

JCRC Statement on Jerusalem

May 13, 1997

Approved by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

The Jewish Community Relations Council continues its strong support of the Middle East peace process as outlined in the Oslo Accords. We believe it is the most viable road map to peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and to lasting security for Israel.

The Israeli and Palestinian officials who authored the Oslo Accords recognized how difficult the path to peace would be and that certain issues, including the status of Jerusalem, should not be addressed until the final stage of negotiations.

While the Oslo Accords left Jerusalem as a final status issue, the position of every Israeli government has remained unchanged since 1967: Jerusalem will remain the united and undivided capital of Israel under Israeli sovereignty with access to holy sites of all faiths guaranteed.

Within Israel's open democratic society, and within the American Jewish community there is a wide range of perspectives on the Arab/Israeli conflict. At the same time, there is a strong consensus within our community on the subject of Jerusalem and its future.

The key points of consensus on Jerusalem and related issues are as follows:

1. Jerusalem is the united, undivided and eternal capital of Israel.
2. The American Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as specified by the Jerusalem Embassy Act enacted by Congress on October 30, 1995, with the support of an overwhelming majority of 467 members of both houses, in accordance with the right of every sovereign nation to determine its capital.
3. The city of Jerusalem is central to the Jewish people. While specific holy sites in Jerusalem are of profound religious importance to Christianity and Islam, as well as to Judaism, the nature of the Jewish people's attachment to Jerusalem in

prayer, history and scope, is unique. Indeed, Jerusalem has never been the capital of any other nation.

4. Jerusalem is a city where protection of the holy sites of all faiths has been stringently guaranteed by Israel since 1967.
5. Among the major obligations contained in the Oslo Accords are direct bi-lateral negotiations and the commitment of the parties to abide by all the terms of the Accords as they pertain to Jerusalem. In particular, the threat of or use of violence and terrorism to influence the complex political issues between Israel and the Palestinian Authority regarding Jerusalem must cease if the peace process is to move forward.
6. The Oslo Accords do not preclude Israel from continuing to develop Jerusalem's neighborhoods. It has been the policy of every Israeli government since 1967 to develop Jerusalem. At the same time, peacemaking requires both Israeli and Arab leaders to maintain on-going lines of communications with their negotiating partners and to weigh the potential impact of their decisions on the peace process.
7. Israel's long-standing commitment to improve the municipal services and quality of life of all of Jerusalem's inhabitants should be fulfilled.