



**WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY**

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

**Glickman's "Middle East Trip
Report," January 14-January 24, 1994**

Rights	Images are in the public domain or protected under U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code), and may be used for research, instruction, and private study. Publication, commercial use, or reproduction, in print or digital format, of a copyrighted image or the accompanying data in accordance with Fair Use (sec. 107) requires users to provide prior written permission from the copyright holder. All images are to be cited as "Courtesy of Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives" and users are to let us know the intended use at specialcollections@wichita.edu .
Download date	2026-05-16 14:15:53
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/10057/52219

THE HONORABLE DAN GLICKMAN
Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee
Middle East Trip Report
January 14-24, 1994

I spent over a week traveling throughout the Middle East as part of my responsibilities as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. This seven day trip, taken in cooperation with the administration and the intelligence agencies, took me to Israel, Jordan, Syria and Egypt to observe, first hand, whether or not progress is being made on the peace process.

I was able to speak with many of the leading political leaders of each country, and have a substantive dialogue with them on the current situation in the region. Through a series of substantive and frank discussions I wanted to be in a position of being able to ascertain the status of the peace process and to determine whether U.S. intelligence was helpful in monitoring the peace process and relationships between parties.

Since it is critical that U.S. policy makers, including President Clinton, have accurate and complete information about the parties and their intentions in order to make sensible and sound policy decisions; and since the role of the U.S. will be so critical in assuring the long-term success of the peace process, the relationships between good intelligence and sound policy decisions in the Middle East are critical.

ISRAEL

I met with Prime Minister Rabin, Foreign Minister Peres, Likud Party Leader Netanyahu, and Chief of Military Intelligence General Sagui while in Israel. Prime Minister Rabin was deliberate and sincere in support of the peace process in the two separate meetings I had with him.

The prime minister indicated that the window of opportunity is now open for an honorable and secure peace with Syria and the Palestinians. He said that population growth and the demographics of the region did not favor Israel. Rabin told me that failure to achieve peace now would result in chaos and war early in the next century, and would only encourage the onerous growth of radical Islamic fundamentalists, which is largely funded by and operating out of Iran. He stressed that Islamic fundamentalists are making life increasingly difficult for more moderate Arab leaders in the Palestinian, Jordanian and Egyptian leadership, and are increasingly becoming a dominate force in the region.

Foreign Minister Peres also believes that a peace agreement will allow Israel to lead the Middle East into a significant economic boom. Both men are clearly worried about Israeli citizen reaction to a possible Golan Heights withdrawal. It is clear a majority of Israelis do not favor a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. However, Rabin said most would be supportive of territorial exchanges with Syria if they were accompanied with certain conditions; including, a maintenance of Israel's superior military strength, clear Syrian recognition of Israel (politically and economically), a long-term phased withdrawal from all or parts of the Golan, and unspecified American military presence in the region.

Likud leader Netanyahu told me that he clearly believes that if the price of peace with Syria is a withdrawal from the Golan, then he will lead his party in direct opposition to the Rabin proposal. Netanyahu also believes that the Rabin government has accepted, in principle, the concept of a Palestinian state on the West Bank, which he opposes. He did, however, inform me that he would accept an unspecified form of autonomy in the region.

I also spent two hours at the Orient House in East Jerusalem with Hanan Ashrawi, the leading Palestinian spokesperson and a well-recognized figure in the U.S. She told me of Yassir Arafat's continual authority in representing the Palestinian position in the peace talks. She also stressed the Palestinian community's growing impatience with Israeli demands at the peace talks, particularly with regard to border security issues near Jericho and Gaza.

JORDAN

We left Israel by merely walking across the narrow Allenby Bridge, which crosses the Jordan River. I was struck by the fact that the Israeli and Jordanian soldiers, guarding each side, seem to get along so well, and seem poised for what we all hope for - a true and lasting peace. American Embassy personnel drove us to Amman - only about 40-50 miles from the Jordan River, and only 60-70 miles from Jerusalem.

Amman is a fairly modern city having been substantially built since 1925. King Hussein was in the U.S. for medical tests, but he provided me with his personal helicopter for us to visit Petra, a historic city in southern Jordan, and to inspect the Syrian/Jordanian border area on the Golan Heights. Jordan has a great interest in protecting its territory along the Syrian border from terrorist infiltration, particularly from the Iranian-funded guerrillas who travel from Lebanon through Syria, moving into Jordan and then into the West Bank. The U.S. intelligence agencies have been advising Jordan on how to protect its borders from terrorists, but on occasion these efforts have not been successful.

At the end of our visit in Jordan, I visited with Crown Prince Hassan, King Hussein's brother, who is in line to succeed the King. The Crown Prince reiterated his support for peace with Israel, and encouraged a strong, active U.S. role in moving the process along. He reaffirmed his desire for normalization of relations with Israel. Jordan clearly has had a long history of non-official economic and political contacts with Israeli officials. Jordan has a great deal to gain in an Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian peace agreement.

