

Official PA news agency threatens: Trump responsible for blood in Jerusalem if he moves embassy

- **Fatah: Moving US embassy to Jerusalem will “open the gates of hell”**
- **PA Mufti: “[Embassy transfer] is not only an attack on the Palestinians, but rather on [all] the Arabs and Muslims.”**
- **PLO member: Embassy move constitutes “a declaration of war against our people and our Arab and Islamic nation”**
- **PA Prime Minister Hamdallah: Embassy move will lead to “explosion of the security situation in the entire region”**
- **Fatah official: “Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will absolve us of all the agreements and turn Palestine into a war zone”**

Itamar Marcus

When the Palestinian Authority wants to prevent a political action either by Israel or other governments, one PA tactic is to threaten violence. That is precisely what is happening following US President-elect Trump’s pledge to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The following are 25 statements, threats and warnings from official Palestinian Authority and Fatah sources, selected from among many more. These are in addition to the PA threats of religious war and bloodshed that Palestinian Media Watch [reported last week](#).

There has not been this high a concentration of warnings and threats of violence by PA and Fatah officials, since September - October 2015. At that time the PA and Fatah leadership warned and threatened violence because Israel they alleged was defiling and planning to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The PA’s political goal at that time was to try to prevent visits by Jews to the Temple Mount. That PA incitement, which was subsequently intensified by private social media incitement, sparked many months of Palestinian terror which left over 40 Israelis and hundreds of Palestinians killed.

Trump responsible for blood

The official news agency of the Palestinian Authority, WAFA, warned in a video report that if Trump moves the embassy, he will be responsible for blood spilling in Israel/Jerusalem and the West Bank:



Official PA news agency reporter: “Now, the Nablus-Jerusalem [taxi] line is cut off. [There] is an additional line which - if it is cut off - blood will be spilled on the other side of this wall (i.e., the security fence between PA areas and Israel) and in front of it... The peaceful line of Mahmoud Abbas is liable to be cut off by the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem. Then the [spilled] blood will be the responsibility of American President [Donald] Trump.”

[Wafa, official PA news agency, Jan. 17, 2017]

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Fatah is critical of the Arab world for being so busy fighting among themselves that they are enabling Israel to do as it pleases in Jerusalem. This cartoon appeared on the official Fatah Facebook page showing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with a kippah (Jewish skullcap) on his head and a Star of David on his tie, devouring the Dome of the Rock while Arabs are busy fighting each other. On the bottom of the Dome of the rock is written "Jerusalem," and on the cloud of dust they are raising by fighting is written: "The Arab state of affairs."

[Official Fatah Facebook page, Jan. 10, 2017]



Fatah in an official statement on its Facebook page likewise said the American administration would be responsible for the consequences of moving the embassy, stressing that it will: “spearhead in the struggle with the Zionist enemy.”

“O masses of the Palestinian people, your movement [Fatah]... will remain the spearhead in the struggle with the Zionist enemy and will continue to raise our issue in the world. We will not raise the white flag, and we will not bow except before Allah. We in the Ramallah and El-Bireh branch of Fatah strongly condemn the inclination of the new American administration to transfer the American embassy to Jerusalem. The meaning of this is a blow to every prospect and effort for peace and security in the region, and therefore the placing of the entire arena on the edge of the abyss. We hold the American administration responsible for the results and influences of this inclination.”

[Official Fatah Facebook page, Jan. 16, 2017]

More PA threats to start a religious war

Several Palestinian leaders have warned of a religious war should the US move its embassy:

“[PA] Minister of Religious Affairs Yusuf Ida’is yesterday, during his meeting with Egyptian Ambassador Sami Murad, demanded that the sources of religious authority in Egypt, and particularly Al-Azhar and Dar Al-Ifta (Muslim religious institutions), speak about the danger of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem... He emphasized that the decision to transfer the embassy means the destruction of the region and strife, and that **this is liable to push the region towards a religious war.**”

[Official PA daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Jan. 16, 2017]

"Secretary-General of the [PA] Islamic-Christian Council [for Jerusalem and the Holy Places, Fatah Revolutionary Council member,] and professor of international law Hanna Issa said... that this step will have **disastrous consequences for the peace process, the two-state option, and the security and stability of the region, and will lead it into a religious war.**"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Also emphasizing the religious component, the PA Mufti, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, stated that the potential embassy transfer is "an attack on Muslims worldwide":

