

# NYTimes: Bush Administration Official - Israel strikes deep into Syria to destroy N.Korean Nukes

Contributed by NYTimes, WSJ, Naharnet, CRNews  
Wednesday, 12 September 2007  
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## U.S. Confirms Israeli Strikes Hit Syrian Target Last Week

Timeline: (CRNews): June Syria warns Israel to give up Golan by Aug/Sept or face Attack

July Ahmadinejad - Summer War, Enemy will be defeated

August - John Bolton makes reference that N.Korea Supplying Syria with Nuclear Weapons

September - NYTimes - Israel strikes deep into Syrian Territory to destroy N.Korean Nuclear Deliveries

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Graphic:  
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## New York Times

U.S. Confirms Israeli Strikes Hit Syrian Target Last Week  
By MARK MAZZETTI and HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 &mdash; After days of silence from the Israeli government, American officials confirmed Tuesday that Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes inside Syria last week, the first such attack since 2003.

A Defense Department official said Israeli jets had struck at least one target in northeastern Syria last Thursday, but the official said it was still unclear exactly what the jets hit and the extent of the bombing damage.

Syria has lodged a protest at the United Nations in response to the airstrike, accusing Israel of "flagrant violation" of its airspace. But Israel's government has repeatedly declined to comment on the matter.

Officials in Washington said that the most likely targets of the raid were weapons caches that Israel's government believes Iran has been sending the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah through Syria. Iran and Syria are Hezbollah's primary benefactors, and American intelligence officials say a steady flow of munitions from Iran runs through Syria and into Lebanon.

In the summer of 2006, during fighting between Israeli and Hezbollah forces, the militant group fired hundreds of missiles into Israel, surprising Israel with the extent and sophistication of its arsenal. Israel has tried repeatedly to get the United Nations to prevent the arms shipments across the Syria-Lebanon border.

One Bush administration official said Israel had recently carried out reconnaissance flights over Syria, taking pictures of possible nuclear installations that Israeli officials believed might have been supplied with material from North Korea. The administration official said Israeli officials believed that North Korea might be unloading some of its nuclear material on Syria.

"The Israelis think North Korea is selling to Iran and Syria what little they have left," the official said. He

said it was unclear whether the Israeli strike had produced any evidence that might validate that belief.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing a military action by another government.

In a letter circulated to members of the Security Council on Tuesday, Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Jaafari, said Israel dropped munitions though they did not cause any "material damage."

Syria made its protest via Qatar, the Arab representative on the Security Council, United Nations officials said. Security Council representatives discussed the issue on Tuesday, but did not come to any conclusions.

Neither Israel nor the United States has spoken publicly on the airstrikes. The State Department spokesman, Sean D. McCormack, referred all questions to Israel and Syria, and a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington declined to comment.

Tensions between Israel and Syria have escalated over the past year, since the end of the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, and both countries remain in a heightened state of alert along their common border.

Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, has said that if Israel is not willing to resume negotiations for the return of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the alternative would be to try to regain the territory by force.

Formal peace talks between Israel and Syria broke down in 2000.

NYTimes, September 12, 2007

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/12/world/middleeast/12syria.html?\\_r=2&oref=slogin&ref=world&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/12/world/middleeast/12syria.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&ref=world&pagewanted=print)

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John Bolton: Syria is providing "safe havens for North Korea's nuclear weapons development."

Written by WSJ-Opinion Journal

Friday, 31 August 2007

Pyongyang's Upper Hand - Thanks to feckless diplomacy, Kim Jong Il may preserve his nuclear program.

The Six-Party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program have now descended into a miasma of "working groups," one of which, on U.S.-North Korea bilateral issues, will meet this weekend in Geneva. It is worth paying attention to the outcome of this gathering.

North Korea wants to be taken off the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism and, as soon as possible, to enjoy full diplomatic relations with Washington. Pyongyang may well succeed, as many in the U.S. State Department seem more eager to grant full recognition to the Pyongyang dictatorship in North Korea than to the democracy in Taiwan. This would be a profound mistake on our part.

Nearly 200 days have passed since Feb. 13, when the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program produced an "agreement" to eliminate that program. Despite encomiums about the virtues of diplomacy, little real progress has been made in eliminating Pyongyang's program. Negotiations in July ended without agreement on a timetable, despite repeated State Department assurances since February that the North would be held to strict deadlines.