SYRIA

After a one hour flight on a U.S. Army Beech King Air (C-12) to Damascus, and a visit with U.S. Embassy officials and a quick tour of Damascus (the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world), I visited with Rabbi Hamra, the chief rabbi of the Syrian Jewish community.

After years of persecution, the remaining members of the Jewish community in Syria have finally received exit visas from the Syrian government. About 1250 Jews remain there and all but 300 have received their exit visas. Rabbi Hamra was a delightful and warm individual. He expressed satisfaction with Syrian President Assad's commitments to finally provide the exit visas. Frankly, I was not sure if the rabbi was sincere in his public praise of Assad, inasmuch as Syria does not have a history of democratic institutions and Assad runs the country with an iron hand. But all indications are that there is a light at the end of that community's long tunnel, and freedom seems to be at hand.

While our group did not meet with Assad, we did spend over two hours with Foreign Minister Sharra. The meeting, held with another congressional delegation led by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), was tense. The Syrians told us that while they are committed to peace, their public position was of adamant opposition to any peace agreement that did not require the complete withdrawal by Israel from the Golan Heights. Sharra also rejected all notions that Syria harbored terrorists, that Syria committed human rights violations in Lebanon and that Syria encouraged drug trafficking in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. He also challenged the history of Israel and its legitimacy, but acknowledged that Israel was a fact of life because of its military superiority and American support.

It is also clear that since Syria is no longer a client state of the old Soviet Union, it now needs the U.S. for economic and political purposes, which Assad apparently relayed to President Clinton a few days before in Geneva. Syria also does not want to be excluded from a Middle East peace agreement involving the Palestinians, Jordanians and Israelis.

Behind the tough Syrian talk, however, is the fact that Syria must come to terms with Israel in the modern world of the Middle East. The forces of radical Islamic fundamentalism can even threaten a regime as totalitarian as Assad's if he chooses to stonewall a peace agreement.

- As a side note, Assad's son was killed in a traffic accident on the road from Damascus to the airport about six hours after we left Syria.

EGYPT

We flew from Damascus to Cairo on the C-12. The distance between the two cities was approximately 300 air miles, but the trip took over 3.5 hours because Syrian air space rules required us to fly around Lebanon to a point near Cyprus and then south to Cairo. Our Egyptian meetings were especially enlightening and encouraging. Personal visits to the Egyptian Foreign Minister and President Mubarek's chief advisor convinced me that Egypt is the pivotal player in the peace process and will be a catalyst towards peace in the region.

Since Yassir Arafat was in Cairo at the same time, I was not able to meet personally with Mubarek, but I did speak to him on the telephone for over 30 minutes. Mubarek expressed sincere optimism about the peace process -- both the Palestinian-Israeli track and the

Syrian-Israel track. Mubarek truly believes that substantive and meaningful agreements will be reached on both tracks, possibly as soon as two or three weeks on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Mubarek says he is on the phone with Rabin, Peres, Arafat and Assad almost every day and believes that the parties will soon reach an accommodation.

He did tell me he is worried that Rabin's hold on the Israeli government is precarious, and that he is working to convince Syrian President Assad to take some symbolic acts (e.g. giving an interview to an Israeli journalist or releasing some more information on Israeli POWs/MIAs), which would help Rabin stay on top of Israeli public opinion. I came away from our conversation convinced that the ability of Mubarek to continue his personal role in this diplomacy is critical to the peace process.

- As a side note, the U.S. chief of mission at the American Embassy (an ambassador has not been confirmed) hosted a dinner party for me at his home. Among the guests were the Israeli ambassador to Egypt, David Sultan, and one of the Palestinian negotiators at the Taba talks. They got along splendidly at dinner. The world has changed a great deal since Sadat and Begin started the historic peace process.

By the way, I did take time to visit the pyramids and the Sphinx. They are amazing.

INTELLIGENCE

Obviously, I visited a number of intelligence officers and saw things I cannot report in an unclassified document. Suffice it to say, the U.S. has a great need to have the best possible intelligence in the region - both human intelligence and satellite information.

Only with good intelligence will U.S. policy makers have complete information to make the proper decisions. If formal peace agreements are signed, the U.S. will have a major role to monitor the agreements and help insure compliance. All of the countries in the region are still counting on America to guarantee the peace.

While the U.S. cannot do what the parties in the region must do for themselves, neither can the U.S. afford to withdrawal from a region which has seen so many people killed and in which so many U.S. resources and taxpayer dollars have already been invested. I came away convinced that the United States must continue to play an active and constructive role in the Middle East if a true and lasting peace is to be achieved.

