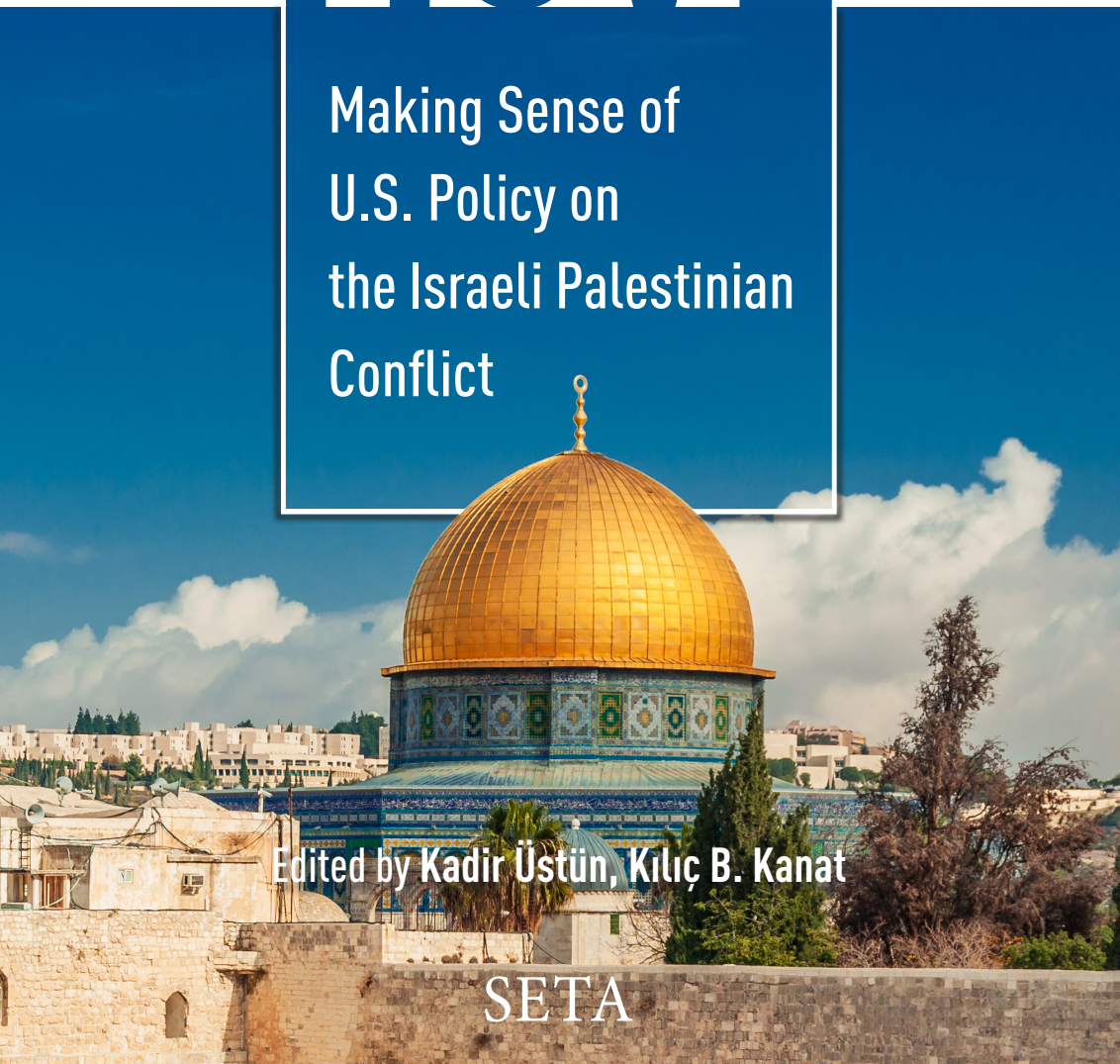
TRUMP'S JERUSALEM MOVE

Making Sense of U.S. Policy on the Israeli Palestinian Conflict



Edited by Kadir Üstün, Kılıç B. Kanat

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FOREWORD

Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims as well as for Jews and Christians. It has captured and inspired the imaginations of billions of people around the world during its long history. It has also been at the heart of the most significant modern conflict in the Middle East. Jerusalem is not only a powerful symbol but a living city in its own right with goals, dreams, and aspirations of its residents. It is obviously impossible to describe Jerusalem's political, religious, and historic significance in a meaningful way within the confines of this short introduction. Nevertheless, we would not be doing any justice to the topic of this book if we avoid highlighting what kind of a powerful place Jerusalem occupies in the minds of so many people from so many different backgrounds.

Jerusalem was under Ottoman control for many centuries until the end of the First World War when the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist as a single political unit. Mandate regimes imposed by colonialist powers divided the Middle East into different states according to their interests through artificial borders. The result has been the longest lasting conflict that has torn apart the region for many decades. Jerusalem has been the central issue for the Palestinians and Muslims around the world. The failure to reach a lasting peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians was closely related to the lack of an agreement on the status of Jerusalem. As the Israeli occupation continues to deepen on a daily basis, Jerusalem continues to be a symbol of resistance and hope against the continuing machinations of colonial and global interests.

Under international law and repeated United Nations decisions, East Jerusalem belongs to the Palestinians. Israel continues to restrict the movement of the city's residents while revealing its plans to expand settlements and claim the entire city as its capital. The Israeli governments have found a reliable ally in the Trump administration to support their position on Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Yet, this support will likely achieve nothing more than exposing the American duplicity and failure of the two-state solution as we know it. The international rejection of the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was striking. Thanks to a big diplomatic push led by Turkey, the U.S. and Israel were not only isolated in the international arena but also exposed as not being committed to lasting peace once again. We certainly did not need reminders of this reality but the Trump administration chose this path.

This critically important book includes chapters both contextualizing and discussing the U.S. administration's Jerusalem declaration in great detail. Various sections authored by American, Latin American, European, and Turkish authors examine the international responses to the U.S. President Trump's declaration. The volume makes a crucial contribution to the literature on Jerusalem by highlighting how the Jerusalem decision was so controversial and touched on different political, religious and cultural nerves around the world. Clearly, Jerusalem is not simply another city but it represents the crystallization of a conflict with so many national, regional, and global implications.

Jerusalem is at a historic moment. This edited volume forces us to think about the significance of this stage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as its importance for the rest of the Middle East. This will register as the U.S. abandoning its responsibility as a global power in order to align itself with a continued and deepening

occupation. Israel is well on its way to become an apartheid (if not already so) and the Trump administration appears more than happy to enable it. This can only sow the seeds of discord, conflict, and violence. The Islamic world came together against Trump's decision but it is doubtful that the reaction would be as strong if it were not for Turkey's leadership. Islamic countries have a much bigger role to play that they fail to appreciate.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the editor of this volume, Kadir Ustun, and distinguished expert contributors of the book for making this publication possible. I am confident that this book will serve as a serious contribution to our understanding of the underlying conflict and the status of Jerusalem.

Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran
General Coordinator
The Foundation for Political,
Economic, Social Research (SETA)

INTRODUCTION

President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the U.S. embassy to the city prompted this edited volume. Trump had already promised to make this move on the campaign trail but most of the foreign policy experts did not expect him to go forward with the idea as quickly as he did. Many judged that it would most likely be a promise unkept and the decades-old U.S. policy would hold. The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 recognized the city as the capital of the State of Israel and called for Jerusalem to remain an undivided city. However, all the U.S. administrations left the issue to be resolved between the parties as part of the final status negotiations. Prior to Trump's decision, most experts considered the peace process to be real in name only with very little prospect for a two-state solution. In this sense, Trump's decision was essentially a nail in the coffin of the peace process. The U.S. was finally openly admitting what many critics argued for a long time, that is, the U.S. would side with Israel.

The Jerusalem embassy move triggered a diplomatic push-back energized by Turkey's leadership in various international fora. It also resulted in clashes on the ground and the killing of many Palestinians by Israeli security forces during the official opening ceremony of the embassy. Clearly, Palestinians were not in a position to start yet another Intifada, as violence in previous Intifadas cost them immensely and led to further deepening of the Israeli

occupation. The Muslim leaders around the world joined Turkey in condemning the Trump administration's decision, however, the international isolation of the U.S. remained largely in the diplomatic arena. Many Muslim countries avoided a serious clash with the U.S. over the issue although they were apprehensive about potential violence on the ground. Turkey mobilized the OIC and the UN while calling for a recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital city of Palestine. The importance of Jerusalem cannot be overstated for the Muslim world but the international mobilization against Trump's decision fell short of reversing the U.S. decision.

In this volume, we analyze the rationale and implementation of President Trump's Jerusalem decision, what it means for the U.S. sponsored peace process, and the international reactions it triggered. In the first chapter, Lara Friedman draws attention to a fundamental failure of experts in not taking Trump seriously on his pronouncements regarding Jerusalem. Friedman outlines the history of U.S. policy on Jerusalem prior to Trump and demonstrates how the policy evolved over the previous decades. Friedman shows it was not out of the blue for Trump to make the Jerusalem declaration but rather that most of the experts refused to listen and take him seriously. Friedman's contextualization of the decision within the Trump administration's broader efforts to redefine the peace process is a stark reminder that the Jerusalem move has to be considered within this wider framework. Friedman skillfully shows how the Trump administration systematically undermined different aspects of the peace process as we knew it.

In the second chapter, Yousef Munayyer argues that the U.S. policy on Jerusalem allowed successive U.S. administrations to claim a mediator role while they were consistently supporting Israel. Munayyer shows that Trump's decision effectively ended this

already flawed claim and exposed the reality of the U.S. policy. Having shown the internal contradictions of the decision, Munayyer focuses on the message sent to the Israelis and the Palestinians. As the decision closes the Oslo era, according to Munayyer, the U.S. policy is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from the Israeli position. However, as the mask on the decades-old U.S. policy falls, he foresees a fundamental shift in the U.S. policy in the near future, partly owed to congressional action and partly to developments on the ground.

In the third chapter, Cecilia Baeza discusses the Latin American responses to Trump's Jerusalem decision. Baeza explains the political, diplomatic, economic, and demographic reasons determining various Latin American countries' policies toward Israel as well as toward Trump's decision. She argues that many Latin American countries approach issues related to Israel in the context of their relationships with the U.S. Her examination of individual Latin American country positions reveals that their policies toward Israel are strongly determined by whether or not they are a right-wing or left-wing government. She also aptly demonstrates how Latin American politicians may try to acquire political leverage domestically via the utilization of their diplomatic position on the Jerusalem issue.

In the fourth chapter, Guilherme Casarões argues that Trump's decision was met with skepticism across South America. Focusing on Paraguay and Brazil, countries that seemed to oscillate between siding with and going against Trump's Jerusalem decision, Casarões shows that the decision created frictions even among politicians supporting it largely as a result of domestic political ramifications and economic relations with Arab countries. In Brazil, for example, Bolsonaro ended up striking a middle road

with opening a trade office in Jerusalem instead of going forward with moving the Brazilian embassy to the city. Casarões presents a complex interplay of a variety of political and economic factors for Paraguay and Brazil on the issue of Jerusalem.

In the fifth chapter, Jacob Eriksson explores how the Jerusalem move played itself out among European countries. Pointing out that Europe opposed the move from the beginning, Eriksson outlines the growing divisions as well as the right-wing nationalist populism's increasing pressure to revise the European policy on Jerusalem. These difficulties have made it difficult to oppose Trump on the matter as a united front, Eriksson argues, while Europe tried to maintain its traditional position on the two-state solution no matter how elusive. Eriksson's analysis suggests that the EU will continue to be divided between these forces (international norms and rise of populism) in the near future thanks to the lack of effective decision making.

In the sixth chapter, Kadir Ustun and Kılıç B. Kanat explain the evolution of the Turkish policy toward Israel and identify the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a major determinant of the nature of the Turkish-Israeli relationship. They argue that all Turkish governments, regardless of their ideological alignments, have been highly sensitive to the plight of the Palestinians since the 1990s and earlier. Outlining the main developments in the Turkish-Israeli relationship under the AK Party during the 2000s, they identify the Operation Cast Lead as a major turning point in Turkey's consistent critique of the Israeli policies against Palestine. Under President Erdogan's leadership, they analyze the Turkish efforts to lobby the international community against Trump's Jerusalem decision at a time when Turkey was trying to also fix its relations with the U.S.

In the seventh chapter, Mark Perry recalls his encounters with the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who was under immense pressure and physical siege by Israel in the early 2000s. Perry argues that the main contribution Arafat hoped to receive from the U.S. was for them to "balance the scales" at a time they were heavily weighing tilted in Israel's favor. Debunking the myth of Arafat as the responsible party for the failure of the peace talks, Perry analyzes the emergence of a fundamental division between various groups within Fatah. Nothing seems to summarize this division and change within Fatah better than the one differences between Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, according to Perry. Perry argues that Trump simply made it crystal clear to everyone that the U.S. was "not only Israel's lawyer … but also its realtor."

This volume includes a rich and diverse set of perspectives on various aspects of Trump's Jerusalem decision. It provides us with an in-depth evaluation of the history and background of the decision, its implications for the U.S. policy, and the future of the peace process. The two-state solution has never appeared so out of reach as today. Ironically, some have welcomed the idea that the U.S. will no longer be able to pretend as the neutral mediator that can resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is no doubt that the decision is consequential for the U.S. policy but its implications for the rest of the world are also just as significant. There are very few people who still think the two-state solution is a distinct solution or even a possibility. Latin America, Europe, and the Muslim world's policies are all affected by this monumental change in the status quo. As Israel is fast on its way to becoming an apartheid, in the judgment of most observers, the international community will need to craft a new approach in the absence of true leadership by the U.S. Turkey's leadership has been very crit-

ical in keeping the attention on the matter and even isolating the U.S. and Israel in the international arena. At the same time, Turkish efforts have to be supported by the Muslim leaders as well as their European and Latin American counterparts to reach a just solution in Palestine.

Kadir Üstün
October, 2019

CHAPTER 1

TAKING TRUMP SERIOUSLY ON JERUSALEM

LARA FRIEDMAN
President of the Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the start of the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States, through this writing (well into the third year of the Trump presidency), observers and analysts of Israeli-Palestinian issues have over and over made the same basic error with respect to trying to understand the intentions of the Trump Administration and to predict its policies and its actions: they have refused to take President Trump and his surrogates at their word – including on Jerusalem.

At the start of Trump's campaign to become president, then-candidate Trump entrusted his Israel-Palestine policy to a core group of trusted advisors – his real estate lawyer, Jason Greenblatt; his bankruptcy lawyer, David Friedman; and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner – all of whom had well-established personal political inclinations in this policy arena[1]. And notwithstanding many people's expectation that, if elected, Trump would replace the trio with experienced foreign policy professionals, after winning the election Trump handed them the reins of his Israel-Palestine policy.

While past Administrations included officials who carried with them various ideological preferences on Israel-Palestine, such officials were almost uniformly foreign policy professionals who demonstrably adjusted their assumptions and their goals based

[1] Josefin Dolsten, "Meet the Jews in the Trump administration," *Times of Israel*, January 28, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/meet-the-jews-in-the-trump-administration/.

on realities of actually having to carry out a real foreign policy and political considerations, foreign or domestic, that emerged. In contrast, it was clear from the start that the men leading Trump's Israel-Palestine policy were not foreign policy professionals; they were, and remain today, ideologues.[2] In this context, it should have been expected that once in office, they would act energetically to implement the policies and promises articulated during the Trump campaign – and where these policies and promises hit obstacles, it should have been understood the result might be an alteration in tactics or timing, but not an alteration in objectives.

This is precisely what has happened since Trump took office, including on Jerusalem.

UNITED STATES POLICY ON JERUSALEM BEFORE TRUMP

From the era before Israel became a state in 1948, until December 6, 2017, the United States maintained an unbroken policy, backed by presidents from both parties, of refraining from recognizing the sovereignty of any nation in any part of Jerusalem, regardless of who was in control on the ground. Consistent with that policy, dating back to 1844, until March 4, 2019, the United States maintained a Consulate General in Jerusalem – an independent diplomatic mission responsible directly to Washington, not affiliated with any embassy accredited to any sovereign nation.[3] Likewise, based on its non-recognition policy in Jerusalem, from the time the United States established diplomatic relations with Israel until

[2] Isabel Kershner, "Israeli Settlement Sees Friendly Faces in Trump Administration," *New York Times,* February 15, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/15/world/middleeast/david-friedman-beit-el-west-bank.html.

[3] "U.S.-Israel Relations: History of the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-of-the-u-s-consulate-in-jerusalem.

May 14, 2018, the United States maintained its embassy to the state of Israel in Tel Aviv.

Those are the headlines; to appreciate the magnitude of the changes in United States policy represented by the Trump Administration's actions on Jerusalem requires a slightly deeper dive into history.

On November 29, 1947, six months before Israel's May 14, 1948 Declaration of Independence, the United States, under the presidency of Harry S. Truman, voted in favor of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181.[4] With respect to Jerusalem, this resolution stated:

> The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority on behalf of the United Nations.

In the wake of Israel's declaration of independence and the outbreak of the 1948 Israeli-Arab War (known to Israelis as the "War of Independence"), the United States did not change its policy on Jerusalem, as noted in an August 13, 1948 memo:

> We continue to believe that Jerusalem should not be placed under the sole authority of either side and that some degree of UN responsibility still essential...[5]

Indeed, on October 14, 1948, in the context of the ongoing presidential election campaign, President Truman issued a statement on Israel asserting, among other things:

[4] "U. N. General Assembly Resolution 181," Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, November 29, 1947, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/israel/unres181.htm.

[5] "Declassified Department of State memo," Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, August 13, 1948, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/berlin_airlift/documents/PDFs/2-18.pdf.

> We continue to support, within the framework of the United Nations, the internationalization of Jerusalem and the protection of the holy places in Palestine.[6]

Likewise, on December 11, 1948, the United States voted in favor of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194. With respect to Jerusalem, this resolution stated that:

> in view of its association with three world religions, the Jerusalem area…should be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control.[7]

The situation on the ground changed in 1949. The 1949 Armistice Line, agreed to by Israel and Jordan on April 3, 1949 as part of the agreements that ended the 1948 Israel-Arab war, left Jerusalem divided between Israel and Jordan, a status quo that held for the next 19 years. Yet, the policy of the United States remained unchanged: the United States, along with the United Nations and most of the world, refused to recognize the sovereignty of either nation in the city and instead continued to push for actions by the United Nations in support of internationalization of the city.

Rejecting this position, in July 1952 Israel moved its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Jerusalem. Objecting strenuously to the move, the United States embassy in Tel Aviv, acting under explicit instructions from Washington, delivered an "aide memoire" to the acting Israeli Foreign Minister reiterating that,

> The Govt of the U.S. had adhered to and continues to adhere to the policy that there shld be a special internatl regime for Jeru-

[6] "Statement of the President on Israel,", Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, October 24, 1948, accessed March 28, 2019, https://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=2004.

[7] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) "Palestine – Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator," United Nations documents archive, December 11, 1948, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/A/RES/194%20(III).

> salem which will not only provide protection for the holy places but which will be acceptable to Israel and Jordan as well as the world community…[8] [sic]

A decade later, a 1962 State Department memo reviewed in detail United States policy on Jerusalem, noting that, "as frequently stated," the United States policy is that:

> the status of Jerusalem is a matter of United Nations concern and no member of the United Nations should take any action to prejudice the United Nations interest in this question. Our objective has been to keep the Jerusalem question an open one and to prevent its being settled solely through the processes of attrition and fait accompli to the exclusion of international interest and an eventual final expression thereof presumably through the United Nations.[9]

In the course of the 1967 War, Israel took control of East Jerusalem (along with the rest of the West Bank). Commenting on the new *status quo* in an address delivered on June 19, 1967[10], President Lyndon Johnson outlined principles for peace between the parties to the conflict, noting, with respect to Jerusalem, only that, "there just must be adequate recognition of the special interest of three great religions in the holy places of Jerusalem." Nine days later, on June 28 - when it became clear that Israel was on the verge of *de facto* annexing East Jerusalem – Johnson issued a statement going much further:

[8] "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, The Near and Middle East, Volume IX, Part 1," U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, p. 961, accessed March 28, 2019, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/pg_961.

[9] "281. Memorandum From the Department of State Executive Secretary (Battle) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)," Department of State Office of the Historian, May 21, 1962, accessed March 28, 2019, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d281.

[10] "Address by President Lyndon Johnson," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 19, 1967, accessed March 28, 2019, https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook1/pages/26%20address%20by%20president%20johnson-%2019%20june%201967.aspx.

> It is one of the great continuing tragedies of history that a city which is so much the center of man's highest values has also been, over and over, a center of conflict. Repeatedly the passionate beliefs of one element have led to exclusion or unfairness for others. It has been so, unfortunately, in the last 20 years. Men of all religions will agree that we must now do better. The world must find an answer that is fair and recognized to be fair. That could not be achieved by hasty unilateral action, and the President is confident that the wisdom and good judgment of those now in control of Jerusalem will prevent any such action.[11]

That same day, Israel announced that it was applying its law to East Jerusalem and adjacent areas – an act of *de facto* annexation – and incorporating them into a single municipality with Israeli West Jerusalem. In response, the United States doubled down on its refusal to recognize Israeli sovereignty in any part of the city:

> The hasty administrative action taken today cannot be regarded as determining the future of the holy places or the status of Jerusalem in relation to them. The United States has never recognized such unilateral actions by any of the states in the area as governing the international status of Jerusalem...[12]

Less than a week later, on July 4, 1967, the United States abstained on UN General Assembly Resolution 2254[13], regarding Jerusalem. In a July 5, 1967 message sent to U.S. diplomatic missions around the world regarding the abstention, the State Department explained:

[11] "The Department of State Bulletin, Volume LVII, Nos. 1462-U87, July 3-December 25, 1967," Department of State Archives, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.archive.org/stream/departmentofstat571967unit/departmentofstat571967unit_djvu.txt.

[12] "The Department of State Bulletin, Volume LVII, Nos. 1462-U87, July 3-December 25, 1967," Department of State Archives, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.archive.org/stream/departmentofstat571967unit/departmentofstat571967unit_djvu.txt.

[13] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2253 (ES-V). "Measures taken by Israel to change the status of the City of Jerusalem," July 4, 1967, accessed March 28, 2019, https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/A39A906C89D3E98685256C29006D4014.

> US views on question of Jerusalem remain as stated by USG on June 19 and June 28 and again by Ambassador Goldberg in UNGA. We will continue to stress our opposition to any unilateral efforts to change the permanent position in Jerusalem or elsewhere, and to insist that any such change be accomplished only by internationally effective action, taking full account of international interests. We do not recognize Israeli measures as having effected changes in formal status of Jerusalem.[14]

Speaking at the United Nations on July 14, 1967, U.S. representative to the UN Arthur Goldberg again reiterated the U.S. position on Jerusalem, this time in explaining the United States' abstention on UN General Assembly Resolution 3354 (ES-V):

> the United States does not accept or recognize these measures as altering the status of Jerusalem. My Government does not recognize that the administrative measures taken by the Government of Israel on 28 June can be regarded as the last word on the matter, and we regret that they were taken, We [sic] insist that the measures taken cannot be considered as other than interim and provisional, and not as prejudging the final and permanent status of Jerusalem.[15]

In the coming year, United States policy on Jerusalem was repeatedly tested by Israel, leading the United States in 1968 to vote in favor of two consecutive United Nations Security Council resolutions (250[16] and 251[17]) opposing Israel's actions in the city

[14] "344. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to All Posts, Subj: Jerusalem Resolution in UNGA," Department of State Office of the Historian, July 5, 1967, accessed March 28, 2019, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v19 /d344.

[15] "Statement of U.S. Representative to the UN Arthur Goldberg" Official records of the UN General Assembly 1554th Plenary Meeting, July 14, 1969, accessed March 28, 2019, paragraphs 91-115,
https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/66E65FB1AA7CFD3085257345004FFE4F.

[16] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 250," United Nations documents archive, April 27, 1968, accessed 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/250(1968).

[17] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 251,", United Nations documents archive, May 2, 1968, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/251(1968).

and to abstain on a third (252[18]). United States frustration with Israeli policies on Jerusalem continued to play out in the United Nations in 1969. On July 1, 1969, in response to Israeli actions in Jerusalem, U.S. representative to the UN Charles Yost, told the Security Council:

> …as far as the United States is concerned such unilateral measures, including expropriation of land or other administrative action taken by the Government of Israel, cannot be considered other than interim and provisional and cannot affect the present international status nor prejudge the final and permanent status of Jerusalem. The United States position could not be clearer.[19]

Two days later, on July 3, 1969, the United States voted in favor of United Nations Security Council Resolution 267, calling on Israel to:

> rescind forthwith all measures taken by it to change the status of the City of Jerusalem, and in future to refrain from all actions likely to have that effect.[20]

Two months after that, the United States voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 271,[21] which, among other things, reaffirmed UNSCRs 252 and 267 and condemned Israel's failure to comply with them.

United States policy on Jerusalem remained firm into the 1970s. For example, on September 25, 1971, the United States voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 298, which

[18] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 252," United Nations documents archive, May 21, 1968, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/252(1968).

[19] "Statements from U.S. Government Officials Concerning Israeli Settlements," Churches for Middle East Peace, March 28, 2019, https://cmep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SettlementStatements.pdf.

[20] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 267," United Nations documents archive, July 3, 1969, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/267(1969).

[21] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 271," United Nations documents archive, September 15, 1969, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/271(1969).

among other things again reaffirmed the Council's prior resolutions (252 and 267) and confirmed:

> in the clearest possible terms that all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel to change the status of the City of Jerusalem…are totally invalid and cannot change the status.[22]

Similarly, on March 23, 1976, the United States representative to the UN reiterated, in response to unilateral Israeli actions to change the status of Jerusalem, that:

> The U.S. position could not be clearer. Since 1967 we have restated here, in other fora, and to the Government of Israel that the future of Jerusalem will be determined only through the instruments and processes of negotiation, agreement, and accommodation. Unilateral attempts to predetermine that future have no standing...[23]

United States policy during the 1980s followed the same course, regardless of what party held the White House.

- On March 1, 1980, the United States voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 465, which noted that "all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof have no legal validity…"[24]
- On June 30, 1980, the United States abstained on UN Security Council Resolution 476, which reaffirmed its previous resolutions on Jerusalem and reiterated that "all such measures

[22] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 298," United Nations documents archive, September 25, 1971, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/298(1971).

[23] "Jimmy Carter Administration: U.S. Position on Settlements," (March 23, 1976)," Jewish Virtual Library, March 23, 1976, accessed March 28, 2019, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/us76.html.

[24] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 465," United Nations Documents archive, March 1, 1980, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/465(1980).

which have altered the geographic, demographic and historical character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem are null and void and must be rescinded in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council."[25]

- On August 20, 1980, the United States abstained on UN Security Council Resolution 478, which censured Israel for enacting a "basic law" changing the character and status of Jerusalem and for ignoring previous Security Council resolutions on the issue, declared the action Israel had taken to be a violation of international law, and declared that no UN member states would recognize it and that countries that had opened diplomatic missions in Jerusalem should withdraw them.[26]

- On September 1, 1982, President Ronald Reagan declared: "...we remain convinced that Jerusalem must remain undivided, but its final status should be decided through negotiations."[27]

- On March 5, 1990, the White House reported that President George H.W. Bush, in a call with Jewish leaders, had "reiterated that U.S. policy toward Jerusalem is unchanged. The United States supports a united Jerusalem whose final status is determined by negotiations."[28] On August 11, 1992, during a press conference with then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, when asked directly if in a second term he would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the embassy, Bush stated,

[25] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 476," United Nations Documents archive, June 30, 1980, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/476(1980).

[26] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 478," United Nations Documents archive, August 20, 1980, accessed March 25, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/478(1980).

[27] "The Reagan Plan," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed March 28, 2019, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/reaganplan.html.

[28] "Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on President Bush's Telephone Conversation With Seymour Reich of the Conference of Presidents of American Jewish Organizations," George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, March 3, 1990, accessed March 28, 2019, https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/1617.

> "Let me just say that our policy on Jerusalem remains unchanged."[29]

Even after 1993, when the United States' energies shifted into efforts that, if successful, would yield a solution on Jerusalem negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians, the United States policy on the status of Jerusalem remained firm. For example, on September 28, 1996, the United States abstained on UN Security Council Resolution 1073, which, among other things, recalled prior Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem.[30]

Moreover, this policy remained embodied most clearly in the fact that the independent Consulate General remained the United States' diplomatic mission in Jerusalem, over time taking responsibility for relations with the Palestinian Authority. In parallel, the embassy representing the United States in Israel and to the Israeli government continued to be located in Tel Aviv, despite the passage in 1995 of Public Law 104-45[31], known as the Jerusalem Embassy Act, seeking to force the President to move it to Jerusalem (a law President Reagan had threatened to veto in 1984[32]). From 1995-2018, every U.S. president (until President Trump) refrained from doing so, based on what each one argued was necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States.

[29] "The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel in Kennebunkport," George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, August 11, 1992, accessed 28, 2019, https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/4655.

[30] "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1073," 28 September 1996, United Nations Documents archive, September 28, 1996, accessed March 28, 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/1073(1996).

[31] "The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995" enacted 8 November 1995, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ45/PLAW-104publ45.pdf.

[32] William R. Doerner, "This Is a Most Unwise Thing," *Time Magazine,* April 9, 1984, accessed March 28, 2019, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,952383-1,00.html.

The consistency of the U.S. approach was also embodied in the fact that since March 1964, as a matter of policy, United States official documents like maps referred simply to "Jerusalem," rather than "Jerusalem, Israel" (prior to March 1964 the city was recorded as "Jerusalem, Palestine"[33]), and official U.S. documents issued by the Consulate noted the place of issuance (or in the case of reports of birth abroad, the place of birth) as "Jerusalem" rather than "Israel." Successive U.S. presidents defended this policy and practice, including President Clinton, who in 1999 vetoed legislation[34] over language seeking to compel the State Department to change the policy. In his veto statement Clinton explained,

> Provisions concerning Jerusalem are objectionable on constitutional, foreign policy, and operational grounds. The actions called for by these provisions would prejudice the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status negotiations...[35]

Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama likewise both defended the policy in the courts, after Bush allowed the same provisions on Jerusalem vetoed by Clinton to pass into law (Public Law 107-228[36]). Notably, when he signed the measure into law, Bush issued a signing statement asserting that the provision on Jerusalem, "impermissibly interferes with the Presi-

[33] "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel," March 14, 1964, accessed March 28, 2019, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v18/d30.

[34] HR 2670, "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000" (vetoed), accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/2670.

[35] "Message from President Bill Clinton to Congress dated 25 October 1999 on veto of HR 2670" October 25, 1999, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/1999/10/26/house-section/article/H10835-1.

[36] "Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003," Public Law 107-228, September 30, 2002, accessed March 28, 2019, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ228/pdf/PLAW-107publ228.pdf.

dent's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs…U.S. policy regarding Jerusalem has not changed."[37] The lawsuit challenging the non-implementation of the Jerusalem provision[38] was originally filed in 2004, and eventually made its way to the Supreme Court, which ruled on it - in the Executive branch's favor - in 2015.

JERUSALEM IN THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN

It is a truism of United States politics that virtually every president, in the course of campaigning, has declared that Jerusalem is Israel's undivided capital, and has either promised or hinted that, if elected, he would move the embassy there.[39]

President Trump was no different, declaring in March 2016 at AIPAC's annual Washington policy conference, "We will move the American embassy to the eternal capital of the Jewish people, Jerusalem[40]." What was different about Trump, however, is that even during the campaign, it should have been clear that, in contrast to his predecessors from both parties, he meant it.

Shortly before Trump appeared at AIPAC, David Friedman, who was at that point already acting as one of Trump's main surro-

[37] George W. Bush, "Statement on Signing the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003," The American Presidency Project, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-signing-the-foreign-relations-authorization-act-fiscal-year-2003.

[38] Adam B. Lerner, "Supreme Court sides with Obama administration in Jerusalem passport case," *Politico*, June 8, 2015, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/jerusalem-passport-case-supreme-court-ruling-118737.

[39] "Donald Trump: What past US presidents have said about recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital," *ABC/Reuters,* December 6, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-07/what-have-past-presidents-said-about-israel-and-jerusalem/9234736.

[40] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Full text of Donald Trump's speech to AIPAC," *The Times of Israel*, March 22, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/donald-trumps-full-speech-to-aipac/.

gates and advisors on Israel-related matters, published an op-ed in a far-right Israeli media outlet examining how voters should determine who is truly the pro-Israel candidate. A longtime supporter of and advocate for Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, Friedman wrote about the qualities that like-minded people have learned to look for in choosing their elected officials, including,

> A recognition that Congress has mandated since 1995 that the US Embassy be housed in Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital, and there is no good reason to further delay this legislative direction.[41]

In July 2016, as the campaign heated up, the Republican National Committee – reportedly working in close coordination with Friedman[42] – adopted a new policy with respect to Israel, dropping any mention of support for peace efforts and adding explicitly that "We recognize Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state and call for the American embassy to be moved there in fulfillment of U.S. law." [43] This was a 180 degree shift from the 2012 platform, which talked about Jerusalem only in the context of peace efforts, noting: "we envision two democratic states—Israel with Jerusalem as its capital and Palestine—living in peace and security."[44]

[41] David Friedman, "US presidents and Israel: Always expect the unexpected," *Israel National News (Arutz Sheva),* March 9, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/18526.

[42] Andrew Kaczynski, "Trump Israel ambassador pick bragged of removing two-state solution from GOP platform at November event," *CNN*, February 23, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/23/politics/kfile-david-friedman-november-speech/index.html.

[43] "Republican Platform 2016," website of the Republican Party, accessed March 28, 2019, https://prod-cdn-static.gop.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL%5B1%5D-ben_1468872234.pdf.

[44] "Republican Platform 2012," American Presidency Project, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2012-republican-party-platform.

In response to the platform change, Friedman and Trump's other key advisor on Israel-related matters, Jason Greenblatt, co-published a no-punches-pulled statement noting,

> Support for Israel is support for America, so it is only right that the committee has made it clear that our government must advance policies that encourage and reflect our country's commitment to Israel, including the recognition that Jerusalem is the eternal, undivided capital of the Jewish people and the Jewish State of Israel.[45]

A month later, in August 2016, Friedman confidently told an Israeli paper,

> I think one of his first acts is going be to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. I think the movement of the embassy to Jerusalem is logistically something that can't be done on the first day (but) I think that will happen in due course.[46]

In that same vein, in October 2016, Trump's daughter told voters in Florida that the chances were "100%" that her father would move the embassy to Jerusalem.[47] That same month, appearing at an event in Jerusalem, Friedman told the assembled Trump supporters:

> In 1995, Congress enacted a law that required the U.S. to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. 1995, that's 21 years ago. It hasn't happened. Why? Because the law provides that the requirement for the embassy to be moved can be waived at the desire of the State Department. The same State Department that has been anti-Semitic and anti-Israel for the past 70 years.

[45] "Joint Statement from Jason Dov Greenblatt and David Friedman, Advisors to Donald J. Trump on Israel," *Medium.com*, July 12, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://medium.com/@jgreenblatt/joint-statement-from-jason-dov-greenblatt-and-david-friedman-advisors-to-donald-j-trump-on-israel-a8187a5c3f9d.

[46] MediaLine, "Interview with Trump's Israel advisor, a Jew who 'truly loves Israel'," April 8, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4837669,00.html.

[47] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Ivanka says Trump would '100%' move US embassy to Jerusalem," October 28, 2016, accessed Marc 28, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/ivanka-says-trump-would-100-move-us-embassy-to-jerusalem/.

> Every president gets elected and he says to the State Department – what about this law, should we move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and they say 'absolutely not, absolutely not. The lifers in the State Department are absolutely, positively committed to never moving the embassy to Jerusalem. What's different about Donald Trump? You all know Donald Trump. If there is anybody in the world politics who could stand up to the State Department it is Donald Trump. When Donald Trump has his first meeting with the lifers in the State Department and they say, 'Mr. Trump, with all due respect, you have only been president for a couple of days, we've been living here for the last 20 years, we don't do it that way, we do it this way – we don't move the embassy, that's been State department policy for 20 years, the reaction from Donald Trump is going to be, 'You know what guys, you're all FIRED!'[48]

Finally, on November 2, 2016, on the eve of the election, Friedman and Greenblatt published a joint declaration offering detailed promises of exactly what, if elected Trump would do with respect to Israel. These included the unequivocal statement that, "The U.S. will recognize Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state and Mr. Trump's Administration will move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem."[49]

THE TRANSITION: DOUBLING DOWN ON JERUSALEM PROMISES

Some pundits and observers no doubt discounted Jerusalem-related statements made by Trump and his surrogates during the campaign, based on the premise that these statements were no different

[48] Allison Kaplan Sommer, "Trump's Envoy to Israel: We'll Break With 'anti-Semitic' State Dept., Move Embassy to Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, December 16, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-trump-s-envoy-to-israel-vowed-to-break-with-anti-semitic-state-dept-1.5474776.

[49] "Joint Statement from Jason Dov Greenblatt and David Friedman, Co-Chairmen of the Israel Advisory Committee to Donald J. Trump," *Medium.com*, November 2, 2016, March 28, 2019, https://medium.com/@jgreenblatt/joint-statement-from-jason-dov-greenblatt-and-david-friedman-co-chairmen-of-the-israel-advisory-edc1ec50b7a8.

from ones made by prior candidates. Based on this logic, it was anticipated that once elected, Trump, like his predecessors, would renege, either having never meant to carry out the promise in the first place or, benefitting now from a better understanding of the broader national security interests in play, coming to a different conclusion about what was possible or desirable.

Yet, from the moment he was elected, it was already clear that, with respect to Israel-related policy in general, and Jerusalem in particular, Trump would not be the same as his predecessors.

In terms of policy promises, his campaign had gotten out in front on Jerusalem to a degree that surpassed all previous candidates. Moreover, the Trump campaign had bolstered its own policy promises by engineering a sea change in the Republican Party platform, re-orienting it to erase any commitment to a negotiated peace and to align it with the positions of the Trump campaign and the Israeli far-right. And finally, immediately after the election it became clear that the same core group of officials who had advised and spoken for Trump on Israel during the campaign – David Friedman, Jason Greenblatt, and Jared Kushner – not only were not about to be marginalized in the Trump Administration, but would be elevated to the most powerful positions on this issue.

Focusing narrowly on Jerusalem, mid-December witnessed a flurry of statements and concrete developments, all of which suggested a serious intention to make good on Jerusalem-related campaign promises. These included senior Trump advisor Kellyanne Conway saying that moving the embassy would be a "very big priority" for the new president[50]; Israeli media reports that the Trump

[50] Felicia Schwartz, "Trump: Moving U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem 'Very Big Priority'," *Wall Street Journal,* December 12, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-considers-moving-u-s-embassy-in-israel-to-jerusalem-a-very-bigpriority-adviser-says-1481579944.

transition team was already scouting locations in Jerusalem for a new U.S. Embassy[51]; and Trump announcing that Friedman would be his nominee for ambassador to Israel.

If all of those signs weren't clear enough, the New York Times reported on December 15, 2016: "In a statement from the Trump transition team announcing his nomination, he [Friedman] said he looked forward to doing the job 'from the U.S. embassy in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem.'"[52]

TRUMP AS PRESIDENT: A MAN OF HIS WORD, AT LEAST ON JERUSALEM

Trump was sworn in on January 20, 2017, amid speculation that he might take immediate action to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem – but he didn't. How close did Trump come to taking action on Jerusalem in those earliest days? Opinions on the matter differ[53], but in an interview in mid-February 2017, then-chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Bob Corker (R-TN) said "I think at one point they were ready to move the Embassy at 12:01 on January 20th…"[54]

Some saw Trump's failure to immediately act on Jerusalem as a sign that now in office, his policy on the matter would, perhaps grudgingly, fall in line with his predecessors. Such reassuring anal-

[51] Tamar Pileggi, "Trump's team already exploring logistics of moving embassy to Jerusalem," *Times of Israel,* December 12, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/trumps-team-already-exploring-logistics-of-moving-embassy-to-jerusalem-report/.

[52] Matthew Rosenberg, "Trump Chooses Hard-Liner as Ambassador to Israel," *New York Times,* December 15, 2016, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/15/us/politics/donald-trump-david-friedman-israel-ambassador.html.

[53] "To Move, or Not to Move (the Embassy), That Is the Question," *Terrestrial Jerusalem*, accessed March 26, 2019, http://t-j.org.il/LatestDevelopments/tabid/1370/articleID/826/currentpage/11/Default.aspx.

[54] Susan Glasser, "Sen. Bob Corker: The Full Transcript," *Politico*, February 13, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/02/sen-bob-corker-the-full-transcript-214767.

ysis discounted Trump's own pronouncements on the issue: interviewed three days after his inauguration in Israel Hayom – the Israeli daily owned by top Trump donor Sheldon Adelson,[55] Trump was asked whether he remembered his promise regarding Jerusalem. Trump responded: "clearly I did not forget," and "of course I remember what I said about Jerusalem," and "You know that I am not a person who breaks promises."[56]

In June 2017, Trump (who by then was already backing away from the longstanding United States position of supporting a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[57]) faced his first formal test of his promises on Jerusalem, when the previous waiver of the Jerusalem Embassy Act, issued 6 months earlier by President Obama, expired. Trump decided to renew the waiver, giving fuel to those who were still arguing that under Trump's presidency, United States policy on Israel was more or less business as usual (just as some were still arguing, contra the facts, that Trump was not changing United States policy on settlements[58]). In order to continue to make those arguments, however, they had to dismiss the very clear official statement of intent that accompanied Trump's signing of the waiver:

[55] Justin Elliott, "Trump's Patron-in-Chief," *ProPublica*, October 10, 2018, accessed March 26, 2019, https://features.propublica.org/trump-inc-podcast/sheldon-adelson-casino-magnate-trump-macau-and-japan/.

[56] Alexander Fulbright, "Trump: 'I did not forget' Jerusalem embassy move pledge," *Times of Israel,* January 19, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-i-did-not-forget-jerusalem-embassy-move-pledge/.

[57] Nicole Gaouette and Elise Labott, "Trump backs off two-state framework for Israeli-Palestinian deal," *CNN*, February 16, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/15/politics/trump-netanyahu-two-state-solution-israel-palestinians/index.html.

[58] Dan Shapiro, "Trump Sounds Like Obama on Israeli Settlements," *Foreign Policy*, February 3, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/03/trump-sounds-like-obama-on-israeli-settlements/; Elliott Abrams, "The Trump Administration Settles In on Settlements," *Council on Foreign Relations (blog*), April 2, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.cfr.org/blog/trump-administration-settles-settlements.

> While President Donald J. Trump signed the waiver under the Jerusalem Embassy Act…as he has repeatedly stated his intention to move the embassy, the question is not if that move happens, but only when.[59]

Foreshadowing what would soon transpire, on September 29, 2017, David Friedman – by then the confirmed United States ambassador to Israel (who was also by then referring to the "alleged occupation"[60]) told a reporter: "I do believe he will decide to move the embassy and most importantly declare Israel as the eternal capital of the State of Israel and the Jewish people."[61]

A month later, Friedman told an audience at a far right-wing U.S. gathering,

> The President has also made clear that he intends to move the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – it is not a question of IF; only a question of WHEN. I take him at his word and I personally am committed to do all I can to advocate for this move.[62]

Friedman was speaking the truth: On December 6, 2017 – less than one year after taking office – President Trump formally recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announced that he was "directing the State Department to begin preparation to move

[59] "Statement on the American Embassy in Israel," *White House,* June 1, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-american-embassy-israel/.

[60] Peter Beaumont, "'Trump's ambassador to Israel refers to 'alleged occupation' of Palestinian territories," *The Guardian*, September 1, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/01/trump-ambassador-israel-david-friedman-alleged-occupation-palestinian-territories.

[61] Loveday Morris, "U.S. ambassador breaks with policy: 'I think the settlements are part of Israel,'" *Washington Post*, September 29, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/09/29/u-s-ambassador-breaks-with-policy-i-think-the-settlements-are-part-of-israel.

[62] "Ambassador David Friedman remarks at the Zionist Organization of America (as prepared)," *U.S. Embassy in Israel*, November 12, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://il.usembassy.gov/ambassador-david-friedman-remarks-zoa-annual-event-prepared/.

the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem."[63] In so doing, Trump overturned bipartisan United States policy dating back to before the establishment of the modern state of Israel and grounded in international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Trump's move was accompanied by a carefully drafted "proclamation," which included a paragraph designed to assure the world that this policy shift didn't fundamentally change U.S. policy on Jerusalem:

> Today's actions — recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announcing the relocation of our embassy — do not reflect a departure from the strong commitment of the United States to facilitating a lasting peace agreement. The United States continues to take no position on any final status issues. The specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties. The United States is not taking a position on boundaries or borders.[64]

That paragraph, however, was contradicted almost immediately by explicit statements from inside the Trump Administration – first from Nikki Haley, Trump's representative at the UN, who days after the proclamation observed: "The president took Jerusalem off the [negotiating] table."[65] Within weeks Trump was public-

[63] "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem," *White House*, December 6, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/.

[64] "Presidential Proclamation Recognizing Jerusalem as the Capital of the State of Israel and Relocating the United States Embassy to Israel to Jerusalem," December 6, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-recognizing-jerusalem-capital-state-israel-relocating-united-states-embassy-israel-jerusalem/.

[65] "Transcript: Nikki Haley on "Face the Nation," *CBS,* December 10, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-nikki-haley-on-face-the-nation-dec-10-2017/.

ly singing the same song, bragging, "We took it [Jerusalem] off the table. We don't have to talk about it anymore."[66]

Trump's announcement immediately gave rise to expert analysis suggesting that it was, in fact, a clever rhetorical ruse designed to placate Trump's base while allowing Trump to postpone moving the embassy for years, as he pursued his own peace efforts.[67] Those theories were quickly proved baseless.

By January 2018, it was already being reported that by Ambassador Friedman would be working out of an existing United States diplomatic facility in Jerusalem by 2019.[68] That timetable proved insufficiently optimistic: on May 14, 2018, barely 7 months after Trump announced his new policy on Jerusalem, the new United States Embassy to Israel was opened there.

The White House announced the official move in a press release entitled, "President Donald J. Trump Keeps His Promise To Open U.S. Embassy In Jerusalem, Israel." That press release noted:

> After decades of past Presidents committing to move the Embassy to Jerusalem on the campaign trail, only to renege on those promises while in office, President Trump has fulfilled his promise to support one of America's strongest allies.[69]

[66] Noa Landau and Amir Tibon, "We Took Jerusalem Off the Negotiating Table, Trump Says Alongside Netanyahu in Davos," *Haaretz*, January 25, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-trump-netanyahu-meet-in-davos-1.5766434.

[67] Martin Indyk, "Donald Trump's Jerusalem move may prove too clever by half," *Financial Times*, December 7, 2017, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/fda1e7f8-da89-11e7-9504-59efdb70e12f.

[68] Amir Tibon, "Report: U.S. Ambassador in Israel Will Work Out of Consular Office Building in Jerusalem by 2019," *Haaretz*, January 19, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/report-u-s-ambassador-in-israel-will-work-from-j-lem-office-building-1.5746733.

[69] "President Donald J. Trump Keeps His Promise To Open U.S. Embassy In Jerusalem, Israel," *White House*, May 14, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-keeps-promise-open-u-s-embassy-jerusalem-israel/.

LEARNING LESSONS FROM TRUMP'S JERUSALEM POLICY

The move of the embassy is not the whole story with respect to Trump's policy shift on Jerusalem. Likewise, the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the move of the embassy are significant not merely in their own right, but more so as a guide for understanding everything else Trump has done on Israel-Palestine, and where he is likely to take his policy in the future.

Back in November 2017, the Trump Administration executed another historic shift in United States policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians: for the first time since the start of the peace process, the United States withheld a waiver that is required by law[70] in order to allow the PLO to maintain an office – effectively, an embassy – in Washington, DC. In the months that followed, the Trump Administration nonetheless gave the PLO special dispensation to keep the office open and to leave its representative in place, ostensibly in order to work with the Trump Administration to achieve progress towards peace[71]. But on September 10, 2018, four months after the opening of the new embassy in Jerusalem, the Trump Administration ended that dispensation[72] and on October 10, 2018, under orders of the Trump Administration, the PLO mission was shuttered.[73]

[70] Lara Friedman, "Understanding the PLO Mission Crisis – Key Documents," *Foundation for Middle East Peace*, accessed March 28, 2019, https://fmep.org/blog/2017/11/understanding-plo-mission-crisis-key-documents/.

[71] Khaled Elgindy and Lara Friedman, "Locking Palestinians in a Flawed Peace Process," *LobeLog*, November 29, 2017, accessed March 27, 2019, https://lobelog.com/locking-palestinians-in-a-flawed-peace-process/.

[72] "Closure of the PLO Office in Washington," Department of State press release, September 10, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/09/285812.htm.

[73] Carol Morello and Ruth Eglash, "PLO mission in Washington is a ghost of an office 2 weeks before closing," September 21, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/plo-mission-in-washington-is-a-ghost-of-an-office-2-weeks-before-closing/2018/09/21/dba01b18-bdad-11e8-be70-52bd11fe18af_story.html.

Weeks later, on October 18, 2018, the Trump Administration announced that it was also closing the United States Consulate General in Jerusalem.[74] On March 3, 2019, the Consulate – in existence continuously since 1844, and since the mid-1990s acting as the mission to the Palestinians – was closed, with its functions – including dealing with the Palestinians – absorbed by the Embassy.[75]

Taken together, these three developments embody a comprehensive restructuring of United States policy regarding the Palestinians and the peace process:

Taking Permanent Status Issues "off the table": The Oslo peace process was predicated in large part on Israel and the PLO agreeing that the most contentious issues at the core of the conflict – Jerusalem, refugees, territory/settlements, and security – would be resolved only in permanent status negotiations between the parties. With its action on Jerusalem, President Trump shredded that agreement, gloating that he had taken Jerusalem "off the table." His administration's subsequent actions and statements on refugees[76], and the systematic shifting of United States policy to actively support Israeli settlements in the West Bank and to legitimize Israeli control over West Bank land[77], were logical corollaries to what is effectively the post-Oslo approach unveiled in the Jerusalem proclamation, i.e., an approach that does not recognize or expect Israel to respect commitments made under Oslo.

[74] "On the Merging of U.S. Embassy Jerusalem and U.S. Consulate General," Statement from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, October 18, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2018/10/286731.htm.

[75] "Merger of U.S. Embassy Jerusalem and U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem," statement by State Department Deputy Spokesman Robert Palladino, March 3, 2019, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2019/03/289851.htm.

[76] Lara Friedman, "Taking Issues Off the Table: First Jerusalem Now Refugees," *Huffington Post*, January 5, 2018, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/taking-issues-off-the-table-first-jerusalem-now_us_5a4ff1c9e4b0f9b24bf31732.

[77] Lara Friedman, "Not Breaking News: Trump Administration Does Not Believe in Occupation," *LobeLog*, March 15, 2019, accessed March 28, 2019, https://lobelog.com/not-breaking-news-trump-administration-does-not-believe-in-occupation/.

Downgrading U.S.-Palestinian Relations: The peace process that was born in Oslo in 1993 was characterized by the establishment of a new, direct bilateral relationship between the United States and the Palestinian leadership, embodied by the PLO and the Palestinian Authority. Under Trump, this bilateral relationship has been undone. With the closure of the PLO mission in Washington, the closure of the Consulate in Jerusalem, and the moving of responsibility for the Palestinian file to the United States Embassy to Israel, the Trump Administration has, for all intents and purposes, de-recognized the PLO and the PA. Moreover, even before Oslo, the existence of the Consulate as an independent mission reporting on and dealing with the Palestinians embodied a United States policy that recognized the Palestinians as a people living under Israeli military occupation, whose interests and welfare were understood separately from those of Israel, and towards whom the United States maintained a policy based on international law and independent of, and often in opposition to, the government of Israel. By closing the Consulate and giving the Embassy authority for dealing with the Palestinians, the Trump Administration has in effect recognized Israel as the legitimate sovereign in the occupied territories, relegating matters relating to the areas' Palestinian residents to the status of an internal Israeli issue, to be reported on and understood exclusively through the lens of Israeli interests and concerns.

Jettisoning international law and the "Land-for-Peace" formula: Likewise, the Trump Administration's move to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital was an important first signal that it had decided, already, to jettison the two key pillars that have until now undergirded United States policy vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: international law, which rejects the acquisition of land by military force, and the notion of "land-for-peace," upon which the Oslo process was grounded. Based on his Jerusalem moves, Trump's

March 2019 recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights should have surprised no one. Likewise, if in the coming period Israel decides to move from *de facto* annexation of the West Bank to formally asserting its sovereignty over all or part of that area (as is highly likely), it should surprise no one if the Trump Administration acts quickly to recognize and endorse the act.

In short, Trump's moves on Jerusalem are about more than the narrow issue of U.S. policy on this much loved, much disputed city. They are emblematic of far-reaching, fundamental shifts in United States policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians, implemented piecemeal but together amounting to a sea change in the United States' approach to Israel, to the Palestinians, and to the whole idea of what it means to seek "peace" on the land stretching between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

These shifts have been taken, openly and without apology, toward the goals of once-and-for-all ending the Oslo process, erasing its achievements and the legal foundations on which it was based, and replacing it with a new Israeli-American approach characterized by three key principles, that are shared by the Israeli right-wing:

- Israel has the right to retain permanent control over all the land occupied in the 1967 War, deriving both from the historical Jewish claim to it (as referenced by Ambassador Friedman in June 2019[78]) and from the principle - newly articulated in the context of President Trump's move to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights[79] and standing in direct contravention of international law – that a country may keep territory acquires in the course of a defensive war;

[78] David Halfinger, "U.S. Ambassador Says Israel Has Right to Annex Parts of West Bank", *New York Times*, June 8, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/world/middleeast/israel-west-bank-david-friedman.html.

[79] Vanessa Romo, "Trump Formally Recognizes Israeli Sovereignty Over Golan Heights," *National Public Radio*, March 25, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://www.npr.org/2019/03/25/706588932/trump-formally-recognizes-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights.

- The only legitimate national actor between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea is the Israeli government;
- Ethnic Arabs living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are individuals for whose welfare Israel, the United States, and the international community feel concern, but they are neither the true "indigenous" population nor are they a recognized "people" or national collective; as such, they have no legitimate national identity, history, leaders, or objectives;
- Seeking "peace" means expediting the consolidation of permanent Israeli control over East Jerusalem and the West Bank (increasingly referred to by senior United States officials using biblical term, long preferred by Israeli settlers, "Judea and Samaria"), while delegitimizing and defeating Palestinian nationalism and the quest for Palestinian self-determination once and for all.

All told, it should have been clear from the start that Trump's shattering of longstanding U.S. policy on Jerusalem was merely the opening move in a broader strategy – which from the start has been masquerading as a constantly-being-worked-on "peace plan" – to fundamentally and irrevocably change U.S. policy vis-à-vis the territories and the people Israel occupied in 1967.

And it should be crystal clear today that Trump and his team of devoted "Greater Israel" ideologues are working relentlessly to implement this broader strategy, seeking to ensure that whether or not there is a second Trump term in office, there can be no return to the Oslo-based two-state *status quo ante*.

YES, BUT WILL IT WORK?

So far, other than successfully shooting some sacred cows of U.S. policy, the achievements of Trump's policy shifts on Israel-Palestine are, at best, mixed. On Jerusalem, strikingly few countries (as of June 2019) have followed Trump in moving their embas-

sies (Guatemala, Paraguay) and others have talked about doing so (Brazil, Hungary, Romania). More strikingly, Trump's policies – rather than taking Jerusalem "off the table" – have generated more focus on Jerusalem than at any time in recent years. The refusal of the overwhelming majority of countries to even talk about moving their embassies is notable, as has been the backlash from Arab nations, including nations that the Trump Administration thought it had in its pocket, like Saudi Arabia, and nations with which Israel has peace agreements, like Jordan (which, given its special role in Jerusalem, has had an unsurprisingly strong reaction).

Likewise, the Trump Administration's other Israel-Palestine policy shifts have found little support in the international community. The United States remains isolated both in its recognition of Israeli sovereignty in the Golan and in its revisionist view of international law regarding land taken in "defensive" wars. The international community remains committed to the two-state solution, opposed to Israeli settlement construction, and opposed to Israeli annexation of West Bank land (as does most of the U.S. Jewish community[80]). The Palestinian Authority remains the recognized address for the international community's relations and aid for the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and the PLO remains the recognized representative of the Palestinian people. And plans to move forward with the "ultimate deal" – which as of this writing are riding on a planned economic "workshop" in Bahrain to be held in late June 2019 – are run-

[80] American Jewish Committee, "AJC 2019 Survey of American Jewish Opinion", June 2, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://www.ajc.org/news/survey2019; and J Street, "J Street 2019 Poll of Democratic Primary and Caucus Voters", May 14, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://jstreet.org/j-street-2019-poll-of-democratic-primary-and-caucus-voters/.

ning into a wall, with the Palestinian private sector boycotting the event[81], and both Arab states and Europe responding with little enthusiasm[82].

In short, since taking office, President Trump has gone a long way already in transforming U.S. policy on Israel-Palestine. Yet, so far, the Trump Administration's accomplishments in this arena are largely unilateral, and their impact on Israel-Palestine as an issue in the international arena, remain limited. Actions like moving the embassy or recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights satisfied and energized "Greater Israel" advocates in the U.S. and Israel, but they did nothing to eradicate international support for the two-state solution or international recognition of the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause (indeed, the Trump Administration's moves have arguably had the opposite effect).

Heading into the final stretch of this term in office, this is the challenge that now faces the Trump Administration: how to sufficiently alter not just U.S. policy but international consensus to ensure that no future administration can ever restore U.S. policy to anything resembling *status quo ante*. Overcoming this challenge – whether through pushing its "peace plan" or other means – will be the core goal fueling the Trump Administration's Israel-Palestinian policies for the remainder of this term in office (and the next, if

[81] WAFA, "Palestinian private sector rejects invitation to US economic workshop in Bahrain", May 28, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=qgYttna110502330312aqgYttn.

[82] i24 News, "US waiting for more Arab countries to RSVP to Bahrain summit before inviting Israel: report", June 10, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/middle-east/1560112080-us-waiting-for-more-arab-countries-to-rsvp-to-bahrain-summit-before-inviting-israel-report; and Middle East Monitor, "Qatar says US needs Palestinians on board for Middle East peace plan", June 10, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190610-qatar-says-us-needs-palestinians-on-board-for-middle-east-peace-plan/.

there is a second one). David Friedman made clear in his March 2019 speech at AIPAC:[83]

> "Can we leave this to an administration that may not understand the existential risk to Israel if Judea and Samaria are overcome by terrorism in the manner that befell the Gaza Strip after the IDF withdrew from this territory? Can we leave this to an administration that may not understand the need for Israel to maintain overriding security control of Judea and Samaria and a permanent defense position in the Jordan valley? Can we leave this to an administration that may not recognize that under Israeli sovereignty, Jerusalem for the first time in 2,000 years has become a dynamic and prosperous city fully open to worshippers of all three Abrahamic faiths?
>
> "Can we leave this to an administration that may not understand that in the Middle East, peace comes through strength, not just through words on a paper? Can we leave this to an administration potentially willing to penalize Israel for nothing more than having the audacity to survive in a dangerous neighborhood, failing to understand the threats that Israel faces or the care and humanity it deploys to meet those threats.
>
> "Can we run the risk that one day the government of Israel will lament, why didn't we make more progress when U.S. foreign policy was in the hands of President Trump, Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, Ambassador Bolton, Jared Kushner, Jason Greenblatt, and even David Friedman? How can we do that?
>
> "The answer is, we can't."

By now, hopefully, Israel-Palestine policy watchers have learned to take Friedman and his fellow travelers at their word.

[83] U.S. Embassy in Israel, "U.S. Ambassador to Israel David M. Friedman delivers remarks at the 2019 @AIPAC Policy Conference," March 26, 2019, accessed June 10, 2019, https://il.usembassy.gov/u-s-ambassador-to-israel-david-m-friedman-delivers-remarks-at-the-2019-aipac-policy-conference/.

CHAPTER 2

WITH JERUSALEM RECOGNITION, A MASK FALLS

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CHAPTER 2

On December 6, 2017, President Donald J. Trump did something no US president had done before him: he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel.[1] In doing so, he not only reversed long-standing US policy on this all-important core issue, but he also sent shockwaves throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds.

REVERSING LONGSTANDING US POLICY

US policy toward Jerusalem since the US vote in support of the 1947 United Nations partition plan had backed a separate status for the city. This held true for many decades. After the start of the peace process era, the US position on Jerusalem maintained the principle of separation while noting that the final status of Jerusalem was subject to the outcome of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.[2]

For years, despite consistent US support for Israel, American policies regarding Jerusalem and settlements acted as data points in the argument that the United States could play a mediator's role. In fact, the American position on Jerusalem served as part of the reason why the peace process, as we know it, was able to begin. As a component of the prelude to the Madrid Conference in

[1] "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem," *White House*, December 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/.

[2] Josh Ruebner, "Moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem: Historical, Legal and Policy Considerations," *US Campaign for Palestinian Rights*, April 2017, https://uscpr.org/campaign/government-affairs/resources/jerusalem-policy-paper/.

1991, American letters of assurances[3] to the Palestinians included a guarantee that the United States would not take any position on Jerusalem nor would any Palestinian claims to Jerusalem be diminished by engaging in these talks. The American guarantee was central because the Israeli delegation had refused to agree to the meetings if any members of the Palestinian delegation were from Jerusalem. Accepting this Israeli position was seen by Palestinians as tantamount to accepting Israeli claims on Jerusalem as well as identifying who can and should speak for it or about it.

For this reason, US guarantees on this issue in particular were central to ensuring Palestinian engagement in the process. Indeed, American neutrality on Jerusalem is at the very foundation of the entire Oslo peace process era. Now that this guarantee has gone out the window and the US position on settlements has become opaque under the Trump Administration, there is not even a fig leaf to hold up to cover a shameful peace process. It is also practically impossible to see how any Palestinian leader can re-engage with Washington.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE NEW US POSITION?

The president recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and while that had never been done before, the new position created a new set of questions. Compounding this was the statement from the State Department after the decision that its consular practices regarding Jerusalem would not change. "Jerusalem, Israel," for example, would not appear on US passports or other consular documents. The US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, added to the confusion when she elaborated in a media interview that,

[3] "James Baker's Letter of Assurance to the Palestinians," *United States Institute of Peace*, October 18, 1991, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/letter_of_assurance.pdf.

"We did not talk about boundaries or borders for a reason. And that's because whatever is East Jerusalem or any other part, that's between the Palestinians and the Israelis. That's not for the Americans to decide. The Americans just said, we want our embassy in the capital. And that capital in Jerusalem." She would also say that by making the declaration, President Trump "just took Jerusalem off the table. He just took it off the table. So, now they get to come together. They get to decide what the borders will look like. They get to decide the boundaries. And they get to talk about how they want to see Jerusalem going forward."[4]

How can we decipher the meaning of this? President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but the United States cannot say where Jerusalem begins and ends because the division of Jerusalem is for the parties to address at the negotiating table—even though the president now has taken the issue "off the table." That, of course, does not make any sense, nor does it mean that the issue is no longer of concern to or a priority for Palestinians; but it is the message emanating from Washington. The question is what message will the parties involved actually take from this decision.

THE MESSAGE TO ISRAELIS

Israel, along with Russia, are the two countries where attitudes toward the US president have become more positive since the transition from President Obama to President Trump. This move will only make him more friends there, particularly with the Israeli right. For Israelis, hearing this declaration from an American president is a validation of their political claims, historical narrative,

[4] Jennifer Rubin, "Trump's Jerusalem decision is a foreign policy move without purpose," *Washington Post,* December 11, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2017/12/11/a-foreign-policy-move-without-purpose/?utm_term=.cb947de3cc26.

and strategy vis-à-vis the Palestinians. The right will argue that this only proves they were correct by not conceding anything, and that the strategy of not conceding while laying claim to more Palestinian land will ultimately be vindicated as well. The recent decision by the Trump Administration to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights will only buttress their argument. The president, in his declaration, argued that recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital was a recognition of a reality on the ground. The problem with this is that only one side, Israel, is capable of creating realities on the ground because it is able to impose its will on the weaker Palestinians, in violation of international law.

It is instructive here to recall the Clinton parameters from the Camp David peace talks in 2000. The American position on a division of Jerusalem was based on the principle of whatever was Jewish would remain Jewish and whatever was Arab would become Palestinian. That meant that the American position was not based on the green line, which ran through the city; rather, it was adjusted to present-day realities. This so-called recognition of reality emboldens Israel to merely expand those realities on the ground in occupied Jerusalem with the understanding that, in the final arrangement, the American position would reflect them. The Clinton parameters were not official US policy but merely a proposal for a plan—if taken in its entirety and agreed to by the parties—that could serve as a framework for an agreement. US policy on Jerusalem did not change, but a message was sent to the Israelis about how the Americans saw things working out, and this conditioned Israeli behavior. The same can be expected of this announcement by Trump which, unlike the parameters, does in fact change US policy and therefore will send a much stronger version of the same message.

THE MESSAGE TO PALESTINIANS

For Palestinians, what they are hearing is a White House that is adopting an Israeli narrative in unprecedented ways. This message, which touches on the very sensitive and emotional issue of Jerusalem in the Palestinian cause, will surely drown out any nuance attempted by Washington in the aftermath of the Trump declaration. But let us assume for a moment that the nuance is indeed part of the policy and that the actual territorial boundaries of Jerusalem are up for negotiation. What guarantee do the Palestinians have that when the Israelis refuse to divide the city during future negotiations, the Americans would step in with leverage—after giving recognition of Jerusalem away now?

Most importantly, what Palestinians will hear is the failure of their leadership to advance their cause. Ahead of the Trump declaration, PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas was facing a public in the West Bank and Gaza where 67 percent wanted him to resign.[5] The strategy of engaging with Washington under the premise that it could deliver Israeli concessions in some remotely even-handed way was already something viewed with deep skepticism among Palestinians. Despite this and Trump's nomination of a right-wing settlement supporter to be his ambassador to Israel[6], David Friedman, and even though Trump made campaign promises to move the embassy to Jerusalem, Abbas still met with him in May of 2017 and declared,[7] "Now, Mr. President, with you we have hope." The

[5] "Poll: Majority of Palestinian public want Abbas to resign," *Ma'an News Agency,* September 22, 2017, https://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779160.

[6] Matthew Rosenberg, "Trump Chooses Hard-Liner as Ambassador to Israel," *New York Times,* December 15, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/15/us/politics/donald-trump-david-friedman-israel-ambassador.html.

[7] Merrit Kennedy, "Trump Says He Wants To Help Mediate Israeli-Palestinian Peace Deal," *NPR,* May 3, 2017, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/05/03/526747102/trump-says-he-wants-to-help-mediate-israeli-palestinian-peace-deal.

biggest loser in all of this is certainly Abbas. He and his political program have now been exposed as hopeless, even to those who still had any shred of hope in Trump's Middle East deal making. One has to wonder how Washington can expect to gain the trust of a Palestinian leader ever again.

WHERE DOES THE U.S. MIDDLE EAST PEACE POLICY GO FROM HERE?

The most immediate concern should be for Palestinians living in Jerusalem, as Israeli politicians who have sought to advance policies aimed at re-engineering the demographics of the city will now be emboldened by the Trump declaration proclaiming Jerusalem the capital of Israel. The Israelis have already announced significant settlement expansion. "Following President Trump's historic declaration," Israel's housing minister stated as he announced thousands of new settlement units in occupied territory, "I intend to advance and strengthen building in Jerusalem."[8] Legislation in the Israeli Knesset regarding Jerusalem may also pick up steam. This includes bills that would redraw[9] the municipal boundaries to exclude certain Arab neighborhoods as well as other legislation[10] that would bring massive Israeli settlements into the municipality.

Regionally, the Jerusalem decision by President Trump brought together many countries to speak in one voice for the first time

[8] Raoul Wootliff and Sue Surkes, "14,000 housing units planned for Jerusalem, 6,000 of them over Green line," *Times of Israel,* December 7, 2017, https://www.timesofisrael.com/14000-housing-units-planned-for-jerusalem-6000-over-green-line/.

[9] Jonathan Lis and Nir Hasson, "Bill Would Allow Parts of Jerusalem to Be Transferred to a New Israeli Local Authority, *Haaretz,* July 25, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-bill-would-allow-parts-of-jerusalem-to-be-transferred-to-new-israeli-local-authority-1.5434517.

[10] Tovah Lazaroff, "Ministers To Vote On Bill To Annex 18 Settlements to Jerusalem," *The Jerusalem Post,* October 26, 2017, https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Ministers-to-vote-on-bill-to-annex-19-settlements-to-Jerusalem-508450.

in years. The Arab League, along with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which includes 57 Arab and Muslim states and was founded because of Jerusalem, collectively condemned the decision[11]; and on December 13, the OIC formally declared East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital.[12] Trump's declaration also brought Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Iran, and Qatar all into line behind one issue. To be sure, Trump has found a way to bring together Arab and Muslim states; but instead of bringing them together to embrace Israel and oppose Iran, he has brought all Arab and Muslim states, including Iran, together to oppose him and Israel. While Arab regimes are caught between regime interests tied to relations with Washington and their own publics, they have tried to navigate through these competing concerns by appeasing them both if they can much as they have always done.

Importantly, however, condemnation of Washington's decision on Jerusalem is not only coming from Arab and Muslim states but basically from everywhere else in the world. Members of the United Nations Security Council rejected the United States' position in an emergency session.[13] Rarely is so much unison in condemnation of a Security Council member that prevalent. Nikki Haley, the US ambassador at the time, told all of her UN counterparts that none of them are in a position to judge the United States, a line of argumentation most often heard in the chamber from the Russians.

[11] "Arab League condemns US Jerusalem move," *Al Jazeera,* December 10, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/arab-league-condemns-move-dangerous-illegal-171209185754563.html.

[12] "Islamic Cooperation declares East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital," *Hurriyet Daily News,* December 13, 2017, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/oic-agrees-to-recognize-east-jerusalem-as-palestinian-capital-124064.

[13] "Trump's Jerusalem move roundly condemned at UN," *Al Jazeera,* December 8, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/convenes-emergency-meeting-jerusalem-decision-171208162736190.html.

But Washington's Western European allies strongly distanced themselves as well. This might be one of the most interesting implications. The Europeans have grown tired of a peace process they are asked to finance but over which they have little say regarding the outcome,[14] as the United States shields Israel while it colonizes what remains of Palestine. Washington has been able, with some success, to keep European objections quiet, but this might be the last straw. The European Union, the United Nations, the Russians, and the United States, which make up the Middle East quartet, have understood the American role as essential because of Washington's relationship with Israel. But if the United States has abandoned even the pretense of mediation, this might allow for the Europeans and others to play more independent roles in relation to the Israeli/Palestinian issue.

For Palestinians, this Trump declaration may provide opportunities for diplomatic achievements with states that are troubled with the US role. How exactly they will seize this moment, if at all, is unclear at this time. What is undeniably clear is that the Trump declaration is a break from the past and the Oslo era has finally drawn to a close.