"The promise of the president-elect [Trump] to transfer the embassy is not only **an attack on the Palestinians, but rather on [all] the Arabs and Muslims. The Muslims and Arabs will not remain silent** when they see the aggression realized at the moment of the transfer of the embassy to occupied Jerusalem."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]

Palestinian Liberation Front (i.e., a PLO faction) political bureau member Abu Saleh Hashem said:

"Trump's transferring of the embassy will be a hostile position and **a declaration of war against our people and our Arab and Islamic nation**, which by necessity will cause damage to the American interests in the region."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Threats of violence: "Gates of Hell will open"

Abbas' Fatah Movement has warned that "the gates of hell will open in the region and in the world," should the embassy be moved, and that it will "prevent any chance of peace and stability in the region." [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 15, 2017]

Fatah official Abbas Zaki warned that US moving the embassy would create a "war zone" and implied use of violence, saying that facing such an "attack," "Palestinians, Muslims, and Christians" would "defend their occupied capital":

"Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki emphasized that the Palestinian leadership will not allow the transfer of the American embassy, **and will be absolved of the previous decisions and agreements.** He also **warned against turning Palestine into a war zone** if the new American administration decides to transfer it... He warned against the **terrible dangers whose course cannot be predicted.** Zaki emphasized that **no power in the world can prevent the Palestinians, Muslims, and Christians as one from carrying out their national obligation to defend their occupied capital.**"

[Donia Al-Watan, independent Palestinian news agency, Jan. 11, 2017;
official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

In another statement, Zaki did not only add that the Palestinians would "cancel the recognition of Israel" and "reexamine all of the agreements," but he also implied they would use violence and "defend it [Jerusalem] with all of the means at their disposal":

"Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki said... that the **Palestinian leadership will go all the way** if the Trump administration transfers the embassy to Jerusalem, which **includes a reexamination of all of the previous agreements and the cancellation of the recognition of Israel.** He emphasized that the Palestinians cannot see their country without Jerusalem, and that **they will defend it with all of the means at their disposal.**"

[*Al-Bayan*, United Arab Emirates newspaper, Jan. 17, 2017]

Another Fatah Central Committee member Jamal Muhaisen:

“The matter of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem constitutes an act of aggression against the Palestinian people.”

[Amad, independent Palestinian news website, Jan. 9, 2017]

Secretary-General of the PLO Executive Committee and Fatah Central Committee member Saeb Erekat likewise implied Palestinians would use violence. Describing how Palestinians would “fight” against the embassy move, Erekat used the words “all legal, political, and popular means.” The terms “[all means](#),” “popular” resistance and/or uprising,” are often used by PA and Fatah leaders [in reference to the use of violence](#) against Israeli civilians such as stabbings, rock-throwing, and even shootings.

“[Erekat] expressed the firm opposition of our people and its leadership, and warned of the dangers in these hostile plans, which our people will fight against with all legal, political, and popular means. He added: 'These attempts are liable to inflame the violence and create an atmosphere that will lead to more tension, not only in Palestine, but also on the Arab, Islamic, and international levels.’”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 8, 2017]

PA’s Prime Minister Hamdallah warned that it would lead to:

”An explosion of the security situation in the entire region”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Others, among them the PA’s Ambassador to the EU, Belgium, and Luxembourg Abd Al-Rahim Al-Fara, have stated that moving the American embassy will be “the end of the two-state solution”:

“Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will lead to the destruction of the peace process in the Middle East, and will cause an explosion of the situation in the region.”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]



This cartoon, titled “Transferring the embassy,” exemplifies this. A hand is moving a black rook with “US” written on it across a chess board to checkmate a chess piece in the shape of a white dove – peace - which is falling over. [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has urged Trump not to move the embassy, and in a letter “explained the dangers of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem... due to its destructive

consequences for the peace process, the option of two states, and the security and stability of the region.” [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 10, 2017] Abbas has also threatened to [“cancel” the recognition of Israel](#) – a recognition which in fact has never really materialized, as Palestinian Media Watch reported yesterday. Other PA leaders have reiterated this “threat” as well:

