

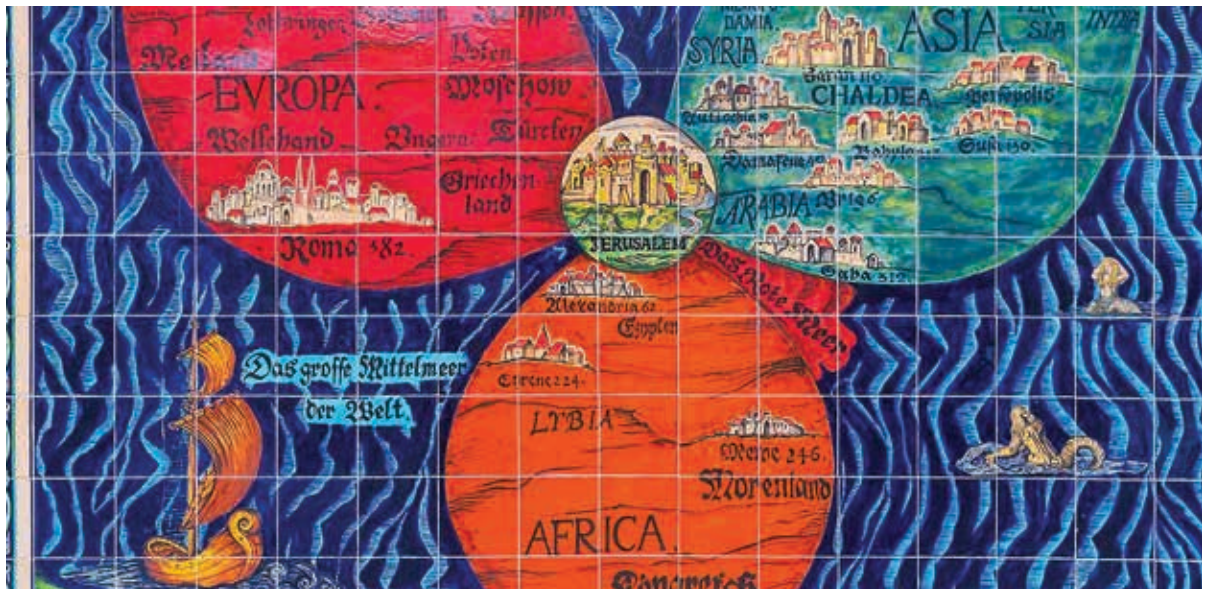
CHAPTER FOUR

Jerusalem





4.1 The Strategic Importance of Jerusalem



There is a strategic imperative for keeping Israel's capital unified, in addition to the historical and religious reasons for doing so. A united Jerusalem is vital to the securing of Israel's eastern border along the Jordan River. To some extent, control of the greater Jerusalem envelope compensates for Israel's lack of strategic depth and the topographical vulnerability of the coastal plain (where most of Israel's Jewish population resides). Jerusalem is also a source of ongoing intelligence for security operations across the PA-governed areas of Judea and Samaria.

Jerusalem is situated on a major crossroads that dominates the north-south axis, along the central mountain ridge watershed. The city also contains one of the few lateral axes suitable for transportation from the Jordan Valley westwards, across the mountain ridge and towards the Mediterranean Sea. Indeed, this is the only urban crossroads that has a Jewish majority, a demographic reality that dates to the 19th Century.

There is a strategic imperative for keeping Israel's capital unified, in addition to the historical and religious reasons for doing so.

A Jewish majority along this east-west axis facilitates the smooth dispatch of military forces from the coast, where most of the IDF's reserve capacities and depots are based, to the Jordan Valley. Keeping this supply line open will be crucial in the event of an attempted invasion of Israel from the east. Thus, in strategic terms, the corridor from Jerusalem to Maaleh Adumim and further east to the Jordan Valley is of vital strategic importance. This corridor should be kept as wide as possible.

Every effort also should be made to avert a situation where Jerusalem is wholly dependent on a single supply and communications route; specifically, Highway No. 1 from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It is important to maintain control over other roads to Jerusalem as well, specifically Route 443 that leads to the north of Jerusalem and Route 375 that leads to the city's south-west.



