

Congress & the Middle East: Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act

In October 1995, the Senate (93-5) and House (374-37) adopted S.1322 - the Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act - which noted that [Jerusalem](#) is the capital of Israel and recalled several past [Congressional resolutions](#) that called for the city to remain united. The Act states that [Jerusalem](#) that should remain a united city, should be recognized as the capital of the [State of Israel](#) and that the U.S. Embassy should be moved there from [Tel Aviv](#) no later than May 31, 1999.

Included in the measure is a stipulation allowing the President to [issue a waiver](#) every six months to keep the embassy in [Tel Aviv](#) if he determines and reports to Congress that such a move is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States. President Barack Obama issued his final waiver preventing the move during his administration on December 1, 2016.

S.1322

An Act

To provide for the relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and for other purposes.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995."

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Each sovereign nation, under international law and custom, may designate its own capital.

(2) Since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the State of Israel.

(3)The city of Jerusalem is the seat of Israel's President, Parliament, and Supreme Court, and the site of numerous government ministries and social and cultural institutions.

(4)The city of Jerusalem is the spiritual center of Judaism, and is also considered a holy city by the members of other religious faiths.

(5)From 1948-1967, Jerusalem was a divided city and Israeli citizens of all faiths as well as Jewish citizens of all states were denied access to holy sites in the area controlled by Jordan.

(6)In 1967, the city of Jerusalem was reunited during the conflict known as the Six Day War.

(7)Since 1967, Jerusalem has been a united city administered by Israel, and persons of all religious faiths have been guaranteed full access to holy sites within the city.

(8)This year marks the 28th consecutive year that Jerusalem has been administered as a unified city in which the rights of all faiths have been respected and protected.

(9)In 1990, the Congress unanimously adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 106, which declares that the Congress "strongly believes that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected".

(10)In 1992, the United States Senate and House of Representatives unanimously adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 113 of the One Hundred Second Congress to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, and reaffirming congressional sentiment that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city.

(11)The September 13, 1993, Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements lays out a timetable for the resolution of "final status" issues, including Jerusalem.

(12)The Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area was signed May 4, 1994, beginning the five-year transitional period laid out in the Declaration of Principles.

(13)In March of 1995, 93 members of the United States Senate signed a letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher encouraging "planning to begin now" for relocation of the United States Embassy to the city of Jerusalem.

(14)In June of 1993, 257 members of the United States House of Representatives signed a letter to the Secretary of State Warren Christopher

stating that the relocation of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem "should take place no later than....1999".

(15)The United States maintains its embassy in the functioning capital of every country exceptin the case of our democratic friend and strategic ally, the State of Israel.

(16)The United States conducts official meetings and other business in the city of Jerusalem in de facto recognition of its status as the capital of Israel.

(17)In 1996, the State of Israel will celebrate the 3,000th anniversary of the Jewish presence in Jerusalem since King David's entry.

SEC. 3. TIMETABLE.

(a)Statement of the Policy of the United States.—

(1)Jerusalem should remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected;

(2)Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel; and

(3)the United States Embassy in Israel should be established in Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999.

(b)Opening Determination.—Not more than 50 percent of the funds appropriated to the Department of State for fiscal year 1999 for "Acquisition and Maintenance of Buildings Abroad" may be obligated until the Secretary of State determines and reports to Congress that the United States Embassy in Jerusalem has officially opened.

SEC. 4. FISCAL YEARS 1996 AND 1997 FUNDING.

(a)Fiscal Year 1996.--Of the funds authorized to be appropriated for "Acquisition and Maintenance of Buildings Abroad" for the Department of State in fiscal year 1996, not less than \$25,000,000 should be made available until expended only for construction and other costs associated with the establishment of the United States Embassy in Israel in the capital of Jerusalem.

(b)Fiscal Year 1997.—Of the funds authorized to be appropriated for "Acquisition and Maintenance of Buildings Abroad" for the Department of State in fiscal year 1997, not less than \$75,000,000 should be made available until expended only for construction and other costs associated with the establishment of the United States Embassy in Israel in the capital of Jerusalem.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.

Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate detailing the Department of State's plan to implement this Act. Such report shall include—

(1) estimated dates of completion for each phase of the establishment of the United States Embassy, including site identification, land acquisition, architectural, engineering and construction surveys, site preparation, and construction; and

(2) an estimate of the funding necessary to implement this Act, including all costs associated with establishing the United States Embassy in Israel in the capital of Jerusalem.

SEC. 6. SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS.

At the time of the submission of the President's fiscal year 1997 budget request, and every six months thereafter, the Secretary of State shall report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on the progress made toward opening the United States Embassy in Jerusalem.

SEC. 7. PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER.

(a) Waiver Authority.—

(1) Beginning on October 1, 1998, the President may suspend the limitation set forth in section 3(b) for a period of six months if he determines and reports to Congress in advance that such suspension is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States.

(2) The President may suspend such limitation for an additional six month period at the end of any period during which the suspension is in effect under this subsection if the President determines and reports to Congress in advance of the additional suspension that the additional suspension is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States.

(3) A report under paragraph (1) or (2) shall include—

(A) a statement of the interests affected by the limitation that the President seeks to suspend; and

(B) a discussion of the manner in which the limitation affects the interests.

(b)Applicability of Waiver to Availability of Funds.—If the President exercises the authority set forth in subsection (a) in a fiscal year, the limitation set forth in section 3(b) shall apply to funds appropriated in the following fiscal year for the purpose set forth in section 3(b)except to the extent that the limitation is suspended in such following fiscal year by reason of the exercise of the authority in subsection (a).

SEC. 8. DEFINITION.

As used in this Act, the term "United States Embassy" means the offices of the United States diplomatic mission and the residence of the United States chief of mission

Sources: [Library of Congress](#)

Booth, William. "Did Obama just sign the last waiver before Trump moves the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem?" *Washington Post*, (December 1, 2016)