

NBC BRIEFING

25X1 **23 September 1957**

THE SYRIAN SITUATION

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- II. Syria's armed forces are mostly deployed in Damascus area and southward on Israeli front (40,000 out of 50,000).
- III. Inside Syria, the various elements in the ruling clique still appear to be treading warily, fearful that a misstep might be used to justify intervention by one or more of its neighbors or might bring out in the open disagreements within the clique itself.
- A. No confirmed movement of Syrian troops or aircraft toward Turkish or Iraqi frontiers. Rumors of such action, however, circulating in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Israel. Syrian defense minister Azm says measures" but not general mobilization. they are concerned that they claim to be "general maneuvers." They have also reportedly proclaimed a partial alert and called up some reserves.

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B. They are probably relying on Soviet pressures and gestures to protect them. In addition to the Soviet naval visit to Latakia (arrived 21 September), a Soviet economic mission has arrived in Damascus.

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IV. Syrian Foreign Minister Bitar has announced that King Saud will visit Damascus next Friday on his way back to Saudi Arabia from Europe. Saud has been urged by his advisors to mediate between the US and Syria.

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V. Egypt has shown increasing concern over Syrian developments.

25X1 A. [redacted] possibly a few hundred Egyptian troops are about to be sent to Syria.

VI. Jordan engaged in heavy war of words with Egypt and Syria. However, extensive Syrian and Egyptian subversive activity in Jordan create serious problem for Amman government already subjected to major economic problems.

VII. Israel is remaining quiet at this stage; the latest set of army maneuvers carried on in the area west of the Syrian border ended last week, and completion of the Lake Hula drainage project is near.

VIII. Moscow probably genuinely concerned over possibilities of armed intervention in Syria.

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