

# What we must Appreciate about Israel

## The '1967 borders'

Israel gained possession of the West Bank (the heartland of historical Israel) because surrounding Arab nations set out on an aggressive war of annihilation in 1967 to destroy the only Jewish state. Because of this aggression and Israel's natural and just right to defend itself, Israel increased its territory from the 1949 armistice lines to the Jordan River. Israeli leaders have always maintained that the 1949 armistice lines did not leave Israel with a defensible border. At one point the '1967 lines' squeeze Israel into a very narrow waistline of 14 km. This means that any attack upon Israel's sovereignty from the east would make Israel vulnerable to being cut in two in a very short time.

## Jerusalem

In all of history the region of the Land of Israel has only ever been the political state of one group of people—the Jewish People. The area has been conquered and ruled by empires who have subjugated the inhabitants of the land and sent its Jewish inhabitants far away into exile. Yet the land of Israel has only had three political expressions—all Jewish: the Kingdoms of Israel & Judah in the first half of the first millennium BC; the restored Jewish Kingdom which included the Hasmonean dynasty in the later part of that millennium; and the Modern state of Israel in our time.

It is in this context that Jerusalem has only ever been the capital city of one people—the Jewish people. Jerusalem may be important to others, but it is only most important to the Jews. It may be holy to others, but it is only most holy to the Jews.

## Palestinian Rejection

In negotiations in 2008, Israel offered 97% of the concessions demanded by the Palestinians for statehood—in exchange for peace and an end to the conflict. The chief Palestinian negotiator's response summed up the attitude of the Palestinian team—*"All, or nothing"*. President Abbas said regarding the leverage of the Palestinians, *"I came to demarcate the borders of Palestine – the June 4, 1967 borders – without detracting a single inch, and without detracting a single stone"*. It's hard for the Israelis to negotiate when facing such uncompromising obstinacy. The Palestinians have refused repeated Israeli offers for negotiations since. Another generous offer by the Israelis was also turned down in 2000. Direct negotiations are the only reasonable answer to a just and lasting settlement to this conflict. Manipulated unilateral declarations by the United Nations will simply drive the sides apart.

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Israel's size is one tenth the size of NZ if you include the disputed territories. Originally Jordan was set aside to satisfy the need for Arab independence in the area. In 1981 King Hussein summed it up: *"Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan"*.