Secretary-General of the PA Islamic-Christian Council and Fatah Revolutionary Council member Hanna Issa “emphasized that **the Palestinian response will be the revoking of the recognition of Israel** as a step of resistance by the PA and the PLO to the illegal decision to transfer the embassy.” [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Secretary of Fatah’s Jerusalem Branch Adnan Ghaith said that “this step **will lead to the destruction of the peace process and to an explosion of all of the agreements** and decisions that were ratified on the matter.” [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 15, 2017]

Supreme Shari’ah Judge of Palestine and Abbas’ Advisor on Religious and Islamic Affairs Mahmoud Al-Habbash urged “religious scholars and Imams of mosques in the Arab and Islamic world” and “Christian clergy” to speak in their sermons “about the dangers of transferring the American embassy to occupied Jerusalem.” In a statement to the press he related “**the dangers inherent in the US taking this unwise step, due to its implications for international peace and security.**” Al-Habbash warned that “**everything could collapse** if they transfer the embassy to Jerusalem.” [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 13, 2017]

Expert on international law and Secretary-General of the PA Islamic-Christian Council for Jerusalem and the Holy Places and Fatah Revolutionary Council member Hanna Issa said:

“This is a **dangerous situation that threatens the nation and turns the war into a religious war**... Trump’s statements about transferring the embassy... mean the **annexation of East Jerusalem and declaring it the ‘capital of Israel.’**”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]

Fatah Revolutionary Council member and spokesman Osama Al-Qawasmi said that:

“[Moving the US embassy] harms our history, our religion, our cultural heritage, and our legal right to our land and to our holy sites,’ and that ‘We will defend our Jerusalem and our land, no matter how many sacrifices will be required.’”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 15, 2017]

PA Minister of Jerusalem Affairs Adnan Al-Husseini said:

“Transferring the [US] embassy **means recognition of the legality of the occupation and of the legality of Israel’s annexation of the city [Jerusalem]**, and this constitutes a revolution against the agreements that have been signed”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Fatah Revolutionary Council member Raed Radwan said:

“Transferring the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem... is a type of **aggression towards the Palestinian people, its holy places**, and its principles, and an explicit declaration that the American embassy sides with the Israeli occupation.”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Threatening the US

Some Palestinian leaders warned that the embassy move would harm American interests in the Arab world, while others urged the Arab countries to close US embassies:

Fatah Revolutionary Council member Raed Radwan said that:

“[Moving the embassy] will drag the region into a situation of tension, more violence, and a threat to the interests of the US in the Arab and Islamic world.”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Fatah Central Committee member Mahmoud Al-Aloul said:

“While the US is striving to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem, we think that the Arab and Islamic states must close the US embassies in them in order to prevent this step.”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 8, 2017]

The following are longer and additional excerpts of the Palestinian leadership’s reactions to the possible move of the US embassy to Jerusalem:

Official PA news agency reporter: “We are at the Qalandiya military checkpoint, less than 10 km. from the occupied capital (i.e., Jerusalem). This is the last point that the taxis on the Nablus-Jerusalem line can reach... Now, the Nablus-Jerusalem line is cut off. [There] is an additional line which – if it is cut off – blood will be spilled on the other side of this (security) wall and in front of it... The peaceful line of Mahmoud Abbas is liable to be cut off by the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem. Then the [spilled] blood will be the responsibility of American President [Donald] Trump.”

[Wafa, official PA news agency, Jan. 17, 2017]

Headline: “Fatah: Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will open the gates of hell”

“The Fatah Movement said that if the American embassy is transferred to East Jerusalem (a Jerusalem location for the embassy has not yet been specified –Ed.), **the gates of hell will open in the region and in the world. It added that this will prevent any chance of peace and stability in the region.**

Fatah Revolutionary Council member and spokesman Osama Al-Qawasmi emphasized on Saturday evening [Jan. 14, 2017] in a press statement that East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state according to the law, the international institutions, and the UN resolutions regarding our issue, the last of which was [UN Security Council] Resolution 2334. Al-Qawasmi emphasized that Fatah, the Palestinian people, and all free people in the world will not allow this step to pass. [He added that **it**] **‘harms our history, our religion, our cultural heritage, and our legal right to our land and to our holy sites,’ and that ‘We will defend our Jerusalem and our land, no matter how many sacrifices will be required.’**”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 15, 2017]

UN Security Council Resolution 2334 was passed on Dec. 23, 2016, by a vote of 14-0 with one abstention.

