

Syria Biological Chronology

[2008-2000](#) | [1999-1972](#)

Last update: October 2008

This annotated chronology is based on the data sources that follow each entry. Public sources often provide conflicting information on classified military programs. In some cases we are unable to resolve these discrepancies, in others we have deliberately refrained from doing so to highlight the potential influence of false or misleading information as it appeared over time. In many cases, we are unable to independently verify claims. Hence in reviewing this chronology, readers should take into account the credibility of the sources employed here.

Inclusion in this chronology does not necessarily indicate that a particular development is of direct or indirect proliferation significance. Some entries provide international or domestic context for technological development and national policymaking. Moreover, some entries may refer to developments with positive consequences for nonproliferation.

2008-2000

18-22 August 2008

A Syrian delegation attends the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of Experts in Geneva, Switzerland. A decision of the meeting allows Syria, which is only a signatory to the BWC to participate in the meetings proceedings and deliberations.

—Informal Advance Report of the Meeting of Experts, 25 August 2008, p.3, para. 8, www.unog.ch.

3 March 2008

The US Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2006. In the section addressing Syria's biological warfare program the report states: "Syria's biotechnical infrastructure is capable of supporting limited biological agent development. We do not assess the Syrians have achieved a capability to put biological agents into effective weapons, however." [This language expands slightly on the 2005 report by introducing the assessment that Syria can support BW agent development while further noting the weaponization remains beyond Syria's ability.]

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2006, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2008), p. 6, www.dni.gov.

3 March 2008

The US Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2005. In the section addressing Iranian biological weapons programs the report

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states: "Syria continued to seek dual-use technology from foreign sources during the reporting period. ... During 2005, Syria probably also continued to develop a BW capability. Syria has signed but not ratified the BWC." [This language essentially repeats that of the 2004 report. See May 2006]

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2005, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2008), p. 4, www.dni.gov.

27 February 2008

Testifying before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Lt. General Michael D. Maples states: "Syria also has a program to develop select biological agents as weapons. The program is judged to be in the research and development stage, with Syria's biotechnical infrastructure capable of supporting limited biological agent development. However, Syria is not known to have successfully weaponized biological agents in an effective delivery system."

—Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, 27 February 2008, p. 20, www.dia.mil.

13 December 2007

The Chairman of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan introduces a report on his activities in support of the universalization of the BWC. In addition to noting several successes he also reports that "three states (Egypt, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic) have all provided information indicating that because of particular regional security circumstances, no action on ratification should be expected in the near future. While these states have said that they will be unlikely to join the BWC soon, they all, individually, indicated that they supported the aims and objectives of the Convention."

—Obtaining Universality for the Biological Weapons Convention: Introducing the Report of the Chairman, 13 December 2007, pp. 6-7, www.opbw.org.

31 October 2007

The Chairman of the BWC Meeting of the States Parties (MSP) meets with a representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in New York to discuss Syrian ratification of the treaty. The Syrian official says "that the issue of ratifying the Convention was linked to other regional security considerations."

—Report of the Chairman on Universalization Activities: BWC/MSP/2007/4, 11 December 2007, p. 5, www.opbw.org.

19 September 2007

The US Congressional Research Service releases an updated version of its report "Little information is available on Syrian biological programs; however, the preparers of a 2003 unclassified CIA study on Syrian proliferation estimate that "Syria probably also continued to develop a BW capability..."

—Jeremy M. Sharp, Syria: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues - RL33487, 19 September 2007, p. 17, italy.usembassy.gov.

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20-24 August 2007

A Syrian representative attends the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of Experts in Geneva, Switzerland. A decision of the meeting allows Syria, which is only a signatory to the BWC to participate in the meetings proceedings and deliberations.

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 76+77 (October 2007), p. 5.

5 March 2007

An American biodefense expert states Syria is ready to use biological weapons in Europe and Israel should the United States attack Iran's nuclear facilities. Bellamy-Dekker asserts Syrian is working with the camelpox virus to gain a deeper understanding of the smallpox virus. Bellamy-Dekker believes that by studying the camelpox virus, Syria will be able to turn the smallpox virus into a weapon.

