

SYRIA

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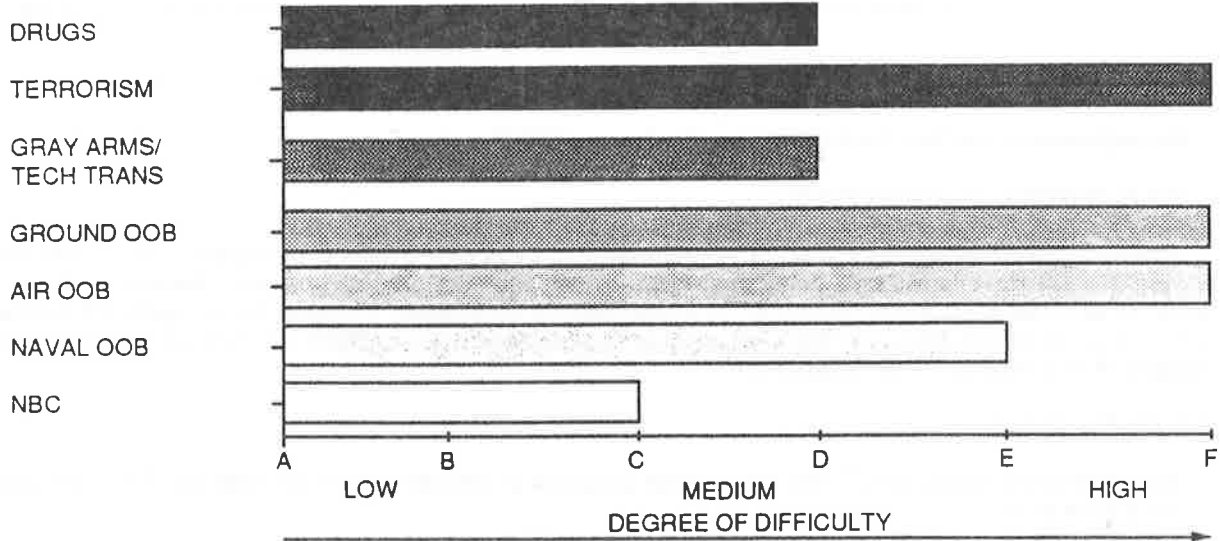


SUMMARY

Acute political and social instability and expansionist intentions toward **Lebanon**, **Jordan**, and **Israel** characterize the position of **Syria** in the **Middle East**. Overall **U.S.** equity in **Syria** is low due mainly to **Syria's** adamant rejection of attempts to mediate peace in the area, its support for international terrorism, and close military ties with the **Soviet Union**. **Syria** is a transit point for illegal narcotics, as well as a heroin refining center. Its military forces allegedly profit from drug production and trafficking in **Lebanon's Bekaa Valley**. **Syria** is known to sponsor terrorism in the **Middle East** and **Western Europe**. **Syria** is also involved in acquiring illicit weapons and technology for a major arms buildup against **Israel**. **Syria** should receive special attention by military planners because of its association with all three threat categories of narcotics, terrorism, and gray arms/technology transfer. It has one of the largest armed forces in the **Middle East** and depends heavily on **Soviet** military equipment and technical assistance. **Syria** is reported to have a significant chemical weapons production capability to include the arming of **Soviet**-supplied SS-21 SSMs with chemical warheads.

A large cultural difference exists between **Syria** and the **U.S.** The rugged mountains and broken terrain in the west would present obstacles for military operations in **Syria**. Only portions of **Syria**, mainly on the eastern plain, are suitable for cross-country movement of tracked vehicles. The average standoff distance for engagement by line-of-sight weapons (intervisibility) is limited to less than 1,000 meters in large parts of the country due to the rough terrain and ground cover. While NGF ships can approach the coast to provide good support for operations ashore, **Syrian** coastal defense weapons would have them seriously out-gunned. Mapping by 1:50,000 scale maps is limited to western **Syria** including the coastal area bordering the **Mediterranean**. **Syria** has one airfield that can accommodate C-5 aircraft and two moderate size ports with depths exceeding 40 feet. Key installations include oil fields, refineries, and pipelines, as well as suspected factories for the production of chemical weapons. Due to over 1,000 potential evacuees in **Syria**, NEO conducted by a MEU under normal conditions would present numerous difficulties.

