Vote Early and Often For Milos Zeman

by Hugh Fitzgerald

After President Trump announced his decision on December 6 to move the American Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, one country – Guatemala – announced that it would follow suit. Then we entered a period of confusion, in which we were assured, and then no longer assured, that other states would soon follow. Honduras was mentioned, and then Panama. And then it was said that Paraguay might be another. As of now, Prime Minister Netanyahu has declared that there are "more than ten countries" with which Israel is holding discussions on moving their embassies, but none of those other countries has been mentioned by name. So we still remain in a state of geopolitical anticipation, and behind assorted curtains and veils, no doubt many discussions with Arab representatives are also being held, and possibly, too, fat wads of cash are being offered by the Saudis to ensure that this or that country continues to do "the right thing." It's happened before. After

both the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, certain black African states that had had good relations with Israel, and even received considerable aid, especially in agricultural projects, one by one severed relations with the Jewish state, as Arab money worked its magic on African politicians. It has also had a similar effect – see Bat Ye'or's *Eurabia* – in Europe.

But while we wait to see how things sort themselves out in Central and South America, in the Great Jerusalem Embassy Move, we can take heart from the thought that in Europe, if Milos Zeman is reelected as the president of the Czech Republic, the Czechs will likely be the first in Europe to move their embassy to Jerusalem. In the election held on January 12-13, with nine candidates, Zeman won 39% of the vote; Jiri Drahos, the runner-up, won 26%. In the latest informal polls, the candidates are running neck-and-neck.

Czech president Milos Zeman has throughout his political life been a strong supporter of the Jewish state. It's not surprising this should be so. For the small state of Israel, threatened by enemies and often let down by its friends, touches a chord in Czechs, who remember how, in 1938, the ethnic Germans living in the Sudetenland, along the southern, northern, and western borders of Czechoslovakia, presented themselves as being victimized by the cruel Czechs, the way the "Palestinians" present themselves as david-versus-goliath demonstrators, savagely put down by the Israeli military. The leader of the "Sudeteners" was Konrad Henlein, a convinced Nazi and later a member of the S.S., who staged demonstrations for the foreign media which would make it appear that the Sudeteners were merely asking for "self-determination" (just like the "Palestinians"), and not for the ultimate destruction of Czechoslovakia, a version of events that Hitler used to pressure the Englishman Neville Chamberlain and the Frenchman Edouard Daladier into supporting the forced surrender by the Czechs of the well-fortified Sudetenland, to Germany, with the

results we all know.

Zeman and many other Czechs sympathize with Israel not only because of their own country's experience with the Nazis. It is also that the Czech Republic, like the three other members – Poland, Hungary, Slovakia – of the political and cultural alliance known as the Visegrad Group, are alert to the dangers of Islam, and determined to keep Muslim migrants out of their countries, to resist relentless pressure by the European Union to have them take what Chancellor Merkel describes as their "share" of the Muslims pouring into Europe. The peoples of these four countries, who experienced both the Nazi occupation and then Communist rule which ended only recently, have learned from experience to recognize an ideological menace, as has not always been the case in Western Europe.

But, I can imagine you are now wondering, how is it that the Germans, who experienced – who indeed were responsible for – Nazism, and then, in East Germany, also suffered from Communist rule, do not see things as the Visegrad Group peoples do? The explanation is complicated, but part of it must be that so eager are the Germans to show that they are tolerant, "anti-racist" as all get out, the very opposite of their heil-hitlering grandparents, that they are demonstrating their mindless "tolerance" and their hypertrophied "anti-racism" by being especially solicitous of Muslims, who have been presenting themselves as "the new Jews." (In dismal fact, the "new Jews" are, alas, still the Jews). Thus does Germany make amends for its killing of six million Jews in exactly the wrong way, by admitting into its midst millions of Muslims who carry with them, in their mental baggage, Islamic antisemitism, that needs no *Mein Kampf* but comes from what is to be found so abundantly in the Qur'an and hadith.

Here is part of what Zeman said, and one wishes other European leaders took the same unflinching look at Islam:

There are states [in the E.U.] with whom we share the same values, such as the political horizon of free elections or a free market economy. However, no one threatens these states with wiping them off the map. No one fires at their border towns; no one wishes that their citizens would leave their country. There is a term, political correctness. This term I consider to be a euphemism for political cowardice. Therefore, let me not be cowardly.

