontiers were improvised, decided by war, and inherently illogical, scarring the countryside with barbed wire while splitting families and even villages.

Superimposing Land and People

It is because of this flawed legacy that present demographic realities make a mockery of the existing demarcation lines between the three direct co-

partitionists (at this stage one autonomous entity and two states), with the mingling and intermix of the two peoples foremost. As proof, the Palestinian people find themselves dispersed between three different political units. Some 2.5 million live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,² close to 1 million in Israel, and anywhere from 2 to 3 million in Jordan. And these numbers do not include the sizable Palestinian diaspora now scattered throughout the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

Which already leads to one or two operative conclusions. Any territorial compromise based on existing borders means that the majority of Palestinians now living within the original mandate borders will not reside inside the proposed Palestinian state—even were that state to include the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. Which means as well that partition will not magically convert Israel into a truly Jewish and homogeneous nation-state. A full 17 percent of the Israeli population (nearly one out of five citizens, or close to one-fifth) will still be Palestinian Arabs.

At the district level Israel's Palestinian Arabs tend to concentrate in a few areas where they form a majority or near majority. Large parts of the northern Galilee, Wadi Ara, the Little Triangle, and, of course, east Jerusalem are dominantly Arab. Of the latter sectors, the Wadi Ara, Little Triangle, and east Jerusalem areas are also geographically proximate to the West Bank. This, too, has to be kept in mind as yet another consideration in drawing rational partition lines, especially should the idea of territorial exchanges be adopted as part of any new territorial compromise. On the other hand, the Lake Tiberias region and the Jezreel and Beit Shean valleys in the north, the coastal plain from Haifa to Ashkelon, the Jerusalem corridor in the center of the country, the Negev and Arava in the south are mainly Jewish.

Distribution patterns of the present Jewish population in Israel are a further given. The coastal strip, overwhelmingly Jewish, is home to 61.3 percent of the Israeli population and much of Israel's industry; the Jerusalem sector (including west Jerusalem and Jewish neighborhoods in east Jerusalem) contains 12 percent of the country's population. Taken together, nearly three-quarters of Israel's population live in areas geographically contiguous to the West Bank, or to the Gaza Strip in the case of the southern edge of the coastal plain.

Even these rudimentary demographic statistics further complicate map drawing since they underscore the fact that the bulk of Israeli Jews live practically "a stone's throw" from the territories designated as Palestinian controlled. Which renders them highly vulnerable to terrorist action or other military provocations originating in the adjacent hills of the West

Bank that hold a commanding position over Israel's coastal strip to the west and the Jerusalem corridor south of Samaria and north of Judea.

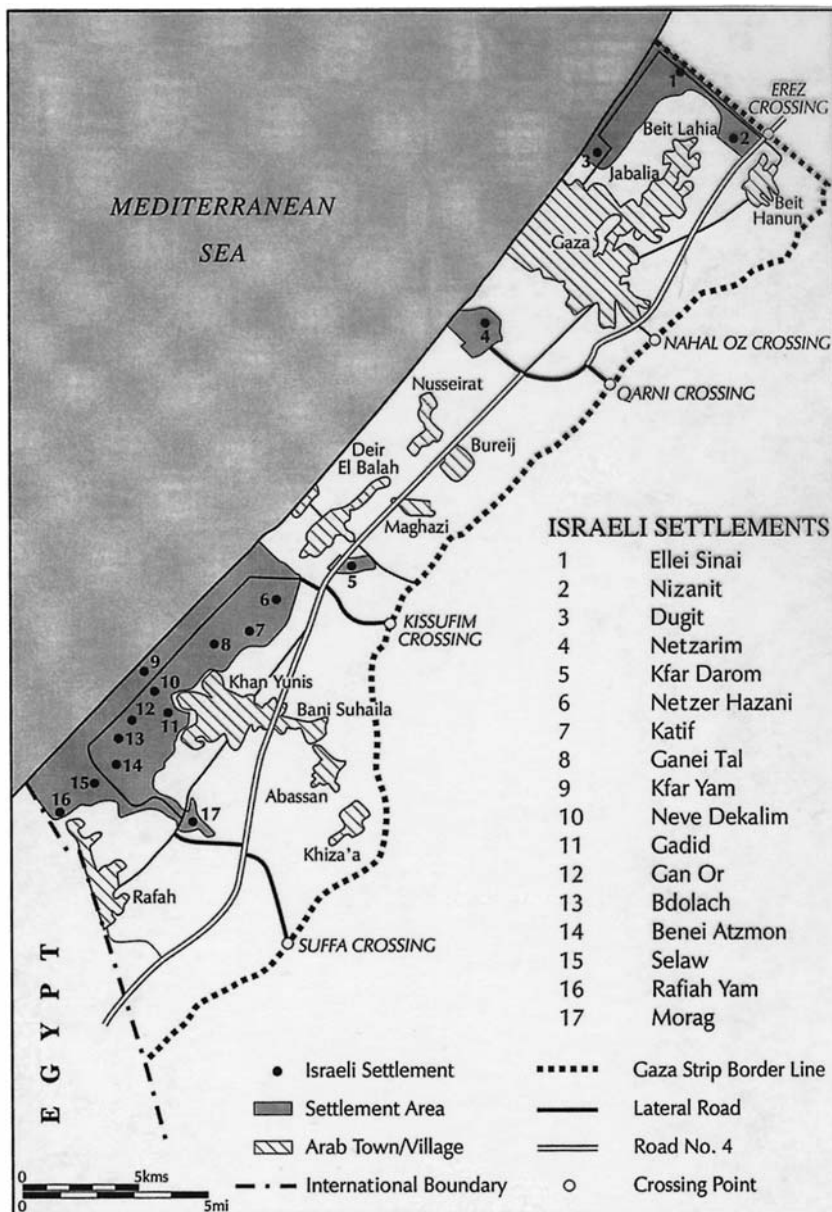
An Effective Presence: Israeli Settlement

