

Israel's fight for survival in 1967 was supposed to be with Egypt in the south and with Syria in the north. Israel went to extraordinary lengths to assure Jordan's King Hussein (in the east) that Israel had no desire to militarily engage Jordan.

But as the war rapidly unfolded, Egypt's strongman, President Nasser, kept falsely insisting to King Hussein that Egypt was thrashing the IDF and that Jordan should launch an assault on Israel's heartland.

Nasser's cynical plan worked, and Hussein made perhaps the greatest misjudgment of his checkered leadership career: he indeed declared war on Israel, and paid dearly for his aggression. The IDF drove Jordanian forces out of Judea and Samaria—which had been re-dubbed the "West Bank" after Jordan's illegal occupation of the territory following Israel's War of Independence in 1948-9.

Suddenly, Judea and Samaria were again under Jewish sovereignty. More significantly, Israel's new territory included "East" Jerusalem, the half of the city which Jordan had seized in 1948. And—most significantly for Jews worldwide—Jerusalem's Temple Mount was in Israel's hands.

Enthusiastic Jewish soldiers hoisted Israel's flag over the gold-coated Dome of the Rock at the middle of the Temple Mount. But it was not to be there for long.

The next day, Israeli General Moshe Dayan had the Israeli flag removed in a gesture of magnanimity and respect for the sacredness of that shrine to Muslims around the world. He further announced that the century-old "Status Quo" would be respected on the Temple Mount, and the Muslim Supreme Council (*Waqf* in Arabic) would continue its exclusive control over the sacred compound—with Israel only administering security control there.

The *Waqf* itself is under the control of the Kingdom of Jordan, which appoints its members. Dayan's move effectively gave the defeated Jordan sole authority over the most crucial and holy site that changed hands in 1967.

Jordan and its *Waqf* have grotesquely abused Dayan's magnanimous gesture, and any attempt by Israel to share in the Temple Mount's administration and policies are vigorously rebuffed by the Islamic authorities. Their fierce defense of their exclusive control often has resulted in riots, violence and even murder.

Israeli leaders over the decades have demurred on many crucial issues regarding the Temple Mount in order to avoid religiously fueled violence and popular uprisings by Palestinian Muslims. But this has only emboldened its adversaries.

Although the Status Quo—enacted by the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, and perpetuated by the British during the Mandate period—calls for freedom of worship at religious holy sites, Jews are not permitted to pray on the Temple Mount. They may not even bring a Bible or pray silently in the compound.

If a Jew violates this *Waqf* policy, Israeli security staff on the Temple Mount whisks the "criminal" away to jail—assuming that Muslim authorities don't get their hands on the perpetrator first.

In short—and with ultimate irony—the only place in Israel where Jews may not practice

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their religion freely is on the Temple Mount.

The Muslim *Waqf* is, in fact, doing many things that violate the Status Quo.

The Status Quo does not permit holy places to be used as armories for vast amounts of weapons and ammunition. Yet the Al-Aqsa mosque and other locations on the Temple Mount have harbored massive caches of weaponry. Two years ago, some of these weapons were used to murder Israeli policemen on security duty on the Temple Mount. Last week, a Molotov cocktail was tossed into the Israeli guard shack.

The Status Quo does not allow terrorists at a holy site to rain rocks and other debris on Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall below the Temple Mount. This became an annual rite on Sukkot during the so-called Al Aqsa Intifada, and continues on an occasional basis today.

The Status Quo does not permit the unsupervised excavation of a priceless archeological site, with tons of material—including priceless first and second-temple relics—dumped in the valley just east of the Temple Mount. Yet this is precisely what the *Waqf* has done from the 1990s to today in order to create a massive new underground mosque in the area known as Solomon's Stables. Even more damage was done by digging a network of deep trenches for new electrical services on the Mount.

The Status Quo does not permit the use of a religious site for the planning and execution of terror attacks. Yet this is what the *Waqf* facilitated on the Temple Mount in a structure near the Golden (or Mercy) gate at the northeast corner of the compound. Hamas used this as a base of operations until 1993, when Israel finally moved in and locked the building. Last week, *Waqf*-inspired rioters ripped the locks off the building so its usage could be restored.

Both the Israeli court system and the government have bent over backwards to avoid confrontation with the Muslim *Waqf*. Although as recently as 1954 the *Waqf* itself acknowledged that the site originally marked the spot of the ancient Jewish temples, they—inspired by Palestinian nationalism—began to deny the validity of Jewish claims to a heritage on the Temple Mount. Yassir Arafat famously stunned President Bill Clinton at Camp David in 2000 by asserting that the Jews never had a temple in Jerusalem.

The *Waqf* has followed suit, denying the Jews any claim to a past that includes the Temple Mount. Now, with the Jordanian-inspired expansion of the *Waqf* from 11 to 18 members—with all the new members being Palestinian Arabs—the leadership on Temple Mount initiatives and issues promises to be even more confrontational and more political than ever. Its willingness to even discuss important matters of security and policy regarding the Temple Mount will be dramatically diminished.

In talking with friends, family and colleagues, I urge you to tell them about the critical issues regarding the Temple Mount. Share with them the outrageous suspension of Jewish religious rights at Judaism's holiest site. Urge them to communicate in the strongest terms to both American and Israeli political and religious leadership that this situation requires forceful intervention before the newfound Palestinian muscle at this religious site results in even greater violence and more aggressive anti-Semitism. Israel's government must fight back, and America should support Israel's efforts to restore sanity and peace at this

beloved site.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively new *Facebook* page and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's most recent *hasbarah* campaign—on whitewashing misrepresentations made by the media and, alarmingly, by some politicians, about the insidious Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

Editor, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. While the Combating BDS Act overwhelmingly passed the Senate (by a vote of 77-23) in February—*without support from any Democratic Senator running for President*—some media and politicians, as well as the ACLU, opposed the bill based on its alleged infringement on free speech. Yet this representation is a lie, since BDS does not merely criticize Israel's policies toward Palestinians, but rather opposes Israel's very existence. This is not a free speech issue, but a thinly veiled hate speech issue. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[What Does BDS Really Want?](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which began running this month. It exposes the true motives of BDS supporters and explains why they are anti-Semitic at heart. It will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Pence and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on Israel's critical role in protecting U.S. interests in the region—as well as protecting itself.

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