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OCCASIONAL PAPERS

ISLAM, THE WEST,
AND JERUSALEM

Walid Khalidi



Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
& Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
Georgetown University

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*Islam, the West,
and Jerusalem*

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CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ARAB STUDIES
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Cover and title page art: Photo detail from the pulpit at al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, G. Eric Matson Collection, Library of Congress. Design by Maggy Zanger.

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Control of Jerusalem has been the source of prolonged conflict and tension between Islam and the West. In more recent times, as control of the city has passed from Islam to Britain and later to Israel, the issue remains a source of great tension between Islam and the West as well as, of course, between Islam and the Christian Arabs, on the one hand, and Judaism, on the other. This is so, because, rightly or wrongly, Israel is seen as a Western proxy and as the beneficiary of Western support in its quest to turn what it calls "United Jerusalem" into its "Eternal Capital."

The peace process that began with Oslo did not improve the situation. This is partly because, under Oslo, the issue of Jerusalem (along with that of the refugees and the settlements) was deferred to the final status phase of negotiations, partly because Israel continued to press on with the colonization of East Jerusalem and its environs despite Oslo, and partly because of American congressional legislation providing for the transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by 1999.

Let no one harbor any illusions: If under a Labor government a faint light may have existed at the end of the tunnel for the future of Jerusalem, it has just been snuffed out. The Likud might or might not start final negotiations on Jerusalem, but even if it does, the negotiations will be more in the nature of a dialogue of the deaf, guaranteed to preclude an outcome honorable to Arabs and Muslims. This will inevitably do grievous harm to the interests of Islam and Arab Christianity in the city, as well as to future relations between Islam and the West in general.

What makes such an outcome all the more potentially explosive is the convergence of an extraordinary range of developments which can only exacerbate it: the resurgence of the religious Right among Muslims, Christians, and Jews equally; what appears to be a Western search for a new enemy to replace Communism; and the rising sense of Muslim cultural beleaguerment in the face of advancing Westernization. During the period in which the fate of Jerusalem is ostensibly to be decided at the negotiating table, we have simultaneously the US elections later this year; the triumphalist thirtieth anniversary of the Israeli conquest of East Jerusalem and the one-hundredth anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, both in 1997; the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Israel in 1998; and the concurrence of a Likud government with the final status phase of negotiations that are supposed to end in 1999—all this accompanied by heightened apocalyptic feelings all around as we approach the end of the millennium.

There is clearly not much to be optimistic about with regard to the future of Jerusalem. The danger that stares us in the face is embedded in memories at various levels of consciousness on both sides, memories that have derived from the historical conflict over Jerusalem and that go all the way back to the advent of Islam in the seventh century AD. This is precisely why all this irresponsible talk about the “clash of civilizations” has such resonance.

The combination of all these circumstances could provide an environment in which Jerusalem might well become the catalyst of prolonged confrontation well into the twenty-first century, with the forces of Western Christendom and Judaism ranged on one side, and those of Islam and Arab Christianity, on the other.

The major premise of the proponents of a “clash of civilizations” is that Islam lies outside the Judeo-Christian tradition. This is nonsense, because Islam’s major premise is that it is integral to and indeed the culmination of the Judeo-Christian scriptural tradition. Central to Islam’s concept of God’s purposes is that He has revealed himself to humankind since creation through a succession of prophets and scriptures. Foremost among these scriptures are the Torah and the Gospels, *Injil*, but the Qur’an is the final Revelation. Eighteen Hebrew patriarchs and prophet kings are mentioned reverentially in the Qur’an, though Muhammad is the last, the “seal,” *al-khatim*, of all earlier prophets. Among these 18 Hebrew prophets, pride of place is accorded in the Qur’an to Abraham, who is described as a Muslim and as the builder of the *Ka’bah* itself, Islam’s most sacred shrine. In Muslim tradition, Abraham is the Friend, *al-Khalil*, of God—hence the town in which he is reputed to be buried, Hebron in the West Bank, is known in Arabic simply as *al-Khalil*. Likewise, Moses is the Interlocutor of God, *al-Kalim*, while Joseph is the Truthful, *al-Siddiq*. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, is called *al-Siddiq* after Joseph because of his truthfulness and steadfast belief in Muhammad’s prophetic mission. Recently, the Muslim religious authorities in Egypt banned an Egyptian film for sacrilege because it depicted Joseph visually.

Of course there are major doctrinal differences between Islam and Christianity, as there are between Judaism and Christianity, on the self-same cardinal concepts of the Trinity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, but it is the same God that the three faiths worship. Some of the epithets with which the Qur’an describes God are the following: *al-Awwal*, the First; *al-Akhir*, the Last; *al-Badi’*, the Absolute Originator; *al-Ghani*, the Self-Sufficing; *al-Alim*, the Knower; *al-Haqq*, the Reality; *al-Nur*, the Light; *al-Khalik*, the

Creator; *al-Muhyi*, the Giver of Life; *al-Mumit*, the Giver of Death; *al-Ba'ith*, the Resurrector; *al-Rahman*, the Merciful; *al-Ghafur*, the Much Forgiver; *al-Ra'uf*, the Kind; *al-Wadud*, the Loving; *al-Hadi*, the Guide; *al-Wali*, the Patron; *al-Razzaq*, the Provider; *al-Mughni*, the Sufficer.

The Qur'an accords Jesus Christ a very special status. He was born of Mary, a virgin, by the direct creative act of God. Jesus is a Word, Logos, *Kalima*, of God. This is the creative word "Be," *Kun*, which God cast into Mary. He is a spirit, *ruh*, from God and blessed, *mubarak*. He is a sign, *aya*, and mercy, *rahma*. He brought proofs, *bayyinat*, and wisdom, *hikma*, and was aided by God with the Holy Spirit, *Ruh al-Qudus*. Jesus was seen to possess peculiar miraculous powers which the Qur'an does not accord Muhammad himself. According to the Qur'an, Jesus spoke in his cradle, healed the sick, and raised the dead.

