

JCPA RESOLUTION ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1967 WAR

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Summary: This coming year marks the 50th anniversary of the historic 1967 Six Day War (1967 War), which resulted in the reunification of Jerusalem. It is an opportunity for the organized Jewish community to commemorate the event, to educate the younger generation about it and to reaffirm strong support for peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors. Israel's detractors can be expected to take advantage of the anniversary to blame Israel for fifty years of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, and to intensify calls to delegitimize and take action against the Jewish state. A resolution is needed to frame these issues and to provide programmatic guidance to the field.

1 The 1967 War was a transformative event in the history of Israel and the
2 Jewish people. Surrounded on all its borders and threatened with annihilation,
3 Israel emerged after six days with a decisive military victory against the combined
4 armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon. The city of Jerusalem was
5 reunified after 19 years of imposed division with no access to Jewish holy sites.
6 Since 1967, Israel has respected the right of all peoples to visit their holy sites,
7 subject to security requirements.

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9 However, the 1967 War also created unresolved challenges with which
10 Israel grapples to this day. It left Israel in control over the lives of millions of
11 Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. This situation, which has lasted
12 half a century, has caused enormous trauma and suffering on both sides. Both
13 before the 1967 War and thereafter, Israel has consistently struggled to achieve
14 peace with its neighbors, making painful sacrifices, including the dismantling of
15 settlements in strategically important areas. A peace treaty with Egypt was forged
16 in 1979, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai. Jordan and Israel signed a peace
17 treaty in 1994, which has led to vital security cooperation in the face of threats to
18 both nations.

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20 In the pursuit of peace and reconciliation, Israel engaged in direct
21 negotiations with Palestinian leadership since 1993, forged interim agreements,

22 and, despite tensions, terrorism and other difficulties, has developed a working
23 administrative and security relationship with the Palestinian Authority. Israel
24 unilaterally disengaged from Gaza in 2005, with the aim of improving the
25 situation for Palestinians on the ground.

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27 While there is responsibility on all sides of the absence of peace, the core
28 of the problem remains: the Palestinian refusal to accept a Jewish state;
29 Palestinian celebration of terrorists who kill Israelis; Palestinian denial of the
30 3,000 year connection of the Jewish people to the land of Israel and Palestinian
31 avoidance of direct negotiations, going instead to international bodies for
32 recognition and delegitimization of Israel.

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34 Despite numerous efforts over the years, a peace agreement between Israel
35 and Palestinian leadership has proven to be elusive.

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37 **The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes that:**

- 38 • The 50th anniversary of Israel's military victory in the 1967 War is an
39 occasion to be commemorated by the organized American Jewish
40 community.
- 41
- 42 • This anniversary provides an opportunity to educate the younger
43 generation of Jews and leaders in the broader community about events that
44 have shaped the Middle East to this day.
- 45
- 46 • Regardless of the outcome of future negotiations regarding the status of
47 Jerusalem, the city should remain undivided with access to all religious
48 sites protected, as has been the case since its reunification.
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- 50 • It is important to reaffirm strong support for the two-state vision of a
51 democratic Jewish State of Israel existing side-by-side in peace and
52 security with an independent State of Palestine. This formulation has been

53 endorsed by the international community and is the only viable resolution
54 to this conflict, which predates the 1967 war by many decades.

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56 • While the current environment does not appear conducive to peace
57 initiatives, Palestinian leadership should accept Israel’s call to resume
58 unconditional negotiations leading to a comprehensive conflict-ending
59 agreement resolving all outstanding issues, including borders, refugees,
60 security, settlements and Jerusalem. As always, U.S. assistance in
61 facilitating these negotiations will be vital.

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63 • There is much value in expanding efforts by Israeli and Palestinian civil
64 society leaders to build an infrastructure of peace from the ground up
65 through people-to-people initiatives. Such efforts may provide impetus to
66 pursue diplomatic solutions, and will serve to anchor any future
67 agreements.

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69 • Beyond the Palestinian issue, a wider peace between Israel and the Arab
70 world would significantly bolster efforts to confront extremism and
71 violence in the region fomented by Iran, ISIL and others.

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73 • Attempts by Israel’s detractors to use the 50th anniversary to brand Israel
74 as a permanent occupier, increase Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
75 efforts, and promote a “one state narrative” are morally and factually
76 wrong and place obstacles in the path to peace and reconciliation.

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78 **The Jewish community relations field should:**

79 • Share background materials and sponsor forums in the Jewish and general
80 communities that provide accurate information surrounding the period
81 leading up to, during and after the 1967 War.

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- 83 • Focus special attention on educating students and other young
84 professionals about the 1967 War. Partnerships with Hillel and others
85 with outreach to these constituencies are most effective.
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- 87 • Advocate the policy positions above to the incoming administration,
88 members of Congress and other decision-makers and opinion-molders.
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- 90 • Consider encouraging adoption of local and/or state government
91 proclamations consistent with the policy positions above, if political
92 conditions are conducive.
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- 94 • Support initiatives that offer concrete opportunities to support the two
95 states for two peoples vision, such as San Francisco’s Invest in Peace
96 www.investinpeace.org and Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people programs
97 promoted by the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP).
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- 99 • Prepare a 50th anniversary media outreach plan, including publication of
100 op-ed pieces, encouraging positive editorials, and making experts and
101 people who participated in the 1967 War available for interviews.
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- 103 • Sponsor cultural events that underscore the hope for peace in the Middle
104 East.
105
- 106 • Be alert to activities of Israel’s detractors seeking to use the 50th
107 anniversary to advance their agenda and develop appropriate responses.