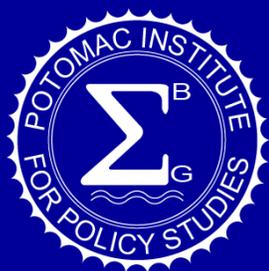


# The Holy Jerusalem:

## A Key to Middle East War or Peace?

December 2016





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## **The Holy Jerusalem: A Key to Middle East War or Peace?**

### **Introduction**

#### **Professor Yonah Alexander**

*Director, Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies and Senior Fellow, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*

#### *Historical Overview*

As this report goes to press, the new administration of President-elect Donald J. Trump is beginning to develop its Middle East foreign policy strategy concerning the threats to peace in the region. These security challenges include terrorism, insurgencies and outbreaks of escalating wars aggravated by ideological extremism, nationalistic fanaticism, ethnic hatred, radical prejudices, and religious animosities. They are justified in the name of “God,” “rights,” “justice,” and even “peace.”

Among the numerous intra- and inter-regional ongoing conflicts, ranging from Iraq to Syria and Yemen, to Libya and beyond, is the decades-old competition between the nationalism of the Jewish State of Israel and Palestinian aspirations to establish a distinct homeland in the territories of the West Bank and Gaza. In addition to the multiple outstanding issues still to be resolved by the parties, such as the need for mutual recognition and the settling of boundary disputes, questions remain regarding the future of Jerusalem, the Holy City, which is considered by Israel as its eternal capital—and which the Palestinians also see as their own capital.

More specifically, from the historical, religious, political, and economic perspectives of Israel, Jerusalem has always occupied a central role in the life of the Jewish people, for over 3,000 years. It was the capital of the Jewish Kingdom under King Solomon and the site of the first and second Temples. Although there was a succession of foreign occupiers, from the Romans in the first century A.D. through the British Mandate during 1917-1948, none of them established Jerusalem as their capital. The birth of the State of Israel in modern times made Jerusalem its capital and thereby represented a historical event marking the culmination of the unique relationship of the Jewish people to the “Holy City.”

Thus, Jerusalem, particularly since 1950, has served as the center of the Israeli government, its presidency, and the location of its parliament (Knesset). The whole city, including its eastern part and environs (formerly occupied by Jordan) became the united Israeli capital as a consequence of the Six-Day War in June 1967.

However, the Palestinians, as well as the Arab and Muslim worlds in general, have also felt a significant religious attachment to Jerusalem. For instance, in Arabic, it is known as "al-Bait al Muquaddas" (the Holy House), "al-Quds ash Sharif" (the Holy and Noble City), and, for short, "al-Quds" (the Holy City) since the Arab conquest of Palestine some thirteen hundred years ago. The “Al-Aqsa” (the Remote) Mosque in the city is the site of the Prophet Mohammed's journey to heaven – a journey known as the “Isra” (nocturnal journey). This place is also mentioned in the Koran, which reads,

“Praise be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Haram Mosque [in Mecca] to the Aqsa Mosque.”<sup>1</sup>

The area over which Al-Aqsa as well as the Mosque of Omar (Dome of the Rock) were built became known as "al-Haram ash Sharif" (the Noble Sanctuary). Moreover, the city is holy because it is the burial place of the "martyrs" from among Mohammed's companions. Because of this inextricably connected history and Islam's sacred teachings and traditions, Jerusalem was the original "Qibla," direction, that is, of Muslim worship (the "Qibla" changed to Mecca). The holy city of Jerusalem is ranked third in the hierarchy of Muslim sanctuaries (surpassed only by Mecca and Medina).

The most dramatic illustration of the centrality of Jerusalem to Islam is the tragic fire that occurred at Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem on August 21, 1969. Even before the causes of the fire, which heavily damaged the south part of the sacred mosque, could be investigated, Israel was accused of planning and destroying the holy site, thereby constituting "...the most severe aggression against Arabs and Moslems...even in all their history."<sup>2</sup> Although subsequently the arsonist (an Australian national and member of a Christian Pentecostal sect) was arrested, convicted, and sent to an asylum, the Al-Aqsa event has continued to inflame the emotions of Arab and Muslims for decades.<sup>3</sup>

To be sure, the deep historical and religious links to the Holy Land are also shared by Christendom. Mention should be made of the many sacred sites in the country associated with the life and death of Jesus. Of special significance are the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the ancient Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Resurrection) in Jerusalem where the events at Christ's tomb are said to have occurred. Christian influence continued to be felt in the country during the Byzantine period in the fourth century and ended some three hundred years later. Christian devotion to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem was solidified with the establishment of the Crusader Kingdom between 1099 and 1291, when the Mamelukes and subsequently the Ottoman Turks occupied the country. The control of Palestine by the British forces during World War I also strengthened Christian bonds with the Holy Land.

It was not surprising, therefore, that Christians of various denominations, such as Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican, have sought since the establishment of the State of Israel to preserve their unilateral jurisdiction over their sacred sites. Although free access to them is assured, the issue of the protection of the holy places and the status of Jerusalem in general was the subject of United Nations General Assembly Partition of Palestine Resolution in 1947 and considered again in subsequent years. For example, the plan that recommended the establishment of a "corpus separation" of the city under a special international regime and administered by the world body was rejected by both Israel and Jordan. Nevertheless, Christendom will continue to be concerned with its sites' safety in the Holy Land as long as the "Palestinian Question" remains unresolved.

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<sup>1</sup> Sura 17:1.

<sup>2</sup> Statement by Bahjat Talhouni, then Prime Minister of Jordan, on Radio Amman, August 21, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> A core belief of the sects is that King Solomon's Temple has to be rebuilt before the Messiah will arrive again.

A sober reminder of the complicated saga of modern Jerusalem is the recent resolution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued in October 2016. It criticized Israel's handling of the Holy Sites in the city and elsewhere in the country. The Resolution, however, left out a clause that would have classified the Jewish link to the Western Wall as part of the Muslim compound in Jerusalem's Old City.

Furthermore, this effort to cast doubt on the 3,000 years old Jewish connection to Jerusalem was reflected once again with the passing of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 on December 23, 2016. With the abstention of the United States on the 14-0 vote, the Council condemned Israel's settlement policy in the "occupied territories" that include not only the West Bank but also "East Jerusalem," the area that incorporates the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall.

The Resolution also asserted that settlement activities have "no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law..." Clearly, this move by the most prominent global body reinforces even further the concept of the internationalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Holy Sites.

Another potential future development concerning the status of Jerusalem is the reported declaration by President-elect Donald Trump to relocate the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to the capital of Israel. Such a step, if taken by the new administration, would implement Congress's Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 and would also constitute a litmus test for the end-game of the Middle East peace process.

In light of the foregoing theological, historical, and political assumptions and experiences of Israelis and Palestinians regarding the status of Jerusalem, will the antagonists and their partisan Jewish, Muslim, and Christian co-religionists be capable of a peaceful resolution on the future status of the Holy City?

