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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY RIYADH

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//

INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
 JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, 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: OIC Ministerial, Syria/Serbia,
 Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories (6/21)

1. Summary: Syrian papers reported that FM Walid al-Moallem discussed with his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul regional topics of joint concern and issues on the agenda of the 33rd session of OIC Foreign Ministers meeting held in Baku. During a meeting held on the margin of the OIC Ministerial, both ministers concentrated on bilateral relations between Syria and Turkey. FM Gul expressed his country's satisfaction with the current progress of Syrian-Turkish relations. In a meeting with Bahraini FM Khaled bin Mohammed al-Khaleifa, FM al-Moalem reviewed topics that were discussed during a meeting between President Asad and Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa al-Khaleifa

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recently in Damascus. The Foreign Minister also discussed with Iranian FM Manouchehr Mottaki issues on the agenda of the OIC Ministerial and issues that will be touched upon in the Iraq neighboring countries' meeting to be held in Tehran on July 8th. Al-Moallem also reviewed with Jordanian FM Abdulilah al-Khatib bilateral relations between Syria and Jordan in light of current preparations for the Syrian-Jordanian Joint Higher Committee in Damascus.

In an address before the Ministerial Conference of the OIC, Mr. al-Moallem said that since the events of September 11, the world has been witnessing a clear exploitation of these events in the service of U.S. interests and its policy of hegemony, under the pretext of fighting terrorism by linking it to Islam, without distinguishing between terrorism and the right of resisting occupation, as well as not tackling the true reasons of terrorism, which are poverty, negligence and occupation. He added that the U.S. wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and their repercussions on the Middle East have led to more tension and chaos in the region and deadlock in the peace process. He also reiterated Syria's support for the Iraqi people's aspirations to achieve national reconciliation through the conference of accord and reconciliation scheduled to be held in Baghdad soon, with the participation of all Iraqi political parties. He criticized international pressures on Iran due to its peaceful nuclear program, adding that "such pressure reiterates once again the unjust approach and double-standard policy pursued by Western circles, which dominate international resolutions on the issues of our region and are deliberately indifferent to the real dangers of the Israeli nuclear arsenal for the security and stability in the region." Mr. al-Moallem expressed Syria's support of Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the right of the states of the region to guarantees in this regard, renewing Syria's demand to make the Middle East a region free of WMD.

Papers also reported that Abdullah al-Ahmar, Assistant Secretary General of the al-Baath Arab Party, met with a delegation from the Serbian Radical party headed by its First Deputy leader, Tomislav Nicolic. Talks focused on the latest developments in the Middle East and the Balkans, pressures against Syria and policies of hegemony and intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. The two sides expressed identical points of view about these developments, stressing that a just and comprehensive peace cannot be established in the Middle East without total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, the Palestinian territories and Lebanese Shebaa Farms. Both sides also stressed that the war on Iraq and the occupation of the country have resulted in a state of chaos, insecurity and more suffering for

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the Iraqi people, stressing that ending the occupation and the success of the political process will help Iraqis build their own future and unity without foreign intervention. Mr. Nicolic stressed his Party's and people's solidarity with the struggle led by Syria to restore its land and rights in the Golan and to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on legitimate international resolutions. He also asserted his rejection of pressure on Syria, pointing out that this would not force Syria to abandon its main role in the region or its national rights and stances.

End of summary.

2. Selected Headlines:

"Al-Moallem addresses the OIC Conference: Syria is targeted because of its resistance of hegemony and foreign intervention. Moallem meets with Turkish FM Gul, Bahraini FM Khaled bin Mohammed al-Khaleifa, Iranian FM Mottaki and Jordanian FM Al-

Khatib" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/21)

"Three Palestinian children victimized, 14 injured by a new Israeli aggression against Gaza. Israel plays down the Olmert-Abbas meeting in Jordan" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/21)

"Lebanese circles: The Mossad network, eradicated in Lebanon, is linked to all explosions in Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/21)

"Japan announces withdrawal of its forces from Iraq. Two plans by Democrats in the US Senate to reduce forces in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/21)

3. Editorial Block Quotes:

"'Slanderers' Point of View"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (6/21): "The discovery in Lebanon of a network linked to the Israeli Mossad is a very big and important achievement, as it has opened the eyes of the Lebanese to the conspiracy against their country...."