A DECISION AMIDST MOUNTING PRESSURE

When President Donald Trump issued his now infamous declaration recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and reversing decades of American policy on the issue, he sent shockwaves not only through the Middle East but around the world. As the fallout from the announcement continues, it is important to recall the context

[14] Arthur Neslen, "EU aid to Palestine 'cannot continue indefinitely' without results," *Euractiv*, September 5, 2014,
https://www.euractiv.com/section/development-policy/news/eu-aid-to-palestine-cannot-continue-indefinitely-without-results/.

in which the decision was made as it suggests a developing American strategy vis-à-vis the US relationship with the Palestinians.

Ahead of the Jerusalem decision there were a confluence of events and reports that added pressure on the Palestinians to get them to make concessions. This included threats to close the PLO Delegation office in Washington, DC, the advancement of federal legislation that would further condition American funding to the Palestinian Authority, and the reported pressure put on PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during an unscheduled visit to Riyadh last November.[15] The Crown Prince, whose close relationship with Jared Kushner has been widely reported, had seemingly acted in tandem with Washington in an effort to press Abbas but there are also signs that him doing so is leading to internal tension in the Royal Court. Washington reportedly wanted the Palestinians to accept a return to the negotiating table with the Israelis on the basis of a Trump Administration framework, the so-called "ultimate deal," the outlines of which were far below the minimum Palestinian demands.[16] Both the White House and the Palestinians made their respective positions clear to each other and, despite knowing the extent of Palestinian objections to an American recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the White House went ahead with it anyway.

PLAYING HARDBALL

Taken together, the message sent by the Trump Administration was that saying no to the president would have dire consequences.

[15] "Saudi: Palestinian Abbas must endorse US' plan or leave," *Middle East Monitor,* November 14, 2017, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171114-saudi-palestinian-abbas-must-endorse-us-plan-or-leave-resign/.

[16] Anne Barnard, David M. Halbfinger and Peter Baker, "Talk of a Peace Plan That Snubs Palestinians Roils Middle East," *New York Times,* December 3, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/world/middleeast/palestinian-saudi-peace-plan.html.

There is a stream of thought in American Middle East peace process policy circles which holds that the reason the Palestinians have not yet signed an agreement with the Israelis is because they are in too comfortable a position and need to be pressured. Despite the fact that this hypothesis seems drawn from an alternate reality than the one on the ground, where Israel is, in fact, overwhelmingly the powerful state that is militarily occupying stateless Palestinians, the mindset still has traction in certain Washington circles. Now it seems that it has been adopted by the White House.[17]

However, instead of responding with capitulation, the Palestinian response to the Trump declaration was defiance. Indeed, the Palestinians used their diplomatic connections in the Arab world and beyond to isolate the United States and Israel before the international community. At the United Nations Security Council, the United States was forced to use its veto power to overcome the opposition of 14 others while at UN General Assembly, a resolution condemning the American decision passed by a wide margin. The embarrassing spectacle left Washington attempting to spin the vote numbers in a positive way. US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley counted those who abstained from the vote along with the handful of countries that voted against the resolution.[18] Others pointed out that the vote totals actually show less international solidarity with Palestinians than in previous years when the General Assembly took up resolutions on Palestine. In reality, however, UN General Assembly resolutions on matters dealing with Palestine continue to pass with an overwhelming majority of support. This partic-

[17] "Trump administration threatens to shutter Palestinians' D.C. office," *CBS News,* November 18, 2017, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-administration-threatens-to-shutter-palestinians-d-c-office/.

[18] Julia Manchester, "Haley sends 'friendship' invites to countries that didn't vote against US Jerusalem decision," *The Hill,* December 12, 2017, https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/366137-haley-sends-friendship-invites-to-countries-that-didnt-vote-against.

ular resolution was unlike previous ones because it was not focused simply on affirming the rights of Palestinians under international law or condemning Israeli action; rather, it was about condemning an American action—the American recognition of Jerusalem.

CUTTING OFF THE PALESTINIANS

Nikki Haley invited representatives of the various UN member states that voted against or abstained from voting on the Jerusalem resolution to a "Friends of the US" reception she hosted on January 3rd, 2018. At a UN press conference, the day before, Haley suggested that Washington would apply additional pressure on the Palestinians.[19] A journalist asked her if the United States would continue funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the UN agency tasked with providing humanitarian aid for Palestinian refugees living in the occupied West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem as well as in refugee camps throughout the region. In light of Palestinian efforts at the United Nations to support the votes at the Security Council and General Assembly, Haley replied that it was the president's view that the United States should not be giving aid to the Palestinians until the Palestinians return "to the negotiations table." Shortly thereafter, President Trump made a statement via twitter declaring:

> It's not only Pakistan that we pay billions of dollars to for nothing, but also many other countries, and others. As an example, we pay the Palestinians HUNDRED [sic] OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year and get no appreciation or respect. They don't even want to negotiate a long overdue peace treaty with Israel. We have taken Jerusalem, the toughest part of the negotiation, off the table, but Israel, for that, would have had to pay more.

[19] "U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley says Trump Wants to Withhold Funding to Palestinians," last modified January 2, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj_BVE-YY3Q&feature=youtu.be.

> But with the Palestinians no longer willing to talk peace, why should we make any of these massive future payments to them?[20]

With this statement, the President of the United States made clear that the comments by Haley were not just an impromptu response at a press conference but part of a calculated policy to use monetary support for Palestinian civilians to force them into negotiations with the Israelis. Over the years, however, the ways in which the United States has supported the Palestinian Authority (PA) financially have evolved.[21] A very small portion of US funding went directly to the PA; these disbursements are aimed at supporting its security apparatus and coordination. The remainder of US support for Palestinians is indirect. During the Obama Administration, economic assistance that was previously earmarked to help subsidize the PA's deficit was changed to direct payments to specific Palestinian Authority creditors. In the 2017 budget, this support was for "East Jerusalem hospitals and private sector fuel suppliers."

There are two other streams of US monetary support for Palestinians that do not involve subsidizing the PA's debts. These are USAID programs that fund a variety of projects sponsored by private and nongovernmental organizations and entities on the ground, including US support for UNRWA. The US State Department notified UNRWA that it is "cutting its contribution by more than half, to $60 million, while demanding a 'fundamental reexamination' of the social-service agency's mission and funding." [22]

[20] Donald Trump, Twitter Post, January 2, 2018, 5:37 pm, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/948322496591384576?lang=en.

[21] "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," *Congressional Research Service,* December 12, 2018, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf.

[22] Nick Wadhams, "U.S. Slashes Aid to Palestinians Through UN to $60 Million," *Bloomberg,* January 16, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-16/u-s-aid-to-palestinians-through-un-cut-by-half-to-60-million.

USAID funding, along with US financial support for UNRWA, not only do not go to the Palestinian Authority but they predate the existence of the PA altogether. These funds are aimed at supporting Palestinian society and alleviating the needs of stateless Palestinian refugees in several countries. In Gaza in particular, where refugees comprise 80 percent of the population, UNRWA's support is crucial to the vast majority of the population. Clearly, this represents a shift in American policy which previously had not tied humanitarian assistance to Palestinians to the PA's behavior. Now, Washington is saying that unless the Palestinian Authority does as Washington pleases, the United States will cut aid to Palestinian refugees and hospitals. This is, of course, extremely dangerous, first and foremost for the civilian populations who will be directly and negatively impacted by the lack of services and who are already living in dire circumstances, particularly in Gaza. In addition to the humanitarian impact, the economic impact will increase the prospects of political instability as well. But this approach also suggests that the United States is grasping for indirect leverage over the Palestinian Authority because direct leverage is either unavailable or unworkable.

DETERMINING OUTCOMES, AND THE BLAME GAME

While the president's tweet made clear Washington would be taking further steps toward cutting aid to Palestinians, it also did two other things that speak to where American policy now stands. Trump stated plainly that he took Jerusalem "off the table." This clarified any remaining confusing messaging around the intent of the Jerusalem declaration. In the days after the announcement, US officials stated that the decisions did not apply to the "boundaries of sovereignty" and that those matters would be for "permanent status or final sta-

tus negotiations," suggesting that Jerusalem was still very much an issue on the table—though Trump's tweet clearly stated otherwise. [23]

This amounted not just to a reversal of long-standing US policy but also to Washington actually determining the outcome of a final status issue by adopting the Israeli position. As the United States announced cuts to UNRWA funding, officials were quoted demanding that UNRWA's operations and funding be "fundamentally reevaluated."[24] This language could be a hint that the United States is taking the same approach to the issue of refugees as it did with Jerusalem by predetermining an outcome and taking the Israeli position. While the Israelis have been wary of the destabilizing impact of cutting funds to URNWA, particularly in Gaza, the Israeli prime minister has used the opportunity to hammer political points assailing the Palestinian position on refugees. He has also advocated to the United States to cut funds to UNRWA based on the premise that the agency's services to the descendants of Palestinians forced from their homes in 1948 are supporting "fictitious refugees." [25]

With a White House clearly disinterested in serious negotiations, the Israelis are exploiting the opportunity to push for altering US positions so that they are in line with their demands on a variety of issues—positions that they hope will carry over to future administrations. First it was Jerusalem, then the refugee issue and most recently the Golan Heights.

[23] David M. Satterfield, "Briefing With Acting Assistant Secretary David M. Satterfield," *U.S. Department of State,* December 7, 2017, https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276349.htm.

[24] "US to withhold $65m in aid for Palestinian refugees," *The Guardian,* January 16, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/16/us-to-withhold-65m-in-aid-for-palestinian-refugees.

[25] PM or Israel, Twitter Post, January 7, 2018, 9:15 am, https://twitter.com/IsraeliPM/status/950008018418139142.

The last and perhaps most important part of the message tweeted out by President Trump had to do with pointing the finger at the Palestinians for the lack of progress on peace talks. Usually, officials wait until peace talks start to engage in a blame game for why they failed; Trump is getting ahead of the game. In response to all these threats, PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas responded by saying "Damn your money!"[26] Further, in a lengthy speech on January 14, 2018, Abbas declared the Palestinians would no longer accept US mediation. Thus far, therefore, the ultimate deal has been an ultimate disaster.

WHAT IS NEXT FOR US POLICY?: MOVING THE EMBASSY AND ENDING AN AMERICAN ERA

Since taking the helm of the US government, President Trump has found new and creative ways to make the Israeli-Palestinian morass he inherited exponentially worse. Instability is greater, US credibility has decreased, and the prospects for restarting a peace process remain at zero. There is a chance the policymakers in Washington might realize that the approach they have taken thus far—aiming to squeeze the Palestinians into submission—is not going to yield results. However, the United States may yet squeeze them further.

Although Donald Trump has tried to bring radical change to many policies, his efforts to do so with Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking have only made things radically more difficult if not impossible to surmount. To be sure, US policy needed serious reevaluation at the end of the Obama Administration. Trump and his

[26] David M. Halbfinger, "Abbas Calls Oslo Accords Dead and Blasts U.S.: 'Damn Your Money!'," *New York Times,* January 14, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/14/world/middleeast/abbas-palestinians-trump.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmiddleeast&action=click&contentCollection=middleeast&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=4&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0.

cohorts seem to have done that but decided to keep going in the wrong direction, and at a much more accelerated speed. The questions that remain are when, if at all, Trump and his circle are going to realize the folly of their policies and the tremendous damage they will inflict on the lives of innocent people.

There was a time not long ago when American officials on a bipartisan basis worried about how the timing of their trips to Israel would affect the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The United States wanted to be seen as a credible mediator; therefore, US diplomats considered the potential of destructive Israeli actions—which could appear as coordinated with American policy—in undermining the US position. In short, the optics mattered.

"Nothing has made my job of trying to find Arab and Palestinian partners for Israel more difficult than being greeted by a new settlement every time I arrive (in Israel)," James Baker, President George H.W. Bush's secretary of state, once famously told Congress.[27] Vice President Joseph Biden was likewise frustrated when he arrived in Jerusalem in 2010 only to find that on the same day, Israel would announce the significant expansion of a settlement there. He proclaimed: "I condemn the decision by the government of Israel to advance planning for new housing units in East Jerusalem," saying that it "undermines the trust we need right now." [28] Those days are over. Washington is not even pretending anymore to play the role of a trustworthy mediator.

[27] Norman Kempster, "New Israeli Settlements Form Biggest Obstacle to Peace, Baker Asserts: Diplomacy: The rare jab suggests U.S. may be ready to get tough with squabbling parties in the Mideast," *Los Angeles Times,* May 23, 1991, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-05-23-mn-3241-story.html.

[28] Paul Richter, "Biden's Israel visit takes a rocky turn," *Los Angeles Times,* March 9, 2010, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2010-mar-09-la-fg-biden-israel10-2010mar10-story.html.

On May 14, 2018, the United States opened its new embassy in Jerusalem with great fanfare.[29] President Donald Trump and his administration could have chosen any other date, but instead either callously disregarded Palestinian sentiment or deliberately sought to add insult to injury by opening the embassy the day before Palestinians mark the Nakba, or "catastrophe"—referring to the expulsion of three quarters of a million Palestinians from their homes 70 years ago, making way for the establishment of the State of Israel. Just a short distance away, Israeli military snipers were shooting Palestinian protesters in Gaza, killing some 60 people.[30] Since March 30 2018, the protests in Gaza have continued on a near weekly basis and have been repeatedly repressed by the Israeli military. A recent United Nations report on an inquiry into the killings have document Israeli snipers killing 183 people and shooting some 6,000. [31]

The Gaza massacre may well mark a crucial turning point: the end of the peace process era. The split-screen images of American officials celebrating with Israelis while Palestinians were being killed will eternally scar the Palestinians' memory. Such images also represent a microcosm of the American government's historical role in the denial of Palestinian rights, one no longer hidden behind a facade of acting as an "honest broker."

[29] Ruth Eglash, "Under banner of peace, U.S. opens embassy in Jerusalem. Sixty miles away, dozens of Palestinians are killed.," *Washington Post,* May 14, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/jerusalem-gears-up-to-embrace-the-new-us-embassy/2018/05/14/1d6707dc-5558-11e8-a6d4-ca1d035642ce_story.html?utm_term=.1bbd6898b7e9.

[30] Tamara Kharroub, "US Jerusalem embassy vs Nakba: A Moment of truth for world leaders," *The New Arab,* May 15, 2018, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/5/15/us-jerusalem-embassy-vs-nakba.

[31] "Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the OPT," *United Nations Human Rights Council,* February 28, 2019, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIOPT/Pages/Report2018OPT.aspx.

Throughout this so-called peace process era, the United States commandeered the handling of the Palestinian-Israeli issue by relentlessly using its veto in the Security Council to prevent any multilateral input or discussion. While doing so, and instead of trying to mediate a just resolution between two sides unequal in power, Washington continued to finance and support the stronger party,[32] encouraging Israel to impose its will on the weak and occupied Palestinian population.

From the outset, the Trump Administration appeared to be predisposed to supporting Israel over the Palestinians more than any administration before it, even in the most destructive of ways. The events the Jerusalem recognition should eliminate any doubts. Today, statements and talking points of American envoys like Jason Greenblatt and US Ambassador David Friedman are practically indistinguishable from those of Israeli government officials. Greenblatt continues to parrot the Israeli government's response to international criticism of its actions in Gaza. For his part, Friedman has been making incendiary comments about US domestic politics and media coverage that would be shocking coming from an American diplomat under normal circumstances.

POPULAR MOBILIZATION VS. STATE REPRESSION

The coming era is likely to be characterized by more of what we saw on the ground in Gaza in May of 2018 and many times since: Palestinian popular resistance brutally repressed by overwhelming Israeli force. With the flawed creations of the peace process, like the stagnant Palestinian Authority (PA), and with Palestinian lead-

[32] Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel," *White House,* September 14, 2016, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/14/fact-sheet-memorandum-understanding-reached-israel.

ership in limbo, popular mobilizations and other acts of civil disobedience will continue to fill the void.

Nearly 30 years ago, the PA was billed as a vehicle to transition Palestinians to statehood. Instead, it is now seen by many as part of the problem, perpetually keeping Palestinians in a holding pattern. Today, polls show[33] that the largest single group of Palestinian respondents support no particular political faction; indeed, the entire idea of leaders governing while under foreign military occupation or siege, as if they had the autonomy to effectively do so, has been exposed as a farce. The failure of these institutions and parties, however, does not mean Palestinians will stop demanding their basic rights. The images of a far more powerful Israel using its military might against stateless Palestinians armed with slingshots and rocks will become increasingly familiar going forward.

This dynamic between Palestinian protest and Israeli repression will not be limited to Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem—and it never was. Shortly after the "embassy day massacre," Palestinian citizens of Israel gathered in Haifa peacefully to protest the killings in Gaza. Israeli police brutally quashed the gathering,[34] beating several protesters and arresting about 20. The head of a civil rights organization, Jafar Farah, was arrested and ended up in the hospital after his knee was broken by police while in custody.[35] When Ayman Odeh, the head of the Joint List of Palestinian cit-

[33] "Public Opinion Poll No (67) Press-Release," Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, March 20, 2018, http://pcpsr.org/en/node/723.

[34] Noa Shpigel and Jack Khoury, "21 Israeli Arabs Arrested During Haifa Protest Against Gaza Killings," *Haaretz,* May 19, 2018, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/21-israeli-arabs-arrested-in-northern-israeli-city-in-gaza-killing-pro-1.6097975.

[35] Josh Breiner and Noa Shpigel, "'Go to Gaza, Terrorist': Israeli Arab Protesters Say Police Abused Them in Detention," *Haaretz,* May 24, 2018, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-go-to-gaza-arrested-israeli-arab-protesters-accuse-police-of-abuse-1.6113949.

izens of Israel, the third largest party in the Knesset, went to the hospital to visit Farah, where he was allegedly handcuffed to his bed, Odeh was denied entry by Israeli police. Israel's Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman responded in lock-him-up fashion, saying that Odeh was a "terrorist" whose place is "not in the Knesset, it's in prison." [36]

IS IT TIME FOR A RETURN TO AN OLD ERA?

In many ways, this moment is very much a return to the era before the peace process, to the spirit of the first intifada. The wide-scale Palestinian uprising that took place from 1987 to 1993 featured popular mobilizations, demonstrations, civil disobedience, and boycotts. All this happened, and perhaps was only possible, because the PLO was not in Palestine at the time. It also forced the start of the peace process because Israel understood that the costs to its international image were increasing unsustainable and the PLO understood that Palestinians on the ground were not going to sit idly by and wait for their rights to materialize.

Now, however, we can look forward with the benefit of knowing the flaws of the peace process: that negotiations under occupation have been attempted and exhausted. Still, the Trump Administration continues to speak of a soon-to-be-released peace plan,[37] the so-called ultimate deal. If one listens closely to different officials in the administration, however, it becomes clear that there is no set timeline for its release—if any such peace plan exists. And even if

[36] Toi Staff, "Liberman calls Arab party chief a 'terrorist' who belongs in jail," *Times of Israel,* May 20, 2018, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liberman-calls-arab-party-chief-a-terrorist-who-belongs-in-jail/.

[37] Anders Persson, "What will Trump's 'ultimate deal' mean for Palestinians?," *Al Jazeera,* Mary 28, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/trump-ultimate-deal-palestinians-180327082942844.html.

it did, it is hard to imagine that Trump and his team would find people who would take it seriously. Most recently, there has been increased reports about the release of the plan after an economic conference in Bahrain which is supposedly geared toward raising funds to strengthen the Palestinian economy. All indications are, however, that the political component of the plan does not include independence and sovereignty for Palestinians meaning all investment in the economy is for naught and the Kushner approach is, at best, an attempt to bribe Palestinians into giving up demands for freedom.

SHIFTING OPINION IN THE WEST AND AROUND THE WORLD

This coming era will not only feature asymmetrical confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians, but it will also include growing confrontations between people of conscience around the world and in Israel—the very necessary confrontations that the peace process helped delay. With no peace process to create illusions about the future, people around the world and Americans, in particular, will increasingly have to deal with questions regarding what comes next. For how long can Israel continue to rule over millions of Palestinians while denying their rights? Individuals, in particular, will ask themselves, how long can I continue to support Israel's policies? How long can my government continue to support these injustices?

Confronting these questions has already begun. For years, people have been turning away from Israel precisely because they cannot bring themselves to support what it is doing to the Palestinians. This new stage will catalyze this process. Increasingly, carte blanche support for Israel's oppressive policies has become a

right-wing issue in the United States. As progressives and people who care about human rights and equality are becoming alienated, those for whom Israel is an ideological or religious issue, like evangelical Christians, are dominating pro-Israel opinion. Ideologically and for many white evangelical Christians in particular, Israel is something of a paragon of the "Judeo-Christian" fighting ethos in its confrontation with Islam. Religious, many believe support for Israel is a biblical commandment and a necessary precursor for the second coming and the day of judgement. The support for Israel in this community and the centrality of this community to Republican party politics is the reason why the bigoted pastors John Hagee and Robert Jeffress were chosen to play roles in the embassy opening ceremony in Jerusalem, a city holy to three faiths, despite their history of Islamophobic and anti-Semitic statements.[38]

President Trump and his administration have further helped crystallize America's weakened position—and impending isolation—in the world community regarding Israel and Palestine. Signs of this were on display at the United Nations when an unprecedented rebuke of American diplomacy unfolded. After further killings in Gaza, the Security Council convened to consider resolutions on the situation. Kuwait put forward a resolution condemning Israel's actions and US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley made clear she would oppose the resolution. Instead, she offered her own. In her statement, Haley blamed the Palestinians for the situation in Gaza and said that the Kuwaiti resolution "sides with terrorists over Israel." She went on to say: "We strongly encourage this Council to vote against Kuwait's resolution

[38] Matt Korade, Kevin Bohn and Daniel Burke, "Controversial US pastors take part in Jerusalem embassy opening," *CNN*, May 14, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/13/politics/hagee-jeffress-us-embassy-jerusalem/index.html.

and acknowledge the concerns of Hamas by voting for the U.S. resolution. Each of you has a choice. You either support Hamas or not. This vote will tell the story."[39]

When Kuwait's resolution came up for a vote,[40] ten countries, including Russia and France, supported it. The United Kingdom, Poland, the Netherlands, and Ethiopia abstained; Haley kept her promise and vetoed the resolution as the only no-vote. But most interesting was the vote on the American resolution. Not only did the council refuse to comply with Haley's request on Kuwait's resolution, but not one single member voted alongside the United States on its own resolution. The United States was the only no-vote on the Kuwaiti resolution and the only yes-vote on its own resolution—alone even among allies. This embarrassing moment of isolation[41] marked a new nadir in the international community's confidence in Washington's diplomatic and peacemaking abilities.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Eventually, this new era could culminate in a tipping point and ultimately yield a much-needed shift in American policy, the kind that actually holds Israel accountable for denying Palestinian rights. The question is how much farther off into the future that point will be, and how many more Palestinians will suffer in the interim. We are beginning to see the seeds of this new era planted

[39] Nikki Haley, "Explanation of Vote before Voting on Two Draft UN Security Council Resolutions on Gaza," United States Mission to the United Nations, June 1, 2018, https://usun.state.gov/remarks/8465.

[40] "Amid Middle East Violence, Security Council Fails to Adopt Competing Resolutions on Israeli Force, Hamas Role in Conflict," Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, United Nations, June 1, 2018, https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13362.doc.htm.

[41] Rick Gladstone, "U.S. Vetoes U.N. Resolution on Gaza, Fails to Win Second Vote on its Own Measure," *New York Times,* June 1, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/01/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-palestinians-.html.

today with things like H.R. 2407, a bill introduced into Congress that would condition US military financing Israel based on its treatment of Palestinian children.

In the meantime, we are likely to see continued popular mobilizations. It is possible that the Palestinian leadership in Gaza, where Hamas is in control, is learning from the positions of the grassroots movement there, which characterized some of the mass-based actions of the first intifada. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority, in coordination with Israeli occupation, has worked to keep popular mobilizations and dissent limited. But with a discredited and aging leadership in Ramallah, a serious lack of public confidence in the PA, and a possible transition in leadership on the horizon, it is unclear how much longer the West Bank can wait before joining in wide-scale mass mobilizations akin to the marches that straddled the entirety of the demarcation line between the Gaza strip and Israel. For Washington's part, the Trump administration has signaled its openness to Israel taking major paradigm shifting steps, including annexation. Washington's openness to this is a clear sign of the end of the peace process era as it was known and Israeli action on this front would make that clear to even the most willfully blind holdouts still talking about a two-state outcome achieved through the traditional process.

CHAPTER 3

LATIN AMERICA AND THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the international opposition, the Israeli Knesset on 30 July 1980 enacted the so-called "Basic Law on Jerusalem" by which it proclaimed that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel." The response did not take long to come: On 20 August 1980, the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 478) censured the Jewish state for having enacted a law declaring a change in the status of Jerusalem, which "constitutes a violation of international law."[1] Though the law did not substantially change the situation that had existed on the ground since Israel had reunited the divided city in June 1967 by seizing East Jerusalem during the Six-Day War, the UN Security Council perceived the move as a provocation and made a point of clearly condemning it.

Countries that had established diplomatic missions in the city were called upon to remove them. Notably, most of them were from Latin America. 11 countries – Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Guatemala – which began opening embassies there as early as the 1950s – shuttered their Jerusalem embassies in 1980, following the UN Resolution. However, a couple of years later, the presidents of Costa Rica and El Salvador

[1] The resolution was passed with 14 votes to none against, with the United States abstaining. For the full text of the resolution: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/478(1980)

broke with the international consensus and moved their embassies back in Jerusalem, in 1982 and 1984 respectively. For more than twenty years, they were the only two countries in the world having done so.

History seems to repeat itself in some ways: since President Donald Trump's decision in December 2017 to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, a handful of Latin American nations have followed in his footsteps. The governments of Guatemala, Paraguay, and later Brazil were the first to declare their alignment with Trump's new policy on Jerusalem. Even though Paraguay reversed its decision a few months later, the issue is far from over in the region. Several governments and political leaders continue to discuss the possibility of moving their embassy to Jerusalem too.

These moves tell a complex tale in which international and domestic interests are often intertwined. In 1977, Regina Shariff argued that "Israel has always had a substantial stake in its relations with the Latin American subcontinent on three levels: the political/diplomatic, the economic and the demographic (as a source of Jewish immigration)."[2] Even though Latin American countries are not among the top destinations of Israeli exports, commercial exchanges have been increasing over the past few years to $1.6 billion in 2017. Furthermore, the economic growth potential in emerging markets like Latin America makes it an attractive destination for Israeli investors. The Israeli government is currently endorsing long-term investment channels in Latin America to take advantage of these developments. One of the

[2] Sharif, R. (1977). Latin America and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *7*(1), 98-122.

most recent initiatives includes investing Israeli capital in regional infrastructure projects in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank.

From the Latin American perspective, additional factors must be considered. First, the way Latin American countries engage with Israel largely depend on their relationship with the United States. Even though some countries, especially in South America, have gained considerable autonomy vis-à-vis the United States since the 2000s,[3] the question of how to cope with the American leadership remains a highly politicized issue. From Mexico and Brazil to Venezuela and Argentina, the definition of the foreign policy towards the US power is periodically the subject of heated debates. Second, new interest groups have emerged in Latin American political landscapes. In particular, the defense of Israeli interests is today less about the influence of Jewish organizations – although this varies from country to country – and more about the growing political power of Evangelical churches, most of them unconditional supporters of Israel (see Table 1). Finally, the attitude of the Arab diasporas towards the Palestinian issue, either passive or politically mobilized, is another important variable. In Chile, where the Palestinian diaspora is particularly influential and active, having a flagrant pro-Israeli foreign policy would be inconceivable.[4]

[3] Vigevani, T., & Cepaluni, G. (2007). Lula's foreign policy and the quest for autonomy through diversification. *Third World Quarterly*, 28(7), 1309-1326 and Russell, R., & Tokatlian, J. G. (2003). From antagonistic autonomy to relational autonomy: a theoretical reflection from the Southern Cone. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 45(1), 1-24.

[4] Baeza, C (2016). Chilean Foreign Policy Toward Arab Countries: Between Trade Diplomacy and the Affirmation of Principles. In: Tawil, M. (ed). *Latin American Foreign Policies towards the Middle East. Actors, Contexts, and Trends*. New York: Palgrave. 59-76

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF PROTESTANTISM IN LATIN AMERICA (SOURCE: LATINOBAROMETRO, 2017)

Country	Protestantism (%)
Guatemala	41
Honduras	39
Nicaragua	32
El Salvador	28
Brazil	27
Costa Rica	25
Panama	24
Dominican Republic	21
Bolivia	20
Venezuela	18
Colombia	14
Ecuador	14
Peru	12
Chile	11
Argentina	10
Uruguay	7
Mexico	5
Paraguay	5

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the positioning of 9 countries in the region (Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, and Argentina) on the question of Jerusalem after Trump's controversial move. This sample includes a larger number of countries than those who chose to move their embassy to Jerusalem. It also comprises countries whose recent voting behavior in the United Nations has tended to tip in favor of Israel (Table 2) and countries

where prominent political leaders have made a pledge in favor of moving the embassy to Jerusalem.[5]

TABLE 2: LATIN AMERICAN VOTES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SINCE 2017

	United Nations General Assembly resolution ES-10/19 21 December 2017	United Nations General Assembly resolution ES-10/20 13 June 2018
Mexico	A	A
Guatemala	N	A
Honduras	N	A
El Salvador	-	Y
Nicaragua	Y	Y
Costa Rica	Y	Y
Panama	A	A
Dominican Republic	A	A
Cuba	Y	Y
Colombia	A	Y
Venezuela	Y	Y
Ecuador	Y	Y
Brazil	Y	Y
Peru	Y	Y
Bolivia	Y	Y
Paraguay	A	A
Uruguay	Y	Y
Argentina	A	A
Chile	Y	Y

Y = Yes (pro-Palestinian), N = No (pro-Israeli), A = Abstained (more favorable to Israel) (source: UNISPAL).

[5] Brazil and Paraguay are excluded, since they have been studied in this book by Guilherme Casarões.

It is worth noting that several of these countries were among those who pioneered the recognition of Palestine as a state in the late 2000s (Table 3). This reversal is largely due to the right turn of much of the Latin American political landscape. While left-wing governments had been rather supportive to the Palestinian cause – Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua having even suspended their diplomatic relations with Israel[6] –, right-wing leaders have vocally expressed their will to resume and/or strengthen their relationship with the Jewish state.

TABLE 3: DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINIAN STATE

	Year
Mexico	N
Guatemala	Y (2013)
Honduras	Y (2011)
El Salvador	Y (2011)
Nicaragua	Y (1988)
Costa Rica	Y (2008)

[6] Among those three, Nicaragua is the only one that renewed its diplomatic ties with Israel. It did so in March 2017, after seven years of suspension in protest of the Israeli deadly raid on the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish ship that was attempting to break the naval blockade on the Gaza Strip. The announcement was preceded by a year of clandestine meetings between representatives of both countries' governments. According to senior foreign ministry officials who were involved in the secret talks, Israel promised economic assistance to the Central American country. In October 2017, only a few months after the re-establishment of ties, Rosario Murillo, Nicaragua's vice president, used the Spanish word for "brother" to speak of Modi Ephraim, head of Israel's foreign ministry division to Latin America and the Caribbean. Significantly, she mentioned that the re-establishment of relations "was celebrated especially by many brothers of the Christian churches of our country". See Nicaraguan vice president welcomes Israeli diplomat as 'hermano". *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 29, 2017 https://www.jta.org/2017/10/29/global/nicaraguan-vice-president-calls-israeli-senior-official-hermano. Notably, Nicaragua has the third largest presence of Evangelicals in Latin America (32% according to the LatinoBarometro, 2017).

Panama	N
Dominican Republic	Y (2009)
Cuba	Y (1988)
Colombia	Y (2018)
Venezuela	Y (2009)
Ecuador	Y (2010)
Brazil	Y (2010)
Peru	Y (2011)
Bolivia	Y (2010)
Paraguay	Y (2011)
Uruguay	Y (2011)
Argentina	Y (2010)
Chile	Y (2011)

MEXICO

Whereas it has maintained a discourse of "equidistance" and "fine balance" between the parties,[7] Mexico has unquestionably strengthened its relations with Israel over the last decade. This resulted in unprecedented business ties between the two countries (the trade balance between both nations has reached 1 billion dollars per year), regular high-profile visits, and changes in Mexico's voting pattern at the United Nations. Mexico is also one of the few countries in the region that have not officially recognized Palestine as a state. It is in this context that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the country in September 2017 – as part of a regional tour including Argentina and Colombia – the first-ever visit by a sitting Israeli prime minister to Latin America.

[7] López Cafaggi, C. E., México y el conflicto árabe-israelí, *Nexos*, December 1, 2016. https://www.nexos.com.mx/?p=30442

According to Dina Siegel Vann, the director of the American Jewish Committee's Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs (BILLA), "the relations between Israel and Mexico are really now at a peak."[8] The fields in which both countries collaborate are agriculture, pharmaceutical, water treatment and technology focused on security solutions, both physical and cybernetic.

It is then no surprise that on December 21, 2017, Mexico was among the 35 countries that abstained from a vote in the emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly during which 128 members overwhelmingly condemned the US decision to move the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. Significantly, Mexico abstained again in June 2018 in the vote in the same body condemning Israel for the violence in Gaza and calling for the "protection of the Palestinian civilian population." In the past, Mexico used to vote against Israel in these types of resolutions.

However, despite repeated calls by Israeli officials, including Jonathan Peled, Israel's ambassador to Mexico, and Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, the deputy mayor of Jerusalem, who paid a visit to Mexico City in August 2018, the Mexican government has not recognized Jerusalem as the Israeli capital and has not announced any plans to move the Mexican embassy to that city. This has been a disappointment to Israeli authorities, who hoped that such a decision would contribute to a domino effect in the Latin American region.

The election in July 2018 of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, an ardently left-wing and anti-establishment candidate, has raised several new questions. The key question is whether he will contin-

[8] Will Golden Age of Israel Mexico ties continues under Obrador?, *Jerusalem Post*, July 3, 2018. https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Will-golden-age-of-Israel-Mexico-ties-continue-under-Obrador-561387

ue during his term in office (2018-2022) the policies of his predecessor, Enrique Pena Nieto (2012-2018), or if he will harken back to the time when Mexico supported the Palestinian cause as part of the Third World and the non-aligned movement.

According to Dina Siegel Vann, several elements seem to weigh in favor of the continuation of the rapprochement with Israel: "Relations between Israel and Mexico today are based not only on values and history, but also on clear interests - there is a lot of value added that Israel brings to the table for Mexico."[9] That "value added," she explained, is that Mexico has invested heavily in Israeli companies, and Israel has also invested in the Mexican economy. For example, in 2017, the Mexican petrochemical giant Mexichem bought Israel's iconic drip-irrigation company Netafim for some USD $1.5 billion, and in 2016 Israel's Teva pharmaceutical company bought Mexico's pharmaceutical giant Rimsa for USD $2.3 billion.

The question of Mexico's relationship with Israel and Palestine notably played no role in the presidential campaign. The groups who could drive this debate in one direction or another have only very little influence in the public sphere. With some 45,000 people, the Mexican Jewish community is well organized but very small. Around 1% of the Mexican population is allegedly of Arab descent – Lebanese, Syrian, or Palestinian – but they do not participate in local politics as a cohesive group of interests. Finally, Mexico is the country in Latin America that has experienced the least growth of the evangelical population (only 5%).