Mary, too, is the object of special veneration in the Qur'an and is mentioned throughout, from the oldest Meccan to the later Medinan chapters. As noted, the Virgin Birth is celebrated as is the Annunciation. The Qur'an has Mary saying to the angel who announces to her the birth of a male child: "How should I have a son, seeing no mortal has touched me?"⁷¹ But the angels reply: "O Maryam, Verily God has elected thee and purified thee and elected thee above all women."⁷² There follows the description of her birth pangs in one of the most moving passages of the Qur'an.⁷³

Thus Jews and Christians were "People of the Book," belonging to the same scriptural tradition. As such, under Islam's rule, they were guaranteed freedom of worship and property and were not called upon to convert to Islam.

All this informs the way in which Islam looks at both Judaism and Christianity—a perspective that is missing in the way Judaism and Christianity look upon Islam.

Because of the perception by Islam of an intimate kinship with Judaism and Christianity, much that is holy to Judaism and Christianity is holy to Islam as well. And much of that is centered in Jerusalem. In addition, Jerusalem is holy for purely Muslim reasons. Thus, for Islam, Jerusalem is thrice holy.

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Jerusalem was the direction of prayer, *qibla*, towards which the earliest Muslims turned before Mecca became their *qibla*. To this day, Jerusalem is known by Muslims as “the first of the two *qiblas*.” Its holiness was further consecrated in a Qur’anic verse that describes a miraculous nocturnal journey, *isra’*, by the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem.⁴ According to Muslim tradition, it was from Jerusalem that Muhammad ascended to Heaven, *mi’raj*, to within “two bow-lengths” of the presence of God.⁵

The Prophet’s *isra’* to and *mi’raj* from Jerusalem became the source of inspiration for a vast body of devotional Muslim literature, as successive generations of Traditionists, Qur’anic commentators, theologians, and mystics added their glosses and embellishments. In this literature, in which the Prophet is made to describe his visits to Hell and Paradise, Jerusalem lies at the center of Muslim beliefs, literal and allegorical, concerning life beyond the grave. This literature is in circulation to this day in the languages spoken by nearly one billion Muslims: Turkic and Persian, Urdu and Hindi, Malay and Javanese. To this day, too, the Night of the *mi’raj* is annually celebrated throughout the Muslim world on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month of the Muslim calendar with narrations of the event, processions, special prayer services, fasting, and almsgiving. The story of the *mi’raj* was, incidentally, a source of inspiration for Dante’s

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Divine Comedy, much of whose structure and many of whose themes bear a striking resemblance to Muslim accounts of the *mi’raj*.⁶

A particular link also exists between Jerusalem and one of the five pillars of Islam—the five daily prayers, *salat*. According to Muslim tradition, it was during the Prophet’s *mi’raj* that, after conversations between the Prophet and Moses, the five daily prayers observed throughout the Muslim world became canonical.⁷

Parallel to this body of literature concerning the *isra’* and *mi’raj* is another vast corpus of devotional writings concerning the “excellencies” or “virtues,” *fada’il*, of Jerusalem. These began in the late ninth century AD and continue to this day. In these writings, Jerusalem is the site of the Day of Resurrection and the Last Judgment when the Anti-Christ will emerge and be vanquished. The writings detail the special recompense that awaits the believer who visits

Jerusalem and who prays, resides, fasts, or dies there. They also illustrate the depth of Islam's acknowledgment of its Hebrew and Christian moorings.

Let me quote two examples. The first is by Burhan al-Din al-Fazari, preacher at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, born in 1262 AD.

The treasure of the world is Jerusalem. Who prays in Jerusalem, it is as if he prayed in the nearer Heavens. All the lands shall be destroyed, but Jerusalem shall prosper. The first thing that was disclosed from the waters of the Flood was the Rock of Jerusalem. God shall assemble his creatures unto Jerusalem.

The angels are in serried ranks round about Jerusalem. God forgives who comes to Jerusalem. God announced to Mary the good news of Jesus in Jerusalem. Who fasts a day in Jerusalem, it will mean his immunity from the Fire.

God directs his regard toward Jerusalem every morning, and showers upon its people His mercy and His benefits. . . . The dew which descends upon Jerusalem is a remedy from every sickness, because it is from the gardens of Paradise.⁸

The second example, written some 400 years later, in 1689, is by Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, the leading intellect and mystic of his day in Syria-Palestine.

My Lord David: We come to you, abject and penitent, but proud to prostrate ourselves at your doorstep.

My Lord David: The revealed scriptures resonate with your praises, and the mountains nightly echo their glorification.

My Lord David: Lend us, your slaves, a shield from your armory against our pain, for your bounty envelops all Arabs and non-Arabs alike.⁹

In 638 AD, the Muslim Arabs with the help of native Christian Arabs captured Jerusalem from its Christian Byzantine rulers. For some 300 years previously, Jerusalem had been a wholly Christian city (the Jews having been barred from residing there). Until the end of World War I, and except for the Crusader inter-

lude, Jerusalem remained under Muslim rule continuously for some eleven hundred years—longer than Britain has been Norman and three times longer than the period which has elapsed since the *Mayflower* first sighted the shoreline of the Americas.

Omar, the second caliph after Abu Bakr, came in person to accept Jerusalem's surrender, attesting to the reverence in which the city was held by Muslims. Omar guaranteed the lives, properties, churches, and freedom of worship of the city's Christian inhabitants. These guarantees became known as the Covenant of Omar, which established the norms of conduct vis-à-vis the non-

Muslim population of Jerusalem for subsequent generations and specifically for the two subsequent Muslim conquerors of Jerusalem: Saladin (1187) and the Ottoman Sultan Selim (1516).¹⁰ Indeed, upon the latter's entry into Jerusalem he was shown a copy of Omar's Covenant, whereupon he placed it on his head in obedience.¹¹

The magnanimity and noblesse oblige with which these Muslim conquerors at the zenith of their military and political power behaved towards the non-Muslim inhabitants of the city is in contrast to the conduct of the city's other conquerors both before and after.

