

# Sharon proposes removal of Gaza settlements, settlers say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**JERUSALEM** — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office on Tuesday proposed evacuating seven isolated settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, settler leaders said, in what would be the strongest sign yet that Israel is getting ready to impose its own boundary.

Israel has never removed an officially sanctioned settlement, and the proposal raised questions about whether Sharon really intended to carry it out. Sharon denied the proposal was formally made.

Israeli radio stations said that in exchange for the settlers' evacuation, the government would guarantee legislation that no other settlements would be uprooted until a peace treaty is reached with the Palestinians.

Settler leader Shaul Goldstein said the settlers turned down the proposal. Media reports said a top Sharon aide relayed it to settler leaders.

Sharon told reporters his unilateral disengagement program is not yet complete, and the reports about the proposal were "wrong."

"I have no intention of passing such a law that would tie the hands of the government," he said.

Israel Radio said the settlements earmarked for evacuation were Ganim, Kadim, Sanur and Homesh in the West Bank, and Netzarim, Kfar Darom and Morag in the Gaza Strip.

All seven settlements are small and isolated and frequent targets of Palestinian attacks. The most prominent is Netzarim, a heavily fortified enclave southwest of Gaza City.

Israel has never removed a veteran settlement in the West Bank and Gaza and has made only halting efforts to evacuate unauthorized outposts in accordance with the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan, which aims at creating a Palestinian state next year.

Middle East expert Mark Heller of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University said the evacuation proposal did not appear to be a serious plan.

"It is a fairly modest redeployment," he told The Associated Press. "It appears to me that all

that means is that he is trying to play for time, particularly with the Americans." Israeli media have reported Sharon will visit Washington next month, though officials from both countries have not confirmed that.

The United States has been promoting the "road map" peace plan. However, talks have been frozen for months, and neither Israel nor the Palestinians implemented the first steps of the plan.

Sharon has threatened unilateral measures if the talks remain frozen, imposing a temporary boundary on the West Bank and moving some settlements to improve Israel's security deployment. In his remarks Tuesday, Sharon linked the reports about evacuating seven settlements to his unilateral disengagement plan, saying no proposals would be made until the plan is completed.

Bentzi Lieberman, head of the main settler organization, said evacuation would amount to rewarding Palestinian terror and he urged settlement backers in Sharon's government to quit.

"This should arouse parlia-

ment and the nationalist parties and those inside the Likud itself," he told Israel TV, referring to Sharon's party. "It looks as if he won't have a government if he gets on the plane with a program that in fact encourages terrorism."

However, Sharon's hard-line coalition partners have said they would leave his government only if he actually carries out his ideas, underlining doubts about whether Sharon is serious about moving or evacuating settlements he has steadfastly promoted for decades.

With Sharon threatening unilateral steps if road map talks remain frozen, U.S. and Egyptian efforts to revive the international peace plan resumed Tuesday.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher met in the West Bank with Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders.

Palestinian officials said the talks centered on fresh efforts to get militant groups to declare a halt in attacks on Israelis and on Palestinian opposition to a security fence Israel is building around the West Bank.

