



- Home
- About Us
- Advertise
- Syndicate
- Archives
- Forum
- Classifieds
- Subscribe

Search

Search input field with 'Go' button

Advanced Search

- Daily Star Editions
- Lebanon Edition
- Kuwait Edition
- Regional Edition

Regional News

- Politics
- Business
- Editorial
- Opinion
- Features
- Special Reports
- Interviews
- Media Reviews
- Readers' Letters
- Today's Cartoons
- Iraq Supplement
- Site Services
- Registration
- PDF version
- Digital Edition



POLITICS

Accountability acts threaten US jobs, promote double standards in Mideast

'Exports to Saudi Arabia currently provide 124,000 jobs in America'

By **M. Scott Bortot**
 Special to The Daily Star
Friday, March 19, 2004

WASHINGTON: Sanctions from the Syria Accountability Act have caused a decline in counterterrorism cooperation between Damascus and Washington and will have a deleterious impact on how Arabs view US foreign policy, Syrian Ambassador to the United States, Imad Moustapha, said here Wednesday at the National Press Club.

It was also remarked at the meeting that if the Saudi Arabia Accountability Act, 2003, was passed there would be rude implications for US jobs.

The event titled The Accountability Acts: Implications for US Middle East Policy, was organized by the Council for National Interest (CNI) and the Institute for Research: Middle East Policy (IRmep), brought together former US State Department officials, independent researchers and academics.

Ambassador Moustapha said the sanctions bill did not diminish Syria's interest in cooperating with the US, but some American officials feel very anxious when Syria cooperates on terrorism because their premise is that Syria is a terrorist country."

"US officials didn't make a decision to reduce cooperation, but the communications started to fall down. However, we are now trying to re-establish our cooperation on this," he said.

While the accountability acts are promoted in the US as a means to fight terrorism, panelists said such legislation harms US interests in the region and negatively impacts the US economy.

"In the name of promoting more cooperation in fighting terrorism, the proposed Saudi Arabia Accountability Act of 2003 could actually cut down on US exports to Saudi Arabia," said Grant Smith, director of IRmep. "US exports to Saudi Arabia currently provide 124,000 jobs in the US and should reach 177,000 by 2012."

But this is if the US-Saudi Arabia relationship remains stable, an unlikely event if the Saudi accountability act is passed. Research provided by IRmep shows that thousands of Americans could lose their jobs if Saudi Arabia were to retaliate to the accountability act by reaching out to other foreign importers.

According to the US Department of Commerce "Rule of Thumb" calculation, there are about 17,000 jobs connected to every \$1 billion in US exports.

LEBANON

Politics.

- » US delays in on Syria
- » Hariri, Lahor Summit separate
- » 'False' charge split

Voices.

- » Working out dressed to the
- » Go east, you the real threat
- » Basic do's a getting started

Business News

- » Organic agri get organized
- » Orascom off networks for 40
- » Survey of w ranks Lebanon

Arts & Societ

- » Seeing the landscape
- » Suffused wit originality, Kay collection prove reckoned w
- » Speech gro international a exchanges

NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our fr Enter Your E

WEEKLY POLI

Do you support referendum presence in I

- Yes
- No
- It's not h

Vote button

Forecasts for 2004 predict US exports to the kingdom will reach \$7 billion. "If Saudi Arabia redirects 66 percent of current manufactured and service imports from the US to foreign competitors, the US would lose the source of 81,000 jobs in 2004 growing to 117,000 in 2012," Smith said.

IRmep research estimated that in 2003 some 66 percent of \$25 billion in new Saudi infrastructure and gas projects went to foreign competitors instead of US corporations. A possible reason is because of strains in the American-Saudi relationship.

US manufactured goods and service exports to kingdom are already in decline. In 1997, the US enjoyed 18 percent of all exports to Saudi Arabia but by 2002 this figure fell to 13 percent. Little doubt exists that exports will plummet further if the Saudi act is passed.

In addition to the possible economic woes an accountability act creates for the US, panelists said political fallout in the Arab world should also be a concern. This is especially an issue with regard to the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

Moustapha said sanctions contained in the Syrian act do not hamper his country's economy because of the already meager bilateral trade with the US.

"If the US really wants peace, it has to be regarded as an honest broker in the peace process," Moustapha said with regard to what he and the other panelists believe are US policy double standards in the region. "You cannot side with one party and apply pressure on the other."

The panelists acknowledged that most people in the Arab world do not see the US as neutral in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. In reference to recent US government media efforts to promote its image in the region, Moustapha said no amount of media campaigning erases the clear suffering of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli forces supplied with US military hardware.

According to Eugene Bird, president of the CNI, the Israeli lobby is the longest-running and strongest interest group to be controlled by a foreign government in American history. He said: "I want to challenge this lobby to a series of debates leading up to the US presidential elections." Bird's challenge stems from what he sees as the Israeli lobby's role in formulating the two accountability acts.

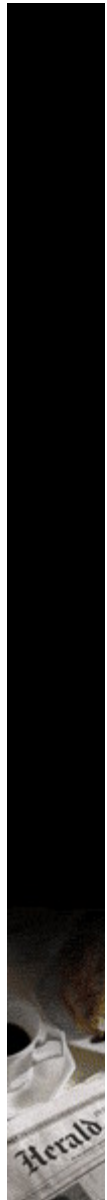
Double standards in US policy in the region were also of concern to panelist Stephen Zunes, professor of politics and chair of the Peace and Justice Studies Program at the University of San Francisco.

While a Syrian troop presence in Lebanon is considered a violation of UN resolution 520 and one of the justifications for the current Syrian accountability act, Zunes said Israel had been in violation of this resolution for more than 18 years. According to Zunes, this is clearly a double standard on the part of US lawmakers, especially when some of those who signed the Syria Accountability Act were in office during Israel's occupation of Lebanon. The fallout from US policy double standards could have far-reaching consequences according to Zunes.

"It undermines not just the search for peace in the Middle East, but undermines the whole premise of international law," Zunes said. "I think that there will be a lot more problems in the Middle East if you push for legislation that does not deal fairly with both sides."

 [Printable Version](#)

 [Send to a friend](#)



Your feedback is important to us!
We invite all our readers to share with us
their views and comments about this article.

Click here NOW to Comment on this Article

✦ **More Politics**

- » [After Israel's murder of Hamas leader, the abyss beckons](#)
- » [White House to delay Syria sanctions, as EU insists on WMD clause](#)
- » [Activists' detention bruises Saudi image, but not fatal to 'gradual reform'](#)
- » [Arab FMs hold stormy pre-summit meet on reforms](#)
- » [What's anti-semitism? Dictionary dispute heats up](#)
- » [European Union calls for greater UN role in Iraq](#)
- » [Europe to create own ME reform approach](#)
- » [Palestinians accuse United States of granting Israel 'license to kill'](#)
- » [Invasion next door helps Tehran thaw once-icy ties](#)
- » [Iraqi Kurdish leaders hold 1st post-war reconciliation conference](#)



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Anti-Spamming Policy](#) | [Copyright Policy](#) | [Jobs@Daily Star](#) | [Our Partners](#) |
[Editor's Message](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2004, The Daily Star. All rights reserved. **Click here** to contact our syndication department for permission to republish or make other authorized use of this material.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.