The Yongbyon reactor is shuttered, but that reactor was not frequently operational in the recent past, and may well be at the end of, or even beyond, its useful life. The return of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to Yongbyon provides North Korea with a new patina of respectability, despite the near certainty that significant nuclear activity is happening anywhere but Yongbyon.

In fact, the key change is that economic assistance is once again subsidizing and reinforcing Kim Jong Il's hold on power. Heavy fuel oil, food and other "humanitarian" assistance from South Korea, and substantial unpublicized aid from China are all flowing North. Cheeky Pyongyang is once again demanding that the outside world supply it with light-water nuclear reactors. The second North-South Summit in Pyongyang, postponed until October--closer to South Korea's presidential elections-- will provide renewed legitimacy to the North Korean dictatorship, and may bolster the political chances of South Korean advocates of appeasement, in turn providing Kim Jong Il even more breathing room.

Kim is once again besting the U.S. in accomplishing his two central strategic objectives: staying in power and preserving his nuclear-weapons program. The working groups currently underway do nothing to achieve the proper ends of U.S. foreign policy. A few weeks ago in Shenyang, China, the "denuclearization" working group met without visible progress, even on permanently dismantling Yongbyon.

There is still simply no evidence that Pyongyang has made a decision to abandon its long-held strategic objective to have a credible nuclear-weapons capability. This inconvenient fact should make it impossible for the State Department to concede on other issues, even if it were inclined to do so. Creative minds are therefore working on ways to explain that any forthcoming North Korean declaration of its nuclear capabilities is "full and complete," thus eliminating the remaining troubling obstacles to full normalization of relations.

Consider a possible North Korean "declaration," perhaps drafted with State's coaching, which would say something like this: "We manufactured two nuclear devices, one of which we detonated last October. We detonated the other earlier, but you didn't recognize it as a nuclear explosion. We currently have no nuclear devices. Our plutonium reprocessing efforts were not very successful, which explains why we only had two devices, neither of which produced large yields. We ultimately disposed of our limited remaining plutonium to others, and we have no idea where it now is. We currently have no plutonium. On uranium enrichment, we purchased some UF6 and a small number of centrifuges for a test cascade from A.Q. Khan, but we could not progress due to inadequate funds. Accordingly, we long ago sold all but a small amount of the UF6 and the centrifuges to third-parties. We will produce what little we have at Yongbyon shortly. That's it. Are we done now?"

Many will fall for this pretense of "full disclosure," especially those needing a diplomatic "success" to justify long years of faith in the Six-Party Talks. The alternative is to reject any North Korean declaration without full and timely verification. IAEA inspections alone are not enough. Its capacities are limited. Indeed, much of the IAEA's work is accomplished on the basis of intelligence provided by governments.

Precisely because our knowledge of the North's nuclear program is incomplete, we need an intrusive, indeed invasive, verification mechanism before having any confidence that North Korea's nuclear program is in fact being dismantled. We need smart and extensive verification activities inside North Korea, including no-notice inspections, a full range of sensors and sampling, unrestricted interviews and document reviews. If the North rejects effective verification, that is yet another basis to repudiate the Feb. 13 quicksand deal.

We need to know, among other things, precisely how many nuclear weapons the North has manufactured, how and where it manufactured them, how many it now has, and how much reprocessed plutonium remains available for weaponization. If any devices, fissile material or nuclear manufacturing equipment have left North Korea, we need to learn the specifics.

We need to understand the full extent of its uranium enrichment program, and if weapons-grade enriched uranium was produced, where it is and how much there is of it. We also need to know specifically if North Korea possesses any enriched uranium metal or any weapons- or missile warhead-design information.

President Bush has stressed that we must also deal with Pyongyang's biological, chemical and ballistic missile programs. We must address these programs, especially the missiles, soon. Failure to make explicit the important connection between weapons and delivery systems will certainly come back to haunt us, and we are on the verge of allowing this point to slip away entirely.

Finally, we need to learn the details of North Korean nuclear cooperation with other countries. We know that both Iran and Syria have long cooperated with North Korea on ballistic missile programs, and the prospect of cooperation on nuclear matters is not far-fetched. Whether and to what extent Iran, Syria or others might be "safe havens" for North Korea's nuclear weapons development, or may have already participated with or benefited from it, must be made clear.

For our own safety's sake, and that of allies like Japan and South Korea, there can be no compromises on these points.

Mr. Bolton is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of "Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the U.N. and Abroad," forthcoming this fall from Simon & Schuster.

