

SPECIAL FOCUS

FROM TEL AVIV TO JERUSALEM: AN EMBASSY MOVE AS THE CRUCIBLE FOR CONTESTED HISTORIES

The U.S. Embassy Move to Jerusalem: Mixed Messages and Mixed Blessings for Israel?

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Abstract

The U.S. decision in December 2017 to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem recognizes the latter as the capital of Israel. While violating several UN resolutions and international law, it has in the short-term impacted the negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. In the longer term we can see that the impact of the decision is also more complex and nuanced. There are three main areas which suggest this to be the case: First, the lack of clarity over the decision itself; second, the varying degrees of sovereignty exercised by Israel in different parts of Jerusalem due to the city's long and religiously diverse history; and thirdly, the contradictions inherent in imposing a nationalist ideology upon a cosmopolitan and heterodox city.

Keywords: Jerusalem, US Embassy, negotiations, Israel, PLO

Until December 2017, every embassy in Israel, including that of the United States, was located in Tel Aviv and not in Israeli West Jerusalem.² This arrangement denied Israel the international

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² The key texts that deal with U.S. policies toward Jerusalem are: Stephen Adler, "The United States and the Jerusalem Issue," *Middle East Review* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1985); Jody Boudreault and Yasser Salaam, eds.,

recognition of Jerusalem as its capital and signaled opposition, or at least uncertainty, toward the incorporation of Palestinian East Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1967, into the state of Israel. The refusal to locate embassies in the administrative center of Israel constitutes one of the very few total and comprehensive diplomatic boycotts of a fellow member state in the UN.

The U.S. participation in this boycott not only defied powerful political constituencies in the United States, but also endured even after Congress passed legislation intended to enforce the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem.³ Indeed, a common promise of successive U.S. presidential campaigns was to transfer the embassy to Jerusalem. Nonetheless, the U.S. embassy remained in Tel Aviv from 1948 until December 2017.⁴ Thus, the U.S. decision to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, finally recognizing in actuality the latter as the capital of Israel, not only violates UN resolutions and international law, but has also changed the logic of negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, handing the latter a reward for no concessions on its part. Still, the longer-term impact of this decision is harder to discern and more nuanced.

The immediate ramification of the decision was to kill off the prospect for peace negotiations over Jerusalem for the near future. Despite all the criticism directed against it, the United States has been a steadfast supporter of a negotiated solution. However much the country allied itself with Israel in the peace negotiations following the Oslo Accords of 1993, the Palestinian negotiators in the PLO knew that without U.S. involvement, any agreement with Israel would not be forthcoming. In addition, with its embassy move, at a stroke the United States has taken Jerusalem off the

US Official Statements: The Status of Jerusalem (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992). Yossi Feintuch, *US Policy in Jerusalem* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Donald Neff, "Jerusalem in U.S. Policy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23, no. 89 (Autumn 1993): 20–45; Shlomo Slonim, "The United States and the Status of Jerusalem, 1947–1984," *Israel Law Review* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 179–252. For a summary of U.S. policy on Jerusalem see Michael Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History and the Future of the Holy City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 76–180.

³ "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995," 104th Congress- 1st Session, effective November 8, 1995, accessed March 26, 2019, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-104s1322es/pdf/BILLS-104s1322es.pdf>. See also Walid Khalidi, "The ownership of the US Embassy Site in Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 80–101.

⁴ The previous policy caused enormous difficulties for the United States in reconciling its position on keeping the Embassy in Tel Aviv with its strong support for Israel in all other matters. See Natasha Mozgovaya, "What's the capital of Israel? Don't ask the U.S. State Department," *Haaretz*, March 28, 2012, last accessed February 19, 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5209356>. The U.S. Embassy was officially opened on May 14, 2018, on the site of the former U.S. consulate in West Jerusalem.

negotiating table. It also, as a consequence, has removed itself as a potential broker for any agreement between Israel and the PLO.

In the same vein, the U.S. move has deferred the prospect of an agreement on Jerusalem indefinitely since it appears to preempt any recognition of Palestinian counter-claims to the city, in addition to postponing negotiations over other important issues, including the evacuation of Israeli colonies or settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPts), security cooperation, and Israeli recognition of the state of Palestine. Without progress on the Jerusalem question, there can be no agreement on these other issues.