A virtual consensus exists in Israel regarding the need to define the Jordan Valley as the defensible eastern border of Israel. The coastal plain is separated from the Jordan Valley by the mountains of Judea and Samaria, which in turn descend sharply to the east, producing a natural barrier. The Jordan Valley is 250-400 meters below sea level, while the mountain peaks – near Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron – rise above 900 meters. This means that an invading armored column attacking from the east would need to traverse some 20 miles along an extremely steep incline. Such an attack could only be executed through very narrow mountain passes. By controlling the entry points of these mountain passes, the IDF can prevent an attempted invasion from the east.

Indeed, this was the governing logic behind the Alon Plan (formulated by the Israel Labor Party after the Six-Day War) for keeping the Jordan Valley and the mountain passes. The plan also remains demographically sound, since the Jordan Valley is sparsely populated by Arabs.

Israel's eastern border is its most sensitive border, because it abuts the Haifa-Jerusalem-Gedera triangle, where most Israelis live and most of the country's economic infrastructure is located. From the Jordan River to Jerusalem is only 20 miles, with the Mediterranean coast only 50 miles away. These are shorter distances that an invading army would have to cross coming from Egypt in the south, or from Syria in the north.

Israel's long-term security interests require full control of the entire Jerusalem envelope.

Israeli policy should be to hold defensible borders that factor in changes in military technology, as well as local and regional political upheavals. And it would be a serious strategic miscalculation to outsource Israel's security needs to foreign powers or organizations.

A unified Jerusalem also compensates for the topographical inferiority of the coastal plain. From the east, the narrow coastal plain is dominated by the foothills of the Samarian and Judean mountain ranges. Control of these foothills offers many strategic advantages, including domination of the country's international airport, Ben-Gurion Airport. The airport and many other vital assets are all within standard rocket range (40 km). In addition, the narrow coastal plain makes it vulnerable to penetration by both mechanized forces and infantry soldiers. Israeli military forces moving to eliminate threats originating in the cities of Judea and Samaria would encounter serious difficulties. Such forces would need to convene in areas whose security has been compromised as a result of constant surveillance and intelligence gathering. They would have to attack under enemy fire from the foothills, and advance along winding mountain roads, through dense and hostile urban areas whose inhabitants have prepared for a long, protracted defense against Israel.

The solution to this challenge is Israel's control over the entire Jerusalem envelope. Such control was crucial in 1967, when the Jerusalem corridor created a wedge within the mountain range that enabled Israeli forces to capture the areas of Ramallah in the north and Hebron in the south. In 2002, control of this region was the basis for the IDF's successful "Protective Shield" military operation. Should Israel lose control over greater Jerusalem, the narrow and vulnerable coastal plain would effectively become indefensible.



Maintaining control over greater Jerusalem is also essential to Israel's ability to gather intelligence and pursue an effective campaign against terrorism. Jerusalem's elevation makes it possible for Israel to better collect intelligence to the east, but also to the south and north. Partitioning the city would greatly diminish Israel's 360-degree intelligence gathering capability. Jerusalem also is adjacent to several hubs of terrorist activity. As such, the city serves as a base of operations for IDF and other security forces.

Greater Jerusalem and the areas to its east form a wedge between densely populated Palestinian areas, preventing territorial contiguity between them. Such demographic disjointedness is important to Israeli security. (Note: This still allows for Palestinian transportation contiguity between, say, Ramallah and Bethlehem, via a network of roads with underpasses and overpasses through Israeli-held areas.)

Meanwhile, the PA is actively working to change realities on the ground, with help from the EU, by building without Israeli approval east of Maaleh Adumim, in the E-1 area. E-1 constitutes the largest area of land available for residential construction near Jerusalem, and thus its takeover by the PA must be prevented.

The strategic importance of Jerusalem is a critical factor when considering the implications of proposals to partition the city. Partition would lead to the loss of Israeli security control over the greater Jerusalem envelope, and would disrupt Israel's ability to secure the dominant mountain ridges/ passes and the Jordan Valley. Israel's long-term security interests require full control of the entire Jerusalem envelope.





4.2 Settling in Jerusalem: The Zionist Imperative



Jerusalem holds a central place in Israel's national ethos and is also a crucial national security issue. As such, there's little likelihood that any future government will agree to partition the city or hand away the Temple Mount compound. Nevertheless, Jewish control at the municipal level could be in danger. Jerusalem's demographic realities and their political consequences are a major concern. Therefore, the most urgent challenge to the Zionist enterprise is to settle Jews in Jerusalem. Indeed, the fate of Israel is closely linked to that of its eternal capital, because there can be no Zionism without Zion.