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has himself no track record on Israel, nor has he spoken widely about it. He has not travelled

[9] *Op.cit.*

much outside of Mexico and has never visited Israel. Many observers have noticed that the new Mexican president seems uninterested in foreign affairs. "The best foreign policy is domestic policy,"[10] López Obrador often says. According to Mexican intellectual Jesús Silva Herzog Márquez, López Obrador simply lacks an international agenda. "He's very experienced when it comes to the domestic political brawl but has an absolute lack of knowledge of the global arena."[11]

In that sense, Mexico's foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue is not likely to witness major changes in the coming years. While moving the embassy to Jerusalem should not be on the agenda of AMLO presidency, bilateral relations with Israel may remain strong for some time. Palestinians might at best achieve the recognition of the Palestinian state.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Guatemala

Guatemala was the first country to follow in the United States' footsteps after President Donald Trump's declared that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Two days after the opening of the US Embassy in the Israeli capital, Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales (2016-2019) inaugurated the Guatemalan Embassy in Jerusalem, together with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"It's not a coincidence that Guatemala is opening its embassy in Jerusalem right among the first. You were always among the first.

[10] La mejor política exterior es la interior: AMLO, *El Economista*, May 22, 2018 https://www.eleconomista.es/nacional-eAm-mx/noticias/9152666/05/18/La-mejor-politica-exterior-es-la-interior-AMLO.html

[11] Krause, L. Why is AMLO not standing up to Trump? Arrogance and Delusion, *Washington Post*, April 4, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/04/04/why-is-amlo-not-standing-up-trump-arrogance-delusion

You were the second country to recognize Israel," Netanyahu said at the ceremony, referring to its founding in 1948. Morales said his country, Israel and the United States "share friendship, courage and loyalty."[12] In December 2017, Guatemala was already among the 9 countries which voted against the UN motion to reject the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Guatemala is the most evangelical country in Latin America. According to Latinobarómetro 2017, 41% of the population identifies with Protestantism. Jimmy Morales himself is an evangelical entertainer with a Baptist seminary degree. Morales and Vice President Jafeth Cabrera officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital by citing prayer and prophesy as their motivation. Similarly, Sarah Angelina Solis, Guatemala's ambassador to Israel, declared in an interview with CBN that she felt that this decision was "a gift from God," that she knew "many blessings will come for Guatemala," since this was "a promise in the Bible, in Genesis."[13]

Morales has prioritized Israel since his election, making the country his first official visit outside of the Americas in November 2016. Due to his decision to officially recognize Jerusalem, Morales was given an award by prominent Christian Zionist Mike Evans, founder of the Friends of Zion Heritage Center in Jerusalem and visited by dozens of leaders involved with the Latino Coalition for Israel (LCI).[14]

[12] Guatemala opens embassy in Jerusalem, two days after U.S. move, *Reuters*, May 16, 2018 https://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN1IH139?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews

[13] This Is What Inspired Guatemala to Move Its Embassy to Jerusalem. *The Christian Broadcasting Network*. January 26, 2018 http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2018/january/exclusive-this-is-what-inspired-guatemala-to-move-its-embassy-to-jerusalem

[14] Founded in 2017, LCI's mission is to mobilize the Latino Evangelical community in support of Israel in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. See http://lci.global/

This support to Israel is not only the President's political whim; it finds resonance at the local level too. Four city mayors (Guastatoya, San Diego, Tiquisate, and San José) have for example decided to rename streets, squares and parks with the name "Jerusalem the capital of Israel."

However, historical and religious ties only tell part of the story; material and political interests are also at stake. According to Eric Olson, the deputy director of the Wilson Center's Latin American Program, "the embassy move is really about trying to curry favor with the United States (…)."[15] President Jimmy Morales has been peppered with accusations of illicit electoral financing, the prosecution of his son and brother for fraud, and expenses of thousands of public dollars in luxuries and gifts. He is under fire from the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), a UN-backed international body investigating crime and corruption in the country. Morales has resisted CICIG's hard work to investigate his campaign finances and some of his own family members, and has made every possible effort to find support in the United States.

Furthermore, Guatemala, a country where half of the population lives in poverty, according to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), has also long been financially dependent on the United States. The United States dedicated $257 million in foreign aid to the country in 2017[16] and 42% of Guatemalan exports go to the United States[17].

[15] Noack, R. Why some Latin American countries are rushing to open Jerusalem embassies, too, *Washington Post*, May 16, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/05/16/why-some-latin-american-countries-are-rushing-to-open-jerusalem-embassies-too/?utm_term=.75aa319d7cf8

[16] For accessing USAID data, see https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/GTM

[17] Data available at The Observatory of Economic Complexity, MIT, 2017 https://oec.world/en/

This amount of aid is the highest contribution in Central America, but funding decreased each year of the Trump administration.

Morales's reward for the Jerusalem move has been high for himself, but not that much for the country. When the Guatemalan President announced in early January 2019 plans to expel the CICIG, giving its investigators 24 hours to shut their office, "the US response was limited to a mild statement of concern about corruption in Guatemala from the US Embassy."[18] The statement didn't even mention the UN-backed commission. Jimmy Morales clearly reaped the benefits of the alliance he forged with pro-Israeli US conservatives, including President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, former UN Envoy Nikki Haley, and Senator Marco Rubio.

By contrast, the country is far from receiving from the Trump administration a more favorable treatment. In March 2019, the US President threatened to cut off all aid to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador if those governments failed to stem unauthorized migration to the United States. In June, the State Department confirmed that the administration would stop the aid to the three countries. As a consequence, one of Morales's last acts was to authorize an agreement with the Trump administration designating Guatemala as a "safe third country," which would permit Washington to send Honduran and Salvadoran asylum seekers who passed through the country back to Guatemala. This spurred large demonstrations to protest the agreement.

Jimmy Morales ended his term in office as one of the most unpopular presidents in Guatemala's history. In August 2019, Alejandro Giammattei, a former prisons director from the conservative

[18] Lynch C., Corrupt Guatemalans' GOP Lifeline, *Foreign Policy*, February 5, 2019. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/05/trump-republican-lawmakers-weaken-u-n-anti-corruption-commission-guatemala-jimmy-morales-white-house-putin/

Vamos list, won the presidential election. The new president will be under immense pressure from the United States to implement the controversial migration pact.

Regarding Israel, Giammattei said late last month that "who is Israel's enemy is Guatemala's enemy."[19] Speaking to the Spanish-language bulletin of the US-based Israel Allies Foundation, he said close bilateral relations with Israel would be a top foreign policy priority of his, adding that he would keep the country's embassy in Jerusalem.

Honduras

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez (2018-2021) has repeatedly signaled that his government was mulling moving the Honduran embassy to Jerusalem. Speaking at the opening meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in Washington in March 2019, Hernandez even declared that his country would "immediately" open an "official diplomatic mission" in "Jerusalem, the capital of the state of Israel."[20]

Honduras and Guatemala follow similar trends. Honduras is the second country with the largest presence of Evangelicals - 39 percent Protestant according to Latinobarómetro. Both countries are also among the most violent and impoverished countries in the Americas – 53,2% of Hondurans live in poverty (Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018) – and depend economically, to a significant degree, on US aid and investment. Finally, the leaders of the two countries have generated

[19] Conservative, pro-Israel Giammattei elected Guatemala president, Times of Israel, August 12, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/conservative-pro-israel-giammattei-elected-guatemala-president/

[20] Honduras to move embassy to Jerusalem. *Israel National News*. March 24, 2019. http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/260812

significant controversy. Hernandez' legitimacy was called into question during his re-election bid in November 2017 after the official vote count ground to a halt when he appeared to be headed for defeat. After the count restarted, the trend turned against his opponent and the electoral authority declared him victor. Interestingly enough, the State Department released a statement backing Hernandez exactly one day after Honduras voted with Guatemala and eight other countries against the UN resolution denouncing President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The US reward for Hernandez's loyalty was clear and sound. Since then, the US government has been a staunch supporter of Hernandez's government, pouring millions of dollars into security cooperation.

Just after his declaration at AIPAC, Hernandez announced the opening of a trade office in Jerusalem. In a statement issued by his government, Hernandez presented it as a "first step." "A second step will draw a lot of attacks from the enemies of Israel and the United States, but we will continue along this path,"[21] Hernandez added. He finally inaugurated the office five months later, at the end of august 2019. The Honduran foreign ministry said in a statement that the office will be an extension of its existing embassy and the complete move to Jerusalem is still being "analyzed and evaluated in the international and national context." Hernandez declared "For me, it's the recognition that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel."

Notably, Honduras hosts around 200.000 people of Palestinian descent. Predominantly, the descendants of a pre-Nakba

[21] Honduran president calls Jerusalem Israeli capital, not moving embassy yet, *Reuters*, March 24, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-honduras-israel/honduran-president-calls-jerusalem-israeli-capital-not-moving-embassy-yet-idUSKCN1R50R0

generation, mostly middle to upper class Christians, Hondurans with Palestinian roots are today not only known for being successful merchants and entrepreneurs, but many are also part of the economic and political elite. The best examples are Carlos Robert Flores Facussé, the president of Honduras from 1998 to 2002, and Salvador Nasralla, a Honduran with Palestinian parents, who missed out on the Honduran presidency in 2017. However, this community, that has maintained various features such as their religious affiliation and ethnic identification as "Arabs" or "Palestinians," is not politically mobilized, or very little, for the Palestinian cause.[22] This large Palestinian presence is, therefore, hardly the reason for explaining why Hernandez has not concluded the move of the embassy yet.

Hernandez is probably trying to bargain with Israel and the US administration. US-Honduran relations became recently tense over immigration issues, specifically migrant caravans. President Trump ordered the suspension of aid payments to Honduras and decided to end deportation protections for 57,000 Hondurans who lived in the United States for decades. That has set up Hondurans, already suffering from months of protests and economic stagnation, for a flood of returnees it can ill afford to absorb. In addition, Hernandez is haunted by new scandals. US federal court recently released documents mentioning the Honduran President as part of a group of individuals investigated by the DEA since about 2013 for participating "in large-scale drug-trafficking and money laundering activities relating to the importation of cocaine into the United States."[23]

[22] Gutiérrez Rivera, L. (2014) Assimilation or cultural difference? Palestinian immigrants in Honduras. *Revista de Estudios Sociales,* 48, 57-68

[23] Honduran president confirms he was investigated by the DEA, *CNN*, June 1, 2019. https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/31/americas/honduras-juan-orlando-hernandez-dea-intl/index.html

Israeli officials said that "Honduras has requested Israel's help in warming relations with the Trump administration as one of its conditions for moving its embassy to Jerusalem."[24] A first trilateral meeting was organized by Netanyahu with Hernández and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Tuesday in Brasilia on the sidelines of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's inauguration in January 2019. These discussions will probably continue until Israel and the United States until they get the result they are looking for.

EL SALVADOR

Foreign Minister Hugo Martinez said in December 2017 that El Salvador will maintain its embassy in Tel Aviv and will not move it to Jerusalem. "We will not move our embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem out of respect for the peace process in the Middle East and particularly Israel and Palestine," said Martinez in an interview with a local TV channel, the Spanish-language Jewish news service Aurora reported.[25]

In 2006, El Salvador was the last nation to move its embassy from Jerusalem in a bid to respect international resolutions. While the Security Council Resolution 478 in August 1980 had called upon member states to remove their diplomatic missions from Jerusalem, El Salvador took the opposite position a few years later: in 1984, the government of Alvaro Magaña brought its embassy back to West Jerusalem. The military cooperation between Israel and El Salvador during the Salvadoran civil war may have been the main factor behind this decision.[26]

[24] Netanyahu helps Honduras warm ties with Trump, *Axios*, January 2, 2019 https://www.axios.com/netanyahu-helps-honduras-warm-ties-with-trump-1546429074-c85b2b54-3661-48da-97fa-780fe39d65f9.html

[25] El Salvador no trasladara su embajada a Jerusalen, *Aurora*, December 29, 2017 http://www.aurora-israel.co.il/el-salvador-no-trasladara-su-embajada-a-jerusalen

[26] El acuerdo secreto del presidente Magaña, *El Faro*, August 21, 2006. http://archivo.elfaro.net/secciones/noticias/20060821/noticias2_20060821.html

A US ally which has a small contingent of troops in Iraq from 2004 to 2009, El Salvador seemed to have taken some distance with Israel over the last years. In early 2016, there were even rumors that the country could close its embassy in Tel Aviv and move it to Ramallah, in the West Bank, in retaliation for Israel's decision to close its embassy in San Salvador due to budget cuts.[27] This did not happen, however.

El Salvador hosts the second highest population of Palestinian descendants in Central America behind Honduras, with around 100,000 Salvadorans with Palestinian ancestry live in the country out of a population of 6.5 million. As in Honduras, this community is particularly well represented among political elites on both sides of the political spectrum. Both Tony Saca, former conservative President (2004-2009), and Shafik Handal, longtime leader of the Salvadoran left and former-guerrilla commander who fought US-backed troops during the country's 12-year civil war, are of Palestinian descent. So is also Nayib Bukele, the candidate of a small right-wing party, the Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANA), who won the last presidential elections in February 2019. However, like in Honduras, this Palestinian community provides very little support to the Palestinian cause. Bukele himself has been described as "a fan of Israel" and has declared that he has no problem in building relations with the Jewish state.[28] In February 2018, Bukele paid an official visit to Jerusalem. While there, then-mayor of El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, met with his counterpart,

[27] El Salvador denies it is moving embassy from Tel Aviv to Ramallah, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, January 19, 2016. https://www.jta.org/2016/01/19/israel/el-salvador-denies-it-is-moving-embassy-from-tel-aviv-to-ramallah

[28] New Palestinian 'Christian' president is a fan of Israel. *Gateway News*. February 7, 2019. http://gatewaynews.co.za/new-palestinian-christian-president-is-a-fan-of-israel/

then-Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat. He also laid a memorial wreath at Yad Vashem and prayed at the Western Wall.

Like in the rest of Central America, El Salvador has a growing Evangelical population (28% according to Latinobarometro in 2017) and these churches play a central role in disseminating Christian Zionism. Like in Guatemala, three towns (San Sebastián Salitrillo, Candelaria de la Frontera and the Municipality of Teucla) have inaugurated a street, a park, and a boulevard with the name "Jerusalem - Eternal Capital of Israel."

While Bukele hasn't demonstrated any intention of changing Salvador's official position yet, the evangelical community in the country and abroad, including the international Christian Zionist organization Christians United for Israel, continues to mount pressure in favor of moving the embassy. As tensions around the migrant crisis at the US southern border increases, Bukele could attempt to use this card as a sign of his desire to reach out to the Trump's administration and work together in partnership.

Panama

In 2018, Panama's President Juan Carlos Varela declared in an interview with RFI in Jerusalem, where he was on an official visit, that he did not intend to imitate other Latin American countries such as Guatemala and move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem: "We respect the decision of other States to establish embassies in Jerusalem. But our decision is to remain in Tel Aviv with the rest of the international community, in order to prevent the situation from getting complicated and ending up delaying what we want, which is to push for a peace agreement."[29]

[29] http://es.rfi.fr/americas/20180518-panama-trasladara-su-embajada-jerusalen-solo-tras-un-acuerdo-de-paz-segun-su-presi

Varela also said that "Panama is committed to dialogue with all parties," however, since the late 2000s, Panamanian governments have been rather aligned with Israel. Panama's steadfast support of Israel at international forums, primarily the United Nations, began with President Ricardo Martinelli and was ensured throughout his presidency (2009-2014). In 2010, Panama distinguished itself by voting alongside the US, Israel, Canada, Nauru, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Micronesia against a UN resolution calling for investigations into allegations of war crimes committed during Operation Cast Lead, the 2008-09 Israeli assault on Gaza (Goldstone Report).[30] Shortly after this vote, Martinelli travelled to Israel to discuss free trade possibilities and other bilateral ventures. According to the Jerusalem Post, Martinelli affirmed eternal Panamanian solidarity with the Jewish state based on "its guardianship of the capital of the world – Jerusalem"[31] and assured Israeli President Shimon Peres that Panama's size did not prevent it from having "a big heart for Israel." His visit was historic, as he was the first Panamanian president to visit the Hebrew State. In 2012, Panama voted against the enhanced UN membership status for Palestine. After a year and a half of negotiations, a Free Trade Agreement between Panama and Israel was finally concluded in November 2015.

[30] The United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, also known as the Goldstone Report, was established in April 2009 by the United Nations Human Rights Council as an independent international fact-finding mission "to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the occupying Power, Israel, against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, due to the current aggression". The Goldstone Report accused both the Israel army and the Palestinian militants of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. It recommended that each side openly investigate its own conduct, and to bring the allegations to the International Criminal Court if they failed to do so. The government of Israel rejected the report.

[31] Panamanian President received Israeli Praise, *Jerusalem Post*, March 2, 2010 https://www.jpost.com/Israel/Panamanian-president-receives-Israeli-praise

Martinelli's unconditional support for Israel was both about projected economic gains and a result of his foreign policy strategy of full alignment with the United States. It was also a personal matter. In addition to ideological affinities and empathy with Zionism, former Panamanian President was closely linked to Israeli security companies. His government purchased Pegasus equipment, a spyware created by an Israeli cyberarms maker, which was used for illegal spying on political opponents, journalists, union leaders, businessmen, and even Supreme Court judges. Martinelli was arrested in June 2017 in Florida on an extradition request by the government of Panama on political espionage and corruption charge. He was extradited a year later.

Juan Carlos Varela's decision not to follow Trump's move on Jerusalem was a way to distance himself from his predecessor's full alignment with Israel. Nevertheless, Panama maintains a very close relation to Israel which has not been contested by any posterior government. Laurentino "Nito" Cortizo, who recently won the presidential race, will probably not change this orientation.

Dominican Republic

Relations between the Dominican Republic and Israel have increased under the presidency of Danilo Medina (2012-2020). While President Leonel Fernandez (2004-2012) had been among the first in the region to recognize the Palestinian state (2009), to visit the Palestinian Occupied Territories (2011), and to officially receive Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (2011), Medina has rather focused on strengthening the economic cooperation with the Hebrew state. The two countries recently signed an air services agreement that allows direct flights between both nations. The agreement was signed in February 2019 by Foreign Minister

Miguel Vargas and his Israeli colleague Israel Katz, as part of the official visit that the Dominican official paid to that nation focused on promoting bilateral relations.

One of the most strategic dimensions of this bilateral cooperation concerns the Israeli surveillance technologies. Illicit Trade at the Haiti-Dominican Republic Border is a very hot topic for Dominicans and the Israeli ambassador to Santo Domingo publicly announced that his country was willing to collaborate to solve the problems at the border: "We have all kinds of technologies and alternatives for the border, [including] drones and satellite surveillance among the possible options to protect against smuggling and illegal immigration."

Despite this alliance, President Medina has shown no desire to move the Dominican embassy to Jerusalem. Part of this stance can be explained by the fact that President Medina has made a point of gaining relative autonomy vis-à-vis the United States, Dominican Republic's main partner. Like Panama, this translated into strengthening economic and political ties with China, after breaking diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

This foreign policy orientation has been criticized by Evangelical church leaders, including Domingo Paulino Moya, one of the best-known evangelical voices in the Dominican media. Luis José "Ramfis" Dominguez Trujillo, a prominent candidate for the 2020 presidential elections and the grandson of the dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1930-1961), has also pledged to relocate the Dominican embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. L. Ramfis Dominguez Trujillo has promised to "restart" the country to confront corruption and insecurity, to return the "glory" to the Armed Forces, and to rescue the nation from the "Haitian invasion." He also declared in an interview that moving his country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem would be "one of the first things" he will do if he is

elected as president: "We have been talking with a lot of different friends here and if President [Donald] Trump is also moving the American embassy to Jerusalem, what's the big deal? It's a bilateral move that makes sense."[32] He promised to foster greater economic cooperation between Israel and the Dominican Republic "to work in technologies, drip irrigation, forestation, energy, and all those things you know very well."

Admittedly, L. Ramfis Dominguez Trujillo trails far behind in the 2020 presidential race, with less than 5% of the electors who declared in recent opinion polls they would vote for him. The ruling PLD still leads the electoral preferences, albeit Luis Abinader, the candidate of the center-left Partido Revolucionario Moderno (PRM) who has Lebanese roots, is close behind. While the PLD and the PRM would not change the current orientation of the Dominican foreign policy, a surprise victory of Trujillo cannot be completely discarded, since as with Brexit, President Trump's victory, and recent Australian national elections, experts have proven they could be wrong. The decision to move the Dominican embassy to Jerusalem will depend on it.

SOUTH AMERICA

Colombia

Colombian president Ivan Duque, in office since August 2018, declared during his electoral campaign that he would not rule out "the possibility of placing [Colombia's] diplomatic seat in Jerusalem" and vowed to further improve already close ties with Israel.[33]

[32] Camisar, A., Trump's decision and its Latin American, Caribbean impact, *Jerusalem Post*, January 18, 2018. https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Trumps-Jerusalem-decision-and-its-Latin-American-Caribbean-impact-538168

[33] New Colombian president open to moving embassy to Jerusalem, *Times of Israel*, June 18, 2018 https://www.timesofisrael.com/new-colombian-president-open-to-moving-embassy-to-jerusalem/

If anything, Colombia - Israel's closest ally on the continent - was next on the list of nations expected to move their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This has not happened, though.

Colombia's strategic relationship with Israel started with President Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), a conservative politician closely associated with the paramilitaries. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, from 2002 to 2017, Colombia was the sixth-largest market for Israeli arms. The paramilitaries and the Colombian army have consistently used Israeli arms and consulting services in brutal fighting against guerrilla groups. This has been largely documented by researchers and NGOs[34]. Significantly, when the Colombian army rescued presidential candidate and media personality Ingrid Betancourt, who had been captured by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2002 and held him prisoner for six years, the press in both Israel and Colombia reported that Israel had been intricately involved in both the planning and the execution of the rescue.

Besides being a loyal customer of Israeli defense exports, Colombia has also been rather supportive of Israel in international forums. In 2010 and 2011, Duque was an assistant to Uribe on the Palmer Commission that investigated the 2010 Mavi Marmara flotilla incident. The commission concluded that the blockade of Gaza was legal, though it said Israel used excessive force in the incident. In parallel, high-level contacts between Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018), the Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, and Shimon Peres facilitated Colombia's refusal to join the rest of Latin America in recognizing the State of Palestine

[34] See Field, L. W. (2017). The Colombia-Israel Nexus: Toward Historical and Analytic Contexts. *Latin American Research Review*, 52(4), and Steinsleger, J., Israel in Colombia: Death Do We Impart, *Meeting Point*, April 4, 2008

in the UN General Assembly. Not surprisingly, Colombia was one of three countries that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited in 2017 on his trip to the region. In December 2017, Colombia abstained from the United Nations vote that condemned the US decision to move the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

However, the relationship has recently known some setbacks that weren't expected by Israel. A few days before the inauguration of Duque's presidency, Colombia's outgoing foreign minister, María Ángela Holguín, sent a letter to Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, informing him that the President Santos had "decided to recognize Palestine as a free, independent and sovereign state." The news of Colombia's decision was rapidly leaked to the media. It didn't take long for the issue to make international headlines. The incoming vice president and foreign minister issued statements to the effect that the Palestine recognition was done legally, but that the new government would review the decision.

Duque initially seemed to suggest that he was surprised to learn that his predecessor had recognized Palestine in its very last days. But Holguín, the outgoing foreign minister, said in a television interview that Duque, the new president, was not only informed but gave his blessing to the demarche. Colombia's new president, Ivan Duque, finally announced that he would not reverse his predecessor's decision to recognize a Palestinian state: "Damage was done by the fact that there was not more institutional discussion. [Former] president [Juan Manuel] Santos told me that he had made that decision, but it is irreversible."

According to several sources, Santos, who won the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in ending Colombia's 50-year-long civil war, was concerned about his legacy: "Yes, Santos is a friend of Netanya-

hu, but he agreed that Netanyahu doesn't do anything to advance peace. That's why he decided it was time to recognize Palestine."

Duque has also come as a disappointment to Israeli authorities, as he has not showed any sign that he is about to move Colombia's embassy to Jerusalem.

Venezuela

In December 2017, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro attended a joint meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement in Istanbul to reject the United States' decision to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem. Maduro described Trump's decision as "a declaration of war against the Arab Muslims" and as "imperialist aggression" against the Palestinian people.[35]

The Bolivarian Revolution led by President Hugo Chávez from 1998 and carried on today by his successor, Nicolas Maduro, has become the most vocal support of the Palestinian cause in Latin America. A symbol of the rise of the Pink Tide[36] in the mid-2000s, Venezuela suspended diplomatic ties with Israel as soon as January 2009 for protesting the Operation Cast Lead. In the face of the 2014 new brutal Israeli assault on Gaza, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro launched an "SOS Palestine" campaign. As Angel Blanco Sorio has pointed out, "the Palestinian cause is important for the Venezuelan Arab community and the wider leftist movement in the country. Confronting Israel polished Chávez's anti-imperialist

[35] Venezuela's Maduro attends OIC summit in Istanbul, *Yeni Safak*, December 13, 2017 https://www.yenisafak.com/en/news/venezuelas-maduro-attends-oic-summit-in-istanbul-2890513

[36] The Latin American "Pink tide" describes a turn towards left wing governments in Latin American democracies straying away from the then more frequent neo-liberal economic model. By 2009, nearly two-thirds of Latin Americans lived under some form of left-leaning government.

credentials and was also in line with the Iranian-Syrian position."[37] A Palestinian diplomat indicated in 2011 that "rather than Palestinian independence being a priority for Chávez," it was "part of a wider anti-imperialist stance against the US and its proxies."

However, the country is in the midst of a social, political, and economic collapse, and the future of Maduro's government seems extremely uncertain. Since the May 2018 presidential election, whose process and results have been widely disputed, the nation and the world are divided in support for Nicolás Maduro or Juan Guaidó. In January 2019, Guaidó declared he was the interim president of Venezuela, challenging Nicolás Maduro's presidency and starting the 2019 Venezuelan presidential crisis.

The relationship with Israel is part of the ideological battle. Notably, in a recent interview with the Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom, Guaidó declared: "we started working to renew relations and I am happy to announce that the process of establishing relations with Israel is in full swing, it is very important for us, first we will renew relations, then we will announce the appointment of an ambassador in Israel and we have a great hope that an ambassador of Israel will come to us." Questioned about the possibility of the Venezuelan Embassy being opened in Jerusalem, Guaidó said: "It is part of the issues we are talking about, at the right time I will announce the restoration of relations and the location of the embassy."[38]

[37] Blanco Sorio, A (2016), Venezuela and the Middle East Under Hugo Chávez (1999–2013): Strategic Continuities and Ideological Preferences. In: Tawil, M. (ed). *Latin American Foreign Policies towards the Middle East. Actors, Contexts, and Trends*. New York: Palgrave. 99-134

[38] Guaidó: Renovaremos las relaciones con Israel y estamos pensando abrir la embajada en Jerusalén, *La Aurora*, February 12, 2019. http://www.aurora-israel.co.il/guaido-renovaremos-las-relaciones-con-israel-y-estamos-pensando-abrir-la-embajada-en-jerusalen

The journalist also asked the president of Venezuela about the Jews of his country who now live in Israel: "There are many Venezuelans in Israel and many Jews in Venezuela" and added that "it is a very active and prosperous community that contributed much to our society. I imagine they are happy that we are restoring relations with Israel."

Guaidó has repeatedly echoed comments from the Trump administration that "all options" for removing Maduro are on the table.[39] In fact, the United Stated has declared its support for Guaidó after he went to a military base in the nation's capital to proclaim the end of Maduro's regime and called for a military uprising. The US dangles the prospect of economic recovery to Venezuelans if they rally behind the opposition leader. This support is crucial for Guaidó, and his promise to relocate the Venezuelan embassy to Jerusalem is a way to showcase his future alignment with the Trump administration if he takes power.

Argentina

Relations between Argentina and Israel have warmed significantly since the election of President Mauricio Macri in 2015. He replaced Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (CFK), under whose leadership bilateral ties were at a historic low. In 2010, Kirchner recognized Palestine as a "free and independent state."

Admittedly, President Macri has not followed in Trump's footsteps regarding Jerusalem, but Argentina was among the 35 countries in December 2017 that abstained from the UN vote condemning the US administration for the embassy's move from

[39] Guaido seeks relations with US military in attempt to take power in Venezuela, *The Guardian*, May 11, 2019 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/11/guaido-maduro-pentagon-trump-us-venezuela

Tel Aviv. This diplomatic stance was one more evidence of a shift in Argentina's position since 2015. During the governments of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who ruled from 2003 to 2015, Argentina voted without hesitation in all multilateral organizations in favor of Palestinian rights. Argentina changed its position for the first time in October 2016, by refraining from supporting a draft resolution on "Occupied Palestine" at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Argentina decided to abstain from supporting Palestine using the argument of "active neutrality" held at the discursive level by Rodolfo Terragno,[40] who was appointed ambassador to UNESCO by the government of Mauricio Macri. This doctrine, which is of most benefit to Israel, has been applied to the letter since. For example, in June 2018, the Argentine Foreign Ministry issued a statement that seemed to put the blame for clashes between the Israeli military and Hamas squarely on the Palestinians, and the country abstained again from the vote calling for the "protection of the Palestinian civilian population" in Gaza.

Relations between Argentina and the Middle East have been part of the most emblematic political and ideological battles opposing Macri and CFK. Argentina is home to a large Jewish community – Argentina's Jewish population is the largest in Latin America, and the third largest in the Americas (after that of the United States and Canada) – and a sizable Syrian and Lebanese diaspora. Both communities are divided, following Argentina's political and social polarization, but the most important Jewish organizations have

[40] La Argentina cambió de postura y se abstuvo de votar en la Unesco un texto sobre Palestina, *La Nación*, October 15, 2016. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/politica/la-argentina-cambio-de-postura-y-se-abstuvo-de-votar-en-la-unesco-un-texto-sobre-palestina-nid1947312

been very hostile to CFK and her foreign policy. In June 2014, Mauricio Macri, then still Buenos Aires mayor, traveled to Israel to participate in an international mayors' conference in Jerusalem. Macri took this opportunity to tell Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Argentina's treatment of Israel would change for the better and that cooperation between the two countries was expected to improve in case of his victory in the presidential elections. He also promised the leaders of the World Jewish Congress that he would work to cancel the agreement signed in 2013 with Iran to jointly investigate bombings against Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina's capital in the early 1990s, which left 114 people killed and more than 500 wounded.[41]

As the Jerusalem Post put it, "Macri victory in Argentina is unequivocally good for Israel and the Jews". Indeed, no sooner was he elected, the Argentine President began to deliver his promises. In January 2016, he met with Benjamin Netanyahu at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where they agreed on increasing investments in technology, security, defense and food. According to the Israeli Prime Minister, Macri told him unequivocally: "We are starting a new slate with Israel. Our interests and values make this partnership necessary and therefore a new era has begun."[42]

[41] The memorandum of understanding signed by Argentina and Iran stipulated the creation of a joint "truth commission" made up of five independent judges from third-party countries to investigate the bombing, two chosen by each country and one agreed upon by both. It also allowed for Iranian suspects in the case to be questioned. However, Argentina's courts had already found Iran culpable, and even issued Interpol warrants against five Iranians and a Lebanese for the attack, including Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi. Israel feared that the commission would result into an Iranian manipulation for exonerating itself. President Macri finally cancelled the memorandum in July 2016.

[42] Netanyahu: Argentina has gone from hostility to friendship with Israel, *Jerusalem Post*, September 13, 2017. https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Netanyahu-Argentina-has-gone-from-hostility-to-friendship-with-Israel-504986

At the beginning of May 2016, this program took more concrete form as officials and security experts met in Buenos Aires for an Argentina-Israel binational conference on security. Its objective was to design joint strategies "to combat organized crime and terrorism" and establish a framework for "intensive cooperation."[43] Sixteen Israeli security companies, including Rafael (high-tech defense systems for air, land, sea and space applications), SK Group (world leader in small arms), RT LTA Systems (aerostats for use in intelligence and surveillance) and Israel Aerospace Industries, attended the conference, as part of a road show.

However, everything could change again by 2010. General elections will be held in Argentina on October 2019, to elect the president of Argentina, members of the national congress and the governors of most provinces. Incumbent president Mauricio Macri is running for re-election. Alberto Fernández, cabinet chief under the Kirchners, is Macri's main rival. After months of economic turmoil – in 2018, the peso halved in value, inflation hit its highest levels since the early 1990s, an incipient recovery vanished into recession – and UDS $56 billion IMF bailout, opinion polls suggest Macri's re-election bid is in danger. However, anti-Kirchnerism is still strong, mainly due to perceptions of corruption during the Kirchner era. Who will win the election will define the fate of Argentina's future relationship with Israel. While rather unlikely, a second government of Macri would probably not completely discard the possibility of moving Argentina's embassy to Jerusalem, depending of the economic situation and its political needs at the international and domestic levels.

[43] Con un seminario, reforzarán la alianza con Israel en materia de Seguridad, *Clarin*, May 24, 2016 https://www.clarin.com/politica/seminario-reforzaran-alianza-israel-seguridad_0_SyVOvsuPml.html

CONCLUSION

This overview shows that the political orientation of the government is a prevalent factor in shaping Latin American foreign policies towards Israel. Right-wing leaders and political aspirants, and in particular new far-right populists supported by Evangelical churches, are more likely to declare their alignment with Trump's new policy on Jerusalem. Their determination to break with the rapprochement with Palestine led by their left-wing predecessors or opponents, their will to strengthen their relations with the United States, and the influence of pro-Israeli Evangelical groups are important explanatory variables. Their affinities with the security orientation of Israel – a pillar of its exporting industries – also contribute to make Latin American right-wing politicians keener to foster their relations with the Jewish state.

However, the decision to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is not only a matter of political and religious beliefs. The cases overall confirm that personal interests are at stake too. The political leaders who are most in need of the US support, either because they are strongly contested at home (like Jimmy Morales in Guatemala and Juan Orlando Hernandez in Honduras) or because they are entangled in a political dispute (like Juan Guaido in Venezuela), are using this gesture as a nod in the direction of Trump. They also try to use it as a bargaining tool for asking the Israeli government to act as a broker between them and the US administration, a role that Israel has been embracing as evidenced by the Honduran case. Mostly, even when these leaders get the reward they were waiting for, their country at the end of the game is the loser: not only democracy is often weakened, but the economic and political gains are poorer than expected.

CHAPTER 4

TRUMP'S JERUSALEM MOVE IN SOUTH AMERICA: FALLING ON DEAF EARS?

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INTRODUCTION

The status of the city of Jerusalem has probably been the most controversial issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. United Nations Resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine between a Jewish and an Arab state, established Jerusalem "as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations."[1] The resolution's provisions, however, were never implemented; a war broke out between Arab countries, who did not accept them as legitimate, and the recently-independent state of Israel in May 1948.

Ever since, Jerusalem passed from the hands of Jordan, who kept control of the eastern part of the city (which included the Old City) after the 1949 Armistice, to Israel, whose conquest and occupation of all its metropolitan area in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War is considered by the Israeli as the 'reunification' of Jerusalem. On 30 July 1980, the Israeli Knesset passed the Jerusalem Law, which determined that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel."[2] A month later, UN Security Council Resolution 478 condemned the attempt at changing the character and status of the Holy City as a 'violation of international law.' It also

[1] United Nations General Assembly. Resolution 181 (II), "Future Government of Palestine". 29 November 1947. Available at https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253

[2] The Knesset. "Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel". Available at https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic10_eng.htm

called upon member states to withdraw their diplomatic missions from Jerusalem.[3]

Out of the 16 states that had their ambassadors stationed in the city, eleven were from Latin America. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela immediately pulled out their embassies in accordance with Resolution 478. It took two more years for Guatemala and the Dominican Republic to follow suit. In that same year, however, Costa Rica and El Salvador returned their representations to Jerusalem.[4] All South American countries, on the other hand, remained committed to the international legal provisions on the status of Jerusalem.

