

Sanctuary and Survival

Sanctuary and Survival

The PLO in Lebanon

Rex Brynen

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For Alex

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Preface

Since December 1987 and the eruption of a widespread and sustained Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) in the Israeli-occupied territories, the focus of political and diplomatic attention in the continuing Palestinian-Israeli conflict has shifted decisively to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The declaration of a yet-to-be-realized independent Palestinian state by the Palestine Liberation Organization in November 1988 reflected this, ushering in a new phase in the history and development of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Yet the occupied territories have not always represented the practical center-of-gravity of the Palestinian movement—a movement much of whose political evolution has necessarily occurred in exile. After the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and even more so after the suppression of the PLO in Jordan in 1970, it was Lebanon that emerged as the primary political and military headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

As a consequence, Lebanon would come to occupy an important place in the evolution of Palestinian political strategy and discourse. At the same time, however, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon would also have an important impact on that country's precarious social order. The PLO would serve to catalyze internal challenges to the Lebanese *status quo*, becoming a part (unwilling or otherwise) in Lebanon's mounting internal political struggles. The Palestinian armed presence would also attract increasing external intervention in Lebanon by both Arab regimes and Israel, culminating in Israel's 1982 invasion and the consequent withdrawal of PLO personnel from Beirut.

This study is an analysis of the PLO's "Lebanese era" and its aftermath, of the changing position of the Palestinian nationalist movement in Lebanon from its initial emergence in the late 1960s through the 1982 war to the present. It focuses on the PLO's efforts to maintain for itself a secure political and military base of operations in Lebanon, and on the broader impact of Lebanon on the political dynamics and development of the Palestinian movement. It attempts to do so in a theoretical context that

highlights the dilemmas intrinsic in all relationships between insurgent movements and those third-party states that may provide them shelter and sanctuary. This latter issue is the explicit focus of Chapter 1, wherein dilemmas of insurgent-sanctuary relations are outlined, and a number of possible insurgent responses identified. The chapter also discusses how insurgent policy-formation and the protection of sanctuary itself are likely to be tied to inherent problems of insurgent authority and decision-making. Chapters 2 through 6 examine in detail the PLO's experiences in Lebanon from the 1960s through to 1982. Chapter 7 evaluates the strengths, weaknesses and evolution of PLO policy in Lebanon during this critical period. Finally, Chapter 8 surveys the PLO's post-1982 position in Lebanon. It illuminates the extent to which the Palestinian movement's current challenges in Lebanon are rooted in the legacies of earlier behavior and policy. And it discusses the interrelationship between the PLO's "Lebanese era," the *intifada* and current Palestinian efforts to achieve self-determination and an independent state.

This study derives data from a number of sources, but especially from fieldwork in the Middle East in 1986-87 and 1989. It would not have been possible without the help of numerous institutions and individuals. The American University in Cairo, University of Calgary and McGill University each offered in turn invaluable facilities and positive research environments; the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund provided the necessary research funds. I am particularly grateful to Paul Noble, Ibrahim Abu Lughod, Walid Kazziha, As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman and Lamis Andoni for their comments and advice, and to Barbara Ellington at Westview Press. I also wish to thank all those who consented to grant research interviews, some of whom are listed in the bibliography. A great many others must unfortunately remain unnamed; my gratitude to them is in no way diminished by that fact. None, of course, bear responsibility for any errors, omissions or conclusions herein; those remain the sole responsibility of the author.

Finally, my largest debt of gratitude is due my wife, Alex, for her unflagging encouragement, creative criticism and practical assistance. Long may our collaborations continue.

Rex Brynen
Montréal

Dilemmas of Sanctuary

On 1 January 1965—a date now commemorated by Palestinians each year as the birthdate of *al-thawra*, the Palestinian “revolution”—a short communique by the heretofore unknown *al-‘Asifa* forces announced from Beirut the successful completion of its first guerrilla raid into Israel. In fact, the group that had set out from ‘Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp in Sidon the previous night had never reached the Lebanese-Israeli frontier, let alone their intended target of an Israeli water-pumping station. Instead, they had been immediately arrested by the Lebanese security forces.¹

Inauspicious as this beginning was, the event spoke volumes about the emerging relationship between Lebanon and the *al-muqawama al-filastiniyya*—the “Palestinian resistance”—that would so very strongly shape the trajectories of both over the next two decades. Quite apart from the remarkable ideological importance of the issue in Arab domestic and regional politics, Lebanon was, by the simple fact of geography, inevitably destined to be affected by the conflict in Palestine. In 1948, the marginal participation of the Lebanese army in what was to become its first and last foray into the Arab-Israeli wars had signaled the reluctant recognition by Lebanon’s political leadership of their country’s status as a confrontation state. The eventual arrival of over one hundred thousand Palestinian refugees confirmed the connection. For a while, Beirut itself became home to al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the former Mufti of Jerusalem whose Arab Higher Committee had constituted the chief leadership of the Palestinian movement during the British Mandate. As elsewhere in the diaspora, Palestinian community organizations were slowly established or re-established in Lebanon through the 1950s and early 1960s, responding both to social needs and national aspirations. It was during this period too that a new generation of Palestinian political activists began to emerge, their activities evident within Beirut student unions, in the Arab Nationalists’ Movement, and in the irregular appearance of the magazine *Filastinuna* (“Our Palestine”), clandestinely published by the same *al-Fateh* movement that lay behind the acts of *al-‘Asifa*.

On the eve of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, however, none of this

was quite so apparent. The Palestinian movement was still weak and fragmented from the disaster it had suffered in 1948. Despite the formation by the Arab League of a "Palestinian entity"—the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—in 1964, the modern Palestinian nationalist movement still only existed as such in a latent and nebulous sense. In Lebanon, as elsewhere, the authorities maintained tight rein over all Palestinian nationalist activities.

After June 1967, all this was to change with astonishing rapidity. Advocating popular armed struggle (*al-kifah al-musallah al-sha'bi*) against Israel, the activism of small Palestinian guerrilla groups (*fida'iyyin*) contrasted sharply with the failure of Arab regular armies. The result was rapid growth in their numbers and popular support. By 1968-69 they had taken control of the PLO, revolutionizing that organization from within, and restructuring the nature of relations between the Palestinians and the Arab confrontation states.

The repercussions of this for Lebanon were immense. By November 1969 the new dynamics of Palestinian-Lebanese relations had produced the "Cairo Agreement," a formal agreement between the PLO and government of Lebanon regulating their mutual relations. Under its terms the Lebanese government accepted the legitimacy of the PLO's presence in Lebanon and the pursuit of its struggle against Israel from Lebanese territory "within the framework of Lebanese sovereignty and security." A year later, in September 1970, the government of Jordan began its suppression of Palestinian nationalist activities there. With this, Lebanon soon became the headquarters and primary operational base of the PLO. Through the 1970s and early 1980s that base would see continuous if uneven expansion, such that by the spring of 1982 it constituted a virtual Palestinian "para-state" in Lebanon.²

The challenges faced by the Palestinian nationalist movement in safeguarding and expanding this presence in Lebanon over the years would be severe. The PLO would twice clash with the Lebanese army, in 1969 and again in 1973. Later it would find itself engulfed by the Lebanese civil war (1975-76), and the target of Syrian military intervention (1976). It would experience escalating military conflict with Israel and its Lebanese proxies in south Lebanon, including Israeli invasions in 1978 and 1982. Of all these, only the latter would succeed in destroying Palestinian bases and institutions in south Lebanon and forcing the withdrawal of PLO fighters and cadres from Beirut.

It is the position of the PLO in Lebanon, from its consolidation in the late 1960s to the Israeli invasion of June 1982 and beyond, that represents the focus of the study. It will examine how, during the critical period from the Cairo agreement to the Lebanese war, the PLO sought to safeguard both its organizational presence in Lebanon and the well-being of the Palestinian community resident there. It will identify the objectives and actions that comprised the PLO's "Lebanese" policy, and the often problematic process whereby such policy was formulated and implemented. And it will assess the effectiveness of the PLO in achieving its aims, assessing the extent to

which the PLO's post-1982 difficulties in Lebanon are rooted in the legacies of earlier actions and experience.

As will be seen, the PLO's problems of maintaining a secure Lebanese base were to prove both complex and intense. Yet it can be argued that, in the broadest sense, they have not been entirely unique. Rather they reflect the existence of the dilemmas faced by any insurgent group which utilizes in its struggle the physical and political shelter offered by a "sanctuary state."

Insurgents and Sanctuaries

A Framework for Analysis

"Sanctuary"—that is to say, a secure base area within which an insurgent group is able to organize the politico-military infrastructure needed to support its activities—is central to the process of insurgency. It is from such sanctuaries that operations against the enemy are planned and launched. It is from here that troops and cadres are trained, logistics maintained, and leadership exercised—all relatively free from enemy interference. The structures and institutions of the insurgent state-in-waiting may first take form within the shelter of a sanctuary area. And it is here that (in the classic model of guerrilla warfare) guerrilla resources are built up to the point where the insurgents can challenge their opponent in semi-regular warfare. It comes as no surprise, then, to find that many guerrilla leaders—Mao Tse-Tung, Vo Nguyen Giap, Che Guevara, to name but a few—have devoted considerable attention to the importance of base areas in their writings. Mao, for example, identified the establishment of base areas as one of seven "fundamental steps" necessary to a successful guerrilla campaign:

A guerrilla base may be defined as an area, strategically located, in which the guerrillas can carry out their duties of training, self-preservation and development. [The] ability to fight a war without a rear area is a fundamental characteristic of guerrilla warfare, but this does not mean that guerrillas can exist and function over a long period of time without the development of base areas.³

Insurgent sanctuaries may differ widely in terms of geography, usage, and political context. Some—what we might term *internal* sanctuaries—are so-called "liberated zones" sited within the territory in contention. Generally these bases are established in areas of high insurgent activity and entrenched insurgent political influence near to major political targets, yet protected by geography (mountains, heavy vegetation, or otherwise protective terrain) or confused boundaries of administrative responsibility and political loyalty.⁴

The partisans in Yugoslavia, the Red Army in China, the struggle of the Viet-Minh against the French, and the revolution against Batista in Cuba all represent examples of successful insurgencies based almost entirely on internal sanctuaries of this type. Still, such examples are relatively rare.⁵ More often insurgents opt for (or are forced into) significant dependence on *external* sanctuaries, utilizing the very different shelter of international borders by establishing major base areas within the territory of a proximate,

but politically distinct, *sanctuary state*. Some are careless or even involuntary hosts, unwilling or unable to deny use of their territory to the insurgents—hence the use of Cambodian and Laotian territory by the Viet-Cong during the Vietnam war. In many other cases, the extension of shelter to insurgents is a deliberate act of policy motivated by ideological sympathy, outside rewards or pressures, or in pursuit of more complex *realpolitik* objectives (especially as a tool of covert punishment or destabilization). Under such conditions it is the principal of state sovereignty, coupled with the willingness and ability of the host state to defend its territory from incursions by the insurgents' opponent, that generates the necessary protection.

What factors contribute to insurgent use of and reliance on sanctuary states? A necessary condition is, of course, the availability of states either willing to perform the sanctuary role or (such as Cambodia during the Vietnam war) unable to avoid it. Above and beyond this, four additional variables of importance can be identified.

The first of these is availability of internal sanctuary. Because of the psychological and political value of "liberated zones" as a symbols of insurgent power, internal sanctuaries are generally preferable to external ones. If, however, "a regime effectively prevents an insurgent movement from organizing within a target area, external support, in terms of sanctuary and freedom of movement, becomes critical."⁶ So too when and where faced by unsuitable terrain or an unsupportive target population, insurgents will be correspondingly more reliant on the shelter of a sanctuary state.

The proximity and access offered by potential external sanctuaries is also an important variable. When utilizing the shelter of an external sanctuary, insurgent groups are more likely to prefer sanctuary states that are near to the conflict zone and which give easy geographical entry to the most important areas of insurgent activity. More distant sanctuaries might provide propaganda and organizational facilities, but are much less effective as operational bases.

Levels of sanctuary support are also likely to affect the choice of sanctuary areas. Tolerance or even active support by the government of the sanctuary state to the insurgent group will increase insurgent use of that sanctuary. Conversely, opposition to the insurgents' presence and activities will have the opposite effect—subject to the government's ability to extend its authority to the (often remote) border regions from which the insurgents seek to operate.

Similarly, the existence of popular support within the sanctuary state, of a population willing to provide the insurgents with recruits and other forms of assistance, will increase insurgent use of that sanctuary. This is particularly important when (as is often the case) the population shares ethnic, religious or other significant characteristics with the insurgents—perhaps even comprising sympathetic refugees displaced from the conflict zone itself.

All of these factors can be found at work in the illustrative case of the 1974-75 Kurdish insurgency in Iraq. Following the collapse of an earlier

1970 autonomy agreement between the central government and the leadership of the Kurdish Democratic Party, fighting once more erupted in Iraqi Kurdistan. Despite the formidable nature of the region's mountainous terrain, assertive military action by the well-armed Iraqi armed forces rendered many of the traditional bases of Kurdish insurgency untenable. Limited sanctuary was potentially available to the Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas (Pesh Merga) among the supportive populations of neighboring Syrian, Turkish, and Iranian Kurdistan. Of these, however, Turkey had long suppressed the Kurdish movement among its own Kurdish population, and hence denied its territory to the Pesh Merga as best it could. Syria (hostile to the rival Ba'thist regime in Baghdad) did grant the KDP propaganda support and use of offices in Damascus, but was reluctant to allow armed guerrillas to operate from its territory. Iran, in contrast, provided the Pesh Merga with both sanctuary and extensive material assistance, enabling the Kurds to mount several major counter-offensives. This continued until negotiations between the Shah of Iran and Iraq's Saddam Husayn brought an end to their long-simmering border dispute over the Shatt al-'Arab waterway in March 1975. With this, Iran immediately withdrew its aid and shelter to the Pesh Merga, causing an immediate collapse of the insurgency.⁷

Imperatives and Dilemmas of Insurgent-Sanctuary Relations

The importance of sanctuary—and hence of sanctuary states—to insurgent movements thus becomes clear. Excepting perhaps the strategies of *coup d'état* or spontaneous insurrection, the possession of secure base areas becomes a *sine qua non* of the insurgents' success. As Ibrahim Abu Lughod has noted:

One of the more important postulates of wars of national liberation is the support revolutionaries are able to obtain, politically, morally and material, from the international system.... It is virtually impossible to think of the successful wars of national liberation of Algeria, Mozambique and Vietnam without assigning important roles to Egypt and Tunis, Tanzania and Zambia, and China, as well as the Soviet Union. In all such cases, the neighboring country served as a hinterland for the revolutionaries, whom it provided with sanctuaries and so forth, while at the same time it provided them with the political support necessary to carry out the struggle internationally. In certain cases the neighboring countries provided the staging area for the transmission of weapons, material and manpower to the country waging its war of national liberation. In short, then, the principle can be stated simply: It is imperative for the population engaged in a war of national liberation to have the full material and political support of an external state.⁸

In Abu Lughod's view, "once a population achieves a certain level of mobilization and 'revolutionary' consciousness, an adjacent territorial base controlled by an ally is crucial."

The extent to which the West Bank and Gaza Strip are mobilized today is evident... There is a logical need for an established state, adjacent to Palestine,

that will provide support, succor and haven for the beleaguered population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The extent to which the Palestinians succeed in securing such a terrain will have an important impact on the outcome of national resistance in the West Bank and Gaza.⁹

Conversely, the loss of such bases through the loss or withdrawal of sanctuary will almost invariably have a devastating—and perhaps fatal—effect on the insurgents in question. Aware of this dangerous possibility, Che Guevara warned that “unconditional help should not be expected from a government, whether friendly or simply negligent, that allows its territory to be used as a base of operations”; on the contrary, insurgents should treat the situation with a degree of caution and discipline “as if... in a completely hostile camp.”¹⁰ The susceptibility of the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland to the changing political environment in the Irish Republic during the 1920s and 1930s illustrates the point, as does the collapse of the communist insurgency in Greece after the closure of the Yugoslavian frontier in 1948. For the Kurds, it was a lesson underscored once more in the 1980s. Having fought against the Iraqi government (with significant success) almost from the outset of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Iraqi Kurds again found themselves abruptly cut off from Iranian aid and shelter when the latter agreed to a ceasefire in August 1988. With this, another Kurdish insurgency collapsed amid a brutal Iraqi offensive in Iraqi Kurdistan.¹¹

Despite the importance of sanctuary states to insurgent movements, little analytical attention has been devoted to examining relations between the two, or to delineating how insurgent movements can and do respond to the dilemmas noted above. In part this reflects the fact that many of the most important and prolific theoreticians of revolutionary warfare (Lenin, Mao, Guevara, Giap) led guerrilla campaigns not involving significant use of an external sanctuary. It also reflects a sometimes deliberate obscuration of the question by insurgents themselves, with the role of external support suppressed amid emphasis on revolutionary action and self-reliance, or hidden by the secrecy under which insurgent-sanctuary diplomacy is so often conducted. As a consequence, the importance of sanctuaries—although almost universally noted—is rarely analyzed in any depth. Accounts of particular cases of insurgent-sanctuary interaction remain largely descriptive, whilst the general question of insurgent policy towards sanctuary states has remained all but unexamined.¹²

One rare exception to this pattern is the treatment extended to sanctuary behavior by Douglas Anglin and Timothy Shaw in the context of a broader examination of Zambian foreign policy.¹³ Here they suggest that Zambia's attitude towards southern African liberation movements should be seen in terms of its efforts to minimize the risks associated with providing transit facilities and other forms of assistance. In other words, Zambia's support as a sanctuary state was tempered by its vulnerability to the superior military power of Rhodesia and South Africa (Figure 1.1). Whenever the activities of southern African liberation movements in and from Zambia threatened to invite unacceptable retaliation (Z₁), Lusaka restricted those activities so as to

reduce the risk to an acceptable level (Z_0). Conversely, as Zambia's vulnerability to retaliation (i.e., the potential cost of the insurgent presence) declined (Z_2), controls were relaxed and support for southern African liberation movements stepped up (Z_3).

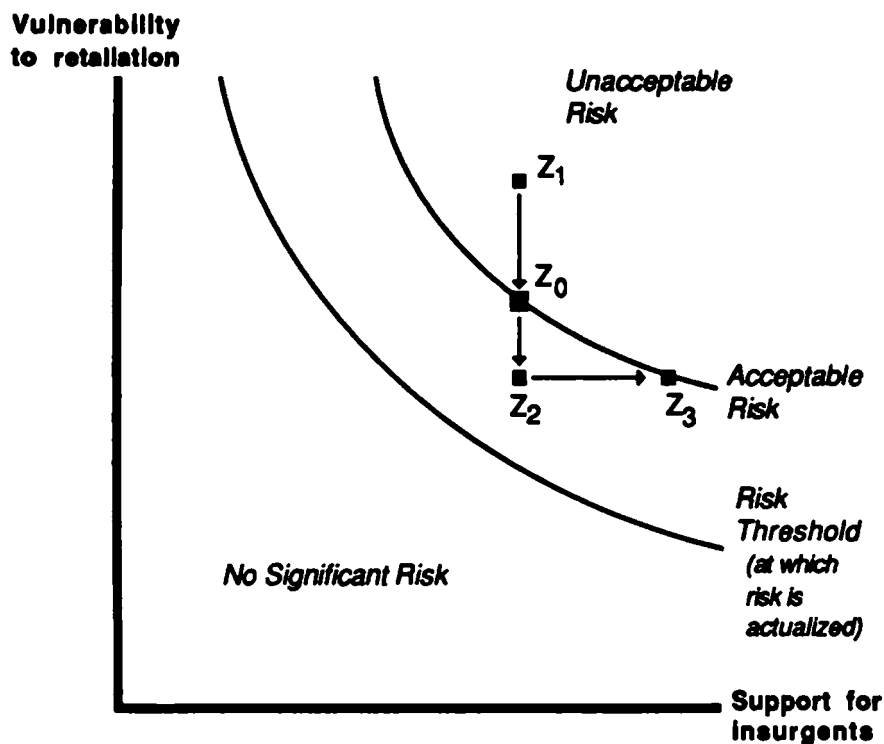


Figure 1.1: Sanctuary Behavior

Here Anglin and Shaw concur with two hypotheses about sanctuary behavior proposed by one of the few other analysts to examine insurgent-sanctuary interaction, Bard O'Neill. Specifically, O'Neill (drawing upon the Palestinian case) has suggested that "if a sanctuary country is clearly in a position of military inferiority vis-à-vis the target state and lacks allies who will come to its defense, the costs inflicted by counterinsurgency reprisals are likely to increase," leading in turn to a situation wherein the host "defenseless against reprisals but perceiving itself to be militarily equal to or stronger than the insurgents, will curb the latter's operations as the costs of retaliation escalate."¹⁴

Indeed, herein lies the heart of the insurgents' dilemma. For while sanctuary provides important, perhaps indispensable, benefits for an insurgent movement, the granting of sanctuary may involve considerable costs for the sanctuary state and the regime that rules it. This in turn adversely affects insurgent-sanctuary relations—and hence threatens the availability of sanctuary itself.

Insurgents and the State

The potential costs faced by a sanctuary state are many. To begin with, the presence of the insurgents may invite "hot-pursuit" raids and other military action against them within the sanctuary's territory by the insurgents' opponent. It will also almost certainly involve some degree of pressure on their host to end its granting of sanctuary. Such pressure may range from diplomatic protests by the insurgents' opponent to punishment-strikes and possibly even armed intervention.

Furthermore, the activities of heavily-armed and difficult-to-control insurgents may adversely affect domestic public order. This is particularly the case if the insurgents' base area begins to assume political autonomy from the sanctuary state itself, threatening the state's ability to assert sovereignty over the insurgents and their activities on national soil.¹⁵ The problems created by the presence of large numbers of armed insurgents among a sanctuary state's civilian population are further exacerbated by the fact that insurgents, by their very nature, reject many of the conventional symbols of state authority. Insurgents who are little more than mercenaries or brigands can be expected to act as such. Revolutionary combatants, on the other hand, may (justifiably or otherwise) view the activities of local security forces to control their activities as part of a counter-revolutionary effort to liquidate their struggle, and resist them accordingly.

The relative magnitude of such costs may be amplified by the context in which they occur. For poor, weak sanctuary states or those already suffering from a degree of political instability—categories embracing much of the third world—the strain of granting sanctuary can threaten to overwhelm.

Such has been the case among the Frontline states of southern Africa. There, in an effort to weaken the sanctuary and support given to the African National Congress (ANC), South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), and other southern African liberation movements, the Republic of South Africa has embarked on a major campaign of indirect economic pressure, subversion, and direct military attacks against Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Between 1980 and 1986 Angola and Mozambique (the chief targets of Pretoria's so-called "Total Strategy") suffered an estimated \$25 billion in economic damage and a staggering total of 735,000 war-related deaths, in addition to the displacement of almost 2 million refugees.¹⁶ By the mid-1980s such pressure had forced many of the Frontline states to negotiate bilateral security agreements with South Africa. Thus in February 1984 South Africa and Angola agreed to a ceasefire (the Lusaka Accord) and joint patrols to halt SWAPO infiltration into South African-occupied Namibia. One month later, Mozambique and South Africa signed the so-called Nikomati Accord, under which both pledged "not to allow their respective territories, territorial waters or air space to be used as a base, thoroughfare, or in any other way by any state, government, foreign military forces, organizations or individuals which plan or prepare to commit acts of violence, terrorism or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other or may threaten the security

of its inhabitants.”¹⁷ Mozambique—a country long committed to the struggle against South African *apartheid*—promptly expelled ANC cadres from its territory.

The central point to be made here is that there exists, within any set of insurgent-sanctuary relations, considerable potential for divergence between the insurgents’ *raison de la révolution* and the sanctuary’s *raison d’état*. And for the insurgents involved, the potential for conflict between the two, coupled with the political and military value of sanctuary, poses a unique set of policy imperatives. Specifically, insurgent groups must formulate and implement policies whereby their position within a sanctuary is safeguarded or improved. To do otherwise is to risk serious damage to insurgent-sanctuary relations, and possibly the crippling or destruction of the insurgent movement itself.

Precisely how can this be achieved? If, as suggested earlier, sanctuary behavior is a response to real and potential insurgent-related costs, insurgent policy towards sanctuary states must largely be aimed at manipulating those costs in a favorable manner. The most immediate response would be to adopt what might be termed a strategy of *restraint*, reducing insurgent-related costs below the level at which containment and suppression would otherwise occur. The voluntary restriction of cross-border activity, strict codes of conduct for guerrilla personnel, and limitations on the display and deployment of weapons would all comprise elements of such an approach. The deliberate low profile of the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) in Tunisia during the Algerian revolution—a policy designed to minimize French pressure upon that state—represented precisely such a strategy. So too did the willingness of the KDP to refrain from nationalist agitation in Iranian Kurdistan during the 1974-75 Kurdish war.¹⁸

Insurgents might also find that a coincidence of interests (or simple bribery) provides the grounds for securing local allies within the sanctuary state. Such allies—influential political parties, associations, interest groups, ethnic or religious groups, or even factions within the government itself—might then provide direct material support, and exert political pressure to obtain greater regime tolerance and support for insurgent activities. The efforts of Sri Lankan Tamil separatists to secure sanctuary and influence Indian policy through ties to Tamil ethnic and political leaders in India’s Tamil Nadu state represents one (albeit largely unsuccessful) use of such a strategy of *internal alliance* in the 1980s.

Neither a strategy of internal alliance nor one of restraint, however, is unproblematic. Internal alliances may create dangerous entanglements. Tied to a domestic actor by such an alliance, insurgents may find themselves unwillingly dragged into domestic political issues. At worst, their internal alliance might be taken as evidence of insurgent interference in the internal affairs of the host regime, and hence received as a further cost by sanctuary decision-makers.

As for a strategy of restraint, it requires that self-restraining guerrilla actions will be appreciated as such by state decision-makers. To assure this

it may be necessary to open and maintain close dialogue, even a formal framework for mutual consultation. Such *communication* may even become an ancillary strategy in itself, serving the additional purpose of reducing the likelihood of "accidental" deterioration in insurgent-sanctuary relations caused by misperceived acts by one party or the other.

The effectiveness of self-restraint is also mediated by the retaliatory activity of the insurgents' opponent, assuming as it does that retaliation is a function of insurgent activity. If this is the case, restraint risks undermining the very *raison d'être* of an insurgent group, generating conditions under which the requirements of maintaining sanctuary (the reduction of military activity so as to reduce retaliatory action against the insurgents' host) may directly contradict the requirements of armed struggle. Conversely, should the insurgents' opponent adopt a policy of deliberate, massive and disproportionate punishment attacks against the sanctuary regardless of insurgent activity, the effectiveness of insurgent restraint will be sharply limited.

Finally, a strategy of restraint assumes that costs are transitory, and hence mutable. But are they? To a significant extent, the costs of enemy retaliation and guerrilla banditry are. But other insurgent-related costs may be structural in nature, thus posing a significantly greater challenge to the course of insurgent-sanctuary relations.

Insurgency and Revolution

Not all insurgencies are created equal. Some lack any significant social content, merely seeking to replace one political elite with another within the framework of the same socio-economic system. Others, however, seek to transform the socio-economic as well as political nature of their own societies. Such revolutionary insurgencies have a far more unsettling effect on the regional and international system.¹⁹ Because of this, insurgents who are revolutionaries face greater difficulties in maintaining sanctuary.

The political economy of revolution affects the problem of insurgent-sanctuary relations most seriously through the threat of contagion. By their very nature revolutions pose a standing challenge to the socio-economic and political structure of states, and more specifically to the social, economic, and political positions of their dominant classes. To the extent that the structures they challenge at home are replicated elsewhere, their threat expands beyond the immediate borders of the conflict area. The insurgents cannot advance a sociopolitical agenda for their own country (agrarian reform, redistribution of wealth, democratization, and so forth) without potentially causing similar questions to be raised within the host sanctuary. So too revolutionary ideology, organization and the notion of armed struggle may spread to groups within the sanctuaries in which they shelter.

In short, the costs of hosting revolutionary insurgents cannot simply be reduced to transitory costs imposed on an abstract state. Whether directly or by catalyzing latent forces within the host society, insurgents may spur developments fundamentally challenging to those in positions of political

and economic power. In other words, the mere presence of a revolutionary movement within a dissonant state and society constitutes a structural threat to those who rule it—varying only with the dissonance between the revolutionary's program and the maintenance structures of the local sociopolitical order, and existing regardless of the activities of the movement and the direct imposition of outside costs. In turn, such a challenge to the status quo raises the regional repercussions of the insurgents' struggle and aggravates the problem of external intervention—quite likely in any case, but now doubly so.²⁰

For the PLO this lesson was bitterly learned in 1970-71. At that time the Hashemite regime in Jordan, having suffered heavily from both Israeli attacks and the activities of the PLO, moved to suppress the latter in a bloody civil war that cost many thousands of casualties and brought to an end the PLO's effective presence in the country which had been its most important sanctuary. The costs of Israeli punishment attacks and the ill-disciplined behavior of the *fida'iyyin* provided major reasons for suppression. But of equal or greater importance than this was the threat that the Palestinian movement in and of itself represented to the stability of the conservative Hashemite monarchy.²¹ Created by British colonial policy in 1921, the monarchy rested on the twin bases of East Bank (Transjordanian) tribal allegiances and a loyal army. Since its annexation of the Palestinian West Bank after 1948, the regime had sought to suppress most manifestations of a "Palestinian" identity among the Palestinians who comprised a majority or near-majority of its population. Jordanian foreign policy had been suspicious of radical pan-Arabism and closely aligned with the West. In this context, the rise of a radical Palestinian nationalist movement after 1967 challenged the very foundations of the regime. And it was precisely those elements most challenged—the monarchy, tribal leaders, the Transjordanian officer corps and political elite—who most favored suppression of the PLO. Anxious to preserve the status quo, their stance was passively supported by conservative Arab states alarmed at the rapid growth and influence of the *fida'iyyin*, and more openly by Israel and the United States. Essentially the "Black September" of 1970 was the military reaction of a conservative elite faced with a potential revolutionary threat to its power and position.

In policy terms, therefore, insurgents face particular difficulties in maintaining sanctuary to the degree in which their programs threaten the social and political status quo in the host state. The strategies of restraint and communications might be utilized to a limited extent. In contexts where the very existence of the revolutionary movement within the sanctuary state represents a major cost to sanctuary decision-makers, however, the revolutionaries are constrained in the degree to which they can "manage" relations by restricting insurgent-related costs.

Instead, insurgents might seek to avoid suppression through reliance on armed force. In some cases, the military power of the insurgents may outweigh the coercive ability of the sanctuary state, allowing insurgents to impose their activities on an otherwise unwilling host. Under such

conditions an insurgent movement has the option of adopting an offensive posture, using its resources to overthrow (or helping others to overthrow) the host government with the aim of replacing it with a more supportive regime. But it is seldom that such circumstances arise; insurgents only rarely have military capabilities superior to those of their host state, and lacking these the contribution of the insurgents is only likely to be decisive in situations already pregnant with political instability and potential domestic revolution. Still, historical cases of such a strategy of *offense* do exist, including the PLO's own unsuccessful calls for the overthrow of the Hashemite regime in Jordan in 1970-71.

A more likely alternative is a strategy of *defense* whereby insurgents prepare to protect their status by force. Such a strategy seeks to increase the costs of suppression to an unacceptable level, effectively raising the threshold at which suppression might occur by adding to it a deterrent threat. If deterrence fails, the insurgents' military efforts are then aimed at defending their essential base of operations.

The Challenge of Intervention

The discussion thus far has examined insurgent responses to the potential threat posed by a sanctuary state, or possibly by its allies or proxies. In Lebanon, however, the PLO would in fact successfully resist all domestic efforts to contain or crush it for more than two decades after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Indeed, it was only suppressed—and temporarily at that—by outside intervention by its opponent, Israel, in June 1982.

At first glance, such intervention falls outside the theoretical scope of insurgent-sanctuary relations as defined and discussed here. But in terms of practical policy, the strategic calculus of insurgent-sanctuary relations and external threats of enemy intervention are inextricably tied. For that reason, it is important that the issue be explicitly addressed.

Of the several features linking the internal and external threats, the first and most apparent is perhaps what might be termed "responsibility." Any country which provides sanctuary to insurgents will be held responsible (both under the terms of international law, and in the practical realities of international politics) for the insurgents' actions by the insurgents' target. If sanctuary is not withdrawn, the insurgents' host is likely to find itself subject to retaliatory diplomatic, economic or military measures. Indeed, the sanctuary state itself may become a primary focus of military action by the insurgents' opponent—partly to compel it to withdraw sanctuary, and partly because it represents (in contrast to the elusive insurgents) a clear target for engagement by regular armed forces.²² The greater the sanctuary's support for the insurgents in question, the greater the likelihood and scope of retaliation it will suffer. Conversely, if the sanctuary evinces no support, and even claims an inability to control the insurgents operating on and from its territory, the greater too the likelihood of armed intervention. Arguing that the sanctuary state lacks both sovereignty over its own territory and the

power to assert its authority, the "enemy" may well claim to itself the right of regional policeman, and enter the sanctuary's territory at will to conduct its own military operations.²³

All of these factors can be seen at work in the South African case, where coercive diplomacy, identification of nationalist insurgency with its neighbors, and the belief direct military action was necessary to curb guerrilla infiltration all underpinned South African pursuit of its "Total Strategy" against the Frontline states. Even after the first of these rationales had been removed by the Lusaka and Nikomati accords, however, South African intervention continued for more than four years. At one level, military action against an external target provided a visible (if marginally effective) response to the government's inability to deal with rising levels of domestic protest and resistance. At another, military intervention acquired a virtual life of its own, rendering southern Angola and Mozambique a chaotic and continuing arena for the forceful deployment of South African military might.²⁴

Yet such intervention does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a critical international context. In the South African case, for example, Soviet and Cuban support for Angola increased the political and military costs of Pretoria's military actions there, ultimately forcing a revision in South African policy. Together with other factors, this led to the December 1988 "tripartite agreement" providing for the withdrawal of South African (and Cuban) troops from Angola and the independence of Namibia.

It is here that a second link between intervention and insurgent policy can be found. The ability of one state (the "enemy") to inflict punishment raids, massive retaliation, or invasion against another ("the sanctuary") is primarily constrained by the local and international balance of power; not only must the sanctuary state be so comparatively weak that it cannot prevent or deter such attacks, but the international system must allow it. During the Algerian War, for example, France responded to FLN use of Tunisian territory by claiming rights of both "hot pursuit" and "riposte" against the insurgents. Despite this, the political costs of such activities (notably its February 1958 bombing of the Tunisian town of Sakiët-Sidi Yusif) ultimately proved too high for France to bear, causing it to refrain from major attacks on Tunisia for the last four years of the war. Similarly, analysis of Rhodesian decision-making in the 1960s and 1970s has shown that, in the case of punishment attacks by the white minority regime against Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Angola, and Tanzania during the Zimbabwean war of liberation, "the political costs involved in such actions [were] the final sanction for their execution."²⁵ If the international political constraints are too great, the only choice remaining to the insurgents' target is either to adopt less open means of action (destabilization, covert penetration)²⁶ or to refrain from retaliation and punishment of the sanctuary altogether.

One possible insurgent response to this situation is to seek support from outside states, particularly from other regional states or the superpowers—a strategy of *external alliances* designed to affect both the regional

environment and the dynamics of insurgent-sanctuary relations. External allies can assist by placing pressure on, or granting rewards to, the sanctuary state. They may also strengthen insurgents directly, through the supply of arms, funds, and intelligence. Finally, external allies become valuable not only as direct supporters and interceders on the insurgents' behalf, but potentially as direct supporters of the sanctuary state itself.²⁷ To the extent that they are able to increase through diplomatic or military means the sanctuary's will and capacity to deter and resist enemy military action, they reduce its vulnerability and the level of retaliatory pressure on it. This in turn effectively reduces the cost of the insurgent presence, and hence the likelihood of suppression.

Still, even external alliances may be insufficient to prevent external intervention. As the locus of conflict is forced backwards into heretofore secure sanctuaries by enemy raids and covert action, an important connection emerges between the insurgents' ability to resist (or deter) enemy action and the state of its local relations. Insurgents enjoying strong support from the sanctuary state or internal allies within it will be correspondingly more difficult to dislodge by external intervention than will those which do not. At the same time, the magnitude of insurgent-related costs suffered by the sanctuary state climb—putting the insurgent-sanctuary relationship to its most severe test yet.

Insurgent Strategy and Decision-making

Although the identification of possible insurgent responses ("restraint"; "communication"; "internal" and "external" alliances; "defense" and "offense") suggests the theoretical bases upon which insurgent policies might be based, it does not in itself fully explain either how and why a particular strategy or mix of strategies might be adopted, or the effectiveness with which they can be pursued. To do so requires examination not only of the policy options available, but also of the process whereby insurgent policy is formulated, adopted, and implemented.

Unfortunately, despite an extensive literature on insurgents and insurgencies, very little of this has addressed the dynamics of insurgent policy-making. In part this stems from the complexity of the subject and the heterogeneity of insurgent movements. It also reflects the historic dominance of a "realist" paradigm of international relations which has centered attention on the state and devalued the importance of non-state actors in the international system. Finally, there are the methodological obstacles which have inhibited the study of third world foreign policy in general, including secrecy and a lack of reliable data regarding decision-making, and an excessive concentration on the idiosyncratic role of political leaders.²⁸

How then can we best approach the insurgent policy-making process in the context of insurgent-sanctuary relations? While the field lacks appropriate established models, several studies of third world foreign policy in general, and of Arab and PLO foreign policy in particular, do suggest

approaches whereby the topic might be addressed.

The first of these stresses the importance of objective and systemic factors in foreign policy formulation, rather than a reductionist focus on the role of third world leaders.²⁹ Systemic and global constraints play a fundamental role in shaping third world foreign policy-making, both by limiting the menu of what can be achieved, and by exerting a determining effect on the degree to which chosen policies can attain their objectives.

For insurgent movements, their limited ability to affect the regional environment within which they must operate heightens the constraining impact of such systemic factors, forcing much of insurgent policy to be event-driven. The importance of external support (including sanctuary) renders them even more vulnerable to regional political developments. This in turn has important implications for the process of insurgent decision-making. The dynamic circumstances of conducting a guerrilla war may inhibit regularized decision-making. As a consequence, high-level (and often ad-hoc) crisis decision-making groups operating under conditions of limited information may predominate amid the breakdown or short-circuiting of formal decision-making procedures.³⁰

A second set of factors that must be addressed pertains to the importance of underlying social and political processes in the shaping of foreign policy.³¹ Despite the foreign/domestic dichotomy sometimes assumed by realist approaches to international relations, domestic politics and socio-economic circumstances comprise an inseparable part of the foreign policy process in the third world. In turn, the weakness and permeability of third world states generates circumstances under which external constraints are transnationalized, and reproduced within the social, economic and political structures of "domestic" society.

Insurgent movements, lacking for the most part the level of institutionalization achieved by even weak third world states, are if anything even more deeply affected by such factors. Almost all effective insurgent movements are ultimately dependent on successful mobilization of the domestic population, and hence highly sensitive to its cleavages and substructures. Yet the domestic politics of insurgency is easily transnationalized, both by the regional repercussions of the insurgents' struggle, and by the influence of external sponsors. Within the movement itself, these transnational linkages may be institutionalized by the creation of client or proxy groups by interested outside actors. While the event-sensitivity of insurgency requires from insurgents dynamic responses to changing circumstances, their simultaneous need to maintain a base of political support may render them subject to the sorts of policy immobilism characteristic of "constrained" political regimes.³²

A third area of importance relates to the impact of the decision-making process itself.³³ While third world leaders often enjoy considerable presidential power, most neither control the decision-making process nor monopolize it. As a result, the exercise of executive power must be studied in the context of both institutional and social variables.

This is particularly true of movements that, like the PLO, have adopted

a "national front" model of organization. By including a variety of political currents within the umbrella of a single broad-based nationalist movement, a national front seeks to maximize its appeal to all segments of its constituent population. With all major groups represented within the decision-making process, consensus-building becomes an important mechanism for maintaining unity and minimizing internal conflict. Indeed, given only limited ability to control member organizations, majoritarian policies can only be adopted at the risk of breaking up the essential inter-group alliance. Decision-making thus commonly rests on compromise, even issue-avoidance. Policies thus tend to be broad in statement (to allow a variety of interpretations), and policy changes incremental in nature, producing a "lowest common denominator" outcome.³⁴

It is in the interaction of these systemic-situational, sociopolitical and organizational variables that insurgent policy emerges. To a significant extent, however, all coalesce into a single, multifaceted issue: the question of insurgent *authority*.

Authority becomes an important key to understanding the processes and constraints that shaped PLO policy in Lebanon, and which shape policy formation in other insurgent groups. The crucial aspect which distinguishes insurgents from the regimes they oppose is, after all, the exercise of sovereign authority over demarcated territory. It is precisely to gain such sovereignty and legal authority that insurgent groups struggle. And, in the meantime, their ability to make and implement policy decisions is deeply affected by its absence. As Mohamed Selim has noted of non-state actors in general, and the PLO in particular:

When they formulate foreign policies and operate in the international system, nonstate actors confront certain problems that state actors do not usually experience. Nonstate actors, especially when they take the form of a regional revolutionary movement aspiring to alter the territorial status quo, lack territorial political symbols to draw upon as a basis for defining foreign policy. They confront problems of control and legitimacy, factionalism, visibility, durability, and maneuverability. Lacking a territorial base and the conventional means of conferring legitimacy, these actors find the legitimacy of their representation to be always in question. They must be concerned with the issue of being heard, perceived, and recognized by nation-states and international organizations. As the nonstate actors become more visible and draw more international support, they run the risk of being portrayed by their adversaries as mavericks threatening international legitimacy. Allies may also become a source of threat. Supporters of nonstate actors expect a higher level of compliance from them than they expect from their state clients.³⁵

The provisional nature of insurgent authority thus leaves insurgent policy open to challenge from both within and without. To the extent that insurgents lack constitutional-legal mechanisms of authority, societal consensus on the legitimacy of insurgent authority, and a monopoly on the legitimate use of force to assure compliance, then, other means of legitimation must be utilized. These might take the form of charismatic leadership, of ideological appeals, or be based on traditional symbols of authority such as the bonds of shared cultural, religious or ethnic identity.

Insurgents may also approximate sovereignty in liberated zones or sanctuaries through revolutionary decrees, their own "laws" and legal procedures, and perhaps even the formal trappings of a state-in-exile. Such a resort to legal-bureaucratic and institutional frameworks in insurgent base areas has both symbolic value and, in a Weberian sense, serves as a mechanism for the routinization and maintenance of (insurgent) authority. Still, potential challenges to the authority of the insurgent decision-making structure are not eliminated. Nor, given the regional context within which they operate, may insurgents be capable of reducing their sensitivity³⁶ to external and internal pressures on their own decision-making processes.

Vulnerability, however, is another matter—indeed, it is an issue that will emerge as a central theme of the study that follows. Like many insurgent movements, the PLO has throughout its history faced severe (sometimes irresistible) pressures to accommodate itself to external demands. But while the constraints these have engendered have been real and significant, they have served to narrow Palestinian policy options rather than obviate Palestinian political autonomy. As will become evident, the Palestinian movement has expended considerable energy in attempting to maintain its freedom from outside "tutelage," Arab or otherwise. Indeed, the principle of safeguarding the independence of Palestinian decision-making is rooted in the very concept of "Palestinianism" upon which the post-1967 resurgence of the Palestinian movement would be implicitly based. It is a principle upon which each of the major independent Palestinian guerrilla organizations agree, whatever their other substantial political differences. Because of this, external threats to the survival and independence of the PLO—whether deriving from Israeli, Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian or other sources—have always tended to engender a defensive unity of sorts. A similar reaction would be evident in Lebanon too, in repeated crises and confrontations with the Lebanese government, hostile Lebanese militias, Syria, and Israel.

This has two important implications. First, it underlines the importance of internal Palestinian politics in PLO policy, politics that is real and indigenous even if substantially affected by the regional political environment. Second, it suggests why Lebanon would prove so important to the PLO, and why over two decades the PLO would make such strenuous efforts to preserve its Lebanese base. Lebanon was important as a sanctuary in general, as a training ground, as a base for Palestinian military and political operations and a delivery point for external supplies. Above and beyond this, however, Lebanon would offer a Palestinian movement, long constrained by the interests and pressures of others, its first real political freedom. The Lebanese base would allow the PLO to make decisions and act in a fashion that was impossible elsewhere in the Arab world, and hence to sustain the independence of Palestinian decision-making it so prized. It would be in Lebanon, then, that the Palestinians would become uniquely free to construct their own institutions, to promote their own identity, and to choose their own, *Palestinian*, paths to their dream of national liberation.

The Palestinians and Lebanon

al-Nakba:

Palestinians in Exile and Diaspora, 1948-67

On 14 May 1948 the formation of the state of Israel was declared. The following day, the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt intervened, ostensibly in support of the resistance of Palestinian Arabs and to prevent Israel's creation. They failed. In the conflict which followed, some 770,000 of the 900,000 Palestinians resident within the nascent Jewish state were uprooted from their towns and villages to seek an uncertain future in Arab lands not their own. Of these, about 500,000 sought refuge on the Jordanian-controlled West Bank or Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip. The remainder fled to Lebanon (100,000 or more), Syria (over 75,000), Jordan's East Bank (over 70,000), Iraq (about 5,000) or even further afield.¹

One could recount a progression of major events marking the evolution of the contemporary Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the Basle Congress of 1897, at which modern political Zionism was born; the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, in which the British government pledged its support to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine; the San Remo Conference of April 1920, in which mandatory control of formerly Ottoman Palestine was granted to Britain. One might point to the growth of Palestinian nationalist resistance to Zionist settlement and British rule during the inter-war years, especially the Palestine Revolt of 1936-39. And developments of fundamental importance could be observed in the historic 29 November 1947 decision of the United Nations to partition Palestine into "Jewish" and "Arab" states, and the objections to that proposal raised by Palestine's indigenous Arab majority.

Yet of all these—representing a history far too long, complex and disputatious to adequately recount here—a single event looms largest: *al-nakba* ("the catastrophe") of 1948.²

The Refugee Experience

The material conditions experienced by the refugees in the aftermath of 1948 were for the most part squalid and repressive. Certainly some Palestinians—those with money, or family or other connections abroad—were often able to settle themselves elsewhere and recreate some semblance of their earlier lives. Most, however, were workers, petite bourgeoisie and above all peasants who had lost everything, including their jobs, land, or other means of livelihood. Destitute, housed in “temporary” refugee camps, they were forced to rely on the relief efforts of Arab governments and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) while seeking what little work they could find in the economic margins of their new societies. For the overwhelming majority this meant casual or day labor at very low wages. In 1951, the average annual earnings of these refugees ranged from a low of \$37 in Jordan to \$60 in Lebanon and \$75 in Syria. Overall, Palestinian per capita incomes were reduced to about one-fifth of their level before 1948.³ Education—the only truly portable asset of a refugee existence—became a highly prized objective.

While some of the traditional authority structure of rural Palestinian life remained intact or was recreated by Palestinians in the camps, strong overall Palestinian political direction was noticeable only by its absence in the first decade or so following *al-nakba*. The leadership of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Arab Higher Committee, which had dominated the Palestinian political scene since the 1920s, was devastated by the disaster of 1948 and discredited by its failure to prevent it. The socio-economic base underlying the political power of traditional Palestinian notables was severely disrupted. The growing proletarianization of the Palestinian *ghurba* (diaspora) undermined it still further. At the same time the Palestinians, leaderless and forced into a daily struggle for survival, were initially in little shape to build new political organizations or actively continue the nationalist struggle.

Nor were they encouraged to do so. In the beginning at least, UNRWA was committed to resettling the refugees and integrating them into their new societies. Although Palestinian objections soon forced it to suspend this portion of its mandate, its very nature as a relief agency forced it to deal with the needs of Palestinians as “refugees” rather than as a dispossessed society. Meanwhile, Arab governments were anxious not to allow the Palestinian issue to slip beyond their control.

Palestine as an Arab Issue

The Arab regimes’ interest in controlling the Palestinians and the Palestine question reflected the issue’s broader significance in the Arab world. Palestine had long held a special geographic, historical, and religious position within the Arab consciousness. During the inter-war years, the struggle of its Arab population against British rule and the efforts of the Zionist movement to create a Jewish National Home there had become among the premier anti-colonialist issues of the day for a generation

of Arab nationalists, encapsulating as it did all the perceived injustices of European imperialism. The loss of such an important part of the cultural heritage of the Arab world before the forces of an essentially Western ideology (Zionism) and its Western supporters raised difficult questions about the Arab reassertion which had been underway since the nineteenth century. Arab disunity and the corrupt and conservative nature of the existing Arab order were identified by many as the root causes of failure. In the political turmoil which followed, the *ancien regimes* in Egypt (1952), in Syria, and in Iraq (1958) were swept away.

In their place new governments came to power, emphasizing the primacy of radical Arab nationalist objectives. For these new regimes, and for their conservative rivals, vocal support for the Palestinian cause became a central element of both domestic legitimacy and regional foreign policy. This was particularly true of the largest and most powerful Arab confrontation state, Egypt, led by President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir. With his prestige bolstered by success in the Suez Crisis of 1956, Nasir's call for Arab unity struck a responsive chord in the Arab world. The formation by Egypt and Syria of the United Arab Republic in 1958 seemed to signal to many—Palestinians included—that the road to Palestine really did lay through Arab unity, and that liberation could be achieved through the united strength of combined Arab regular armies.

Palestinian Political Reorganization

Through the 1950s and 1960s, pan-Arabism represented the dominant ideological orientation among most Palestinian communities. One effect of this was to submerge Palestinian political activity into broader Arab nationalist frameworks. Yet, at the same time other factors were at work, spurring the formation (or re-formation) of explicitly Palestinian organizations.

One immediate spur to this was the need to establish institutions which could not only press demands for the fulfillment of Palestinian rights, but also respond to the pressing social and psychological needs of Palestinian communities in the diaspora. Shared feelings of Palestinian identity provided the essential base for this. The Palestinians' plight and the repression experienced in some host countries further stimulated a gradual resurgence of Palestinian sociopolitical identity, especially in the refugee camps. The maintenance of kinship ties and networks provided a reinforcing element in this process, but one overwritten by the common experience of a dispersed and dispossessed people. Religious differences—already in decline in pre-1948 Palestine—became almost inconsequential as the common experience of an uprooted and dispossessed people provided a transcendent bond of shared Palestinianism.⁴

It was in this social, economic, and political environment that the modern Palestinian movement began to take root. By the mid-1950s, much of the traditional Palestinian political leadership had receded into the distance. A new generation (the *jiyl al-nakba*, or "generation of the

disaster") matured and began to become politically active, notably within Palestinian student unions in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere. This played a major role in Palestinian political reorganization on a nation-wide basis, a process marked by the formation of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in 1959. Later, associations of Palestinian workers, women and other groups were established, often on the foundations of organizations that had existed before 1948. Egypt, which granted critical early sponsorship to their activities, became an early center of post-1948 Palestinian political activity. So too did Kuwait and the Gulf, where political controls on individual Palestinian activists were often less rigid than those elsewhere in the Arab world.

In 1964 Palestinian political reorganization entered a new stage with the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In January of that year, Arab leaders meeting to discuss Israeli plans to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River called for the formation of a Palestinian "entity." This task was delegated to Ahmad Shuqayri, the Palestinian representative to the Arab League. Under his leadership a Palestinian congress was convened in East Jerusalem in May, and a charter and constitution adopted.

The formation of the PLO was, in part, a tacit recognition by Arab regimes of growing political assertiveness on the part of the Palestinians. Yet in other respects, the new organization was also intended to maintain Arab (and particular Egyptian) domination of the Palestinian issue, and to contain potential nationalist pressures among Palestinians within manageable proportions. The new PLO was, by virtue of its Charter, denied any administrative role on the Jordanian-annexed West Bank or Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip (Article 24). It was forbidden to interfere in the internal affairs of Arab states (Article 26). Its military wing—the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA)—consisted not of guerrillas, but of regular forces attached to (and controlled by) the armies of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. The PLO did play an active role in promoting Palestinian popular organization, and opened offices in most Arab capitals. But no Arab state had envisaged it as an independent actor (much less an exclusive Palestinian representative) in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Instead, it was to act as an adjunct of the pan-Arab liberation of Palestine—even if, much to the chagrin of some Arab states, it often seemed in practice to act as a adjunct of Egyptian policy in issues of inter-Arab dispute.

For these reasons, many Palestinian activists had serious misgivings about the likely effectiveness of the new PLO. For some, the experience of 1948, the collapse of the UAR in 1961, and the continued divisions which afflicted the Arab world cast doubt upon the wisdom of excessive reliance upon Arab governments. For others, the national liberation struggles being waged around the world, notably the victory of the FLN against the French in Algeria (1958-62) and the eruption of resistance to the British in South Yemen (1963-), underscored the value of armed struggle both as a means of national liberation and as a statement of national existence. As one 1950s Palestinian activist later remarked:

[The Palestinian question] was dealt with under UNRWA reports, under the "Middle East problem", not as the Palestinian cause... Every representative in the United Nations was speaking about how to sympathize with the Palestinian "refugees", how to give them aid—tents, medicine, and so on. It was treated as a matter of refugees, a matter of borders, a matter of clashes. This was the Palestinian problem. A Palestinian cause? No. A cause as a people, a national cause? No. Therefore we began to search for a way to tell the world "we are still alive as a Palestinian people...." ⁵

Five years earlier the clandestine and irregular publication in Beirut of the magazine *Filastinnuna* had signaled in 1959 the first public activity of one such group, the Palestine National Liberation Movement (*Harakat al-tahrir al-watani al-filastini*) or Fateh (*al-Fath*). The organizational nucleus of Fateh had been formed in the mid-1950s in Cairo and Kuwait by Yasir 'Arafat, Salah Khalaf, and Khalil al-Wazir. Ideologically, the group espoused a simple Palestinian nationalism largely devoid of socio-economic content. While it accepted the Arab dimension of the Palestinian question, the Arab nature of the Palestinian people, and called for cooperation with friendly Arab forces, Fateh's advocacy of Palestinian liberation of Palestine through Palestinian armed struggle nevertheless represented a position in contradiction to pan-Arab formulations of the time. Shortly after Algeria won its independence in 1962 Fateh opened its first office, the *Bureau de la Palestine* in Algiers. A few years later came the historic announcement of the first operation by its military wing, *al-'Asifa* ("The Storm") on 1 January 1965. The objectives were three-fold: to revitalize the Palestinian self-identity; to remind Israel and the world of the Palestinians' existence; and to stoke the intensity of Arab-Israeli confrontation as part of a long-term war of liberation embracing both the Arab states and the Palestinian people. Over the next 29 months Fateh would claim responsibility for 175 military operations inside Israel.⁶

A second manifestation of rising militancy was the Arab Nationalists' Movement (*Harakat al-qawmiyyin al-'arab*). The founding core of the ANM was comprised of a number of Arab and especially Palestinian students (notably George Habash and Wadi' Haddad) active in the nationalist *al-Urwa al-wuthaq* ("the Firm Tie") literary society at the American University of Beirut after 1948. By the early 1950s the ANM had developed into a formal organization with underground cells in a number of Arab countries and a clandestine leadership headed by Habash. Although the movement initially espoused a reactive and rather conservative Arab nationalism, it later swung to the left in the 1960s under the influence of Nasirism and its own radical wing (Nayif Hawatima, Muhsin Ibrahim, Muhammad Kishli). It also came to accept the principle of Palestinian armed struggle against Israel (albeit to hasten liberation within a pan-Arab framework). In 1964 the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine was established from among the ANM's Palestinian cadres. In November of that same year the NFLP's military wing ("The Youth of Vengeance") suffered its first casualty during a reconnaissance mission across the Lebanese-Israeli border.⁷

A third response was typified by various small, underground Palestinian military organizations which pursued armed struggle with scant regard to larger issues of ideology. Typical of these was the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), founded in 1961 by Ahmad Jibril, a former Palestinian officer in the Syrian army. Under Syrian urging it briefly coordinated its activities with Fateh in 1965.

All of these groups viewed the PLO with varying degrees of suspicion. Fateh initially sought cooperation, and several of its members took part in the PLO's 1964 founding congress. It soon gave up when it became apparent that the organization had limited objectives and autonomy. The ANM too criticized the unrevolutionary nature of Shuqayri's organization, despite its support for Nasir and pan-Arabism. Even some within the PLO itself grew impatient with its quietist attitude, and began organizing guerrilla groups of their own.⁸

Palestinian participation in the various *fida'iyyin* groups was extremely limited at this stage. According to Fateh sources *al-'Asifa* consisted of only 26 persons when it launched its first operations in 1964, growing to 200 the following year and perhaps 500 on the eve of the 1967 war.⁹ Still, the growth of Palestinian militancy in the 1960s elicited concern in most Arab capitals. *Fida'iyyin* actions against Israel were seen as uncontrolled and adventurist at the least, and as dangerous invitations to Israeli reprisals at worst. Emphasizing the point, the escalation of *fida'iyyin* activity in the period between 1965 and 1967 was accompanied by a growing number of Israeli punishment strikes against neighboring Arab countries.¹⁰ Furthermore, the ideological positions of the various groups were challenging in their own right: thus Fateh's Palestinian orientation challenged widely accepted pan-Arabist views; the ANM's growing Nasirism was unwelcomed by conservative regimes and by the rival *Ba'ith* party in Syria. In the case of the Hashemite regime in Jordan, which had annexed the Palestinian West Bank in the aftermath of the 1948 war, virtually any expression of Palestinian militancy or nationalism was a serious political threat.

Such factors motivated Arab attempts to either gain control of, or suppress, the *fida'iyyin*. Egypt, which had established *fida'iyyin* units of its own in the Gaza Strip before 1956, offered financial support to the ANM and later dominated Shuqayri's PLO. Syria, in part motivated by a desire to offset the PLO's Cairo connection, provided some support and facilities to Fateh. When rebuffed in its attempts to gain control, Damascus turned its attentions to the PLF. Throughout the Middle East, Arab security forces routinely arrested Palestinian militants. Both Habash and 'Arafat were imprisoned at one time or another. Fateh lost its first casualty, Ahmad Musa, not to an Israeli but a Jordanian military patrol in 1965. Many Arab countries (including Lebanon) initially suppressed news of *fida'iyyin* activities. Indeed, in 1965 the Arab League and the Unified Arab Command went so far as to formally call for the suppression of *al-'Asifa* activity. In Lebanon, the army command asked the Lebanese Press Union to embargo all news of guerrilla activity.¹¹

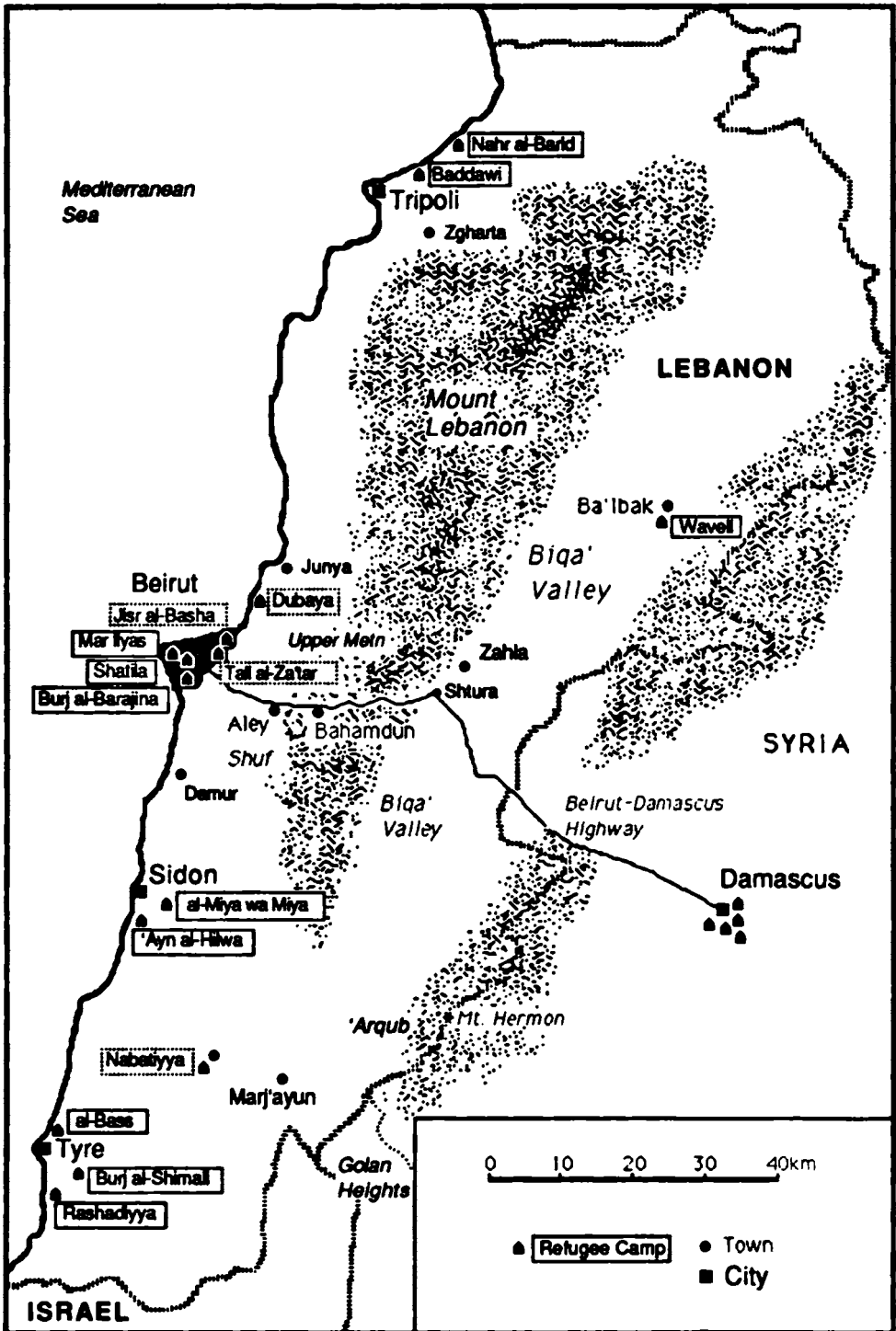
The Lebanese Sanctuary

By this time over 180,000 Palestinians were to be found in Lebanon, representing the second largest community of the diaspora. By 1969 a combination of further immigration, the 1967 war, and natural increases in the population had raised the number of Palestinians resident in Lebanon to approximately 235,000. This figure would grow still further to 300,000 in 1976 and some 375,000 or more on the eve of the Israeli invasion in 1982.

Although some of those who sought refuge in Lebanon in 1948 were middle or upper class Palestinians who arrived with a significant portion of their savings intact, the vast bulk were workers, fishermen, and especially peasants who had fled or been driven from their homes in the Galilee and Haifa-Acre coastal strip. Initially sheltered in temporary transit camps in southern Lebanon, these refugees had later been moved to a dozen or so UNRWA-operated camps near Tyre, Sidon and Nabatiyya in the south, Beirut, Ba'lbak in the Biqa' Valley, and Tripoli in the north. The tents that initially sheltered them gradually gave way to single-story concrete houses with corrugated metal roofs, and perhaps (after 1969, when Lebanese law ceased to restrict local construction) to more substantial structures. Over time, a majority of Palestinians moved into the surrounding districts, as Beirut and other urban areas expanded to envelop camps that had often originally stood on waste ground. By the late 1960s perhaps a third of Palestinians in Lebanon remained in the camps. Still, the camps themselves always remained the geographic and social core of the Palestinian community in Lebanon (see Map 2.1 and Table 2.1).

