

CHAPTER ONE

JERUSALEM: ENDANGERED CITY

“But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.”—DEUTERONOMY 12:5

Outside the White House on March 26, 2010, the weather was cloudy and drizzly; the temperature inside was downright frigid. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli entourage accompanying him could almost see the frost gathering on President Barack Obama’s upper lip. The U.S. leader was glacial in his response to the prime minister’s refusal to kowtow to Obama’s demands that construction on 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem be halted. It was apparently more important to appease the Palestinians and assuage world opinion than to stand firm with Israel. It was reported that as Mr. Obama left the conference room to have a private dinner with his wife and daughters, he coolly called out, “Let me know if there is anything new.”

Global warming may be taking place in other parts of the world, but the atmosphere was decidedly chilly in Washington, D.C., and by proxy, in Jerusalem. It is difficult to determine just how wide the rift is in U.S./Israeli relations. It isn’t at all problematic to see where President Obama’s arrogant treatment of Mr. Netanyahu is leading—directly to renewed efforts to divide Jerusalem to appease Palestinian leaders and the Arab world. Only the Israelis know for how long they will allow themselves to be pushed and prodded to give up more and more.

The unfortunate truth is that should the plan to divide Jerusalem succeed, the Arabs surrounding the tiny nation of Israel will have won without firing another shot. Jerusalem as we know it—prosperous, culturally rich, religiously significant, and economically stable—will wither and die. It will become a center of strife and bloodshed the likes of which we have not seen in any of Yasser Arafat's infamous intifadas. It will be Belfast on steroids—Hell on Earth not only for the Jewish people but also for the prosperous Palestinians who thrive under Israeli rule.

It is unclear who would eventually rule East Jerusalem. It will become a hotbed of terrorist activity for new groups such as the progressively more extreme and ferocious Israeli Arab movement, whose main target is the Temple Mount. It will be the incubator for heinous attacks against the Jewish people, the kindergarten for training younger and younger suicide bombers, the high school for Hamas and Hezbollah, and the university for graduating al-Qaeda operatives.

Would the Saudis, the self-appointed caretakers of designated Islamic holy places, be persuaded to undertake a leadership role in East Jerusalem? Perhaps Jordan might step into the fray, but does King Abdullah really have the stomach, not to say the backbone, to stand up to the likes of radical Islamists? He would place his own country at risk of attack. Would it be the Moroccans, members of the Arab League and overseers of the Supreme Jerusalem Committee?

Having a terrorist base just over the avenue from Jewish residents, government offices, commerce and holy sites would be like dangling Chivas Regal before an alcoholic—impossible to resist. Without the restraints of Israeli security, murder and mayhem would be the order of the day. Marksmen would be able to pick off shoppers, home-goers, office workers, and school children at will. The streets of Jewish Jerusalem would flow red with the blood of its citizens.

Jews would no longer risk praying at the Western Wall. Families would forgo outings together for fear that one or all might end up in the morgue. The Stations of the Cross that spans the Christian and Muslim Quarters would no longer be the destination for church tour groups from any country.

Women who did not adhere to the Muslim ideology of proper dress and behavior would be targeted.

The picture assumes nightmare proportions when one considers changes that would decimate Jerusalem if it were divided. Would a new business want to invest in a city where one stray rocket fired from East Jerusalem could wipe out its presence in Israel? It is only the security afforded by the IDF that spares Jerusalem from being a flashpoint of friction with skirmishes in every alley and side street. No other organization or entity would patrol and protect Jerusalem with the same care and concern as Jews who love their city.

The connection between the Jews and Jerusalem is deeply rooted and compelling. The tie is over three thousand years old. When Arabs pray they face Mecca; when Jews pray they face Jerusalem. For three centuries, Jews have ended each Passover meal with the pensive, “Next year in Jerusalem.” In the words of Ehud Olmert, mayor of Jerusalem from 1993 to 2003, Jerusalem embodies “the purest expression of all that Jews prayed for, dreamed of, cried for, and died for in the two thousand years since the destruction of the Second Temple.”¹²

The Arabs, on the other hand, have no real connection to Jerusalem other than that Muhammad visited it in a dream. The Muslims can point to no holy place except the Dome of the Rock, which they built on the site of the Temple Mount, knowing it was sacred to Jews. Statisticians have determined that Jerusalem and/or Zion are mentioned 823 times in the Old Testament and 161 times in the New Testament. Columnist Moshe Kohn wrote that the two proper nouns can be found in the Koran as often “as they do in the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita, the Taoist Tao-Te Ching, the Buddhist Dhamapada, and the Zoroastrian Zend Avesta—not even once.”