The magnanimity and noblesse oblige with which these Muslim conquerors at the zenith of their military and political power behaved towards the "other"—the non-Muslim inhabitants of the city—is in contrast to the conduct of the city's other conquerors both before and after. According to Steven Runciman, the pre-eminent historian of the Crusades, the Crusader knights, for example, waded with their horses knee deep in the blood of the massacred Muslim and Jewish civilian inhabitants of Jerusalem.¹² It was in the wake of the entries of Omar,

Saladin, and Selim into Jerusalem that Jews were allowed in increasing numbers to live in the city under Muslim protection.¹³

The most palpable reflection of Islam's reverence for Jerusalem is in its architecture. What is known in the West as the Temple Mount lay vacant at the time Omar entered the city. The Byzantines had used it as a garbage dump. But to the Muslims it contained the Rock from which the Prophet's *mi'raj* is believed to have taken place. According to the Muslim chroniclers, Omar started to clean it up in person, carrying the dirt in his own robe. His entourage and army followed suit until the whole area was cleansed and

sprinkled with scent, whereupon Omar built the first Muslim mosque on it.¹⁴ In the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the time, Omar's capture of Jerusalem was seen as an act of redemption from the Byzantines.¹⁵

Following in Omar's steps, two caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty ruling from Damascus, Abd al-Malik (d. 705) and his son al-Walid (d. 715), built respectively the magnificent mosques of the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa which to this day grace the city of Jerusalem. The Mosque of the Dome of the Rock is the earliest surviving mosque of Islam—older than the surviving mosques of either Mecca or Medina.¹⁶ The inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock are our earliest dated fragments of the Qur'an.¹⁷ Down through the centuries, and under subsequent Muslim dynasties ruling from Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Constantinople, a wide variety of buildings and institutions were constructed in Jerusalem out of a sense of attachment to and veneration for the city: mosques, theological colleges, convents for Sufi mystics, abodes for holy men, schools of the *hadith* (sayings) of the Prophet, schools of the Qur'an, orphanages, suqs, hospitals, hospices for pilgrims, fountains, baths, pools, inns, soup kitchens, places for ritual ablution, mausoleums, and shrines to commemorate the Prophet's Nocturnal Journey, or a Hebrew patriarch, or an eschatological theme. These buildings were maintained through a system of endowment in perpetuity (*waqf*) sometimes involving the dedication of the revenues of entire villages in Palestine, Syria, or Egypt. The donors were caliphs and sultans, military commanders and scholars, merchants and officials, including a number of women. Their philanthropy bears witness to the importance of Jerusalem as a Muslim center of residence, pilgrimage, retreat, prayer, study, and burial.¹⁸ The most striking monumental contribution of the Ottoman period is the magnificent walls that surround the present-day "Old City." In the first flush of victory in the 1967 war, Ben Gurion wanted these walls destroyed because they were such a powerful reminder of the Islamic character of the city.¹⁹

I have so far dwelt on the Muslim connection with Jerusalem, because this is the least known in the West. But also little known

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or mentioned in the West is the particularly intimate historical and emotional connection between the modern Christian Palestinians and Jerusalem. The earliest Christian community was composed almost exclusively of Jerusalem converts from Judaism. Before the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 AD, St. Simeon,

remembering Christ's warning of the approaching destruction of the city, led his Jerusalem flock to Pella (Khirbet al-Fahil) in Transjordan. They returned to Jerusalem to live in its ruins after its destruction.²⁰ It was St. Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, who in 325 AD obtained the permission of Emperor Constantine to destroy the massive constructions built by Hadrian over the Jewish and Christian holy sites that Hadrian had devastated.²¹ It was the local oral tradition preserved by the Jerusalem Christian community during the 200 years between Hadrian and

Constantine that revealed the sites of Calvary and the Resurrection under the debris of Hadrian's dismantled superstructures. This then paved the way for the great Byzantine architectural legacy in Jerusalem.²² The Palestinian Christians of today are the closest spiritual and lineal descendants of these early pre-Islamic Christian communities.

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The 1947 United Nations General Assembly partition resolution envisaged a Jewish and a Palestinian state, as well as a special regime for Jerusalem—a *corpus separatum* under UN Trusteeship. The *corpus separatum* comprised the entire city of Jerusalem within its Mandatory municipal boundaries. To this area were added some 20 Arab villages. The population of the *corpus separatum* was just under 100,000 Jews and 105,000 Arabs.

The most important thing to remember about the UN partition resolution with regard to Jerusalem is that the city was not to be in either the envisaged Jewish or Palestinian state—hence the *corpus separatum*.

What is most remembered about the 1947 UN partition decision is that the Arabs rejected it and the Jews accepted it. The Arabs *did* reject it, with the exception of King Abdallah, and the official Jewish leadership *did* accept it. But what is not remembered is that the Zionist Revisionist camp and its two military

organizations, the Irgun and the Stern group (from which the Likud is directly descended) did *not* accept partition. At the same time, verbal acceptance of partition by the official Jewish leadership did not mean acceptance of the *corpus separatum* that was an integral part of the UN partition plan. As is witnessed by the Haganah's Plan Dalet,²³ the Jewish leadership was determined to link the envisaged Jewish state with Jerusalem in the *corpus separatum*. But as the *corpus separatum* lay deep in Arab territory, in the middle of the envisaged Palestinian state, this could only be accomplished militarily. As of early April 1948—before the end of the British Mandate and before the entry of the regular Arab armies—the Jewish forces launched two major military offensives for the conquest of Jerusalem: one from Tel Aviv towards Jerusalem through territory assigned by the partition resolution to the Palestinian state, and the other starting from the Jewish quarters within the city itself.²⁴ It was in the course of the second offensive that the whole of today's West Jerusalem fell to the Haganah and that the massacre at Dayr Yasin was perpetrated at the hands of the Irgun and Stern groups, led by former prime ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, respectively.

Even before the scheduled end of the Mandate on May 15, 1948, Haganah's objective was the conquest not only of the whole of municipal Jerusalem but of the larger area of the *corpus separatum* itself.²⁵ It was thwarted only by the last-minute intervention of the Arab Legion of Transjordan under King Abdallah, grandfather of Jordan's current King Hussein.

