



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on December 6, 2017

Trump Respects Israel's Sovereignty in Embassy Move to Jerusalem

President Donald Trump is fulfilling a campaign pledge with his decision to move the American Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, which Israel considers to be its national capital.



Ordinarily, it is not even an issue as to where one nation places its embassy in a host country — the embassy is located in the host nation's capital, where its governmental offices are situated. But in this case, Trump's announcement has touched off opposition, not only in the Middle East, but in Europe as well.

Israel announced its recreation as an independent nation in the Middle East in May of 1948, with its capital at Tel Aviv. After Israel won its stunning victory in the "Six-Day War" of 1967, and with that victory, East Jerusalem, the capital was moved there. Today, Israel's Knesset (parliament), president, prime minister, and almost all other governmental offices are in Jerusalem, so it makes perfect sense for the embassies of other nations to also be located there as well.

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But when Trump informed the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, on Tuesday, that the United States will be relocating its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in six months (where the U.S. already has a consulate), Abbas was upset. The Palestinian Arabs have expressed a desire for East Jerusalem to be the capital of the Palestinian state they hope to someday establish, next to Israel, in Palestine.

Abbas told Trump that the move will have "dangerous consequences," warning that "the Palestinian stance is determined and steadfast — there will not be a Palestinian state without East Jerusalem as its capital according to decisions by the international community."

Jerusalem is a city of great significance to three different religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

King Abdullah II of Jordan was also told by Trump about the planned move, and was also opposed. In a statement released from the palace, Abdullah "stressed that the adoption of this resolution will have serious implications for security and stability in the Middle East, and will undermine the efforts of the American administration to resume the peace process and fuel the feelings of Muslims and Christian [in the region]."

Other Middle Eastern rulers expressed similar misgivings. Turkish President Erdogan threatened to break diplomatic ties with Israel, if the United States moves its embassy to Jerusalem, arguing that Jerusalem is "a red line for Muslims." Illustrating the political difficulties of Middle Eastern politics, Israel retorted that "Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital for 3,000 years." King David established the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Israel in Jerusalem in 1001 B.C.



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Egypt said there would possibly be “dangerous repercussions” should Trump move the embassy. Saudi Arabia likewise warned of “very serious implications,” and that such a move was “provocative to all Muslims’ feelings.”

While such reactions are not surprising coming from the Arabs and Turks, European political leaders also expressed similar opposition. Federica Mogherini, the foreign policy leader for the European Union, cautioned that such a move would undermine the “two-state solution” (the state of Israel and an Arab Palestine state). France’s President Emmanuel Macron argued that the question of Jerusalem must be handled “in the framework of peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.” Germany expressed similar sentiments.

The reality of the situation is that Jerusalem is the *de facto* capital of Israel, as virtually its entire government is located there, not in Tel Aviv. Moreover, Israel is a sovereign nation, and as such it should have the right to locate its capital in any city in its country it wishes — regardless of the views of other nations such as France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.

During his 2012 campaign for president, former Texas Congressman Ron Paul stressed the issue of national sovereignty when he was asked about the “Jerusalem Question.” He replied, “The real issue here is not what America wants, but what does Israel want. If Israel wants their capital to be Jerusalem, then the United States should honor that.”

Some argue, however, that other countries and “the international community” do not accept Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. Whether they accept it or not, all of Jerusalem has been ruled by Israel for a half-century. Negotiations have been ongoing between Israel and its Arab neighbors, especially the Palestinian Authority, for several years now. No one seriously thinks Israel will ever willingly surrender East Jerusalem to either the Palestinian Arabs or anyone else.

How would Americans like it if the Israelis decided to not have a consulate in Houston because it was, at one time, part of the Republic of Mexico, and before that part of the Spanish Empire?

Respect for another nation’s national sovereignty dictates that each nation gets to choose which of its cities is its capital. As Paul put it in 2012, “How would we like it if some other nation said, ‘We decided to recognize New York City as your capital instead, so we will build our embassy there?’”

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