The resolution condemned the establishment of Israeli “settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,” saying it “has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.” It demanded that Israel “immediately and

completely cease all settlement activities” in the area. The resolution further said “it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines” other than changes made through negotiations, in reference to the 1949-1967 ceasefire line between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries following Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

The resolution called “upon all States... to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.” It also called “to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as acts of provocation and destruction... and to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism,” and noted the obligation of “the Palestinian Authority Security Forces to maintain effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantling terrorist capabilities.”

The US abstained instead of vetoing the resolution, in a breach of longstanding US policy of not allowing the UN to force conditions on Israel in place of direct negotiations. This policy change came during US President Barack Obama’s final weeks in office.

Headline: “The [PA] mufti emphasized that the Muslims and Arabs will not remain silent if Trump takes this step – the [PA] president calls on Putin to aid in preventing the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem”

“PLO Executive Committee Secretary[-General] Saeb Erekat said yesterday [Jan. 13, 2017] that [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to help prevent the US from transferring its embassy to Israel (sic., to Jerusalem). Erekat said that he passed the message from President Abbas to Putin during a visit to Moscow during which he met with [Russian] Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Erekat said: ‘I passed a letter from President Abbas to Putin. Frankly, in it was a request for aid from Putin, after information reached us according to which US President-elect (Donald) Trump will transfer the embassy to Jerusalem, which **as far as we are concerned is considered a red line** and a serious matter...’

[PA] Mufti of Palestine Sheikh Muhammad Hussein yesterday condemned Trump’s plan to transfer the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He viewed it as an attack on Muslims worldwide.

In a Friday sermon that he gave at the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, Sheikh Hussein said: ‘The promise of the president-elect [Trump] to **transfer the embassy is not only an attack on the Palestinians, but rather on [all] the Arabs and Muslims. The Muslims and Arabs will not remain silent when they see the aggression realized at the moment of the transfer of the embassy to occupied Jerusalem.**’”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]

Headline: "Jerusalem is protected by international decisions, but the occupation continues to violate them"

"Expert on international law [and Secretary-General of the PA Islamic-Christian Council for Jerusalem and the Holy Places and Fatah Revolutionary Council member] Hanna Issa... said about the latest reports on US President-elect Donald Trump's intention to transfer the American embassy to Jerusalem: 'These threats constitute a grave violation of the laws, and a violation of American foreign policy, American and international decisions, and all norms.' ... He concluded: 'This is a dangerous situation that threatens the nation and turns the war into a religious war that he does not want. Trump's statements about transferring the embassy this coming May [2017] mean the annexation of East Jerusalem and declaring it as the "capital of Israel."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]

Headline: "**Hamdallah warns against an explosion of the security situation** if the US transfers its embassy to Jerusalem"

"[PA] Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah demanded that the institutions of the international community stand against the intention of the new American administration to transfer the American embassy to Jerusalem.

He warned against an **explosion of the security situation in the entire region** if the US carries out this step. He also noted that it is necessary to pressure Israel to commit to [UN] Security Council Resolution [2334] to stop the settlement.

These statements were made during the reception that he held yesterday [Jan. 11, 2017] in his office in Ramallah for Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Borge Brende in the presence of [PA] Minister of Foreign Affairs Riyad Al-Malki and Representative of Norway in Palestine Hilde Haraldstad."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Excerpt of an op-ed by Bassem Barhoum, regular columnist for the official PA daily

Headline: "Trump's position regarding Jerusalem is the benchmark"

"First of all, transferring the American embassy is **a sort of new Balfour Promise** (i.e., Declaration) that determines the issue of Jerusalem in advance in favor of Israel, despite it being one of the final resolution issues in the Oslo Accords. This constitutes a change in the outlook of the new American administration regarding the peace process and its perception regarding the principles of the political solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and **this is undoubtedly a sort of annihilation of the two-state solution** and the Palestinian issue in general.

Secondly, the step **could cause the outbreak of a religious war that is liable to encourage terror and extremism.**

Therefore, it will not be coincidental that [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas will describe the step, if it happens, as aggression against the Palestinian people, as it is **a direct threat to global peace** and is liable to eliminate the hope for peace.

