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**LEESBURG MAN SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS IN PRISON  
FOR ACTING AS UNREGISTERED AGENT FOR SYRIAN GOVERNMENT**

WASHINGTON – Mohamad Anas Haitham Soueid, 48, a resident of Leesburg, Va., was sentenced today to 18 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for collecting video and audio recordings and other information about individuals in the United States and Syria who were protesting the government of Syria and to providing these materials to Syrian intelligence agencies in order to silence, intimidate and potentially harm the protestors.

Neil MacBride, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; and James McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI Washington Field Office, made the announcement following sentencing by United States District Judge Claude M. Hilton.

Soueid, aka “Alex Soueid” or “Anas Alswaid,” a Syrian-born naturalized U.S. citizen, was charged by a federal grand jury on Oct. 5, 2011, in a six-count indictment in the Eastern District of Virginia. He was convicted of unlawfully acting as an agent of a foreign government on March 26, 2012.

“Mr. Soueid betrayed this country to work on behalf of a state sponsor of terror,” said U.S. Attorney MacBride. “While the autocratic Syrian regime killed, kidnapped, intimidated and silenced thousands of its own citizens, Mr. Soueid spearheaded efforts to identify and intimidate those protesting against the Syrian government in the United States.”

“Mohamad Soueid acted as an unregistered agent of the Syrian government as part of an effort to collect information on people in this country protesting the Syrian government crack-down. I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who helped bring about this important case,” said Assistant Attorney General Monaco.

“By illegally acting as an agent of Syria, Mr. Soueid deceived his adopted country of the United States in support of a violent and repressive despotic government,” said Assistant Director in Charge McJunkin. “Through today’s sentencing, he will now be held accountable for his actions.”

According to court records, from March to October 2011, Soueid acted in the United States as an agent of the Syrian *Mukhabarat*, which refers to the intelligence agencies for the Government of Syria, including the Syrian Military Intelligence and General Intelligence Directorate. At no time while acting as an agent of the government of Syria in this country did

Soueid provide prior notification to the Attorney General as required by law. The U.S. government has designated the Syrian government a state sponsor of terrorism since 1979.

Under the direction and control of Syrian officials, Soueid recruited individuals living in the United States to make dozens of audio and video recordings of protests against the Syrian regime – including recordings of conversations with individual protestors – in the United States and Syria, which he provided to the Syrian government. He also supplied the Syrian government with contact information for key dissident figures in the United States, details about the financiers of the dissident movement, logistics for protests and meetings, internal conflicts within the movement, and the movement's future plans.

In a handwritten letter to a Syrian official in April 2011, Soueid outlined his support for the Syrian government's repressions of its citizens, stating that disposing of dissension must be decisive and prompt and that violence, home invasions, and arrests against dissidents is justified.

The Syrian government provided Soueid with a laptop to further their ability to surreptitiously communicate, which he later destroyed. In late June 2011, the Syrian government paid for Soueid to travel to Syria, where he met with intelligence officials and spoke with President Bashar al-Assad in private.

To thwart detection of his activities by U.S. law enforcement, Soueid lied to a Customs and Border Patrol agent upon his return from meeting with President al-Assad in Syria, and he also lied repeatedly to FBI agents when they questioned him in August 2011. Following the FBI interview, Soueid destroyed documents in his backyard and informed the *Mukhbarat* about his FBI interview.

This investigation is being conducted by the FBI's Washington Field Office with assistance from the Loudon County, Va., Sheriff's Office. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dennis Fitzpatrick and Neil Hammerstrom of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Brandon L. Van Grack of the Counterespionage Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

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