"The majority of Lebanese have immediately determined, following the arrest of the Mossad agents, that Israel is Lebanon's number one enemy.... The majority of Lebanese realize quite well that

Lebanon is targeted by direct aggression. Those who are trying to neutralize Lebanon in the conflict with the Israeli enemy adopt a logic that conflicts with the facts of history and geography and ignores the expansionist Zionist-American danger in the region."

"A sincere national will and a defense strategy must be formulated on the basis of cooperation between the Lebanese Army and the resistance...."

 "Between the Gaza and Al-Haditha Massacres"

Abd-al-Fattah al-Awad, chief editor of government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (6/21): "Israeli massacres in Gaza are paralleled by US massacres in Iraq...."

"There is a competition between Israel and the United States for the more brutal role.... Israel commits its crimes with cover from other crimes committed by the United States in a nearby country.... The United States, which is used to making others wage wars on its behalf, has found itself now waging wars on behalf of others and for their sake, and, what is worse, against its own interests...."

"Arabs are doing nothing because rejecting Israeli actions means rejecting US actions.... And few can reject US action these days....!"

"It cannot be claimed that Syria was intimidated by US threats. It was able to read the facts correctly, without fear, deception or recklessness. At a time when Syria is being advised to change its principles due to new developments in the region and to read the new facts, Syria can now tell others to reconsider the new developments.... Syria takes pride in its positions and its correct reading of the situation."

 "When Mistakes Accumulate"

Ali Qasim, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/21): "The European mechanism to deliver aid to the Palestinians stems not from a desire to alleviate the

Palestinian suffering, but from recognition of the mistake, which has reached the level of sin, made when Europeans decided to punish the Palestinians because of their democratic choice....

"The EU mechanism, which was approved by the international quartet, does not necessarily mean Europeans and Americans have found solutions to the problem they created for themselves. It is, rather, an acknowledgement that the punitive position against Palestinians has cast its negative shadow on available options.

"The entire European exercise is part of the frenzied effort to pressure the Palestinians and to use aid and mechanisms for its delivery as part of that pressure, through the creation of a rift in the Palestinian social reality.... Europeans and Americans will finally be forced to submit to the Palestinian people's choices and accept what they have accepted and chosen...."

 "The Pentagon and the Culture of Massacres"

Salim Abbud, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/21): "Arrivals from Iraq stress that the criminal acts that the Marines have committed against Iraqis are actually more appalling than what the media outlets report from time to time. The occupation authorities impose a blackout on the media to hide these American crimes, which have become recurrent American conduct. All Iraqi cities, from Hadithah to Al-Fallujah, Al-Qa'im, Tall Afar, Al-Najaf, Samarra, Al-Ramadi, Basra, Kirkuk, and Mosul are scenes of crimes of killing and destruction that Rumsfeld's soldiers are committing. These repeated crimes leave victims among children, women, men, old people, and houses. They have surpassed all the crimes that Iraq has witnessed throughout its history and in all ages...."

"The American military establishment embraces the culture of massacres, which is an old culture officially adopted by the Pentagon.... The majority of bombings against civilians in Iraq are the product of US intelligence and the Israeli Mossad...."

 "Language of Force and Language of Dialogue"

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Isam Dari, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/21): "Four years of US wars on terrorism have proved that force alone, no matter how mighty, cannot eliminate terror and achieve security and stability in the world.

"The Bush administration could have used the sympathy of countries and peoples of the world after the 9/11 events to create an appropriate international climate to uproot terrorism....

"Dialogue could have produced positive results that the language of force cannot possibly produce.... But this is the only logic that the Bush administration adopts. The only language that this administration masters is the language of military force, intransigence, and arrogance. As a result, it is paying dearly with the United States' reputation and status...."

"What Will Wash off US Sins?"

Samir Abd-al-Rahman, a columnist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (6/21): "The American story about the suicide of three Guantanamo inmates appears closer to a big lie than to the truth. The aim of this lie is to cover up the violation of all international laws and conventions by U.S. prison authorities, who invent the worst and filthiest investigation methods, leading to the death of detainees under torture....

"US authorities might close down the Guantanamo prison, but what will wash off US sins and human rights violations in US detention camps at a time when the scandal of the CIA secret prisons is reverberating throughout Europe and in other parts of the world, and the scandals of Abu Ghurayb are revived every day by new images of American soldiers abusing inmates...?"

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