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**Geopolitics and Security of Israel in the
Middle East
A Palestinian Case Study**



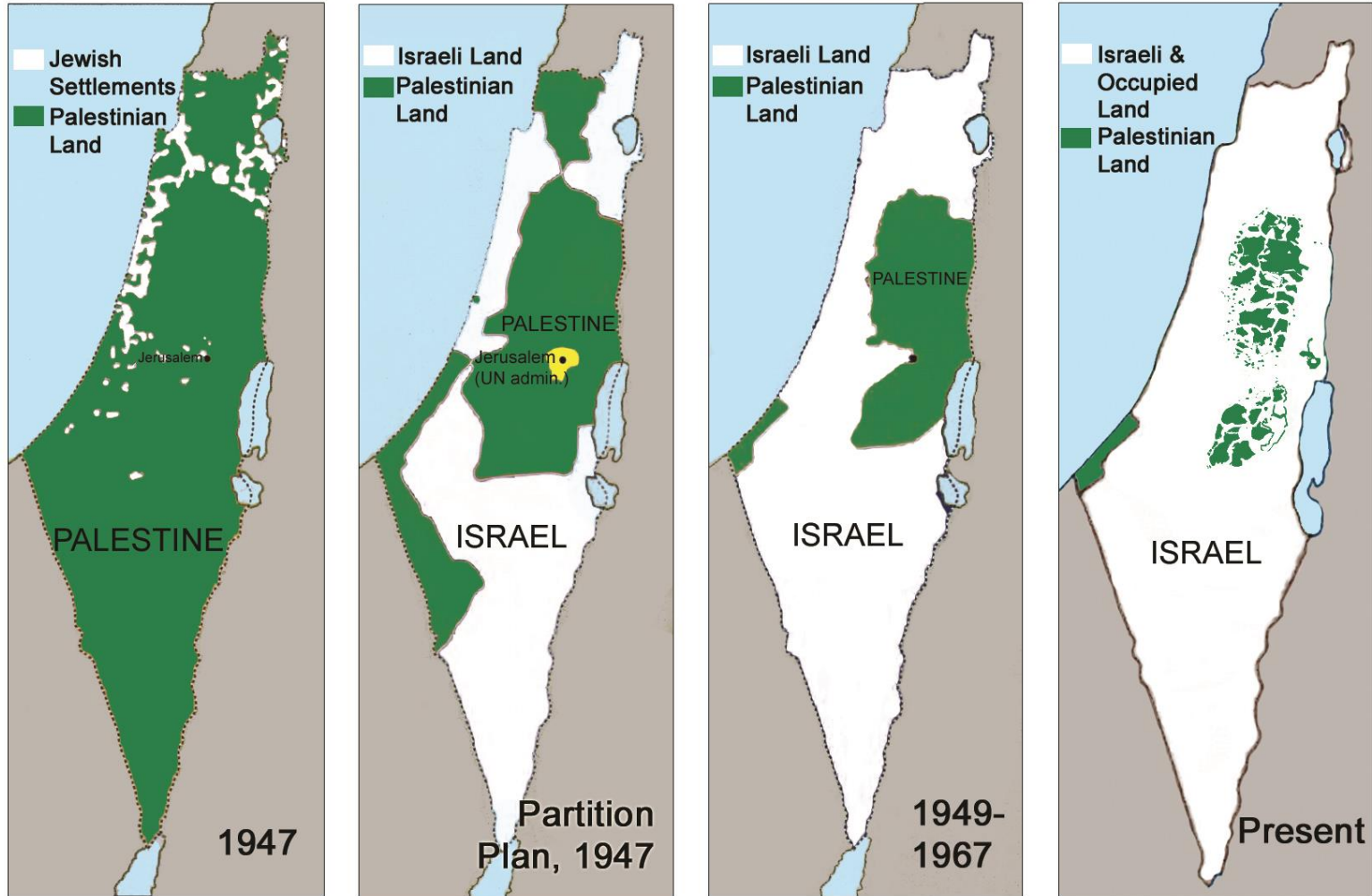
General Introduction

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Map

From Palestine to the Palestinian Territories

Palestinian Loss of Land 1947 to Present



Course Overview

This course deals with the Israeli security issue by looking at the significance of the wall.