—Jerome R. Corsi, "Syria ready with bio-terror if U.S. hits Iran: Damascus reportedly hiding WMD among commercial pharmaceuticals," World Net Daily, 5 March 2007 www.worldnetdaily.com.

11 January 2007

Testifying before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Michael Maples, states that "Syria has pursued development of a strategic deterrent principally based on ballistic missile, chemical, and, to a limited extent, biological warfare programs, as a means of countering Israel's conventional force superiority. Syria's biotechnical infrastructure is capable of supporting limited biological agent development. DIA assesses Syria has a program to develop select biological agents." [It is noteworthy that Mr. Maples at no point in his public testimony claimed that Syria has a stockpile of BW agents or deployable biological weapons.]

— Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 11 January 2007, intelligence.senate.gov.

21 November 2006

At the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Biological Weapons (BWC) Syria exercises its right to reply in response to statements made the previous day by the U.S. delegation. Mr. Hussein Ali of Syria noted that the United States delegation had made accusations with regards to Syria. Those accusations were wrong — and the entire world was used to this double standard and selectivity in the reports of the United States State Department. Secondly, if the US was sincere in their concern to put an end to the spread of weapons of mass destruction, they should approve the draft resolution before the Security Council, which had been submitted by Syria on behalf of the Arab Group in 2003, and which endeavored to ensure that the Middle East was completely free of weapons of mass destruction. Everyone knew the United States of America had vetoed that project. He went on to add that the US would do better to convince Israel to become a member to all the Conventions restricting and banning weapons of mass destruction.

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 74 (December 2006), p. 16.

20 November 2006

Speaking at the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Biological Weapons (BWC) the United States

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Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, Mr. John C. Rood says: "The activities of North Korea, Iran, and Syria are of particular concern given their support for terrorism and lack of compliance with their international obligations. Each of these countries was identified in the most recent edition of the U.S. noncompliance report published in August 2005." Later in the same speech Mr. Rood says: "We [the United States] remain seriously concerned that Syria - a signatory but not a party to the BWC - has conducted research and development for an offensive BW program". Mr. Rood did not provide evidence for his accusations.

—"Remarks to the Sixth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference John C. Rood, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation," 20 November 2006, www.state.gov; Richard Waddington, "Iran probably has germ weapons, possibly N. Korea-US," Reuters, 20 November 2006, www.alertnet.org.

May 2006

The US Central Intelligence Agency releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2004. In the section addressing Syrian biological programs the report states: "Syria continued to seek dual-use technology from foreign sources during the reporting period...During 2004, Syria probably also continued to develop a BW capability."

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2004, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2006), p. 5, www.dni.gov.

25 April 2006

President George W. Bush Issues Executive Order 13399 to extend the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods to Syria. President Bush's action was explained as being justified by the "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions of the Government of Syria in supporting terrorism, interfering in Lebanon, [and] pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs". President Bush extended the national emergency for one year.

—"Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods to Syria," 9 May 2006, www.whitehouse.gov.

28 February 2006

In testimony before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. General Michael D. Maples, addresses the question of Syria's pursuit of WMD capabilities. On the issue of biological weapons General Maples says: "we also believe the Syrian government maintains an offensive biological weapons research and development program."

—Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 28 February 2006, p. 10, www.dia.mil.

10 November 2005

In its Amended national report submitted to the U.N. 1540 Committee Syria includes the following amended

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statement: "The Syrian Arab Republic is a State that neither possesses nor intends to acquire weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, or related materials, as Syria has made clear in a number of general statements presented to the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and the First Committee of the General Assembly in New York, which deals with disarmament issues." On page 7 of the document Syria states: The Syrian Arab Republic does not possess any biological weapons, their means of delivery, or any related materials.

—Annex to the note verbale dated 7 November 2005 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee: Amended national report* of the Syrian Arab Republic submitted pursuant to the comments of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) (Note No. S/AC.44/2005/DDA/OC.S dated 15 June 2005), 10 November 2005.

