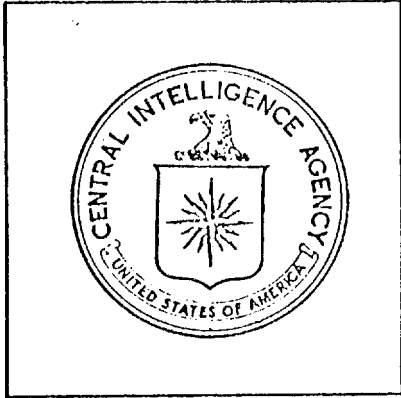


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*Israeli-Arab Conflict  
in the Holy City of Hebron*

**Secret**

CIA/BGI RP 74-6

September 1973

## WARNING

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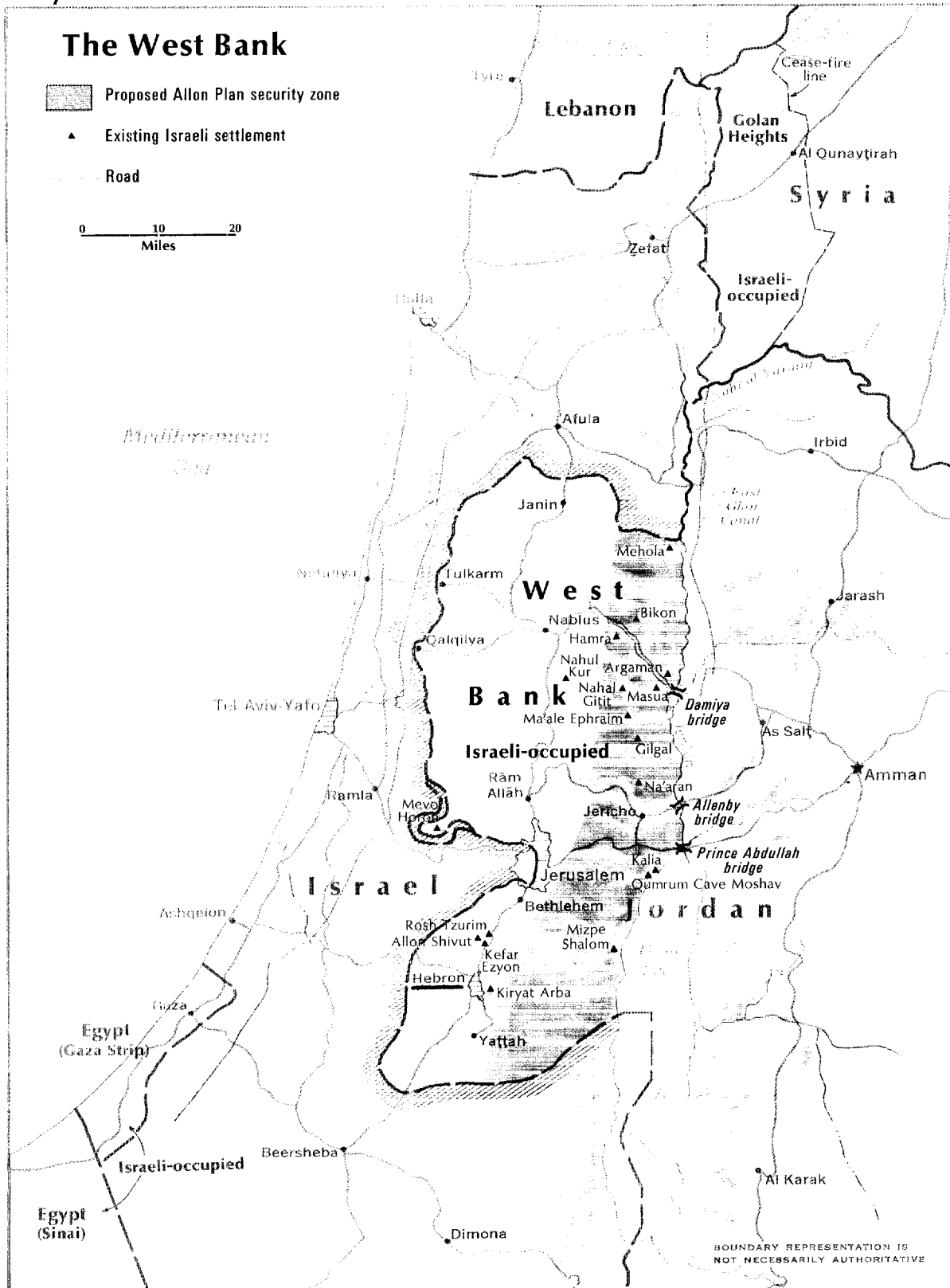
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Map A



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Central Intelligence Agency  
Directorate of Intelligence  
September 1973

ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT IN THE HOLY CITY OF HEBRON

Summary and Conclusions

In all the occupied territories Israeli authorities face few problems more sensitive than those of the city of Hebron and its Cave of Machpelah, sacred to both Jews and Moslems. It is a pious belief that Isaac, ancestor of the Jews, and Ishmael, ancestor of the Arabs, together buried their father Abraham in the cave. This holy place is enclosed by a high stone-wall structure, Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil, which contains the 12th-century Mosque of Abraham. Jews, excluded from the Haram during Ottoman times, gained access after the June 1967 War. An overjoyed Israeli Army Rabbinate Unit seized the Haram and opened it for Israeli sightseeing and Jewish worship. Later that year a "sharing arrangement," signed by the Israeli military, guaranteed the joint use of the area by Jews and Moslems.

In April 1968 a few Orthodox families moved into rented rooms of an Arab hotel in Hebron, ostensibly to celebrate Passover but actually to establish a Jewish community in the city despite the stated disapproval of the Israeli Government. This settlement attempt caused sharp debate within the coalition Cabinet. Although establishing civilian settlements in an occupied territory

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\* *Comments and questions may be directed to [REDACTED] of the Office of Basic and Geographic Intelligence, Code 143, Extension 2886.*

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is illegal according to international law, the Israeli Cabinet, which included minority supporters of the settlement, compromised its official position by allowing the settlers to stay. Under continuous pressure from the right-wing and religious parties, the Government in 1970 seized 825 acres of Arab land and began building the first apartments of a permanent settlement, named Kiryat Arba, the Biblical name for Hebron.

After its quiet surrender in 1967, Hebron has been an occasionally tense but generally peaceful city under Israeli occupation. Sheikh Jabari, the mayor, convinced of the futility of fighting, continues to lead his people in non-violent protests. However, the Kiryat Arba settlers have insisted upon several changes in the "sharing arrangement" of the mosque -- each in their favor -- and continue to ask for more Arab land for expansion, despite previous large seizures. These actions indicate to the Arabs the impossibility of amicable coexistence: the Israeli actions are hauntingly similar to the ancient Arab fable of the camel who moved gradually into his master's tent -- and moved the master out.

Kiryat Arba is one of about 18 Israeli settlements, many of which are now civilian, in the occupied West Bank. Although it is an Israeli urban center built in the spirit of the Allon Plan,\* the reason for its creation was neither strategic nor economic but rather Hebron's significance as a holy city of Judaism. It is important primarily to the Orthodox segment of the Israeli population, many of whom want to live in the holy city.

It appears that the Kiryat Arba/Hebron area will remain in Israeli hands, that Kiryat Arba will probably increase in population and industrial strength, and that Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil will become more a synagogue and less a mosque. Should there be any peace negotiations, the new "facts" now being created on the Hebron landscape -- settlement pattern, economic investment, and population composition -- cannot help but influence these negotiations.

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\* *Interim plan presented by cabinet member Yigal Allon in 1967 for dealing with problems imposed by Israel's acquisition of Arab territories during the 1967 war. See The Allon Plan, CIA/BGI GM 69-4, 25 February 1969.*

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Jewish Presence

1. The ancient city of Hebron (Al Khalil in Arabic) lies about 20 miles south of Jerusalem in the Biblical Valley of Eschol. Associated with Abraham, King David, and other Old Testament people and events, Hebron is identified as one of the four holy cities of Israel, mentioned in the Talmud with Jerusalem, Safed, and Tiberias. (See Appendix.) Traditionally, a small Jewish community had lived in Hebron from the time of the Jews' return from exile in Babylon until the Arab riots in 1929.

2. In modern times, the Hebron Jews had existed as a small minority within a separate quarter of the old city; in 1917 the British Government counted 757 Jews living in Hebron -- about 3 percent of the total population. After World War I, Hebron and other cities in Palestine became