Thus, barring a significant shift in the balance of power in the region that would constrain the relative impunity with which Israel acts, there is little prospect of success for any peace negotiations. The Palestinians are unlikely to sign what would be, in effect, surrender terms – particularly when it comes to the question of control over the Islamic and Christian holy places of Jerusalem. In the longer term we can see that the impact of the decision is more complex and nuanced. There are three main areas which suggest this to be the case: First, the lack of clarity over the decision itself; second, the varying degrees of sovereignty exercised by Israel in different parts of Jerusalem due to the city's long and religiously diverse history; and thirdly, the contradictions inherent in imposing a nationalist ideology upon a cosmopolitan and heterodox city.

Confusion over the Recognition

The lack of clarity over the decision may turn out to be problematic for Israel. It was unclear, for example, whether the United States, by moving its embassy to Jerusalem, also ruled out a future Palestinian political role in the city.⁵ The announcement stated the United States was taking “no position on boundaries or borders,” making it unclear whether it specifically recognized Israeli sovereignty over Palestinian East Jerusalem. If it did not, did that mean the United States recognized Israeli sovereignty only over Israeli West Jerusalem? If it also recognized Israeli sovereignty over Palestinian East Jerusalem, other problems would arise. Which borders in East Jerusalem was it recognizing as part of the capital? The announcement left out mention of the two most relevant borders dividing Jerusalem: the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality borders, established

⁵ The President of the United States of America, “Recognizing Jerusalem as the Capital of the State of Israel and Relocating the United States Embassy to Israel to Jerusalem,” *Federal Register* 82, no. 236 (December 11, 2017).

after the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, and the militarized security border delineated by a separation barrier, also known as “the Wall.”

Thus, while the announcement dramatically heralds the U.S. intention to regard Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, it did not specify what geographical areas constituted that capital, which leaves a host of other more operational questions unresolved. What is the status of the U.S. 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act, which refers to the city as the “unified” capital of Israel? Will U.S. ambassadors be allowed to visit East Jerusalem and the Western Wall in their official capacity? A paper by the International Crisis Group explores this lack of clarity in greater detail:

Will U.S. officials be permitted to meet Israelis at ministries in East Jerusalem? Will passports of U.S. citizens born in East Jerusalem say “Israel” on them? Will settlement construction within municipal Jerusalem be treated differently? Can Netanyahu take Trump to the tower of David, the Western Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the U.S. president’s next visit? Can U.S. military personnel visit the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at Central Command headquarters in Neve Yaakov, in occupied East Jerusalem, without special dispensation?⁶

On top of this confusion, the announcement poses further and crucial questions for the other actors involved in the city, ranging from the PLO to the Kingdom of Jordan to the Vatican and other major religious organizations that own extensive property in the city.

The announcement seriously undermines the role of the Hashemite regime in Jordan. In 1994, King Hussein of Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel on the basis that Israel would recognize Jordanian custodianship over the Muslim and Christian holy sites of the city and that it would be consulted over any future dispensation. The PLO reluctantly accepted this agreement, and in 2015 Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed it to head off a crisis provoked by the installation of Israeli surveillance equipment in Islamic holy sites. The 2017 U.S. announcement throws this understanding into disarray. As a result, Jordan’s King Abdullah faces mounting criticism from his countrymen for allegedly failing to protect these sites and even for colluding with Israel to encroach

⁶ Ofer Zalzberg and Nathan Thrall, “Counting the Costs of U.S. Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s Capital,” International Crisis Group, December 7, 2017, last accessed February 19, 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/israelpalestine/counting-costs-us-recognition-jerusalem-israels-capital>.

upon them, which has increased the pressure on him to demonstrate support for the Palestinian position on Jerusalem.

The U.S. announcement apparently abandoned the notion that a peaceful resolution to the conflict over Jerusalem requires leaving open the possibility of reaching a future agreement. The removal of Jerusalem from the agenda, effectively accomplished by the U.S. announcement, pushes the conflict in the direction of violent reaction rather than negotiation.