Here there is no choice but to wonder: How does Trump say that the fight against terror and ISIS is at the top of his priorities, and at the same time **take a step that could cause the outbreak of a religious war and encourage extremism, violence, and terror?**"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

The Balfour Declaration of Nov. 2, 1917 was a letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Baron Rothschild stating that "His Majesty's government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" and is seen as the basis for later international commitments to establish the State of Israel.

Headline: "Al-Husseini: The transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem means the end of the agreement on principles and the return of matters to the starting point"

"[PA] Minister of Jerusalem Affairs Adnan Al-Husseini said: 'New American President [Donald] Trump's insistence on transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem is a large change of the rules of the game and a crossing of all the former lines according to which they [the US] behaved. This step will bring complications and responses that could potentially bring the situation [back to] the starting point.' ... Al-Husseini added: 'Transferring the embassy means recognition of the legality of the occupation and of the legality of Israel's annexation of the city [Jerusalem], and this constitutes a revolution against the agreements that have been signed, and is liable to allow other states to transfer their embassies in the shadow of the international and Hebrew silence, negligence, and weakness towards the occupation.'"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

"Secretary-General of the [PA] Islamic-Christian Council [for Jerusalem and the Holy Places, Fatah Revolutionary Council member,] and professor of international law Hanna Issa thinks that the American proposal to **transfer the embassy to Jerusalem is 'settlement in a new guise and support for the violations and new steps of Judaization that the occupation authorities are committing in the holy city [of Jerusalem].'**

He emphasized that this step will have **disastrous consequences for the peace process, the two-state option, and the security and stability of the region, and will lead it into a religious war...**

Issa emphasized that **the Palestinian response will be the revoking of the recognition of Israel as a step of resistance by the PA and the PLO to the illegal decision to transfer the embassy.**"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Headline: "Al-Fara: Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will destroy the peace process"

"Ambassador of Palestine to the European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg Abd Al-Rahim Al-Fara said that transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will lead to the destruction of the peace process in the Middle East, and will cause an explosion of the situation in the region."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 14, 2017]

Headline: "The Jerusalem branch [of Fatah] demands an international deterrent position on what is happening in Jerusalem"

"The Jerusalem branch of the Fatah Movement yesterday [Jan. 14, 2017] demanded an international, Arab, and Islamic deterrent position in order to dissuade the occupation from its attacks and violations against everything Palestinian in the occupied capital. This was said by Fatah Jerusalem [Branch] Secretary Adnan Ghaith who demanded a tough and firm position [be taken against it] in order to prevent the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem. He warned against the determination of US President-elect Donald Trump to transfer the embassy, and said that **this step will lead to the destruction of the peace process and to an explosion of all of the agreements and decisions that were ratified on the matter.** He added: 'For a long time the US has been an inseparable part of the sponsorship for signing peace agreements, and here, today, through this decision, it defends the occupation and makes different decisions than those agreed upon in the past. This contradicts all of the international decisions, conventions, and norms, and the entire world – and primarily the US and the occupation – must bear the results of this step and others.'"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 15, 2017]

Headline: "Zaki: **Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem will absolve us of all the agreements and turn Palestine into a war zone**"

"Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki emphasized that **the Palestinian leadership will not allow the transfer of the American embassy, and will be absolved of the previous decisions and agreements. He also warned against turning Palestine into a war zone if the new American administration decides to transfer it.**

Zaki said today, Wednesday [Jan. 11, 2017], in an interview with Radio Mawtini: 'The transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem will be **a sign of the end of the world.**' He added: 'The attack against the place of [Prophet] Muhammad's Ascent to Heaven and Jesus' resurrection contradicts the religious and international understandings,' and he

warned against the terrible dangers whose course cannot be predicted. Zaki emphasized that no power in the world can prevent the Palestinians, Muslims, and Christians as one from carrying out their national obligation to defend their occupied capital, and said: 'There is no Palestinian state without Jerusalem.'

Zaki said that he is convinced that the statements of US President-elect [Donald] Trump that were used during the election campaign, cannot be implemented on the ground in Palestine, and noted that this trend appeared in the 1960s when [former Israeli Prime Minister David] Ben-Gurion proposed it in order to establish the occupation state in Jerusalem and to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to establish the alleged Temple."