Thus present-day Jewish control of West Jerusalem and of a so-called "corridor" linking it to the coast was achieved by military conquest in violation of the partition resolution that gave birth to the Jewish state itself. This is why the international community, including the United States, has up to now never explicitly recognized Israeli sovereignty even over West Jerusalem.

As for the impact of the 1967 war, two major arguments have been pressed by Israel to justify its conquest of East Jerusalem and its actions there since then. The first is the denial by Jordan of access to the Wailing Wall in the period between the 1949

The most important thing about the UN partition resolution with regard to Jerusalem is that the city was not to be in either the envisaged Jewish or Palestinian state—hence the corpus separatum.

Armistice and the 1967 war. The second is that King Hussein fired the first shots in Jerusalem in the 1967 war.

The denial of access between 1949 and 1967 has been presented as an example of Muslim intolerance. This is nonsense,

as is obvious from more than a millennium of Muslim treatment of Jews in Jerusalem. Also obvious from the historical record is that before the advent of political Zionism, the Wailing Wall had never been an object of Arab-Jewish controversy.²⁶ Access to the Wailing Wall between 1949 and 1967 was a casualty of the 1948 war itself, alongside many other casualties—such as the 750,000 Palestinian refugees and the loss of their properties and lands in a score of towns and more than 400 Palestinian villages.²⁷

Given Israel's repeated emphasis on access to the Wailing Wall between 1949 and 1967, one might ask about access today to the Christian and Muslim holy places denied to the hundreds of thousands of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians barred from entering "united Jerusalem" under Israel's continuing closure policies.

Hussein's "war guilt" of having fired the first shots in Jerusalem in June 1967 has given Israel the so-called "self-defense" argument it uses as blanket justification for its seizure of East Jerusalem and all its actions there since then. What isn't mentioned is that Hussein's "first shots" *followed* Israel's surprise attack on Egypt, already far advanced that morning of June 5. Perhaps the most telling commentary on all this comes from Yitzhak Rabin, chief of staff during the 1967 war:

In 1948 we had been forced to leave East Jerusalem in the enemy's hands, and ever since the outbreak of the present war [1967] we had been dogged by the feeling that we must not miss the historic opportunity again.²⁸

In retrospect, it is ironic to observe the fervor with which not only Labor but also Likud embrace King Hussein, while the Palestinians in East Jerusalem continue to be punished for his alleged "war guilt" in 1967.

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Today, the basic concept that seems to inform all discussion on Jerusalem is that of the “unity of Jerusalem.” In principle, the concept sounds worthy of the Golden City and its ecumenical significance to humanity.

On closer scrutiny, however, a different reality emerges.²⁹ Sixty-six percent of so-called “united Jerusalem” is territory seized by force in 1967. Of that, 5 percent is what had been the Jordanian municipality of Jerusalem and 61 percent is West Bank territory annexed into the Jordanian municipal area. Before 1948, Jewish land ownership in that 66 percent was less than 3 percent.³⁰ Even the Jewish Quarter of the Old City was Jewish primarily in tenancy; most of the quarter belonged to old Jerusalem families as *waqf* (Islamic endowments).³¹

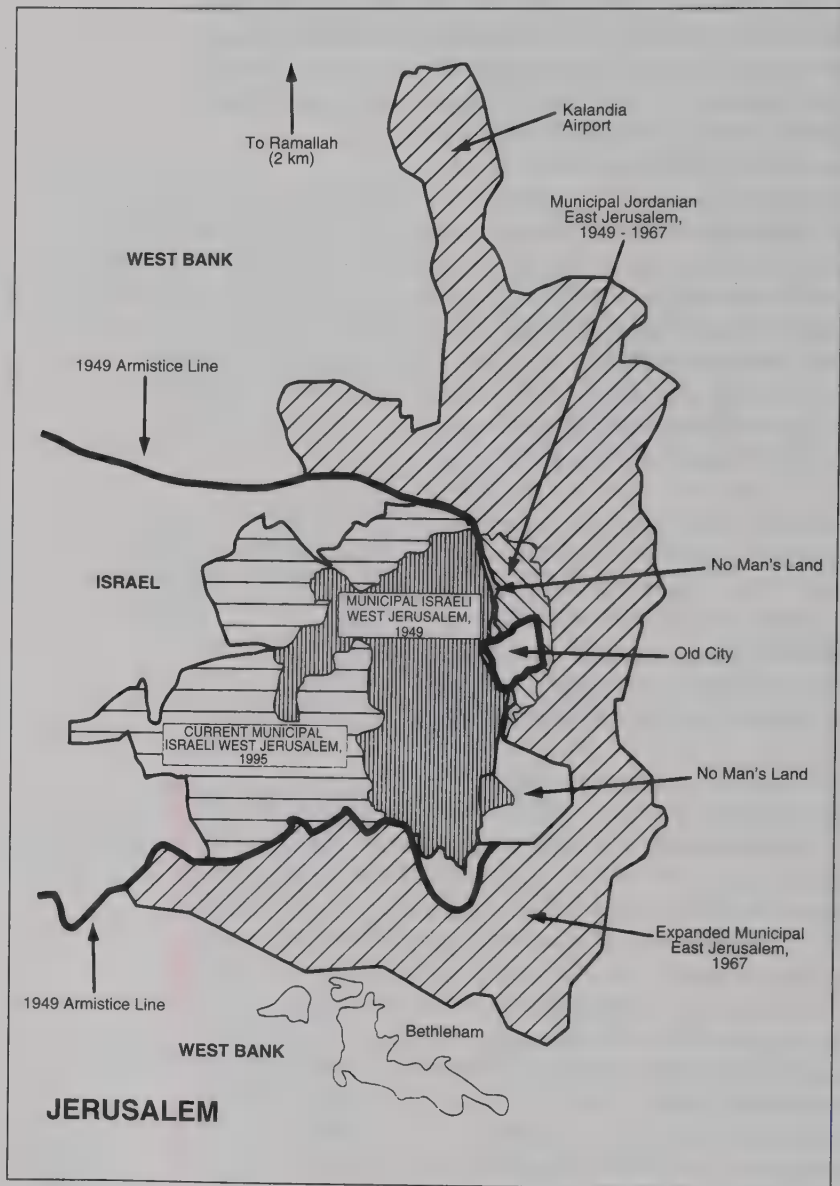
As for the remaining 34 percent of “united Jerusalem” that is today’s West Jerusalem,³² Jewish-owned property there before 1948 did not exceed 20 percent overall; the rest belonged to Christian and Muslim Palestinians and to international Christian bodies.³³ This sector contained the most affluent Palestinian residential quarters as well as most of the Palestinian commercial sector.

