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History and Current Situation of Jerusalem:
The Disputed Facts and Prospect
(Abstract)

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Part 1 History and Disputes on Jerusalem

There are several key issues among Palestinian-Israeli conflicts such as territory issue, refugees, Jewish settlements, establishment of Palestinian state, future borders, and water resources etc. But the issue of Jerusalem occupies an important status, and it may be the most difficult issue to deal with. The main reason why Jerusalem issue is so critical is that this issue is not only connected to territory disputes, but also religious feeling and conflicts. In terms to the parties involved in the conflict on Jerusalem issue, not only Israeli and the Palestinians, but also all the Arab states and whole Muslim world will not shut up on single action upon Jerusalem. During the Camp David talks in 2000, President Arafat had once said that the Arab leader who surrendered on Jerusalem issue had not been born.
On Israel side, almost all political parties have the same demands on Jerusalem issue. They all regard Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and insist on the unity of Jerusalem.

Firstly, Jerusalem is an old city with more then 5000 years. In history, the city of Jerusalem was inhabited or occupied by many ethnic groups and dynasties. Jews and Arabs all occupied this ancient city. Both Jews and Arabs can find many reasons to prove that they are the “masters” of the city. On March 23, 2010, in a speech to the pro-Israel lobby group, AIPAC in Washington while visiting in United States, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has asserted Israel’s “right to build” in Jerusalem, saying that “the Jewish people were building Jerusalem 3,000 years ago and the Jewish people are building Jerusalem today. Jerusalem is not a settlement, its our capital.”¹ But, as we know, during the period of Jewish "Diaspora" period, seldom Jewish inhabited in Jerusalem, and it is unfair to say that Jewish people are the “masters” of this city in more than 1900 years.

Secondly, the city of Jerusalem varies greatly in its different period of history and current situation. Jerusalem is famous for so-called “Holy City” or “holy Land”. The world's three major religions - Judaism, Islam, Christianity all claims that Jerusalem is their "Holy Land”. In history, Jerusalem had only an area of only 1 square kilometers (which now is

called “old city” of Jerusalem) but Israel side only used to mention so-called “The City of David”, they mean that, Jerusalem of ancient times, was located on a narrow ridge south of the present-day Old City”\(^2\). In 2006, Jerusalem has an area of 126 kilometers with more than 720,000 populations

**Thirdly,** Israel is constantly changing the way the de facto geographical and political landscape of Jerusalem. In 1980, Israel claims that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. The Jerusalem city controlled by Israel is continuing to be expanded. Now Palestinians claims that the future Palestinian state may capital in “East Jerusalem”, but East Jerusalem is becoming increasingly blurred face. In 1999-2000, Palestinian and Israel once discussed the idea for Palestinian capital in Abu Dis Town in East Jerusalem. But in recent years, Israel has been building many Jewish settlements around Jerusalem.

**Part II Future Prospect and Possibilities on Jerusalem Issue**

1. **The fate of Jerusalem is connected to the future of Palestinian state**

As we know, in 1988, the PLO proclaimed the independent State of Palestine, but at that time of the 1988 declaration, the PLO did not exercise control over any territory. From then on, the declaring of establishment of the state of Palestine was delayed for several times.

Palestine official declaring of establishment of independent state regarded Jerusalem as the capital. For the Palestinians, the possible way is to declare statehood with Jerusalem as its capital, but the actual administrative capital can be temporarily located in other cities.

2. **Oslo Accords in 1993 should be the important basis for discussing the state of Palestine and Jerusalem issue.** In the Oslo Accords in 2003, Israel acknowledged the PLO negotiating team as "representing the Palestinian people", in return for the PLO recognizing Israel's right to exist in peace, acceptance of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and its rejection of "violence and terrorism". The principle expressed in Oslo Accords is the basis for Palestine and Israel to deal with such issues like the statehood of future Palestine and its capital.