Of the initial wave of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, only a small fraction ever obtained full Lebanese citizenship. Most of the rest were given the status of temporary residents. As such, they enjoyed few legal rights and were subject to wide discretionary powers exercised by the Lebanese Interior Ministry's Directorate of Palestinian Refugee Affairs. Later refugees, from 1967 or 1970, were even less fortunate. Unregistered with either UNRWA or the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior, they became both stateless and statusless persons in the eyes of the authorities.¹²

Moreover, of all the major Arab countries of refuge for Palestinian refugees in 1948, the Lebanese state was perhaps the least supportive. In contrast to Jordan (where most Palestinians gained citizenship), or Syria and Egypt (where in many sectors Palestinians were granted legal equivalency), Palestinians in Lebanon were systematically denied access to state education or to Lebanon's underdeveloped social welfare system. Despite the deductions made from their wages, Palestinian workers in regular employment had no right to social security. They were also routinely denied the documentation necessary for legal employment in the country. In 1969, only 3,362 of the tens of thousands of Palestinian workers in Lebanon had legal work permits. Similarly, many Palestinian professionals were prohibited from working, or were forced to do so under restrictive circumstances. Palestinian teachers, for example, required an annual license



Map 2.1: Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Camp	Location	Population		Notes
		1968	1982	
Mar Elias	West Beirut	889	522	
Shatila	West Beirut	4,892	5,865	
Burj al-Barajina	West Beirut	7,189	10,451	
Tall al-Za'tar	East Beirut	7,403	—	(1)
Jisr al-Basha	East Beirut	1,236	—	(1)
Dubaya	East Beirut	2,448	—	(1)
Nahr al-Barid	Tripoli	10,076	16,041	
Baddawi	Tripoli	5,445	8,637	
'Ayn al-Hilwa	Sidon	17,029	25,804	
al-Miya wa Miya	Sidon	1,871	2,490	
al-Bass	Tyre	3,911	5,415	
Burj al-Shimali	Tyre	7,159	11,256	
Rashadiyya	Tyre	13,165	15,356	
Nabatiyya	Nabatiyya	3,937	—	(2)
Wavell	Ba'bak	3,937	4,686	

(1) Destroyed by Lebanese Forces in 1976.

(2) Largely abandoned due to Israeli attacks after 1977.

Table 2.1: Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon¹³

from the Lebanese Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs if they wished to work in the private sector; private schools were limited to a maximum of two "foreign" (including Palestinian) teachers. Under regulations issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Education, many Palestinian teachers were also prohibited from teaching in the social sciences or other politically sensitive subjects. Political activity was expressly prohibited, and teachers hired by UNRWA required advance clearance from the *Deuxième Bureau* (Lebanese military intelligence).¹⁴

Such legal status reflected and reinforced the adverse economic status of the Palestinian community in Lebanon. Because of the relative prosperity of Beirut, the earnings of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were often higher than those of refugees in Jordan or Syria during the early years. But whereas in these countries Palestinians found increasing employment opportunities amid economic expansion and a shortage of skilled and educated workers, similar conditions did not exist in Lebanon. Instead, a sufficient supply of qualified Lebanese professionals and skilled Lebanese labor was already present. As a result, many Palestinians continued to work as casual agricultural or unskilled laborers, or in menial positions in Lebanon's large service sector. One 1971 Lebanese government survey found that most camp workers were employed in services (35.8%), followed by industry (25.4%, of which more than half worked in building and construction) and agriculture (21.1%). Over half (58.4%) of camp workers were day-labourers; fewer than one-third enjoyed either long-term employment (14.2%) or were self-employed (18.8%). Lacking work permits and generally employed in small enterprises, most Palestinians thus labored for low wages under poor working conditions with no fringe

benefits, devoid of protection under Lebanese law. Such economic circumstances, coupled with the lack of support offered by the Lebanese state and the meager resources of UNRWA, combined to create poor living and health conditions in the camps. In 1971 more than 88% of camp homes had 80 square meters or less of living space, with an average of 3.5 persons per room and 6.7 per house. Less than 12% of homes had toilets; 60% had no running water. Most camps lacked either garbage collection or adequate sewer systems.¹⁵

Conditions were clearly better for those wealthier Palestinians outside the camps, and especially for those (predominately Christian) Palestinians who through family ties or connections had managed to acquire Lebanese citizenship. Some Palestinians were able to construct (or reconstruct) sizable business networks in Lebanon, often extending elsewhere in the Arab world and even further abroad. Yet the very success of members of the Palestinian bourgeoisie could lead to resentment on the part of their Lebanese counterparts. Evidence of this came in 1966, when the Lebanese economic elite apparently engineered the collapse of the largely Palestinian Intra Bank.¹⁶

The legal and economic marginality of the Palestinian community was matched by the tight political control exercised by the Lebanese Interior Ministry and the Lebanese Army *Deuxième Bureau*. Security posts of the former's para-military *Forces de Sécurité Intérieure* existed in and around Palestinian camps. Palestinians were routinely questioned at army checkpoints around the refugee camps and on major roads; during some periods of political tension in the 1950s and 1960s Palestinians required permission for travel within Lebanon itself.

This, combined with the Palestinian community's political shock and pan-Arab orientation in the 1950s and early 1960s, restricted the emergence of new Palestinian organizations. To the extent that Palestinian political activity did take place, it tended to be on an individual rather than community basis, with activists joining organizations like the ANM or the *Ba'th*. Indeed, despite the activities of Palestinians at Beirut universities (especially by those holding non-Lebanese passports) and efforts by the ANM to increase its recruitment in the refugee camps, most political activity by the Palestinians in Lebanon was forcefully suppressed. At the American University of Beirut, for example, many key Palestinian leaders of the ANM were expelled in 1954–55.

In the mid-1960s this situation began to change with the emergence of an armed Palestinian resistance movement. But until 1967 the Lebanese authorities were in firm control of the camps and determined to remain so—a determination evidenced by the death of one early Fateh guerrilla, Jalal Ka'ush, under Lebanese military interrogation in January 1966.¹⁷

Such sensitivity to any signs of radical Palestinianism stemmed from a variety of factors, chief among them the precarious nature of Lebanon's own sociopolitical order. Lebanese President Fu'ad Shihab's reported 1960 response to an ANM delegation protesting *Deuxième Bureau* excesses in the camps is instructive in this regard:

Let's speak frankly. Lebanon is a country of sects; and we treat everyone according to this reality. If we treat you [Palestinians] as a sect, you will dominate the others because of your large numbers, your concentration in the same places, and your passion for politics. The Lebanese state is unable to deal with these problems and thus we have to replace social measures with security measures. In other words, the Palestinian problem is bigger than Lebanon. For Lebanon will either repress the Palestinians or be repressed by them—and no third solution exists.¹⁸

Sect, Class and Identity:

A Brief Political Economy of the Lebanese System

As Shihab suggested, Lebanon is indeed a state characterized by the presence of a number of religious communities: Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Armenian (Orthodox and Catholic) Christians; Sunni, Shi'i, and Druze Muslims; and others. Upon independence political and economic power was apportioned between the leadership of the various communities on the basis of elite accommodation, a consociational democracy wherein "small elites of different communities interact moderately, responsibly with one another to preserve mutual advantages and promote mass tranquility while they maintain the tightest possible control over their own 'flocks'."¹⁹ These elites have traditionally taken the form of *zu'ama'*—leaders from wealthy, notable families whose political power rests on a strong network of patron-client relationships.

The evolution of this socio-economic and political structure is a complex historical event, detailed examination of which is beyond the scope of this study.²⁰ In essence, however, it emerged in the 19th century from the effect of two interrelated social forces on Mount Lebanon's precapitalist social order: the expansion of European political influence in the region as the Ottoman Empire declined; and the concomitant expansion of local capitalist production. As a result of these forces (and its own internal contradictions) the hitherto dominant aspect of Lebanese society, feudalism, began to collapse. At the same time a new bourgeoisie arose in the rapidly expanding urban centers, a class which owed much of its position to money-lending to weakened agriculturalists, or to involvement in the coastal region's expanding European and entrepôt trade.

It was in this context that sectarianization began to assume a particular importance. Up to the early 19th century communal identities had existed but had not dominated society. Traditional patron-client relationships rooted in feudalism, rather than sectarianism, had provided the essential bonding of the social order.²¹ Three major factors, however, served to transform this situation.

The first of these was the decline of feudal agriculture itself. As the expansion of capitalist production and changes in the structure of the Ottoman tax system weakened the financial and social position of the feudal class, competition between feudal families and the economic exploitation of the peasantry increased. The results were violent clashes and widespread discontent amongst Druze and Maronite peasants alike. In 1820 this

growing discontent exploded into a commoners' uprising. In the 1840s, a successful struggle against Egyptian occupation (1831-40) was followed by fighting amongst feudal families and sporadic rebellions by predominately Christian peasants as the former sought to re-establish their feudal privileges. In an attempt to limit the extent of the rural rebellions, the Druze nobles promoted anti-Christian sentiments to solidify their base of Druze support. As a consequence, sectarian fighting—and hence the sectarian nature of conflict in the Mountain—intensified.²² This, combined with a successful rebellion by Maronite peasants against their Maronite feudal overlords in Kisrawan set in course a train of events which ultimately led to the massacre of more than ten thousand Christians by Druze lords and their Druze followers in 1860.

Throughout this period, a parallel role was being played (for very different reasons) by the Maronite Church. Strengthened by a demographic shift in favor of the Christians in Mount Lebanon and rendered more assertive by internal reform, the Church sought to extend its political and economic influence and interests at the expense of the feudal system. It did so by challenging the old patterns of feudal loyalty, promoting in their stead a communal Maronite identity.²³ The Church thus supported both the growing anti-feudal assertiveness of Christian commoners and the sectarianization of the political system.

Finally sectarianism invited, and was promoted by, European powers anxious to extend their influence into the Ottoman Empire's erstwhile possessions. Thus France supported the Maronites and other Catholics of Mount Lebanon; Russia, the Orthodox; Britain, the Druze. Later, the 1860 massacre of Christians led to the landing of French troops and direct European political intervention. Constantinople was forced to grant autonomy to Mount Lebanon under a Christian governor (*mutasarraf*). Under the *mutasarraf* system sectarianism was further consecrated and institutionalized through explicit recognition of religious community as the basis for representation within the political system.

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century Lebanon's socio-economic and political system had undergone a major transformation. This change was amplified in the aftermath of World War One, when the Ottoman Empire was vanquished and France gained a League of Nations mandate over Syria and Lebanon. Portions of the Biqa' Valley and the coastal plain were combined with the Mountain to form a Greater Lebanon, adding a substantial number of urban Sunni Muslims and Sunni and Shi'i agriculturalists to the hitherto largely Christian and Druze population. This population historically looked to Syria and the broader Arab world for economic and political intercourse, in contrast to the predominately Levantist and European orientation of the Christians of Mount Lebanon. The political arrangements established by France (notably the 1926 Lebanese constitution) tended to further entrench the confessional principle. Finally, French control accelerated the decline of the agricultural sector and the growth of Lebanon's capitalist service and trade sector in urban areas.

All of this had important implications for the structures of political

leadership in the country. In some areas of the country (among the Druze and Shi'a in the south, the Shi'a of the Biqa', and the Sunnis of 'Akkar) the social system still bore strong evidence of its feudal roots, and power still derived from historic families, landownership, and retainers. Elsewhere, however, it had undergone substantial adaptation to post-feudal circumstances. The weakening of feudal ties of loyalty forced *zu'ama'* to adopt more overtly ideological means for mobilizing their supporters. Among the small-holding farmers and Christian middle class of Mount Lebanon, modern patron-client networks and the popular appeal of a "political Maronitism" strengthened political loyalties by emphasizing the plight of Lebanese Christians as an isolated minority in a non-Christian Middle East. For urban-based Sunni leaders, historically oriented towards Syria and the wider Arab world, a different political mix found favor: appeals to pan-Arabism, coupled with patronage and the local control of the Muslim "street" provided by neighborhood strongmen (*qabadayat*).²⁴ Yet to the extent that all such leaders shared a common interest in maintaining a sectarianized political base, the Lebanese elite had a strong shared interest in negotiating a *modus vivendi* which would reinforce their mutual positions. Sectarianization (and even some degree of communal tension) strengthened them; unrestrained communal conflict would threaten dysfunctional disorder, particularly in view of a service economy's need for a minimum degree of security and stability.²⁵

The result was the National Pact (*al-mithaq al-watani*) of 1943, an unwritten agreement between Maronite President Bishara al-Khuri and Sunni leader Riyad al-Sulh that was to provide the institutional framework for the Lebanese system for more than four decades after independence. Under its terms Lebanon's most powerful political position—that of the President of the Republic—was reserved for a Maronite, while the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies were to be a Sunni and Shi'i respectively. Representation within the Lebanese parliament and senior bureaucracy was similarly allocated on a sectarian basis of a 6:5 ratio of Christians to Muslims, the alleged demographic balance at the time of Lebanon's last census in 1932. The National Pact resolved conflicting views over Lebanon's identity between (predominately Maronite) "Lebanese" nationalists and pan-Arabists through a compromise formula which confirmed both Lebanon's independence and its Arab "face" In return, leaders of the two sides were expected to renounce European (i.e., French) protection and the inclusion of Lebanon into a larger Arab union respectively.

Internal Contradictions

In a little over three decades after independence in 1946 Lebanon would twice explode into civil war: first in 1958, and again after 1975. In the later conflagration, the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon played a major role. That it did not in the first, however, is strong evidence of the degree to which the internal contradictions of the Lebanese system constituted a

primary cause for its own demise.

A major source of grievance within the Lebanese system was rooted in its socio-economic structure and the disparities it generated. While the urban bourgeoisie reaped enormous profits from Lebanon's growing service sector, the continuing decline of agriculture forced thousands of villagers to migrate to Beirut and other urban centers in search of work. Here they congregated in what became known as the capital's "misery belt," alongside the already miserable quarters of the Palestinian refugees. A vast gap existed between a small rich minority and the poor majority. In 1959 one study estimated that whereas 4% of Lebanon's population could be classed as "rich" and enjoyed an annual income in excess of L£15,000 or more, 49% were either "poor" (L£1,200-2,500) or "destitute" (less than L£1,200). While the former received some 32% of Lebanon's GNP, the latter half of the population received less than 18%.²⁶ Moreover, a general aura of *laissez faire* capitalism both intensified the economic exploitation of workers and inhibited government spending on health, welfare, or social services which might mitigate its impact.

All of this stimulated rising levels of social discontent. Yet for the most part this discontent failed to develop along class lines. Instead, confessional identification inhibited the formation of inter-communal class consciousness. Socio-economic grievances were translated into tensions over confessional inequality, with working-class Muslims most militant in their demands for a redistribution of political and economic power among the sects.²⁷ This in turn was fueled by a changing demographic balance in the country.

According to Lebanon's 1932 census, a majority of Lebanon's population was Christian. As the years progressed, however, a higher Muslim (and especially Shi'i) birthrate and Christian emigration cast doubts on whether this balance had been maintained. The refusal of the government to undertake a new census only seemed to confirm the view of many that the Muslim community had become Lebanon's new majority.²⁸

Despite this, it continued to be the Christian community (and especially the Christian elite) which was the major beneficiary of the Lebanese system. Economically, a disproportionate level of benefits appeared to flow to the Christian community, while the Muslim community appeared disproportionately poor. Certainly the difference was often one of degrees of relative poverty: according to one study 82% of Shi'i, 79% of Sunni, and 61% of Christian families had incomes below L£6,000 in 1971.²⁹ Nevertheless, the underdevelopment of many Muslim areas compared with the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon remained a source of discontent. This was exacerbated by continued Christian political dominance over the government and bureaucracy as provided for under the National Pact.

To some extent, this discontent was contained by the Sunni *zu'ama'*, who were able to exploit it to strengthen their own position and to back calls for a larger Muslim share of wealth and power. But when coupled with the discontent produced by economic inequities, not all could be channeled within sectarian boundaries. It instead found expression outside the

traditional framework, in the form of several small but growing radical organizations. Faced with their challenge, the traditional Muslim leadership was increasingly forced to escalate its demands in order to maintain the loyalty of its constituency.

A third area of tension—that of Lebanon's national and political identity—increasingly provided the avenue for this. The Sunni bourgeoisie had long found pan-Arabism a useful mobilizing tool; with the acceleration of Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s, its importance grew still further. Indeed, given the popularity of Egypt's 'Abd al-Nasir among the mass of the Muslim population it would have been virtually impossible for the traditional Sunni leadership to resist the Arab nationalist tide without seriously undermining their own political status. Many conservative Muslim leaders thus underwent a "road to Cairo" conversion of sorts, embracing Nasirism (and, if possible, Nasir himself for photographic record) despite their distaste for its progressivist flavor.

The issue of identity was intimately connected to other tensions within Lebanese society. Most Lebanese, both Christian (especially Greek Orthodox) and Muslim, embraced an Arab identity and hence responded to the appeal of Arab nationalism. Most (Maronite) Christian leaders, however, drew their political support from the portrayal of Lebanon as a Christian enclave in a hostile Muslim sea, and hence proved hostile to a non-sectarian "Arab" nationalism which threatened to erode such distinctions. It was this attitude, and their espousal of a Levantist or "Lebanese" nationalism, that earned them the epithet "isolationist" (*in'izali*) from their political opponents. The question of Lebanon's identity also had class implications, insofar as the dominant strains of Arab nationalist thought adopted an increasingly more socialist content in the aftermath of the 1952 Egyptian revolution.

A final weakness of the Lebanese system was produced by the personalized nature of the political process. Both political and economic life were dominated directly by a small number of persons from a few leading families. Because of this, personal disagreements and slightly divergent economic interests were reflected in sometimes intense conflict within the Lebanese government and ruling class. By the late 1960s, such intra-elite conflict had reached the point that "not one of the ten to twelve leading oligarchs was on speaking terms with all the others."³⁰ This in turn had severe negative implications for the state's ability to protect the stability and smooth operation of the Lebanese political and economic system as a whole.

All of these aspects—socio-economic exploitation, confessional conflict, tensions of international orientation, and the absence of relative state autonomy—were evident as contributing factors to the 1958 Lebanese civil war. As Nasirism grew in popularity, many (born-again Nasirite) Muslim leaders pushed for the adoption by Lebanon of a more pan-Arab foreign policy. Lebanese President Camille Chamoun (1952-58) responded to such pressure by moving closer to the West. In 1956 he refused to break relations with Britain and France during the Suez Crisis; the following year he endorsed the US Eisenhower Doctrine. He also embarked on an attempt

to weaken the power of the traditional pan-Arab Muslim elite, manipulating the 1957 parliamentary elections to unseat many of them. In doing so, however, the President was seen as challenging the position of the Muslim communities, thus further fanning the flames of growing sectarian discontent. This, combined with Chamoun's attempts to amend the Lebanese constitution so as to permit his re-election to a second presidential term, led to the outbreak of a rebellion against the government in May 1958. The strength of the rebellion in both underdeveloped and Muslim areas of the country was indicative of its twin socio-economic and communal character.³¹

The Maronite army commander, Fu'ad Shihab, refused to use the armed forces in support of the President. Amid the added pressure of the July 1958 revolution in Iraq, US troops intervened to safeguard Lebanese "independence". Still, it soon became impossible for Chamoun to remain in power. Thus at the end of July early elections were held. Shihab emerged the victor. The civil war was over.

The short duration of the 1958 civil war and the slogan of "no victor, no vanquished" under which it was settled underscored the common interest of the Lebanese elite in containing the conflict before it overwhelmed the Lebanese system. It was as much for this reason as for personal dislike of Chamoun that many Christian leaders (including the Maronite Patriarch) had supported the insurgents against the President's attempts to change the essential rules of the system; it was for this reason too that most Muslim leaders were only too willing to mute their Nasirite rhetoric for continued participation in that system. And it was in defense of the *system* that General Shihab had refused to support the *government* during the crisis, thus emerging as Lebanon's apparent savior and new President (1958-64).

Yet the contradictions of the Lebanese system remained, and Shihab and his parliamentary supporters embarked on a series of reforms designed to mitigate them. To weaken Muslim and working class discontent a series of public works projects were launched in underdeveloped areas. Externally, rapprochement was sought with Nasir. In order to strengthen the relative autonomy of the state and its ability to intervene to maintain system stability, Shihab set about expanding the state role, bypassing the traditional *zu'ama'*. The greatly-enlarged *Deuxième Bureau* became the primary political weapon of the new regime, active throughout Lebanese politics and society.

These reforms were soon opposed by a broad coalition of traditional leaders who, having fought to keep their power in 1958, now found it threatened still further. Their opposition, coupled with the corruption and patronage so widespread in the Lebanese administrative machinery, slowed the pace of reform under Shihab. Under his successor, Charles Hilu (1964-1970), it was slower still.

The limits of reform, coupled with the continued dominance of the traditional elite had a radicalizing influence on many of Lebanon's younger generation for whose aspirations and ideals the Lebanese system seemed to hold no room.³² The radicalization of Arab nationalism in the 1960s

reinforced this, as did the emergence of the Palestinian resistance movement. And, with the Arab defeat of 1967, many in Lebanon (as elsewhere in the Arab world) sharpened their critique of the present system, now calling for its social and political transformation.

Lebanese Parties, Factions and Forces

By the late 1960s these interrelated tensions and contradictions in Lebanese society had combined to form a complex array of political groupings.³³ In defense of the socio-economic and political status quo stood a number of conservative, largely Maronite, parties and groupings. Some, such as the Franjiyya clan of Zgharta, were little more than a local family-centered network of *zu'ama'*. In other cases, however, *zu'ama'* networks had assumed a more modern political exterior. The Liberal Nationalists' Party (*Hizb al-wataniyyin al-ahrar*) of Camille Chamoun was one of these, formed in 1959 on a free-enterprise, anti-Shihabist conservative program. Another was the National Bloc (*al-Qutla al-wataniyya*), dating to before independence and now led by Raymond Eddé on an anti-Shihabist platform.

The largest conservative group, however, was the Lebanese Phalange Party (*al-Kata'ib*). This right-wing populist organization, led by Pierre al-Jumayyil, was the only conservative group to establish an institutionalized party organization. Originally modeled after the European fascist parties of the 1930s, the Phalange saw itself (in the words of one analyst) as "builder, surrogate, and defender of the state."³⁴ It was in this role that the Phalange had been among the major supporters of the government in 1958. Although it was willing to see some modest changes in the Lebanese system (and had supported Shihab to this end), it was militant in defense of Lebanon's "Lebanese" identity and the capitalist social order. It thus gradually broke with Shihabism over what it saw as its pan-Arabist orientation and excessively reformist inclinations.

All of these various groups were engaged in competition for political support, particularly from the Christian population. Despite this, they often managed to coordinate their resistance to fundamental political change. This was manifest in the formation of the Tripartite Alliance (*al-Hilf al-thulathi*) by the LNP, National Bloc, and Phalange on the eve of the 1968 parliamentary elections. The *Hilf* was also supported by the Maronite Patriarch who had traditionally performed a moderate political role. Later, this role would be surpassed by the more militant Maronite Monastic Orders.

In opposition to the status quo stood an even more heterogeneous collection of forces. The largest of these was the Progressive Socialist Party (*al-Hizb al-taqaddumi al-ishtiraki*) led by Druze *za'im* Kamal Junblat. Junblat had been among Chamoun's major opponents in 1958, and had subsequently supported Shihabism through the 1960s. The PSP espoused a secular reformist ideology, and was strongly supportive of Arab nationalism. Although it drew its support from all communities, its core membership was composed of Junblat's Druze followers.

Another significant source of radical opposition was posed by the various urban-based Nasirite groups. The largest of these was the Beirut-based Independent Nasirites Movement led by Ibrahim Qulaylat, later better known under the name of its military wing, *al-Murabitun*. All of these groups, which promoted Nasir's own blend of secular pan-Arab socialism, drew the bulk of their support from the Sunni community, within which they posed the major alternative to the traditional leadership. Their ability to challenge the Sunni *zu'ama'* was constrained by their perennial internal divisions, however, and by the fact that many represented little more than armed, organized, and slightly politicized local street gangs.

The Shi'a, Lebanon's largest communal group by this time, lagged further behind in political mobilization against the status quo—reflecting the community's widespread poverty and lack of education. Nevertheless one such attempt was undertaken by a rising Shi'i cleric, Imam Musa al-Sadr. In 1969 Sadr was elected head of the Shi'i Higher Council, established two years earlier to replace Shi'i representation in the Sunni-dominated Islamic Higher Council. In 1974 he launched the Movement of the Deprived (*Harakat al-mahrumin*). The Movement, better known by the name of its militia *Amal* ("Hope") was to gain greater political prominence in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Other opposition groups were less dependent on a communal core of support. Lebanon's various Marxist-Leninist parties, for example, drew members from all communities, and were among the few organizations to meet any success in mobilizing the poor, largely Shi'i, workers of Beirut's "misery belt". The largest of these parties was the Lebanese Communist Party. As a traditional Moscow-line party the LCP had long opposed Arab nationalism, only revising its position in 1968-69. The Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon was a direct descendent of the "leftist" splinter within the Arab Nationalists' Movement. The OCA was formed in 1971 through the merger of two smaller groups, and led by Muhsin Ibrahim. The Arab Socialist Action Party represented another Lebanese descendant of the ANM.

The secular pan-Arabism of the *Ba'th* was represented in Lebanon by two parties, the Organization of the *Ba'th* Party, and the Arab Socialist *Ba'th* Party, reflecting the split of the parent party into pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi wings respectively. The Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (*al-Hizb al-suri al-qawmi al-ijtima'i*) comprised a final significant member of the radical forces. Often known under its French title of the *Parti Populaire Syrien*, the SSNP had originally been founded as a secretive proto-fascist Syrian nationalist group in 1932. Indeed, in 1958 its conservatism and hostility to pan-Arabism had led it to be amongst the government's most militant supporters. By the early 1970s, however, its original ideology had been replaced by a functional reformism and accommodation with Arab nationalism, placing it in the anti-status quo camp.

Eventually the reformist and revolutionary forces also began coordinating their demands for change, with the formation of the umbrella Front of National and Progressive Parties and Forces (*Jabhat al-'ahzab wa*

al-quwa al-taqaddumiyya wa al-wataniyya) after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Led by Kamal Junblat, the Front—better known as the Lebanese National Movement (LNM)—was to play a major role in Lebanese politics throughout the 1970s.

Amid this the traditional Muslim *zu'ama'* found themselves uncomfortably poised between the status quo and anti-status quo forces. Whilst many supported the idea of a horizontal (inter-communal) redistribution of wealth in Lebanon, none supported vertical redistribution amongst classes, and few were willing to compromise their own privileged positions within the system to achieve reform. Yet they were forced to find some populist platform around which to shore up their political support. As a consequence they were often led to support reformist programs rhetorically, while taking actions that seemed more supportive of the status quo.

To some extent their quandary was shared by the Sunni Mufti and other Muslim religious personages, and by conservative Muslim organizations. These too supported greater power for the Muslim community. But they opposed the call of the National Movement for secularism or deconfessionalization, a program which would have struck at the very root of their ideological foundations and influence.

It was into this complex social and political milieu that a revitalized Palestinian nationalist movement would be injected after June 1967. As we have already seen, by the mid-1960s a number of rudimentary Palestinian nationalist groupings had thus risen from the social and political wreckage of 1948. It was not until the Arab defeat of June 1967, however, that these groups were catapulted to the forefront of the Palestine question.

al-Thawra:

The Emergence of the Palestinian Movement, 1967-

The impact of the 1967 war was fundamental. In physical terms, Israel now occupied both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With this, a further 300,000 Palestinians had fled their homes in these areas to join the Palestinian diaspora. Thus, by the end of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war all of historic Palestine lay under Israeli occupation; over one-half of its population had become involuntary exiles from their homeland (Table 2.2).³⁵

In political terms, the inability of Egypt, Syria and Jordan to triumph on the battlefield raised more critical questions about the ability of the pan-Arab orthodoxy to deliver Palestinian liberation. Shuqayri, whose shrill rhetoric had remained unmatched by action, was similarly discredited by implication. He eventually resigned as PLO chairman in December 1967.³⁶

For Fateh, the lesson (if not its scope) was not unexpected. Indeed, the events of June 1967 seemed to confirm Fateh's prescriptions regarding the need to liberate Palestine through Palestinian armed struggle. For the ANM (and the Arab new left in general) the lesson was somewhat different. The

	1952	1967	1982	1987
Israel (pre-1967)	179,000	326,000	550,000	645,000
West Bank	742,000	666,000	830,000	937,000
Gaza Strip	300,00	346,000	455,000	558,000
(Palestine)	(1,221,000)	(1,338,000)	(1,835,000)	(2,140,000)
Jordan (East Bank)	150,000	731,000	1,080,000	1,252,000
Lebanon	114,000	225,000	375,000	338,000
Syria	83,000	143,000	245,000	284,000
Other	32,000	263,000	965,000	1,125,000
(Diaspora)	(379,000)	(1,362,000)	(2,665,000)	(2,999,000)
TOTAL	1.6 million	2.7 million	4.5 million	5.1 million

Table 2.2: Distribution of Palestinian Population

June defeat was the result of the Arab regimes' "inability to effect the political, military, economic and ideological mobilization... capable of resisting and triumphing over imperialism and its alliances and plans in our homeland."³⁷ What was needed was the revolutionary mobilization of the Palestinian people (and the broader Arab world) in support of popular armed struggle against Israel. The progressive Arab regimes (Nasir's Egypt, Syria, Iraq) could contribute to this process, although their contribution was limited by their incomplete social transformations. The reactionary Arab regimes (notably Jordan and Saudi Arabia), linked to imperialism, could make no such contribution and were bound to clash with the Palestinian revolution. In December 1967 the adoption of this revised analysis was signified by the formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), uniting the Palestine Regional Command of the ANM, Jibril's PLF, and a small group known as the "Heroes of the Return".

The Arab defeat of 1967 thus served to stimulate the growth of the *fida'iyyin*, who were seen as a viable alternative to the failed option of regular military confrontation. In January 1968 a "Permanent Bureau" of *fida'iyyin* groups was formed upon Fateh's initiative to coordinate their activities, although the newly-formed PFLP refused to participate. Further impetus was received on 21 March 1968 when Israeli troops struck at *fida'iyyin* concentrations near the Jordanian town of Karama. The majority of guerrillas did not withdraw but rather (supported by Jordanian forces) confronted the Israeli troops, inflicting unusually heavy casualties. The Battle of Karama did much to bolster Palestinian and Arab morale which had been so badly shattered by the debacle of the Six-Day War less than a year before. Thousands now flocked to join the *fida'iyyin*.

It was in this context of rising guerrilla organization and activity that the Palestine Liberation Organization convened the fourth session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) in July 1968. Reflecting their new-found strength, 48 of the 100 delegates (38 from the Fateh-dominated Permanent

Bureau, 10 from the PFLP) came from guerrilla organizations. A new PLO chairman, Yahya Hammuda, was elected. More significantly, a revised Palestinian National Charter was adopted which declared that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine" (Article 9). The revised Charter also dropped the previous version's prohibition of PLO activities on the West Bank and Gaza, altered the clause concerning relations with Arab states (Article 27), and added a new Article (28) declaring rejection of "all kinds of intervention, trusteeship and subordination" of the Palestinian revolution.³⁸ Seven months later, at the fifth session of the National Council (February 1969) the guerrillas won 63 of 105 seats. With 33 PNC seats, Fateh capitalized on its growing strength and a temporarily favorable balance of power within the Council (both the PFLP and PLA boycotted the session in protest over representation), and succeeded in having four of its members elected to the PLO Executive Committee. These included Yasir 'Arafat, who replaced Hammuda as chairman of the PLO.

With this, the PLO completed its transformation into a genuinely independent, Palestinian, liberation organization. As such it would eventually gain substantial international recognition as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," first from the Arab League in 1974 and later from others within the international community.

Far more important still, the post-1967 PLO would achieve remarkable legitimacy in the eyes of virtually all segments of the Palestinian population. More than simply a political representative or an umbrella organization for the various *fida'iyyin* groups, the PLO would come to be seen by Palestinians as the organizational expression and symbolic repository of Palestinian nationalism as a whole, and hence as "the forum—far broader in scope than is usually believed—in which virtually all Palestinian political activity takes place."³⁹

PLO Institutions and Infrastructure

In tandem with its rising political status, the institutional structure of the PLO would undergo an equally remarkable expansion over the years. Much of this expansion would take place in Lebanon, where on the eve of the 1982 war the PLO had assembled a massive and complex organizational structure to support both the social needs and political aspirations of the Palestinian people (Figure 2.1).

At its apex the Palestine National Council has remained the highest decision-making body of the PLO. Its delegates include representatives not only of the various Palestinian guerrilla organizations and of Palestinian mass organizations, but also independents chosen so as to be representative of the geographic dispersion of the Palestinian population at large. It is the PNC that sets the broad outlines of PLO policy. The PNC also elects the members of the Central Council (a smaller body established in 1973 to set and review policy when the PNC is not in session), and the PLO Executive Committee.

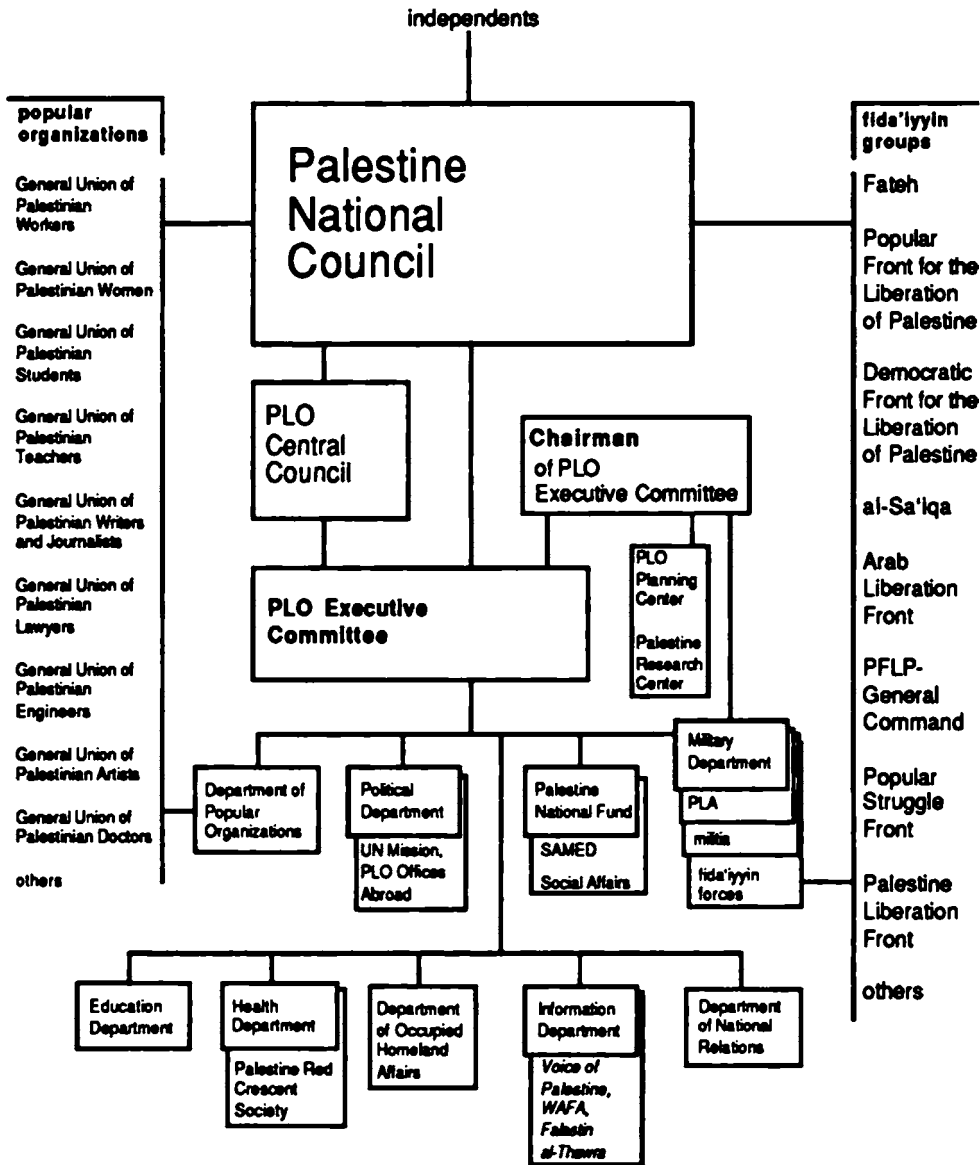


Figure 2.1: Organizational Structure of the PLO

The Executive Committee is the PLO's "cabinet," consisting up of to 15 persons including representatives of the major guerrilla groups. It is responsible for the implementation of PLO policy through its various departments, with each Executive Committee member holding specific policy portfolios.

In the military field this includes the 6-10,000 strong regular Palestinian military forces of the Palestine Liberation Army. Each of the PLA's three

brigades was originally raised and overseen by a different Arab state: the 'Ayn Jalut Brigade by Egypt, the Hittin Brigade by Syria, and the Qadisiyya Brigade by Iraq. A fourth unit—the Badr forces—was later raised by Jordan and sent to support the PLO in Lebanon. The PLA has also featured a guerrilla wing, the Popular Liberation Forces, created in February 1968 in response to the rising popularity of the *fida'iyyin*. Unlike the main resistance groups, however, the Liberation Forces never generated a real political following; after reaching a peak of 1-2,000 fighters in 1969-70, they lapsed to a strength of a few hundred and political obscurity a few years later. Finally, Palestinian military forces are also comprised of the fighters of individual guerrilla groups, and (in Lebanon) local self-defense militias.

Nominally, the PLA and its Chief-of-Staff are responsible to the PLO Military Department, and ultimately to the PLO Chairman in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief. In practice, however, military coordination has long proven a serious problem, with the behavior and allegiance of PLA units heavily influenced by their respective Arab sponsor, particularly in the case of the Hittin Brigade and those portions of the al-Qadisiyya Brigade stationed in Syria under Syrian control after the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Similarly, the fighters of individual *fida'iyyin* groups have rarely been subject to central PLO command and control. In an effort to improve cooperation, the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (*qiyadat al-kifah al-musallah*) was formed by the *fida'iyyin* and the PLA in the spring of 1969. In practice, however, PASC failed to act as the intended military central command, evolving instead into a PLO military police force.

In non-military areas the PLO is divided into a number of functional departments which coordinate and oversee the PLO's external and internal operations. Among these, the Political Department maintains the PLO's network of offices abroad, almost ninety in number by the early 1980s. The Department of Information and Guidance and PLO Unified Information are responsible for a network of Palestinian radio stations (*Voice of Palestine*), a press agency (Wafa), and the publication of the PLO central organ *Filastin al-thawra*. The Palestine Red Crescent Society, initially founded as the medical services branch of Fateh in 1968, provides medical facilities, under the authority of the PLO Health Department. The Palestine National Fund is responsible both for the vocational and employment activities of the Palestine Martyrs' Work Society (SAMED), and for overseeing PLO finances. The Department of Popular Organizations is responsible for the Palestinian women's, students', professional, and trade unions associated with the PLO, and for the *Ashbal* (Lion Cubs) and *Zahrat* (Flowers) children's organizations.

Within the overall framework of a single Palestinian nationalist movement represented by the PLO, individual Palestinian guerrilla organizations (*tanzimat*) have retained considerable autonomy. Indeed, they have acted in effect as the political parties of the Palestinian political system. The dynamics of competition and cooperation between them, reflecting the ideological and political cross-currents of their Palestinian constituents and

the broader Arab world, have played a fundamental role in shaping both the process and content of PLO policy-formation.

Fateh. Of the various *tanzimat*, by far the most important has been Fateh. Bolstered by its success at Karama, Fateh's strength had grown from just over 700 cadres on the eve of the battle, to some 3,000 or so in its aftermath, to perhaps 10,000 (including militia) in September 1970.⁴⁰ In 1982 it would field a similar number of fighters in Lebanon on the eve of Israel's 1982 invasion. Fateh has dominated the administrative structure of the PLO in the post-1967 era. It has long controlled two important Executive Committee portfolios: the Political Department (Khalid al-Hasan, 1969-73; Muhammad Yusif al-Najjar 1973; Faruq Qaddumi 1973-), and that of Executive Committee Chairman/PLO Commander-in-Chief (Yasir 'Arafat). Most PLO representatives abroad and senior PLO military officers are Fateh members, as are the leaders of many Palestinian mass organizations. Most "independent" members of the PNC have tended to support Fateh too.

A number of factors have contributed to Fateh's continued strength. Paramount among these has been Fateh's preeminent popular support both in the occupied territories and in the diaspora. Because of its espousal of a simple pragmatic philosophy of Palestinian nationalism and its eschewal of more complex and divisive social doctrines, Fateh has long succeeded in attracting followers from a broad social spectrum. Such popular support, coupled with policy pragmatism and commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of Arab regimes, also provides it considerable maneuverability in the shoals of inter-Arab politics.

Finally, Fateh has benefited from a remarkably stable core leadership. Despite formal subordination to Fateh's General Congress and the intermediary Revolutionary Council, the Fateh Central Council represents the leadership body of the movement. And, twenty years after *al-'Asifa's* first operation, much of this group would still be composed of the surviving founding figures of the movement, notably Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), Faruq Qaddumi (Abu Lutf), Khalid al-Hasan (Abu Sa'id), and Fateh leader Yasir 'Arafat (Abu 'Ammar).

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The PFLP (*al-Jabha al-sha'biyya li-tahrir filastin*) has also consolidated its position as an important force in the Palestinian movement. George Habash has served as PFLP Secretary-General since its formation.

Reflecting the ANM's leftward drift in the 1960s and the radicalizing experience of the 1967 War, the PFLP gradually synthesized its Arab nationalism with Marxist-Leninist ideology. The transition was signaled by the advocacy of a "revolutionary scientific ideology" in the Front's August 1968 Political Report, and a belief that the achievement of Palestinian liberation was necessarily part of a broader revolutionary transformation of the Arab world. The PFLP's consequent identification of "Zionism, imperialism and Arab reaction" as the chief foes of the Palestinian struggle has resulted in constant antipathy to both the United States and conservative Arab regimes. (The PFLP's militancy also led it to introduce hijacking into

the repertoire of Palestinian armed struggle, with its first action of this kind in July 1968. Eventually, however, the political costs involved led the Front to suspend "external operations" in the mid-1970s.) Within the PLO the PFLP has been the leading radical critic of mainstream Fateh/PLO policy, a process manifest in the formation of the Palestine Rejection Front in 1974; in the PFLP's participation in the Palestine National Salvation Front from 1985; and in PFLP boycotts of the PLO Executive Committee in 1974-81, and 1983-87.

The PFLP's militant attitude to liberation has won it a substantial degree of Palestinian mass support, both inside the occupied territories and in the diaspora (especially among refugee camp residents in Lebanon). By 1970 the Popular Front's armed strength would stand at over 2,000; in Lebanon it would field a similar number of fighters in 1982.

(Popular) Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (*al-Jabha al-dimuqratiyya li-tahrir filastin*) also traces its roots to the ANM, and specifically to the "leftist" faction which emerged in the 1960s. This division continued with the establishment of the PFLP, and escalated into open fighting in the winter of 1968-69. Fateh intervened, and as a result Nayif Hawatima and others established the PDFLP (later DFLP) in February 1969. By 1970, the DFLP armed strength would stand at about 1,000 fighters, and perhaps twice that number in Lebanon on the eve of the 1982 war.

Like the PFLP, the Democratic Front evolved as a mass-based Marxist-Leninist organization hostile to Western imperialism and conservative Arab regimes. It also claims allegiance to the PFLP's August 1968 Political Report. At its Second National Congress (May 1981) the DFLP's Political Program called for an intensification of the liberation struggle within and outside Palestine, including the opening of all Arab borders to the resistance; support for the national democratic struggle against the Hashemite regime in Jordan; confrontation of the Camp David Accords; and closer relations with socialist and progressive forces. It also stressed the historic role of the Palestinian proletariat.

Whereas the PFLP has tended to act as a self-appointed ideological watchdog over PLO policy, the DFLP would play a major role in promoting a revision of Palestinian goals and objectives. It was the DFLP that would support adoption of the slogan of a democratic non-sectarian state in all of Palestine (1969-), and later that of establishing an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1974-). The DFLP would also pioneer contacts between the Palestinian movement and the Israeli left.

Palestine Communist Party. The PCP first emerged as an entity autonomous from the Jordanian Communist Party in 1975, and was formally established as an independent group in 1982. Like Fateh, the PFLP, and DFLP, the Communist Party can also claim a significant popular following. The strength of the PCP, however, has never lain in the diaspora, or in its contribution to armed struggle (the existence in the early 1970s of a communist guerilla group, *al-Ansar*, notwithstanding). Instead, its activities and influence have been evident in a long history of popular

organization in the occupied territories. For these reasons (and despite the membership of some leading communists in the PNC) the PCP was outside the formal structure of the PLO for many years, gaining formal representation in the PNC and later in the PLO Executive Committee only after the 1982 Lebanese War. Similarly, it has had no impact on either PLO policy in Lebanon or Palestinian-Lebanese relations. The same is true of the "Palestine Communist Organization in Lebanon," an offshoot established in 1980 that opposed the party's move to independence from the JCP.

Other fida'iyyin organizations. Over the following years, a host of other Palestinian guerrilla groups would make an appearance, their impressive revolutionary titles obscuring their true status as small factions, minor personality cults or covert guises for Arab or foreign intelligence agencies. Most would disappear equally quickly.⁴¹ A few, however, would endure into the 1980s, maintained by the skill of their central organizers or more often by the funds of an interested Arab party.

Among these was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command, established in 1969 when Ahmad Jibril split with the PFLP over what he saw as its excessively ideological character. (The title of Jibril's original group—the Palestine Liberation Front—would later be taken by a breakaway faction of the General Command after 1976.) A small and highly militant group with several hundred cadres, the PFLP-GC advocates the liberation of all Palestine through armed struggle to the virtual exclusion of more sophisticated ideological doctrine. Much of its material support has come from Syria and revolutionary Libya. Its relations with the mainstream PLO, however, have been rather more conflictual, to the point of its exclusion from the PLO after 1983.

The Palestinian Popular Struggle Front was established by Bahjat Abu Gharbiyya before the 1967 War. The PSF would briefly merge with Fateh in 1971, only to reemerge as an independent entity (with never more than a few hundred members) led by Samir Ghusha after 1973.

Finally, as the status and influence of the *fida'iyyin* grew, a number of Arab countries intervened directly to establish their own Palestinian guerrilla groups. The "Vanguards of the Popular Liberation War"—better known by the name of its military wing, *al-Sa'iqa*—was thus established after a 1966 decision by the (pro-Syrian) National Command of the *Ba'ith* Party to create a Palestinian Branch. This in turn gave birth to *Sa'iqa* in 1968. During the struggle for power in Syria between Salah Jadid and Hafiz al-Asad in the late 1960s, *al-Sa'iqa* was expanded by the former as a counterweight to the latter's military power. With Asad's eventual victory in 1970, *al-Sa'iqa* was restructured under a new leader, Zuhayr Muhsin. In turn, leadership passed to 'Isam al-Qadi with Muhsin's assassination in 1979. *Sa'iqa's* strength—often bolstered in time of need by Syrian "volunteers"—runs to several thousand armed personnel. Its position and influence within the PLO has always been directly correlated with the state of PLO-Syrian relations. In Lebanon, where Syria's position was strong, *Sa'iqa* could often exert significant influence. After 1982, and even more so amidst PLO-Syrian conflict after 1983, its influence sharply declined.

The smaller Arab Liberation Front (ALF) has enjoyed a parallel relationship with the Iraqi Ba'th, which created the Front in 1969 in direct response to the formation of Sa'iqa and the hostility between the Iraqi and Syrian wings of the Ba'th party. Led by 'Abd al-Wahhab Kayyali and later by 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad, the ALF would command an armed strength of perhaps one thousand members in the 1970s and early 1980s.

PLO Decision-making

The autonomy retained by individual guerrilla organizations within the overall framework of the PLO has had an important impact on the dynamics of PLO decision-making. Lacking sovereignty and a territorial base, and hence limited in its ability to exert control over constituent organizations, the PLO leadership has generally sought to attain inter-group agreement on major policy issues. Decisions taken by the PLO Executive Committee are almost always taken by consensus, and broad agreement if not unanimity is the preferred method for dealing with issues within the Central Council or PNC. In these forums, each representative tends to defend the position and interests of his or her organization; resolution of conflict generally rests on compromise or even issue-avoidance. As a result, policy statements are often broad in scope (to allow a variety of interpretations), and changes incremental in nature.

One effect of this has been to grant disproportionate decision-making influence to the smaller groups within the PLO, each of which may be in a position to veto policy initiatives supported by a majority of the movement. Counter-balancing this, however, has been the individual strength of the Fateh organization, which commands more fighters, finances and (most important of all) popular support than all other Palestinian groups combined. Fateh has been able to claim most of the PLO's senior leadership positions and functions for itself. This control has been further protected and promoted through an extensive system of patronage, which assures that more often than not the boundaries of Fateh and the PLO are blurred, with patronage networks and loyalties to Fateh (and particular Fateh leaders) supplanting the "paper", formal chain of PLO command.

Consequently the Fateh Central Committee, when united behind a given course of action, usually determines the general direction of PLO policy—if not its speed, mode of travel, or exact route. When and where necessary, Fateh can carry out a course of action unilaterally, presenting others with a *fait accompli*. And on issues it feels particularly important, it can impose its position by threat of force if need be. To a very considerable extent, then, Yasir 'Arafat is right in claiming that "Fateh is the PLO".⁴²

Still, constraints remain. Attempts by Fateh to exert the full weight of its power are met with strident protests by other Palestinian organizations. This, of course, does not prevent Fateh from acting unilaterally; Fateh can and does go it alone. But even when it does so, it still must choose between three unpalatable options: to accept dysfunctional opposition and continue regardless; to retreat from its initial action, possibly disavowing the initiative

entirely; or to compel other *tanzimat* to accept policies that Fateh favors.

This third option is one that, except in times of extreme urgency and importance, Yasir 'Arafat would prove unwilling to pursue. The cost of enforced unity, of what within the Palestinian movement is sometimes termed the "Algerian solution" (after the FLN's strong suppression of rival groups during the Algerian liberation war) is seen by the PLO Chairman as an excessive price to pay. It would mean destruction of the PLO's democratic structure and of the free debate that is a point of pride (if sometimes inefficiency) for Palestinians since the late 1960s. It evokes bitter memories of the internal Palestinian feuding that accompanied, and hastened, the collapse of the Palestinian revolt against British colonial rule in 1936-39. And, given that most dissident groups enjoy the support of one or more Arab regimes, to confront them would be to invite confrontation with their Arab sponsor.

Thus Fateh sets the tone of PLO policy, but must do so on the basis of consultation and consensus if it is not to risk the splintering of the movement and external confrontation with Arab regimes. As a result, extended inter-group bargaining and competition, policy immobilism and unilateral actions (by Fateh or others) have been common. Such problems of Palestinian authority and decision-making would become amply evident in the context of PLO policy in Lebanon.

The PLO in Lebanon

With the emergence of the Palestinian movement, Lebanon became an increasingly important focus of Palestinian nationalist activity. Lebanon's position on the borders of Palestine was a primary reason for this, with the terrain and small size of Palestine, coupled with the proficiency of Israeli counter-insurgency, forcing the *fida'iyyin* to adopt cross-border infiltration as a major military tactic. Although Jordan was the primary theater for such action, the Lebanese-Israeli border was also useful. The mountainous 'Arqub region in southeast Lebanon, close to guerrilla supply bases in Syria, soon became a major *fida'iyyin* supply and infiltration route. Within Israel, the number of incidents reported near the Lebanese border grew from two in 1967, to twenty-nine (1968) to one hundred and fifty (1969).⁴³ Ideologically, the Palestinian movement held that the Arab regimes' past failures obliged them to permit such military activity. In the words of Khalil al-Wazir of Fateh (later Deputy Commander of PLO forces), Lebanon's importance lay not simply in the fact that it bordered on Palestine, but also reflected Arab political responsibility for the Palestinian cause:

We believe—and this is a very important point—that every Arab regime around our occupied territories is responsible for our tragedy, and they have a duty to let us have our chance to liberate our country because they are responsible.... They must pay the price of their crime against our people and their share in creating our tragedy... by giving us permission to be there, to work to organize ourselves and to prepare ourselves for returning to our homeland. For that we consider that every Palestinian border country must be a base for our people.⁴⁴

Lebanon's development as a sanctuary for the Palestinian resistance movement was also spurred by widespread popular support. Lebanon's Palestinian population lent sympathy and recruits to the burgeoning liberation movement. In the aftermath of the 1967 defeat so too did the overwhelming majority of Lebanese. One survey of popular opinion conducted in September 1968 by the Lebanese newspaper *al-Nahar* found that 79% of the population unreservedly supported the *fida'iyyin*. Among some segments of the population (notably students, leftists, Arab nationalists, and Muslims) such support was especially strong.⁴⁵ The nascent Lebanese National Movement, already ideologically predisposed to the Palestinian movement, soon saw in it a potent political ally and powerful domestic issue.

Further evidence of the mass popularity of the Palestinian resistance came in April 1968 with the funeral of the first Lebanese al-Fateh volunteer to die in action, Khalil al-Jamal. Between one hundred and fifty thousand and a quarter of a million people took part in the procession which accompanied the body from the Syrian border to Beirut, including Prime Minister 'Abdullah Yafi, Sunni Mufti Hasan Khalid, and representatives from all major Lebanese political parties. For the *fida'iyyin*, such public funerals were a deliberate tool of public relations, a means of mobilizing mass Palestinian and Arab support after the 1967 Arab defeat: "martyrs touched the hearts of the people—it was the way we opened the gate."⁴⁶ For Lebanese politicians participation was a political necessity. "Guerrilla freedom of action" (*hurriyat al-'amal al-fida'i*) became a major rallying cry in the progressive, Arab nationalist, and Muslim sectors alike.

For Lebanese decision-makers, however, the presence of an armed and organized Palestinian resistance movement on Lebanese territory involved a number of costs. A major source of these was Israel, which responded to increasing guerrilla activity with retaliatory and punishment attacks. These were aimed not just at the Palestinians but even more so at the Lebanese, in an attempt to pressure the Beirut authorities to put an end to guerrilla incursions. Israeli cross-border shelling had become commonplace by 1968, later followed by air raids, ground incursions and helicopter-borne commando raids. During the most dramatic of these on 28 December 1968, Israeli raiders retaliated to a PFLP attack on an El Al airliner in Athens the previous day with an attack on Beirut International Airport that destroyed thirteen Lebanese civilian airliners. During this period tens of thousands of largely Shi'i peasants fled Israeli destruction in the south to the relative safety of Beirut.

An even more important consideration, however, was the ideological and political threat posed by the *fida'iyyin*. The obvious domestic popularity of the Palestinian movement, and Lebanon's particular vulnerability to the currents of Arab politics, constrained the response of all Lebanese political figures. At the same time, such popularity—combined with the revolutionary message of many *fida'iyyin* groups—accentuated the alarm felt by much of the Lebanese elite.

The ideological impact of the guerrillas worried Lebanon's urban

bourgeoisie. In Beirut student protests in support of the Palestinian movement were also directed at prevailing economic, social, and political conditions in Lebanon itself. Often such protests seemed devoid of confessional content as Christian and Muslim students protested side-by-side—a dangerous development for the ruling class in a country where the privileges of the elite rested on the pillars of a sectarian status quo.⁴⁷ Urban Sunni *zu'ama'* necessarily muted the alarm they felt. But Maronite leaders, ever mindful of their vulnerable hegemonic position within Lebanon, were more vocal in their concern as to the growth and organization of a predominately Sunni Muslim Palestinian population.

The rural *zu'ama'* of the underdeveloped south also found their traditional authority undermined by the presence of a revolutionary guerrilla movement. Many of the impoverished, predominately Shi'i peasants of the area felt greater affinity with the Palestinian movement than with either their exploitative landlords or the politically (if not geographically) distant central government. This affinity was reinforced by the fact that the Shi'ia of the south had historically stronger ties to northern Palestine than they did to Mount Lebanon. After 1967-68 hundreds of southerners flocked to join the resistance.

It was with this in mind that tight surveillance and control over the camps had been exercised by the *Deuxième Bureau* and Lebanese police. Following the post-1967 emergence of the *fida'iyyin* such controls led to escalating conflict between the guerrillas and the central Lebanese authorities. Lebanese President Charles Hilu declared that Lebanon faced a "Palestinian movement which is... a flagrant contradiction of the state itself." In a similar vein, Pierre Jumayyil likened Palestinian organizations like the PFLP to a "Trojan horse of the international communist movement" which threatened to destroy Lebanon's capitalist system.⁴⁸ It was in this context too that Maronite leaders had come together to form the Hilf, with the explicit aim of bringing about stricter restrictions on the Palestinian resistance movement. But the obvious concern of the Lebanese establishment over the rise of the guerrillas only increased the enthusiasm of Lebanese progressive parties for the Palestinian resistance: any force as apparently unsettling to the status quo as the *fida'iyyin* appeared a natural ally in efforts to advance the agenda of social and economic reform. Within a year of the battle of Karama, and four years after Fateh's first armed operation from Lebanese soil, the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon had become a major Lebanese political issue.

The Cairo Agreement

The immediate effect of Israel's attack on Beirut airport in December 1968 was to precipitate a major political crisis in Lebanon. Students at each of the country's four largest universities launched strikes to protest the government's inability or unwillingness to confront Israeli aggression, and to signify their solidarity with the Palestinian resistance movement. Further strikes occurred in Sidon and Tyre. Kamal Junblat and other progressive

~~spokesmen echoed their demands and condemned the government's arrests of Palestinian fighters and activists.~~

The response of other political forces was more complex, constrained as they were by obvious political sympathy for the *fida'iyyin* from virtually all sectors of Lebanese society. The Center Bloc led by (Sunni, Shi'i, and Maronite) *zu'ama'* Sa'ib Salam, Kamal As'ad, and Sulayman Franjiyya issued a memorandum which called for the legalization of the guerrillas, but also used the incident as grounds for an attack upon the Shihabist security establishment. The *Hilf* attacked the *Deuxième Bureau* too, but amid statements of support for the Palestinian cause that indirectly suggested that guerrilla activities were endangering Lebanon.⁴⁹

Because of the protests Lebanese Prime Minister Abdullah Yafi resigned on January 8, to be replaced shortly thereafter by Rashid Karami. Karami later announced that relations between the government and the guerrillas would be based on the principle of *tansiq* or coordination between the two parties.

Despite this, the Lebanese army and security forces intensified their efforts to contain the *fida'iyyin*. In the south, the tension gave way to open clashes. In mid-April the army arrested a group of guerrillas near Bint Jubayl, killing one. When news of the incident reached the camps, spontaneous demonstrations of support erupted. Palestinian organizations and the Lebanese National Movement issued a joint call for a larger demonstration in Beirut on April 23. This, together with other protests in Sidon and elsewhere were suppressed by the Lebanese Internal Security Forces and army at a cost of more than a hundred dead and wounded. The cabinet declared a state of emergency, and military curfews were imposed on Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Ba'lbak, Nabatiyya, and Tripoli.

The killings incensed the National Movement, which issued a call for punishment of those responsible, military preparations to enable Lebanon to resist Israel, and freedom of action for the *fida'iyyin*. These calls, in more muted form, were also made by the Sunni establishment, including Salam, Yafi, and the Sunni Mufti. Pointing to the alleged participation of Sa'iqa in the initial clashes in the south, the Phalange placed the blame for the incidents on radical agitation and Syrian infiltrators. In a special session of the Chamber of Deputies called to discuss the events, Karami argued that the government was being placed in an impossible position between those who unconditionally supported the guerrillas on the one hand, and those who saw in guerrilla actions a threat to Lebanon on the other. He concluded by tendering his resignation as Prime Minister.⁵⁰

In fact Rashid Karami remained Prime Minister throughout the six month cabinet crisis which followed. In May the ~~guerrillas reportedly agreed to temporarily freeze their raids and henceforth cooperate with the Lebanese army.~~ They did so on condition that the situation in the camps be normalized, those arrested released, and compensation paid to the families of those killed. In any event, the agreement soon fell through amid mutual recriminations. PLO spokespersons asserted that the "presence of commandos on Palestinian borders in any part of the Arab homeland is not a

subject of bargaining," a position subsequently affirmed by the Palestine National Council in September.⁵¹ Junblat and the National Movement continued to support the Palestinian position, with the former accusing the government of "conspiracy" to suppress the guerrillas.

The government rejected Junblat's accusations and the Palestinians' demands. Karami maintained that political support, transit facilities, and *tansiq* were the best Lebanon could offer. Hilu took a still harder line in a May 31 speech to the country, chilling relations between him and his Prime Minister. For its part the Phalange categorically rejected the idea of Palestinian bases in Lebanon, and continued to place much of the blame for the situation on Syrian and international communist interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, declaring that "the issue under question is not that of the commandos but of those hiding under their name, exploiting their noble work, to introduce foreign ideologies to the country." Pierre Jumayyil added that guerrilla operations and the instability they implied had led to the flight of foreign capital and damaged the tourist industry, thus threatening the very basis of Lebanon's service economy.⁵²

A lull in the crisis followed until late August, when a clash between police and refugees at the Nahr al-Barid camp near Tripoli led to its being surrounded by units of the Lebanese army. The tension soon spread to Burj al-Shimali, Rashidiyya, and other camps in the south, which were similarly surrounded. In October more fighting broke out in towns and villages in the south and along the Syrian-Lebanese border. In Tripoli armed Lebanese guerrilla sympathizers briefly seized the city's citadel. Throughout the country *de facto* authority within the Palestinian refugee camps passed from the Lebanese police to the *fida'iyyin*.

As the clashes intensified, so too did Arab diplomatic involvement. Syria stepped up logistical support for the guerrillas, infiltrated Sa'iqa units into Lebanon, and closed the two countries' common border. Iraq, Algeria, South Yemen, the Sudan, and Libya all condemned the Lebanese government's actions. The most important role, however, was played by Egypt. On October 27 both PLO chairman 'Arafat and Lebanese Prime Minister Karami announced their acceptance of Egyptian President Nasir's offer to mediate the conflict. A Palestinian delegation led by 'Arafat and consisting of PLO Executive Committee members Bilal al-Hasan and Yasir 'Amru, PLA Commander 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Yahya, and PLA Chief of Staff Colonel Uthman Ja'far Haddad arrived in Cairo a few days later. There they met with a Lebanese delegation headed by General Emile Bustani. Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmud Riyad and the Egyptian Minister of War were also in attendance. Initially the Lebanese delegation rejected the idea of any formal agreement providing for an armed *fida'iyyin* presence on Lebanese soil. In the face of the pressures confronting it, however, this "last ditch attempt" soon crumbled.⁵³ On 3 November 1969 the parties announced they had reached agreement on an accord to regulate their mutual relations.

The "Cairo Agreement" was to prove of central importance to PLO-Lebanese relations over the next thirteen years (see Appendix). Under its terms the PLO recognized the requirements of Lebanese "sovereignty and

security," and undertook to coordinate its activities with the Lebanese army through the PLO's central military authority, the Palestine Armed Struggle Command. Some territorial restrictions were placed on the guerrillas, but these were general in nature, to be finalized through later consultation. In exchange the PLO gained recognition of the legitimacy of a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon, freedom of movement in the 'Arqub, and the establishment of autonomous institutions in the camps. Detained personnel and confiscated arms were to be released.

In Lebanon the Cairo Agreement was immediately welcomed by Junblat, the National Movement, and by the bulk of the Muslim establishment. The reception it received from Maronite leaders was, however, mixed. President Hilaire hailed the accord as "consolidating Lebanon's sovereignty and independence" while "dedicating Lebanon's existence to the support of the Palestinian problem." The Phalangist newspaper *al-'Amal* at first noted the agreement with "satisfaction," although the party later grew more critical. Chamoun followed a similar pattern, and soon LNP members of the Chamber of Deputies were demanding a full debate on the subject. Raymond Eddé was against the agreement from the outset on the grounds that it compromised Lebanese sovereignty. He called instead for the stationing of a UN force along the Israeli-Lebanese border. Members from all three *Hilf* parties called for public release of the agreement's secret text, and for an end to Palestinian control of the various refugee camps.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, such differences did not prevent Rashid Karami from forming a new cabinet on November 25, one including both Jumayyil and Junblat among its members.

Within the Palestinian movement, the agreement was also welcomed by all but a few. The newly-formed PFLP-GC was critical, largely in an effort to discredit 'Arafat. The PFLP, which had declined to join the Armed Struggle Command and therefore was not party to the negotiations, announced that it would adhere to the accord despite reservations. Certainly, the PLO had not gained all that it had wanted; initially it had called for no geographic restrictions on guerrilla bases; complete military freedom of action in the south; punishment of those responsible for the killings of April 23; the release of all guerrillas and Lebanese supporters who had been imprisoned; and an end to harassment of the latter by the *Deuxième Bureau* and police. It had, however, achieved most of this. Moreover, the agreement they had obtained was a "flexible" one, lacking in detail and requiring further qualification. Its real importance lay not in its specific provisions, but in its symbolic value. For the PLO it was the "first official recognition of the Palestinian revolution in Lebanon," a "kind of passport, document by which we could deal directly, officially, with the Lebanese authorities."⁵⁵

Yet for the Palestinian movement the Cairo Agreement brought new responsibilities as well as opportunities. Heretofore the activities of Palestinian groups in Lebanon had reflected the relatively recent explosion of the *fida'iyyin* on the regional scene: *fida'i* action had been uncoordinated in the political and military arenas and fragmented in execution. Each

organization had sought to build its support and pursue its aims through independent action, whether it be recruitment in the camps, confrontation with the authorities, or armed struggle in the south.

