

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

11 August 2014

Mr. Steven Aftergood
Federation of American Scientists
1725 DeSales Street, NW
6th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Reference: F-2014-01908

Dear Mr. Aftergood:

This is a final response to your 26 June 2014 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, submitted on behalf of the Federation of American Scientists, for “a copy of the following document that was generated by the Open Source Center: OSC Report LIR2014061158407788, ‘Syria: regime exploiting humanitarian crisis to win truce deals, gain ground,’ June 11, 2014.” We processed your request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 431, as amended. Our processing included a search for records as described in our 15 July 2014 acceptance letter.

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located one document, consisting of six pages, which we can release in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemption (b)(3). A copy of the document and an explanation of exemptions are enclosed. Exemption (b)(3) pertains to information exempt from disclosure by statute. The relevant statutes are Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 U.S.C. § 403g, as amended, and Section 102A(i)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended.

As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Meeks".

Michele Meeks
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures



OPEN SOURCE CENTER

UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOUO~~

Syria: Regime Exploiting Humanitarian Crisis To Win Truce Deals, Gain Ground (U//~~FOUO~~)

(U//~~FOUO~~) LIR2014061158407788 OSC Brief 2000 10 June
2014 - 2000 10 June 2014

(U//~~FOUO~~) *The Syrian Government's portrayal of truce agreements with rebels – which almost certainly have given the regime greater control of key conflict areas – as national victories and as a means to alleviate civilian suffering suggests that the regime will continue to exploit the humanitarian crisis to conquer rebel-held areas.* Damascus has concluded more than 40 truces with rebel groups in key besieged areas in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, and Homs Governorates between late January and early May, according to pro-regime and pan-Arab media (21 April, 20 February).¹²

(U//~~FOUO~~)

- (U//~~FOUO~~) Several Syrian officials, including the state minister for national reconciliation affairs, called the agreements "national reconciliations" intended to "facilitate access of relief aid into flashpoints and to bring life back to normalcy" (Beirut Al-Mayadin Satellite Channel, 21 April; Damascus SANA Online, 11 April).³⁴ The top two officials in the government-designated Syrian Reconciliation Committee, Hasan Ghandur and Jabir Isa, told government news agency SANA and pro-regime, pan-Arab channel Al-Mayadin that "national reconciliations" in Rif Dimashq succeeded because the people "lost hope in the rebels to meet their basic needs" (21 April, 20 April).⁵⁶
- (U//~~FOUO~~) The truces frequently began as temporary ceasefires that subsequently became formal agreements under which rebel fighters surrendered, handed over heavy-caliber weapons, and departed contested areas. In return, fighters received immunity for their "criminal records" and residents received access to humanitarian aid, according to leading Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar* (25 April).⁷
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Regional media, including those that have been consistently biased against the Damascus regime, noted that the regime used truces to gain greater control of conflict areas. Prominent Saudi-owned daily *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, for example, suggested the truce agreements have given the regime de facto control over large areas between Damascus and Homs (25 April).⁸
- (U//~~FOUO~~) The regime-imposed stranglehold on aid to rebel-controlled areas may have degraded civilian support for continued fighting against the regime; more than 85 percent of

AN OSC PRODUCT

Brief

Doc #: LIR2014061158407788

Posted: 11 Jun 2014 15:06:25

Publication Date: 11 Jun 2014

Source Name: OSC Brief

Source Language: English

Source Start Date: 2014-06-10

Source End Date: 2014-06-10

POC:

OSC, Commercial

OSCinfo@rccb.osis.gov, SIPRNet

OSCinfo@dni.sgov.gov, JWICS

assist@jdiss.cia.ic.gov, 1-800-205-8615

7/7/2014

(b)(3)

