

Gaza settlements abandoned

Colin Harnish

Staff Writer

Israeli military rule in the Gaza Strip ended earlier this month as the last of nearly



Israel has begun leaving the Gaza Strip after 38 years.

9,000 Jews evacuated. Israel has controlled Gaza for 38 years following its capture in the Mideast War of 1967.

Palestinians have cheered the pullout, and have since flooded the streets on the Egyptian side of Gaza to rejoice.

"Since last night, I have been in the street, for no reason, just to breathe the air of freedom," said Samir Khader, a farmer in northern Gaza who needed Israeli permits to go in and out of his village, in the Houston Chronicle. "I don't know what the future will bring, but at least,

I can come in and out of my house at any time."

Major General Dan Harel, head of Israel's southern command, said the pullout presented an important opportunity for

the Palestinians to control their future.

"The responsibility belongs to the Palestinian Authority," he said. "We hope that they will know how to rise to the responsibility, and enable all of us to leave in peace and security."

The withdrawal is widely seen as an opportunity for Palestine to achieve statehood. However, during the celebration, militant groups hoisted flags, fired wildly into the air and set abandoned synagogues ablaze, which only illustrated the weakness of local Palestinian security forces.

Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas told Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera that by year end: "I will be able to control the chaos in Gaza."

Israeli soldiers have long guarded the walls splitting the Egyptian town of Rafah against cross-border infiltrators smuggling weapons and other contraband from Egypt into Palestinian territory. Within hours of the Israeli withdrawal, however, hooded Palestinian militants with guns stood atop the Palestinian wall allowing Gazans to climb over into Egypt.

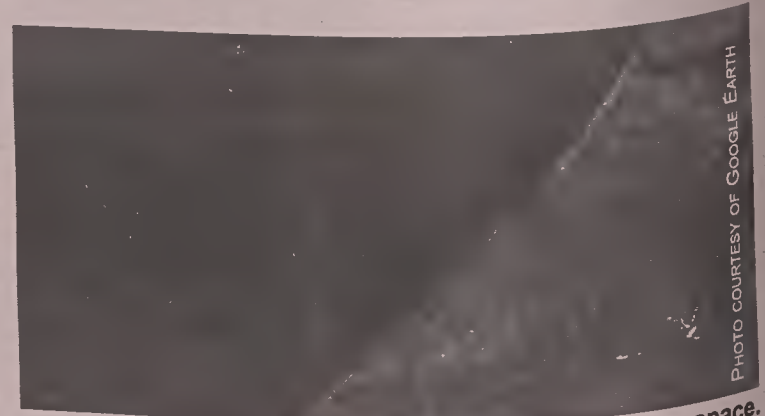
"We have achieved victory in Gaza and we came to wrap it up in Egypt," said a Palestinian Muslim.

Before nightfall, Abbas arrived at the crossing and raised a Palestinian flag.

"Today is a day of joy and happiness that our people were deprived of in the past century," Abbas said, adding that the Palestinians still have a long path toward statehood.

He denounced Israeli rule in Gaza as "aggression, injustice, humiliation, killing and settlement activity."

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced the with-



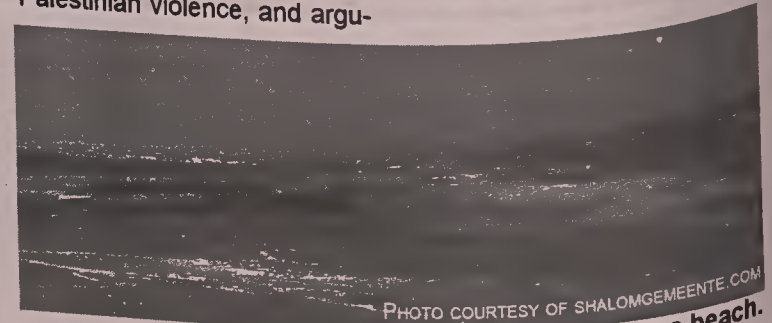
A view of the Gaza Strip from space.

drawal plan in 2004 as a way to separate Israelis and Palestinians after years of conflict. He says the withdrawal will improve security and strengthen Israel's hold on large West Bank communities where most of the 240,000 Jewish settlers live.

Sharon has faced fierce opposition by Israeli settler groups and hard-line politicians accusing him of giving into Palestinian violence, and argu-

ing that eventually Israel will withdraw from the rest of the West Bank.

"They didn't really leave Gaza," said first-year Rasha Ali, who came to the U.S. three weeks ago from Palestine. "It was something for the western world to see and for the media to show something that wasn't real, and besides there is still the west bank which is even worse."%



A calm day on a Gaza beach.

Bush accepts \$400 million in oil, rejects money from small countries

Dan Etter

Staff Writer

Days after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf coast, organizations from around the country joined in the relief effort. The NFL raised money by showing two Monday Night Football Games; NBA stars helped donate and deliver truckloads of supplies.

The Guilford community aided the assistance as well. They donated food, water, clothing, and money at the bookstore. In addition, Guilford allowed students from Tulane and Loyola University to study on campus.

Americans sent aid; tax dollars continue to rebuild a broken city. At the gas pumps,

Americans pay for the destruction through increased prices. With the south Pacific tsunami still fresh in their minds, some are beginning to wonder why Katrina victims did not receive aid immediately.

According to the Washington Post, other nations offered help, but America simply wanted to wait until it was necessary.

On ABC's Good Morning America three days after the hurricane, Bush said, "I'm not expecting much from foreign nations because we hadn't asked for it. I do expect a lot of sympathy and perhaps some will send cash dollars. But this country's going to rise up and

take care of it."

According to Good Morning America, our government wanted cheap oil from countries in the Middle East, but shunned monetary aid from smaller

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- George W. Bush

countries.

In Sweden, a water purification system and a \$3 million cellular network waited a week for delivery simply because the U.S. government had not given

its approval. There was no delay to approve Kuwait's donation of \$400 million in oil and \$100 million in cash, however.

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez referred to Bush as a "cowboy" who failed in making the right decisions while handling the disaster. The U.S. was reluctant to take \$1 million from Venezuela.

The world put aside their differences with the United States, for the time being. Iran - part of

Bush's Axis of Evil - sent humanitarian aid to Katrina victims. Fidel Castro sent 1,100 doctors and nurses along with medicine to help the cause. Afghanistan provided \$100,000

in aid in the midst of near civil war. 115 countries helped by sending manpower, medicine, military aid, or simply money to ease the suffering.

Commenting to Fox News on his country's donations, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said, "The United States is often at the forefront of international aid efforts to help less fortunate nations."

"The international community of nations should help one another," said Assistant Professor Robert Duncan on the world's charity.

The United States supported the world in past crises. Now, the world returned the favor and helped save Americans from turmoil. %