Since 2003, Israel has been building a wall which separates its territory from the Palestinian Occupied Territories. This is probably the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken by this state. It is justified by the security plan.

Several questions will be treated:

- What are the origins of such an undertaking?
- What are the territorial and human consequences in the Occupied Territories?
- How might we analyze the case of East Jerusalem city, the stumbling block within the peace process?
- What exactly is the so-called Oslo agreements and to what extent can we say that we are now in the post-Oslo stage ?

This course attempts to provide some answers while showing the limits of the Israeli security plan, through the analysis of the political and territorial development in the Occupied Territories.

Course Plan

I - Security and the Wall in the West Bank

1. The wall
2. The wall and International Law
 - 2.1 The opinion of the International Court of Justice
 - 2.2 The wall and boundary
 - 2.3 The end of walls?
3. The consequences of Israel's strategy: the example of Jerusalem City
4. The wall and “perverse effects”

II - Security and Oslo Agreement

1. What is the Oslo agreement ?
2. The wall and the Oslo agreement

Wall Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem



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Wall Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem



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Wall Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem



Wall in Qualandiya (North of Jerusalem)



I- Security and the Wall in the West Bank

1. The Wall

The separation wall, built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, is between 700 and 800 km long. Its average height in some places reaches 8 meters. It costs nearly two billion euros for Israel to build.

Embodying the old idea of separation, the barriers between Israel and Palestinian takes several physical forms: a concrete wall with watchtowers, barbed wires, some of which are electric, surveillance cameras, detection equipment and sophisticated shooting posts, enabling gun fire from a distance, etc.

