Trump’s Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s Capital: A Step Forward or Backward for Peace
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This presentation will examine the implication of President Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Many commentators have argued that this was a mistake and a setback for the cause of peace. Some predicted an outbreak of violence across the region, particularly by Muslims angered by what they would see as a threat to the third holiest site in Islam.

The Palestinians angrily rejected the move, said it indicated the U.S. was no longer an honest broker for negotiations, and threatened to cease communications with the administration. They declared three days of rage and said they would take several steps in international forums to seek recognition of a Palestinian state based on the “1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital.”

Other countries around the world also condemned the U.S. move, which culminated in an overwhelming repudiation of the policy change at the UN General Assembly following a U.S. veto of a similar resolution in the Security Council. The fact that major U.S. allies such as Britain, France and Germany voted against the United States was interpreted as a rebuke of the president, an indication of a potential diminution of American influence, and a fracturing of ties with key allies.
By contrast, Israel welcomed the U.S. move, as did many foreign policy analysts. Some saw the decision as little more than a recognition of reality; that is, Jerusalem has been Israel’s capital for nearly 70 years. Others argued that rather than impede the prospects for peace, the U.S. decision may have enhanced it by forcing the Palestinians to accept that Israel will never concede any part of its capital in negotiations.

This presentation will look at the various interpretations of the U.S. decision and make the case that peace is more likely now, and that an agreement could be negotiated that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem while allowing Israel to retain its capital in Jerusalem.