

US Should Do More for Peace Process

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Washington should play a more effective role in the peace process between Arabs and Israelis, Syrian newspapers said of last week's visit to Damascus by the United States Middle East envoy, George Mitchell.

A July 26 editorial in the official Al-Thawra newspaper said that the steps that the US was taking towards peace were still too slow and were "not serious enough" to reach tangible results quickly.

The article's author, Assad Aboud, said that Syria was ready to accept solutions to the conflict with Israel based on the rejection of occupation and the right of resistance to continue until the land is freed.

Mitchell told reporters after meeting top Syrian officials that he wanted Syria's help in forging peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, adding that restarting talks between Damascus and Israel was a "near-term goal" for Washington.

The visit of the US official was appreciated and evidence that Washington recognised that any political achievement in the region had to pass through Syria, said Muhammad al-Khuder in an op-ed piece published a day earlier in the official Al-Baath daily.

Dialogue was useful to overcome the deterioration of relations of the past eight years between the two countries, the columnist said, adding that "logical and realistic" plans based on mutual respect should be designed to guarantee the security of both nations.

The author urged the US to lift economic restrictions against Damascus in place since 2003, which he called unfair.

Washington said recently that it would relieve the pressure of economic sanctions against Damascus.

White House spokesman Tommy Vietor announced on July 27 that the US would speed up the process of allowing the export of certain products to Syria, especially those related to information technology and telecommunications equipment as well as parts and components connected to the safety of civil aviation.

But the official insisted that the existing sanctions - which were recently renewed for another year - remained effective.

Another editorial in the official Tishreen daily also said on July 26 that Syria wanted to develop its relations with the US and was willing to cooperate with the new administration of President Barack Obama.

But the article's author, Ezeldin Darwish, indicated that Washington should more readily press Israel to withdraw from Arab occupied land.

Focus: Syria Press Monitor

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