

ACTION NEA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CA-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOTE-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	UTED-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	M-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	PA-00	PM-00
	GIWI-00	DOHS-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	BBG-00	R-00	ECA-00
	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00
	SCA-00	CARC-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W	

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O 140908Z JUN 06
 FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9649
 WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
 AMEMBASSY AMMAN
 AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
 AMEMBASSY CAIRO
 AMEMBASSY RIYADH
 AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
 AMEMBASSY ANKARA
 AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
 HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
 INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 002822

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
 JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
 AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
 WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
 CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR, PREL, KPAO, OPRC, SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/US, Syria/Venezuela,
 Syria/Iran, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Guantanamo
 Suicides (6/13)

1. Summary: Syrian papers reported that FM Walid al-Mouallem received James Abourezek, Chairman of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and former US Senator, and that they talked about American-Syrian relations, the situation in Iraq, and the Arab-Israel conflict. In a statement to SANA, Senator Abourezek stressed that solution of Arab-Israel conflict will lead to solution of all the problems in the Middle East. He described his meeting with al-Muallem as "good and productive."

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Papers also reported the visit to Venezuela by Dr. Faysal Miqddad, Deputy Foreign Minister, who conveyed a message from President Asad to President Hugo Chavez about enhancing relations between Syria and Venezuela, about the current situation in the Middle East, and about Syria's view regarding developments in Latin American. President Chavez stressed that the two countries have identical views regarding issues connected with the Middle East and the world. He reviewed the positive changes in South America and the failure of the American policy of hegemony in many parts of the world. In a interview on Venezuelan TV, Dr. Miqdad expressed Syria's full support for Venezuela's non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council.

On Syrian-Iranian relations, papers reported the visit to Tehran of Syrian Defense Minister Hasan Turkumani and his meetings with Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Najjar, which focused on developments in the region and means of improving defense cooperation between Syria and Iran.

Papers also reported a statement to Lebanese ANB satellite channel by Information Minister Dr. Muhsin Bilal, that Syria is initially satisfied with the report of Judge Serge Brammertz, head of the International Investigation Commission into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. "Syria is now studying the report to make its final observations about it," he said. The minister noted that "Syria has from the very beginning demanded an objective, neutral, and professional report, especially after the first two reports of the investigation commission digressed so much that they harmed relations between Syria and Lebanon." Dr. Bilal said "Brammertz' latest report is technical to some extent and it avoids politicization." He stressed that Syria cooperated fully and from the beginning to accomplish a professional inquiry free from political motives. He said "former German Judge Detlev Mehlis based his reports on testimony by some Lebanese known for their hostility toward Syria and leveled accusations before searching for proof." He wondered how the assumption that the security services in a country knew in advance about a terrorist crime in their area of deployment could be legally and professionally acceptable. Noting that some parties accused Syria from the first moment of involvement in Al-Hariri's assassination, the minister pointed out that this accusation was directly associated with the change in regional political inclinations of those parties, for reasons that are known to them. Bilal said "Brammertz' meetings in Syria show Syria's good intentions and desire to help the investigation reach their objective goals." On Syrian-Lebanese relations, the information minister said, "There is no need for any country to intervene to restore normal relations between Syria and Lebanon. He said

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"Some Lebanese parties have harmed Syria and they should acknowledge their mistakes." He said, "Lebanese PM al-Saniora's visit to Damascus requires only the drafting of an agenda showing interest in the establishment of strong and outstanding relations between two sovereign countries." He said, "the road between Beirut and Damascus is very short, and one does not need to go to Damascus via Washington." The minister added: "We are watching the inter-Lebanese dialogue, and we expect the Lebanese to emerge united and Lebanon to be healthy, with a clear identity and policy toward Syria and toward the Israeli enemy."

End of summary.

2. Selected Headlines:

"Against the background of exposing a network of Israeli

intelligence agents in Sidon and reports on a connection between Mahmoud Rafe Mossad agent with the Socialist Progressive Party, President Lahoud calls for enhancing national unity, and Nasrallah calls for a national unity government. Lebanese MPs: Israeli sabotage foils the logic of those who call for dismantling arms of Lebanese resistance" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/13)

"Lahoud warns against Israeli conspiracies. Lebanese nationalist forces: Jumblatt is one of the basic tools of Israeli conspiracies" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/13)

"President Chavez receives an oral message from President Asad conveyed by Deputy Foreign Minister Miqdad. Chavez: Our friendship is deep; Our points of view are identical. Miqdad: Syria supports Venezuela's non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/13)

"FM Muallem discusses Israel's evasiveness about peace with James Abourezek, former US Senator and Chairman of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/13)

"Defense Minister Turkumani confers with Iranian President and discusses military cooperation in Tehran. Nejad: Our coordination assures the defeat of enemy schemes" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/13)

"The Palestinian Legislative Council defers decision on referendum on the prisoners document. Dispute over the cause of bloody confrontations in Gaza and Ramallah. Olmert threatens to liquidate more Palestinian leaders" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/13)

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"More human rights violations exposed in Baquba Central Prison. Two Iraqi children killed in US shelling near Baquba. Scores of Iraqis killed in various assaults and explosions" (Government-owned Tishreen 6/13)

3. Editorial Block Quotes:

 "The Option on National Unity"

An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Ba'th reads: "The new Israeli massacre in Gaza proves Israel's aggressiveness and shows that its goal is to manipulate all opportunities in the region...."