A related broader question is whether religion in general can serve as an effective bridge to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

#### *Academic Context and Acknowledgements*

For the record, as an academic participant-observer focusing on security challenges both regionally and globally, including personal and professional experiences in Jerusalem during the past six decades, I have benefited immensely from the collaboration with Jewish, Muslim, and Christian colleagues, in considering the foregoing fundamental questions. This report on "The Holy Jerusalem: A Key to Middle East War or Peace?" is the latest educational effort undertaken by the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (IUCTS), a consortium of universities and think tanks in over 40 countries. It combines selected presentations from two recent seminars on "The Role of Religion in Combating Terrorism" and "Jerusalem: Outlook for War or Peace?" held on December 19, 2014 and December 21, 2015, respectively.

Presentations included in this publication were contributed by Professor Robert Eisen (Professor of Religion and Judaic Studies and Chair of the Department of Religion at the George Washington University); Issam Michael Saliba (Senior Foreign

Law Specialist for the Middle East and North Africa, Law Library of Congress); Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed (National Director of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) heading up its Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington, DC. He is one of the founders of the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS) and served as Editor and then Editor-in-Chief from 1984-1994); Hon. Reuven Azar (Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Israel-Washington, DC. Previously, he served at the Israeli Embassies in Amman and Cairo and was involved in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority); and Professor Mohammed S. Dajani (Weston Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He founded the Wasatia movement of moderate Islam and previously worked as a professor of political science at al-Quds University in Jerusalem). We are deeply indebted to the contributors for their patience in producing this report. Their personal and professional views do not necessarily reflect those of the co-sponsoring institutions associated with this publication.

As always, we owe special gratitude for the continuing inspiration and support of Michael S. Swetnam (CEO and Chairman, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); General (Ret.) Alfred Gray (Twenty-Ninth Commandant of the United States Marine Corps as well as Senior Fellow and Chairman of the Board of Regents, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); Professor Don Wallace, Jr. (Chairman, International Law Institute); Professor John Norton Moore (Director of the Center for National Security Law and the Center for Oceans Law and Policy, University of Virginia School of Law); and Professor Robert F. Turner (Distinguished Fellow and Associate Director, Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia School of Law).

Additionally, useful research and support, ably managed by Sharon Layani (Research Associate and Coordinator, IUCTS), was provided by our team of interns during the fall 2016 semester, including Cameron Dively (Carnegie Mellon University), Jacob Fuller (University of Oklahoma), Daniel Hennessy (University of California, Berkeley), Eunice Kim (State University of New York at Geneseo), Sheona Lalani (George Washington University), April Lee (George Washington University), Cameron Niven (University of California, San Diego), and Riley Plamp (University of Michigan).

Finally, as the Christian world is celebrating its Christmas holiday, the spirit of “Peace on Earth” might hopefully continue to inspire both the faithful of every religion to dedicate themselves to the true cause of humanity and brotherhood in Jerusalem and elsewhere around the world. It therefore behooves the international community to follow the ecumenical guidance provided by Pope Francis during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land on May 24, 2014: “The path of dialogue, reconciliation and peace must constantly be taken up anew, courageously and tirelessly. There is simply no other way.”<sup>4</sup>

December 31, 2016

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<sup>4</sup> “Full text of Pope Francis’s speech on arrival in Israel.” *The Times of Israel*, May 25, 2014. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-pope-franciss-speech-on-arrival-in-israel/>

## **The Role of Religion in Combating Terrorism**

### **Professor Robert Eisen**

*Professor of Religion and Judaic Studies and Chair of the Department of Religion at the George Washington University<sup>1</sup>*

The first question that I was asked to address is whether religion is relevant for combating terrorism. I would say that the answer to this question is a clear ‘yes.’ There are many reasons for my saying this, but the first is that you have to understand what the problem is before you can solve it. And what is the problem? Well, when we speak about terrorism as a problem in the West, we are generally speaking about *religious* terrorism—more particularly, Islamic terrorism. I do not mean to imply that Islam is inherently violent, or that it has no peaceful side to it. In fact, I will argue in a few minutes that Islam does indeed have a peaceful dimension. Nor am I saying that other religions are immune to violence. They are not, and I include my own religion, Judaism, in this assessment as well. I am only clarifying that when Westerners express concerns about terrorism, they are generally speaking about terrorism of this kind. Now Islamic terrorism has many causes—political, social, economic, historical—but religion is inextricably connected to all of these. Therefore, you have to have an understanding of Islam as a religion before you can even approach the problem of terrorism that Westerners are concerned with.

Now this recommendation may seem like a no-brainer, but I have found, surprisingly, that the whole issue of religion is often missing or downplayed when academics discuss international conflict, or people in government do. Religion is not taken all that seriously. It is not seen as a subject deserving study in its own right. Generally, the view is that the role of religion in international conflict is a function of other factors. The real issues are political, social, and economic, and religion is a sort of a window-dressing for these other, more basic issues. As a result, the discussions of religion are often very simplistic and superficial.

In fact, religion, which is the field that I study, is a highly complex phenomenon. It is one of the most complicated subjects you can study. The mastery of any one religious tradition can occupy you for a lifetime, not to mention the subject of religion in general. Also, religion is connected to every level of human identity, and it therefore expresses itself on every level of human life and culture. So if you want to understand religion, you have to understand it on all these levels. You have to know something about everything.

Certainly outside factors have an influence on religion in the political, social, and economic realms, but this influence itself is also complicated, and religion cannot be viewed as just a function or an expression of these factors. It is an independent factor in its own right. I will cite one example to illustrate my point. Much of what motivates religious terrorists—and I am speaking specifically about Islamic terrorism—is that violence against one’s enemies is seen as having a spiritual and transcendent purpose. It is a deeply religious experience, as difficult as that may be to comprehend. So

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation was delivered at an event on “The Role of Religion in Combating Terrorism” held December 19, 2014 at Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

besides the outside factors that influence religious actors to be violent, religious experience itself plays a key role in their violent activity. This insight has been noted by academic scholars and is based on interviews and studies that have been done on religious terrorists.

So my first point is you have to understand religion in order to understand religious extremism, including Islamic extremism which the West is so concerned about, and this understanding is sorely lacking among many of the academics and professionals who deal with terrorism. We must then ask: what role can religion play in combating terrorism, if any? Because of the complexity of the problem, one cannot expect a single, sweeping solution. Islamic terrorism takes many forms depending on place and time, and therefore the solution often has to be localized. Still, I will try to make some generalizations.

A point that is made repeatedly by scholars of religious ethics and those who deal with religion and international conflict is that all major religions have a violent dimension to them, but they also have a peaceful dimension. It's therefore pointless to speak about any one religion being a religion of violence or a religion of peace. They all have both sides. And which side emerges is a complex issue as well. Again, social, political, economic factors play a role, but religion cannot be reduced to these factors. The major religions also have long histories which have given them each a unique character, and this element also has to be studied in order to get an understanding of which side of a religion will emerge under a given set of circumstances. What this means is that religion is the problem, but it can also be the solution, if we can find ways to accentuate the peaceful dimension of religion and strengthen the representatives of that dimension.

I myself have written about this ambiguity in religion with respect to Judaism. My latest book, which came out in 2011, was entitled *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism*. In it, I examined both the peaceful and violent dimensions of Judaism that developed from the Bible onward in order to get a better understanding of modern Zionism, which also has its peaceful and violent dimensions. My underlying motive was to get insight into the religious dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how Jews might use religion to find ways to resolve the conflict. In recent years, I have also studied Christianity and Islam for the same purpose. Again, my goal has been to gain a better understanding of the ambiguity of these religions and to come up with insights for encouraging the peaceful sides of these religions to emerge.