Such unilateral and often competing activity provided few grounds for a coherent Palestinian policy towards the Lebanese authorities. This was clearly evident in the events of autumn 1969. The uprising which took place in the Palestinian camps had been a spontaneous rather than organized affair, stemming not from PLO policy but from the revolutionary enthusiasm of camp populations. It was only after the Cairo Agreement that formal PLO institutions—the Palestine Armed Struggle Command, the popular committees (*lijan āl-sha'biyya*) which ran the camps, PLO services and guerrilla offices—were consolidated.⁵⁶ Indicative of the primacy of spontaneity in the camps' "revolution" (*thawra*) of 1969 was the experience of Dr. Fathi 'Arafat of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, who in the wake of the Cairo Agreement was asked to travel to Lebanon and establish medical facilities. He was given only 48 hours to do so by the PLO Chairman. Yet when he arrived from Jordan at Tall al-Za'tar camp in East Beirut:

I was astonished. I was going just to visit, to see where we could have a clinic or something like that. Then I find a clinic! It said "Palestine Red Crescent Society."... I went and knocked on the door, and an eighteen or nineteen year old nurse opened it. "Hello! You are Dr. Fathi, we know you! You are welcome!" I said, "This is good, but who are you?" "I am Nidal, a Palestinian nurse. We heard the news that we had established a Red Crescent Society, so we did not wait. We took this room and we put in it this small bed, instruments, wash basin, and put up a big white blanket on which one of the camp artists drew a crescent... and wrote on it 'Palestine Red Crescent Society'".⁵⁷

It was such initiatives, combined with popular Lebanese support and Egyptian and Syrian pressure which had led to the Cairo Agreement. Yet if the Palestinian position in Lebanon was to endure it had to be put on a firm, organized base. Yasir 'Arafat warned:

Commando action in Lebanon is an established fact, as evidenced by our presence in the streets, in the camps and in the border villages. However, we cannot base our action in Lebanon on the *fait accompli* alone. The commando movement needs to deepen itself from the human, ideological and struggle point of view. This cannot be achieved, either in Lebanon or anywhere else, except through the commando movement tying itself to the masses. To depend on the *fait accompli* itself alone means depending on force alone. Force evokes force, which means a clash between us and the Lebanese army. Even if we win in this clash, we must also ask ourselves: what next? Lebanese territory is not what we want. What we want is Palestinian territory. The Lebanese army is not our enemy, but our enemy is Israel. We were forced to fight in Lebanon despite ourselves, and in order to stop what we thought were attempts to liquidate the Palestinian revolution there. We had to fight to stop these attempts, and to draw the attention of the Arab nation to what was happening.⁵⁸

In many ways his remarks were to prove prophetic.

Rising Tensions

(1969-75)

Despite the generally uncoordinated, *ad hoc* character of *fida'iyyin* responses to the crisis, the showdown between the Palestinian movement and Lebanese government had indicated some of the bases upon which future PLO policy in Lebanon would be established. Specifically, the terms of the Cairo Agreement brought two important strategies to bear on the problems of Palestinian-Lebanese relations: communication and restraint, manifest in the agreement's provisions for coordination and some restriction of guerrilla activities respectively.

Yet it was equally clear from the course of the crisis that neither of these strategies had played the major role in enabling the Palestinian movement to not only resist attempts by the Lebanese authorities to constrain their activities, but ultimately to secure official endorsement of *fida'iyyin* activity. Instead, internal alliances with the various parties comprising the Lebanese National Movement, and external alliances with supportive Arab states (especially Syria and Egypt), had proven paramount. Given the mass popularity of the *fida'iyyin* in Lebanese public opinion and the equal importance of the Palestinian cause in the rest of the Arab world, both seemed firm foundations upon which PLO policy in Lebanon could be based. Yet at the same time, internal and external alliances also tied the PLO's position in Lebanon firmly to the unstable dynamics of Lebanese and regional politics. As a result, the PLO's position in Lebanon would prove highly sensitive both to local political developments and to the shifting sands of inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli diplomacy and conflict.

From Cairo to Verdun *Implementing the Cairo Agreement*

Despite a clash between guerrillas (reportedly from al-Sa'iqa) and the Lebanese Army at Nabatiyya on November 21, both Lebanon and the PLO seemed determined that implementation of the Cairo Agreement would proceed smoothly. Within a week the *fida'iyyin* had withdrawn from

positions they had occupied during the crisis in northern and eastern Lebanon, although they did retain a sizable presence in the camps and in the south. A Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon was established by the PLO to serve as a coordinating mechanism with the government. Weekly meetings between the two sides were instituted. Signifying the importance placed by the PLO leadership on the Committee and on maintenance of the Cairo Agreement, a senior Fateh leader and member of the PLO Executive Committee, Muhammad al-Najjar, was appointed to head it.

The potential for difficulties in PLO-Lebanese relations in the immediate aftermath of the Cairo Agreement was greatly eased by the presence of Kamal Junblat in Karami's new cabinet. Junblat was appointed Minister of the Interior, and as such was responsible for regulating the guerrilla presence in the country. He soon announced a series of measures designed to implement the recently-negotiated accord, relax tensions, and minimize the chances of Israeli reprisals. In December, restrictions were placed on *fida'iyyin* funerals. The following month the firing of weapons in the air, bearing of arms or wearing of uniforms in urban areas were banned. The guerrillas were also forbidden to fire weapons across the border with Israel, and asked to keep their camps and military positions at least one kilometer away from towns and villages. Two guerrilla offices were closed with the introduction of new guidelines for the operation and location of such facilities. Heavy weapons and other installations were banned in some areas. Following meetings between Palestinian liaison officers and their Lebanese counterparts, the Lebanese Army issued memoranda on January 27 and 28 setting forth operating procedures for the central and western sectors of the frontier and for the coordination of reconnaissance and military operations from Lebanese territory. Arrangements were also made to reintroduce a Lebanese police presence in and around Palestinian refugee camps (February 4), while new joint committees were established to deal with these and other issues.¹

As might be expected, such measures evoked some critical comment from the various resistance organizations. Thus on January 10 a communique issued by the major guerrilla organizations condemned the government for restricting their freedom of action, and doing so on an unequal basis.² The following month the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon denied that the PLO was willing to accept Lebanese police posts inside the camps, asserting that such posts could only be established outside and that police activities must be coordinated with the Palestine Armed Struggle Command. In May criticism of the Cairo Agreement and the Lebanese government's behavior was also heard at the 7th session of the PNC in Cairo. It was not, however, reflected in the Council's final communique or resolutions.

For the most part the PLO mainstream voiced a willingness to exercise the degree of self-restraint necessary to implement the agreement. In November (two months before Interior Ministry regulations were issued on the matter) the PLO office in Beirut called upon guerrillas not to circulate

armed or in uniform in public areas. In the south Fateh issued leaflets setting forth correct behavior at funerals and discouraging the firing of weapons into the air. Fateh also announced the suspension of military training at some camps. On 25 February 1970 the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon declared that it had reached agreement with the government on the issue of a Lebanese police presence in and around the camps, crossing procedures at border points, and a ban on provocative actions such as "letting off firearms in the camps or allowing armed men out onto the streets." It also announced restrictions on how resistance organizations could conduct fund-raising in the country.³

Yet, for all these steps, much remained to be done. Kamal Junblat estimated in January 1970 that only half of the Cairo Agreement ~~had been implemented~~ and that full implementation would be a long process.⁴ Of the several obstacles to be overcome, ~~three were particularly~~ troublesome.

The first was the increasingly hostile attitude of Lebanese conservative ~~parties~~. The initially cautious welcome given the Cairo Agreement by Jumayyil and Chamoun had ~~apparently been based on the belief that the Lebanese Army had negotiated a more restrictive accord.~~ And, as noted earlier, this attitude soon proved short-lived when it became apparent that the momentum of the Palestinian movement remained unbroken. *Hisf* criticism mounted. Conservative members of the Lebanese ~~parliament~~ complained of armed men in the streets, training in the camps, and incidents ~~of cross-border shelling~~. The Cairo Agreement was termed a failure. Joseph Mughabghab, a Deputy from Chamoun's LNP, warned that the presence of the Palestinian movement in Lebanon threatened the stability of the Lebanese political system:

Giving a legal identity to the commando action within Lebanon and recognizing this action by the constitutional authorities will help... to guarantee protection for the commandos not only with regard to their safety and security of their supply routes, but also on the political and moral level. In other words, a party or organization will arise in Lebanon to serve the interests of the commandos and cooperate with them for the realization of their demands. Of course, the commando organizations will not remain outside the struggle, but will support the Lebanese political forces which meet with them... The logic of the commando action is likely to turn further to the left because he who swears to sacrifice himself will not stop to take into consideration the existing regimes or systems in a particular society... These leftist organizations aim at liberating Arab societies "from imperialism" and then seek the liberation of Palestine. This requires the blowing up of existing conditions in Lebanon... If the opportunity is given to them, Lebanon will then be a good soil for leftist activities and bloody armed clashes...⁵

Pierre al-Jumayyil and the Phalange agreed that the agreement was a mistake, and suggested that the fida'iyyin be transferred from Lebanon to other Arab countries. Zgharta za'im Sulayman ~~Frankiyya~~ called for the government to take a tougher line with guerrilla violations of Lebanese law, and was reported to have formed a private militia in his home district to offset the growing power of the PLO and National Movement in the nearby

~~city of Tripoli.~~

A second problem was that ~~there were still~~ armed men in the street and incidents of cross-border shelling. According to Israeli sources over one-half of the 150 incidents in the Lebanese border area in 1969 and about 60% of the 410 incidents in 1970 involved cross-border small arms, rocket, or mortar fire rather than infiltration. All of this provided grist for the Phalangist mill. Junblat himself warned the Palestinians that their behavior could damage their public standing, although he stressed that the incidents were minor and that the guerrillas needed time to adjust, discipline themselves, and learn from their mistakes.⁶

Disunity within the PLO, and the failure of PASC to ~~exert centralized~~ control over guerrilla activities, accounted for much of the problem. At the same time, Palestinian fears over the attitude of the Phalange (and elements of the Lebanese Army and *Deuxième Bureau*) disinclined them to consult, coordinate, or reduce their military preparations. In response to Mughabghab, Zuhayr Muhsin of al-Sa'iqa warned: "unless there is a real change in the mentality of the regime and the ruling class, and unless there is a tangible change in the manner in which matters concerning Palestinians and the Palestine revolution in Lebanon are dealt with, it is difficult to be optimistic about the possibility of creating positive conditions quickly to establish the minimum amount of mutual confidence between the Palestinians and authorities." A similar appraisal was later provided by Salah Khalaf of Fateh, who identified "lack of trust"—not of Junblat, but of the security forces and conservative political leadership—as the single biggest barrier to implementation of the Cairo Agreement.⁷

The third challenge was that posed by Israel. In January 1970 Israeli Chief-of-Staff Chaim Bar-Lev warned that unless Lebanon moved to ~~halt guerrilla activities~~, Israel would "adopt more severe and firm measures in Lebanon." A steadily increasing series of artillery, air, and ground attacks took place against southern Lebanon over the next six months. In May, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan predicted that "if aggression continues, southern Lebanon faces the same kind of ruin as that suffered on the west bank of the Suez Canal, [and] the east bank of the Jordan." By May, the pace of Israeli destruction in the south had forced an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 southern villagers to flee their homes. In turn, Lebanese conservative parties redoubled their calls for an end to the Palestinian armed presence in the country.⁸

The Lebanese Base

One PLO response to this situation was greater emphasis on forging internal Lebanese alliances. Popular Lebanese sentiment had remained strongly pro-Palestinian in the wake of the Cairo Agreement: a November 1969 survey by *al-Nahar* found that over 80% of Lebanese supported the *fida'iyyin*. A majority also expressed support for Palestinian military activity from Lebanese territory.⁹ Now, having opened formal relations with the Lebanese government and ~~against a backdrop of present and potential~~

difficulties, ~~Palestinian leaders explicitly sought to promote and reinforce their Lebanese mass base.~~

The most obvious targets for such a policy were, of course, those parties and segments of the population which had stood by the Palestinian movement in the crisis of 1969 and continued to do so. In May-June 1970 the PNC affirmed the importance of maintaining close links with the ~~National Movement~~ in Lebanon and called for "every effort to be made to achieve the highest possible level of coordination with these forces in order to ensure that the Arab-Lebanese masses play a greater part in protecting the Palestinian Revolution and Arab territory in Lebanon."¹⁰ The attitude of Lebanese conservatives, and friction between the Palestinian movement and the Hashemite regime in Jordan served to intensify Palestinian determination to do precisely that.

Palestinian-National Movement relations thus proceeded apace. The nature of alliances formed, however, varied from group to group. For the more radical Palestinian organizations, ideology provided an important motive force. The PFLP, for example, was closest to the Arab Socialist Action Party, with which it shared resources and organizational links. Similarly the DFLP had close ties to the Organization of Lebanese Socialists and its successor, the Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon. The DFLP and OCA jointly produced the newspaper *al-Hurriyya*. The ALF and al-Sa'iqa were closely tied to the pro-Iraqi and pro-Syrian *Ba'ith* parties in Lebanon respectively. Sa'iqa also came to establish strong relations with a number of other pro-Syrian progressive and nationalist groups in the country, thus serving to extend Syrian influence in Lebanon as a tool of Syrian foreign policy.

For Fateh, alliances were forged where they could be had: the receptivity of a given group and Fateh's assessment of its influence, rather than ideology, seemed to be the primary motivating factor. Thus, in addition to supporting the establishment of the small "Lebanese Movement in Support of Fateh" (headed by Dr. Usama Fakhuri, a second rank Sunni politician opposed to leading Beirut Sunni *za'im* Sa'ib Salam) in 1968, Fateh established relations broadly across the National Movement. And, whereas organizations such as the PFLP eschewed close ties to confessional organization (on the grounds of anti-sectarianism) or the traditional Lebanese elite, Fateh deliberately cultivated many such contacts. 'Arafat and other Fateh leaders commonly held consultation with the leading Muslim *zu'ama'* and figures from the Muslim religious establishment. With regard to Christian leaders and organizations, a policy of establishing links with the Christian community as such was initiated in 1969. This complemented early efforts by Fateh as far back as 1966: Fateh's Lebanese branch had been dominated by Christians in its early years, and led by a Palestinian Maronite for three.¹¹ Palestinian participation in international organizations such as the "World Conference of Christians for Palestine" played a role in these efforts. Still more so did local contacts through such Lebanese groups as the Lebanese YMCA (strongly supported by Christian Palestinians); the pro-Palestinian, predominately Christian "Fifth of June Society"; Maronite

Patriarch Bulus Butrus al-Ma'ushi and his successor Antonius Butrus Khuraysh; the Social Movement of Greek Catholic Bishop Gregoire Haddad; and individual members of notable Christian families. In many cases (such as that of the Social Movement, co-founded with Haddad by Imam Musa al-Sadr) the linkage formed was a tripartite Christian-Shi'i-Palestinian one.

At the same time, Fateh opened lines of communication with the leadership of the major conservative parties, hoping to avoid misunderstandings and assuage conservative Christian fears. Statements by Jumayyil and others to the effect that Lebanese conservatives opposed "the international left" (*al-yasar al-duwali*) rather than "honorable guerrilla activity" (*al-'amal al-fida'i al-sharif*) undoubtedly provided further impetus for this. According to Salah Khalaf, it was a policy that met with some early success:

Our relations with the Christian rightist leaders were not bad at the time. Our ambition was to maintain friendly and cooperative relations with all parties, and especially with the two main religious components of the population. The Palestinian leaders, particularly Yasir 'Arafat, often met with Pierre Jumayyil and Camille Chamoun...

Of course, problems arose, but they were resolved in a friendly manner thanks to the lines of communication we succeeded in keeping open with the Christian leaders and the Lebanese government.¹²

As a result, the period from 1970 to 1972 was "relatively calm" for the PLO in Lebanon. There were, however, a few early indications of troubles on the horizon.

Signs of Things to Come?

On 17 March 1970 a clash between the Lebanese Army and Palestinian guerrillas near Bint Jubayl in the south left one guerrilla officer dead and two others wounded. A Lebanese Ministry of Defense communique issued shortly thereafter described the incident as a "misunderstanding." The PLO, however, saw events differently. The Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon suggested the killings were deliberate. It called for an immediate investigation, the dismissal of those responsible, and an end to security forces provocations and restrictions on *fida'iyyin* freedom of action. Interior Minister Kamal Junblat's comments too strongly suggested suspicion regarding the circumstances of the matter.¹³

One week later, a group of young Phalangist gunmen (led by one of Pierre al-Jumayyil's sons, Bashir) ambushed a guerrilla funeral cortege when it passed through the predominately Christian village of Kahhala en route from Beirut to Damascus. Ten persons were killed and an even greater number wounded, almost all of them Palestinians. Sporadic clashes between Palestinians and Phalange militiamen took place in Beirut in the following hours. While the PLO placed blame for events on the *Deuxième Bureau* and the US Central Intelligence Agency (charges echoed by Junblat), the Phalange attributed the killings to *fida'iyyin* misbehavior. A

series of American targets in Lebanon—the US embassy, cultural center, a refinery, and the Beirut offices of a bank and insurance company—were attacked by the PFLP over the next few days.¹⁴

Then on May 12, Israel launched a major raid against guerrilla bases in the 'Arqub. Although Israeli forces withdrew 32 hours later, this and a PFLP-GC rocket attack against an Israeli bus near the Lebanese border on May 22 signaled the beginning of intensified military action in the border area over the summer.

These incidents highlighted the PLO's difficult position in Lebanon. To them, it generally responded by announcing measures designed to calm tensions in the country and forestall escalation which might damage the position it had won with the 1969 Cairo Agreement. Hence, after warning that the Kahhala attack formed part of a conspiracy to liquidate the Palestinian movement in Lebanon, the communique issued by the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon announced that steps had been taken to prevent reprisals and called for restraint by all sides. Similarly, Fateh cooperated with Junblat in interceding to obtain the rapid release of Bashir Jumayyil, who had been seized by a guerrilla roadblock near Tall al-Za'tar camp while driving from Kahhala to Beirut. Later, the Committee strongly condemned the PFLP's "ineffective acts of violence... under the pretext of striking at American interests," albeit without mentioning the Popular Front by name. Discussions between the Committee and the Ministry of the Interior led to a detailed agreement on April 8 setting forth guerrilla transit routes in the south, deployment in the central sector, and limitations on "semi-heavy" weaponry. To avoid a repetition of the Bint Jubayl incidents, further guidelines were drawn up regarding cooperation between the PLO and the Army and the behavior of military commanders in the south. In May, additional regulations were announced by the Lebanese government for implementation June 15. These included a definition of who constituted a guerrilla, detailed agreement of the respective roles of PASC and the Lebanese police, and a restatement of previous bans on cross-border firing and the public carrying of arms. May 1970 also saw PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat announce the formation of a special Palestinian committee to compensate southern villagers for war damages.¹⁵

At the time, the PLO seemed unable to generate universal support for a policy of restraint. The June 15 regulations, for example, were condemned as forming part of an "imperialist-reactionary scheme aimed at the Palestinian revolution" by the PFLP, and were also criticized by al-Sa'iqa and the DFLP. Nevertheless, Fateh accepted them, and the deadline passed without incident. For his part Junblat replied that he did not intend to engage in debate: "certain commando contingents, whose members number not more than 100, are engaged in bidding in efforts to win Palestinian sympathy... we depend on the understanding and cooperation of the bigger commando groups." In mid-May he estimated that 85% of the security problems with the PLO had been solved.¹⁶

The Franjiyya Presidency

A change in the style, and perhaps substance, of PLO-Lebanese relations seemed likely after September 23. On that date, five weeks after his election by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, Sulayman Franjiyya succeeded Charles Hilu as President of the Republic. Franjiyya named Sa'ib Salam as his new Prime Minister; Salam in turn took the decision to retain the Interior Ministry portfolio for himself, and did not reappoint Kamal Junblat to the new cabinet. Two weeks later the new President seemed to signal a tough line regarding the *fida'iyyin* when, on October 5, he refused to allow more than forty ALF fighters to disembark from a flight from Iraq at Beirut airport. After a stand-off of seventeen hours (during which the guerrillas briefly took a Lebanese security officer hostage), the ALF backed down, and the aircraft returned to Baghdad.

Yet for a variety of reasons neither the airport incident nor Franjiyya's accession to power signaled the immediate onset of increased tensions between the Lebanese government and the PLO. Both the Palestinians and Junblat had found Franjiyya's position on the Cairo Agreement preferable to the ambiguous position adopted by his Shihabist presidential rival, Ilyas Sarkis, and had in fact supported his candidacy.¹⁷ Moreover, the PLO had good reason to avoid conflict with the new administration: September 1970 had also marked the beginning of King Husayn's military offensive against the Palestinian movement in Jordan.

At the end of October, as the Jordanian situation worsened, a rare anti-guerrilla demonstration took place at Marj'ayun in south Lebanon to protest Palestinian cross-border rocketing and the Israeli retaliation which invariably followed it. Anxious to stabilize the situation whilst dealing with the crisis in Jordan, 'Arafat traveled to Beirut to chair an emergency meeting of the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon. In a subsequent statement it announced that a number of important organizational decisions had been made in an effort to unify guerrilla activities and reorganize PLO relations with Lebanon, "the sovereignty and independence of which it is eager to preserve." These included the closing of all Lebanese offices of resistance organizations outside Beirut, and the unification of fund-raising activity. When an internal clash between Fateh and the small Action Organization for the Liberation of Palestine broke out in Beirut at the end of December 1970, further measures were adopted. Two AOLP fighters were handed over to the Lebanese authorities, the AOLP office in Beirut was closed and its leader ('Isam Sartawi) deported to Syria. Some Fateh units were disarmed to prevent the clashes from spreading, while the PLO issued a statement regretting the actions of some guerrilla members. One year later, the PLO condemned as "undisciplined" those al-Sa'iqa guerrillas who participated in a New Year's Eve attack on a Beirut police station in which some of their comrades were being held. 'Arafat deplored the incident, and stated that the PLO would "never agree to harming Lebanon and abusing its hospitality."¹⁸

With the bulk of their attention directed towards the escalating civil war

in Jordan, guerrilla activities in Lebanon slackened. The number of guerrilla incidents inside Israel near the Lebanese border dropped from an average of 32.5 per month in 1970 to 11.7 per month in the first half of 1971. This situation, however, did not endure indefinitely. As the last PLO strongholds in northern Jordan were crushed in the summer of 1971, Lebanon became by default the primary external base of the Palestinian resistance movement. In lieu of an easier target, Lebanon was also held responsible by Israel for increasing levels of Palestinian terrorism in the early 1970s, of which the killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich was only the most dramatic example. Moshe Dayan announced that henceforth Israel would no longer be constrained by the pretense of retaliation, but rather would seek to preempt Palestinian military action, striking Lebanon at will.¹⁹

Rising confrontation in the south prompted Franjiyya to take firmer action. New, more restrictive regulations on deployment in the western and central sectors were issued by the Lebanese Army liaison office on July 5, 1971. Palestinian negotiators complained of these in a meeting with the Army at the Nabatiyya barracks on July 17, but did not challenge Army authority. Then, in the wake of a three-day Israeli occupation of south Lebanon in late February 1972, the Lebanese Army was ordered to occupy vacated guerrilla positions so as to prevent the guerrillas' return. As units entered the 'Arqub for the first time since November 1969, the PLO's representatives on the joint coordinating committee accepted the necessity of this, provided the PLO's right to operate in the area remained intact.²⁰

The PLO's willingness to restrain its activities was, above all else, motivated by a desire to avoid a replay of the disastrous showdown it had recently suffered in Jordan. In January 1972, Israeli threats to occupy portions of Lebanese territory led the PLO to announce an extension of its past policy of restraint to include a temporary freeze on its activities in the south. Palestinian spokesmen reassured the Lebanese government that the Palestinians would "take into consideration Lebanon's political and military situation and will not be the cause for the occupation of southern Lebanon." Such freezes were announced again in June and September of the same year, with the longest actual halt in guerrilla activity being a twelve week period between February 24 and June 20.²¹

Despite this, critics of the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon continued their verbal attacks. In June 1972 Raymond Eddé called for abrogation of the Cairo Agreement, a call subsequently echoed by Pierre Jumayyil. Internally, the PLO leadership sometimes encountered difficulties in having its freeze orders accepted. The PFLP-GC rejected the measure, as did some Fateh field commanders. In the autumn there were reports that force had to be used in the Biqa' against Fateh dissidents who opposed 'Arafat's acceptance on October 8 of Lebanese government restrictions on guerrilla activities in much of the central sector. There were also small incidents between the guerrillas and the army, and others—including a wave of bombings in Beirut in January 1972—for which no one claimed responsibility. Indicative of the depth of suspicion on both sides, a

February 1973 Israeli attack against the Nahr al-Barid and Baddawi refugee camps near Tripoli was initially believed by PASC to be an attack launched against it by the Lebanese Army.²²

The Verdun Raid and the May Crisis

The real spark, however, was to come on April 10. On that date in 1973, an Israeli commando raid in Rue Verdun, in the heart of Beirut, left three major Palestinian figures dead: Kamal Nasir, poet and the PLO's official spokesman; Muhammad al-Najjar, head of the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon, member of the PLO Executive Committee and Fateh Central Committee; and Kamal Udwan, also a member of the Fateh Central Committee.

The failure of the Lebanese security forces to intercept the raiders raised a storm of protest from Palestinian and leftist circles. The PLO Executive Committee initially blamed the US Central Intelligence Agency and Israel, although it also deeply suspected that elements within the Lebanese Army had collaborated with the raiders. Junblat charged that the Lebanese government had been lax in its preparations, was unprepared and unwilling to defend the Palestinian movement, and hinted at "collusion" between the authorities and Israel.²³ Sa'ib Salam placed the blame on General Iskandar Ghanim, the commander of the Army, and demanded his dismissal. When President Franjiyya refused, Salam resigned as Prime Minister, to be replaced by Amin al-Hafiz.

Friction between the guerrillas and the security forces increased rapidly thereafter. On April 14 the US-owned oil terminus at Zahrani was bombed, allegedly by the PFLP-GC; on April 27 three men were arrested with explosives at Beirut airport, where a bomb was found the next day; on April 30 several armed DFLP members were arrested as they drove past the US Embassy. In response, two Lebanese soldiers were kidnapped on May 1. The refugee camps were then surrounded and attacked by the army. In response to Palestinian shelling of the airport, the Lebanese Air Force was ordered into action against the Burj al-Barajina camp on Beirut's southern outskirts. A state of emergency was declared throughout the country.

As the fighting intensified, the PLO appealed to external allies for support. Algeria, Libya, and Syria promptly condemned the Lebanese government's actions. All three, together with Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, and the Arab League offered to mediate. Egypt and Syria—now planning what would become the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War—were particularly anxious to contain the conflict, and exerted considerable pressure to that end. This included the closure of the Syrian-Lebanese border on May 8, and the movement of Fateh and Sa'iqa forces from Syria to a few kilometers inside Lebanon.²⁴

Appeals to internal and external allies notwithstanding, the PLO's position in the May crisis was essentially a defensive one. Although it could not fully control the activities of some smaller and more radical Palestinian groups, the bulk of Palestinian military strength was withheld in defense of

the camps. Throughout the crisis PLO communiques were careful to hold out the possibility of compromise, expressing at the same time the PLO's "profoundest concern for the sovereignty of Lebanon."²⁵ A joint Palestinian-Lebanese committee was formed almost immediately upon the onset of fighting to negotiate an end to the clashes. Two weeks and three ceasefires passed, however, before the shooting abated. With this, attention then turned to establishing guidelines for future Palestinian-Lebanese relations—relations which, the PLO insisted, must be based on the principles set forth in the Cairo Agreement of 1969. Negotiations between a Palestinian delegation ('Atallah 'Atallah [Abu Za'im] of Fateh, commander of Palestinian forces in Lebanon; 'Abd al-Karim Hamad [Abu Adnan] of the DFLP; and Salah Salah of the PFLP) and representatives of the Lebanese Army subsequently began at the Milkart Hotel in Beirut.

On May 17, after some seventeen hours of negotiation, the two sides announced that they had reached agreement. The "Milkart Protocols," as the agreement became known, comprised detailed minutes of those points upon which agreement had been reached. In the camps, the two sides agreed to ban the presence of guerrillas and of medium and heavy weaponry. Self-defense was to be entrusted to a local militia drawn from residents, equipped with individual light arms only. A Lebanese Internal Security Forces post would be established nearby. In the border area, the guerrillas were prohibited from deploying in the Western sector, or near villages or in close proximity to the Israeli frontier in the central and eastern sectors. Military operations were to be frozen by virtue of earlier decisions of the Arab Defense Council, and Lebanon was not to be used as a departure point for external operations. Military training was to occur only at agreed locations outside the camps, and all non-Arab guerrillas (other than humanitarian and civilian personnel) were to be dismissed. Finally, the PLO reaffirmed that its official headquarters was in Damascus, and agreed not to establish a radio station or to "entangle" (*tawrit*) Lebanon in its informational activities.²⁶

In accordance with their agreement and following additional meetings at the Kuwaiti and Egyptian embassies on May 28, 29 and 30, the PLO and Lebanese Army established a new Higher Coordinating Committee to oversee implementation of the Milkart Protocols. After fighting that had left more than a hundred dead and twice as many wounded, a semblance of calm returned to Beirut. The tensions which had sparked the abortive confrontation, however, remained rife.

Roots of the Crisis

The clashes of May 1973 were not merely evidence of the deteriorating state of PLO relations with Franjiyya, the army, and the Lebanese right, but also symptomatic of a deeper crisis in Lebanon. Of these the PLO was but a part—a lightening rod for regional conflict and a catalyst for domestic protest to be sure, but only a part nonetheless. As factors beyond its control

enveloped the PLO and its Lebanese sanctuary, the dilemmas of PLO policy grew ever more acute.

The Impact of Black September

"Black September"—King Husayn's bloody campaign launched in September 1970 to crush the PLO in Jordan—was one such factor. Heretofore, Jordan had been the external headquarters and major operational base of the *fida'iyyin*, accounting for over two-thirds of all cross-border guerrilla operations between June 1967 and August 1970. Afterwards, the PLO officially moved its headquarters to Damascus—and, in practice, to Beirut. In contrast to its Syrian counterpart, the Lebanese capital offered relaxed political controls and excellent access to the world press. This, combined with Egypt's deactivation of the Suez front through acceptance of the Rogers Plan in August 1970, and Syria's restriction of guerrilla activity on the Golan Heights the following year, rendered Lebanon the Palestinian movement's most important external sanctuary and the only state bordering Palestine within which the PLO enjoyed any significant freedom of action. Over the two years an estimated 15-30,000 Palestinians displaced by the fighting in Jordan—including several thousand armed guerrillas—entered the country.²⁷

With the increased Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon came other evidence that the Palestinian-Hashemite war had expanded to the west. Mysterious attacks on Lebanese Army positions, the January 1972 bombings in Beirut, the unknown snipers who violated the May 1973 ceasefires—many of these, the PLO suspected, were the work of Jordanian *agents provocateurs* seeking to provoke a second Black September. The fact that the Jordanian military attaché in Beirut was subsequently deported on information provided the Lebanese government by Fateh intelligence sources gave at least some credence to the view. Certainly it was true that Jordan had begun to extend military training to the militias of the Phalange and LNP, and financial support to Camille Chamoun and Shi'i *za'im* Kamal As'ad—all of them strong opponents of the Palestinian armed presence.

For the Palestinian movement the major lesson of Jordan was clear: the continued survival of the Palestinian revolution required the mobilization of a mass base of popular Arab support, one which would both constrain the ability of reactionary regimes to strike at the resistance and stand by the PLO in its times of need:

We believe that the basis of the protection of the Palestine resistance movement... is the Lebanese National Movement.... We hold the National Movement in Lebanon responsible before all other quarters for confronting the conspiracies that are being prepared to strike down the resistance. Our task is to defend ourselves in light of a plan in whose drawing up the Lebanese Nationalist Movement plays a fundamental role. If we want to take advantage of what happened in Jordan, this is the basic lesson we must learn.²⁸

It was important too that such allies be powerful and independent in

their own right. In Jordan, the PLO had overshadowed other supportive Palestinian and Jordanian organizations, and when the royal army had struck at the former the latter had been paralyzed. There were, as noted before, differences over who the PLO's allies should be, with Fateh much more willing to cooperate with representatives of the traditional Muslim elite. There was, however, agreement across the Palestinian movement of the necessity of Lebanese alliances.

The major ally the PLO found was, of course, ~~Kamal Junblat and the~~ **Lebanese National Movement**. The value of this internal alliance was soon apparent. In March 1972, ten Lebanese progressive parties organized a demonstration of over 10,000 people to protest government restrictions on guerrilla activities in the south. Eight months later Junblat was elected Secretary-General of the Arab Front for Participating in the Palestinian Revolution, an international grouping of forty-six pro-Palestinian parties. The Lebanese Movement in Support of Fateh, OCA, the LCP, and the *Ba'th* were all represented on the Front's secretariat. During the spring 1973 crisis between the PLO and the Lebanese Army, up to a quarter of a million persons turned out for the funeral of the three Palestinian leaders slain in Rue Verdun. Concrete political support from the LNM was apparent throughout the weeks of fighting which followed. Palestinian leaders were virtually unanimous in their assessment that "the Lebanese national and progressive movement played an important role in thwarting this scheme," and that "the struggling Lebanese masses and their movement took a stand against the armed attacks which the authorities organized, and backed the resistance effectively and politically and on a mass basis, and this had a major influence in freezing the crisis."²⁹

There was, however, a difficulty in all this. 'Arafat, initially at least, seemed to envisage the PLO's internal alliances in Lebanon as strategic ones whereby the PLO could gain the support it needed without becoming embroiled in Lebanese domestic issues not of immediate concern. He explicitly appealed to other Palestinian resistance organizations "not to involve the revolution in any Lebanese domestic issues." But for the DFLP, PFLP, and even some within Fateh itself, the slogan of non-interference in Lebanon's internal affairs was idealistic and naive. The complexity of the Lebanese situation, the Arab dimension of the Palestinian cause, the common struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese people against imperialism and reaction—all of this, they argued, made a hands-off alliance in Lebanon impossible. The PFLP and DFLP were further committed to a revolutionary transformation of the entire Arab world; the sponsored organizations (al-Sa'iqa, the ALF), to an extension of the foreign policy influence in Lebanon of their parent regimes. Hence all of these organizations showed considerable enthusiasm for the intricacies of Lebanese politics: the PFLP, for example, had as one of its avowed aims the creation of an "intimate alliance with the patriotic and progressive movement in Lebanon," and the "integration" of the PLO and LNM. In many cases it became difficult to distinguish Palestinian organizations from their Lebanese counterparts (DFLP/OCA, PFLP/ASAP, Sa'iqa and the ALF from the

respective branches of the Lebanese Ba'ath).³⁰

Fateh, desirous of retaining its influence and having recruited large numbers of Lebanese guerrillas in any event, became involved in the process too. The 1970 death of President 'Abd al-Nasir and the subsequent withdrawal of Egyptian influence in Lebanon accelerated the process, as Fateh emerged as an increasingly important sponsor of many of Lebanon's Nasirite groups. Fateh also formed close early ties with Imam Sadr and his movement.

Moreover, equal (and often even greater) enthusiasm for the PLO-LNM alliance was shown by many Lebanese parties, who were anxious to maximize Palestinian involvement so as to increase their own political influence in Lebanon. The Palestinian armed presence was seen by leftist and Arab nationalist groups not only as a rightful (and popular) cause, but also as a guarantee against the suppression of the progressive movement by a conservative Lebanese state. The PLO was thus an invaluable ally, by the mere fact of its presence, in the struggle against the status quo. After the crisis of May 1973, and even more so the civil war, "non-intervention" had become obsolete, formal declarations to the contrary notwithstanding.

Scorched Earth in the South

Before 1967 Syria and Egypt had directly organized commando raids on Israel and hence provided obvious targets for Israeli military retaliation. Post-1967 *fida'iyyin* action (and the international terrorism to which some Palestinian groups turned in the early 1970s to garner world attention to their cause) was, however, more difficult to counter. The Palestinian nature of guerrilla action meant that no one state could be held responsible. Indeed, identifying a meaningful target in itself could pose serious difficulties. Military action on a limited scale was unlikely to achieve a decisive effect given the dispersal and popular Palestinian base of the guerrilla movement. Raids against Palestinian positions could cause casualties and disrupt operations, but could not provide the sort of sustained pressure needed to suppress the movement altogether, short of occupying each confrontation state in turn.

Under such circumstances the logical response was to focus attention on ~~not only the~~ Palestinians, but also on their supporters. By striking at Lebanon and the population which gave the Palestinians such valuable support, Lebanese sympathies for the PLO would be undermined. Eventually the Lebanese government might be encouraged to suppress the guerrillas themselves. It was a policy predicated, in the words of Israeli Foreign Minister (1966-74) Abba Eban, on the "rational prospect, ultimately fulfilled, that affected populations would exert pressure for the cessation of hostilities." In the case of Lebanon, other foreign policy calculations entered the picture too: if the chaos generated by Israeli pressures strengthened the position of Maronite conservatives and created opportunities for realizing Israel's long-standing interest in expanding its influence over its northern neighbor, so much the better.³¹

The continuous and escalating attacks experienced by Lebanon in the late 1960s and 1970s were part of precisely such a strategy. Southern villages were shelled and the crops and groves upon which the villagers depended destroyed. The Lebanese Army recorded over three thousand violations of Lebanese territory by Israeli forces between 1968 and 1974, an average rate of 1.4 incidents per day. (In 1974-75 the rate would increase still further, to 7 per day.) During this same period (1968-74) some 880 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians were killed in Israeli attacks. Thousands were wounded, and one-fifth or more of the border region's 150,000 inhabitants were forced to flee the south to the relative safety of Beirut and other urban centers.³² Given such policies and Israel's known intelligence and covert action capabilities in Beirut (graphically illustrated in the 1972 assassination of PFLP spokesman Ghassan Kanafani, and at the 1973 Verdun raid), it would be surprising indeed if the Israeli secret service did not also lay behind at least some of the mysterious incidents which plagued PLO-Lebanese relations.

With the attacks on Lebanon came calls by Lebanese rightist parties for abrogation of the Cairo Agreement, and early signs of friction between the guerrillas and the generally supportive population of the south. Given the scope of Israeli military action against south Lebanon, the fact that most southerners appeared to maintain their support for the *fida'iyyin* was in itself remarkable. Sympathy for the Palestinian cause contributed to this, as did PLO policies designed to relax tensions and improve public relations. Of equal importance, however, were the activities of the PLO's National Movement allies. These allies played a major role in preempting criticism of the guerrillas by channeling grievances into dissatisfaction with a Lebanese central government that had traditionally ignored the impoverished south. The National Movement and Shi'ite leader Imam Musa al-Sadr demanded government programs to alleviate the south's hardship, and increased defense preparations (including conscription) which would allow Lebanon to resist Israeli aggression.

Problems of Palestinian Policy-making

For its part the PLO recognized the potential if not yet realized dangers of alienating Lebanese opinion, and in this spirit announced its temporary freezes on guerrilla activity from 1972 on. But the issue of cross-border guerrilla activity was an emotive one within the Palestinian movement. Ideologically, virtually no one in the PLO approved of the principle of suspending military action against Israel. Many were unconvinced that even temporary freezes served any useful purpose. And, quite apart from the policy debate over whether the suspension of cross-border action actually lessened Israeli pressure on Lebanon or improved the PLO's popular Lebanese standing, the realities of Palestinian politics made any such decision difficult to sustain.

Simply put, cross-border action was popular among Palestinians, and especially among the refugee camp populations that represented substantial

bulwark of the Palestinian liberation struggle. Fateh's apparent willingness to announce freezes on such action left it open to charges that it was abandoning the armed struggle, the catalyst which had created the Palestinian movement and the *raison d'être* of the PLO. Under such conditions, efforts by the Fateh and mainstream PLO leadership to compel a suspension in operations were politically dangerous at best. By the same token, violating a freeze whilst others were abiding by it tended to enhance a group's image of militancy and commitment. Therefore, despite the announcement of a freeze, cross-border operations generally continued.

A similar dynamic endured too with regard to continued Palestinian violations of the Cairo Agreement. The Jordanian experience had already demonstrated to most Palestinian leaders the dangers of unruly guerrilla behavior and internecine conflict. But each group was limited by the need to maintain its own organization and constituency against the inroads of political competitors. Individual efforts to impose rigorous discipline might harm political recruitment if other organizations retained their relatively lax standards. Yet any attempt to impose a central discipline, especially by Fateh over the smaller guerrilla organizations, was viewed as an extension of Fateh hegemony and resisted accordingly.

Such disunity had a serious impact in Jordan, where some degree of cohesion had been only belatedly achieved after September 1970 under weight of Jordanian military pressure. In an attempt to improve coordination, the PLO Central Council and a central military command (like PASC before it) had been established. But in practice, PLO policy emerged from a rather less cohesive and more competitive process.

Indicative of the problems facing Palestinian decision-makers in formulating a common and coherent Palestinian policy was the fate of a study reportedly undertaken for Fateh by a private research institute, and subsequently leaked in June 1973. The study reportedly placed significant blame on the DFLP and PFLP-GC for escalating the May crisis. It called for action to be taken against US and Israeli intelligence capabilities in Lebanon; an attempt to win over the forces of the Lebanese political "center"; and strengthened relations with the Lebanese National Movement. It also warned against sectarianization and entanglement in Lebanese affairs; stressed the importance of good guerrilla conduct; suggested improved relations with the Lebanese security forces; and called for the mobilization of Lebanese mass support. It was revealing, however, that although the report emphasized the fundamental importance of Palestinian unity, it was precisely in this interest that its findings were denounced. Amidst protests from the DFLP and PFLP-GC, the official Palestinian press agency Wafa quickly disavowed it, stating that Fateh did not hold the DFLP or PFLP-GC in any way responsible for recent Lebanese events.³³

The Economic and Political Crisis

As the PLO debated policy amidst its confrontations with Jordan, Israel, and the Lebanese Army, the social contradictions of the Lebanese system

were being sharpened by a growing economic crisis. By the late 1960s, the economic growth experienced by Lebanon after World War Two had soured amid the Intra Bank failure of 1966 and the regional economic dislocation caused by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The lopsided dominance of a large service sector employing relatively few and a small and declining agricultural sector employing many provided further impetus for economic hardship. Inflation, which had doubled between 1970-71 and 1971-72, reached more than 23% in 1973. With the post-October 1973 oil boom the situation worsened still further as the influx of petrodollars to Beirut's service sector pushed prices higher. The cost of such consumer staples as rice, fruit, and vegetables more than doubled. Meanwhile, thousands of (predominately Shi'i) peasants fled economic decline and Israeli raids in the south to face underemployment or unemployment in urban slums, and especially in the "misery belt" of Beirut's southern outskirts.³⁴

As unemployment and the cost of living increased, so too did economic discontent. On 11 November 1972 workers at the Ghandur chocolate factory went on strike; the government responded with force which left three workers dead. Two and a half months later eight thousand tobacco farmers (supported by students and the leftist parties) demonstrated in Nabatiyya. When they tried to march on the offices of the government-owned tobacco company, security forces opened fire again, killing three and wounding thirteen. January 1973 also saw the dismissal by the Salam government of 2,600 striking teachers. In March 1974 some 15,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Beirut to protest the high price of bread amidst threats by the Lebanese trade union federation to call a national general strike. Student strikes against tuition fee increases, for educational, social, political, and economic reform—and, of course, freedom of action for the *fida'iyyin*—occurred throughout 1971-74. They too often ended in clashes with police.

The students' linkage of particular grievances to issues of general social reform, and the active participation of National Movement parties in workers' and farmers' protests, pointed to the ideological ferment underway in Lebanese politics. While Lebanese conditions and contradictions were providing the basic ingredients for this, the Palestinian movement was, by its aims, aspirations, popular base and example, providing a powerful catalyst for social change.

This process both promoted, and was promoted by, the expansion of the Lebanese left, who were in the forefront of organized protests against social injustice. Kamal Junblat decried the government's suppression of strikes and demonstrations as a "massacre," and declared that "Lebanon, even in the darkest periods of its history, has never experienced such corruption." The membership of the progressive parties climbed, with the communist parties enjoying particular success in attracting poor workers from Beirut's "misery belt." In Tripoli, the 1972 parliamentary elections saw 'Abd al-Majid al-Rafa'i of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party top the polls, garnering several hundred more votes than Tripoli's traditional Sunni leader, Rashid Karami. In Beirut, Nasirite leader Najah Wakim was also elected to

the Chamber of Deputies.³⁵

The economic and political crisis also spurred Imam Musa al-Sadr's efforts to organize the Shi'ite community. By 1974 he had founded the Movement of the Deprived to further his demands for equality and social justice for all Lebanese, and the down-trodden Shi'a in particular. Addressing a crowd of 75,000 supporters at Ba'lbak in March of that year he threatened to arm his Movement to defend south Lebanon and win equality by force if government reforms were not forthcoming.

Because of Sadr's political influence in the south, close relations were initially forged between his movement and the Palestinians, especially Fateh. The slogan of "unity between those dispossessed of their land and those dispossessed in their land" was coined to reflect this. Support for Sadr was also voiced by the DFLP, which like much of the Palestinian-Lebanese left espoused the concept of "sect-class" (*al-tabaqa al-ta'ifa*, i.e. the congruence of class and communal boundaries, insofar as the bulk of the Shi'ite population were also poor peasants and workers) to justify such support for what otherwise constituted a sectarian organization.

For the traditional Lebanese ruling class, the political developments of the early 1970s were worrying in the extreme. Growing popular radicalism was undermining the individual support bases of all traditional leaders, and particularly rural feudal Shi'i *zu'ama'* and urban Sunni bourgeoisie who lacked even rudimentary party apparatuses. Moreover, the nonconfessional nature of the protests, the rise of secular leftist parties, and the apparent growth of intercommunal class identities posed a serious threat to the foundations of the sectarian political system. Franjiyya and Salam thus responded to worker and student protests with force, with the latter declaring that "the state is determined to deal with any attempt to create chaos." Disturbances were blamed on the actions of outside agitators. It was a position with which the Phalange concurred. Pierre Jumayyil remarked in an open letter to the President: "We thank God that the State has decided to take firm action to meet this challenge and we support you and your stand."³⁶

Yet force alone could not quell the ideological and economic foundations of the strikes, riots, and demonstrations. Weakened and constrained by the attitudes of the Muslim "street," there was little that Salam, Karami or other traditional Sunni leaders could do to confront these issues directly. To support calls for fundamental reform was to support calls for abolition of an important base of their social power; yet to openly oppose demands for reform was equally impossible. The best that could be done was to promote incremental changes in the National Pact formula through calls for greater Muslim representation in the administrative structure, and a greater role for the Prime Minister (and cabinet) vis-à-vis the President. The slogan of *musharaka* ("participation") that they raised was thus little more than a call for incremental change in the sectarian balance-of-power. Later, as domestic conditions worsened and demands for major reform grew more powerful in 1974-75, a common interest in maintaining some middle ground between the National Movement and the increasingly reactionary stance of the

Phalange would lead Salam, Karami, and Raymond Eddé to join in forming the Tripartite Coalition (*al-tahaluf al-thulathi*).

Even the Phalange faced a crisis of ideology and political support. Despite its conservatism, the party had always sought to present itself as populist, modernist, and reformist—hence the official but little-used inclusion of “Social Democratic” in its formal title. It contrasted its modernism with that of feudal *zu‘ama’* like Sulayman Franjiyya. Officially at least, it had sought to promote a “Lebanese” nationalism that would transcend sectarian bounds. Yet, when faced with demands for real change, it found itself relying upon a Maronite Christian core of support in a vigorous defense of the status quo.

The Phalange’s support for status quo and upholding of Christian rights, however well-received among its traditional supporters in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, was seen with disappointment by a younger generation of Lebanese. At predominately Christian universities right-wing Phalangist students clashed with the left-wing and Arab nationalist counterparts as the *Kata’ib* lost ground to progressive slates in student elections. Within the party, a internal report by liberal members warned as early as 1971 that the Phalange’s doctrine was no longer attractive to Lebanese youth, who were “going through a period of awareness and doubt—awareness of the corruption of the confessional system, and doubt as to its ability to persist and progress.”³⁷

Phalange liberals suggested that the way out of this dilemma lay in changing the *Kata’ib* into a progressive, secular party, and by moving closer to mainstream Arab views on issues such as Palestine. An alternate response—and one more deeply rooted in the traditions of political Maronitism—called for a retreat into the Christian-Lebanese laager and generation of a siege mentality. Phalange support had always risen in times of crisis; by posing the current situation in terms of a Phalangist defense of Lebanese sovereignty and protection of the Christian community in the face of foreign (Palestinian-leftist) subversion, the party could both defend its privileges and rebuild its strength. Moreover, by striking at the Palestinians in particular it could remove a major source of discomfort and strip the Lebanese National Movement of its ally and current protector. Ominously, Pierre al-Jumayyil’s open letter to Franjiyya had added “should the state fail in its duty or weaken or hesitate, then Mr. President, we shall ourselves take action; we shall meet demonstrations with bigger demonstrations, strikes with more extensive strikes, toughness with toughness, and force with force....”

From the Milkart Protocols to the Civil War

On June 1, Yasir ‘Arafat met with Franjiyya, their first meeting since the crisis had begun. Three weeks later Zuhayr Muhsin announced (in his capacity as head of the PLO’s Military Department) a temporary freeze on guerrilla actions in the south. Yet for all sides, this respite from conflict

provided little time to reflect on the past. On the regional front, new problems and prospects soon arose in the aftermath of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Within Lebanon, the domestic economic and political crisis continued unabated, and indeed worsened as time went on. Over the next two years Lebanon would gradually be brought to the brink of violent civil war.

Armed Camps

The apparent unwillingness or inability of the Lebanese Army to achieve a clear-cut victory over the Palestinian movement in May 1973 was a severe disappointment to the Lebanese right. Up until May, Phalange and LNP strategy appeared to be directed towards encouraging the government to act to restrict the *fida'iyyin*, even to the point of precipitating a showdown between government and guerrilla forces in which the power of the latter would be broken. Yet when it had come to pass, the confrontation had been inconclusive and the hoped-for suppression had failed to materialize.

As Jumayyil had threatened, the Lebanese right began to take matters into its own hands. Even before the recent crisis, several political militias had existed in Lebanon. That of the Phalange dated back to 1936, and the party's early formation as a para-military youth group. The LNP had a military wing too, *al-Numur* (The Tigers), as did the Franjiyya clan and others in Zgharta (later known as the "Zgharta Liberation Army" and the "Mardaite Brigade"). In the wake of the May clashes new groups emerged publicly, such as *al-Tanzim* (The Organization) and the Guardians of the Cedars (*Hurras al-arz*), led by Sa'id 'Aql and Etienne Saqr. Both were virulently anti-Palestinian, and drew their support almost exclusively from the Maronite community.

Extensive military preparations were soon apparent as massive quantities of arms flowed from abroad to conservative militias—sometimes with the apparent connivance of sympathetic government officials. Maronite leaders justified it as an appropriate Christian response to the Palestinian armed presence and a worsening deterioration in public order. Speaking at a September 1973 graduation ceremony for his own militia, Camille Chamoun asked, "Why have foreigners and those seeking refuge in hospitable Lebanon the right to stage military training and carry arms, while Lebanon's sons have no right to do so in defence of their homeland?" Pierre Jumayyil put the rightist position even more clearly, warning "we cannot accept the closing of our camps and at the same time allow the presence of Palestinian camps that have their own government, courts, army, and police." Four months later, when asked about reports that over six thousand weapons had recently arrived at Beirut port for the Phalange and LNP he denied all knowledge of the affair, but declared "if [the reports] are true, I say 'bravo' to those who concluded the deal." He added: "It is not logical that the Lebanese should see arms being carried in the streets and flowing in from everywhere across the border without cost to an alien group which

entered Lebanon illegally."³⁸

The arming of the Lebanese right was accelerated by similar preparations on the Palestinian side. The April 1973 Verdun raid had seriously alarmed the Palestinian leadership, who now felt acutely vulnerable. Palestinian offices near the seashore at Ras Beirut were closed and hurriedly withdrawn to the relative safety of the Sabra-Shatila refugee camps. The unification and strengthening of the camps' popular militia forces, initiated soon after Israel's raid against the Nahr al-Barid and Baddawi refugee camps near Tripoli in February 1973, was stepped up. A program of building fortifications in the camps was undertaken, while heavier weapons systems (especially anti-aircraft defenses) were acquired and deployed to defend them—much of this in direct violation of the recently-negotiated Milkart Protocols. Amid requests from the Palestinian movement's Lebanese allies (who themselves were alarmed by the arming of the right), some Palestinian military aid and training was supplied to parties of the Lebanese National Movement. At this stage, most of this support was extended on individual initiative by the more radical organizations. Recognizing the escalatory potential, the PLO leadership refused to undertake major military support for the National Movement until after the onset of the Civil War in 1975.³⁹

At the same time, the PLO did seek to calm the fears of the Maronite leadership through its policy of direct contact and communication. Defending the policy against its LNM and Palestinian critics, Salah Khalaf told one interviewer that:

Active political opening up to all political forces in Lebanon should be strengthened in order to explain ourselves to Lebanese public opinion. We do not consider dialogue with forces which differ with us or disagree with our existence as something shameful, but as a political struggle pursued by all revolutions which are sure of themselves and possess a clear political line.⁴⁰

The most important element of this had been a formal dialogue with the Phalange opened in 1972, having been confirmed by a *Kata'ib* party resolution in September of that year. In June 1973, a Palestinian delegation headed by Salah Khalaf reached agreement with its Phalangist counterparts on a joint communique outlining the common views of the two sides. The communique was to be made public at the Phalange Party's anniversary celebrations in September. Before then, however, the agreement was torpedoed by internal opposition from Phalangist hard-liners (notably Bashir al-Jumayyil), and external opposition from Camille Chamoun on the one hand and some Lebanese national movement parties on the other. Instead, listeners heard a speech by Pierre Jumayyil in which, after hailing Palestine as the "most just cause of our time," he warned against "this abuse of commando action" whereby "[the *fida'iyyin*] have taken military action against us amounting to war in the full sense of the word." After 1973, the dialogue between the two sides effectively stopped.⁴¹

In the polarized and militarized atmosphere prevailing, it was inevitable that conflicts would occur. And they did. The worst of these took place in

late July 1974 when a dispute between two smugglers escalated into a three-day battle between *Kata'ib* militiamen of the Dikwana district of East Beirut and PFLP guerrillas from the neighboring Tall al-Za'tar camp. Five persons were killed before the clash was finally brought under control. Clashes between the Phalange and the LNM also occurred, notably in July 1974 (between *Kata'ib* and PSP militiamen in the Metn) and with the SSNP in February 1975. Because of his government's apparent inability to halt the proliferation of arms in the country, Taqi al-Din al-Sulh tendered his resignation in the fall of 1974. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by his cousin, Rashid al-Sulh.

Repercussions of the October War

Amid rising tensions in Lebanon, only the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war had, paradoxically, provided the PLO with a brief hiatus. From the onset of hostilities on October 6 the PLO was active in the fighting, alongside the Egyptians in the west, with the Syrians on the Golan Heights, and alone inside Palestine and across the Lebanese border. For the first time since 1948 Palestinians, as Palestinians, had directly participated in a war with Israel. Within Lebanon, tensions temporarily relaxed as both Muslim and Christian leaders endorsed the Arab war effort.⁴²

After the war, the PLO's international status grew rapidly. In ~~November~~ 1973 only Jordanian opposition prevented the PLO from being recognized by the Arab League as the sole body qualified to speak on the Palestinians' behalf. In October 1974 even that obstacle was removed as the Arab leaders at the Rabat Summit Conference unanimously announced to the world their acceptance of the PLO as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."⁴³ A few weeks later Yasir 'Arafat himself appeared before the United Nations. It was Lebanon's Sulayman Franjiyya who formally proposed (on behalf of the Arab League) the PLO's successful bid to gain observer status in the General Assembly. The PLO opened diplomatic relations with a number of countries, more than 100 of which were to grant it some form of official recognition by the early 1980s.

Yet the post October environment also posed new challenges. As the Arab world confronted the issue of a peace settlement with Israel, regional and local conditions deteriorated badly.

Within the PLO unity and coordination were badly affected by differences over how best to respond to the post-October diplomatic environment, and in particular the proposed Geneva peace conference. Should the PLO participate in the conference, or did this represent an unwarranted deviation from the armed struggle? Efforts to base the conference on UN Security Council resolution 242 of 1967 (with its reference to Arab "refugees" rather than Palestinian self-determination) complicated the matter, as did reluctance to grant Israel *de facto* recognition through negotiation. If the PLO were to participate in Geneva, on what basis should it do so? The US and Israel were anxious to preclude PLO participation; others suggested the Palestinians' submergence within a

unified "Arab" delegation. What negotiating position should the PLO adopt? Clearly, a non-sectarian democratic state in all of Palestine could not be achieved in the short term given prevailing political and strategic conditions.

Such considerations, coupled with the PLO's Jordanian experience, had led many in Fateh and the DFLP to suggest that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip might represent a more realistic interim objective. Yet even interim acceptance of anything less than the liberation of all Palestine was bitterly opposed by the PFLP and others within the Palestinian movement. Such rejectionism won significant support both from Palestinian refugees from pre-1967 Israel, and from radical Arab states such as Libya and Iraq. In a similar vein, the PFLP also opposed 'Arafat's UN appearance, fearing it foreshadowed a deemphasis of the armed liberation struggle.

Apparent compromise on all these points was painfully forged at the 12th session of the PNC in July 1974. The ten-point program adopted at the meeting rejected UN Security Council resolution 242 (point 1), and similarly rejected recognition of Israel (point 3). Yet, more importantly, all of the major resistance groups broke with the past to endorse the idea of a "phased" (*marhali*) approach to the struggle. According to the second point of the program:

The PLO will struggle by every means, the foremost of which is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land and to establish the people's national, independent and fighting sovereignty on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated. This requires the creation of further changes in the balance of power in favor of our people and their struggle.⁴⁴

Thus armed struggle was no longer the "sole" means of Palestinian liberation (as had been the case under the 1968 revised Charter), but one among many; in the course of that struggle the PLO was prepared to accept, in the interim, a "national authority" on any part of Palestinian soil from which Israel withdrew. It was this decision that had been endorsed at Rabat, and which had paved the way for 'Arafat's UN appearance.

The ten-point program of 1974 had been carefully and ambiguously worded to maintain internal Palestinian consensus. Soon, however, 'Arafat and other spokespersons were making it clear that by "national authority" they understood the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories, and that in their view the PNC program did not exclude participation in Geneva or other similar negotiations. With this, unity collapsed. In June 1974, the PNC resolutions sparked fighting in Lebanon between the PFLP-GC and DFLP in which over twenty persons were killed or wounded. In September, the PFLP announced its decision to withdraw from the PLO Executive Committee and boycott meetings of the Central Council in protest over what it saw as misuse of the PNC resolutions to legalize a "course of deviation and surrender." Soon the Arab Liberation Front, PFLP-GC, and PSF joined the Popular Front in condemning the apparent political direction of the PLO. The first two of these froze their Executive Committee membership, and with Iraqi support all four groups

announced the formation in October of "a unified front comprising the sections of the resistance, all mass bodies and organizations and patriotic persons that reject surrenderist solutions"—the Palestinian Rejection Front.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Henry Kissenger's "step-by-step" diplomacy (marked by the Sinai I Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement of January 1974, the Syrian-Israeli disengagement of May, and especially the Sinai II agreement of September 1975) did little to lessen tensions in Lebanon. The Palestinians grew increasingly worried that a piecemeal settlement was in the making that would leave Palestinian national rights unfulfilled. Pierre Jumayyil and other Maronite leaders expressed a related concern that a situation was developing wherein "the burden of the fight for the return is now to be the sole responsibility of Lebanon and the Palestinians," a burden that "Lebanon cannot possibly cope with."⁴⁶ Outside the country, the Arab unity evident in October 1973 had collapsed by 1975. Hostility between Syria and Egypt increased as the former came to suspect the latter of moving towards a separate peace with Israel. This in turn aggravated the situation in Lebanon as rival Arab intelligence services fought out their differences through Lebanese or Palestinian proxies, and as Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab regimes provided material support to the Phalange and LNP as a counterweight to what they perceived as growing leftist radicalism.

In the south the war continued. The week-long shelling of the 'Anqab village of Kafr Shuba which forced as many as four thousand people from their homes in January 1975, was just a particularly intense example of a constant pattern of Israeli attacks. Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres remarked that "Lebanon's sovereignty [is] being eaten away by a collection of terrorist organizations and by camouflaged designs on her independence"—as much a threat as an observation, and of particular significance in light of domestic Lebanese developments.⁴⁷

The PLO again agreed to several temporary halts to its cross-border operations—in late October 1973, and again in February, March, April, and July 1974. When Palestinian attacks did occur inside Israel near the Lebanese border, PLO sources were quick to state that "those who carried [the attack] out proceeded from inside the occupied territories."⁴⁸ Yet this was rarely true, and the PLO's disclaimers were for the most part intended to divert Israeli wrath away from the PLO's Lebanese sanctuary. The PLO's tendency to accord blame for continuing cross-border raids on "undisciplined elements" during its discussions with the Lebanese government was no less misleading. Such claims merely masked the fact that, amid the decreased unity and increased political competition within the PLO marked by the formation of the Rejection Front, it had become increasingly unlikely that the various *tanzimat* would halt their Lebanese operations. Rejection Front organizations used cross-border attacks to demonstrate their militancy and as a means of derailing the PLO's diplomatic moves. Fateh and the DFLP used similar attacks to advertise their continued commitment to armed struggle, and as a means of

demonstrating the need to include the PLO in any steps towards a regional settlement. Even if it had wished to, no one guerrilla group could restrict its operations without damage to its Palestinian popular support. Indeed, the fact that most Palestinians in Lebanon originated from within the borders of pre-1967 Israel, and were consequently less likely to compromise on issues of militancy and the maximalist goal of liberating all Palestine, made the pressure for continued cross-border operations all the more intense.⁴⁹

Among the results of this was increased friction between the guerrillas on the one hand, and southern villagers and the Lebanese authorities on the other. March and August 1974 both saw shooting incidents between *fida'iyyin* and police. In Sidon an armed guerrilla protest sparked by the latter was broken up by PASC. August also saw a protest by the population of the southern village of Rashaya against Israeli attacks, to which the PLO responded by withdrawing guerilla units from the immediate area. A second demonstration occurred in the village of Blida two months later. There were clashes between the PFLP and Lebanese Army on October 16, and again (with PFLP and ALF) on January 18, escalating into a rocket attack against the Lebanese military barracks in Tyre on January 20. A PLO statement condemned this latter incident in unusually strong language as "a premeditated and reckless act by irresponsible members of the PFLP," and vowed to "strike with an iron fist and put an end to such acts which only serve the enemy." The PLO's regret was reemphasized a few days later, in a meeting between 'Arafat and Prime Minister al-Sulh. Needless to say, such events, combined with Israeli destruction in the south, intensified rightist criticism of the Palestinian armed presence. In January, Jumayyil called for an end to the "anarchy" within the Palestinian movement. One month later he submitted a memorandum to the President requesting a referendum on the Cairo Agreement which, he claimed, most Lebanese wished to see ended.⁵⁰

The Road to Civil War

Within Lebanon, the domestic economic and political crisis continued unabated. Early in 1976 a series of events in Sidon primed an already explosive situation still further.

On February 26 local fishermen held a rally in the port city to protest the government's decision to grant an extensive fishing concession to the newly-formed "Protein Company." The company, headed by Camille Chamoun, planned to undertake extensive mechanized offshore fishing operations, and was seen by local inshore fishermen as a serious threat to their livelihood. Soon after the rally began, however, the demonstrators were confronted by units of the Lebanese Army. Shots rang out: Ma'ruf Sa'd, former Sidon Deputy and leader of the local Popular Nasirite Organization, was fatally wounded at the head of the protesters. The security forces were blamed.