Wall Street Journal - Opinion Journal - BY JOHN R. BOLTON - Friday, August 31, 2007 12:01 a.m. EDT

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110010542>

Channel 1: IAF Struck Syria, NY Times: N. Korean Nukes Targeted  
by Gil Ronen and Ezra HaLevi

(IsraelINN.com) Israeli TV Channel 1 said Tuesday that the IDF "definitely carried out an attack" against Syria last Thursday. The attack was significant, the channel's military affairs reporter said, and was probably carried out against a large and important target that justified taking this kind of extreme action at such a sensitive time in Israeli-Syrian

relations.

The target hit was in the Deir Ez-Zour region in eastern Syria, near the Euphrates river. The attack was carried out by Israel Air Force (IAF) F-15i jets (The 'i' stands for 'Israel'), referred to in Hebrew as Ra'am, or 'thunder.' Anti-aircraft fire from the ground was ineffective, Channel 1 said.

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/123666>

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Ahmadinejad: It's going to be a 'hot' summer  
In surprise Damascus visit hopes for 'defeat for the region's enemies'

[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=56765](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=56765)

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'Mideast war this summer'  
Syrian official threatens 'resistance' by September, warns Damascus preparing for large-scale conflict

[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=56567](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=56567)

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Israeli air strike well inside Syria last week, apparently to send Damascus a message not to rearm Hizbullah.

Communications Jamming Across Lebanon Likely Caused by Israel's Air Strikes on Syria

The jamming of the communications system throughout Lebanon in recent days was apparently caused by Israel's air strikes on Syria, Telecommunications Minister Marwan Hamadeh said.

Hamadeh uncovered that while the source of interference has not been officially determined, the jamming coincided with Israel's aggression against Syria on Thursday.

"What we have witnessed over the past four or five days started with the aggressive Israeli infiltration on Syria," Hamadeh said in remarks published by the daily An Nahar on Wednesday.

He said the interference has dwindled toward a stop by late Tuesday.

It was the biggest jamming of cell phones since last summer's Israel's offensive against Lebanon, Hamadeh added.

Syria complained to the United Nations over Israel's "flagrant violation" of its airspace which apparently was meant as a message to Damascus to stop rearming Hizbullah.

Syria's U.N. envoy Bashar Jaafari said his government was "drawing attention to this flagrant violation by Israel of its airspace and to its aggression against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic in clear and brazen defiance of international law."

In identical letters to U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon and to French Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert, the current president of the Security Council, Jaafari said the Israeli planes last Thursday crossed Syria's northern frontier and dropped "some munitions without managing to cause any human casualties or material damage."

The Israeli incursion ratcheted up tension between the neighboring foes.

The Syrian letter, obtained by AFP, said the Jewish state had deliberately committed "other similar crimes including the bombing of Syrian civilian facilities in 2003."

"If the international community persists in disregarding these Israeli actions in breach of international law, that is likely to subject the region and international peace and security to serious consequences that may be difficult to control," Jaafari noted.

In an interview with an Italian newspaper published Saturday, Syrian Vice President Farouq al-Sharaa said his country was mulling a "series of responses" to the Israeli air violations.

A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity Tuesday, said Israel carried out the air strike well inside Syria

last week, apparently to send Damascus a message not to rearm Hizbullah.

Israel accuses Damascus of supporting Hizbullah with which the Jewish state fought a devastating 34-day war last summer.

Syria also shelters a number of radical Palestinian groups and is home to Khaled Meshaal, the exiled leader of Hamas who tops Israel's most-wanted list and heads a movement branded a terrorist organization by the West.

Israel and Syria remain officially at war. Peace talks last collapsed in 2000 over the status of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967, and each blame each other for tensions in the Middle East.(Naharnet-AFP)

from Naharnet, Beirut, 12 Sep 07, 10:00

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&71482ED0AA47A01BC225735400275B24>

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Israel Reportedly Hit Syrian Base Financed by Iran

Israeli warplanes last week bombed and destroyed a northern Syrian missile base that was financed by Iran, an Arab Israeli newspaper reported on Wednesday.

Citing anonymous Israeli sources, the Assennara newspaper said that Israeli jets "bombed in northern Syria a Syrian-Iranian missile base financed by Iran ... It appears that the base was completely destroyed."

Syria on Tuesday lodged a formal complaint with the United Nations over the "flagrant violation" of its airspace last Thursday, during which it said its air defenses opened fire on Israeli warplanes flying over the northeast of the country.

Israeli officials have refused to comment on the report, as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert "specifically instructed ministers not to talk about the incident related to Syria at all," one senior Israeli government official said.