3. **The Possibility of Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.** During the talks between Palestine and Israel after 1993, the two sides discussed the possible program like "capital in East Jerusalem". So it is very important to clearly the concept of East Jerusalem. As we know, East Jerusalem refers to the parts of Jerusalem captured by Jordan in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and then taken by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. It includes Jerusalem's Old City and some of the holiest sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, such as the Temple Mount, Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The term "East Jerusalem" may refer to either the area under Jordanian rule between
1949 and 1967 which was incorporated into the municipality of Jerusalem after 1967, covering some 70 km2 (27 sq mi), or the territory of the pre-1967 Jordanian municipality, covering 6.4 km2 (2.5 sq mi). East Jerusalem is the proclaimed capital of the Palestinian National Authority[1] although Ramallah serves as the administrative capital. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Jerusalem was divided into two parts—the western portion, populated primarily by Jews, came under Israeli rule, while the eastern portion, populated mainly by Muslim and Christian Palestinians, came under Jordanian rule. Arabs living in such western Jerusalem neighborhoods as Katamon or Malha were forced to leave; the same fate befell Jews in the eastern areas, including the Old City and Silwan. The only eastern area of the city that remained in Israeli hands throughout the 19 years of Jordanian rule was Mt. Scopus, where the Hebrew University is located, which formed an enclave during that period and therefore is not considered part of East Jerusalem. Following the 1967 Six-Day War, the eastern part of Jerusalem came under Israeli rule and was annexed to Jerusalem, together with several neighboring West Bank villages. In November 1967, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 was passed, calling for Israel to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict". In 1980, the Knesset passed the Jerusalem Law, which declared that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel",[2] however, without specifying boundaries. This
declaration was declared "null and void" by United Nations Security Council Resolution 478.

Both Israel and the Palestinians regard the city of Jerusalem as a symbol of nationhood. Both want to make the city their capital. But it is the religious importance of the city that has proved one of the greatest obstacles to peace. Ehud Barak, the former Israeli prime minister, insisted at the Camp David summit in July 2000 that Israel retain sovereignty over Jerusalem's holiest site, while Palestine may regard East Jerusalem as their nominal capital. Even secular Israelis are unwilling to place what many regard as Judaism's spiritual heart under Muslim control. But the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, with strong support from the rest of the Arab world, rejected this. Considering of the current situation of Jerusalem, it's possible that the future Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem is a viable option. For that, the most important thing is to that Israel should first stop building new Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and nearby.

4. The possibility of internationalization of Jerusalem. Since the origin of Jerusalem issue, internationalization of Jerusalem is a solution that has been widely mentioned in the program. As we know, the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was a resolution adopted on 29 November 1947 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Its title was United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) Future Government of
Palestine. The resolution recommended the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine and the partition of the territory into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area being under special international protection, administered by the United Nations. But with the advance of time and geopolitical change of Palestine area, the internationalization of Jerusalem was once forgotten by the world. When Israel occupied east Jerusalem, Israel refused any international program for resolving Jerusalem issue. For the Arab side, because the Arab world rejected the U.N. 181 Resolution, international program of Jerusalem issue was logically refused by the Arab world and Palestinian. With the mutual recognition of Israel and Palestine and the Middle East peace process started, Jerusalem issue was one context of the peace talks. Former Palestinian Legislative Committee Abu Ala once said that if Palestinians and Israelis could not reach an agreement on Jerusalem, the Palestinians would agree to the provisions of the internationalization of Jerusalem based on UN Resolution 181. But it seems Israel is not ready to accept any kinds of program for internationalization of Jerusalem.

5. China's "one country two systems" political innovation and "two states share one capital" vision on Jerusalem issue

China supports the Palestinian cause based on that china a good historical ties and cultural links with the Middle East. China had been very involved in the Middle East ever since the time of the Roman
Empire. China used the Silk Routes to trade with the Romans for valuable goods such as glass. China also had good relations with the Middle Eastern Muslim and Islamic states and had established close ties with them. The relationship between China and the Middle East continued even to the present.