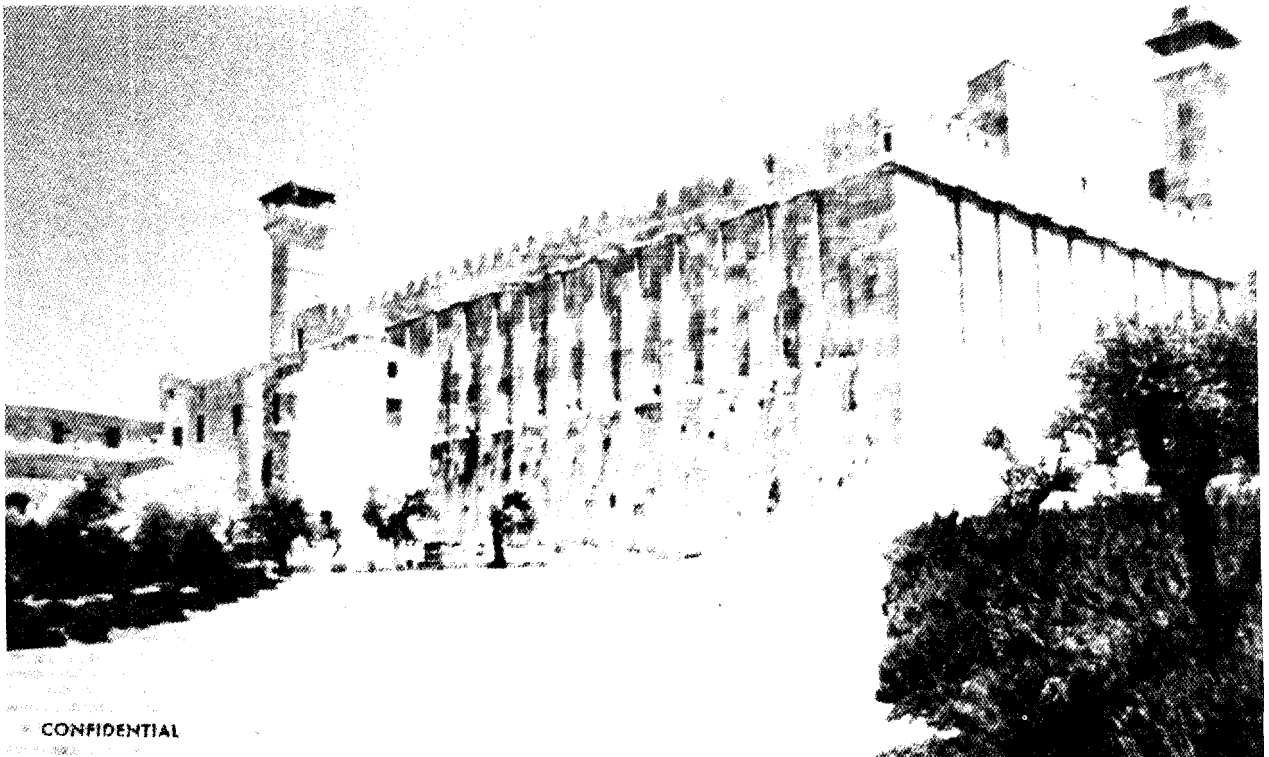


Figure 1. The stone wall structure of Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil in northeastern Hebron is believed to enclose the area above the sealed Cave of Machpelah, also known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The stone wall, surrounding an area about 200 feet by 112 feet, dates from the Herodian period.

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centers of Arab nationalistic feeling and the scenes of protests and riots against Jewish immigration. Following riots in 1929, in which many Jews were killed, the Jewish community left the city.

3. In 1967 there were about 40,000 Arab residents, most of them crowded in the 2-square-mile urban area in the valley. The rest lived in scattered farmhouses in the city's 30-square-mile agricultural area.

4. In April 1968, seven Jewish families moved into rented rooms of an Arab hotel in Hebron. On April 15 these ultra-Orthodox families stated their desire was only to celebrate Passover in Hebron near the Cave of Machpelah, but afterwards they announced their intent to settle permanently in the city. They took this controversial action despite the Israeli Government's disapproval and in the face of international law: the 1950 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, signed by Israel, prohibits the establishment of civilian settlements in occupied territory. When the minority right-wing and religious parties voiced their support of the Hebron settlers, Israel's coalition Government began to split. The more moderate Cabinet members did not support the settlers but would not vote to forcibly evict them from Hebron. The Government, to preserve itself, reached a compromise. The settlers stayed but were moved for their own protection into the Israeli military government compound in northwestern Hebron (Map B). To pacify the settlement's minority supporters, the Eshkol government commissioned a time-consuming Hebron Master Plan for Jewish settlement.

5. The Cabinet, under continuous pressure, made several decisions in 1968 and 1969 which led to creation of the Jewish settlement Kiryat Arba in northeast Hebron in March 1970. While the settlers lived in the compound, they petitioned repeatedly for permission to operate a yeshiva (religious boarding school) and a kosher restaurant/gift shop, which the Cabinet eventually granted (Figure 2).

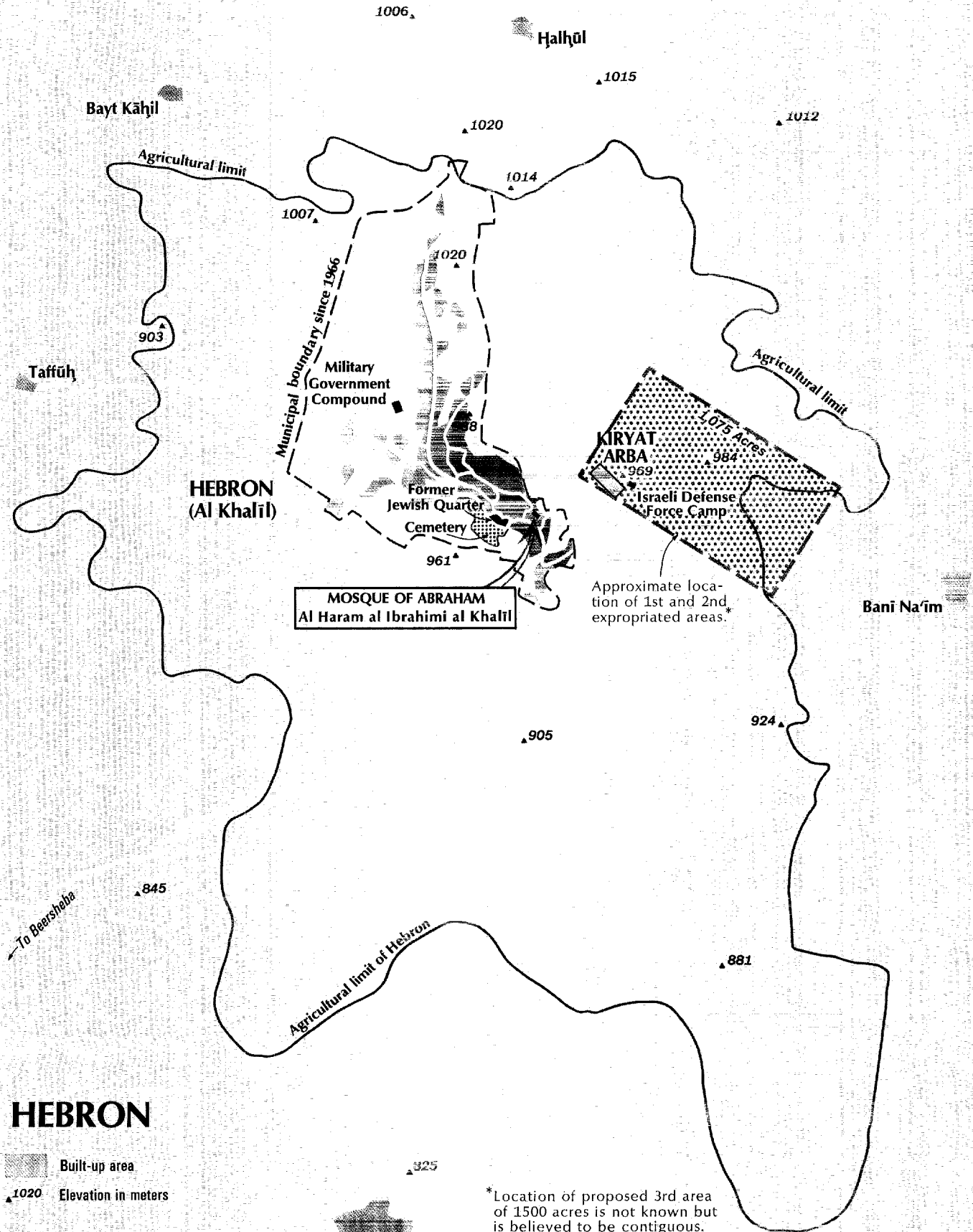
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To Jerusalem

Sa'ir



Approximate location of 1st and 2nd expropriated areas.

# HEBRON

- Built-up area
- Elevation in meters



\* Location of proposed 3rd area of 1500 acres is not known but is believed to be contiguous.

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 Exempt from general  
 declassification schedule of E.O. 11652  
 Exemption category: 5B  
 Declassification date: impossible to determine

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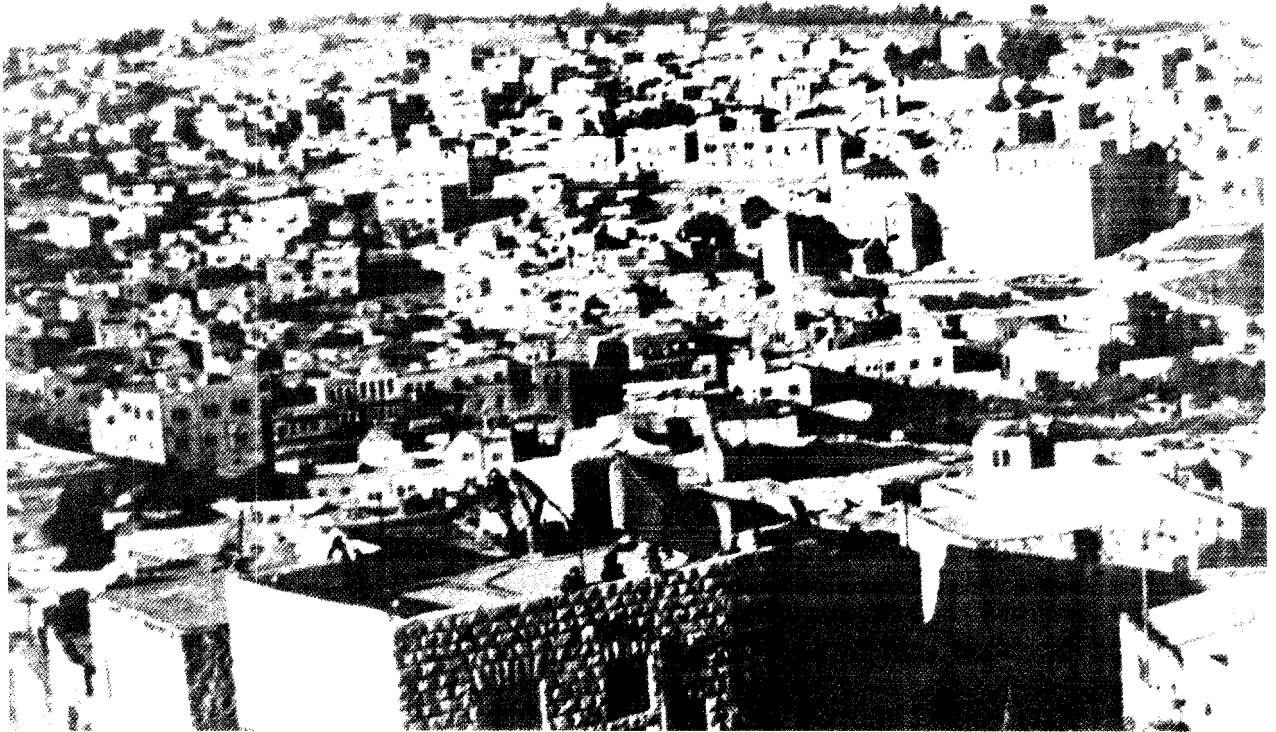


Figure 2. Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil is in the upper right of the above view of Hebron. After the Jewish settlers moved from a hotel in the city to the military government compound (large building on hill, below left), they opened a kosher restaurant/gift shop (below right) in front of the Haram. The settlers, now living in Kiryat Arba, continue to operate the restaurant and have recently opened an art gallery in a nearby building.



