

## **Juneau World Affairs Council Middle East Forum**

**November 2 & 3, 2009**

**November 2 “Differing Perspectives”:** How do major actors see the current issues, and what do they expect or hope for from the Obama administration? In particular, how does each major actor assess the chances for success of President Obama’s initiative with respect to Israel and the Palestinians? How do they assess the prospects for a Syria-Israel agreement? How do they assess Iran’s influence in the region, and American efforts to deal with the nuclear issue and Islamist groups? What is the best role for the U.S. in these issues?

**5:30 Welcoming remarks (JWAC Chair and Juneau Mayor Bruce Botelho)**

**5:40 Introductory remarks**

**5:50 Ambassador Philip Wilcox:** American interests; the Obama administration’s approach and pending decisions.

**6:25 Israeli Consul General Akiva Tor:** The Netanyahu government’s positions on regional issues and its priorities; its relationship with the Obama administration.

**7:00 M.J. Rosenberg:** Another view of Israeli positions and options, and the U.S. relationship with Israel.

**7:35 Break**

**7:50 Yousef Munayyer:** Palestinian problems and possibilities, including the recent Fatah conference, unity talks, the siege of Gaza, and the need for elections.

**8:25 Hussain Abdul-Hussain:** The issues that flow through Syria – Iran, proliferation, Lebanese stability, disputes with Israel, Islamist movements.

**9:00 Farideh Farhi:** Differing Iranian views of Iran’s interests; the effects of political turmoil; means of influence; possible approaches.

**9:35 Matthew R. J. Brodsky: Another view on how the United States should approach Syria and Iran; dealing with authoritarian regimes and their domestic opponents.**

**10:10 Closing remarks**

**November 3 “Competing agendas”: How do the positions of the respective actors interact? How do those interactions affect what the United States can do, or suggest priorities or sequencing of efforts?**

**4:30 Introductory remarks**

**4:40 Ambassador Imad Moustapha: Syria’s positions on regional issues and its priorities; its relationship with the Obama administration; goals for the next year.**

**5:40 Panel One: “Syria or Iran First?” – President Obama has focused on issues between the Palestinians and Israel as a priority. But what are the advantages and disadvantages of starting with the Syrian issues, or concentrating on issues relating to Iran – Syria’s border dispute with Israel, its relationship with Iran, its support of Islamist groups; Iran’s nuclear ambitions, its support of Islamist groups? Would resolution or amelioration of these issues make the Palestinian issues easier to resolve? [Farhi, Hussain, Brodsky; comments by other speakers]**

**6:40 Panel Two: “Palestinians First?” Time has been the enemy of the two-state solution. But if Palestinian issues are to take precedence in American policy, numerous questions must be addressed: Who is prepared to negotiate; who has prepared their constituencies for negotiated concessions; who can implement a deal if one is negotiated? How are Hamas, and the Palestinian schism they represent, to be dealt with? If success is unlikely, will a failed effort make things worse? [Tor, Wilcox, Munayyer, Rosenberg; comments by other speakers]**

**7:40 Break**

**8:05 Panel Three: “Domestic Politics” – A number of advocacy groups on Middle East issues have started up, or grown, or established DC offices in the past few years. What effect if any have these developments had to date, and going forward, how do they affect the chances of significant change in US policy in the region? [Wilcox, Rosenberg, Munayyer, Brodsky; comments by other speakers]**

**9:05 Panel Four: “What Does Progress Toward Peace and Stability Require of the United States? What Does it Require of Each of the Other Actors?” Given the complexity of the challenges, what goals should the Obama administration set for the next year, and what steps should it take, in what order, to achieve those goals? From the perspective of each actor, what does achievement of its policy goals require of other actors? [Each speaker to give short summary]**

**10:05 Closing remarks.**