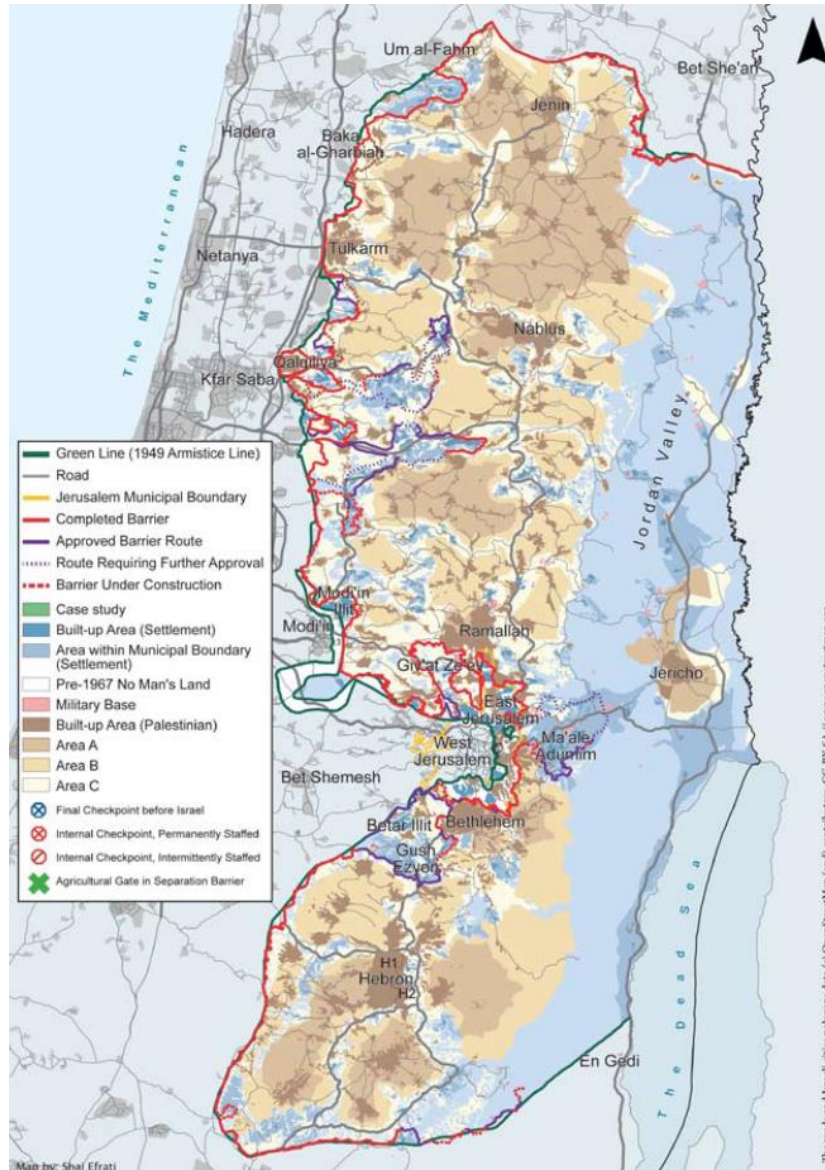
The Wall

According to the initial project, the wall, which is managed by the military, will surround the West Bank, which will be split into two parts, north and south, integrating the settlement of *Maali Adumim* to Jerusalem. The Israeli government seems to have abandoned the construction of the eastern part for financial reasons. (See maps below)

It should be noted that Palestinians use the term "wall": "wall of shame", "apartheid wall", while the Israelis prefer terms such as "barrier" or "fence" of "separation", "security", "anti-terror".

We have chosen to use the term "wall" used by the international community.

The wall in the West Bank



East and West Sides

On the west side, Israel seeks to include colonies into its state as much as possible by penetrating deeply inside the Palestinian Territories.

On the east side, where the construction seems to be abandoned for the moment, Israel is trying to absorb the fertile land in the Jordan Valley. Although Israeli justifications are for reasons of security: controlling the passage of hostile elements from Jordan, these lands are in fact among the most fertile in the West Bank.

Not following the route of the Green Line*, the map of the wall highlights the fact that the Israeli security plan is not exempt from political intentions to weaken the vitality of a future Palestinian state. Not only will Israel have a greater number of Israeli settlements and lands in the West Bank, but it will also possess most of the groundwater.

*Also known as the Armistice Line of 1949, this is the line of demarcation between the Palestinian Territories and Israel. Established following the 1949 armistice agreements, it is an internationally recognized state border.

The West Bank

Separated from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank finds itself with a fragmented population under the control of Israeli soldiers when moving between the north and the south. ([See the checkpoints map below](#))

It has no border with a country other than Israel, making it is difficult to develop its own economy with the outside.

Map of the West Bank Checkpoints



2. The Wall and International Law

2.1 The opinion of the International Court of Justice

In July 9, 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) pronounced a consultative opinion but not restrictive, on the wall's construction. It condemned the construction of a "separation wall" in the West Bank. Voted by fourteen voices against one, the ICJ's opinion stated that the construction of the wall by Israel, an occupying force, built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, are contrary to the international law*. Therefore, the Court affirmed that Israel should be forced into stop working and dismantling Immediately the structure located in the Occupied Territories.

* See <http://www.icj-cij.org/cijwww/cijhome.htm>

The International Court of Justice (ICJ)

The ICJ is regarded as **The** leading international judicial body.

The ICJ has two abilities : contentious and consultative.

Contentious: resolves disputes between states by decrees .

Consultative: has the power to interpret international law by pronouncing opinions. It is true that opinions, unlike decrees, have not a compulsory impact, but they make authority related to the concerned states.

