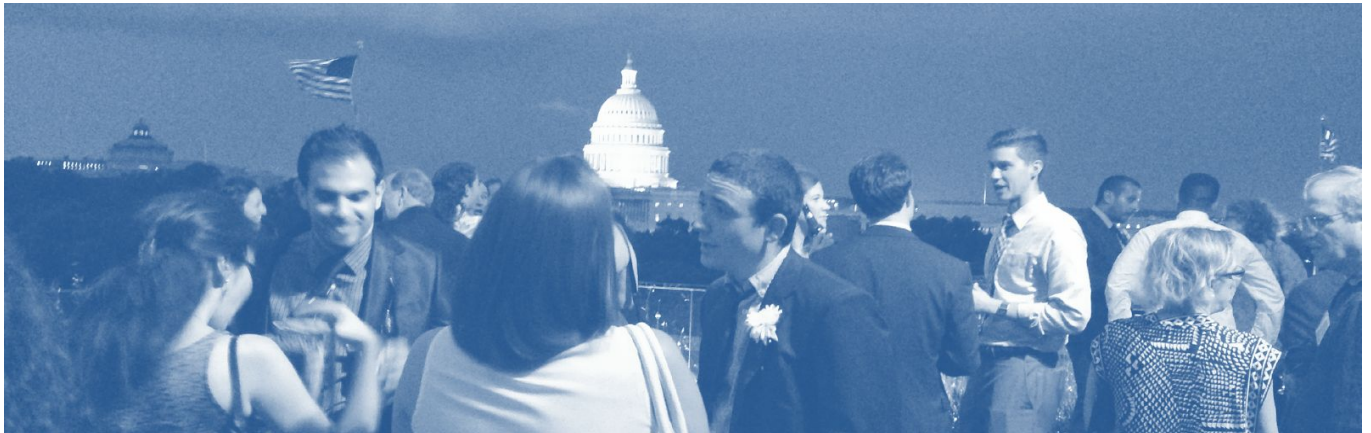




PLO DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES



The Washington Scene

December 2015

Staff members of the PLO Delegation are keen on attending key events in the capital that relate to Palestine and the Middle East. This bulletin offers a brief summary of these important conversations that take place in academic and policy circles. The views expressed in these events and reported here do not necessarily represent the views of the General Delegation of the PLO to the United States.

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House Armed Services Committee Hearing on the U.S. Strategy for Syria and Iraq and its Implications for the Region

Where: Rayburn House Office Building 2118

When: December 1, 10:00 AM

About:

The House Armed Services Committee held a hearing about the U.S. strategy for Syria and Iraq and its implications on the region. The witnesses were the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Ashton B. Carter, as well as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph F. Dunford. Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-TX) presided over the meeting with Ranking Member Adam Smith. This was a full committee hearing.

In light of the recent developments in Syria, widespread terrorist attacks, and increased coalition action, the chairman wanted to hear straight from the President's highest ranking advisers on the U.S. strategy to combat ISIS. The chairman, along with many members of the committee, expressed concern that the U.S. strategy was inadequate and needed to be more aggressive in countering ISIS. Secretary Carter emphasized the need for a mobilization of Sunni forces to fight ISIS and retake territory, augmented by American special forces conducting raids and intelligence collection. Chairman Dunford emphasized the need for greater interagency European intelligence sharing to combat the ISIS threat. The consensus was that a coalition effort and cooperation from the U.S.'s European and Middle Eastern allies is necessary to counter the ISIS threat.

Link: [House Armed Services Committee](#)

House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on The Paris Attacks: A Strategic Shift by ISIS

Where: Rayburn House Office Building 2200

When: December 2, 1:00 pm

About:

The House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing to determine if the Paris attacks signal a changing strategy by ISIS. The witnesses at the hearing included Mr. Max Boot, a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations; Dr. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies; Mr. Michael Weiss, Senior Editor of The Daily Beast and Co-Author of ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror and Mr. Thomas M. Sanderson, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. This hearing was sponsored by the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. The Chairman, Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) and Ranking Member, Rep. William Keating (D-MA), presided over the hearing.

