

Aoun meets with Assad, as MPs convene for session on Ministerial Statement

Contributed by Naharnet, SANA
 Thursday, 10 December 2009
 Last Updated Thursday, 10 December 2009

Aoun: My Visit to Damascus Not Related to Visit of Any Other Official

These articles are presented for documenting and knowledge of the event; as opposed to actual support. CRNews.

 Aoun meets with Assad, as MPs convene for session on Ministerial Statement
 December 9, 2009

Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun went to Damascus on Wednesday for a brief visit with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

According to LBCI television, Assad sent a private jet to transport Aoun, along with former Minister Michel Samaha and an FPM delegation, to Damascus. The meeting was held while Lebanese deputies convened in Nejme Square for the second parliamentary session on the Ministerial Statement.

Bouthaina Shaaban, Assad's political aide, said the sit-down was held to address regional issues and ways to strengthen both countries' roles in the Middle East.

SANA news agency reported that the Assad-Aoun meeting was valued by both sides, adding that the FPM leader puts Lebanon's interests above all others and seeks to preserve national unity.

The agency also quoted Aoun as saying during his visit that he is working on maintaining strong ties with Syria and appreciates Assad's efforts to support Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and internal unity. No further information has been disclosed.

Lebanon First bloc MP Ahmad Fatfat criticized the FPM leader's visit to Damascus, saying, "It seems Aoun has more important issues than to discuss the Ministerial Statement."

-NOW Lebanon

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=131410>

 Assad to Aoun: You Deserve Credit for Presidential Election, Cabinet Formation

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has reportedly told visiting Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun that he deserves credit for two major accomplishments — Lebanese presidential election and formation of a national unity government.

The daily As-Safir on Thursday said Assad told Aoun during a meeting between the two men in Damascus on Wednesday that he appreciates the "big national role" the FPM leader played in achieving national Lebanese unity and getting Lebanon out of both the Presidential and Cabinet conflicts.

Ad-Diyar newspaper, for its part, said Aoun briefed Assad on his recent visit to Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir and the bishops and the assurances he gave them regarding resistance weapons.

It said Aoun asked Assad to invite him the Patriarch and the Maronite bishops to Syria so that they could "personally hear" assurances from the Syrian president regarding the region.

Ad-Diyar said Aoun was trying to prepare for a meeting between Sfeir and Syrian officials to hear assurances from them concerning Hizbullah arms.

Beirut, 10 Dec 09, 12:15

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/Lebanon/72352206156FA14EC22576880037AA29?OpenDocument>

 Aoun: My Visit to Damascus Not Related to Visit of Any Other Official

Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun on Wednesday stressed that in contrary to "some who were persistent in visiting Damascus for long years", he did not visit Damascus to target anyone or to discuss tight interests, but "to discuss what is in the interest of the two countries."

Aoun was being interviewed over the phone by Al Manar TV network. In another phone call with his party's OTV network, he expressed his deep relief over the conducted visit.

FPM leader told OTV that he had been already planning to make his visit, but the "generous invitation" of President Bashar Assad preceded his plans. He added that Wednesday's visit coincided with the anniversary of his first "historic" visit to Damascus.

Aoun added that he went to Damascus in order to demonstrate the events of one full year, and to discuss the external challenges facing both Lebanon and Syria "especially after the latest Israeli threats."

He also said that his visit aimed to express welcoming and relief over the track of inter-Arab reconciliations, "a track parallel to that initiated in Beirut."

Answering a question on whether his visit was related to any other visits, Aoun denied the relation between his visit to Damascus and the timing of the visit of any other Lebanese or non-Lebanese official.

"PM Saad Hariri's visit to Syria has become a declared thing, and is being prepared by those directly concerned with the subject," added Aoun.

Earlier, Syrian President Bashar Assad saluted "the national role played by Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun in the Lebanese political scene" after a summit that gathered them at the People's palace on Wednesday, Syria's state-run news agency, SANA, reported.

SANA added that Assad "expressed admiration during the meeting for the national role played by General Aoun in the Lebanese political scene which favors the interest of Lebanon before anything else."