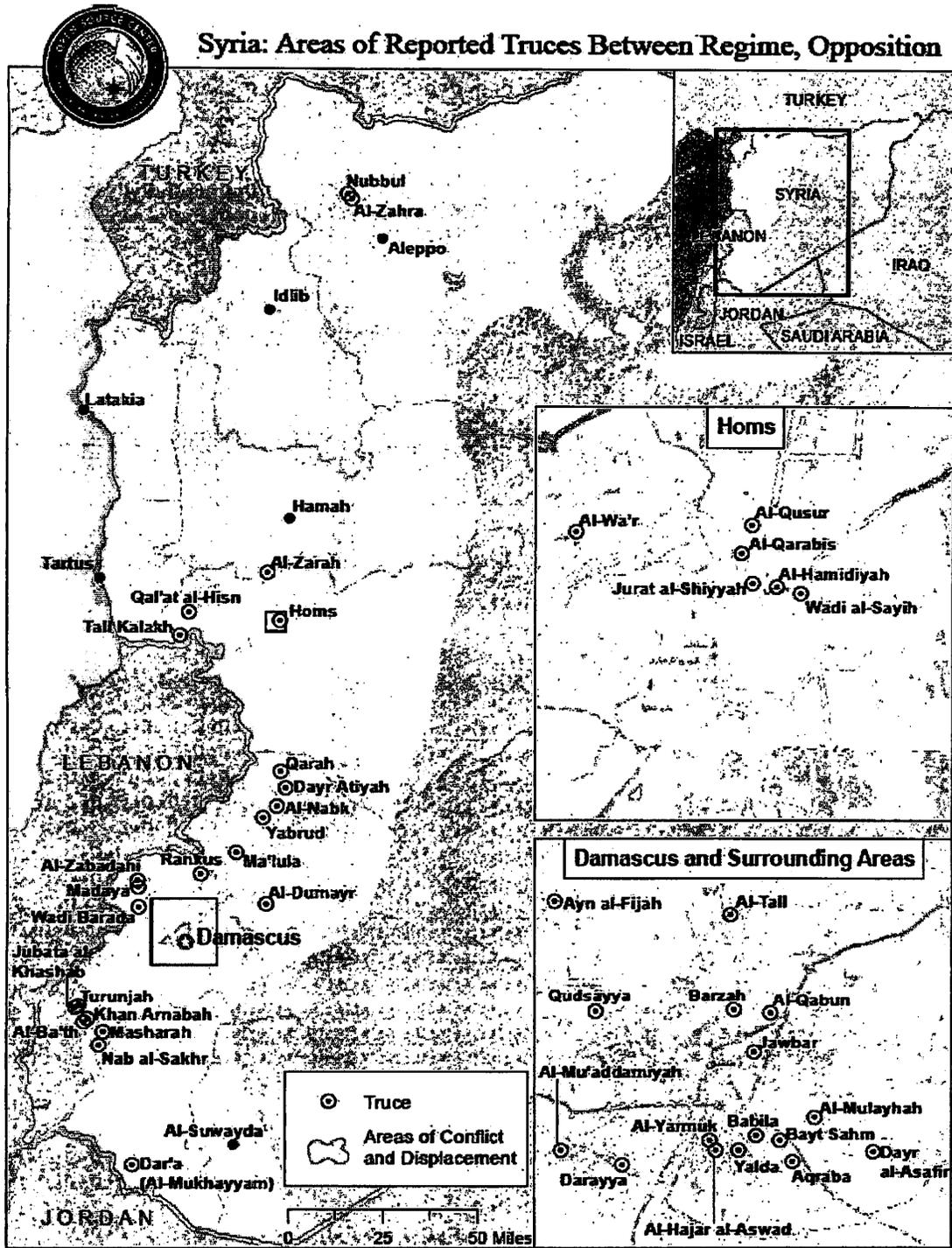
food aid and 70 percent of medicine went to government-held areas in the first quarter of 2014, according to UN statistics cited in *The New York Times* (17 May, 15 May).^{910a}

(U//~~FOUO~~) Syrian opposition messaging meanwhile has portrayed the agreements as temporary and as intended solely to alleviate people's suffering in besieged areas. Opposition sources have insisted that the agreements do not involve recognition of regime authority.