With the exception of Bolivia and Venezuela, who broke diplomatic relations with Israel over the 2009 Gaza war,[5] South America has traditionally adopted an even-handed approach to Israel and Palestine. They enjoy friendly relations with Israel – Argentina and Brazil are home to two of the ten largest Jewish communities in the world – and have recognized the sovereignty of the Palestinian people in recent years. When the United Nations decided to upgrade Palestine to the status of non-member observer state in November 2012, only two South American nations abstained – Colombia, thanks to its close relations with Washington and Tel Aviv, and Paraguay, who had a right-wing provisional government at the time.[6]

[3] United Nations Security Council. Resolution 478. 30 July 1980. Available at https://undocs.org/S/RES/478(1980)

[4] Baeza, Cecilia. "América Latina y la cuestión palestina (1947-2012)". Araucaria, vol. 14, no. 28, 2012, pp. 111-131.

[5] CNN, "Venezuela, Bolivia cut ties to Israel over Gaza". 14 January 2009. Available at http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/01/14/bolivia.israel/

[6] ABC Color, "Palestina: Paraguay se abstuvo de votar". 30 November 2012. Available at http://www.abc.com.py/internacionales/palestina-paraguay-se-abstuvo-de-votar-484196.html

President Donald Trump's decision to move the U.S. Israeli embassy to Jerusalem in December 2017 was met with skepticism across South America. In the UN vote that condemned the unilateral measure as 'null and void,' all countries in the region voted against the U.S., except for three who abstained: Argentina, Colombia, and Paraguay. The first two, who had become Washington's foremost regional allies, fiercely criticized Trump's embassy move, arguing that it ran counter to a 70-year-old international consensus.[7] Paraguayan president Horacio Cartes, on the other hand, immediately stirred controversy by announcing that it would move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem no later than May 2018. One year later, Brazil's President-Elect Jair Bolsonaro boasted he would also move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem as a sign of renewed friendship with Trump's America.

By mid-2019, none of the promises have been fulfilled. Paraguay indeed moved its embassy to Jerusalem in May 2018, only to see it return to Tel Aviv four months later, as the new president, Mario Abdo Benítez, took office. Brazil's Bolsonaro did not even go as far as Paraguay and announced the opening of a trade office in Jerusalem with no diplomatic status, a move that frustrated many of his supporters, but served to appease the more pragmatic and trade-oriented forces in the Brazilian government.

This chapter's goal is to analyze the complex decision-making processes that led two countries to embrace the embassy move as a major foreign policy act – and to soon change course. While there is a common geopolitical thread to Cartes's and Bolsonaro's motivations, which relate to their desire to strengthen ties with the United States and Israel, I argue, first of all, that the embassy transfer would hardly be considered if not for domestic factors.

[7] El País, "Colombia no reconocerá a Jerusalén como capital de Israel, disse Cancillería". 21 December 2017.

With a weakly institutionalized foreign policymaking structure,[8] the Paraguayan decision was directly influenced by the personal ties between the President and individuals who were close to the Israeli government. In the Brazilian case, the embassy promise stemmed mainly from the growing political power of Evangelical Christians, both as lawmakers and voters. They were one of the main forces behind Bolsonaro's successful presidential bid in late 2018, who suggested he would break with Brazil's long-standing diplomatic traditions to favor his closest supporters.

The nature of the political struggle behind the embassy move in each country explains how the decision quickly got reversed. Paraguay's Abdo Benítez saw no political reward in keeping the embassy in Jerusalem and took the opportunity not only to distance himself from his predecessor but also to improve relations with emerging markets of the Islamic world, with potential gains for the country's agricultural exports. On his part, Bolsonaro, who was adamant that he should follow Donald Trump's steps, was curbed by members of his own cabinet, notably the military and the agrobusiness sector, who feared, among other things, that the embassy move would hurt Brazil's position as the world's largest exporter of halal meat and chicken.

PARAGUAY: THE ORIGINS OF THE JERUSALEM MOVE

Paraguay's embassy move announcement came as a surprise to many, who did not expect a South American nation to abandon the region's tradition of even-handedness towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its commitment to the two-state solution. Under left-

[8] Coronel Correa, Liz Haydee. "Evolución del Servicio Diplomático y Consular del Paraguay y su Sistema Jurídico". Rev. Secr. Trib. Perm. Revis., vol. 5, no. 9, 2017.

wing president Fernando Lugo, Paraguay was also part of a large group of neighbors, led by Brazil, who recognized Palestine as a 'free and independent state' between 2010 and 2011.[9] However, the rise to power of conservative president Horacio Cartes in mid-2013, after a year of turbulence following Lugo's impeachment, marked a change in Paraguay's broader foreign policy direction. Relations with the U.S. became the centerpiece of the new Paraguayan administration, as Cartes distanced itself from Brazil and Mercosur.[10]

The tiny landlocked South American country served Washington's interests in at least three respects. First, Paraguay could strengthen U.S. trade with the region by moving closer to the Pacific Alliance and deepening the divide between the highly U.S.-influenced Pacific and the Brazil-led Atlantic. Second, it could boost U.S. military presence in the continent by allowing the establishment of a military base at South America's heart under the guise of fighting transnational drug trafficking[11] and terrorist networks, particularly at the tri-border area between Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil.[12] Third, Paraguay's longstanding relationship with Taiwan helped keep Chinese political presence in South America at arm's length, in spite of China's growing trade flows with the region.[13]

[9] Amorim, Celso. "Let Us In". Foreign Policy, 14 March 2011. Available at https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/03/14/let-us-in/, Although the formal recognition was made in January 2011, Paraguay was the first South American country to officially establish diplomatic relations with the state of Palestine, in March 2005.

[10] Tase, Peter. "Paraguay y Estados Unidos: fortaleciendo una nueva estrategia de cooperación". Eurasia Hoy, 31 March 2014.

[11] Resumen Latinoamericano, "Estados Unidos apuesta por Paraguay como lugar clave para su imperio". 16 March 2015. Avaliable at http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2015/03/16/estados-unidos-apuesta-por-paraguay-como-lugar-clave-para-su-imperio/

[12] Neumann, Vanessa. "O Hezbollah pode dominar o PCC". Defesa Net, 7 December 2018. Avaliable at http://www.defesanet.com.br/pcc/noticia/31423/Vanessa-Neumann---O-Hezbollah-pode-dominar-o-PCC-/

[13] Taiwan News, "Taiwan ally Paraguay could be next to fall to China: US senator". 16 May 2015. Available at https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3432071

Cartes also considered Israel a source of political and economic opportunities. The first step towards closer ties with the country was to reopen the Paraguayan embassy in Tel Aviv in 2014, twelve years after it had been closed in response to Israel shutting down its representation in Asunción (as well as in several other capitals and major cities).[14] One year later, Israel also reopened its embassy in Paraguay, depicting it as an attempt to "make up for a mistake" made in 2002.[15]

It seemed clear that Paraguay's strategy was to curb Brazilian influence in the country by aligning itself with two extra-regional players that had strained ties with Brazil. While the relationship between Brasilia and Washington went through one of its most dramatic periods between 2013 and 2014, thanks to a row over allegations of U.S. espionage,[16] ties between Brazil and Israel had greatly deteriorated after Brazilian criticism over Israel's military offensive in Gaza in the summer of 2014 and Rousseff's silence over the appointment of former settler leader Dani Dayan as Israel's ambassador to Brazil in mid-2015.

In July 2016, Cartes became the first Paraguayan president to pay an official visit to Israel. His three-day trip to Jerusalem was mostly about trade and cooperation. Agreements signed on security and agriculture technologies challenged two areas of considerable Brazilian influence over Paraguay.[17] On top of it, Cartes took

[14] Paraguay.com, "Paraguay reabre embajada en Israel". 19 May 2014. Available at http://www.paraguay.com/nacionales/paraguay-reabre-embajada-en-israel-108544

[15] Agencia de Información Paraguaya, "Mercado israelí se mantiene como destino estable de la carne paraguaya". 5 November 2018. Available at https://www.ip.gov.py/ip/paraguay-mantiene-volumen-de-exportacion-de-carne-a-israel/

[16] The Guardian. "Brazilian president: US surveillance a 'breach of international law'". 24 September 2013. Avaliable at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/24/brazil-president-un-speech-nsa-surveillance

[17] Hoy, "Intercambio científico y de educación con Israel, firman Cartes y Netanyahu". 19 July 2016. Available at https://www.hoy.com.py/nacionales/intercambio-cientfico-y-de-educacin-con-israel-firman-cartes-y-netanyahu

the opportunity to compare the Jewish Holocaust with the alleged genocide perpetrated by Brazil (and, to a lesser degree, Argentina and Uruguay) against the Paraguayan population in the war of the Triple Alliance (1865-1870).[18]

Trump's election in late 2016 and his pledge to improve relations with Israel through the formal recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital were seen by Cartes as a unique chance to further deepen ties with both countries. In September 2017, the Paraguayan president met with Benjamin Netanyahu in Buenos Aires, as part of the Israeli prime-minister's four-day tour in Latin America.[19] According to the Paraguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eladio Loizaga, it was Netanyahu who asked for the meeting with Cartes, who flew to the Argentinian capital especially for the bilateral event.[20]

On December 21, Paraguay abstained in the vote that condemned Trump's embassy move at the UN General Assembly. It was one of the earliest signs that Cartes was ready to change Paraguay's position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico also abstained, as well as many Central American countries. They all received a public thank you note from Ambassador Nikki Haley, who said the U.S. appreciated "these countries for not falling to the irresponsible ways of the UN."[21] On Christmas Eve – less than a week after the UN con-

[18] Infobae, "Horacio Cartes y Benjamin Netanyahu firmaron acuerdos bilaterales en Israel". 20 July 2016. Available at https://www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2016/07/20/horacio-cartes-y-benjamin-netanyahu-firmaron-acuerdos-bilaterales-en-israel/

[19] Middle East Monitor, "Netanyahu begins four-day tour in Latin America". 11 September 2017. Available at https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170911-netanyahu-begins-four-day-tour-in-latin-america/

[20] La Nación, "Cartes se reúne hoy con Macri y Netanyahu, en Buenos Aires". 12 September 2017. Available at https://www.lanacion.com.py/politica/2017/09/12/cartes-se-reune-hoy-con-macri-y-netanyahu-en-buenos-aires/

[21] https://twitter.com/AmbNikkiHaley/status/943921549333204992

demnation of the U.S. – President Jimmy Morales announced that he would also move the Guatemalan embassy to Jerusalem.

Morales's decision immediately spurred expectations among Israeli diplomats that other countries, such as Honduras and Paraguay, would soon follow suit.[22] That perception was reinforced by official Israeli sources some months later, which declared that both countries could move their embassies – but so long as Benjamin Netanyahu paid them official visits.[23] As Romania and the Czech Republic became the first two European countries to manifest their desire to follow Trump's steps, Netanyahu doubled the bet and offered a deal to the first 10 countries that moved their embassies to Jerusalem, granting Israel's most loyal partners favorable real estate conditions and preferential diplomatic treatment.[24]

Time was running short for Cartes as presidential elections approached in Paraguay. Critics such as former foreign minister Héctor Lacognata claimed that the question of Jerusalem should be addressed by the new government, as Cartes would not have enough political legitimacy to move the embassy at the dawn of his administration.[25] Moreover, the incumbent president probably would not have been able to live up to his promise in case the opposition had won.

[22] YNet News, "Honduras, Paraguay expected to join embassy move to Jerusalem". Available at https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5061703,00.html

[23] Aurora, "Honduras y Paraguay están listos para abrir sus embajadas en Jerusalén, si Netanyahu los visita". 11 March 2018. Available at http://www.aurora-israel.co.il/honduras-y-paraguay-estarian-listos-para-abrir-sus-embajadas-en-jerusalen-si-netanyahu-los-visita

[24] El País. "Rumania se suma a la carrera del traslado de embajadas a Jerusalén". 20 April 2018. Available at https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/04/20/actualidad/1524250292_276017.html

[25] HispanTV, "Rechazan traslado de embajada de Paraguay a Al-Quds". 21 March 2018. Available at https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/paraguay/371925/embajada-jerusalen-trump-israel-lacognata

The election of Mario Abdo Benítez, although a political rival of Cartes within the Colorado party, seemed like the perfect opportunity for the President to move his agenda forward. On April 26, three days after the election results, at a ceremony that celebrated Israel's 70th anniversary in Asunción, Cartes reinforced his commitment to moving the Paraguayan embassy to Jerusalem before the end of his term. Emmanuel Nahshon, spokesman to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, received Cartes's words as "very positive", but with some caution.[26] After all, four months after Trump's announcement, only Guatemala had confirmed its decision, which was scheduled to enter into force one day after the U.S. opened its Jerusalem embassy.

Paraguay's decision was further reiterated by foreign minister Loizaga on May 5. Two days later, Nahshon announced that Cartes planned to travel to Jerusalem later that month to launch the new Paraguayan embassy, information that was confirmed by the Israeli ambassador to Paraguay, Ze'ev Harel.[27] Indeed, on May 21 – a week after Israel's 70th anniversary – President Cartes flew to Jerusalem and stated that the decision of opening the embassy expressed "the sincere friendship and the utter solidarity of Paraguay toward Israel." Netanyahu, who attended the ceremony, thanked Paraguay for taking brave steps to "debunk numerous lies against Israel" and to support it in international organizations.[28]

[26] ABC Color, "Israel valora con positiva cautela la declaración de Cartes". 29 April 2018. Available at http://www.abc.com.py/internacionales/israel-valora-con-positiva-cautela-la-declaracion-paraguaya-de-traslado-embajada-1698109.html

[27] El Comércio, "Israel: Paraguay trasladará su embajada a Jerusalén este mês". 7 May 2018. Available at https://elcomercio.pe/mundo/diplomacia/israel-paraguay-trasladara-embajada-jerusalen-mes-noticia-518374

[28] Ultima Hora, "Cartes inaugura Embajada em Jerusalén pese a críticas internas". 21 May 2018. Available at https://www.ultimahora.com/cartes-inaugura-embajada-jerusalen-pese-criticas-internas-n1148752.html

THE ROLLBACK OF PARAGUAY'S DECISION

Critics abroad immediately slammed Cartes's decision. When Paraguay confirmed the move on May 7, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said, at a bilateral meeting with Nicolás Maduro in Caracas, that he hoped no country in the Americas would follow Trump's steps as it ran counter to international legal obligations.[29] The day before the embassy launch, senior Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) official Hanan Ashrawi reinforced Abbas's words and called the Paraguayan move "provocative and irresponsible."[30] Her position was seconded by Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, who also warned that the move would have a negative impact on ties between Paraguay and the Arab world, which could include political and economic measures.[31]

Opposition politicians attacked Cartes on similar grounds. Frente Guasú, led by former President Fernando Lugo, issued a statement calling the President's decision "irresponsible." Senator Desirée Masi of Partido Democrátrico Progresista (PDP) tweeted that "fanaticism, ignorance, and likely bribery along the way have put Paraguay in the middle of an international conflict."[32]

The reference to bribery alluded to the relationship between the Paraguayan president and two controversial figures, Darío Messer and Ari Harow. Messer, known in Brazil as 'the master

[29] DW, "Abbas pide desde Caracas no trasladar las embajadas a Jerusalén". 7 May 2018. Available at https://www.dw.com/es/abbas-pide-desde-caracas-no-trasladar-las-embajadas-a-jerusal%C3%A9n/a-43693843

[30] UOL, "OLP critica abertura de embaixada do Paraguai em Jerusalém". 20 May 2018. Available at https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/efe/2018/05/20/olp-critica-abertura-de-embaixada-do-paraguai-em-jerusalem-provocadora.htm

[31] Xinhua Net, "Arab League chief slams opening of Paraguay's embassy in Jerusalem". 22 May 2018. Available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/22/c_137195870.htm

[32] Paraguay.com. "Castiglioni sobre embajada en Israel: Cartes debía hablar com Marito". 15 May 2018. Available at http://www.paraguay.com/nacionales/castiglioni-sobre-embajada-en-israel-cartes-debia-hablar-con-marito-177862

black-market dollar dealer' for his involvement in corruption scandals brought to light by the Car Wash graft probe, is sought by Interpol and moved to Paraguay in 2014 to dodge investigations. Considered a 'soul brother' by Cartes thanks to long-standing family ties, Messer accompanied the President in his official trip to Israel and is said to have benefitted from presidential decrees on real estate, which sparked criticism from opponents and supporters on the eve of the 2018 race.[33]

Five years before, back when Cartes decided to run for president, it was the Brazilian dollar dealer who called Ari Harow, former Netanyahu's bureau chief, asking him to talk to the Paraguayan businessman and help "instill a warm place in Horacio's heart for the State of Israel."[34] Harow's consultancy firm H3 Global advised Cartes during the campaign and after his election in 2013, and he is said to have played a decisive role – together with two other former Netanyahu advisers, Yechiel Leiter and general Meir Kalifi – in the rapprochement between Paraguay and Israel.[35] According to one account, Harow – who became Netanyahu's chief of staff in 2014 – was responsible for the decision to reopen the Israeli embassy in Asunción, which ran counter to the professional recommendation of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[36]

[33] El País, "Dario Messer, o doleiro de todas as corrupções no Brasil e protegido pelo presidente do Paraguai", 4 May 2018. https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/05/03/politica/1525376638_429844.html

[34] Ari Harow, "The Backdrop of Paraguay's Move to Jerusalem". Jerusalem Post, 10 May 2018. https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/The-backdrop-of-Paraguays-move-to-Jerusalem-556133

[35] ABC Color, "El presidente Cartes y sus asesores israelíes". 21 May 2018. http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/cartes-y-sus-asesores-israelies-1704715.html

[36] Iton Gadol, "Las relaciones Israel-Paraguay y el hombre de confianza de Netanyahu". 13 March 2017. http://itongadol.com.ar/noticias/val/103069/las-relaciones-israel-paraguay-y-el-hombre-de-confianza-de-netanyahu.html

When the Paraguayan president arrived in Jerusalem in mid-2016, Harow was under house arrest on bribery charges. A year later, he became a state witness in two corruption cases against prime-minister Netanyahu.[37]

The incoming government also showed its discomfort with the embassy move. President-elect Abdo Benítez complained numerous times that he had not been consulted on such a sensitive issue.[38] His foreign minister, Colorado senator Luis Castiglioni, affirmed that Cartes's 'unilateral' decision undermined the geopolitical balance in the Middle East, as well as Paraguay's relations with both Israel and the Arab world. Asked whether they would back off on the embassy transfer, Castiglioni said it was too early to tell.[39] Along the same lines, Abdo Benitez pled for caution and said that despite Israel being "a good friend" of Paraguay, the new government would maturely analyze the decision and eventually reverse it.[40] In an interview that followed the embassy move, Cartes said he hoped his successor maintained the decision and underlined that he did not have to consult anybody because it was a 'constitutional prerogative' of the Paraguayan president.[41]

However, it would be just a matter of time before the new president reversed the embassy move. On September 5, less than

[37] Haaretz, "Paraguay Officially Moves Embassy to Jerusalem". 21 May 2018. Available at https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/after-the-u-s-guatemala-paraguayan-embassy-to-move-to-jerusalem-1.6099346

[38] Times of Israel, "Paraguay becomes third country to open embassy in Jerusalem". 21 May 2018. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/paraguay-becomes-third-country-to-open-embassy-in-jerusalem/

[39] ABC Color, "Traslado de la Embajada en Israel genera malestar". 9 May 2018.

[40] ABC Color, "Abdo quiere rever el traslado de la Embajada a Jerusalén". 16 May 2018.

[41] MSN Notícias, "Cartes cree que sucesor mantendrá embajada en Jerusalén pero no lo consensuó". 22 May 2018. Available at https://www.msn.com/pt-br/noticias/brasil/cartes-cree-que-sucesor-mantendr%C3%A1-embajada-en-jerusal%C3%A9n-pero-no-lo-consensu%C3%B3/vp-AAxCN7Y

a month after being sworn in, the Paraguayan government issued a statement saying the embassy would return to its previous location in Tel Aviv. Reactions were immediate: a few hours after the announcement, Netanyahu gave orders to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to close down the Israeli embassy in Asunción. In a statement, the Israeli government claimed it viewed "with utmost gravity the decision by Paraguay, which will cloud bilateral relations." At a news conference on that same day, Abdo Benítez regretted Israel's decision and pictured the reaction as 'exaggerated', urging Israeli authorities to reconsider.[42]

Pressure also came from Washington. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence promptly called the new Paraguayan president to discuss the embassy question. According to an official statement, Pence strongly encouraged Abdo Benítez "to follow through with Paraguay's previous commitment to move the embassy *as a sign of the historic relationship the country has maintained with both Israel and the United States.*"[43] Abdo Benítez defended his position on Twitter: "Paraguay is a country of principles. The spirit of the decision is that the people of Israel and Palestine reach a broad, just, and lasting peace. We will always respect international law."[44]

Meanwhile, the Palestinians cheered Paraguay's decision and tried to take some credit for the move by calling it a "Palestinian dip-

[42] The Times of Israel, "Paraguay urges Israel to reverse 'exaggerated' Asuncion embassy closure". 7 September 2018. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/paraguay-urges-israel-to-reverse-exaggerated-asuncion-embassy-closure/

[43] The White House, "Readout of Vice President Mike Pence's Call with President Mario Abdo Benitez of Paraguay". 6 September 2018. Available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/readout-vice-president-mike-pences-call-president-mario-abdo-benitez-paraguay/

[44] BBC Mundo, "Paraguay regresa su embajada en Israel a Tel Aviv tras el polémico trasladado a Jerusalén". 5 September 2018. Available at https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-45427674

lomatic achievement."[45] Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki had attended Abdo's inauguration and had met with Abdo Benítez some weeks before and was said to have "exerted a big effort during his meeting with the new president who instructed his foreign minister to arrange the issue."[46] Both Palestine and Turkey declared they would open up embassies in Asunción. In early December, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan paid a historic one-day visit to Paraguay in his return from the G-20 summit in Buenos Aires, following the launch of the Turkish embassy.[47] Six months later, Paraguay reciprocated the gesture and opened its embassy in Ankara[48]. The costs of moving away from Israel were allayed somewhat by the renewed ties with the Arab and Muslim world.

Paraguay's unprecedented diplomatic backtrack may be explained by its weakly institutionalized foreign policymaking structure. In this case, an individual decision made by Cartes – influenced not just by geopolitical considerations, but also by personal relationships – had the power to overrule longtime positions and provoke policy turnarounds. The timing of the move made it relatively easy for the new president, Abdo Benítez, to change his mind and affirm himself not only as independent from his forerunner, but also as a champion of new economic opportunities for Paraguay.

[45] For a detailed account, see Al-Monitor, "Behind Paraguay's decision to return its embassy to Tel Aviv". 10 September 2018. Available at https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/09/palestine-paraguay-emabassy-jerusalem-tel-aviv.html

[46] The Telegraph, "Paraguay frustrates Israel by moving embassy from Jerusalem back to Tel Aviv". 6 September 2018. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/06/paraguay-frustrates-israel-moving-embassy-jerusalem-back-tel/

[47] Mercopress, "Turkey, Paraguay close ties with presidential meeting in Asunción". 3 December 2018. Available at https://en.mercopress.com/2018/12/03/turkey-paraguay-close-ties-with-presidential-meeting-in-asuncion

[48] Anadolu Agency, "Paraguay opens its first embassy in Turkey". 2 May 2019. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/paraguay-opens-its-first-embassy-in-turkey/1468334

BRAZIL: TRADITION ABOVE POLITICS?

The Brazilian case is more complex, mainly because of Brazil's long-standing diplomatic positions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When President Trump announced he would move the U.S. embassy, Brazil's reaction was immediate and swift. On that same day, the country issued a press release reinforcing its understanding that the final status of Jerusalem "should be defined in negotiations that ensure the establishment of two states living in peace and security within internationally recognized borders and with free access to the holy sites of the three monotheistic religions, in the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, such as Resolution 478 of 1980, among others."[49] The very same text was reiterated on December 29, a few days after Brazil had voted in favor of the UNGA resolution condemning Trump's decision.[50]

The Brazilian government's position was all but surprising. Brazil has historically been one of the staunchest advocates of the two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was a Brazilian diplomat, Oswaldo Aranha, who put the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine to a vote as the acting president of the General Assembly. Brazil also sponsored Security Council Resolution 242, which urged Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967. Even Lula's Workers' Party, often accused of taking sides with Israel's enemies, maintained Brazil's stance on the need for two states. While Lula recognized Palestinian sovereignty and signed a controversial fuel-swap agreement with Tehran

[49] Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Press Release no. 409". 7 December 2017. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/18038-press-release-palestine

[50] Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Status of Jerusalem Press Release no. 427". 29 December 2017. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/18140-status-of-jerusalem

in 2010, trade relations with the Israelis reached an all-time peak, as Brazil brokered negotiations for a free-trade agreement between Mercosur and Israel.[51]

Relations with the Israeli government have been strained since 2014, when the infamous 'diplomatic dwarf' crisis took place. The episode was named after the nickname given to Brazil by Yigal Palmor, spokesman for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in response to the Rousseff administration's criticism of the Israeli attacks on Gaza as 'disproportionate.'[52]

Bilateral misunderstandings continued for the rest of Rousseff's term and involved a diplomatic row around the appointment of settler leader Dani Dayan as ambassador to Brasilia, whom the Brazilian government refused to accept by keeping silent over his name. While many assumed that Brazil's refusal had to do with the fact that Dayan represented illegal settlements in the West Bank, which ran counter to Brazil's diplomatic principles of the rule of international law and Palestinian right to self-determination, Itamaraty's official position was that they could not accede to Dayan's nomination because Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had done it on his social networks, not through the formal diplomatic means.

[51] Casarões, Guilherme; Vigevani, Tullo. "O lugar de Israel e da Palestina na política externa brasileira: antissemitismo, voto majoritário ou promotor da paz?". História, vol. 33, no. 2, 2014, pp. 150-188.

[52] On July 17, 2014, as Israel launched a ground operation into Gaza, the Rousseff administration promptly issued a press release condemning the military action as 'disproportionate' and pulling out its ambassador from Tel Aviv for 'consultation'. Yigal Palmor, spokesman for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called Brazil a 'diplomatic dwarf', whose 'moral relativism' made it 'an irrelevant partner'. Palmor even brought up Brazil's humiliating defeat in the World Cup (7-1 to Germany) to lecture Brazilians on 'disproportionate results'. While many brushed off the outspoken tone as evidence of Israel's diplomatic truculence, the message resounded loudly through the Brazilian government and triggered a crisis between both countries. See Guilherme Casarões, "Who's Afraid of the Diplomatic Dwarf?". Open Global Rights, 22 August 2014.

In any case, by the end of Rousseff's term, tensions with Israel had mobilized important sectors of the Brazilian Jewish community, of Evangelical Christians and of the Armed Forces against the government. Evangelical groups – and particularly neo-Pentecostals – have become the voice of Israel and of the Netanyahu administration, not rarely opposing Brazil's foreign policy positions.[53] The explanation lies in a phenomenon called Christian Zionism, which refers to the relentless defense of Israel – and the recognition of the Holy City of Jerusalem as Israel's 'complete and united' capital – as part of the biblical prophecy of the second coming of Christ.

On the other hand, groups that maintained economic ties with Israel, especially in high-tech sectors, started to fear that diplomatic tensions could jeopardize the purchase of strategic components. Having many defense contracts with Israeli military giants, the Brazilian Airforce, for instance, did not hide their dissatisfaction with President Rousseff as the Dayan crisis unfolded. That explains former Foreign and Defense minister Celso Amorim's public criticism of Brazil's growing dependence on Israeli avionics[54] - which was somehow ironic, for most contracts had been signed during his tenure at the Ministry of Defense.

In May 2016, as José Serra took office as Foreign Minister after Rousseff's impeachment trial, he immediately made a U-turn regarding Israel. In a quite unusual statement, Itamaraty threatened to change a pro-Palestinian vote at UNESCO that Brazil had

[53] See, for instance, this article published by three prominent Evangelical politicians. Crivella, Marcelo; Pereira, Marcos; Siqueira, Carlos. "Recusar Embaixador de Israel não é a Solução". Folha de São Paulo, 5 January 2016.

[54] Folha de S. Paulo, "Veto a embaixador expõe dependência da Defesa com Israel, diz Amorim". 25 December 2015. Available at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2015/12/1722979-veto-a-embaixador-expoe-dependencia-da-defesa-com-israel-diz-amorim.shtml

cast a few months before in case the organization did not revise the terms of the resolution, which were considered 'partial and unbalanced.'[55] Sometime later, Serra took a trip to Israel for the funeral of former President Shimon Peres – but unlike his predecessors (and successor), he did not visit any Arab country.[56]

All these moves were part of a calculated decision of getting closer to Israel for electoral purposes, which can be seen not only in Serra's desire of rooting out PT's influence in foreign affairs, but also in the São Paulo PSDB branch's proximity with the local Jewish community, whose institutions had long expressed their desire for 'normal' relations with Israel,[57] and particularly in the growing influence of Evangelical voters and leadership, who often treated ties with Israel as sacred and biblical, as game-changers of Brazilian elections.

Reality, however, has quickly imposed itself upon Serra's Mideast plans. Realizing that the pro-Israel stance could risk Brazil's historically positive relations with the Arab world, President Temer prevented Serra from changing the Brazilian diplomacy's traditional positions on Palestine in international organizations. That was, to be sure, an unlikely tug of war between the president and the foreign minister.[58]

[55] Ministério das Relações Exteriores, "Decisão do Conselho Executivo da UNESCO sobre o patrimônio cultural nos territórios ocupados". 9 June 2016. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/notas-a-imprensa/14191-decisao-do-conselho-executivo-da-unesco-sobre-o-patrimonio-cultural-nos-territorios-ocupados

[56] Ministério das Relações Exteriores, "Visita do ministro José Serra a Israel". 30 de setembro de 2016. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/notas-a-imprensa/14809-visita-do-ministro-jose-serra-a-israel

[57] Federação Israelita do Rio Grande do Sul, "Com Alckmin, Serra e ministros da Justiça e Educação, Conib homenageia Natan Sharansky". 25 November 2016. Available at https://www.firs.org.br/com-alckmin-serra-e-ministros-da-justica-e-educacao-conib-homenageia-natan-sharansky/

[58] This information was confirmed by a Brazilian diplomat in a private conversation on 16 June 2016.

Besides the potential of political damage at the heart of the government, the president's decision to keep Brazil's status quo on Palestine came under heavy fire from the Brazilian Israelite Confederation (CONIB),[59] from prominent figures of the Jewish community, such as businessman Alexandre Nigri,[60] and from Evangelical congresspeople, who even sent a rejection motion against the government.[61] Naturally, Israel also expressed its disgust at Brazil's position. In Benjamin Netanyahu's Latin America tour, in September 2017, he skipped Brazil under the justification that he could not be certain, at the time the trip was planned, that President Temer would remain in office, given the mounting corruption charges against him and his closest ministers.[62]

Aloysio Nunes's tenure recovered a more balanced direction to Brazil's position. His decision to make an official visit to Israel in March 2018 appeased some sectors of the Brazilian Jewry. CONIB – whose president, Fernando Lottenberg, attended the foreign minister's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu – obtained Itamaraty's commitment not to vote automatically against Israel in international forums, which was portrayed as a 'historic step.'[63]

[59] O Estado de S. Paulo, "Conib lamenta voto do Brasil em resolução da UNESCO". 14 October 2016. Available at https://internacional.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,conib-lamenta-voto-do-brasil-em-resolucao-da-unesco-sobre-jerusalem,10000082169

[60] Nigri, Alexandre. "O Brasil contra Israel e a história na Unesco". Gazeta do Povo, 21 October 2016. Avaliable at https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/opiniao/artigos/obrasil-contra-israel-e-a-historia-na-unesco-51w0dqd9y95xyy19dn8whqvdz/

[61] Gospel Prime, "Deputados evangélicos repudiam voto brasileiro contra Israel". 16 May 2017. Available at https://noticias.gospelprime.com.br/deputados-evangelicos-mocao-voto-brasileiro-israel/

[62] Casarões, Guilherme; Goldfeld, Monique. "Em Giro Latino, Netanyahu se esquiva de política do Brasil". Folha de S. Paulo, 16 September 2017.

[63] Federação Israelita do Estado de São Paulo. "Visita de Aloysio Nunes a Israel tem alcance histórico". 7 March 2018. Available at https://www.fisesp.org.br/2018/03/07/visita-de-aloysio-nunes-a-israel-tem-alcance-historico/

Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, remained harsh critics of Brazil's position, not just because the Temer administration never challenged the recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state, but also because there was no sign that Brazil would move its embassy to Jerusalem, along the lines of President Trump's announcement of December 2017. Congressman Victório Galli, one of the most outspoken members of the evangelical caucus, attacked Nunes as a 'Marxist' who obstructed the improvement of Brazil's relations with Israel. "We must join the Trump administration and recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel."[64]

THE GAME-CHANGER: JAIR BOLSONARO

As the October 2018 general elections approached in Brazil, one presidential candidate stepped under the spotlight with a controversial foreign policy platform. Retired Army captain Jair Bolsonaro promised a diplomatic about-face regarding Brazil's relations with two key countries: The United States and Israel. Bolsonaro never hid his admiration for Trump and always made clear that he wanted to reproduce the US president's electoral tactics and discourse, as well as his international strategy. His expressed desire to become best friends with the US even rendered him the nickname "Trump of the tropics."[65]

Israel also became part of Bolsonaro's electoral strategy. The most obvious target was the Evangelical vote. Almost two years before launching his candidacy, in May 2016 the then-lawmaker

[64] Gospel Prime, "Líderes evangélicos querem que Brasil transfira embaixada em Israel para Jerusalém". 7 December 2017. Available at https://noticias.gospelprime.com.br/lideres-querem-que-brasil-transfira-embaixada-em-israel-para-jerusalem/

[65] The Guardian, "Trump of the tropics: the 'dangerous' candidate leading Brazil's presidential race". 19 April 2018. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/19/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-presidential-candidate-trump-parallels

traveled to Israel as part of a congressional delegation to learn about irrigation and defense technology. Bolsonaro took the opportunity to be baptized in the Jordan river by the hands of the president of his own party at the time, the Social Christian Party, who is also a well-known Evangelical pastor.[66] In the months that followed, he made an effort to associate himself with an imaginary Israel, one of conservative religious and political values, represented by the flag of Israel waving side by side with the Brazilian one at all his rallies.

Bolsonaro's declared love for Israel explains why, in virtually every church Bolsonaro campaigned, he vowed to move Brazil's embassy to Jerusalem. His promise also helped him strengthen ties with important sectors of the Jewish community, fueled by a strong anti-PT sentiment and excited to have an openly pro-Israel candidate. "His victory in the first round made us very joyful and hopeful due to his friendship, love and bonds not only with the State of Israel but with the whole Jewish people. He will be a great president by having Jewish ethics and morals as his pillars," said Rio Jewish Federation President Ary Bergher.[67]

Pleasing Evangelical and Jewish communities was not the only goal of Bolsonaro's pro-Israel stance. Much like the role played by Steve Bannon in Trump's campaign, Bolsonaro's political positions were shaped by a group of radical nationalists, or the so-called anti-globalists. Inspired by the ideas of writer and self-proclaimed philosopher Olavo de Carvalho, Brazil's anti-globalists saw Israel as the heart of a whole new foreign policy strategy for two reasons.