[Donia Al-Watan, independent Palestinian news agency, Jan. 11, 2017;
official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 12, 2017]

Headline: "Muhaisen: Transferring the US embassy to Jerusalem constitutes an unprecedented act of aggression"

"Fatah Central Committee member [and Commissioner for Diaspora Branches] Dr. Jamal Muhaisen called to formulate a comprehensive plan and to act on the internal, Arab, Islamic, and international level against transferring the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Muhaisen said in an interview with Radio Mawtini today, Monday [Jan. 9, 2017]: ... **'The matter of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem constitutes an act of aggression against the Palestinian people,'** and he noted that 'Embassies are situated on the basis of an agreement between two states, but never in history has it happened that the embassy of a state was established on occupied territories of a third state.'

Muhaisen said that in his opinion the world will oppose this step, which contradicts [UN Security Council] Resolution 2334, and that the US will not obtain international support. He also noted that the position of the American Congress regarding the Palestinian issue (i.e., the US House of Representatives rejected the UN resolution condemning Israel on Jan. 5, 2017) is not new, and emphasized that the Palestinian leadership will act against this intention through internal, Arab, and international action.

Muhaisen said: 'We regard the American Congress as if it is the Israeli Parliament.'

He added: 'The standpoints of the Israeli Parliament may be more advanced than the standpoints of the American Congress because of the [Joint] Arab List [party].' He also added: 'It is clear that the new American administration will not regard the interests of the US, but rather the interests of [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu.'"

[Amad, independent Palestinian news website, Jan. 9, 2017]

Headline: "Erekat: The attempts of the American Congress to revoke or modify [UN] Resolution 2334 are a revolt and incitement against international law"

"Secretary[-General] of the PLO Executive Committee [and Fatah Central Committee member] Saeb Erekat yesterday [Jan. 7, 2017] condemned the American Congress vote by a large majority to condemn [UN] Security Council Resolution 2334 against the settlements, and its intention to revoke or modify the UN resolution and stop the UN funding. This is **concurrent with submitting a bill regarding the transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem. He described these regretful attempts as a revolt and incitement against international law and the UN resolutions...**

Erekat referred to the coordination in submitting initiatives and bills that contradict international law and destroy the chances of peace, including the initiative of the occupation's [Israeli] Minister of Education Naftali Bennett. He expressed the firm opposition of our people and its leadership, and **warned of the dangers in these hostile plans, which our people will fight against with all legal, political, and popular means**

(term refers to events that include violence against Israeli civilians such as rock-throwing, stabbings, and even shootings -Ed.).

He added: **'These attempts are liable to inflame the violence and create an atmosphere that will lead to more tension, not only in Palestine, but also on the Arab, Islamic, and international levels.** What is needed now is to implement the resolutions of the international institutions, to put an end to the occupation, which is the main reason for violence and terror, and to recognize the State of Palestine and the right of the Palestinian people to realize the sovereignty of its state in the 1967 borders and in its capital, East Jerusalem, as this is **the only solution for bringing peace and stability to the region and the world.**"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 8, 2017]

Headline: "Dalal Salameh: Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem is a denial of the international decisions"

"Fatah Central Committee member Dalal Salameh said that the matter of **transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem is a denial of the truth that Jerusalem is occupied Palestinian land.** She emphasized the unity of the national position to fight against every decision regarding its transfer. She also demanded a clear Arab, Islamic, and international position. Salameh said in an interview with Radio Mawtini yesterday (Tuesday) [Jan. 10, 2017]: 'The matter of transferring the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is completely unacceptable.' She emphasized that the Palestinian leadership and the national factions, and primarily the Fatah Movement, object and are continuing the legitimate struggle against the occupation in order to strengthen the rights and legitimacy of our people on the ground. Salameh emphasized that the possibility of the embassy being transferred must be fought against, through a strong and unified internal Palestinian position, and through clear Arab, Islamic, and international positions."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Headline: "Radwan: Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem is aggression"

"Fatah Revolutionary Council member Raed Radwan said that **transferring the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, if this is indeed carried out, is a type of aggression towards the Palestinian people, its holy places, and its principles, and an explicit declaration that the American embassy sides with the Israeli occupation.**

In a radio interview yesterday [Jan. 10, 2017], Radwan emphasized the unity of the Palestinian people against the attempts to legitimize the settlements and the occupation. He said: 'There are institutions of the American administration and state institutions which will prevent Trump from fulfilling this promise, which **will drag the region into a situation of tension, more violence, and a threat to the interests of the US in the Arab and Islamic world.**'"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Headline: "Ramallah: A demonstration against the American House of Representatives resolution and Trump[’s decision] to transfer the embassy to occupied Jerusalem"