The shooting (and Sa'd's death from his wounds March 6) sparked almost two weeks of intermittent rioting in which dozens were killed. In

Sidon local militiamen and anti-government demonstrators clashed with the army amidst persistent reports that Palestinian guerrillas from local refugee camps had intervened in support of their National Movement allies.

Events in Sidon rapidly assumed the scale of a national political crisis. The National Movement and its supporters saw in the city the brutal suppression of legitimate protest on behalf of the status quo. It demanded the resignation of General Ghanim, and pressed its calls for fundamental changes to the Lebanese system. These calls were echoed by members of the traditional Muslim elite, and by the *Tahaluf* which submitted a reform plan of its own which would have curtailed the power of the presidency and altered the structure of the Army. The Phalange and LNP, on the other hand, saw in the same events in Sidon proof positive of leftist subversion and Palestinian interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. The two parties were soon organizing rallies of up to 35,000 supporters to defend "their" army against charges of bias and brutality. The stage was set for a devastating conflict—civil and regional—in Lebanon. The curtain would rise a few weeks later.

The Lebanese Civil War

(1975-76)

The more than five years immediately following the Cairo Agreement had clearly indicated the serious challenges confronted by the PLO in Lebanon. Internal and external alliances, guerrilla self-restraint and communication with the authorities and Lebanese conservatives had, it was true, enabled the PLO to maintain the freedom of action it had first won in 1969. The first two of these strategies, coupled with the military defense of refugee camps and *fida'iyyin* positions, had also enabled the Palestinian movement to emerge intact from its May 1973 conflict with the Lebanese Army. Yet none of this had really aborted the growing challenges posed to the PLO by either Israel or by the Palestinians' Lebanese opponents.

Moreover, PLO policy itself was beset by increasingly serious contradictions. Caught up in both the polemics and dynamics of broader issues of Palestinian politics, the PLO's strategy of restraint was imperfectly applied at best. Despite reiteration of the strategy in the Milkart Protocols, restrictions on *fida'iyyin* activities were honored as often in the breach as the observance. The PLO's strategy of communication had faded in the wake of the May 1973 crisis as political polarization in Lebanon made dialogue ever less fruitful. Growing levels of inter-Arab conflict aggravated the Lebanese situation and complicated the PLO's external alliances. The PLO's internal alliance with the Lebanese National Movement remained strong, but at the cost of further alienating the Lebanese right. Finally, the PLO's adoption of a strategy of defense had a similar effect. Military preparations made by the PLO to assure the safety of the refugee camps and deter further attacks upon them enhanced the Palestinians' immediate security, but at the cost of stoking the already potent powderkeg of Lebanese domestic politics.

In fact, the spark which was to ignite Lebanon's explosive and polarized situation would come a scant seven weeks after the first clashes at Sidon. On 13 April 1975, an altercation between a *fida'i* motorist and Phalangist militiamen in the predominately Christian 'Ayn al-Rummana district of Beirut was followed by an attack by unknown gunmen on a local church in which Pierre al-Jumayyil was attending services. Jumayyil's bodyguard and

two other Phalangists were killed in the exchange of gunfire. A short while later a bus returning from a guerrilla rally at Tall al-Za'tar passed through 'Ayn al-Rummana on its way to the Sabra refugee camp. Phalangists ambushed the bus, killing twenty-seven of its Palestinian and Lebanese passengers and wounding nineteen others.¹ As news of the attack spread through the capital, fighting erupted between the Phalange on the one hand and the *fida'iyyin* and their National Movement supporters on the other—marking the start of what was to become the Lebanese civil war.²

The Opening Rounds, April-December 1975

As the number of casualties produced by the fighting climbed to more than three hundred in the next three days, the PLO's Lebanese allies rapidly moved to its support. On April 15 the National Movement leadership met in an emergency session and endorsed a 10-point statement drawn up by Junblat which placed full blame for the incidents on the Phalange. It further called for the disbandment of the party, and punishment of those of its members responsible for the 'Ayn al-Rummana attack. These demands were later endorsed by the Arab Front for Participating in the Palestinian Revolution (and hence by the PLO) on April 26, which added to them a call for a political boycott of the *Kata'ib* throughout the Arab world. The Phalange responded by denying that it harbored any hostility towards the Palestinian movement, asserting instead that it was fighting leftist subversion, a "small and corrupt group that is supported by foreign Arab or international organizations... [and] entrusted with a sabotage mission."³

Despite its Palestinian beginnings, the military and political crisis which developed in the aftermath of the 'Ayn al-Rummana attack soon assumed a predominately Lebanese character as the country's socio-economic and political contradictions made themselves felt. Junblat's call for the isolation and proscription of the Phalange was a catalyst for this, with his declaration of a political boycott against the *Kata'ib* having the effect of provoking a major cabinet crisis. On May 7 two Phalange and three LNP ministers resigned. One week later Prime Minister al-Sulh tendered his resignation, complaining of deliberate Phalangist provocations. Franjiyya responded with the appointment of a military government headed by a Sunni reserve army general, Brigadier Nur al-Din Rifa'i. For the National Movement a military government was anathema. The PLO was unhappy too, as was Syria. The traditional Sunni political leadership saw the move as a direct challenge to their position and power. Not surprisingly, the Rifa'i cabinet collapsed within three days. Veteran politician Rashid Karami was called in to form a replacement. After weeks of difficult negotiations this was finally achieved by July 1.

Karami avoided the thorny question of the boycott by including Camille Chamoun in his new government (as Minister of the Interior), but not representatives of the Phalange or Junblat's parliamentary bloc. Excluded from power, the National Movement leader unveiled a new five-point program of social and political reforms in July. Subsequently adopted by

the National Movement as a whole, the program called for the complete deconfessionalization of the Lebanese system.

Throughout this process, political developments had been punctuated by bouts of intermittent fighting. A ceasefire concluded April 16 gradually brought an end to the first wave of clashes that month, only to have them reignite in late May in fighting between rightist forces in al-Dikwana and the Palestinians of Tall al-Za'tar, and then between National Movement forces in Beirut's (largely Shi'i) Shiyah quarter and opposing militias in neighboring 'Ayn al-Rummana. After this round came a lull of several weeks, after which time small incidents sparked clashes around Zahla in late August, followed by heavy fighting in 'Akkar and around Tripoli and Zgharta in the north of the country. The latter—in the home districts of the Prime Minister and President respectively—soon led to calls from Franjiyya and Chamoun for army intervention, a move Karami opposed while Ghanim remained army commander. Franjiyya finally replaced Ghanim with General Hanna Sa'id, and on September 11 the army moved to occupy positions between the combatants in the north.

The use of the army was bitterly opposed by the Lebanese National Movement, which had little confidence in its impartiality. Junblat called, and then called off, a general strike in protest. The PLO, while accepting army intervention in Tripoli, was equally opposed to its intervention in Beirut. 'Arafat reportedly told Lebanese government leaders that such intervention would lead to clashes between the armed forces and some Palestinian groups.⁴ Karami also opposed army deployment in the capital.

The Phalange, on the other hand, pressed hard to have the military's role expanded. When political pressure failed, other steps were taken to force Karami's hand. Two days after renewed clashes had erupted in the Shiyah-'Ayn al-Rummana area on September 15, Phalange artillery began a severe bombardment of the commercial areas of downtown Beirut. The pace of the fighting escalated throughout the capital.

Amid repeated ceasefires which slowed but did not halt the shooting, a National Dialogue Committee was formed September 25 to seek ways of ending the strife. However the Committee, consisting of twenty leading Lebanese political figures (including Junblat, Jumayyil, Salam, Chamoun and Eddé), made little progress. Instead, Lebanon was treated to yet another resurgence of combat, first in Beirut and then in Zahla to the east and Damur to the south. A ceasefire and formation on November 3 of a Higher Coordinating Committee to oversee it brought a few weeks of relative calm. But this was shattered in December when the massacre of two hundred Muslim civilians ("Black Saturday") provoked a generally successful Beirut counter offensive by National Movement forces.

Regional Dimensions of the Conflict

While internal contradictions provided the major motive force for the continuing crisis in Lebanon, the civil war could not be isolated either from the Palestinian presence, or from regional developments. With the

conclusion of the Sinai II disengagement treaty between Israel and Egypt in September 1975, inter-Arab tensions aggravated the Lebanese situation. Egyptian-Syrian estrangement and Egyptian-PLO hostility arising from the accord led Cairo to extend political and military support to the rightist parties during the first phase of the civil war. Other conservative Arab regimes, notably Jordan and Saudi Arabia, provided similar aid in an effort to contain what they saw as Palestinian and Lebanese radicalism. Iraq and Libya granted support to the PLO and Lebanese leftist parties, with emphasis on the organizations of the Rejection Front and their Lebanese allies.

An even more important actor on the side of the PLO and National Movement at this stage was Syria, whose interest in Lebanese developments was considerable. Syria had special historical ties with Lebanon, and ideologically was pledged to promote the Arab nationalist cause and the Palestinian liberation struggle. Moreover, Lebanon was (and is) of very grave strategic importance to Syria, representing, via the Bīqā' Valley, a gateway to Damascus. A hostile, or Israeli-dominated Lebanon would be a disaster. A neutralist Lebanon, or one which suppressed Palestinian guerrilla activity, would increase the pressure on the Syrian front. A chaotic or revolutionary Lebanon would be a constant source of instability, an unreliable ally, and a constant invitation to Israeli intervention. The possibility of Lebanon's partition into conservative/pro-Israeli/Christian and radical/nationalist/Muslim statelets threatened the worst of all cases. If Syria had an important interest in promoting its friends within the Lebanese National Movement and undermining the position of the (anti-Syrian) Lebanese right, it had an even greater interest in dampening the conflict and preserving stability on its western border. Indeed, Damascus and its allies saw in the growing turmoil in Lebanon a deliberate attempt to sap its energies and weaken Syria's strategic position. Zuhayr Muhsin of al-Sa'iqa, for example, linked Lebanese developments to the recent conclusion of the Sinai II disengagement agreement:

What is happening in Lebanon today is closely and directly linked to what is happening in the Sinai: there can be no doubt that, but for the Sinai agreement, the situation would not have exploded in Lebanon. The proof is that the incidents in Lebanon certainly started to escalate with the stepping up of Kissinger's visits to the Middle East. The intention was that the incidents should act as a cover for the agreement, and so that the Arab and Palestinian masses should be unable to express their rejection of the agreement. They were also intended to distract the attention of Syria and the PLO from the steps that were being taken towards the conclusion of the Sinai agreement.⁵

Consequently, Damascus extended material support to the PLO and some National Movement organizations after April 1975, and initiated a major political initiative to contain the conflict. Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam and National Security Director and Air Force commander Naji Jamil traveled to Beirut on May 24, at which time they played a significant role in resolving the Lebanese cabinet crisis. Khaddam visited again in late June (when he played a major part in the formation of

Karami's cabinet), and in September (when he and Syrian Chief-of-Staff Hikmat Shihabi helped to achieve a ceasefire and the formation of the National Dialogue Committee).⁶

For the Palestinian leadership, the fighting in Lebanon also produced fears that a conspiracy was being hatched, that a trap was in the making. In this view, 'Ayn al-Rummana had marked the beginning of an attempt to (at minimum) divert the Palestinian resistance into side battles away from its liberation struggle, (probably) related to the concurrent diplomatic machinations of Henry Kissinger, and (at worst) part of a complex plot to liquidate the Palestinian movement altogether with the aid of the Lebanese rightist parties. The provocative nature of the 'Ayn al-Rummana attack, the escalatory nature of subsequent Phalangist actions, and the support the rightist parties were receiving from the conservative Arab states, the US, and Israel all seemed to confirm the analysis.⁷

While in their alarm Palestinian leaders may have exaggerated the conspiratorial nature of the Lebanese conflict, there could be no question that Israel had a major interest in events to the north. Fighting in Lebanon increasingly diverted Syrian and PLO attention away from confrontation ~~with~~ Israel. The sectarian dimension of the conflict also discredited the PLO's cherished notion of a non-sectarian Palestine, and provided an opening for the establishment of important Israeli contacts with the major Lebanese Christian parties. With so much to gain and little to lose, Israeli intervention in Lebanon expanded both quantitatively and qualitatively. Four major attacks were launched in south Lebanon in the latter half of 1975, despite a reduction in the number of Palestinian cross-border raids as the civil war progressed. Israeli violations of Lebanese territory rose to an average rate of 17 incidents per day (January-August 1975). At this time too, Israel began to establish covert links with, and provide covert assistance to, the PLO's Lebanese opponents—first Chamoun and the LNP, and later the Phalange and other rightist parties.⁸

Palestinian Responses

On the principle of avoiding entrapment, all major Palestinian organizations could agree: ~~none viewed with relish the possibility of becoming entangled in a Lebanese civil war.~~ There was clear agreement too on defending the Palestinian position in Lebanon, both in terms of the physical security of the camps and the maintenance of the PLO's acquired Cairo Agreement rights; ~~and on maintaining ties to the Lebanese National Movement so as to facilitate such aims.~~ But beyond this, substantial differences emerged among the various Palestinian movements as to the weight that should be placed on these various elements, and how overall security might best be achieved. Could (and should) the PLO respond to what appeared to be blatant provocations without escalating the situation to a dangerous level? Conversely, might not PLO self-restraint be viewed as weakness, and hence invite even greater challenges to the Palestinian presence? How could the Palestinians disentangle themselves on the one

hand, and maintain their strategic alliance with the National Movement on the other? The choices were difficult ones.

For the bulk of the Fateh leadership, the answer seemed to be a combination of several policies: communication and dialogue with relevant Lebanese parties, in the hope of thereby allaying Phalangist fears of a "Palestinian threat"; restraint of (potentially provocative) Palestinian actions and reactions, so as to achieve a de-escalation of both the political and military dimensions of the conflict; continued coordination with the PLO's major external allies, especially Syria; and military defense of Palestinian positions. At the same time the PLO maintained what had become since 1969 the most important aspect of its Lebanese policy: its strategic internal alliance with Junblat and the Lebanese National Movement.

The extent and rationale of the first two elements of Palestinian policy were clearly elucidated by Fateh's Nabil Sha'th early in the civil war:

Among the most prominent lessons of the recent events is the fact that we have discovered that there is a kind of "estrangement" between many Lebanese and Palestinians. There are large groups that do not know the truth about the problems of the Palestinians. There is a large number of Palestinians who are in need of a deeper knowledge of the Lebanese reality. The Palestinian revolution recognizes that it exists for all the Lebanese and not for a group of them. It has to operate on this basis.

A "serious candid dialogue with the different parties in Lebanon"—not simply the Islamic and progressive parties—was thus necessary. Sha'th went on to note that the Palestinian movement recognized its responsibility in "controlling the behavior and conduct of its members... [and of] Palestinians who are under its protection on Lebanese territory," and he promised that the PLO would "intensify our measures against violators and saboteurs who exploit the revolution for their own ends." By the same token, however, the PLO's Lebanese critics had to accept the reality of the Palestinian presence and the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle being waged in and from Lebanon.⁹

To this end, Salah Khalaf and Nimr Salih (Abu Salih) of the Fateh Central Committee met with then Prime Minister al-Sulh a few days after the 'Ayn al-Rummana attack to discuss how escalation might best be avoided. The meeting ended with an agreement between the two sides on joint action by PASC and the Lebanese security forces to prevent "provocative acts by extremists."¹⁰ In fact, PASC patrols had already been bolstered for precisely this purpose. In early May, a second meeting between a PLO delegation (Khalaf, Muhsin, Hawatima) and al-Sulh resulted in the formation of a joint Lebanese-Palestinian committee to negotiate outstanding matters of concern. In June, the PLO announced the formation of a special tribunal to deal with violations of guerrilla discipline. The PLO was an active participant in the various ceasefire negotiations which accompanied each bout of fighting, and was formally represented on the Higher Coordinating Committee. In some cases—notably during the fighting in the north in the fall—Fateh, Sa'iqa, and PLA troops took an active part in policing whatever agreements were concluded.¹¹

During this phase of the civil war the PLO leadership also used its remaining lines of communication to the Maronite leadership in an attempt to (in Khalaf's words) "exorcise the demons of the Lebanese right" regarding the Palestinian presence. Open negotiations with the major rightist party, the Phalange, were all but impossible at this stage given the PLO's endorsement of Junblat's call for the party's proscription and grass-roots anger over the 'Ayn al-Rummana attack within the PLO and LNM.¹² It was still possible to hold discussions with others, however, and 'Arafat and Khalaf met with Camille Chamoun and with Maronite religious leaders several times in the spring and summer of 1975.

Palestinian leaders also held a long meeting with President Franjiyya on June 23. According to Khalaf's account of events, Franjiyya began the meeting by criticizing the Palestinian movement for "intolerable behavior" in Lebanon, for allying itself with the Lebanese left, and for alienating a significant portion of Lebanese opinion by supporting Junblat's call for a boycott of the Phalange. To this the PLO delegation responded as best it could, apologizing for the "reprehensible" activities of some individual Palestinian elements, and emphasizing that the Palestinians "had just as much at stake as the Lebanese themselves in the well-being of Lebanon and the harmonious coexistence of Palestinians and Lebanese." The two sides agreed to establish joint military committees to halt the fighting, and to oppose external Arab attempts to mediate the conflict. The PLO undertook to "use its influence to tone down the National Movement and encourage it to reduce its pressure against the Phalangist party." Finally, 'Arafat undertook to deliver an address to the Lebanese people outlining the PLO's commitment "not to jeopardize the confessional, political, or economic structures of Lebanon."¹³

On June 29 'Arafat's statement was broadcast on Lebanese radio and television. At its core was a strong assertion of the principle of Palestinian non-interference in Lebanese internal affairs:

The Palestinian resistance in Lebanon is not a political clique affiliated to any specific quarter, nor does it wish to be.

The Palestinian resistance is not a party to the internal affairs of Lebanon, nor does it wish to be so.

The Palestinian resistance in Lebanon is neither a confessional group nor does it wish to be so.

The stability of Lebanon is the stability of the Palestinian revolution.¹⁴

Similar themes were evident in a memorandum submitted by the PLO Executive Committee to the National Dialogue Committee on October 14. In it the Palestinian leadership made note of five points which, in its view, were "essential for the maintenance of Lebanese-Palestinian fraternal relations and for ensuring the solutions of the problems which beset them." These were: first, rejection of "any country as a substitute for the occupied Palestinian homeland," (i.e., no permanent Palestinian settlement in Lebanon, a perennial fear of the Christian right); second, rejection of "any nationality or political identity that may be offered as a substitute for their Palestinian nationality"; third, reaffirmation of the PLO's "concern for the

security, stability and sovereignty of Lebanon, for its territorial integrity and the unity of its people, with all that this involves in the way of the state's right to exercise its authority over all parts of Lebanon"; fourth, reaffirmation of "the agreements concluded between the Lebanese state and the Palestine Liberation Organization as being the formula that governs Lebanese-Palestinian relations and the basis for resolving any problems or complications"; and fifth, support for a "commitment of all parties to rule out the use of force as a means of dealing with Lebanese-Palestinian relations."¹⁵

At this point, PLO efforts to stabilize the Lebanese situation ran parallel to those of Syria—a situation evident in the participation of al-Sa'iqa in policing the ceasefires, and Zuhayr Muhsin's prominence in joint Palestinian-Lebanese discussions. Since the PLO and Syria both shared a further common desire to prevent the "Arabization" of the civil war, the two jointly boycotted an Arab League conference called to discuss Lebanon in October. Syria also provided the Palestinians with material assistance, including arms and ammunition.

The PLO's external alliance thus also bolstered its ability to pursue a policy of defense. The need for such a posture was underlined both by the scale of the civil war and by the threats made against the Palestinians by some rightist militia commanders. Heavy weapons and fighters were deployed in defense of the camps. In his capacity as head of the PLO Military Department, Zuhayr Muhsin vowed that the PLO would "deal a double blow" against anyone who attacked it. At the same time, however, Fateh and Sa'iqa generally refrained from committing their large military forces to the fighting, other than to protect Palestinian positions or rescue endangered National Movement units. According to Muhsin, "[Palestinian forces] have not yet thrown their main strength into these engagements," although "this does not mean... that they have not given some assistance to their supporters when they have been defending themselves." He warned that were the Palestinians to throw their full military weight into the fray, the Phalange would be finished off in twenty-four hours.¹⁶

Finally, there was the question of relations with Junblat and the LNM. As had been promised Franjiyya in June, the PLO sought to secure some political and military restraint from its National Movement allies. Indeed, many in the National Movement had seen the PLO Chairman's subsequent public statements as a partial retreat from the PLO's ties to the LNM. Further efforts to moderate LNM behavior were apparent in September, when 'Arafat played a significant role in having Junblat call off his proposed general strike. Later the Lebanese leader was to complain that the PLO (and even more so Syria) kept back National Movement arms shipments so as to lessen the level of military conflict:

Delivery of our weapons and munitions stockpiled in Syria was tightly controlled and we were systematically denied access to heavy weapons, thereby making us dependent upon the Palestinians who, in turn, acted in concert with the Syrians. Furthermore, the weapons we were supposed to receive were often requisitioned by our Palestinian friends and allies in Fateh while in transit

through Lebanon. These "confiscations" were always carried out secretly and without warning. Each time the theft was revealed, a thousand excuses were proffered, but the shipments never arrived for all that, or at least never arrived intact. There was a sort of tacit understanding between the Syrian *Ba'ith*, certain senior Palestinian leaders, and perhaps some others: firstly, never to allow the [PSP] to become a real military force and an independent or determinant element in the war; secondly, never to supply the parties allied to us, especially the left[ist] parties, with sufficient weapons to become militarily effective.¹⁷

Yet the PLO's internal alliance with the National Movement *did* continue, and despite Junblat's comments, the PLO *did* supplement its political support and coordination with some military assistance. In keeping with the PLO's attempts to quiet the Lebanese conflict, such assistance was kept as discreet as conditions allowed. Considerable embarrassment thus arose in July when an accidental explosion revealed that Fatch was training Imam Musa Sadr's militia *Amal* in the Biqa' Valley.

Still, for the Rejection Front and the DFLP the actions of the mainstream PLO leadership were a weak response to the rightist challenge the PLO now faced. In their view, the Palestinians and the Lebanese National Movement were fighting the same struggle, against imperialism and reaction. This was not to say that the Palestinians should now take a leading role in the Lebanese dimension of that struggle: such responsibility lay with the Lebanese themselves. But at the same time Palestinian radicals saw little merit in arguments for a more "neutral" or "evenhanded" approach such as dialogue with the Lebanese right or 'Arafat's apparent efforts to distance himself from the LNM. The PLO and Lebanese progressive parties were fighting in the same trench, and just as the LNM had supported the PLO in its clashes with the Lebanese Army in 1969, 1973, and now in 1975, so too the PLO should stand behind the LNM in its clashes with the Phalange and its allies. According to George Habash:

We in the PFLP maintain that in Lebanon the progressive and patriotic forces must take their proper position in the battle against reactionaries and imperialism. They must play the leading role, and in turn we view ourselves as a supportive element, as a force allied to the progressive forces and not the opposite.

Furthermore, we do not occupy a position of neutrality as regards the ongoing struggle in Lebanon, a situation which the reactionaries desire.... In this context we cannot remain neutral, for we are with the deprived and the oppressed because they are our allies, whereas the [ruling] class is not only against us but in fact is party to schemes that aim at our liquidation....¹⁸

Such an ideological argument for a more active PLO-LNM alliance and a more aggressive Palestinian politico-military response to the Phalange was often complemented by a practical one, based on an analysis of Phalangist objectives. The Phalange, it was argued, had started the conflict and would continue it until defeated. Since confrontation seemed inevitable, was it not best to adopt a policy of active defense, striking at the rightist militias before they could grow further in strength and inflict ever greater numbers of Palestinian casualties? In the words of one DFLP Politburo member:

[The conflict] was started by the Phalangists themselves, and the main objective, the main slogan of the Phalangist militias was the demand to throw out the Palestinians. The civil war in Lebanon certainly had its own internal Lebanese aims, but this war started with an offensive by the right wing mainly against the Palestinian resistance. The right wing viewed the Palestinian presence as one of the main factors that shifted the balance of forces in the Lebanese formula, strengthening the position of the national and Islamic forces. That is why their main assault was against the Palestinians at that time....

In order to defend the Palestinian refugee camps you had to, one way or another, smash the military power of the right wing. In order to do that, you had to fight alongside the National Movement...¹⁹

Hence Nayif Hawatima's criticism of Fateh's military policies:

We found ourselves with two methods of defeating [the second round of fighting in May]. The course of "negative defense" prevailed and this put all the forces of the revolution in positions of limited defense while the Phalangists and their partners remained, especially after some of the state's forces intervened on the side of the Phalangists, in offensive positions which confused the revolution politically and militarily. This is why the popular calls emanated in most of the positions demanding that offensive attack be repelled and that the revolution not be content with negative defense.

The domination of this course... permitted the continuation of the aggression for a longer time, caused greater and bigger losses and victims, and exposed the revolution to the likelihood of slipping into dangerous political pitfalls which the hostile forces often attempted to exploit.²⁰

For their part, the groups of the Rejection Front announced from the outset that they would not be bound by the PLO's policy of self-restraint. Instead, they often complained of what they saw as only limited PLO support for the National Movement. In June the PFLP criticized 'Arafat's statement to the Lebanese people. Rejectionist groups participated in the fighting around Tripoli in September, and were by their own admission "prominent at both the military and political levels" during the later fighting in central Beirut. The Rejection Front also voiced criticism of PLO mediation and ceasefire efforts, arguing that such attempts to "achieve a tribal truce between certain parties of the nationalist movement and the fascist right in Lebanon" violated the PLO's alliance with the LNM and would "benefit only the rightist parties."²¹

Such policy differences, combined with general problems of Palestinian disunity, adversely affected the degree of command and control exercised by the official PLO leadership. This in turn weakened the effectiveness of the PLO's policy of restraint and undermined the credibility of its attempts at dialogue with the opposition. But it is possible to exaggerate this effect, and to overlook those practical considerations which increasingly mitigated the differences between Palestinian organizations. Most important of all, it was Fateh (supported by al-Sa'iqa) that controlled by far the largest portion of Palestinian forces, the Rejection Front notwithstanding. As the mainstream Fateh/PLO leadership used its superior weight to reduce uncontrolled and provocative behavior, the prominence of Palestinian rejectionist forces diminished. Fateh/PLO policy thus prevailed, as Nayif

Hawatima confirmed. Growing inter-Palestinian cooperation spurred by the Phalangist challenge reinforced this. And eventually, Phalangist efforts to escalate the fighting gradually inclined the Fateh leadership to the view that a more active military policy might be necessary, narrowing the differences between it and the DFLP or Rejection Front. This was particularly the case after the Palestinian refugee camps in (predominately Christian) East Beirut—Tall al-Za'tar, Jisr al-Basha, and Dubaya—came under periodic shelling from rightist forces. Both Fateh and Sa'iq'a forces provided major support to LNM forces fighting in downtown Beirut after September. In late December a further increase in PLO military participation in the war was evident when elements of Fateh's Syrian-based Yarmuk brigade entered the Bika' to aid in the fighting around Zahla.

The year came to a close with several troubling harbingers for the PLO and its Lebanese policy. There were signs of a continued rightist military build-up, with a ship-load of arms reportedly arriving for the LNP and Phalange at the port of Junya in early November. On November 6 the militant Maronite Monastic Orders released a long statement on the crisis bitterly critical of the Palestinian movement:

[The Palestinian resistance] interfere in Lebanese politics, in alliance with such groups as it believes can be of advantage to it, and openly try to bring them to power by calling upon them to cause disturbances even such as involve the use of arms, using external pressure on the Lebanese state through certain Arab countries when it seems to be in its interest to extract from the Lebanese authorities such privileges as have not been extracted before. The resistance also believes itself entitled to call openly upon the Lebanese to deny their political system, impeding the normal course of the constitutional and administrative institutions (the army, for example) by openly appealing to one or other of the Arab countries, which then pours in its money to direct the information media (and the press in particular) as it wishes, and, indeed, to mold them and to undermine their national role so as to suppress the expression of any opinion favorable to Lebanon in its own interest, providing a base and a refuge for international terrorism which can only be injurious to Lebanon.²²

In December, as Maronite leaders met to coordinate strategy, Camille Chamoun and others refused to hold any future meetings with 'Arafat and the PLO.

Escalation, January 1976

On 5 January 1976, rightist forces launched sieges of the Tall al-Za'tar and Jisr al-Basha refugee camps in East Beirut. On January 12 the Dubaya refugee camp northeast of the city was attacked and overrun, after a fierce battle with its Palestinian (and largely Christian) defenders. The following day, a summit meeting of Maronite leaders declared that the current conflict was between "the Lebanese, especially the Christians, and the Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslim, who have broken the agreements in force in a dishonorable manner and allied themselves with leftist movements, hiding behind the Muslims."²³ The major Maronite-rightist groups (the Phalange,

LNP, the Maronite Monastic Orders, the Guardians of the Cedars, and *al-Tanzim*) formally allied themselves under the banner of the "Front of Freedom and Man in Lebanon," or the Lebanese Front (LF).

In response to this the PLO frantically signaled that it would not long tolerate attacks on Palestinian camps and positions. Senior PLO/Fatch military commander Colonel Sa'd Sayil (Abu Walid) warned publicly:

We will absolutely not allow the siege to go on, whatever the cost. Our armed forces are ready at any time to break the siege. But out of a desire to calm down the situation, we are giving the opportunity to the wise people and extremists in this country to reconsider their positions. This will be the last chance given to them by the revolution and the Lebanese nationalist movement.

Similarly *Voice of Palestine* radio declared that "the Palestinian command cannot maintain the policy of restraint much longer at a time when the Palestinian-Lebanese people are facing shelling and destruction in many parts of Beirut and other towns."²⁴ The sieges, however, continued.

This in turn brought large-scale Palestinian involvement in the civil war. Previously withheld Fatch and Sa'iqa forces were committed to battle in Beirut, the Bika', and in a counter-offensive against the predominately Christian town of Damur astride the strategic Beirut-Sidon road. With much of the PLO's military force still deployed in south Lebanon, however, even this was insufficient to reverse the situation. On January 19 the Lebanese Front overran and leveled Beirut's Palestinian-protected al-Karantina and al-Maslakh slum districts, killing one thousand of their Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim inhabitants in the process and evicting a further twenty thousand others. Following a meeting at the Sunni Mufti's home attended by Junblat and other LNM and Muslim leaders, an urgent appeal for assistance was dispatched to Syrian President Asad.

As a result, the units of the Yarmuk brigade, and PLA's Hittin and al-Qadisiyya brigades—perhaps three thousand troops in all—entered Lebanon from Syria. While the PLA fought near Zahla and established control over much of the Bika' Valley and Beirut-Damascus highway, PLO forces from the south were redeployed in support of the Damur counter-offensive. The town fell on January 20. Some five hundred of its inhabitants were killed and a further seven thousand expelled by the victorious but embittered PLO and LNM fighters, much to the displeasure of their respective leaderships.

The Palestinian military offensive was intended to lessen pressure on the East Beirut camps, avert the encirclement of West Beirut, maintain lines of communication to positions in the south, and punish the Lebanese Front for its military escalation of the conflict. And it was successful in achieving most of these aims. On January 22 the rightist parties agreed to a Syrian-sponsored ceasefire. A Higher Military Committee (including both Zuhayr Muhsin and Sa'd Sayil as members) was established to oversee it.

The military strength of the PLO, its internal alliance with the Lebanese National Movement, and external support from some Arab states had all proven crucial to the PLO.²⁵ Calls for assistance had brought messages of

support from most Arab regimes. Syria was particularly important in this regard, ordering the transfer of Syrian-controlled PLA troops to Lebanon and providing arms, ammunition, and other military aid. Egypt too had permitted the transfer of elements of the PLA 'Ayn Jalut Brigade to Lebanon in an effort to regain some Palestinian favor in the aftermath of Sinai II. But this had been achieved at the cost of militarizing and Arabizing the conflict, something which the PLO leadership had hoped to avoid. Syria had emerged from the January fighting in a major position in Lebanon, both diplomatically and by virtue of its influence over Sa'iqa and the Syrian-based Yarmuk and PLA Hittin and al-Qadisiyya brigades. Appalled by "Black Saturday" and other atrocities against Muslims, Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab countries shifted their support to the traditional Sunni elite. Finally, the scope and depth of Israeli involvement in Lebanon expanded too. In addition to continuing military action in the south, Israel responded to the surge of armed conflict in January by initiating large-scale military aid (arms, ammunition and training) to the rightist parties (especially the LNP) early in the new year.

Towards Intervention, February-May 1976

The January 22 ceasefire was quickly followed by two other important developments. The first of these came on February 14, when President Franjiyya unveiled a Syrian-engineered 17-point proposal for political reforms for the country. Among its major provisions, the "Constitutional Document" called for equal Christian and Muslim representation in the Chamber of Deputies; selection of the Prime Minister by parliament (rather than by the President); changes in the naturalization law; an end to the distribution of lower-level civil service positions on a sectarian basis; and a declaration of Lebanon's status as a "sovereign Arab state." The Constitutional Document would not have altered the National Pact assignment of the offices of President, Prime Minister, and parliamentary Speaker to a Maronite, Sunni, and Shi'a respectively. On the contrary, this practice would now be enshrined in writing.²⁶

The response of Lebanon's political leaders to the initiative was cautious. Qualified endorsement was heard from Jumayyil, Chamoun, Karami, and Kamal As'ad. Eddé and Salam were critical. So too was Sadr, who nonetheless muted his comments in deference to Syria, which was providing substantial material support for his organization. Kamal Junblat and the PSP, in a memorandum issued February 24, rejected most of the Constitutional Document proposals.

The second important development of the new year was the collapse of the Lebanese Army. In the course of the battle for Damur and nearby Sa'diyyat (home of Camille Chamoun) in January, the Lebanese Army and airforce had been ordered to assist the town's defenders. In Beirut, Interior Minister Chamoun had ordered the Internal Security Forces to aid in the siege of Palestinian refugee camps. Such partisan intervention on the side of the Lebanese Front soon sparked the beginnings of a confessional-political

split in the ranks of the armed forces. By mid-February, some nine hundred Muslim soldiers, led by Lt. Ahmad al-Khatib, had broken away to form the "Lebanese Arab Army" (LAA) in the Bīqā'. In an attempt to halt the process, army commander Hanna Sa'id backed a proposal (put forward March 10 by Colonel George Ghurayib, the Christian commander of the Rayaḡ air force base in the Bīqā') that Khatib and his men be granted amnesty. The suggestion was vehemently rejected by Franjiyya. The President, supported by rightist officers, instead condemned Khatib as a traitor and demanded that he and the members of the LAA be punished. Franjiyya's obstinacy provoked a coup attempt on March 11 by Brigadier 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Ahdab, the Beirut barracks commander. Broadcasting on Lebanese radio and television—but with little military force to back his demands—Ahdab placed the blame for the worsening political climate in the country on Franjiyya and demanded his resignation.²⁷

Franjiyya rejected the demand, and there was little that the "television coup" could do to force him. Still, Ahdab's move galvanized political opposition to the President. Soon sixty-eight of the ninety-nine members of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies (including Junblat, Salam, Karami, and Eddé) had signed a petition demanding that Franjiyya go. The Lebanese Arab Army grew further in strength, to an estimated three thousand soldiers by mid-March. Still the President refused to step down.

It was at this point, amidst political deadlock and apparently endless clashes in Beirut, that the National Movement took what was to prove a momentous decision to force a political settlement through military means. On March 15 LNM and LAA forces attempted to advance on the presidential palace at Ba'abda. Although they failed to reach their objective, the move provoked a flurry of political activity, culminating in a Syrian-engineered amendment to the Lebanese constitution to allow early (and face-saving) presidential elections. It was too little, too late in Junblat's eyes. Instead, the time had come to "cut the Gordian knot and put an end to the dirty trench warfare in Beirut." A more aggressive strategy, he later explained, was "forced" on the National Movement. "As the war dragged on it became imperative to take action," and thus "the racist fascism of the Phalange, of Chamoun and company, first had to be broken militarily if one was to later deal with it politically and, eventually, heal it psychologically."²⁸ On March 21 he announced the beginnings of a "total and irreversible" offensive against the Lebanese Front. National Movement, Lebanese Arab Army, and Palestinian forces were launched against rightist positions in central Beirut and, more significantly, against the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon. As Franjiyya was forced from the presidential palace at Ba'abda by heavy shelling, PLO and LNM militias advanced on 'Ayn Tura, Bayt Mari, and other objectives in the upper Metn.

Troubles with Syria: The Mountain Offensive

The launching of the Mountain offensive hastened what had already become a serious deterioration of relations between Junblat and Damascus.

The Syrians resented Junblat's rejection of the Constitutional Document, particularly since he had raised few of his later objections during prior consultations. They were also angered by his support for the Lebanese Arab Army, the formation of which they saw as a serious blow to their attempts to stabilize the Lebanese situation. In this context, the Mountain offensive constituted a final straw of sorts. Syria, together with *Ba'th* Party Organization in Lebanon and Sa'iqa within the PLO, strongly condemned the National Movement offensive. Syrian-controlled Sa'iqa and PLA troops (many of them disguised Syrian regulars) were deployed in defense of the Lebanese Parliament and Presidential palace, where they were responsible for blocking the advance of LAA-National Movement forces. Armed clashes between Sa'iqa and National Movement forces erupted as both Khaddam and Zuhayr Muhsin issued unequivocal threats to occupy Junblat's military headquarters at Aley unless the offensive were stopped. Other pro-Syrian opposition groups—Kamal Shatila's Union of Working People's Forces in Beirut, Imam Musa al-Sadr's Movement of the Deprived, a portion of the SSNP, and the Kurdish "Razkari" Party—also criticized Junblat, joining the *Ba'th* Party Organization in forming their own "Front of Patriotic and National Parties." On March 28 the Syrian leadership took the decision to impose a naval blockade to prevent arms and other supplies reaching National Movement ports. On April 9 an even more ominous gesture was made as Syrian armor moved a few kilometers inside Lebanese territory, occupying the border post of al-Masna'a astride the Beirut-Damascus highway.

PLO-Syrian relations also soured during this period. Continued strong ties between the PLO and National Movement were the major reason for this, as the Palestinian leadership resisted Syrian pressure to drop their Lebanese allies. The pressure became significant after the January ceasefire and Junblat's rejection of the February 1976 Constitutional Declaration, as Khalaf later related:

Junblat thought Syria had once again abandoned the National Movement, which in his view would have been able to impose at least part of its program of institutional, economic, and social reforms if Damascus had supported the left's military strategy a little longer. President Asad, on the other hand, claimed that continued fighting would have hardened the rightist parties and brought about a disastrous foreign intervention, particularly by Israel. In short, the Palestinian Resistance was torn between the need to maintain good relations with its Syrian ally and the moral obligation to stand by the Lebanese left.²⁹

For its part the PLO leadership was irritated by its lack of control over the PLA, and by Damascus' use of al-Sa'iqa to settle political scores with the National Movement and other opponents of its policies in Lebanon. On January 31, for example, al-Sa'iqa guerrillas had attacked the offices of two Beirut newspapers, apparently in response to articles critical of Syria. Within the PLA, a long power struggle between 'Arafat (theoretical Commander-in-Chief of all PLA forces) and Syria (represented by Zuhayr Muhsin, head of the PLO Military Department, and by PLA Chief of Staff Brigadier Misbah Budayri, on loan from the Syrian army) intensified. In

March, PLA forces in the south began to harass members of the Iraqi-sponsored ALF, leading Faruq Qaddumi of the PLO Executive Committee to admit that the PLO leadership had "no control over some of these troops."³⁰

Among the particular Palestinian actions which raised Syrian ire was the PLO's support for Lieutenant Khatib and the Lebanese Arab Army. The Palestinians did, as the Syrians suspected, play a key role in the formation of the LAA (although Khalil al-Wazir was later to claim that this role was forced on PLO by the discovery of Lebanese Army operation orders calling for military action against the resistance). Bolstered by PLO forces, Khatib's group soon captured a series of Lebanese Army posts in south Lebanon and the Biqa'. Defections to the LAA also occurred at many Lebanese Army barracks. The Syrians were furious, and Hikmat Shihabi dispatched several officers to al-Wazir to demand an explanation and the withdrawal of PLO support for Khatib. The PLO, however, refused.³¹

Another area of tension was Ahdab's "television coup." Fatch security men accompanied the Brigadier to the broadcast station, fueling suspicions that the Palestinians were involved here too. The PLO denied this, suggesting the decision to provide an escort was taken on the spot by Fatch's second-ranking intelligence officer, 'Ali Hasan Salama, and did not reflect any greater role.³²

Perceived PLO support for Raymond Eddé in the Lebanese presidential elections was a further irritant. Eddé was strongly opposed to Syrian involvement in Lebanese affairs, and was the only real candidate opposing Syria's choice for the presidency, Ilyas Sarkis. The PLO, whilst not hiding its preference for Eddé, denied that it was interfering in the electoral process in any way. Indeed, 'Arafat was adamant that, far from interfering, the PLO refrained from doing so despite the fact that the Chamber of Deputies was well within its military reach. According to Salah Khalaf:

The Resistance leaders were at a loss as to what attitude to adopt. Should we prevent parliament from electing a new president, and thus come into open conflict with Syria? Or should we abandon the Lebanese left and allow Ilyas Sarkis to be elected? We were in a quandary....

The Resistance finally decided it wasn't worth it to incur the terrible wrath of Damascus, even if it were true that Eddé if elected could have ended the civil war, dismantled the partisan militias, reunited the army, and assured the unity of the country on new bases. On the other hand, as a gesture to the left the *fida'iyyin* subjected the building where the deputies met on May 8... to a heavy shelling, just enough to show their displeasure but not enough to block the election of a new president.³³

It is undeniable, however, that the PLO did support, militarily and politically, Junblat's Mountain offensive—perhaps the most provocative move of all in Syria's eyes. In Damascus, the actions of the PLO and LNM raised the specter of Lebanese partition, and possible Israeli intervention. It also highlighted the independence of both the PLO and Junblat, an independence that Syria found unnerving and potentially dangerous. In response, after January 1976 Syria shifted its support away from the PLO

and LNM, and towards Franjiyya and the Lebanese Front. Syrian military intervention, first covert, later overt, increased. Why then had the Palestinian leadership committed itself to the offensive, knowing full well the potential cost?

Essentially the PLO supported the Mountain offensive for the same reason that Junblat and the National Movement had initiated it: to break the prevailing political and military deadlock and speed a resolution of the civil war. With tens of thousands of Palestinians concentrated in refugee camps in the Beirut area—many on the front lines, and all vulnerable to shelling—the need to break the cycle of fighting in the capital was particularly acute. Moreover, the failure in early January of previous Palestinian policy based on restraint, dialogue, and limited defense forced a new strategic approach. Apart from al-Sa'iqa, some within the Palestinian leadership (notably Khalid al-Hasan of Fateh, and to a lesser extent 'Arafat himself) were opposed to such active intervention in support of Junblat, and the consequent dangers of further entanglement in Lebanese affairs and confrontation with Syria. Most felt, however, that Syria's ability to intervene against a joint PLO/LNM/LAA offensive would be limited by international disapproval—by the US and Israel, by other Arab states, and by the Soviet Union. In the absence of such intervention, joint military action by Palestinian and progressive forces would achieve a series of military victories that would force the Lebanese Front to negotiate a settlement based on reform—a settlement to which Syria would be forced to reconcile itself.³⁴

In this sense—and despite a widely reported remark by Salah Khalaf that the “road to Palestine” might pass through the Maronite center of Junya itself (later denied by him, but seized upon by the Lebanese Front and Syria as proof of aggressive Palestinian intent)—the offensive *was not* intended to result in the military conquest of all Mount Lebanon. In practice only a fraction of Fateh forces were deployed in support of the offensive, a fact that would rankle those Fateh field commanders responsible for its prosecution. The DFLP too rejected the idea that the joint offensive was designed to “liberate” Mount Lebanon:

The idea was not to defeat the right-wing militias completely... We did not have the dream to control Junya, this was not on the agenda. The Mountain offensive was an attempt to force the right-wing to a political settlement which was more favorable to our presence, and to the demands of the Lebanese National Movement. The slogans that were raised by Kamal Junblat about “military decisiveness” (*al-hasm al-'askari*), [about] a decisive military strike to liberate the districts that were under the control of the right wing—we realized—I don't know if Kamal Junblat realized—it was only a dream.³⁵

Yet whether Junblat realized this or not was, in a sense, irrelevant. What was important at this stage was whether Hafiz al-Asad believed that the PLO's objectives were as limited as its leaders would later claim. Clearly he did not, and Syrian-PLO relations deteriorated accordingly.

Strong condemnation of the Syrian role in Lebanon was now heard from the PFLP and ALF, which demanded Sa'iqa's expulsion from the

PLO. In a statement issued March 22, the former slammed Sa'iqa for its defense of Franjiyya against the LNM and LAA, and Syria for its perceived willingness to involve itself in a "capitulationist" Middle East settlement. In the PFLP's view, Syrian policy in Lebanon was intimately related to the diplomatic situation in the Middle East: Damascus was said to be trying to gain hegemony over Lebanon and the PLO so as to improve its bargaining position in any future negotiations with the US for a Middle East peace settlement—"even if this resulted in supporting the Phalange and President Franjiyya in their quest to prevent the deconfessionalization of Lebanon." To achieve this, Damascus had first intervened to secure ceasefires between the PLO/LNM and the Lebanese Front, thus assuring maintenance of a status quo. When this had failed (in the face of continued National Movement demands for reform and the military strength of the PLO and LNM) Syria had embarked on more direct material and military assistance to the Lebanese right. Sa'iqa angrily responded to the PFLP's charges with condemnation of "the suspect motives of the quarters which are trying to drag the resistance movement into involvement in Lebanon's domestic struggle." Fateh, although also voicing criticism of Sa'iqa, was more circumspect. There was, however, a very public reconciliation between Habash and 'Arafat at the March 30 commemoration ceremonies for the Palestinian "Day of the Land" in Beirut. The significance of this in terms of Palestinian unity in the face of external threats did not go unnoticed.³⁶

For the most part, however, the PLO mainstream made strenuous and multiple efforts to heal the breach between it and the National Movement on one side, and Damascus on the other. To this end 'Arafat (together with Khalaf, Muhsin, and Hawatima) traveled to Damascus to meet with Hafiz al-Asad on March 16. There they urged the Syrian President both to support Franjiyya's departure from power, and to meet with Junblat directly. Eleven days later another Palestinian delegation consisting of 'Arafat, Khalaf, and Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin) of the Fateh Central Committee accompanied Junblat when he visited Damascus himself.³⁷ Despite its past record of support for the National Movement, the DFLP was even more anxious to avoid a break with Syria, with which it had heretofore enjoyed very good relations. It thus pressed for a limitation of National Movement aims in the offensive. Nayif Hawatima also played an active role trying to reconcile the Palestinian, Syrian, and National Movement positions during meetings with Asad in March and April.

Another 'Arafat visit followed on April 15-16, a week after the first major penetration of Syrian troops into Lebanon. This time the two sides came to an agreement on a 7-point plan for Lebanon which included a ceasefire and reactivation of the Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian Higher Military Committee. They also agreed to oppose the partition of Lebanon, reject US plans for the region, work to avoid the Arabization or internationalization of the crisis, and support Syria's continuing political initiatives in the country. Although Junblat was not pleased with the outcome, he and the National Movement were prevailed upon by the PLO leadership to endorse the Syrian-Palestinian agreement.³⁸ The ceasefire was

subsequently policed by Syrian-controlled troops of the PLA.

Despite the willingness not to Arabize the Lebanese conflict professed by the PLO in the agreement, divergence between the PLO and Syria could now increasingly be seen at the regional level too. As it became clear that the differences between Syrian and PLO policies in Lebanon were growing wider, the Palestinian leadership intensified efforts to secure alternate allies. Iraq and Egypt, each engaged in bitter rivalry with Syria for very different reasons, proved most responsive. Between January and June approximately two and a half battalions of the PLA 'Ayn Jalut Brigade were shipped or air-lifted from Egypt to the PLO in Lebanon, together with arms and ammunition. Some Iraqi-based units of the ALF and PLA al-Qadisiyya forces were similarly transferred. Such activities only stoked Syrian hostility, as Asad now saw the PLO consorting with his Arab enemies. Many Palestinian groups also opposed the strengthening ties with Egypt, the very same government that had recently signed the Sinai II Agreement with Israel and the United States. The PFLP, DFLP, and Sa'iqa all publicly condemned PLO-Egyptian rapprochement. Public criticism, however, could block neither the visit of Fateh's Hani al-Hasan to Cairo for talks at the end of April, nor Fateh's establishment of closer ties with Egypt over the Lebanese issue. It was a balancing act to be sure; each time a Palestinian leader criticized Sinai II the PLO would have to act to calm Egyptian anger. But the Fateh leadership calculated that it could not resist both Egypt and Syria at the same time, and that if it was to embark on a potential collision course with the latter it needed external support.³⁹

Matters approached a climax early in May. On May 9 Wafa accused the Lebanese Front of violating the April 16 ceasefire. A few days later a PLO-National Movement-LAA offensive was launched under the auspices of a newly-formed (May 12) joint command. Joint Palestinian and progressive forces advanced against opposing strongholds in the Metn-Kisrawan region as, for the first time in the war, the Palestinian leadership explicitly acknowledged their leading role in the fighting.⁴⁰

With this Syrian-Palestinian relations deteriorated still further. A May 15 meeting between Asad and 'Arafat produced little more than bitter acrimony, and soon 'Arafat was reportedly being denied permission to enter Syria at all. Colonel Fakhri Shakkura, commander of the PLA al-Qadisiyya Brigade in the Biqa', was arrested by the Syrians for following orders issued by Fateh's Khalil al-Wazir, overall commander of PLO forces in Lebanon. Clashes erupted between Palestinian (especially Rejection Front) and National Movement forces on the one side, and Syrian Sa'iqa and PLA units on the other. The most serious of these occurred in Tripoli on May 11, when an attack by local pro-Syrian Ba'thists, PLA, Sa'iqa, and Syrian commando units against the PFLP and local pro-Iraqi groups resulted in some one hundred and fifty casualties. The PLO leadership subsequently condemned the attack, warned the PLA not to fight against the National Movement, and called for the withdrawal of Syrian forces. 'Arafat unsuccessfully tried to order the ever-increasing number of PLA troops in Lebanon to return to their Syrian bases. On May 25 there was a failed

assassination attempt against Raymond Eddé; two days later Kamal Junblat's sister Linda was murdered in East Beirut. On May 29 the LAA commander in the north, Major Ahmad Mi'mari, began the unauthorized bombardment of several Christian towns and villages, an action which Salah Khalaf condemned as part of a conspiracy to prepare a pretext for Syrian military intervention. By the month's end the PLO's official journal *Filastin al-Thawra* published its first-ever direct condemnation of Damascus, accusing it of "undermining the victories of the Palestinian revolution, arresting Palestinian fighters, and supplying [the rightist parties] with all kinds of political, moral, and material support."⁴¹

Damascene Steel, June-October 1976

On 1 June 1976 Syrian military intervention began in earnest as an additional four thousand combat troops of the Syrian Third Armored Division, supported by over two hundred tanks, crossed the border into Lebanon. They rapidly took up positions in the Biqa' Valley, advancing as far as Zahla on the Beirut-Damascus highway. Reinforcements then followed, with the number of Syrian soldiers in the country rising to twelve thousand by June 6, to twenty thousand in mid-August, and to thirty thousand by late September.

Syria's decision to intervene was strongly welcomed by Franjiyya and Jumayyil, although Chamoun's attitude was more reserved. It was also supported, initially at least, by Rashid Karami and a number of conservative figures in the Muslim community. 'Asim Qansuh of the *Ba'th* Party Organization blessed the move, as did the "Vanguards of the Lebanese Arab Army" (a pro-Syrian splinter of the LAA), and the parties of the pro-Syrian "National Front." And, of course, it was supported by Zuhayr Muhsin of al-Sa'iqa, who, in his capacity as a member of the Syrian Ba'th Regional Command, had been a direct participant in the decision to commit Syrian troops against the National Movement and PLO.⁴²

The PLO and Lebanese National Movement were less enthused by this apparent attempt to contain or crush them. In a joint communique issued after an emergency meeting on June 2 a defiant note was struck:

First: The Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese National Movement affirm their political stand and unified struggle in rejecting and resisting Syrian military occupation of Lebanon.

Second: Active joint measures will be taken in coordination between the Palestinian resistance, the Lebanese National Movement and the Lebanese Arab Army to confront the military aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

Third: The Syrian regime is responsible for the grave result of any clashes between the Syrian occupation forces and the Palestinian revolution and Lebanese National Movement.

Fourth: To carry on the internal political popular campaign to raise the voice of the Lebanese and Palestinian masses in rejecting the occupation, starting with a general strike on June 6 throughout Lebanon, and to ensure that all Lebanese political personalities and forces, official or non-official, shoulder their

responsibilities and take a definite stand towards this occupation.

Fifth: To continue Arab and international political activity to secure broad Arab and international support for the National Movement and Palestinian revolution, as well as calling on the Arab states to take a frank official stand as regards Syrian military intervention in Lebanon, calling also on the Arab masses to raise their voices against this intervention, which harms not only Lebanon, but the joint national destiny of the Arab masses.⁴³

A new "United Military Command" was established for the Joint Forces (*quwat al-mushtarika*) as Palestinian, National Movement, and Lebanese Arab Army fighters took up defensive positions to block any further Syrian advance on Beirut. That same day Junblat held talks with Sarkis on a ceasefire and national reconciliation. The meeting (arranged by 'Ali Hasan Salama and attended by Salah Khalaf) was designed to show Syria's intervention as unnecessary. But it was too late.

Over the next few days a stand-off developed between the Syrians and the Joint Forces. This was broken June 6, when intense fighting erupted throughout Lebanon. Syrian forces advanced from the Biqa' towards Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon.

Asad and al-Sa'iqa subsequently claimed that the Syrian advance was provoked by attacks on the offices of pro-Syrian groups in Beirut by the PLO. The PLO maintained, however, that this was necessary to preempt planned actions against the PLO and LNM. According to Khalaf (who, in the absence of 'Arafat and other members of the PLO leadership from Beirut, presided over the decision to resist Syrian intervention), the PLO learned that the Syrian-controlled organizations intended to launch attacks against leftist and Rejection Front parties on June 6, which in turn would provide a pretext for Syrian military units in and around Beirut to intervene—suppressing Fateh at the same time. Forewarned, the PLO launched a six-hour operation to disarm the militias and arrest their leaders. In fact, many Sa'iqa members voluntarily quit their organization rather than fight fellow *fida'iyyin*. Similar "defections" to the PLO occurred within the ranks of the PLA. The 'Ayn Jalut Brigade, the bulk of the al-Qadisiyya Brigade, and over one-third of the Hittin Brigade remained loyal to the Palestinian command. The PLA's pro-Syrian Chief-of-Staff, Misbah Budayri, was handed over to the PLO by his own troops, and imprisoned. (He was subsequently stripped of his position, and unceremoniously returned to Damascus via Libyan Prime Minister and mediator 'Abd al-Salam Jallud.) 'Arafat now assumed control of the PLO Military Department and command of all Palestinian forces.⁴⁴

Despite military support in the Mountains from the Lebanese Front, the advancing Syrian soldiers encountered stiff opposition. A major battle raged at Bahamdun, on the Beirut-Damascus highway. In Sidon, a Syrian column which attempted to enter the city June 8 was ambushed by Palestinian and LNM forces and forced to withdraw with heavy casualties.⁴⁵

Such resistance provided time for the PLO's diplomatic machinery to try to rally Arab and international opinion against the Syrian intervention. On June 1 Faruq Qaddumi made a public appeal in Beirut for an emergency

meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers to discuss the Lebanese crisis. The message was then repeated privately by Qaddumi and Khalaf to Arab ambassadors in the Lebanese capital the following day. In Cairo, Jamil al-Surani and Ribhi Awad (the PLO and Fateh representatives in Egypt respectively) placed a similar request before Arab League Secretary General Mahmud Riyad. After the intensification of Syrian military action on June 6, personal appeals were sent by 'Arafat to Arab Heads of State.

An emergency session of Arab League foreign ministers was convened, on June 9. There they agreed to call for an immediate ceasefire, and the deployment of an Arab peace-keeping force in Lebanon consisting of both Syrian and other Arab troop contingents. Small numbers of Sudanese, Saudi, and Libyan troops were later deployed in Beirut, alongside the thousands of Syrian soldiers already in the country.

With this, the pace of fighting slowed to intermittent skirmishes. The PLO now concentrated its efforts on trying to win political and material support for its position in Lebanon, and securing the withdrawal of the largest possible portion of the Syrian forces. 'Arafat began a major tour of Arab capitals, traveling to Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Iraq, Egypt, and Libya in the two week period following the foreign ministers' meeting. In Beirut, the PLO issued a statement June 12 calling for Arab and Soviet action to halt Syria, while in Cairo al-Surani and Awad complained to Secretary General Riyad that Damascus was not withdrawing or implementing the Arab League resolutions.

Massive overt Syrian military intervention in Lebanon in June 1976 served to complete the Arabization of the Lebanese civil war, substantially shifting the fulcrum of the conflict from its initial Lebanese social and political bases to the broader regional arena. Within the Arab world, the PLO continued to receive support for its position from Syria's two major rivals, Iraq and Egypt. Immediately upon Syrian intervention in June—decried as a “hideous act” of the “fascist ruling clique in Damascus”—Iraq ostentatiously moved military forces to the Syrian border.⁴⁶ In October, a further 1,200 ALF “volunteers” were sent to support the PLO against Syria, bringing the total number of Iraqi-sponsored forces in the country to approximately three thousand. Egypt continued its transfer of Egyptian-based PLA forces to Lebanon, despite the Syrian (and Israeli) blockade of National Movement ports. It also allowed the PLO to reopen its Egyptian *Voice of Palestine* transmitter, closed in 1975 after Palestinian criticism of Sinai II. Sadat strongly encouraged the PLO to maintain a tough position against Syria—an encouragement that led some to suspect that he was more interested in confrontation with Asad than with the fate of the Palestinian movement in Lebanon.

The position of other Arab countries was more equivocal. Some found themselves torn between their friendly relations with both Syria and the PLO. Libya, for example, played an active role as mediator in the person of Libyan Premier 'Abd al-Salam Jallud. Libya also provided material aid to the Palestinian and progressive forces, and especially to the more radical Lebanese Nasirite and Palestinian rejectionist organizations. Obverse

considerations motivated Arab conservatives: while welcoming the cutting down to size of the Lebanese left and the PLO (its rejectionist wing in particular), their policies were moderated by widespread popular support for the Palestinians and Muslims; by concern over Egyptian-Syrian estrangement; and by fears of complete Syrian influence over both Lebanon and a defeated Palestinian movement. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in particular played a major role in attempting to reconcile Cairo and Damascus, and also in restraining what they saw as the more excessive of Asad's actions against the PLO. Jordan, on the other hand, was less ambiguous in its support for Asad's move, and quietly redeployed troops along its north-eastern frontier to deter the threat of Iraqi intervention. Amman also continued to extend financial and other aid to its conservative Lebanese allies.

For its part, Israel welcomed the open conflict between Syria and the PLO, and had for this reason let it be known that it would tolerate Syrian intervention, provided it remained north of a "Red Line" drawn approximately from Sidon to the southern Biqa'. An Israeli naval blockade was maintained of National Movement ports. It also continued its policy of supporting the Lebanese Front, with an estimated \$100 million worth of arms and other assistance being provided to the rightist militias between January and October 1976.⁴⁷ In the south, Israel sought to capitalize on the PLO's distraction and local disaffection to create friendly local clients. Military support was thus extended to local anti-Palestinian militias (consisting predominately of rightist Christian elements, but including some Shi'ites). As part of what became known as the "Good Fence" policy, select crossing points were opened along Israel's northern border to allow some southern villagers access to Israeli medical facilities and other services.⁴⁸

Further acceptance of Syria's actions came from the United States and France. Washington saw Syrian intervention as a stabilizing force and blow to the rising power of the PLO and Lebanese left. Washington thus cautiously approved the entrance of Syrian troops, and played a major role in securing Israeli approval and transmitting to Damascus the limits of Israeli tolerance signified by the tacit "Red Line" in the south. French acquiescence, signaled during Asad's visit to Paris in mid-June, stemmed from a similar view of Syria as a stabilizing factor. In contrast, the Soviet Union disapproved of Asad's actions, despite its close ties with Syria and its past criticism of "extremist" elements in the Palestinian and Lebanese movements. *Pravda* described the intervention as a "knife in the back" of the Palestinians. While the USSR refused (despite repeated PLO requests) to send arms or supply ships through the Syrian and Israeli naval blockades, it did severely curtail military and economic aid to Damascus as a sign of its displeasure.⁴⁹

Tall al-Za'tar

Arab League mediation efforts and the calls for a ceasefire could not but worry the Lebanese Front, and Camille Chamoun in particular. The Lebanese right had, after all, supported Syrian military intervention on the

understanding that it would be directed against their Palestinian and Lebanese opponents. Now it seemed as if that confrontation was gradually being frozen before the latter's defeat. Concern was intensified when, on June 22, Riyadh and Jallud secured the withdrawal of a Syrian troop contingent at Khalde on Beirut's southern outskirts.

In an effort to regain the political and military initiative and reap maximum advantage from the PLO's current weakened state, June 22 also saw the LNP (supported by *al-Tanzim*, the Guardians of the Cedars, and right-wing Christian Lebanese Army officers) launch a major military offensive against the two remaining Palestinian refugee camps in East Beirut. The Phalange joined the fighting a few days later. After a week, the camp of Jisr al-Basha fell following stiff resistance. Tall al-Za'tar, with its twenty thousand Palestinian (and up to fifteen thousand Lebanese) inhabitants continued to hold out, despite constant shelling, daily assaults, and a total rightist blockade of all supplies.⁵⁰

With Tall al-Za'tar surrounded and the bulk of Palestinian forces pinned down in the south or Metn by Syrian troops, there was little the PLO leadership could do other than provide artillery support for the camp's defenders and address urgent appeals to the world. Although a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers was held July 1, this provided small relief. On July 5, the PLO's National Movement allies launched an offensive south of Tripoli in an effort to relieve the pressure on the camp. As they did so, Junblat declared that he would not accept a ceasefire until the siege was lifted. Many conservative Muslim figures, alarmed by the growing assertiveness and power of the Lebanese Front, rallied to the PLO's support. Indicative of this, Karami, Salam, al-Yafi, and several other former Lebanese prime ministers joined Raymond Eddé and some National Movement figures in forming a "National Union Front" on July 11.

For the PLO, much of the blame for the Tall al-Za'tar siege lay with Syria, which it accused of supplying military aid to the Lebanese Front and engaging Palestinian units elsewhere in the country. Within an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, and more directly the National Movement's relief offensive, a planned meeting of 'Arafat, Khaddam, Phalange Politburo member Karim Pakradouni, and the Saudi Foreign Minister, collapsed July 5. A subsequent meeting of Arab foreign ministers July 12 achieved little more than a reaffirmation of its desire for a ceasefire and Syrian-Palestinian rapprochement. With the failure of third-party arbitration and the collapse of the National Movement offensive in the face of a successful rightist counter-attack, the Palestinian leadership had no real choice but to pursue a direct dialogue with Damascus.

Talks between the PLO and Syria, arranged through Libyan and Arab League good offices, opened in the Syrian capital as the siege of Tall al-Za'tar entered its second month. After a week of difficult negotiations, agreement was finally reached. Under the terms of the July 29 accord there was to be an immediate Lebanese ceasefire, overseen by a reactivated Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian Higher Military Committee. The two sides also stated their support for the February 1976 Constitutional Declaration, the

principle of Palestinian non-interference in Lebanese internal affairs, and application of the Cairo Agreement and its annexes. In a joint communique issued at the same time, the "special links" between Syria and the PLO were affirmed, with the latter praising the former's "support...to the Palestinian resistance in its struggle against the Zionist enemy." The communique also condemned the Sinai agreements, labeling them part of an "imperialist and Zionist plan."⁵¹

Upon its release, the agreement was quickly criticized by the Rejection Front (the ALF, for example, labeled it "stupid tactics") for making excessive concessions to Syria. Egypt was angered by the reference to the Sinai agreements (Qaddumi promptly issued a statement noting the aim of the agreement "was not to harm fraternal Egypt, whose role in support of the Palestinian resistance during the Lebanese crisis has been a prominent one"). Ironically the parties of the Lebanese Front were equally critical, alarmed as they were at any signs of potential Syrian-PLO rapprochement.⁵²

More importantly, the agreement failed to bring an end to the Tall al-Za'tar siege. Attempts were thus made, through the PLO's channels to the Phalange, to work out arrangements for humanitarian relief for the camp's inhabitants. These, however, were systematically sabotaged by the LNP. As the situation grew still more desperate, 'Arafat accused Syria of deliberately obstructing implementation of the Arab League foreign ministers' resolutions and the terms of the July 29 accord. Frantic appeals for help were issued to the Arab governments (or anyone else) to intervene. It was all to no avail.

