



# New England Americans for Lebanon

118 Ten Hills Road, Somerville, MA 02145-1033  
neal-ma@attbi.com Tel/Fax 617 - 776 - 7499

**Boston, Massachusetts – December 15, 2002**

## **Open letter to the British government regarding Assad's visit to the UK**

In a statement praising Syria's cooperation with the war on Al Qaeda and acknowledging positive signs of change in Syria the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office totally ignored very important facts that contradict its statement:

- Syria is a dictatorship and in defiance of all international laws and UN resolutions it occupies Lebanon.
- Syria is the number one sponsor of terrorism in the Middle East by hosting training camps and providing arms and funds to several terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and radical Palestinian groups.
- Syria's very short-lived so-called "Damascus spring" in 2000, the re-imprisonment of released political dissidents and human rights activists, its continuing occupation of Lebanon, and its human rights abuses both in Lebanon and in Syria totally negate the FCO's claim of positive signs of change.
- Syria's cooperation with the vote in the Security Council on resolution 1441 is to camouflage its sordid record in maintaining an active war front between Israel and South Lebanon instead of proactively participating in the peace process.
- Syria's flagrant defiance of the UN oil embargo on Iraq.

On what is being called a "historic" visit by Syria's President to the United Kingdom we urge Prime Minister Blair, Foreign Minister Straw, and others that might be meeting with the Syrian president to request from Syria to adhere to UN resolutions and stop its occupation to Lebanon, stop its support of terrorism, and stop its human rights abuses and truly work on returning democracy to the Middle East.

Long Live Free Lebanon