[66] Extra, "Enquanto votação do impeachment acontecia, Bolsonaro era batizado em Israel". 12 May 2016. Available at https://extra.globo.com/noticias/brasil/enquanto-votacao-do-impeachment-acontecia-bolsonaro-era-batizado-em-israel-19287802.html

[67] The Jerusalem Post, "Far-right pro-Israel candidate wins first round of Brazil's elections". 10 October 2018. Available at https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Far-right-pro-Israel-candidate-wins-first-round-of-Brazils-elections-569029

First, Netanyahu is seen as a key member of the emerging far-right nationalist movement, having become a role-model regarding "the resistance against the unwanted interference of globalists in country's national sovereignties."[68]

Second, courting Israel would help Brazil strengthen its relationship with the U.S. on their common path towards saving the West and its Judeo-Christian tradition. That was the argument put forth by ambassador Ernesto Araújo in a controversial 2017 article, which many believed led Bolsonaro to appoint him as foreign minister.[69] On the way into becoming Brazil's 'tropical Trump', the day after Trump's announcement of the embassy move, Bolsonaro said in an interview that he would "do a Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V" of the American president's decree.[70] Mimicking the great neighbor of the North would become part of a renewed Brazilian identity. Seeking to reverse Lula's foreign policy legacy, Bolsonaro also pledged to break off with Palestine. "Is Palestine a country? Palestine is not a country, so there should be no embassy here. You do not negotiate with terrorists," he said in an interview.[71]

Bolsonaro's election triggered immediate responses from around the world. Conservative leaders as Trump, Netanyahu, and Italy's vice-premier Matteo Salvini publicly expressed their support for the new Brazilian president. "Diplomatic dwarfism now belongs to the past," celebrated Filipe Martins, Bolsonaro's foreign

[68] Martins, Filipe G. "A luta anti-globalista e o exemplo paradigmático de Israel". Senso Incomum. 8 December 2017. Available at http://sensoincomum.org/2017/12/08/anti-globalista-exemplo-de-israel/

[69] Araújo, Ernesto. "Trump e o Ocidente". Cadernos de Política Exterior, vol. 3, no. 6, 2017.

[70] Meio Retrô, "Confirmado: Jair Bolsonaro apoia Jerusalém como Capital de Israel". YouTube vídeo. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy4QrPOIVSI

[71] O Estado de S. Paulo, "Bolsonaro promete retirar embaixada da Palestina do Brasil". 7 August 2018. Available at https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,bolsonaro-promete-retirar-embaixada-da-palestina-no-brasil,70002436161

policy advisor and an unwavering anti-globalist. In an interview with Israel Hayom the day after his victory, the president-elect reinforced his commitment to move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem and said he would shut down the Palestinian embassy and change Brazil's voting pattern on Israel at the United Nations. On Twitter, prime-minister Netanyahu congratulated Bolsonaro for such bold promises – "a historic, correct and exciting step!"[72]

Reactions across the Arab world were immediate. Hanan Ashrawi, a lawmaker at the Palestinian National Council, called Bolsonaro's embassy decision 'provocative and illegal.'[73] Hamas's spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said it was a "hostile step towards the Palestinian people, the Arab and Islamic nations."[74] In the days that followed, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, issued statements condemning the move. Less than a week after Bolsonaro's victory, Egypt called off an official visit by a Brazilian delegation of businesspeople and politicians, led by foreign minister Nunes, apparently out of disgust with the embassy promise.[75]

Getting closer to Israel by offering the recognition of Jerusalem, however, was not a consensus even among Bolsonaro's closest allies. The military, in particular, expressed their concern with the political effects of the decision of moving the embassy. A few days after the elections, vice-president-elect, retired general Hamilton Mourão, said in an interview that the new government should be

[72] https://twitter.com/netanyahu/status/1058230060988022786

[73] Isto É, "Palestinos atacam decisão de Bolsonaro sobre Jerusalém". 2 November 2018. Available at https://istoe.com.br/palestinos-atacam-decisao-de-bolsonaro-sobre-jerusalem/

[74] https://twitter.com/DSZuhri/status/1058232515603775488

[75] Folha de S. Paulo, "Declaração de Bolsonaro faz Egito cancelar viagem de comitiva brasileira". 5 November 2018. Available at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2018/11/apos-declaracoes-de-bolsonaro-egito-cancela-viagem-de-comitiva-brasileira.shtml

cautious not to take sides on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or else could become target of international religious terrorist groups.[76] The good working relationship between the military and Itamaraty's diplomats also brought concerns among the government's generals that the break with Brazil's traditional diplomatic positions, which included the utter respect for UNSC resolutions on Jerusalem, could put the country's international credibility at risk.

The agribusiness sector, a first-hour supporter of Bolsonaro's candidacy, was particularly dismayed by the embassy promise. Even before being appointed as Agriculture Minister, former congresswoman and leader of the agribusiness caucus Tereza Cristina voiced her concern that an Arab retaliation would be devastating for the entire sector.[77] After all, Brazil is the world's leading producer and exporter of halal meat and accumulates massive trade surpluses with the Arabs.[78] In the last 15 years, Brazilian halal beef and chicken exports skyrocketed from USD 706 million (2003) to 3.65 billion (2017). In 2017 alone, Brazil supplied the 22 Arab countries with 51.9 percent of their total animal protein imports.[79] Nevertheless, commodity trade was just a part of an even-greater trade surplus of more than USD 7 billion in that same year, which

[76] Folha de S. Paulo, "Não é o caso de comprar brigas que não podemos vencer, diz Hamilton Mourão". 23 November 2018. Available at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/11/nao-e-o-caso-de-comprar-brigas-que-nao-podemos-vencer-diz-hamilton-mourao.shtml

[77] DW, "Reações árabes preocupam, diz líder da bancada ruralista". 6 November 2018. Available at https://www.dw.com/pt-br/rea%C3%A7%C3%B5es-%C3%A1rabes-preocupam-diz-l%C3%ADder-da-bancada-ruralista/a-46182657

[78] Hannun, Rubens. "Nosso país sempre atuou pela resolução de conflitos". Folha de S. Paulo, 10 November 2018.

[79] Época Negócios. "A aproximação entre Bolsonaro e Israel pode afetar o mercado bilionário de carne halal no Brasil?". 30 March 2019. Available at https://epocanegocios.globo.com/Economia/noticia/2019/03/aproximacao-entre-bolsonaro-e-israel-pode-afetar-o-mercado-bilionario-de-carne-halal-no-brasil.html

also included manufactured goods such as medical equipment and civilian aircraft.[80]

Anti-globalists and evangelicals, on the other hand, kept pressuring Bolsonaro for moving the embassy as soon as he took office. They were behind Netanyahu's decision to visit Brazil for Bolsonaro's inauguration, on January 1st. The former, represented by Congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro, held a number of meetings with Israeli ambassador to Brazil, Yossi Shelley – all made public on social networks[81], including one in which representative Bolsonaro was awarded an Israeli medal of honor[82] – and reiterated Brazil's commitment to the embassy move.[83] As for the latter, on the eve of the presidential inauguration ceremony, the Israeli prime-minister met with Christian leaders and underpinned his commitment to protect Christian interests: "We have no better friends in the world than the Evangelical community. And the Evangelical community has no better friend than the state of Israel."[84]

As the Brazilian president was sworn in, Netanyahu declared that Brazil and Israel had just ushered in a new era of relations and were off to a magnificent start.[85] Although the Israeli prime-minister has never treated the recognition of Jerusalem as a precondi-

[80] Goulart, Josette. "Fazendo a egípcia". Revista Piauí, 14 November 2018. Available at https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/fazendo-a-egipcia/

[81] https://twitter.com/bolsonarosp/status/1013774870088421376

[82] https://twitter.com/BolsonaroSP/status/1070805289853743107

[83] Poder 360, "Mudança de embaixada em Israel está decidida, diz Eduardo Bolsonaro". 27 November 2018. Available at https://www.poder360.com.br/governo/mudanca-de-embaixada-em-israel-esta-decidida-diz-eduardo-bolsonaro/

[84] Agência Brasil. "Netanyahu diz que evangélicos são melhores amigos de Israel". 30 December 2018. Available at http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2018-12/netanyahu-diz-que-evangelicos-sao-os-melhores-amigos-de-israel

[85] UOL, "Netanyahu diz que Brasil e Israel iniciam "nova era" após posse de Bolsonaro". 1 January 2019. Available at https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/efe/2019/01/01/netanyahu-diz-que-brasil-e-israel-iniciam-nova-era-apos-posse-de-bolsonaro.htm

tion for improving relations with Israel,[86] he seemed eager for the embassy move and decided to turn it into a fait accompli. Besides attending Bolsonaro's inauguration, an unprecedented gesture by an Israeli acting premier, Netanyahu promptly sent a 130-member rescue team to Brazil to help with rescue efforts following the collapse of a tailings dam in Brumadinho, in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, which left more than 200 dead in late January 2019.[87] While many hailed Israel's humanitarian aid as part of a renewed relationship with Brazil[88], critics belittled it as a 'publicity stunt,' aimed at boosting personal ties between Bolsonaro and Netanyahu, as well as their nationalist-conservative agendas.[89]

Bolsonaro's promises also became vital for Netanyahu as elections approached in Israel. Ever since Trump announced the embassy move, the Israeli premier, whose reelection bid was largely based on breaking Israel's diplomatic isolation, launched a campaign for the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Hoping that Brazil's decision would spark a wave of pro-Israel positions across Latin America,[90] Bibi strategically invited the Brazilian president for a state visit to occur just days before the vote.

[86] The case of the relationship between Israel and India is very eloquent in this regard. See Burton, Guy. "Explaining India's position on Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict". Middle East Institute, 13 March 2018. Available at https://www.mei.edu/publications/explaining-indias-position-jerusalem-and-israeli-palestinian-conflict

[87] The Times of Israel, "Israel sends rescue team, aid to Brazil following dam collapse". 27 January 2019. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-send-rescue-team-aid-to-brazil-following-dam-collapse/

[88] Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Collapse of the tailings dam in Brumadinho". Press release no. 25. 27 January 2019. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/20005-r

[89] Middle East Monitor. "A single Latuff cartoon has provoked Israel into exposing its own duplicity". 5 February 2019. Available at https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190205-a-single-latuff-cartoon-has-provoked-israel-into-exposing-its-own-duplicity/

[90] Atlantic Council. "Israel's Latin America Push". 8 April 2019. Available at https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/israel-s-latin-america-push

THE COMPROMISE: BOLSONARO'S JERUSALEM TRIP

The decision of whether to move the Brazilian embassy had not been made until Bolsonaro arrived in Jerusalem, on March 31.[91] There were high hopes that the Brazilian president would announce the transfer during the state visit. All signs pointed to it: in the weeks before the trip, the anti-globalist foreign policy team – foreign minister Araújo, international advisor Martins, and congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro – turned down two invitations for the President to meet with his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas.[92] Brazil also changed its voting pattern towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the UN Human Rights Council, aligning itself with Washington and Tel Aviv in an attempt to do away with an 'unjust and spurious' tradition of taking sides with Arabs and Palestinians, in the foreign minister's own words.[93]

Instead, in a joint statement with prime-minister Netanyahu, Bolsonaro announced the opening of an office in Jerusalem "for the promotion of trade, investment, technology and innovation."[94] Given that it lacked diplomatic status, the Brazilian office was no different from the Czech House, launched in November 2018,[95] or from the Australian trade and defense office, opened 'without

[91] This information was confirmed by a Brazilian diplomat in a private conversation on 31 March 2019.

[92] Bloomberg, "Palestinian Leader Invites Brazil's Pro-Israel Leader to Visit". 19 March 2019. Available at https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-19/palestinian-leader-invites-brazil-s-pro-israel-leader-to-visit

[93] https://twitter.com/ernestofaraujo/status/1109093954933403650

[94] Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Joint Declaration on the occasion of the Official Visit of President Jair Bolsonaro to Israel". Press release no. 81. March 31, 2019. Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/press-releases/20236-joint-declaration-on-the-occasion-of-the-oficial-visit-of-president-jair-bolsonaro-to-israel-march-31-2019

[95] The Times of Israel, "Czech House, feted as 'first step' in embassy move, opens in Jerusalem". 27 November 2018. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/czech-house-feted-as-first-step-in-embassy-move-opens-in-jerusalem/

fanfare' a few days before Bolsonaro's visit[96]. But it was certainly not as ambitious as Hungary's trade office, inaugurated in mid-March 2019, which was promoted as a 'branch' of the Hungarian embassy in Tel Aviv and a clear step towards the full recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.[97]

That was a frustrating moment for Netanyahu, who wanted the Brazilian president to work as his pitchman a week before the Knesset elections. "I hope, one day, that the Embassy of Brazil will arrive in Jerusalem," said the Israeli premier.[98] Bolsonaro made no mention of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital either, although his visit to the Wailing Wall – another unprecedented gesture, given that foreign authorities usually avoid including the Old City in their official itinerary, let alone accompanied by the sitting prime-minister[99] – and the references to the historical bonds between Jerusalem and the Jewish people[100] could be interpreted as a tacit recognition of Israel's claims. Despite reiterated promises that the embassy move would just be a 'matter of time,'[101] how-

[96] The Times of Israel, "Without fanfare, Australia opens trade and defense office in Jerusalem". 29 April 2019. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/without-fanfare-australia-opens-trade-and-defense-office-in-jerusalem/

[97] The Times of Israel, "In first for EU state, Hungary opens diplomatic trade office in Jerusalem". 19 March 2019. Available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-for-eu-state-hungary-open-diplomatic-trade-office-in-jerusalem/

[98] The Rio Times, "Bolsonaro Announces Opening of Representation Office in Jerusalem". 1 April 2019. Available at https://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-business/bolsonaro-announces-opening-of-representation-office-in-jerusalem/

[99] The Santiago Times, "Brazil's Bolsonaro becomes first head of state to visit the Western Wall with an Israeli PM". 2 April 2019. Available at https://santiagotimes.cl/2019/04/02/brazils-bolsonaro-becomes-first-head-of-state-to-visit-the-western-wall-with-an-israeli-pm/

[100] https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1112420504407863297

[101] Folha de S. Paulo, "Bolsonaro frustra Netanyahu com escritório em vez de embaixada em Jerusalém". 31 March 2019. Available at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2019/03/bolsonaro-anuncia-a-criacao-de-escritorio-comercial-em-jerusalem.shtml

ever, the absence of a tangible diplomatic triumph for Netanyahu was one of the reasons that led Bolsonaro to cut his trip short.[102]

Both friends and foes of the new Brazilian government seemed distressed with the opening of a trade office. Many evangelicals went to the social networks to express disgust at what they called a 'handout', including congressman Marco Feliciano, a popular neo-Pentecostal pastor and a loyal Bolsonaro supporter, who said that Brazil is intervening in the domestic affairs of a friendly nation by refusing to recognize the Holy City as Israel's capital.[103] Moreover, Hamas immediately issued a press release calling on Brazil to reverse the decision and stressing that "this policy does not serve the stability and security of the region and threatens the Brazilian ties with Arab and Islamic nations."[104] On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority, who threatened to recall its ambassador to Brazil for consultations, ended up adopting a conciliatory tone, asking the Brazilian administration to open up an office in East Jerusalem to deal with Palestinian matters.[105]

A week after Bolsonaro's return to Brazil, it seemed the compromise had worked. Netanyahu's tight reelection may bring fresh air to the bilateral relationship. On the very day of the Israeli premier's victory, the Brazilian president had dinner with ambassa-

[102] Isto É. "Bolsonaro muda agenda em Israel e antecipa retorno ao Brasil". 2 April 2019. Available at https://istoe.com.br/bolsonaro-muda-agenda-em-israel-e-antecipa-retorno-ao-brasil/

[103] Folha de S. Paulo, "Evangélicos lamentam recuo de Bolsonaro ao anunciar escritório em Jerusalém". 1 April 2019. Available at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2019/04/evangelicos-lamentam-recuo-de-bolsonaro-ao-anunciar-escritorio-em-jerusalem.shtml

[104] The Islamic Resistance Movement, "Press release on Brazilian President's visit to Israeli occupation". 1 April 2019. Available at http://hamas.ps/en/post/2016/press-release-on-brazilian-president-rsquo-s-visit-to-israeli-occupation

[105] Barbosa, Renan. ""O saldo da viagem de Bolsonaro a Israel: solução do impasse ou prolongamento da agonia?" 3 April 2019. Available at https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/republica/como-foi-viagem-bolsonaro-israel-jerusalem/

dors of 37 Arab and Muslim countries at the National Agricultural Confederation. Promoted by agriculture minister Tereza Cristina, the meeting was set up to allay concerns that the new Brazilian administration was being hostile to the Palestinian cause or to interests of the Islamic countries. By the end of the dinner, the Palestinian ambassador told the Brazilian ministers and journalists: "This conflict does not belong do Brazil. Please stay out of it."[106]

CONCLUSION

The experiences of Brazil and Paraguay reveal the complex decision-making processes behind the embassy move, which go much beyond the U.S. regional influence. In both cases, we must consider the interplay international alignments and domestic factors: in Paraguay's case, Horacio Cartes's personal links with Ari Harow and Dario Messer, as much as his desire to curb Brazilian regional influence by reaching out to the United States; in Brazil's case, Bolsonaro's Evangelical and anti-globalist base, which ended up being neutralized by other forces within his own administration, who favored trade relations with Arab and Muslim countries.

As for the former, Cartes sought to improve ties with Israel and the U.S. as a way to distance itself from Brazil and strengthen his political position at home. Yet, Trump's embassy move forced the outgoing president to anticipate a costly concession before tangible benefits came about. Given the possibility to improve trade relations with some Arab countries – which were increasing consistently since 2009[107] – and with Turkey, Abdo chose to return to the

[106] Poder 360, "'Fiquem fora disso', diz embaixador da Palestina sobre conflito com Israel". 11 April 2019. Available at https://www.poder360.com.br/governo/bolsonaro-discursou-por-47-seg-em-jantar-com-representantes-de-paises-islamicos/

[107] Cabral López, María Antonella. "Paraguay y los países árabes: una relación casi desconocida." Intellector, no. 12, vol. 13, 2016.

status quo, even at the cost of straining relations with Israel and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Finally, Abdo's perspective of building closer ties with Brazil, irrespective of the electoral results, might also have reduced the impact of changing Paraguay's geopolitical position.

Brazil took much longer to opt for the embassy move. Although domestic pressure for greater ties with Israel had been increasing since the late Rousseff years, mostly thanks to the weakening of the left-wing coalition in power and to the consolidation of Evangelicals at the heart of Brazilian politics, who progressively opposed Rousseff's Mideast policies, a solid diplomatic tradition toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented governments – left or right – from changing the country's decades-old position on Jerusalem. This had little to do with Brazil's relationship with Washington: Trump's election and subsequent decision to transfer the embassy to Jerusalem, which coincided with President Temer's desire to strengthen ties with the U.S., did not alter Brazil's stance.

Not only did Bolsonaro's election represent a break with Brazil's foreign policy guidelines, as it also brought to power anti-globalists and evangelicals, to whom Trump and Netanyahu – and, therefore, the embassy move – were top priorities. This explains the mutual enthusiasm for a renewed Brazilian-Israeli friendship between the October general elections in Brazil and the April elections in Israel. However, the risk of hurting businesses with Arab and Islamic countries, which frightened meat and chicken exporters, combined with the potential political costs of the embassy transfer, pitted key government actors against each other. The result was what neither groups expected: the announcement of a trade office in Jerusalem did not please Netanyahu and his supporters nor did it appease critics, within or outside of the Bolsonaro administration.

As Brazil and Paraguay are the only two South American countries to have considered moving their embassies to Jerusalem, two questions are in order. First, from a geopolitical (or geoeconomic) perspective, does Washington exert any greater influence upon these two countries than in other parts of the continent? The answer would be no for both. Paraguay is still highly dependent on Brazil – politically, economically, and even socially. Brazil, on its part, as the regional power of South America, has long sought to limit American presence in the region. In this sense, looking exclusively from a global perspective, free trade partners as Colombia, Peru or Chile would be much more susceptible to U.S. diplomatic pressure.

Therefore, we must look for answers in the domestic realm. Do Brazil and Paraguay share characteristics at home might explain their pro-Israel turn? A preliminary assessment points out, in the Paraguayan case, the weak institutionalized diplomacy, which gave the President much more freedom to abruptly change course of the country's foreign policy, according to his beliefs or personal interests. The Brazilian case, on the other hand, involved a more complex interplay between a strong diplomatic bureaucracy, which is usually rather averse to change, and the newly-elected governing coalition, which favored building up ties with Benjamin Netanyahu, but whose internal disputes have ultimately prevented Brazil from moving the embassy to Jerusalem.

From a conceptual standpoint, the Jerusalem embassy question begs for a more detailed assessment on the domestic drivers of foreign policymaking – not only in the cases, as the ones presented in this chapter, where the decision was either considered or effectively made, but also to shed light on situations in which, despite U.S. pressure or other external constraints, the move was not even a possibility.

CHAPTER 5

THE EUROPEAN (DIS)UNION ON JERUSALEM AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

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INTRODUCTION

On 6 December, 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump broke with longstanding American policy on the status of Jerusalem by recognizing the city as the capital of Israel. Due to its political, religious, and social significance, Jerusalem is the beating heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a city that both sides lay claim to. Both the sensitivity of the issue and the broader principles at stake made this a significant decision. Traditionally, the US position has been that the future status of Jerusalem should be determined through negotiations with the Palestinians as part of a final status agreement to end the conflict. This has also been the position of the European Union (EU), and has represented a widely shared international consensus based on international law, which does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Eastern part of the contested city occupied in 1967.

The differences between the Trump administration and the EU on this issue were plain to see. On 5 December, the day before Trump's announcement, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said after a meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that any action that would undermine the resumption of a meaningful peace process must be avoided: "A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states

so that the aspiration of both parties can be fulfilled".[1] In reaction to the announcement, Mogherini commented that Trump's decision had "a very worrying potential impact" to "send us backwards to even darker times than the ones we are already living in", and that "this difficult moment calls for an even stronger engagement for peace".[2]

The following week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became the first Israeli leader to visit EU headquarters in Brussels in 22 years, seeking further endorsement of Trump's position. As expected, the EU declined and reiterated its vision of Jerusalem as a shared capital of both Israel and a future Palestinian state.[3] While the EU continues to officially maintain this position and refuses to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties,[4] within the bloc there are significant differences of opinion. Trump's announcement has catalyzed an unraveling of the old consensus as numerous member states are altering their stance, chiefly the countries collectively known as the Visegrad group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) but also others like Austria and Romania. This chapter will analyze the growing division within the EU on this issue and how right-wing nationalist populism is galvanizing an alternative European discourse on Israel and Jerusalem.

[1] "Secretary Tillerson and EU High Representative Federica Mogherini Joint Statement to the Media", US Mission to the European Union, December 5, 2017, https://useu.usmission.gov/secretary-tillerson-eu-high-representative-federica-mogherini-joint-statement-media/

[2] "Remarks by HR/VP Mogherini on the announcement by U.S. President Donald Trump on Jerusalem", European External Action Service, December 7, 2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/36962/remarks-hrvp-mogherini-announcement-us-president-donald-trump-jerusalem_en

[3] Alan Cowell, "EU leaders reject Netanyahu on Jerusalem recognition", *The New York Times*, December 11, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/11/world/middleeast/eu-netanyahu-israel-jerusalem.html

[4] "Middle East Peace process", European External Action Service, https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/middle-east-north-africa-mena/337/middle-east-peace-process_en

Trump began his statement on recognition by acknowledging that he entered office promising "to look at the world's challenges with open eyes and very fresh thinking. We cannot solve our problems by making the same failed assumptions and repeating the same failed strategies of the past. Old challenges demand new approaches."[5] Trump has shattered the international consensus on Jerusalem but the novelty of his approach is questionable, and it is unlikely to yield positive progress towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the Trump administration appears to have little interest in addressing Palestinian political needs.

As Mogherini's statements suggest, the EU is very concerned about Trump's approach and does not share his view that one-sided recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital fosters peace.[6] While all EU member states continue to agree on the need for the two-state peace paradigm, individual member states have their own stances on Jerusalem specifically and strive to accommodate these within this broader policy. Disunity on Jerusalem, however, is limiting the EU's ability to speak with one voice on the issue and act as a normative counterbalance to the US position, further weakening the advocacy for a peace agreement based on principles of international law. Continued frustration with this disunity on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among powerful member states can also have important implications for internal EU policymaking procedures. Ultimately, if the EU continues to be unable to formulate shared positions on key issues, its ability to influence the trajectory of the conflict will only become weaker than it already is.

[5] "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem", The White House, December 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/

[6] *ibid*

EUROPE, ISRAEL, AND JERUSALEM

As a leading international organization, the EU (and its precursor, the European Community) has for decades sought to be an influential voice on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Key pronouncements like the Venice Declaration of 1980, which recognized the Palestinians' right to exercise self-determination and called for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to be included in any negotiations, have had a substantial impact on international thinking about the nature of a peace settlement. Even though it was heavily criticized at the time, it later came to be the widely accepted consensus, with the subsequent Oslo Agreement in 1993 bearing the hallmarks of Venice.[7] A similar intention motivated a joint statement by EU foreign ministers in the Council of the European Union in 2009 which referred to Jerusalem as "the future capital of two states," although this was not so much a case of being visionary as much as trying to salvage an old proposition that is gradually being rendered less and less feasible due to Israeli actions on the ground.[8] Even though the EU has not been effective at realizing the visions that it put forward, the parties to the conflict do nonetheless take EU positions seriously and continue to see the institution as a source of normative power and legitimation.[9]

[7] Anders Persson, *The EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1971-2013* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2015), 80-84; Rory Miller, *Inglorious Disarray: Europe, Israel and the Palestinians since 1967* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 134

[8] "Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process," Council of the European Union, December 8, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/wgme/dv/201/201012/20101215_5_council_conclusions_en.pdf. For analysis of changes in Jerusalem, see "Extreme Makeover? (I): Israel's Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem", International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 134, December 20, 2012.

[9] Anders Persson, "Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe can Work in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 6, 2017

The same has traditionally been true of the US. The Obama administration did not endorse or condemn the EU's 2009 Jerusalem policy, but merely stated that it was a matter for negotiation between the parties. Yossi Alpher has suggested that the EU declaration actually reflected Obama's position on Jerusalem, but that he was politically unable to endorse it.[10] Although there was friction between the EU and Obama regarding his management of the conflict, such as the EU's exclusion from the resumption of negotiations in September 2010 and differences over the Palestinian internationalization strategy at the UN, it appears to have been predominantly a difference of methodology rather than goals.[11]

This cannot be said of the Trump administration, which has at best been ambiguous on the two-state solution and on the key issue of Jerusalem.[12] In one sense, Trump's wording on recognition was straightforward: "… I have determined that it is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel."[13] However, this brief, blunt statement failed to engage with the details of such a complex and sensitive issue. Trump made no effort to define what he meant by "Jerusalem." Following its capture of Jordanian-occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank during the 1967 Six Day War, Israel significantly expanded the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to include 70 sq. km of these newly occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and 28 Arab villages.[14] Within this territory, Israel built settlements like French Hill, Gilo, Neve

[10] Persson, *The EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 88

[11] Josh Ruebner, *Shattered Hopes: Obama's Failure to Broker Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (London: Verso, 2013), 114-115

[12] Jacob Eriksson, "Master of none: Trump, Jerusalem, and the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian peace", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2018, 54-55

[13] "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem".

[14] "Extreme Makeover? (I): Israel's Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem", International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 134, December 20, 2012

Yaakov, Pisgat Zeev, Ramot, and others. While Israel considers these neighbourhoods of the city of Jerusalem, the vast majority of the international community considers them illegal settlements in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and has never recognized the legality of this municipal expansion or the subsequent official Israeli annexation of the territory in 1980.[15]

Trump refrained from specifically endorsing this Israeli vision of a greater Jerusalem and did not use Israel's preferred terminology of an "undivided" or "indivisible" capital. However, Trump also made no reference to East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. In reference to the Palestinian claim, he said that his decision did not seek to prejudge any final-status issues to be negotiated: "We are not taking a position [on] any final-status issues, including the specific boundaries of the Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem, or the resolution of contested borders. Those questions are up to the parties involved."[16]

Trump later contradicted his own statement about not prejudging the outcome of final-status negotiations when he tweeted, "… We have taken Jerusalem, the toughest part of the negotiations, off the table …," sowing further confusion about the parameters and implications of his recognition.[17] In a meeting with Netanyahu at Davos on January 25, 2018, Trump repeated, "We took Jerusalem off the table, so we don't have to talk about it anymore."[18]

[15] For a brief discussion of the legal dimension of this issue, see Ahron Bregman, *Cursed Victory: A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), xxxiii-xxxvii. For a more detailed discussion, see Iain Scobbie with Sarah Hibbin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict in International Law: Territorial Issues* (The US/Middle East Project, 2009).

[16] "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem."

[17] "Donald J. Trump on Twitter," Twitter, January 2, 2018, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/948322497602220032?lang=en.

[18] "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel Before Bilateral Meeting | Davos, Switzerland," The White House, January 25, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-prime-minister-netanyahu-israel-bilateral-meeting-davos-switzerland/.

Without further articulation in the long awaited US peace plan, it remains unclear whether Trump's recognition refers to Israeli sovereignty in West Jerusalem only or, as his later statements suggest, Trump is dismissing any Palestinian claim to Jerusalem whatsoever.

It is the latter eventuality that concerns the EU and, of course, the Palestinians. During a visit by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to Brussels on January 22, 2018, Mogherini reassured him that, just as she had communicated to Netanyahu a month earlier, EU policy on Jerusalem had not changed and they remained committed to a shared capital as part of a two-state solution.[19] This tradition continues to be championed by the vast majority of members, including the likes of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, who all agree that this remains a necessary compromise for peace. Beneath this unity, however, there are significant differences between member states on the issue, which were evident already in 2009 when the Jerusalem policy was adopted. A leaked draft prepared by Sweden, who held the rotating presidency of the EU at the time and led the initiative, specifically mentioned East Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Palestine, but this initial formulation was removed due to a lack of consensus among member states.[20]

These divisions were immediately visible again in December 2017. Hours after Trump's announcement, the Czech Republic made a statement to the effect that they would recognise West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, an important distinction which

[19] Andrew Rettman, "EU stands by Palestine on Jerusalem," *EUobserver*, January 22, 2018, https://euobserver.com/foreign/140645.

[20] Rory McCarthy and Ian Black, "Europe softens Middle East statement after condemnation from Israel", *The Guardian*, December 8, 2009; Barak Ravid, "Haaretz Exclusive: EU Draft Document on Division of Jerusalem," *Ha'aretz*, December 1, 2009; Persson, *The EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 86-87; Jacob Eriksson, "Swedish recognition of Palestine: politics, law, and prospects for peace," *Global Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2018, 42; Jacob Eriksson, "'With friendly concern': The turbulent relations between Israel and Sweden," in *Israel in a Turbulent Region: Security and Foreign Policy* (ed.) Tore T. Petersen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 178.

Trump did not make. Still, aware of their deviation from the line of most other member states, the Czechs stressed that this was simultaneously consistent with the EU policy of a shared capital.[21] While the vast majority of EU member states voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution entitled "Status of Jerusalem", which rebuked US policy, called on states not to establish embassies in Jerusalem, and declared attempts to change the status of the city null and void, six member states (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Romania) broke from the shared EU position and abstained.[22] EU institutions have been unable to produce a joint declaration condemning US recognition; an initial draft was blocked by Hungary and another designed to be released on the eve of the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem in May 2018 was blocked by the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania. As a frustrated senior European diplomat explained, "the Hungarians didn't want to poke Trump in the eye and the Czechs and the Romanians are considering to move their embassies to Jerusalem against the EU position. This is the state of the EU these days".[23] Indeed, following the Czech example, Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dancila announced at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) 2019

[21] Josh Delk, "Czech Republic recognizes West Jerusalem as Israel's capital," *The Hill*, December 6, 2017, https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/363633-czech-republic-recognizes-west-jerusalem-as-israels-capital.

[22] "General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Asking Nations Not to Locate Diplomatic Missions in Jerusalem", United Nations, December 21, 2017, https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/ga11995.doc.htm. France and Germany were concerned about the British position given their close relationship with the USA, but their vote was consistent with the wider EU line. See Richard Gowen, "Separation anxiety: European influence at the UN after Brexit," Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, May 8, 2018

[23] Barak Ravid, "Scoop: EU statement opposing U.S. embassy move is blocked," *Axios*, May 11, 2018, https://www.axios.com/hungary-czech-romania-block-eu-statement-against-embassy-move-jerusalem-6b85f6bb-8861-4dab-8473-e542196d1368.html.

conference that they too would move their embassy to Jerusalem.[24] This was lent added significance by Romania then holding the rotating presidency of the EU.

Political sensitivities, however, may render these decisions difficult to implement. Although Czech President Milos Zeman, an ardent supporter of Israel, has backed the move and described the opening of the cultural and trade office Czech House in Jerusalem in November 2018 as a precursor to the relocation of the embassy, he also told the Knesset that he "was not a dictator, unfortunately."[25] Despite seemingly acceding to the move in a September 2018 declaration, Prime Minister Andrej Babis has expressed opposition to it in deference to EU policy on the subject.[26] Similarly, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has rejected the move based on compliance with UN resolutions on the matter and international law. He responded scathingly to Dancila's announcement by saying, "The Prime Minister shows complete ignorance regarding foreign affairs," reminding her that "the final decision about moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem rests with me."[27] As reported by the *Jerusalem Post*, German Chancellor Angela Merkel lobbied Iohannis and other European politicians against moving their embassies, and

[24] Andrew Rettman, "Romania presidency shatters EU line on Jerusalem," *EUobserver*, March 25, 2019, https://euobserver.com/foreign/144489.

[25] Raphael Ahren, "Czech House, feted as 'first step' in embassy move, opens in Jerusalem", *The Times of Israel*, November 27, 2018, https://www.timesofisrael.com/czech-house-feted-as-first-step-in-embassy-move-opens-in-jerusalem/.

[26] "Czech leaders endorse Israeli embassy move to Jerusalem," *The Times of Israel*, September 12, 2018, https://www.timesofisrael.com/czech-leaders-endorse-israeli-embassy-move-to-jerusalem/.

[27] Rettman, "Romania presidency shatters EU line"; Raphael Ahren, "With Romanian PM powerless, celebration over embassy move premature," *The Times of Israel*, March 24, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-romanian-pm-powerless-celebration-over-embassy-move-premature/.

the decision is connected to domestic political conflicts in these member states.[28]

As Gordon and Pardo have argued, the local politics of member states have an impact on the EU's ability to exercise normative power. [29] While they argue that disagreements may give a particular issue greater coverage and thereby maximise the normative impact, it also limits the consensus achievable to the lowest common denominator, thus limiting the normative impact. Their focus on the local, both in Europe and in Israel, is critical to understanding how these differences about Jerusalem have become so salient in European discourse, and it is important to emphasise that these local trends are not isolated but are deeply interconnected.

In response to concerns over immigration, multiculturalism, and the political power afforded to EU institutions, Europe has seen the rise of predominantly right-wing nationalist populist Eurosceptic parties, particularly in the younger democracies of central and eastern Europe where they are not just a prominent opposition voice, as in much of western Europe, but members of the ruling governments. Prominent examples include Milos Zeman's Party of Civic Rights in the Czech Republic, Viktor Orban's Fidesz party in Hungary, Jaroslaw Kaczynski's Law and Justice party in Poland, and until May 2019 Norbert Hofer's Freedom Party of Austria in Austria. In his analysis of these movements, Brubaker observes that they draw on Huntington's concept of a "clash of civilizations" and distil a Christian cultural identity, framed in

[28] Herb Keinon, "Czech president in Israel, to begin moving embassy to Jerusalem," *The Jerusalem Post*, November 25, 2018, https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Czech-president-arrives-in-Israel-to-inaugurate-embassy-precursor-in-Jerusalem-572750.