So we need to strengthen the peaceful dimension of religion. How do we do that? How do we make religion a force for the good? Well, there are no easy answers. We could just kill all the bad people, which has generally been the method used by our government. But we have discovered that this is easier said than done. So we have to think of alternatives. Now in my experience, most people are actually peaceful people. And in my years of working with Muslims, my impression is that most Muslims are peaceful, but they cannot combat terrorism because they either do not have the power to do so, or they are simply too scared to speak up. And I am very sympathetic with these problems. So we have to give the moderate representatives of Islam the power and security they need to preach their viewpoint and make it influential.

One thing that would help would be including religious clerics with peaceful leanings at the highest levels of negotiations between governments who are involved in dealing with religious conflicts. But that generally does not happen. I am dismayed by the fact that in all the many rounds of peace-talks between Israelis and Palestinians that have taken place in recent years—the Rabbis, the Sheiks, and the Priests are generally excluded. This is just amazing. It is perhaps the best illustration that religion is not taken seriously enough by people in high levels of government. But if religion is not included in these negotiations, my feeling is that you will never have a solution to this conflict. For instance, the status of Jerusalem is one of the major problems dividing the two sides, and it is inconceivable that we are going to have a solution without having the clerics at the table.

I think there are also much less dramatic steps that we can take. What would be helpful would be to fund programs in which religious clerics who are interested in the peaceful dimensions of the religions, actually meet each other. It would even be more valuable if the programs were international. One of the reasons that terrorism thrives is simply that the leaders and lay people of these communities rarely meet each other, and, therefore, they assume the worst about the religious other. Christian and Jewish clerics who bad mouth Islam have generally never met a Muslim. And I find that the same is the case vice versa. I cannot tell you how many Muslims I have met through my work who have never met a Jew, and I cannot tell you how many of them are shocked to find out that I am actually a nice guy. In short, we have become globalized enough to want to kill each other, but not globalized enough to be able to make peace with each other.

I know that meetings between clerics have occurred. You read about meetings periodically in the papers, and they sometimes involve clerics of distinction from different countries, but there are not nearly enough of these meetings. I have participated in some of them over the last ten years. At George Washington University, for instance, we are running a program in which we invite Saudi academics in the field of Religion, many of whom are also clerics, to dialogue with scholars of Religion at our university about religious issues. It has been a very interesting program. We need many more programs like this.

One final observation is that programs like this will take a long time to change minds. This is one reason why we do not see more programs of this kind. It is much easier to drop bombs and convince ourselves that we are going to take care of the problem quickly and decisively. But if we have learned anything in recent years, it is that change will not happen if this is all we do. We will need to have tremendous patience. This is one of the things I emphasize in all of my talks about religious extremism. We need great patience as we get to know each other across divisions of distance, language, and culture, and work on changing fundamental attitudes. This could take decades. This could take centuries. But we have to start somewhere, and we may as well do it now.

**Issam M. Saliba**

*Senior Foreign Law Specialist for the Middle East and North Africa, Law Library of Congress<sup>1</sup>*

This paper is limited to discussing the role in combatting terrorism of two religious traditions, Christianity and Islam.

Terrorism is but one manifestation of the intentional violence and aggression used against innocent people.

The evidence supporting the veracity of this postulate is readily available in our recorded history.

The atrocities committed by Attila the Hun pillaging cities and towns, bringing them to ruins, and murdering whole populations leaving no survivors behind are examples of the terrorist acts practiced in the fifth century AD.

The cruelty exhibited by the Mongols in conducting their wars during the 13<sup>th</sup> century provides other similar examples.

It has been reported that the Mongols assessed the extent of their victories by cutting off an ear from each dead enemy and that after the battle of Liegnitz, Poland in 1241:

They collected nine large sacks of ears and sent them back to the Khan as proof of their victory.<sup>2</sup>

Genghis Khan is quoted as having said:

The greatest pleasure is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Issam M. Saliba is the Legal Expert on Islamic Law at the Law Library of Congress; this unedited paper reflects a speech he delivered in his personal capacity on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2014, at the Potomac Institute and does not represent the position of the Library of Congress or any other U.S. government institutions.

<sup>2</sup> *1001 Battles That Changed the Course of World History*, edited by Reg G. Grant, p. 168, at <https://books.google.com/books?id=s4njwZGrZg4C&pg=PA168&dq=Liegnitz+mongols+nine+sacks+of+ears&hl=en&sa=X&ei=x3yZVMPaFoixyQSCnYDoBg&ved=0CCcQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Liegnitz%20mongols%20nine%20sacks%20of%20ears&f=false>

<sup>3</sup> *The Conquest of a Continent: Siberia and the Russians*, W. Bruce Lincoln, p. 10 at [https://books.google.com/books?id=a7JrTvgU4yMC&pg=PA10&lpg=PA10&dq=The+greatest+pleasure+is+to+vanquish+your+enemies+and+chase+them+before+you,+to+rob+them+of+their+wealth&source=bl&ots=mCOgYqgF\\_G&sig=-rJ8\\_7rSznllHFjdYZqFgrtffNw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=JImZVK7JF4OjyATtyICgAw&ved=0CFMQ6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=The%20greatest%20pleasure%20is%20to%20vanquish%20your%20enemies%20and%20chase%20them%20before%20you%20to%20rob%20them%20of%20their%20wealth&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=a7JrTvgU4yMC&pg=PA10&lpg=PA10&dq=The+greatest+pleasure+is+to+vanquish+your+enemies+and+chase+them+before+you,+to+rob+them+of+their+wealth&source=bl&ots=mCOgYqgF_G&sig=-rJ8_7rSznllHFjdYZqFgrtffNw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=JImZVK7JF4OjyATtyICgAw&ved=0CFMQ6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=The%20greatest%20pleasure%20is%20to%20vanquish%20your%20enemies%20and%20chase%20them%20before%20you%20to%20rob%20them%20of%20their%20wealth&f=false)

The Nazis attempts to exterminate Jews in the 20<sup>th</sup> century present examples of terrorism at its worst.

In his book *Civilization and its Discontents*<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud attributes violence and aggression to human nature. He asserts:

That men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but that a powerful measure of desire for aggression has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment.

He further explains that:

This aggressive cruelty usually lies in wait for some provocation... it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals men as savage beast to whom the thought of sparing their own kind is alien.

Freud's views on this subject, which the empirical evidence appears to support, are not shared by everyone.

The Seville Statement on Violence<sup>5</sup> authored by an international group of scientists in 1986 and adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1989 asserts:

That it is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature.

It also adds:

That biology does not condemn humanity to war.

In trying to determine the role of religion in combatting terrorism, and irrespective of whether violence is a biological instinct or an acquired behavior, we are compelled to point out that a lot of violence rising to the level of terrorism has been carried out in the name of religion.

In the early centuries of the Common Era a conflict arose among Christians as to the nature of Jesus Christ; was he completely divine and completely human or did his incarnation as the Son of God make him of only one divine nature?

One would have expected this conflict to remain within the confines of intellectual debate among scholars, priests, and theologians but it instead spread to the general public causing years of intra-Christian violence, terror, and mayhem.