Yet a further complication arises from the fact that as of 1998 163,173 Israelis have chosen to make the West Bank their home, residing in some 120 settlements.³ This means that perhaps 17 percent of the predominantly Palestinian West Bank population are Israeli Jews (in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli settler community—6,166 people living in 24 settlements—comprises 0.6 percent of the population). In which case final status partition along the former 1967 “green line” would require either that these Israelis vacate their homes or else live under Palestinian rule. Neither option is acceptable to them at the present time, while the majority of the Israeli public continues to waver at least with respect to the notion of dismantling settlements in return for peace.

The geographic distribution of these Jewish settlements, intentionally dispersed in a transparent effort at establishing an Israeli “presence” in all parts of the land, has achieved its deeper political purpose. Varying from self-contained communities clustered together, like the Gush Etsion bloc or the city of Ariel and its satellite settlements, to solitary and isolated outposts ringed by Arab villages, these settlements certainly render the task of a neat, compartmentalized partition difficult in the extreme. Short of blanket Israeli withdrawal from the territories, of course. Otherwise, formation of a geographically contiguous Palestinian state on the West Bank may well be predicated on inclusion of Jewish settlements—their numbers, size and growth potential subject to tough negotiation, to be sure—as a permanent fixture within the territory of that state.

Unless adequately provided for in the final status accords this in itself bears the seeds for further discord: by creating a minorities problem, by leaving Jewish islands under Palestinian rule and by dissatisfying unrequited Arab demands for complete cultural independence free of Israeli influence. For their part the settlers will not only be asked to live in an Arab country and to coexist with the Palestinian regime but to experience their own dependency on a daily basis, as when passing through Palestinian-controlled areas and along Arab roads.

Because so many of these settlers came to the West Bank for a combination of Zionist and economic motives, and surely have no desire to be residents of a Palestinian state, they understand how the redefining of final status borders must determine their own personal fate. So that in the



8. The Gaza Strip: Map of Jewish Settlement and Border Crossings

event creation of a Palestinian state becomes inevitable they can be relied upon to pressure the Israeli government at least into insisting upon redrawing the borders in such a way that the large majority of settlements and settlers be formally annexed to Israel.

Popular perceptions aside, this Jewish settler movement is far from monolithic. Subtle differences within the settler ranks become a significant factor when gauging the strength of domestic support for, or resistance to, any plan for territorial compromise calling for either (a) complete withdrawal, or (b) partial abandonment of those outlying settlements judged to be the least tenable politically and militarily.

One index is the degree of ideological commitment to the settlement ethos. Israeli activists are motivated by a complex religious-nationalist-pioneering worldview that regards the 1967 victory as providential and messianic, the territories as liberated. The West Bank especially is described in reverential terms: as the cradle of biblical Jewish civilization, as the land of the patriarchs, as divinely bequeathed, as the exclusive covenantal birthright of the Jewish people, as a sacred trust—and therefore nonnegotiable and non-returnable.