This West Jerusalem also included the lands of the occupied or destroyed villages of Dayr Yasin, Lifta, Ayn Karem, Maliha, Romema, Shaykh Badr, and Khallat al-Tarha. Most of the Israeli government buildings in this area, including the Knesset, are built on Palestinian land. Thus, the great bulk of “united Jerusalem” is, quite simply, conquered and arbitrarily expropriated land.

In terms of the population in this “united Jerusalem,” some 170,000 Jews now live in settlements established in those parts of Jerusalem seized in 1967, whereas only about 3,000 Jews had lived in those same areas prior to 1948.³⁴ In contrast, to this day virtually no Palestinians are allowed to live in West Jerusalem, whereas more than 35,000 fled or were expelled from that part of the city during the 1948 fighting and thereafter. This figure includes the inhabitants of the villages just mentioned, which were incorporated in the West Jerusalem city limits after 1948.³⁵

Nor are the current municipal borders of Jerusalem the limit of Israel’s ambitions for Jerusalem. Israel has already surrounded East

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Jerusalem with concentric rings of colonies on West Bank territory outside but contiguous to the municipal borders of the city. The plan, already well advanced, is to integrate these colonies with united municipal Jerusalem in order to create Greater or Metropolitan Jerusalem. Under Likud, this plan will be pressed forward at an even more frenetic pace than under the Labor government. The resultant Metropolitan Jerusalem will cover twice the surface area of present-day municipal "united Jerusalem."³⁶ A great advantage and indeed the prime objective of this strategy for Israel is that the more Palestinian territory that is alienated from the West Bank in the name of Metropolitan Jerusalem, the less the physical, political, and psychological space that will be left for the Palestinians there in the West Bank. One can count on Netanyahu to carry this strategy to its very farthest extent.

Soon after Balfour made his Declaration in 1917, he told his cabinet:

Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-old traditions, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.³⁷

In a sense, the Balfour Declaration was the West's response to what Saladin had told Richard the Lionheart some 800 years earlier in a letter before Richard's departure from Palestine:

Jerusalem is our heritage as much as it is yours. It was from Jerusalem that our Prophet ascended to heaven and it is in Jerusalem that the angels assemble. Do not imagine that we can ever abandon it. Nor can we possibly renounce our rights to it as a Muslim community. As for the land, your occupation of it was accidental and came about because the Muslims who lived in the land at that time were weak. God will not enable you to build a single stone in this land so long as the war lasts.³⁸

If the Balfour Declaration was the West's twentieth-century response to Saladin, the specific pro-Zionist form the response took was the result of momentous developments that had occurred within Christendom since the Catholic Crusades. These momentous developments were the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism, with its heavy emphasis on the Old Testament.

This intoxication with the Old Testament reached its zenith in Puritanical England in the seventeenth century. It subsided in the eighteenth century—the Age of Reason—only to be powerfully recharged, partly in reaction to the French Revolution, in the revival of Evangelicalism early in the nineteenth century with its persistent advocacy of the return of the Jews to Palestine.

The lay leader of English Evangelicalism in the nineteenth century was Lord Ashley, the Earl of Shaftesbury. But if, as the historian Barbara Tuchman recounts, Shaftesbury had carried the Bible pointing toward the Jewish return to Palestine 20 years before the founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, was born, the imperial sword pointing in the same direction was carried by a succession of British statesmen starting with Lord Palmerston.³⁹ Symbolically, the first British Anglican bishop appointed to Jerusalem in 1841 was transported on an Admiralty boat.⁴⁰

It is in this tradition, which froze the history of Palestine within the timeframe of the Old Testament, that Balfour spoke. And it is this tradition which, to one observer at least, is very much in the background of contemporary American congressional legislation on Jerusalem.

If my correlation between the Balfour Declaration and the Crusades could appear somewhat far-fetched to some, it is probably worth noting that General Allenby's offensive towards Jerusalem in December 1917, a few weeks after the Declaration itself, was intended by him as a "Christmas present" to the British people.⁴¹ It is also worth noting that a cartoon in the famous London weekly *Punch* marking Allenby's capture of Jerusalem was entitled "The Last Crusade." It depicted Richard the Lionheart gazing at Jerusalem with the caption: "At last my dream come true."⁴² Likewise, the memorial of Sir Mark Sykes, of Sykes-Picot fame, the architect of the New Order in the Middle East after World War I who died in 1919, is "a figure blazoned in brass, armored and bearing a sword. Under his feet lies a Muslim, and above him is a scroll inscribed *Laetare Jerusalem* (Rejoice, Jerusalem)." The memorial is at Sledmere, Yorkshire, Sir Mark's home.⁴³

It is precisely because of the microcosmic significance of Jerusalem in the larger conflict that, in our search for a middle ground between palpable injustice and the mirage of full justice, we seek in it the potential healing power of a historical reconciliation.

What are the prospects for an honorable and peaceful solution in Jerusalem? As things stand, and especially with the Likud in power, the prospects are nil. But this does not mean that human ingenuity is incapable of devising such a solution, or that its ingredients are impossible to identify. In devising it, however, it is essential to keep in mind not only the vastness of the changes wrought on the ground since 1948 and 1967, but also the extent of their asymmetry in favor of one side. In this way, we take cognizance of both *realpolitik* and equity. Of course, the situation as it has evolved in Jerusalem is but a microcosm of what has happened throughout Mandatory Palestine since 1948. But it is precisely because of the microcosmic significance of Jerusalem in the larger conflict that, in our search for a middle ground between palpable injustice and the mirage of full justice, we seek in Jerusalem the potential healing power of a historical reconciliation.

