



PERSPECTIVES

THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Why the International Community Should Follow Trump's Lead on Jerusalem

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BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 687, December 17, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Arab and Muslim leaders hope to stoke sufficient anxiety among world leaders to stop them from following President Trump's lead in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. In effect, they hope to ensure that Muslim threats are given veto power over the decisions by world powers on this matter. But the objections to recognition are specious, ahistorical, and hypocritical. All countries should reject Muslim revisionism and join Trump in his action – which is, after all, simply acknowledging a 3,000-years-long reality.

Now that US President Trump has recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announced plans to relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem, Arab and Muslim leaders and spokespersons have been trying to frighten other nations out of following his lead. To counter that effort, the world should consider a few salient points.

- Jerusalem, the capital of the state of the Jewish people, is one of the most ancient capitals in the world. It became the capital of Israel's monarchy during the reign of King David – that is, around 1000 B.C.E., over 3,000 years ago, when the capitals of the countries who now refuse to recognize it were still boggy swamps, leafy forests, or arid deserts. The history of the oldest nations of Europe, the Greeks and the Romans, proves without a doubt that Jerusalem was already the capital of the Jewish nation in ancient times.
- The Jews are the only indigenous people of the land of Israel. They lived in Jerusalem for over 1,600 years prior to the birth of Islam, which occurred in 610 C.E. Putting it bluntly, the Jews lived in Jerusalem when Islam's forefathers were still pagan nomads in the Arabian

- Peninsula. The Muslims of today certainly don't have the right to oppose Jerusalem's being recognized as the capital of the Jewish state.
- It is unacceptable in the modern world for Muslim threats of terror attacks and mass rioting to be granted sufficient clout to limit or direct the political decisions of world powers.
 - No other country in the world accepts external dictates regarding the location of its own capital city. The very idea is risible.
 - Why doesn't the world recognize Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem despite Israel's liberation of the city's eastern sector from illegal and illegitimate Jordanian occupation – unrecognized by the entire international community (apart from Britain and Pakistan)?
 - King Abdullah II, the current Jordanian monarch, is trying to pressure Israel into establishing a Palestinian state on the hills of the West Bank with its capital in East Jerusalem. Yet his father, King Hussein, who assumed the throne in 1952, refrained from doing so. Not only did Palestinian statehood not become an issue for Jordan prior to its loss of the West Bank in the June 1967 war but it did its utmost to obliterate any trace of Palestinian nationalism.
 - The Arab League demands that Israel establish a Palestinian state in the same area delineated by Abdullah II. Yet it demanded no such thing of King Hussein during the years of his illegal control of the West Bank. Nor did it ever express any interest in Palestinian statehood prior to that war. The same applies to the many governments and political figures backing the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Once all foreign embassies move to Jerusalem, Israel's enemies will be forced to realize that their prolonged struggle to destroy the Jewish state has failed. They will have to accept Israel as a *fait accompli*, a state there is no longer any reason to fight – which, incidentally, is the definition of “peace” in the Middle East. Relocating all foreign embassies to Jerusalem will serve as a significant step forward in the quest for peace between Israel and the Arab and Islamic world.

One of the international organizations urging the world not to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital is the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which consists of 57 Islamic states. This organization aspires, among other things, to make it illegal under international law to criticize Islam, thereby eliminating two fundamental freedoms of modern culture: freedom of thought and freedom to express an opinion. All those holding dear their freedom of thought and expression are obliged to support everything this organization opposes.

Islamic opposition to recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital emanates from Islam's belief that Judaism and all other religions are obsolete, leaving only

Islam as the true faith. Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital grants Judaism the status of a living religion, one that threatens Islam, which arrived in the world to "supersede all existing religions" (Koran, chap. 9, verse 33). The international community must make clear to the Muslims that they should take care of their own affairs and leave other religions alone. Judaism is alive and well and does not pose a threat to any other religion. If Islam is incapable of dwelling in peace with other religions, it will have to be revised to allow for accepting "others," including Jews, as people with living religions and holy sites – Jerusalem, for example – and the right to behave in them as they choose.

It is no secret that most Palestinians, their surrounding fellow Arabs, and Muslims around the world do not consider Israel a legitimate state no matter what. This is because according to Islam, the Jews – as well as the Christians – must live under Islamic domination and "protection" as lowly *dhimmis*. This means being fourth-class citizens with the limited rights granted them by sharia law, which *inter alia* denies Jews the right to a land of their own and denies recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Giving in to these demands would amount to the modern world's submitting humiliatingly to the Islamic worldview and to sharia, both of which hail from the 7th century. No one who believes in the freedom of man and his right to dignity can honestly support that.