5 May 2005

U.S. President George W. Bush renews sanctions he imposed on Syria one year ago.

—"Bush renews sanctions on Syria," Xinhua News Agency, 6 May 2005.

4 May 2005

Hearings on the controversial nomination of U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton to the position of U.S. ambassador to the UN continue. The chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee declines to endorse a request from Democrat committee members asking that the U.S. State Department turn over documents related to a long-running dispute between U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton and American intelligence agencies over assessments of Syria's weapons programs. The purpose of the request was to obtain evidence supporting claims that Mr. Bolton is prone to the manipulation and exaggeration of intelligence information.

—"Lugar declines to endorse Democrats' request of Bolton documents," Bulletin News Network, 5 May 2005; Douglas Jehl, "A setback to Democrats' request for papers on Bolton and Syria," New York Times, 5 May 2005, p. A10.

27 April 2005

The U.S. State Department releases Country Reports on Terrorism 2004. Although the Syrian section of the report makes no reference to weapons of mass destruction or Syria's alleged chemical or biological weapons programs other sections of the report draw links between Syria, terrorism and WMD. Listing Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism the report goes on to say: "[m]ost worrisome is that these countries also have the capabilities to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists." At a press conference introducing the report U.S. State Department Counselor Philip Zelikow says: "Unfortunately, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, and in particular, Iran, continue to embrace terrorism as an instrument of national policy. Most worrisome is that these countries also have the capabilities to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists."

—"Country Reports on Terrorism," US Department of State, April 2005, pp. 8, 90-91, www.state.gov; "Philip Zelikow holds a State Department news briefing on the release of the Annual Country Report on Terrorism," Political Transcript Wire, 27 April 2005.

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27 April 2005

The Iraq Survey Group (ISG) publicly releases the Addendums to the Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisors to the DCI on Iraq's WMD. On the question of purported transfers of Iraqi WMD to Syria the report says: "There was evidence of a discussion of possible WMD collaboration initiated by a Syrian security officer, and ISG received information about movement of material out of Iraq, including the possibility that WMD was involved. In the judgment of the working group, these reports were sufficiently credible to merit further investigation. ISG was unable to complete its investigation and it is unable to rule out the possibility that WMD was evacuated to Syria before the war. It should be noted that no information from debriefing of Iraqis in custody supports this possibility." The report concluded that "based on the evidence available at present, ISG judged that it was unlikely that an official transfer of WMD material from Iraq to Syria took place. However, ISG was unable to rule out unofficial movement of limited WMD-related materials."

—"Addendums to the Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisors to the DCI on Iraq's WMD (Duelfer Report)," March 2005, www.cia.gov; Dana Priest, "Report finds no evidence Syria hid Iraqi arms," *Washington Post*, 26 April 2005; Katherine Shrader, "Weapons inspector ends WMD search in Iraq," *Associated Press*, 26 April 2005; Rowan Scarborough, "CIA can't rule out WMD move to Syria," *Washington Times*, 27 April 2005, www.washingtontimes.com; "Puncturing another weapons myth," *New York Times*, 30 April 2005, p. A12; Anders Strindberg, "Report finds no evidence of WMD transfers to Syria," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 June 2005.

26 April 2005

Unnamed U.S. intelligence officials are quoted as stating that Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton "had planned to say in a classified portion of his [July 2003 Congressional] testimony that Syria's development of chemical and biological weapons posed a threat to the stability in the Middle East." Intelligence officials say this prepared testimony "went well beyond what the United States had previously said about Syria's weapons program."

—Douglas Jehl, "Ex-Officials say Bolton inflated Syrian Danger," *New York Times*, 26 April 2005, p. A1; Douglas Jehl, "Intelligence official told staff to resist Bolton," *International Herald Tribune*, 29 April 2005, p. 7.

1 April 2005

"Scientists from Surrey-based CABI Bioscience have been examining fungal-based insecticide to control Sunn Pest as part of an Integrated Pest Management project coordinated [sic] by ICARDA in Syria." CABI Bioscience is part of a global not for profit organization dedicated to improving human welfare. The ICARDA is the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas that works through a network of partnerships with national, regional and international institutions.