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From these businesses the dozen families earned the income needed for them to stay in Hebron. When the Government authorized the yeshiva in 1968, it attempted to limit the Hebron settlement to 103 Jews, all of whom had to be connected with the yeshiva. By March 1969 the yeshiva was open with 12 bachelor students in residence. In March 1970 the settlers threatened to pitch tents near the government compound if apartments were not built for more families. The Israeli Cabinet, taking their threat seriously, hurriedly announced plans to construct 250 apartments for them in Hebron.

Kiryat Arba

6. In April 1970 the Israeli military governor seized a tract of 825 acres of Arab farmland for the officially planned Israeli city of Kiryat Arba. The military immediately established an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) camp within this area to protect Kiryat Arba against possible sabotage. Planning and construction continued over the next 12 months. In October the Housing Ministry approved plans for an initial project of 80 apartments to be built in three-story structures, and Deputy Finance Minister Dinstein later announced the transfer of over \$1.7 million\* from budgets of various government offices to finance the housing construction. In December, Finance Minister Sapir said an industrial area of 16,200 square feet of floorspace would also be constructed, and after this area was rented, the industrial area could be expanded to 43,200 square feet. The government also granted Kiryat Arba a preferential status for industrial development like that granted to Kefar Ezyon, a Jewish settlement a few miles north of Hebron. By September 1971 Kiryat Arba included 234 apartments, a kindergarten, a school, a store, a temporary synagogue, and an electric plant. At this time the settlement housed 140 Hebron settlers and 25 families of the border police -- a total of 200 to 250 people.

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\* *Conversions of Israeli pounds into US dollars involve different rates of exchange because of devaluation.*

7. Complete details of the Hebron Master Plan, approved by the Israeli Cabinet, have not been announced. The Government has spent more than \$10 million on Kiryat Arba, and plans to spend another \$20 million have been approved (Figure 3). The Housing Ministry announced that a total of about 900 apartments would be constructed in phases in Kiryat Arba and that by 1975 the settlement would have about 5,000 residents.

8. In October 1971 the Government seized another 250 acres for Kiryat Arba's industrial expansion, making the total area of Kiryat Arba about 1,075 acres (Map B). This year the settlers are demanding additional land for expansion, and more seizures are anticipated. The Commerce and Industry Ministry reportedly decided to expropriate another 1,500 acres in 1972, but this land has not yet been taken.

9. Late in 1971 cracks began to show in the Hebron Master Plan as the Orthodox settlers debated with the Housing Ministry over the religious character of the Kiryat Arba population. The Housing Ministry had planned Kiryat Arba for the Orthodox families and for other residents representing a wide range of Israeli society. An important consideration was to relieve some of Jerusalem's housing problems, since people could live in Kiryat Arba and easily commute to work in the capital. The original settlers wanted to maintain at least a majority of Orthodox families, however, and they attempted various schemes, such as "screening" applicants' jobs, to achieve this. As the struggle continued between the proponents of these opposing development schemes, 45 of the apartments remained unoccupied; this vacancy rate caused officials to delay new apartment construction. For a variety of reasons, including the persistent rumor that the settlement was limited to Orthodox families, couples in Jerusalem who needed housing refused to move into Kiryat Arba. Nevertheless, in 1971 a few families living in Kiryat Arba were non-Orthodox.

10. In December 1971 the Orthodox settlers requested that Kiryat Arba be granted municipal status to replace the then joint administration by the Housing Ministry and the military government. As a municipality, the settlers would be able to elect their own mayor and council and could keep

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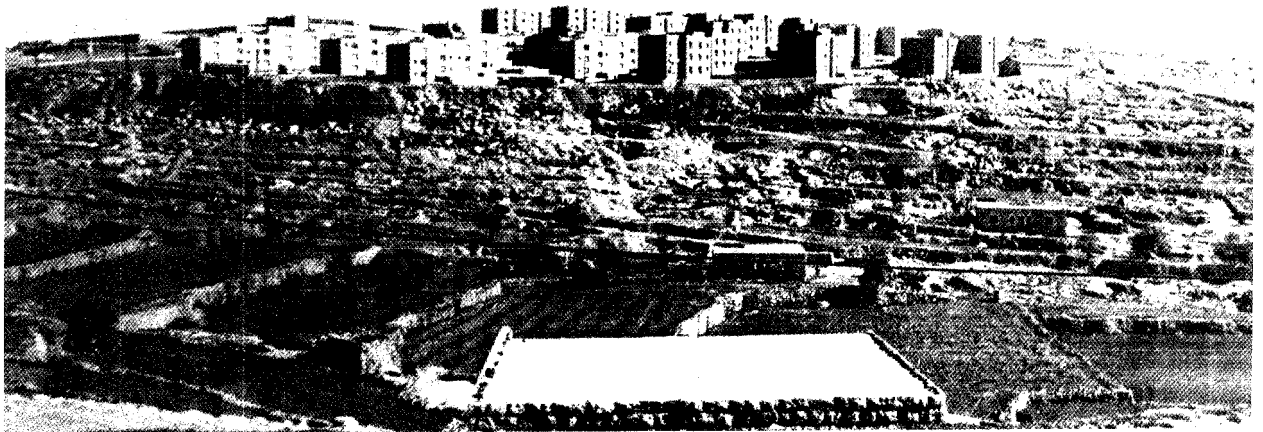


Figure 3. Kiryat Arba (Jan. 1973) includes about 40 apartment buildings and a small industrial park. Arab farmers continue to live in the area between Kiryat Arba and the Haram (above). Security measures at Kiryat Arba include a guard tower at its entrance, fencing around the built-up area (below), and an IDF camp on its eastern side.



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the number of non-Orthodox residents to a minimum. This maneuver was, however, unsuccessful: although the problem reached Cabinet level, the request for municipal status was turned down. The Cabinet, desiring not to show partiality toward any particular segment of the Israeli population, favored the Housing Ministry's ideas for development of the area.

11. Despite Israeli Government encouragement, few industries have located in the settlement. Presently, Kiryat Arba's industrial park includes the \$350,000 Hebron Tiles factory, a building materials plant, and a men's underwear sewing plant. In 1972 the Commerce and Industry Ministry announced plans for 17 new factories in Hebron. A controversial jet engine parts plant, proposed by Beit Shemesh Engines, Ltd., is under consideration. An earlier proposal for a \$3.8 million plywood and formica plant failed in final negotiations. Eight factories received Government loans totaling more than \$350,000. The total employment in these industries is not known, but more Arabs from Hebron work in the plants than do Jewish settlers, less than half of whom are employed in Kiryat Arba's services, businesses, and industries.

12. To further stimulate industrial development in the occupied territories, the Israeli Government decided this year to give greater investment incentives. Under a maximum assistance plan, it would give the developer of an "approved enterprise" in Kiryat Arba a 20-percent grant on the equipment purchased as well as a subsidized loan and five-year tax relief. The industrial project would also be insured by the Israeli Government for 100 percent against political risks. The investor would be fully compensated should Israel be forced to withdraw from the occupied territory and the plant damaged or confiscated by non-Israeli authorities.

#### Arab Reactions

13. Initial Hebron Arab reaction to the Jewish settlement attempt was guarded. The mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Jabari, asked the Prime Minister to order the expulsion of the group in May 1968, after a meeting with the settlers

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degenerated into a shouting match. On June 2 the owner of the hotel, under pressure from his fellow Hebronites, terminated the group's lease. The settlers then moved into the military government compound.

14. Arab reaction to the announced creation of Kiryat Arba was sharp, but non-violent. The settlers had not provoked Arab concern much more than did the Israeli military personnel as long as the group remained small and was confined to the military compound. The Hebronites, however, were aroused by the prospect of a large number of Jews -- 250 families -- with their own housing area in the city.

15. After the April 1970 seizure of 825 acres Mayor Jabari called a protest meeting to discuss possible counter-measures. It accomplished little, in part because the Israelis sabotaged it by putting up road blocks around the city, thus prohibiting journalists and others from traveling to Hebron. Later Jabari said that the Government had not offered anything approaching adequate compensation for the land. Although the exact number of Arab farmers in the seized area is disputed, U.S. Embassy officials who visited the area in 1970 reported it to be substantially inhabited and under intensive cultivation. They said an accurate count of the houses was difficult because of the hilly terrain, but apparently many more farmers commuted to the area than lived in it. Hebron officials stated that at least 500 families derived their living from the seized tract and an Israeli Arab journalist estimated that 100 Arab families lived there. Although the Israeli government paid "compensation money" to the displaced farmers, they could not replace their losses since more than 85 percent of the Hebron area was already under cultivation (Figure 4). Only marginal land, rocky or steep-sloped, remained uncultivated or in pasture. Farmers on nearby land also lost olive trees when the Israelis bulldozed access roads into the new settlement. After a second seizure, 250 acres, in 1971 more Arabs lost their lands. If the proposed third area of approximately 1,500 acres is taken by the Israelis, most of the remaining farmers northeast of Hebron will be displaced.

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Figure 4. Hebron's Arab farmers grow vegetables, deciduous fruits, and sweet, late-ripening table grapes for the Arab markets in Jordan and the Persian Gulf states. Vines, which occupy about 40 percent of the agricultural area, are grown as extended bushes in fields, on string courses, and as climbers on arbors.



