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The Background on Jerusalem in International Relations

Policy Focus by ATFP - April 1, 2010 - 12:00am

Numerous recent developments have reconfirmed the centrality of Jerusalem to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unilateral Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem, including the eviction of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, building plans in Silwan, plans for the demolition of Palestinian homes in several parts of the city, controversial archaeological excavations, the rededication of a restored synagogue, and the announcement of 1,600 new settler housing units in Ramat Sholmo announced during the visit of VP Joseph Biden -- along with violent confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters -- all point to the extraordinary significance of Jerusalem to the conflict and a peaceful resolution based on two states.

These developments are perceived as prejudicing permanent status issues and therefore complicating a resumption of talks, and undermining the credibility of negotiations and the viability of a two-state agreement. Moreover, because of its symbolic importance, any deterioration in Jerusalem has the potential to spill beyond the boundaries of Israel and Palestine, and play into the hands of those who want to redefine the conflict as a religious war.

The fate of Jerusalem can no more be decided unilaterally by any party than the conflict can itself be resolved unilaterally by any single party. With this in mind, the American Task Force on Palestine (ATFP) has compiled the following set of background links to American, European, Quartet and United Nations statements regarding Jerusalem over the years to contextualize this renewed attention. It does not deal with the many other aspects that make Jerusalem a unique and incendiary issue, but it does lay out the fundamentals of international opinion on the question.

Selected US Presidential Statements on Jerusalem

* Barack Obama: Memorandum on Suspension of Jerusalem Embassy Act: Suspension of moving the Embassy to Jerusalem to protect the national security interests of the United States. December 3, 2009 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=86958&st=Jerusalem+Embas> [1]...

* Barack Obama: Address to the UNGA in NYC: Jerusalem is a core issue for permanent status negotiations. September 2009 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=86659&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [2]

- * Barack Obama: Remarks during meeting with President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Exchange with reporters: On the continuation of settlement construction in Jerusalem even after the partial moratorium was announced. August 18, 2009 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=86546&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [3]
- * Barack Obama: Cairo Speech: Reiteration of Jerusalem as a multicultural/multiethnic/multireligious city. June 4, 2009 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=86221&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [4]
- * Barack Obama: Remarks Following a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Exchange with Reporters: Remarks about negotiating the status of Jerusalem. May 18, 2009 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=86174&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [5]
- * George W. Bush Remarks on the Middle East Peace Process in Jerusalem: Jerusalem is a central issue for diplomatic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. January 10, 2008 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=76252&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [6]
- * George W. Bush Discusses the Middle East: Calling for a regional peace conference. July 16, 2007 - <http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/bush.pdf> [7]
- * George W. Bush: News conference with President Nicolas Sarkozy of France in Paris: Need for peaceful negotiations between Palestinians and Israel and the centrality of the issue of Jerusalem. June 14, 2008 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=77535&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [8]
- * George W. Bush: President's News conference with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem: Jerusalem is a core permanent status issue and highlighting commitment to the roadmap. January 9, 2008 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=76249&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [9]
- * George W. Bush: Memorandum of Suspension of Jerusalem Embassy Act: Suspension of moving the Embassy to Jerusalem to protect the national security interests of the United States. December 15, 2006 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=24401&st=Jerusalem+Embass> [10]...
- * George W. Bush: News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom: Reiterating the centrality of the issue of Jerusalem. December 7, 2006 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=24350&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [11]
- * George W. Bush: News Conference with President Mahmoud Abbas of the PA: Israel must cease settlement expansion and remove unauthorized outposts. October 20, 2005 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=73809&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [12]
- * George W. Bush: Joint statement by the US and EU working together to promote Peace and Prosperity in the Middle East: Calling for Palestinian elections in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. June 20, 2005 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=64892&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [13]
- * George W. Bush: President Bush's News Conference with President Mahmoud Abbas of PA: Israel should abide by the roadmap and not prejudice negotiations concerning Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. May 26, 2005 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=73644&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [14]
- * George W. Bush: Remarks following a briefing on Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster Relief and Exchange with Reporters: Palestinian voters in Jerusalem should have access to the polls. January 10, 2005 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63095&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [15]
- * George W. Bush: Memorandum on Suspension of Jerusalem Embassy Act: Suspension of moving the Embassy to Jerusalem to protect the national security interests of the United States. June 11, 2001 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63243&st=Jerusalem+Embass> [16]...
- * William Clinton: Outgoing Presidential Remarks at an Israel Policy Forum Dinner in NYC:

Jerusalem should be open and undivided, but what is Jewish should be Israeli and what is Arab should be Palestinian. January 7, 2001 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=73575&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [17]

* William Clinton: Written Responses to questions submitted by the Arabic-Language Newspaper Al-Hayat: Jerusalem can be resolved in a way in which both sides' national aspirations can be realized. August 10, 2000 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=1445&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [18]

* William Clinton: Remarks on Fiscal Responsibility and Exchange with reporters: any agreement on Jerusalem must be one which meets the legitimate interests of both parties. July 26, 2000 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=1556&st=Jerusalem&st1=>

[19]

* William Clinton: Statement on the Middle East Peace Talks at Camp David: on the pivotal role of Jerusalem in the peace talks. July 25, 2000 -

http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nea/000725_clinton_stmt.html [20]

* William Clinton: President's News Conference with Prime Minister Ehud Barak: Jerusalem is a core final status issue. July 19, 1999 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=57913&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [21]

* William Clinton: Memorandum on Suspension of Jerusalem Embassy Act: Suspension of moving the Embassy to Jerusalem to protect the national security interests of the United States. June 17, 1999 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=57741&st=Jerusalem+Embass> [22]...

* William Clinton: Exchange with Reporters Prior to Discussions with President Hosni Mubarak: Reiterates the centrality and difficulty of Jerusalem. September 29, 1995 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=50578&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [23]

* William Clinton: Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters: Reiterates Jerusalem is a core final status issue. March 1994 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=49862&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [24]

* William Clinton: President's news conference with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel: Reiterates Jerusalem is a core final status issue. March 1994 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=49818&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [25]

* George H.W. Bush: The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel in Kennebunkport: US policy on Jerusalem remains unchanged. August 11, 1992 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=21313&st=&st1=> [26]

* George H.W. Bush: The President's News Conference Following Discussions With Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu of Japan in Palm Springs: Reiterates US opposition to new Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem. March 1990 -

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18215&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [27]

* Ronald Reagan: Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East: Jerusalem should remain undivided, with its status to be defined through negotiations. September 1, 1982 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=42911&st=&st1=> [28]

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Selected Additional Sources on US policy towards Jerusalem

* Joe Biden: Official transcript of speech from Tel Aviv University concerning US-Israel Partnership: Condemns new settlement construction plans in East Jerusalem. March 11, 2010 - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-> [29]...

* Joe Biden: Official transcript of remarks between VP Biden and PA President Abbas: Highlights Israel's settlement policies, particularly in Jerusalem, as a threat to negotiations. March 10, 2010 - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-> [29]