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<sup>4</sup> P. 24 at <http://www2.winchester.ac.uk/edstudies/courses/level%20two%20sem%20two/Freud-Civil-Disc.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> A copy is available at <http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/seville.pdf>

One account of the violence resulting from this conflict as told by Edward Gibbon, the British historian, reads as follows:

Jerusalem was occupied by an army of monks; in the name of the one incarnate nature, they pillaged, they burnt, they murdered; the Sepulchre of Christ was defiled with blood; This deadly superstition was inflamed, on either side, by the principle and the practice of retaliation: in the pursuit of a metaphysical quarrel, many thousands were slain, and the Christians of every degree were deprived of the substantial enjoyments of social life...<sup>6</sup>

Other examples of terrorist acts carried out in the name of Christianity include the atrocities committed by the successive waves of crusaders not only against Muslims, Jews, and even Christians in the Holy land but also against groups in the West considered heretics by the Catholic Church.

In describing the fate of one such group, the Cathars of southern France, Voltaire, the renowned personality of the enlightenment age, wrote the following:

The city of Beziers tried to hold out against the crusaders; all the inhabitants who sought refuge in a church had their throats cut and the city was reduced to ashes. The citizens of Carcassonne, frightened by this example, begged for mercy from the crusaders and their lives were spared. They were permitted to leave their city, almost naked, and all their goods were seized.<sup>7</sup>

These terrorist acts had been sanctioned by the religious leaders of the warring factions or the official representatives of the Catholic Church at the time.

In 1252, Pope Innocent the fourth issued a papal proclamation, known as *Ad Extirpanda* describing the rules to be applied in dealing with heretics.

In this proclamation he authorized torture, short only of killing and breaking limbs, in order to extract confessions of wrongdoing against the creed of the Church.

Article or Law 25 of this proclamation reads as follows:

The *Podesta* or Rector has the authority to oblige all heretics that he may have in his power, without breaking limbs or endangering their lives, to confess their errors and to accuse other heretics whom they may know, as true assassins of souls and thieves of the Sacraments of God ...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 47 at

<http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap47.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Voltaire on the Wars against the Cathars of the Languedoc at [http://www.midi-france.info/articles/t\\_voltairecathars.htm](http://www.midi-france.info/articles/t_voltairecathars.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Jordan Bishop, Aquinas on Torture, p. 1 at

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0028-4289.2006.00142.x/pdf>

The first act of terrorism committed in the name of Islam is probably the murder of the fourth caliph, Ali bin Abi Taleb, by a group, known as al-Khawarij.

Al-Khawarij accused the caliph of violating the word of God for agreeing to arbitrate the legitimacy of his appointment to office

Other examples of terrorist activities carried out in the name of Islam include the atrocities of the two notorious groups, known as al-Qarameta and al-Hashasheen.

One account of the atrocities of the Qarmatians committed in 930, states as follows:

the Qarmatians had spread down in Hijaz, and flooded Mecca and Kaba with the blood of pilgrims ... They made it a scene of fire, blood and repine for 17 days. ... The Qarmatians choked up the sacred spring of Zamzam, the door of the Kaba was broken open, the veil covering the Kaba was torn down, and the sacred Black Stone was removed from the Kaba and taken to their headquarters<sup>9</sup>

The name al-Hashasheen, assassins, entered the English language to become synonymous with killing and murdering.

Terrorism in the name of Islam has produced the 9/11 attacks on the United States and is manifesting itself anew through the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS or ISIL.

With this record of violence can we expect religion to play a role in combatting terrorism?

The answer is yes because religion has the capacity to tame biological instincts, change acquired behavior, and give true meaning to scripture if its teaching emphasizes peace and toleration.

Christianity, after many years of questionable stances no longer condones violence committed in its name. To the contrary, its teaching today concentrates on peace, toleration, and love of others and its message to would-be-terrorists is that their actions are against what God is expecting from them.

With respect to Islam, the task is complicated:

1. There is no church or single body that represents Islam. This lack of central authority which originally gave Muslims the intellectual freedom to build a civilization based on peaceful coexistence and respect for diversity has become a hindrance by allowing terrorist groups such al-Qaeda and ISIS to speak on behalf of Islam as any other groups do;
2. The tool of reason that helped Muslims in the past understand their religion as preaching peaceful co-existence and respect for diversity has disappeared

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<sup>9</sup> The Qarmatians in Bahrain at <http://ismaili.net/histoire/history05/history510.html>

starting with the banishment of Ibn Rushd, the great Muslim Scholar and thinker of the 12th century, known in the West as Averroes.

The writings of Averroes which became the inspiration of the European Enlightenment were burned in public in his native Andalusia.

What is amazingly surprising is that the vast majority of Muslims who reject and abhor violence are letting a small minority from among themselves to make Islam look like a religion of violence and aggression.

It is not enough for the Muslim majority to assert that Islam is a religion of peace; it is incumbent upon them to face, reexamine, and challenge the traditional interpretation of some of the passages of their scripture, the so-called verses of the sword.

These verses of the Koran upon which the terrorists rely to attack non-Muslims and defile their places of worship are the same verses that existed when the Prophet Mohammed pledged his word and the word of God to protect the lives, properties, and churches of the Christians of Najran.

The pledge reads in part as follows:

Najran and their followers are entitled to the protection of Allah and the security of Muhammad the Prophet, the Messenger of Allah, which security shall involve their persons, religion, lands and possessions...<sup>10</sup>

They are the same verses that existed when the Prophet instructed Maaz bin Jabal, his representative in Yemen, that “no Jew shall be enticed to leave Judaism.”<sup>11</sup>

And they are the same verses that existed when the Muslims refunded to the non-Muslim inhabitants of Hims the taxes levied on them when they, the Muslims, became unable to protect them against the advancing army of Heraclius.<sup>12</sup>

The role of the religion of Islam in combatting terrorism in this age where most terrorist groups are claiming to represent Islam shall be the most effective only if the majority of Muslims are able to make their voices heard, reintroduce the tool of reason in the interpretation of their scripture, and reclaim the intellectual heritage of their fallen heroes such as Averroes, Mohammed Abdo, and others.

A statement attributed to Sheikh Mohammed Abdo points out indirectly but affirmatively to the heavy responsibility placed on the Muslim majority; upon his return from a visit to Paris in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century he is reported to have said:

In Paris I saw Islam, I did not see Muslims.  
In Egypt I see Muslims, I don't see Islam.

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<sup>10</sup> Imam al-Baladhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. by Philip Hitti, p. 100 at <https://ia802708.us.archive.org/29/items/originsofislamic00balarich/originsofislamic00balarich.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Id. p. 109

<sup>12</sup> Id. p. 211

**Dr. Sayyid Syeed**

*National Director of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) heading up its Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington, DC. He is one of the founders of the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS) and served as Editor and then Editor-in-Chief (1984-1994)<sup>1</sup>*

I want to introduce myself and I want to introduce the community that I am representing in North America. It is a new identity, it is a new reality, and it has a tremendous global role to play.

I came here about 40 years ago. In the '50s and '60s, many of the Muslim countries were becoming independent from their European colonial occupation. Therefore, the first priority that they had was to send their students to America for advanced studies in science, technology, and education. So in the 1960's, we had about a quarter million Muslim students in American universities. This was a new thing for America to have that many Muslims in American universities and to have that many Muslims in America observing their religious practices like praying and fasting as a community. We did not have the Islamic centers and mosques that we have today. So it was the Christian churches that opened their doors to these Muslims to pray here.

