

Jerusalem: The Red Line for Muslims

By [Gulam Asgar Mitha](#)

Global Research, December 10, 2017

[Oriental Review](#) 9 December 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

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To Netanyahu it is Yerushalayim (city of peace) in Yiddish; to Muslims it is Bayt Al-Maqdis (the house of peace). To Google and now to Trump Jerusalem (city of peace) is the capital of Israel.

On December 7, 2017 Yeni Safak, a conservative Turkish daily newspaper and strong supporter of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [reported](#) Erdoğan as saying that Trump's Jerusalem step 'will throw the region into a ring of fire', 'Trump's declaration aims to stir up the region, not to bring peace,' and that "Jerusalem, Mr. Trump, is the red line for Muslims". No empty words from a NATO partner and a country that has recognized Israel.

"It is not possible to understand what Trump wants to achieve," Erdoğan said in the capital Ankara before leaving for a visit to Greece.

"The (US) announcement has the potential to send us backwards to even darker times than the ones we are already living in" Federika Mogherini, EU Foreign Policy chief added.

She shared German Chancellor Angela Merkel's sentiments that the European Union had a "clear and united position" on the issue:

"We believe that the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two states and with Jerusalem as the capital of both."

On December 7, 2017 Newsweek [reported](#) Iran says Arabs and Muslims must defend Jerusalem as rockets target Israel. Like Turkey, Iran has demonstrated its resolve on several occasions that it is a country with a leadership that is not impotent. Iran's military chief of staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri stated on Press TV

"The world of arrogance, and foremost the criminal U.S., should know that the unity of the Muslim world will obstruct this desperate move and will be defeated with the vigilance of the Muslim world."

Unity? Is that possible?

A statement from nuclear Pakistan's Prime Minister's office stated

"It is deeply regrettable that pleas from states across the globe not to alter the

legal and historical status of Al Quds Al Sharif have been ignored, more out of choice than necessity.”

Even Trump’s closest Middle East ally Saudi Arabia has ostracized President Donald Trump’s [decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel’s capital](#), calling the move “unjustified and irresponsible”. The statement added that

“The kingdom has already warned of the serious consequences of such an unjustified and irresponsible move.”

But Saudi agenda is to block Iran, not Israel.

Probably the strongest message that the Islamic countries should send is voiced by the Chairman of Indonesia’s Youth Association of Nahdlatul Ulama (IPNU), Irfan Mujahid:

“Expel the US ambassador (to Indonesia) if he ignores this demand.”

Indonesian President Joko Widodo also called on Muslim countries to unite and reject the US move.

So there are four strong Muslim nations Turkey, Iran, Indonesia and Pakistan (I’m always wary of Egyptian intentions) with formidable militaries and a collective population of over 600 million voicing their opposition designating Jerusalem as Israel’s capital against the [UN resolution 478](#) of August 20, 1980.

The OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) comprising 57 nations will be convening an extraordinary summit for Muslim leaders on December 12-13 in Istanbul to “*discuss the repercussions of the American decision, and to formulate a unified Islamic position on this dangerous escalation.*” Is a unified Islamic position possible?

The key question that needs to be addressed is one posed by Erdogan: what does Trump want to achieve by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? Only then can the consequences of Trump’s decision be taken for discussion and whether it’ll result in Erdogan’s ring of fire in the region.

I posed a question on my recent article on Oriental Review [if Trump is unpredictable, senile or juvenile?](#) It seems from opinions of several political and media analysts who know him enough that he truly is all three. His decision to recognize Jerusalem therefore comes as no surprise. But behind these attributes may lay a cunning plot which may well be the genius of Benjamin Netanyahu. Trump wants to make America great and therein is his genius for an irrational war.

As the sun begins to set on any empire, and the most classical ones have been the Roman and British, there develops desperation to somehow keep the sun from setting. The empire’s leadership starts fragmenting and the rationale that made a nation an empire starts to crumble.

America has witnessed no threat from its Muslims citizens as the vast majority have

contributed their professional and business talents towards making it great. However, Trump is not willing to accept the contributions of all immigrants including Muslims, Chinese, and Mexicans or even the contributions of his predecessor of Afro-American origin. He favors the alt-Right group as the true contributors. He sees the Muslims, most specifically, within its borders as well as outside as the threat to America in a manner similar to the Germanic tribes that threatened the Roman Empire under the able leadership of Emperor Marcus Aurelius till his son Commodus began the Roman descent. Trump shares the fear of Muslims with Netanyahu.

Trump has thus far failed to drive a wedge between the Shias and Sunnis or between Arabs. The rationale of Trump to making America great is a war-the ring of fire in the region. Trump is not going to backtrack his decision so what responses can be expected from the Islamic leaders following the OIC summit?

If Jerusalem is the red line for Muslims, how do they intend to address it? Will they blink and open up the opportunity for Trump to enforce his decision leading other nations to follow in recognizing Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel?

Or will the Muslims unite on the Jerusalem platform? Trump is expecting the Muslims to capitulate and his hopes are pinned among the weaker ones Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Jordan who are fully capable of upsetting the proverbial apple cart and dissent with the stronger nations Turkey, Pakistan and Iran whose actions are needed for Palestinians (including Hezbollah) to continue their struggle.

OIC countries may demonstrate at the Istanbul summit they're united but historically they've always been splintered. It is something that Netanyahu is aware of. They cannot speak with one voice and there is no leadership except venom within their ranks. Most importantly the OIC summit must not show any willingness to negotiate on the position of Jerusalem within the framework of UN resolution 478 because that would be seen as weakness which can easily be exploited by Trump and Netanyahu. In fact the only solution that should be a part of the final OIC communique is the member countries are willing to be prepared for the *ring of fire in the region* if the US will not retract its decision. If the OIC leaders proffer that unity then Trump and Netanyahu are doomed.

The outcome of the OIC summit will be carefully watched by both Russia and China whose support is critical for Muslims.

Gulam Asgar Mitha is a retired Technical Safety Engineer. He has worked in Libya, Qatar, Pakistan, France, Yemen and UAE with several N. American and International oil and gas companies.. Currently Gulam lives in Calgary, Canada and enjoys reading and keeping in tune with current global political issues.

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