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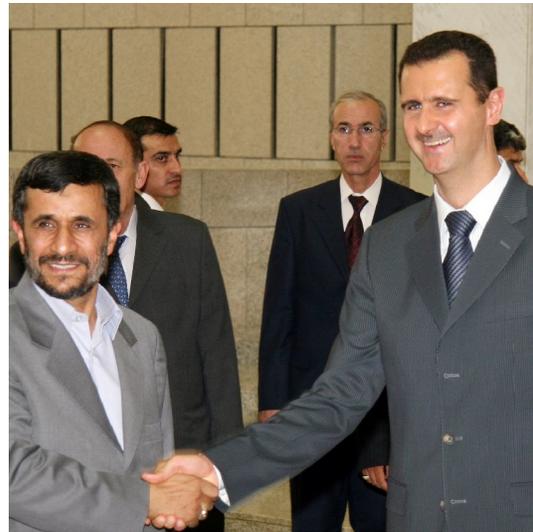
August 7, 2007

Syrian Actions Undermine Talk of Peace

Even as it calls for peace talks with Israel, Syria is threatening war against the Jewish state. These threats are amplified by Damascus' continuing military build-up, its actions in Lebanon, including rearming Hizballah, and its support of Palestinian terrorist groups such as Hamas, whose top leaders reside in Damascus. Israel is prepared to negotiate with a Syrian partner serious about abandoning its destructive policies and promoting regional peace.

Syrian officials are issuing belligerent statements alongside their peace overtures.

- Syrian President Bashar Assad on July 17 said in a speech that Syria is “prepared for just and comprehensive peace,” but then added that “developments ... have made us more determined to adhere to resistance as a policy and choice.”
- Nawaf al-Faris, the governor of Quneitra, a town on the border of the Golan Heights, recently said, “The resistance is the guarantee to restore land [and] rights.”
- Syrian Information Minister Mohsen Bilal on May 7 threatened violence if negotiations were not pursued, saying, “We Arabs have learned. Last year Hizballah clearly showed how to fight a guerrilla war of resistance to occupation.”
- Syria has vowed to continue its military alliance with Iran, the leading state sponsor of terrorism. After a July 19 meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran’s ties with Syria are advancing “in every field and along all lines.”



Syrian President Bashar Assad (right) recently met in Damascus with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other top terrorist leaders.

Syria is increasing its military arms build-up and emulating Hizballah’s tactics.

- Israeli officials indicate that in recent months the Syrians have built up substantial defenses in and around the Golan Heights and are stockpiling new arms. In May, then-Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh revealed that “Syria is now in the middle of an unprecedented process of a huge military buildup. They have acquired state-of-the-art Russian weapons, huge quantities of long-range rockets and missiles.”
- Russia and Iran are providing Syria with sophisticated weaponry on par with Western technology, including advanced anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles.

- Syria has amassed tens of thousands of short-range rockets and has a large chemical weapons stockpile, including warheads for its domestically produced Scud-C and Scud-D ballistic missiles.
- While Israeli security officials assess that the current Syrian buildup is largely defensive, a miscalculation by the Assad regime could lead to a rapid escalation in which Syria's arsenal could be unleashed upon Israeli towns and cities.

Syria continues its support for terrorism and its efforts to undermine Lebanon's government and U.S. efforts in Iraq.

- Terje Roed-Larsen, the special U.N. envoy for Lebanon, warned the Security Council on June 11 of an "alarming and deeply disturbing picture" of "a steady flow of weapons and armed elements across the border from Syria" into Iraq.
- Syria aids insurgent attacks against American forces in Iraq by maintaining training camps and repeatedly ignoring U.S. requests to seal its border with Iraq. Dozens of suicide bombers enter Iraq every month from Syria.
- Syria continues to host the offices of Hamas and 10 other Palestinian terrorist groups despite Assad's May 2003 promise to then-Secretary of State Colin Powell to close them.
- Assad refuses to recognize Lebanon's sovereignty, declining to demarcate Syria's border with Lebanon and to open a Syrian embassy in Beirut, as called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1680.
- The Syrian regime is also working to block efforts of the U.N. tribunal to try those suspected in the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Israel has said it is prepared to make peace with Syria.

- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has made clear that Israel is ready to make peace with Syria, saying in early July, "I don't want to fight Syria. I am saying this to Bashar Assad... I am willing to negotiate peace directly with you."
- Israeli President Shimon Peres said that if Syria is interested in true peace with the Jewish state, "there is no substitute for direct negotiations between it and Israel."
- If Syria is truly interested in peace, it can demonstrate its sincerity by halting its support for terrorism and its efforts to undermine Lebanese sovereignty.

Basic Facts Summary

- Syrian officials are issuing belligerent statements alongside their peace overtures.
- Syria is increasing its military arms build-up and emulating Hizballah's tactics.
- Syria continues its support for terrorism and its efforts to undermine Lebanon's government and destabilize Iraq.
- Israel has said it is prepared to make peace with Syria.