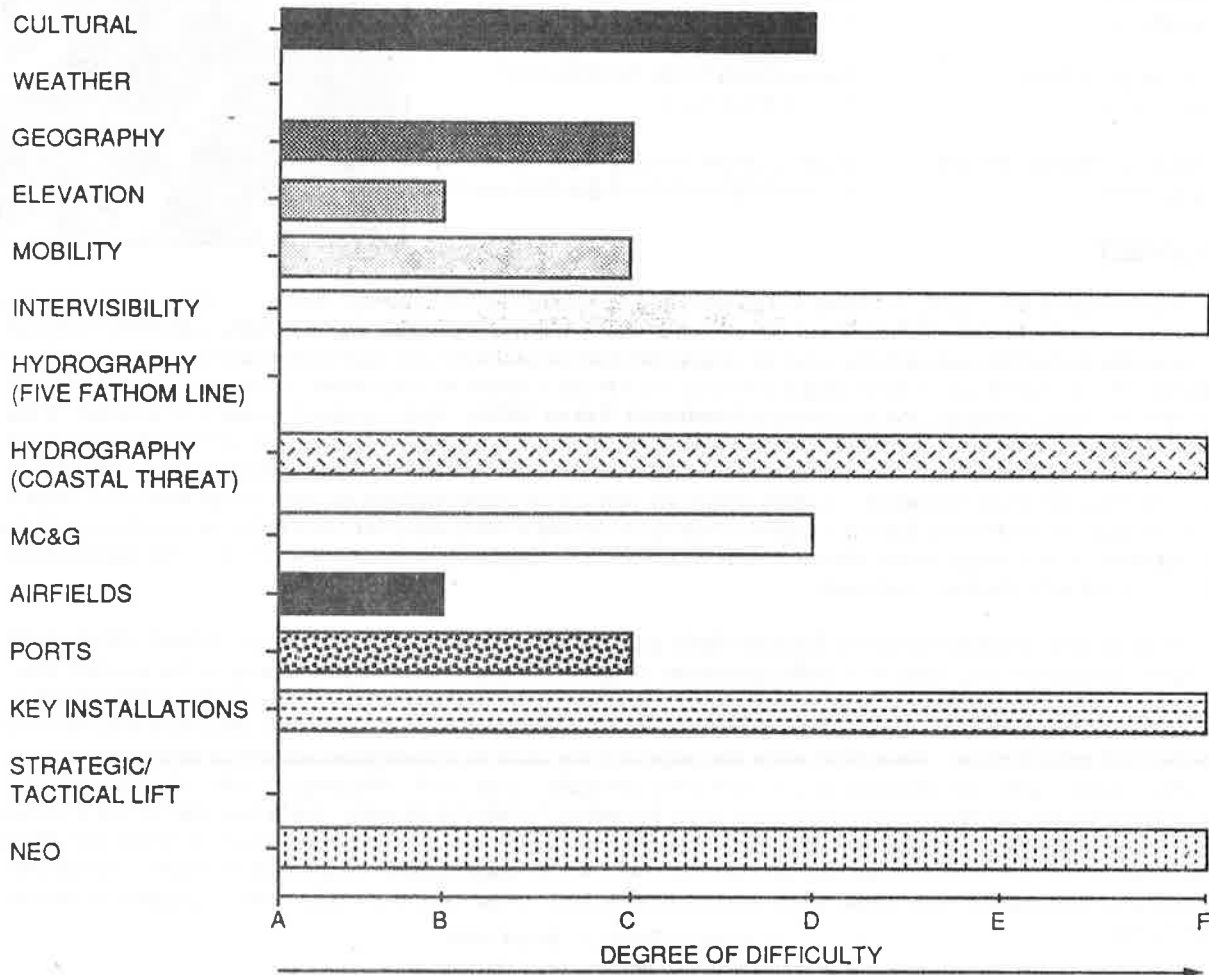
SYRIA - THREAT SUMMARY



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## SYRIA - TERRAIN AND LOGISTICS SUMMARY



### Existing Ongoing Conflicts

- Has expansionist intentions toward **Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel**.
- Has acute political and social instability.

President Hafez al-Assad must keep his country militarized to maintain control of the people. Almost all of the **Syrian** political factions have visions of a **greater Syria**, an idealized state that encompasses **Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel**. In particular, **Syria** strives to maintain an active presence in **Lebanon**. Visions of greater **Syria**, a threatened dictatorship, and militant Arabs lead **Syria** into an ongoing struggle with **Israel**. **Syria** also supports insurgent PLO elements in an attempt to further its ambitions.

### U.S. Equities in Syria

**Syria** is a strong military force in the **Middle East** and plays an important role in the Arab world. Overall **U.S.** equity in **Syria** is low.

