



Jerusalem 4:29
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ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

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themselves.
Fortunately, Jerusalem
is in our hands, and we
have a clear advantage in deciding its
future.

Battles are often won by taking
over the center of gravity. Jerusalem
is the center of gravity in the Israeli-
Palestinian conflict in both a symbolic
and a strategic sense. This insight
must be internalized by Israeli society. (BESA Center Perspectives Jan
19)

Commentary...

Jerusalem is the Center of Gravity By Efraim Inbar

Israel's control of a united Jerusalem is challenged now more than ever. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334, adopted on December 23, 2016, declared the Jewish Quarter, the Western Wall, and the Temple Mount occupied territory and any Jewish presence there illegal if it is without Palestinian consent. This followed the October 2016 UNESCO resolution ignoring Jewish links to the Temple Mount. Moreover, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced on December 28, 2016 that for the first time, the U.S. supports the idea that Jerusalem should be the capital of two peoples.

Many Israelis console themselves that President Donald Trump will move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, signaling a new era. Even if the move takes place, and even if it goes smoothly with few repercussions, it is not at all clear that the rest of the world will fall in step.

In all probability, most of the world will refuse to come along, despite the fact that west Jerusalem is not disputed territory. It will not help that there should be no legal or political problem moving an embassy to the western part of the city. There was great reluctance to move embassies to pre-1967 Jerusalem long before the Palestinians issued any demands for parts of the city. No particular sensitivity to the Palestinian issue was displayed during the 1948-67 period.

The truth is that many foreign ministries have not yet put to rest the November 1947 U.N. resolution for the partition of Palestine, which includes an article to internationalize the city under U.N. control. They simply do not want the Jews to have full control over the eternal city, and are eager to help the Palestinians prevent such control. In the Christian and Muslim worlds, Jerusalem has great resonance, and we know the attitudes toward Jews in those cultures. These factors, together with diplomatic inertia (which certainly plays a role), explain the persistent international refusal to acknowledge that Jerusalem is the seat of government and the capital of the Jewish state.

Jerusalem carries great symbolic value. There is no Zionism without Jerusalem, and David Ben-Gurion accordingly gave the city first priority during the 1948 War of Independence. The Palestinians understand this, which is one of the central reasons why they insist on claiming Jerusalem: They hope to water down Jewish attachment to the land of Israel.

They have not been entirely unsuccessful in this. Today, the most assimilated elements in Israel's society advocate parting with the Temple Mount for the sake of peace. Most Israelis, however, continue to believe that Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are more important than peace. Indeed, they are ready to fight for it. (For the time being, the Palestinian leadership feels the same.)

Jerusalem also carries great strategic value. Control of Jerusalem secures dominance of the only highway from the coast of the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley, a route along which military forces can move with little interference from Arab communities. If Israel wants to maintain a defensible border in the east, it must secure the east-west axis from the coast to the Jordan Valley via an undivided Jerusalem. The military importance of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's central role in Israel's eastern line of defense, cannot be overestimated – especially given the immense potential for political upheaval east of the Jordan River. The turmoil of the past few years in the Arab world suggests the need for great caution.

Jerusalem is an issue that commands consensus in Israel. Maintaining social cohesion in the protracted conflict with the Palestinians is easier, not harder, if the struggle is for a united Jerusalem. Therefore, educational efforts should be directed towards reinforcing the national love for Jerusalem, in tandem with budgetary preferential treatment for the development of an even more thriving city.

Israel's government should make this priority clear in its dealings with the new American administration. With that in mind, it should encourage the U.S. to overcome complaints and threats from the international community and move its embassy to Jerusalem. That would be an important step in securing Jerusalem for the Jewish people.

Of course, most of the work remains to be done by the Israelis

Never Again By Arsen Ostrovsky

This Friday, Jan. 27, is International Holocaust Remembrance Day, marking the day the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp was liberated.