—"CABI Bioscience: Fungi to help fight key pest of Middle East cereals," M2, 1 April 2005.

8 March 2005

In Washington DC, Republican Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Democrat Eliot Engel announce that they are co-sponsoring a bill pressing for harsher sanctions on Syria and other countries that provide support to Damascus. The Lebanon and Syria Liberation Act, calls on President Bush "to push for tighter UN and other international sanctions against Syria. The bill would also withhold foreign aid to any country receiving U.S.

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assistance which could help Syria obtain nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, among other measures."

—"Lawmakers propose new Syria sanctions," Agence France Presse, 8 March 2005.

7 March 2005

Speaking in the United States, Hans Blix, former head of UNMOVIC says: "I don't believe that weapons from Iraq have been smuggled into Syria."

—Derek Gentile, "Ex-weapons inspector in Berkshires," The Berkshire Eagle, 8 March 2005.

7 March 2005

The Center of Studies and Research at Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Saudi Arabia holds a seminar on biological terrorism. Experts participating in the seminar are from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain, Comoros, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Egypt.

—"Seminar on biological terrorism opens in Saudi capital," Financial Times Information, 7 March 2005.

21 February 2005

Representatives from Syria, and other Middle Eastern and Western European nations, attend an international conference on bio-safety at the Al-Bustan Palace hotel in Oman, under the patronage of Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq al-Said, Oman's Minister of Heritage and Culture. The three-day event is organized by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources. "The conferees...discuss case studies assessing risks to bio-safety. The conference...also provide[s] the opportunity for participants to exchange information and experience on bio-safety."

—"Int'l Bio-Safety Conference to open today in Oman," Asia Pulse, 21 February 2005.

16 February 2005

In testimony before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, addresses the question of Syria's pursuit of WMD capabilities. He says: "Longstanding Syrian policies of supporting terrorism [and] relying on WMD for strategic deterrence ... remain largely unchanged."

—Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 16 February 2005, p. 15, www.dia.mil.

17 January 2005

Unnamed US congressional officials, speaking in anticipation of the final report of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), say that "they have not seen any information - never 'a piece,' said one' - indicating that WMD or significant amounts of components and equipment were transferred from Iraq to neighboring Syria, Jordan or elsewhere."

—Katherine P. Shrader, "US Intelligence found no evidence WMD moved from Iraq," Associated Press, 17 January 2005, web.lexis-nexis.com.

17 January 2005

U.S. Intelligence and congressional officials say they have not seen any evidence that WMD components or equipment were moved from Iraq to Syria, Jordan or elsewhere before or after the March 2003 U.S. invasion. In a separate statement Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) says: "What I can tell you is that I believe

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we know a lot of materials left Iraq and went to Syria. There was certainly a lot of traffic across the border points. But whether in fact in any of these trucks there was WMD-related materials, I cannot say."

—Katherine P. Shrader, "U.S. intelligence found no evidence WMD moved from Iraq," Associated Press, 17 January 2005, web.lexis-nexis.com.

14 January 2005

White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, rules out the possibility that Iraqi WMD may have been moved to Syria.
—Brian Knowlton, "Search for banned weapons in Iraq ends quietly," International Herald Tribune, 14 January 2005, p. 3.

5 January 2005

Pakistani Federal Minister for Science and Technology Ch. Nouraz Shakoore Khan and Syrian Deputy Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Mohamed Najib Abdul Wahid participate in the meeting of the Pak-Syria Joint Committee on Science and Technology. Topics to be discussed and potentially finalized in the Joint Committee meetings "include items in the fields of Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Water Resource Management in Arid Areas, Oceanographic Research standards, Accreditation, Precision Mechanics."

—"Latest Technology is need for progress in all sectors: Nouraz," Financial Times Information, 5 January 2005.

6-10 December 2004

A Syrian representative attends the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC in Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose of the meeting is to continue preparations for the Sixth BWC Review Conference which is to take place in 2006.

