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destination:09DAMASCUS477|09DAMASCUS534|09DAMASCUS620
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DE RUEHDM #0692/01 2661336
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6864
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3974
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0714
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0674
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 0097
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0711
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0708
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

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S E C R E T DAMASCUS 000692

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, DRL/NESCA, NEA/PI
NSC FOR MCDERMOTT/SHAPIRO
LONDON FOR LORD, PARIS FOR NOBLES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2019
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PINR, PREL, KDEM, KMPI, EG, EZ, SY
SUBJECT: SHOW US THE MONEY! SARG SUSEPCTS "ILLEGAL" USG
FUNDING

REF: A. DAMASCUS 00477
B. DAMASCUS 00534
C. DAMASCUS 00620

Classified By: CDA Charles Hunter for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S/NF) Summary: Over the past six months, SARG security agents have increasingly questioned civil society and human rights activists about U.S. programming in Syria and the region, including U.S. Speaker and MEPI initiatives (ref A).
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

End Summary.

Overview

2. (S/NF) Over the past six months, civil society and human rights activists questioned by SARG security have told us interrogators asked specifically about their connections to the U.S. Embassy and the State Department. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX was questioned about MEPI-funded Democracy Council activities as well as visiting State Department officials (ref A).
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

3. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

4. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

5. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

6. (S/NF) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

7. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

8. (S/NF) Comment: It is unclear to what extent SARG intelligence services understand how USG money enters Syria and through which proxy organizations. What is clear, however, is that security agents are increasingly focused on this issue when they interrogate human rights and civil society activists. The information agents are able to frame their questions with more and more specific information and names. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX suggest the SARG has keyed in on MEPI operations in particular.

9. (C) Comment continued: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Except for the Netherlands' public stalling of the EU Association Agreement over human rights, Syrian activists have heard little in the way of support from the international community.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX End Comment.
HUNTER