ICJ's Opinion

The Court's opinion is totally new. Even if the wall in the Palestinian territories is not unique, historically and on a worldwide scale, it is the first wall that gives rise to a legal treatment which, for the first time, considers the legal consequences of the existence of a wall on a specific territory. It is "the only one which received a substantial legal treatment through the ICJ opinion" affirms Pr. Jean-Marc Sorel *.

* See Jean-Marc Sorel (dir.), *Walls and international law*, (in french, *Les murs et le droit international*), Cahiers internationaux, n°24, Ed. Pedone, 2010. Available in <http://www.amazon.fr/murs-doit-international-Jean-Marc-Sorel>

See also <http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2011/01/06les-murs-et-le-droit-international>

A History of Walls

Examples of building walls are numerous in history: The Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall, most recently walls in Berlin, Cyprus, Western Sahara, between the United States and Mexico, between the two Koreas, etc.

It is clear that regardless of their size and the time when they were built, the walls have always been the symbol of a certain security for states or empires. But at the same time, if the wall remains a protector, its construction always appears as a political failure*. In other words, “If the wall is security, it is no longer synonymous of security.”

* See Jean-Marc Sorel (dir.), *Walls and international law*, *op.cit.*

The Court and the Wall

The opinion of the Court does not have a general effect, insofar as it does not fix the issue of walls in general, but only that of the wall in Palestine.

However, its importance is based on the idea that any discussion on walls in international law inevitably brings it to the Palestinian wall.

When the question of the wall in international law is evoked, one is quickly led to speak about the concept of boundary. What is the link between **wall** and **border** ?

2.2 Wall and Boundary

In legal terms, the wall is not necessarily synonymous with border. The boundary results from law, the wall from power.

The border is a legal continuing line, limiting state sovereignty. It separates two territorial sovereignties. The border is also neutral.

The wall is an artificial physical obstacle unilaterally built. It puts into practice an authoritarian closing and has a coercive aspect. It does not necessarily leads to a boundary, as is the case in Palestine. The walls are defensive, they are the result of a "weakening of the public space."

Pr. Serge Sur asserts that more widely than the border itself, it is the whole of international law that is being challenged. It should be noted that international law has some difficulty in understanding walls.

Three Types of Walls

Pr. Serge Sur distinguishes between three types of walls that are either alternative or cumulative:

1. *Strategic walls*: they have a military function. With their defensive character, they have a goal of deterrence relating to military threat.
2. *Economic walls*: they tend to protect resources.
3. *Societal walls*: it is the dominant dimension of contemporary walls. It is to make societies and groups impenetrable and to avoid promiscuity, passage and mixtures. These walls of discrimination can be coercive. Examples: wall in Palestine, wall that separates the United States from Mexico, the ghettos, the former Berlin wall, etc.

Four Functions of Walls

This analysis identifies four functions of walls :

- 1- *Protection*: to protect; to prevent entering or to filter and to control.
- 2- *Homogenization*: to create or to strengthen the feeling of a community. The threat, real or not, makes solidarity.
- 3- *Imprisonment*: “After all”, explains Pr. Serge Sur, “the wall is the symbol of prison....This is the risk that takes Israel today, to enclose himself in an closed space, in an ethnic and religious identity that considers all the surrounding environment as hostile, to recreate a ghetto. This leads then to a reversal of the ostensible meaning of the wall: the wall no longer protects, but encloses, doesn’t reassure anymore but punishes, no more homogenizes but forces.”
- 4- *Punishment*: imprisonment carries the risk of repression.

2.3 The End of Walls ?

In theory, walls are not made to last.

However the wall is a chameleon, it adapts to its environment and is also a phoenix, as we are reminded by Pr. Serge Sur.

Regarding the societal walls, the wall interest us most directly in the Palestinian case, and it dominates contemporary walls; they cannot be neither impenetrable nor complete, according to the analysis of Pr. Serge Sur. They carry their own limit, insofar as they violate the principles of human rights and thus demonstrate their own illegitimacy.

The Current Palestinian Framework

Within the current Palestinian framework, these principles don't seem capable of changing the order.