There are dozens of days of independence being celebrated every year in the Czech Republic. Some I may attend, others I cannot. There is one I can never miss, however: it's the Israeli Independence Day.

There was a hideous assassination in the flower of Europe in the heart of European Union in a Jewish museum in Brussels. I will not let myself be calmed down by the declaration that there are only tiny fringe groups behind it. On the contrary, I am convinced that this xenophobia, and let's call it racism or antisemitism, emerges from the very essence of the ideology these groups subscribe to.

So let me quote one of their sacred texts to support this statement: "A tree says, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. A stone says, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."

I would criticize those calling for the killing of Arabs, but I do not know of any movement calling for mass murdering of Arabs. However, I know of one anti-civilization movement calling for the mass murder of Jews.

After all, one of the paragraphs of the statutes of Hamas says: "Kill every Jew you see" [in words, not quite, but certainly in intent]. Do we really want to pretend that this is an extreme viewpoint? Do we really want to be politically correct and say that everyone is nice and only a small group of extremists and fundamentalists is committing such crimes?"

There was outrage from Muslims, who could not bear to have that hadith, found repeatedly in the two most authoritative collections, those by Bukhari and Muslim, quoted accurately:

> *Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, issued a statement condemning Neman's speech, saying, "It is only appropriate that President Milo?s Zeman apologizes to the millions of Muslims worldwide for his deeply offensive and hateful anti- Islam statements."*
>
> *In the OIC's statement, it said, "The Secretary General reiterated that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and that terrorism should not be equated to any race or religion; a stance upheld by all major UN texts on the subject of countering terrorism. He added that the OIC countries share a profound respect for all religions and condemn any message of hatred and intolerance."*
>
> *Zeman refused to apologize, for as his spokesman said, '"the president would consider it blasphemy to apologize for the quotation of a sacred Islamic text."*

In the Western press, stories about Zeman's speech and Muslim outrage over it often left out the actual quotes by Zeman from the hadith. The press knew the quotes were accurate, understood that they could put Muslims in a bad light, and therefore decided not to include them in their reportage. In their eyes, it is better to have a Western public that does not know the texts and teachings of Islam. For if that public were to find out what is in the Qur'an and hadith – anything other than the usual handful of misleading peaceable-kingdom verses, such as "there is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256) – then their rage at the political and media elites who have allowed in, and continue to allow in, so many Muslims (take a bow, Angela Merkel) and brought Europe to its present parlous state could not be contained.

Zeman said on December 8 that Trump's announcement about

moving the American embassy made him “truly happy,” and that he hoped the Czech Republic would follow suit. Zeman added that as he proclaimed during his visit to the Jewish state four years earlier, he “would appreciate the transfer of the Czech Embassy to Jerusalem, and had it happened, we would have been the first to do so.” He did not offer a timeline, but were he to be reelected in the election, it is reasonable to expect a formal announcement that the Czech Republic that it, too, will be moving its Embassy. The Czech example might lead the other three nations of the Visegrad Group – Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia – all of which are defiantly refusing to take in Muslim migrants despite E.U. pressure – to follow suit. They have no desire to placate Arabs or Muslims, no desire to end up as Germany, France, and the U.K. have ended up, with millions of Muslims in their midst. Those who endured Communist, and before that, Nazi totalitarianism, have no intention of succumbing to Islamic totalitarianism. Those who feel alarm about the inroads of Islam in Europe are more likely to exhibit sympathy for, and identification with, Israel. For they understand that the war against the Jewish state is not a dispute over borders but, rather, a conflict that for the Muslim side can not end until Israel disappears altogether. And the same fate – the subjugation of the Kuffar to Islamic rule – may come later in Europe, but if Muslims have their way, come it must.

The leaders of Poland and Hungary have already joined the Czech Republic in denouncing the attempt by the E.U. to force them to take in a certain quota of Muslim migrants. They do not wish to participate in Angela Merkel’s folly. Viktor Orban, Hungary’s president, has just denounced – not for the first time – those he calls the “Muslim invaders” of Europe, whom he describes as not being real refugees but merely economic migrants. That is, they are not fleeing from persecution or death, but come to Europe mainly to take advantage of the many welfare benefits – free or subsidized housing, free education, free medical care, generous family

allowances – that European states offer. These Muslims have not shown any willingness to integrate but, as President Orban warned, are everywhere setting up "parallel societies." There are No-Go zones (for non-Muslims) in many places in Europe, though the political and media elites keep minimizing this matter, places where women, Jews, homosexuals, and even the police and the firemen are hesitant to enter. There are said to be 85 sharia courts in the U.K. alone. Orban has described with grim accuracy what European countries now endure.