The Many Borders of Jerusalem

Despite 52 years of occupation and settlement building, Israel has failed to establish hegemonic control over the predominantly Palestinian eastern parts of Jerusalem, so it is unclear whether the U.S. announcement will alter this situation on the ground. Professor Ian Lustick has drawn attention to the fact that Israel has actually refrained from fully annexing East Jerusalem. It has not, for example, imposed citizenship on the Palestinian residents of the city in the same way it did to the residents of the areas that fell outside the borders allocated to Israel by the 1947 Partition Plan. For example, in areas acquired by Israel after 1948, such as Galilee and the so-called Little Triangle in central Israel, the Israeli state imposed citizenship on the Palestinian Arab residents. In addition, Lustick points out that while the Basic Law of 1980 – the cornerstone of Israeli policy in Jerusalem – declared Jerusalem the “complete and united” capital of Israel, it omitted reference to any specific boundaries. Indeed, he argues that the ambiguity over annexation is a deliberate policy designed to avoid international censure and to maintain internal Israeli unity over the question of Jerusalem.⁷ In 2000, an amendment was passed to the Basic Law whereby it could not be repealed without a two-thirds majority of the Israeli Knesset.⁸ While this was clearly an attempt to consolidate Israeli hegemony over the city, it also served to underline its fragility by establishing legal hurdles in the way of any change.

Israel’s weak grip on Palestinian East Jerusalem comes despite an extensive settlement-building program to populate the area with Israeli Jewish nationals. Since 1967, Israel has transformed the demographic makeup of the city.⁹ There are approximately 316,000 Palestinians living in

⁷ Ian Lustick, “Has Israel Annexed Jerusalem?,” *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 1 (January 1997): 34–45.

⁸ *Laws of the State of Israel: 1948-1989*, authorized translation by the Ministry of Justice (Jerusalem: Government Printer).

⁹ Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, *Jerusalem: Facts and Trends 2018: The State of the City and Changing Trends*, 2018, <http://en.jerusalemstitute.org.il/.upload/jerusalem/Jerusalem%20Facts%20and%20Trends%202018-%202020.Population.pdf>. Further details can also be found in Michael Dumper, *The*

East Jerusalem and over 200,000 Israeli Jews, referred to as “settlers,” whereas virtually none had lived there in 1967. Furthermore, the construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian-owned land in East Jerusalem has restricted the land use available to existing Palestinian residents. A European Union report from 2014 stated that as a result of the land acquisition policies of the Israeli government “around 53% of the Israeli defined municipal area of East Jerusalem is unavailable for development and 35% has been designated for settlement [colony] use.” This leaves less than 13 percent of land to meet Palestinian needs and already much of this area is densely populated and built up.¹⁰

Combined with a number of additional measures to reduce the Palestinian population in the city, the effect of these changes in land ownership is twofold. First, it pushes the Palestinian population both to the margins of the city and also over the Wall and into the West Bank, where it is much more difficult to access schools, hospitals, family, and religious sites. Second, it increases the housing density to levels that pose structural and medical risks. Both these outcomes heighten the tension in the city.¹¹ The erection of the Wall between some of the inner and outer suburbs of East Jerusalem is the culmination of a “closure” policy dating back to 1992. Taken together, these changes have consolidated Israel’s physical control over Jerusalem, both east and west.¹²

Still, Israel has not managed to assert hegemonic control in East Jerusalem. Despite the huge investment in housing and infrastructure, the marginalization of Palestinians, the expense of surveillance and the

Politics of Jerusalem since 1967 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 53–88; and Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound*, 23–39.

¹⁰ Amira Haas, “EU Heads of Missions’ Annual Report on East Jerusalem,” *The European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine*, April 1, 2014, accessed March 29, 2019, <http://www.eccpalestine.org/eu-diplomats-warn-of-regional-conflagration-over-temple-mount/>. See also “East Jerusalem-The Current Planning Situation: A Survey of Municipal Plans and Planning Policy,” *Ir Shalem*, n.d. Different sources identify a date between 1997 and 2001 for the “East Jerusalem report.” Although the non-governmental organization *Ir shalem*, which translates to “whole city,” does not cite a specific author, it lists Seidemann as its “adviser,” who eventually founded *Terrestrial Jerusalem*, an “Israeli non-governmental organization that works to identify and track the full spectrum of developments in Jerusalem that could impact either the political process or permanent status options, destabilize the city or spark violence, or create humanitarian crises.” See, “About Terrestrial Jerusalem,” *Terrestrial Jerusalem*, accessed March 30, 2019, <http://t-j.org.il/AboutTJ.aspx>.

¹¹ Peter Beaumont, “Jerusalem at boiling point of polarisation and violence – EU report,” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2015, accessed March 30, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/20/jerusalem-at-boiling-point-of-polarisation-and-violence-eu-report>.