"Citizens led by leaders and representatives of the national activity forces and popular activists demonstrated yesterday evening [Jan. 10, 2017] at Al-Manara Square in the center of Ramallah against the American House of Representatives resolution regarding [UN] Security Council Resolution 2334 (i.e., the House of Representatives rejected UN resolution 2334 on Jan. 5, 2017), and against the statements of US President-elect Donald Trump, who called to transfer Washington’s embassy to Jerusalem as a priority of American foreign policy...Palestinian Liberation Front (i.e., a PLO faction) political bureau member Abu Saleh

Hashem said that the demonstration is a prelude to a series of activities, whose goal is to express popular protest alongside the official protest against the American policy, and to warn against transferring the American embassy to occupied Jerusalem.

He added that **Trump's transferring of the embassy will be a hostile position and a declaration of war against our people and our Arab and Islamic nation, which by necessity will cause damage to the American interests in the region, due to [the American administration] being a partner of the occupation.**"

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 11, 2017]

Headline: "Al-Aloul: We will continue to besiege the occupation in all of the international forums"

"The Fatah Movement's Jenin branch yesterday [Jan. 7, 2017] marked the 52nd anniversary of the outbreak of the revolution (i.e., Fatah's first terror attack against Israel, the bombing of the Israeli National Water Carrier in 1965) in a well-attended rally in the village of Zibda, in the presence of several [Fatah] Central Committee members...

Fatah Central Committee member Mahmoud Al-Aloul... said: **'While the US is striving to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem, we think that the Arab and Islamic states must close the US embassies in them in order to prevent this step** and to fight this trend that denies the right of the Palestinian people to Jerusalem, the capital of the independent Palestinian state."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 8, 2017]

Bombing of Israel's National Water Carrier - On Jan. 1, 1965, Palestinian terrorists attempted to bomb Israel's National Water Carrier. This was the first attack against Israel carried out by Fatah. Fatah refers to the attack as the "Intilqa", meaning "the Launch" of Fatah.

Headline: "The Supreme Muslim Council warned against transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem"

"[The independent organization] the Supreme Muslim Council warned today, Tuesday [Jan. 10, 2017], against the danger of transferring the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The Muslim Council said in a statement: 'Transferring the embassy means official US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state, and in this way the US will put itself in a situation of clear contradiction, because the US took on itself the patronage of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which necessitates postponing the discussion on the issue of Jerusalem until the final stage of the negotiations! And how does it now want to rule in the matter of transferring the embassy to Jerusalem!'

The statement added: 'The American position completely contradicts the international position that considers Jerusalem an occupied city, and in this way the US declares its complete bias in favor of Israel, and loses its credibility in its foreign policy.'

The statement emphasized that transferring the embassy means a cancellation of the rights of the Muslims and Christians in this blessed and holy city; the Jews are a minority in the world, how will they spread their sovereignty over the holy city?!

The statement added: 'The Muslims ruled this city for 15 centuries by the decision of Allah, Master of the Universe, and we will not concede on this divine decision, as Jerusalem is the destination of the Night Journey of [Prophet] Muhammad, blessing and peace be upon him, the site of his Ascent to Heaven, and Jesus' birthplace, peace be upon him (sic., according to Christian tradition Jesus was born in Bethlehem). **If the US transfers the embassy to Jerusalem, it declares war on the original residents of Palestine, and also on the Arabs and Muslims.** Therefore, we declare our absolute opposition to transferring the embassy, and condemn the biased American policy in favor of 'Israel.'"

[Ma'an, independent Palestinian news agency, Jan. 10, 2017]

Headline: "The [PA] president called on Trump not to transfer the US embassy to Jerusalem, and sent letters to world countries in order that they intervene to prevent this step"

"[PA] President Mahmoud Abbas sent a letter to US President-elect Donald Trump in which he **explained the dangers of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem**. He called on the US president-elect not to carry out this step, due to **its destructive consequences for the peace process, the option of two states, and the security and stability of the region** in light of the fact that the decision of the occupation authority (Israel) [parentheses in source] to annex East Jerusalem is invalid, nullified, and contradicts international law.