As part of this philosophy, the act of settlement is itself seen as entirely consistent with the pre-state Zionist pioneering enterprise of settling the land. While the exact percentage of those committed to this ideology of settlement is unclear, some observers place the figure at 20 percent, others at closer to 40 percent.⁴ Irrespective of numbers, this element remains both visible and vocal in “manning the barricades” against the previous Labor government’s pro-Oslo policies. Even though constituting an important base of electoral support for the Netanyahu government, they are certainly not above criticizing it as irresolute on settlement expansion. Members of Chazit Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel Front) were increasingly outspoken at the beginning of 1998 in condemning the ruling coalition’s resolve to proceed with further redeployments as a betrayal of Zionist goals and a national tragedy.

A second index for categorizing the settlers and their motivation is socioeconomic. Perhaps the majority crossed the “green line” onto the West Bank out of concern for an improved quality of life and in quest of open spaces and affordable housing. They can be found in relatively sparse Arab areas within commuting distance of the two leading metropolitan areas: inside a 20 kilometer (12 mile) radius of Jerusalem (Ma’ale Adu-mim, Gush Etsion, Givat Ze’ev, etc.) or in western Samaria (Ariel, Alfei Menashe, Kedumim, etc.) close to Tel-Aviv. Although allied with the ideological settlers in fighting against the loss of their homes, this group as

a rule is taken to be both more materialistic and also more individualistic. Portrayed as less committed to the nationalist and religious vision of Israel rule and annexation, such people are therefore also seen as open-minded and realistic enough not to dismiss compensation and resettlement as part of the price for a peace accord.

A final category of settlers are those Israelis residing in the Jordan Valley who view themselves as different and apart by virtue of the fact that they inhabit an almost empty area (except for Jericho) of essential importance for Israel's defense. Traditional supporters of the Labor party and also, most recently, the "Third Way" party, many of these people actually favor a territorial compromise with the Palestinians . . . as long as the Jordan Valley remains under Israeli control.

One distinct weakness in all such arbitrary classifications is that no one knows the exact membership or strength of each group. Nor how individuals, families and entire settler communities might respond under different circumstances, as yet unknown, to government calls for evacuation and resettlement. Whether they will go quietly and resignedly as the price for peace remains an open question until put to the test. So, too, other speculations, including resisting eviction orders through all means, passive and political, at their disposal, such as lobbying to win a vote of no confidence in the Knesset against any government pledging to dismantle individual settlements or to abandon Israeli settlers to Palestinian rule. A third scenario: fighting back with violence and armed force against both Israeli and the Palestinian authorities bent upon implementing a territorial compromise that provides for dismantling settlements. Whereas trying to adapt themselves to living as a protected minority under Palestinian rule for the sake of upholding the birthright of Jews to live anywhere in biblical Judea and Samaria has been raised as yet a fourth possibility.

Israeli Arabs: A Presence of Their Own

Separatist constructs on the grand scale of secession and partition have as one of their chief goals putting an end to all forms of exploitation and discrimination—legal, economic, social, political. In other words, removing the classic minorities problem which in modern times has so flagrantly contradicted liberal ideals of equality and social peace. This goal is best served by one of two adjustments: cartographic or demographic. Shifting people and communities; or moving lines of demarcation. In other words, by revising territorial borders, or else through population transfer,

so that in effect the respective ethnic and geopolitical boundaries more fully and most closely correspond to each other.

From the standpoint of majority-minority relations and territorial compromise, therefore, the Israeli Jewish population in the territories clearly presents a problem; but then so too does the Palestinian Arab population resident in Israel. Some 150,000 Arabs remained within the State of Israel following the events of 1948–1949. Today, there are close to a million Israeli Arabs, their numbers swelled by the return of some refugees to their homes through family reunification plus a high birth rate and natural increase.

Over the last two decades, in tandem with the PLO's mounting success in promoting a distinctive Palestinian national identity and consciousness, the Arabs of Israel have been experiencing a strong, and growing Palestinian cultural awakening on their own part. One that could have serious longer-term political overtones inside Israel as much as between Israel and the Palestinian entity, while countermanding the call by both sides for clear political boundaries and lines of ethnic separation.

Loyalty or disloyalty of the Arabs of Israel to the State is not the question here. Over the decades remarkably few Israeli Arabs have been convicted of endangering state security. Far more problematic, it seems to me, is why successive Israeli Governments have not the sagacity to go beyond verbal pledges of equality under the law by making equal rights, equal opportunities, equal schooling and equal living conditions Arabs and Jews alike a number-one national priority. If only to prevent existing inequalities, real as well as perceived, from providing the breeding grounds for Israeli Arab discontent, claims of discrimination and alienation.