It is also worth noting that last week marked 75 years since the infamous Wannsee Conference in Germany, where the Nazis came together to form the Final Solution.

Incredulously, a week earlier, a German court ruled that the firebombing of a synagogue just outside Dusseldorf was not an act of anti-Semitism but a legitimate form of political protest against Israel. This same synagogue had previously been damaged during Kristallnacht.

This is the unfortunate and very dangerous reality facing Jewish communities across Europe today, many of which are forced to live their lives in the shadows, under fear of anti-Semitism.

This week, Israel's Diaspora Affairs Ministry published a new report detailing the alarming increase in global anti-Semitism, most notably in Germany, where the number of anti-Semitic incidents doubled in the past year, and the United Kingdom, which saw a 62% rise.

The fact is, we know the situation is bad. The Jewish communities of Europe know it is bad. We need another report to tell us that about as much as we need another report to say that smoking is bad for your health.

What is needed, especially among the Jewish communities of Europe, is action. Real, tangible, concrete action, to fight this oldest and most enduring hatred, which targets the Jewish people, and by extension today, the Jewish state.

The esteemed Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, in a speech last September before the European Parliament, called anti-Semitism "the mutating virus," saying: "In the Middle Ages, Jews were hated because of their religion. In the 19th and early 20th century they were hated because of their race. Today they are hated because of their nation-state, the State of Israel."

Because the lines are all too often and easily blurred, it is crucial that it be made clear, repeatedly and until the point is understood, that this assault on Israel's legitimacy as the nation-state of the Jewish people, including the use of false claims and malicious distortions of truth disguised as acceptable criticism of Zionism and Israel, is the modern-day manifestation of anti-Semitism.

In this regard, it was a very welcome development last month to see the U.K., which has become a hotbed of anti-Semitism, especially on campus and in political discourse, being the first country to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism. It was important because this definition is very explicit in reiterating that the assault on Israel's legitimacy, including against Zionism and applying this double standard against Israel, was a form of anti-Semitism.

Other states should follow the U.K.'s principled lead in adopting this definition, which would send a clear and unequivocal sign that neither hatred against the Jewish people, nor that against the Jewish state, will be tolerated.

Without such an adequate definition of anti-Semitism, which is regrettably lacking on both an EU institutional level and in many countries across Europe, how can states even begin to tackle this hatred until they can even define it first?

Recognizing that the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement is the very embodiment of this modern-day anti-Semitism, European countries ought to also give consideration to the French model of legislation that outlaws BDS on the basis of discrimination against a group of people on the grounds of their origin or belonging to an ethnic group, nation, race or religion.

There also needs to be increased focus on education, both for students and educators, including the study of racism, hatred and implications of the Holocaust, as well as Jewish culture and contribution to society in Europe.

It is imperative that we increase our efforts in interfaith dialogue and intercultural cooperation. We know that what starts with the Jews never ends with the Jews. And so we must join forces in our shared fight against this bigotry, hatred and anti-Semitism.

Today, social media and the online world are rapidly becoming the primary vehicle for amplifying and facilitating this hatred. While steps are being taken to curtail this, more -- much more -- can still be done, including more stringent monitoring and faster removal of hate material and greater cooperation between online companies, servers, authorities and Jewish communities.

Lastly, on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is still an unfathomable anomaly that only 13 of the 28 EU member states have laws specifically criminalizing Holocaust denial, despite being required to do so under EU law. We must work together with our European colleagues to remedy that.

Seventy-two years since the end of the Holocaust, the darkest chapter in European history, the international community and the Jewish people collectively said "Never again." Yet here we are, still having to repeat: Never again!

For some, this may be no more than just an empty slogan. But not for us. Not for the Jewish people. And not for those with a clear moral compass and sense of urgency. (Israel Hayom Jan 26)

The writer is the executive director of the Israeli-Jewish Congress.

The Palestinian Reflex By Reuven Berko

The Palestinian leadership is responding to the idea of relocating the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem with empty threats, which amount to no more than a knee-jerk reaction to the situation.

