

Committee: Special Political 1

Topic: The Question of Jerusalem

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Summary

Jerusalem is located in modern day Israel and is widely regarded as one of the most holy places in the world for the three largest monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Both Israel and Palestine have claimed Jerusalem as their capital city which has led to many conflicts in attempt to control the city.

After the Second World War, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 in 1947 which was known as the Partition Plan. The resolution divided the British Mandate of Palestine into two separate states, one Jewish (Israel) and one Arab (Jordanian Annex). The resolution also recommended that Jerusalem become a 'corpus separatum' which would be controlled by the UN. A war of independence broke out between Jewish and Arab militia in December of 1947. When a ceasefire was reached in July 1948, Israel occupied West Jerusalem and Jordan East Jerusalem, including the Old City. In 1949, David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first Prime Minister) established Jerusalem as Israel's Capital.

The world did not recognise that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel or the capital of the Jordanian Annex. From 1949-1967 Jerusalem remained divided.



Definition of Key Terms

Corpus Separatum - Separated body

Two State Solution - A solution involving the creation of two separate states

Intifada - Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

Annexation - East Jerusalem becoming part of Palestine

Occupied territories - the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula

Background Information

Overview

In 1967, a six-day war broke out. In that time Israel occupied the West Bank and the east of the city. After the war, the boundaries of Jerusalem were redrawn by Israel and they implemented Israeli law on the land within the borders. Jerusalem was made ten times larger than the old Jordanian Jerusalem. New territories were added to the boundaries that were not previously part of the city, including 28 Palestinian villages and 2 refugee camps. The Security Council passed Resolution 242 in November 1967, calling for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Israel adopted a 'Carrot and Stick' method to gain control over the Palestinian population. They granted Palestinians in Jerusalem more welfare services and more rights than when they were under military occupation. However, Palestinians weren't allowed to express Palestinian nationality. The Knesset (Parliament of Israel) passed the Basic Law in 1980, stating that: Jerusalem, providing that "Jerusalem, united and complete, is the capital of Israel" and "the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court". However, the UN did not accept this and denounced it in UN Security Council Resolution 478.

In December 1987, the first intifada (Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) broke out and showed that Palestinian religious connections as well as the national connections to Jerusalem were facts that could not be ignored. The Hashemite abandoned their claim to the West Bank and Jerusalem to the Palestinian National Movement led by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Jerusalem became a major issue.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN Security Council - Council involve in possible solutions to the conflict

Israel - State involved in the conflict

Hamas - Palestinian fundamentalist organisation

Palestinian National Movement - Movement involved with negotiations

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1947 - November	UN Resolution 181 passed
1947 - December	War of Independence starts

1948 - July	Ceasefire reached
1949	Israel announced as Israeli Capital
1967	Six Day War breaks out
1967 - November	Security Council pass Resolution 242
1980	Basic Law passed in Israel
1987 - December	First Intifada breaks out

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

UN resolution 181

Security Council Resolution 242

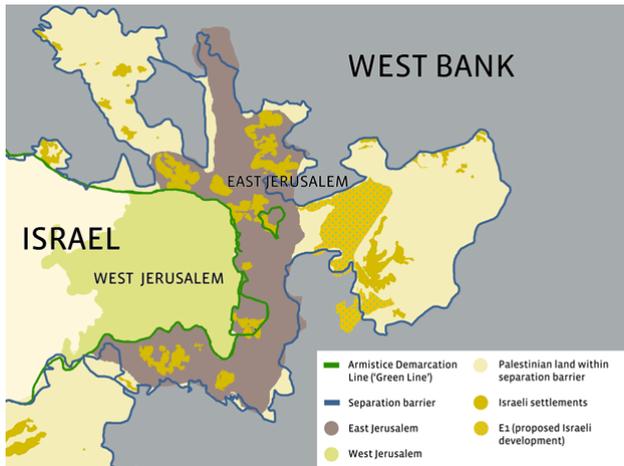
Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The Oslo Accords

Before 1993, there were few negotiations, official or unofficial because Israel refused to speak with the PLO until 1993. The State department of the USA reportedly treated Jerusalem as the “J-Word”. The situation was so complex with regards to religion, politics and its municipal aspect that any attempt to find a model that would match all the interests of both sides would surely fail.