After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed under Mao Zedong. China had at first recognized the Jewish State of Israel. But after Israel became mostly a pro-Western and American ally China began to support the Arabs and the cause of the Palestinians. After the Sino-Soviet split during the 1960s China began to support the cause of the Palestinians more than ever. During the 1960s China had strongly supported the destruction of Israel and its replacement with a Palestinian Arab State. China had strongly supported Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). China had also established close relations with the Fatah party as well. The Chinese government under Mao Zedong had supported Palestinian militant groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as well as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). After China was admitted to the United Nations as a member in 1971, China continued to support the Palestinian cause more than ever before. A Palestinian embassy was opened in China during the summer of 1974 and also at the same time in the Soviet Union
as well.

China had strongly supported UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 which had equated Zionism with racism in 1975[1]. (the resolution, however, was later revoked with Resolution 4686 in 1991, but this time China was absent during the voting) But after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 a new leadership came to power in China and it was determined to end its hostilities with America and the West. When Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978 he began to reduce Chinese support for Palestinian militant groups and he emphasized the need for dialogue. Under Deng China cut off support for Palestinian militant groups and it supported the Camp David Accords in 1978. China also began to call for a two state solution and for a lasting peace in the Middle East. Also during this time China began cut off support for Third World and other leftist guerilla movements.

China is one of the countries who recognized the state of Palestine when Yasser Arafat announced Palestinian Declaration of Independence in November 15, 1988, Palestinian Declaration of Independence by in Algiers, Algeria despite the objections by both Israel and the United States. China recognized the new State of Palestine on November 20, 1988 and had established full diplomatic relations with it by the end of 1989. But nevertheless China continued to increase its relations with Israel and it established full diplomatic relations with the Jewish State in
1992. Till now, Chinese Embassy in Israel has been based in Tel Aviv and not in Jerusalem, which reflects China’s attitude on Jerusalem issue.

As a Chinese scholar on the Middle East study, I am often asked why Palestinian and Israeli have so much hatred, so refused to give on some issues like Jerusalem issue. On Chinese TV programs, the conflicts and disputes between Israel and Palestine usually occupy the headlines of international news. Most of the Chinese general audience are lack deep background knowledge on Palestine-Israel conflicts. But Jerusalem issue is not just an academic issue, and it involves the national interests and cultural, religious feelings of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Although almost all the countries in the world never accepted that Jerusalem is Israel’s legitimate capital, it’s difficult and almost impossible for Israeli to quit proclaim regarding Jerusalem as their capital. It's necessary to find new political ideas to resolve Jerusalem issue in the future. China's "one country two systems" model maybe beneficial to resolve Jerusalem disputes. As we know, Now, China is a socialist country, but Hong Kong and Macau have capitalist political system. After Taiwan's reunification with the mainland in the future, under the framework of "one country two systems" framework, continental China will allow Taiwan also keep its capitalist system. China’s "one country two systems" model is a kind of political innovation. This means that within the People's Republic of China, the mainland with its 1.3 billion
people will maintain the socialist system, while Hong Kong (from 1997), Macau (from 1999) and Taiwan (in the future) continue under the capitalist system. "One country two systems" model is a political idea innovation invented by former Chinese senior leader Deng Xiaoping. If there is no such political innovation, it is very difficult to resolve Hong Kong and Macau issue. Both Palestine and Israel should consider adopting innovative political thinking to resolve Jerusalem dilemma. That means that both Palestine and Israel should not exclude the other’s rights and interests in Jerusalem. They should accept each other’s presence in Jerusalem.

6 Whether the origin of Jerusalem issue, or the involved countries in its development, whether recognition of non-recognition, the question of Jerusalem is already an international issue, it is an indispensable condition for the engagement of the international community to resolve the issue of Jerusalem. First of all, Both Palestine and Israel should have political will, although it is difficult with such conditions. Secondly, the participation of the countries concerned is essential. Such countries like Jordan and the Gulf Arab states can also play very important role. Thirdly, the change of U.S. attitude on the issue of Jerusalem is very important.