East Jerusalem Settlements and the Imminent Demise of the Two-State Solution

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Jerusalem and the Two-State Solution

The two-state solution will take place in Jerusalem, or it will not take place at all.
This will require a political division of the city that will:

• Create a viable contiguous Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, and a viable, robust Israeli capital in Israeli Jerusalem.
Jerusalem and the Two-State Solution

This will require a political division of the city that will:

• Place the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem under Palestinian sovereignty, while incorporating the large settlement neighborhoods of East Jerusalem into Israel, in the framework of an agreed, equitable land swap.
This will require a political division of the city that will:

• Create a border regime that will allow both Israelis and Palestinians, to go anywhere in their respective cities without crossing a border or encountering the authorities of the other side.
While the large settlement neighborhoods in East Jerusalem create daunting difficulties in implementing a political division of the city, the possibility to do so still exists in the beginning of 2012.
That said, during the last decade settlement construction has eroded significantly into the possibility of implementing the two-state solution in Jerusalem.
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• For example, under the 2003 Geneva Accords, the area of Har Homa is to fall under Palestinian sovereignty. But today, a settlement neighborhood that did not exist in 2000 is now home to 12,000 Israeli residents.

• Consequently, the Palestinians insist that Har Homa will become Palestine, while Israel demands that it be integrated into Israel.

• Despite this obstacle, whatever be decided about the fate of Har Homa, it still remains possible to politically divide the city.
Following a quiet, de facto settlement freeze imposed by PM Netanyahu in March 2010, in November 2010 settlement activities in East Jerusalem resumed and have since exceeded even previously high levels by 50%-200%. East Jerusalem has not witnessed settlement activities of such a pace and scope since the 1970’s.

The Surge in East Jerusalem Settlement Activities

- The map opposite details the settlement projects significantly expedited in the three month period between November 2011 and January 2012.

- For an in-depth analysis of the current settlement surge, see: http://www.t-j.org.il//Portals/26/images/EJSettlementsNov152011.pdf

- Given the pace, scope and intensity of current East Jerusalem settlement activity, we deem it imperative to examine the impact of these plans on the possibility of reaching an permanent status agreement between Israelis and Palestinians.

Projecting Jerusalem’s Map at the End of 2013

• Given the current trajectory of the expediting and implementation of settlement plans in East Jerusalem, we can now project what the map of East Jerusalem will look like at the end of 2013, should the current trends continue.

• In our projection, we account only for large settlement plans (100 units or more), in the advanced planning stages (after deposit for public review), and that are being actively promoted by the Israeli government.

• Our projection excludes smaller plans, those in the initial planning stages, plans that appear to be dormant, and the settlement schemes in the Old City and its environs.

• The projected map is consequently a conservative estimate as to the situation on the ground at the end of 2013.
The additional built-up areas on our projected map entails the following:

the construction of between app. 11,983-12,670 additional units in East Jerusalem, and increase of 23%-25% in the total number of units built in East Jerusalem since 1967.
Jerusalem's Projected Map at the End of 2013

The map opposite displays areas that are not developed today and that under current trends will either be fully developed or under construction with homes being marketed to the public by the end of 2013.
While some of the units will be built within the existing contours of the settlement neighborhoods, others will expand the footprint of the built-up areas by 3.1 sq. km., a 15% increase in the territorial base of the settlement neighborhoods.
The additional construction will add app. 45,000 residents, a 23% increase in the settler population of East Jerusalem.
While under current circumstances, the implementation of the two-state solution in East Jerusalem is still, with difficulty, possible, our projections indicate that this will not be the case by the end of 2013:

- The Givat Hamatos construction will rule out the possibility of any agreement based on a division of territorial sovereignty (like the Clinton parameters/Geneva accords) in and around Beit Tzafafa.
While under current circumstances, the implementation of the two-state solution in East Jerusalem is still, with difficulty, possible, our projections indicate that this will not be the case by the end of 2013:

- Construction on Jerusalem’s southern flank will create an effective buffer between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem.
The Impact on the Two-State Solution

While under current circumstances, the implementation of the two-state solution in East Jerusalem is still, with difficulty, possible, our projections indicate that this will not be the case by the end of 2013:

- The “welding” of settlement neighborhoods to adjacent Palestinian areas (in places like Gilo, Ramot and Pisgat Ze’ev) will make the creation of a viable border more difficult.
The construction will increase the size of the lands needed for a land swap.
As noted, our projections exclude smaller settlement projects, and those in initial planning stages. At least some of these will approach implementation during the coming months, and could add thousands of additional units to our projections.
The most prominent of these is E-1. While no formal steps have been recently taken to implement the plan, there are indications that this is being considered (the pending displacement of the Bedouin in E-1, the construction of a road grid diverting Palestinian traffic from E-1, etc.)
Possible Additional Settlements: E-1

E-1 would seal East Jerusalem from its environs in the West Bank

Projected Jerusalem - Dec. 2013 (with possible construction of E-1)
E-1 would seal East Jerusalem from its environs in the West Bank, and dismember the potential Palestinian State into two, discontinuous cantons. Implementation of E-1 would itself signify the demise of the two-state solution, and requires constant vigilance.

That said, the impact of the southern flank construction is no less devastating in its impact, and unlike E-1, is already under way.
Our conservative projections of the potential map of Jerusalem at the end of 2013 provides incontrovertible evidence that the current settlement surge constitutes a clear and present danger to the very possibility of the two-state solution.

Left unattended, the situation on the ground could well be considerably worse than predicted.

That said, if a quiet, de facto settlement freeze were to be put in place, as it was in 2010, the potentially devastating circumstances we envisage can be averted.

Consequently, achieving a de facto settlement freeze in East Jerusalem is an imperative of the highest order if the two-state solution is to remain even remotely viable.
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