What are the ingredients of such a reconciliation in Jerusalem? I have no doubt that it must be premised on the following four cardinal principles:

1. No monopoly of sovereignty in both halves of the city by any one party. This is the master key.
2. No aristocracy of religious rights according preeminence to the religious status of any single faith.
3. No conqueror-conquered, confiscator-confiscated, and displacer-displaced in the relations between Jerusalem's residents.
4. Equal cognizance of both the religious and political dimensions of Jerusalem for all sides. The quintessence of the Jerusalem issue has been—and *is*—precisely the inextricable link between its secular and religious dimensions. Unlike any other city, and in the circumstances that surround it today, Jerusalem cannot be the capital of any one nation or any one faith.

I believe that any fair-minded person will agree that these four principles could still be accommodated without encroachment on any legitimate Israeli or Judaic rights. And here, for the record, is my ten-point proposal for doing so:

1. East Jerusalem would be the capital of Palestine, with its own municipality in the extended municipal 1967 borders; West Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel.
2. The borders between West and East Jerusalem would follow the 1967 lines, but be open both ways—"sovereignty without walls"—subject to agreed security arrangements.
3. The Jewish Quarter in the Old City, the Wailing Wall plaza, and the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives would have extraterritoriality.

4. An agreed number of Jewish residents of East Jerusalem would remain, as Israeli citizens, with their own boroughs within the Palestinian municipality of East Jerusalem.
5. Each religion would be in exclusive charge of its own holy places and institutions, but an interecclesiastical council with a rotating chairmanship would promote interfaith harmony.
6. Central structures with rotating chairmanships would exist at both an interministerial and an intermunicipal level to address political and infrastructural issues respectively between East and West Jerusalem.
7. Land requisitioned by Israel but not built upon in East Jerusalem would revert to Palestinian hands.
8. The choice of compensation or return would be accorded Palestinian Jerusalemites.
9. Jewish colonies outside the extended 1967 municipal borders would be addressed in final status negotiations on settlements in the West Bank.
10. There would be an agreed transitional period.

As an ancient Jerusalemite and a recent US citizen, I am filled with foreboding at where we are all heading on Jerusalem if current US policy on Jerusalem persists. What Prime Minister Netanyahu wants in Jerusalem is no secret. The crucial question is whether Washington will accord him the same leeway in Jerusalem that it granted his two predecessors. There is no time to catalogue the progressive retreats from braver words on Jerusalem uttered by earlier administrations across five decades⁴⁴—a retreat that reached rout proportions in the Clinton administration, ostensibly to encourage the peaceful inclinations of former Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres.

*East Jerusalem would be
the capital of Palestine,
with its own municipality
in the extended municipal
1967 borders; West
Jerusalem would be the
capital of Israel.*

The problem of Jerusalem is compounded by the fact that the site chosen for the prospective US embassy in the former Palestinian residential quarter of Baqaa in West Jerusalem is, to use a euphemism, “confiscated” Palestinian property.

To be sure, the stand of the administration against the latest shamelessly *plus royaliste que le roi* posture of the Congress on the transfer of the embassy is welcome.⁴⁵ But even this stand would seem to indicate that the question of transfer is only a matter of time.

The problem with transferring the embassy is that it is the supreme expression of recognition. And given Washington's insistence on a "unified" Jerusalem, the paramount question remains: *Which* Jerusalem would Washington be recognizing? West Jerusalem? Or West Jerusalem *plus* the former Jordanian municipal Jerusalem? Or West Jerusalem *plus* the former Jordanian municipal Jerusalem *plus* the expanded municipal boundaries of East Jerusalem? Or West Jerusalem *plus* the former Jordanian municipal Jerusalem *plus* the expanded municipal boundaries of East Jerusalem *plus* the wide ring of extra-municipal colonies on the West Bank?

When first used by the US, the concept of an undivided Jerusalem was concurrent with US insistence on the applicability of the laws of belligerent occupation and of the Geneva Convention.⁴⁶ Is this still the case, or is Washington's support today of the "unity" of Jerusalem designed through obfuscation to cover up its abandonment of its former principled stand?

I say "through obfuscation" because Washington and the whole world know that the only unity that exists between the two halves of Jerusalem today was brought about, *mutatis mutandis*, by a virtual *Anschluss*.

The chief culprit in this obfuscation on the US side is the US Congress, which behaves as though it had a heavenly mandate to dispose of the future of Jerusalem without reference to the sensitivities of hundreds of millions of Christians and Muslims worldwide. The issue is dealt with as another item on Congress' domestic agenda, but unlike all other such items, it is not even accorded the courtesy of a public hearing. Thus, on Jerusalem, the US democratic process is suspended, accountability is thrown overboard, and what we have is policy by stealth. And this on an issue that touches upon American prestige and credibility globally, and which, if unresolved, could well herald the clash of civilizations prophesied by some.

It is no asset for the US to be associated with Israel's maximalist territorial and political objectives in Jerusalem which are central to Likud ideology.

It is no asset for the US to be associated with the fundamentalist religious spin that the Likud government will give to its exclusivist claims in Jerusalem.

*Those committed
to an honorable solution
must band together to
stop the forces of
fundamentalism—
Muslim, Christian, or
Jewish—slouching towards
their rendezvous in
Jerusalem.*

It is no asset for the US to site its embassy on confiscated Palestinian land, which is tantamount to retrospective endorsement of Israel's successive waves of seizure of Palestinian refugee properties and dispossession of their owners.

Palestinian Jerusalem, including its Muslim holy places and *awqaf*, is not the patrimony of any Arab incumbent in whatever Arab capital, but that of a billion Muslims and the Arab people of Palestine.

The area of David's ancient capital per se constitutes less than 1 percent of today's so-called united Jerusalem.⁴⁷ No religious, historical, economic, or security considerations informs the extended municipal boundaries of East Jerusalem, much less those of Metropolitan Likudist Jerusalem. What does inform them is ruthless gerrymandering in the service of solipsistic nationalism and a spirit of defiance of world opinion. And if this spirit of defiance draws its strength from inner fountainheads, it draws it in equal measure from a vast reservoir of permissiveness stretching from Capitol Hill to Pennsylvania Avenue.

