

Authority **NND 969049**
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INFO : AMMAN, JIDDA, USINT, JADID, Assad

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ANALYSIS BRANCH

FROM : Amembassy BEIRUT

DATE: NOV. 3, 1970

SUBJECT : Situation in Syria

REF :

A longtime Syrian friend, a resident in Damascus, gave us the following rundown on the current Ba'th party crisis on October 30. He has good personal relations with a number of Ba'th party leaders including Atassi.

He confirmed that the crisis began when the party's left-wing directed the intervention into Jordan in late September. He identified the prime movers in the left-wing as Zuayeh, Makhous and Eid Esh Shawi - who are popularly associated with Salah Jadid. This leadership had hoped to retain control of the two tank battalions after the withdrawal from Jordan and had gone so far as to rent a variety of houses and apartments around Damascus with the idea of taking control of Damascus in Amman style. Assad's discovery of these plans was the final straw in bringing on the crisis. However, this had followed the Army's thwarting of the left-wing's plans to take over Saigra completely by bringing it under control of the Army a month or so earlier. Another point of contention was Assad's refusal to commit the Syrian Air Force, which he controls, to protect tanks during the Jordanian fiasco. (source put Syrian task losses at seventy).

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