The American insistence on moving their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is driving the Palestinians crazy. As Israel helped create the Palestinian people and state out of nothing, the Palestinians now ask "in exchange" to thwart the move of the U.S. Embassy to the Jewish capital, established thousands of years before their prophet had divine visions, and before the blood and murder of their first terrorist attack put them on the world map.

Until recently, the Palestinians were euphoric. They avoided direct negotiations and wagered on international pressure to defeat Israel for them. But Islamic terrorism and the progression of events since the Arab Spring brought a gradual change in the global trend of submission to Palestinians around the world. The series of escalating Palestinian warnings aimed at U.S. President Donald Trump now includes threats of terrorism and attacks on American embassies and interests.

As the future American Embassy will likely be located in the western part of Jerusalem, and the Palestinian villages of east Jerusalem will likely be placed under the Palestinian Authority's control, the move does not contradict a future peace deal. But Palestinians like negotiator Saeb Erekat deny the very existence of the Jewish state and the symbols of its rule in Jerusalem.

For this reason the pantheon of Palestinian terrorists has fallen back into familiar habits and the conditioned reflex of making threats. Erekat explained that the U.S. Embassy will not relocate to Jerusalem "because it will undermine American interests in the Middle East, the Islamic world and many countries worldwide."

The truth is rooted in the "Jewish question." Palestinian threats carry religious and anti-Semitic overtones, as if they came from the mouths of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden or Islamic State head Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Palestinian Football Association President Jibril Rajoub threatened that Fatah views the plan to relocate the embassy as "a dangerous move that will have destructive consequences." Rajoub has suddenly become "the representative of Islam worldwide," and warned that "moving the embassy to Jerusalem will be a declaration of war on Muslims. It's unthinkable that America will give the Jews the keys to Christian and Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem."

For years, Arab states used the Palestinians as an instrument meant to serve their interests. Now the Palestinians are threatening to use the Arab states against the U.S., but these threats are empty. The Palestinians know the Persian Gulf states, which face domestic threats, hope for a settlement in Syria, and are in desperate need of American protection from Iran, will not agree to be used by the Palestinians. The Gulf states will not risk antagonizing Trump, nor will they look the other way on actions against American interests on their soil.

Fatah will not cower to Hamas, and it is tempted to resume its terrorist activity. But if the Palestinians embrace terrorism, they risk losing whatever traces of empathy they still have in the West. At the very least, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas will try to maintain his grip on King Abdullah of Jordan, who represents, in coordination with Israel, Islamic interests in Al-Aqsa. But the king, wary of the "embassy effect," met with Abbas, as if to warn the new president against the move.

The cat is out of the bag. Whoever refuses to recognize the Jewish state may see Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem as disastrous, but cannot threaten to "revoke recognition." The Palestinians use Jerusalem, as well as the

"right of return," as the wrench they repeatedly throw in the peace process' wheels. Luckily for us, Trump is the only one who can pry this wrench out of their hands. (Israel Hayom Jan 24)

Finally Calling a Spade a Spade By Ephraim Herrera

At his inauguration, U.S. President Donald Trump said what his predecessor, former President Barack Obama, refused to say for the eight years of his administration: The vast majority of terrorist attacks around the world are the result of radical Islam, and radical Islam should be eradicated completely. This is good news for the West and good news for the entire world because in order to deal with a problem, one must first acknowledge its existence.

Furious reactions from the radical Islamic world were quick to follow. Throughout the Palestinian territories, pictures were burned; senior Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouk called Trump "jahil" (ignorant), a term reserved in Islam for those who have not received the message of the Prophet Muhammad, and idol worshippers from the pre-Islamic era in particular.

Marzouk said, "Indeed, we are a nation that eulogizes battles but wins wars, and humanity will recognize the eminence of our mission." The Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper, published in London and financed by a Saudi tycoon, published a cartoon in which Trump launches bombs from his mouth toward the dove of Islam. The caption: "Trump, in his first speech after being appointed president."