The president also sent letters to the presidents of Russia, China, and France, to the German chancellor, to the British prime minister, to the European Union, to the African Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, in which he called on them to act and to invest every possible effort to prevent the step of transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 10, 2017]

Headline: "Al-Habbash called on *Imams* of mosques in Arab and Muslim states to focus on the dangers of transferring the US embassy to Jerusalem"

"Supreme Shari'ah Judge of Palestine and [PA] President [Mahmoud Abbas'] Advisor on Religious [and Islamic] Affairs Mahmoud Al-Habbash yesterday [Jan. 12, 2017] **called on religious scholars and *Imams* of mosques in the Arab and Islamic world to speak in the Friday sermons about the dangers of transferring the American embassy to occupied Jerusalem**.

Al-Habbash related in a press statement to the dangers inherent in the US taking this unwise step, due to its **implications for international peace and security**.

He added: 'We call on the *Imams* of mosques in all Arab and Islamic states to deal with this grave matter during the Friday sermons. We also hope that the Christian clergy will also do this in their religious sermons this Sunday, as Jerusalem has an important place in the hearts of more than 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. In addition, it is also holy to Christians, and we do not agree to the damaging of its religious status and its identity.'

He continued: 'Everything could collapse if they transfer the embassy to Jerusalem and damage its value and meaning, as this could open wide the door to scenarios that no one wishes for. This is because the Al-Aqsa Mosque is the first direction of prayer for the Muslims and the third holiest "Noble Sanctuary." Jerusalem also includes holy sites important to Christians, and primarily the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.' Al-Habbash said: 'Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem constitutes an unacceptable step as it contradicts international law, and we hope that the administration of [US] President[-elect] Donald Trump will not take such a step.'

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 13, 2017]

Headline: "A senior Fatah official to *Al-Bayan*: We will cancel the recognition of Israel if the American embassy is transferred"

"Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki emphasized that **the Palestinian leadership will cancel the recognition of Israel and will reexamine all of the agreements if the new American administration transfers the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem**...

Abbas Zaki said to [UAE newspaper] *Al-Bayan* yesterday [Jan. 16, 2017] that the Paris Conference (held on Jan. 15, 2017, as part of the French Peace Initiative –Ed.) has

symbolic and moral significance because it placed the Palestinian issue at the top of the international community's agenda...

He added that the value of the conference stems from the circumstances of its convening, since the Palestinians are dealing with a brutal attack from the extremist Israeli right-wing government, and [this comes] in the shadow of the fact that [US President-elect] Donald Trump's administration will take up the reins of government in another few days, and even before that he has appointed diplomats who are hostile to the Palestinians, and who support the settlements and transferring the American embassy to occupied Jerusalem.

The Fatah Central Committee member said in response to these American efforts that the Palestinian leadership will go all the way if the Trump administration transfers the embassy to Jerusalem, which includes a reexamination of all of the previous agreements and the cancellation of the recognition of Israel. He emphasized that **the Palestinians cannot see their country without Jerusalem, and that they will defend it with all of the means at their disposal...**

Zaki said that the world needs to define terror. He noted that Israel is the root of terror, and that it and the ISIS organization are two sides of the same coin. He also said that it is the greatest danger to the region, and demanded to set a limit on it, because what it is doing to the Palestinian people is the embodiment of terror."

[*Al-Bayan*, United Arab Emirates newspaper, Jan. 17, 2017]

The French Initiative – A peace initiative proposed by the French PM Hollande's government in 2015 aimed at reviving peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. A one-day summit was held in Paris on June 3, 2016, attended by foreign ministers of the US, EU countries, and several Arab countries, for the purpose of advancing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. At the end of the summit, participants issued a joint communique supporting a negotiated two-state solution and proposing an international conference before the end of the year. Israelis and Palestinians did not participate in this first summit, the purpose of which was to establish a framework for renewed negotiations between the two.

On Jan. 15, 2017, Britain and Australia refused to sign the Paris Peace Conference declaration calling for a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians based on the two-state solution and praising UN Security Council Resolution 2334. Britain argued that the declaration, which was made as part of the French Peace Initiative without the attendance of Israeli or PA representatives, might harden the Palestinian negotiating position, particularly given its timing right before the inauguration of US President Donald Trump's administration. The following day Britain blocked the EU Foreign Affairs Council from adopting the declaration.