Direct Inv (Mil of \$)	Exports (Mil of \$)	Imports (Mil of \$)	U.S. Aid (Mil of \$)	Total Equity (Mil of \$)	U.S. Citizens	\$ Rating Rating	Total Numerical Rating	Overall U.S. Equity
2	93	66	-	161	1,043	1 3	4	Low

**Drug Threat**

- Transit point for illicit narcotics.
- Heroin refining center.
- Profits from drug trafficking in the **Bekaa Valley**.

Drug Production	Drug Processing	Precursor Chemicals	Money Laundering	Transit Point
	X			X

**Syria** is a transit point for illicit narcotics, as well as a heroin refining center. Its military exerts significant influence over **Lebanon's Bekaa Valley**, allegedly profiting from widespread drug production and trafficking in that area.

**Terrorism**

- Sponsors terrorism in the **Middle East** and **Western Europe**.

**Syria**, under President Assad, previously was an active, if not a more calculated, sponsor of terrorism. **Syrian** operations normally were confined to the **Middle East**, although **Western Europe** occasionally has been the venue for its activities. Three acts of **Syrian** terrorism occurred in **Europe** in 1986: an attempted bombing of the El Al airline in **London**; the bombing of the **German-Arab** friendship society in **Berlin**; and the bombing of the El Al ticket counter in **Madrid**. These attacks drew intense international criticism and sanctions, forcing **Syria** to distance itself from its previously close association with terrorism, although more circumspect support for terrorist acts in the **Middle East** likely will continue.

**Gray Arms/Technology Transfer**

**Syria** is involved in acquiring illicit weapons and technology for a major arms buildup against **Israel** and to pursue its interests in **Lebanon**. The **Syrian** cities of **Damascus** and **Aleppo** are centers of commerce and, as such, act as transit points for gray arms shipments to the **East**, particularly **Iran** and **Iraq**.

**Consolidated Threat**

**Syria** deserves special consideration by military planners because it is involved in all three of the threat categories: narcotics, terrorism, and gray arms/technology transfer.

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## General Ground OOB

- Syria has the third largest ground OOB in the **Middle East** following **Iraq** and **Iran**.

Infantry	Tank OOB	Artillery	Army Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Reg/Exp	T-72	Bloc	300	10	450	F

Ground OOB includes about 300,000 troops of whom 120,000 are regulars, 130,000 are conscripts, and 50,000 are reserves. The general standard of individual training in the **Syrian** army is considered good. It is largely independent of **Soviet** training assistance except for specific highly advanced training subjects. **Syrian** forces have gained combat experience during operations in **Lebanon** and against **Israel**. Tanks: T-54, T-55, T-62, T-72, T-72M. Artillery: 2S1, 2S3, D-30, M-1931, M-1937, M-1938, M-1943, SS-21 SSM.

## General Air OOB

- Syria has the second largest air OOB in the region behind **Egypt**.

Air OOB	Close Air	AAW (IAD)	Air Force Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Bloc	NT/AW	Bloc	95	10	255	F

Fighter Aircraft: MiG-21, MiG-23, MiG-25, MiG-29; Close Air: Gazelle, Mi-24, Su-7, Su-22, Su-25; Air Defense: SA-2, SA-3, SA-5, SA-6, SA-7, SA-8, SA-9, SA-11, SA-13, and SA-14 SAMs and AA guns. In addition to 45,000 air force personnel, there are 50,000 personnel in a separate air defense command.

## General Naval OOB

- Syria has the fourth largest naval OOB in the region behind **Egypt**, **Iraq**, and **Iran**.

Naval OOB	S/S Missiles	Patrol Craft	Navy Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
ASUW/Air/ASW	Bloc	Bloc	3	10	143	E

Ships: 2 Frigates (Ex-**Soviet**) with guns, torpedoes, ant/submarine mortars, depth charges, mines, and radars; SSMs: SS-N-2A; Patrol Craft: 6 Fast Attack Craft-Missile (Ex-**Soviet**) with SSMs, SAMs (Crotale), guns, countermeasures, fire control and radars; 6 Large Patrol Craft; 3 Coastal Patrol Craft.

Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threat

- Reported to have a significant chemical weapons production capability.
- Delivery systems for chemical weapons may include the Soviet-supplied SS-21 missiles.

Syria is reported to have weapons production capability at two factories including capacity for arming Soviet-supplied SS-21 missiles with chemical warheads. No nuclear weapons are suspected.