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16. In May 1972 the Government announced that Kiryat Arba would be expanded from 250 apartments to 500, the formerly vacant units having been assigned by the Housing Ministry's lottery held in January. Jabari dispatched a telegram to the Israeli authorities. He requested them to "be satisfied" with the first Hebron settlement of 250 apartments and to refrain from the planned expansion which might arouse a "feeling of uneasiness" among the people.

#### Mosque Dispute

17. It is probable that the residents of Hebron feel the greatest bitterness over the control and use of their main mosque by the Jewish settlers. From the Moslems point of view the "sharing arrangement" is a pattern of Jewish demand, Moslem concession, Jewish demand . . . imposed by the Israeli military. Recently, in June 1973, the Jewish settlers have asked for the Moslems to be completely excluded from the mosque; Dayan and the Israeli Government so far have not agreed to this proposal, but the Hebron natives see it is inevitable.

18. The Mosque of Abraham and its courtyard cover the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Machpelah Cave, sacred to both Moslems and Jews. Its surrounding wall, thought to have been originally a fortress, is ascribed to the Herodian period, about 37 B.C. The crenelated upper part of the wall and the two surviving minarets of the original four are of Arab construction. The Mosque of Abraham, in the southern end of the walled area, is adapted from a 12th century Crusader church which was built over a Byzantine basilica of the Justinian period. The entire walled area, including the Mosque and its courtyard, form the Moslem Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil, the Sanctuary of Abraham the Friend of God.

19. Cenotaphs, empty honorary tombs, for the Patriarchs and their wives are located within the walls of the Haram above what are believed to be their actual graves. The cenotaphs of Isaac and Rebecca are inside the mosque; those of Abraham and Sarah are behind silver gratings in the walls of the narthex of the mosque; and those of Jacob and Leah

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are enclosed in chapel-like halls on the northern side of the courtyard (Figure 5). A cenotaph honoring Joseph is attached to the outer side of the courtyard wall. (See Plan of Al Haram.)

20. During Ottoman times Jews were banned from the Tomb of the Patriarchs. Under the British Mandate they were permitted to advance just seven steps up the long entrance stairway into the mosque. Jordanian authorities refused Jewish visits to the Haram from 1948 to June 1967.

21. After the June 1967 War, the Israeli Army Rabbinical Unit headed by Rabbi Goren took over the supervision and guarding of the Haram and its mosque. The Rabbinate placed a Holy Ark in the courtyard, which provided a place for Jewish worship; and thousands of Israelis crowded into the area to pray and to sightsee (Figure 5).

22. The Army Rabbinate, overjoyed in gaining control over the sacred site, paid little attention to maintaining order in the Haram. The Moslems complained that the Jews, who did not remove their shoes, were ruining the prayer carpets covering the floor and that the sanctity of the place was being defiled by women in immodest dress and by tourists carrying or eating food. The Moslems also charged that the Israeli soldiers guarding the Mosque played dice and cards in the area.

23. After several weeks, Defense Minister Dayan mediated an agreement between the Israelis, represented by the military governor, and the Moslems, represented by Mayor Jahari and the religious leaders of Hebron. This agreement, signed on August 1, 1967, reduced the Army Rabbinate's authority over the site. Jewish visitors were allotted regular visiting hours, 8-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-5 p.m. except on Friday, the Moslem sabbath, when visits were forbidden. The Israeli Army was ordered to see that visitors were modestly dressed, to prevent food or drink being introduced into the mosque, and to prohibit smoking in the Haram courtyard. The agreement made no mention of the removal of shoes. The Army Rabbinate also banned visits by Jews on Saturday to prevent their desecrating the Jewish

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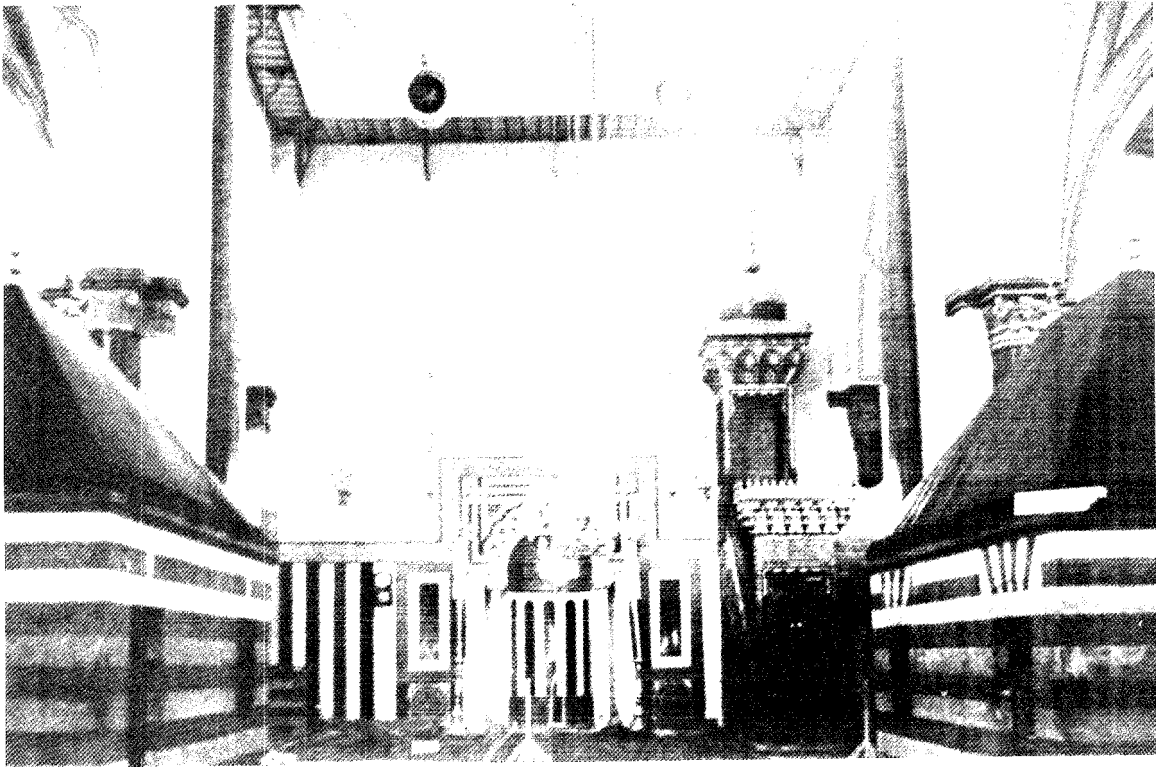


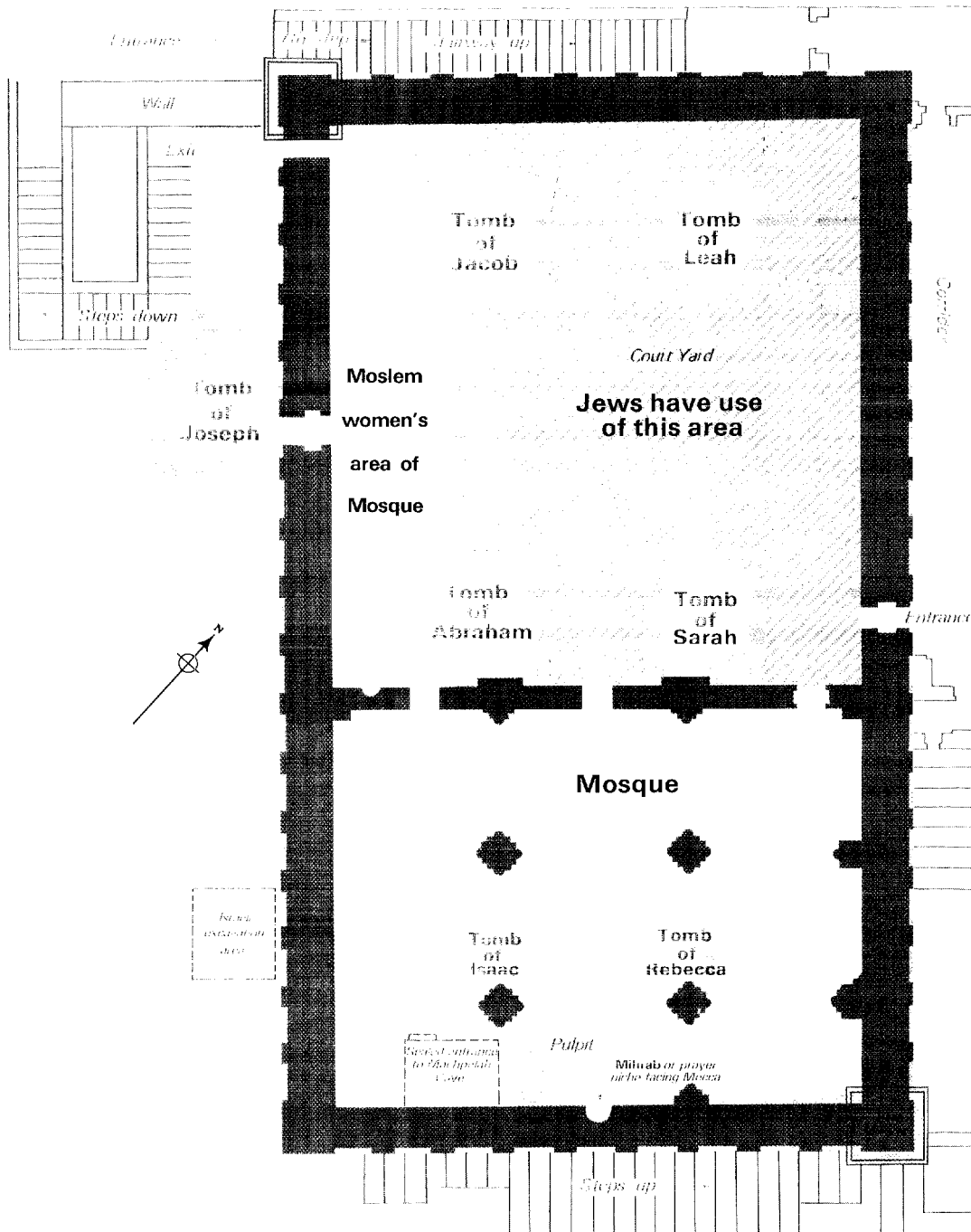
Figure 5. Facing the mihrab or prayer niche (and Mecca) inside the Mosque of Abraham within the Haram. Red and white stone "huts" with green roofs cover the Tombs of Isaac (right) and Rebecca. Inside these "huts" the cenotaphs are covered by richly embroidered cloths (above). Inside the courtyard of the Haram two Israelis guard the Holy Ark used in Jewish services (below).