With the emergence of a Palestinian state a distinct possibility in the not distant future, it would be unreasonable to expect younger Israeli Arabs unhesitatingly to prefer closing ranks with their fellow Jewish citizens in creating a stronger "Israeli" identity. They might well see equal, if not greater personal fulfillment, cultural solidarity and closer group affiliation in their "Palestinian" nationalism, even if themselves not residing within the borders of that Palestinian state. It was precisely with this in mind that an internal memorandum circulated within the Prime Minister's Office in August 1998 termed Israeli Arabs "a potential strategic threat." As leaked to the press, it warned that Israeli Arab "Palestinian" nationalist activists might eventually press for formal annexation to the adjacent Palestinian territories based on the analogy of the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia in the late thirties.⁵

Already now rumblings of discontent can be heard among a more confident Israeli Arab intellectual and political elite. M.K. Azmi Bishara openly articulates demands for greater cultural and administrative autonomy within a pluralistic, binational post-Zionist Israel, and on the basis of parity. Bishara and others call for abolishing institutions like the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency. They would revoke the Law of Return that confers automatic citizenship upon Jews entering Israel; and would even rewrite, or replace, the national anthem, “Hatikva,” because of themes from Jewish lore and history offending the sensitivities of non-Jewish Israelis of Arab extraction or Muslim religious persuasion. This talk of “a state for all its citizens,” in turn, has a psychological effect upon Jewish Israelis. It sets off their own insecurities at the gradual subversion not by frontal assault but from within of the “Jewish state,” and Israel’s replacement by a “secular, democratic” state in which Jews might end up finding themselves the tolerated minority, rather than the empowered majority.

These accusations and counter-charges are further symptomatic of the fundamental uncertainties still unresolved after 50 years (no permanent allegiances, no fixed borders, no guaranteed trustworthiness). And of the heightened uneasiness among all Israelis, just like all Palestinians, and for that matter all Jordanians, the closer Permanent Status repartition looms on their political horizon.

It appears for the present that few Israeli Arab citizens are so keen on Palestinian separatism that they are prepared individually or as a community to sacrifice the freedoms and Israeli living standards most personally enjoy in favor of living under a still undetermined PLO regime and economy. Yet neither can the possibility entirely be ruled out that some day, for whatever reason, perhaps incited by irredentist rhetoric demanding ethnic unification, Israeli Arab activists across the future dividing line might insist upon merging under Palestinian rule. Such an annexationist drive would pose a profound threat to Israel’s geographic contiguity, territorial integrity, physical security and, indeed, to its very state existence.

Multiple Allegiances and Close Quarters

Although enjoying Israeli citizenship and equality before the law, this sizable Arab minority (one-fifth of the total population) nonetheless still has considerable difficulty with the State of Israel’s *raison d’être* as a uniquely Jewish homeland expressly designed for “ingathering the exiles” of

world Jewry. Just as, we may add, the Jewish authorities have their own problems—of conscience and constitution—in reconciling the state's special Jewish character with the egalitarian pledge to make Israel a democracy for all its citizens.

There is some truth to the notion that with time Israeli Jews and Arabs have developed many shared cultural tastes, "levantine" behavior traits, values, and expectations. That these have been further cemented by common experiences—deriving from the very fact of shared physical space and proximity—such as indiscriminate Iraqi "Scud" missile attacks or random terrorist operations against civilian targets on the roads and in cities that have exacted a toll on Arab lives as well. And, third, that these commonalities help distinguish "Israelis," Arab and Jew alike, from their respective "diasporas": world Jewry resident outside of Israel and Palestinian Arabs outside the pre-1967 Israeli borders. However, these are still a long way from constituting any single national identity, allegiance, or emotional bond, especially when both groups retain intimate links with their non-Israeli compatriots.

In a nutshell, this larger question of separate, multiple, or divided allegiances poses a serious dilemma for all sides: for West Bank Israelis as well as for Israeli/Palestinian Arabs. Neither the Israeli government nor the Palestinian Authority can realistically count upon achieving total separation between their respective constituencies, even were it feasible from an economic point of view. Add to this the emotional attachment of the members of each community to the land best symbolized by the many religious, burial, and historical sites dating back centuries if not millennia that dot a landscape now further crosshatched by modern battlegrounds and military cemeteries.

However imaginatively, however conscientiously one pencils in the partition lines, complete, hermetic Arab-Jewish/Israeli-Palestinian disengagement is a practical and physical impossibility.

This iron final status rule holds true even should an Israeli leader or government be prepared in principle to turn over to Palestinian sovereignty select areas of large and concentrated Israeli Arab population (assuming the latter's enthusiastic consent) in exchange for territorial concessions on the West Bank.⁶ Or, about equally extreme on the spectrum of partition scenarios: even were said Israeli leader or government to agree upon the dismantling of every single post-1967 Jewish community on the West Bank and in Gaza as a prelude to full withdrawal from all the territories.

