

~~Secret~~

(b)(3)



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

~~Secret~~

43

RETURN TO ARCHIVES & RECORDS CENTER  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER USE  
JCR 79-927 BOX 82

25 September 1970  
No. 0389/70

~~SECRET~~

The **WEEKLY SUMMARY**, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology. Topics requiring more comprehensive treatment and therefore published separately as Special Reports are listed in the contents pages.

#### WARNING

The **WEEKLY SUMMARY** contains classified information affecting the national security of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, sections 793 and 794, of the US Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

#### DISSEMINATION CONTROLS



(b)(3)

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## CONTENTS

*(Information as of noon 24 September 1970)*

Page

### MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA

Jordan-Fedayeen: The Conflict Widens . . . . . 1

NR Record

~~SECRET~~

Page i WEEKLY SUMMARY 25 Sep 70



~~SECRET~~

## MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA

Jordan-Fedayeen: *The Conflict Widens*

The clash took a new turn when, after a shallow thrust on Friday, a Syrian armored brigade crossed the border in force early Sunday. Jordanian armor drove the unit back after knocking out 30 Syrian tanks. Some 15 hours later, however, Syrian forces made a second push into Jordan, moving as far as Irbid in the west and Hawara to the south. According to press accounts, the Syrians wore Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) uniforms and claimed to be a unit of this regular force of the fedayeen movement. Damascus steadfastly denied that any intervention had occurred.

Throughout the week, most of Amman remained under army control. Heavy fighting raged in and near refugee camps and residential areas, however, as army tanks shelled sniper positions. Field Marshal Majali, military governor of the city, instituted a "shoot-to-kill" curfew that has remained in effect except for occasional early-morning breaks. All attempts to establish a cease-fire have failed.

The Syrian incursion appears initially to have panicked the palace in Amman, already deeply concerned by the continuing fedayeen resistance and the ambiguous threat of the large Iraqi force in Jordan. The Jordanian tank force was able to hold in an arc below Ramtha, however, aided by timely strikes from the Jordanian Air Force and by constant pounding from artillery on the heights around Irbid. The Iraqi tanks continued to patrol north and west of Mafraq, where their forces had concentrated, but did not join battle on either side. Although Baghdad has assured the Palestinians of support, it has so far limited this to the supply of arms to individuals and perhaps the dispatch of elements of the Iraqi contingent of the PLA.

In an effort to calm the heightened tensions, the Tunisians hastily called for an emergency Arab summit conference, but this never got off

the ground and was postponed indefinitely on Tuesday. The Arab League sent a four-man delegation—led by Sudanese President Numayri, with representatives from Kuwait, Tunisia, and Egypt—to Amman Tuesday evening to meet with King Husayn. The team was unable to contact fedayeen leader Yasir Arafat, [REDACTED]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

Israel's stance was one of watchful preparedness during the week. Israeli officials began getting ready for a possible military intervention of their own as developments in Jordan raised the possibility of new dangers to Jewish settlements in the Beit Shean Valley. Had the Arabs and guerrillas begun to dismember Jordan, Israel apparently was ready to pick up some additional insurance for itself—the Gilead Heights. The imminence of Israeli intervention subsided Wednesday morning, however, after the Syrian tanks withdrew.