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- * Robert Gibbs: Press Briefing by US Press Secretary: Condemns advanced planning for new Israeli settlement housing units in East Jerusalem. March 9, 2010 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=87639&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [30]
- * Transcript from George Mitchell's conversation with Charlie Rose: East Jerusalem, settlements are highlighted. January 6, 2010 - <http://thepage.time.com/transcript-george-mitchell-on-charlie-rose/> [31]
- * Hillary Clinton: Remarks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas while speaking in Ramallah: Calls the demolition of Palestinian homes in occupied East Jerusalem 'unhelpful' and 'not in keeping' with roadmap obligations. March 4, 2009 - <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/03/120021.htm> [32]
- * Dana Perino: Reiterating Bush administration's opposition to additional Israeli settlement construction anywhere in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. June 2, 2008 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=77422&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [33]
- * Stephen Hadley: On the Road Map to peace and the overall Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: States moratorium on the settlements is part of the Road Map, so building in East Jerusalem is against the roadmap. January 10, 2008 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=62257&st=jerusalem&st1=> [34]
- * Scott McClellan: Air Force One press briefing: Bush administration has tried to make arrangements to allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem to Vote. January 11, 2006 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63639&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [35]
- * Scott McClellan: Press Briefing: Settlements in East Jerusalem should not be growing/expanding. May 26, 2005 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=66207&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [36]
- * Joe Lockhart: Press Briefing: Very disappointed with the settlement expansion and construction in East Jerusalem. November 12, 1998 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=48419&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [37]
- * Mike McCurry: Press Briefing: Reiterates opposition to settlement construction in East Jerusalem. March 24, 1997 - <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=48449&st=Jerusalem&st1=> [38]
- * Foundation for Middle East Peace Settlement Report from 1994: US Policy towards East Jerusalem, selected quotations: 1948-1994. - <http://www.fmep.org/reports/special-reports/special-report-on-israeli-se> [39]...

Selected EU Statements on Jerusalem

- * 'A Commitment to Peace' ? Speech by HR Catherine Ashton, at the League of Arab States: Reiterates commitment to a future State of Palestine including East Jerusalem. March 15, 2010 - http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/ [40]...
- * Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2985th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting: calling for Jerusalem to serve as the capital of both Israel and a future Palestinian state as part of a negotiated peace. December 8, 2009 - http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/ [40]...
- * Presidency Statement on the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question: Deeply concerned at settlement activities, house demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem. October 14, 2009 - <http://www.se2009.eu/en/2.543/2.578/2.705/2.720/1.19297> [41]
- * Statebuilding for Peace in the Middle East ? An EU Action Strategy: on the importance of resolving the issue of East Jerusalem. November 2007 - http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/reports [42]...

Selected Quartet Statements on Jerusalem

- * UNSG Press Conference: Ban condemns Israel's decision to advance planning for 1600 new settler housing units in East Jerusalem. March 16, 2010 - <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf/47d4e277b48d9d3685256ddc00612265/6fcdd> [43]...
- * Statement on Clashes in East Jerusalem: UNSG Ban Ki-moon emphasizes settlements are illegal under international law. March 16, 2010 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/a4127> [44]...
- * Quartet Statement: Condemns Israel's decision to advance planning for new settler housing units in East Jerusalem. March 12, 2010 - <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf/47d4e277b48d9d3685256ddc00612265/6fcdd> [43]...
- * Joint Statement by the Quartet: Urges Israel to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem. September 24, 2009 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/be4d8> [45]...
- * Quartet Statement: Urges Israel to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem, including home demolition and evictions. June 26, 2009 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/96edb> [46]...
- * UNSG Press Conference: House destruction and deportation is contrary to international law, including in East Jerusalem. November 11, 2008 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/43441> [47]...
- * Progress Report: Strong opposition to continued settlement expansion in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. September 25, 2008 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/3620d> [48]...
- * Joint Statement by the Quartet: Quartet calls for closure of unauthorized outposts and an opening of East Jerusalem institutions. December 18, 2007 - <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/46101> [49]...