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Plan of  
**AL HARAM AL IBRAHIMI AL KHALIL**  
(MOSQUE OF ABRAHAM)



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Sabbath by driving to Hebron on that day. The Israeli flag, placed on the mosque on the day of Hebron's surrender, was removed.

24. In January 1968 the Israelis attempted archeological exploration into the long-sealed Machpelah Cave. They apparently felt the need to end doubts expressed by some Israelis as to whether the bones of their Jewish forefathers actually lay buried in that area. Sheikh Ati, custodian of the mosque, claimed that he foiled their plans by refusing to close the mosque for two days while "maintenance" of the premises was undertaken. The educated Sheikh said, "As a 20th century man, I would not object to proper exploration of the cave. But we know that the Jews would not do it properly."

25. The Jewish settlers, who moved into Hebron on April 15, 1968, began within a few months a series of actions violating the agreement. In September they ignored the Moslem prayer time by holding holy day services for Rosh Hashana inside the mosque courtyard. The Hebronites protested this encroachment by sending petitions to the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Defense Forces Commander in Judea and Samaria. The response was disappointing. Before the Yom Kippur services on October 2, the Israelis changed the agreement in favor of unrestricted Jewish prayer at the mosque on Jewish holy days. Defense Minister Dayan told the Moslem dignitaries that Jewish services would be held on Yom Kippur without regard to the agreed Jewish visiting hours in the mosque. He reaffirmed, however, that the agreement would be respected on "ordinary" days. A Cabinet committee reportedly decided to have a synagogue built adjacent to the mosque as a long-range solution.

26. On October 9, 1968, a holy day of Succoth, more than 15,000 Israelis visited the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the Haram. That evening an Arab youth, apparently frustrated by the lack of success of peaceful protest and angered by the "new rules," threw a grenade at the entrance of the mosque injuring 47 Israelis. Defense Minister Dayan later announced at a Hebron meeting with Arab leaders that those

responsible for the incident had been captured and that Hebron as a whole was not held responsible. At this same meeting, which was covered by the Israeli press, he further attempted to calm the angry Israelis by stating that Hebron's Mayor Jabari had foiled an attempt to sabotage the electricity network at the mosque during Yom Kippur services a few days earlier. Between 1969 and 1972 there were no more reported incidents at the mosque.

27. Again in September of 1972 the settlers asked for extended use of the Haram area. They claimed they needed more space for services since the Jewish settlement had increased in size. Again the military government tried to effect a compromise between the Arab rights and the Jewish rights at the sacred site. In November 1972, Dayan informed the Hebron leadership of a second batch of new rules, which extended both the times and places of Jewish worship. The new provisions permit Jews to worship in the Hall of Jacob and Leah in addition to the Hall of Abraham and Sarah, to which they had previously been restricted, and to bring benches and screens into the prayer area. The mosque courtyard would be roofed to provide additional space for Jewish worship. Moreover, the Jews gained prayer time between 4 and 5 p.m. every Friday, a day the Moslems had previously had exclusive right to the Haram. This change limited Moslem services on the one day of the week they required maximum use of the mosque facilities, while the Jewish Sabbath which begins at sundown Friday continues through Saturday. (Kiryat Arba Jews, who can walk to the Haram on Saturday, are apparently permitted to have services).

28. The Hebron settlers announced on the 24th of November the desecration of a scroll and psalm books from their Holy Ark in the mosque with the clear implication that Moslem fanatics were responsible for the act. A thorough Israeli police investigation into the incident concluded that the scroll in question had not been deliberately damaged, and it was not shown conclusively that the psalm books had actually come from the Haram. Undeterred by the police findings, the Hebron settlers petitioned the Prime Minister for expansion of Kiryat Arba into a full sized city, and

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suggested that there should be a Jewish population of 100,000 in Hebron "alongside the Arab city of 50,000 which includes many hostile elements."

29. In June 1973, Defense Minister Dayan again visited Hebron and Kiryat Arba to "cool things down." At a Kiryat Arba meeting the settlers discussed several of their current demands. Rabbi Levinger, leader of the group, spoke of the need for expanding Kiryat Arba and asked Dayan to be a representative for this purpose. Dayan said he could not be their representative although he supports the expansion of the settlement. He explained that he would reconsider many times before he would take land from Arab owners and transfer it to Jews.

30. One of the settlers asked Dayan if the settlers would be allowed to return to Beit Hadassah, the Jewish quarter of the city which was destroyed in 1929 (Map B). Dayan replied that he would not recommend that Jews live within Hebron but rather in a separate neighborhood. He said that it is possible to build synagogues and public institutions without entering Arab neighborhoods. The Defense Minister added that the Mosque of Abraham is a separate matter because of its uniqueness as a holy place and that the same conclusion could not be drawn for other places in the city, even if they had been Jewish property in the past.

31. In response to the settlers' demand that Jews be allowed to pray in all parts of the Haram over the Tomb of the Patriarchs, Dayan said he would not deprive Moslems of the right to use their Mosque of Abraham for religious services. He told the settlers unequivocally that he would not support the barring of Moslems from the sacred area.

32. The building of a synagogue adjacent to the Mosque of Abraham, planned as early as 1968, has not yet started, although in 1972 the Jewish National Fund purchased a few parcels of land around the mosque. The settlers of Kiryat Arba broke ground for a permanent synagogue in their settlement in June 1973, but at the same time they suggested that the mosque should be theirs

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and that the Moslems should be excluded from it. To Hebron's Moslems, who have worshipped continuously in the mosque since the defeat of the Crusaders in 1187, this recent demand of the settlers indicates the likely pattern of Israeli action in the future.



APPENDIX

Abbreviated Chronology of Machpelah Cave  
and Al Haram al Ibrahimi al Khalil

Approximate Date

2200 B.C.	Abraham purchases Cave of Machpelah for burial of his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23) Ishmael and Isaac bury their father, Abraham (Genesis 25)
1300 B.C.	Moses leads Hebrews to Palestine
1011-1003 B.C.	Hebron serves as King David's capital
931-587 B.C.	Hebron ruled as part of Kingdom of Judah
587 B.C.	Jews conquered by Babylonians; Hebron under foreign rule
5th Century B.C.	Jews, returning from Babylonian exile, settle in Hebron
168-63 B.C.	Brief rule of Maccabeans over Palestine
63 B.C.	Palestine falls under Roman rule
37 B.C.	Ashlars of present mosque wall erected as fortress during Herodian period
A.D. 70	Jerusalem destroyed
483-565	Christian basilica built over site
560	The Christian pilgrim Olacentinus wrote that Christians and Jews prayed on opposite sides of a partition
614-629	Palestine under Persian dominion

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636-1099	First Moslem conquest and rule
during 6th Century	Synagogue reportedly adjoined mosque wall
6-11 Century	Some sources report a synagogue at site from 6th to 11th Century
1099-1244	Crusaders establish Kingdom of Jerusalem in Palestine
1099	Crusaders take Hebron; fortify and rename it St. Abraham; build Cathedral of St. Abraham over Machpelah Cave
1167	Hebron area is see of Latin bishop
1187	Hebron recaptured by Saladin; Crusaders destroy own church and conceal Machpelah Cave; Moslems build present Al Haram al Ibrahimi al Khalil
11th-12th Century	Synagogue adjoined mosque, according to some sources
1518-1917	Jews banned from area during rule of Ottoman Turks
1917	Palestine conquered by British troops
1923	League of Nations mandate established over Palestine; British allow Jews to climb up 7 of the 43 steps leading into the Haram
1948-1967	Jordanian rule over the West Bank; no Jews permitted at the Haram
June 1967	Israelis conquer West Bank and regain use of Haram
Sept 1967	Israeli military enforces "shared arrangement" for Israeli and Moslem use of the Haram

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Oct 1968	Jews granted by Israeli military unrestricted prayer time in Haram on Jewish holy days
12 Nov 1972	Israeli military grants Jews use of two more areas of the Haram for Jewish worship, and Jewish prayer hours are extended
23 Nov 1972	Kiryat Arba Jewish settlers accuse Moslems of desecrating scroll and psalm books; Holy Ark broken into; Israeli police investigate and report that damage not deliberate
June 1973	Kiryat Arba settlers demand Moslems be excluded from Haram completely

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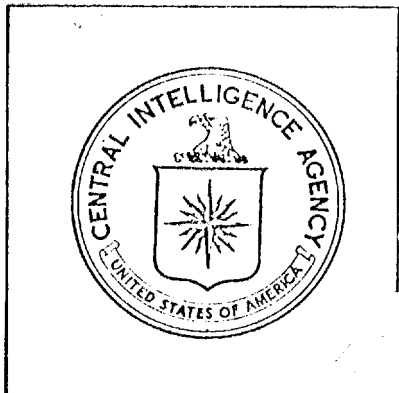
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*Israeli-Arab Conflict  
in the Holy City of Hebron*

**Secret**

CIA/BGI RP 74-6  
September 1973

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Central Intelligence Agency  
Directorate of Intelligence  
September 1973

ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT IN THE HOLY CITY OF HEBRON

Summary and Conclusions

In all the occupied territories Israeli authorities face few problems more sensitive than those of the city of Hebron and its Cave of Machpelah, sacred to both Jews and Moslems. It is a pious belief that Isaac, ancestor of the Jews, and Ishmael, ancestor of the Arabs, together buried their father Abraham in the cave. This holy place is enclosed by a high stone-wall structure, Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil, which contains the 12th-century Mosque of Abraham. Jews, excluded from the Haram during Ottoman times, gained access after the June 1967 War. An overjoyed Israeli Army Rabbinate Unit seized the Haram and opened it for Israeli sightseeing and Jewish worship. Later that year a "sharing arrangement," signed by the Israeli military, guaranteed the joint use of the area by Jews and Moslems.

