

DEPARTMENT OF STATE AIRGRAM

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Department of State

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Asad, Baathization, Diplomats

TO:

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FROM:

Ambassy DAMASCUS

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SUBJECT:

The Baathization of the Syrian Diplomatic Service

DATE: November 10, 1975

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The Syrian Baath Party has decided to increase its influence in the Foreign Ministry and in Syrian diplomatic posts abroad. While present officials of the Foreign Ministry will not be forced out, henceforth only Baath Party members will be taken into the Syrian Diplomatic Service. According to one senior Ministry official, a group of twenty Party members was assigned to the Ministry some time ago. The Ministry organized a series of internal training lectures for them and they have now been sent to Syrian Embassies abroad. A second group of Party members, some of them older, has now been sent to the Ministry with the recommendation from the Baath Party National Command that seven of them receive ambassadorial appointments. The Ministry has persuaded President Asad to postpone these appointments on grounds that a period of diplomatic training is necessary, but it is likely that several of these Party members will receive ambassadorial assignments over the coming few months.

Apparently many of the new Syrian diplomats are Alawis. We can surmise that the Party leadership is responding to pressures from the Alawi community to place more of its members in prestigious government positions. Given the fact that the Alawis are already coming under fire for over-staffing the government with their followers, it can be assumed that the leadership is not unaware

Attachments:

1. Listing of Current Syrian MFA Departmental Directors
2. Listing of Previous Syrian MFA Departmental Directors

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that the decision to staff foreign embassies with their co-religionists minimizes the impact of the decision by exporting the beneficiaries of this sectarian policy.

Also attached is a list of the current departmental directors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as our list of previous incumbents. It will be noted that two new departments have been created: the Department of Files, Authentication and Translation and the Department of Private Bureaus. The latter Department includes the Secretariat of the Minister and Deputy Minister and also handles the Ministry's diplomatic codes and liaison with the Baath Party.

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