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May 21, 2009 17:22 | Updated May 22, 2009 2:13

Netanyahu: Jerusalem will never be divided

By ETGAR LEFKOVITS

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Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu vowed Thursday never to divide Jerusalem, and pledged to keep the capital united under Israeli sovereignty.

"Jerusalem was always ours and will always be ours. It will never again be partitioned and divided," Netanyahu said at the official state ceremony marking Jerusalem Day and the reunification of the capital during the Six Day War 42 years ago.

"Only under Israeli sovereignty will united Jerusalem ensure the freedom of religion and freedom of access for the three religions to the holy places," he added.

The prime minister prefaced his remarks with a reference to his meetings with US President Barack Obama and other American officials earlier in the week, saying he had made the same declarations during that trip.

In an earlier address, President Shimon Peres said that Jerusalem, while sacred to others, is the only capital Israel and the Jewish people have ever known.

"Jerusalem is held sacred by half of mankind [but] it has been and always will be Israel's capital. We never had another and it has never been the capital of any other people."

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat lauded Netanyahu for his opposition to divide Jerusalem.

"With the world examining us let it be said here: We will never divide Jerusalem," Barkat



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu speaks at a Jerusalem Day ceremony, Thursday.
Photo: GPO

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said.

The august annual ceremony, which was broadcast live on some Israeli television and radio stations, took place at Ammunition Hill, site of one of the bloodiest battles in the city during the 1967 war.

The hour-long event, which was open to the public and bereaved family members, began on a temperate spring evening under a crystalline blue sky with the lowering of the Israeli flag to half mast, and the recital of kaddish by a bereaved father.

The ceremony, which included several musical interludes, and the laying of memorial wreaths, concluded with the singing of Israel's national anthem, Hatikva.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of flag-waving Israelis marched to the Western Wall on Thursday in commemoration of the reunification of the capital 42 years ago in the Six Day War.

Hundreds of east Jerusalem Arabs protested the celebrations in the capital on Thursday. Demonstrators carrying flags of the Palestinian Authority shouted slogans condemning the Jewish occupation, as they call it, of the eastern part of the city and the treatment of Israel towards Jerusalem's Arabs.

Participants lambasted "the myth of the city's unity" and said Israel must "awaken from the fantasy of unity" of the capital. They said bringing east Jerusalem under Israel rule in the wake of the Six Day War was illegal and illegitimate. "Al-Quds [Jerusalem] is an Arab city and the steps taken by the occupier in [managing] the city are illegal," they said.

Archbishop Atalla Hanna, one of the heads of the Greek Orthodox Church in east Jerusalem, said during his speech in the protest: "We tell the whole world today that Al-Quds is ours and not the racists'. To whomever wants to hear we say we are tied to Al-Quds in regard to our faith, history, culture and values. This is our city, our capital, we are not strangers and not passers-by here."

"We own houses in the city, own lands here and in the holy places," Hanna added. "If Israel thinks a new Palestinian house in Al-Quds is illegal and should therefore be destroyed, we say the presence of the occupation is illegal and therefore it should pull back."

Some 270,000 Arabs live in Jerusalem, and make up 35 percent of the city's residents.

Jerusalem Post staff contributed to this report.

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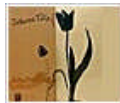
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- 209. Jerusalem is the only city in the world where God would live.**
 Bastiaan - The Netherlands (05/25/2009 12:17)
- 208. There is no place for terrorists in Israel**
 Jonathan - UK (05/25/2009 00:53)
- 207. JERUSALEM IS JEWISH - ARABS BELONG TO ARABIA**
 S De Castro Leon - UK (05/24/2009 21:07)
- 206. re Banister USA #191 - OK we'll foolw the US example and build reservations for the allegedly indigenous Arabs, and allow them to run casinos.**
 Zatapek - (05/24/2009 06:03)
- 205. Genius, #131**
 Yechielshlipshon - USA (05/23/2009 05:15)
- 204. To all the colonialists living on occupied lands in NZ Canada US S. Am. go home and find something else to do instead of preaching hypocritically tous**
 DB - (05/23/2009 04:17)
- 203. Jerusalem undivided????**
 Yukon Eddie - Canada (05/23/2009 02:35)
- 202. Undivided Jerusalem**
 a friend of Israel in America - USA (05/23/2009 01:16)
- 201. robert costa #192: You are wrong. Jews and Arabs have lived sisde by side for a thousand years. One million Arabs are citizens of Israel.**
 Jonathan - (05/23/2009 00:48)
- 200. To bannister #191: Here's your answer. The Jews were flung to the four corners of the earth by dispossession, persecution, "war and death"..**
 D. Wallach - (05/23/2009 00:35)
- 199. # 192 "palestinians israelis have different language, religion, history, mentality,**
 The other Bob - USA (05/23/2009 00:02)
- 198. # 191 "Why when you come back there is endless war and death?"**
 The other Bob - USA (05/22/2009 23:55)
- 197. # 152. Johan: Jerusalem will be Arab**
 The other Bob - USA (05/22/2009 23:41)
- 196. Jerusalem not divided?**
 Hansen - Norway (05/22/2009 23:03)
- 195. this american agrees with bibi**
 red - USA (05/22/2009 22:38)
- 194. Mr. Netanyahu, I applaud your strength**
 Ted - United States (05/22/2009 22:36)
- 193. Jerusalem is already devided, since 1967**
 david dick - Germany (05/22/2009 22:29)
- 192. Devided Jerusalem**
 robert costa - Israel (05/22/2009 22:23)
- 191. 800 years of relative peace in Palestine**
 bannister - USA (05/22/2009 21:53)
- 190. #161 kudos, kudos to Bibi as well. Iit was NOT noted by the US media nor reported**
 marti - USA (05/22/2009 21:34)
- 189. # 41 "Expel the residents and settle Jews."**
 The other Bob - USA (05/22/2009 20:54)
- 188. Johan, 152 - You really are an extremely impertinent person: You live on occupied lands in NZ taken from the Maoris, and you dare to have the nerves**
 DB - (05/22/2009 20:17)
- 187. Ask the Israeli Arabs enjoying all the social security Israel has to offer if they want it stripped and to be under PA rule?...I bet they dont.....**
 Jordan - USA (05/22/2009 20:16)
- 186. Bibi is a dodo...**
 Jen - usa (05/22/2009 20:16)

185. 8. Send That Greek Back To Greece

The other Bob - USA (05/22/2009 20:15)

184. Thank you Sharon and J.W.....

Joe - Israel (05/22/2009 20:09)

183. Yerushalaiym Shelany.Long live Bibi,Melech Israel!!!!!!!

Counterpropaganda Gil - Germany (05/22/2009 19:43)

182. Jordan is Palestine & Amman is the Palestinian Capital

Jordan is Palestine - Jordan is Palestine (05/22/2009 19:37)

181. Most Arabs in the area settled fro other countries during the British occupation. They are settlers - no different than W. Bank settlers

Len - UK - (05/22/2009 19:36)

180. Jewish Palestinians were supposed to get the remaining 22% of Palestine after Jordan was created from the rest. Israel is in that sliver of land.

Nathan - (05/22/2009 19:28)

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