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Document ID: EUP20021015000146
Entry Date: 10/15/2002
Version Number: 01

Region: The Americas, Near East/South Asia

Sub-Region: North America, Near East

Country: Canada, Syria, United States

Topic: HUMAN RIGHTS, INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, MIGRATION, TERRORISM.911WEB,
URGENT

Source-Date: 10/15/2002

US Said To Provide 'Incomplete Information' on Syrian-Canadian Detained in
US

EUP20021015000146 Toronto The Globe and Mail (Internet Version-WWW) in
English 15 Oct 02 p A5

[Report by Estanislao Oziwicz from the print edition: "Ottawa man feared
being sent to Syria, U.S. lawyer says; Arar[0] 'confused' during New York
meeting, said he had refused to sign removal paper"]

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An Ottawa engineer detained by U.S. authorities and accused of having links
to al-Qa'ida was terrified that he would be deported to his native Syria, a
U.S. lawyer says.

Ottawa is demanding that Washington divulge the whereabouts of Maher
Arar[0], a 32-year-old Canadian citizen arrested during a stopover at New
York's Kennedy airport on Sept. 26 as he was travelling to Montreal from
Tunisia.

Amal Oummi, an Arabic-speaking immigration lawyer based in New York,
said yesterday she may have been the last contact the family had with Mr.
Arar[0] before he disappeared.

Ms. Oummi spoke to Mr. Arar[0], who was being held at Brooklyn's
Metropolitan Detention Center, on Oct. 5 at the request of his family.

"Basically, everything happened so fast that before we could take the
next step we couldn't find him and then we heard he was deported."

Ms. Oummi said Mr. Arar[0], a telecommunications engineer, told her
that U.S. authorities had asked him to sign a document permitting his
deportation to Syria but that he had refused. "He was very, very concerned
and worried that he was going to be deported to Syria."

She reassured him that her understanding of U.S. law was that if he was
going to be deported he could choose to go to Canada. She also told him
that if he feared being deported to Syria he would get a chance to argue
his case.

But Ms. Oummi said that opportunity never arose, and Mr. Arar[0] was
later interrogated by U.S. officials with no lawyer present. She said she
and another New York lawyer involved in the case had no real chance to be
present because they were notified by voice-mail message on a Sunday that

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
DATE/CASE ID: 11 MAR 2009 200706444

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the interview was being held that evening.

She said a U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service document she examined indicated that Mr. Arar[0] was being detained "for allegedly being a member of a terrorist organization, to wit al-Qa'ida."

Mr. Arar[0] "was in very, very bad shape, from my observations," Ms. Oummi said.

"He was very emotional, very scared. He was not doing well at all. I was very concerned about him. . . . He didn't seem to know what was going on. He was very disoriented. He seemed very confused. He was very, very emotional. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that about half the time I just had to let him sob and cry."

Riad Saloojee of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada has said Mr. Arar's[0] treatment is a breach of Canadian sovereignty.

Mr. Saloojee said Mr. Arar[0], father of two young Canadian-born children, could face severe punishment in Syria because he avoided compulsory military service before leaving the country for Canada as a teenager.

Both Mr. Arar[0] and his wife, Monia, got their postsecondary education in Canada.

Reynald Doiron, a spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs, said an INS official provided incomplete information when he contacted the Canadian government about the case on Saturday.

Mr. Doiron said as far as Ottawa knows Mr. Arar[0] was not charged with any offence.

"We need to find out, since he was transitting in the U.S. on a Canadian passport, why it is he was removed to an undisclosed country from the United States."

[Description of Source: Toronto The Globe and Mail (Internet Version-www) in English -- centrist daily; leading national newspaper of record]

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