In fact, the Israeli government rejected the ICJ's opinion and the Israeli Supreme Court denounced it, even if it tried sometimes to put pressure on the government to change the route of the wall in some places, and in a specific cases.

It is less international policy which seems able to make changes in the short term, that the "perverse effects" of Israeli actions themselves. They may redefine the programs originally planned by the Israeli government, as we will see through the case of Jerusalem city.

3. Consequences of the Security Strategy: The Example of Jerusalem City

In Jerusalem*, the wall's installation meets a major territorial and demographic aim. Its purpose is to exclude many Palestinians residing in the city, and has been part of Israeli policy applied since 1967.

Indeed, when in June 1967, Israeli soldiers occupied the eastern part of Jerusalem, the city's area increased from 6.5 km² to approximately 70 km². Twenty-eight Arab villages were annexed and formed the new borders of the Israeli municipality. (See the map below)

*We use the term "Jerusalem" to refer to "East Jerusalem" in order to not weigh down the text. Since 1967, Israel occupies the eastern part of Jerusalem and considers it (with the western part) a "unified" and "eternal" capital. The occupation and annexation of East Jerusalem, were not recognized by the international community.

Jerusalem Municipal Boundaries, 1947-2000



The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
(PASSIA)

The Palestinians of Jerusalem

The Palestinians of Jerusalem refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel on this side of the city and demand the pre-1967 borders return.

A vast majority also reject the offer of Israeli citizenship and, instead, obtain a special status of "permanent resident" of Israel while retaining their Jordanian passports.

This status distinguishes them from their compatriots in the West Bank, because they have access to a multitude of benefits (social security, health insurance, old age allowance, etc.) which are not available to the Palestinians of the West Bank. At the same time, this status reinforces Israeli strategy to separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. The separation wall reinforces the isolation of East Jerusalem creating a new territorial and demographic conditions.

Palestinian Life since 1967

Palestinian life has profoundly changed. The construction of the wall adds a complexity to an already ambiguous territorial situation since the occupation of the east side in 1967.

Indeed, the route of the wall around Jerusalem does not follow municipal boundaries set unilaterally by Israel in 1967.

Example: Shofat Camp

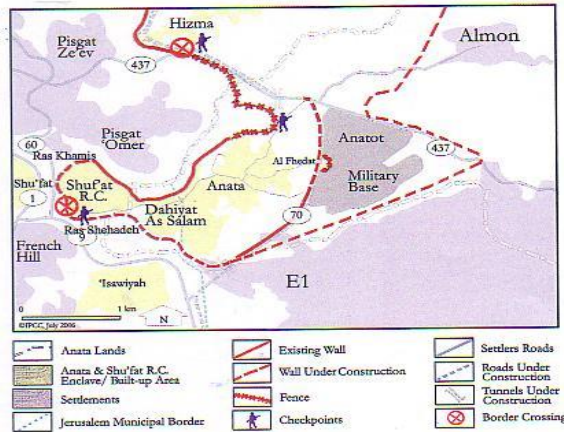
To examine this situation more closely, we can consider the example of *Shofat camp*. (see the map next slide)

The only refugee camp inside the municipal perimeter since 1967, it hosts almost 20,000 inhabitants who are now on the wrong side of the wall. Located 3 km from the Old Town, this camp forms, together with the village of Anata, a real ghetto. Besieged on all sides by a wall of about 9.5 km long, it is now disconnected from not only East Jerusalem but also from the West Bank territories, isolating over 47,000 Palestinians. To go out of this enclave, the population must use several gates that are under a total surveillance of the Israeli military, 24hrs a day, seven days a week.