Finally, on 12 August 1976, Tall al-Za'tar fell. As many as three thousand Palestinians had died in the 53 days of fighting, or in the subsequent atrocities committed by the victorious rightist militias. The remainder were evicted as their homes were razed to the ground.

The Riyadh Summit

With the fall of Tall al-Za'tar, the Palestinian dimension of the Lebanese civil war shifted to new political and military fronts. Fighting flared in the upper Metn between the Joint Forces and Lebanese Front as Syrian troops edged westward along the Beirut-Damascus highway. Simultaneously, a complex series of Palestinian-Phalangist and Palestinian-Syrian negotiations got underway with the assistance of Arab League and Libyan intermediaries.

The first of these opened August 16, with a Phalangist call for a ceasefire and partial Palestinian withdrawal from the Metn, to be followed by negotiations for a full withdrawal and permanent ceasefire. The PLO responded by proposing a ceasefire, followed by comprehensive political negotiations in which the questions of a Palestinian and Syrian withdrawal would form a part. Further discussions ensued through the agency of Arab League peace-keeping force commander Major-General Muhammad Ghunaym, and then on August 21 in the form of direct talks between 'Ali Hasan Salama and Hani al-Hasan (of Fateh) and Alexander Jumayyil and

Joseph Abu Sharaf (of the Phalange) at the Beirut home of Sa'ib Salam. By August 24 the two sides were close enough for Ghunaym to announce that partial agreement had been reached. This news was not welcomed either by Chamoun or many members of the LNM, and fighting in Beirut soon escalated as the former's militia sought to scuttle any potential disengagement accord.

Meanwhile, Syria had delivered its demands to the PLO through Libya's Deputy Foreign Minister and Lebanese president-elect Sarkis: the Palestinians must withdraw from the Mountain forthwith. Moreover, Syria demanded that the LNM be excluded from participation in the tripartite committee proposed by the July 29 Syrian-Palestinian agreement. The PLO refused to abandon its National Movement allies, or to withdraw unless Syrian troops were also withdrawn. The Palestinian presence in the Mountain was one of the PLO's few remaining political cards; it was loathe to surrender it without a substantial *quid pro quo*. Moreover, given popular Palestinian (and LNM) attitudes towards Syria, its intervention, and its apparent complicity in the massacre at Tall al-Za'tar, the political price of any "surrender" to Damascus would be very high indeed.

The PLO's refusal of Syria's demands was quickly followed by increased military pressure against the Joint Forces' positions, especially near Tripoli, and by a Syrian military build-up at Jizzin, east of Sidon. Further rounds of talks (this time direct in nature) followed: secret negotiations between the PLO's Salah Khalaf and Syria's Naji Jamil in early September led to two meetings between 'Arafat, Sarkis, and Jamil (chaired by Arab League envoy Hasan Sabri al-Khuli) at Shtura on September 17 and 19. But these were no more successful than their predecessors. Syria repeated its earlier demands. 'Arafat's counter-proposal of a Palestinian withdrawal in exchange for a ceasefire and Syrian withdrawal from Sofar and Jizzin was rejected.⁵³

Four days later, Sarkis was officially inaugurated as President of Lebanon. In a letter to the newly-installed President, 'Arafat reaffirmed the PLO's support for the unity and stability of Lebanon, and its commitment to previous Lebanese-Palestinian agreements.⁵⁴

As the date for Sarkis' accession to official power approached and safely past, the Syrian position hardened. It was important, from Damascus' point of view, that it strengthen its hand before a proposed Arab League summit (called on Saudi and Kuwaiti initiative) could be convened during the third week of October. Thus on September 22 it was decided to issue an ultimatum to the PLO, demanding its withdrawal from the Mountain within five days. Four days later, several *fida'iyyin* stormed the Samiramis Hotel in Damascus. Although the attackers were not associated with the PLO but rather were members of a Baghdad-based group headed by Fateh renegade Sabri al-Banna (Abu Nidal), the incident only hardened Syrian attitudes.⁵⁵

On September 28, with the PLO still refusing to withdraw from its Mountain positions, Syria unleashed a major offensive. Syrian troops from Sofar and Zahla advanced against Palestinian and National Movement

positions in the northern Metn, forcing the Joint Forces to withdraw. At the same time, rightist forces converged on the area from the opposite direction. On September 30, the Syrian advance was halted to give the PLO time to reflect on its situation. At a meeting between the two sides held in Sofar, Khaddam and Jamil demanded the withdrawal of the Joint Forces from Aley and Bahamdun, the opening of the (Palestinian-controlled) airport road in south Beirut, and further negotiations based on the Cairo Agreement, to be implemented within 15 days. The PLO refused. Another day of fighting followed. On October 8, however, the PLO, Syria, and Sarkis agreed to resume the Shtura meetings aborted the previous month. This time Damascus demanded an unconditional Palestinian withdrawal and break with the Lebanese National Movement. Again, the PLO refused. With this, the Syrian offensive was renewed October 11-12.⁵⁶

Within the Palestinian leadership, the pressure of Syrian attacks ultimately forced a reassessment of the nature of the PLO's alliance with the National Movement, and of the policies which the Palestinian movement had been pursuing since the spring. Within Fateh, Khalid al-Hasan was the most prominent spokesman for the view that the PLO had gone too far in supporting Junblat, and had consequently become too deeply involved in fighting battles with Damascus. Against this Salah Khalaf (backed by Nimr Salih and many of the smaller Palestinian groups) argued that it would be both "an intolerable breach of loyalty" and a "serious political blunder" to abandon the Lebanese National Movement. Yet almost all agreed that, given political and military realities, indefinite continuation of the confrontation with Syria was out of the question.⁵⁷

The decision finally reached was described as one of "fighting withdrawal": the PLO would reject Syria's harsh terms for a settlement, but would nevertheless withdraw its advance forces in the upper Metn to last-ditch defenses at Aley and Bahamdun. Many National Movement and Rejection Front leaders opposed the decision, and when the Syrian offensive started in September, they tried to hold their positions. But, given the withdrawal of the bulk of fighting forces belonging to Fateh, they ultimately could not do so. They too were also forced to retreat.

Concurrent with the policy of "fighting withdrawal," the PLO also redoubled its efforts to secure inter-Arab agreement on ending the Lebanese conflict. Central to this were efforts by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (and Fateh's Khalid al-Hasan) to secure a sufficient degree of Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement, the apparent prerequisite of any meaningful and effective initiative. But progress was slow, hampered by the conservative regimes' ambiguous attitudes towards Syria and the PLO; by the new strength of Syrian-Jordanian relations, and Jordan's support for Syria's intervention; by Egypt's increasingly withdrawn attitude to issues of Arab politics; and by the absence in Saudi Arabia of King Faysal, assassinated in 1975.⁵⁸

The necessary diplomatic break-through finally came as Syria renewed its assault in October. On October 14, shortly after the fighting had restarted, 'Arafat sent an urgent personal appeal for help to Saudi Crown Prince Fahd. The following day, the government of Saudi Arabia

announced that a limited Arab summit conference would be held in Riyadh on October 16. Enjoying a strong position on the ground, amidst growing domestic discontent in Syria with intervention against the PLO and LNM in Lebanon, and under some Saudi pressure (including the threat of a suspension of financial aid and the withdrawal of Saudi troops from the Golan Heights), Asad announced his willingness to attend. At the same time, Syria announced a Lebanese ceasefire.

It was at Riyadh that the elements of a settlement at last came into place. The summit participants—King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Sabah of Kuwait, President Asad of Syria, President Sadat of Egypt, President Sarkis of Lebanon, and Yasir 'Arafat, Chairman of the PLO—agreed on a series of measures to end the civil war. Chief among these was a ceasefire, to be enforced by a thirty thousand-strong Arab Deterrent Force; and full application of the Cairo Agreement and its annexes, to be overseen by a quadripartite Saudi-Egyptian-Syrian-Kuwaiti committee. In addition, the PLO affirmed its “respect for Lebanon’s sovereignty and well-being and its non-interference in its domestic affairs,” while Lebanon guaranteed the “security and activities of the PLO within the framework of the Cairo Agreement and its appendices.” A detailed timetable sketched the process whereby militias would be disarmed and life in Lebanon normalized. On 27 October 1976 the resolutions passed at Riyadh were approved by nineteen of twenty-one Arab leaders attending the special Arab League summit in Cairo.⁵⁹

Behind these two agreements, it was soon apparent that inter-Arab differences had been reconciled at the PLO and LNM’s expense; that only now, having seen Syria apparently achieve the goal of containing Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionism, were Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and others prepared to rein in Syria and disengage other Arab states from the Lebanese conflict. Egypt had achieved, as the price for acceptance of Syria’s actions, unspoken acceptance of Sinai II. Syria won implicit pan-Arab endorsement of its actions. As was the case with the Arab peace-keeping force that had preceded it, the new Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) turned out to be an almost entirely Syrian affair, consisting largely of those Syrian troops already in Lebanon. The agreements made no mention anywhere of the reforms the LNM had fought to achieve; nor did they substantially relax Syrian political pressure on the PLO.

But at least a lasting ceasefire had been achieved to put an end to the worst of the fighting. The PLO leadership and Junblat reluctantly endorsed the settlement. The civil war, for now at least, was over.

Battles on Three Fronts

(1976-78)

At considerable human and political cost, the PLO had emerged battered but intact from the Lebanese civil war. Yet its struggle for survival in Lebanon was far from over. On the contrary, in the altered constellation of forces produced by the Lebanese conflict the PLO confronted new challenges to its position and activities from Lebanese sources, from Syria, and from Israel.

In the Lebanese arena, the PLO faced difficulties with the Lebanese government and the continuing hostility of the Lebanese Front. To these problems could be added the weakening of the PLO's allies in the Lebanese National Movement, and a mounting crisis of public relations in the south. Yet in many ways such local threats were no longer paramount. As the preceding years had demonstrated, the PLO's military strength had become such that no Lebanese actor could directly confront it without significant external backing.

Instead, the major challenges faced by the PLO in Lebanon were now primarily external in nature, a consequence of the growing regionalization of the Lebanese conflict during the civil war. The most immediate of these was the threat of Syrian hegemony. Damascus had emerged from the Riyadh and Cairo summit meetings as the dominant force in Lebanon and the ADF. ~~Some 30,000 Syrian troops now stood behind the otherwise powerless Sarkis government.~~ Their presence provided Damascus with leverage that could be applied not only in Lebanese affairs, but also against the PLO. On another front, the PLO faced mounting costs in its confrontation with Israel. ~~Israeli political and military intervention in Lebanon would continue to grow; in the south, a war dormant for almost two years would soon re-ignite and burn more furiously than ever.~~

As a consequence of these threats, the focus of PLO policy gradually shifted. In the wake of the civil war, the neutralization of internal Lebanese challenges (achieved through strategies of restraint, internal alliance and defense) would be increasingly subordinated to efforts to cope with the dangers posed by an ever more hostile regional environment.

The Syrian Challenge

By November 1976 Syria at last achieved under the banner of the ADF what it had failed to achieve through direct military action: the entrance and deployment of its troops in and around the major Palestinian/LNM strongholds of West Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli. In the ADF's wake, Sa'iqa appeared too, attempting to re-establish its physical and political presence in those areas it had been forced to vacate in June 1976. Zuhayr Muhsin warned that, if "cordial persuasion" failed, the Syrian-sponsored organization would resort to "other methods" to regain its position.¹

Soon enough, clashes erupted between Sa'iqa guerrillas and those from other Palestinian organizations: with the DFLP (17-18 November, Sabra camp); Fateh (6 December, Nahr al-Barid); and the PFLP and ALF (16-17 December, Burj al-Barajina and Sabra-Shatila). Fighting also took place on several occasions between pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian factions within the PFLP-GC, fighting in which other *fida'iyyin* soon became involved.²

Fearing that these and other incidents would escalate into renewed military confrontation with the Syrian Army, the PLO leadership quickly took what measures it could to contain the outbreaks of violence. The Palestine Armed Struggle Command was strengthened, and a special PASC strike force formed to prevent future clashes.³ To the extent that fighting between Sa'iqa and other members of other organizations was a product of grass-roots guerrilla anger at the Syrian role in the civil war, such measures might have had some effect. But while such friction was a contributing factor, few within the PLO saw it as the major cause. Instead, the clashes with Sa'iqa (and similar friction between the PLO and ADF) was viewed by the PLO leadership as forming part of a general pattern of Syrian political and military intimidation of the PLO and its National Movement allies. In a bitter assessment of the situation dated November 26, the PLO leadership stated:

The peace force [ADF] is restricting the movement of our elements and cadres while the isolationist side enjoys many prerogatives, including freedom of movement, of importing weapons, and of dealing with Israel with the aim of creating a buffer region in the south to forbid our presence there.

In spite of this we are still committed to self-control and to the disregard of minor incidents of provocation carried out by forces which came in with the Arab peace force and behind a Palestinian facade to instill terror among the masses.

The statement went on to emphasize the PLO's "commitment to the preservation of the Palestinian cause from liquidation," and to warn that this commitment "can only be efficient if the Palestinian revolution remains strong and remote from any tutelage and vassalage, and from attempts to bring it down to size or liquidate it."⁴

In issuing the statement, the PLO leadership signaled Damascus that it could be pushed only so far. The PLO did not want continued conflict; on the contrary, the need to establish a working relationship with Syria was seen (particularly by Fateh and the DFLP) as urgent and overwhelming.

Quite apart from the strategic importance of coordination with a major confrontation state, the practical security situation in Lebanon—the Palestinians' last sanctuary—demanded it.⁵ But at the same time there were limits to the degree of external influence the Palestinian movement was prepared to accept: "the leadership of the revolution," the statement had added, "stems from the Palestinian masses and is not concerned by the will of any Arab regime. This leadership represents the independent will and decision of the Palestinian people and it will continue to lead this people and represent its cause and revolution until it achieves its national aims." Whatever their political and ideological differences, Fateh, the DFLP, and PFLP—that is to say, the popular, "Palestinian" organizations of the PLO—stood as one in upholding and defending the independence of Palestinian decision-making.

That the stakes were precisely this was confirmed by subsequent events. Formal reconciliation between the PLO and Syria had supposedly been achieved by a meeting of the PLO Central Council in Damascus, 12-14 December 1976. Zuhayr Muhsin had been restored to his Executive Committee positions. The Council had been addressed by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. At its close, the Council's final statement had praised Syria (although not Syrian actions in Lebanon), and "welcomed the return to normal relations between the PLO and Syria, and emphasized the PLO's eagerness to strengthen these relations."⁶ Despite this, Muhsin and other Sa'iqa leaders issued calls for the replacement of the current PLO leadership before and after the Central Council meeting. Increasingly Syrian spokespersons referred to Palestine as a historical part of Syria, implicitly discrediting both the "Palestinian" nature of the Palestinian people's struggle, and the PLO's right to lead it.⁷

Pressure on the ground also intensified. In February, there were reports of the forced closure of PLO offices and the harassment of PLO personnel in Syria. In Beirut, Syrian ADF troops bolstered their presence in existing positions near the camps, and forced their way into new ones. Noting the continued friction between his organization and others (especially those of the Rejection Front), Muhsin warned that if the PLO leadership could not keep order in the camps, the ADF would.⁸ Although a larger confrontation was averted in this case through Saudi pressure and a direct appeal from 'Arafat to Asad, hostility between the Rejection Front and Syrian forces remained high. The PFLP, ALF, and Palestine Liberation Front (newly-formed from the anti-Syrian wing of the PFLP-GC) accused Sa'iqa and the ADF of harassing, or even murdering, their cadres. In June, the Rejection Front threatened to resist the entrance of Sa'iqa personnel into Tyre. Muhsin responded with threats of his own, and Fateh was forced to intervene to prevent further bloodshed.⁹

Maintaining Independence: The 13th PNC

One arena in which the struggle for Palestinian independent decision-making occurred during this period was that of the 13th session of the

Palestine National Council. As the first Council meeting since the civil war approached, Damascus made it clear through Sa'iq'a and other channels that there were a number of policies it would like to see endorsed. These included the idea of an independent Palestinian state; greater use of diplomatic means by the PLO; the formation of a strategic alliance between the PLO and Damascus; and improved relations between the PLO and Jordan. To assure support for these positions, and strengthen its influence within the PLO's highest decision-making body generally, Syria pressed for changes in the composition of the PNC. Specifically, Syrian spokesmen called for the enlargement of PNC ranks, the selection of more pro-Syrian and pro-Jordanian candidates, the selection of more delegates from the occupied territories, and a possible end to *fida'iyyin* representation in the PNC altogether.¹⁰

However, when the PNC convened in Cairo (itself a highly significant choice of locale) in March 1977, what emerged was not so much a product of Syrian pressure as an object lesson in Fateh politics. Although the Central Council had agreed to increase PNC membership from 187 to 289, the final list of delegates showed no significant shift in the distribution of power in the assembly. The PNC session itself went on to adopt a 15-point political program with the support of all Palestinian groups, excepting the PFLP. In its most important sections, the program explicitly endorsed the idea of a Palestinian state, and the use of diplomatic as well as military means to achieve it. This was in line with Syrian views, but also with those advanced by Fateh and the DFLP since the 12th PNC in 1974. No mention of Jordan was made one way or the other. This, in balance, was also an outcome favored by Fateh—which had cautiously reactivated communication with the Hashemite regime, but which probably preferred to avoid a potentially divisive debate on the subject all the same. Most notable of all was the coordination evident between Fateh and the Rejection Front organizations, and the decision of the ALF and PFLP-GC to rejoin the Executive Committee. An attempt by Sa'iq'a to increase its own representation, directly or through a pro-Syrian independent, was rebuffed. In essence, Fateh had cooperated with Sa'iq'a insofar as their views coincided, while simultaneously using Syrian pressure as a catalyst to rebuild Palestinian unity and bring much of the Rejection Front "on side," on Fateh's terms.¹¹

Still, if the assembled delegates needed evidence of the seriousness of the dangers still confronting the PLO in Lebanon, tragic confirmation would be provided even before their deliberations ended. On 16 March 1977, PNC members were shocked to learn that Kamal Junblat had been assassinated in Lebanon, in circumstances that strongly pointed to Syrian involvement.

The Quadripartite Committee and Shtura Agreement

In honor of the PLO's closest and most valuable ally, the 13th session of the Palestine National Council was officially renamed that of the "Martyr Kamal Junblat." Among the fifteen points of the political program it had

adopted, two had specifically referred to the Lebanese situation. In point seven, the PNC had saluted the "heroic people of Lebanon"; noted "with pride" their support for the Palestinian struggle; strongly affirmed "the need to strengthen and consolidate the cohesion between all Lebanese nationalist forces and the Palestine revolution"; and reiterated "the PLO's concern for the unity of [Lebanon's] territory and people, its security, independence, sovereignty and Arab character." One paragraph earlier, in point six, the PNC stated:

The Palestine National Council stresses its concern for the right of the Palestine revolution to its presence in Lebanese territory within the framework of the Cairo Agreement and its annexes concluded between the PLO and the Lebanese authorities. It also affirms its insistence on their implementation in spirit and letter, including the application of the provisions on the revolution's [retaining] its arms and on the security of the camps, and rejects any unilateral interpretation of the agreement and its annexes by any quarter, with due respect for the sovereignty and security of Lebanon. ¹²

The statement reflected the Palestinian movement's deep concern at that time over what, in its eyes, were Syrian-Lebanese attempts to shackle the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Under the terms of the Riyadh Agreement, the ADF had been charged with ensuring adherence to a Lebanese ceasefire, the withdrawal of armed men, and the collection of heavy weapons from combatants. It had been further mandated, in conjunction with the Quadripartite Committee (consisting of the Saudi, Kuwaiti, Egyptian ambassadors to Lebanon, and Colonel Muhammad al-Khuli, Syrian Air Force chief of security and President Asad's special envoy to Lebanon) to assist the Lebanese government in implementing the Cairo Agreement and its later annexes. Such implementation, including the withdrawal of regular Palestinian (PLA) forces and limitation of arms and ammunition in the refugee camps, was to be accomplished within 45 days.

In practice, matters proceeded less smoothly. Concerned at the vulnerability of a disarmed Palestinian movement and population, Sa'd Sayil informed ADF commander General Ahmad al-Hajj of the PLO's inability to disarm while the threat of an armed Lebanese Front remained. This danger, the PLO argued, was compounded by the increased military activity of Israeli-supported militias in the south. The rightist parties, on the other hand, maintained that they would not give up their weapons unless the Palestinians did so first.¹³

On November 30, Hajj presented a compromise of sorts: heavy weapons would be collected together at a site of each party's choice, and would be jointly guarded there by that militia and the ADF. All sides eventually agreed, but technical disputes over what precisely constituted a "heavy weapon" now occupied the Quadripartite Committee until late December. Finally, a deadline of midnight, 12 January 1977 was set for the collection of arms and departure of regular Palestinian forces. When the moment arrived, weapons were surrendered to the ADF, and the bulk of PLA forces did leave the country by air or land. Still, some PLA troops—and substantial quantities of arms—remained outside the

designated sites, under the control of the PLO.¹⁴ This, combined with the difficulties encountered in extending state authority and rebuilding the shattered army, led the Lebanese government to request the first of many extensions of the mandate of the ADF.

Attention now turned to the broader question of implementing the Cairo Agreement, as well as the collection of any remaining heavy weapons. Again, serious differences of interpretation arose between the PLO on the one hand, and the Lebanese and Syrian governments on the other. In brief, the "Lebanese interpretation" of the Cairo Agreement and Milkart Protocols held that only those Palestinians resident in Lebanon at the time the agreement was signed in 1969 enjoyed the right to work, reside, and move freely. It further held that the Palestinian military presence in the camps was forbidden, as was the presence of medium or heavy weapons. The sole armed Palestinian presence tolerated would be PASC (at the ratio of 3 lightly-armed personnel per 1,000 camp residents) and a small local defense militia, with a total overall ratio of 7 armed men per 1000 residents. PASC was to be limited to assisting the Lebanese security forces, who had the right to enter the camps at any time. The camp militia could provide some local defense capability, but ultimate responsibility for external defense fell upon the Lebanese Army (and ADF). In the south, the Lebanese interpretation called for PLO military deployment to be restricted to previously agreed border positions.¹⁵

This reading of previous agreements was broadly supported by Syria, although Damascus did seem prepared to accept some heavier weaponry in the camps and a greater Palestinian military presence in the south (excess Palestinian weapons would be transported south under Syrian supervision). For their part the Palestinians argued that all registered Palestinian refugees legally in Lebanon should enjoy the Cairo Agreement's guarantees; that internal and external security of the camps was primarily the responsibility of the PLO; and that further negotiations were needed to overcome differences regarding any limitations on arms and ammunition.

These and related issues were taken up in months of discussions between the PLO and President Sarkis, newly-appointed Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Huss, and the Quadripartite Committee. Within the committee there was prolonged debate, and ultimately rejection, of the "Lebanese interpretation." It was not able to produce an alternative, however, and on May 26 the (renewed) mandate of the Quadripartite Committee expired without its members having reached consensus on a definitive reading of the Cairo Agreement. The following day the Lebanese Front seized upon this failure to declare that henceforth it would regard the Cairo Agreement as "abrogated and invalid," and the Palestinian presence in Lebanon as illegal.¹⁶

The PLO rejected the Lebanese Front's statement, and its accusations that the PLO was unwilling to implement previously-negotiated agreements:

We have expressed readiness to implement the [Cairo] Agreement in theory and we have implemented it in practice. The broadcasts have been stopped, the

heavy armaments have been withdrawn, displays of armed force have been ended. We have expressed complete readiness to cooperate with President Sarkis....

We have sought dialogues with the Lebanese Front with a view to putting an end to all misgivings and fears, because what we want is that Lebanon should be independent with full sovereignty over its territory. We want to be an element of stability and security, because that will help us concentrate all our efforts on the occupied territories.

The PLO is making every effort to ensure a secure and independent Lebanon as rapidly as possible, and to promote the rebuilding of the Lebanese Army, as this will help to implement the remaining routine measures of the Cairo Agreement. Furthermore, national conciliation will be a fundamental element in setting Lebanon on the road to stability and security, so that life may return to normal.¹⁷

Despite the Lebanese Front's declaration, discussions over the implementation of the Cairo Agreement did not cease. On the contrary, the months of June and early July 1977 saw intensive consultation between the PLO, Lebanon, and Syria. The PLO and the Lebanese government reactivated joint meetings with the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon (in abeyance since the start of the civil war) to resolve a number of procedural and legal issues regarding Palestinians resident in Lebanon. Then, in mid-July, agreement was reached on reactivating the tripartite (Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian) committee established during the civil war. On July 21, delegations representing Lebanon (led by Lebanese Army commander Victor Khuri), Syria (led by Syrian Chief-of-Staff Hikmat Shihabi), the ADF (represented by Colonel Sami Khatib, its new Lebanese commander), and the PLO (Salah Khalaf, with Fatch's Sa'd Sayil, Salih Nimr, and Muhammad Ghunaym) assembled at Shtura. They promptly formed two subcommittees, one dealing with the application of the Cairo Agreement to the camps, the other with the south. These held a series of working meetings July 24-25 on the terms and timetable for implementation of the Cairo Agreement. On July 25 the full tripartite committee met again, and announced that a mutually acceptable agreement had been reached.

Although a full text of the Shtura Agreement was never officially released, Lebanese press accounts and statements by Shtura negotiators painted a generally consistent picture of an agreement which reflected Syrian views—hardly surprising, given the close relations between Syria and three of the four parties involved. In its first phase it called for the collection and surrender (once more) of PLO heavy weapons in the refugee camps. This was to be followed by ADF deployment around the perimeter of the camps, with the ADF responsible for external defense “after joint consultation with the PLO,” and cooperation between PASC and the Lebanese Internal Security Forces in maintaining public order. In its third phase, the agreement required the PLO to withdraw 12-15km from the border in the south, except in the ‘Arqub. A similar withdrawal was to take place by other militias too, thus allowing the deployment of a Lebanese Army brigade along the border zone.¹⁸

In contrast to previous agreements, it appeared as if rapid

implementation would follow. On July 30, after joint consultations (and the formation of a special PLO security committee to forestall any possible incidents), the ADF began to take up positions around the Palestinian camps. An inventory of camp heavy weapons was then drawn up. During August 5-13, the Palestinians withdrew from their positions in the Sports Stadium near the Sabra-Shatila camps. Some 125 tons of excess weapons and ammunition were surrendered to the ADF and trucked to storage sites, and eighty-five Palestinian offices outside the camps closed.¹⁹ The PLO also declared its willingness to abide by the final phase of the accord, and in September provisional agreement was reached with Sarkis on the deployment of the Lebanese Army in the south.

In practice, much of this was intended largely for public (and Syrian) consumption. Behind the scenes the PLO quietly resisted implementation, as it often had previous measures. Only obsolete and surplus weapons were surrendered; the remainder were hidden away against future need. Those offices and positions vacated were soon reoccupied. In the south, the PLO tied any future Palestinian withdrawal to the (unlikely) withdrawal of all rightist militias. Soon, local developments rendered the Shtura Agreement impractical, obsolete, and unenforceable—something the Palestinian movement had known, and probably counted on.

In fact, this—despite protestations to the contrary—had been the whole thrust of PLO policy in Lebanon, and towards Syria, since the Riyadh Agreement: to stall the implementation process in the hope that constant delays, coupled with a changing regional and local environment, would allow the Palestinian movement to retain its arms and freedom of action and resist Syrian demands. The skillful exploitation of political differences within the Quadripartite Committee, and especially the interest that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt had in forestalling complete Syrian dominance of the PLO, played a major part in this. Earlier in the year, their opposition led the committee to override Syrian objections and reject the “Lebanese interpretation” of the Cairo Agreement. Now, the Shtura Agreement was approached in a similar manner: it represented some progress, was the best that could be achieved under present circumstances, and provided further breathing space. This, and not pleasure with its specific provisions, was the reason why it was endorsed by the Palestinian leadership. In essence, the PLO had adopted a deliberate policy of inertia.²⁰

As it turned out, the Palestinian gamble paid off. The Shtura Agreement marked the onset of improved Syrian-Palestinian relations. With the election of Menachem Begin as Israeli prime minister in May 1977, increasing levels of activity by Israel and Israeli-backed militias in the south, and especially the 1978 Israeli invasion (described below), Damascus grew less and less willing to exert its fullest pressure on the PLO. This in turn accelerated a worsening of relations between Damascus and its erstwhile allies (excluding Sulayman Franjiyya) in the Lebanese Front.

Syrian-PLO rapprochement would be sealed, however, by a very different event: Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat’s November 1977 visit to Jerusalem. To the leadership of the PLO it appeared that Cairo was on the

verge of abandoning the Palestinian cause in pursuit of a separate US-sponsored peace with Israel. Syria's Hafiz al-Asad was no less alarmed at the prospect of Egypt—the most powerful of the confrontation states—defecting from Arab ranks, and hence leaving Syria alone to face Israel across the occupied Golan Heights. In December the PLO and Syria, together with Libya, Algeria, Iraq, and South Yemen, met in the Libyan capital to establish the “Steadfastness and Confrontation Front” (*jabhat al-sumud wa al-tasaddi*) in opposition to Egyptian policies. With this, the opponents of June 1976 were once more strategic allies.

Back to the Front: The War in the South, 1976-78

During the Lebanese civil war, Israel's quiet extension of its influence in south Lebanon had gone largely unchallenged by the PLO, Syria, or the Lebanese National Movement. Faced with more severe and pressing challenges elsewhere, the Palestinian command had effectively frozen cross-border operations in 1976.²¹ This temporary diminution of the Palestinian presence in the south was soon exploited by Israel to increase its backing for local rightist militias. In October 1976 these militias took advantage of Syria's offensives against the Joint Forces to the north to seize control of the southern town of Marj'ayun, and to press forward attacks against Bint Jubayl and al-Khiyam.

To combat this and to escape control by Syrian ADF units elsewhere in the country, the PLO had begun to reinforce its positions in the south soon after the Riyadh summit conference. Fighting between the Joint Forces and the rightist militias soon erupted, and as it escalated so too did the extent of Israeli backing for the latter. In the political vacuum of the south, a direct confrontation emerged between Israel and its proxies on one side, and the PLO and National Movement on the other. In this contest Syria found itself on the horns of a dilemma: whilst it sought a weakening of Israeli influence in the south and hence favored the Joint Forces, it also feared that intensification of the fighting would invite even greater Israeli intervention. Attempts to send the ADF south had been met with loud Israeli protests.²² Because of this, Syria allowed the PLO to move fighters (including al-Sa'iqa personnel) and material south, but (with a few notable exceptions) did not provide direct military support. Hoping that a reassertion of Lebanese authority in the area would stabilize the situation, Syria also strongly supported efforts by the Sarkis administration to deploy the Lebanese Army or Internal Security Force in the south.

New rightist offensives were launched in January and February of 1977, leading to the capture of Khiyam and further advances towards Bint Jubayl. In March a sustained effort was made to link the eastern border enclave (commanded by Lebanese Army Major Sa'd Haddad) with those in the central and western sectors (then commanded by Major Sami Shidyaq of the Phalange) into a contiguous zone along the Israeli-Lebanese border. In response, the Joint Forces launched a major counter-offensive early in April, recapturing Khiyam and pressing hard on Marj'ayun. At this point

Syria, concerned at possible Israeli reactions to a major defeat of Haddad's forces, prevailed upon 'Arafat to declare a unilateral ceasefire April 10.

Fighting in the south rekindled in July 1977 on the eve of Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian negotiations, a timing which many saw as a military manifestation of Israel's publicly-stated concern over the negotiations. Despite another unilateral ceasefire announced by Salah Khalaf, fighting was reported west of Bint Jubayl, and in the 'Arqub. Israeli intervention grew too, culminating in the penetration of an IDF armored column a short distance into Lebanese territory in mid-September. Finally, after a series of US diplomatic contacts with Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, a ceasefire was announced September 26. Although not a formal party to this (a legitimization of the PLO that Israel was unprepared to accept), a parallel ceasefire was announced by Palestinian forces.²³

With this, political efforts once more focussed on implementation of the Shtura Agreement. Conflicting pressures converged upon the mainstream PLO leadership.

Lebanon, or more specifically the Sarkis administration, continued to press for a Palestinian withdrawal from the south, and the deployment there of the Lebanese Army. When little progress was made on this (in part because of difficulties in rebuilding an army capable of the task) the Lebanese government also broached the possibility of UN forces in the south.

Syria was also anxious to secure a stabilization of the southern situation, and hence backed Sarkis in his calls for rapid implementation of the Shtura Agreement. When the idea of a UN role was brought up, however, Damascus was much less enthusiastic, fearing that such a force would diminish the role of the ADF and hence Syrian influence in the country. The net effect was to cause Damascus to press 'Arafat even harder to fulfill the PLO's commitments.

Israel, meanwhile, was adding provisos of its own to the southern issue. Specifically, the new Begin government insisted on three conditions for its acceptance of the Shtura Agreement: first, that the PLO withdraw ten kilometers north and west of the Litani River (i.e., more 15 km from the border at the closest point); second, that Haddad's militia assume security responsibility in the border zones it occupied; and third, that the "Good Fence" border crossings into the Haddad zone remain open. To underline the seriousness of its demands and further increase the pressure on the Palestinian movement and Lebanese government to comply, the IDF responded to two cross-border shelling incidents against Nahariya in November with massive artillery and air attacks against villages in the south. Over two hundred persons were killed or wounded in these, most of them Lebanese civilians in the village of 'Aziyya.

The bombardment of 'Aziyya had its effect, galvanizing even greater Lebanese pressure on the PLO to withdraw. This came not only from its usual sources—the Lebanese government, the Lebanese Front—but now also from leading figures in the Sunni and Shi'i political leaderships. Within days, the "Front for Safeguarding the South" (consisting of southern Shi'ite

Deputies) and the "Islamic Alliance" (Sa'ib Salam, Rashid Karami, Taqi al-Din al-Sulh, Rashid al-Sulh, and 'Abdullah Yafi) had issued a joint call for implementation of the Shtura Agreement. This was echoed by figures as otherwise opposed as Imam Musa al-Sadr and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Shi'i *za'im* Kamil al-As'ad—a clear indication of the concern of the Shi'a community and of the growing concern amongst even one-time Palestinian allies over the Israeli-imposed cost of the Palestinian military presence.

Although the Fateh/PLO leadership was willing to ease tension by implementing—or giving the appearance of implementing—the Shtura Agreement, its political ability to do so was sharply limited. The PFLP, PLF, PSF, and ALF of the Rejection Front were strongly opposed to either withdrawal or the cessation of cross-border operations, a view shared by many Fateh field commanders and fighters.²⁴ The Lebanese National Movement was equally anxious not to surrender their positions in the south and hence be restricted to ADF-controlled areas. External encouragement for such a stand came from Iraq, whose relations with Fateh had deteriorated as PLO-Syrian relations had improved.

The PLO's official signals throughout 1977-78 were thus mixed. Palestinian spokespersons variously emphasized that ~~the PLO was willing to implement the Shtura Agreement~~, but that it would not withdraw from the south; that it would withdraw; that it would withdraw provided Israel and the rightist militias did the same; that it would withdraw only to those positions it was entitled to under the 1969 Cairo Agreement; that it was anxious not to provide pretexts for further Israeli intervention, but that it would continue the armed struggle.²⁵ In part, such statements comprised a deliberate effort to satisfy all while conceding to none. But they also reflected both the contradictory pressures being exerted on the PLO leadership, and divisions with Fateh itself over Lebanese policy.

As Israeli pressure increased, the PLO's position hardened; in the face of Israeli intimidation, it became difficult to back down.²⁶ Indeed, in the wake of Sadat's Jerusalem initiative the PLO had a strong incentive to ~~escalate military action in and from south Lebanon~~, in an effort to underscore the centrality of the Palestinians and the PLO in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As Lebanon entered 1978, the situation in the south seemed as dangerous as ever.

Operation Litani

On 11 March 1978 a group of Fateh guerrillas, having infiltrated ~~Israel~~ by sea, hijacked a bus on the coastal highway 55kms north of Tel Aviv. With the passengers as hostages, they headed south. After a running gun-battle most of the way the bus was finally stopped a few kilometers outside the city. Israeli casualties were high (32 dead, 82 wounded), and ~~overwhelmingly civilian~~. The government claimed that the guerrillas had left from Damur or Tyre in Lebanon, and accelerated a military build-up ~~already under way along the Israeli-Lebanese border~~.²⁷

Three days later, up to twenty thousand Israeli troops invaded south Lebanon. "Operation Stone of Wisdom" (or "Operation Litani," in its expanded version) was, in part, retaliation for the coastal highway attack. It was also a product of mounting Israeli concern about the Palestinian presence in south Lebanon and the increasingly precarious position of Haddad's militia, who had a few days earlier lost an important position at Marun al-Ra's to the Joint Forces. As the IDF entered Lebanon on a broad front, clearing the area before them of all *fida' iyyin*, the Israeli government emphasized the need to create a ten kilometer *cordon sanitaire* in the border zone.

Israeli plans were predicated on the assumption that the scale of the coastal highway attack provided sufficient pretext for a major and sustained operation, an operation in which the US and the UN would not interfere. But the Begin government had miscalculated its diplomatic freedom of action. Stung by the size of the Israeli invasion, the large numbers of Lebanese and Palestinian civilian casualties that resulted, and the potential implications for US prestige of a lengthy Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, Washington's initial ambivalence quickly changed to calls for a rapid withdrawal of Israeli troops and the deployment of a UN peace-keeping force in their place. The result was United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 of 19 March 1978, calling for "strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its territorially recognized boundaries" and an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. Further, the Council decided "in the light of the request of the government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area."²⁸ In practice, the proposed deployment of UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) actually provoked an expansion of the IDF's military campaign: if Israel was going to be forced to withdraw and accept a UN buffer force, it wanted the latter deployed as far north as possible. Consequently, it was only after Israeli forces had extended their control to the banks of the Litani that Israel announced a ceasefire March 21.

For the PLO, Operation Litani had come as no surprise. A general military alert had been declared March 11, and many civilians had been evacuated from the southern camps in anticipation. When the attack did come, the bulk of the Joint Forces slipped away before it, holding only those positions around the city of Tyre. Nevertheless the invasion posed a grave challenge to the Palestinian leadership, politically as well as militarily. In the face of massive Israeli military superiority, the Joint Forces could not be expected to indefinitely hold Tyre—a base of considerable importance, around which three large Palestinian refugee camps were grouped. Moreover, to retreat from all of the area south of the Litani would place the PLO entirely under the sway of the ADF, an almost equally unpalatable alternative. Yet to accept a ceasefire with Israel would, as ever, be seen as a

surrender. To this were added particular concerns regarding the proposed UNIFIL deployment, and especially the fear that the UN force would seal-off the Israeli border to the guerrillas. For these reasons the PLO initially rejected either a ceasefire or the deployment of UNIFIL, arguing that it would constitute "an entrenchment against, and occupation of, southern Lebanon." More out of convenience than conviction, it also echoed Syrian concerns that the deployment of a UN force might undermine the mandate of the ADF.²⁹

Over the next few days, military realities forced a change in Palestinian and Syrian thinking. Within the PLO, concern grew about the possible collapse of the Joint Forces in the Tyre salient and the consequent loss of the important city.³⁰ In retrospect, it seems that the IDF was deterred from launching a full-scale assault on Tyre by the heavy casualties and adverse international reaction it would inevitably incur. To the beleaguered field commanders of the Joint Forces, outnumbered and outgunned before the largest Israeli attack on the south in history, this was not so clear. No military relief was in sight: Syria withheld its forces from combat for fear of escalation, confining itself to permitting the transit of supplies and a few hundred Iraqi "volunteers" to the PLO in the south. Even this ended March 24 when, amid growing Syrian and Lebanese pressure on the PLO to accept a ceasefire, the Lebanese government announced a ban on further resupply.

Under these circumstances, the PLO's official attitude towards UNIFIL and a ceasefire turned to one of deliberate indifference. Because of fears by Lebanon and Kuwait (then on the Security Council) that any explicit rejection of the Palestinian armed presence would spur Palestinian opposition, Security Council Resolution 425 had not mentioned the PLO. As a result, Yasir 'Abd Rabbu of the PLO Executive Committee could now argue that the resolution did not concern the Palestinian movement. On March 25 Faruq Qaddumi expressed a willingness to cooperate with the United Nations in bringing about an Israeli withdrawal. Then on March 28 (one day after an appeal from UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim) 'Arafat met with UNIFIL commander General Emmanuel Erskine (of Ghana) and stated the PLO's acceptance of a south Lebanese ceasefire. This acceptance was later transmitted directly to Waldheim by 'Arafat on April 17, when the two met to discuss the issue in Beirut.³¹

The Politics of UNIFIL

That same day, Fateh units under the command of Khalil al-Wazir arrested more than one hundred Fateh guerrillas in the south. This act was promptly denounced by Fateh Revolutionary Council member Muhammad Da'ud 'Awda (Abu Da'ud), and by the official press in Iraq. According to Lebanese press accounts, the detained guerrillas had recently come to south Lebanon from Iraq, and were when arrested about to embark on military operations inside the UNIFIL zone. The whole incident was said to mark the development within Fateh, and within the Palestinian movement as a whole, of grave divisions over UNIFIL and the south Lebanon issue.

The actual politics of the situation were even more complex. There was major criticism within the PLO of the ceasefire and the decision to accept, even cooperate in, the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces. Statements by the Sarkis administration to the effect that Security Council Resolution 425 superseded the Cairo Agreement within the UNIFIL area of operations served to sharpen this dissent. In March, an internal PFLP circular called for the maintenance of daily attacks against Israeli forces, resistance to any attempt by the Lebanese government to take over Palestinian positions, and opposition to UNIFIL deployment other than to supervise an Israeli withdrawal. The PFLP lambasted 'Arafat for "double-dealing" and weakness. Similarly, in a statement issued April 10 the Rejection Front argued that acceptance of a ceasefire undermined the fundamental purpose of the Palestinian revolution, and that consequently the decision was binding only on those forces favoring "capitulation."³²

Yet, as a close reading of these and other statements suggested, there was far more at stake here than a debate over UNIFIL. In the aftermath of Sadat's November 1977 visit to Jerusalem, south Lebanon had become an issue on which a much broader battle was being fought for control over the political direction of the PLO. Proponents of the decision saw cooperation with UNIFIL as opening the way for increased international legitimacy, and as an opportunity to demonstrate the Palestinians' reliability as a negotiating partner—in short, as a significant potential diplomatic victory. Opposing the UN, they argued, would severely damage Palestinian prestige. Critics (including some within Fateh) responded that the presence of UNIFIL might seal off the Israeli-Lebanese border. If so, the PLO would be faced with the choice of either clashing with the UN, or surrendering the armed struggle for doubtful gains in the diplomatic arena. Further, they argued, the manner in which the ceasefire had been accepted, and in particular 'Arafat's personal assurances to Erskine and Waldheim, were prime examples of precisely what was wrong with the whole decision-making structure of the PLO. Externally, the issue was fully exploited by Iraq, which used it as further ammunition in its conflict with both Syria and the PLO/Fateh leadership. The bulk of those arrested had come from Iraq; within Fateh, the incident was seen by many not so much a dispute over UNIFIL or with Abu Da'ud, but as an attempt by Iraq and the Baghdad-based Fateh renegade Abu Nidal to embarrass 'Arafat, undermine the ceasefire, and gain control over the *al-'Asifa* command in the south.³³

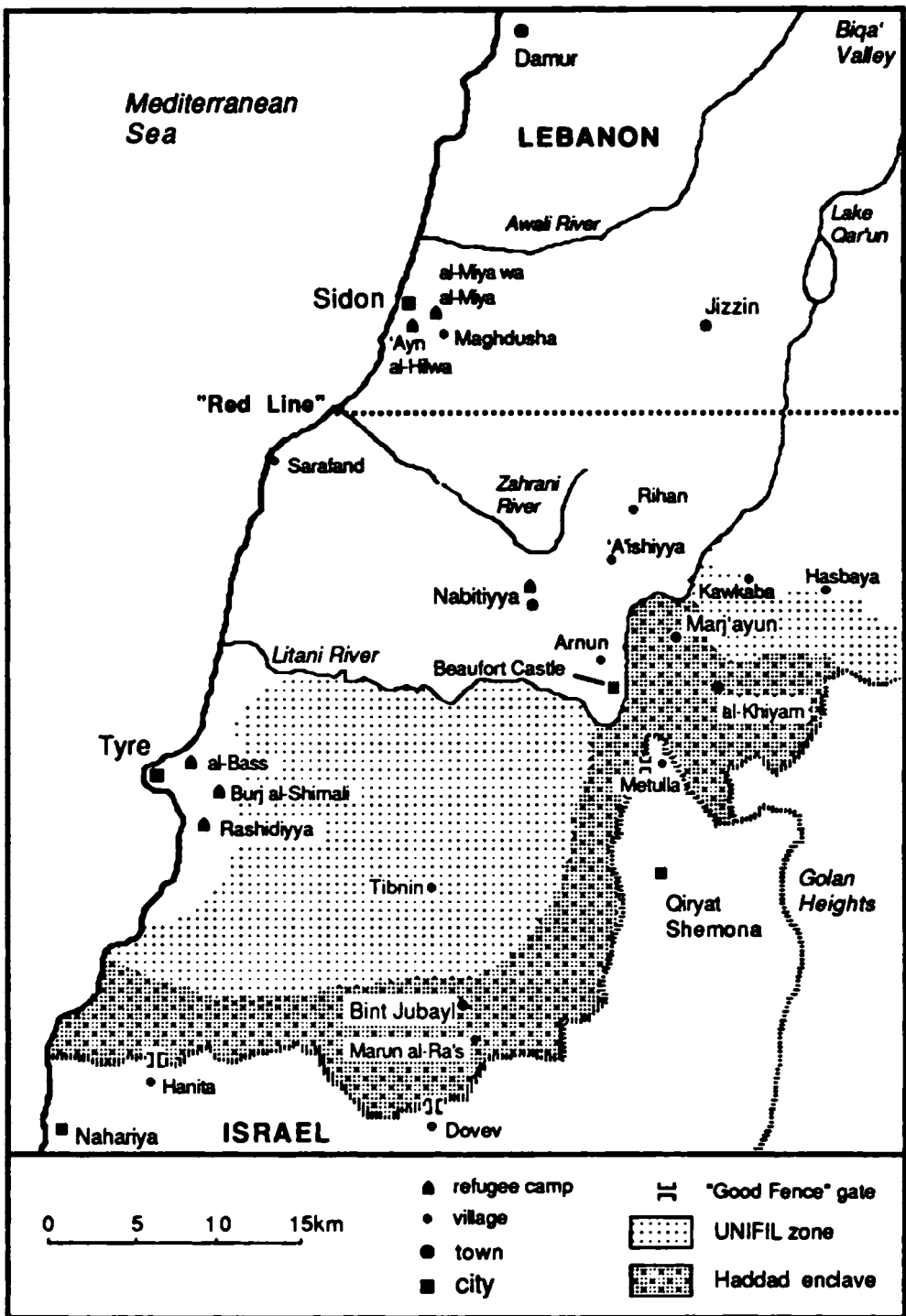
The importance of the issues at stake prompted the mainstream PLO/Fateh leadership to take further measures to prevent ceasefire violations, by force if necessary. In April, Fateh security personnel claimed to have aborted an assassination attempt against UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim during his visit to Lebanon. In late May, there were reports that a special Fateh force of five hundred guerrillas under the command of 'Arafat loyalist Major 'Azmi Sughayyir had been formed to assure the ceasefire. In July and August, Fateh clashed with both the PLF and ALF over these groups' harassment of UNIFIL.

The Fateh clampdown and similar measures to insure the ceasefire

provoked a storm of protest from every Palestinian organization other than al-Sa'iq. On May 18, one day after the Tyre arrests, the PFLP, ALF, PSF, PLF, and DFLP submitted to the Fateh Central Committee a memorandum outlining their views on the current situation. In it they accused the Fateh leadership of exerting hegemony over Palestinian decision-making. They also complained about what they saw as Fateh's attitude towards the LNM, suggesting that "certain parties in the resistance" were "meddling with the National Movement and setting up delusory and popular organizations to influence it from within and to control its political decision-making," thus damaging the PLO-LNM alliance. The memorandum called instead for the National Movement to assume a leadership role, with Palestinian support, in "the struggle to liberate the Lebanese territory occupied by the Zionist enemy in the south, and to achieve its nationalist and democratic goals." Finally, the signatories emphasized the need to escalate Palestinian armed struggle "inside and outside the occupied territories."³⁴

Nevertheless, Fateh's position with regard to UNIFIL prevailed. On May 21, 'Arafat met with UN Undersecretary-General Roberto Guyer in Damascus and confirmed his earlier promise to Waldheim that the PLO would facilitate UNIFIL's task. He also promised that the PLO would refrain from infiltrating fighters into the UNIFIL area, and that it would refrain from attacking Israel from south Lebanon. That same day the PLO Central Council met and endorsed UNIFIL's deployment as part of the process of securing an Israeli withdrawal from the South.

In part the Council's endorsement was due to Fateh's greater weight, and the support it received on this issue from Syria. But it also had a great deal to do with the working relationship that gradually evolved between UNIFIL and the PLO. After a clash between Fateh and French peacekeepers in Tyre in early May, the UN force accepted the Palestinian argument that UNIFIL's mandate to secure an Israeli withdrawal did not entitle (or require) it to enter areas which had remained under the control of the Joint Forces. Only on this basis was the establishment of UNIFIL facilities in Tyre eventually accepted. In his meeting with 'Arafat in Damascus, Guyer confirmed that UNIFIL would allow the supply of food, water and medicine to Palestinian units within its area of operation. In practice, this meant that the PLO was allowed to maintain six groups of positions within the UN deployment area, including a group of strategic deployments in the so-called "Iron Triangle" overlooking the Bint Jubayl-Tyre road. These, the PLO argued, had either remained under the Joint Forces' control during the Litani campaign or were allowed the PLO by "historic" (i.e., Cairo Agreement) right. Mutual arrangements were worked out between PLO and UNIFIL commanders whereby these positions could be supplied and fighters could be rotated in and out of them, although the PLO was not supposed to increase its field strength (totaling around 140 guerrillas) in these areas, expand them, or launch military operations from them. Any armed men or uniformed men attempting to infiltrate through the UN zone would be apprehended, disarmed, and released into the custody of a liaison officer in Tyre.



Map 5.1: South Lebanon, 1978-82

Some sources of PLO-UNIFIL tension did remain, particularly the issue of guerrilla infiltration into the UNIFIL zone. Over time, the PLO would establish up to 450 guerrillas in more than 30 positions inside the UNIFIL area of operations. But for the most part, the PLO was officially cooperative. As a *modus vivendi* developed between the *fida'iyyin* and the UN peacekeepers, virtually all Palestinian groups agreed, publicly or privately, to cooperate with the United Nations and avoid future incidents.³⁵

This attitude stood in sharp contrast to that evinced by Haddad's militia and his Israeli sponsors. The initial stages of Israel's withdrawal, and the deployment in those areas of UN troops, had proceeded relatively smoothly in April. When the time came for the IDF to make its final withdrawal from the remaining ten kilometer security belt along the Israeli-Lebanese border, however, UNIFIL was not permitted to take up positions within the border enclave. Instead, the entire area was handed over by Israel to the control of its local Lebanese proxy, Major Sa'd Haddad (see Map 5.1). The IDF continued to operate, as necessary and at will, in this area. In 1979 Haddad declared it to be "Free Lebanon," virtually seceding from the rest of the country. Over the next few years, it would be Haddad's militia (the "*de facto* forces," in UN terminology) that would account for the bulk of attacks on the 6,000-strong UN peace-keeping force.³⁶

Countdown to Confrontation

(1978-82)

If the PLO debate over UNIFIL deployment had reflected the extent to which issues of Lebanese policy had become inextricably bound up with broader ideological and political issues within the Palestinian movement, the 1978 invasion itself confirmed the extent to which the problems of PLO-Lebanese relations had become overshadowed by the threat of massive, direct Israeli intervention. In both policy debates and practical challenges, therefore, external considerations predominated.

Yet, as argued earlier, the calculus of confronting external threats to the PLO's Lebanese sanctuary was intimately tied to the security of its status in Lebanon. In one sense, this was as secure as ever: PLO-Syrian rapprochement had reactivated (if only partially) a key external alliance, while the PLO's military strength seemed to assure continued deterrence of any significant local threat. Yet this picture, against the backdrop of escalating Israeli pressure, was misleading. For while the vast bulk of the PLO's burgeoning physical infrastructure in Lebanon continued to emerge relatively unscathed from most Israeli attacks, the same could not be said of either the PLO's internal alliances or its position in Lebanese public opinion.

Lebanese Repercussions

The toll, Lebanese and Palestinian, of Operation Litani had been severe. Up to two thousand persons had been killed. Six villages had been destroyed, and 82 others damaged. By Lebanese government estimate some 220,000 refugees—one-third of the area's population—had fled north from the fighting.¹

Partly out of conviction, and partly out of concern at potential Lebanese repercussions, the PLO was quick to deny that the invasion had been a consequence of its own behavior. Israel's claim that the invasion was necessary for security purposes was labeled a mere "pretext." Instead, the PLO argued that the invasion was a reflection of "Zionist designs on south Lebanon," whereby "the Zionist leadership is revealing Israel's actual

intention to occupy the southern and southeastern section of Lebanon, the underlying motive being access to and control over the waters of the Litani River.² Nonetheless a broad range of Lebanese political figures, from the Sarkis administration and the Lebanese Front to Shi'i leaders and traditional figures in virtually every community, assigned a large portion of blame to the PLO. Large segments of public opinion followed suit, compounding an already serious deterioration of Palestinian-Lebanese relations at the popular level.

The seriousness of these problems soon became evident when, in April 1978, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies came together to discuss what was termed the "Palestinian file" (*al-milaf al-filastini*). On April 10 a four person parliamentary committee was charged with finding a common denominator for the debate. The PLO Executive Committee responded three days later with a public re-endorsement of the ceasefire in the south. This gesture did not prevent the subsequent establishment of a larger committee to examine the Palestinian issue, nor the drafting April 23 of a six-point resolution on this and other aspects of the Lebanese conflict. On April 27 that resolution received the unanimous approval of the 74 members who attended a special session of the Chamber of Deputies for that purpose.

Two points of the parliamentary statement explicitly addressed the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. These called for "stopping all Palestinian and non-Palestinian armed action on all Lebanese territory" (point two), and "prohibiting any armed presence apart from that of the legitimate Lebanese authority, and applying Lebanese laws and regulations on all Lebanese as well as on all those present on Lebanese territory without any exception" (point three). The parliamentary declaration thus seemed to envisage a disarmed PLO presence in Lebanon, restricted to activities of a purely political nature.³

Even before the declaration had been formally adopted, the PLO had announced that as far as it was concerned "the decision to stop armed Palestinian action cannot be taken except by the Palestinian revolution alone."⁴ It also stressed that its military presence in Lebanon had been legitimized by the Cairo Agreement of 1969, which the declaration had not mentioned. Yet, as the Executive Committee met to discuss the parliamentary declaration, it faced a quandary. A sustained, frontal attack on the resolution adopted by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies would be seen by many as an intolerable breach of Lebanese sovereignty—sovereignty for which, the PLO once more affirmed, it had the fullest respect. But, in view of its direct rebuttal of the PLO's acquired Cairo Agreement rights, the parliamentary resolution could hardly go unchallenged.

The response ultimately adopted by the Executive Committee was two-fold. It would look to its National Movement allies to bear the brunt of criticizing the declaration. At the same time, the PLO would take other steps to ease PLO-Lebanese tensions.

It was in pursuance of the latter that the Palestinian leadership initiated a round of discussions with Syria and Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Huss on the question of south Lebanon. Two months of talks culminated in

a two and a half hour meeting between a PLO delegation led by 'Arafat and the Prime Minister on May 24. At the conclusion of that meeting, the Palestinian delegation issued a statement outlining a series of undertakings it had made:

1. The PLO assured the Prime Minister that it is interested in facilitating the mission of the UN forces to bring about complete Israeli withdrawal from the south and the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty there.

2. The PLO condemned all negative practices and excesses in the south. It expressed full readiness to exert every effort to prevent such excesses at the earliest possible time in order to preserve Palestinian-Lebanese relations.

3. The PLO emphasized that it intends to end armed manifestations in the south in order to help the legitimate authorities carry out their duties and exercise their sovereignty.

4. At the request of the Prime Minister, the PLO will seek to insure the departure of the volunteers who came during the Israeli invasion of the south.

5. It was agreed to hold further meetings to regulate Lebanese-Palestinian relations in such a way as to safeguard Lebanese sovereignty and serve the Palestinian cause.⁵

Two days later, a meeting of the tripartite Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian technical committee was held. It was agreed to ban the establishment of arms depots or the presence of military vehicles in residential areas in the region between the Litani and Zahrani Rivers. The public appearance of armed men and the firing of weapons into the air during rallies was also banned, particularly in Sidon, Zahrani, and Nabatiyya. A new ceasefire was declared in the south. The PLO also relaxed its previous unwillingness to facilitate deployment of the Lebanese Army in the south. In spring 1979 an army battalion was permitted the passage through (but not deployment in) Joint Forces-controlled territory. The unit subsequently made its way, through Sidon, to Tibnin where it took up positions in the UNIFIL zone.⁶

The PLO insisted that such measures were designed to hasten an Israeli withdrawal from the south, and that they did not compromise Palestinian rights under the Cairo Agreement. There was, however, a major Lebanese public relations component to all this too, an aspect indirectly confirmed by Salah Khalaf when he warned that some guerrilla activities were seriously compromising the PLO's continuing status in Lebanon.⁷

The Decline of the National Movement

Before the civil war, the Palestinian movement had faced challenges to its position in Lebanon with the support of the Lebanese National Movement. It continued to do so afterwards. But the LNM which now stood by its side was a weaker, more divided version of its predecessor, a movement much less able to rally and coordinate the mass support it had so convincingly mobilized in 1969, 1973, and April 1975.

Of the several reasons for this, the assassination of Kamal Junblat was among the most apparent. The elder Junblat had been, whatever his weaknesses, an undeniably powerful political figure. He had been instrumental in welding a disparate assortment of reformist and

revolutionary currents—Arab and Syrian nationalist, Nasirite and Ba‘thist, social democratic and Marxist—into a loose but viable coalition with a common program and sense of direction. Moreover, Kamal Junblat’s status was such that ties between the PLO and LNM reflected a rough equality between the two sides. This could prove a hindrance: according to one close observer Yasir ‘Arafat would sometimes emerge from meetings with the PSP leader “almost crying with frustration” over the differences that had emerged between their respective political agendas.⁸ But the value to the PLO of an ally as powerful as Junblat and the LNM was clear.

With his assassination in March 1977, Kamal Junblat’s son Walid had succeeded to the leadership of the PSP and LNM. Shortly thereafter the National Movement published a new program for the resolution of the Lebanese conflict.⁹ But Walid was not Kamal; the younger Junblat lacked the political experience and national appeal his father had enjoyed. In turn, this subjective change in leadership compounded a series of objective political developments then underway, accentuating the centrifugal tendencies the National Movement had always suffered.

One such factor was the low level of institutionalization the National Movement had achieved. Despite its claims to the contrary, the LNM had made little progress in creating a workable administrative and service infrastructure in the areas which had come under its control, or in strengthening political cooperation and military integration. According to Kamal Junblat, such weaknesses stemmed from a desire to avoid giving the appearance of participating in the *de facto* partition of the country.¹⁰ It was also, however, a product of Kamal Junblat’s very personal leadership. During his lifetime this had tended to overshadow the need to attend to organizing or integrating the many groups that comprised the National Movement. Whatever the reason, it represented a lost opportunity to demonstrate and implement the movement’s ideals. Instead, competition and lack of coordination sparked periodic bouts of internecine fighting amongst National Movement “allies,” notably amongst the various small Nasirite groups in Beirut, and between the *Murabitun* and SSNP in November 1980. In Tripoli, an incident between Lebanese communists and pro-Iraqi Ba‘thists punctuated continuing friction between (non-LNM) Sunni fundamentalists and the Syrian-supported (Alawite) Arab Democratic Party. It also allowed the local emergence of political and security vacuums, vacuums which local armed groups (many little more than street gangs with revolutionary labels) tended to fill. The neighborhoods of West Beirut and other National Movement areas were replete with these, each with its own checkpoints and leadership. Although their activities were outside the framework of the LNM, the movement could not help but suffer guilt by association in the minds of many Lebanese.¹¹

A second development serving to weaken the National Movement was the increasingly sectarian nature of the Lebanese conflict during and after the civil war. Identity card murders and other sectarian atrocities had tended to reinforce communal identities; so too had the explicitly Islamic appeal of the traditional Sunni leadership and the militant Christianity espoused by the

Maronite hawks of the Lebanese Front. This in turn strengthened *zu'ama'* whose political power rested on a confessional basis, while weakening those avowedly non-sectarian parties within the LNM. Certain aspects of National Movement policy and political analysis did not help. The notion of "sect-class" espoused by many on the Lebanese left, for example, had the effect of alienating many otherwise sympathetic Lebanese Christians.

In addition, the impact of Syrian policy on the LNM was substantial. Throughout the 1970s, Damascus played a skillful game of divide and influence, if not conquer. This strategy was evident in the formation of the National Front in 1976, in the death of Kamal Junblat, and in Syrian efforts to woo Walid Junblat into participating in a "Broad National Front" in 1977. Later, the pro-Syrian Lebanese *Ba'ith* Party Organization rejoined the National Movement in an attempt to increase its influence from within. *Amal*, the Lebanese Arab Army, the SSNP and many other Lebanese organizations were deeply penetrated by Syrian intelligence. Meanwhile, Syrian pressure against some National Movement organizations (especially those associated with Iraq) was sustained and intense—even more sustained and intense than that exerted on the PLO. This represented a major reason why many LNM organizations expressed strong opposition to withdrawing from their last areas of autonomy in the south or permitting the deployment of the Lebanese Army there. By emphasizing traditional *zu'ama'* such as Rashid Karami and Sulayman Franjiyya as part of its "Broad National Front" strategy, Damascus reinforced the traditional figures of Lebanese political life, a strengthening that often came at the direct or indirect expense of the LNM.

Other Arab sponsors played the game too, each trying to advance its Lebanese interests through support for Lebanese organizations, or small splinters of organizations. As funds and arms (notably from Libya and Iraq) poured into the Lebanese cauldron, the National Movement grew ever more fragmented.

All of this had a dialectic affect on Palestinian-Lebanese relations. Throughout the early 1970s Palestinian organizations had also provided some material support to their Lebanese allies; during the civil war the joint command had been formed, and the PLO's military preponderance and expertise had led it to dominate the Joint Forces and military decision-making. Now, after Junblat's death, these seeds and the decline of National Movement fortunes provided the ingredients for a qualitative change in the nature of the ties between the LNM and the PLO. Fateh in particular stepped into the widening breach to become a major, and perhaps the major, sponsor of National Movement and local organizations. Fateh arms and funding flowed to many of the small neighborhood militias which sprang up, a policy that became known by its critics as the practice of setting up Lebanese "shops" (*dakakin*). These armed groups, or the security or military forces of a Palestinian organization proper, became a major source of employment for many Lebanese youth in Lebanon's post-civil war economic chaos. Divorced from dependence on a political following, such groups often also became a cover for theft, smuggling, and extortion. Their

activities, and the LNM's consequent weakened independence, hastened the National Movement's decline. This in turn led Fateh to re-emphasize its contacts with the traditional Muslim conservative leadership—a "Broad Front" approach of its own, with equally deleterious effects on the LNM.

Such developments were criticized by the PFLP. For George Habash, it was a "major mistake" that "the very nature of the Lebanese-Palestinian national alliance during the period in question was guided by the Palestinian revolution." Similarly, the PFLP's Mustafa al-Zibri accused Fateh of having dealt with the LNM on a tactical basis, and of having thrust its own agenda upon its Lebanese allies:

This tactical outlook was shortsighted. If we review its history we discover many mistakes. A leader of a neighborhood would come to Fateh and say "I want to form an organization—give me money, give me arms." The next day—a new organization in the neighborhood. This was not the correct way to support the Lebanese National Movement.... Fateh considered itself responsible for everything, from anti-aircraft weapons to the post office in Beirut. They would not give the Lebanese National Movement a free hand to direct the fight.