The mass protests against Trump's comments about women are also not without an element of Islam: One of the four organizers of the mass march at Trump's inauguration was Linda Sarsour, the executive director of the Arab American Association of New York, an American Muslim of Palestinian descent. In an interview on MSNBC in 2015, Sarsour said, "We come to the U.S., 22 states with anti-Shariah bills trying to ban us from practicing our faith. ... We have mosques being vandalized, kids being executed, Islamophobia."

The concept of "Islamophobia" is often used as a tool to prevent criticism of radical Islam: If you criticize Islamic extremism, then you are an Islamophobe, a racist. This prevents serious discussion of the number one cause of wars and displacement of people around the world. We will believe Sarsour is concerned about the fate of women and women's rights when she organizes a similar protest against the discrimination of women in the majority of Islamic states, but it seems this painful subject is of no concern to her or the millions who took part in the anti-Trump rallies around the world.

And as for dealing with the issue at hand, throughout his campaign, Trump said he would wage an all-out war against radical Islam through the use of a variety of measures. Israel must stand with him in this war: His war is the heart of our war, which, at its core, is not about "territories" or "discrimination against Muslims," but a war in the name of Islam and in the name of Allah. It is enough to hear the terrorists as they carry out their attacks; they do not yell "Long live independent Palestine!" or "Equal rights for Muslims!" but rather "Allahu akbar." A victory for Trump in his battle against radical Islam would also be a victory for Israel against its enemies. (Israel Hayom Jan 24)

Annex Through Continued Building By Nadav Shragai

It's hard to address the core of the matter of annexing Maaleh Adumim when the issue is becoming a battle between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Education Minister Naftali Bennett, but we must do so.

First, we need to say that the Maaleh Adumim area (along with Gush Etzion) is indeed -- as argued by the authors of the bill to annex it, MKs Yoav Kisch (Likud) and Bezalel Smotrich (Habayit Hayehudi) -- in the consensual part of the settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria. The Zionist Union, Yesh Atid, Likud, Habayit Hayehudi, and even the haredi parties see all these areas as a permanent part of the State of Israel.

But broad national agreement does not guarantee that this will happen. There is no peace deal on the horizon, and in the meantime a number of processes underway on the ground are raising questions about the fate of Maaleh Adumim.

The first is the construction freeze. For years, very little been built in Maaleh Adumim. The U.S. under President Barack Obama decreed, and Israel under Netanyahu, froze the building.

The second process is the spread of illegal Palestinian and Bedouin construction around Maaleh Adumim. Over the years, this construction has narrowed the width of the corridor through which the Jerusalem-Maaleh Adumim road passes from at least 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) to a single kilometer (two-thirds of a mile). The illegal construction to which the Civil Administration has awakened only recently threatens to cut off contiguous Israeli space between the two cities.

The third and most worrying process is the continued freeze on construction of the E-1 residential neighborhood, which was planned to have connect Mount Scopus in Jerusalem to Maaleh Adumim years ago.

In the absence of a connection like that -- again, due to U.S. pressure -

- the land on the eastern slopes of Mount Scopus was declared a national park a few years back, meaning any construction there was forbidden. If it hadn't been for that status, the Palestinians would probably have connected the neighborhood of Anata in the north of Jerusalem with A-Zaim in the south, and Maaleh Adumim would have been swallowed up by a crowded strip of Palestinian communities. Maaleh Adumim would have been connected to Jerusalem by a single road only, similar to how Mount Scopus was linked to the western half of Jerusalem before the 1967 Six-Day War.

Will annexing Maaleh Adumim help change the situation? Probably. It is easier to maneuver within the scope of Israeli law. Will annexation guarantee a change? No. Change depends first and foremost on re-launching construction. Building in Maaleh Adumim should not hang on permission from the United States. It's also probable that U.S. President Donald Trump and his people may take a different stance on Israeli construction in the settlements, particularly within the "blocs." Annexation will be effective only if it comes with construction. So we should try to coordinate the annexation with a friendly administration, as the Trump administration appears to be going to be.