¹² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) secretariat, *The Palestinian War-Torn Economy: Aid, Development and State Formation* (April 5, 2006), 13–15, https://unctad.org/en/Docs/gdsapp20061_en.pdf.

extensive deployment of military personnel, East Jerusalem remains occupied territory in the eyes of the international community, and seen by many Israelis as not quite Israel. Polling data routinely identify most areas of East Jerusalem as dispensable in the opinion of Israelis if ceding it serves the interests of a broader peace agreement with the Palestinians.¹³ Indeed, on closer examination, Israeli political control and claims to sovereignty over East Jerusalem are undermined by numerous gaps and weaknesses in its exercise of that control. At the Camp David summit in 2000, therefore, the Israeli offers to the Palestinians over the Jerusalem issue were based upon a perception of political control and presence in East Jerusalem that misread the reality on the ground. Some background information is necessary to explain this assertion.

When Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967, one of the first laws it passed was to extend the West Jerusalem (Israeli) municipality to encompass the Jordanian Arab Jerusalem municipality and the surrounding areas. On the same day, however, it also passed the Law and Administration Ordinance Law whose ostensible purpose was to integrate East Jerusalem into the Israeli legal system. Significantly, this law established a series of “exemptions” that made the Israeli presence less intrusive in East Jerusalem. This has led to incongruity between political borders and security borders, to an inconsistent application of legal jurisdiction, and to varying degrees of service provision in East Jerusalem. For example, the law exempted Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem from many health and safety regulations, from labor laws, and from laws on the registration of businesses and money-changers.¹⁴

As a result, the Palestinian Arab commercial system was allowed to continue the practices of the Jordanian era. The draconian Israeli Absentee Property Law of 1950 was amended to exempt the residents of East Jerusalem from provisions that would otherwise have classified them as Jordanian, and technically residents or citizens of an “enemy” state, who were liable to have their property confiscated. The same law also prevented them from claiming their properties in West Jerusalem. It is in this context that the term “multiple borders of Jerusalem” has been coined.

¹³ See for example, Jerome M. Segal, et al., eds., *Negotiating Jerusalem* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); and Israel Kimhi, Maya Choshen and Yair Assaf-Shapira, *Jerusalem as a Component of Israel's National Security: Indicators of the State of the Capital, and a View to the Future* (Position Paper submitted to the 6th Herzliya Conference, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, January 2006), 15.

¹⁴ Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem*, 43–46; Terry Rempel, “The Significance of Israel's Partial Annexation of East Jerusalem,” *Middle East Journal* 51, no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 520–534.

These exemptions were not mere technicalities, but rather established a parallel system of justice, security, political representation, and administration unique to East Jerusalem. Similarly, Israel made concessions to Muslim and Christian religious organizations, giving them autonomy in their internal administrative arrangements over the holy places they oversaw. Significant parts of East Jerusalem, particularly in the Old City, are owned and administered by the churches or an Islamic foundation known as the Waqf Administration, which for most of the period since 1967 has been funded by the Jordanian government, which also appointed most of the senior personnel. The Waqf Administration is notably independent from any Israeli state institution while employing several hundreds of people and carrying out significant building works and community activities. Accountable to the Jordanian government but with a significant input from the PLO, it operates in the heart of territory that Israel claims as its capital.

Israeli presence and jurisdiction in East Jerusalem are constrained in many other ways. For example, the education system and curricula in most Palestinian schools in Jerusalem are not only almost identical to that of the West Bank, but also fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education of the Palestinian Authority. While Israel has succeeded in altering the curriculum in small ways, such as including Hebrew classes, the fact remains that the final matriculation (the *tawjihi*) is the same as that taken by other Palestinians in Ramallah or in Gaza.¹⁵ Other examples of how Israeli jurisdiction is both diluted and fragmented can be seen in the way water supplied to the northern Palestinian suburbs is piped by the Palestinian Ramallah Water Undertaking while electrical power in all Palestinian residential areas is supplied by the Palestinian-owned East Jerusalem Electricity Company, both of which are based in the West Bank. When one adds these factors to the wholesale neglect of the Palestinian residential areas by both the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the central government, one can see how they create a detachment from the Israeli state.