As for Fateh's dealings with the "Islamic bourgeoisie," these resulted in "political compromises without any benefit to the Palestinian revolution" and further disturbed the position of the LNM.¹²

A similar critique was heard from the Democratic Front. Although it recognized "the objective factors that led to this situation," it argued that "it was in the interest of the Palestinian revolution to safeguard the independence of the [Lebanese] patriotic movement, to help it to overcome the internal weaknesses that it certainly did suffer from, to strengthen the position of the patriotic movement in the internal Lebanese formula instead of replacing it, instead of being a substitute for it."¹³

Yasir 'Arafat strongly denied that Fateh sought to dominate the LNM, and derided the suggestion that PLO should ignore the traditional Muslim elite. It was this group, he later argued, that constituted the "real power" in the country. Similarly, Fateh's Khalil al-Wazir subsequently suggested that the PLO had not gone far enough in this regard, and that the PLO erred in "neglecting others who were neutral, with whom we had to be on good terms—the other Islamic groups and the Christian groups."¹⁴

Some National Movement parties—the PSP, LCP, OCA—did remain influential players in their own right, with a central role in Lebanese and even Palestinian events. Within the LNM, Muhsin Ibrahim of the OCA, George Hawi of the LCP, and Inam Ra'ad of the SSNP all occupied positions almost as influential as that of Walid Junblat himself. As a coalition, however, the overall status of the nationalist and progressive movement was fading. To reverse this decline, the LNM adopted in the spring of 1981 a new charter and program of action designed to set the movement on firmer foundations. Among other things, it called for the National Movement to take a more active security and social welfare role in the areas it controlled. Political and military relations with the PLO were to be reorganized, with the latter's security duties primarily limited to defense of the Palestinian presence.¹⁵ In March 1982 the National Movement

announced that elections would be held the following month for local councils in West Beirut. But neither of these initiatives made much progress. By virtue of its superior strength and resources, the PLO (or more properly Fateh) remained the dominant force in the Joint Forces. In Beirut, the council proposal was dropped in the face of vociferous opposition from the traditional Muslim elite, the government, *Amal*, and the Lebanese Front.

The Rise of the Lebanese Forces

In contrast to the gradual disintegration of the Lebanese progressive movement, the reverse process was underway in the conservative Christian camp. With single-minded determination, Bashir al-Jumayyil was building the militias of the ~~Lebanese Front into a new, unified political and military power. The Lebanese Forces.~~

The Lebanese Forces had originally been established in 1976 as a military umbrella for the militias of the Christian right.¹⁶ Bashir had entered its leadership in July of that year, after the death of Phalangist commander William Hawi during the fighting around Tall al-Za'tar. When the fighting ended, the younger Jumayyil proceeded to use the Lebanese Forces to build a new power base for himself, distinct from that of the Phalange or any of the other traditional rightist parties. His was a new brand of Christian/Maronite militancy, in some ways more akin to that of Camille Chamoun than that of his father. Like Chamoun, ~~Bashir saw in Israel a natural ally. Relations between the Lebanese Forces and the Begin government flourished.~~ Unlike him, Bashir rejected as obsolete many of the traditional symbols and precepts of a "National Pact" Lebanon. His views and personality appealed to a young generation of Christian militiamen who (whatever their formal party memberships) became fiercely attached to their military commander.

Little was allowed to stand in his way. In June 1978, his forces attacked the Franjiyya mountain home at Ehadin, killing Tony Franjiyya (the former President's son, and commander of the Zgharta militia), his wife, and daughter. In July 1980 it was the turn of *al-Numur*, the LNP militia. In 1981 he even disarmed Phalangist militiamen loyal to his brother Amin in the Metn.

Bashir al-Jumayyil's actions soon put him on a direct collision course with Syria. Relations between the two sides had already become frosty as a consequence of the ADF's growing unwillingness to either suppress the Palestinians altogether or allow the LF to do so. Then, in February 1978, fighting broke out between the ADF and Christian rightist units of the Lebanese Army (supported by the LNP) at the Fayaddiyya barracks. In April, rightist leaders accused the ADF of bias when it intervened to contain fighting between the (Christian) 'Ayn al-Rummana and (Muslim) Shiyah districts of Beirut. The attack on the (pro-Syrian) Franjiyyas that summer provoked further fighting in June and July, culminating in the resignation of President Sarkis in protest over Syrian bombardment of East Beirut. (Sarkis later withdrew his resignation when the shooting stopped.) More fighting

erupted in the fall, again followed by a ceasefire. In October, the foreign ministers of Lebanon and those countries contributing to the ADF (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan, Qatar, and the UAE) met at Bayt al-Din, south-east of Beirut. The outcome was essentially a reaffirmation of the role of the ADF and a strong condemnation of those dealing with Israel.¹⁷

On several occasions during this period the Lebanese Forces and Lebanese Front accused the PLO of engineering the clashes to damage their relations with Damascus. The PLO strongly denied the charge, asserting that, on the contrary, its forces had explicit orders not to join the fighting even if fired upon.¹⁸ While the PLO was undoubtedly pleased by the collapse of the Syrian-rightist alliance, Palestinian leaders could not help but be alarmed by the rise of Bashir al-Jumayyil and a strong, militant Lebanese Front:

These forces are well known for their isolationism. Two aspects of their isolationism have to be kept in mind: their affiliation to the West, and their extreme chauvinism in categorically rejecting Arabism. The socio-economic development of Lebanon coupled with the disintegration of the structure inherited from the French mandate era seriously threatened their privileges as a ruling class. These conditions created an objective situation for the conspiracy against the Palestinian Revolution as a dynamic mobilizing force of the exploited masses and the progressive nationalist forces in Lebanon.¹⁹

In the PLO's view such isolationism and conservatism provided strong grounds for the Lebanese Front to forge closer and closer ties to the Palestinians' Israeli foe.

In an attempt to offset this, Salah Khalaf met with Amin al-Jumayyil of the Phalange politburo in October 1978. In November, Palestinian academic Walid Khalidi and Palestinian businessman Hasib Sabbagh held discussions with Pierre al-Jumayyil, Camille Chamoun, and Sulayman Franjiyya. These latter meetings achieved nothing of substance. They did, however, set off a storm of protest from other Palestinian groups, Syria, and the PLO's Lebanese allies. The Central Council of the Lebanese National Movement quickly issued a statement demanding a formal explanation. On November 15 the PLO Executive Committee met to discuss the issue.

Support for Khalidi and Sabbagh was soon forthcoming from Khalaf, who defended the principle of dialogue and the right of the Palestinian movement to speak to whomever it pleased. He also recognized in the virulent condemnations of Khalidi and Sabbagh now being heard, attacks on his own earlier discussions with Amin al-Jumayyil. In a press conference held at the Wafa offices in Beirut, the Fatch leader stressed that the two men's initiative, taken on a personal basis, had nonetheless been told him in advance. It was hoped that it might lead to the extension of the present ceasefire into a permanent truce. The contacts had been established on the clear grounds that Khalidi and Sabbagh did not represent the PLO, and that there could be no dialogue with those who continued to cooperate with Israel. Finally, the discussions had been based on the principle that the permanent resettlement of the Palestinians in Lebanon was unacceptable,

and that Syria must be part of any agreement.²⁰

The political pressure exerted on the PLO by Syria and its Lebanese allies, combined with the unproductiveness of the actual meetings themselves, cut short the nascent dialogue. The PLO disavowed any official involvement. Khalidi and Sabbagh's efforts, stated Yasir 'Arafat, had been a "sincere personal initiative," but "we regret the uproar that has resulted." He added the PLO's official view that "we consider a Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue as necessary," but that such a dialogue "must come after, not before, a Lebanese-Lebanese dialogue."²¹

Shi'ite Stirrings: The PLO, Amal and the South

Overshadowed by the military might of other militias and Palestinians, discredited by his wartime quietism and collaboration with Syria, Imam Musa al-Sadr's influence had fallen sharply in the two years immediately following the 1975-76 civil war. In 1978-79, however, a series of events was to revitalize the *Amal* movement.²²

The first of these was the March 1978 Israeli invasion of south Lebanon. The continuing war in the south had visited massive destruction on the poor Shi'ite farmers of the area.²³ Increasingly, the blame for this was placed on the Palestinian presence, and the attitude of many southern villagers to the PLO grew steadily more hostile. It was a trend which was encouraged by Shi'i notables, by the Lebanese Front, and by Israel. It was reinforced by the often insensitive and sometimes brutal behavior of members of the Joint Forces. And it was a trend which the PLO's Lebanese allies, displaced from their home villages in the south by Israel or Haddad's militia, could do little to counter. Local villages armed themselves, to resist by force any attempt by the Joint Forces to establish positions near their homes and fields which might invite Israeli retaliation. The degree to which *Amal* encouraged this is debatable; generally it was the product of local initiative rather than central direction. Shortly after his election as Chairman of the *Amal* Command Council in 1980, however, *Amal* leader Nabih Berri did acknowledge that he saw a conflict of interest between southerners and the PLO, and that "without the Palestinian presence in the south the residents of the south would not have had to carry the same heavy burden."²⁴ Almost by default, *Amal* became an umbrella for Shi'ite anti-Palestinian organization, a situation that *Amal* in turn exploited to further its own mobilization of the Shi'ite community.

A second factor in the resurgence of *Amal* was the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr while on a trip to Libya in August 1978. In the context of Shi'i religious and cultural tradition the "vanished" Imam took on a particular significance.²⁵ Sadr provided a unifying symbol for the resurgent *Amal*, stimulating an appeal in his absence that he had failed to generate while at its helm.

Third, there was the effect of the Iranian revolution. Strong religious and social links had always existed between Lebanese Shi'ites and the larger Shi'ite population of Iran. Imam Musa al-Sadr himself was born in Iran.

Dr. Mustafa 'Ali Shamran, who had worked with Sadr in Lebanon and operated a school near Tyre, later became Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic until his death in 1981. After its 1979 revolution, Iran emerged as an important sponsor of Shi'ite political organization in Lebanon (and even more so after 1982, when units of Iranian Revolutionary Guards deployed in the Biqa' provided considerable support for *Hizb allah*, *Islamic Amal*, and other fundamentalist groups.) Perhaps most important of all, however, was the psychological feeling of community empowerment which the dramatic success of the (Shi'i) Islamic revolution against the Shah generated within the Lebanese Shi'ite community.

The growth of *Amal* in the early 1980s was accompanied by increasing friction between it and many of the constituent groups of the LNM and PLO. The disappearance of Imam al-Sadr, for example, fueled tensions between *Amal* and pro-Libyan Lebanese Nasirite groups; similarly, the eruption of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 led to clashes with the (pro-Iraqi) ALF and Arab Socialist *Ba'th* Party. Political competition for recruits and influence within the Shi'a community set *Amal* against many National Movement organizations, notably the Lebanese Communist Party and OCA. On top of all this, local friction was generated by the deployment of the Joint Forces in the south, and the resistance to this by local groups under *Amal's* banner.

The first major clashes between *Amal* and the Joint Forces in Beirut erupted in February and March 1980, as the two sides jockeyed for position after a redeployment of the ADF out of many positions in west and south Beirut. In the spring, the assassination (in Iraq) of an Iraqi Shi'ite leader sparked fighting between *Amal* and pro-Iraqi groups. This was finally contained, although not entirely ended, in June by the formation of a Palestinian-LNM-*Amal* coordinating committee. *Amal*, however, continued to reject Fateh blandishments to join the Joint Forces or the PLO-LNM joint command.

Officially, the PLO maintained a position of neutrality in the fighting, seeking only its end. PLO leaders stressed that there was no conflict between the Palestinians and *Amal*, and that on the contrary relations were "good."²⁶ But behind these public statements, Palestinian attitudes towards *Amal* were hardening. Many in the Fateh leadership saw *Amal* as a Syrian tool, one being used to weaken the PLO and LNM in the south with the active connivance of some *Amal* leaders:

From the beginning we had encouraged Imam Musa al-Sadr to create an organization to take a stand in the south and support it. We encouraged this creation, in the south, in the poor areas of Beirut. Imam Musa al-Sadr's slogan was one of "unity between those deprived of their land, and those deprived in their land." This was the beginning of [Fateh's] relations with *Amal*: we used to support them, train them, give them equipment, sometimes even financial support. And relations continued in a good way until 1976. In 1976 Syrian intelligence began to put their hands on *Amal*, and that created the beginning of differences between us and *Amal*...

In 1978 suddenly Nabih Berri reappeared in Beirut, and was able to take control of *Amal* from Husayn Husayni and Shaykh Muhammad Shams al-Din.

At that time, *Amal's* relations with Syria were strong. Nabih Berri's plan was to destroy the relations between us and the Syrians, and between *Amal* and the National Movement. It was almost a daily plan: every day there was a clash between *Amal* and this Lebanese party or that Lebanese party, this Palestinian group or that Palestinian group.²⁷

Fateh also sought to use its contacts with the new revolutionary government in Iran to improve Palestinian-Shi'a relations in south Lebanon. In the immediate aftermath of the Iranian revolution, PLO-Iranian relations were very warm: some members of the Iranian opposition had received military training in Palestinian camps in Lebanon during the Shah's reign, and 'Arafat himself visited Tehran on 17 February 1979 (less than a week after the collapse of the Bakhtiar government) to praise the new regime. But neither this, nor efforts to mediate between the combatants, made much progress:

In 1981 we began to understand *Amal's* game, because they began to play this game in the villages of the south. Of course when there was a clash between *Amal* and the Nationalist groups we used to intercede to stop the clash, so sometimes we had to use force. When we had to use force, when civilians were involved, this reflected on our relations with the population in the area....

We used to support the nationalist groups not directly, but indirectly. But *Amal* always accused the Palestinians, [saying] that every clash in south Lebanon was the responsibility of the Palestinians. Because they were Shi'a, these slogans had their effect on the civilians in the south. This was the point—this was the danger of *Amal's* behavior. It continued up until the last few days before the invasion in 1982.²⁸

In fact, Fateh deployed increasingly heavy military force against *Amal* and pro-*Amal* Shi'i villages in the south, a move that only served to exacerbate Shi'a-Palestinian tensions.

Within the PLO, others shared Fateh's concern over the rise of *Amal's* military and political power. The ALF was particularly hostile to *Amal*, reflecting the state of relations between Iraq and Iran elsewhere in the region. The PFLP journal *al-Hadaf* declared that *Amal* was "seeking to liquidate the positions of the National Movement in southern Lebanon," and warned that there was "a limit to the Palestinian revolution's abstention from getting involved in the fighting."²⁹

The DFLP, however, adopted a dissenting position, arguing that confrontation with *Amal* constituted a "grave political mistake." In its view what was taking place was "a struggle for influence, for prestige in the south," an "underground war against groups and tendencies that were considered in alliance with Syria at that time"—including *Amal*, "considered by the Fateh leadership as one of the stooges of the Syrians."

We were completely against this. And in some cases we in the Democratic Front were on the verge of military confrontation with Fateh in order to stop some of the aggressive acts against these groups—in spite of the fact that, neither in ideology nor in politics, were we very much in agreement.... But we thought that it was not in the interests of the Palestinian resistance to reshape the Lebanese patriotic movement to its own image. By respecting the independence

of this movement, by trying to help it to consolidate its influence in the internal Lebanese struggle, and by building up the political and military might of this movement—this we viewed as the main guarantee for the long-term objectives and interests of the PLO and the Palestinian resistance.³⁰

The DFLP suggested that it was the task of the Lebanese left—not the PLO—to meet the challenge of *Amal*, and through political rather than military means. But this argument had little influence on events, leading only to serious difficulties between the DFLP and some of its Lebanese allies, especially the Lebanese Communist Party.

Clashes between the Joint Forces and *Amal* broke out once more in March, April, and August 1981, leading to the formation of a new Higher Security Committee comprising the ADF, PLO, LNM, and *Amal*. Some ADF troops were stationed in Beirut's southern suburbs, but this did not prevent a recurrence of the fighting in January 1982. In April the heaviest clashes yet broke out in Beirut, Zahrani, Nabatiyya, and around a dozen southern towns and villages. The PLO denied involvement, but such denials were quickly brushed away. Imam Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din of the Supreme Shi'i Council accused Palestinian and National Movement forces of shelling Shi'i villages in the south.³¹ The Council itself issued a strongly-worded communique calling for an end to the fighting and the effective reassertion of Lebanese authority in the area. Although the joint coordinating committee finally brought the shooting to an end, the situation remained explosive.

Destabilizing the "State Within the State"

The mounting public relations problems of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon were compounded by the often poor behavior towards the Lebanese population exhibited by some PLO guerrillas themselves. Even such a strong supporter of the PLO as Kamal Junblat had been moved to comment in 1977:

It has to be said that the Palestinians themselves, by violating Lebanese law, bearing arms as they chose and policing certain important points of access to the capital, actually furthered the plot that had been hatched against them. They carelessly exposed themselves to criticism and even to hatred. High officials and administrators were occasionally stopped and asked for their identity papers by Palestinian patrols. From time to time, Lebanese citizens and foreigners were arrested and imprisoned, on the true or false pretext of having posed a threat to the Palestinian revolution. Such actions were, at first, forgiven, but became increasingly difficult to tolerate. Outsiders making the law in Lebanon, armed demonstrations and ceremonies, military funerals for martyrs of the revolution, it all mounted up and began to alienate public opinion, especially conservative opinion, which was particularly concerned about security.... I never saw a less discreet, less cautious revolution.³²

The situation had deteriorated further amidst the anarchy that was the civil war. The collapse of state authority, the heavy fighting in urban areas, the proliferation of arms and organizations—all of this provided a cover

under which personal interest was advanced. For some Lebanese militias, emerging from the *qabaday* tradition of local strong-arm politics, such activities represented as much their *raison d'être* as did any political objectives or beliefs.³³ This was not the case for Palestinian organizations, which as organizations condemned such behavior, and of whose members only a minority were involved. Still some, including some senior leaders, did exploit the situation. Sa'iqa was particularly notorious in this regard, with its members accused of particular fondness for loot and its leader, Zuhayr Muhsin, winning the nickname *al-'ajami* ("The Persian") from his reputed fondness for stolen rugs. Again, Junblat was moved to comment (not disinterestedly) on his regret of "the chaos created by the Palestinians and nearly all the other parties, the tendency to unbridled self-indulgence and looting":

Al-Sa'iqa tore through Beirut like a cyclone, looting everything. Nearly half the Lebanese population imitated them, in an exhibition of moral decadence for which one can only blame the rapid or illicit enrichment of the few in the past, the disorganization of the state and the re-emergence of the "rapacious Bedouin" in the ranks of the combatants... The flea market was flooded with goods looted from the houses, villas, banks, shops and seraglios of Beirut. After all, Persian carpets are a good long-term investment.... Gangsterism, the ugly face of Bedouinism, reigned triumphant.³⁴

After the fighting died down, smuggling, extortion, and theft continued. So too did corruption as some Palestinian or Lebanese militia officials translated their *de facto* control of large areas of Lebanon into yet more direct personal gain. Their conspicuous wealth at a time when ordinary Palestinians and Lebanese were facing bombings, shellings, and social hardship had a severely corrosive effect on the PLO's status, largely overshadowing the image of a decade earlier of the self-sacrificing *fida'i* struggling to regain usurped rights.³⁵

The problem of criminality, damaging enough in itself, was compounded by political chaos. When fighting flared between or within Palestinian or Lebanese organizations, civilians were often caught in the middle. In the worst single such case in August 1978, as many as one hundred persons were killed when an apartment building housing the PLF headquarters in the Fakahani district of Beirut was blown up, most probably by the PFLP-GC.

Furthermore, Arab regimes continued to use Palestinian or Lebanese organizations to settle their own scores in Lebanon, with similar effects. As Salah Khalaf complained:

...most analyses of the causes of the civil war attribute major responsibility to the *fida'iyyin*, who by their excesses supposedly pushed the Christian rightist parties to take action against the Palestinians.

Advocates of this thesis overlook the fact that most of the provocations to which they refer were committed by *fida'iyyin* organizations manipulated by various Arab regimes, which traditionally settle their scores on Lebanese territory. For instance, when an article offensive to Iraq is published... it is the Arab Liberation Front, a mere puppet of the Baghdad regime, which takes the

matter into hand by dynamiting the publication's building and killing about a dozen people in the process.... And when Sa'iqa, which dances to the tune of Damascus, kidnaps Lebanese belonging to the pro-Iraqi *Ba'ith* party, the PLO is accused of interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs. Or when Libya decides to seize an opponent... it digs up some obscure Palestinian splinter group to do its dirty work.

All this put the PLO in an "intolerable position":

First of all, it goes without saying that we don't necessarily know who is responsible for every act. And secondly, even if we do know, it would be suicidal to incur the wrath of the various Arab regimes on the pretext of maintaining order. Could we afford the luxury of breaking with Syria or Saudi Arabia, for example?³⁶

Tajawuzat ("excesses") was the generic title given to such militia crime, corruption, extortion, internecine fighting in Joint Forces' areas, violations of the Cairo Agreement, and friction arising from the Palestinian presence in the south. Palestinian leaders protested that the Palestinians were not responsible for much of what transpired, that *agents provocateurs* were at work, and that the situation was being exploited by those opposed to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. And much of this was undoubtedly true. Certainly it could point to an effective campaign against it and its image by the Phalangist *Voice of Lebanon* radio, *Voice of Hope* in the Haddad enclave, the right-wing press, and Israel.³⁷ In the Sunni, Shi'i, and Druze communities, many traditional figures were using popular irritation with the PLO as a means of recycling their own political power among their co-religionists. So too was *Amal*. And the Lebanese environment—a "machine-gun forest," in Salah Khalaf's words—was hardly conducive to the maintenance of order.³⁸

But recognition of these mitigating factors made little practical difference. Car-bombings and assassinations were just as deadly, no matter who instigated them. Israeli attacks were apparently a product of the Palestinian presence, Palestinian allegations of long-term Zionist aspirations in south Lebanon notwithstanding. And criminal acts or political violence, whether committed by Palestinians or Lebanese, were seen as occurring under the Palestinians security "umbrella," a view reinforced by the often hazy lines of demarcation between Palestinian and Lebanese organizations. The hostile propaganda (however exaggerated) retained enough basis in fact and day-to-day experience that it was readily accepted by large segments of Lebanese public opinion, Christian and Muslim alike.

The PLO made multiple attempts to halt and reverse the political damage it was suffering in Lebanese public opinion as a consequence of both *tajawuzat* and Israeli destruction in the south. Repeated declarations of support for Lebanese sovereignty, the Shtura and 'Arafat-Huss Agreements, the announcement of ceasefires in the south or freezes on cross-border military activity all comprised aspects of this policy. So too did a series of other measures announced (but rarely implemented) by the PLO, often in response to specific incidents or irritants in PLO-Lebanese

relations. Thus on 1 February 1978, after fighting between the PFLP-GC and PLF in the Sidon refugee camps sparked a protest strike by the inhabitants of that city, the PLO and National Movement agreed to close most Palestinian offices and hand over vacated positions to the LNM. A joint committee was formed to oversee implementation of the agreement, first in Sidon and later in Tyre, Nabatiyya, and other southern towns, and to deal with violators and "undisciplined elements." Further provisions were announced by the National Movement a week later. In May 1978, a decree outlining and strengthening the powers of the PLO Military Prosecutor, its revolutionary courts, and the Palestine Armed Struggle Command was issued by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. In June 1979, the PLO-LNM joint command again promised the closure of offices in Tyre so as to "expose the excuses which the enemy uses to justify his aggression and to defend the masses and their sovereignty." In December, new PLO regulations were announced which, among other things, prohibited commercial activities by PLO employees and the illegal or unpaid acquisition of property. The PLO's intention to close offices outside the camps and end "armed manifestations" was reaffirmed. In June 1980, the PLO announced again that offices in Sidon outside of the refugee camps would be closed, and that armed men would be withdrawn from the streets. The undertaking was expanded and reiterated yet one more time in November, after clashes between the *Muribitun* and SSNP in Beirut.³⁹

By the early 1980s, *tajawuzat* had become the single-most demanding Lebanese issue facing Fateh/PLO decision-makers. Reflecting this concern, the issue was debated at length by Fateh's Fourth General Congress in May 1980, which called for "eliminating all negative aspects that threaten relations with the [Lebanese] masses." A special committee of the Fateh Revolutionary Council was reportedly formed to examine appropriate policy measures to deal with the situation.⁴⁰ But, given the nature of the PLO, LNM, and the sensitivity of the Palestinian position in Lebanon, the matter was not so easily resolved. Restrictions on Palestinian deployment, behavior and activities were rarely implemented, in large part because of the multiplicity of competing organizations and sometimes poor command and control at the local level. Any attempt to force acceptance of such measures, or to impose strict security procedures, would generally be resisted by LNM and PLO groups seeking to preserve their freedom of action. Even when the mechanisms of internal Palestinian discipline did operate, the outcome was usually less than effective. Because of the Lebanese security situation, prison terms for offenders lasted a matter of days or weeks at worst. Formal death sentences (except in the case of flagrant car-bombings) were rare, in part because of 'Arafat's unwillingness to condone them.⁴¹

Moreover, increased security measures tended to reinforce the very impression the PLO leadership was seeking to avoid: that the Palestinians considered themselves a "state within the state." This view had first been promoted by the Lebanese right in the aftermath of the Jordanian *débâcle* in 1970, when PLO institutions and cadres forced from Jordan had been relocated to Lebanon. It gained currency after the civil war, reflecting

growing Lebanese dissatisfaction with the Palestinian movement, the expansion of the PLO's military and social infrastructure, and fears that Egypt's unilateral peace with Israel would result in permanent Palestinian settlement in Lebanon. The scope of Palestinian institution-building—always an important part of the modern revitalization of Palestinian identity, but nowhere more evident than in Lebanon—further strengthened perceptions that Lebanon was becoming the Palestinians' *watan badil*, or "alternative homeland."

In Lebanon, the development of Palestinian social and political institutions had been equally propelled by the collapse of Lebanese central government in 1975-76 and by the Palestinians' post-1969 political autonomy.⁴² Thus the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which had opened clinics in Lebanon in 1969, opened its first hospital in Beirut in 1975 to deal with the exigencies of the civil war. By 1976, it was operating three hospitals; six years later, the PRCS operated no less than 10 hospitals and 30 clinics in the Lebanese camps, 2 physiotherapy centers, a residential rehabilitation center, an orthopedic workshop, a nursing school, and multiple pharmacies. A further 47 other clinics were run by non-Fateh guerrilla organizations. SAMED (the Palestinian Martyrs Works Society), relocated to Lebanon from Jordan in 1971, emerged as a major source of vocational training after the civil war. By 1981 its 46 workshops and factories in Lebanon employed 5,000 persons and had trained some 30,000 more, with reported earnings of \$40 million.

Palestinian political organization kept pace with this expansion. The two largest Palestinian mass organizations—the General Union of Palestine Workers and the General Union of Palestinian Women—each boasted tens of thousands of members, most of them in Lebanon. The PLO had grown from a loosely organized collection of *fida'iyyin* to a vast bureaucratic network, centered in Lebanon, employing perhaps eight thousand civil servants and a budget (including that of constituent organizations) in the hundreds of millions of dollars, three-quarters of which went to support the PLO's social and administrative programs. Despite undertakings in the Milkart Protocols and elsewhere not to entangle Lebanon in its informational activities, Lebanon had become the center of much of the Palestinian press, and of the PLO's *Voice of Palestine* radio network. And, of course, it was the PLO that was the major military force in those areas of Lebanon under the nominal control of the LNM.

Recognizing the political dangers that Lebanese perceptions of a Palestinian "state within the state" posed, efforts were made to use Palestinian institutions to ameliorate Lebanese conditions. A "hearts and minds" campaign of sorts was launched in the south, with the PLO reportedly providing assistance in rebuilding homes destroyed by Israeli attack, digging shelters. Up to L£19 million was paid in compensation. After July 1981 and the particularly heavy Israeli attacks of that summer, a further L£18 million was paid: in the heavily-bombed Fakahani/al-Tariq al-Jadid district of Beirut, L£2,000 was offered to those whose houses had been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, and L£1,000 to those whose

houses had been damaged or who had been forced to seek temporary accommodation. In the south, the PLO reportedly purchased the harvests of farmers whose crops had been destroyed or otherwise rendered unmarketable by damage to local roads and bridges.⁴³

In 1979 alone, the PLO spent a reported Lf9 million treating Lebanese civilians wounded in Israeli or rightist militia attacks. The number of cases treated by the PRCS in Lebanon rose from 373,328 in January-June 1980 to 425,682 in the same period in 1981. Of these 156,209 (37%) were civilians, and 44,183 (34%) of these civilians Lebanese. In direct competition with Israel's own "Good Fence" policy of trying to win support from the local population, the PRCS offered free medical treatment to inhabitants of the border zone. Ironically, this meant that at times Palestinian doctors in Tyre would treat Lebanese civilians with Israeli, even IDF, medical records.⁴⁴

At the time, the Palestinian military commander at Nabatiyya painted an optimistic view of the scope and effectiveness of such relief efforts:

On the administrative level, we cooperate with the regional command of the LNM and the Lebanese Arab Army to provide the inhabitants with medical and food assistance. The shelling has caused great damage to water, telephone and electricity networks, and we have had to repair the damage and restore as many essential services as possible. We have two medical centers here. One is run by the Palestinian Red Crescent medical service and the other is run by the LNM. Both of them provide medical treatment free for everyone. Even those medical centers and their personnel have come under attack by Israeli shelling.

Our efforts in these fields are fruitful. The bonds between ourselves and the people of the area are strengthened, their morale is raised and they have a greater opportunity to continue living on their land in their villages.⁴⁵

Others were less glowing in their assessments. One senior DFLP leader warned that neither the PLO nor the LNM had yet undertaken effective political mobilization so as to reverse the "reactionary political effects" in Lebanon of Israeli attacks. He suggested that more could be done to address the housing, medical, and economic needs of displaced southern refugees.⁴⁶ In fact, Nabatiyya camp and town had by now been abandoned by much of their civilian and refugee population in the face of incessant attacks by Israel and Haddad's militia.

Yet, for the time-being at least, the Lebanese themselves (including the LNM) seemed unwilling or unable to undertake either security or administrative responsibilities themselves. Compounding the dilemma, January-March 1980 saw the ADF remove the bulk of its troops from the Beirut-Sidon coastal strip and West Beirut itself, leaving the PLA and the Joint Forces primarily responsible for these areas.

On top of this, a wave of bombings struck Palestinian and LNM-controlled areas beginning in the autumn of 1981. On 17-18 September 1981, car-bombs exploded in Sidon, near Tripoli, and in West Beirut. On September 20, a bomb exploded in a West Beirut cinema. On October 1 another explosion rocked the western part of the capital. Over 300 persons were killed and wounded in these attacks, for which a hitherto unknown

"Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners" claimed responsibility.⁴⁷

The PLO and LNM placed blame on the Lebanese Front, Haddad, the *Deuxième Bureau* and Israel, pointing to the Israel detonators and Hebrew markings found on a car-bomb which improperly detonated in Sidon in February 1982. Salah Khalaf warned the instigators that there was a limit to the PLO's patience: if the bombers did not desist, there would be "no safe areas"—meaning LF-controlled East Beirut and the Haddad enclave to the south. But he also placed blame elsewhere, noting that "many Arab intelligence services are tampering with the Lebanese arena" and citing the particular case of an attempted bombing of an apartment building containing a leftist radio station. Around the same time, a wave of assassinations and murders also struck foreign embassies and diplomatic personnel in West Beirut; the targets (primarily Iraqi and French diplomats) suggested a connection to the Iran-Iraq war. Thus, as well as the Lebanese and Arab-Israeli conflicts, other regional tensions continued to find expression in violence in Lebanon.⁴⁸

By late 1981, the scope of this violence finally led to wide public support for stricter security measures. A meeting of the ADF, LNM, and PLO under the auspices of the Higher Coordinating Committee led to a decision to use ADF troops (including PLA units) to patrol West Beirut. The decision was also taken to ban the presence of other armed men on the streets, to remove heavy weapons from residential neighborhoods, and to halt the illegal construction or occupation of buildings. For a while, the security situation improved. Then, on 26 April 1982, Shaykh Ahmad 'Assaf (a prominent Sunni religious figure) was assassinated. This led to a nation-wide protest strike on April 28. On May 5, a car-bomb exploded near the home of Shaykh Hasan Khalid, the Sunni Grand Mufti. Popular revulsion at these acts damaged the credibility of the LNM still further, and strengthened at its expense the position of the traditional Muslim leadership.

There were also incidents in Sidon. In March and again in May, *Voice of Lebanon* reported clashes between Fateh and members of the local Popular Nasirite Organization. In mid-May a prominent member of the PNO was killed. The rightist press promptly accused Salah Khalaf's PLO security department of responsibility.⁴⁹ A strike by city residents followed.

According to PLO sources, the clashes and murder stemmed from a dispute between groups within the PLO and Popular Nasirite Organization, rather than differences between the two organizations *per se*. The fact that the PLO quickly arrested and handed over to a Lebanese military court for trial the chief suspects in the murder—something it scarcely would have done had the men been acting under orders, as the rightist media charged—seemed to confirm this. But this and other incidents nonetheless illustrated the severe damage being done the PLO's status in Lebanon by undisciplined elements within its ranks, and the effective exploitation (even provocation) of the resulting incidents by hostile elements. It also showed, as *Voice of Palestine* ruefully admitted, that efforts by the PLO and LNM to correct the mistakes of the past had generally resulted in a "quick,

temporary solution" which allowed the problem to reappear elsewhere in a slightly different form. Support for the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon, as distinct from Lebanese support for the Palestinian cause, was at low ebb.⁵⁰

Such problems of security, PLO-LNM relations, and *tajawuzat* were inextricably tied to the PLO's military situation and policy in the south. As Khalil al-Wazir explained:

We can't neglect the circumstances. It was a war. Look at the years after the 1978 war when the Israelis invaded the south. 1979, 1980, 1981—it was continuous war, it didn't stop. A week or even two days wouldn't go by without Israeli attacks by sea, by air, by special forces, by helicopters. Every day for three years, and if not this day, then the next. It was a continuous war, everywhere and all the time. This left us always in continuous battle. We were not paying attention to building [Lebanese] relations because we were in battle...[we] made some mistakes here or there because we, as the Palestinian leadership, were busy facing continuous Israeli attacks.⁵¹

By the same token, the destruction wrought by war in the south only served to fuel antipathy towards the Palestinian armed presence.

Camp David and the War in the South, 1978-81

On 17 September 1978, American President Jimmy Carter, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, and President Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt had signed at Camp David an agreement on a "framework for peace in the Middle East." The following year, on 26 March 1979, the same parties signed a full and formal Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Neither agreement was to bring much peace to the Palestinians, nor the Lebanese. On the contrary it had the opposite effect as the south of Lebanon became one of the chief remaining arenas of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

• For the PLO, Camp David had made it imperative to force recognition, through armed and diplomatic struggle alike, of the centrality of the Palestinian question in any lasting and meaningful Middle East peace settlement. But there were dangers in doing so, and concerns that "the Zionist-isolationist plan in Lebanon will try to exploit the results of the liquidationist Camp David Agreement to escalate their aggression against the Lebanese nationalist forces, the Palestinian revolution, and Syria."⁵²

• For Syria, the Camp David process had heightened the political and strategic importance of the triangular Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian relationship, and hence the importance of maintaining maximum influence over Lebanese and Palestinian events. Under such circumstances, Damascus was even less inclined to tolerate independence on the part of the PLO or LNM.

• For Israel, military pressure on south Lebanon represented an important means of achieving both security and diplomatic goals. Israeli attacks on the PLO in south Lebanon were deliberately intended to undermine the position of PLO "moderates," thus reducing the likelihood that the PLO would make

the sort of diplomatic initiatives and concessions necessary for contacts with the US, and in the longer term abort pressure on Israel for direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.⁵³ Later, with the conclusion of the Camp David Accords and the effective neutralization of Egypt—the most powerful of the Arab confrontation states—Israel acquired a position of massive regional strategic superiority, a virtual *carte blanche* of *realpolitik* that could now be applied to its remaining opponents in Lebanon.

In the wake of "Operation Litani," significant fighting between Israel and the PLO in south Lebanon had resumed in December 1978, three months after Camp David. The IDF raided a Palestinian base near Tyre; the PLO responded by firing rockets into northern Israel. A similar pattern continued into the new year, aggravated by a DFLP guerrilla attack on Ma'alot and subsequent Israeli shelling of Sidon and Nabatiyya. On January 24, UNIFIL managed to achieve an informal and irregularly-observed ceasefire.

Then, in April 1979 and only one month after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the Israeli government announced its adoption of a new policy of "preventative" or "preemptive" Israeli attacks against the PLO. Four major raids and a host of unacknowledged shellings of Palestinian positions in south Lebanon followed. On its part too the PLO declared its determination to escalate the armed struggle against Israel. But at the same time, it emphasized that Palestinian fighters were acting from within the occupied territories or by sea, as in the case of an abortive sea-borne attack by Fateh in March and another by the PLF on Nahariya in April, rather than infiltrating across the Lebanese border. In June 1979, 'Arafat claimed that only two cross-border infiltrations by PLO forces had taken place in the past two years.⁵⁴

By late August 1979 fighting had escalated to include intensive Israeli shelling and bombing of Nabatiyya and other southern towns. This, and other shellings over the past year, had by now left some two hundred Lebanese and Palestinian civilians dead, and many more wounded. International reaction was strongly negative, forcing Israel to announce a suspension of its bombardments as of August 26.

The fighting in south Lebanon was not stilled for long. In September, Haddad's Israeli-backed militia launched new attacks on the Joint Forces, and later against UNIFIL itself. In the skies above, Israeli and Syrian jets tangled on several occasions, to the cost of several of the latter's MiGs. Cross-border activities did stop, however, for six months—until an ALF attack on an Israeli kibbutz on April 6 sparked several Israeli raids in response. In August, Israeli forces resumed artillery bombardment of Nabatiyya and the Arnun heights. Over the next seven months (September 1980–March 1981) the IDF conducted another 13 acknowledged raids in Lebanon, as well as shellings in support of Haddad's militia. During the same period it reported 4 Palestinian cross-border infiltrations and 16 shellings of northern Israel, most of the latter related to fighting in the border enclave or in apparent retaliation for previous IDF attacks.⁵⁵

Armed Struggle: Developments and Difficulties

In Lebanon, the Palestinian movement's strategic dilemma as to how best confront the Camp David process was complicated by increasing operational and political constraints on PLO military action. True, the deployment of UNIFIL and the consolidation of the Haddad enclave along the entire length of the Israeli-Lebanese border had not rendered Palestinian cross-border infiltration impossible. It had, however, made it a much more difficult affair. So too had the pledges made by the Palestinian leadership to the Lebanese government to freeze cross-border activity, and the state of Lebanese public opinion. The PLO thus faced after 1978 a complex strategic calculus in the south, a set of unstable and ever-changing equations in which it was forced to balance regional developments, internal Palestinian politics, Lebanese opinion, Syrian views, Israeli policy and the political and practical difficulties of operations in the south with its own commitment to pursue, even escalate, the armed struggle.

All of this was reflected in changing military tactics. ~~'Infiltration from Lebanon across the Israeli border was discouraged.~~ Instead, the obstacles involved with attempts at ground infiltration through UNIFIL, rightist, and finally Israeli lines were overcome by turning to sea-borne operations and other techniques.⁵⁶ The PLO also sought to step up the pace of its operations on other fronts, especially within the occupied territories but on a few occasions through Jordan.

There was also a ~~steady expansion of the artillery component of Palestinian forces,~~ thus allowing the PLO to engage Israel or Haddad ~~over the heads of UNIFIL forces,~~ and to respond in kind to the shelling of Nabatiyya, Tyre, even Sidon by its opponents in the border enclave. Protection of these weapons in turn required heavier anti-aircraft defenses, and their supply and maintenance a larger logistic "tail." Coupled with the expanded security responsibilities forced on the Joint Forces by the ADF withdrawal from Beirut and the coastal zone south to Sidon, and stepped-up Israeli raids against PLO transportation, supply, command, and training facilities, this necessitated even greater attention to communications and rear-echelon security. And all this required a more efficient and centralized control mechanism for the scattered forces of the PLA, camp militias, and various Palestinian resistance organizations. The changing military environment in Lebanon thus served to accelerate organizational and doctrinal developments within the PLO that had been underway since the early 1970s.

A key element of this change was the process of "regularization" (*tajyish*) of the military forces of the PLO outside of Palestine. In the occupied territories, the need for small guerrilla bands (*al-'isabat al-thawriyya*) was still accepted. In Lebanon, however, the trend was towards building a more structured semi-regular army (*jaysh nizami*). From the late 1970s Fateh forces in south Lebanon had been organized into three larger, brigade-sized (*liwa*) units.⁵⁷ Heavier and more sophisticated weapons were acquired. By 1982 these included BRDM-2 reconnaissance vehicles, BTR-152 armored personnel carriers, ZSU-23-4 radar-directed self-propelled

anti-aircraft guns, SA-9 vehicle-mounted surface-to-air missile launchers, various calibers of towed artillery, multiple rocket launchers (Katyushas) and, most controversial of all, a quantity of obsolete, WWII-era Soviet T-34 tanks.⁵⁸

Development of the external military forces of the PLO was, from 1980 onwards, complemented by a Palestinian recruiting drive. During that year, the unstable Lebanese security situation and increasing fears of an even larger, post-Camp David Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, had led to the formation of a General Mobilization Committee under the PLO's Supreme Military Council. Provisions were drawn up for establishing and training a Palestinian reserve force. In February and April 1981, these provisions were then ratified by the PLO Central Council and PNC respectively as part of a formal General Mobilization Order. Shortly thereafter, the General Mobilization Committee issued formal orders for the reserve call-up and training of Palestinian men aged 16 to 49.⁵⁹

Finally, the early 1980s also saw the increasing centralization of the command and control of Palestinian militia, guerrilla, and PLA forces under the authority of the Supreme Military Council (chaired by Yasir 'Arafat as PLO Commander-in-Chief) and the PLO's Central Operations Room (directed by Brigadier General Sa'd Sayil, with Colonel Sa'id Musa Muragha as his deputy). Specific recommendations to this effect were reiterated by the Military Committee of the Palestine National Council in April 1981. In large part, this was a natural concomitant of the organizational and doctrinal changes and military expansion noted above. But there was, it can be argued, another aspect to it too. Since 1978-79 the PLO had faced an extremely delicate situation in the south in several respects: with regard to the likelihood of major military confrontation with, and possible invasion by, Israeli forces; with regard to interaction with UNIFIL, and the diplomatic ramifications thereof; and with regard to relations with Syria, Lebanon, and the local population. Provocations in any of these areas had to be avoided if the PLO was to retain its status in the south. Accordingly, it grew increasingly vital to exert tighter political control, by the mainstream Palestinian leadership, over Palestinian military action. A more centralized and structured command and control system and the regularization of Palestinian guerrilla ranks would undoubtedly facilitate this. Within the smaller Palestinian groups some expressed the concern that such measures could be used (or might even be intended) to further extend Fateh's military and political dominance. ~~In the context of an increasing~~ Israeli military threat, however, few opposed or argued the necessity of bolstering Palestinian military capabilities or coordination.⁶⁰

South Lebanese Diplomacy: Bayt al-Din and the Tunis Summit

From 1976 on, the Sarkis administration had sought to use its Syrian ally to contain the PLO. By 1978, however, it was clear that this was not being achieved, a fact evident in the failure of the the Bayt al-Din Conference of ADF foreign ministers to produce in their final declaration

any explicit reference to the PLO, other than a reaffirmation of the Riyadh and Cairo Arab Summit resolutions. There were several reasons for this: the resistance of the Palestinian movement; Syrian-Palestinian rapprochement; mounting internal problems in Syria which deflected attention and energy from the Lebanese situation; and growing differences between Syria and the Lebanese Front, which affected Sarkis' own relations with Damascus. The Lebanese government tried once more in an implementation proposal drawn up by the cabinet. This called for the ending of armed manifestations, the departure of PLA troops, and the surrender of excess Palestinian weaponry.⁶¹ With only lukewarm support from Syria and the Bayt al-Din Follow-Up Committee (consisting of Syrian, Saudi, and Kuwaiti representatives) the plan made little headway.

Because of this, and in view of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the south, the Lebanese government began to cast a wider international net in search of support for its position.

Short-lived support from the United States came in the autumn of 1979, after the informal ceasefire had taken hold in the south. In September, Washington set forth a series of proposals for a more enduring truce. These reportedly called for the withdrawal of PLO forces from Nabatiyya and the Tyre salient; the ending of Israeli attacks; a commitment by other militias not to expand the areas under their control; the reinforcement of UNIFIL; and the deployment of more Lebanese troops in the south. Former Under-Secretary of State Philip Habib was sent to the Middle East to follow up on the plan. But no progress was made, either by Habib, or by an official of the French Foreign Ministry who traveled to Beirut to discuss the same issue at around the same time. September 1979 also saw a direct meeting between 'Arafat (with Salah Khalaf) and Sarkis. In it, the Lebanese President asked for a freeze on Palestinian operations in the south, and the deployment there of the Lebanese Army. The PLO leader responded by blaming the LAA for placing obstacles in the army's way.⁶²

When this failed, renewed emphasis was placed on securing inter-Arab agreement on dealing with the south Lebanese issue, an objective in which Sarkis was supported both by al-Huss, and by his successor as Prime Minister that autumn, Shafiq al-Wazzan. In September, the Lebanese government issued a formal call for the convening of an Arab summit conference to discuss the south. Others agreed, and a meeting of Arab heads of state and government was slated for November 1979.

The position that the Lebanese government planned to take in the summit was made evident a few days earlier, during a preparatory meeting of Arab foreign ministers held in Tunis November 15-17. At that time, the Lebanese delegation had distributed a report on the destruction inflicted on south Lebanon, a study of the growth of the Palestinian presence and Lebanon's involvement in the Palestinian issue since 1948, and a Lebanese government working paper outlining the Sarkis administration's proposals for dealing with the problems of the south. Specifically, the working paper proposed the reactivation of the Bayt al-Din Follow-up Committee, and the mobilization of diplomatic pressure (especially through the United States)

on Israel to halt its attacks. With regard to the PLO, it proposed that "the Palestinian resistance refrain from staging military actions from Lebanon, including infiltration," or from announcing actions against Israel from Lebanon. It also proposed that "all armed presence of the Palestinian resistance in the areas outside the international forces' zone of activity... should be minimized." Finally, it stressed the need to re-establish Lebanese sovereignty in the south through the deployment of the Lebanese Army, and called for the elimination of all other armed presences within the UNIFIL zone.⁶³

The PLO (in this case, supported by Syria) submitted its own working paper to the Tunis Summit. This contained another PLO restatement of support for Lebanese sovereignty, unity, and independence. But it also stressed the legitimacy of the Palestinian armed presence in south Lebanon under the terms of the 1969 Cairo Agreement. It proposed that closer forms of Palestinian-Lebanese coordination be instituted, that Arab financial aid be made available to the south, and that those in the south who cooperated with Israel be prosecuted.⁶⁴ Further papers submitted to the foreign ministers by the Lebanese National Movement and the Shi'ite community generally supported the PLO and the Sarkis administration respectively.

The outcome of the foreign ministers' meeting was inconclusive. So too was the main Tunis Summit Conference (November 20-22) itself, where the distance separating the Palestinian and Lebanese positions led to heated debate between 'Arafat and Sarkis, precluding any real agreement. The summit session devoted to south Lebanon was finally abandoned without the benefit of a final public communique. It was reported, however, that Arab leaders did endorse a minimal seven-point "secret" resolution. This was said to re-endorse the prior Riyadh and Cairo Summit Resolutions, stressing the need to re-establish Lebanese sovereignty in the south and supporting the deployment of the Lebanese Army there. It noted a commitment by the PLO to refrain from military operations from Lebanon, while upholding the PLO's right to a military presence in the UNIFIL zone under the terms of the Cairo Agreement. Blame for the destruction in the south was placed squarely on Israel. Finally, the Arab leaders agreed to reactivate the Bayt al-Din Follow-Up Committee, and to initiate a major program of economic and social aid for Lebanon.⁶⁵

In the end it all made little difference. The Follow-Up Committee achieved nothing; only a portion of the economic aid was delivered. When in February 1980 the Lebanese government demanded that positions vacated by the ADF to be occupied solely by the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces, both the LNM and PLO objected. The latter suggested that the Army first take up positions in the Haddad zone, and reemphasized the guarantees for a Palestinian armed presence in the south contained in the Cairo agreement.⁶⁶ And in any event, it was clear by now that the initiative in south Lebanon no longer lay with the Lebanese, Syria, the United Nations, the Arab League, or even with the PLO. It lay with Israel.

The July Crisis

In April 1981, ~~Phalangist militiamen loyal to Bashir Jumayyil attacked~~ Syrian troops in and around the town of Zahla in the Biqa' Valley. Syria responded with a major attack on the town, and on Phalangist positions on Mount Sanin to the north of the city.

The Lebanese Forces' attack on the ADF ~~seemed a deliberate attempt to~~ provoke a crisis in which Israel would become involved on the LF's behalf ~~against Syria.~~ If so, the desired result was not long in coming. On April 28, Israel intervened in support of its Lebanese allies by shooting down two Syrian supply helicopters, on the grounds that such Syrian use of airpower constituted a violation of the 1976 "Red Line" Agreement. The next day Syria deployed SA-3 and SA-6 anti-aircraft missile batteries into previously-prepared positions in Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and his government immediately denounced this as a further and unacceptable violation of the "Red Line," and threatened to destroy the Syrian missile sites. A full-scale "missile crisis" developed, ~~to which the US responded by~~ sending special envoy Philip Habib to mediate between the two sides and forestall further escalation.

Meanwhile, the tensions generated by the Syrian-Israeli confrontation heightened the already explosive political and military situation in the south. On April 9-10, the IDF had conducted a raid against Fateh positions northeast of Nabatiyya. In retaliation, the PLO had rocketed several Israeli settlements in the northern Galilee. This, and the April 16 landmine death of an Israeli officer in the Haddad enclave, led to an expansion of the Israeli attacks, including cross-border shellings and air raids against Damur (April 10), Tyre (April 16), Qal'a al-Shakif (Beaufort Castle) and Nabatiyya (April 20)—the heaviest bombardments of the south since the Israeli invasion of 1978. The PLO again responded in kind, with five rocket attacks against northern Israel on April 20-21, and the shelling of the border enclave. A similar pattern was repeated again the next week, with an Israeli attack on PLA and PFLP-GC installations near Sidon and Nabatiyya being followed by intense exchanges of cross-border artillery fire. In May and June the pace slackened somewhat. The IDF launched four more major raids on Palestinian positions in the south. The PLO leadership, anxious not to let matters get out of hand, refrained from retaliating either by Katyusha or cross-border infiltration. It could not do so indefinitely, however, without serious political risk.

Palestinian restraint finally came to an end on July 10, after Israel launched air-raids on Palestinian artillery positions near Sidon and Nabatiyya, and further attacks against Sidon and Damur four days later. PLO artillery bombarded Qiryat Shemona (July 10, 15), Nahariya (July 15), and targets in the Haddad zone. More Israeli shelling of south Lebanon, and three more Katyusha attacks against northern Israel, followed.⁶⁷

Then, on July 17, Israeli aircraft launched a major bombing raid on Fateh and DFLP headquarters in the Fakahani district of Beirut. Massive, and overwhelmingly civilian, casualties resulted: somewhere between 90

and 175 dead, and perhaps 400-600 injured. At this the PLO unleashed its heaviest riposte yet, with ten salvos of artillery fire on Israeli settlements July 18. Shellings and counter-shellings continued at this rate for the next several days.

Israel's bombing of Beirut also produced a UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to the fighting. UN Undersecretary-General Brian Urquhart and UNIFIL commander William Callaghan pressed the PLO to accept a mutual ceasefire. Following a meeting with Callaghan in Beirut on July 20, 'Arafat communicated his willingness to do so provided that the Haddad enclave not then be used as an umbrella for Israeli attacks. Privately, however, the Palestinian leadership held out scant hope that a ceasefire could be achieved given Israel's massive military superiority and its prior rejection of any negotiations, even indirectly, with the PLO.

Meanwhile, a similar diplomatic track was being pursued in Israel by US mediator Philip Habib, as the US pressured Israel to bring an end to the fighting. By July 24, some 33 Israeli settlements had been the subject of 88 attacks, involving more than 1,200 Palestinian rocket, cannon, and mortar shells over a ten-day period. Casualties had been light (six dead, 59 wounded) in comparison with the hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese casualties in Beirut and the south. Still, the Palestinian shelling did result in the flight of thousands of Israelis from Qiryat Shemona and other northern towns, while those who remained sheltered in bomb-shelters night after night. Such panic and flight was a new phenomenon, unknown in previous Arab-Israeli wars. And the IDF seemed unable to silence the Katyushas. The Israeli cabinet was alarmed, and under mounting public pressure to do something. It thus finally decided to give Habib the green light to secure a cross-border ceasefire with the PLO. Later that day, the US diplomat announced in Jerusalem a suspension of all hostile action between Israel and Lebanon (including the border enclave) effective from 1:30pm local time.

In the meantime, Israel's desire for a ceasefire was negotiated to the PLO by the US through Saudi and UN channels. When the news of Israeli acceptance came through, the PLO leadership was "astonished."⁶⁸ It was even more surprised to learn that Israel, after failing to achieve more extensive restrictions on Palestinian military activities, had agreed to the terms the PLO had previously outlined. That afternoon Yasir 'Arafat, in his personal capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, informed General William Callaghan of UNIFIL of the PLO's acceptance of the ceasefire. Shortly thereafter, a joint meeting of the Palestinian and LNM leadership was held, and the formal decision made to accept the ceasefire terms.⁶⁹ Reaffirmation by the PLO Executive Committee and the Fateh Central Committee followed. In the south, the guns and rockets fell silent.

The July 1981 ceasefire agreement was, as the UNIFIL issue had been three years earlier, a momentous decision with political ramifications far exceeding its immediate military significance. To its proponents, it was a major diplomatic victory, an indirect Israeli recognition of the PLO and an opportunity to demonstrate the Palestinian movement's status and credibility

on the international stage. In this respect it represented a further advance of the diplomatic strategy pursued by 'Arafat since the mid-1970s.

To critics already concerned by such changes in the PLO's position, however, it was (like the 1978 deployment of UNIFIL before it) yet another diminution of the Palestinian armed struggle. They argued that there could not be a ceasefire with the enemy, nor could there ever be until Palestinian national rights were achieved. This feeling was shared not only by the rejectionist organizations, but also by many *al-'Asifa* field commanders who often did not understand the need or reason to stop fighting.⁷⁰ Concerns were also expressed on practical grounds. There was little confidence that Israel would abide by the agreement. And, in terms of the agreement's Lebanese effect, there was the view (notably from the DFLP) that by accepting a ceasefire the PLO was sending the wrong message to the Lebanese people, telling them that the Palestinian presence—and not Israeli aggression—was responsible for their misfortunes.

Nevertheless, on July 24 the decision to accept the ceasefire had been made, and endorsed unanimously by the PLO Executive Committee. When it was later reaffirmed by the Central Council, only verbal objections were raised by rejectionist members.⁷¹

Objective military and political factors had played the major role in the decision to accept the ceasefire on July 24. During and immediately after the fighting, there was broad agreement among those Palestinian leaders in Lebanon at the time that the PLO had little option but to agree. The PLO's military forces and infrastructure were, after two weeks of intense combat with the most powerful armed forces in the Middle East, on the point of collapse. "Breathing space" was imperative.⁷² Furthermore, there was the Lebanese factor to consider: most parties in the LNM, and the vast majority of the Lebanese themselves, wanted a ceasefire. To be seen to be willfully prolonging the terrible destruction being wrought on Lebanese towns and villages in the south would cost the PLO dearly in terms of its already-weakening popular Lebanese support. Last but not least, there was support for the ceasefire from many of the PLO's major allies (notably Saudi Arabia and the USSR), and from the US. Even the Syrians, angry at the prominent Saudi and American role in the negotiations, were anxious to avoid further escalation, and hence were not opposed.

The content of subsequent Palestinian public statements reflected both pride at the PLO's accomplishment, and the need to sell the ceasefire to PLO commanders and the Palestinian rank-and-file. The fighting was hailed as the "Palestinian Ramadan War" and the "Sixth Israeli-Palestinian War," a war in which the Palestinians and their Lebanese allies had, alone, faced down the might of the Israeli military machine and exposed serious contradictions within Israeli society and politics.⁷³ To assuage internal opposition, the view often presented was that the July 24 ceasefire was not a "cease-fire" but a "cease-shelling," that is to say a commitment only to halt cross-border bombardments. Furthermore, it was not an agreement with the "Zionist enemy" through US mediation; it was a Palestinian decision taken pursuant to a request from the United Nations. *Voice of Palestine* had first

announced the ceasefire in precisely these terms on the afternoon of July 24. Another *Voice of Palestine* broadcast to the Joint Forces stressed that "what has been announced today cannot exactly be called a ceasefire," because "there is a difference between a ceasefire and the cessation of shelling," and because "our revolution will not cease firing until we realize the full national rights of our people." Fateh's Colonel Sa'id Musa Muragha (Abu Musa)—himself personally critical of the ceasefire—sought to justify the decision at greater length:

Actually, there is a big difference between ceasing fire and ceasing the exchange of shelling between the Joint Forces and the Israeli forces. The ceasing of shelling means a certain thing. Such a decision is usually made in light of certain circumstances and to serve the tactical and strategic action of the Palestinian revolution.

As for ceasing fire, I say that when the Palestinian revolution erupted in 1965, it defined its strategic objective, namely, the emancipation of the Palestinian land and the return of the Palestinian people to their own homeland. In order to bring about this objective, the Palestinian revolution adopted armed struggle as a method. Armed struggle means continuing the struggle against the occupying Zionist enemy.... Hence, we would like to clarify things here and say that the ceasing of shelling does not mean ending armed struggle. On the contrary, this struggle will continue against the occupying Zionist enemy. Moreover, the decision to cease shelling was made to protect civilians in the innocent, non-belligerent villages in southern Lebanon and to prevent more victims among them...

Because of all this, we hereby adhere to the appeals addressed to the Palestinian revolution by the UN Security Council and by [UN Secretary General] Kurt Waldheim to cease the shelling—the shelling only. Armed struggle will continue inside our occupied land wherever the Zionist enemy is present.⁷⁴

To underline to Israel (and undoubtedly to PLO cadres too) that the ceasefire agreement did not constrain the PLO on non-Lebanese fronts, the PLO immediately planned, and later undertook, an operation against Israel through Jordan.⁷⁵

Despite attempts to define the ceasefire as a "cease-shelling," however, the Fateh/PLO leadership was clearly committed to maintaining a suspension of all operations across the Lebanese border, infiltration included. This commitment was soon put to the test. First the PFLP-GC and later the PFLP disowned the assent given the ceasefire by their own Executive Committee representatives. Fateh-controlled *Voice of Palestine* immediately lambasted this disavowal, accusing the PFLP-GC of a "lack of responsibility" and of "toying with the sons of the Palestinian and Lebanese people in the market of cheap and mercenary one-upmanships." More to the point, Fateh made it clear that it would move militarily against Jibril or any other group which tried to sabotage the ceasefire. Where necessary, it backed up these threats by forcibly confiscating artillery ammunition in the possession of PFLP-GC and PFLP units. On July 27, a statement was issued after a meeting of 'Arafat, Ahmad Jibril, and Muhsin Ibrahim of the National Movement pointedly noting that the three had reaffirmed the ceasefire decision.⁷⁶

Because of Fateh's military predominance, and a general fear among the Palestinian leadership that a full-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon was in the works, this position prevailed. The PFLP-GC and PFLP were restrained. The DFLP and ALF, although critical of aspects of the ceasefire commitment, unofficially suspended cross-border operations.⁷⁷ For nine months the ceasefire held, as both sides prepared for the final showdown.

Readying for the Invasion, July 1981-June 1982

Almost immediately upon concluding the July 1981 ceasefire agreement, political and military pressures mounted on and within the Begin government. The course of the July fighting was one major reason for this: stung by the damage inflicted by the PLO's artillery, "hawks" within the IDF joined with officials from northern Israel in arguing for a major ground operation to destroy the PLO's growing military infrastructure. Moreover, to the extent that most members of the IDF and cabinet saw a breakdown of the ceasefire as inevitable, preemption was urged. But perhaps more important yet were the arguments made against the political consequences of the agreement. The ceasefire agreement had served to heighten the PLO's international stature and reputation. Its maintenance suggested that, contrary to what Israel had always charged, the Palestinian movement was capable of making and keeping agreements. The ceasefire promised to allow the PLO to promote its cause and identity, and further its struggle, from within a relatively secure Lebanese sanctuary. Finally, destruction of the PLO's infrastructure in Lebanon was seen by many Israeli officials as necessary to force local Palestinian leaders to accept Israel's autonomy proposals in the occupied territories. As one Israeli columnist noted in the spring of 1982:

Behind the official excuse of "we shall not tolerate shelling or terrorist actions" lies a strategic view which holds that the physical annihilation of the PLO has to be achieved. That is, not only must its fingers and hands in the West Bank be amputated (as is now being done with an iron fist), but its heart and its head in Beirut must be dealt with. As Israel does not want the PLO as a partner for talks or as an interlocutor for any solution in the West Bank, supporters of confrontation with the PLO hold that the logical continuation of the struggle with the PLO in the territories is in Lebanon. With the loss of its physical strength, in their opinion, the PLO will lose not only its hold over the territories but also its growing international status.⁷⁸

Such political, rather than military, considerations appear to have been the prime factors motivating the chief architect and proponent of an Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. In the words of another Israeli analyst:

[Sharon believed that to] halt its rise to political respectability, the PLO would have to be dealt a blow from which it would not recover for years. To achieve this the PLO would have to be denied an independent territorial base. It would have to lose its command center, its depots, and its organizational hold over the Palestinian population in the refugee camps of Lebanon. Ideally it should not only lose its independent infrastructure but also come under the tight control of

Syria. This would not necessarily destroy Palestinian nationalism but it would weaken substantially the burgeoning PLO establishment, deny it any real autonomy, make it perhaps verbally more extreme but politically and militarily far less potent.⁷⁹

To achieve this, a massive military operation, reaching as far as Beirut itself, would be necessary. This required that Syria be confronted and defeated, in Lebanon at least. And if this was going to be achieved, Israel might as well take advantage of the political vacuum that would inevitably result to put into power its close Lebanese ally Bashir al-Jumayyil, whose ambitions for the forthcoming 1982 Lebanese presidential elections were scarcely veiled. Sharon traveled to East Beirut in January 1982 to discuss his plans with Bashir and Camille Chamoun; a month later his trip was repeated by General Rafael Eitan, the IDF's Chief-of-Staff.

The PLO leadership was aware of these preparations. It had collected together from a variety of sources—friendly Arab and European governments, the USSR, the Israeli press, informants in the Lebanese rightist parties, and its own sources—considerable information on Sharon's war plans. In Beirut, 'Arafat, al-Wazir and others were busy sketching these plans out to Arab and Western diplomats and reporters, as if in the forlorn hope that broadcasting details of the proposed invasion might forestall its eventual implementation.

In August 1981, 'Arafat convened a meeting of the PLO's Supreme Military Council to make preparations for the invasion that all felt was coming. Based on the experience of July, additional artillery was acquired in the hopes that this might act as a deterrent to an Israeli attack. Military supplies were stockpiled, and defenses fortified and dug. Parallel preparations were undertaken by the Palestine Red Crescent Society and other Palestinian and LNM relief and social support agencies, in expectation of the flood of casualties and refugees that would inevitably result.⁸⁰ To avoid providing Israel with a pretext for invasion, the July 1981 ceasefire was to be scrupulously kept. But Palestinian leaders were aware that this could not indefinitely postpone the coming confrontation, nor could any amount of Palestinian military preparations ultimately defeat a determined Israeli attack. The best that could be hoped for was that the Joint Forces could inflict sufficient casualties and win sufficient time for diplomatic intervention to stop the IDF, as had been the case in 1978.