On the other hand, the Trump era is the time to put an end to coordination and permissions from Washington for any Israeli activity beyond the Green Line. This is what the Jerusalem Municipality finally did on Sunday when it issued a permit to build beyond the line. That what the government and the municipality did a few days ago when they approved the second light rail line connecting Mount Scopus to the Gilo neighborhood in the southeast of the city, and that's how we need to conduct ourselves from here on out, not only in Jerusalem, but in Maaleh Adumim, too. Action first. Words can come later. (Israel Hayom Jan 23)

The Crusader Revival: Banning Jews From The Heart Of Jerusalem By Shlomo Slonim

UN Security Council resolution 2334 of December 23, 2016 is designed to redivide Jerusalem and to stamp Israeli authority, currently exercised throughout the city, as illegal. In effect, it would put the Jewish Quarter, as well as the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, under Muslim authority, and make all Jewish residents in the outlying suburbs of Jerusalem into squatters earmarked for expulsion, since the resolution marks them as "settlers."

In short, the heart of Jerusalem, with its Jewish holy sites, would become stripped of its Jewish population. The divided city would become reminiscent of the 19-year embargo imposed on the eastern part of the city from 1948 to 1967, when Jordan exercised suzerainty and Jews were expelled and not even allowed access to their holy sites.

An even more graphic example of Jewish expulsion from Jerusalem occurred in the time of the Crusaders, who pillaged and destroyed Jewish communities on their way to the Holy Land, and upon seizing Jerusalem butchered the Jewish residents therein and proclaimed that no Jew was to set foot again in the Holy City.

It is a sad reflection on the Obama administration that it allowed a resolution with such fateful consequences to be adopted by the world body that is charged with maintaining international peace and security.

Had President Barack Obama fully appreciated the implications of the resolution, he could at least have secured the removal of the references to the June 4 line, which amount to an attempt to impose new lines on the parties to which they had never given their sanction. It is less than amazing that in this day and age, any world leader, let alone a president of the United States, could endorse, even implicitly, a program to dislodge thousands of Jews from their homes in Jerusalem. And this in the face of genocidal mobilization by a relentless foe that for 70 years has not desisted for a moment from its murderous campaign to destroy the Jewish state.

Several previous American presidents adopted a very different attitude in relation to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

In his long address attempting to justify the American abstention in the Security Council vote, Secretary of State John Kerry claimed, time and again, that condemnation of settlements and allotting eastern Jerusalem to the Palestinians is in accordance with long-standing American policy.

He declared: "Every US administration since 1967... has recognized east Jerusalem as among the territories that Israel occupied in the Six Day War." Likewise, Ambassador Samantha Power's essay, after the Security Council's vote, stated that "for nearly five decades... through the administrations of presidents Lyndon B. Johnson through to Obama, have sent messages that the settlements must stop."

This simply does not concur with the facts. There were no settlements during the Johnson administration and he never sent any such message.

In outlining "five great principles of peace" Johnson said there must be "adequate recognition of the special interest of three great religions in the holy places of Jerusalem." It has been noted that this formula relates to interest in holy places, but does not bear on Israeli administration in the city.

The approach was changed under the Nixon administration, which tried to attribute the term "Israeli occupation of Jerusalem" to the Johnson administration. This provoked a vigorous denial from Arthur Goldberg, US

ambassador to the UN under president Johnson, that appeared in The New York Times. He declared: "This is entirely inaccurate... At no time... did I refer to East Jerusalem as occupied territory."

Clearly, Kerry's and Powers' references to the Johnson administration are inaccurate.