[29] Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, "Normative Power Europe and the Power of the Local," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2015

nationalist terms, which considers Islam a threatening enemy. The refugee crisis of 2015 brought the issue to the fore, with Orban railing against the threat to Christian identity, Kaczynski describing refugees as vectors for disease, and Zeman characterizing it as an organized invasion by the Muslim Brotherhood to control Europe.[30] Simultaneously, liberalism is also portrayed as an external and even anti-national force, brought with foreign capital acting as a vehicle for foreign ideas (such as multi-culturalism and LGBT rights), and personified by the EU and think tanks like the Open Society foundation, a favorite target of Orban's.[31] While Russian President Vladimir Putin supports this illiberal nationalist trend in order to weaken the EU and NATO, in some cases financially, the parties are firmly rooted in domestic political issues rather than being external constructs.[32]

A similar ideological rapprochement exists between the Israeli government and the Visegrad group on issues to do with liberalism, nationalism, and security, specifically migration, terrorism, and Islam, which are all seen as interconnected.[33] In moves

[30] Rogers Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 8, 2017, 1209

[31] Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationism", 1208

[32] Alina Polyakova, "Strange bedfellows: Putin and Europe's far right," *World Affairs*, Vol. 177, No. 3, 2014; Fredrik Wesslau, "Putin's friends in Europe," Commentary, European Council on Foreign Relations, October 19, 2016, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_putins_friends_in_europe7153; Adrienne Klasa, Valerie Hopkins, Guy Chazan, Henry Foy & Miles Johnson, "Russia's long arm reaches to the right in Europe," *The Financial Times*, May 23, 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/48c4bfa6-7ca2-11e9-81d2-f785092ab560;

[33] Joanna Dyduch, "The Visegrad Group's Policy towards Israel: Common Values and Interests as a Catalyst for Cooperation," SWP Comment No. 54, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, December 2018, https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/the-visegrad-groups-policy-towards-israel/; Zeev Sternhell, "Why Benjamin Netanyahu Loves the European Far-Right," *Foreign Policy*, February 24, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/24/why-benjamin-netanyahu-loves-the-european-far-right-orban-kaczynski-pis-fidesz-visegrad-likud-antisemitism-hungary-poland-illiberalism/.

reminiscent of Hungary and Poland's descent into authoritarianism,[34] Netanyahu's government has sought to limit European funding to human rights NGOs critical of Israeli policies towards Israel's Arab minority and the Palestinians under occupation.[35] It has also looked to minimize the power of the Supreme Court – an institution seen by the right wing as a liberal bastion – to challenge Knesset legislation and obstruct their preferred policies, such as the protection and retroactive legalization of illegal outposts in the West Bank.[36] A shared antipathy towards liberalism has even meant that Netanyahu was willing to countenance the blatant anti-Semitism that Orban and Fidesz has repeatedly deployed against philanthropist George Soros, founder of the aforementioned Open Society foundation.[37]

[34] Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Penguin), p. 80; Dalibor Rohac, "Hungary and Poland aren't democratic. They're authoritarian.", *Foreign Policy*, February 5, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/05/hungary-and-poland-arent-democratic-theyre-authoritarian/; Elisabeth Zerofsky, "Is Poland retreating from democracy?", *The New Yorker*, July 23, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/07/30/is-poland-retreating-from-democracy.

[35] "Israel to develop law limiting foreign gov't funding to left-wing NGOs," *i24 News*, June 12, 2017, https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/147706-170612-israel-to-develop-law-limiting-foreign-gov-t-funding-to-left-wing-ngos; Marissa Newman, "Netanyahu vows Knesset push to limit NGOs' foreign funding," *The Times of Israel*, June 12, 2017, https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-confirms-knesset-push-to-limit-ngos-foreign-funding/

[36] Alan Craig, "Israel's legal insecurity: The domestic and international consequences of Israel's increasingly transparent support for the settlement outposts" in *Israel in a Turbulent Region: Security and Foreign Policy* (ed.) Tore T. Petersen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Danny Zaken, "Netanyahu facing greater ultra-Orthodox political appetite," *Al-Monitor*, April 17, 2019, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/04/israel-netanyahu-election-new-coalition-ultra-orthodox.html.

[37] Barak Ravid, 'On Netanyahu's Orders: Israel's Foreign Ministry retracts criticism of anti-Semitism in Hungary and slams George Soros', *Ha'aretz*, July 10, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-retracts-criticism-of-hungary-s-anti-soros-campaign-1.5492668

European nationalist populist movements consider Israel's brand of ethnic nationalism – ethnocracy as Yiftachel argues[38] – a model to aspire to.[39] The controversial Israeli nation-state law passed in 2018 privileges the Jewish nature of the state at the expense of non-Jewish citizens, who make up roughly 20% of the population. During the recent election campaign, Netanyahu explained on social media what this meant: "Israel is not a state of all its citizens. … According to the basic nationality law we passed, Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people – and only it."[40]

This affinity with European nationalists has offered Israel an opportunity to undercut the normative stances taken by the EU on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exploiting Euroscepticism as an instrument of foreign policy; in return, European populist movements use their relationship with Israel to dispel accusations of anti-Semitism.[41] Israel has leveraged these partners to impede and politicise the EU policy of differentiation between products originating in Israel and the illegal settlements.[42] During deliberations of the EU Foreign Affairs Council in 2016, Israel enlisted the services of Eurosceptic Greece to leak drafts of the Council's conclusions on differentiation and put forward Israeli suggestions for changes to the wording, effectively acting as a "29th delegation"

[38] Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and identity politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Oren Yiftachel, "'Ethnocracy': The politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine," *Constellations*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1999

[39] Sharon Pardo and Neve Gordon, "Euroscepticism as an Instrument of Foreign Policy," *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2018, 402; Sternhell, "Why Benjamin Netanyahu Loves the European Far-Right"

[40] "Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel is 'not a state of all its citizens'", *The Guardian*, March 10, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/10/benjamin-netanyahu-says-israel-is-not-a-state-of-all-its-citizens.

[41] Pardo and Gordon, "Euroscepticism as Foreign Policy"

[42] Hugh Lovatt, "EU differentiation and the push for peace in Israel-Palestine," Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, October 2016, 6-7

in the negotiating room to soften the criticism towards it. A former senior Israeli diplomat said that "the issue is not to find [a] Eurosceptic [member state]. We always have the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and others. The challenge is to convince a Eurosceptic EU member to operate with the same passion of Greece and block the Union's voting machinery."[43] Recent voting records on Jerusalem suggest this may be less and less of a challenge.

"THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY"

President Trump appears to have brought his approach to real estate into politics, thinking of things in highly transactional terms, whether trade deficits or NATO contributions. Having delivered on issues of significance to Israel and Netanyahu, like Jerusalem and the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, one could reasonably argue that in return Trump will now expect significant Israeli concessions to the Palestinians as part of his peace plan. However, that assumes that Israelis are the main audience for these actions. While Netanyahu has undoubtedly reaped political benefits from them during both of his 2019 election campaigns, Trump's target audience is his conservative, evangelical, and Republican political base at home who have strong views on Israel, and his decisions are dictated by domestic politics rather than foreign policy. From a transactional perspective, Trump will view continued domestic political support for his re-election in 2020, supported by Israel, as the required quid pro quo rather than concessions to the Palestinians.

Although Trump has accrued considerable goodwill and leverage over Netanyahu that could be used in the context of a peace

[43] Pardo and Gordon, "Euroscepticism as Foreign Policy", 407

initiative, he is unlikely to do so effectively for two related reasons: first, he will not want to harm his standing with his political base, and second, he has thus far proven himself to be a poor mediator in this conflict, attuned exclusively to the needs of one side. Zartman and Rubin argue that "biased mediators … can be effective in assisting negotiations only if they deliver the party toward whom they are biased. In negotiation, external intervention rides the diplomatic equivalent of a Trojan horse."[44] By contrast, the Trump administration's strategy to date has focused on rewarding Israel and taking punitive actions against the Palestinians, including halting funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) responsible for the provision of services to Palestinian refugees, trying to redefine which Palestinians can be classified as refugees, closing the PLO representative office in Washington DC, and reducing funding to the Palestinian Authority.[45]

At the time of writing, the Trump administration's full proposal for peace has yet to be presented. On June 25-26, 2019, Trump's son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner unveiled the first component at the Peace to Prosperity workshop in Bahrain. More spectacle than substance, the event was widely criticized for failing to move beyond broad economic aid aspirations for the Palestinians, for including projects that already exist or projects that have been proposed in the past, and for ignoring Israel's occupation which

[44] I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, "Symmetry and Asymmetry in Negotiation" in *Power and Negotiation* (eds.) I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 288

[45] Michael Hirsh and Colum Lynch, "Jared Kushner and the Art of Humiliation," *Foreign Policy*, February 12, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/12/jared-kushner-and-the-art-of-humiliation/; Krishnadev Calamur, "The US Is Sidelining Itself in the Middle East," *The Atlantic*, August 31, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/08/trump-palestinians-unrwa-funding/569167/.

remains a major obstacle to Palestinian economic growth.[46] An EU source was critical of the plan, as it "includes numerous existing or already proposed projects including for instance EU's financed Greater Gaza desalination plant. … There is no indication as to where the money would come from and who would implement the projects. Also, no mention of the existing impediments to the implementation of these proposals."[47]

Senior US officials insist that they are taking the political aspect seriously, but the political component of the plan remains unconfirmed. However, the word that has thus far been used to describe the status of Palestinians under the future plan is "autonomy", which is a non-starter for Palestinians.[48] According to those familiar with its contents, it falls short of ensuring sovereign Palestinian statehood, seemingly consistent with the notion of economic peace that Netanyahu himself has long advocated.[49] Trump claims to want to upend traditional assumptions about how to resolve the conflict, but an economic dimension has been central to previous efforts and the political vision appears to be reverting to

[46] Loveday Morris, "Kushner presents vision of a Middle East at peace but no details how to get there," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/trump-administ...-9692-11e9-9a16-dc551ea5a43b_story.html?utm_term=.604a82f59f2d; David Makovsky, "Jared Kushner's all-or-nothing mistake in the Middle East," *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/jared-ku...27f-ed2942f73d70_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c1c9ce7701a7; Matthew Lee, "Investors at Bahrain workshop say peace is the missing piece in US Mideast plan," *The Times of Israel*, June 26, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/investors-at-bahrain-workshop-say-peace-is-the-missing-piece-in-us-mideast-plan/

[47] Andrew Rettman, "EU 'special envoy' going to US plan for Palestine," *EUobserver*, June 24, 2019, https://euobserver.com/foreign/145254

[48] Anne Gearan and Souad Mekhennet, "Trump peace package for Middle East likely to stop short of Palestinian statehood," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 2019; Mattia Toaldo and Hugh Lovatt, "Has Benjamin Netanyahu won?", *Al Jazeera*, March 4, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/03/benjamin-netanyahu-won-170303125610296.html.

[49] Gearan and Mekhennet, "Trump peace package"

old, outdated models of Palestinian autonomy from the late 1970s and early 1980s.[50]

In an open letter to current EU foreign ministers and officials published in *The Guardian*, a collection of 37 former European foreign ministers and EU officials recognize this danger and urge the EU to reject any plan that does not meet its previously stipulated parameters for a two-state solution: "a Palestinian state alongside Israel on borders based on the pre-1967 lines with mutually agreed, minimal and equal land swaps; with Jerusalem as the capital for both states; with security arrangements that address legitimate concerns and respect the sovereignty of each side and with an agreed, fair solution to the question of Palestine refugees." The group go on to explain that while they share Washington's frustration with the failure of previous efforts, abandoning Palestinian statehood is not the answer, and that this will damage the prospects of durable peace.[51]

This does indeed appear to reflect current EU policy. The EU attended the Bahrain workshop in a technical capacity, sending a special representative to the Middle East peace process and a member of the European Commission. An EU spokesperson stressed that "our participation at the workshop in Manama does not infringe on any of [our] very clear commitments" to creating a Palestinian state, and would not commit the EU to supporting or participating in

[50] Mohammed Samhouri, "Explaining Failure: How Palestinian economic potential was denied during Oslo," *Fathom*, July 2019, http://fathomjournal.org/explaining-failure-how-palestinian-economic-potential-was-denied-and-destroyed-during-oslo/; Makovsky, "Jared Kushner's all-or-nothing mistake". For the details of old autonomy plans, see Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A political history from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 117-161

[51] "Europe must stand by the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine," *The Guardian*, April 15, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/14/europe-must-stand-by-the-two-state-solution-for-israel-and-palestine.

the administration's plan.[52] In a meeting with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Kushner prior to the workshop, Mogherini expressed the EU's willingness to work with the US on the basis of its longstanding parameters, the implication being that they would not support a deviation from them.[53]

However, it is not clear that the Trump administration shares this vision. Rather, its ambiguity towards a two-state solution and its unquestioning support of Israel has created an atmosphere of impunity that has helped normalize the prospect of annexation. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo refused to clarify to Congress what the administration's position would be in the event of Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank, but has said elsewhere that it would not contradict their peace plan.[54] As I have argued elsewhere, the final death of the two-state solution may be the most consequential impact of the Trump administration's engagement in the conflict, not necessarily because of the content of any plan but because of the precedents that they are setting and the constituencies that they are energizing into motion, which may be difficult to stop.[55]

[52] Rettman, "EU 'special envoy'"

[53] "High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini in Washington: Meets with Secretary Pompeo and Adviser Kushner," European External Action Service, June 19, 2019, http://eueuropaeeas.fpfis.slb.ec.europa.eu:8084/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/64310/high-re presentativevice-president-federica-mogherini-washington-meets-secretary-pompeo-and_en

[54] Edward Wong and Catie Edmondson, "Pompeo Refuses to Say What U.S. Would Do if Israel Annexes West Bank," *The New York Times*, April 9, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/09/us/politics/pompeo-israel-west-bank.html; Raphael Ahren, "As US appears to back West Bank annexations, is its peace plan dead on arrival?" *The Times of Israel*, April 16, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-us-appears-to-back-west-bank-annexations-is-its-peace-plan-dead-on-arrival/.

[55] Eriksson, "Master of none", 58-59

With the backing of the Trump administration, Netanyahu has been increasingly clear about his intentions. He has disavowed the prospect of a Palestinian state, which he has sought to prevent throughout his political career, deeming it a threat to Israel's existence.[56] During the first Israeli election campaign in 2019, he pledged to annex illegal settlements in the West Bank, including isolated ones outside the main settlement blocs.[57] While unfulfilled election promises abound in Israel and Netanyahu has previously blocked legislation aimed at annexation, if his political survival were at stake that may change his calculus. Such a decision would be consistent with Likud party policy, whose central committee in December 2017 voted unanimously in favor of the "free construction and application of Israeli law and sovereignty in all liberated areas of settlement" in the West Bank, in other words annexation.[58]

As Ron Skolnik has argued, Israel's nation-state law has laid the constitutional groundwork for these policies. The first article states, "The Land of Israel, in which the State of Israel arose, is the historic homeland of the Jewish people." In line with the longstanding Likud party platform, this suggests a territorial claim beyond Israel's current legal boundaries. The distinction between the Land and the State has always been blurred, since Israel does

[56] Under significant pressure from the Obama administration, he did endorse the idea of a Palestinian state in his 2009 Bar-Ilan speech, but with preconditions that circumscribed sovereignty. This approach has also been described as a 'state-minus'. See Neill Lochery, *The Resistible Rise of Benjamin Netanyahu* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 278-281

[57] David M. Halbfinger, "Netanyahu Vows to Start Annexing West Bank, in Bid to Rally the Right," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/06/world/middleeast/netanyahu-annex-west-bank.html.

[58] David M. Halbfinger, 'Emboldened Israeli Right Presses Moves to Doom 2-State Solution', *The New York Times*, January 1, 2018, https://nyti.ms/2DLmaOC; Daoud Kuttab, 'Trump's Jerusalem decision opens Israeli expansionism floodgates', *Al Monitor*, 04/01/2018. Available at: https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/israel-likud-annex-west-bank-settlments-palestine.html.

not accept that the West Bank is occupied territory.[59] While the law does not explicitly reject the possibility of a Palestinian state in that it states that the right to self-determination in the State of Israel – as opposed to the Land of Israel – is unique to the Jewish people, the trajectory towards annexation may render this distinction moot.

If the rumors surrounding the political component of the Trump administration's peace plan are true, then there can be little doubt that a majority of member states, led by countries like France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom will reject it as it is likely to deviate from longstanding EU positions. It remains to be seen whether the Visegrad group or others would be willing to scupper a unanimous rejection of the plan. As the Czech Republic argued, their potential recognition of West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel could fit within the EU's two-state vision, but a peace plan that does not specify a Palestinian state as a goal is less easily reconciled.

The most likely candidate to deviate from consensus remains Hungary. During a meeting of the UN Security Council on April 29, 2019, Finland's representative criticized Israeli behavior towards the Palestinians, including in East Jerusalem, on behalf of the EU despite a last-minute Hungarian objection. The incident, which one frustrated EU diplomat blamed on "Hungarian intransigence", has prompted renewed discussion of a move away from a consensus system toward one of qualified majority voting on EU foreign policy, which would constitute a major change in inter-

[59] Ron Skolnik, "Israel's Nationality Law lays ground for West Bank annexation," *Al-Monitor*, August 9, 2018, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/08/israel-nationality-law-netanyahu-annexation-west-bank.html.

nal EU decision-making procedures.[60] However, the EU was able to issue a statement on June 1, 2019, criticizing Israeli plans for new construction in Jewish settlements Ramot and Pisgat Zeev in East Jerusalem, suggesting that Hungarian opposition to such statements is not uniform and may rely on broader political considerations.[61] No explanation was provided for the objection on April 29.[62]

CONCLUSION

The EU will not change its policy on either Jerusalem or the two-state solution to suit the Trump administration, Israel, or the Visegrad group. Unless the decision-making system changes, the future will continue to be one of fracture and division, with statements critical of changes to the status of Jerusalem likely to be blocked. The EU will not take a position that violates or undermines international law unless it is agreed between Israelis and Palestinians, and the domestic political dynamics that determine the Visegrad group's relations with Israel and their position on Jerusalem are not uniform but also seem unlikely to change in the near future.

If Trump's plan does indeed abandon the idea of a Palestinian state with a capital in East Jerusalem, the important question is what practical steps would the EU be able to take to wield the substantial leverage it holds over Israel and avert the collapse of the two-state paradigm? With the Visegrad group and others reluctant to place any economic or political pressure on Israel, the prospects

[60] Andrew Rettman, "EU ignores Hungary veto on Israel, posing wider questions," *EUobserver*, May 1, 2019, https://euobserver.com/foreign/144768

[61] "EU slams Israel's planned East Jerusalem construction as 'obstacle to peace'," The Times of Israel, June 1, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/eu-slams-israels-planned-east-jerusalem-construction-as-obstacle-to-peace/

[62] Rettman, "EU ignores Hungary"

are not encouraging without changes in EU foreign policy making. Moreover, Israel will do whatever it can to undercut any such steps. As one Israeli official has put it, "we do our utmost to make sure that the Eurosceptic countries … fight on any possible issue with the other EU members, so that the Union heads for a crash-landing."[63] If this strategy continues to be successful, it would represent a crash-landing not just for the EU, but for its preferred policy, the two-state solution and a shared capital in Jerusalem.

[63] Pardo and Gordon, "Euroscepticism as Foreign Policy," 407

CHAPTER 6

TURKEY'S GLOBAL ACTIVISM AND LEADERSHIP ON TRUMP'S JERUSALEM MOVE

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CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian issue has traditionally been to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict through a two-state solution. At the same time, it is no secret that Turkey has often highlighted the plight of the Palestinians and the injustice of occupation. This approach has broadly remained consistent throughout the terms of various governments for many decades. In 1980, for instance, Turkey upgraded its diplomatic mission to Israel to the ambassadorial level only to downgrade it in the same year when Israel announced its annexation of East Jerusalem and declared Jerusalem its "eternal capital."[1] Moments of robust international efforts to create a peaceful and equitable solution to the conflict opened up space for Turkish leadership to develop, albeit limited cooperation with Israel.

In the 1990s, mutual threat perceptions in the region enabled security and defense cooperation. Turkish leaders judged that cooperating with Israel would bring additional benefits such as the political influence of Israel in the U.S. Despite such areas of cooperation, however, Turkey remained sensitive to any deterioration in the conflict, especially to Israel's heavy-handed treatment of Pales-

[1] "13 Key Moments in Turkish-Israeli Relations," *TRT World*, 27 June 2016, https://www.trtworld.com/in-depth/14-things-about-turkish-israeli-relations-you-didnt-know-93510.

tinians. Much of the literature on Israel-Turkey relations places an outsized emphasis on what some scholars consider the emergence of "Islamist" politicians in Turkey, no matter how pragmatic they might be, as the main factor for the deterioration of bilateral relations.[2] They often take it for granted that Turkish governments, right or left, have had to answer to their constituencies about the relationship with Israel while occupation continued unabated and even deepened over the years.

This chapter analyzes successive Turkish governments' policy on Jerusalem within the broader framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By discussing the pre-AK Party period, albeit briefly, this study aims to show that continuities in Turkey's policy toward Israel are significant. Surely, this is not to deny the significance of much bolder and increasingly vocal reaction of AK Party governments under the leadership of President Erdoğan over the past two decades. On the contrary, Turkey has become a major advocate for the Palestinian cause in this time period in a much more effective and independent manner in recent years. Turkish foreign policy's growing global activism has certainly contributed to this development. While remaining active and engaged with the Western dominated international fora, Turkey has increasingly positioned itself as the voice of the disadvantaged and the wronged. As the Palestinian cause persists as a major concern for the Turkish public opinion, Turkey's foreign policy remains highly sensitive to the ups and downs in the peace process. This chapter attempts to contextualize Turkey's activism on Jerusalem within these broader national and international trends that have been under way over the past several decades.

[2] Bishku, Michael B. "How Has Turkey Viewed Israel?" *Israel Affairs*, 12:1, 177-194. Aviv, Efrat. "The Turkish government's attitude to Israel and Zionism as reflected in Israel's military operations 2000–2010." *Israel Affairs*, 25:2, 281-306. Inbar, Efraim. "Israeli-Turkish Tensions and their International Ramifications." Orbis 55(1):132-146, December 2011.

TURKISH-ISRAELI PARTNERSHIP OF THE 1990s

With the end of the Cold War, geopolitical shifts created new risks and opportunities while spurring the formation of new alliances throughout the region. The First Gulf War demonstrated the dangers of shifting military and political balances in the Middle East, as it resulted in heightened security concerns for Turkey. Syria's support for a variety of terror organizations was extended to the PKK, which was conducting major terrorist activities inside Turkey. Israel also focused on security risks coming from Iraq and Syria, creating a strong incentive for the military establishments in both countries to increase their security cooperation. Turkey found it easier to purchase advanced weapons systems from Israel and hoped to benefit from Israeli influence in Washington as well.[3] Military figures that could be considered architects of the Turkish-Israeli relationship of the 1990s characterized the partnership as "ties between these two countries—democratic, pro-Western, non-Arab—could provide the Middle East with stabilizing ballast, which is now a vital interest of the West."[4]

Some public intellectuals criticized the fact that the relationship with Israel had not been subjected to sufficient public scrutiny and could be detrimental to Turkey's ties with regional powers such as Iran and Egypt.[5] Many quarters showed skepticism about heightened levels of military-to-military cooperation between the

[3] Kanat, Kilic B, and Hannon, Jackson. "Turkey-Israel Relations in the New Era: Opportunities and Challenges." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2017): 64–86. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/693128.

[4] Bir, Çevik and Sherman, Martin. "Formula for Stability: Turkey Plus Israel," *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2002, pp. 23-32.

[5] Çandar, Cengiz. "The Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Triangle." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, The Special Policy Reform Report 249, 15 March 2000. https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-turkish-israeli-syrian-triangle.

two countries especially because they remained within the purview of the Turkish military without civilian input or decision making. In fact, the Turkish "government and the state bureaucracy have preferred to downplay the significance of ties with Israel."[6] Nevertheless, the onset of the peace process following the Oslo Accords between Israelis and Palestinians made political situation somewhat easier at home. By the late 1990s, the relationship had already been upgraded to a strategic partnership, rationalized in part by the need to respond to emerging alliances in the region, such as the military training agreement between Syria and Greece.[7]

The PKK terrorism reached the highest levels of violence in the early 1990s, as Turkey started its intelligence and security cooperation with Israel. In March of 1996, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel became the first Turkish head of state to visit Jerusalem since the establishment of the state of Israel. Although Demirel had been scheduled to visit Israel in the fall of 1995, his trip was canceled because of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. Demirel visited Israel in the context of suicide bombings against the country, which triggered a one-day summit in Egypt to show a common front against terrorism. Some 27 countries agreed to join the summit with U.S. President Clinton at the forefront of the effort. While a large number of Arab countries joined the summit, Syria and Lebanon declined the invitation.[8] Having condemned the attacks on Israel, President Demirel com-

[6] Kibaroglu, Mustafa. "Turkey and Israel Strategize." *Middle East Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 61–65.

[7] Tür, Özlem. "Turkey and Israel in the 2000s—From Cooperation to Conflict." Israel Studies 17, no. 3 (2012): 45-66. p.47.

[8] Purdum, Todd S. "Summit in Egypt: The Overview; World Leaders Join in a Condemnation of Terrorism." *The New York Times*, 14 March 1996, www.nytimes.com/1996/03/14/world/summit-in-egypt-the-overview-world-leaders-join-in-a-condemnation-of-terrorism.html.

mented, "we wish to see Syria and Lebanon take their place in this positive trend."[9] In the context of a common front against terrorism, President Demirel touted the potential for a good relationship between Israel and Turkey:

> a high level of economic development, a democratic system and a similarity in global and regional affairs form a hard basis for mutual cooperation.[10]

The collapse of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians resulted in the emergence of the Second Intifada, which in turn, triggered a crisis in the Turkish-Israeli relationship. In April of 2002, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians. Ecevit also claimed that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had told him in December of 2001 that Sharon wanted to get rid of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, proven by the Israel's ongoing heavy-handed operations. At the time of Ecevit's genocide statement, Turkish citizens were in the streets demonstrating against Israeli operations, dubbed Operation Defensive Shield, in the context of the Second Intifada. Some have dismissed it as Prime Minister Ecevit playing to the domestic public opinion, however, Turkey's sensitivity for the Palestinian issue was unmistakable. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the strongly secularist Turkish President at the time, joined Prime Minister Ecevit in condemning the Israeli operations, which speaks to the power of public outrage. This also underscores the fact that the strength of the Turkish-Israeli relationship has often been underwritten by the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

[9] "Turkish President Visits Israel." *UPI*, 11 March 1996, www.upi.com/Archives/1996/03/11/Turkish-president-visits-Israel/6052403801629/.

[10] Ibid.

THE AK PARTY YEARS

During the AK Party government years in the early part of the 2000s, Turkish foreign policy assumed a whole new posture in the region. The September 11 attacks brought U.S. allies and partners together in an unprecedented manner. Turkey was in full support of the U.S. pursuing terrorists as it had heavily suffered from terrorism in the previous decade. The invasion of Afghanistan did not find many detractors around the world. When it came to the invasion of Iraq, however, the international public opinion was deeply skeptical. Turkish parliament narrowly denied access to U.S. forces to invade Iraq from the north largely as a result of public pressure. The lesson learned for Turkey at this moment proved to be that it could no longer simply align its foreign policy with the West. As a result, Turkey increased its regional posture in the form of robust diplomacy. Turkey had already forced Syria to kick out the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, and arrested him with the apparent help of the U.S. intelligence. With the change in Syrian leadership from Hafez Assad to his seemingly reformist son Bashar Assad, time seemed ripe for a new opening with Syria.

Turkey quickly developed a close relationship with Syria and used its diplomatic clout to broker a deal between Syria and Israel. Prime Minister Erdoğan invested a lot of time and energy to develop a close relationship with Syria and leverage it for peace. While the Second Intifada had not produced the results that Palestinians hoped for, violence was subsiding in the mid-2000s. Given his personal, diplomatic, and political investment in finding a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Erdoğan's efforts culminated in a visit to Israel in the wake of the Israeli decision to withdraw from Gaza. Erdoğan once again underlined the relevance of the peace process for the improvement of bilateral Turkish-Israeli ties,

"I came here to contribute to the peace process."[11] Erdoğan's visit came on the heels of a series of visits by high profile world leaders to Israel as the geopolitics seemed to be shifting. Turkey was not interested in missing the boat and it seemed to be the right time to engage with both Syria and Israel to broker peace between the two parties. As Turkey had increased its regional diplomatic activism and a new opening for peace was on the horizon, Turkish-Israeli relations were, once again, on a positive note. The next few years would witness Turkish government's diplomacy and Erdoğan's personal investment in striking a peace deal between Syria and Israel.

However, Turkish efforts under the leadership of Erdoğan came to a halt when Israel launched Operation Cast Lead against Gaza in 2008, right when a Syria-Israel peace deal seemed imminent. Erdoğan was deeply disturbed by the Israeli behavior and came out with very strong words for the Israeli leadership. The infamous Davos crisis ensued in 2009 when Erdoğan minced no words for the Israeli President Shimon Peres and walked off the stage.[12] In May of 2010, the Mavi Marmara incident, where 9 Turkish citizens were killed by Israeli security forces, represented the height of Turkish-Israeli tensions, as the Turkish public was outraged and turned against Israel.[13] The relationship appeared beyond repair at the time and the U.S. tried to mediate between the two sides for the next several years. Turkish diplomacy sought to isolate Israel in international fora while downgrading its rela-

[11] Myre, Greg. "Turkish Leader Visits Israel, Restoring Friendly Ties." *The New York Times*, 2 May 2005, www.nytimes.com/2005/05/02/world/middleeast/turkish-leader-visits-israel-restoring-friendly-ties.html.

[12] "Recep Erdoğan Storms out of Davos after Clash with Israeli President over Gaza." *The Guardian*, 30 January 2009, www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-gaza-davos.

[13] Kučera, P. "Israel and Turkey: From Realpolitik to Rhetoric?" Central European Journal of International and Security Studies 8, no. 2 (2014): 75–95.

tionship and halting all military and security cooperation mechanisms. This episode showed once again that any deterioration in the plight of the Palestinians would result in a Turkish reaction against Israel's policies.

Some scholars have argued that the crisis was a result of the AK Party government's pursuit of an "Islamist foreign policy,"[14] however, such arguments take for granted the long-standing tradition of supporting Palestine by different governments of various ideological backgrounds. Others have labeled the harsh rhetoric coming out of Ankara "brinkmanship" and qualified Turkish efforts as "theatrical" while presenting the emerging tensions as a result of Turkey's neo-Ottoman ambitions.[15] These arguments similarly underestimate the fact that continued sympathy for the cause of Palestine combined with domestic political outrage over the killing of Turkish citizens in international waters created an extremely powerful incentive to push against Israel. If anything, Turkish politicians gave a chance to diplomatic initiatives by the U.S. and the UN's Palmer report to be completed before taking definitive steps.

Following the fallout of the bilateral relationship, Turkish Foreign Ministry regularly denounced Israeli settlement expansion activities in East Jerusalem. In December of 2009, for example, the Foreign Ministry expressed concern about "Israel's announcement that nearly 700 settlement units will be constructed in East Jerusalem." Calling such actions contradictory to international law, Turkey called on Israel to refrain from "unilateral steps regarding such issues that will be taken up in the final status

[14] Banu Eligür (2012) Crisis in Turkish–Israeli Relations (December 2008–June 2011): From Partnership to Enmity, Middle Eastern Studies, 48:3, 429-459.

[15] Ben Lombardi. "Turkey & Israel Brinkmanship & The Grand Strategy of the Erdoğan Government." Levantine Review 1, no. 1 (1 May 2012): 7–22.

negotiations."[16] In December of 2012, Ankara condemned the newly announced Israeli settlement plans for 1,500 apartments in East Jerusalem by stating, "we harshly condemn this manner of Israel, which deliberately damages the ground for a permanent and just peace in the region through illegal settlement activities that overstep international law."[17] Such declarations had been repeated many times, pointing to Turkey's consistent commitment to the US-backed peace process framework that saw the resolution of the status of Jerusalem as part of the final status negotiations. This continuous and firm commitment to the parameters of the peace process represented the backbone of Turkish diplomacy, with Turkish politicians mincing no words for what was seen as Israel's heavy-handed treatment of Palestinians and violations of the peace process.

In addition to calling out Israel on its security operations, Turkey was especially sensitive to violence in and around holy sites in Jerusalem. In the context of the collapse of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in April of 2014, renewed violence and clashes between Israeli security forces and the Palestinian civilians[18] drew Turkey's ire. Then Prime Minister Erdoğan was particularly vocal over Israel's military operations in Gaza and the holy sites in East Jerusalem, restricting the access and movement of Muslim worshipers. Erdoğan spoke out against such moves and

[16] "From Rep. of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs." *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 29 December 2009, www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-242_-29-december-2009_-press-release-regarding-the-israel_s-announcement-that-settlement-units-will-be-constructed-in-east-jerusalem.en.mfa.

[17] "Ankara Condemns Israeli Settlement Plan." *Hurriyet Daily News*, 20 December 2012, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ankara-condemns-israeli-settlement-plan-37246.

[18] "Israeli-Palestinian Violence in 2014 – Timeline." *The Guardian*, 18 November 2014, www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/18/israel-palestinian-violence-timeline.

emphasized that attacking the Masjid al-Aqsa in the city was like attacking the Kaaba in Mecca, the holiest site for Muslims. By emphasizing the importance of Masjid al-Aqsa as a holy site not only for Palestinians but for all Muslims, President Erdoğan continued his efforts to highlight the centrality of Jerusalem for the Muslim world as a whole.[19] The religious significance of Israeli settlement plans as well as consideration of various laws in the Israeli parliament, including one restricting call for prayers in mosques,[20] continued to be the source of Turkish criticism up until today.

In the meantime, U.S. efforts to find a rapprochement through an Israeli apology and compensation for the Mavi Marmara victims continued. President Obama was finally able to convince Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to deliver the apology during a visit to Israel at the end of 2013. However, despite several news reports about restoring ties,[21] a final deal was announced in June 2016 that involved an Israeli apology, compensation for the victims, and humanitarian aid for Gaza. Since the Mavi Marmara incident in May of 2010, the economic and civilian relationship between the two countries continued, albeit in a less than robust fashion. It is important to note that even the apology deal did not prevent Turkey from highlighting the plight of the Palestinians and opposing Israeli policies aimed at deepening and making permanent the occupation. This policy of continued support for the Palestinian cause and Jerusalem remained a constant even after

[19] "Turkey Declares Protecting Al-Aqsa Its Mission." *Hurriyet Daily News*, 8 November 2014, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-declares-protecting-al-aqsa-its-mission-74043.

[20] "We Won't Allow Call for Morning Prayers to Be Silenced in Jerusalem: Turkey's Erdoğan." *Hurriyet Daily News*, 8 May 2017, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/we-wont-allow-call-for-morning-prayers-to-be-silenced-in-jerusalem-turkeys-Erdoğan-112878.

[21] "Israel and Turkey Agree to Restore Diplomatic Ties." *The New York Times*, 17 December 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/12/18/world/middleeast/israel-turkey-mavi-marmara-gaza.html.

the Israeli apology and throughout both the Obama and Trump administrations.

