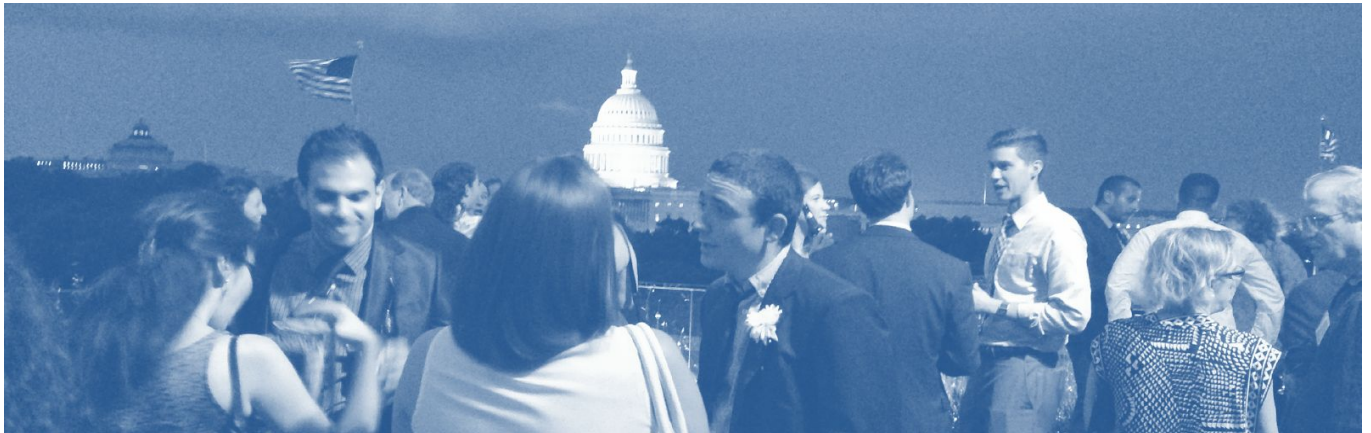




PLO DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES



The Washington Scene

February 2016

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.

Reports in this issue

United States of Jihad (DC Launch) : Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on From Iraq and Syria to Libya and Beyond: The Evolving ISIL Threat

Arab Voices on the Challenges of the New Middle East
Understanding the Current Palestinian Revolt: Its Context and Consequences for Palestinian
Society
Hebron Under a Tightening Occupation

Palestinian Succession Plans: Who Will Replace President Mahmoud Abbas?

Policy Studies Organization Middle East Dialogue 2016:
New Hopes and Aspirations

United States of Jihad (DC Launch) : Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists

Where: New America Foundation

When: February 9, 2016; 12:15PM-1:45 PM

About: The recent tragic attacks in Paris and San Bernardino provide fresh evidence that “homegrown” terrorism is a real and present danger. In UNITED STATES OF JIHAD: Investigating America’s Homegrown Terrorists (Crown; February 2, 2016), Peter Bergen offers an unprecedented look at the factors that lead to the radicalization of American citizens and offers expert insights into the shape of the threat confronting us. For over two decades, CNN national security analyst and New York Times bestselling author Peter Bergen has been our foremost chronicler of Islamist terrorism, through groundbreaking reporting on the Middle East, al-Qaeda, and homeland security. Since 9/11, more than 300 Americans have been indicted or convicted on charges of Islamist terrorism. With hometowns in New Mexico and New Jersey, Minnesota and Alabama, dozens of American citizens have sought to join overseas terrorist groups including al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and more recently ISIS. Among those who have succeeded, some have risen to positions of deadly influence. Who are these individuals? What motivates them? And what can be done to stem the tide of extremism?

[Link to Event](#)

House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on From Iraq and Syria to Libya and Beyond: The Evolving ISIL Threat

Where: Rayburn House Office Building 2172

When: February 10, 10:00 AM

About:

The House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on the U.S. administration's strategies toward ISIL and its potential for growth throughout the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The witness was Brett McGurk, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Chairman Edward Royce (R-CA) presided over the committee with Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY). The committee was not even half full.

With recent reports of ISIL's increased recruitment and terrorism taking place in Libya and Chechnya, the House Foreign Affairs Committee requested an update on the administration's strategies to combat ISIL's growth. The Chairman, as well as most other committee members, expressed concern that the administration is not doing enough to combat ISIL militarily. Many members also questioned the roles of allied nations like Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia in slowing the growth of ISIL beyond Syria and Iraq. Special Envoy McGurk articulated the many strategies the U.S. has used or considered using, from increasing airstrikes, bombing oil trucks, training the Free Syrian Army, sending U.S. troops to fight alongside the Iraqi forces, arming the Kurds, and diplomatic talks. McGurk also relayed information about the shrinking sizes of ISIL, its territory in Iraq, and the number of foreign recruiters traveling to Syria to fight. In general, the committee agreed that although the administration is using several strategies, the military efforts are not enough and should be increased in order to prevent further spread into Africa and Asia.