Moreover, president Reagan, shortly after he entered the White House, stated that settlements in the territories were not illegal. This was supported then by a comprehensive legal analysis drafted by former US under-secretary of state and former dean of Yale Law School Eugene Rostow, who declared categorically that, on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242, "Settlement was never illegal." As a presidential candidate, Reagan had acknowledged Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem. In 1982, president Reagan published a peace plan. On that occasion, Reagan said: "I have personally followed and supported Israel's heroic struggle for survival since the founding of the state of Israel 34 years ago: in the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely 10 miles wide at its narrowest point."

The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile Arab armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again."

It is interesting to observe that the editorial of a noted newspaper described the Reagan peace plan as "promis[ing] a thinly disguised Israeli domination over all of Jerusalem."

This paper was not The Jerusalem Post.

It was the New York Times. Thus, talk of consistent American policy under each administration since 1967 in defining east Jerusalem as occupied territory is simply not borne out by the facts.

Fortunately for Israel, resolution 2334, with its proclamation that the definitive boundary is that of June 4, '67, is simply an exercise in futility in international law, for several reasons.

First of all, noted authorities on international law, including former American president of the International Court of Justice Stephen M. Schwebel, have declared that Israel's sovereign claim to all of Jerusalem is indefeasible. Furthermore, 2334 contravenes Security Council Resolution 242, the bedrock foundation of all resolutions in the search for Middle East peace, supported also by resolution 338, which confirmed that Israel is entitled to "recognized and secure boundaries." This right that accrued to Israel cannot be nullified by a wave of the hand. Moreover, 2334 in its preamble "reaffirms" the aforementioned resolutions, so any rights accruing to Israel under those resolutions are reaffirmed automatically by 2334. The Security Council can, of course, alter an earlier resolution, but it cannot deprive a state of its just rights, territorial or otherwise, based on and affirmed by the earlier resolutions.

And in this regard, it is imperative that members of the Security Council bear in mind the limits of their own authority. It was stated most bluntly by the eminent British judge on the International Court of Justice Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice. He declared that the Security Council, even when acting genuinely for the preservation of peace, is not empowered to effect legal changes "in territorial rights whether of sovereignty or administration.... It was to keep the peace, not to change the world order, that the Security Council was set up."

The attempt of 2334 to fix a boundary of June 4, 1967 between Israel and a Palestinian entity is in accordance neither with United Nations Charter law nor international law. It is not binding on anyone, least of all on Israel. (Jerusalem Post Jan 25)

The writer is professor emeritus of American history at the Hebrew University and is the author of 'Jerusalem in America's Foreign Policy.'

Israel's Moment of Decision By Caroline B. Glick

Over the past week we were given new evidence of what many assumed for years. Former president Barack Obama and his administration weren't interested in bringing peace to the Middle East. They were interested in harming Israel.

Last Friday, Makor Rishon published an interview with former Foreign Ministry director general Dore Gold. Gold told the paper that Obama's national security adviser Susan Rice once said, "Even if Israel and the Palestinians reach an accord, it's possible that the US will oppose it."

Rice said the US would oppose any deal that it felt didn't do justice to the Palestinians.

Rice's statement is significant not merely because it shows the depth of Obama's hostility. It is important because it tells us the truth about the so-called "twostate solution."

Rice's statement showed that Western pressure for Israeli concessions to the PLO isn't geared toward making peace between the parties at all. It is about retribution.

Obama's anti-Israel vision of justice for the Palestine was revealed in another story Gold told the paper.

Gold related that after Obama and his entourage left Israel following former president Shimon Peres's funeral last September, Obama phoned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from Air Force One. He told Netanyahu that if he wants to have a funeral like Peres's, he needs to get

moving with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu responded that he has no interest in having a funeral like Peres's, "because I have no intention of participating in my country's funeral."

In other words, Netanyahu told Obama that the US leader's understanding of what Israel needs to do to bring justice to the Palestinians involves Israel ceasing to exist.

Today, as excitement abounds in Israel about the new, friendly administration of President Donald Trump, we must understand what we just went through with Obama.