It was unprecedented. It was new for Muslims also because their earlier generations had been to Europe—Indo-Pakistanis and Malaysians going to London for higher studies, Algerians and Moroccans would go to France. But the relation between the host society and incoming students was quite unequal. It was for the first time that Muslim students in America saw a new reality. A pluralist democracy where they were treated as equals and practice of religion was encouraged. So it was very much a new experience for both, Muslim students as well as the host society.

This was the environment in which Muslim Students Association of the U.S. and Canada was born in 1963. That is why last year we were celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. So I also came to do my Ph.D. here as a student. After a few years I became President of the Muslim Students Association of the U.S. and Canada, in the later '70s. As President of the Muslim Student Association of the U.S. and Canada, which had already done so much good work in America, I thought this was a wonderful opportunity. It should not stay just as the Muslim Student Association. America deserved to have a modern day Islamic community at par with Christian and Jewish communities. This would be our gift to America. This would be a gift to the Muslim world. For the first time the Muslims will be proud of observing a Muslim community flourishing in a pluralist democracy and that will be a gift that the Muslim world would recognize. So while I was President, we transformed this student organization into the Islamic Society of North America. So that is what we were celebrating last year.

So it is amazing that this happened in 1963. That was the year when Martin Luther King, Jr. was presenting the Dream speech, leading a march on Washington. Usually, in America and around the world, when people think of Martin Luther King,

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation was delivered at an event on "The Role of Religion in Combating Terrorism" held December 19, 2014 at Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

Jr. and his march and of the whole civil rights movement in America, they think that 1963 was a watershed; a beginning of a more inclusive society in America which recognized people of different colors and different races. But the fact is that it was also the year when America became inclusive in terms of welcoming a new religion that is Islam. So our growth, our development, started in 1963 in terms of having well-coordinated growth and development of Islam in America. But the whole project was an interfaith project. We were working together with our Christian and Jewish neighbors and organizations. Working so closely with the National Council of Churches representing about 50 million Protestants, so closely with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops representing about 84 million Catholics, and the Union of Reform Judaism and other denominations. It is amazing what could be achieved when you have such multiple faith groups and civil rights reforms supporting and helping you to move forward.

It was in 2010 that we thought our honeymoon in America was going to end. What happened was that a pastor in Florida threatened that he was going to burn the Koran. That was the time when in New York the Ground Zero Mosque project was under attack. There were people who were resenting the building of the Ground Zero Mosque. That was the same time when we had problems building an Islamic center in the Midwest in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. There was a wave of anti-Muslim sentiment in America. That was the time I was getting letters of support from Catholics, Protestants, and Jewish leaders condemning the anti-Muslim rhetoric. They were assuring us that these hate mongers did not represent Christianity or Judaism. They decided that they would come to Washington and hold a summit of religious leaders on August 7, 2010, where they would articulate their rejection of anti-Muslim sentiment that was growing quite loud and intense.

On September 7, 2010, a summit of Christian and Jewish religious leaders was held in Washington, DC and at their major press conference at the National Press Building, these leaders denounced anti-Muslim bigotry. But they did something more than that. They created a campaign called "Shoulder to Shoulder with American Muslims, Upholding American Values." And you know what America values they were talking about. They said that they cannot allow these hate mongers to attack the Muslim community in America, because attack on one religion was an attack on all religions. They said that those who indulge in bigotry against a religious community will be destroying the most cherished asset of our society, that is respect for diversity. They raised about a quarter of a million dollars to run this campaign. They advertised the position of a director for Shoulder to Shoulder with American Muslims. ([www.ShouldertoShoulderCampaign.org](http://www.ShouldertoShoulderCampaign.org)). We in the Islamic Society of North America hosted the office of the Shoulder to Shoulder in our office on the Capitol Hill, steered and funded by Christian and Jewish leaders.

They have done a wonderful job. For the past few year this organization has opposed this kind of Islamophobia in America. You must have seen for yourselves that in 2010, the anti-Muslim rhetoric was about to become mainstream. But these people have made sure that anti-Muslim sentiment is no longer a respectable discourse.

Now when you are living in an environment where Islam, Christianity, Judaism, major representatives, organizations, and institutions together are participating in creating an environment of mutual respect and religious freedom, then you can

imagine what that means. That means that when I turn on the television and I hear that a Church has been burned in Pakistan or I hear that something of this nature has happened anywhere in the world, it becomes a part of my Islamic responsibility to come forward and see what we can be do together to avert it. That is exactly what we have been doing.

I have just returned from Abu Dhabi. We had an international conference of religious leaders on how to deal with this kind of violent extremism. In every country we have now Religions for Peace and then we have the World Religious for Peace an international peace movement. So we go to different countries and identify Muslim scholars and leaders from other faith communities who have a similar understanding of their faiths. This way we are able to create a new reality. I have been to Pakistan, to Iran with a similar kind of delegation and met with Christian leaders and leaders of other minorities there. We have raised funds here in the U.S. for reconstructing churches that had been burned there. It is very surprising to many that Muslims in America are collecting funds to help the Christians in Pakistan to rebuild their church properties. But this is what Muslims are expected to do according to the Quranic commandments, protect places of worship of other faiths. Quran (22: 50).

This is happening from country to country. Our major impact was felt in Tunisia for example. When the Arab Spring came, there was an opportunity to redefine how to shape their politics, governments, and the role of minorities. We celebrate the fact that our 50 years of experience of living in a democratic society is appreciated by the Islamic party, Ennahda and incorporated as a priority in adopting their new Constitution. We do not want to see that Islam is used to justify dictatorships and deprivation of religious freedom and human rights. We owe the growth of our community to freedom and respect for diversity. We would like to see that these values that are enshrined in the Quran are implemented without any compromise. We celebrate these achievements in different measures in different countries but continue to advocate for safety and security of the minorities. American Muslims are destined to play a role in promoting a better understanding of Islam here and a better practice of Islamic vision for human dignity and respect for diversity abroad.

## Jerusalem: Outlook for War or Peace?

### Hon. Reuven Azar

*Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Israel-Washington DC. Previously, he served at the Israeli Embassies in Amman and Cairo and was involved in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority<sup>1</sup>*

I think that the key for peace if we want to avoid the continuation of war is acceptance. Acceptance—it means acceptance of the other. I could speak here for a whole hour, maybe for a whole day, regarding the connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem. To talk about the history of Jerusalem, how it was established as the capital of the Israeli Kingdom by King David 3000 years ago, the first and the second Temple, and the fact that Jews pray three-times-a-day every day for going back to Jerusalem and to restore Jerusalem as the capital and the place where the Temple can be restored, etc. We mention Jerusalem at funerals and weddings. It is part and parcel of the life of any Jew. But in order to get to peace we have to accept also the other and the other has to accept us.

Another thing that we have to do is, instead of exploiting religion to radicalize, we have to exploit religion to moderate—to be a force of moderation. And that is a very difficult task, especially today, with the situation we have in the region. Unless we defeat the radicals we will not be able to do it.