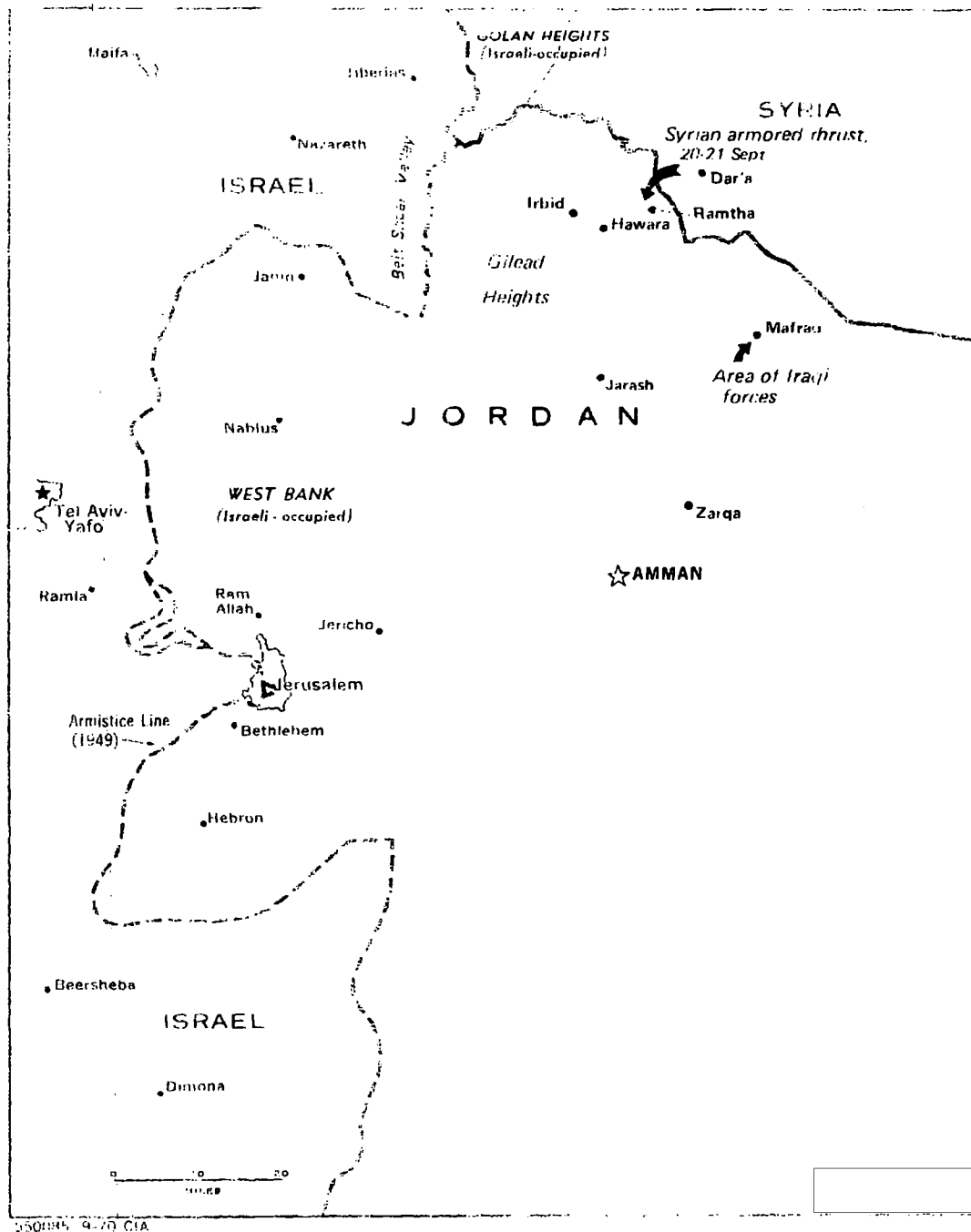
As the week ended, the Jordan Arab Army in Amman sought to exterminate the last-ditch resistance of the fedayeen with point-blank cannon fire. In the north, remnants of three Syrian armored brigades huddled astride the border, facing a hastily set up but still effective screen of Jordanian tanks, artillery, and aircraft. The guerrilla stronghold of Irbid was beleaguered, but the fedayeen continued to resist stubbornly elsewhere in the so-called "liberated area" north of Amman, holding or contesting most of the major towns. In the south, Bedouin tribesmen, their faces blackened in the traditional sign of no quarter, joined with army units to eradicate fedayeen enclaves in the scattered villages along the Dead Sea.

*Soviet Attitude and Reaction*

From the outset, Moscow's primary concern over Jordan has been the possibility of US or

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~



(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Israeli intervention. Following the Syrian invasion, Soviet diplomats in Washington and elsewhere repeatedly probed for information on Western intentions and warned of the "serious consequences" of any intervention. Moscow also reportedly approached Damascus to urge restraint and an end to the fighting, a demarche probably prompted by Soviet concern that Syrian involvement had substantially increased the chance of "outside interference." The approach was undoubtedly in low key, however, and was made with the recognition that such efforts under similar circumstances in the past had proved fruitless.

As the fighting in Jordan went on, and the US and Israel made contingency military preparations, Soviet propaganda warned with increasing sharpness against Western intervention. These preparations were taken up by Soviet President Podgorny in a speech on Wednesday, lending added weight to Soviet public criticism. At the same time, Moscow linked events in Jordan with larger issues in the Middle East, charging they were part of "a wide imperialist conspiracy" instigated by the Israelis and intended to upset a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

#### *Whither Fatah?*

The fedayeen movement is likely to become even more radicalized in the wake of its latest confrontation with the Jordanian Government. Throughout late August, Yasir Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization/Fatah complex had been attempting to brake the runaway activities of extremist fedayeen groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP), which had been inciting new troubles for King Husayn. As a result of Arafat's failure to keep the lid on, however, Fatah's continued leadership of the fedayeen movement now faces its strongest challenge.

The extremists were probably eager to provoke a clash with King Husayn, both to isolate Fatah and to gain the sympathy of Arab public opinion. Fatah's pre-eminence in the fedayeen movement was gained largely as a result of Arafat's ability to establish and maintain a political relationship with the King that allowed the fedayeen to co-exist with the government. Even though Fatah has borne the brunt of the fighting in most past clashes with the government, Arafat had still been able to re-establish this relationship. By early September, however, the PFLP and PDFLP were finally able to bring conditions in Amman near to chaos, forcing King Husayn to take repressive measures.

The recent fighting has been so bitter and apparently so bloody that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to reach another understanding. Fatah, which apparently is seriously decimated, now becomes merely another Palestine guerrilla organization. Although it still has the largest membership, Fatah's loss of its unique position leaves it little room for future maneuvering. If it accepts support from another Arab state, it is likely to lose its apolitical image and also stands a good chance of becoming—or being regarded as—a puppet. If it chooses to go underground, it not only loses its freedom of operation but is likely to see its ranks further depleted. A rapprochement with the King, and there is evidence that Husayn is seeking to re-establish such ties, would brand Fatah as a traitor to the Palestinian cause, further diminishing its influence.

In the future, therefore, it seems likely that Arafat and Fatah will adopt a more radical political program in order to compete with Habbash's PFLP and Hawatmah's PDFLP. Fatah also has an opportunity to shift its activities to Lebanon, where the commandos are not likely to be challenged seriously by a government that has less strength and resolve than the Hashemite regime of Jordan.

(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~