In April 1968 a few Orthodox families moved into rented rooms of an Arab hotel in Hebron, ostensibly to celebrate Passover but actually to establish a Jewish community in the city despite the stated disapproval of the Israeli Government. This settlement attempt caused sharp debate within the coalition Cabinet. Although establishing civilian settlements in an occupied territory

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\* Comments and questions may be directed to [REDACTED] of the Office of Basic and Geographic Intelligence, Code 143, Extension 2886.

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is illegal according to international law, the Israeli Cabinet, which included minority supporters of the settlement, compromised its official position by allowing the settlers to stay. Under continuous pressure from the right-wing and religious parties, the Government in 1970 seized 825 acres of Arab land and began building the first apartments of a permanent settlement, named Kiryat Arba, the Biblical name for Hebron.

After its quiet surrender in 1967, Hebron has been an occasionally tense but generally peaceful city under Israeli occupation. Sheikh Jabari, the mayor, convinced of the futility of fighting, continues to lead his people in non-violent protests. However, the Kiryat Arba settlers have insisted upon several changes in the "sharing arrangement" of the mosque -- each in their favor -- and continue to ask for more Arab land for expansion, despite previous large seizures. These actions indicate to the Arabs the impossibility of amicable coexistence: the Israeli actions are hauntingly similar to the ancient Arab fable of the camel who moved gradually into his master's tent -- and moved the master out.

Kiryat Arba is one of about 18 Israeli settlements, many of which are now civilian, in the occupied West Bank. Although it is an Israeli urban center built in the spirit of the Allon Plan,\* the reason for its creation was neither strategic nor economic but rather Hebron's significance as a holy city of Judaism. It is important primarily to the Orthodox segment of the Israeli population, many of whom want to live in the holy city.

It appears that the Kiryat Arba/Hebron area will remain in Israeli hands, that Kiryat Arba will probably increase in population and industrial strength, and that Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil will become more a synagogue and less a mosque. Should there be any peace negotiations, the new "facts" now being created on the Hebron landscape -- settlement pattern, economic investment, and population composition -- cannot help but influence these negotiations.

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\* *Interim plan presented by cabinet member Yigal Allon in 1967 for dealing with problems imposed by Israel's acquisition of Arab territories during the 1967 war. See The Allon Plan, CIA/BGI GM 69-4, 25 February 1969.*

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### Jewish Presence

1. The ancient city of Hebron (Al Khalil in Arabic) lies about 20 miles south of Jerusalem in the Biblical Valley of Eschol. Associated with Abraham, King David, and other Old Testament people and events, Hebron is identified as one of the four holy cities of Israel, mentioned in the Talmud with Jerusalem, Safed, and Tiberias. (See Appendix.) Traditionally, a small Jewish community had lived in Hebron from the time of the Jews' return from exile in Babylon until the Arab riots in 1929.

2. In modern times, the Hebron Jews had existed as a small minority within a separate quarter of the old city: in 1917 the British Government counted 757 Jews living in Hebron -- about 3 percent of the total population. After World War I, Hebron and other cities in Palestine became

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centers of Arab nationalistic feeling and the scenes of protests and riots against Jewish immigration. Following riots in 1929, in which many Jews were killed, the Jewish community left the city.

3. In 1967 there were about 40,000 Arab residents, most of them crowded in the 2-square-mile urban area in the valley. The rest lived in scattered farmhouses in the city's 30-square-mile agricultural area.

4. In April 1968, seven Jewish families moved into rented rooms of an Arab hotel in Hebron. On April 15 these ultra-Orthodox families stated their desire was only to celebrate Passover in Hebron near the Cave of Machpelah, but afterwards they announced their intent to settle permanently in the city. They took this controversial action despite the Israeli Government's disapproval and in the face of international law: the 1950 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, signed by Israel, prohibits the establishment of civilian settlements in occupied territory. When the minority right-wing and religious parties voiced their support of the Hebron settlers, Israel's coalition Government began to split. The more moderate Cabinet members did not support the settlers but would not vote to forcibly evict them from Hebron. The Government, to preserve itself, reached a compromise. The settlers stayed but were moved for their own protection into the Israeli military government compound in northwestern Hebron (Map B). To pacify the settlement's minority supporters, the Eshkol government commissioned a time-consuming Hebron Master Plan for Jewish settlement.

5. The Cabinet, under continuous pressure, made several decisions in 1968 and 1969 which led to creation of the Jewish settlement Kiryat Arba in northeast Hebron in March 1970. While the settlers lived in the compound, they petitioned repeatedly for permission to operate a yeshiva (religious boarding school) and a kosher restaurant/gift shop, which the Cabinet eventually granted (Figure 2).

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From these businesses the dozen families earned the income needed for them to stay in Hebron. When the Government authorized the yeshiva in 1968, it attempted to limit the Hebron settlement to 103 Jews, all of whom had to be connected with the yeshiva. By March 1969 the yeshiva was open with 12 bachelor students in residence. In March 1970 the settlers threatened to pitch tents near the government compound if apartments were not built for more families. The Israeli Cabinet, taking their threat seriously, hurriedly announced plans to construct 250 apartments for them in Hebron.

#### Kiryat Arba

6. In April 1970 the Israeli military governor seized a tract of 825 acres of Arab farmland for the officially planned Israeli city of Kiryat Arba. The military immediately established an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) camp within this area to protect Kiryat Arba against possible sabotage. Planning and construction continued over the next 12 months. In October the Housing Ministry approved plans for an initial project of 80 apartments to be built in three-story structures, and Deputy Finance Minister Dinstein later announced the transfer of over \$1.7 million\* from budgets of various government offices to finance the housing construction. In December, Finance Minister Sapir said an industrial area of 16,200 square feet of floorspace would also be constructed, and after this area was rented, the industrial area could be expanded to 43,200 square feet. The government also granted Kiryat Arba a preferential status for industrial development like that granted to Kefar Ezyon, a Jewish settlement a few miles north of Hebron. By September 1971 Kiryat Arba included 234 apartments, a kindergarten, a school, a store, a temporary synagogue, and an electric plant. At this time the settlement housed 140 Hebron settlers and 25 families of the border police -- a total of 200 to 250 people.

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\* *Conversions of Israeli pounds into US dollars involve different rates of exchange because of devaluation.*

7. Complete details of the Hebron Master Plan, approved by the Israeli Cabinet, have not been announced. The Government has spent more than \$10 million on Kiryat Arba, and plans to spend another \$20 million have been approved (Figure 3). The Housing Ministry announced that a total of about 900 apartments would be constructed in phases in Kiryat Arba and that by 1975 the settlement would have about 5,000 residents.

8. In October 1971 the Government seized another 250 acres for Kiryat Arba's industrial expansion, making the total area of Kiryat Arba about 1,075 acres (Map B). This year the settlers are demanding additional land for expansion, and more seizures are anticipated. The Commerce and Industry Ministry reportedly decided to expropriate another 1,500 acres in 1972, but this land has not yet been taken.

9. Late in 1971 cracks began to show in the Hebron Master Plan as the Orthodox settlers debated with the Housing Ministry over the religious character of the Kiryat Arba population. The Housing Ministry had planned Kiryat Arba for the Orthodox families and for other residents representing a wide range of Israeli society. An important consideration was to relieve some of Jerusalem's housing problems, since people could live in Kiryat Arba and easily commute to work in the capital. The original settlers wanted to maintain at least a majority of Orthodox families, however, and they attempted various schemes, such as "screening" applicants' jobs, to achieve this. As the struggle continued between the proponents of these opposing development schemes, 45 of the apartments remained unoccupied; this vacancy rate caused officials to delay new apartment construction. For a variety of reasons, including the persistent rumor that the settlement was limited to Orthodox families, couples in Jerusalem who needed housing refused to move into Kiryat Arba. Nevertheless, in 1971 a few families living in Kiryat Arba were non-Orthodox.

10. In December 1971 the Orthodox settlers requested that Kiryat Arba be granted municipal status to replace the then joint administration by the Housing Ministry and the military government. As a municipality, the settlers would be able to elect their own mayor and council and could keep

the number of non-Orthodox residents to a minimum. This maneuver was, however, unsuccessful: although the problem reached Cabinet level, the request for municipal status was turned down. The Cabinet, desiring not to show partiality toward any particular segment of the Israeli population, favored the Housing Ministry's ideas for development of the area.

11. Despite Israeli Government encouragement, few industries have located in the settlement. Presently, Kiryat Arba's industrial park includes the \$350,000 Hebron Tiles factory, a building materials plant, and a men's underwear sewing plant. In 1972 the Commerce and Industry Ministry announced plans for 17 new factories in Hebron. A controversial jet engine parts plant, proposed by Beit Shemesh Engines, Ltd., is under consideration. An earlier proposal for a \$3.8 million plywood and formica plant failed in final negotiations. Eight factories received Government loans totaling more than \$350,000. The total employment in these industries is not known, but more Arabs from Hebron work in the plants than do Jewish settlers, less than half of whom are employed in Kiryat Arba's services, businesses, and industries.

12. To further stimulate industrial development in the occupied territories, the Israeli Government decided this year to give greater investment incentives. Under a maximum assistance plan, it would give the developer of an "approved enterprise" in Kiryat Arba a 20-percent grant on the equipment purchased as well as a subsidized loan and five-year tax relief. The industrial project would also be insured by the Israeli Government for 100 percent against political risks. The investor would be fully compensated should Israel be forced to withdraw from the occupied territory and the plant damaged or confiscated by non-Israeli authorities.

#### Arab Reactions

13. Initial Hebron Arab reaction to the Jewish settlement attempt was guarded. The mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Jabari, asked the Prime Minister to order the expulsion of the group in May 1968, after a meeting with the settlers

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degenerated into a shouting match. On June 2 the owner of the hotel, under pressure from his fellow Hebronites, terminated the group's lease. The settlers then moved into the military government compound.

