

RELEASE IN PART  
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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 3, 2009 6:12 PM  
**To:** humamahedin [redacted]  
**Subject:** PrintFw Senator Kaufman on his meeting with President Assad

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**From:** Beale, Courtney A Kramer  
**To:** Macmanus, Joseph E; Sullivan, Jacob J; Abedin, Huma  
**Cc:** S\_SpecialAssistants  
**Sent:** Wed Jun 03 09:30:43 2009  
**Subject:** Senator Kaufman on his meeting with President Assad

FYI on Senator Kaufman's readout of his meeting with President Assad.

Courtney

**From:** Hale, David M  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 03, 2009 9:11 AM  
**To:** S\_SpecialAssistants  
**Cc:** Verma, Richard R; Greene, David J  
**Subject:** FW:

This is from Senator Kaufman and might be of interest to the Secretary, or her staff.

**From:** [redacted] (Kaufman) [mailto:[redacted]@kaufman.senate.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 02, 2009 6:52 PM  
**To:** Hale, David M  
**Subject:**

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Dear David:

It was good to speak with you before I left for my trip. Here is a report on my meeting with President Assad.

I began by emphasizing that our CODEL represented the view of Congress, and did not come with a message on behalf of the administration. I underscored the importance of cooperation on the Iraqi border, and expressed deep concern regarding the movement of foreign fighters from Syria into Iraq. I conveyed the message that this issue will remain a significant obstacle to bilateral relations so long as the lives of U.S. troops are at risk in Iraq.

Assad responded that he shares our concern regarding security in Iraq, but differs on the approach – he said the U.S. should focus less on border security and more on internal political dynamics in Iraq. He questioned Syria's ability to completely seal the border with Iraq, and appeared concerned that even if he took increased measures to enforce border security, Syria may still be blamed for the movement of foreign fighters. Assad said he is seriously considering the tripartite proposal put forth by the administration, but he would like to discuss it in the context of a larger "roadmap" for U.S.-Syrian relations, which includes "removing obstacles" such as sanctions. I specifically asked Assad to have Foreign Minister Moallem call Secretary Clinton, and he promised to do so when the Foreign Minister returned from Copenhagen. I am glad to see that they had a chance to speak on Sunday.

Assad indicated he was impressed with President Obama and hopeful about his policy of engagement in the region, and he made a brief comment that he was "surprised" to see Vice President Biden's visit to Beirut so close to the Lebanese elections. He indicated that Syria is ready to open dialogue with Israel, but "Israel is not a partner." He also was adamant that Turkey is Syria's "best friend" in the region, and he clarified that Turkey is closer to Syria than Iran.

A longer analysis of the meeting should have been sent in a cable by the State Department over the weekend, and I would be happy to discuss the meeting further if needed. I plan on sending a trip report with recommendations in the next week. Thanks again for your insight.

Best,

Ted