

**From:** Khaled Elgindy  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 17, 2008 1:55 AM  
**To:** LPU; CD  
**Cc:** Maen Areikat  
**Subject:** meeting with U.S. Co-Del

On Saturday, Aug. 16, I accompanied Dr. Saeb [SE] in a meeting with a congressional delegation headed by Congressmen Chris Shays (R-Connecticut) [CS] and Jim Marshall (D-Georgia) [JM]. The meeting was held at the US consulate in Jerusalem. Afterwards, Dr. Saeb met privately with Jake Waller.

This was the group's last meeting in Israel/Palestine before heading to Jordan. The meeting focused primarily on the status of ongoing negotiations, as well as the broader regional situation. Below are some of the more noteworthy comments and issues raised in the meeting.

- JM noted that what they hear is that Livni will not be able to conclude an agreement "because of her political ambitions". SE responded that we'll know by Sep. 25, when either there will be a new Israeli government or new elections.
- JM asked, supposing there was no agreement by the end of Bush's term, what the effect would be on Pres. Abbas, Fateh, Hamas, etc? SE responded, basically "damage control", adding that we don't have Camp David's option of failure and that another "blame game" would be disastrous.
- CS noted that the view they are hearing is that negotiations have not made much progress and are not likely to either, especially given the weakness of all three leaders. SE responded that Pal's and Israelis have jointly told the Americans that we don't want bridging proposals or short-cuts (i.e., no interim/temporary solutions), and that what is needed now is: (1) to continue negotiations irrespective of internal politics, and (2) to start introducing drafts (I's & P's) to lock in our joint positions (but without publicizing). JM commented that this was a "very clever strategy".
- CS asked (rhetorically) why the Israelis make it more difficult for Abbas to have credibility (i.e., by not improving situation on the ground, etc.). JM took a somewhat different view, which is that if Israel made concessions when Abbas is weak and solely to strengthen him, this actually weakens him more.
- JM noted that same people say that Barak's offer in 2000 was the best Palestinians could hope to get, to which SE responded, "when you see Barak, ask him for a copy of this 'offer'. There was no offer by Barak, only by Clinton in January 2001."
- When asked about the domestic political situation in the US, both JM and CS said they were pleased that both Obama and McCain have indicated that they will be fully engaged in the process.
- Regarding Iran, SE downplayed the possibility of an Israeli military strike, which could complicate things for the next US administration. However, JM noted that what he had heard is that Israeli would launch a strike before the election in order to avoid just that, adding that he had "inside information".