Obama's vision did not die with him. Thanks to his leadership, the Democratic Party is now anti-Israel.

The millions of protesters who took to the streets throughout the US last Saturday voiced their opposition to Israel with the same enthusiasm and passion as they voiced their support for open borders.

Moreover, the American establishment supported Obama's positions. Obama's hostile policies were roundly supported by the State Department's permanent bureaucracy. The diplomats who worked with Obama are still in place. So, too, the Washington establishment, including US Jewish leaders, still support Obama's policy of backing the PLO against Israel.

Immediately after Netanyahu and Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman announced that they approved plans to build 2,500 apartments for Jews in the so-called settlement blocs, David Harris, the CEO of the American Jewish Committee, condemned the move as "not helpful."

Harris gave a public relations victory to those who reject the very notion of Jewish civil and national rights, by proclaiming that the announcement of building permits, "alas, could hand anti-Israel forces a PR victory."

Harris was joined in his campaign against Jewish property rights by former US negotiator Dennis Ross.

Ross published an article in the New York Daily News where he argued that Trump should limit his support for Jewish property rights to the so-called "settlement blocs." In so arguing, Ross invited Trump to reject the property rights of 100,000 Israelis who don't live in the so-called blocs. Ross effectively called for the new president to support a plan that would require their mass expulsion from their homes and the destruction of their communities.

Ross's fellow mediators used the past week or so to lobby against Trump's plan to keep his promise to move the US Embassy to Israel's capital city. Speaking to The New York Times, David Makovsky, who was a member of former secretary of state John Kerry's negotiating team, and Aaron David Miller, who served as Ross's deputy in the Clinton years, both said that Trump should not move the embassy to Jerusalem.

Their comrade Martin Indyk wrote an op-ed in the New York Times earlier this month where he argued snidely that Trump should move the embassy to Jerusalem and simultaneously announce his plan to open a second US embassy in Jerusalem for the state of "Palestine."

Last Wednesday, Trump he told Israel Hayom that he intended to keep his campaign promise to move the embassy. The next day Trump's spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters to "stay tuned" on the embassy move, intimating that an announcement could come as early as Trump's first day in office.

On his first full day in office, Trump moved boldly to overturn Obama's policies. He signed executive orders that effectively ended Obama's environmental and health policies.

But he ignored Jerusalem. And Spicer made clear that the early plan to move quickly on the embassy has been abandoned. At his press briefing Spicer wouldn't even commit to moving the embassy before the end of Trump's term of office.

In other words, the Washington establishment won and Israel lost.

To be sure, the peace processors and the leftists weren't alone in their opposition to the embassy move. The Arabs also voiced their disapproval.

PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas and his deputies threatened to open a new terrorist offensive against Israel and destabilize the Middle East if Trump kept his promise. Jordan's King Abdullah reportedly threatened to withdraw his ambassador from Israel and suspend his security ties with Israel. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi reportedly voiced opposition to the planned move as well.

But as former CIA director Gen. David Petraeus said during his visit to Israel this week, in recent years, the Palestinian issue, which was once the top concern Arab leaders voiced in their meetings with US officials, became a minor issue for them.

In an interview with Breitbart this week, former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton said that while moving the embassy "would... necessitate a lot of active diplomacy to calm down people who might be concerned about it," reneging on Trump's promise would be tantamount to "allowing other people, in other countries, to tell us... where we put our embassy."

Trump's abrupt about-face on the embassy move makes clear that now is no time for Israel to tread lightly.

To the contrary. As the government takes the first steps toward forging its relationship with the new administration, two basic truths need to inform its decisions.

First, in light of the hostility of the US Left and establishment alike to the notion that Israel is America's ally, and given the speed with which Trump backed away from his promise to move the embassy to Jerusalem, the only way Israel can expect to be treated with respect is to command respect. And you can't command respect when you beat around the bush about your vital interests and rights.