Culture (Language and Religion)

Primary language - Arabic (Armenian, Kurdish, French, English)  
Primary religion - Islam

There is a large cultural difference between Syria and the U.S.

Weather

Average Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit)	Average Relative Humidity (Percent)	Average Annual Rainfall (Inches)	Rating
51-76	36	9	Dry/Warm

The weather in Syria can be compared to Phoenix, Arizona; summer days are dry and hot with average maximum temperatures above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. From December to March it is quite cold but seldom reaches freezing. Precipitation may reach 30 inches annually along the coast, decreasing to less than 10 inches in the eastern desert area. The rainy season is generally from November to April.

General Geographic Conditions

URBAN	DESERT	JUNGLE	MOUNTAINOUS
	X		

Operational Elevation

<2,000 FT	<4,000 FT	<6,000 FT	>6,000 FT	>9,000 FT	>12,000 FT
	X				

The topography consists of a coastal zone with a narrow double mountain belt enclosing a depression in the west, deserts, and a much larger eastern plateau.

General Cross-Country Mobility

- Portions of Syria are generally suitable for cross-country movement of tracked vehicles.

The large eastern plateau can generally accommodate cross-country movement of tracked vehicles. The northwestern coastal highlands and the area bordering Lebanon however, are basically unsuited due to steep slopes and rough terrain.

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## Intervisibility (Line of Sight)

- Poor, limited to less than 1,000 meters in large parts of the country.

About 75 percent of **Syria** consists of mountainous and rough terrain which would limit line of sight distances to less than 1,000 meters. Only the narrow coastal plain along the **Mediterranean Sea**, the **Euphrates River** valley, and portions of the eastern plateau would accommodate unrestricted visibility beyond 1,000 meters.

## Hydrography (Five Fathom Line)

- Good NGF support for coastal operations.

DMA Chart #	5 Fathom Line from Shore (Meters)	NFG Rating
56041 (Baniyas)	2,100	Good

## Hydrography (Coastal Threat)

- Coastal defense weapons have significant capability.

Maximum Capability Coastal Defense Weapon	Maximum Range of Weapon (Meters)	Rating (Compared with 5"/54-cal)
SS-21 SSM	120,000	Threat Advantage

## MC&G Shortfalls

- Limited map coverage.

1:50 New	1:50 Old	Some 1:50	MSI Avail	1:250 New	None
		X			

1:50,000 scale map coverage is available for western **Syria** including the coastal area.

## Airfields

- Accessible by air, with one airfield that can accommodate C-5 aircraft.

Number of Airfields	Type Aircraft (C-5, C-141B, C-130) Accommodated	Airfield Utility (Unconstrained/Constrained)	Rating
2	1 C-5 1 C-141B	1/1	1/C-5

Airfields	Type Aircraft	Comments
Damascus International Tiyas	C-5, C-141B, C-130 C-141B, C-130	Daylight/VFR only.

**Ports**

- Two moderate size ports with small harbors and depths exceeding 40 feet.

Major Ports	Harbor Size	Channel/Anchorage Depths (Feet)	Cargo Pier Depth (Feet)	Cranes
Al Ladhqiyyah Atarus	Small Small	-/46-50 61-65/66-70	31-35 -	Yes -

**Key Installations**

It has been reported that there are facilities in **Syria** which are producing chemical weapons. Oil fields are found at **Qarah Shuk** in the northeast near the **Iraqi** border, **Suwaydiyah, Remaylan, Jubaysah, Dayr az Zawr, Sharifah, Qayrik, Wahab, Said, As Safih, and Thayim**. There have been recent improvements in roads, railroads, ports, electricity, and communications networks.

U.S. Embassy	Communications	Highways	Railroads	Major Ports	Primary Airfields	Pipeline	Oil Field	NBC
Damascus	- Fair telecomm currently being improved - 10 Radio stations - 40 TV stations - 1 Satellite station and 1 under construction	27,000 km	1,997 km	2	2	- Crude oil - Refined products	Yes	C

**Strategic and Tactical Lift**

The **Atlantic ARG** with its embarked **MEU**, which normally operates in the **Mediterranean Sea**, could reach **Syria** in less than two days. The **AAF/ACB** can arrive within 24 hours but these elements do not possess a forcible entry capability.

**NEO**

- Due to the large number of potential evacuees (1,043) in **Syria**, NEO conducted by a **MEU** under normal conditions would present numerous difficulties.

Embassy Staff	Evacuees	Inland Objective (nm)	Rating
42	1,043	45 (Damascus)	F