If Milos Zeman is reelected as president, not only will he repeat his intention to move the Czech Embassy to Jerusalem but, given his temperament, will likely try to persuade one or more of his V4 9 (Visegrad) partners to do the same. Hungary would likely be next. Certainly Viktor Orban has repeatedly expressed support for Israel, and denounced the failure of Hungary to protect Jews during World War II. Poland has been another staunch supporter of Israel in Europe; like the leaders in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, Polish leaders did not criticize President Trump's embassy move. After Hungary, I would put Poland as the third state in Europe to announce an embassy move, and finally, Slovakia.

This break by the V4 nations with the E.U. over recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital would certainly hearten others who would wish to do the same. They need all the encouragement they can get. The Western media continue to hinder Israel in making its case for a united Jerusalem being recognized as Israel's "eternal" capital. Perhaps you, too, have heard Israeli spokesmen attempt to make that case, with hostile interviewers, including some fro the BBC, undermining them at every turn. The amount of media misinformation about, and contumely towards, Israel is staggering. Consider just one oft-repeated misstatement that "Jerusalem is a city holy to three faiths." That isn't true. As a city, it is holy only to Jews and Christians, while Muslims find holy only a particular site, Haram ash-Sharif, on the Temple Mount. Muslims

deliberately appropriated the holiest Jewish site for Islam. Even the identification of the mosque there as the "al-Aqsa" mosque mentioned in the Qur'an (17:1) has been recently challenged by the Egyptian scholar and historian Youssef Ziedan. Ziedan argues that there were no mosques in Jerusalem in Muhammad's lifetime, and that the Umayyad caliph Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan, who finished the mosque in 705, 73 years after the death of Muhammad, decided to identify it as the "Al-Aqsa" mosque of Qur'an 17:1 only because of his political rival Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr. Since that rival possessed Mecca and Medina, Abd al-Malik wanted at least to lay claim to the third holiest mosque, in Islam – which is why he began to call the mosque that he himself had built the "Al-Aqsa" Mosque.

Even if Milos Zeman were not to be reelected as the Czech president, he can continue to speak out on the historical justification for moving the Czech embassy to Jerusalem. He can still attempt to stir the consciences of those Europeans who have chosen to ignore history, and the 3000 year-old Jewish claim to Jerusalem, while blandly accepting the ahistorical claims to the city made by the "Palestinians," a people only invented after the Six-Day War. He can still, as a public figure, help disseminate the argument of Professor Ziedan that the real Al-Aqsa mosque is to be found not on the Temple Mount, but on the road between Mecca and Ta'if, as described by the historian and early biographer of Muhammad, al-Waqidi. The outspoken Milos Zeman, who has the unusual habit of saying what he believes to be true, is clearly unfazed by Muslim critics. He stood his ground, confounding the Muslims who demanded a retraction, when he quoted from the hadith – nearly-identical versions to be found in several places in the two most authoritative collections, those by Bukhari (at 4.52.177, 4.52.796, and 4.56.791) and by Muslim (at 041.6981, 041.6983, 041.6984, o41.69850) – that "A tree says, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. A stone says, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him." Muslims claimed that such passages gave an entirely unfair impression

of their peaceful and tolerant faith. You know how Zeman responded.

Milos Zeman might perform another useful service, whether reelected or not, by telling the V4 publics – the Czech, Polish, Hungarian, and Slovak peoples – what many of them do not know: to wit, that there were no mosques in Jerusalem in Muhammad's lifetime, that the "al-Aqsa" mosque was completed 73 years after Muhammad's death, that a political rivalry explains why the mosque built by the Umayyad caliph became known, inaccurately, as the "Al-Aqsa Mosque," while according to Professor Youssef Ziedan, the real Al-Aqsa mosque can be found further south, on the road between Mecca and Ta'if, in Saudi Arabia..

And once the V4 nations, that subgroup within the E.U. that consists of four countries, all formerly part of the Communist bloc, the very nations that have successfully resisted the pressure to open their countries to the "Muslim invaders," and that are most sympathetic to Israel, announce their own intention to move their embassies, would this not lead to pressure from others in Europe on their own governments, as they begin to realize that aside from the "Palestinians," the reaction of most Arabs to Trump's announcement has been muted, and furthermore, that if we accept the convincing arguments of Professor Ziedan about where the real Al-Aqsa Mosque can be found, the Muslim claim to Jerusalem is greatly diminished.