Arabs and Israelis are far too geographically and demographically intertwined at present to permit achieving on the ground what in theory and

on paper might sound like a moral and political imperative: an elegant, tidy, seamless disengagement. Consequently, were partition and separation nevertheless to remain fixed peacemaking objectives, the only other conceivable way for negotiations to produce dividing lines that make any sense is by inducing the two parties to agree to an exchange of populations.

But here, too, prospects are dimmed because in general it is far easier to move borders than to shift large numbers of people from one place of residence to another. In the case of Palestine, prospects for human engineering on such a grand scale are doomed from the outset precisely because of this double veto.

For peaceful population transfer to work, Israeli proponents of Jewish dominion over *Eretz Yisrael hashlema* (the “integral” or “greater” Land of Israel) would have to consent, in the first instance, to abandoning the Zionist proactive dream. And then lend their own hand to wholesale dismantlement of West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements. Given their ideological commitment and investment of thirty years, and with memories of the northern Sinai city of Yamit’s forced evacuation in the early 1980s still in mind, they are not expected to be willing accomplices or to give up without a fight.

Moreover, acquiescence by the Palestinian leadership is a second, equal necessity, and it would be a profound understatement to describe such assent as implausible. Authorizing Israeli Arabs in the Galilee to uproot themselves and their families, to abandon ancestral homes and forfeit title to the land, to migrate in considerable numbers in order to relocate on the West Bank—each of these runs directly counter to the appeals for steadfastness against Zionist encroachment.⁷

On the contrary, the bedrock Arab position insists upon the exact opposite. It is Zionism and all Jewish settlement activity that are illegal, and it is for Israel to undertake total withdrawal from the territories. Whereas the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 fighting are the dispossessed and therefore the ones with a “right of return” to homes and property within Israel proper. All but unconscionable therefore their giving consent to the creation of newly homeless pouring into an already crowded West Bank and imposing yet another burden, at least initially, upon a brittle Palestinian economic infrastructure.

Absent all three prerequisites—a clear ethnic delineation, enthusiasm for territorial exchanges, any incentive toward large-scale population transfer—the Palestinian side, too, will have to learn to live with certain

realities. Premier among them the fact that, comparable to a majority of the world's Jews residing beyond Israel's sovereign borders, peace will leave the majority of Palestinians outside the narrower confines of the projected Palestinian state as well. This, again, even were the PLO demand for returning all territory as far west as the old 1948–1967 armistice green line to be met by Israel.

Mixed Municipalities as a Metaphor

An interesting case are the many existing towns, urban communities, and rural regional clusters where Arabs and Jews interact on a daily basis and in truly close quarters—at times almost literally living on top of each other. This ethnic mix further disabuses all blackboard exercises based upon a “hard,” iron curtainlike, simplistic plan of partition. Indeed, nothing better depicts this present condition of jointness—and its continued likelihood well into the future—than the mixed neighborhoods and cities of Israel/Palestine.⁸

To walk the streets of Jerusalem, to peer over the statistics on Arab urban residence within Israel, to drive from Kfar Saba to Kochav Yair through Tira, to look at the map of Hebron is to confront the stark reality of Arab-Jewish antipartitionism at the grassroots level. A demographic spread that knows no borders and that defies any rational demarcation.

TABLE 4.2. Jewish and Arab Populations in Mixed Cities and Towns

City/Town	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Jerusalem	412,000	167,000
Haifa	225,625	26,675
Acre	35,000	10,000
Nazareth/Upper Nazareth*	47,500	60,000
Lod	N/A	N/A
Ramle	48,000	12,000
Tel-Aviv–Jaffa	340,000	15,555
Ma'alot Tarshicha	15,000	4,000
Hebron (West Bank)	500	120,000

Figures, based on 1994–1995 data, are approximate.

*Nazareth and Upper Nazareth (Natzaret Illit) are administered under two separate municipalities. Nazareth proper, the largest Arab city in the country, has an exclusively Arab Israeli population of approximately 60,000, which is expected to double by the year 2020. Nazareth Illit, on the other hand, has a different mix: 25,000 Jewish Israelis and 3,500 Palestinian Israelis.

Clearly, all schemes for surgically separating one nationalist community from the other on the extended West Bank, or cis-Jordania, are reduced to the status of pipedreams.

An Israeli world without Arabs? Or, vice versa, a Palestinian world devoid of Jews? Once prevailing conditions of geography and demography are interlaced with the politics of intransigence, otherwise innocent fantasizing translates into diplomatic nonstarters, pure and simple. This, we regret to say, is true even before the additional second layer of border questions and security factors are superimposed on the human and geographical map of Palestine.