

Preface

Introducing a new book that focuses on diagnosis of the issues at stake in Jerusalem requires some preemptive comment. Jerusalem is considered to be the major stumbling block for Israeli-Arab negotiations. No other issue has generated more blueprints for conflict resolution. In fact, not a few of the contributors to this joint report, produced through cooperation between an Israeli and a Palestinian research institute, have been participants on research teams before, working with other institutions that are also focusing on the future of Jerusalem.

The papers here are the fruits of the first stage of a joint research project on Jerusalem between the Truman Institute and the Palestine Consultancy Group, but they by no means represent the first time that the two institutes have joined forces. Ongoing since September 1995, the project joins a long and successful record of collaborative projects between the two institutions. It has included such topics as Joint Management of Shared Aquifers; A Study of Environmental Protection and the Ecological Impact of Waste; The Psychology of Peace and Conflict; Education for Coexistence; and Regional Economic Cooperation.

PCG founder Sari Nusseibeh was a pioneer in addressing the Jerusalem issue in cooperation with Israelis, as witnessed, among other publications, by his Jerusalem chapter in the book *No Trumpets, No Drums*,¹ co-authored with Mark Heller. The Truman Institute, together with the Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Stratégiques of the Free University of Brussels–ULB, published a report last year examining present-day Jerusalem and Brussels, the latter the capital of the European Community, Belgium, and Belgium's French and Flemish communities alike.²

All the work that has gone before notwithstanding, the Truman Institute and the PCG feel that it is both necessary and productive to continue to address the issue. Many seeds of promise were planted in Israeli-Palestinian dialogues that took place over the years; it was the Oslo "backchannel" that bloomed, providing us with creative ideas for the actual initiation of the current Israeli-Palestinian peace process, among them, mutual recognition between the two peoples and graduated pullbacks in the context of confidence-building measures, beginning

with "Gaza and Jericho First." But in the last year or two, events in Jerusalem have contributed heavily to the current freeze in the negotiation process: the violence in September 1996 after the opening of a new tunnel exit under the Old City; the March 1997 Jabal Abu Ghaneim/Har Homa settlement start; the subsequent house-takeover at Ras al-Amud; and the recurring bloodshed at the hands of Hamas' suicide bombers, who have selected Jerusalem as the main target of their deadly missions. These setbacks can only underscore the importance of joint sustained academic ventures, as reflected in this volume.

To what extent should solutions give priority to the needs of those who live in the city? What kind of participation in decision-making is the right of co-religionists of Jerusalem's people who never come to visit in their lifetimes? What role in resolving its future belongs to citizens of Israel or of a Palestinian state who do not live in Jerusalem and rarely see it? The work of Christians, Muslims, and Jews for whom the city is part of daily life can inform public perceptions about such problems. As project directors, Sari Nusseibeh and Moshe Ma'oz shared with the other researchers the original aim of the study: to explore the feasibility of a variety of options for a shared and non-imposed solution to the problems of a city that is home to two political communities. An undivided Jerusalem without claims of exclusive jurisdiction for either side was the starting point of these explorations.

The research collected herein was conducted over a period of a year and a half by Palestinian and Israeli research pairs or trios studying a particular angle of the Jerusalem problem. While much of the work was done individually, the teams met often, in spite of the obstacles in communication resulting from the closure of the West Bank (home of most of the Palestinian contributors). On several occasions the entire group was convened, allowing for the presentation of preliminary findings, the sharing of constructive criticism, and the anchoring of the ongoing research to the general purposes of the project.

Because the project features joint research between Palestinians and Israelis, it has been of paramount importance for the scholars to determine an agenda of the critical issues to be studied and then to agree on the formulae for investigating viable options that could gain acceptance in both communities. Varying degrees of co-authorship characterized the writing of the chapters herein; what they have in common is the eminent qualifications of participants in addressing the issues. We welcome this cooperation as a natural process in team-building.

The underlying approach to the joint study has been (a) to frame the issues within a historic perspective and with a forward-looking bias; and (b) to disaggregate the intricate problems that comprise the delicate problem of Jerusalem. At this stage our contributors focused on finding shared diagnoses of the problems, rather than prematurely moving into one-sided prescription. The issues they selected represent three levels of concern:

1. Issues at the *local/municipal* level involve the services provided to the inhabitants of Jerusalem on a daily basis. Riad Malki and Shlomo Hasson divided their study into two stages that parallel those of the overall project, with data collection and analysis of major trends preceding the planned formulation of a master plan for the city of Jerusalem.
2. Sovereignty issues are of great importance for both Israeli and Palestinian *national* aspirations. In terms of conflict resolution, the national issues stand out as the most difficult to resolve. Contributors Claude Klein and Jonathan Kuttab tackled three aspects of sovereignty and identified many more. Two are covered herein: access to the city and education.
3. The holy places are an *international* focus of concern by the adherents of the world's main monotheistic religions. Marwan Abu Khalaf, Marlen Eordegian, and Yitzhak Reiter studied the significant sites of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, and the historical attachments to them. Their categorizations may well be of service to negotiators when the final status of the sites is determined.

The material herein is the foundation for the intensive work that the project's second stage will demand. All three research teams agreed unanimously to continue on to the next stage. An important goal is to develop a limited number of models for solving the question of Jerusalem through negotiations. And even if the study does not yield a single solution that is acceptable to both sides, it can assist negotiators in understanding the "red lines" that the other party cannot cross. It also indicates the areas where common ground can be found, as well as the topics that require future discussion before such mutual agreement can be reached. We seek the means to continue our research and integrate the findings of this volume further in jointly elaborated papers. This first volume has as its main objective the elucidation of the constraints related to the issues selected. The next step will be to see how solutions can contribute toward implementation of goals reflecting the priorities of both communities. Our direction can be seen in the words of project co-director Sari Nusseibeh:

The city's own government should be so designed as to give more weight to the human quality of life of its own residents than to the assertive claims of its competitive national contenders. States should thus transfer privileges to the city's government, reinforcing Jerusalem's special status, but in such a way as to enhance religious harmony and tolerance rather than religious bigotry and extremism.

Outside the academic realm, we are mindful of grassroots response to the proposals that the next stage aims to generate. Our initiative is worth undertaking provided the teams can eventually reach out both to policymakers and to the public. One of the strategies in creating an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence is establishing a shared common identity among the Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants of Jerusalem.

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Yitzhak Reiter also played an important role in coordinating materials for the book. Roza El Eini was responsible for initial editing of the chapter on the holy places and Jessica Bonn assisted with typing and corrections. The map of the holy places was produced by Vered Shatil, based on the 1994 map "Jerusalem: The Old City," used with the permission of the Survey of Israel. Finally, thanks to Chaia Beckerman, who once again has been responsible for the editing and production in book form of findings on the subject of Jerusalem, the subject perhaps the closest to her heart and interests.

Edy Kaufman
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References

1. Mark A. Heller and Sari Nusseibeh, *No Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1991).
2. Joël Kotek, Simone Susskind, and Steven Kaplan, eds., *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution* (Jerusalem: The Truman Institute, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1996).