The policy of strategic neglect in East Jerusalem, described in considerable detail in a book by the former Israeli Mayor's Advisor on Arab Affairs, Amir Cheshin, and his colleagues,¹⁶ continues today. Despite housing 33 percent of

¹⁵ For further details see, Rawan Nuseibeh Asali, *Political Conflict and Exclusion in Jerusalem: The Provision of Education and Social Services* (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁶ Amir S. Cheshin, Bill Hutman, and Avi Melamed, *Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 410. Palestinian Jerusalemites pay the same tax rates as their Israeli counterparts whose per capita income is approximately eight times higher.

the city's residents, East Jerusalem is allocated just 12 percent of the municipal budget.¹⁷ The most basic services, such as rubbish collection and road maintenance, are sporadic or absent in East Jerusalem. In some cases, local residents have cooperated to provide their own private facilities where they are able, but much of Palestinian East Jerusalem is crowded and badly under-serviced. Sewage disposal is completely inadequate and Palestinian suburbs suffer regular overflows of sewage from inadequate septic tanks.¹⁸ Another report detailed further discrepancies: there are 680 kilometers of roads in West Jerusalem, in contrast to only 86 kilometers in East Jerusalem; there are 1,079 public gardens in West Jerusalem and only 29 in East Jerusalem; and there are 650 kilometers of sewage lines in West Jerusalem as opposed to only 76 kilometers in East Jerusalem. Gaps in services between the two communities amounting to more than 500 percent differences have been identified.¹⁹

The result is that East Jerusalem consists of a series of Palestinian enclaves detached to a large extent from the Israeli polity. After over fifty years of occupation, the most visible element of the Israeli state in these areas is the restrictive planning laws and the security forces. It is significant that customary and tribal law has been revived among the Palestinian residents of many of these enclaves. This could not have been the intention of those who passed the various laws of absorption in 1967 and the Basic Law in 1980. If it was the intention to create controlled urban ghettos on the apartheid-era South African model, then the demographic spread of the Palestinian population has rendered it a failure and undermined the Zionist vision of a Jewish Jerusalem. This is a point I will expand upon in the next section.

These policies have led to a seriously inadequate provision of basic municipal services, infrastructural development, and welfare programs in the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem. In an attempt to fill the vacuum left by the Israeli state, Palestinian and foreign charitable associations, religious organizations, the PLO, and the Jordanian government have all stepped in. One could also argue that Israeli failure to impose citizenship,

¹⁷ An EU report in December 2008 suggested that as little as 5–10 percent of Jerusalem's municipal budget is spent in Palestinian East Jerusalem. See, Rory McCarthy, "Israel annexing East Jerusalem, says EU," *Guardian*, March 6, 2009, accessed March 30, 2019, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/07/israel-palestine-eu-report-jerusalem>.

¹⁸ "Foul Play: Neglect of Wastewater Treatment in the West Bank," *B'Tselem*, June 2009, http://www.btselem.org/Download/200906_Foul_Play_eng.pdf.

¹⁹ Cheshin, Hutman, and Melamed, *Separate and Unequal*, 405.

the persistent boycott of Israeli institutions and municipal elections by Palestinian residents, their mass resignation from the East Jerusalem police force in 1987, and the collapse of the neighborhood council schemes during the first *intifada* led to a network of alternative representative bodies. It also led to East Jerusalemites referral of internal issues to the Palestinian National Authority and its appointees, instead of Israeli institutions such as the Knesset and Municipal council. After 1996, the first Netanyahu government tried to shut down this ‘alternative administration’ by shutting down the PLO-run Orient House and professional organizations such as the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce. However, these were replaced by the Awqaf Administration and church leadership, al-Quds University, and a myriad of smaller research and social institutions seeking to fill the gap rather than defer to Israeli institutions.

Palestinian elections that allowed East Jerusalemites to participate in presidential and legislative council elections – held under the Oslo Accord electoral law – only exacerbated the failure of Israeli administrations to function in the eastern part of the city. The election of Jerusalem parliamentarians to the Palestinian Legislative Council, while ineffective in delivering benefits to their constituencies, has formalized the exclusion of Palestinians from the Israeli polity.²⁰

It is also important not to overstate this argument. We should recognize, for example, that the health and National Insurance system in East Jerusalem has motivated many Palestinian East Jerusalemites, who had sought residency in the outlying suburbs in the seventies and eighties, to return to the more Israeli-controlled central parts of the city in the nineties. Similarly, the supply of water and power is still subject to Israeli controls and oversight in the context of their occupation of the West Bank, and the resulting “ghetto-ization” of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem offers many security advantages to the Israeli authorities.