The proposition of a clash of civilizations, far from being the latest in prognostication, is old hat. Remember Rudyard Kipling with his "East is East and West is West and ne'er the Twain shall meet"? But the proposition itself is not harmless old hat. It is tendentiously deterministic and ominous in its self-fulfilling potential. Its deepest flaw is that it abolishes human initiative. That is why a viable solution for Jerusalem must steal the thunder of all irredentists—of Crusades and proxy-Crusades, of jihads and counter-jihads.

That is why all those committed to an honorable and peaceful solution must band together to stop in their tracks the forces of fundamentalism—Muslim, Christian, and Jewish—slouching towards their rendezvous in Jerusalem.⁴⁸

But, especially with the recent developments in Israel, there is no way for this to happen without the leadership of the one country that has the power, the national interest, and the moral obligation to assume it.

On Jerusalem, the US democratic process is suspended, accountability is thrown overboard, and what we have is policy by stealth. And this on an issue that touches on US prestige and credibility globally, and which, if unresolved, could well herald the clash of civilizations prophesied by some.

Earlier I quoted the words of two Muslim mystics. I want to end with those of another—the incomparable Jalal al-Din al-Rumi.

The place that Solomon made to worship in,
called the Far Mosque, is not built of earth
and water and stone. . .

Every part of it is intelligence and responsive
to every other. The carpet bows to the broom.
The door knocker and the door swing together
like musicians. . . .

Solomon goes there every morning and gives guidance
with words, and in actions,
which are the deepest teaching. A prince is just
a conceit until he *does* something with generosity.⁴⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Qur'an XIX, 20.
2. Qur'an III, 42.
3. Qur'an XIX, 21-34.
4. Qur'an XVII, 1.
5. Qur'an LIII, 9.
6. Miguel Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, trans. and abridged by Harold Sunderland (London: John Murray, 1926), esp. pp. 67-76.
7. "Salat," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1974), p. 492.
8. Burhan al-Din al-Fazari, *Kitab Baith al-Nufus ila Ziyarat al-Quds al-Mahrus (The Book of Arousing Souls to Visit Jerusalem's Holy Walls)* translated into English by Charles D. Mathews under the title *Palestine-Mohammedan Holy Land*, Yale Oriental Series, Researches, Vol. XXIV (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 32-34.
9. *Al-Hadra al-Unsiyyah fi al-Rihla al-Qudsiyyah (The Pleasant Presence of a Jerusalem Visit)*, manuscript in writer's possession, p. 121.
10. Abdul Aziz Duri, "Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period," in K.J. Asali, ed., *Jerusalem in History* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1990), p. 106 ff.
11. F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 479 ff.
12. Sir Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), Vol. 1, p. 118 ff.
13. Dan Bahat with Chaim T. Rubinstein, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), pp. 83, 107, 116; Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life Under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 14 ff.
14. Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 185 ff.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
16. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: MacMillan, 1940), p. 264.
17. O. Grabar, "Kubbat al-Sakhra" in *Encyclopedia Islam*, Vol. 5, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), p. 298.
18. Michael Hamilton Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem* (Published on behalf of the British School of Archeology, Jerusalem, by World of Islam Festival Trust, 1987).
19. Evan M. Wilson, *Jerusalem, Key to Peace* (Washington, DC: The Middle East Institute, 1970), p. 129.
20. *A Survey of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Government Printer, 1946), reprinted by Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington, DC, 1991, Vol. II, p. 881.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 884.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Walid Khalidi, "Plan Dalet Revisited" with Appendices A, B, C, D, E, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (Autumn 1988), pp. 3-70; Appendices B and C are translations from Hebrew of Plan Dalet.
24. *Ibid.*, Appendix C, p. 36; and Uri Bar Joseph, *Israel and Transjordan in the War of 1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), p. 64 ff, including map on p. 67.
25. Benzion Dinur, ed., *Sefer Toldot Hahaganah (The History of the Haganah)*, 8 Vols. (Tel Aviv: The Zionist Library, Maarakhot, 1954-1972), chap. 70, p. 1395 ff.
26. *Report of the Commission by His Majesty's Government—with the Approval of the League of Nations to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931), reprinted by Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1968, p. 25 ff.
27. Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
28. Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1979), p. 111.
29. The following overall percentages of today's "united" Jerusalem for East and West Jerusalem are based on the following assessment of their respective areas: West Jerusalem in 1948, 16,261 dunums (d.) or 14% (one d. = 1000 square meters), West Jerusalem in 1967, an additional 23,000 d. or 20%, i.e., both combined is 39,261 d. or 34%; East Jerusalem under Jordan in 1967, 6,000 d. or 5%, East Jerusalem expanded by Israel after 1967, an additional 67,000 d. or 61%, i.e., combined is 73,000 d. or 66%.

Sarah Kaminker (former member of Jerusalem City Council in charge of planning Palestinian neighborhoods) gives the following figures respectively for East Jerusalem under Jordan and the West Bank territories annexed by Israel to expand East Jerusalem's borders: 6,500 d. under Jordan, plus 64,000 d. annexed by Israel, making the total area of East Jerusalem 70,500 d. (Paper presented by Kaminker at "Arab Jerusalem," 21st Annual Symposium of Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, April 18-19, 1996.)

Geoffrey Aronson gives the following overall percentages: West Jerusalem 35%, East Jerusalem under Jordan 4%, East Jerusalem (with the additional area annexed to Jordanian Jerusalem) 59%. Thus, West Jerusalem constitutes today 35% of "united" Jerusalem and East Jerusalem 63% (leaving 2% unaccounted for). "Settlement Monitor," *Journal for Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Autumn 1995), p. 136.

Meron Benvenisti gives the figures for Jordanian municipal Jerusalem and the additional annexed area as 6,000 d. and 67,000 d. respectively. *The Torn City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1976), p. 113.