However, the EU and other organisations helped instigate talks between Israel and Palestine to talk about the future of Jerusalem. By 1993, many groups were working through unofficial channels to help deal with political solutions to the conflict. These groups, although they came across difficulties, weren’t restricted like official negotiators and managed to calculate new ideas for the future, including solutions for the Old city and its surroundings (the Holy Basin) and new definitions of the city limits and demographic sovereignty as replacements for sovereignty over territory.

In 1993, the Oslo Channel, a secret channel, became public and the Israeli government officially adopted the process. Discussions in September led to Israel and the PLO to make a joint



declaration that meant a change of official Israeli policy. Israel showed willingness to negotiate over Jerusalem for the first time as a political and national issue, not just a religious one. However, even temporary agreements like the Oslo Accords said that discussion of a final solution wouldn't happen until other matters between the two sides had been settled. Despite that, they did introduce the Camp David Summit in July 2000 where Jerusalem was officially discussed for the first time.

The optimism from both sides about breakthroughs broke down due to a wave of suicide attacks in the 1990s in which hundreds of

Israelis were killed and were focused on Jerusalem. In addition, the assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin. Under the new government of Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996 the process of peace stopped.

Camp David Negotiations

In 2000, Israeli PM Ehud Barak met US President Bill Clinton along with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at Camp David State. The question of Jerusalem was discussed and particularly the issue of the Temple Mount became the focus of the summit and was the main reason for its failure.

Israel proposed a complicated model of control, involving Palestine gaining full control of al-Quds (mainly outer circle of Palestinian neighbourhoods) in return for expanding the city limits and annexing the nearby settlements to Israel. Palestinian neighbourhoods close to the Holy Basin would remain under Israeli control but Palestine would be given municipal autonomy in them. The Palestinians demanded complete sovereignty and control of East Jerusalem and holy sites like the Temple Mount. They also demanded that all Israeli neighbourhoods that were built beyond the border. An alternative proposal was that Palestine would have sovereignty over the surface of the Mount and Israel would have sovereignty underground, however it was rejected by Palestine.

The failure of the summit made it clear that there was an unbridgeable gap between Israel's offers and Palestine's demands. A second intifada was caused by the failure of the talks, the mistrust over the diplomatic stalemate and Ariel Sharon's ascent up the Temple Mount. This escalated to popular protests and more attacks.

Despite the failure, the Camp David summit broke the tension of discussing Jerusalem and helped break the illusion that the borders were set out by Israel were unchangeable.

In December 2000, despite the rising violence, President Bill Clinton suggested a document of principles for a settlement to Jerusalem. These would see that Israel would gain sovereignty over the Western wall and would gain "symbolic ownership" of the Temple Mount. Between July 2000 and 2001, there were over 30 meetings to attempt a breakthrough, however this was futile. 2002 saw a document submitted nicknamed the 'road to peace', calling for the official creation of Palestine bordering Israel, who formally accepted the agreement.

The Geneva initiative, launched in December 2003, was possibly the most important unofficial initiative. After two years of secret talks it published a model for a final settlement that should have ended the conflict. However, it faced criticism from both Israel and Palestine.

2011 saw the press report that Ehud Olmert (Israeli PM 2008) negotiated with Palestine. Allegedly he proposed international control of the Holy Basin and a joint team to control East Jerusalem until a final solution was settled. Palestine showed cooperation to give up the Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Despite his efforts, the current Israeli Prime Minister opposed and dismissed Olmert's proposal.

Possible Solutions

Any solution to the Jerusalem issue needs to address three elements that have guided the conflict: Politics, religion and the municipal, allowing the people to express their nationality and their spiritual, religious and historic identities.

The situation is not helped by Israel's insistence to keep building in East Jerusalem, which is a constant source of tension between them and their close allies. Even if official negotiations are not taking place, any steps taken to calm the conflict on the streets are expected to make the situation worse and stop a solution being found in the future.

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