Attempting to explain the recent terror attacks by ISIS in Paris, Beirut, and the Sinai, the subcommittee attempted to explore these attacks as a strategic shift. Ranking Member Keating and Dr. Gartenstein-Ross agreed that territorial losses suffered by ISIS may cause them to retaliate by lashing out with terror attacks to show their strength. Mr. Boot argued that as long as ISIS controls a state, we won't be able to defeat them. He and Mr. Weiss agreed that the Sunnis in the area see no credible alternative to ISIS, and that Syrians as a whole want to depose Assad before facing the ISIS threat. Mr. Sanderson interpreted their recent actions as a show of force of their ability to strike in enemy territory. The general sense in the hearing was that ISIS is deploying a strategy of terrorist attacks abroad to maintain their brand of strength and legitimacy in the face of territorial losses.

Link: [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#)

Palestinian Citizens of Israel Lead Toward Justice, Freedom, and Equality with Ayman Odeh

Where: Palestine Center

When: December 2, 1:00 PM

About:

Member of Knesset Ayman Odeh, Chairman of the Joint List, spoke on today's landscape and the prospects for Palestinian citizens of Israel to build political power and lead the region. MK Odeh is the head of the third largest political party in the Knesset, representing Israel's Palestinian citizens, who account for one-fifth of the country's population. He discuss his bold vision for a just future.

He spoke about the discrimination Palestinian citizens of Israel face, in all aspects of life, as well as the difficulties and hurdles Arab MKs face. He stressed the Arab Joint Lists' commitment to democratic values and their moral, nations and political commitment to ending the occupation in Palestine.

Link:[Jerusalem Fund](#)

The Atlantic: Women of Washington featuring political strategists Stephanie Cutter and Katie Packer.

Where: Newseum

When: December 10, 3:30 PM

About:

an interview led by Mary Louise Kelly, featuring political strategists Stephanie Cutter and Katie Packer. Cutter worked on Obama's reelection campaign as Deputy Campaign Manager and now doubles as a partner of Precision Strategies and co-host for CNN's Crossfire. Before founding Burning Glass, Packer served as Deputy Campaign Manager of the Romney for President Campaign in 2012. The conversation discussed the year's upcoming elections and the 2016 presidential race.

The general focus was on the phenomenon of Trump and how a non-establishment candidate is garnering enough support in the polls, and how other candidates are struggling to match him. the only agreed-upon crystal clear point, is that this election cycle is the farthest from anything clear. This is the most unpredictable election; many are unable to make any predictions on who will be the primary candidates, and are waiting for the candidates to become smaller in numbers. The Media, especially cable news was lamented for their bombastic coverage of not newsworthy stories and criticized for their role in not properly educating the public about the candidates.

Link:[Atlantic Women of Washington](#)

HaaretzQ Conference in NYC.

Where: New York City

When: December 13, 9:00 AM

About:

HaaretzQ with New Israel Fund in NYC was a conference and an opportunity to ask and discuss pressing questions, and to have an Israeli-American discussion about the future, about current issues and their impact on the U.S.-Israeli relationship. The conference showcased the movement working for a liberal Israel. It also attempted to engage in honest debate about Israel's most

difficult issues with Israelis who are rarely heard in the U.S. And we will come together as a community concerned about the future. The Q stood for questions, which was the organizing principle for the day, questions that riddle the landscape around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and are the driving force behind journalism. Inquiry. Debate. Discussion. Q. The line-up consisted of Haaretz correspondents as well as Israeli, Palestinian and American political leaders, officials, clergy, non-profit leaders and activists.

Link:[HaaretzQ](#)

Roundtable: Preserving a Path to a Two-State Solution

Where: The Washington Institute

When: December 22, 10:00 AM

About:

With increased Israeli-Palestinian violence and continued diplomatic impasse as 2015 draws to a close, many observers are wondering if the two-state solution can still be saved. The Washington Institute hosted a roundtable debate on this difficult question, featuring a new publication by Israeli scholar Einat Wilf, with comments by Institute fellow Ghaith al-Omari. In her study *Aligning Policy with Preference: Preserving a Path to a Two-State Solution*, Ms. Wilf argues that outside powers, especially the EU, can unilaterally help keep hope for peace alive. Mr. Omari presents a different perspective, emphasizing the continuing necessity of bilateral negotiation and agreement rather than unilateral moves by any party.

Link:[The Washington Institute](#)