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 66 (December 2004), p. 23.

23 November 2004

The US Central Intelligence Agency submits its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions 1 July Through 31 December 2003 in accordance with S.721 of the FY1997 Intelligence Authorization Act. In respect to Syria, the report states that until 31 December 2003, "Syria probably also continued to develop a BW capability." This statement, which repeats the statements issued on this matter by the CIA for a number of years now suggests an absence of new developments.

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions 1 July Through 31 December 2003 (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, 2004), p. 6, www.cia.gov.

November 2004

The German Zollkriminalamt (Federal Customs Administration) releases a report entitled Exportkontrolle Informationen sensible Länder [Export Controls: Information about Countries of Concern]. The section addressing Syria says: "Syria is presumed to have initiated biological weapons research in the late 1980s under the auspices of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC, or CERS), Damascus. Syria is thought to have developed biological weapons agents such as botulinum toxin, algae toxins and Bacillus anthracis." [original text in German - translation

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by Harvard Sussex Program]

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 67 (March 2005), p. 12; Exportkontrolle Informationen sensible Länder, (Berlin, Federal Customs Administration, November 2005) p. 8, www.zollkriminalamt.de.

27 October 2004

US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, John R. Bolton, delivers a speech at the Tokyo American Center following the conclusion of a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) related naval exercise in the sea of Japan. Bolton thanks Japan for hosting Team Samurai and says: "While PSI is helping stem the spread of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials, serious proliferation threats remain. These threats must be met head on by active, concerted efforts through PSI cooperation and other available means. North Korea, Iran, and Syria, among others, are clearly states of proliferation concern; we believe that PSI partners should be ready to scrutinize shipments going to or from such states or terrorist groups."

—John R. Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Stopping the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Asian-Pacific Region: The Role of the Proliferation Security Initiative, Address to the Tokyo American Center, 27 October 2004, www.state.gov.

19 October 2004

Syria and the European Union (EU) initial a 1,450 page association agreement. The agreement, which will enter into force after it is ratified by EU and Syrian political institutions, provides a framework for increased economic relations between the parties. It also includes sections addressing the expansion of social, cultural and political ties. The finalization of the agreement was delayed by disputes over the late inclusion of language on fighting terrorism and the non proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. This language was added at the insistence of German and the UK [see 23 December 2003].

—"EU and Syria mark end of negotiations for an Association Agreement," Press Release IP/04/1246, 19 October 2004, www.eu.int.

8 October 2004

Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group is quoted responding to a question about the possibility that Iraqi WMD were transferred out of Iraq prior to March 2003. He says: "We cannot yet definitively say whether or not WMD materials were transferred out of Iraq before the war. Neither can we definitely answer some questions about possible retained stocks though, as I say, it is my judgment that retained stocks did not exist." [By excluding the possibility of retained stocks of WMD, or new production prior to March 2003 Duelfer also excludes the possibility that WMD were transferred to Syria or any other country.]

—Janine Zacharia, "Bush concedes Iraq had no WMDs," Jerusalem Post, 8 October 2004, p. 1, web.lexis-nexis.com.

17 August 2004

The CIA is reported to have discovered that in the weeks before the war, Saddam Hussein replaced Iraqi border guards with trusted intelligence agents who supervised moving truckloads of contraband materials into Syria. Although officials caution that the new information is "not considered concrete evidence Saddam shipped chemical and biological agents to Syria before the U.S. invasion," there is a clear intention to raise the possibility

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that this transfer did occur.

—Niles Lathem, "Saddam's WMD may be in Syria," New York Post, 17 August 2004, p. 10, web.lexis-nexis.com.

26 July 2004

In Damascus, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Shara says that the EU has recognized it had made a "mistake" by insisting on the WMD clause in the EU Mediterranean joint political and economic pact. "I believe [the EU] have started to shift closer to our point of view, and I do not rule out that between now and September there may be a new thing regarding the Syrian European partnership, toward signing," says Shara. The next day, the Lebanese Daily Star quotes an unidentified Beirut-based European diplomat as saying that the EU has "somewhat diluted" the clause by "rephrasing" it, but that it was really the Syrians that "gave in", not the EU.