It is politics not historical claims that make Jerusalem such an important issue for the Arabs. One has only to look at history books to discover that King David established Jerusalem as the capital of a united Israel in 1010 B.C.; Caliph Omer, a Muslim, first entered Jerusalem in 638 A.D. Anyone who can add and subtract should be able to figure out who has the most prolonged claim to Israel—and it isn't the Palestinian Arabs.

A divided Jerusalem would mean Israel would be bereft of a peacekeeping force capable of maintaining a terrorist-free Jerusalem. The U.S. president that accomplishes this feat would be signing a death warrant for the Jewish people in Israel. He or she will have to stand before God and give account of why the admonition to “touch not mine anointed” (Psalm 105:15) fell on deaf ears and a callous heart.

Now known as the city of three religions, under Arab rule Jerusalem would become inhospitable to Christians and Jews. How can this be determined beforehand? No Muslim country in the world welcomes other religions to openly practice their beliefs. As David Weinberg wrote,

Under Palestinian Authority and Hamas rule, Christians in the West Bank and Gaza have been hounded, terrorized, and driven out. Christian Bethlehem is, effectively, no more. The Church of the Nativity was defiled by Palestinian Muslim terrorists who turned it into an armed refuge in 2002. Who will protect the churches of Jerusalem from the same fate under Islamic rule?¹³

It will go the way of Bethlehem, and yes, any territory under Muslim rule. Christians will be *persona non grata*—driven from the country or made to suffer intense persecution, perhaps even death, because of their rejection of Islam. Desecration of holy sites and Jewish graves will follow the pattern set under Jordanian rule, and no one will be able to stop it.

Just as much of the civilized (?) world turned its back while some six million Jews were barbarically murdered during the Holocaust, it will once again keep its distance from a Jerusalem overrun by fanatical Islamic terrorists. Nothing will be sacred. The Arabs care nothing about Jerusalem; it has never really been the issue. That has been proven time and again as suicide bombers targeted the city and its inhabitants, indiscriminately killing Jews and Israeli Arabs alike. Jerusalem is coveted only because it is the most sacred city to the Jews and is under Jewish control.

Jerusalem is a beautiful, cosmopolitan city—the jewel in the crown of modern-day Israel. It will be neglected and targeted for ruin simply because it is loved by the Jews. If it were possible, every Jew in Israel would be driven into the Mediterranean while the Arabs on shore celebrated the demise of their enemies. Jerusalem would be laid waste. It could become just another dirty, neglected, poverty-stricken Arab village with its streets piled with garbage and its gutters flowing with human excrement.

Jerusalem must not be divided. It is impossible to imagine any part of the regal city under Arab rule. Hillary Clinton seemed unduly condescending as she admonished the attendees of the AIPAC convention in 2010, insisting they must “tell the truth when it is needed.” Unfortunately she, like so many others, does not recognize the truth when it is staring her in the face.

TRUTH: Jerusalem was built stone-by-stone from a dusty desert town in the hills of Judea to become a thriving metropolis—sophisticated and multinational. It is a home for the Jews, a symbol of survival through the centuries.

TRUTH: Jerusalem is a magnet for scholars, clergy, artists, archaeologists, and tourists—Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

TRUTH: All that Jerusalem has become under Jewish governance would vanish under Arab rule.

When polled privately, the Arabs who live in Israeli-controlled Jerusalem agree wholeheartedly. Many Palestinians who reside under the safety and security of the IDF prefer that to the misrule of Hamas or the toothless Palestinian Authority. Few Arabs who reside in Jerusalem ever become involved in terror tactics. They don't want to chance being banished to the other side of the security fence, and those who live on the other side avail themselves of every opportunity to cross into Israeli-controlled Jerusalem.

Homes in Jewish neighborhoods such as Talpiot, French Hill, and others are being purchased at an incredible rate by wealthy Arabs.

Forcing Israel to divide Jerusalem would deprive the world of one of the most urbane, stylish, erudite, cultured, historical cities in the Middle East. Jerusalem would once again be reduced to rubble by the rabble surrounding it. Christians and Jews who truly treasure David's City would be left to shake their heads in horrified sadness. Yet American presidents continue to push for a divided Jerusalem.

Barack Obama is not the first president to stake his legacy on trying to force Israel to the bargaining table. Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and even George W. Bush are among the number. Who in their administrations took time to sit down and actually count the cost of dividing Jerusalem? Will anyone in succeeding administrations consider the price of a divided Jerusalem to be much too costly?