30. Pre-1948 Jewish land ownership in present-day East Jerusalem was very limited. Within the Old City it comprised the "Jewish" Quarter whose area did not exceed 5 d. Outside the Old City it included the Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University compounds on Mount Scopus, both not exceeding 100 d., and the colonies of Atarot and Neve Yaacov with 500 and 489 d. respectively. *Jewish Settlement in Palestine*, Jewish National Fund Head Office, Jerusalem (March 1948), pp. 2 and 52 respectively.

31. According to Benvenisti (*op. cit.*, p. 239) Jewish-owned property before 1948 comprised about 20% of the Jewish Quarter, most of whose property was owned by Arabs who belonged to the city's leading families and who rented out their property to Jews "for extremely low rents."

32. See note 29 above.

33. Sami Hadawi, "Jerusalem," map with statistics (New York: Palestine Arab Refugee Offices, 1951?). Hadawi was a former senior offi-

cial in the Department of Land Settlement in Palestine under the British Mandate.

34. According to Benvenisti (*op. cit.*, p. 154), 1,700 Jews lived in the Jewish Quarter in early 1948. The number of pre-1948 Jewish colonists in Atarot and Neve Yaacov (see note 30 above) was 200 in each.

35. According to Benvenisti (*op. cit.*) "over 20,000" Arabs left West Jerusalem. These do not include the inhabitants of the villages listed here.

36. For Israel's Greater Jerusalem plans see "A Jerusalem Primer" in *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, DC: Foundation for Middle East Peace), February 1994.

37. "Memorandum by Mr. Balfour (Paris) Respecting Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, 1919," E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, First Series, Vol. IV, 1919 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), p. 340 ff.

38. Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad, *Al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyya*, ed., M. A. 'Sabih, (Cairo, 1927-1928), p. 187.

39. Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 175 ff.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

41. Theo Larsson, *Seven Passports For Palestine* (Sussex: Longfield, 1995), p. 26.

42. Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 384.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Examples of earlier statements from different administrations follow.

(a) "The world religious community has claims in Jerusalem which take precedence over the political claims of any particular nation. . . ." Secretary of State Dulles, address to nation, June 1, 1953 (Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 28, No. 729, June 15, 1953), p. 832.

(b) "Our own view has been and remains that the future of Jerusalem is a problem which falls within the purview of Security Council Resolution 242, 1967." US United Nations Rep. Goldberg, UN Security Council, May 21, 1968 (Provisional Verbatim Record 1426th Meeting S/PV. 1426), pp. 6-7.

(c) "The expropriation or confiscation of build-

ings, the construction of housing on such land, the demolition or confiscation of buildings, including those having historic or religious significance, and the application of Israeli law to occupied portions of the city are detrimental to our common interests in the city." US UN Rep. Yost, United Nations Security Council, July 1, 1969 (Provisional Verbatim Record, 1483rd Meeting, S/PV. 21483), pp. 56-61.

(d) "On the general question of constructing housing and other permanent civilian facilities in the occupied zone, including Jerusalem, our policy is to call for strict observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a party." Department of State spokesman Bray III, press conference, June 9, 1971 (Daily News Conference's Office of Press Relations, DOS, Vol. 61, June 1971), pp. 1-6.

(e) "We regret Israel's failure to acknowledge its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as its actions which are contrary to the letter and spirit of this convention. We are distressed that the actions of Israel in the occupied portion of Jerusalem give rise to understandable concern that the eventual disposition of the occupied section of Jerusalem may be prejudiced." US UN Rep. Bush, United Nations Security Council, September 25, 1971 (Provisional Verbatim Record, 1582nd Meeting, S/PV, 1582), pp. 166-67.

(f) "*Secretary Vance*: If you will go back to 1970 and the statements which were made at that time, we said then there was occupied territory in Jerusalem, namely East Jerusalem. . . .

"*Senator Sarbanes*: Is it the present position of our Government that East Jerusalem is occupied territory?

"*Secretary Vance*: That is the position, yes." Secretary of State Vance, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 20, 1980, Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, 96th Congress, 2nd Session, March 20, 1980 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980), pp. 12, 13, 20, 21, 25-28.

(g) "We will fully support the position that Jerusalem must be undivided and that its status must be determined through negotiations. We do not recognize unilateral acts with respect to final status issues. . . ." Secretary of State

Shultz, House Foreign Affairs Committee, September 9, 1982, AFPCD, 1982 Doc. #321 (Washington, DC: GPO 1985), pp. 760-61.

(h) "*Q*: There's a report that you're considering moving the US embassy in Israel to West Jerusalem. . . ."
"*The President*: I read these and was surprised, myself, to hear that there were some recommending that. No, I feel very strongly that this is not something we should do. This should be part of the negotiations if we're to have peace talks." President Ronald Reagan Q&A on trip to China, May 1, 1984, PP: RR, 1984 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1986), pp. 611-12.

(I) "My position is that the foreign policy of the US says we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem. And I will conduct that policy as if it's firm, which it is and it will be shaped in whatever decisions we make to see whether people can comply with that policy. And that's our strongly held view." President George Bush, press conference, Palm Springs, CA, March 3, 1990, AFPCD, 1990 Doc #370, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1991), p. 567.

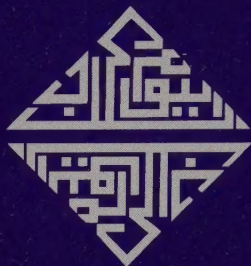
45. On May 9, 1995, Sen. Robert Dole and Rep. Newt Gingrich submitted identically worded bills to Congress which would have forced the administration to begin breaking ground on a new embassy site in Jerusalem before the end of 1996 and to open the embassy by May 31, 1999, under penalty of cutting State Department construction funds for FY 97-98, 98-99. As a result of opposition from the administration the Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act, passed on October 23, 1995, while adopting the substance of the Dole-Gingrich bill, provided for a presidential waiver suspending the opening of the embassy for successive periods of six months to protect US national security interests.

46. See note 44.

47. See Bahat with Rubenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

48. For Jewish fundamentalism in Israel and the threat it poses to the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, see Ian S. Lustik, *For the Land and the Lord* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988).

49. "The Far Mosque," *The Essential Rumi*, trans. by Coleman Barks with John Moyne (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), p. 191.



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