

RELEASE IN  
FULL

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
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Note American journalist killed

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
*Operations Center*

***Overnight Brief***  
 Wednesday, February 22, 2012  
 0530 EST

### **AUSTRALIAN FM RESIGNS AMID LEADERSHIP CRISIS**

(SBU) FM Rudd made the announcement during a visit to Washington amid speculation he was going to mount a bid to topple PM Gillard, according to press. Rudd explained he could not serve as FM without the PM's support. Embassy Canberra comments the decision might have been a preemption of his possible removal from office, as well as a strategic step to position himself for a future leadership challenge. Dennis Richardson, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and former ambassador to the United States, will replace Rudd in upcoming meetings in London and Tunis. PM Gillard has yet to name Rudd's successor. *(Ops/Embassy Canberra telcon and e-mail, Reuters)*

### **SYRIA UPDATE**

- (U) Opposition activists said two journalists, one American and one French, were killed and two others wounded, an American and a UK national, when shells hit the building where they were staying in Homs. French FM Juppe confirmed the death of the French journalist. *(Reuters, AP)*
- (U) Syrian troops and militiamen loyal to President Assad killed 27 people in three northern villages, an opposition group said. *(Reuters)*

### **IAEA INSPECTORS CLAIM MISSION TO IRAN FAILED**

(SBU) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors said Iran blocked their access to a site they believe could have been used for testing production of a nuclear weapon, and also refused to agree to a process for resolving questions about other possible military dimensions to its nuclear program, media report. USUNVIE comments expectations were Iran was expected to provide limited cooperation, but leaving the IAEA empty-handed might open the door to additional censure of Iran at the next Board of Governors meeting March 5. The Iran Regional Presence Office Dubai comments Iranian officials glossed over the failure by saying it will hold future talks with the IAEA. *(Ops/USUNVIE e-mail, Ops/Iran Regional Presence Office Dubai e-mail, The New York Times)*

## **ROK AND CHINESE FM MEETING IN JEOPARDY**

(SBU) Republic of Korea (ROK) FM Kim and Chinese FM Yang are scheduled to hold talks March 2 in advance of ROK President Lee and Chinese President Hu's meeting on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit March 26-27, according to press. Embassy Seoul comments the foreign ministers' meeting might be postponed or cancelled because of the ROK's strong criticism of China's detention of a large group of refugees from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in Shenyang, several of whom have relatives in the ROK. Embassy Beijing comments the key issue for both sides presumably would be how to deal with a post-Kim Jong-il DPRK, particularly its nuclear program. FM Yang could also raise the possibility of announcing the start of bilateral or ROK-China-Japan trilateral free trade agreement negotiations. *(Ops/Embassy Seoul telcon and e-mail, Ops/Embassy Beijing e-mail, Yonhap News Agency)*

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