14. Arab reaction to the announced creation of Kiryat Arba was sharp, but non-violent. The settlers had not provoked Arab concern much more than did the Israeli military personnel as long as the group remained small and was confined to the military compound. The Hebronites, however, were aroused by the prospect of a large number of Jews -- 250 families -- with their own housing area in the city.

15. After the April 1970 seizure of 825 acres Mayor Jabari called a protest meeting to discuss possible counter-measures. It accomplished little, in part because the Israelis sabotaged it by putting up road blocks around the city, thus prohibiting journalists and others from traveling to Hebron. Later Jabari said that the Government had not offered anything approaching adequate compensation for the land. Although the exact number of Arab farmers in the seized area is disputed, U.S. Embassy officials who visited the area in 1970 reported it to be substantially inhabited and under intensive cultivation. They said an accurate count of the houses was difficult because of the hilly terrain, but apparently many more farmers commuted to the area than lived in it. Hebron officials stated that at least 500 families derived their living from the seized tract and an Israeli Arab journalist estimated that 100 Arab families lived there. Although the Israeli government paid "compensation money" to the displaced farmers, they could not replace their losses since more than 85 percent of the Hebron area was already under cultivation (Figure 4). Only marginal land, rocky or steep-sloped, remained uncultivated or in pasture. Farmers on nearby land also lost olive trees when the Israelis bulldozed access roads into the new settlement. After a second seizure, 250 acres, in 1971 more Arabs lost their lands. If the proposed third area of approximately 1,500 acres is taken by the Israelis, most of the remaining farmers northeast of Hebron will be displaced.

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16. In May 1972 the Government announced that Kiryat Arba would be expanded from 250 apartments to 500, the formerly vacant units having been assigned by the Housing Ministry's lottery held in January. Jabari dispatched a telegram to the Israeli authorities. He requested them to "be satisfied" with the first Hebron settlement of 250 apartments and to refrain from the planned expansion which might arouse a "feeling of uneasiness" among the people.

#### Mosque Dispute

17. It is probable that the residents of Hebron feel the greatest bitterness over the control and use of their main mosque by the Jewish settlers. From the Moslems point of view the "sharing arrangement" is a pattern of Jewish demand, Moslem concession, Jewish demand . . . imposed by the Israeli military. Recently, in June 1973, the Jewish settlers have asked for the Moslems to be completely excluded from the mosque; Dayan and the Israeli Government so far have not agreed to this proposal, but the Hebron natives see it is inevitable.

18. The Mosque of Abraham and its courtyard cover the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Machpelah Cave, sacred to both Moslems and Jews. Its surrounding wall, thought to have been originally a fortress, is ascribed to the Herodian period, about 37 B.C. The crenelated upper part of the wall and the two surviving minarets of the original four are of Arab construction. The Mosque of Abraham, in the southern end of the walled area, is adapted from a 12th century Crusader church which was built over a Byzantine basilica of the Justinian period. The entire walled area, including the Mosque and its courtyard, form the Moslem Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil, the Sanctuary of Abraham the Friend of God.

19. Cenotaphs, empty honorary tombs, for the Patriarchs and their wives are located within the walls of the Haram above what are believed to be their actual graves. The cenotaphs of Isaac and Rebecca are inside the mosque; those of Abraham and Sarah are behind silver gratings in the walls of the narthex of the mosque; and those of Jacob and Leah

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are enclosed in chapel-like halls on the northern side of the courtyard (Figure 5). A cenotaph honoring Joseph is attached to the outer side of the courtyard wall. (See Plan of Al Haram.)

20. During Ottoman times Jews were banned from the Tomb of the Patriarchs. Under the British Mandate they were permitted to advance just seven steps up the long entrance stairway into the mosque. Jordanian authorities refused Jewish visits to the Haram from 1948 to June 1967.

21. After the June 1967 War, the Israeli Army Rabbinical Unit headed by Rabbi Goren took over the supervision and guarding of the Haram and its mosque. The Rabbinate placed a Holy Ark in the courtyard, which provided a place for Jewish worship; and thousands of Israelis crowded into the area to pray and to sightsee (Figure 5).

22. The Army Rabbinate, overjoyed in gaining control over the sacred site, paid little attention to maintaining order in the Haram. The Moslems complained that the Jews, who did not remove their shoes, were ruining the prayer carpets covering the floor and that the sanctity of the place was being defiled by women in immodest dress and by tourists carrying or eating food. The Moslems also charged that the Israeli soldiers guarding the Mosque played dice and cards in the area.

23. After several weeks, Defense Minister Dayan mediated an agreement between the Israelis, represented by the military governor, and the Moslems, represented by Mayor Jabari and the religious leaders of Hebron. This agreement, signed on August 1, 1967, reduced the Army Rabbinate's authority over the site. Jewish visitors were allotted regular visiting hours, 8-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-5 p.m. except on Friday, the Moslem sabbath, when visits were forbidden. The Israeli Army was ordered to see that visitors were modestly dressed, to prevent food or drink being introduced into the mosque, and to prohibit smoking in the Haram courtyard. The agreement made no mention of the removal of shoes. The Army Rabbinate also banned visits by Jews on Saturday to prevent their desecrating the Jewish



Sabbath by driving to Hebron on that day. The Israeli flag, placed on the mosque on the day of Hebron's surrender, was removed.

24. In January 1968 the Israelis attempted archeological exploration into the long-sealed Machpelah Cave. They apparently felt the need to end doubts expressed by some Israelis as to whether the bones of their Jewish forefathers actually lay buried in that area. Sheikh Ati, custodian of the mosque, claimed that he foiled their plans by refusing to close the mosque for two days while "maintenance" of the premises was undertaken. The educated Sheikh said, "As a 20th century man, I would not object to proper exploration of the cave. But we know that the Jews would not do it properly."

25. The Jewish settlers, who moved into Hebron on April 15, 1968, began within a few months a series of actions violating the agreement. In September they ignored the Moslem prayer time by holding holy day services for Rosh Hashana inside the mosque courtyard. The Hebronites protested this encroachment by sending petitions to the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Defense Forces Commander in Judea and Samaria. The response was disappointing. Before the Yom Kippur services on October 2, the Israelis changed the agreement in favor of unrestricted Jewish prayer at the mosque on Jewish holy days. Defense Minister Dayan told the Moslem dignitaries that Jewish services would be held on Yom Kippur without regard to the agreed Jewish visiting hours in the mosque. He reaffirmed, however, that the agreement would be respected on "ordinary" days. A Cabinet committee reportedly decided to have a synagogue built adjacent to the mosque as a long-range solution.

26. On October 9, 1968, a holy day of Succoth, more than 15,000 Israelis visited the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the Haram. That evening an Arab youth, apparently frustrated by the lack of success of peaceful protest and angered by the "new rules," threw a grenade at the entrance of the mosque injuring 47 Israelis. Defense Minister Dayan later announced at a Hebron meeting with Arab leaders that those

responsible for the incident had been captured and that Hebron as a whole was not held responsible. At this same meeting, which was covered by the Israeli press, he further attempted to calm the angry Israelis by stating that Hebron's Mayor Jabari had foiled an attempt to sabotage the electricity network at the mosque during Yom Kippur services a few days earlier. Between 1969 and 1972 there were no more reported incidents at the mosque.

27. Again in September of 1972 the settlers asked for extended use of the Haram area. They claimed they needed more space for services since the Jewish settlement had increased in size. Again the military government tried to effect a compromise between the Arab rights and the Jewish rights at the sacred site. In November 1972, Dayan informed the Hebron leadership of a second batch of new rules, which extended both the times and places of Jewish worship. The new provisions permit Jews to worship in the Hall of Jacob and Leah in addition to the Hall of Abraham and Sarah, to which they had previously been restricted, and to bring benches and screens into the prayer area. The mosque courtyard would be roofed to provide additional space for Jewish worship. Moreover, the Jews gained prayer time between 4 and 5 p.m. every Friday, a day the Moslems had previously had exclusive right to the Haram. This change limited Moslem services on the one day of the week they required maximum use of the mosque facilities, while the Jewish Sabbath which begins at sundown Friday continues through Saturday. (Kiryat Arba Jews, who can walk to the Haram on Saturday, are apparently permitted to have services).

28. The Hebron settlers announced on the 24th of November the desecration of a scroll and psalm books from their Holy Ark in the mosque with the clear implication that Moslem fanatics were responsible for the act. A thorough Israeli police investigation into the incident concluded that the scroll in question had not been deliberately damaged, and it was not shown conclusively that the psalm books had actually come from the Haram. Undeterred by the police findings, the Hebron settlers petitioned the Prime Minister for expansion of Kiryat Arba into a full sized city, and

suggested that there should be a Jewish population of 100,000 in Hebron "alongside the Arab city of 50,000 which includes many hostile elements."

29. In June 1973, Defense Minister Dayan again visited Hebron and Kiryat Arba to "cool things down." At a Kiryat Arba meeting the settlers discussed several of their current demands. Rabbi Levinger, leader of the group, spoke of the need for expanding Kiryat Arba and asked Dayan to be a representative for this purpose. Dayan said he could not be their representative although he supports the expansion of the settlement. He explained that he would reconsider many times before he would take land from Arab owners and transfer it to Jews.

30. One of the settlers asked Dayan if the settlers would be allowed to return to Beit Hadassah, the Jewish quarter of the city which was destroyed in 1929 (Map B). Dayan replied that he would not recommend that Jews live within Hebron but rather in a separate neighborhood. He said that it is possible to build synagogues and public institutions without entering Arab neighborhoods. The Defense Minister added that the Mosque of Abraham is a separate matter because of its uniqueness as a holy place and that the same conclusion could not be drawn for other places in the city, even if they had been Jewish property in the past.

31. In response to the settlers' demand that Jews be allowed to pray in all parts of the Haram over the Tomb of the Patriarchs, Dayan said he would not deprive Moslems of the right to use their Mosque of Abraham for religious services. He told the settlers unequivocally that he would not support the barring of Moslems from the sacred area.