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 49.

15 July 2004

In Damascus, EU envoy Annalisa Gianella holds talks on weapons of mass destruction proliferation with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara. Speaking after the meeting Gianella says: "The purpose of my visit is to explain to our friends, the Syrians, the security strategy and the strategy against proliferation of WMD which were adopted by EU countries." The official Syrian news agency quotes Shara as saying "all parties without exception (including Israel) must cooperate to make the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction."

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 46.

15 June 2004

The London Al-Sharq al-Aswat reports that yesterday's meeting of EU foreign ministers did not approve the contentious draft Association Agreement with Syria [see 8 April 2004] because of "the absence of any new element that justifies returning to it or discussing it." The latest draft of the agreement, approved by all 25 EU member states, consists of a preamble and three clauses. It calls on Syria to implement the agreements on WMD it has signed and to sign the BWC and CWC. It also calls for setting up monitoring mechanisms and a commitment not to import, export or allow the transit of the components of such weapons. According to unidentified European diplomatic sources quoted by the newspaper, Syria had tried to intervene to achieve a more flexible paragraph but to no avail. The sources also state that Syria objects to the fact that the EU's Association Agreement with Israel does not include a similar paragraph and believes that the EU's stance is a result of US pressure.

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 35.

7 June 2004

The government of the United Kingdom releases its annual report on the application of strategic export controls in 2003. The report notes the approval of exports of civil and military NBC protection equipment, including clothing and respirators, to Syria.

—United Kingdom Strategic Export Controls, Annual Report 2003, (June 2004), pp. 390 and 391, www.fco.gov.uk.

13 May 2004

Libya declares - in a statement read out by US Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton in Washington, DC - that it will "not deal in military goods or services with countries that it considers of

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serious weapons of mass destruction proliferation concern." Bolton says that Libya included North Korea, Syria and Iran as countries with which it had renounced all military trade. Subsequent to Bolton's comments, in a statement carried by the official Libyan news agency JANA, the Libyan Foreign Ministry says: "The Libyan statement was clear, it cited no country and was not aimed at Syria... Tripoli cannot say that Syria has WMD since it is a peaceful country whose land is occupied and is threatened by Israel."

—The CBW Conventions Bulletin, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 23.

11 May 2004

Using authority granted to him by the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, U.S. President George W. Bush imposes sanctions on Syria for its alleged pursuit of WMD and support of terrorist groups. The sanctions ban all U.S. exports to Syria except food and medicine; ban Syrian airlines from flying to or from the United States; restrict relations between U.S. banks and the Syrian national bank; and authorize the U.S. Treasury Department to freeze assets of Syrian nationals allegedly involved in terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, occupation of Lebanon, or terrorism in Iraq.

—Megan K. Stack, "Accusing Syria of Aiding Terrorists, Bush Imposes Sanctions," LA Times, 12 May 2004, p. A3, web.lexis-nexis.com.

8 April 2004

Efforts to conclude a Free Trade Agreement between Syria and the European Union [see 9 December 2003] stall. Syrian officials publicly complain that the EU has added new clauses to the proposed agreement that require all parties to uphold bans on the possession or production of WMD including biological weapons. The Syrian officials complain that this clause is discriminatory as a similar agreement between the EU and Israel does not include any such clause. Syrian Minister of Expatriate Affairs, Mr. Buthaina Shabaan says: "[w]e feel the wording is a deliberate attempt to raise impossible issues." He also rejects suggestions that Syria replicate Libya's example and give up its chemical weapons. He points to Israel's occupation of Syrian territory and possession of nuclear weapons.

—Daniel Williams, "Syria-EU Trade Deal Stalls Over Chemical Weapons Issue," Washington Post, 8 April 2004, web.lexis-nexis.com.