A U.S. defense official said on Tuesday that Israel had launched an air strike well inside Syria, apparently to send Damascus a message not to rearm Hizbullah.

The official did not know the target of the strike.

"The Israelis are trying to tell the Syrians: 'Don't support a resurgence of Hizbullah in Lebanon.'"

Israel fought a devastating 34-day war in July and August 2006 against Hizbullah, whose missile firepower and use of sophisticated weaponry surprised the Israelis.

CNN said the strike, which could have also involved the use of ground forces, was believed to have targeted weapons either coming into Syria or moving through Syria from Iran to the Iranian-backed Hizbullah.(AFP)

from Naharnet, Beirut, 12 Sep 07, 09:11

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&71482ED0AA47A01BC225735400275B24>

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Syria Complains to U.N. Over Israel's 'Flagrant Violation' of its Airspace

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Israel and Syria remain officially at war. Peace talks last collapsed in 2000 over the status of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967, and each blame each other for tensions in the Middle East.(AFP)

from Naharnet, Beirut, 12 Sep 07, 07:06

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&71482ED0AA47A01BC225735400275B24>

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**U.S. Official: Israel Raided Syria to Stop Hizbullah Supplies**

Israel carried out an air strike well inside Syria last week, apparently to send Damascus a message not to rearm Hizbullah in Lebanon, a U.S. defense official said Tuesday.

"It wasn't big. It was a quick strike. They were engaged by the Syrians, they dropped their ordnance and scooted out of there," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official did not know what was the target of the strike conducted Thursday, but said the US military believed it was to send a message to the Syrians.(AFP)

from Naharnet, Beirut, 11 Sep 07, 18:38

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&71482ED0AA47A01BC225735400275B24>

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**Mystery Shrouds Israeli Jetfighters' Mission in Syria**

Damascus said its air defenses opened fire on Israeli warplanes which violated Syrian airspace at dawn Thursday, escalating tension between the neighboring foes. Israel withheld comment.

A Syrian cabinet minister warned that the nation's leadership was considering its response to the Israeli "aggression" while in Israel the military declined any comment.

"Enemy Israeli planes penetrated Syrian airspace from the Mediterranean Sea heading towards the northeast, breaking the sound barrier," a Syrian army spokesman told the official SANA news agency.

"Our air defenses repulsed them and forced them to leave... after the Israeli planes dropped munitions, without causing human or material loss," he said, without giving further information on what exactly was dropped.

Syria's allegations came amid a war of words with Israel, with each blaming the other for stoking regional tensions and for failure to revive peace talks that have been stalled for seven years.

Information Minister Mohsen Bilal told pan-Arab satellite television Al-Jazeera that Syria's leadership was "giving serious consideration to its response... to this aggression."

In Israel, the military refused to comment on Syria's claims, saying: "We do not comment on such reports."

Former major general Uzi Dayan said the military's silence was an indication of Israel's eagerness not to allow the incident to stoke tension with Syria.

"Israel is active on many fronts in the Middle East but we have no intention to bring about a deterioration of the situation. That is why the Israeli reaction was so short and restrained," he told private Channel Two television.

A Syrian minister admitted to Al-Jazeera's English-language channel that it remained unclear whether the Israeli aircraft had actually carried out an attack.

"They intervened in our airspace... which they should not do -- we are a sovereign country and they should not come into our airspace," Expatriate Affairs Minister Bussaina Shaaban said.

"We do not know yet" if the aircraft dropped anything. "The investigation is still proceeding on the ground," she said.

In June 2006, Israeli warplanes flew over President Bashar Assad's palace in northern Syria while he was inside, an action Damascus condemned as an "act of piracy."

Over the past few months, Israeli and Syrian leaders have both said their countries do not want a war, but were preparing for any possibility while each side has accused the other of arming for a conflict.

Syria and Israel remain technically in a state of war, and peace talks broke down in 2000 over the fate of the Golan Heights, the strategic plateau captured by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War and annexed in 1981.

The previous over flight by Israel in 2006 came amid high tensions in the Middle East after the Jewish state launched a massive military offensive on the Gaza Strip to try to retrieve a soldier captured by Palestinian militants.

The Gaza action was followed just a few weeks later by a devastating Israeli war in Lebanon against the Shiite Muslim Hizbullah militia, after two soldiers were captured in a raid by the guerrillas.

Syria shelters a number of radical Palestinian groups, and is home to Khaled Meshaal, the exiled leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) who tops Israel's most wanted list.