Second, Israel cannot expect Trump to abandon Obama's hostile policies in relation to the Palestinians if it doesn't abandon them first.

This means Netanyahu must heed his government ministers' calls to abandon the two-state paradigm.

So long as Netanyahu continues to support PLO statehood even to a limited degree, he gives legitimacy to the wholly anti-Israel PLO narrative.

Right after Trump was elected, government ministers from Bayit Yehudi and the Likud implored Netanyahu to abandon the two-state formula and apply Israeli law to Area C in Judea and Samaria. Under pressure from Netanyahu, who himself was under pressure from Obama, the ministers quickly ended their calls.

Obama's decision to enable the UN Security Council to pass Resolution 2234 brought the two-state paradigm to its inevitable conclusion. The resolution criminalized Israel and legitimized Palestinian terrorists.

After the UN resolution passed, and as Trump's inauguration approached, the ministers renewed their calls to end support for Palestinian statehood and replace the two-state paradigm with the paradigm of Israeli sovereignty.

But pressured by Netanyahu, they scaled back their calls for Israeli administration of Judea and Samaria to a minimalist call to apply Israeli law to the city of Ma'aleh Adumim.

Over the weekend, calls for action grew louder. But on Sunday, just as Trump was backtracking on the embassy move, Netanyahu prevailed on his ministers to postpone consideration of their bill on Ma'aleh Adumim.

Netanyahu exhorted them to allow him to run Israel's policy toward the Palestinian and toward the Trump administration. Netanyahu's mantra this week has been that he doesn't wish to surprise Trump with a big Israeli initiative. He insists that a new policy toward the Palestinians needs to be coordinated with the US administration.

Netanyahu also says that he continues to support a Palestinian state. But his vision involves establishing a state too weak to threaten Israel.

Trump's sudden about-face on Jerusalem shows the weakness of Netanyahu's gradual and careful approach. As Netanyahu preached caution, Israel's opponents in the US worked hand in glove with the Palestinians to draw Trump into the anti-Israel logic of the "two-state" policy.

The situation isn't lost. Even as he backtracked on Jerusalem, Trump has taken other steps that make clear that he really is a friend of Israel.

Due in large part to the UN's hostility toward Israel, Trump moved resolutely to scale back US support for the UN. Trump also overturned Obama's last minute decision to give the Palestinian Authority \$221 million.

But so long as Trump continues to make establishing a Palestinian state the goal of US policy, including indirectly by failing to move the embassy to Israel's capital city, Democrats and the Washington establishment will be able to keep on undermining Israel. They will point to Trump's continued if indirect support for Palestinian statehood as an excuse to continue to require Israel to prefer the positions of terrorists sworn to its destruction over its national interests, in order to "preserve the two-state policy," or "enhance prospects for peace."

Moreover, so long as he supports the "two-state policy," every supportive move Trump makes will be easily reversed by a successor administration. And it would be irresponsible, indeed reckless, for Israel to assume that Trump and the Republicans will maintain the upper hand in US politics indefinitely.

Eight years ago when Obama took office, the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. Pundits were near unanimous in the view that the Democrats would remain in power for a generation as the Republicans, smarting from their losses were fractured and leaderless.

Two years later, the Republicans won control of the House of Representatives and for the final six years of his presidency, Obama was unable to get his policies through Congress.

Netanyahu is right. Israel shouldn't surprise Trump.

But Israel must move immediately to take advantage of the time it has with Trump in power, and with the Republicans in control of Congress to ensure our interests in Judea and Samaria and to rally Trump to support our policies.

Time is of the essence. The one Obama legacy that is most likely to be lasting is his transformation of the Democratic Party into an anti-Israel party. His deep hostility toward Israel will likely be shared by his partisan successors.

And again, as Israel treads lightly, its opponents scored a victory.

If Netanyahu doesn't seize the moment, the opportunity we have today will quickly slip away. (Jerusalem Post Jan 26)