Map of Shofat Camp

Carte 3

The Shu'fat Refugee Camp, Anata Enclave



International Peace and Cooperation Center, *The Wall. Fragmenting the Palestinian Fabric in Jerusalem*, 2007

Other examples

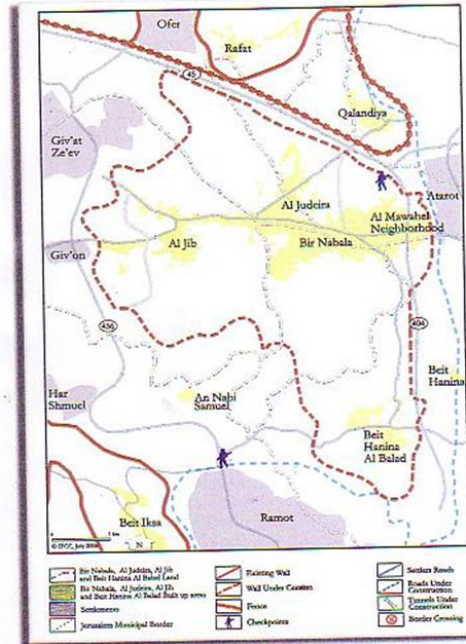
Not very far from the city, in the Northwest, another territorial configuration is significant. Four villages form an enclave separately : *Bir Nabala, Al Jib, Al Judeira* and *Beit Hanina (al-balad)*. (See the map next slide)

The total length of the wall, which completely surrounds the area, is approximately 17 km, isolating it from its environment on all sides. Nearly 15,000 Palestinians are affected. The economic consequences are catastrophic because these villages are very dependent on the labor market in East Jerusalem and neighboring villages.

Northwest of Jerusalem

Carte 4

The Bir Nabala, Al Judeira, Al Jib, and Beit Hanina Al Balad Enclave



International Peace and Cooperation Center, *The Wall. Fragmenting the Palestinian Fabric in Jerusalem*, 2007.

Economic Consequences of New Territorial Configurations

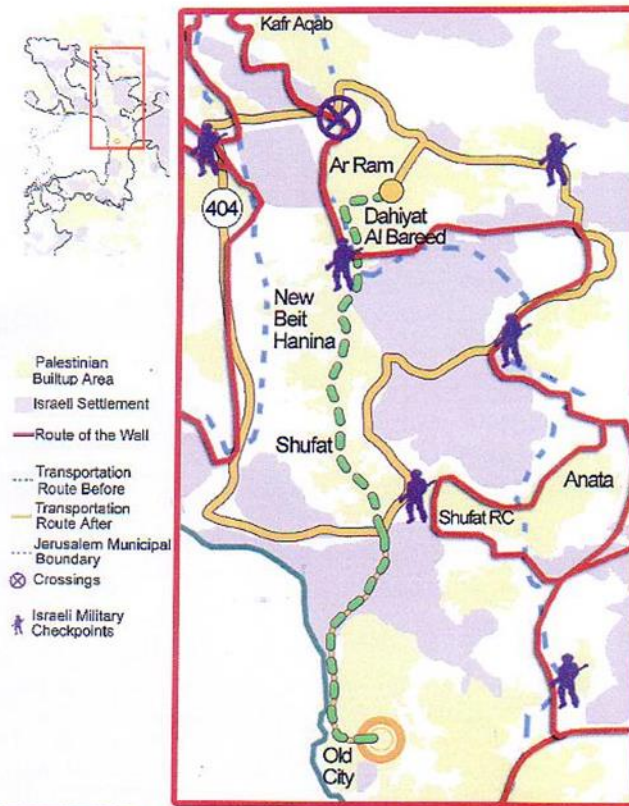
The economic consequences of these new territorial configurations are serious. Several Palestinian organizations and international institutions are isolated and forced to close their offices to locate elsewhere.

In *Ar-Ram*, for example, suburbs of Jerusalem ([see maps next slides](#)), several businesses have closed since the beginning of the construction of the wall. The 2007 estimates, say that nearly 550 commercial companies have moved from the neighborhood or have gone bankrupt. This issue causes a significant increase in the unemployment rate and consequently leads to the deterioration of the living standards of families and their displacement.

