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**Subject:** Fw: The Media Line MidEast Daily

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**Subject:** The Media Line MidEast Daily



## New Blast Halts Gas Flow from Egypt to Israel

For the second time since February and less than one week after prosecutors indicted officials responsible for the deal to sell Egyptian natural gas to Israel, the pipeline supplying Israel and Jordan has been bombed. [Photo: Egyptian state-television covers the blast.] The explosion occurred on Wednesday near the northern Sinai Peninsula town of Al-Arish. The contract to sell gas to Israel, which buys 40% of its natural gas from Egypt, has been a topic for discussion since the unrest which ousted Hosni Mubarak from his 30-year presidency began. Prosecutors allege that the multi-billion dollar deal was a "squandering of state resources." Observers have viewed the future of the gas deal as a harbinger of future relations between the Jewish state and Egypt. In addition to the February bombing, explosives that failed to detonate were found at the site on March 27.

## Syria Appears to be Preparing Attack on Rebels

Reports from Syria appear to indicate that forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Asad are preparing to mount an offensive against rebels based in the coastal town of Baniyas. Farther south, in Dara'a, eyewitnesses report bodies remaining in the streets uncollected since being killed by Al-Asad's troops. The sound of gunfire is still heard while the city is sealed by soldiers and lines of communication, water and electricity have been cut. With an estimated 120 killed over the weekend, rights groups peg the total loss of life in excess of 400 so far, exclusive of the most recent killings in Dara'a. The clear intent by Al-Asad to crush his detractors has prompted many to charge U.S. President Barack

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Obama with a double standard vis-à-vis American policy versus Mu'amar Al-Qaddafi in Libya. The White House has not called for Al-Asad to step down and critics say the threat to the Syrian population by its president is no less than was the threat to Libyans from Qaddafi that was cited by Obama as the motivating factor in the U.S. call for a regime change in Libya. Some say the direct threat to Egyptians when Obama called for Hosni Mubarak to step down was not as great as the current threat to Syrians. Others charge that the administration's clear message to Al-Asad that the U.S. has no intention of intervening as it did in Libya in encouraging the Syrian leader to continue the campaign against his people.

### **Mubarak's Interior Minister Tried for Deaths During Demonstrations**

Ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's interior minister is on trial in Cairo charged with ordering the deaths of anti-government demonstrators during the protests that ultimately brought down the regime. Habib Al-Adly and six former aides face the death penalty if convicted of ordering troops to fire on the protestors. More than 800 Egyptians died during 18 days of unrest. After Mubarak himself, Al-Adly was the main focus of protestors' angst during the weeks of unrest. As interior minister, he was responsible for the security forces that terrorized the people. Al-Adly is also on trial for embezzlement. Mubarak, who has been under detention at the Sharm A-Sheikh hospital in the Sinai resort town, has been declared fit to travel and is being transferred to a military hospital in Cairo. He is expected to be moved to the hospital at Tora prison where his two sons are being held once emergency medical equipment for his heart ailment is installed.

### **National Unity Government for Yemen**

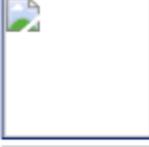
Yemen's two leading parties have agreed to participate in a unity government following the end of Ali Abdullah Saleh's 32-year reign. Saleh and the opposition parties that brought about his ouster agreed to a deal brokered by the Gulf States in which Saleh will resign within 30 days and elections will be held within 60 days. Saleh's party, the General People's Congress, and the opposition coalition, the Common Front, have agreed to join a unity government after Saleh leaves office. Rank-and-file Yemenis are not happy that the Gulf deal provides Saleh and his close associates with immunity from prosecution.

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The Media Line (TML) is an American non-profit news organization established to enhance and balance media coverage in the Middle East, promote independent reporting in the region, and break down barriers to understanding in the Arab and Israeli journalism communities.

TML's mission is to provide credible, unbiased content, background and context to local media outlets throughout the Middle East and around the world. The Media Line has a mandate for education and supports scholarly endeavors at all levels. TML is "The Mideast News Source."

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