What may be called the "Al-Aqsa effect" cannot be overestimated. Many of the Arabs would like to concentrate on their own national interests, and have become tired of the "Palestinians" and their incessant demands, whereby the other Arabs must expend diplomatic and other forms of capital, including money, on them. Recently *The New York Times* reported on an Egyptian army officer, Ashraf al-Kholi, who contacted talk show hosts in Cairo to make sure they downplayed the embassy move, telling one of them "How is Jerusalem different from Ramallah, really?" Egyptian officials have since put on a

show of indignation over *The Times*' report. But the article, apparently well-sourced from four different talk show hosts, is entirely plausible. The Egyptian government does not want there to be another intifada which might resuscitate Hamas in Arab eyes; it knows that its main domestic enemies are ISIS in the Sinai, and Hamas, with its safe base in Gaza. ISIS recently attacked a Sufi mosque in the northern Sinai, killing 305 people, the worst terrorist attack in Egypt's history. Attacks on Copts, on churches and pilgrims in buses, and individuals, by ISIS, and other Muslims too, are ever more frequent. Meanwhile, Hamas has been continuing its attacks on the Egyptian military and police in the Sinai. The situation is volatile enough for El-Sissi, without having the Egyptian street riled up over the American embassy move.

The "Palestinians" will see their claim to Jerusalem much diminished if al-Aqsa is "moved" to accord with the historical reality Professor Ziedan convincingly provides. The Saudis, on the other hand, can take pleasure, should they wish, that the three holiest mosques in Islam – those in Mecca, in Medina, and now, in its rightful place somewhere on the road between Mecca and Ta'if, the real Al-Aqsa mosque – are all to be found, according to Professor Ziedan's evidence, in Saudi Arabia. Why shouldn't the Saudis be pleased? And couldn't that make for a Saudi-Palestinian quarrel over the location of al-Aqsa, a fight the Saudis – who if they wished could spend a fortune to promote Professor Ziedan's eminently sensible argument throughout the Arab and Muslim lands – could even win? In any case, there is widespread disenchantment with the "Palestinians," and exhaustion, too, at their constant demands, including requests for aid of all kinds. Such states as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, that are no longer eager to spend political and other capital on behalf of the endlessly needy and ungrateful "Palestinians," would find it much easier to justify their not having made bigger fuss over the American embassy move to Jerusalem, if they, and other Muslims, embrace the argument that the al-Aqsa mosque

mentioned in the Qur'an is not, and never was, in Jerusalem. The fury of the "Palestinians'" can be imagined, but what can they do? What can they say to the deeply learned Egyptian scholar who points out that there were no mosques in Jerusalem during Muhammad's life, tells us where the textual evidence places the real al-Aqsa, and explains how a political rivalry led to the Umayyad caliph's claim that the mosque he completed in 705 CE was the "al-Aqsa mosque"? And what could they do if the Saudis were now to lay claim to possessing all three of the holiest sites in Islam, and use their money to help convince other Muslims to acquiesce? The "Palestinians" continue to think that they remain center stage for Arabs and Muslims; they do not yet realize how tired the other Arabs, who have their own interests and worries (from ISIS and Hamas in the Sinai to Houthis in Yemen), are of the "Palestinian" insistence that the Arab world must revolve around them.

The one politician in Europe whom we can be reasonably sure would be willing to publicly discuss the question of where the real "Al-Aqsa" mosque is to be found is Milos Zeman. He does not need to win the Presidential election to do so, but being reelected would allow him to retain his bully pulpit. His opponent, Jiri Drahoš, is a distinguished scientist, the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences, but – as I discovered to my consternation – disturbingly naive when it comes to Islam. In 2014, Drahoš signed a petition called "Scientists against fear and hatred," which criticised what was described as "**the growing anti-Islamic radicalism in the country**." One wonders if he still feels the same today, after four more years of Islamic terrorism in Europe, after the rise and fall in Syria and Iraq, and rise again elsewhere, of ISIS. One would like to think that Dr. Drahoš has by now taken time to read and study the Qur'an and hadith, and reconsidered his earlier views. Meanwhile, though Milos Zeman's often abrasive manner is no match for the grave and thoughtful demeanor of the professorial Jiri Drahoš, on the matter of Islam, Zeman

happens to be right. Let us hope enough Czech voters will agree.

First published in