

Jerusalem should be the Israeli capital without dispute

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In keeping with President Trump's promise to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's de facto capital, the embassy is planned to open this week on May 14.

With so much of our attention being focused on the day-to-day activities of life, current events, upcoming elections and family activities, it is easy to forget how important it is to support Israel and its right to exist in peace.

The fact that Israel even exists is a miracle, and many believe, myself included, that it is a fulfillment of prophecy that this tiny country, about the size of the eastern third of the state of Oklahoma, has come to exist.

Reborn on May 14, 1948, Israel began its independence with a population of only 806,000, but now numbers over 7 million. Thousands of Jews still immigrate to Israel every year. Some come to escape persecution, but many others have moved there because they are, as a Jewish friend of mine once described it, strangely drawn to the place.

Barely more than a desert in 1948, Israel has become a leader in the middle east in agriculture, and is also poised to become one of the region's leading producers of natural gas and oil, estimating that there may be as much as 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil just offshore in the Mediterranean Sea.

With around 300 million enemies surrounding it, Israel has survived several major attacks from neighboring countries.

In 1948, immediately after it declared itself the State of Israel, five countries – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria – attacked, but even with few military resources, Israel defeated them.

In 1967, Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai, and Jerusalem after Egypt, Jordan and Syria attacked them in the Six Day War. What is not so well known is that Russia nearly entered that war, but because of America's pledge to protect Israel, a nuclear war was narrowly averted?

During that short 3-day war in 1967, the Israelis drove the Jordanian military forces out of East Jerusalem as well as from the West Bank. Just prior to the war, Palestinian guerrillas conducted attacks against Israel out of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. When Israel saw that Egypt, Jordan and Syria were mobilizing its military forces, it conducted a pre-emptive air assault that destroyed more than ninety percent of Egypt's military, and incapacitated Syria's air force.

Israel had captured western Jerusalem during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. At the conclusion of the 1967 War, it held all of Jerusalem.

Casualties were high on both sides, but lop-sided in numbers. While Israel suffered 700, the Arab countries that attacked it suffered over 11,000.

In 1973, Egypt and Syria again attempted to destroy Israel on the holiest day in Judaism, Yom Kippur, but again Israel defeated them. Nuclear war was again narrowly avoided after Russia began preparing its forces to join the war, and again it was America's military might that forced them to reconsider.

In 1980, Israel decreed by law that Jerusalem was to be Israel's undivided capital, annexing eastern Jerusalem.

In 1982, Israeli Defense Forces discovered a massive amount of Soviet armaments in Lebanon, which had been secretly stored there in preparation for an invasion of Israel by Russian forces. This occurred only one month before Israeli bombers had destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq, a move that kept Saddam Hussein from developing nuclear weapons.

On November 8, 1995, the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 was passed into law in the United States. It recognized that any sovereign nation should be able to designate the city of its choice to be its capital, and that since 1950, Jerusalem has been its de facto capital.

Every President since then has signed six-month waivers to prevent the embassy from being moved to Jerusalem. Critics of President Trump are claiming that he made the decision to satisfy Christian Evangelicals, and that it will make the peace process more difficult and create more violence; but Trump has rightfully recognized that the delay is pointless because it has not helped the peace process in the past. The Palestinians have repeatedly demonstrated that there can be no peace as long as Israel exists.

Israel's land has belonged to the Jewish people since the time of Abraham, when God told him "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you". (Gen. 12:3) There are many good reasons to stand by Israel, but God's covenant to the Jewish people is reason enough alone.



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