"Israel proves day after day that it is an existential enemy of the Arab nation and that it is proceeding with the implementation of its hostile colonial and expansions schemes in the Palestinian territories, flagrantly supported by the US Administration, which does not hide this support and its hostility toward the Arab nation.... Facing this threat, Palestinians must adhere to national unity and rally around the resistance option. This is a national necessity for survival in the difficult circumstances the just Palestinian cause is experiencing...."

"Syria, which has always supported the Palestinian people, is today aggrieved by the ongoing splits and differences among Palestinian brothers. It calls on and hopes that everyone will demonstrate rationality and reason and give precedence to the higher national interest at this decisive juncture in the history of the Palestinian cause."

 "A Pressing Palestinian Need"

Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (6/13): "The killing of Palestinian civilians on the Gaza beach is part of Tel Aviv's war crimes and crimes against humanity.... Israel, in its crimes against the Palestinian people, outperforms Nazism and Fascism...."

"The US Administration was not ashamed to label a war crime, of an undoubtedly racist and hostile nature, as an act of self-

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defense. The Palestinian people, Arabs, and the international community should not expect any other position from this administration as long as its blind bias toward Israel results in political blindness and makes it difficult to differentiate between its positions and Israel's positions toward the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the developments in the region.

"The pressing national mission of all Palestinian forces is to strengthen national unity on the basis of resisting occupation by all available means to protect the Palestinian people from the crimes of the occupation and force it to leave Palestinian land as it was forced to leave south Lebanon and the Gaza Strip in defeat, thanks to the resolve of the resistance and its determination to achieve liberation."

 "Al-Zarqawi and the Game of Occupation"

Ziyad al-Munajjid, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/13): "The intelligence services linked to the occupation forces in Iraq had exaggerated Al-Zarqawi's image in order to carry out terrorist acts against Iraqis and blame Al-Zarqawi and the Iraqi resistance for it, while all indications are that the Iraqi resistance differed with Al-Zarqawi over the management of the conflict with the occupation."

"With the death of Al-Zarqawi, the occupation forces will lose a figure they used to blame for all their crimes against the Iraqi people.... This is why the occupation is expected to exaggerate the image of another 'terrorist' to maintain its presence in Iraq...."

 "Guantanamo, a Mark of Disgrace"

Shawkat Abu-Fakhr, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (6/13) "Regardless whether the three Guantanamo inmates committed suicide or died under torture, which is more likely in light of previous reports by Amnesty International and other humanitarian and nongovernmental organizations, the US Administration bears the legal and human responsibility and should, consequently, bear all the consequences and rush to close down this detention center after compensating the detainees, who were arrested in an arbitrary manner and held

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without charges or trial....

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"Any talk by this administration about human rights and democracy is unacceptable because it disastrously commits the worst human rights violations in Guantanamo, the secret prisons, and the detention centers, as well as notorious massacres like those it perpetrated in Abu Ghurayb, Hadithah, and other places...."

"Between Crime and Punishment"

Charles Kamilah, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/13): "What is happening in Guantanamo is a small-scale copy of the crimes that have been taking place in Iraq and Afghanistan...."

"This is not the age of US credibility, values, freedom, and democracy that President Bush has bragged about.... President Bush expressed concern over the suicide of the three inmates in Guantanamo not because he cares about people's life in this Nazi prison, but because he fears the impact on his ever-declining popularity...."

"Under the Diplomacy of Pressure "

Sa'dallah Barakat, a commentator in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (6/13): "Amid intensified diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis of Iranian nukes, hope is pinned on the IAEA meeting in Vienna and on Iran's response to the EU proposals...."

"President Bush stated that Tehran has weeks, not months, or else the Security Council will act...."

"This threat shows Washington's arrogance.... It is an acknowledgement that Washington controls the UN Security Council. It also shows that Washington seeks to torpedo the diplomatic activity for which Iran left the door open."

"The US president is ignoring the positions of Russia and China.... Observers can only interpret President Bush's threat as a provocation for Iran on the one hand and as disdain for the

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six-way moves on the other...."

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