25 March 2004

In Israel, the Sub-Committee for Intelligence and the Secret Services of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee publishes a report entitled "The Committee of Enquiry into the Intelligence System in Light of the War in Iraq." The report states that the possibility that Iraq's alleged WMD stockpiles and their means of production "were moved to Syria on the eve of the war, still exists."

—Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, The Committee of Enquiry into the Intelligence System in Light of the War in Iraq Report — Volume 1 (Unrestricted section), 25 March 2004, p. 28.

16 January 2004

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is interviewed on British television and makes a number of statements regarding US relations with Syria. Powell says: "We have not characterized Syria as one of the members of the axis of evil but we are concerned about some of Syria's policies with respect to supporting terrorist activity, with respect of what they might be doing with weapons of mass destruction." Powell added that: "They [Syria] should follow the

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example of other nations in the region, especially Libya." [This statement is clearly part of a broader effort to apply pressure on Syria in the wake of Libya's December 2003 repudiation of its weapons of mass destruction programs.]

—"Powell renews call on Syria to end support for terrorism, WMD," Agence France Presse, 16 January 2004, web.lexis-nexis.com.

9 January 2004

Responding to the claims of Syrian dissident Nijar Nijjof that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were smuggled into Syria in February and March 2003, US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice says: "I don't think we are at the point that we can make a judgment on this issue," Rice said. "There hasn't been any hard evidence that such a thing happened. But obviously we're going to follow up every lead, and it would be a serious problem if that did in fact happen." Rice added: "I can't dismiss anything that we haven't had an opportunity to fully assess."

—"ROUNDUP: No proof Iraq smuggled weapons to Syria, Bush advisor says," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 9 January 2004, web.lexis-nexis.com; "Dissident claims Saddam's weapons were smuggled into Syria," ONASA News Agency, 9 January 2004, web.lexis-nexis.com.

9 January 2004

Exiled Syrian human rights campaigner Nijar Nijjof appears on Britain's Channel Five News claiming that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were moved to Syria in the months prior to the US-led invasion of March 2003. Nijjof claims that a senior Syrian military intelligence source has told him that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were smuggled into Syria in ambulances under the supervision of Brigadier Zoul-Himla Shalish, chief of the presidential guards. Nijjof asserted that the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons are now stored at three locations in central Syria, near the cities of Hama and Homs; a bunker controlled by the Syrian Department for Document Security (Bureau 489) built into a mountain near the town of Misyaf; a bunker 20 meters (66 feet) beneath a radar base in the town of Chenchar; a "large factory workshop" making missiles and warheads in the village of Tal Snan.

—James Lyons, "Saddam's weapons smuggled to Syria," Liverpool Daily Post, 10 January 2004, p. 4.

6 January 2004

Responding to Syrian President Bashar Assad's call for Israel to give up its undeclared arsenal of nuclear weapons [see 5 January 2004] a senior British government official says: "Israel is in a unique position as the only state whose very existence is threatened. There is no point in asking for a WMD-free Middle East while there are countries parading missiles with a sign up the side saying Death to Israel." An additional unnamed "senior Western diplomatic source" said: "They [the Syrians] have to make a decision about whether [their] chemical weapons will make much of a difference against the Israelis, or whether they would not be in a better position by saying, 'we're giving it up and now we want a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.'"

—Anton La Guardia, "Syria rebuffed by Washington, London: President Assad told to give up weapons of mass destruction," National Post (Canada), 7 January 2004, p. A10.

5 January 2004

Syrian President Bashar Assad is reported to have said that Syria is entitled to defend itself by acquiring its own chemical and biological deterrent. He also says that any deal to destroy Syria's chemical and biological capability

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would come about only if Israel agreed to abandon its nuclear arsenal.

—"Syria ties disarmament to Israel," *Calgary Herald*, 6 January 2004, p. A5, web.lexis-nexis.com.

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1999-1972

August 1998

The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1997 compliance report states that "it is highly probable that Syria is developing an offensive biological warfare capability."

—*Threat Control Through Arms Control: Annual Report to Congress 1997*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printers Office, 1998).

August 1997

The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1996 compliance report states that "it is highly probable that Syria is developing an offensive biological warfare capability."

