

Elon: Real Danger to Jerusalem as Israel's Undivided Capital

by Hillel Fendel

Shevat 6, 5770, 21 January 10 11:55

(Israelnationalnews.com) Leading PA and Norwegian diplomats met for a high-level meeting in Jerusalem on Monday, prompting concern on the part of some Israelis regarding the future of the Israeli capital. The meeting was held in an eastern Jerusalem hospital on Mt. of Olives, with the participation of Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store, Rafik Husseini of chairman Abbas' office, PA Jerusalem minister Ahmed A-Rawidi, and others.

Nine years ago, in August 2001, then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the closure of the PA eastern Jerusalem headquarters in Orient House. One of the leaders of the campaign to do so, then-MK Benny Elon, now says this move is in danger of being overturned.

In fact, some Quartet representatives suggested this week that the Orient House and other PA institutions in eastern Jerusalem be reopened as yet another enticement to the PA to resume talks with Israel.

Benny Elon, who served as Tourism Minister from 2001 to 2004, says the developments are "critically dangerous."

"This is the big test of the Netanyahu government," Elon told Arutz-7, "and I hope he reads the signals. Jerusalem is the heart of our state, and there cannot be any compromise. Yes, the Orient House was closed, there has been massive Jewish building in nearby neighborhoods such as Shimon HaTzaddik and Nissan Beck [purchased by Jews in 1874, opposite Damascus Gate – ed.] – but all this is worthless if the Palestinians take over buildings in the eastern part of the city and operate their institutions from there."

'American Policy: Eastern Jerusalem for PA'

"The PA's desire to make Jerusalem the capital of Palestine is becoming an increasingly acute danger," Elon said. "There are several foreign consulates near the Orient House, and particularly the American consulate which focuses on Arabs, while the American consulate in the other side of Jerusalem serves Israelis – and they operate with a clear policy that eastern Jerusalem will become the capital of Palestine, Heaven forbid. The danger is very real, and we must take action immediately."

'PA Stubbornness on Jerusalem is to Our Benefit'

"[Special Mideast envoy] George Mitchell is working quietly and wisely towards recognition of a Palestinian state," Elon warned, "while Netanyahu is very weak in this area. He has already offered recognition of a [demilitarized] Palestinian state, for the first time in Likud history, and the dangers that it will actually come to pass are very real. Our only chance is that the Palestinians are holding out for Jerusalem – and we must therefore be very strong here. Netanyahu is not strong regarding Judea and Samaria, and is not strong regarding a Palestinian state – but I believe that he *is* strong concerning Jerusalem, and he must prove it, immediately."

'Worse than the Destruction of 20 Towns'

"I hope that our public is smart enough to realize that the policy of 'another house and another dunam' is not enough. We saw how, with one misguided political decision, they erased 20 flowering communities from the face of the earth. The existential dangers that Israel will face if a Palestinian state is formed with Jerusalem as its capital in any shape or form are greater than if 20 communities were to be destroyed, Heaven forbid."

'Ben Gurion's Approach is Out of Date'

Elon emphasized that we must recognize the concrete dangers of diplomacy and diplomatic decisions: "We wake up sometimes when the bulldozers are about to knock down a house, but the decisions to send the bulldozers were made long before. Some of our politicians still adhere to the Ben Gurion approach of 'U-N, Shmu-en,' and that 'it doesn't matter what the goyim say, but rather what the Jews do' – all this has been proven wrong in Gush Katif and elsewhere. We must wake up and read the signals and realize that the talks leading to a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital are advancing all the time. I call on Cabinet ministers like Uzi Landau, Gideon Saar and others who have shown great loyalty to Jerusalem to fight this battle and understand that we have a virus here that can be overcome only when it is still small."



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