(U//~~FOUO~~)

- (U//~~FOUO~~) Several opposition activists, in addition to opposition fighters like Islamic Front leader Hassan Abbud, emphasized that rebel factions had reached "short-term agreements" in Rif Dimashq and Homs "for humanitarian reasons only" and complained that the regime exploited the agreements to weaken the opposition and "regain legitimacy" in those areas, according to Qatari Government-affiliated Al-Jazirah Television and *Al-Quds al-Arabi* daily (7 May; 14 April).¹¹¹²

(U//FOUO)



UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO

Embedded Image

This Table's classification is UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO

(U//FOUO) Map of areas of reported truces in Syria

(U//FOUO) To view a high-quality version of the map above, click here .

(U//FOUO) To view a PDF version of this product, click here .

(U//FOUO) a An OSC review of Syrian social media from December 2013 to February 2014 indicated that the top complaint of residents in rebel-controlled areas was the lack of food and health services. For more information, see the 10 April OSC Report, **Syria: Increased Social Media Attention to Humanitarian Conditions** (LIR2014041043403134).

(U) 1 [OSC | | OSC ID: LIO2014042156283912 | 21 April 2014 | | Al-Mayadin Reports on Syria Reconciliation Efforts, Interviews Reconciliations General Coordinator | | | Beirut Al-Mayadin Satellite Channel in Arabic -- Pan-Arab news channel launched in June 2012 by former Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel journalist Ghassan Bin-Jiddu; supports Arab nationalist perspectives on regional issues; promotes Palestinian issues and "resistance" against Israel; espouses editorial lines that are pro-Syrian Government, pro-Iran, pro-Hizballah]

(U//FOUO) 2 [OSC | | Al-Quds al-Arabi Reports on Chances of Reconciliations in Syria | | 20 February 2014 | | 20 February 2014 | London Al-Quds al-Arabi Online in Arabic -- London Al-Quds al-Arabi Online in Arabic -- Website of London-based pan-Arab nationalist, pro-Palestinian, and anti-US daily founded in 1989 by Palestinian journalist Abd-al-Bari Atwan, who served as chief editor until his sudden resignation in July 2013; URL: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/>]

(U) 3 [OSC | | OSC ID: LIO2014042156283912 | 21 April 2014 | | Al-Mayadin Reports on Syria Reconciliation Efforts, Interviews Reconciliations General Coordinator | | | Beirut Al-Mayadin Satellite Channel in Arabic -- Pan-Arab news channel launched in June 2012 by former Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel journalist Ghassan Bin-Jiddu; supports Arab nationalist perspectives on regional issues; promotes Palestinian issues and "resistance" against Israel; espouses editorial lines that are pro-Syrian Government, pro-Iran, pro-Hizballah]

(U) 4 [OSC | | OSC ID: LIR2014041200937853 | 11 April 2014 | | National Reconciliation Minister: Reconciliation is only way to solve crisis | | | Damascus SANA Online in English -- Damascus SANA Online in English -- Website of the official press agency of the Syrian Government; URL: <http://www.sana-syria.com/>]

(U) 5 [OSC | | OSC ID: LIO2014042156283912 | 21 April 2014 | | Al-Mayadin Reports on Syria Reconciliation Efforts, Interviews Reconciliations General Coordinator | | | Beirut Al-Mayadin Satellite Channel in Arabic -- Pan-Arab news channel launched in June 2012 by former Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel journalist Ghassan Bin-Jiddu; supports Arab nationalist perspectives on regional issues; promotes Palestinian issues and "resistance" against Israel; espouses editorial lines that are pro-Syrian Government, pro-Iran, pro-Hizballah]