—*Threat Control Through Arms Control: Annual Report to Congress 1996*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printers Office, 1997).

December 1996

U.S. and Israeli officials engage in a series of meetings to discuss Syrian WMD. Israeli officials indicate that a major focus of discussion will be "a newly acquired capability by Syria to produce...biological warheads and place them on Scud surface-to-surface missiles." The officials also state that Syria has received the help of Russian scientists in its biological weapons program which is alleged to include the manufacture of anthrax.

—Steve Rodan, "Syria's Chemical Arms to Head Agenda at US-Israel Talks," *Jerusalem Post*, 2 December 1996, p. 2.

August 1996

The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Annual Report states that "it is highly probable that Syria is developing an offensive biological warfare capability."

—Barbara Starr, "Egypt and Syria are BW Capable, Says Agency," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 21 August 1996, p. 15, www.janes.com.

22 August 1994

In Germany, *Der Spiegel*, purportedly quoting from a confidential Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) report of May 1994, states that Syria is on the point of establishing a native capacity for the production of biological weapons.

—"Death and terror from the laboratory," *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), 22 August 1994, pp. 22-25, as translated from the German in JPRS-TND-94-017, 8 September 1994, pp. 39-42.

June 1994

In the U.S. Congress, a study of potential military countermeasures against nuclear and CBW weapons proliferation is published by the Congressional Research Service. It includes Syria in a list of seven states that probably possess

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biological weapons.

—John M. Collins, Zachary S. Davis, and Steven R. Bowman, *Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapon Proliferation: Potential Military Countermeasures: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress No. 94-528 S*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1994).

April 1994

Concern is expressed that North Korea may be assisting Syria in the development of biological weapons and warheads.

—"Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme Special Report," *Jane's Intelligence Review 6* (April 1994), p. 192, www.janes.com.

14 June 1993

U.S. Defense Secretary Les Aspin, in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, speaking of the growing challenge faced by Israel from ballistic missiles with nuclear or CBW warheads notes that Syria has biological weapons and is seeking long range missiles.

—"Israel safer today than at any time, but new threats loom - Aspin," *Defense Daily*, 16 June 1993, p. 434.

April 1993

Syria is described as possessing an offensive biological warfare capability. Syria is also reported to be seeking assistance from Chinese and Western companies in the development of biological warheads.

—Michael Eisenstadt, "Syria's Strategic Weapons," *Jane's Intelligence Review 5* (April 1993), p. 168, www.janes.com.

19 January 1993

In the United States, a report prepared by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency claims that based on evidence to date, it is highly probable that Syria is developing an offensive biological warfare capability.

—*Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control Agreements*, (Washington DC: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1993).

September 1992

U.S. officials state that they have identified a facility in the Syrian town of Cerin dedicated to the production of biological agents.

—"Investigation: Syrian CW programs," *Middle East Defense News* (Paris), 28 September 1992, pp. 5-6.

January 1992

In the U.S. Senate, Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates testifies on proliferation questions and mentions the existence of a biological weapons program in Syria. He also states that Syria "apparently is seeking assistance from China and Western firms for an improved capability with biological warheads."

—Robert Gates, Prepared Testimony, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 15 and 22 January 1992.

March 1991

Director of U.S. Naval Intelligence, Rear-Admiral Thomas Brooks testifies that Syria currently has developed an

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offensive BW capability.

—Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, USN, Director of Naval Intelligence, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on Intelligence Issues, 7 March 1991, pp. 56-59.

February 1974

In testimony before the House Armed Service Committee, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams notes, "the sophistication, completeness, and extensiveness" of chemical, biological, and radiological defenses found on Soviet-supplied equipment captured from Syrian forces during the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973.

—John W. Finney, "Abrams Cites Intelligence Gained from Soviet Arms in Mideast," *New York Times*, 15 February 1974, p. 4.

14 April 1972

The Syrian Arab Republic signs the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC).

—Status of Multilateral Arms Regulation and Disarmament Agreements, disarmament2.un.org.

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