[Link to Event](#)

Arab Voices on the Challenges of the New Middle East

Where: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

When: February 12, 2016; 9-10:15 AM

About: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace hosted a review of its first Arab Experts Survey. The results of the survey, conducted in English and Arabic, represent the views of more than one hundred accomplished political thinkers representing almost every Arab country and answer broad questions around terrorism and extremism, civil war and foreign intervention, sectarianism, corruption,

and governance. The survey is part of Carnegie's Arab World Horizons project, an effort to examine the social, political, and economic forces shaping the Arab world.

Marwan Muasher, Perry Cammack, and Shibley Telhami discussed the findings of the survey, and Joyce Karam moderated. Join the conversation on Twitter with #ArabWorldHorizons.

This survey is qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. The experts were not randomly selected, and the results are not necessarily representative of the broader Arab public. But as voices that might press for and lead efforts for change and reform, they provide considerable insight into the Middle East's policy dilemmas. The experts' views are complex and often contradictory. However, three themes in particular stand out: government legitimacy, prioritization of local concerns, and democratic prospects.

The findings of this survey of Arab experts constitute a rare, if not unique, compilation of the views of many of the Arab world's leading thinkers. Given the enormous challenges facing the Middle East, it is perhaps not surprising that the experts lack consensus on the root causes of the historic upheaval in the region. Nonetheless, their focus on authoritarianism, governance, and accountability, even in the face of acute terrorist threats and burgeoning regional conflicts, is an important reminder that the crisis of legitimacy facing Arab states remains highly resonant today. More than five years after the spark of revolution was lit in a small interior city in Tunisia, the dramatic and turbulent story of the Arab Awakening is far from over.

[Link to Event](#)

Understanding the Current Palestinian Revolt: Its Context and Consequences for Palestinian society

Where: The Palestine Center

When: February 18, 1:00 PM

About:

Since the fall of 2015 the world has witnessed a deadly spate of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli soldiers, police, and settlers, with over 160 Palestinians killed. The violence began with tensions at Al Aqsa mosque and spread quickly beyond East Jerusalem to the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel as soldiers

employed shoot-to-kill tactics, claiming that their assailants, many of them youth at checkpoints, were threatening them with knife attacks. With the eruption of this violence coinciding with the 15-year anniversary of the second intifada, journalists, analysts, and scholars debated whether the Palestinian revolt could be called a “third intifada.”

The UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, cautioned recently, “History proves that people will always resist occupation.” Indeed, a neglected generation of Palestinians has grown up post-Oslo with no prospects for an end to Israel’s military occupation, feeling deep anger and despair. Panelists will analyze these events as well as the growing shift to the right by Israel’s government and society. They will also consider U.S. and global responses. Join us for panel presentations with policy analyst Phyllis Bennis and journalist Rania Khalek as they examine this volatile situation in the context of Palestinian society on the ground and the larger frame of U.S. and international policies.

[Link to Event](#)

Hebron Under a Tightening Occupation

Where: Middle East Institute-Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

When: February 25, 9:30 AM

About:

The Middle East Institute's (MEI) George and Rhonda Salem Family Foundation Lecture Series is pleased to host the mayor of Hebron, Dr. Daoud Zatar, for a discussion about growing tensions in the West Bank town between Palestinians, Hebron's settler population, and the Israeli Defense Forces. The largest city in the West Bank and a holy site for both Muslims and Jews, Hebron has often been a tinderbox in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is home to hundreds of Israeli settlers, and 20% of its territory remains in Israeli administration under the 1997 Hebron Protocol. The bisected city has seen numerous violent flare-ups in recent months, resulting in deaths on both sides and stoking resentment between the two populations. The mayor will address the surge in violence and its impact on the lives of Hebron residents. MEI president Amb. Wendy Chamberlin will moderate the discussion.

[Link to Event](#)

Palestinian Succession Plans: Who Will Replace President Mahmoud Abbas?

Where: John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

When: February 25, 12 PM-1:30 PM

About: The SAIS Foreign Policy Institute presents a discussion on:
Palestinian Succession Plans: Who Will Replace President Mahmoud Abbas?

With:

* Ilan Goldenberg, Senior Fellow and Director of the Middle East Security Program at the Center for a New American Security - Discussant

* Grant Rumley, Research Fellow at the Foundation of Democracies - Discussant

* Fadi Elsalameen, Non-Resident Fellow at the SAIS Foreign Policy Institute - Moderator

[Link to Event](#)

Policy Studies Organization Middle East Dialogue 2016: New Hopes and Aspirations

Where: The Historic Whittemore House, Washington, D.C.

When: February 26, 8 AM-5:10 PM

About: The Middle East Dialogue is for policy makers, scholars, business and social leaders, to discuss current issues. Its purpose is to promote multidisciplinary conversation about topics that include, but are not limited to education initiatives, social, economic and political reforms, nuclear proliferation, interfaith dialogue, women's gains and challenges, peace initiatives, and potential areas of conflict. We welcome a spectrum of political and religious persuasions to discuss issues in a spirit of tolerance and free discourse.

[Link to Event](#)