Selected UN Security Council Resolutions on the Status of Jerusalem

- * SCR 1322 (2000): Expressing alarm concerning violence in holy places in Jerusalem. October 7, 2000 - [http://www.undemocracy.com/S-RES-1322\(2000\).pdf](http://www.undemocracy.com/S-RES-1322(2000).pdf)
- * SCR 1073 (1996): Calls for safety and protection of Palestinian civilians in Jerusalem. September 28, 1996 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/ee9fd4> [50]...
- * SCR 904 (1994): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. March 18, 1994 - <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/4690652A351277438525634C006DCE10> [51]
- * SCR 799 (1992): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. December 18, 1992 - <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/D7E7A668894B0455852560DD0062D041> [52]
- * SCR 726 (1992): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. January 6, 1992 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/d5757c> [53]...
- * SCR 694 (1991): Deportation of Palestinians from areas within the occupied territories including Jerusalem is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. May 24, 1991 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/f9ba76> [54]...
- * SCR 672 (1990): Expresses alarm at violence at the Al-Haram al-Sharif. October 12, 1990 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/a77d15> [55]...
- * SCR 636 (1989): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. July 6, 1989 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/fd2b01>

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* SRC 607 (1988): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. January 5, 1988 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/0e9a50> [57]...

* SRC 605 (1987): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. December 22, 1987 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/a734f6> [58]...

* SRC 592 (1986): Affirms the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to Jerusalem. December 8, 1986 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/f0c991> [59]...

* SCR 478 (1980): Censures in the strongest terms the enactment by Israel of the "basic law" on Jerusalem, affirms it is a violation of international law and determines it is null and void and must be rescinded forthwith. August 20, 1980 -

<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/dde59> [60]...

* SCR 476 (1980): Reaffirms the overriding necessity to end the prolonged occupation of Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; reiterates that Israel's actions to change the character of the city are null and void, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. June 20, 1980 -

<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/6de6d> [61]...

* SCR 465 (1980): Determines all measures taken by Israel to change the status of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy of settling parts of its population in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. March 1, 1980 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/5aa254> [62]...

* SCR 452 (1979): Calls on Israel to cease the construction of settlements in Jerusalem. July 20, 1979 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/0b7116>

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* SCR 298 (1971): Calls on Israel to rescind measures which may change the status of Jerusalem. September 25, 1971 -

<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/44132> [64]...

* SCR 271 (1969): Response to an arson of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, condemns the failure of Israel to comply with earlier resolutions. September 15, 1969 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/35941B603B4459B8852560C50061DC5E> [65]

* SCR 267 (1969): Confirming Israeli administrative acts to change the status of Jerusalem are invalid and calling on Israel to rescind forthwith all measures. March 3, 1969 -

<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/5932e> [66]...

* SCR 252 (1968): Jerusalem - Israel's legislative and administrative measures to change the status of Jerusalem are invalid and should be rescinded. May 21, 1968 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/46f280> [67]...

* SCR 251 (1968): Deploring Israel for holding military parade in Jerusalem. May 2, 1968 -

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/e4b90e> [68]...

* SCR 250 (1968): Calls on Israel to refrain from holding military parade in Jerusalem. May 2, 1968 - <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/655f02> [69]...

Selected Recent General Assembly Resolutions on the Status of Jerusalem

* A/RES/64/185: On the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. December 21, 2009 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/3fb9d> [70]...

* A/RES/64/94: Call on Israel to halt all actions that alter the character, status and

demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. December 10. 2009 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/16beb> [71]...

* A/RES/64/93: Calls for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. December 10. 2009 - <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/b47fb> [72]...

* A/RES/64/19: Calls for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and cease all actions that alter the nature of East Jerusalem including the construction of the wall and settlements. December 2. 2009 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/6f2df> [73]...

* A/RES/63/30: On the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine; reiterating the illegality of Israeli claims on Jerusalem. November 26, 2008 -

<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/79a7b> [74]...

* A/RES/62/84: Welcoming the decision of states with diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw these missions. December 10. 2007 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/21644> [75]...

* A/RES/119: on the need for the unity and territorial integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the removal of restrictions on movement into and from East Jerusalem. December 14. 2006 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/9b38c> [76]...

* A/RES/61/25: on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine; reiterating the illegality of Israeli claims on Jerusalem and the need to withdraw from all Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. December 1. 2006 -

<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/a06f2943c226015c85256c40005d359c/eed10> [77]...

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