32. The building of a synagogue adjacent to the Mosque of Abraham, planned as early as 1968, has not yet started, although in 1972 the Jewish National Fund purchased a few parcels of land around the mosque. The settlers of Kiryat Arba broke ground for a permanent synagogue in their settlement in June 1973, but at the same time they suggested that the mosque should be theirs

and that the Moslems should be excluded from it. To Hebron's Moslems, who have worshipped continuously in the mosque since the defeat of the Crusaders in 1187, this recent demand of the settlers indicates the likely pattern of Israeli action in the future.

APPENDIX

Abbreviated Chronology of Machpelah Cave  
and Al Haram al Ibrahimi al Khalil

Approximate Date

2200 B.C.	Abraham purchases Cave of Machpelah for burial of his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23) Ishmael and Isaac bury their father, Abraham (Genesis 25)
1300 B.C.	Moses leads Hebrews to Palestine
1011-1003 B.C.	Hebron serves as King David's capital
931-587 B.C.	Hebron ruled as part of Kingdom of Judah
587 B.C.	Jews conquered by Babylonians; Hebron under foreign rule
5th Century B.C.	Jews, returning from Babylonian exile, settle in Hebron
168-63 B.C.	Brief rule of Maccabeans over Palestine
63 B.C.	Palestine falls under Roman rule
37 B.C.	Ashlars of present mosque wall erected as fortress during Herodian period
A.D. 70	Jerusalem destroyed
483-565	Christian basilica built over site
560	The Christian pilgrim O'lacentinus wrote that Christians and Jews prayed on opposite sides of a partition
614-629	Palestine under Persian dominion

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636-1099	First Moslem conquest and rule
during 6th Century	Synagogue reportedly adjoined mosque wall
6-11 Century	Some sources report a synagogue at site from 6th to 11th Century
1099-1244	Crusaders establish Kingdom of Jerusalem in Palestine
1099	Crusaders take Hebron; fortify and rename it St. Abraham; build Cathedral of St. Abraham over Machpelah Cave
1167	Hebron area is see of Latin bishop
1187	Hebron recaptured by Saladin; Crusaders destroy own church and conceal Machpelah Cave; Moslems build present Al Haram al Ibrahim al Khalil
11th-12th Century	Synagogue adjoined mosque, according to some sources
1518-1917	Jews banned from area during rule of Ottoman Turks
1917	Palestine conquered by British troops
1923	League of Nations mandate established over Palestine; British allow Jews to climb up 7 of the 43 steps leading into the Haram
1948-1967	Jordanian rule over the West Bank; no Jews permitted at the Haram
June 1967	Israelis conquer West Bank and regain use of Haram
Sept 1967	Israeli military enforces "shared arrangement" for Israeli and Moslem use of the Haram

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Oct 1968	Jews granted by Israeli military unrestricted prayer time in Haram on Jewish holy days
12 Nov 1972	Israeli military grants Jews use of two more areas of the Haram for Jewish worship, and Jewish prayer hours are extended
23 Nov 1972	Kiryat Arba Jewish settlers accuse Moslems of desecrating scroll and psalm books; Holy Ark broken into; Israeli police investigate and report that damage not deliberate
June 1973	Kiryat Arba settlers demand Moslems be excluded from Haram completely

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Disseminated 1 October 1973

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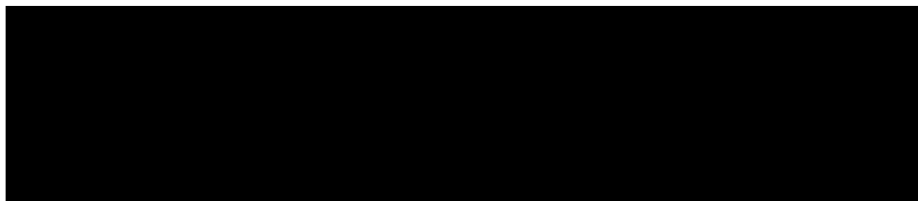
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GEOGRAPHY DIVISION Record of Classification Decision

2 October 1973  
(Date)

1. Title of report, study, or map: Israeli-Arab Conflict in the Holy City of Hebron
2. Project No. and Report No. or Map No.: CIA/BGI RP 74-6
3. Classification, control, and exempt category: SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM
4. Name of classifier:  25X1A
5. Rationale for classification and exemption: Use of sources
6. Sources used in report, study or map which have a bearing on classification and exemption:

25X1A



NOTE: Prepare in triplicate -- one copy for Branch Project File and two copies for Division Front Office.

CONTROL or CLASSIFY, according to content of entries.

# Memorandum

TO : D/BGI

DATE: 24 September 1973

FROM : AC/GD/OBGI *ACG*

SUBJECT: Israel-Arab Conflicts in Hebron

We are pushing to get this out ASAP because the coincidence of several Jewish holidays (Rosh Hashona is on Thursday) with Ramadan, beginning Friday, promises to make this a very hot issue. Coordination with OCI and ONE has been completed. Items that might be interpreted as critical of the Orthodox settlers are generally based on Israeli sources. This is an unproofed copy.

The attached GMS may be of value in tracing our interests in this area since the 1967 war.

Incl. No. 1 was not published but the draft was used by the members of the Agency task force headed by [REDACTED] now Chief, ME Section, ONE during the crisis.

25X1A Incl. No. 2. West Bank Refugees, was condemned as anti-Arab by some individuals at the Dept. of State and anti-Israeli by others. Many on both sides felt that the picture was difficult to grasp -- an indication to us that they were getting our message.

Incl. No. 3. The Allon Plan, was very well received by the Intelligence community as a whole although our friend in Foggy Bottom felt we were writing pro-Israeli propaganda.

Incl. No. 4, Israeli Development of occupied Arab Territories has been used as a reference work for some time and led to other elements of the Agency looking to us for guidance in that area. This was more or less formalized by the OCI Memorandum of October 1972 that requested we monitor developments and serve as their "authority" on the subject.

25X1C Incl. No. 5. The Golan Heights, irritated an individual in OER but the ONE people were delighted, as was the [REDACTED] We feel that the content is still sound.



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10 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Request for Reconsideration of Two Geography  
Division Studies

1. I request your reconsideration of the cancellation of our Intelligence Memos entitled The Volga River Cleanup (PN 64.2659/1) and Creating Facts in Hebron (PN 62.2668).

2. We had intended to produce the Volga IM as a spin-off from an in-depth Research Paper on the same subject. The latter has been in-work for several months and a first draft has been completed. It is a solid piece of work with more detail than the average reader probably would want, but since the subject is an important one we believed-- and believe -- that publication of the highlights under the IM format would be justifiable. The Research Paper addresses the extent of environmental disruption within the industrially important Volga Basin and its effect on the Caspian Sea. It also describes and evaluates the mammoth Soviet program to combat this environmental problem. If the program is to be successful, it will require the allocation of massive resources which can be ill-spared by the Soviet economy.

3. The Hebron paper discusses the significance of Hebron as a city holy to both Muslims and Jews, and analyzes relevant geographic elements such as location and economic and strategic value. Hebron has been mentioned by the Israelis as one of the portions of the West Bank, along with Jerusalem, they want to keep. Since there are Muslims in Hebron, as well as Jews, and conflicting claims to its ownership, Hebron is a likely source of friction. A clarification of these various claims and an assessment of what is actually there would be a useful exercise, we believe. If an IM seems too ambitious, may we at least continue the project as a Research Paper with limited dissemination?

25X1A

Chief, Geography Division, ODSI

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Subject File: PN 62.2668 and PN 64.2659

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PROJECT PROPOSAL		<input type="checkbox"/> RESEARCH ACTIVITY NOTICE	
SUBJECT "Creating Facts" in Hebron		PROJECT NUMBER 62.2668	
REQUESTER Self-Initiated		SUBJECT CODE	
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM Israeli officials have stated firmly that they will never give up the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, Sharm ash Shaykh and Jerusalem. Hebron is now being mentioned as one of the portions of the West Bank, along with Jerusalem, they want to keep. Policies concerning Hebron have been contradictory; Israelis must have special government permission to stay overnight in Hebron, but when a group of Orthodox Jews moved in illegally, the Israeli officials did not remove them. This Orthodox group has pressured the Israeli government to "create facts" despite the objections of the Moslem Hebronites and the reservations of a significant number of Israelis.		REQUESTING OFFICE OBGI/GD/M	
		TARGET DATE Sept July 1973	
		ANALYST/BRANCH GD/M	
		EST. ANALYST MANHOURS 200	
		25X1A	
<p>The GM will include: a discussion of the significance of Hebron as a holy city to both Moslems and Jews; an analysis of relevant geographic elements, such as location, economic and strategic value, and people; a description and analysis of the changes made since the Israeli occupation, including the Israeli civilian settlement at Kiryat Arba, joint Israeli-Moslem use of the Mosque of Abraham, the integration of the Hebron's electric power grid into the Israeli system. Do they indicate a trend toward retention of this area as a salient or an exclave of Israel proper, and if so, what does this indicate for other portions of the West Bank?</p>			
COORDINATION REQUIRED FROM			
CD/BI : 3 maps		25X1A	
OTHER CIA: OCI, NPIC for graphics			
NON-CIA : none			
[Redacted]		[Redacted]	
DATE 5 March 73		CHIEF, Geography Division, OBGI 1/3/73	

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XX PROJECT PROPOSAL		RESEARCH ACTIVITY NOTICE	
SUBJECT "Creating Facts" in Hebron		PROJECT NUMBER 62.2668	
REQUESTER Self-Initiated		REQUESTING OFFICE OBGI/GD/M	
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		ANALYST/BRANCH [REDACTED] GD/M	
		EST. ANALYST MANHOURS 200	
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COORDINATION REQUIRED FROM CD/BI : 3 maps OTHER CIA: OCI, NPIC for graphics NON-CIA : none		25X1A	
APPROVED [REDACTED]	DATE 5 March 73	[REDACTED] CHIEF, Geography Division, OBGI 1/3/73	
DIRECTOR OF BASIC INTELLIGENCE			

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