Suburbs of Jerusalem

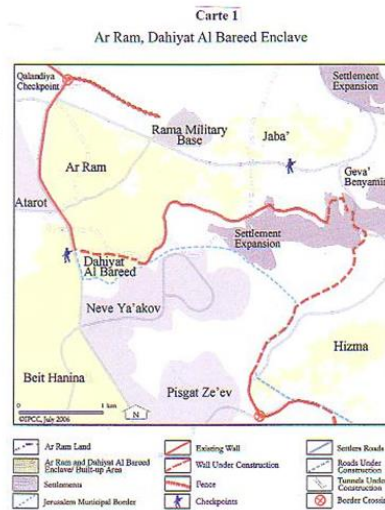
Carte 2

Transport Routes in Ar Ram/Dahiyat Al Bareed Enclave Before and After The Wall



International Peace and Cooperation Center, *The Wall. Fragmenting the Palestinian Fabric in Jerusalem*, 2007

Suburbs of Jerusalem



International Peace and Cooperation Center, *The Wall. Fragmenting the Palestinian Fabric in Jerusalem*, 2007

4. Wall and “Perverse Effects” *

In his letter of withdrawal addressed to George W. Bush, Ariel Sharon (former Prime Minister of Israel) explains that the *“fence is a security barrier and not a political barrier, it is temporary and not permanent, and therefore does not prejudice the final status, including the final location of frontiers”*.

This letter is about Gaza, but it can throw light on the principle from which Israel argues its construction of the wall in the West Bank.

Indeed, what constitutes the cement of Israeli position is to link inextricably its project of “separation” in the Palestinian territories to the security plan. However, the lack of security for which Israel seeks to remedy by this vast project, may produces "perverse effects" and turns against its basic intention.

*See my article, (in French), "The construction of the wall in Jerusalem, Issues and Implications", in *Naqd Journal*, No. 21, Autumn / Winter 2005, pp.131-141.

Wall and “Perverse Effects”

We can identify several factors that may go against the original objectives:

First, the wall contributes to the development of a Palestinian representation of the Israeli society, significantly different from what Israel would aim to obtain. Indeed, it may contribute to radicalize Palestinian feelings vis-à-vis not only the Israeli political system, but also vis-à-vis its civil society and therefore strengthen extremist movements.

Moreover, the objective of making the wall impenetrable with regard to the passage of “kamikazes”, seems not guaranteed. It is not clear that the problem of their infiltration into Israel is definitively solved, given that Israel implements several checkpoints for civilians, teachers, farmers, traders, etc. crossing at rush hour.

Wall and “Perverse Effects”

A former head of the Shin Beth, the Israeli secret service, declares : "It is impossible with so many people, to prevent terrorists from crossing. Perhaps the wall will reduce the number, but just one. One, is too much, and the wall will fail-[...]."

While this project is expected to reduce insecurity in Israel, a possible scenario would lead to its accentuation. In other words, it may foster the emergence of "reinforcing effects" *, a variant of “perverse effects” which might go against Israeli objectives.

- * French sociologist Raymond Boudon distinguishes, according to the result of the action, the reinforcing effects, reaction, innovation, reversal, etc. “Perverse effects” are by definition "individual or collective effects resulting from the juxtaposition of individual behavior without being included in the objectives intended by the actors.”

Wall and “Perverse Effects”

In Jerusalem, the Israeli demographic ambition through the wall, trying to minimize the number of Palestinians to create an Israeli Jewish majority, can also generate “perverse effects”.

Some Palestinians of Jerusalem who have Israeli identity cards and have lived outside the city limits (*Ar Ram, Dahiet Albarid, Azariyé Abu Dis*) returned to live in the city not to lose their permanent residence and to avoid the daily passage at *checkpoints*. Their number is estimated between 50,000 and 100,000.

Wall and “Perverse Effects”

The return of many Palestinians to East Jerusalem could change the demographic balance, in the opposite direction from aims of Israeli government policy, in place since 1967.