Consequently, the PLO leadership launched a series of efforts designed to improve the political climate in which it would face Israel. In November, on the eve of an Arab summit conference at Fez, 'Arafat met personally with President Sarkis to assure him of the PLO's commitment to the ceasefire agreement. At the summit itself both Lebanon and the PLO pressed for the development of a unified Arab strategy for dealing with the south Lebanese problem. 'Arafat, Faruq Qaddumi, and other Palestinian leaders made the rounds of Arab capitals, hoping to mobilize both greater Arab material support, and Arab diplomatic pressure on the United States to restrain its Israeli ally. The PLO chairman undertook a trip to the USSR and Eastern Europe for a parallel purpose. And the PLO also signalled to the US

that it would be prepared to negotiate a consolidation and expansion of the ceasefire in the south.

But the PLO was to be disappointed by the response it received from both from its external allies and from the US. There seemed little inclination on the part of Arab leaders to proffer anything more than verbal encouragement for the PLO in Lebanon. In Washington, the Reagan administration's strongly pro-Israeli Secretary of State Alexander Haig was sympathetic to Sharon's arguments for military action in Lebanon, and disinclined to discourage it.

In desperation, Salah Khalaf and 'Atallah 'Atallah even tried to use their remaining contacts to reopen a dialogue with the Phalange, hoping that some Palestinian concessions might woo it away from its Israeli alliance. But Bashir Jumayyil, and not the Phalange as such, was the dominant force now in "Christian" Lebanon, and when 'Atallah 'Atallah met with Bashir in February 1982, the Lebanese Forces commander demanded "return" of Damur as a precondition for any further discussions. The dialogue, such as it was, was aborted.⁸¹

All that remained was for the PLO to seek greater strategic cooperation with Syria. This option was favored by most Palestinian groups, but not by 'Arafat and a segment of the Fateh leadership. PLO-Syrian, and more specifically Fateh-Syrian relations had continued somewhat clouded ever since 1976. More recently, additional irritants had entered the picture: political competition between Fateh and Syria in Lebanon, and particularly within the LNM and in the south; the lack of support Syria had provided during the Israeli invasion of 1978; reports that some Fateh leaders were funding the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, a major source of President Asad's domestic troubles; 'Arafat's close ties to Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi (and US) role in the 1981 ceasefire. There was serious disagreement between Damascus and some of the Fateh leadership over the 1981 Fahd (and later Fez) Peace Plan. There was considerable Palestinian resentment of Syria's support for a recent decision (never implemented) of the Arab Follow-Up Committee to ban all non-government arms imports into Lebanon, a move that was seen as an attempt to make the PLO more dependent on Syrian sources of supply. Many within Fateh blamed Syria—not Israel—for several of the car-bombs which had rocked Beirut, Sidon, and other Joint Forces-controlled areas, believing them part of a Syrian program to isolate the PLO from its remaining public support and Lebanese allies. And, whether this latter charge was true or not, it was acknowledged that Abu Nidal had moved his anti-'Arafat organization from Baghdad to Damascus. From there, he continued his terrorist campaign against Jewish and Fateh targets alike around the world.

Nevertheless, in February 1982 Fateh's Revolutionary Council took the decision to open talks with Damascus on strategic cooperation. Later that month, a Fateh delegation led by Salah Khalaf traveled to the Syrian capital, where they held extended talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam. In April, 'Arafat and Asad met. These discussions produced a joint agreement on strategic principles, as well as some concrete defensive measures in

Lebanon. The redeployment of some Palestinian units in the southern Bīqā' was part of this, a move to deter a possible Israeli strike by moving closer to Syrian positions north of the Red Line. (A related Palestinian, although not Syrian, intention of any such redeployment was to assure that when Israel did strike Syrian forces would be dragged into the fray as quickly as possible.) But the "strategic cooperation" established by the talks was limited, a fact that was to become amply evident during the 1982 war. Indeed, the two sides seemed unable to even agree on the exact text of their agreement, with different versions being released in Damascus and Beirut.¹²

The PLO's careful maintenance of the July 1981 ceasefire, as intended, left Begin and Sharon searching for almost a year for a sufficient pretext under which an invasion of Lebanon could be mounted. To facilitate this, official Israeli interpretation of the July 1981 ceasefire agreement was expanded to include clashes between the Joint Forces and Haddad's militias, and Palestinian attacks on other Arab-Israeli fronts or abroad, whether conducted by the PLO or not. In December 1981, an explosion on a Greek ship bound for Haifa led Begin to order the preparation of a military operation against Lebanon, only to rescind the order a short while later when mechanical failure was identified as the cause. The following month, Sharon attempted to secure permission for a similar operation on the basis of a guerrilla raid from Jordan, but was refused. Two more requests were made by the Defense Minister in March. Finally, on April 3, an Israeli diplomat was shot in Paris. Eight days later, a major Israeli air-raid struck Beirut.¹³

Palestinian military forces were immediately placed on alert for an impending Israeli invasion. A general mobilization of all Palestinian males aged 16-39 was ordered. But 'Arafat, anxious to provide no excuse for further escalation, refused internal pressures to fire back.

When an Israeli soldier was killed by a mine in the Haddad border zone on April 21, Israel once again bombed Lebanon, again provoking no response. Another Israeli air-raid followed on May 9.

This time, the provocation was too much. In an emergency meeting of the PLO Executive Committee held immediately afterward, the PLO Chairman once more counseled against retaliation, arguing that it would invite even more Israeli attacks and further damage the PLO's precarious relations with *Amal* and the local population in the south. He was, however, under intense pressure from the more radical organizations, and his own field commanders. Moreover, as 'Arafat himself recognized, the PLO's image in Palestinian and Arab eyes would be badly tarnished if it continued to ignore Israeli ceasefire violations. Thus a limited response was ordered, and six rocket salvos deliberately targeted on unpopulated areas of northern Israel as a deterrent warning. At a subsequent meeting of the PLO's Supreme Military Council, new guidelines were adopted concerning how the PLO would react to Israeli military action. In exchange for an undertaking from the more radical groups not to initiate fire, it was agreed that henceforth the PLO would automatically reply to artillery fire in the sector from which it originated. The response to Israeli air-raids would

remain the prerogative of the senior PLO leadership.⁴⁴

The May exchanges were still not yet sufficient grounds for an invasion, or at least grounds which could be defended to international opinion. These were provided on June 3, when Arab gunmen shot and seriously wounded the Israeli ambassador to Britain, Shlomo Argov. Almost immediately the Israeli government was aware that Abu Nidal, and not the PLO, was responsible for the act. Indeed, the PLO's own London representative was on the gunmen's list of targets. But this nuance did not prevent Begin and Sharon from seizing upon the shooting to order further Israeli bombing of Beirut on June 4. This time the PLO responded with Katyusha fire from south Lebanon, leading to IDF shelling and further air attacks. On June 5, the Israeli government accused the PLO of violating the ceasefire. On 6 June 1982, it invaded Lebanon.

For some 76 days, from the first unleashing of the IDF in the south on June 6, through the inferno of a nine week siege of West Beirut, the PLO and Joint Forces would face in Lebanon an estimated 100,000 Israeli troops and the most powerful and sophisticated arsenal in the Middle East. Under such pressure, the PLO ~~agreed in mid-August to a US-negotiated withdrawal agreement.~~ On August 21, as a Multi-National Force (MNF) of American, French and Italian troops deployed to assure the safety of both departing personnel and "other persons in the Beirut area," the first contingent of Palestinian fighters left the city. By 1 September 1982 the evacuation of 8,144 *fida'iyyin*, 2,651 PLA and 3,603 Syrian troops from Beirut was complete.⁴⁵

Maintaining Sanctuary

The PLO in Lebanon 1969-82: An Assessment

Lebanon had posed a severe test for the PLO. It was (and is) a country suffering from deep social, economic, and political divisions. The Palestinian armed presence had certainly exacerbated the contradictions of the Lebanese system, contradictions that exploded into the Lebanese civil war of 1975-76 and that continued to rend the country thereafter. But it did not create them. After all, Lebanon had fought an earlier civil war—over many of the same issues—in 1958, six years before the foundation of the PLO.

Lebanon has also always been something of a battleground for regional, great-, and superpowers. Once again, it is true that the PLO presence aggravated this. Certainly the PLO attracted greater levels of Israeli and Arab intervention in Lebanon—the inevitable consequence of the regional importance and permeability of the Palestine issue. But Lebanon had been a battleground long before this: in the preceding century alone, the Ottoman Empire had ruled over it; European powers had intervened and finally gained control of it; Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese nationalists and the early Zionist movement had laid claim to it; the United States had landed troops to “protect” it; Arab regimes had fought out their differences in it; years prior to the formation of the PLO, Israeli leaders had discussed the best way of gaining influence or control over it. Outside involvement in Lebanese affairs—often at the request of Lebanese actors—was hardly new.

On top of this, Lebanon’s weakness relative to Israel allowed the latter to embark on a deliberate and sustained series of massive punishment raids against it, intervention designed to destabilize both the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and Lebanon itself. This in itself placed severe limits on the policy options open to the PLO leadership in its attempts to maintain satisfactory Palestinian-Lebanese relations.

Thus, from the beginning, maintaining a secure and useful sanctuary in Lebanon posed serious problems for PLO policy-makers. How did they fare?

It is undeniable that the PLO was successful in overcoming many of the formidable obstacles it faced in Lebanon. After the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Palestinian *fida'iyyin* had exploded onto the regional scene, winning mass support not only from their people but also from the broader Arab population. In the spring and summer of 1969 this support, coupled with external pressures from Egypt and Syria, allowed the Palestinian movement to resist the attempts of the Lebanese Army to suppress its activities in Lebanon. The end result was the Cairo Agreement of November 3, 1969, a document whereby the PLO gained official recognition of the legitimacy of a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon. It would prove of central importance to PLO policy in Lebanon over the next thirteen years.

From 1969 to 1973, and especially after the suppression of the Palestinian movement in Jordan in 1970-71, Lebanon's importance to the PLO grew. During this period the PLO sought, through strategies of restraint and communication, to forestall further conflict with the Lebanese government. When conflict did erupt in 1973, Palestinian resistance, coupled with its internal alliance with the LNM and external alliances with Syria, Egypt and others, was such that the authorities were forced to accept a return to the status quo ante—the Cairo Agreement, as interpreted in the so-called Milkart Protocols. From May 1973 to April 1975, conflict was once more contained. The apparently declining value of the PLO's strategies of restraint and communication, however, led to intensified reliance on internal and external alliances and defensive military preparations. When the civil war erupted in 1975, the PLO's military defense of its positions, together with its internal alliance with the parties of the Lebanese National Movement and assistance from external Arab allies, succeeded in safeguarding the security of the Palestinian refugee camps during the first nine months of fighting. The situation deteriorated in January 1976 with attacks by the Lebanese Front on Palestinian camps in Beirut, to which the PLO and LNM had responded with a counter-offensive, securing a partially effective ceasefire. That spring, continued political stalemate had led the PLO to support the LNM's "Mountain offensive" against the LF heartland. But the PLO would not be allowed to restructure Lebanese politics. Syrian military intervention on behalf of the Lebanese Front came in June, setting the stage for the massacre of thousands of Palestinian civilians at Tall al-Za'tar in August. In September, the Riyadh Summit brought the civil war to an all too ineffectual end.

The PLO and the bulk of the Palestinian population in Lebanon managed to emerge from the civil war battered but intact, despite its precarious military position. In 1976-77, through careful diplomacy and the counterbalancing use of external Arab allies, the PLO resisted hegemonic pressures from Syria. It also retained its arms, and its geographic position in south Lebanon. The PLO-LNM Joint Forces fought a proxy war in the south against Israeli-backed militias with increasing effectiveness, despite growing levels of Israeli intervention and the countless air raids, shellings, ground incursions, airborne and seaborne commando attacks, bombings and assassination attempts directed against them. The Joint Forces resisted

an Israeli invasion in 1978. And, in the end, the PLO was only dislodged (imperfectly at that) after a massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon and two month siege of Beirut—a period of resistance longer than that offered by the Arab armies of 1956, 1967, and 1973 combined.

These political and military achievements were complemented by social and organizational ones. After its expulsion from Jordan, Lebanon became the headquarters of the PLO and focus of Palestinian institution-building. With the collapse of the Lebanese government in 1975-76, the PLO undertook (in cooperation with the LNM) the task of maintaining a skeleton of essential services in those areas under the Joint Forces' control. In the camps, the initiatives undertaken by Palestinian popular committees after the 1969 Cairo Agreement grew into a range of programs, from the supply of electricity and water to public sanitation. An extensive system of hospitals and clinics, open to Lebanese and Palestinians alike, was built and maintained by the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Palestinian mass organizations flourished, grouping together Palestinian workers, women, youth, professionals and other groups within common frameworks under the aegis of the PLO. Most importantly, Palestinians were able to institutionalize their own national consciousness, to solidify the sense of resurgent Palestinian identity that had propelled the rise of the modern Palestinian resistance movement before and after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

All of these were fundamental and impressive accomplishments given the difficulties the Palestinian movement faced. Yet PLO policy was also less coherent, and less effective, than it might have been.

The most important casualty was Lebanese public opinion. In 1969, widespread public support for the Palestinian movement in all Lebanon's confessional communities had effectively stymied Lebanese government efforts to suppress the *fida'iyyin*. Lebanese progressive parties played a particular role in mobilizing this support, and in turn found their growth catalyzed by the Palestinian presence. But even many conservative leaders, and especially the traditional Sunni urban leadership, had little choice but to echo cries for "freedom of action for the *fida'iyyin*" if they were to not risk their own political bases.

By the eve of the 1982 Israeli invasion, however, a significant degree of alienation between the PLO and its traditional Lebanese supporters had set in. Constant Israeli military pressure on Lebanon, resulting in the deaths of thousands and the displacement of hundreds of thousands more was a major, perhaps *the* major, reason for this. Anti-Palestinian propaganda disseminated by Israel and the PLO's Lebanese opponents had fed this growing dissatisfaction. But so too had certain types of Palestinian behavior and policy. In turn, this weakening of the PLO's popular Lebanese position had "a vital impact on the PLO when the Israeli invasion began."¹

A great many Lebanese fought, and died, alongside the Palestinians in resisting the 1982 Israeli invasion. Most would still support the Palestinian cause. Lebanese and Palestinians alike would participate in the post-1982 guerrilla campaign against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Still, after 1982, few Lebanese had any desire to return to the pre-1982 situation.

Lebanese Alliances: Friends and Enemies

The growth of the Palestinian movement in Lebanon in the late 1960s had been viewed with alarm by the conservative Lebanese elite, Christian and Muslim alike. The Palestinian presence attracted increased Israeli military action against Lebanon, attacks which inflicted not only a heavy human cost but also a growing economic toll on the service-oriented Lebanese economy. The Palestinian presence was disruptive in other ways too, with armed Palestinian guerrillas disturbing public order or flaunting Lebanese law and authority. Most fundamentally, however, the Palestinian resistance movement was a dangerous challenge to the Lebanese system itself. The very presence of a militant, generally progressive and avowedly non-sectarian popular movement in an unequal *laissez-faire* society wherein the privileges of a relatively small number of leading families were sustained by a precarious sectarian political order was clearly a destabilizing element. The mass popularity of the *fida'iyyin* only heightened this danger, as did the intensification of Lebanon's own domestic economic and political crisis in the early 1970s. It is in this light that attempts by the Lebanese state (and later by the Phalange, Lebanese Forces, and other self-appointed defenders of the status quo) to suppress the PLO should be seen.

Within the PLO itself, no universally-accepted interpretation of Lebanon's political dynamics ever emerged. For some, the Lebanese conflict was motivated by sectarianism; for others, by class forces transcending confessional boundaries. Still others placed emphasis on the regional dimensions of Lebanese conflict. But for the most part the Fateh mainstream, initially at least, seemed to believe the Palestinian movement could avoid being dragged into Lebanese domestic struggles.

As a result the PLO adopted two major strategies designed to reduce tensions with the Lebanese government and conservative parties: restraint and communication. With regard to the former, the PLO announced (but rarely adhered to) its series of temporary freezes on cross-border activity in south Lebanon in the early 1970s. It also attempted to regulate the behavior of Palestinian guerrillas, through its own military police (the Palestine Armed Struggle Command), judicial system, and internal security forces ("Force 17"). In pursuit of the latter, dialogue was initiated with the Phalange Party and Christian leaders in an effort to ease the Christian right's concerns over the Palestinian armed presence.

Ultimately, however, such policies could achieve only limited results. Although the overall cost of the Palestinian presence to Lebanese decision-makers might be mitigated by reducing transitory PLO-related costs—Israeli retaliation, Palestinian misbehavior, and so forth—the structural component of this cost represented by the PLO's role as a revolutionary catalyst was in essence irreducible. The PLO was an indirect danger to the economic, political, and confessional privileges of the Lebanese elite by the very fact of its being. Conflict with the Lebanese government and its right-wing defenders was therefore inevitable, even more so as the PLO increasingly (and necessarily) allied itself with the reformist and revolutionary parties of the Lebanese National Movement. At best a strategy of restraint or

communication might postpone such conflict or reduce its intensity. It could not, however, forestall it completely. Those who argued that the PLO could avoid being drawn into Lebanese issues—a view encapsulated in Fateh's slogan of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of Arab regimes—had underestimated the degree to which the Palestinian presence and struggle was, in and of itself, a Lebanese issue. The PLO could refrain from intervening in other inter-Lebanese political conflicts, but it could not prevent itself from becoming the focus of one.

The PFLP and DFLP had always known this, although their enthusiasm for the Lebanese social struggle often led them to aggravate the problem. In the belief that Palestinian liberation required a broader revolutionary transformation of the surrounding Arab countries, both were active in their support of sister parties in the LNM. The Arab-sponsored resistance organizations—Syria's al-Sa'iqa, Iraq's Arab Liberation Front—also became active in Lebanese politics through their local Ba'athist equivalents in support of the foreign policy objectives of their respective parent regimes. Meanwhile the various progressive parties that comprised the LNM were, through the late 1960s and early 1970s, only too anxious to tie their fortunes to that of the Palestinian resistance. The PLO was progressive, popular, and a partial guarantee against suppression of the left by a conservative Lebanese state. All of this undercut much of the effectiveness of the PLO's nominal policy of self-restraint, since Palestinian involvement in Lebanese politics was fundamentally provocative to the Lebanese right.

After September 1970, most of this became a moot point. Confrontation with Jordan, and later with other Arab regimes, narrowed the practical differences between Palestinian groups: whether cast in terms of class analysis or otherwise, most came to accept that in the Arab world the PLO was an essentially disruptive force. A basic contradiction existed between the Palestinians' *raison de revolution* and the Arab regimes' *raison d'état*. The 1973 clashes with the Lebanese Army reinforced the point. With the outbreak of the civil war, the PLO mainstream needed no more convincing. Fateh became as active as any other Palestinian group in promoting alliances with Lebanese actors and intervening in Lebanese politics; indeed, as the largest Palestinian organization it became the most heavily involved.

Was this inevitable "Lebanization" of the Palestinian issue a *carte blanche* for the PLO to involve itself in Lebanese politics? Did it invalidate any strategy of Palestinian restraint? Lebanese opposition to the Palestinian armed presence was initially weak and divided, a weakness evident in the PLO's ability to wrest from the authorities terms as advantageous as those contained in the Cairo Agreement of 1969. Active (and often gratuitous) Palestinian intervention in Lebanese political affairs, coupled with cross-border firing, the flaunting of Lebanese sovereignty, the high visibility and poor public behavior of some guerrillas—all of this only served to solidify opposition to the *fida'iyyin* while ultimately weakening the PLO's own essential Lebanese popular base of support. Pressures exerted first by Kamal Junblat as Lebanese Interior Minister in the early 1970s, and later by

the LNM, to restrict certain Palestinian activities was a reflection of their genuine concern as to the damage being done to the PLO (and themselves) by the guerrillas' tendency to showmanship and weak discipline. But this pressure was resisted, and eventually overcome, by the PLO in the name of freedom of action—to the PLO's ultimate cost.

Did the inevitability of conflict imply that dialogue with the Lebanese right was useless? The Palestinian left sometimes argued that it did. But to accept this view is to grant the Lebanese ruling class—a category embracing Maronite leaders, Sunni urban bosses, semi-feudal Shi'a leaders in the south, and many others—a homogeneity and unity of purpose that it simply did not have. Such differences might even have been exploited to the PLO's advantage. The problem with dialogue lay not with the principle, but with the underlying absence of agreement on a clear Lebanese policy.

Still, given the limitations on the use of the strategies of restraint and communication, it was the PLO's internal alliances which had to assume overriding importance in Palestinian policy in Lebanon. As the clashes of 1969, 1973, and 1975-76 showed, the PLO's Lebanese opponents were unable to suppress a Palestinian movement which enjoyed broad support from the Lebanese population and the parties of the LNM. Israel and Syria were similarly limited. Throughout this period, the PLO's links with the LNM and Lebanese masses were strong, productive and multidimensional: formal contacts between PLO and LNM leaders; joint commands and the Joint Forces; inter- and intra-organizational ties. At the grass-roots, social as well as political ties between Palestinians and Lebanese, and the settlement of poor Lebanese in and around the refugee camps, brought the two even closer together.

From the mid-1970s onwards, however, the PLO's Lebanese support and the strength it derived from its internal alliance with the Lebanese National Movement began to dwindle. Objective factors beyond the PLO's immediate control—the 1977 death of LNM leader Kamal Junblat, political sectarianization, Arab interference, Israeli retaliatory policy—all played a major role in this. But so too did important aspects of PLO behavior. Continued Palestinian cross-border military action in the face of a clear Israeli policy of massive retaliation shifted much of the burden of blame for the destruction of south Lebanon from Israel to the easier and more accessible scapegoat of the Palestinian armed presence. With the PLO-dominated Joint Forces now in control of West Beirut and large portion of the south, the impact of negative aspects of Palestinian guerrilla behavior was magnified.

Finally, the PLO's ever increasing intervention in the Lebanese National Movement undercut that organization's political status and further damaged the reputation of the Palestinian resistance in the eyes of its erstwhile supporters. In an attempt to increase its local influence, Fateh increasingly engaged in the creation of marginal but compliant Lebanese organizations—"shops"—owing primary loyalty to Palestinian paymasters. Many were little more than local street gangs, armed and financed by Fateh and operating under grandiose Islamic or Nasirite titles. These groups,

although addressing short-term requirements of local military and political influence, were in the longer term unable to address the social and political problems facing the Lebanese National Movement. Their inability to confront these tasks weakened the LNM from within, burdening the PLO with Lebanese responsibilities that it was neither able nor willing to solve.

Thus, instead of building on the mass base that had allowed the Palestinian movement to survive multiple challenges to its position between 1969 and the civil war, the chief focus of the PLO's Lebanese policy after 1976 shifted elsewhere, to *force majeure*. This was particularly evident in the south, where the PLO responded forcefully to growing levels of Shi'ite opposition to Palestinian military deployments. Palestinian military preponderance, not the LNM or the sympathies of the Lebanese population, became the primary means upon which Palestinian political power and independence in Lebanon rested—joint PLO-LNM commands, consultation, and stirring declarations of solidarity notwithstanding.

The PLO's emphasis on a strategy of "defense" maintained the security and status of the PLO in Lebanon for some six years, from 1976 to 1982. It came at the cost of further Lebanese resentment of what now appeared a Palestinian state-within-the-state. Unlike the PLO's previous reliance on internal allies, the foundations of its post-civil war position was essentially a political house of cards. By removing one material element—the PLO's armed superiority—the PLO's position in Lebanon could be brought tumbling down. And this, of course, is precisely what Israel did in the summer of 1982.

External Alliances: The PLO and Lebanon in Regional Politics

If the Palestinian movement and issue could not be isolated from the dynamics of Lebanese political and social conflict, it was no less inextricably tied to developments at the regional level. The PLO's external alliances with varying Arab actors constituted an important part of its Lebanese policy. Inter-Arab politics posed important pressures, constraints and opportunities for Palestinian decision-makers. Because of the nature of both the Palestinian cause and Palestinian movement, those pressures were both external and internal in nature. Perhaps nowhere was that relationship more graphically—and importantly—illustrated than in the case of PLO-Syrian relations.

Damascus, of course, had important interests at stake in Lebanon stemming from Syria's historic ties to the area, Lebanon's strategic importance to Syrian national security, and Syria's desire to exert influence over the PLO and the Palestinian cause. Damascus also had powerful instruments of policy available. It had much to offer the PLO as an external ally. The PLO was, particularly before 1976, heavily reliant on Syrian bases to maintain its position in Lebanon. It had reason to call upon Syria for more direct diplomatic and material assistance in the face of threats posed by the Lebanese government or right wing in 1969, 1973 and 1975-76. And Damascus had means of coercion against the PLO, whether through covert

intelligence operations, Lebanese proxies or (from 1976) the presence of Syrian troops in Palestinian areas. Such a combination of dependence and vulnerability to coercion severely constrained the PLO's abilities to contravene Syrian wishes, placing a heavy cost upon any open defiance of Damascus. Indeed, even open discussion of Syrian-PLO relations was inhibited, a "Syrian check on Palestinian democracy"² that was only briefly lifted in the summer of 1976 when bilateral differences exploded into direct confrontation.

On top of this, Syria could exert influence on the PLO from within. Syrian policy and pressure was direct transmitted into Palestinian decision-making forums through the presence of al-Sa'iqa. Unilateral actions by Syrian proxy groups could also be used to advance Syrian interests, even where these directly contravened the stance of the mainstream PLO. Because of Syria's weight, there was little the PLO could do to prevent this, short of open conflict with Damascus: in the stark words of one Fateh leader, "so much as arrest a Syrian pimp and [Syrian Chief-of-Staff] Hikmat Shihabi would be calling Yasir 'Arafat to complain."³ Significantly, when confrontation did come in June 1976 the suppression of pro-Syrian organizations was one of the first steps taken by Fateh.

Could conflict with Syria have been avoided? Not surprisingly, Sa'iqa argued that it could, and that the PLO had in 1976 failed to take adequate account of Syria's important interests in Lebanon.⁴ In retrospect the PLO's adoption of a strategy of offense in the spring of 1976—its attempt to forcefully realign Lebanese politics in tandem with its National Movement allies—was doomed to failure. But few in the Palestinian movement came to believe that conflict with Syria could have been mitigated in its entirety. For while Lebanese issues had provided the immediate reason for Syrian intervention in 1976, the sources of Syrian-Palestinian friction were more deeply rooted in Hafiz al-Asad's continuing suspicion of the independence of Palestinian decision-making, an independence that Lebanese events only seemed to confirm. As Salah Khalaf later reflected:

On the Lebanese field, sometimes we used to be involved in some proposals or projects without understanding that there is a "red line" in dealing with Lebanese matters. For example, the "Battle of the Mountain" [March 1976]. It was well known that we would not be allowed to move towards Junya.... When we moved into the Mountain, it was an excuse for the Syrians to come, to enter our areas. That was the big mistake we made. *Not the conflict with Syria—the conflict was going to happen.* But it was our mistake to give the Syrians a reason, an excuse to come [emphasis added].⁵

No other Arab country so affected PLO policy in Lebanon as did Syria, and no other country figured so prominently in it. But this is not to say that they did not try—Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Algeria and others all played a role in Lebanese events too. Indeed as Syrian leverage grew, so too did other Arab intervention as other Arab regimes sought either to forestall Syrian dominance of the PLO or to achieve policy objectives of their own. With the increasing fragmentation of the inter-Arab regional system in the 1970s, inter-Arab competition and conflict grew still

further.

All of this was reflected within both the PLO and within Lebanese domestic politics, both highly sensitive to their regional environment. Faced with contradictory demands from its Arab allies, the PLO was forced to engage in a difficult balancing act, playing off (as in the case of the 1976-77 Quadripartite Committee) the pressures and interests of one against the other, whilst all the time seeking to permanently alienate none.

In this sense, inter-Arab conflict aided the PLO in its search for external allies. But any such benefit was more than offset by other effects.

First, growing levels of inter-Arab conflict—in particular Egypt's defection from the ranks of the Arab confrontation states in 1978, and later the inter-Arab repercussions of the Iran-Iraq war—severely weakened the deterrent restraints Israel might have otherwise felt. As Israeli pressure on south Lebanon grew, the PLO sought to mobilize sufficient Arab and international opposition to abort full-scale Israeli intervention. After the war, it would debate whether its diplomatic efforts had been sufficient, whether further moves might have prevented the Lebanese war.⁶ But the PLO was sharply limited in its ability to affect its regional environment. Inexorably or otherwise, Israeli attacks culminated in the full-scale invasion of June 1982.

Second, growing regional conflict was also manifest in internal conflict within the PLO and Lebanon. Inter-Arab rivalries fought through Lebanese and Palestinian proxies hastened the deterioration of the security climate in Lebanon, exacerbating the problem of *tajawuzat* and discrediting both the PLO and the LNM.

Such factors assumed the political geometry of a vicious circle. The intensification of Arab pressures fueled the PLO's efforts to maintain its independent base of operations in Lebanon. This in turn aggravated both Lebanese tensions and Arab pressures as Syria and others redoubled their efforts to influence the PLO in Lebanon.

Thus the PLO's struggle to maintain its independence and freedom of action in Lebanon became paramount. And the process itself underscored the manner in which the strategic purposes and role of the Palestinian movement's Lebanese sanctuary had undergone substantial change.

Lebanon in Palestinian Strategy

Modern Palestinian guerrilla action, initiated in the 1960s, had been intended to serve as both a popular liberation war against Israel and as a catalyst to greater Arab-Israeli confrontation. It had also been intended to rebuild a shattered Palestinian political community, and to reestablish the Palestinian cause on regional and international agendas. After 1967 the latter would be substantially achieved: in the aftermath of the June defeat, Palestinian guerrilla action struck a particularly defiant and receptive popular note, catapulting the resistance to the political forefront of the Palestinian issue. The mystique of the *fida'iyyin* had been born.

As the 1970s progressed, objective and subjective circumstances led to a gradual change in Palestinian political strategies. "Black September" of

1970, the limited objectives set for the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, clashes with the Lebanese government and the PLO's reluctant envelopment in civil strife there—all of these events served to underscore the ambiguous nature of the Palestinian movement's relations with Arab regimes. At the same time, the Rabat Summit Declaration of 1974 (recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people) and the entrance that same year of the PLO into the United Nations reflected the heightened international profile of the organization and its cause. These two developments, coupled with the continued strength of Israel and unlikelihood of achieving the PLO's initial maximalist program of liberating all Palestine, led to a revision of PLO objectives. Specifically, the immediate goal (if not the dream) of a non-sectarian democratic state in all of Palestine was set aside in favor of a more achievable objective. In 1974, the 12th session of the Palestine National Council endorsed such an approach when it called for the establishment of a "national authority" on any portion of Palestinian land liberated. After 1977 this objective crystallized into the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

All of this had several implications for the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon. First, it cast Palestinian operations from Lebanon against northern Israel in a new light. Such attacks, even at their height, had never posed a serious threat to Israeli national security, whatever their internal Palestinian value or other political achievements.⁷ Now even their political significance was gradually reduced: if the West Bank and Gaza Strip were to be the target of immediate Palestinian liberation efforts, it was here too that Palestinian energies should be concentrated, in an effort to render Israeli occupation as costly as possible. At best, Lebanese cross-border operations might be used sporadically, as an *acte de presence* intended to derail specific regional developments (such as the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations) inimical to Palestinian interests. At worst, such operations actually undermined the PLO's own objectives. They diverted attention and resources away from the occupied territories.⁸ By striking at pre-1967 Israel, they obscured the PLO's emerging acceptance of an independent Palestinian state. Given the civilian nature of most of those targets attacked, cross-border terrorism damaged the PLO's international reputation, and hence devalued the very diplomatic currency it increasingly sought to use in the post-October War period. And, most important in Lebanese terms, Palestinian operations from Lebanon invited (or provided a pretext for) Israeli retaliation aimed at destabilizing the Palestinian movement's Lebanese base.

For the PLO, the deterioration of its position in Lebanon caused by cross-border attacks might have been tolerable had they represented a major source of military pressure on Israel. But they did not; on the contrary, Lebanon's real importance lay elsewhere. By the very nature of the Palestinians' own evolving political objectives, Lebanon had become important not as a military front but as a headquarters for Palestinian diplomatic activity, as a coordination point for popular, diplomatic, and armed struggle in the occupied territories and elsewhere. All of this required

a substantial, secure, and independent Palestinian infrastructure. Indeed, the very essence of the PLO's claim to an independent Palestinian state as it was now being put forward necessitated steadfastness in the occupied territories and a demonstrably independent Palestinian polity-in-exile and national identity—and hence a largely autonomous territorial base free from external interference. This the Palestine Liberation Organization found in Lebanon, and only in Lebanon.

This latter point—that the importance of Lebanon to the PLO was political, not military—was fully understood by then Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who confronted it directly in June 1982. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon had not been intended to destroy the Palestinian movement in a single stroke. What the invasion did seek was a weakening of the PLO's politico-military power and its territorial and political autonomy. After this, the *coup de grâce* would be left to others—notably Syria and Jordan, who could be expected to spare little effort in attempting to exert their own particular hegemonies over the weakened Palestinians and PLO. The primary purpose of "Operation Peace for Galilee" was not to halt Palestinian attacks on northern Israel. Rather, it was an attempt to produce a weakened, more radical PLO under Syrian dominance that would become preoccupied with a struggle for Palestinian loyalties with the Hashemite regime in Jordan—a PLO which would pose a lesser political threat to Israel, and one with which Israel would feel less international pressure to eventually negotiate. The invasion of 1982 thus illustrated more than anything else Israeli fears of the dangers posed by an independent Palestinian movement, and especially an independent Palestinian movement whose status and security had been enhanced since July 1981 by the conclusion and maintenance of a ceasefire on the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Within the PLO, the Lebanese implications and requirements of all this were long debated. Some pressed for freezes on military operations in the south, pointing to both military and political imperatives. But in doing so they argued against the weight of dominant Palestinian images of Israel, images that suggested Israel was driven by an expansionist, racist and imperialist Zionist ideology, fundamentally committed to both the destruction of Palestinian nationalism and the occupation of south Lebanon. Given this, ceasefires were often seen as ineffectual even as a short-term tactical means of recouping Palestinian strength and easing Israeli pressure on the Lebanese people. Israel, this view argued, would attack nonetheless; ceasefires could only compromise the integrity of Palestinian armed struggle and the PLO's Cairo Agreement "rights" whilst conceding the military initiative to the IDF. Only by the late 1970s did a more sophisticated view of the complexities of Israeli society and security policy begin to gain currency.

Moreover issues of Lebanese policy such as the ceasefire debate often cut to ideological and psychological core of the Palestinian movement. As such they became bound up with broader and unresolved issues of the PLO's own changing position on issues as fundamental as the goals of the

struggle and the optimum means of achieving Palestinian liberation. The acceptance of UNIFIL thus seemed to some to signal acceptance of the primacy of diplomatic efforts; the 1981 ceasefire implied the tacit recognition of Israel and hence of a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. Indeed, after the 1982 war some of Yasir 'Arafat's radical critics would carry this view even further, charging that dominance of the LNM and the construction of state institutions had represented a deliberate attempt to hold Lebanon as a political "hostage" for "some solution in the occupied territories." Lebanese policy was consequently identified as a direct outcome of the "rightist trend" in PLO policy since the 1974 PNC.⁹ However much they may have exaggerated the process, they were right in a sense. For as argued above, the objective role of the PLO's Lebanese sanctuary had altered with broader changes in the PLO's political direction.

Yet despite this political transition, the mystique of armed struggle continued to dominate Palestinian political discourse in and about Lebanon through much of the 1970s. In many respects, the means—military action—became a veritable end in itself. Accordingly, until 1978, no freeze on PLO cross-border military operations endured longer than a few weeks. And, in fairness, Palestinian field commanders and fighters could be excused much of their confusion regarding the political rationale which lay behind the conduct, or non-conduct, of military action. Pursuing the politics of ambiguity in an effort to maintain internal unity, the Palestinian leadership itself never clearly set forth the strategy which lay behind such decisions. If the PLO leadership understood the importance of Lebanon—and it is clear from their intense effort to preserve the PLO's position there that they certainly did—that understanding and the needs stemming from it were never clearly articulated to Palestinian cadres or public.

Such confusion was manifest, among other places, in the organizational and doctrinal development of Palestinian military forces. To protect the Palestinian presence against Lebanese opponents, and to increase political control over military ranks, the "regularization" of PLO guerrilla forces progressed in the 1970s and early 1980s. Larger units, formal ranks and command structures were established; artillery and other heavy weapons were acquired. But the more visible nature of such units and weapons made them more vulnerable to Israel and more provocative to many Lebanese than *fida'i* guerrilla bands had ever been. This was particularly true of Palestinian artillery, acquired to circumvent UNIFIL and Israeli border defenses, deter Israeli attacks, and strike back against the Haddad enclave. Cross-border shelling, rather than cross-border infiltration, scarcely seemed heroic to the beleaguered Lebanese who usually bore the brunt of Israeli retaliation.¹⁰

It was in this context, and against the threat of a massive Israeli invasion, that the PLO eventually did begin to deemphasize Lebanese operations, a process marked by its acceptance of UNIFIL deployment in 1978 and the cross-border cease-fire agreement of July 1981. In fact, these decisions were taken as much to calm Lebanese public opinion as to prevent Israeli military intervention. But the process came too late to achieve either.

If the inevitable conflation of issues of Lebanese policy with broader questions of PLO aims and objectives inhibited the PLO's ability to respond to Lebanese circumstances, it was the mechanisms of Palestinian decision-making that provided the most immediate constraints. In part, these reflected the external pressures on the PLO and the changing circumstances in which it found itself between 1969 and 1982. But the process whereby PLO policy emerged in Lebanon also reflected inherent problems of central authority.

PLO Decision-making in Lebanon

The need to build consensus (evident in all but the most pressing emergencies) has created quite remarkable levels of democracy within the PLO. It has often done so, however, at the immediate cost of clear, coherent and effective policy. Even then, the PLO central establishment has generally exerted but weak control over activities of individual organizations.

Fundamental but non-urgent issues before the Palestinian movement have been most likely to be resolved by formal procedures and the PLO's highest decision-making bodies, the PNC or PLO Central Council. In such cases (for example, the PNC's 1974 decision to establish a "national authority" on any liberated Palestinian soil) such procedures have been necessary if the matter under consideration is to receive, and be seen to receive, the broadest and most powerful stamp of Palestinian approval and legitimacy. This process, however, would prove less appropriate to questions of Lebanese policy, questions that often arose in an immediate atmosphere of crisis. It is difficult to assemble from around the world the several hundred Palestinian representatives necessary to convene a session of the Palestine National Council; it would be done only nineteen times, in five different countries, in the twenty-four years from 1964 to 1988. The Central Council, smaller and consisting of the more important members of the PNC, has generally been able to meet every three months or so between PNC sessions. But it has remained unwieldy for the purposes of immediate decision-making. Because of this, neither the PNC nor the Central Council played a major role in the formulation of Palestinian policy in Lebanon. PNC resolutions on Lebanon were largely an exercise in platitudes, carefully written so as not to offend the Lebanese, Syria, or other Arab regimes.¹¹ Similarly the Central Council, while discussing Lebanese issues in more detail, was largely confined to confirming policy decisions taken earlier on the spot.

A somewhat larger role was played by the PLO Executive Committee. Despite its formal subordination to the PNC, the Executive Committee has enjoyed broad latitude in framing and interpreting policy. Smaller than the PNC or CC, it has been able to meet monthly or even biweekly. And it contains representatives (officially or as observers) of each Palestinian organization, thus providing a forum within which inter-group negotiation and compromise can take place. But in many respects it was still ill-suited for Lebanese decision-making. Many of its members resided outside Lebanon at any given time. The fact that many Committee members are

organizational representatives has tended to slow proceedings due to their need to consult with their own political leaderships. In matters of Lebanese policy, the PLO Executive Committee assumed a major role in framing formal responses to developments, especially non-urgent ones, and in bestowing greater legitimacy and authority upon potentially sensitive and divisive decisions. But in many cases, the real locus of PLO decision-making during the 1969-82 period rested elsewhere.

The first of these was the Central Committee of Fateh (or those members available in Lebanon at the time). If at all possible, Fateh would determine its own unified position on an issue before the matter was discussed with other groups, or brought formally before the PLO Executive Committee. Important negotiations and discussions with the Lebanese government, Syria, the LNM, the UN or others were almost invariably headed by senior members of the Fateh leadership, notably Salah Khalaf, Hani al-Hasan, 'Atallah 'Atallah or 'Arafat himself. (Mahmud 'Abbas and Muhammad Ghunaym, largely based in Damascus, also handled much of the contact with the Syrians.) PLO (and Joint Forces) military operations in Lebanon were commanded (formally) by 'Arafat, (practically) by Khalil al-Wazir, overseen by a Central Operations room headed by (Fateh Central Committee member) Sa'd Sayil and (Fateh Revolutionary Council member) Sa'id Musa Muragha, and implemented in regional commands under *al-'Asifa* commanders. Fateh similarly dominated the PLO's informational and diplomatic machinery. As a result, much of the PLO's Lebanese policy was formulated and implemented by unilateral action or administrative fiat.

A second important body of the PLO's Lebanese decision-making tended to dominate the more urgent and important issues of the 1969-82 period. This was the office of the PLO Chairman, in consultation with what was generically referred to as the "leadership of the Palestinian revolution" or the "Palestinian-Lebanese joint command." This comprised input from 'Arafat's senior colleagues in the Fateh leadership and an ad-hoc availability group drawn from:

1. Lebanese-based members of the PLO Executive Committee, especially those (regardless of affiliation) considered specialists in Lebanese affairs.
2. The leaders (or, if unavailable, their deputies or other senior members) of each Palestinian resistance organization. Of these, the PFLP and DFLP were by far the most important, reflecting as they did significant portions of Palestinian opinion. Other organizations (especially Sa'iqa and the ALF) provided external inputs into the process by expressing the position of their respective Arab sponsors.
3. Senior Palestinian military commanders, especially if the matter under consideration was of a military nature.
4. On Lebanese issues, members of the LNM leadership. During his lifetime Kamal Junblat dominated this role. Later Walid Junblat, George Hawi of the LCP, and Muhsin Ibrahim of OCA became the most important figures in this regard.

By virtue of his centrality in the process, the views and leadership attributes of the PLO Chairman—his “charismatic autocracy” and “superb ability in maneuverability,” as one close observer termed them—assumed considerable importance as an internal variable in decisions made this way.¹² Because the participants in the process were leaders and experts in their own right rather than organizational representatives, the process tended to produce a faster and more innovative policy response. Objective factors and a sober appraisal of the situation assumed a greater importance, an effect reinforced by the tendency of the Palestinian movement to pull together and subordinate competition to survival in times of crisis. On the other hand once crises had passed, competition resurfaced and even previously-accepted policy decisions could prove contentious. Fateh, having received a decision, would move to implement its own interpretation thereof; dissidents, despite having acquiesced under the pressure of events, would now feel less constrained to abide.

The Impact of Disunity

Indeed, on many issues of Lebanese policy the political incentives to deviate from a previously agreed position outweighed the value of adherence. This was particularly evident with regard cross-border ceasefires. But the impact of Palestinian disunity extended far beyond this, into other areas of policy too. Weak internal Palestinian cohesion, control and coordination severely undermined the effectiveness of Palestinian policy. It created inconsistencies which undermined the PLO's credibility in the eyes of its allies and opponents alike. Uncontrolled Palestinian behavior—most notoriously and damagingly evidenced in the form of *tajawuzat*—seriously undercut the PLO's Lebanese position, compromising what had once been its essential Lebanese base. At the same time, the PLO's alienation of Lebanese public opinion facilitated the task of external actors (Israeli and Arab alike) seeking to destabilize the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

By the early 1980s, the latter had become among the most pressing problems facing the PLO in Lebanon. But while the dangers of *tajawuzat* were often recognized, the problem was never solved—for several reasons. Much of the chaos was externally instigated, beyond the PLO's control. The PLO was constantly (and deliberately) distracted by the ongoing confrontation with Israel in the south. Paradoxically, the very security measures necessary to contain *tajawuzat* were themselves provocative to Lebanese opinion, being seen as further evidence of the Palestinian construction of a “state within the state.” And, most importantly in terms of policy, the PLO's ability to deal with *tajawuzat* was limited by the very organizational weaknesses that generated it in the first place. As Khalil al-Wazir noted in retrospect:

We have our lessons of what was in Lebanon... First of all, let me say that a part of our mistakes was a lack of strong control over our Palestinian organizations and their way of dealing with the people in a part of Lebanon.

Sometimes there were mistakes by this group or that in a given area. Some were serious, and others were not—but there were mistakes. A second mistake was in our way of dealing with each other, as Palestinian organizations. We did not pay so much attention to strengthening our unity in Lebanon. Although we were all in one organization, as the PLO, and although we were controlling the central situation, every organization was still free to do whatever they could. They could make mistakes here or there, without control.¹³

In a similar vein, Salah Khalaf later commented:

The unity between the organizations was not strong—this is one [mistake]. Because there was not the unity we needed, there was a lack of control among the organizations, with each acting by itself. Because there were so many sections—a security section for each organization, for example; social affairs for each organization; information departments for each organization—this large number of groups, of sections, of offices confused matters and made them difficult to control. And that, of course, created incidents in proportion to the number of sections or offices.¹⁴

Disunity thus created the organizational and political gaps which allowed *tajawuzat* to grow, with serious negative consequences for the PLO's popular Lebanese image. To the extent that much of this was a result of the inevitable penetration of the PLO by Arab regimes and their proxies, there was little that could be done to rectify the situation. Nevertheless, the independent nature of the major, mass-based resistance organizations—Fateh, the PFLP and DFLP—placed on them a special responsibility to address the weaknesses stemming from Palestinian disunity. To the extent that they failed to do so, they bore significant responsibility for the political atmosphere within which *tajawuzat* and lack of coordination endured.

In the case of Fateh, political maneuverability and ambiguity, adopted so as to preserve the unity of the broad-based Fateh movement and the broader PLO, often came at the cost of a clear political program and course of political action. Because of the very different ideological and political currents which make up its nationalist membership (and that of the PLO as a whole), the Fateh leadership felt limited in its ability to publicly elucidate policies. One effect of this has been to encourage clique formation among Fateh sub-groups, and the use of patronage and private structures of authority to assure policy compliance. In Lebanon, fealty often came to be prized over competence; corruption by local Palestinian (and Lebanese) commanders and ill-disciplined behavior by guerrillas were overlooked in the interests of power. This approach was eventually applied to Lebanese politics too, with damaging consequences to both the LNM and the PLO-LNM alliance.

Such behavior was criticized by the PFLP and DFLP. In contrast to Fateh, wherein *tajawuzat* were usually the product of its loose organization, the DFLP and PFLP were less vulnerable to this by virtue of their Leninist internal structures. But they were not entirely innocent of such practices either. Ideological commitment could be negatively manifest in adventurism, disregard for Lebanese law, and a lack of sensitivity to the religious feeling

and moral conservatism of the south Lebanese peasantry. Moreover, these organizations were themselves a major reason for Fatah's actions, having acted throughout the early 1970s as (in the words of one senior Fatah member) a "militant irritant" to the PLO's official policy.¹⁵ Freed from the responsibilities that Fatah bore as the leading Palestinian organization, smaller groups sought to extend their political support by outbidding the mainstream PLO leadership—a process for which Fatah, and not they, often bore the political costs. In turn, Fatah adopted policy unilateralism and ambiguity to achieve its goals—a practice that only increased the suspicion of other Palestinian groups. One result of this was to encourage further PFLP and DFLP criticism of Fatah policies, often not so much on the grounds of staunch opposition, but out of concern as to exactly what they meant.¹⁶

Thus multiple centers of authority coexisted, even competed. Organization and discipline suffered. Reflecting both this and the crisis-laden atmosphere of the times, Lebanese decision-making was generally ad-hoc and fragmented in nature. Those supposedly "unified" decisions that were taken were usually little more than paper exercises.

One example of this was the PLO's efforts to reduce friction by removing Palestinian offices and military deployments from populated Lebanese urban areas. This commitment was made, in various forms, perhaps two dozen times between 1969 and 1982. Yet, whether because of changing conditions, inefficiency or quite deliberate inertia, it was never really implemented. By the early 1980s, it was understandable if many Lebanese no longer believed what the PLO said, and turned to the simple but effective anti-Palestinian propaganda of its opponents.

Maintaining Sanctuary

The PLO's experience in Lebanon illuminates something of the dilemmas of insurgent-sanctuary relations, and of the challenges it poses insurgent policy and policy-makers. It does not resolve, however, the central dilemma of that relationship, a dilemma which remains essentially irresolvable: how to maintain sanctuary without compromising the very struggle for which sanctuary is sought. Insurgent activities in and from sanctuary states remain an important (and often indispensable) part of insurgency. Insurgent-related costs from such action will always threaten to damage insurgent-sanctuary relations. Insurgent policy must work within the confines of this contradiction, seeking to balance its opposing tensions without violating either of its essential bounds. In this respect, the PLO's Lebanese experience suggests some general observations about the challenges of maintaining sanctuary.

First, the PLO's Lebanese experience demonstrates that the military value of a sanctuary state as a launching point for guerrilla activities forms part, and in some cases only a small part, of the full value of external sanctuary to an insurgent movement. As important (and sometimes more important) is the sanctuary's political value as an administrative

headquarters, meeting point, logistics base, and center for training, diplomatic and informational activities. There is a natural tendency for the mystique of the guerrilla to dominate both insurgent thinking and thinking about insurgency. But in the end insurgency is a process with political aims, a process wherein military action is only a means to an end. This being so, effective insurgent policies are those tailored to the real value of maintaining sanctuary. In cases where safeguarding the benefits of sanctuary outweigh the immediate value of guerrilla action, insurgents may be led to suspend the latter so as to enhance prospects of the former.

Second, it is important to recognize the foundations upon which the primary protection of external sanctuary lies—not geography or the defensive military capabilities of the insurgents, but rather the “sanctity” of international borders and all that this implies in the contemporary state system. The regional balance of power, the relative strength of the sanctuary and “enemy,” and the extent of international support for the former play the major role in determining the degree to which the insurgents’ opponent will be able to engage in coercive violence against the insurgents’ host. The requirements of safeguarding sanctuary may thus lead insurgents to pursue active diplomatic efforts designed to mobilize the insurgents’ external allies in such a manner as to bolster the sanctuary’s willingness and ability to resist external intervention. Internally, insurgents must strive to uphold the symbolism of their host’s territorial sovereignty if they wish to enhance its capability to deter intervention. Any failure to do so only serves to invite greater intervention.

All of this serves to underline the value—and limitations—of insurgent adoption of a strategy of restraint. The limitation of insurgent-related costs represents the most obvious method of minimizing the likelihood of confrontation between insurgents and their host. But the ability of an insurgent movement to utilize such a strategy will be sharply limited if either of two conditions is present: if the insurgent’s presence itself poses a structural, revolutionary threat to the stability of the host regime; or if the local balance-of-power is such that their opponent is able to pursue a policy of massive punishment and retaliation relatively free from international constraints. In such cases, other insurgent strategies—defense, internal and external alliance—assume greater importance. Moreover, insurgents face a probable expansion of the conflict zone, either through sustained conflict with the host regime, or through military intervention by their opponent and the consequent transformation of one-time sanctuary into a battleground.

Finally, the importance of insurgent cohesion, command and control—emphasized by O’Neill and others¹⁷—reemerges from the PLO/Lebanese case as a variable of key importance to the development of insurgent-sanctuary relations. Guerrilla ill-discipline is as much a threat to insurgent-sanctuary relations as is enemy military action. Indeed, in some respects its effect is more damaging. Uncontrolled and negative behavior on the part of insurgents increases the cost to their host of sheltering their presence. It weakens local support for the guerrillas. And it increases the likelihood of enemy intervention by simultaneously heightening the

insurgents' profile whilst weakening the very national sovereignty behind which they shelter. Sanctuary is best maintained, therefore, by a low profile. This requires high standards of discipline and coordination, in turn necessitating organizational and leadership structures that address the intrinsic problems of insurgent authority to control the potentially unruly behavior of insurgent personnel.

The PLO's own political structure met the task of safeguarding and promoting a Palestinian identity and national cause. In its establishment of the status of the PLO in the eyes of its population as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, it achieved a remarkable degree of popular authority. It demonstrated independence and even unity in times of severe external challenge. But it never resolved those chronic problems of disunity and lack of coordination that were evident day-to-day at both the strategic and tactical levels. As a result, Lebanese policies were ineffectively applied. The popular Lebanese base upon which it stood was progressively weakened by *tajawuzat*. Lack of cohesion facilitated penetration of the Palestinian movement by Arab intelligence services; gaps in Palestinian ranks were exploited by hostile propaganda. Under the pressure of events—events often deliberately exacerbated by the PLO's opponents to set the organization continually off-balance—insufficient attention was paid to questions of relations with the LNM, and of Lebanese public opinion. Lebanese goodwill was increasingly assumed, not cultivated; the PLO's military preponderance in West Beirut and the south allowed to mask its narrowing Lebanese support.

The issue of Palestinian unity and responsibility would prove an important one, both before and after 1982. The PLO could not directly control Israeli attacks against Lebanon, the Lebanese *Deuxième Bureau*, the Phalange, the policies of Arab states, or many of the other objective factors that so shaped developments in Lebanon. It was, however, expected to control its own behavior and the behavior of those under its umbrella. As its involvement and intervention in Lebanese affairs grew, such expectations grew, even as the PLO found itself beset with tasks beyond its capabilities. In its efforts to meet these, the PLO sought to maximize its short-term influence over the security situation in Lebanon. But it did so in ways (Lebanese "shops," the use of military force) which often aggravated the long-term situation. As Salah Khalaf later observed, the PLO was "afraid that we were going to lose our position, our power or authority in Lebanon," and acted accordingly. But this had a cost, and after 1982 the PLO would have "no authority to lose."¹⁸

Indeed, it was to be in the aftermath of the August 1982 evacuation of PLO personnel from Beirut too that the full legacy—and cost—of earlier PLO policy in Lebanon would make itself felt. As a consequence of the war, the PLO suffered serious losses. With the destruction of its Beirut infrastructure, its cohesion was weakened even as its vulnerability to the cross-currents of regional politics grew. This exacerbated existing internal divisions to the point of an open and bitter four-year split in PLO ranks from 1983, and open combat between Palestinian factions around the

Lebanese city of Tripoli late that year. Shorn of their fighters, Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and throughout south Lebanon found themselves under attack from hostile Lebanese militias, culminating in the massacre of refugees by the Israeli-supported Lebanese Forces at Sabra-Shatila in September 1982, and more than two years of even more costly attacks by the Syrian-supported *Amal* militia from 1985. In this context the PLO was to face an uphill struggle to reestablish even a modicum of its former influence, infrastructure and security in Lebanon.

The PLO in Lebanon since the 1982 War

In his August 1982 farewell message to Beirut, Yasir 'Arafat had portrayed the PLO's departure as a political victory snatched from the jaws of military defeat, a "legend of steadfastness" that "sowed the seeds of great change for our peoples and our nation."¹ Virtually alone, with scant but verbal support from the rest of the Arab world, the PLO and its Lebanese allies had resisted the might of the IDF for more than two months, and had in the end withdrawn from Beirut with its arms and its military presence in the Bīqā' and north Lebanon intact. Yet for all its bravado, there could be little doubt that the PLO's evacuation from Beirut constituted a turning point for the Palestinian movement and its presence in Lebanon.

As a result of the 1982 war, the PLO had all but lost its once virtually autonomous territorial base in Lebanon. The south was now under Israeli occupation; in the Bīqā' and the north the PLO existed under Syria's military sway. PLO personnel once in Beirut were scattered throughout the Middle East, having been evacuated to Algeria, Tunisia, the Sudan, North and South Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria.² Because of this, the control of the PLO central establishment over its cadres and fighters was further weakened.

The PLO's loss of its Lebanese sanctuary, coupled with its material losses, aggravated its existing vulnerabilities to regional pressures. It did so at a time when political demands upon the PLO were building. On 1 September 1982, US President Ronald Reagan had announced a new peace initiative for the region. Despite some departures from past US policy, the proposal explicitly ruled out the establishment of a Palestinian state and seemed intended to capitalize on the PLO's weakness by positing a negotiating process centered on Jordan. Meeting shortly thereafter in Fez, Arab leaders and the PLO endorsed a peace plan of their own. The Fez Plan (based on the earlier Fahd initiative of 1981) called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories and security guarantees for "all states in the region"—an implicit reference to Israel.³

Yet the Arab consensus forged at Fez could not hide renewed regional conflict spurred by events in Lebanon. As Ariel Sharon had forecast, the

weakening of the PLO in Lebanon signaled the start of intense inter-Arab competition to exert influence or hegemony over the weakened Palestinian movement. On one side, Jordan sought to woo the PLO into support of a US-sponsored settlement negotiated through Jordanian auspices. In October 1982 the PLO opened a formal dialogue with Jordan on the issue. Discussions would stretch into April 1983, when they were broken off for lack of progress. On the other, Syria was anxious to amplify its own influence over the Palestinians, both as an instrument of its policy in Lebanon and for the purposes of political leverage in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. It opposed those Palestinian initiatives (such as the dialogue with Amman) which indicated Palestinian independence on issues of crucial importance to Syrian interests. Consequently, Syrian pressure on the PLO grew. With it the conflict between Damascus and Fateh, which had begun during the civil war and reemerged in the early 1980s, intensified.

Finally, within Lebanon itself the PLO faced a domestic political environment transformed by the Israeli invasion and its aftermath. The Maronite right seemed in the ascendant, its position in Lebanon now backed directly by Israeli military power. Indeed, even as the PLO withdrew from Beirut, Bashir al-Jumayyil was elected Sarkis' successor as President by a Lebanese parliament convened under Israeli control. In the Shuf, the new-found power of the Lebanese Forces would soon be evident in an aggressive military campaign against Druze areas. Despite this, Walid Junblat had survived the war with his leadership of the Druze intact, and the PSP had equally preserved much of its military capability. Among the Shi'a the aftermath of the war (and the removal of the PLO from Beirut and the south) confirmed the emergence of *Amal* as a major Lebanese political actor. It also marked the emergence of fundamentalist rivals to *Amal*, most notably the Iranian-backed *Hizb allah*. In contrast, the Sunni community had been greatly weakened by the Israeli invasion. The Nasirite *Murabitun* and other predominantly Sunni militia groups suffered from the withdrawal of their Palestinian allies and suppression by Israel. The already weakened Sunni *zu'ama'* and traditional religious leadership, lacking military resources, could exert only limited influence within post-war Lebanese politics. In some cases—most notably the Tripoli-based Islamic Unification Movement of Sa'id Sha'ban—the resulting gap was filled by new religious-political groupings.⁴

The Struggle for Survival

Such pressures provided the political backdrop to the post-1982 situation in Lebanon. More immediate, however, was the physical predicament of the Palestinian community in Lebanon in the wake of the Beirut withdrawal. The war itself had wrought massive destruction. Some 19,000 Lebanese and Palestinians (more than half of them civilians) had died in the invasion, and a further 30,000 had been wounded.⁵ In addition to the PLO's military losses (about 1-2,000 dead, 2-4,000 held in Israeli detention camps), much of the institutional infrastructure that the PLO had

constructed in Lebanon—hospitals, social services, mass organizations, offices and administration—had been uprooted or destroyed.⁶ Of the 300,000 Palestinians in Beirut and the south, many were once more refugees, their camps having been heavily damaged during the invasion. With the destruction of the PLO's social and military infrastructure they were now bereft of support and protection, surrounded by Israeli troops and hostile Lebanese militias. While their PLO fought to safeguard its political existence, Palestinians in Lebanon found themselves facing a parallel and even more desperate struggle for survival.

Sabra, Shatila and the South

Cognizant of the dangers, the protection of Palestinian civilians left behind in Beirut had been among the central points of the agreement under which the PLO had evacuated the city. The withdrawal agreement provided not only for the deployment of a Multi-National Force (MNF) of US, French and Italian troops in Beirut, but also bilateral guarantees to the PLO from both the US and Lebanese governments, and an Israeli pledge not to enter West Beirut.⁷ Despite this, the US contingent of the MNF withdrew from Beirut ten days ahead of schedule on September 11, forcing the French and Italian contingents to do likewise. On September 15, Bashir al-Jumayyil was assassinated by a bomb at an East Beirut Phalange headquarters. September 16 the IDF entered West Beirut. The next day Lebanese Forces militiamen, thirsting for revenge in the wake of their commander's death, agreed to an IDF request to enter Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in search of Palestinian "terrorists." In fact, there were no guerrillas in the camps, only small numbers of local residents with militia training.

What followed was more than two days of slaughter as over one thousand Palestinian men, women and children were killed and their bodies bulldozed into mass graves. As news of the massacres reached the outside world, the IDF ordered its allies out of the camps. The PLO charged that the killings were deliberate, aimed at uprooting and dispersing Lebanon's Palestinian population. The Israeli government denied this, condemning the killings and disclaiming any direct responsibility for them.⁸ The MNF belatedly returned to Beirut.

Whatever the degree of direct responsibility Israeli decision-makers bore for the deaths at Sabra and Shatila, there could be little doubt that the massacre comprised only the most tragic part of an emerging pattern of intimidation against Palestinians in Lebanon. For Israel, dispersal of Palestinian population centers seemed a way of weakening the PLO's base in Lebanon and preventing a resurgence of the Palestinian armed presence, especially in the south. For the Lebanese Forces, post-war Lebanon provided a golden opportunity to settle old political scores, and to generate through terror an exodus that would rid Lebanon of its Palestinian problem once and for all. Even before the Beirut evacuation, the issue had been raised in discussions between Israeli leaders and Bashir al-Jumayyil.

Menachem Begin had spoken of the need for population "transfer" as early as June 10, and had later issued directives to prevent the reconstruction of devastated refugee camps in Sidon and Tyre. Other government spokesmen had announced Israel's opposition to any rebuilding of Palestinian camps within 40-45km of the border, requesting the Lebanese government relocate Palestinians further north. In his last meeting with Begin and Ariel Sharon, Bashir al-Jumayyil had been told that the PLO must be driven from Tripoli and Palestinian population concentrations broken up. The Lebanese president-elect needed no such encouragement; already Lebanese Forces militias had attacked camps around Israeli-controlled Sidon, warning their populations to leave at once.⁹

Similar violence and threats continued through the latter half of 1982 and into the new year. In the south, mass arrests by the IDF were accompanied by a spate of disappearances and murders conducted by local Phalangists and Haddad militiamen. In Beirut, the government of Amin al-Jumayyil (elected president in his brother's place September 21) ordered the full reassertion of Lebanese law over the Palestinians, a process that included the bulldozing of "illegal" structures in the camps and the rounding up by the Lebanese Army of hundreds of Palestinians lacking official documentation. Palestinians abroad with Lebanese refugee travel documents were refused renewals unless they pledged not to return to Lebanon. In Beirut, the Lebanese government announced that only those Palestinians who sought refuge in 1948 would be allowed to remain.¹⁰

The May 17th Accords and an Israeli Withdrawal

Further complicating the position of the PLO and Palestinians in Lebanon was the issue of Israeli occupation. Formal Lebanese-Israeli negotiations on the question of an Israeli withdrawal were begun on 28 December 1982 under US sponsorship. As the talks approached, President al-Jumayyil announced his intention to secure the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, a category that included not only the IDF but also PLO and Syrian forces in the Bika' and north Lebanon.

In response, and in the belief that the withdrawal negotiations would provide it somewhat greater leverage with Beirut, Fateh and the PLO attempted to initiate a new dialogue with the Lebanese government. Yet despite a meeting between Amin al-Jumayyil and Yasir 'Arafat on the sidelines of the March 1983 Non-aligned Summit Conference at New Delhi, there was little that such a strategy of communication could achieve. The Lebanese government was unreceptive to the PLO's requests for a new formal PLO-Lebanese accord; Lebanese Foreign Minister Fu'ad Butrus had already characterized the idea of such agreements (including the Cairo Agreement) as "gone forever." In part this reluctance stemmed from Israeli pressure. But it also reflected widespread public opposition to a return of the Palestinian armed presence, and not merely among the president's Phalangist supporters.¹¹

As a result, the PLO's official status in Lebanon remained precarious.

