

## **Israel Government Memo Admits Israel is Flouting Road Map**

By Dan Williams

**JERUSALEM, Nov 12 (Reuters) - A secret Israeli memorandum says the country has failed to honour commitments under a U.S. peace plan to evacuate illegal settler outposts and has sought "in every way to whitewash their existence and build more."**

**Government sources on Wednesday quoted the memorandum as saying: "We promised the United States that we would dismantle the outposts and have not done so. That is our Achilles' heel."**

**"International criticism is growing because of our lack of creative ideas for getting out of the conflict," it said.**

**Israel lacked credibility when it claimed to be fulfilling its obligations under a U.S.-backed plan for ending three years of fighting with the Palestinians, the memorandum said.**

**"Our claim that Israel has fulfilled its side of the (peace) road map is seen as lacking credibility because not only have we not evacuated the illegal outposts, we are working in every way to whitewash their existence and build more," it said.**

The sources said the memorandum was prepared at Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom's behest. A Shalom spokesman said he was unaware of the memorandum.

A senior government source acknowledged the memorandum but denied Israel had acted in bad faith.

The memorandum, intended for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's inner circle, contradicted public assertions the Palestinians alone had reneged on their commitments.

The road map envisages a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by 2005. Among its reciprocal requirements is Israel halt construction in Jewish settlements and dismantle recently built settler outposts on occupied land.

Most of the international community regards the settlements, built on land seized by Israel in a 1967 war, to be illegal. Israel disputes this.

Israel razed a handful of small West Bank outposts after it and the Palestinians embraced the peace road map in June, but left dozens more untouched. The government has issued tenders for building hundreds of new settler homes.

11/12/03 09:40 ET