Here we can apply the concept of "reaction effect" which "are effects that come from miscalculations about the strategic reactions of others." Effects not explicitly intended by actors and resulting from their situation of interdependence.

Wall and “Perverse Effects”

Finally, it can be noted that the wall may increase divergences even within the Israeli political class. If the need for its construction, for security reasons, remains an idea shared by a large part of Israeli political leaders, its distance from the Green Line reveals opposition-among some political parties.

The opinion of the former head of the Shin Beth goes in this direction :
“Nobody will believe us if we say that it’s only a security wall. If this was the case, it would have been built closer to the Green Line [...], or on the Green Line itself. It would have been recognized by the international community and even by the Palestinians.”

Supposed to consolidate national unity around the security problem, the construction of the wall will eventually lead to increase differences. This is another example of the "reinforcement effect".

Questions

The following questions must be brought up:

What is the role of the Peace Process signed in Oslo nearly eleven years ago ?

How can the paradox between this agreement and the building of the wall in the West Bank as a security defense be explained ?

II- Security and Oslo Agreement

Signature of Oslo Agreement Washington



The Oslo Agreement

The Oslo agreement signed in 1993 has transformed the Israeli-Palestinian political evolution. For the first time since the creation of Israel in 1948, Palestinians and Israelis set up a "peace process." And for the first time, the exiled members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), came back to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

In July 1994, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is established in Ramallah. A political institution intended to manage the Palestinian society waiting for the creation of the Palestinian state.

What is the Oslo agreement ?

Does the construction of the wall put an end to this agreement? In other words, are we in the post-Oslo stage?

1. What is the Oslo agreement ?

On 13 September 1993, ten years before the beginning of the construction of the separation wall, Israelis and Palestinians signed an agreement in Washington to establish the rules of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. They formalized the political relations between the two groups, through mutual recognition.

This agreement put an end to the first major Palestinian uprising, called *Intifada* in Arabic, which began in December 1987. It started in Gaza and reached the West Bank including the city of Jerusalem. Israeli leaders were surprised. They tried by all means to stop the *Intifada* and engage the secret channel of negotiations with the Palestinians, in Oslo.

Oslo Agreement

The policy signed in Oslo was considered temporary. The signing of a final agreement was scheduled for 1996. It -never happened. Oslo principles, signed in 1993, were completed by a second signature in Taba, Egypte, in 1995, the so called 'Oslo II'.

Was a Palestinian state born in Oslo ?

The answer is no.

This agreement organized the territorial management of the West Bank between Israelis and Palestinians. In other words, Palestinian did not have full power and the West Bank territory found itself fragmented into three zones.

The Three Zones of the West Bank

Zone A: under total Palestinian control, includes major Palestinian cities, but covers only 3% of the West Bank.

Zone B: managed jointly by Palestinians and Israelis. It covers almost 27% of the West Bank.

Zone C: managed only by the Israelis. However, this part is the rest of the territory and covers about 70% of the West Bank. In 1993, this area is mostly sparsely populated. Israel will thus have the opportunity to build new settlements.

Note that areas A and B comprise 90% of the population of the West Bank.

(See map next slide)

Oslo II, 1995



TINE FACTS



2. The Wall and the Oslo Agreement

We can realize with hindsight that the Oslo negotiations lead mainly to one real change: the PLO's return back to the Occupied Territories.

Indeed, in terms of building a viable Palestinian state, this interim agreement said nothing. In the same way, the autonomy granted to Palestinians in the West Bank is limited. In this sense, the construction of the wall seems to go in the direction of the non-construction of a Palestinian state, as it contributes to the development of the territorial fragmentation of the West Bank started in Oslo.

Moreover, the question of East Jerusalem, claimed by the Palestinians as the capital of their future state, was not negotiated in Oslo. Today, this city finds itself surrounded by the wall.

The End