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State Dept. review completed

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[REDACTED]

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

[REDACTED]

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2. REMOVAL OF SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF REPORTED IMMINENT

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[redacted] Syrian chief of staff Shuqayr will be removed shortly, [redacted]

[redacted] Dissatisfaction within the officer ranks is making his position untenable and there is danger that he may be assassinated.

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The embassy comments that Shuqayr's future would appear to depend on whether and how strongly conservative elements in Syria rally to his support. It feels that his dismissal would remove the last real obstacle to the assumption of full control over the army by anti-Western elements and might lead to leftist control over the government.

Comment

Shuqayr has previously exhibited considerable political agility and has long maneuvered successfully between the various conflicting elements struggling for control in Syria. [redacted]

[redacted] conservative elements in Syria, with Iraqi support, may be preparing for a showdown.

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Shuqayr has been under increasing pressure to obtain arms from the Soviet bloc and to avoid any agreement with the West. Syrian humiliation over the Israeli raid at Tiberias is apparently being used against Shuqayr as a means of obtaining either his removal or his compliance with leftist demands.

3. NEW CRISIS THREATENS IN JORDAN

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The 4 January supreme court decision that King Hussain's 19 December dissolution of the Jordan parliament was illegal has infuriated Jordanian elements hostile to the Baghdad pact, which had hoped to dominate a newly elected parliament. The consulate general in Jerusalem expects renewed rioting.

The governmental problem remains unresolved, with rumors that the caretaker cabinet may resign. The authority and prestige of the throne have declined and the British position has been severely damaged. Egypt's prestige has risen sharply and it is unlikely that any Jordanian decisions in the near future involving Israel or Middle East problems will be taken without the approval of Cairo.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 6 January)

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There was brief exchange of fire between Egyptian and Israeli patrols in the El Auja region on 6 January and Israel claims that Egyptian forces also ambushed an Israeli weapons carrier in this area. According to an Israeli spokesman, two Egyptian jets violated the Israeli airspace over Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba on 5 January.

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Syria would not sign a reimbursable military aid agreement with the United States. Syria considers the prices for the military items under consideration exorbitant and believes the items are available elsewhere at much lower prices.

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[redacted]