

Mr. Trump, You Must Move Our Embassy to Jerusalem

It's true that, during the presidential campaign, candidate Donald Trump promised that he would move our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

It's true that 60 top Christian leaders, among many others, have called on the president to keep his word.

It's true that the Republican Party platform stated, "We recognize Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state, and call for the American embassy to be moved there in fulfillment of U.S. law."

And it's true that in 1995, Congress officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, calling "for the U.S. Embassy to be moved there by May 31, 1999."

But to do this would upset the Muslim world, further exacerbate the peace process, and potentially foment a new wave of terror attacks against Israel. Is the risk worth the reward?

Things are fragile enough in the Middle East right now, so why alienate countries like Egypt? Why strain relationships with Saudi Arabia? Why make it more difficult to unite Muslim nations in a war against ISIS? And why add fuel to the fire of Palestinian terrorists? Why put Israeli lives at risk?

The answer is simple: 1) Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and there's probably no country on earth with a more ancient connection to its capital city. 2) We recognize the capitals of all other nations with whom we have relationships and we put our embassies there. 3) There is no legitimate reason for us not to treat Israel like every other nation on the planet. Why should we discriminate against our friend Israel, which is

also our number one ally in the region?

As my friend Rabbi Shmuley Boteach recently wrote, "It is outrageous that out of the 190 nations America has diplomatic relations with, Israel is the only one whose capital is not recognized by the U.S. government."

Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes went one step further: Not to move our embassy to Jerusalem "is disrespectful, insulting, wrong—politically and diplomatically—and has an anti-Semitic tone to it." I do not believe he overstated his case.

As for the risk of making this move, consider the following.

1. The embassy could be in West Jerusalem rather than East Jerusalem. Even Palestinian negotiators recognize Israel's right to West Jerusalem. It is East Jerusalem they covet as the capital of a Palestinian state.

Russia recently said (to paraphrase), "We're happy to recognize West Jerusalem as Israel's capital and East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state." *The Wall Street Journal* actually ran an op-ed with the headline, "Russia Recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's Capital. Why Can't the U.S.?"

It's as simple as picking a building there (Does our government own or control any buildings in West Jerusalem right now?) and saying, "This is our embassy." We don't need a major building project. Just a sign over a door.

2. We cannot let terrorists blackmail us, nor can we pacify them. Israel is happy to take more security precautions and run the risk of having the embassy moved. Why aren't we? And since we have a policy of not negotiating with terrorists, why should we allow the threat of terrorism to stop us from doing what's right?

Let's also learn the lesson of recent history. As noted on the

Myths and Facts website, "Between 1993 and 2001, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) signed six agreements with Israel and conducted countless meetings and summits to bring about a lasting peace between them. Each Israeli concession was met with Palestinian non-compliance and escalating violence. Six times, Palestinians failed to honor their commitments and increased their anti-Israeli aggressions. Finally, they broke every promise they made and began an allout guerrilla war against Israel and its citizens"

If making concessions hasn't stopped terrorism in the past, why should we think it will stop terrorism in the future?

3. The Muslim world must recognize that Jerusalem is Israel's capital and that Israel is here to stay. As long as we refuse to move our embassy, we are putting a question mark over Israel's legitimacy. It's time we declare to the world: This is way it is and this is the way it's going to be.

Coming from a different angle, Rabbi Shmuley said, "We should not take the paternalistic view that Muslims cannot understand that Jerusalem has long been Israel's capital and that the United States is the Jewish state's closest ally. Reinforcing our special relationship by moving a building should not be seen as a provocation or retreat from our friendship with Arab and Muslim nations."

In other words, let's not treat the Muslim nations like a bunch of crybabies. Israel is not going anywhere, and Jerusalem is the capital. End of subject. Let's move on to bigger, more important issues that concern us all.

4. The last reason we should move the embassy is that I believe God will bless us for doing this.

Mr. Trump, please do the right thing. It will be a positive chapter in your legacy. You might be wavering now, but you have time to reset the course and do the right thing.

History will smile on your move. You would do something that neither Clinton nor Bush nor Obama were willing to do.