BY JOSHUA RUNYAN

WE PHILADELPHIANS know a thing or two about Pyrrhic victories. After all, we inhabit a city where Monday morning, any visitor would have found it difficult to discern that our Eagles had, the night before, actually clinched the NFC East division title with three games left in the season.

The loss of Carson Wentz might in the end prove — although the optimist in me continues to see a path to February glory — to be a cost too great.

Armed with this experience of things not always turning out the way you hope or predict them to, I am approaching last week’s historic announcement by President Donald Trump officially recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel — as well as calling for the relocation of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — with a certain amount of trepidation.

It is because of this trepidation that despite standing alongside the many in our community who have been applauding the president, I must temper that joy with the recognition that, for all the hoopla, Trump’s speech from the White House’s Diplomatic Reception Room has left a lot yet to be accomplished.

The week before Trump took the Oath of Office, I wrote a column bemoaning the Law of Unintended Consequences. In it, I advocated the moving of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv to East Jerusalem: “Moving the embassy to an address in the western part of the city would settle nothing and only provide further fuel to those who believe East Jerusalem belongs to the Palestinians.”

Lest anyone think that the fear I articulated back in January has somehow been wiped away by Trump’s announcement, let’s look at the facts: Despite the claims of some who supposedly counseled the president to include it, Trump did not once use the word “undivided” to describe a city that our people has treated as its spiritual capital for thousands of years. On the contrary, he expressly said that his announcement would not prejudice negotiations over Jerusalem as part of a hoped-for peace deal with the Palestinians.

Who cares, you might ask? Well, for one, a lack of specificity regarding what the president actually means when it comes to Jerusalem has practical as well as symbolic significance. In 2015, a Jewish family sued then-Secretary of State John Kerry over the State Department’s policy — in contravention of Congress — of not recognizing Jerusalem as a part of Israel by not identifying Israel as the country of birth for those U.S. citizens born in the city. The Supreme Court sided with the State Department on constitutional grounds granting the president and his administration wide latitude in the conduct of foreign policy.

That case, Zivotofsky v. Kerry, is still controlling — as is the State Department’s passport policy unchanged, a fact confirmed by State to the Associated Press the day after Trump’s speech. I have a personal interest in this because whereas my family carries Israeli passports in addition to our American ones, the U.S. passports — as well as the Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, a sort-of birth certificate — of my Jerusalem-born sons do not list Israel as their country of birth. I am waiting for the day when we can have these documents amended, but that day has not come yet.

But my issues with the White House Jerusalem announcement go beyond problems with documents. The most jubilant among us speak of Trump opening a new door in U.S.-Israel relations. But the corridor it opens to can end in one of two destinations: I worry of the potential path to Israeli sovereignty over the Old City, an area including the Western Wall and the Temple Mount, being taken away as part of U.S.-led negotiations. This outcome is entirely possible, although the probability of it is sure to be debated.

But because just such an outcome was not explicitly ruled out by Trump, I must politely decline to view last week’s events with messianic fervor. Remember, the 1967 lines traveled roughly along Yafo Street, the international community continues to view the Old City as occupied territory, and the Trump administration is making a point of viewing the borders of the capital it now recognizes as up to negotiation.

We didn’t need U.S. recognition of our claims over the land upon which the Knesset sits. What we need is U.S. recognition of our claims over the land to which we have turned for millennia. The minor victory last week didn’t put the major victory any closer within reach.

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