According to the Syrian agency, Assad also hailed Aoun's "struggle to fortify national unity and his continuous support for establishing good and firm relations between the two brotherly countries."

On his part, Aoun expressed his "deep admiration for the stances of the Syrian president toward Lebanon and his support for all of what the Lebanese agree on, as well as for the Syrian leadership's keenness on anything that preserves the unity, independence, and sovereignty of Lebanon."

The summit discussed the positive atmospheres currently dominating in Lebanon, especially the formation of the national unity government and the developing Syrian-Lebanese relations, according to SANA.

The two leaders also discussed the latest regional and international developments and the importance of coordination among the neighboring countries of the region in order to safeguard the Arab rights.

After the meeting, the Syrian president hosted lunch in honor of Aoun, the Syrian news agency said.

LBC TV network reported that the Syrian president had sent a private jet to take Aoun to Damascus, accompanied by former minister Michel Samaha and a delegation from FPM.

Aoun returned to Beirut shortly after his trip to Damascus that lasted only a few hours.

Aoun traveled to Syria in December last year. During his visit to Damascus exactly a year ago, the MP predicted a bright future for ties between Lebanon and Syria.

Beirut, 09 Dec 09, 21:54

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/Lebanon/0F732F6B775ED268C225768700509C77?OpenDocument>

President al-Assad, Gen. Auon Review Positive Atmosphere in Lebanon , Rapidly Developed Bilateral Relations

Dec 10, 2009

Damascus, (SANA)-President Bashar al-Assad received on Wednesday Leader of Lebanese Free Patriotic Movement in Lebanon Gen. Michel Aoun.

Both sides reviewed the positive atmosphere in Lebanon, particularly the formation of the Lebanese national unity government, the rapidly developing Syrian-Lebanese relations and the necessity for pushing the bilateral cooperation forward on all tracks to reach close and special relations in the interest of brotherly people of the two countries.

During the meeting, President al-Assad hailed Gen. Aoun's national role in the Lebanese arena through which he put Lebanon interest above all considerations, and his relentless efforts to consolidate the national unity along with his constant support to establishing good and close ties between Syria and Lebanon.

For his part, Gen. Aoun highly appreciated president al-Assad's stances towards Lebanon and his support to every thing agreed upon by the Lebanese people and the Syrian leadership's keenness to achieve anything that preserves Lebanon's unity, independence and sovereignty and its obvious attempts to upgrade the Syrian-Lebanese relations.

Talks during the meeting also reviewed the latest developments in the Arab and international arenas, highlighting necessity of coordination on the regional level with the brotherly and neighboring countries to protect the Arab rights and rally international support to the rights of the Palestinian people and to put an end to Israeli crimes against them.

Afterward, President al-Assad held a dinner banquet in honor of Gen. Aoun.

Following the meeting, Presidential Political and Media Advisor Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban said in a statement to reporters that talks between President al-Assad and Gen. Aoun focused on the Syrian-Lebanese relations, the situation in the region and the real progress achieved in the bilateral relations for the interest of both countries and people.

Dr. Shaaban added that talks also touched upon the regional situation in general and the Syrian-Lebanese efforts exerted in the interest of the Arab rights. The two sides called for rallying international support to the Arab rights and halting the Israeli crimes as well as formulating a regional situation that further support the Arab rights.

The Presidential Advisor said that Gen. Aoun's national stances and efforts as always been for the unity and stability of Lebanon and for the formation of the national unity government. "These stances are highly evaluated by Syria and by President Bashar al-Assad."

Dr. Shaaban pointed out that Lebanon has made progress since the election of the Lebanese President and the formation of the new government. "The situation of Lebanon now is much better than before…We hope that the Syrian-Lebanese relations will have prosperous future…It is natural that the security and prosperity of Lebanon is in the interest of the two countries and people and also in the interest of Syria's security and stability…We hope that these relations will always develop into the best."

Aoun's visit to Damascus is the second since January 2008 where he held talks with President al-Assad on the Syrian-Lebanese positive developments as well as regional and international events.

Ruaa AL-Jazaeri / Haifa Said/Zahra

<http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2009/12/10/260201.htm>