In the last few months I have heard people say that ISIS is ignorant. Unfortunately they are not. Their methods are terrible but the leaders of ISIS have an ideology and they are educated. So the problem that we have is that the radicals are educated and unless we defeat them, it will be very difficult to promote the message of acceptance of the other and to use religion to promote moderation.

Now one of the problems that we have in Jerusalem—I am also a Jerusalemite, I was raised there—is that religion is being manipulated. In the last spark of violence that we are suffering from now, before that there was a well-organized campaign, actually by the Islamic Movement in Israel, claiming that Israel wants to change the status quo of the Temple Mount or the Haram Al-Sharif.

Now this is not the first time that religion is being manipulated in that way. It goes back to the beginning of the conflict—not only before 1967, but before 1948. In 1929, for example, when a terrible massacre happened in Jerusalem, Hebron, the very old community of Hebron was erased, people were killed. It was sparked by a supposedly insignificant initiative of Jews at the Wailing Wall to put a separation between men and women. So this sparked a rumor that the Jews are going to take over the Haram al-Sharif, the Temple Mount. Incitement at the Mosque led to violence and to mass murder.

Before the 1920's it was well-known, including in the publications of the Waqf at that time, I think it was Rob Satloff from the Washington Institute that found this

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation was delivered at an event on “Jerusalem: Outlook for War or Peace?” held December 21, 2015 at Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

booklet actually in the National Archives, that mentioned a publication of the Waqf in 1923 that said that the Haram al-Sharif is the same location where the Temple of Solomon was built. And actually the term *Bayt al-Maqdis*, like the term in Hebrew *Beit Hamikdash*, is something that is well-known. It has to do with the Solomon's Temple. Actually, one of the ISIS related organizations Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis, they exist in the Sinai. So the term is pretty embedded into the Islamic tradition.

This rejectionist approach today of trying to rewrite history and disconnect the narrative of the Jews and their connection to the Holy Land was part of an anti-nationalistic or anti-Zionist movement. What we know today as the Palestinian national movement emanated from rejectionists like Izz ad-Din al-Qassam or Haj Amin al-Husseini, even if they didn't define themselves as Palestinians.

So how can we deal with rejectionists? That is a very, very difficult challenge and I followed it when I served in Jordan, in Amman. We were dealing on a day-to-day basis on trying to settle this problem that we have. The approach of Israel has been very interesting because when we came to Jerusalem back in 1967 after all of these years, hundreds of thousands of years of praying for Jerusalem, when Moshe Dayan came to the Temple Mount, to the Haram al-Sharif, he sat on the floor, he called for the priests, the Awqaf people, and he gave them the keys for the Temple. The idea of the leaders at that time was that in order for us to solve the conflict what we have to do at the end of the day is to separate between nationalism and religious rights and to show religious tolerance and not to take over the places that are sacred for the others. That is the government policy today.

Another very important event was in 1994 when Prime Minister Rabin signed a peace accord with the Jordanians because that was the first time that any leader in the world recognized the role of the Hashemites at the Haram al-Sharif. Now why did Israel do that? Because Israel wanted to maintain and to promote the idea that you can identify and solve religious issues separately from nationalist issues. We have a national conflict with the Palestinians and we have to solve it but if we draw religion into the conflict then we will not be able to solve it. So we have to be able to respect other religions and respect the religious role of legitimate leaders in the region.

Now it is very interesting because at that point in time no other Arab leader had declared it respects the role of the Hashemite family in the Haram. Israel was the first one. Last year I think or two years ago, Abu Mazen was the second one to recognize the role of the Hashemite family and the Hashemite King in Jerusalem.

In the last two years we have another phenomenon that is worrisome. Although Israel is a democracy and we respect religion and although we have been attacked for many years by radicals in the Arab world and beyond, there is a radicalization problem in Israel itself as well. We have Jewish radicals. Of course you cannot compare it to what is going on in the region in size or depth or violent expressions, but we have to deal with that. We have seen in the last year or two an increase in the number of victims of Jewish terror. They are few in number but it's a challenge we are taking very seriously in terms of the investment in resources to fight it.

In addition, we have seen some people in Israel who are trying to call for a change in the status quo in the Temple Mount, in the Haram.

Now what the President, Prime Minister, and Security Forces are trying to do is fight that Jewish radicalization, whether it be the Hilltop Youth or others trying to promote violence. But the Prime Minister said very clearly that Israel will not change the status quo in the Temple Mount. There is incitement around this, there is propaganda, and people around the Arab world are completely sure that Israel wants to take over al-Aqsa Mosque or Haram al-Sharif. But we are not going to do that because we believe that although Jerusalem and that place which is the most sacred place for us, has a connection to us, we have to respect also the aspirations and the religion of others.

Just to wrap it up, I would say that if we manage to find partners that not only will join us in promoting moderation but also will recognize our narrative then we have a chance of negotiating peace. You know we have negotiated even Jerusalem in the last few years, under the Barak government, during the Olmert government, and the suggestions on the table were very, very revolutionary and very ambitious. I think that we may get to that point when we hear from the other side, from the leaders of the Palestinians and the leaders of the Arab world that they are willing to recognize the historic connection of the Jews to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem, the religious connection, and the national connection. If we hear that, if Israelis hear that from the other side I think that they will be much more prone to compromise on the issue of Jerusalem.

**Professor Mohammed S. Dajani**

*Weston Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He founded the Wasatia movement of moderate Islam and previously worked as a professor of political science at al-Quds University in Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>*

*Beginning remarks*

What I would like to do is explore the status of Jerusalem in the hope of offering insights to help in resolving this complex and sensitive issue.

*Family Association*

I will start by introducing my family association with the city and then talk a little bit about the history of the city and then discuss some potential ways of trying to seek solutions pertinent to the future of the city.

In 1529 the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman appointed my great grandfather Sheikh Ahmed Dajani and his family to be the Custodians of the King David Tomb which became part of the Dajani legacy till 1948 when Mount Zion was overtaken by the Jewish forces who took over control of that neighborhood. When the Ottoman Empire started establishing the municipalities in the Empire by having the first in Istanbul, and the second in Jerusalem, it appointed in 1863 Abdel Rahman Dajani as a Mayor for the city; also Aref Pasha Dajani became a Mayor in 1917-1918.

During the violent conflict of 1948, the Dajani family gave refuge to Jewish philosopher Martin Buber and his family, hiding them in their homes in the Arab quarter after the Jewish quarter fell, and saving the Buber library from being burnt. So, the Dajani family is one of the oldest and largest Palestinian families in Jerusalem. There are more things to say about the family association with Jerusalem but this is not the topic of our meeting today.

*Attachment to Jerusalem*

The thrust of my talk may be exemplified in the Quranic verse which says that God alternates power among people: “And so are the days, We alternate to people by turns, that God may test those who believe, and that He may take witnesses from among you” (Aal Imran Surah: verse 140). It is interesting to notice how different people have fought to get control of the city and in doing so the rule over Jerusalem shifted from one power to another alternating among atheists, Jews, Christians, and Muslims. So basically the history of Jerusalem has been shifting between glories and catastrophes; a city that has been witness to transition and occupation by a diversity of nations and peoples but has remained despite all adversities, target of religious pilgrimage for all nations throughout its history.

