

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We were disappointed that the recent State Department report, mandated under Section 6507 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-81) on the estimated net worth and sources of income of Syrian President Bashar Assad, failed to account for the significant role of the Assad regime in Captagon trafficking in the Middle East.

Captagon is a highly addictive amphetamine. Its trade is a growing problem that has various negative impacts throughout the Middle East. According to recent open-source reporting, the potential value of Captagon trafficking in 2021 approached \$6 billion – a potentially significant source of illicit income for the Assad regime. In addition to fueling Assad’s ongoing crimes against the Syrian people, Captagon trafficking threatens regional stability. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, increasingly threatened by the flow of Captagon across its borders, has had several dangerous skirmishes with drug traffickers on its border with Syria. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also under assault from flows of Syrian Captagon, has been forced to increase security resources for interdiction efforts. In addition to the security and regional stability impacts, Captagon stifles economic growth in affected countries. In some cases, traffickers hiding drugs in commercial and agricultural products has resulted in import bans that hinder legitimate trade as many countries in the region grapple with severe economic crises.

Despite ample open-source information, the report submitted to Congress made scant mention of the Syrian regime’s role in the illicit Captagon trade. Understanding the Assad regime’s role in the Captagon trade is important to U.S. national security and that of our allies. The Captagon trade increasingly has the potential to serve as a largely unchecked source of revenue for the Assad regime, undermining the impact of U.S. and international sanctions designed to compel the regime to end its war against the Syrian people. Moreover, as many of our partners take ill-advised steps to normalize relations with the Assad regime, it is imperative that the United States and others shed light on the regime’s role in the destabilizing Captagon trade, which threatens many of those same partners’ security.

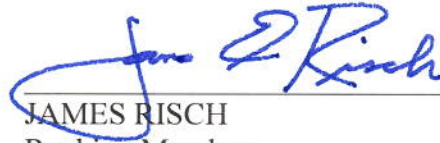
For these reasons, we respectfully request that you provide additional details on the estimated net worth and known sources of income of Syrian President Bashar Assad and his family members that specifically addresses the estimated income that the Captagon trade provides the Syrian regime and details the regime’s role in the Captagon trade.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael T. McCaul in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

MICHAEL MCCAUL  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee

Handwritten signature of James Risch in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

JAMES RISCH  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee