

Syria Being Surrounded

Debka is reporting that the Jordanian Army will conduct exercises near the Syrian border simultaneously with the Turkish exercise in Hatay Province.

Debkafile's military and intelligence sources report that the United States and Turkey urged Jordan's King Abdullah to hold a similar maneuver or reinforce his units on the Syrian border. But Bashar Assad decided that being forced to build up his forces on Syria's borders with Turkey and Israel was enough and a Jordanian exercise must be stopped.

Thursday, he sent his powerful brother-in-law Gen. Asef Shawqat to Amman with a stern warning for the king: If the Hashemite Kingdom lines up with Turkey and Israel and deploys extra troops on the Syrian border, Assad will order his air force to bomb Jordanian towns.

And if Israel intervenes to engage Syrian bombers, Damascus would launch surface missiles against Jordanian cities. (<http://www.debka.com/article/21367/>)

Please read the entire article for more important information.

Analysis. Assad has pretty much been a marked man ever since he told King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia that he was not giving up his alliance with the Iranians. There is little doubt in my mind that the Saudis have been the principal sponsors of the current revolt against Assad. It is a religious affront that a Sunni majority should be ruled by an Alawite (Sevener Shiite) minority. I suspect that Assad was told in the Arab manner that the Saudis were not fighting a two front war against Iranians on the east and Syrians on the west.

Even though the Iranians may consul restraint as they are most likely not ready for war with the Sunnis, Assad may still preempt in one final spasm of retribution against his external enemies. He may well believe that attacking Israel will get him the support of the Muslim World. Attacking Turkey or Jordan will earn him the enmity of the Muslim World.

We must also see what the Russians say about this situation. There have been reports that Russian technicians have been in Syria recently assessing the status of the Syrian armed forces and what upgrades may be required to bring them closer to the capabilities of their enemies. The Russians have a base area in the port of Tartus.

While it is unlikely that Turkey, Jordan or Israel will attack Syria, these exercises take a toll on the Syrian Army's operational capabilities. Keeping the Syrian Army constantly on the move depletes their war reserve spares and limits their ability to perform major maintenance on their vehicles. This puts the Syrian Army at a distinct disadvantage if it were to fight armies with fully capable weapons systems. At some point Syria will have to start cycling units through major maintenance and reduce the number of units operationally ready. Assad must pull units out of revolt suppression or weaken his forces on the various borders.

The biggest problem is that any war started here cannot be contained to the area of the combatants. Iran will attack the GCC states on the Persian Gulf and in turn be attacked itself. Iran will close the Straits of Hormuz. That will bring in the United States and possibly others to keep the Straits open and the oil flowing. Pakistan may be drawn in for supplying the Saudis with nuclear weapons from their stockpiles. The Indians may see this as an opportunity to rid themselves of their long time enemy. The People's Republic of China may be drawn in as an ally of Pakistan against India. Surely the North Koreans will see this as an opportunity to go South while the US is engaged in the Persian Gulf. What will the Japanese do?

Residents of the village of Meggido are well advised to seek other places to live.