Jews believe that the Red Sea was opened to allow the Jews to cross safely and then closed to drown Pharaoh and his army and that Moses spoke to God on Mt. Sinai and received from him the Ten Commandments. Christians believe in the trinity and

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation was delivered at an event on “Jerusalem: Outlook for War or Peace?” held December 21, 2015 at Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

that Jesus resurrected the dead and that he fed multitudes of people with few loafs of bread and fish. Similarly, Muslims believe in the nocturnal journey of Prophet Muhammad to Jerusalem carried by al-Buraq's steed where he met Archangel Gabriel and ascended to Heaven and met the Prophets and God. So, the lesson here is to each his narrative; an integral part of the solution to the conflict lies in respecting the narrative of the other and not to deny it or to refute it.

### *Historical Background*

In 1638, Muslims conquered Jerusalem and the second Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab arrived at the city from Mecca riding a camel and was led by Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. When it was time for Muslim prayer, the Caliph was invited to pray in the Church but refused fearing Muslims would turn churches into mosques, which some of them did anyway. He prayed outside the church and on the site of his act of worship the Mosque of Omar was built which still stands to this very day. So, if you go to the Holy Sepulcher, facing you, you will find the Mosque of Omar where he prayed. Caliph Omar asked to be taken to the sacred rock from which Prophet Mohammed ascended to Heaven. Upon reaching there, he found that the area was used as a garbage dump. He ordered it be cleaned and built a mosque near the rock, which was called Al-Aqsa Mosque in reference to the verse in the Quran. Caliph Omar allowed Jews to return and reside in the city of Jerusalem after they were being banned from doing so for centuries.

The Umayyads later built the Dome of the Rock Mosque on the site of the same rock where it is believed Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son as a test to his loyalty to God but was ordered by God to sacrifice a ram instead. It is also believed that on this rock the ship of Noah landed.

In 1852, Sultan Abdul Majid issued the Status Quo Declaration which regulated mutual rights of Christian institutions in Jerusalem and asserted that the status quo in Jerusalem should prevail. This status quo has been respected even till this very day.

Though Austrian troops left the city in 1916, and the Turks surrendered the city of Jerusalem in November 1917, General Edmund Allenby delayed his entrance to the city till the 9<sup>th</sup> of December to coincide with Christmas celebrations to give his conquest victory a religious aura. Then, to deliver his victory speech, he dismounted from his horse to enter through Jaffa Gate on foot in respect for the city pledging his victory speech to have Jerusalem be the City of Peace. His modesty was partly in response to the pompous entry of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II on a white horse upon his visit in 1898 when the city wall at Jaffa Gate was breached to accommodate him.

In November of 1947, the UN reached a resolution to partition Mandate Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state and then to internationalize the city, including Bethlehem. However, when the British left Palestine in mid-May 1948, the British commander was asked, "To whom did you leave Palestine?" His response was: "I left the key under the door rug." So, after the 1948 War, 85 percent of Jerusalem was captured by Jewish forces which became West Jerusalem; 11 percent of the city including the Old City fell under the control of Jordan; and four percent of the city was considered no-man's land in which the UN headquarters was established.

On December 13, 1949, Israel declared West Jerusalem the capital of Israel in violation of international law and UN resolution. A week later, on December 19, 1949, the UN responded by restating the intention to place Jerusalem under a permanent international regime. However, the city remained divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule.

In June 1967, Israel reunited East and West Jerusalem, but the city remained divided politically, socially and psychologically. In late June 1967, the Israeli Knesset extended Israeli jurisdiction to East Jerusalem in violation of international law. This is the crux of the problem. Israelis who wonder, 'Why should Israel give up its sovereignty over united Jerusalem?' do not realize that in accordance to international law, Israel has no sovereignty over Jerusalem whether East or West. So, the legal reference question here resides with international law since in 1948 Jewish forces captured West Jerusalem and later declared it capital of Israel, overriding the 1947 UN Resolution to internationalize the city. In 1967, the Israeli forces captured East Jerusalem and later declared it the "eternal" capital of Israel, overriding a UN Resolution not to change the character of the city. However, Israel allowed the administration of the Haram Sherif compound to continue to be maintained by the Jordanian religious WAQF.

### *Peace Initiatives*

In September 1993, the Declaration of Principles listed Jerusalem as one of the issues to be negotiated at a later stage. The Israeli Foreign Minister at the time Shimon Peres promised that the Israeli government will not hamper the activities of Palestinian institutions from the fulfillment of their important mission in East Jerusalem.

In October 26, 1994, the peace treaty signed between Israel and Jordan reaffirmed the status of Jordan as the Custodian for the holy places in the city.

Later, three peace initiatives viewed the future status of Jerusalem to be divided into two Palestinian and Israeli capitals granting the Palestinians and Israelis equal status in their part of Jerusalem, namely, the Road Map, the Clinton Plan, and the Arab Peace Initiative. There were also joint initiatives between various Palestinian and Israelis NGOs calling for the formation of a Palestinian state and having Jerusalem serve as the capital for both.

### *Palestinian Jerusalemites*

To look at the present status of the city, we have 350,000 Palestinians living in the Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. A Separation Wall between Jerusalem and the West Bank was built in 2003. 145,000 Palestinian residents live outside the Jerusalem Separation Wall, while 195,000 live inside the Wall carrying Israeli residency permits. The blue Israeli identity cards entitle them to reside in the city but not to be citizens of the State of Israel. They can move from Jerusalem to the West Bank and from Jerusalem to Israel without any permit. The Israeli identity cards they hold give them the right to work and move freely across the country and the West

Bank, and to cross checkpoints but not to vote in Israeli elections. More than 10,000 Palestinians who live in Jerusalem hold Israeli citizenship.

Here, it is important to note the hidden clash in Jerusalem between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Although Palestinians benefit from being residents of East Jerusalem, particularly in health care, much more than those living in the West Bank or in Gaza, they live under much tension and pressure suffering from Israeli annexation policies which aim at Judaization of the city. In the last two decades the velocity of this effort accelerated a lot, even names of streets have been changed from Arab to Jewish and written in Hebrew while in their early days of occupation, Israel used to write the names of the streets and sites in three languages: Hebrew, English, and Arabic. But, now the tendency is to put only Hebrew or Hebrew and English.

Also, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem live continuously under the threat being stripped of their residency rights. This is a very serious problem that actually makes Palestinians very insecure and unstable fearing that at any time their residency rights be revoked.

We have poor public services in East Jerusalem compared to West Jerusalem. There is a big gap in the facilities between West Jerusalem and East Jerusalem. Although East Jerusalem Palestinians comprise 32 percent of the city's total population, now this percentage is decreasing at a high pace. Palestinians contribute nearly 33 percent of the city's budget, yet they receive less than three percent of the municipal budget. Also, the Jerusalem Municipality invests six times more on Jewish residents than Palestinian residents. This is evident in public facilities such as schools, parks, swimming pools, public libraries, clinics, and other different facilities within the city.

For instance, the Israeli public schools in West Jerusalem are provided with superior facilities at a time when the Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem are left in extremely miserable conditions. So, when you are reading about a young kid who takes a kitchen knife and goes out looking for an Israeli to stab, you may find more motivation in this poor educational system than in politics. He hates to go to school because there are no good facilities to attract him and this is part of the problem we are facing. Residential buildings are converted to schools with crammed classes. The schoolyards are narrow; there are not many sports facilities, no computers, labs, or libraries, no heating in freezing winter or cooling in hot summer, and poor lightning. The environment is not attractive to learning and education creating problems with students. This is why students hate to go to school. We have to make them love to come to school rather than be in the street. That is part of the problem.