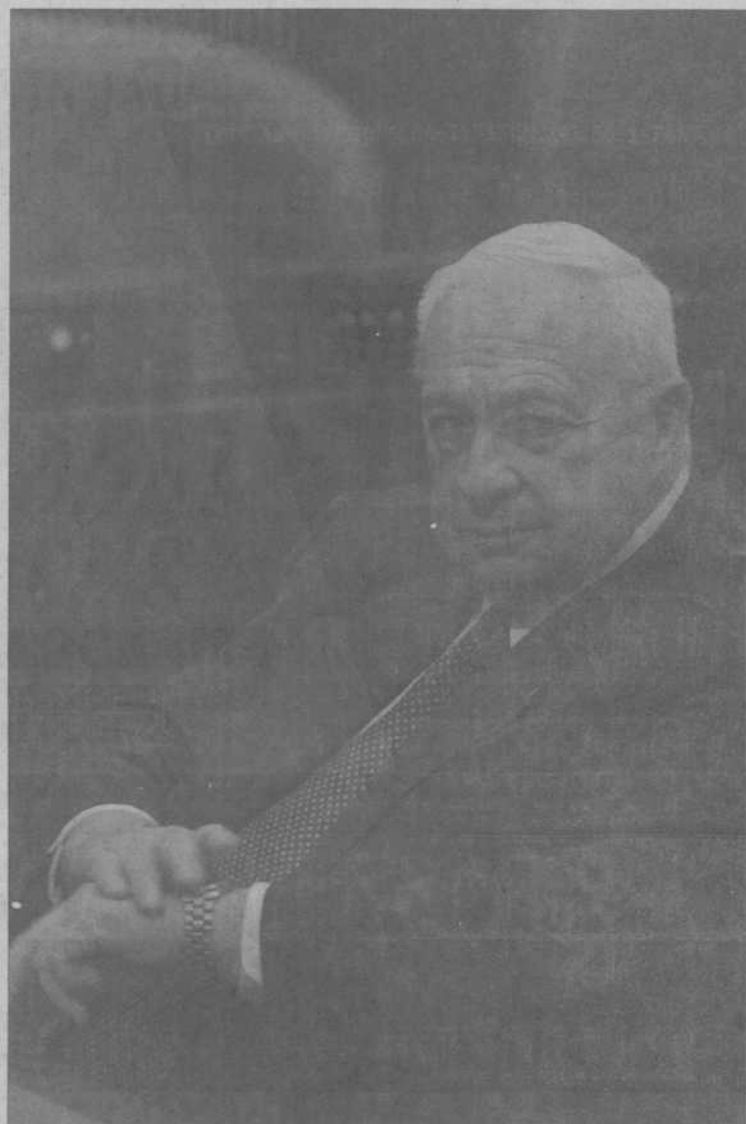


PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is seen after addressing the Israeli Parliament in Jerusalem, Israel on Tuesday May 14, 2002.

# Suicide bomber kills Canadian peacekeeper, Afghan civilian

BY AMIR SHAH

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN** — A suicide bomber killed a Canadian soldier and an Afghan civilian Tuesday in an attack on a convoy of the NATO-led security force patrolling Kabul. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

The soldier was the first foreign victim of a fresh wave of violence that has claimed more than 60 lives this month. The attack came a day after Afghanistan's president signed the country's first post-Taliban constitution into law.

Three other Canadian troops

and eight civilians, including a Frenchman, were wounded in the attack on a three-jeep convoy on a main road in the west of the city.

Lt. Col. Don Denne, a Canadian commander of the security force, said the attacker blew himself up as a jeep slowed down to negotiate a rut in the road, peppering the soldiers and bystanders with shrapnel.

Denne told reporters the man appeared to have detonated artillery or mortar rounds strapped to his body — a tactic previously unknown in Afghanistan.

Mullah Hakim Latifi, a Taliban spokesman who contacted The

Associated Press by satellite telephone, said the attack was the start of a campaign of suicide bombings that "will be continued until the coalition forces leave our country." He identified the bomber as 22-year-old Hafiz Abdullah from Khost province.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned the attack, blaming it on "terrorist elements intent on disrupting the peace and security of our people."

U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said the attack "showed how desperate the terrorists are as Afghanistan makes progress" and vowed the Taliban would be

defeated. "There is no doubt in my mind that history is not on their side," he said.

At NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer condemned the attack and pledged it would not deter the alliance's peacekeeping mission.

The dead soldier was identified as Cpl. Jamie Brendan Murphy, 26, of Conception Harbour, Newfoundland. The wounded were Lt. Jason Matthew Feyko, 30, of Bethany, Ontario; Cpl. Jeremy Gerald MacDonald, 30, of Burnt Islands, Newfoundland; and Cpl. Richard Michael Newman, 23, of

Hartland, New Brunswick.

Fazel Karim Sayedi, director of the hospital that treated most of the wounded, said the 20-year-old Afghan civilian died of abdominal injuries. Two other wounded civilians were in serious condition.

Afghan state television said the wounded Frenchman worked for the Asian Development Bank. Bank officials could not be reached for comment.

At their main base in Afghanistan, Canadian soldiers hugged and comforted each other after the attack.

Some of the troops said the attack was retaliation for a raid the

Canadians carried out early last week with Kabul police, in which several suspected terrorists and alleged drug lords were apprehended. The raid was their first offensive action since arriving in Afghanistan last August as part of the NATO-led security force.

Two years after the Taliban's ouster, remnants of the hard-line regime, along with its al-Qaida allies and followers of Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, have been launching regular attacks against U.S. or international forces, though suicide bombs are an unusual tactic in Afghanistan.

## Student Government News

### Student Body Elections

Filing for candidacy has been extended to Thursday, January 29th. All applications and fees must be received by noon!

Good Luck to all candidates!



Mandatory candidates meeting will be Feb. 9th

### Tonight

Safety Walk at 8pm. (meet in the Russell House lobby)

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