TURKEY'S ACTIVISM AGAINST TRUMP'S JERUSALEM MOVE

Donald Trump had openly expressed his intention on the campaign trail during the 2016 U.S. presidential race to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.[22] While this was a policy legislated by U.S. Congress in 1995,[23] it was not implemented by subsequent administrations as it would damage the prospects of the peace process. Every U.S. administration since then had adopted the policy of leaving the status of Jerusalem to final negotiations. President Trump was intent on keeping his promise largely for domestic political reasons such as playing to his evangelical base and receiving unconditional support from pro-Israel lobbying groups as well as the Netanyahu government by moving the U.S. embassy to "the eternal capital of the Jewish people."[24] Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was already turning the support for Israel in U.S. politics into a partisan issue with his close relationship with U.S. evangelicals and Republican candidates during the Obama administration. Trump's pronouncements on Jerusalem in addition to his strong support for Netanyahu were a dream come true for the Israeli government, serving to reverse decades of U.S. policy on final status negotia-

[22] "Donald Trump to Netanyahu: Jerusalem Is Israel's Capital." *Time*, 26 September 2016, www.time.com/4507432/donald-trump-israel-jerusalem-capital-netanyahu/.

[23] Dole, and Robert J. "S.1322 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995." *Congress.gov*, 8 November 1995, www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/senate-bill/1322.

[24] Moten, Abdul Rashid. "US Embassy in Jerusalem: Reasons, Implications and Consequences." Intellectual Discourse 26 (1), 5-22. https://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/islam/article/view/1112. p.13.

tions. However, the embassy move served to isolate the Israeli government and the U.S. administration in the international arena.

Turkey was quick to play a leading role in mobilizing the international reaction against such a consequential and potentially dangerous move. Prior to President Trump's Jerusalem decision, President Erdoğan warned his counterpart by calling Jerusalem a "red line" for Muslims.[25] France, the EU, Arab League, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt all warned against the detrimental impact of such a move but the Turkish President was the most vocal one on the issue.[26] Immediately following Trump's Jerusalem declaration, Turkey led the effort to create a voice of unity among Islamic countries by bringing together Muslim leaders at an emergency meeting of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in Turkey on December 13, 2017.[27] Representatives of 57 member countries attended the extraordinary summit to discuss a single agenda item: "the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel and to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem."[28] Leading the calls for recognition of Palestine as a state in response to President Trump's Jerusalem decision, President Erdoğan also declared that Turkey intended to open an embassy to Palestine in East Jerusalem.[29] This could, in fact, mean the end of Turkey's decades old

[25] "Jerusalem: Turkey Warns Trump against Crossing 'Red Line'." *BBC News*, 5 December 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42232158.

[26] "Turkey Taking 'Strongest' Stance against Jerusalem Move." *Anadolu Ajansı*, www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-taking-strongest-stance-against-jerusalem-move/992515.

[27] "Turkey Calls for Recognition of East Jerusalem as Capital of Palestine." *TRT World*, 19 December 2017, www.trtworld.com/jerusalem/turkey-calls-for-recognition-of-east-jerusalem-as-capital-of-palestine-13253.

[28] Kireçci M. Akif. "Turkey's Leadership in the Jerusalem Crisis." Insight Turkey 20, no. 2 (2018): 67-79. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26390308.

[29] "Turkey Hopes to Open Embassy in East Jerusalem, Says Erdoğan." *The Guardian*, 17 December 2017, www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/17/turkey-hopes-open-embassy-east-jerusalem-Erdoğan.

diplomatic position that the status of Jerusalem should be decided as part of the final status negotiations. Erdoğan called on "all countries supporting international law to recognize Jerusalem as the occupied capital of Palestine."[30]

Turkey also bolstered its diplomatic efforts to bring together an emergency session at the United Nations. Faced with the prospect of international isolation, the Trump administration threatened countries intending to vote in favor of condemning the U.S. decision.[31] Ahead of the vote on Trump's Jerusalem decision at the UN, Erdoğan strongly criticized the Trump administration who was threatening to cut aid to countries voting against the U.S. declaration. Erdoğan said, "Mr. Trump, you cannot buy Turkey's democratic will with your dollars."[32] The final tally of the UN vote (128-9) in the emergency session[33] that rejected the U.S. decision on Jerusalem proved to be a diplomatic disaster in the form of clear international isolation for the Trump administration. President Erdoğan led the international efforts to condemn the Trump administration's Jerusalem decision at the UN at a time when Turkey was still interested in repairing ties with the U.S. after the last couple of troubling years with the Obama administration. This willingness to confront the U.S. in the international arena indicates the significance of Jerusalem for the Turkish leadership as well as for the Turkish public.

[30] "Muslim Leaders Call on World to Recognize East Jerusalem as Palestinian Capital." *Reuters*, 13 December 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-israel-oic/muslim-leaders-call-on-world-to-recognize-east-jerusalem-as-palestinian-capital-idUSKBN1E70KM.

[31] "UN Jerusalem Vote: US 'Will Be Taking Names'." *BBC News*, 20 December 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42424666.

[32] "Erdoğan Says U.S. Can't Buy Turkish Support on Jerusalem." *Reuters*, 21 December 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-israel-turkey-idUSKBN1EF1I3.

[33] "UN Votes 128-9 to Reject US Decision on Jerusalem." *Deutsche Welle*, 21 December 2017. www.dw.com/en/un-votes-128-9-to-reject-us-decision-on-jerusalem/a-41892757.

In addition to the OIC and UN meetings, President Erdoğan raised the issue at every opportunity while lobbying world leaders including the Pope.[34] Despite past criticism of the Pope for some of his remarks on the events of 1915, Turkey found common ground on the issue of Jerusalem with the leader of the Catholic Church, who agreed that any change to the status of the city should be avoided. The Jerusalem issue was so central that President Erdoğan's visit to the Vatican was the first by a Turkish president since 1959.[35] Erdoğan continued to raise the profile of the Jerusalem issue in order to rally support against the U.S. administration's decision. The Turkish leadership on the issue made some of the Arab countries including Jordan and Saudi Arabia uncomfortable, according to news reports, as they worried that Turkey's influence in East Jerusalem was increasing and it was forcing these countries to take a stronger stance. The somewhat formalistic objections to Trump's decision by these countries were widely perceived as paying lip service[36] in contrast to vocal Turkish criticisms. According to some scholars, the majority of Arab states did not ultimately care about Trump's decision as they were more concerned with their mutual regional priorities with Israel, such as Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Arab Spring.[37] The Israeli leadership was also reportedly worried about increased Turkish financial support

[34] "Turkish President Heads to Italy to Discuss Jerusalem with Pope." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 4 February 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-turkey-idUSKBN1FO0QK.

[35] "Pope, Erdoğan Discuss Shared Opposition to U.S. Move on Jerusalem." *The Wall Street Journal,* 5 February 2018, https://www.wsj.com/articles/pope-Erdoğan-discuss-shared-opposition-to-u-s-move-on-jerusalem-1517847626.

[36] Efron, Shira, The Future of Israeli-Turkish Relations. RAND Corporation, 2018. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2445.html. p.31

[37] Hamid, Shadi. "The Jerusalem announcement won't really hurt America's Arab alliances." *Markaz*, The Brookings Institutions, 7 December 2017, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/12/07/the-jerusalem-announcement-wont-really-hurt-americas-arab-alliances/.

as well as Turkish citizens traveling to East Jerusalem to join the pro-Palestinian protests.[38]

Turkey's activism was not limited to international diplomacy but included direct pressure, as the Turkish leadership had threatened to "cut ties with Israel if necessary" shortly before President Trump's Jerusalem decision.[39] Some Israeli leaders dismissed Turkey's stance and personally attacked President Erdoğan, claiming that Jerusalem had been the capital of Israel for thousands of years.[40] Unfazed by such criticism, Turkey continued its pressure campaign and recalled its ambassadors to Israel as well as the U.S. in the wake of the opening of the American embassy in Jerusalem and the killing of dozens of Palestinian protesters by Israeli military forces.[41] Calling President Trump's decision a "huge mistake" and seeing "nothing to gain" by the move, President Erdoğan said, "East Jerusalem is the capital city of Palestine." He pointed out the international opposition to the move by stating that "the United States is losing true friends right now."[42] In the midst of violence on the ground sparked by the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem

[38] "Turkey's Strongman Tries to Overtake Saudi Arabia as Biggest Champion of Palestinians." *Newsweek*, 29 June 2018, www.newsweek.com/turkey-strongman-Erdoğan-tries-overtake-saudi-arabia-palestinians-biggest-1002698.

[39] "Will Erdoğan cut ties with Israel over Jerusalem?" *Al Jazeera English*, 14 December 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/words-Erdoğan-jerusalem-israel-171212113605165.html.

[40] "Israel hits back at Turkish leader over threat to sever ties." *Times of Israel*, 5 December 2017, https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-hits-back-at-turkish-leader-over-threat-to-sever-ties/. See also Landau, Noa, and Reuters. "Israel Fires Back at Turkey: Jerusalem Has Been the Jewish Capital for 3,000 Years." *Haaretz.com*, 24 April 2018, www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-jerusalem-has-been-the-jewish-capital-for-3-000-years-1.5627774.

[41] "Turkey recalls ambassadors to Israel and United States." *Al Jazeera News*, 14 May 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/turkey-recalls-ambassadors-israel-united-states-180514200635590.html.

[42] "Erdoğan Calls Jerusalem US Embassy Move 'Huge Mistake'." *CNN*, 9 May 2018, www.cnn.com/2018/05/09/europe/Erdoğan-interview-becky-anderson-intl/index.html.

and during a press conference alongside the British Prime Minister Theresa May during his visit to the U.K., President Erdoğan said:

> The US claims to be powerful. You are powerful, but you are not right. History will not forgive you. This is the fact that we will observe in the future … Israel will not be forgiven. That's what we are going to witness in the future too. It all boils down to the fact of making a choice – are we going to side with the strong or side with those who are right?[43]

Turkey continued to take every opportunity to highlight its strong stance on Jerusalem around the world. For example, in support of the reversal of Paraguay's decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, Turkey decided to open an embassy in Paraguay.[44] On another occasion, in March of 2019, the Turkish Foreign Ministry criticized several country representatives' statements of intent to move their embassies to Jerusalem made during an AIPAC conference in Washington.[45] In June of 2019, Turkey, once again, harshly criticized Israel's announcement of further settlement activity in East Jerusalem. Interestingly, in this instance, the Turkish Foreign Ministry's statement qualified the settlement announcement in the context of Israel's "aim to erode the status of Jerusalem and destroy the vision for a two-state solution."[46] Official Turkish

[43] "Turkish President Erdoğan Says 'History Will Judge' US Decision to Move Israeli Embassy." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 16 May 2018, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/turkey-Erdoğan-us-theresa-may-press-conference-israeli-embassy-human-rights-a8353321.html.

[44] "Turkey to open Paraguay embassy after policy shift on Israeli capital." *Reuters*, 6 September 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-paraguay-turkey/turkey-to-open-paraguay-embassy-after-policy-shift-on-israeli-capital-idUSKCN1LM33H.

[45] "Turkey Voices Concern over Proposed Jerusalem Embassy Moves." *Daily Sabah*, 25 March 2019, www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/03/25/turkey-voices-concern-over-proposed-jerusalem-embassy-moves.

[46] "Turkey Slams Illegal Israeli Settlement in E. Jerusalem." *Anadolu Ajansı*, 1 June 2019, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-slams-illegal-israeli-settlement-in-e-jerusalem/1495022.

statements usually condemned settlement activity as an obstacle to a two-state solution but ever since the Trump administration's embassy decision, Turkey has perceived these efforts as tied to the status of Jerusalem as well.[47]

While the international debate on Jerusalem has waned and the Arab world leaders continue to sidestep the issue in order not to damage their relationship with the Trump administration, President Erdoğan continues to highlight the issue as well as the Israeli occupation while maintaining a good personal relationship with President Trump. Rejecting what he called a "fait accompli in Jerusalem," Erdoğan highlighted the issue again in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe during an international gathering.[48] Most recently, in September of 2019, President Erdoğan devoted a significant portion of his address to the UN General Assembly to criticism of Israel's continued occupation and settlement activity in Palestine. Erdoğan said:

> Where are the borders of the State of Israel? Is it the 1948 borders, the 1967 borders, or is there any other border? … How can the Golan Heights and the West Bank settlements be seized, just like other occupied Palestinian territories, before the eyes of the world if they are not within the borders of this state? … Turkey will continue to stand by the oppressed people of Palestine as it has always done so until today.[49]

[47] Turkey condemns Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes." Anadolu Ajansı, 23 July 2019, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-condemns-israeli-demolition-of-palestinian-homes/1539475.

[48] "Turkey rejects 'fait accompli' in Jerusalem: Erdoğan." *Daily Sabah,* 15 June 2019, https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/06/15/turkey-rejects-fait-accompli-in-jerusalem-Erdoğan.

[49] "Erdoğan's Historic Palestine Speech at UN Echoes Worldwide." *Daily Sabah*, 26 September 2019, https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/09/26/Erdoğans-historic-palestine-speech-at-un-echoes-worldwide.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the evolution of Turkey's Israel policy over the past several decades with a particular focus on the status of Jerusalem. I have argued that the issue of Palestine has been a highly sensitive topic for the Turkish public and the bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel have been punctuated by developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. These have served as constant features of the bilateral ties regardless of which Turkish government was in power. At the same time, the increasing strength and influence of Turkish foreign policy in the region in the past two decades have made the Turkish approach to the issue much more relevant. While Turkey tried to play the role of a mediator between Syria and Israel in the early 2000s, the failure of Turkish efforts as a result of Israel's Cast Lead Operation in 2008 led to consistently vocal criticism of Israel's settlement activities in the ensuing decade.

By the time President Trump had announced his intention to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel and move the U.S. embassy to the city, Turkey had been at loggerheads with Israel for several years. The Mavi Marmara incident in May of 2010 could only be resolved in 2016, and even then, there was no love lost between the two sides. Economic relations persisted but Turkey continued its international critique of Israel's actions on the ground. Mutual areas of interest in the energy arena were explored but there did not seem to be any serious push to strengthen the relationship. President Trump's Jerusalem decision and the embassy move made the Turkish-Israeli relationship even more difficult. Turkey recalled its ambassador to Israel and the U.S. demonstrating the significance of the issue for the Turkish leadership. Just as Turkey was vocal about Israel's settlement activity and continued occu-

pation, Trump's decision was met with a highly energized diplomatic effort by President Erdoğan to rally the international community against the *fait accompli*. All this was happening while the US-Turkey relationship was experiencing several serious tensions due to the two countries' Syria policies and a host of bilateral legal issues. Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 systems was also making things complicated for Trump in his dealings with the U.S. Congress. Erdoğan was unfazed when it came to Jerusalem and he led the efforts to isolate and condemn this decision in various international fora.

President Trump's Jerusalem decision triggered protests on the ground, resulting in the loss of many Palestinian lives killed by Israeli security forces. Palestinians were not interested in calling for another Intifada over the issue, as Israel had already become a de facto apartheid and calls for a one-state solution were already on the rise. The opposition to Trump's decision by the Arab world leaders and Europe seemed to lack muscle to be able to coordinate a significant international effort that could reverse the decision. In contrast, Turkey has been highlighting the issue at every opportunity. In President Erdoğan's statements, Jerusalem does not feature as simply a negotiation item in the peace process but a holy site that all Muslims have a duty to protect. His efforts to both internationalize the issue and make it a top agenda item for the Muslim countries have borne fruit in terms of creating a diplomatic common front. Declaring East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine has become another consistent theme and bolsters the position of the Palestinians in the future.

Clearly, a resolution of the conflict has never appeared so far out of reach as today. Nevertheless, Turkey's leadership on the issue has brought much exposure and clarity to the issue, preventing

potential further destabilizing moves similar to Trump's Jerusalem move. International isolation on the matter has not served well either the U.S. administration or the Netanyahu government. Turkey will most likely continue this line of diplomatic activism on Jerusalem and the Israeli occupation in the foreseeable future. While it has not resulted in a reversal of the U.S. decision, it has ensured that the Muslim countries oppose the move as a common front. This dynamic, created in large part by Turkey's activism and leadership on Jerusalem, highlights the moral bankruptcy of the occupation and strengthens the position of Palestinians.

CHAPTER 7

MA JOURNEÉ CHEZ ARAFAT: TRUMP'S JERUSALEM DECISION AND THE WAGES OF PAIN IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

MARK PERRY
Author and Journalist

CHAPTER 7

ARAFAT

In the late Spring of 2004, at the height of the Second Intifada, I would spend many of my days navigating my way from the hotel where I was staying in East Jerusalem (it was just outside the Damascus Gate) to the Mukata, the hilltop headquarters and walled compound of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, which housed the offices and living quarters of Yasser Arafat, the PA's president. On one of those days, in late April, I found myself facing Arafat as he walked into his office. His appearance that early April morning, and each time I met him, was the same: the head scarf wrapped (as he said) in the shape of Palestine and the unadorned khaki uniform (he had, it was said, eight of them in all), that he'd worn since his days in exile in Tunisia. Arafat was a late riser, so I thought I would have to wait for him to appear, but there he was. He was as surprised to see me as I was to see him.

"How did you get here?" he asked, and his eyes were wide – disbelieving. I thought the answer was obvious: "I took a taxi," I said. He shook his head, slightly irritated, because he thought I was making a joke: "No, I mean, how did you get here?" I was puzzled, but then understood what he was asking, and smiled. I wanted to say that being unaware of danger is not the same as being impervious to it, but I settled on something easier: "It's really not that hard," I explained. "You just have to be careful." This satisfied him and he let it go with a nod, and motioned me to a seat beside him at the long table used for his typical late-night marathon meetings.

Having settled in and putting on his glasses (which he rarely wore in public), he grabbed a stack of papers and newspaper clippings, compiled for him by his aides the night before, and began to leaf slowly through them. This was typical of our meetings: he would read a clipping, then slide it towards me. On occasion he would use his index finger, thumping it on a clipping he thought particularly important, but without uttering a word, and I would dutifully read what he gave me. This was his way of beginning our political discussions, which were often lengthy – and regularly interrupted by the arrival of other guests or members of his staff, and almost always by Nabil Abu Rudeineh, his assistant and constant presence.[50]

I remember that, on that particular April day, I was sweating profusely, because the weather was unseasonably hot, and because I had had a particularly difficult time negotiating the multiple roadblocks that sealed off Ramallah from the rest of the West Bank, and from Jerusalem. Arafat's greeting of me with his question ("how did you get here") reflected that. Then too, as Arafat knew, in order for me to meet with him I had to not only navigate the various Israeli checkpoints between Jerusalem and Ramallah, I had to spend the last minutes prior to my arrival dodging a particularly threatening tank, a dusty brown behemoth, that was churning up the road outside of his compound. The tank, an Israeli Merkava, wound its way in circles outside of his headquarters – making a total circuit in something under two minutes, while bouncing up and down on the hills of a dirt track that had once been an expansive paved road. The road had been destroyed in 2002, at the height of the Second Intifada, and the Mukata invaded by Israeli soldiers accompanied by Israeli bulldozers. The bulldozers then proceeded to level almost

[50] For an account of Yasser Arafat's stay in the Mukata, see also: "Arafat Among the Ruins," David Rieff, The New York Times Magazine, April 25, 2004.

all of the buildings of the Mukata, except for Arafat's headquarters, which housed Arafat and his aides, as well as senior PLO official Hani al-Hassan, whom I had known for many years. I communicated with Hassan by telephone during this April 2002 crisis, on one occasion hearing the ping-ping-pint of bullets as they struck the walls of Arafat's headquarters. The IDF had withdrawn from the compound since, along with the bulldozer, leaving the tank – and its monotonous but intimidating circuit. The tank served its purpose, as a constant reminder to Arafat that his nemesis in Israel, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (who had once laid siege to him in Beirut, many years before, and who hated him) could end his life at any moment.

The result of all of this was that to get inside the Mukata, it was necessary for me to time the tank's endless circuit and sprint for the gate of the compound, hoping that the security officials inside would notice my arrival – and open the gate. I never thought this journey was particularly dangerous until, on that particular April morning, a Palestinian taxi driver waiting at the Kalandia checkpoint leading into Ramallah greeted me with a shake of his head. "There's a siege on," he said. I nodded my understanding, then directed him to Arafat's headquarters, with its specter of the Israeli tank. The driver looked at his colleagues as if to ask them what he should do, but they shrugged. He looked back at me. "Okay," he said. "Get in." The driver let me off on the corner opposite the Mukata's iron gate: "I won't go in there," he said, and I nodded my agreement, paid him, and jumped to the curb. The rest was easy: I sprinted across the road to the compound's gate, which swung open soundlessly – then made my way to the second floor of his offices. The bleary-eyed guards nodded in my direction, but seemed disinterested in my arrival.

BALANCING THE SCALES

I visited Mr. Arafat often, but on this occasion he seemed particularly reflective and so, after putting aside his papers, he looked at me and raised his eyebrows. "Yes?"

During my previous visit, several weeks earlier, I had said that I wanted to speak with him about two topics: the collapse of the Camp David talks, back in early September of 2000, and the inception of the Second Intifada, shortly thereafter. Mr. Arafat's English was good, but broken by staccato sentences which he issued when he wanted to make a point, and often accompanied by personal reflections on his views on the people he was mentioning. These were long asides, but always interesting. His favorite phrase, "and by the way" was often accompanied by a raised finger – a habit of emphasis. Thankfully, Nabil Abu Rudeinah, a sometime translator for some of Mr. Arafat's more complicated presentations, joined us as the conversation was beginning, along with two cups of coffee. And so, with this, Arafat began.

"I remember at the end of Oslo, when Mr. Rabin and I had signed the agreement in Washington, I went to Mr. Clinton and we had a discussion about what would happen next," Arafat said. "And I told Clinton that in order for the agreement to succeed I would need his help. I said that the conflict was out of balance, because the Israelis were strong and we were weak. The scales favored them." At this point, Arafat placed his hands in the air, demonstrating the scales, with one dipped well below the other. "Like this," he said, "and he dipped his one hand further. "I told Clinton that I would call him from time to time when I needed his help, to rebalance the scales, and he promised that he would call [Prime Minister Yitzhak] Rabin or [Prime Minister Ehud] Barak and tell him 'Arafat needs your help and I want you to

help him. And in those phone calls Mr. Clinton would rebalance the scales. He would weigh in on my side. This happened several times, and Mr. Clinton would keep his word and Rabin would follow his request."

He continued: "I did not want to go to Camp David," he said. "I told Mr. Clinton that I was not ready, my people were not ready. And there was no preparation. I needed political help to make the deal, but no one in the region even knew what Clinton was planning. And so, the talks failed and I told Clinton 'this is not my fault. You cannot blame me.' But he did. And then, Ariel Sharon marched in Jerusalem, on the Temple Mount and there was a lot of violence. And because almost all of those killed in its first days there was pressure on me to respond. So, I called Mr. Clinton and told him 'you have to tell the Israelis to stop the killing. You have to rebalance the scales.' But he told me he would not do anything. He blamed me for Camp David and he was angry. So, I thought about what to do. Remember: when I came here the Israelis gave me a list of people, people they called terrorists, to arrest and put in jail. And I did it, because that was the agreement. I kept that agreement, though it was painful. But I had to make a decision. I had to respond, to do something. And so, when Clinton said he would not rebalance the scales, I took the keys out of my desk and I opened all the jails." At this point, he made a gesture with his hands, as if turning the keys in a lock. "And I rebalanced the scales."[51]

[51] This is the conversation as I remember it, and recreated from the notes I took following the meeting, which I then converted into a typed memo for my own files. Several months later, Arafat repeated this explanation on Oslo and the beginning of the Second Intifada with a colleague working with me at the time, and he related it to me. What Arafat told my colleague was, in almost every detail, a repeat of what he told me during our April 2004 meeting.

FATAH

Just four months after this April meeting with Arafat, in August of 2004, I returned to Jerusalem and the West Bank and had my last meeting with him at the Mukata. While only four months had lapsed, and while the tank that had once circled the Mukata was gone, Arafat seemed more isolated than ever. The week before my visit he'd celebrated his birthday and so when I greeted him I asked him if he'd enjoyed the day, noting that in America we celebrate the occasion with a cake. Did he have a cake? I asked. His eyes got big, he raised his forefinger, nodded his head and told me that he needed to show me "something special." He grabbed my hand and escorted me up a flight of stairs to an arched and open overlook that led from his office to the offices of the legislative council (which were in an adjoining building), fished in his khaki coat and brought out a small electronic camera. "Look," he said. "This is my birthday present. It's almost a miracle." He pointed the camera towards the west and began to take pictures, then adjusted the lens before handing it to me, explaining that he'd received the camera from his aides. "Look there," he said, pointing. "You can see Tel Aviv." And it was true, in the shimmering distance and through the haze it was possible to make out the high rises of the Israeli metropolis. I handed the camera back to him, smiled, and noted that the tank that had once made a circuit of his compound was gone. "Yes," he said, and was silent for a moment. "It is nothing." I nodded. "Maybe," I responded, "but I still worry about you." He shook his head in disagreement. "It is not so bad," he told me. "I am here, in Ramallah, amongst my own people, and only eight miles from Jerusalem." We were joined then by Jabril Rajoub, whom I knew only slightly. Arafat handed Rajoub the camera and then, in an unusual show of affection, grabbed him and gave him a head rub using the bare

knuckles of his right hand. "My friend look at my camera," he said. In November, after a short illness, Arafat died.

Yasser Arafat was not a man of peace, but he was a sophisticated thinker. And he was a political realist. His calculus, from the time of the founding of Fatah until his death (in November of 2004), was that, while the struggle against Israel might take many forms, the use of force was always a part of the Palestinian calculus. "The one thing that Israel understands is pain," he had told me, in Arabic, during one of my first conversations with him, back in Tunis in the early 1990s. "And, by the way, it works." He was right, though Israel was not the only target of Palestinian violence. Fatah gained respect and admiration in the Arab world after fighting the IDF to a bloody draw during the Battle of Karameh (with 28 Israeli soldiers killed), in Jordan in 1968, challenged the power of King Hussein of Jordan in 1970 (in what came to be known as "Black September"), planned and carried out the Munich Massacre in 1972, launched a series of high profile international airline hijackings in its wake, fought the Israelis to a standstill outside of Beirut (in 1982), provided much (but not all) of the leadership for the First Intifada in the West Bank, Israel and Gaza in the late 1980s and early 1990s – and then launched the bloody, but indecisive Second Intifada in 2000. But now, in April of 2004, Arafat's strategy of exacting "pain" on Israel seemed to have run its course – with a series of bloody standoffs between Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and the IDF in the major cities of the West Bank. Then too, not only were the Palestinian people exhausted by the fighting, but a rising cadre of young Fatah members (led by political rivals Marwan Barghouti and Mohammad Dahlan in what was then called the Higher Committee), had tired of Arafat's rule, and the corruption that surrounded him.

ABBAS

Just as crucially, not everyone agreed with Arafat's political philosophy; a number of sharp internal fights had occurred over his strategy throughout Fatah's history – and most particularly in Lebanon when, having faced off against Israel, Arafat had returned from exile to lead a bloody response to an internal uprising – led by a breakaway faction in Fatah. But there were also other, if quieter, dissenters. Among them, particularly during the Second Intifada, was Arafat colleague Mahmoud Abbas – now more publicly referred to as Abu Mazen, Arafat's successor as head of the Palestinian Authority. Abbas was one of the founders of Fatah, and a central figure in Palestinian politics. While he never openly questioned Arafat's leadership, it was clear to his Fatah colleagues that he believed Arafat's strategy against Israel was undermining the Palestinian cause. Abbas was an odd-man-out among the Fatah elite, who were political activists and liked nothing more than speaking before large crowds and political rallies. Abbas could not equal their high profiles, and he didn't try. Instead, he worked carefully, slowly and out of the public eye to shift Fatah from a revolutionary organization into a finely tuned political structure that would provide constituent services and respond to Palestinians looking for peace. When Arafat died, after a short illness, in November of 2004, Abbas stepped in as his replacement.

"At the time, nobody knew Abbas at all," Nader Said, a pollster at the West Bank's Arab world Research and Development Center told reporters Grant Rumley and Amir Tibon. "Abbas was always in the background. He was never a populist. He was not a people's person. He didn't care—not in a bad way—but it's just not his style. Unlike Arafat, who was always out there, always saying the right things, the sloganeering. Abbas is not into that. He doesn't give a damn about that." All true: but when Arafat died,

the PA leadership decided that they would pick Abbas, Arafat's nominal second-in-command, to lead them. The choice was not unanimous, but it was entirely predictable. Abbas had not only been with Fatah from the beginning, he had a new strategy that, his supporters said, would bring peace – and a Palestinian state.

The differences between Arafat and Abbas were stark, as if they had come from different political movements. Where Arafat was effusive and outgoing, Abbas was quiet, but determined. But he was also wily – and underestimated by his Palestinian colleagues. During the Second Intifada, Abbas quietly oversaw a strategy group inside the Palestinian Authority that focused on using the rule of law and economics as a counter to Israel – and to Arafat's strategy. He monitored and supported the group, whose mandate was to focus on final status negotiations with Israel, while building the professional capacity that, he believed, would be needed once the violence of the Second Intifada ended. This Negotiations Support Group was a heady mix of think-tankers, strategists and lawyers who not only offered a counterpoint to the violence that had marked the last five years of Arafat's leadership – but that operated without the knowledge of Arafat or those around him. When I mentioned the Negotiations Support Group to Arafat in the year before his death, he turned on me: "I have heard of this group," he said. "But who are they?" At the same time that Abbas was building a group around his new strategy, he solidified his support inside of the Fatah Central Committee as a reformer. It was time, he argued, for the PA to focus on education, the economy, democratization and the demilitarization of the Intifada. But the true centerpiece of Abbas's political philosophy was his belief that Arafat's strategy of accepting the use of violence was counterproductive: as the violence increased, Abbas believed, the chances for a Palestinian state receded.

In the first few years following Arafat's death, Mahmoud Abbas was able to solidify his power – replacing nearly two-thirds of the senior Palestinian leadership, and requiring those who served at the PA's highest leadership positions to assume control of the most prominent constituent portfolios. Additionally, at the same time that Abbas tamed the most radical Fatah armed groups (he actually campaigned for election in 2005 while walking beside the commander of the Al Aqsa Brigade in Jenin), he built (under U.S. auspices) a police force that curtailed Palestinian attacks on Israelis, but that also dampened internal dissent to his rule. In effect, Abbas's lower profile throughout his career made his ascension to power all the easier, and quickly made him a favorite of Washington. Speaking in the White House Rose Garden in May of 2005, then-President George Bush praised Abbas's embrace of democracy and rejection of terror.

As crucially, Bush implied that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would end only when Palestinian demands were satisfied, and reiterated the U.S.'s long-standing call for an end to Israeli settlement expansion. And so, it was that, within two years of Arafat's death, it seemed that Abbas had accomplished the impossible: he was in the midst of successfully "demilitarizing" the Second Intifada, had won election as Arafat's successor, had reformed the Palestinian ruling elite, had begun the process of shaping a new and more professional Palestinian security service, and had garnered a White House invitation and the blessing of a sitting president. "We will stand with you, Mr. President," Bush told Abbas in May of 2005, "as you combat corruption, reform the Palestinian security services and your justice system, and revive your economy."[52]

[52] President Bush and Palestinian President Abbas together in the White House Rose Garden, May 26, 2005. http://archive.peacenow.org/entries/archive807

But in the years ahead, as the U.S. focused on the problems caused by the Bush administration's intervention in Iraq and as the hoped-for revival of a substantive Israeli-Palestinian peace process slipped slowly from view, and second and more sobering reality took hold – and one that inadvertently endorsed the Arafat strategy. For while Abu Mazen bought into a peace process supported by the United States and received the blessing of a U.S. president for his efforts, the peace process that he gambled would succeed if only Palestinian violence would end, slipped slowly away. And the reason that it did so was because the scales of the process that he endorsed were as out-of-balance as it was when Yasser Arafat appeared at the White House with Yitzhak Rabin in September of 1993.

TRUMP

It is in the context of this history that Donald Trump's December 6, 2017 declaration recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (and his decision to move the U.S. embassy there), can be best understood. Trump's declaration was condemned throughout much of the Arab world and was met with deep skepticism by America's European allies. It seemed to portend the final end of the already paralyzed and nearly non-existent U.S. mediated Israeli-Palestinian peace process, while confirming what was, and has been for many years, Washington's worst-kept non-secret: that the United States is not only Israel's lawyer (as former State Department negotiator Aaron David Miller phrased it), but also its realtor. It is important to note, however, what the declaration did not do: it did not lead to regional instability, it did not spark rioting in large areas of the West Bank or in Gaza, it did not trigger a diplomatic crisis among Arab leaders, it did not lead to widespread resignations among U.S. diplomatic professionals – and it did not unseat a quiescent

Palestinian Authority, nor threaten the standing of PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

From Trump's point of view, on the other hand, the Jerusalem decision made perfect political sense: it tied this administration's Middle East program to America's closest ally in the region, it solidified the president's support among his core base of Republican voters (and especially among Christian evangelicals), it signaled to America's European allies that the U.S. could, and would, act unilaterally and it deepened the emerging divisions inside the progressive movement inside the Democratic Party between Israel's supporters and their antagonists. And while Trump's Jerusalem decision was condemned in the Arab world, it did not change the calculus of the group of America's Arab allies, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan. Finally, the reaction to Trump's Jerusalem decision seemed to confirm what many had already concluded: that peace between Israelis and Palestinians is no longer the crucial challenge to America's credibility that it was during the forty years that followed the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

In fact, Trump's declaration has had a more profound impact in Ramallah than it ever did in Washington. PA President Mahmoud Abbas was surprised by Trump's decision and thereafter struggled to shape an appropriate and substantive response. But thus far, Abbas and his senior advisers have been unable to mount the kind of public campaign that would roll-back the Jerusalem decision, or garner the kind of strong international condemnation that would place it in jeopardy. The PA's inability to do so is of a piece with its other failures: its inability to roll back settlement activity, build a viable economic structure to attract large scale international investors (which would, in time, attract powerful allies to its cause), mount an international campaign that would isolate

the U.S. from its most important Arab allies (or at least convince them to distance themselves from America) – or provide a diplomatic counter that would force the Israeli government back to the negotiating table. Instead, Mr. Abbas has continued to insist that the reignition of the peace process depends on his success to provide quiet in the West Bank, at the same time that he vainly works to unite the Palestinian polity. Abbas is thus faced with this reality: the most substantive response to Israeli unilateral activities comes from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, an initiative which he and his aides have, in turn, either airily dismissed or completely ignored. The lesson, thus learned in Washington and around the world, is obvious: there is no price to pay in taking unilateral actions that punish the Palestinian Authority – or reward Israel.

And it is this lesson that has the greatest impact on the leaders of the Palestinian Authority, for it places in stark relief the differences between the Arafat and Abbas strategy for achieving their dream of a Palestinian state. For while Abbas, as he has made clear, will not abandon his no-pain strategy when it comes to dealing with Israel, the Jerusalem decision has sewed abiding doubts among his followers, and among the Palestinian public, that the path he has chosen will ever succeed. It shows that Arafat was right: that the use of force must be a part of the Palestinian calculus, that the one thing that Israel understands is pain. So, it is that while President Trump's decision on Jerusalem might look like good news to Israel's supporters in the U.S., and good news inside the office of Israel's Prime Minister, it is actually bad news for Israel. For while the price of the decision will not be paid tomorrow, or next week, and perhaps not even until Mr. Abbas passes from the scene, it will be paid. And it will be bloody.

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President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the U.S. embassy to the city prompted this edited volume. Trump had already promised to make this move on the campaign trail but most of the foreign policy experts did not expect him to go forward with the idea as quickly as he did. Many judged that it would most likely be a promise unkept and the decades-old U.S. policy would hold. The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 recognized the city as the capital of the State of Israel and called for Jerusalem to remain an undivided city. However, all the U.S. administrations left the issue to be resolved between the parties as part of the final status negotiations. Prior to Trump's decision, most experts considered the peace process to be real in name only with very little prospect for a two-state solution. In this sense, Trump's decision was essentially a nail in the coffin of the peace process. The U.S. was finally openly admitting what many critics argued for a long time, that is, the U.S. would side with Israel.

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