Nevertheless, taken as a whole, these exemptions, lacunae, anomalies, and passive resistances mean that the city has numerous sub-political borders (See Map 1). This is not to ignore the municipal border, but there are also other important delineations crisscrossing Jerusalem that amount to multiple borders. There is the religious border, which ignores both the Armistice lines and the post-1967 borders; there is a commercial and banking border that distinguished Palestinian from Israeli areas; there is an educational border that does the same; there is a water border that

²⁰ Menachem Klein, *Jerusalem: The Contested City*, trans. Haim Watzmanv (New York: New York University Press in association with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies), 214ff.

incorporates parts of East Jerusalem into the West Bank; there is an electricity border that does the same; there is a service-provision border that creates neglected enclaves within the city; and there is an electoral border that also runs down the Armistice lines. Since the first *intifada*, there has been a separate security border from the municipal borders, one that now forms the basis of the separation Wall running through Jerusalem. While significantly changing the points of access between the outer suburbs and the center of Jerusalem, the point here is that this new security border is also neither congruent with the borders of the state of Israel nor the municipal provision borders established in 1967. Trying to identify which parts of East Jerusalem are fully under Israeli jurisdiction, or are as Israeli as pre-1967 Israel, is a complex if not impossible task.

The Contradictions of Ethno-Nationalism as Urban Policy

Another issue to address when considering the long-term impact of the 2017 U.S. announcement on Jerusalem is how it is perceived in relation to U.S. support of a Zionist vision for the future of the city. What is often overlooked in this commentary is the complex nature of cities and the contradictions that are inherent when ethno-nationalist ideologies determine the framework for sharing urban space and administration. Since 1967, ethno-nationalist political ideology, that is, Zionism, has driven Israeli policies in East Jerusalem.

As such, Israeli policies in Jerusalem are not dissimilar to those in other cities under the yoke of ethno-nationalism-based ideologies, such as Ulster Loyalists in Belfast, Maronites in Beirut, Serbian nationalists in several cities in former Yugoslavia, Han Chinese Communists in Lhasa, Hindu nationalists in many cities of northern India, and Malay nationalists in Kuala Lumpur and the east coast states of the Malaysian peninsula. In all these cases, one can see how the privileging of the dominant community is quite widespread but also how it leads directly to the marginalization of the subordinate community.²¹

Most cities have processes and institutions through which the needs of the subordinate community are recognized and addressed. Without them, disputes escalate into open conflict and areas become combat or no-go zones. In the case of Jerusalem, such processes and institutions are indeed absent. Despite attempts over the years since 1967 by Israel to coopt segments of the community or go over their heads by dealing directly

²¹ Michael Dumper, *Power, Piety and People: Holy Cities in the 21st Century* (Columbia University Press), forthcoming.

with the Jordanian government, the Palestinian community remains marginalized. As the subordinate community, it is deprived of resources and the means to determine the security of both its current status and future position in the city, due to the simple fact that they are not Israeli Jews.

In these sorts of urban governance cases, the subordinate community will look elsewhere for representation, for funds, and for protection, and will make political alliances outside the polity and across the region. Cumulatively, these links add up to a formidable constraint on the dominant community's attempt to control a city. This highlights the contradiction at the heart of urban ethno-nationalist governance: the ideology that seeks exclusive control over a city triggers the very forces that will resist the imposition of that ideology.

One major result of this contradiction, one pertinent to Jerusalem, is how this dynamic leads to the internationalization of an urban conflict. External actors are drawn in because of kinship, political and religious sympathies, and opportunism, forming a counterweight against ethno-nationalistic ideology. The 2017 U.S. announcement does not in any significant way address the emergence of this countervailing force in East Jerusalem. Stoking the fires of the conflict over Jerusalem is the presence of important holy sites that have mobilized a wide spectrum of external players. By acting unilaterally and by sidelining important external actors such as Jordan, Turkey, Morocco, and the Vatican in the debate over the future of the city, the United States may actually have done a disservice to Israel. Not a single other member of the international community has followed the U.S. lead in moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.²² Even if a few of them did, it still vividly illustrates the strength of the opposition to this ideologically driven attempt to incorporate East Jerusalem into Israel.

²² The Guatemalan and Australian governments have also recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. However, only Guatemala has moved its embassy to Jerusalem.