Jews are a majority (62%) in Jerusalem. Most of these Jewish residents of the city are Zionists (71%) who identify with Israel's core Zionist values. This includes 20% who self-identify as secular Jews, 33% as traditional Jews and 18% as religious Zionist Jews. Meanwhile, the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) community comprises 29% of the city's Jewish population and maintains an extremely high birth rate. In contrast, the number of secular inhabitants living in Jerusalem is declining as a result of migration from the city.

The fate of Israel is closely linked to that of its eternal capital, because there can be no Zionism without Zion.

The proportion of Arabs living in Jerusalem has grown from 26% to 38% since the city was unified in 1967. But because Jerusalem's Arabs have thus far refused to play an active role in municipal politics, their political influence remains marginal. For fifty years, Jerusalemite Arabs have boycotted local elections, even though their residency status gives them the right to vote.



There are potential problems with the growing proportion of Arab and Haredi communities in Jerusalem. The deep emotional connection of Israeli Jews to Jerusalem could significantly weaken if the city is increasingly identified with two non-Zionist population groups. If such a sentiment spreads and deepens, the existing consensus about keeping Jerusalem united (including consensus regarding the Temple Mount issue, which has far-reaching strategic implications of its own) will start to fray.

One plan that has been proposed to enhance the Jewish-Zionist majority in the city involves expanding Jerusalem's borders and creating a larger metropolitan entity by annexing surrounding Jewish towns. Another idea is to remove some Arab neighborhoods that are located beyond the security barrier (where 135,000 people currently reside) from Jerusalem's municipal jurisdiction. These neighborhoods would remain under Israeli sovereignty, as part of a new municipality separate from Jerusalem. Yet neither of these plans (which raise other problems, in turn) directly address the primary challenge, the need to increase the number of Zionist Jews who live in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem should become the focal point of all Jewish-Zionist settlement efforts.

To prevent emergence of a non-Zionist majority, Jerusalem should become the focal point of all Jewish-Zionist settlement efforts. As such, the Israeli government should endorse policies that encourage Jewish Zionists to move to Jerusalem. Specifically, housing projects and economic incentives need to be offered in order to attract young people to new neighborhoods in Jerusalem and nearby areas.

Construction should be undertaken in E-1, Givat HaMatos and Atarot (with the latter two areas lying within the city's municipal jurisdiction). These are the only large land reserves still left in and around Jerusalem for the absorption of tens of thousands of new residents. Changing the demographic dynamics in such a dramatic fashion would express Israel's determination to keep Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty.

Prioritizing a Jewish majority in Jerusalem should not impinge on the municipality's fair treatment of the city's Arab minority. The operative municipal slogan, "full (Israeli) sovereignty, full fairness (for Arab Jerusalemites)" is instructive in this context.

Most Arabs in the city only know life under Israeli rule. After the Oslo process collapsed, most Arab residents of Jerusalem concluded that the city would not be divided. Beyond political and diplomatic developments, the realities of daily life that have emerged over the last decade (relating to employment, health care and transportation) reduce the likelihood of separation between Jews and Arabs.

Efforts should be made to improve the national, municipal and police presence in Jerusalemite Arab neighborhoods. Doing so means putting a special emphasis on the provision of vital services and the strengthening of law enforcement measures. Ultimately, firm and fair Israeli rule will bolster the Zionist position in Jerusalem.



The appropriate budgetary framework for this effort already exists. Government Plan 3790 involves the investment of NIS 1.2 billion in Arab neighborhoods over the next five years. This plan is focused on improving transportation, higher education, schools, welfare services, employment opportunities, infrastructure and sanitation.

It seems that a majority of Jerusalemite Arabs prefer the status quo in the city, under Israeli sovereignty. Indeed, a process of “Israelization” is taking place among the city’s Arab population. A rapidly growing number of students in eastern Jerusalem study Hebrew intensively, and choose to study in schools that teach the Israeli high school curriculum (including preparation for national matriculation exams), which if completed, allows for enrolment in Israeli colleges and universities.

Simultaneously, action is needed to counter vicious disinformation that proliferates on Arab social networks about Israeli and local government activities in eastern Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Much more must be done to develop and distribute positive news coverage of policies being developed and implemented by City Hall and the national government that benefit all of Jerusalem’s residents.