Last month, Israel said it was reducing its military presence on the Golan Heights and lowering its level of alert.

However, it said it will continue to conduct regular training on the plateau as part of its training following the Lebanon war against Hizbullah, which revealed major shortcomings in the army's conduct.

And Israel continues to carry out occasional flights over neighboring Lebanon, triggering protests from Beirut and concern from the United Nations peacekeeping force monitoring a ceasefire there.(AFP)

from Naharnet, Beirut, 06 Sep 07, 14:24

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&71482ED0AA47A01BC225735400275B24>

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From the Bloggers:

Arutz Sheva is reporting that Israel's Channel 1 (state-owned) television has confirmed that the IAF did attack targets in Syria last week. Just what those targets were remains a mystery: Israeli TV Channel 1 said Tuesday that the IDF "definitely carried out an attack" against Syria last Thursday. The attack was meaningful, the channel's military affairs reporter said, and was probably carried out against a large and important target that justified taking this kind of extreme action at such a sensitive time in Israeli-Syrian relations.

The target hit was in the Deir Ez-Zour region in eastern Syria, near the Euphrates river.

The attack was carried out by Israel Air Force (IAF) F-15i jets (The 'i' stands for 'Israel') referred to in Hebrew as Ra'am, or 'thunder.' Anti-aircraft fire from the ground was inefficient, Channel 1 said.

Arutz Sheva also reports that Syria's ambassador to the UN has denied the part of the CNN report that claims that Israeli troops were on the ground in Syria. If the troops were on the ground, it would have been to mark targets and/or to survey damage afterwards.

The map at top left came from the Jerusalem Post. If you look at it, you will see that the IAF jets were fired upon - and apparently fired upon some kind of target - near number 2 on the map. But what the targets were remains a subject of speculation. Clearly, if they were worth attacking given the current tensions with Syria and the risk that this escalates into war, they were important.

Writing at Contentions, Noah Pollak thinks he has an idea: What did the IAF target? The most obvious answer: weapons in transit from Iran to Hizballah that were of sufficient danger to Israel that the mission, even given the serious risks it entailed, was deemed necessary. Iran and Syria have been supplying Hizballah with weapons for years, and, obviously, it has not been Israeli policy regularly to target such smuggling. In this case, I suspect, the weapons in question were long-range guided missiles that would enable Hizballah to threaten Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Specific target information will probably not be forthcoming, but it looks as though the U.S. is happy with the results of the mission.

I think it was something bigger than that. Long-range guided missiles would probably still be "in transit" to Hezbollah. And recall that the CNN report referred to a "hole in the desert": But the sources told CNN the military operation, which happened Wednesday into Thursday, may have also involved Israeli ground forces who directed the airstrike which "left a big hole in the desert" in Syria.

This is from Haaretz: It is still difficult to assess what the ultimate response of the Syrians will be, at least on the basis of the statements being made these past six days. On the one hand, the Syrians warn of the consequences and are angry that no one seems interested in condemning Israel's illegal raid. On the other hand, they are not talking about the "strategic" target that was bombed in their territory - according to Lebanese press. If they admit it, this would be a troubling sign that they are weighing a serious response.

My guess is that they're not talking about the 'strategic target' because there would be damaging political consequences to Syria if the target's identity got out. And Israel isn't talking about it either, because if we talked about it, we'd be admitting that the Syrians may have other targets like the one we destroyed, and we have a gas mask shortage.

This is pure speculation, but I think that what Israel destroyed was a chemical weapons plant, and a pretty major one at that. If you were manufacturing chemical weapons, wouldn't you want to do it in the desert where if there's a leak, you don't kill 10,000 people? If a chemical weapons plant was destroyed, wouldn't that leave a "hole in the desert"? Or, maybe this was the place where the Syrians stored the chemical weapons they got from Saddam and that's why the Americans are so pleased.

Either way, I don't think these weapons were in transport to Hezbollah. This sounds like it was too big for that.

posted by Carl, <http://israelmatzav.blogspot.com/2007/09/did-israel-destroy-chemical-weapons.html>

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#### Reference Links

Sources tell CNN's Christiane Amanpour Israel launched a military airstrike against Syria

Israeli Overflights Deep into Syria - The Questions Remain!

John Bolton: Syria is providing "safe havens for North Korea's nuclear weapons development."

IsraeliAF Overflies Syria to Test Newly Delivered Russian Pantsyr SAMs?

Mystery Shrouds Israeli Jetfighters' Mission in Syria