(U) 6 [OSC | | OSC ID: LIR2014042101552463 | 20 April 2014 | | Homs and Aleppo governors hope Easter will mark Syria's resurrection | | | Damascus SANA Online in English -- Damascus SANA Online in English -- Website of the official press agency of the Syrian Government; URL: <http://www.sana-syria.com/>]

(U//FOUO) 7 [OSC | | Al-Akhbar Daily Reports on Recent National Reconciliations | | 25 April 2014 | | <http://al-akhbar.com/node/205159> | 25 April 2014 | Website of Al-Akhbar, a political daily espousing Arab nationalist views, pro-Hizballah, pro-Syria; URL: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/>]

(U) 8 [OSC || OSC ID: LIN2014042529557046 | 25 April 2014 || Oppositionist Kamal al-Libwani: Syrian Regime Invalidates 'Test Reconciliation' To Impose Conditions || | London Al-Sharq al-Awsat Online in Arabic -- Website of influential London-based pan-Arab Saudi daily; editorial line reflects Saudi official stance; URL: <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/>]

(U//FOUO) 9 [Online Publication || New York Times | U.N. Seeking More Ways to Distribute Aid in Syria | 17 May 2014 | www.nytimes.com | 17 May 2014 |]

(U//FOUO) 10 [Online Publication || New York Times | U.S. Seeks to Bypass Assad So More Aid Can Reach Syrian Civilians | 15 May 2014 || www.nytimes.com | 15 May 2014 |]

(U) 11 [OSC || OSC ID: LIR2014050768943451 | 7 May 2014 || Al-Jazirah Talk Show Debates Evacuation of Rebel Fighters From Homs, Pros, Cons of Homs Agreement || | Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television in Arabic -- Influential pan-Arab news channel of the Qatari Government-funded Al-Jazirah Media Network; generally critical of US Middle East policy; provides platform to opponents of some Arab governments; says it promotes human rights and political and social reforms]

(U) 12 [OSC || OSC ID: LIN2014041531813708 | 14 April 2014 || Syria: Report on 'Negotiations' Between Government, Rebel Forces in Homs City || | London Al-Quds al-Arabi Online in Arabic - - London Al-Quds al-Arabi Online in Arabic -- Website of London-based, reportedly Qatari-Government owned pan-Arab daily. Founded in 1989 by Palestinian journalist Abd-al-Bari Atwan, who served as chief editor until his sudden resignation in July 2013; URL: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/>]

(U//FOUO)

(U//FOUO) Speaker:

(U) This product may contain copyrighted material; authorized use is for national security purposes of the United States Government only. Any reproduction, dissemination, or use is subject to the OSC usage policy and the original copyright.

REFERENCE

LIR2014041043403134 (U//FOUO) Syria: Increased Social Media Attention to Humanitarian Conditions

Return to Top

UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO

FISA Material

Such information, and any information derived therefrom, may only be used in a US legal or administrative proceeding with the advance authorization of the Attorney General. Any recipient interested in obtaining authorization for such use in a US legal or administrative proceeding should contact FBI Headquarters. Any further dissemination outside of intelligence channels and/or for law enforcement purposes must be made through FBI Headquarters. Any reproduction, dissemination, or

7/7/2014 (b)(3)

communication (including, but not limited to oral briefings) of this information must be accompanied by a statement of these restrictions.

Security Reminder

Use of this U.S. Government system, authorized or unauthorized, constitutes consent to monitoring of this system. Unauthorized use may subject you to criminal prosecution. Evidence of unauthorized use collected during monitoring may be used in administrative, criminal, or other adverse actions.

Copyright Material

Material used in the WIRe may be subject to copyright laws. Further reproduction and dissemination by any means, for any purpose other than official business, may be subject to copyright restrictions and is generally prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

Site content limited to: TOP SECRET//HCS/SI-
G/TK//FGI//RSEN/ORCON/IMCON/NOFORN/PROPIN/FISA

CL BY: 2131315 CL REASON 1.4(c) DECL ON: Originator Review DRV FROM: Multiple Sources