The Jerusalemite Arab partners that Jerusalem City Hall and other Israeli authorities need to work with – community center leaders, school principals and mukhtars (neighborhood leaders) – should be made to feel welcome and valued. They should be given as much support as possible. Most importantly, Israeli authorities should do everything in their power to reward such civic leaders and protect them from Arab terrorism.





4.3 Confronting Foreign Elements that Subvert Israeli Sovereignty in Jerusalem



In recent years, various foreign agents have increased their diplomatic, cultural and educational activities in eastern Jerusalem. These activities – whether legal or illegal, community-based or security-focused – undermine Israeli sovereignty in the capital and delegitimize the Israeli presence in eastern Jerusalem. Some of these machinations have gone so far as to encourage nationalist Palestinian or Islamist terrorist activities in Jerusalem.

The agents who are seeking to undermine Israeli sovereignty can be categorized as belonging to one of three distinct networks: Palestinian, Islamist and international.

The Palestinian network uses two prongs of attack. One is Islamist in nature and is led by Hamas and the Islamic Movement in Israel – Northern Branch. These groups work to fuel local tensions and interfaith hostilities on the Temple Mount compound and in surrounding areas.

Foreign interventions in Jerusalem affairs must be blocked; this is a key national security matter.

The Palestinian network's second mode of resistance to Israeli rule is nationalist in nature, led by Fatah and the PA. To subvert any attempts by local Arabs to normalize relations with Jerusalem City Hall and the national government, Palestinian security operatives intimidate Arab residents they suspect of collaborating with Israeli "occupation authorities," and incite violent disobedience. Evidence suggests that both Palestinian prongs of attack against Israeli rule have had a cumulative influence, dampening the willingness of Jerusalemite Arabs to openly integrate in Israeli society or express support for Israeli administration of the city.



In Islamic circles, Turkey's influence is ascendant. Ankara is actively propagating an Islamist brand of anti-Israel radicalization among eastern Jerusalem Arabs. Under Erdogan's AKP, Turkey's long-term goal is to replace Jordan as the Muslim power player in the city. Ankara's ambitions extend to the Temple Mount compound, where the Hashemite Kingdom has special rights and privileges under the terms of the 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. Specifically, Jordan is recognized as the official custodian of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem.

On the international level, there has been a change in the nature of the EU and UN role in Jerusalem. They no longer confine themselves to supporting pro-Palestinian NGOs. The scope of their activism has expanded to include such projects as funding the construction of commercial centers in Arab areas.

Though operationally distinct, these three networks often are interwoven in practice, which creates a powerful multiplier effect in their common resistance to Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. The networks are often united by religious and nationalist ties. Two specific alliances link them. One is Islamic and religious, the other nationalist and political.

Israel must act with determination to prevent radical groups from undermining the status quo on the Temple Mount.

The Islamist connection links the Turkish regime to the Muslim Brotherhood, which operates in Jerusalem under the leadership of Shaykh Ikrimah Sabri (who was the Mufti of Jerusalem, 1994-2006). Together, Ankara and the Brotherhood work to foment religious subversion in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, it's a political bond that brings together the PA and European officials. They seek to undermine the legitimacy of Israel's rule in eastern Jerusalem.

In the face of these challenges, Israeli policy should be based on defining these foreign interventions in Jerusalem affairs as a national security matter. Accordingly, the activities of the three networks need to be closely monitored and countered by an inter-agency task force comprised of officials from the Prime Minister's Office, Internal Security Ministry, GSS and other elements of the Israeli intelligence community, Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem Affairs Ministry, Jerusalem City Hall and Israel Police.

This team should reassess the "Implementation Law," which covers aspects of the PA's activity in Jerusalem, and extend its application; track and block financial transactions that fund improper foreign activities in Jerusalem; cap the amounts of money that can be legally transferred; and conduct a discreet dialogue with the Jordanian government, which has a major stake in preserving the status quo in Jerusalem, including calm on the Temple Mount.

The above steps can help thwart the efforts of subversive elements to change the status quo that has sustained the city for decades.

An Israeli civilian counteroffensive should be launched to counter the wave of foreign-based and funded hostile activities in Jerusalem. Full implementation of Plan 3790 for infrastructure, education, urban planning, sports facilities, transportation and employment is necessary.