In addition, the Israeli Home Demolition Policy is affecting the welfare and the psychology of the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem.

There is high level of despair as a result of the political stalemate and the frustration from social and economic neglect resulting in violent explosions we are witnessing today. Militant Muslim extremists have exploited these deteriorating conditions to intensify the tensions and to incite for violent action.

Much of the donations Muslims abroad make to improve the conditions of Palestinians in Jerusalem do not reach its needy destination.

### *The Future of Jerusalem*

The city of Jerusalem has a special status in the consciousness of the great monotheistic religions. For centuries it has been a vital center of worship for the three world religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Any lasting solution should take into account this religious and historic attachment of the three monotheistic faiths to this city.

Here we have two clashing narratives. The Palestinians aspire Arab East Jerusalem to become the capital of the prospective State of Palestine and Israel maintains that united Jerusalem is its “eternal capital.” Both clashing aspirations are without legal status for lack of international recognition.

So, if we want to seek solutions for the Jerusalem issue, we need to filter out the symbolism, religious overtones, and nationalist rhetoric from the political reality on the ground. The political reality today is that Israel rules the city but without international sovereignty and recognition.

Here lies the answer to the questions, ‘Why should Israel actually share Jerusalem? What would Israel get if it does want to share the city?’ The answer is Israel will gain international recognition.

Looking at Jerusalem from a plane we see a twin city. We notice that Jerusalem is composed of two cities – the Holy City and the Municipal City. The Holy City comprises of the Old City which itself combine four quarters: Jewish, Christian, Armenian, and Muslim. This is the historic Biblical Jerusalem referred to by religious holy books. It is surrounded by a historic wall built by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. It includes the three holy places for Jews (The Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall), for Christians (The Holy Sepulcher), and for Muslims (The Haram al-Sherif) which gives the Old City its Holiness. Thus, only the Old City and its immediate surroundings constitute the historic Jerusalem – the city referred to in the holy books. The Old City has become very small compared to the neighborhoods and areas annexed to the city.

In the last century, vast areas have been annexed to the city of Jerusalem by succeeding municipalities which I call the Municipal City.

These areas were annexed in a systemic zoning way to cut out the Arab population while annexing the unpopulated land i.e. to annex land and exclude people making its shape looking odd.

When contemplating the future of Jerusalem, we need to make a sharp distinction between the Holy City and the Municipal City because the battle is to decide the present and future of the Holy City and not as much the Municipal City.

In order to achieve reconciliation in midst of conflict on coexistence in the Holy City of Jerusalem, all that we need is to agree on such issues as municipal services, day-

to-day living problems, status of holy places, and agree to disagree on conflictual issues such as political sovereignty and who rules.

The proposed solution is to bestow special international Jewish-Christian-Muslim Custodianship on the Holy City while share the Municipal City: East for the Arab community which is mainly Muslim and Christian; West for the Jewish community. Jerusalem would be without checkpoints, walls, barriers or restrictions. Israel will transfer its responsibility for sewage, roads, schools, child care, health care and social services in East Jerusalem to the Palestinians. Municipal taxes collected from Palestinian residents would be used to improve the living conditions of Palestinians in the Jerusalem neighborhoods.

This is a win-win situation to replace the perceived win-lose situation of the present in which the city is ethnically divided, religiously, and psychologically with Israel retaining control of the entire city, but without recognition by the international community. It is a win-win situation because it will bring peace, security, stability, and prosperity to the residents and visitors of the city. In this way, the city would be open to the whole world to come and pray and particularly to all Muslims, Christians, and Jews. This way it will become the City of Peace and the City of Hope.

## **“The Holy Jerusalem: A Key to Middle East War or Peace?”**

### **Postscript to the Introduction**

#### **Professor Yonah Alexander**

*Director, Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies and Senior Fellow, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*

During the production process of this report on “The Holy Jerusalem: A Key to Middle East War or Peace?” two recent developments are noteworthy.

First, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a bipartisan measure (H. Res. 11) on January 5, 2017, criticizing the earlier UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2334 of December 23, 2016, that was passed with the abstention of the United States. This legislative move, introduced by the Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) on January 3, 2017, was adopted by the House 342-80. It condemned *inter alia* the UNSC Resolution for “effectively stat[ing] that the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site, are ‘occupied territory’ . . . .”<sup>1</sup>

A similar motion was introduced in the United States Senate by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Marco Rubio (R-FL). It called, on January 4, 2017, for the UNSC Resolution “to be repealed or fundamentally altered so that it is no longer one-sided and allows all final status issues toward a two-state solution to be resolved through direct bilateral negotiations between the parties.”<sup>2</sup>

In a related move in the Senate on January 3, 2017, Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX), Dean Heller (R-NV), and Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced a bill to relocate the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and withhold a portion of the State Department budget until the relocation is completed.<sup>3</sup>

The second Jerusalem-connected development is the latest escalation of violence in the Holy City. On January 8, 2017, an Israeli-Arab terrorist, allegedly inspired by the Islamic State, plowed his truck into a group of Israeli Jewish soldiers visiting Jerusalem’s Armon Hanatziv promenade (a popular tourist area near the Old City). The dead included four soldiers, and 17 others were injured. The attacker himself was shot and killed during the event. He was identified as Fadi Ahmad Hamdan Qunbor, 28, a resident of the Palestinian neighborhood of Jabel Mukabar of East Jerusalem.

This specific violence that ended several months of relative calm after a longer period of frequent stabbings, shootings, and car attacks, and many more aborted

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<sup>1</sup> H.Res.11 - Objecting to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 as an obstacle to Israeli-Palestinian peace, and for other purposes. 115th Congress (2017-2018). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-resolution/11/text>

<sup>2</sup> S.Res.6 - A resolution objecting to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 and to all efforts that undermine direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians for a secure and peaceful settlement. 115th Congress (2017-2018). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-resolution/6/text?r=474>

<sup>3</sup> S.11 - Jerusalem Embassy and Recognition Act. 115th Congress (2017-2018). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/11?r=65>

plots, was immediately praised by Hamas, the terrorist movement that controls the Gaza Strip. One of its officials described the Jerusalem incident as a “courageous and heroic operation.”<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the attack “...is part of the same pattern inspired by Islamic State, by ISIS, that we saw first in France, then in Germany and now in Jerusalem. This is part of the same ongoing battle against this global scourge of the new terrorism.”<sup>5</sup>

Regardless of the foregoing developments related to the Holy Land in early 2017, it is crystal clear that incitement and glorification of bloodshed undermine any possibility of a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

January 10, 2017

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<sup>4</sup> Kershner, Isabel. “4 Die in Jerusalem Attack as Palestinian Rams Truck Into Soldiers.” *The New York Times*, 8 January 2017.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/08/world/middleeast/jerusalem-truck-attack.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/08/world/middleeast/jerusalem-truck-attack.html?_r=0)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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Established in 1994, the activities of IUCTS are guided by an International Research Council that offers recommendations for study on different aspects of terrorism, both conventional and unconventional. IUCTS is cooperating academically with universities and think tanks in over 40 countries, as well as with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental bodies.

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