Another reason for Muslim opposition to the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is the Islamic religious concept of land. According to Islam's tenets, every country can join Islam and become a "House of Islam" instead of a "House of War." According to this mindset, there is no legitimate way for a country to be removed from Islam's ownership once it has been under Islamic rule for any length of time. Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital stamps a seal of approval on the establishment of a Jewish state on land once conquered by Muslims. It is therefore in direct contradiction to the way Islam views the nations of the world. That international community is going to have to ask itself whether it is willing to act according to the way Islam views the world or whether it is going to stand up for the internationally accepted behavioral norms under which no one interferes with a country's choice of a capital city.

Many Muslims claim that the issue of Jerusalem must be solved as part of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. This is specious. There is no connection between the establishment of a future state – should that ever come to pass – and the world's recognition of the fact that Jerusalem is and has always been the capital of the Jewish nation.

Terror organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah have proclaimed their opposition to the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. These statements contain veiled and not-so-veiled threats of violence. Had President Trump refrained from recognizing Jerusalem, that would have signified a surrender to terror that would only lead to additional threats in the

future. The approval rating of radical groups goes up in the Muslim world when politicians and states give in to them. It brings more volunteers to their ranks and increases donations from their supporters. The recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital deals terror a blow to both its image and its ability to enlist financial support and volunteers.

The Arabs conquered Jerusalem in 1948, reduced the Jewish Quarter of the Old City to rubble, and demolished scores of synagogues. Throughout the 19 years of Jordanian occupation, from 1948 to 1967, they willfully destroyed large parts of the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives, used the gravestones to build houses and pave streets, and prevented Jews from visiting the sacred sites located in Judaism's holiest city. The Islamic Waqf and the Islamic Movement conducted criminal digging – with bulldozers, no less – on the Temple Mount, destroying priceless Jewish, Christian, and other artifacts. The Muslim Arabs' treatment of the city, its residents, its history, and its holy sites renders them ineligible to express an opinion on its status and future.

During the Jordanian occupation of eastern Jerusalem, Arab snipers shot and killed innocent Jews walking the streets of western Jerusalem, forcing Israel to build concrete walls along the streets and sidewalks in order to protect passersby. The sharpshooters would aim through the windows of private homes, resulting in the murder and wounding of many of the city's Jewish residents. The enlightened world must tell the Arabs: "You have shown that you are not worthy of governing this holy city, even its eastern part, because who can guarantee that you won't go back to doing what you did for 19 years?"

By contrast, under Israel's 50-year-long rule, Jerusalem has been an open city – open to Jews, Christians, Muslims, and all other religions. Freedom of worship is guaranteed to all – except Jews, who are not allowed to pray on the Temple Mount for fear of the violent Muslim reaction. Millions of tourists have visited Jerusalem since 1967 and tell of the spiritual effect of its unique atmosphere. Israel has proven that it is the only state in the region worthy of administering Jerusalem and keeping it free – as is Israel itself.

Most important of all: Jerusalem appears in the Bible hundreds of times under various names. It does not appear in the Koran at all – not under any of the four Arabic names for it. Those names are Bait al-Maqdis (the house of the Temple), a name that appears in a Hadith (Islamic oral law); Ilya, a shortened version of Ilya Capitolina, the name given to the city by the Romans; Urshalim, used by Christians; and al- Quds, a more recent name. The city is never mentioned.

Nor is Jerusalem holy to all Muslims. The city is holy to the Sunnis, not to the Shiites. Due to interval rivalries, the Umayyad (Sunni) dynasty wanted to downplay Mecca's importance at one point in history, ca. 680, and tried to

initiate a Hajj pilgrimage to Jerusalem instead of Mecca. This fact, based on Islamic sources, turns any claims to Jerusalem as intrinsically holy to Islam into fake news originating in seventh-century power struggles among Muhammad's followers. Does the modern world have to act in accordance with the lies and fables attending rivalries in seventh-century Islam?

In sum: there is no logic to the failure of so many countries to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It's time they took a page from President Trump's book and moved their embassies to Jerusalem – the sooner the better.

An earlier version of this article, translated by Rochel Sylvetsky, was [published](#) on December 7, 2017 by Israel National News.

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BESA Center Perspectives Papers are published through the generosity of the Greg Rosshandler Family