Only a single PLO political office (headed by longtime PLO representative to Lebanon Shafiq al-Hut) had remained in Beirut after the evacuation, together with the PLO Research Center. The first of these was occupied by Israeli, then Lebanese, troops. The Lebanese government refused all Palestinian entreaties to clarify its status. The latter was devastated by a car-bomb on February 3 which left twenty persons dead. It was then effectively closed by the Lebanese Army, and forced to move to Nicosia, Cyprus in late 1983.¹²

On 17 May 1983—despite the non-involvement of both Syria and the PLO in the process, and the consequent failure of the Lebanese government to secure pledges of future cooperation from either—Lebanon and Israel signed a formal agreement providing for peaceful relations and an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, contingent on Syrian and PLO withdrawals and the implementation of extensive Israeli security arrangements in the south. Article 4 of the May 17th Agreement further provided that Lebanon “will not be used as a base for hostile or terrorist activity.” The Lebanese government pledged to prevent “the existence or organization of irregular forces, armed bands, organizations, bases, offices, or infrastructure” hostile to Israel. To this end, the agreement continued, “all agreements and arrangements enabling the presence and functioning on the territory of either Party of elements hostile to the other Party are null and void.”¹³

Syria rapidly and vehemently condemned the May 17th Agreement. Within Lebanon, Sulayman Franjiyya, Rashid Karami, Walid Junblat, the LCP, (pro-Syrian) *Ba’th*, and SSNP also voiced their collective opposition to the accord, as did *Amal*. With the formation of the “Lebanese National Salvation Front” by Franjiyya, Karami and Junblat on July 23, opposition to the May 17th Agreement would become a centerpiece of Lebanese political conflict (and Syrian foreign policy) for much of the next year.¹⁴

The PLO also announced its rejection of the accord, scarcely surprising given the May 17th Agreement’s direct assault upon its status in Lebanon. Although PLO leaders did sometimes hold open the possibility of withdrawing entirely from Lebanon, such offers were never very credible.¹⁵ The PLO was unlikely to voluntarily withdraw from its last Lebanese foothold at a time when every other confrontation state remained effectively closed to it. Moreover, the decision now really rested with Syria, which controlled all areas of Lebanon within which Palestinian forces remained.

As with the PLO’s position on south Lebanon in 1976-78, apparent equivocation was intended for diplomatic and public relations purposes, and in the expectation that events on the ground would eventually render the question of a Palestinian withdrawal obsolete. PLO opposition to the agreement, moreover, offered a possible means of smoothing deeply troubled relations with Syria and its erstwhile Lebanese allies—that, in the words of the PLO Central Council, “this resistance reinforces the unity of the Lebanese-Palestinian struggle against the common enemy.”¹⁶ Some Palestinian units subsequently participated alongside the PSP in fighting against the Lebanese Forces and Lebanese Army in the Shuf following an Israeli withdrawal from the area in early September. In the south the PLO

claimed responsibility for scores of attacks against the IDF.

Yet even these actions betrayed the PLO's weaknesses in Lebanon. In the Shuf the PSP eventually evicted many Palestinian units.¹⁷ In the south, despite rapidly deteriorating relations between *Amal* and the IDF, the former remained bitterly opposed to any renewed Palestinian armed presence. Palestinian units in the Bika' generally found themselves restricted by Syria. Although Damascus supported guerrilla operations against the IDF, it had no desire to reopen direct confrontation with Israel by allowing the PLO to engage in open military action. Although Palestinians were very active in resistance to Israeli occupation, the tendency of the PLO and Fateh to make inflated public claims about the scope of their actions in the south only served to further alienate Lebanese opinion.¹⁸

In the end, Syria and its Lebanese allies would be successful in defeating the May 17th Agreement. On 5 March 1984—less than a month after *Amal* and PSP forces seized control of West Beirut from the Lebanese Army, and the US Marines of the MNF had withdrawn offshore—President al-Jumayyil formally abrogated the accord. In January of the following year Israel began a three-stage withdrawal of its forces in the face of mounting attacks against it in south Lebanon. By June 1985 the IDF retained a permanent presence only in a self-declared "security zone" along the frontier, alongside the proxy militias of the South Lebanese Army established by Sa'd Haddad and commanded since his death (in 1984) by former Lebanese army general Antoine Lahad.

The PLO played no real role in the abrogation of the May 17th Agreement, and a significant but secondary role in resistance to the IDF in the south. For even as it declared its opposition to the accords in May 1983, open rebellion had erupted within the ranks of Fateh—threatening to split the Palestinian movement asunder.

Centrifugal Pressures

On May 9 an order issued by Fateh's Colonel Sa'id Musa Muragha (Abu Musa) called upon all Fateh units in the Bika' to disregard future orders from the Fateh leadership. At first, the Fateh Central Committee belittled the disobedience; later, as it became apparent that the mutiny was gaining strength, it cut funds and logistical support to rebellious units. The rebels then seized Fateh supply depots in the Bika' on May 25, and in Damascus on May 28. In late June, fighting erupted between loyalist and rebel units in the Bika', with the latter taking control of the town of Majdal Anjar and hence the Beirut-Damascus highway from Shtura to the frontier.

The heterogeneity of the rebel movement reflected the wide spectrum of grievances that motivated its actions.¹⁹ Many were fundamentally dissatisfied with the evolution of Fateh and PLO policy since the mid-1970s, with its gradual shift from the goal of liberating all Palestine through armed struggle to the achievement of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories, and increasing adoption of diplomatic means to achieve that goal. There were a variety of specific complaints regarding corruption

and incompetence within Fateh itself, and dissatisfaction with the removal of prominent Fateh radical Nimr Salih from his positions on the Fateh Central Committee and PNC earlier that year. Most immediately, the rebellion had been sparked by seventy-nine new military appointments recently made by 'Arafat. These included the appointment of Colonel Ghazi 'Atallah (Abu Hajim) as commander of Palestinian forces in the Bika', and Colonel al-Hajj Isma'il in the north. In June 1982 both had fled their respective posts in the southern Bika' and Sidon at the start of the Israeli invasion.

The eruption of open rebellion within Fateh, however, was connected to the PLO's changing status in Lebanon in a far more fundamental way. As a direct consequence of the Lebanese war, the PLO had been rendered acutely vulnerable both to regional pressures and to its own centrifugal tendencies. The resultant tensions surfaced within months of the evacuation. In January 1983, Abu Musa, supported by Nimr Salih and Samih Abu Kuwayk of the Fateh Central Committee, presented to a meeting of the Fateh Revolutionary Council in Aden a memorandum strongly critical of the political direction of the movement. It condemned the Fez Summit resolutions, the PLO-Jordanian dialogue, and PLO contact with both Egypt and with Israeli peace groups. It further condemned the continued dispersal of PLO forces and the failure to reconcentrate them in the Bika' and the north, suggesting that the Fateh leadership was indeed prepared to withdraw Palestinian forces from Lebanon. Earlier that same month, the PFLP, DFLP, PFLP-GC, PSF and al-Sa'iqa had met in Libya, where they issued a joint statement that condemned the Fez and Reagan Plans, criticized the PLO-Jordanian joint approach, and called for closer relations with Syria.²⁰

Recognizing the dangers, the 16th PNC (the first since Beirut, convened in Algiers in February 1983) had deliberately produced a broad political platform designed to minimize political differences and maximize national unity.²¹ But it had clearly been insufficient.

This internal challenge to the PLO leadership coincided with deteriorating relations with Damascus and an intensification of Syrian pressure on the PLO.²² In part, 'Arafat's post-Beirut diplomacy—his discussions with Jordan, a quiet and partial rapprochement with Egypt—were designed to offset such Syrian pressure. But they also served to confirm Syrian perceptions that the PLO leadership was dangerously independent. Syria encouraged oppositional elements within Fateh; 'Arafat had responded with the removal of Nimr Salih and his controversial military appointments, designed to assure that the military command structure of the *al-'Asifa* forces was dominated by trustworthy officers. It was for this reason too that he resisted the reconcentration of Fateh forces in Syria and Syrian-controlled Bika', a position that his critics took as indicative of a willingness to withdraw from Lebanon and hence of a lack of commitment to armed struggle.

When the rebellion erupted, Syria and Libya tacitly, then openly, supported the rebels. When the Fateh leadership condemned this, Arafat himself was unceremoniously deported from Syria to Tunis on June 24.

Pro-Syrian units of al-Sa'iq, the PFLP-GC, PLA, and even Syrian Army units, backed Abu Musa's forces.

With the failure of Palestinian and Arab mediation efforts, loyal Fateh units were gradually forced out of their positions in the Biqa' northwards to the Nahr al-Barid and Baddawi refugee camps near Tripoli. In late September 'Arafat himself returned to Tripoli to face his opponents. In October, fighting erupted around the two refugee camps. On November 3, the rebels (backed by Syrian and some Libyan forces) launched a major offensive against 'Arafat, capturing Nahr al-Barid on November 6. After a brief lull in the fighting, a second offensive captured Baddawi on November 16. Loyalist forces retreated to Tripoli. Rebel forces bombarded their positions and threatened to storm the city.

The military pressures on 'Arafat were combined with intense Lebanese pressures to leave the city—from Rashid Karami and the LNSF, as well as from the Lebanese right. Only local Sunni fundamentalist leader Sa'id Sha'ban and his Islamic Unification Movement militia supported the PLO leader.²³ At the same time, Arab pressures on Syria to halt the attacks were also building from states anxious to prevent the PLO from completely falling under Syrian sway. As a result, 'Arafat, Syria and the rebels agreed to a Saudi-mediated ceasefire agreement on November 25. Under its terms, 'Arafat would evacuate the city. It was not until December 20, however that the withdrawal took place. Some 4,000 'Arafat loyalists evacuated the city by sea to North Yemen, Algeria and Tunisia in Greek ships under the UN flag and with a naval escort provided by France.

With this second Palestinian departure from Lebanon, the PLO had essentially split into three competing factions. The Fateh rebels (known as Fateh-*intifada* ["uprising"] or Fateh-Provisional Command), together with al-Sa'iq, PFLP-GC, PSF and other critics grouped themselves into the so-called "National Alliance" and called for 'Arafat's removal as PLO leader. At first their criticisms of PLO policy and organization had generated significant sympathy among segments of the Palestinian movement and population. Now whatever popular sympathy had existed at the outset for the rebels' critique quickly evaporated with their resort to force and Syria's obvious support for their challenge. In the occupied territories, for example, support for Abu Musa was all but nonexistent.²⁴ As a result, these groups found themselves increasingly dependent on Damascus.

Moreover the bulk of Fateh, especially outside Lebanon, remained loyal to the PLO leader. Fateh's historic central leadership group remained united. The ALF supported 'Arafat too (largely because of Syria's support for the opposition) as did its Iraqi sponsor, Saudi Arabia, and other important Arab states.

Meanwhile the PFLP, DFLP, PLF and Palestine Communist Party found themselves in a difficult position. These groups (particularly the PFLP) agreed with many of the opposition's organizational and political criticisms. They remained headquartered in Damascus. Yet they also were quite fundamentally committed to the independence of Palestinian decision-making and to the institutional framework of the PLO. Despite often intense

Syrian pressure to do otherwise, the "Democratic Alliance" upheld 'Arafat's leadership of the PLO and strongly condemned the rebels' use of violence, rejecting all attempts at "containment of the PLO or subjecting it to Arab tutelage, which would annul the independence of Palestinian national decision-making and obliterate the national rights of the Palestinian people."²⁵

The split in the PLO grew even wider as a result of the diplomatic offensive launched by 'Arafat in the wake of the Tripoli evacuation. On December 22, 'Arafat met with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo, the first such meeting with an Egyptian leader since Camp David. The move, designed to reward Egyptian support of 'Arafat in Tripoli and counterweigh Syrian pressure, brought a storm of protest not only by the National Alliance, but also by the Democratic Alliance and even some within Fateh.²⁶ In February 1984 the PLO reopened discussions with Jordan on a joint diplomatic approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In July, Fateh and the Democratic Alliance reached agreement (the Aden-Algiers Agreement) on reconvening a session of the Palestine National Council. When the process encountered obstacles, 'Arafat unilaterally convened the 17th session of the PNC in Amman in November. Both the National Alliance and PFLP denounced the meeting as illegal. The participation of Fateh, the ALF, a pro-Fateh splinter of the PLF (led by Muhammad 'Abbas) and most of the independents, however, was enough to assure that the meeting went ahead with a majority of PNC delegates in attendance. Not surprisingly, the Council endorsed both 'Arafat's leadership and the PLO's political direction.²⁷ Finally, after a year of negotiation, the PLO and Jordan announced that agreement had been reached on 11 February 1985 on a coordinated approach for achieving a negotiated Middle East peace settlement. Under its terms the PLO agreed to participate in an international, UN-sponsored peace conference as part of a joint (Jordanian-Palestinian) delegation. It also committed itself to the formation of a confederal Jordanian-Palestinian state.²⁸

The 17th PNC and even more so the Amman Accords confirmed the split in the PLO. On 25 March 1985, former PNC Speaker Khalid al-Fahum announced from Damascus the formation by the National Alliance, PLF and PFLP of a "Palestine National Salvation Front." In its founding statement, the PNSF condemned the Amman accords and called for "action to topple the trend of deviation and relinquishment" within the PLO.²⁹ Now legitimized by the presence of the PFLP, the opposition's challenge to 'Arafat's leadership seemed stronger than ever.

Amal, Syria and the War of the Camps

Meanwhile, regional conflict and the divisions within the Palestinian movement continued to be reflected in Lebanon after 'Arafat's withdrawal from Tripoli. Indeed, Palestinian camps in Lebanon became one of the prime arenas within which such tensions would be fought out.

Even before the split in the PLO, Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut

had seen the gradual reestablishment of a Palestinian armed presence since 1982. In part this was the product of deliberate Palestinian efforts to reestablish a Lebanese infrastructure. But for the most part it stemmed from the rearming in self-defense of Palestinian camp populations, and from the gradual return of evacuated personnel to their families and homes in Lebanon.

This process accelerated in the wake of the split in the PLO, as competing Palestinian organizations scurried to bolster their presence and win support from the local Palestinian community. By the end of 1984, numerous Lebanese sources reported a substantial resurgence of the Palestinian political and military presence in the capital.³⁰ The following year, Israel's withdrawal from Sidon (February) and Tyre (March-April) initiated a similar reemergence of Palestinian guerrilla groups in local camps there. Indeed, by the spring of 1985 Palestinian militias in the Sidon area were strong enough to repel attacks by the Phalange and SLA against the al-Miya wa-Miya and 'Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camps.

Such developments were viewed with concern by Syria. Given the importance of the Lebanese arena to Damascus, it was loath to permit the reestablishment of a semi-autonomous Palestinian base of operations in Beirut and the south, particularly one loyal to the PLO. At first it encouraged its own Palestinian clients to compete in the process, facilitating the entrance of Sa'iqa, PFLP-GC, and Abu Musa's Fateh-Provisional Command into these areas. In camps under direct Syrian control (Nahr al-Barid and Baddawi in the north, Wavell in the Bika') these groups quickly gained the upper hand. But in areas beyond Syria's writ it soon became apparent that the independent Palestinian organizations—Fateh, the PFLP and DFLP—enjoyed far stronger popular support.³¹ Consequently, other means had to be found to restrict the PLO's resurgence.

Amal also viewed the reestablishment of a Palestinian political and military presence in Beirut and the south with concern. Hostility towards the Palestinians stemming from Shi'ite-PLO conflict in the late 1970s and early 1980s was reinforced by fears that a resurgent Palestinian presence would threaten the powerful political position that *Amal* had established for itself in post-1982 Lebanon. When *Amal* and the PSP seized control of West Beirut in February 1984, the former established military posts in and around the camps. As the IDF withdrew, it did the same in Tyre and Nabatiyya in the south. To consolidate their control over West Beirut, *Amal* and the PSP had jointly suppressed the Nasirite *Murabitun* militia—one of the few Sunni militias, and one of few groups in Lebanon to still support a Palestinian armed presence. Shortly thereafter, encouraged by Syria, *Amal* turned its attention to the Palestinian camps directly.

The first round of what was to become known as the "war of the camps" began 19 May 1985, with an incident between Palestinians in the Sabra camp in Beirut and *Amal* militiamen.³² Heavy fighting quickly erupted between the approximately one thousand armed Palestinians in the Sabra, Shatila and Burj al-Barajina refugee camps and *Amal's* more than three thousand fighters, the latter supported by over a thousand soldiers of

(predominately Sh'ite) Sixth Brigade of the Lebanese Army and even some units of the (predominately Christian) Eighth Brigade stationed in East Beirut. Syria labeled the fighting an "Israeli-US plot being implemented by Yasir 'Arafat," declaring that "Lebanese nationalists have the right to refuse to allow 'Arafat and others to restore the anomalous state of affairs that previously existed."³³

On May 30, Sabra fell to its attackers. Amid Arab and Soviet political pressures on Syria and an emergency meeting of Arab League foreign ministers scheduled to discuss the issue June 8, *Amal* declared a unilateral ceasefire the next day.

Despite this, small-scale fighting continued for weeks. In Shatila, Palestinian defenders retained control of a small area around the camp's mosque, despite repeated efforts to dislodge them. Burj al-Barajina was not penetrated at all, but nevertheless remained under siege as *Amal* prevented supplies from entering or its population from leaving. Finally, after fighting that had claimed more than six hundred dead and two thousand wounded, a ceasefire agreement was signed by *Amal* and representatives of the Palestine National Salvation Front in Damascus on June 17.

Under the terms of the Damascus Agreement, the PNSF committed itself to the removal of medium and heavy weapons from the camps; *Amal* to withdraw from the camps and the release of detainees. The Lebanese Internal Security Force would assume policing responsibility inside the camps, while a joint coordinating committee would be formed by *Amal*, the PNSF, Syria, and the "Lebanese National Democratic Front."³⁴ Reflecting its Syrian sponsorship, the ceasefire agreement recognized the PNSF as the "national political leadership of the Palestinians in Lebanon until the Front manages to take over the PLO."

Not surprisingly Fateh criticized the agreement, emphasizing that only the PLO could negotiate agreements regarding the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. But it accepted the ceasefire nonetheless, labeling it a "tactical step of retreat" by Damascus.³⁵ Certainly, despite heavy Palestinian casualties, *Amal* and its Syrian sponsor had been politically and militarily rebuffed. *Amal* had been forced to retreat, having gained only the promise that the Palestinians would surrender nonexistent medium and heavy weapons and allow an ineffectual Lebanese police presence in the camps. The Damascus Agreement's rhetorical endorsement of the PNSF notwithstanding, Fateh's foothold in Lebanon remained intact.

Yet the tensions which had sparked the camps war had not been resolved, and they would soon be manifest elsewhere. In Sidon, Palestinian (and particularly Fateh) reorganization attracted stern warnings from *Amal*, the local Popular Nasirite Organization, and influential Sidon Deputy Dr. Nazih Bizri.³⁶ Clashes between *Amal* and Palestinians in the camps erupted again in Beirut briefly in September, and once more for a week from 29 March 1986.³⁷ Then, on 19 May—one year to the day after the first round of the camps war—a second round began. Once again *Amal* was unable to penetrate the camps, despite a supply of T-54 tanks provided it by Damascus after the previous fighting. After the failure of more than a

dozen ceasefires, the fighting finally died down with the deployment of Lebanese Army units and Syrian military observers around the Beirut camps June 24.³⁸

This set the stage for the third and most severe round of the camps war. It began with an incident September 29 at the Rashidiyya refugee camp on the outskirts of Tyre in which Palestinians allegedly fired on an *Amal* patrol. *Amal* immediately surrounded the camp, demanding the surrender of all arms inside it. The demand was refused.³⁹ By late October, the fighting had spread to Sidon and Beirut. In an effort to relieve pressure on Rashidiyya, Palestinian forces in Sidon broke through *Amal* lines November 24 to seize the strategic hilltop village of Maghdusha, overlooking the coastal highway south of the city. As *Amal*'s military weaknesses became evident, Syrian special forces reportedly aided it in the battle for Shatila. At Sidon, Israel launched multiple air-strikes against Palestinian positions around the city.

As before, the clashes led to an emergency session of Arab League foreign ministers, and diplomatic intervention to halt the fighting. Iranian mediation secured a partially effective ceasefire between *Amal* and the PNSF on December 15. But while pro-Syrian groups withdrew from around Maghdusha, Fatch (excluded from the negotiations) refused. It insisted that it would not turn over its positions around Maghdusha without a ceasefire in Beirut, guarantees of security in the Sidon area, and the lifting of *Amal*'s siege around the Tyre refugee camps.⁴⁰

Some of these positions were subsequently vacated to *Hizb allah* and Popular Nasirite Organization militiamen in January, and some supplies allowed into the beleaguered camps. But for the most part the sieges continued, and new fighting soon erupted. In Beirut, the shelling of the camps was compounded by a blockade of food and medical supplies that resulted in sickness, starvation or death for thousands of trapped residents.

Finally, on February 21, the first of seven thousand Syrian troops were deployed in West Beirut to maintain order. On April 7, following an agreement with the PNSF, *Amal* lifted the siege as Syrian forces took up positions around the camps. That same month, negotiations between *Amal* and the PNSF took place with the aim of achieving a ceasefire in the south.

Between 1985 and 1987, the camps war had claimed more than 2,500 lives. Palestinian refugees camps had been devastated, and thousands of refugees had fled the fighting to seek uncertain refuge in the coastal strip north of Sidon.⁴¹ Yet those same two years had also wrought a significant shift in the PLO's position in Lebanon in several important respects.

First, the camps war had seen a significant weakening of *Amal*. Many Lebanese actors had reacted negatively to the political and military assertiveness of both *Amal* and Syria evident in the camps war. In the first round, *Amal*'s only (half-hearted) support had come from the Lebanese Forces. The PSP had reaffirmed its alliance with *Amal*, but in practice opposed the attacks on the camps. It sheltered Palestinian refugees fleeing the fighting, and had not prevented Palestinian artillery units in the hills surrounding Beirut from firing on Shi'ite areas of the city during the fighting. The Sunni community, already alarmed at the suppression of the

Murabitun and other Sunni political forces, also refused to support *Amal*. Common concern with rising power of *Amal* underpinned all such attitudes.⁴² *Amal*'s continuing efforts to exert political hegemony in West Beirut and the south, coupled with the camps war itself, had by the third round led to a serious deterioration of relations between it and the PSP and LCP. In the latter half of 1985, several clashes erupted between the PSP and *Amal* fighters in Beirut. By February 1987 such friction escalated to the point of open fighting between the PSP, LCP on one side and *Amal* on the other. Indeed this provided one of the major reasons for the deployment of Syrian troops in the capital that same month.

In this dynamic political context, various Palestinian groups had found themselves able to forge or reforge various internal alliances, albeit often of a tactical, temporary and opportunistic nature. Lebanese actors as diverse as the Sunni elite, Lebanese Forces, President Jumayyil, local Sunni militias, *Hizb Allah*, the PSP and LCP were at one time or another reportedly aiding the Palestinians.⁴³

Second, the fighting had allowed the Palestinians to mobilize a significant diplomatic coalition in support of their position, a fact evidenced in the convening of emergency meetings of the Arab League during the first and third rounds. Even such important Syrian allies as Libya, Iran, and the USSR had criticized the attacks on the camps, and had exerted significant diplomatic pressure on Damascus to bring them to an end.

Finally, Syrian support for *Amal* had served to seriously weaken Syrian influence in the Palestinian movement at large. Palestinian public opinion grew strongly anti-Syrian, and groups tied to Syria (such as Abu Musa's Fateh-Provisional Command) lost further credibility. Both the DFLP and PFLP criticized Syrian policy, despite being based in Damascus and consequently highly vulnerable to Syrian pressure.⁴⁴ At the same time, the fighting had led to greatly increased cooperation among otherwise divided Palestinian groups. During the first round Fateh, the DFLP and PNSF had cooperated in defending the camps. Even Abu Musa's Fateh-PC, elements of which played a role that many Palestinians considered treasonous, provided artillery support for the Beirut camps from positions east of the city. During the first round ceasefire negotiations, the PFLP had flatly rejected an *Amal* proposal that the PNSF disarm Fateh and DFLP forces in the camps. By the third round, it was tacitly coordinating its negotiating position with Fateh, and refusing to accept Syrian demands that blame for the fighting be placed on 'Arafat's shoulders.⁴⁵

Reunification

Throughout the history of the PLO's presence in Lebanon—in 1969, in 1973, during the civil war and Israeli invasion—serious external threats had always engendered a defensive unity among the major, mass-based contingents of the Palestinian movement. The post-1982 situation would be no different. The fighting with *Amal* and the practical unity forged between Fateh, the DFLP and PFLP in defending Palestinian refugee camps in

Lebanon would make a vital psychological contribution towards the overall reunification of the PLO.

Moreover, while Syria and *Amal* were providing an important catalyst to the reunification of the Palestinian movement, further impetus was being provided by Israel and Jordan. In the occupied territories, social and political conditions deteriorated through the 1980s. The introduction by Israel of what it termed an "iron fist" policy in the territories in August 1985, the growth of Palestinian protests and the acceleration of arrests, detentions, deportations, use of lethal force and other Israeli countermeasures over the next two years underlined the practical need for overall Palestinian political unity.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the PLO-Jordanian joint approach envisaged in the 1985 Amman Accords encountered serious obstacles. In February 1986 King Husayn announced the suspension of Jordanian-PLO cooperation and indirectly called upon Palestinians to produce an alternative political leadership. Jordan also encouraged another rebellion against 'Arafat's leadership from within Fateh, this time by former head of Fateh military intelligence Colonel 'Atallah 'Atallah. In March revisions were made to the structure of the Jordanian parliament (increasing the number of West Bank seats) and to Jordan's electoral law. When Fateh criticized these moves as contrary to the PLO's status as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, Fateh offices in the country were ordered closed and a number of cadres (including Khalil al-Wazir) were deported. In August, Jordan announced a five-year, \$750 million development plan for the occupied territories, a move that was widely seen as aimed at increasing Hashemite influence on the West Bank.⁴⁷

By the fall of 1986 such developments, coupled with Algerian, Soviet and Libyan mediation, had led to active discussions between the major Palestinian groups on convening a new session of the PNC. In meetings in Moscow and Prague in September Fateh committed itself to cancellation of the Amman Accords, thus removing a major obstacle to reconciliation. In March, Fateh, the PFLP, DFLP, Palestine Communist Party and ALF agreed in Tunis to convene a meeting of the PNC the following month.

On 20 April 1987, the 18th session of the Palestine National Council did indeed open in Algiers, with the participation of all but Sa'iqa, Fateh-PC, PSF and PFLP-GC. Political differences remained, but with the PNC the almost four year split in the PLO came to an end.

The "Session of the Steadfastness of the Camps and the Masses of the Occupied Territories" (as the 18th PNC had been appropriately titled) adopted a number of resolutions regarding the PLO's position in Lebanon. Specifically, the political resolutions adopted by the Council called for "reinforcing the unity of action regarding the situation in our camps in Lebanon," "rejecting the attempts to expel and disarm our people," "insisting on our people's rights in Lebanon regarding residence, work, movement, and the freedom of political and social action." They stressed the PLO's right to defend the camps and struggle against Israel in accordance with the Cairo Agreement and its annexes, and reiterated the PLO's commitment to the Lebanese National Movement. Moreover, the PNC

agreed to a series of organizational reforms designed to restructure, democratize, and strengthen the PLO's decision-making structure. Meeting in early October 1987 the PLO Central Council endorsed a series of specific measures aimed at improving relations with Syria and easing tensions in Lebanon. A new joint command for PLO forces in Lebanon was established to bolster coordination and cooperation among groups.⁴⁸

The PLO and Lebanon: Continuing Challenges

In the five years following the Lebanese war and the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut, the immediate pressures facing the Palestinian movement in Lebanon had prevented it from reacting to post-1982 Lebanese events on anything other than a tactical basis. Despite a widespread debate about the successes and failures of the pre-1982 "Beirut era," efforts to evaluate and restructure PLO policy had soon been aborted by the internal divisions and the pressure of events. Now, the reunification of the PLO held out some hope that these issues would be once more addressed, and that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon could be reconstructed on a new and firmer basis. As George Habash noted in the wake of the 18th PNC:

[The Palestinian movement] must answer the following question: What do we want from Lebanon? Why do we insist on maintaining a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon? How do we perceive our relations with the LNM? If the Palestinian revolution fails to provide a clear answer to these questions, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon will not grow the way we hope. To be exact, we ought to make clear that we do not wish to flaunt our Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon nor do we wish to set up a Palestinian authority in Lebanon to impede or to fly in the face of the Lebanese National Movement program. During its presence in Lebanon throughout the seventies and until 1982, the Palestinian revolution made mistakes. A bold reexamination process is in order. These mistakes must be identified, acknowledged, and rectified.⁴⁹

Habash himself went on to identify Palestinian domination of the LNM and "excesses and misuse of arms" as the PLO's two major mistakes of the past. Other senior PFLP leaders condemned pre-1982 cross-border shelling (rather than infiltration) as counter-productive. DFLP spokespersons offered similar analyses, although they extended their criticism to include pre-1982 Palestinian military pressure on *Amal*, and past Palestinian violations of ceasefires and freezes on military activity in south Lebanon. Fateh leaders, on the other hand, were much more likely to stress the impact of organizational disunity and the role of external (Arab and Israeli) intervention. Some (such as Salah Khalaf), however, included a critique of the tolerance of "incompetence" within Fateh itself.⁵⁰

Yet if past experience was to prove any guide, the rectification of shortcomings and weaknesses in PLO policy in Lebanon would prove far from a simple and painless affair. References to the (obsolete) Cairo Agreement were hardly sufficient, nor were appeals to the (largely-defunct) Lebanese National Movement. It was difficult to see how, in the chaotic and

multipolar context of Lebanese and regional politics, the PLO could reestablish a firm base of internal and external alliances. The temptation to deploy the PLO's considerable finances and military potential in pursuit of an active and assertive role in the Lebanese balance-of-power was substantial. Yet patterns of alliances founded upon opportunism alone, however useful in the short-term, seemed likely only to reinforce Lebanese (and Syrian) suspicion of Palestinian motives. Similarly, the strengthening of Palestinian "unity of action" required considerably more than mere PNC resolutions. It required substantial reform of the structure and process of Palestinian decision-making. The obstacles to this—the inherent tensions between democratic debate and revolutionary authority; the competing cross-currents of Palestinian and inter-Arab politics; the firm entrenchment of a leadership style and political dynamic—continued to be severe. Indeed, they seemed so severe that, paradoxically, the day-to-day defense of the camps appeared easier to secure.

Yet the military defense of a siege perimeter comprised "security" only in the narrowest and most fleeting sense. Promoting an atmosphere within which Palestinians in Lebanon would enjoy real security represented the more important and difficult task. And, if the PLO's successful defense of its position during the camps war was a tacit admission by its opponents of the tenacity of Palestinian resistance and the strength of its hard-won military skills, other developments would soon resignal the magnitude of the challenges the Palestinian movement continued to face in Lebanon. Indeed, as if to underscore the point, within weeks of the 18th PNC (and in what many saw as a Syrian-encouraged response to it) the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies voted on 21 May 1987 to abrogate the Cairo Agreement of 1969 (see Appendix). The following month, Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil officially confirmed the act.

Of the various challenges to the PLO in Lebanon, Israel continued to be among the most important. Israeli intervention in Lebanon had far from ceased. The IDF continued its proxy occupation of the SLA security zone in the south. At sea, ships *en route* to and from Lebanon were regularly searched for PLO personnel and supplies. Periodic attacks (some three dozen in 1987-89) continued to be directed against Palestinian installations. But in other respects, the magnitude of the Israeli challenge had sharply declined. The military and political costs borne by Israel during and after the 1982 war disinclined Israeli decision-makers to take further large-scale action north of the border enclave. Moreover, the PLO's political institutions and leadership were no longer found in Lebanon, but farther afield. While these were hardly immune from Israeli military action (as evidenced by Israel's 1985 bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunisia, the February 1988 car-bombing of three senior Palestinian officers in Cyprus, and the assassination on 16 April 1988 of Deputy PLO Commander-in-Chief Khalil al-Wazir in Tunis), Israel had clearly lost the opportunities for coercive diplomacy against the Palestinian movement it had enjoyed in the pre-1982 period.⁵¹

A second declining threat to the PLO in Lebanon was that posed by

Amal. The summer of 1987 saw a brief and inconclusive renewal of the camps war in the south. It ended with a new agreement September 11, this time between the PLO and *Amal*—a tacit recognition by Syria and Lebanese actors of their failure to block the resurgence of the mainstream PLO. Further obstacles, however, delayed implementation.⁵² In January 1988 *Amal* leader Nabih Berri, having failed to overcome the camps' resistance after more than two and a half years of trying and now entangled in growing military conflict with *Hizb Allah*, announced a formal end to the camps war as a "gift" to the then one month-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. But even this gesture was not sealed for almost a year, until a formal Fateh-*Amal* disengagement agreement for the Sidon area was signed on December 23. The new accord was praised by local PLO officials as a "new leaf in our relations with *Amal*."⁵³

The relaxation of tensions between the PLO and *Amal* did not, however, signal any corresponding improvement of the hostile relations between the PLO and *Amal*'s Syrian ally—the third and perhaps gravest source of challenge to the PLO in Lebanon. In April 1988 the funeral of Khalil al-Wazir in Damascus seemed to provide an opening for possible PLO-Syrian rapprochement. Indeed, later that month Yasir 'Arafat and Hafiz al-Asad held in Damascus their first meeting since 1983. But the process soon stalled. In Beirut, fighting erupted between 'Arafat loyalists and Abu Musa's Fateh-PC in May 1988. The dissidents' assault on loyalist positions was backed by intense fire support from Syrian artillery that left more than one hundred dead and five hundred wounded. After two months of fighting, Abu Musa finally captured Shatila and Burj al-Barajina camps on June 27 and July 8. The remaining Fateh forces there were evacuated to Sidon (despite the reluctance of the local Popular Nasirite Organization to accept them) under the auspices of Libya, the PSP, LCP and SSNP.⁵⁴

In 1989 further meetings took place between 'Arafat and Asad in May (at the Arab League Summit in Casablanca) and September (at ceremonies marking the twentieth anniversary of the Libyan revolution in Tripoli), and between Faruq Qaddumi and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'. That summer, some 140 long-imprisoned Fateh fighters were released from Syrian custody. But despite rumours and portents of a possible thaw, there was no evidence of any real rapprochement between the PLO and Syria. Although official Syrian criticism of the PLO leadership diminished, Syrian-supported Palestinian groups remained vociferous in their condemnation of 'Arafat and his policies.

Indeed, enduring suspicions between Fateh and Syria continued to provide the grounds upon which the former forged tactical alliances with a variety of groups—ranging from the Lebanese Forces to *Hizb Allah*—characterized by little in common (or with Fateh) other than their own differences with Damascus. Similar reasoning appeared to motivate 'Arafat's support for Michel 'Awn, the Maronite army general appointed head of a caretaker administration by out-going President Amin Jumayyil in September 1988 when the Lebanese parliament proved incapable of selecting a successor. Syria and its Lebanese allies, in contrast, supported

the rival cabinet of Prime Minister Salim al-Huss. In January, 'Arafat met with 'Awn in Tunis, despite strong criticism not only from Syria and its Lebanese and Palestinian allies, but also from the PFLP and DFLP. 'Arafat's tacit support for 'Awn continued into the spring of 1989, when 'Awn announced a "war of liberation" to drive Syrian troops from Lebanese soil—to which Damascus responded with a massive show of military force. Through the summer 'Awn's forces and those of Syria and its Lebanese allies exchanged artillery barrages in heaviest fighting in Lebanon since Israel's 1982 invasion.

A final source of difficulties for the PLO in Lebanon continued to be rooted in the organization itself. There were multiple signs that problems of fragmented and personalized decision-making, organizational disunity, and other weaknesses which had plagued pre-1982 PLO policy in Lebanon had yet to be overcome. Internecine fighting between Fateh loyalists and Syrian-backed Palestinian dissidents was one such indicator. Certainly, most of the blame for the poor state of Syrian-PLO relations could justifiably be laid at Damascus' door. Indeed, the fighting in Beirut in the summer of 1988 only served to confirm the marginality of Syrian proxy groups within the PLO.⁵⁵ But while much of PLO policy was driven by a widely-accepted need to preserve the independence of Palestinian decision-making, Fateh (and 'Arafat in particular) did not shy from actions that only served to stoke Syrian hostility.⁵⁶ The continued existence of weaknesses in PLO policy in Lebanon was evident in other areas too. This was particularly true in Sidon, beyond the direct reach of Syrian power. There a rash of clashes, kidnappings, assassinations and other incidents signaled local power struggles and the reemergence of *tajawuzat*.⁵⁷

All these developments underscored the constant attention the PLO needed to devote to the maintenance of its Lebanese sanctuary. Increasingly, however, issues of Lebanese policy were overshadowed by the dramatic popular uprising underway in the occupied territories: the Palestinian *intifada*.

Lebanon, the *Intifada*—and Independence?

In December 1987, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip erupted in revolt—their most powerful and sustained revolt against Israeli rule since the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Thereafter, the escalation of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation represented by the Palestinian *intifada* would bring important changes to the structure and dynamics of Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with repercussions felt within the Palestinian movement, Israel, and the wider Arab and international community. Reflecting this, on 31 July 1988 Jordan's King Husayn formally announced his country's disengagement from the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Less than four months later on 15 November 1988, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee Yasir 'Arafat announced, on behalf of 19th session of the Palestine National Council then meeting in Algiers, the establishment of the independent state of Palestine.⁵⁸

Despite the declaration, an independent Palestinian state did not yet exist. But the declaration itself represented a landmark in the history of the Palestinian movement. The PLO had announced its unequivocal support for a two state solution. In the political resolutions adopted by the PNC, it had laid out a clear political strategy for its achievement, including participation in an international peace conference and acceptance of UN Security Council resolution 242 (an implicit recognition of Israel). One month later on 13 December 1988, Yasir 'Arafat delivered a historic speech to the United Nations General Assembly in Geneva. In it, and even more clearly in a press conference the next day, he emphasized "our people's rights to freedom and national independence... and the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security, including the state of Palestine, Israel, and other neighbors, according to the Resolution[s] 242 and 338." The United States responded by announcing that it would immediately open a dialogue with the PLO for the purposes of achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.⁵⁹

The opening of US-PLO dialogue, the Geneva speech, Jordanian disengagement, and the Algiers PNC, collectively constituted an important turning point. All were substantially a product of the fundamental transformation wrought since December 1987 by the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. The *intifada* had demonstrated both the centrality of the Palestinian issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the instability of the *status quo* of occupation. Within the Palestinian movement, the *intifada* had served to strengthen the voice of the occupied territories, consolidating the PLO's commitment to a negotiated settlement based on a two state solution. At the same time, the *intifada* had expressed, daily and in myriad ways, the PLO's status as the political representative of the Palestinians, accepted as such by Palestinians themselves. This had become broadly recognized by the bulk of the international community, by Jordan, and now by the US. Only Israel's divided Likud-Labor coalition government seemed to maintain otherwise, clinging to a position that had been rendered increasingly untenable by events on the ground. The *intifada* had thus dramatically altered the political equation in the Middle East.

Yet as the crux and course of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict underwent a historic reorientation, it was important to remember that none of this had taken place outside history—that the era of the *intifada* shared important ancestry in the Palestinian movement's earlier Lebanese experiences. Lebanon had acted as an important base for the development of the Palestinian movement since the activities of the ANM, the formation of Palestinian student groups and the appearance of *Filastinuna* in the 1950s. After the June 1967 war it had been Palestinian armed struggle, from Lebanon and elsewhere, that had spurred the development of the modern Palestinian nationalist movement. From 1970 to 1982 Lebanon had acted as the political center-of-gravity of the Palestinian movement as a whole. The political positions now adopted by the PLO in 1988 had been the product of a gradual evolution, an evolution marked by the resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council in 1974 and 1977, and by the PLO's

endorsement of the 1982 Fez Peace Plan. It had been in Lebanon that the issues bound up in this process had been most directly and intensely debated by the Palestinian movement; in Lebanon that the PLO had developed the political and informational infrastructure necessary to present and argue its case on the world stage; and in Lebanon that, in 1978 and 1981, the PLO had taken difficult decisions to restrict its military activities so as to preserve that essential infrastructure, and hence enable it to pursue the uncertain avenues of political diplomacy. It had been in Lebanon too that the strains produced by changes in Palestinian political strategy had exploded, and there that much of the post-1982 battle for the political direction of the Palestinian movement had been fought.

Moreover, Lebanon remained a potential battleground within which the political conflicts now generated by the *intifada* could be fought out—indeed, an arena that would likely grow in importance as further progress was made to a regional political settlement. Lebanon provided an important outlet, for example, for Palestinian critics of the diplomatic approach taken by Yasir ‘Arafat in the aftermath of the 19th PNC. During this period attacks or attempted attacks by dissident groups (the PFLP-GC, Fateh-PC and Abu Nidal’s Fateh-Revolutionary Council) against Israel’s Lebanese security zone and northern border were clearly intended to derail the political course of the mainstream PLO. Similar actions by the PFLP, DFLP, and PLF seemed equally intended to enhance their own reputations for militancy, to note dissatisfaction with Fateh strategy, or to signal that the PLO’s renunciation of terrorism did not include guerrilla attacks against Israeli military targets. Only Fateh refrained from such activities so as not to undermine its own diplomatic activities. But, as with earlier phases of cross-border military action, internal and external pressures still existed for an intensification of armed struggle, particularly in periods when the progress of the PLO’s political initiatives seemed slowed.⁶⁰

For its part, Israel’s attitude to Palestinian activities in Lebanon seemed to reflect the divided political views of its coalition government. On the one hand, it tacitly acknowledged Fateh’s suspension of cross-border activities. At the same time, hawkish members of the government seized upon attempted raids by radical Palestinian groups, appearing to find in them an almost welcome diversion from Israel’s unsuccessful attempts to contain the Palestinian uprising. Thus, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and others repeatedly emphasized “terrorist” activity near Israel’s northern border in an effort to convince the US to abort its dialogue with the PLO, and also in an attempt to reverse the Palestinians’ gains in international public opinion. In the meantime, the IDF made it clear that it would not permit the PLO to construct an infrastructure in Lebanon capable of supporting the *intifada*.⁶¹ Indeed, as the *intifada* continues Israeli military activity north of its border might well increase. Present or future hard-line Israeli leaders could (as in the past, in tactics parallel to those of Palestinian rejectionists) seek to abort any progress towards Israeli-PLO negotiations by stoking the level of military confrontation in Lebanon.

Finally, Lebanon has continued to constitute a major arena of inter-Arab

interaction, and a prime battleground for conflict between the mainstream PLO and Syria. Despite recognition of the PLO's declaration of independence and a heavily-qualified endorsement of the PLO's initiative at the 1989 Casablanca Arab Summit, Damascus has generally evinced considerable dissatisfaction with the PLO's diplomatic policies. Such opposition has been expressed in Syrian support for Palestinian dissident groups, and by tacit sponsorship of periodic attacks against Israel's northern border and south Lebanon security zone. Fateh has responded with its array of alliances with anti-Syrian forces in Lebanon. As in 1975-76, Syrian actions in Lebanon in 1989 indicated that Damascus viewed its security concerns in Lebanon as paramount—and that it would move to protect these with massive force if necessary. Syrian-PLO confrontation thus has an enormous potential cost for both. It is a cost that appears even greater when the centrality of the PLO and the necessary participation of Syria in any stable and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is considered.

Such efforts by Palestinian groups, Israel, Syria and others to influence the PLO in and through Lebanon stand as stark testimony to the fundamental contribution of the Palestinian movement's Lebanese sanctuary over the years. For a critical period between the late 1960s and early 1980s, Lebanon provided an invaluable base and haven within which the Palestinian movement could assert its growing independence relatively free from external intervention. Lebanon had provided an environment within which unparalleled Palestinian institution-building and political participation could take place. In Lebanon the Palestinian movement created institutions to nurture its political and cultural consciousness, constructing a PLO that would act both as a central expression of common Palestinian political identity and as the embryonic framework for a Palestinian state in exile.

The final political statement of the 19th session of the Palestine National Council reiterated the organic connection between inside and outside, between the PLO's past and the present of the *intifada*:

This, our people's revolutionary furnace and their blessed *intifada*, along with the cumulative impact of our innovative and continuous revolution inside and outside of our homeland, have destroyed the illusions our people's enemies have harbored that they can turn the occupation of Palestinian land into a permanent *fait accompli* and consign the Palestinian issue to oblivion. For our generations have been weaned on the goals and principles of the Palestinian revolution and have lived all its battles since its birth in 1965—including the heroic resistance against the Zionist invasion of 1982 and the steadfastness of the revolution's camps as they endured siege and starvation in Lebanon. Those generations—the children of the Palestine Liberation Organization—rose to demonstrate the dynamism and continuity of the revolution, detonating the land under the feet of its occupiers and proving that our people's reserves of resistance are inexhaustible and their faith is too deep to uproot.

Thus did the struggle of the children of the RPGs outside our homeland and the struggle of the children of the sacred stones inside it blend into a single revolutionary melody.⁶²

The statement reflected the heady and rhetorical emotionalism of its framers, meeting in Algiers to announce the formation of their still distant Palestinian state. But at its core it reflected a basic truth. A Palestinian identity—the existence of a Palestinian people self-conscious as such, and enjoying as such ever increasing levels of international recognition—had always represented a necessary (if far from sufficient) condition for achievement of Palestinian demands for self-determination. And for the Palestinian movement, Lebanon's contribution to this—if now overshadowed—had been irreplaceable.

Appendix

The Cairo Agreement (1969)

On Monday, 3rd November 1969, the Lebanese delegation headed by Army Commander General Emile al-Bustani, and the Palestine Liberation Organization delegation, headed by Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the organization, met in Cairo in the presence of the United Arab Republic Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmud Riyad, and the War Minister, General Muhammad Fawzi.

In consonance with the bonds of brotherhood and common destiny, relations between Lebanon and the Palestinian revolution must always be conducted on the bases of confidence, frankness, and positive cooperation for the benefit of Lebanon and the Palestinian revolution and within the framework of Lebanon's sovereignty and security. The two delegations agreed on the following principles and measures:

The Palestinian Presence

It was agreed to reorganize the Palestinian presence in Lebanon on the following bases:

1. The right to work, residence, and movement for Palestinians currently residing in Lebanon;
2. The formation of local committees composed of Palestinians in the camps to care for the interests of Palestinians residing in these camps in cooperation with the local Lebanese authorities within the framework of Lebanese sovereignty;
3. The establishment of posts of the Palestinian Armed Struggle (PASC) inside the camps for the purpose of cooperation with the local committees to ensure good relations with the Lebanese authorities. These posts shall undertake the task of regulating and determining the presence of arms in the camps within the framework of Lebanese security and the interests of the Palestinian revolution;
4. Palestinians resident in Lebanon are to be permitted to participate in the Palestinian revolution through the Armed Struggle and in accordance with the principles of the sovereignty and security of Lebanon.

Commando Activity

It was agreed to facilitate commando activity by means of:

1. Facilitating the passage of commandos and specifying points of passage and reconnaissance in the border areas;
2. Safeguarding the road to the 'Arqub region;
3. The Armed Struggle shall undertake to control the conduct of all the members of its organizations and [to ensure] their non-interference in Lebanese affairs;
4. Establishing a joint command control of the Armed Struggle and the Lebanese

Army;

5. Ending the propaganda campaigns by both sides;
6. Conducting a census of Armed Struggle personnel in Lebanon by their command.
7. Appointing Armed Struggle representatives at Lebanese Army headquarters to participate in the resolution of all emergency matters;
8. Studying the distribution of all suitable points of concentration in border areas which will be agreed with the Lebanese Army command;
9. Regulating the entry, exit, and circulation of Armed Struggle personnel;
10. Removal of the Jiyrun base.
11. The Lebanese Army shall facilitate the operation of medical, evacuation, and supply centers for commando activity;
12. Releasing detained personnel and confiscated arms;
13. It is understood that the Lebanese authorities, both civil and military, shall continue to exercise all their prerogatives and responsibilities in all areas of Lebanon in all circumstances;
14. The two delegations affirm that the Palestinian armed struggle is in the interest of Lebanon as well as in that of the Palestinian revolution and all Arabs;
15. This agreement shall remain Top Secret and for the eyes of the commands only.

Head of Lebanese delegation

Emile Bustani

Head of Palestinian delegation

Yasir 'Arafat

Resolution adopted by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, 21 May 1987

1. Abrogation of the law issued by the Chamber of Deputies on 14 June 1983, authorizing the Government to ratify the agreement signed by the Government of the Lebanese Republic and the Government of the State of Israel on 17 May 1983.

2. The agreement signed on 3 November 1969 between the head of the Lebanese delegation General Emile Bustani and the Chairman of the PLO and which is known as the "Cairo Agreement" is hereby null and void as if it had never existed. Further, all annexes and measures related to the Cairo Agreement are hereby null and void as if they had never existed.

3. This law will become effective upon its publication in the Official Gazette.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?*, 3rd ed. (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p. 182. Text of al-'Asifa Communique No. 1 in *al-Watha'iq al-filastiniyya al-'arabiyya* 1965 [Arab Palestinian Documents, henceforth *APD*] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, annual), p. 1.
2. Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: PLO Decisionmaking During the 1982 War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 28-29.
3. Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, intro. and trans. by Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1961), p. 107. Similarly, for Vo Nguyen Giap "a strong rear area is always the decisive factor for victory in a revolutionary war"; see *The Military Art of People's War*, ed. Russell Stetler (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), pp. 87-92, 160, 179-181.
4. Robert W. McColl, "A Political Geography of Revolution: China, Vietnam and Thailand," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 11, 2 (June 1967): 153-156.
5. According to one study of twelve civil wars of the 1970s outside actors provided (narrowly-defined) "base facilities" to insurgents in 42% of cases, representing 83% (five of six) of successful insurgencies. Bertil Dunér, *Military Intervention in Civil Wars: the 1970s* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985).
6. Bard E. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), p. 160.
7. Chris Kutschera, *Le mouvement national Kurde* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), pp. 300-333.
8. Ibrahim Abu Lughod, "Lebanon and Palestine: Some Contrasts in the Application of the Principles of National Liberation," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7, 4 (Fall 1985): 83.
9. Abu Lughod, "Lebanon and Palestine," p. 88.
10. Ernesto (Che) Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare*, intro. and case studies by Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p. 157.
11. On the effect of changing sanctuary conditions on the Irish, Greek and Kurdish cases, see: J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA 1916-79* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1980); Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War 1944-49* (New York: Praeger 1966); John Campbell, "The Greek Civil War," in Evan Luard, ed., *The International Regulation of Civil War* (New York: New York University Press, 1972), pp. 53, 59; *Middle East International*, 9 September 1988, pp. 3-4 [henceforth *MEI*].
12. For example, Peter Calvert, *Revolution and International Politics* (London: Frances Pinter, 1984); Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal War", in George Kelly and Clifford Brown, eds., *Struggle in the State: Sources and Patterns of World Revolution* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1970), p. 189; Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr.,

Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts (Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1970), pp. 76-78; Andrew M. Scott et al., *Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 77; Eqbal Ahmed, "Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency," in Norman Miller and Roderick Aya, eds., *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 168-170; David Wilkinson, *Revolutionary Civil War: The Elements of Victory and Defeat* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Page-Ficklin, 1975), pp. 25-26; Gerard Chaliand, ed., *Guerilla Strategies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 16; Bard E. O'Neill et al., *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 15-16; Walter Lacqueur, *Guerilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 394. Notable exceptions are Thomas H. Greene, *Comparative Revolutionary Movements* 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1990), pp. 110-111, 125-132; McCoil, "A Political Geography of Revolution," and J.D. Deiner, "Guerilla Border Sanctuaries and Counter-insurgent Warfare," *The Army Quarterly* 109, 2 (April 1979)—although the latter two studies tend to examine the question from a counter-insurgency perspective, analyzing the identification or destruction of guerilla base areas. In the Palestinian case, relations between the PLO and host governments are a central focus of Paul A. Jureidini and William E. Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington, 1973), wherein the issue is dealt with in largely descriptive terms.

13. Douglas Anglin and Timothy Shaw, "Zambia and Southern African Liberation Movements 1964-1974," *Zambia's Foreign Policy: Studies in Diplomacy and Dependence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), pp. 234-271.

14. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, p. 160.

15. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, p. 160 suggests that "if an insurgent organization finds it necessary to establish a parallel hierarchy in an external support state, which governs part of the state's territory and population, violent conflict with the host state is almost inevitable."

16. Dan O'Meara, "Destabilization of the Frontline States of Southern Africa," Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security *Background Paper* 20 (June 1988): 6-7.

17. The Accord prohibited guerilla organization, recruitment and transit; logistics bases, training centers, arms depots, command centers, telecommunication facilities and radio broadcast facilities. The text of the Nikomati Accord can be found in Ibrahim S.R. Msabaha and Timothy M. Shaw, eds., *Confrontation and Liberation in Southern Africa: Regional Directions After the Nikomati Accord* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 279-283.

18. Edgar O'Ballance, *The Algerian Insurrection 1954-62* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967), p. 85; Saad Jawad, *Iraq and the Kurdish Question 1958-70* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), p. 297.

19. Examining the linkage between the two, James Rosenau has differentiated between "personnel wars" (concerned with the composition of the existing political elite), "authority wars" (concerned with the arrangement of political power), and "structural wars" (which challenge the substructures of society). The latter—corresponding with the concept of revolutionary insurgency as used in this study—involve more extensive international repercussions. See: "Internal War as an International Event," in James N. Rosenau, ed., *International Aspects of Civil Strife* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 45-91; Karl W. Deutsch, "External Involvement in Internal War," in Harry Eckstein, ed., *Internal War: Problems and Approaches* (New York: The Free Press, 1964); George A. Kelly and Linda B. Miller, *Internal War and International Systems: Perspectives on Method*, Occasional Paper No. 21 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Center for International Affairs, 1969).

20. K.J. Holsti has found external intervention in almost half of 200 cases of revolutions during 1900-1950; see Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* 3rd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 275.

21. Clinton Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge, 1948-1983: A Political History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).

22. This tendency may be reinforced by the unwillingness of regular military officers to accept the indigenous nature of an insurgency—and hence look for an external actor that can be blamed for insurgent actions, and engaged in conventional warfare. Eqbal Ahmed, "Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency," p. 168.

23. International law has traditionally enjoined states to refrain from assisting insurgencies against established governments, and to assume neutrality in the event of full-scale civil war. Richard Falk, ed., *The International Law of Civil War* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 11-16; Rosalyn Higgins, "International Law and Civil Conflict", in Luard, ed., *The International Regulation of Civil Wars*; James E. Bond, *The Rules of Riot: Internal Conflict and the Law of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 99-102; John North Moore, ed., *Law and Civil War in the Modern World* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974); Françoise Hampson, "Winning by the Rules: Law and Warfare in the 1980s," *Third World Quarterly* 11, 2 (April 1989). A state's "right" of reprisal or hot pursuit is less clear; see Richard Falk, "The Beirut Raid and the International Law of Retaliation," *American Journal of International Law* 63 (July 1969); Yehuda Blum, "The Beirut Raid and the International Double Standard," *American Journal of International Law* 64 (January 1970).

24. O'Meara, "Destabilization of the Frontline States of Southern Africa, 1980-1987," pp. 5-6; Robert S. Jaster, "South Africa and its Neighbours: The Dynamics of Regional Conflict," *International Institute for Strategic Studies Adelphi Papers* 209 (Summer 1986): 62-73.

25. Arnold Fraleigh, "The Algerian Revolution as a Case Study in International Law," in Falk, ed., *The International Law of Civil War*, pp. 206-207; J. K. Cillier, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 173-174.

26. The use of covert action against sanctuary states is well established in the literature on counter-insurgency, e.g. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 101-103; John McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), pp. 240-249. In the case of South Africa, Pretoria has supported UNITA guerillas against Angola, the "Mozambique National Resistance" (itself originally a creation of the Rhodesian regime) against Mozambique, "Super-ZAPU" in Zimbabwe, and the "Lesotho Liberation Army" in Lesotho. Steven Metz, "Pretoria's 'Total Strategy' and Low-Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa," *Comparative Strategy* 6, 4 (1987): 437-469.

27. US encouragement to Honduras and Costa Rica to provide shelter and aid to Nicaraguan rebel forces represents perhaps the most obvious example of an external actor influencing insurgent-sanctuary relations in this way—although in this case, the Contra's dependence on the US made Washington, and not the Contra leadership, the prime initiator of policy. See US House of Representatives and Senate, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1987).

28. Bahgat Korany, "The Take-Off of Third World Studies: The Case of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 35, 3 (April 1983); Bahgat Korany, *How Foreign Policy Decisions are Made in the Third World: A Comparative Analysis* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 40-41; Ali Dessouki and Bahgat Korany, "A Literature Survey and Framework for Analysis," in Korany and Dessouki, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States* (Boulder: Westview, 1984), pp. 5-18. With regard to the PLO, Paul Noble has noted the need for "a more systematic treatment of the factors shaping policy and greater effort to link the internal and external setting of [the PLO] to its actual behavior," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 18, 1 (March 1985): 193-194.

29. Korany, *Foreign Policy Decisions*, p. 169; Korany and Dessouki, "The Global System and Arab Foreign Policies: The Primacy of Constraints," and Paul Noble, "The Arab System: Opportunities, Constraints, and Pressures," both in Korany and Dessouki, *Foreign Policies of Arab States*.

30. The importance of objective factors in shaping both the outcomes and process of PLO policy-making is emphasized by Khalidi, *Under Siege*, pp. 67-129.

31. Korany, *Foreign Policy Decisions*, p. 170; Korany and Dessouki, *Foreign Policies of Arab States*, p. 326.

32. The impact of domestic political constraints on foreign policy formation are examined by Barbara Salmore and Stephen Salmore, "Political Regimes and Foreign Policy," in Maurice East, Stephen Salmore, and Charles Hermann, eds., *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspectives for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1978), pp. 103-122. The importance of internal political forces (and the influence on those forces of social and external factors) are stressed by Alain Gresh, *PLO: The Struggle Within* (London: Zed, 1985).

33. Korany, *Foreign Policy Decisions*, p. 171.

34. Aaron David Miller, *The PLO and the Politics of Survival*, Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington Papers 99 (New York: Praeger, 1983). This is evident in other policy-making groups based on organizational representatives. Charles Hermann writes of "delegate groups" in foreign policy formation: "participants are likely to feel cross-pressured between loyalty to the decision structure...and to the organizations they represent.... Instead of appeals to group loyalty...the primary process becomes incremental bargaining among group members.... Trade-offs, logrolling, and compromises tend to be prominent..." Similarly, in "leader-delegate groups" (corresponding to a national front with a dominant member), Hermann notes that new courses of action tend to be expressed in terms sufficiently broad as to cover possible disagreements. Hermann, "Decision Structure and Process Influences on Foreign Policy," in East, Salmore, and Hermann, eds., *Why Nations Act*, pp. 86-88.

35. Mohammed Selim, "The Survival of a Non-State Actor: The Foreign Policy of the Palestine Liberation Organization," in Korany and Dessouki, *Foreign Policies of Arab States*, p. 198. See also Judy Bertelson, *The Palestinian Arabs: A Non-State System Analysis* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1979).

36. The concepts of "sensitivity" and "vulnerability" are used here in the sense developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977), pp. 11-19.

Chapter 2

1. Demographic data here and elsewhere in this study are drawn from: Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Demographic Transformation of Palestine," in Ibrahim Abu Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine*, 2nd ed., (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1987), pp. 153-163; Edward Said et al., *A Profile of the Palestinian People* (Chicago: Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 1983); "The Palestinian Journey 1952-87," *Middle East Report* 146 (May-June 1987): 11. On Lebanon's involvement in the 1948 war, see Frederic Hof, *Galilee Divided: The Israel-Lebanon Frontier, 1916-1984* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Hassan Hallaq, *Mawqif lubnan min al-qadiyya al-filastiniyya* [Lebanon's Attitude Towards the Palestinian Cause, 1918-1952], (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1982).

2. The Palestinians' flight from Palestine and their early refugee experience is examined in Nafez Nazzari, *The Palestinian Exodus from the Galilee, 1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978); Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Simha Flapan, "The Palestinian Exodus of 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 4 (Summer 1987): 3-26; Erskine B. Childers, "The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees," in Abu-Lughod (ed.), *The Transformation of Palestine*, pp. 165-202; and Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Press, 1979).

3. Rosemary Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival: The Economic Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, 2 (Winter 1978): 107, and *Palestinians*, p. 115.

4. About 10% of the Palestinian population is Christian. On the socio-political dynamics of Palestinian popular organization, see Rosemary Sayigh, "The Palestinian Identity Among Camp Residents," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, 3 (Spring 1977): 3-22, and "Sources of Palestinian Nationalism: A Study of a Palestinian Camp in

Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, 4 (Summer 1977): 17-40; and especially Laurie Brand's superb study, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution-Building and the Search for State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

5. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), Baghdad, 30 December 1986.

6. Fuad Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance and Inter-Arab Politics," in William B. Quandt et al., *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 172. On the early evolution of Fatah, see: Abu Iyad (with Eric Rouleau), *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle* (New York: Times Books, 1981); Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 21-35; Hart, *Arafat*, pp. 1-263. On the purposes of Palestinian guerilla activity, see Yezid Sayigh, "Palestinian Armed Struggle: Means and Ends," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 1 (Autumn 1986): 95-112.

7. On the Arab Nationalists' Movement see Walid Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and his Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism* (London: Charles Knight, 1975).

8. Most notable of these was the "Heroes of the Return," to which some reports linked Shafiq al-Hut (PLO representative to Lebanon from 1964) and then PLA Chief of Staff Wajih al-Madani.

9. John W. Amos II, *Palestinian Resistance* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 57.

10. Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance and Inter-Arab Politics," in Quandt et al., *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, pp. 168-173. Barry Blechman, "The Impact of Israeli Reprisals on Behavior of Bordering Arab Nations Directed at Israel," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16, 2 (June 1972): Table A4, lists eight Israeli raids (six against Jordan, one each against Lebanon and Syria) prompted by al-'Asifa activities between January 1965 and June 1967.

11. Riad El-Rayyes and Dunia Nahas, *Guerillas for Palestine* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p. 30; Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance in Inter-Arab Politics," pp. 163-174.; *APD 1965*, p. 467. In response Fatah sent a formal memorandum to Arab leaders at the Third Arab Summit meeting complaining of such restrictions; text in *APD 1965*, pp. 482-483.

12. About 15,000 of the 1948 refugees obtained Lebanese citizenship. By 1982 it was estimated that 50,000 Palestinians in Lebanon were Lebanese citizens. Since a further 238,000 were registered with UNRWA at this time, this suggests that 100,000 or more had no legal standing. Howard Adelman, "Palestinian Refugees and the Peace Process," in Paul Marantz and Janice Gross Stein, eds., *Peace-making in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1985), pp. 110, 118.

13. In June 1982, a further 115,225 UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees were to be found outside the camps, in the Beirut area (56,503); Sidon area (23,346); Tyre area (27,311); Tripoli area (5,883); and Biqa' (5,098). These figures and those provided in Table 2.1 exclude Palestinians not registered with UNRWA. The Table also excludes some camps—Sabra (Beirut); Karama (Damur); Wasta, Jamjim, Abu al-Aswad, Adlun (Zahrani); Jal al-Bahr, Shabriha, Burghaliyya, Qasmiyya (Tyre)—that were established as emergency facilities to deal with refugees after fighting in 1976, 1982, and 1985-87, or which do not fall under UNRWA auspices.

14. Hani Mundas, *al-'Amal wa-al-'ummal fi al-mukhayyam al-filastini: bahth maydani 'an mukhayyam Tall al-Za'tar* [Work and Workers in a Palestinian Camp: Research on the Camp of Tall al-Za'tar], (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1974), p. 196; Cheryl Rubenburg, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: Its Institutional Infrastructure*, (Belmont, Mass.: Institute for Arab Studies, 1983), p. 48.

15. Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival," p. 115; Sirhan, "Palestinian Refugee Camp Life in Lebanon," pp. 91-93, 101; Sayigh, *Palestinians*, pp. 111-129; Mundas, *al-'Amal wa-al-'ummal fi al-mukhayyam al-filastini*; Mu'in Ahmad Mahmud, *al-Filastiniyun fi lubnan: al-waq'a'i al-ijtima'i* [The Palestinians in Lebanon: The Social Realities], (Beirut: Dar Ibn Khaldun, 1973).

16. Kamil Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War* (New York: Caravan Books, 1976), pp. 69-

70; Pamela Ann Smith, "The Palestinian Diaspora, 1948-1985," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 3 (Spring 1986): 102-103, and "The Exile Bourgeoisie of Palestine," *Middle East Report* 142 (September-October 1986): 23-27.

17. For accounts of the official harassment and political oppression of Palestinians in Lebanon see Sayigh, *Palestinians*, pp. 130-136; Fawaz Turki, *The Disinherited: The Journal of a Palestinian Exile* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 52-78.

18. Munah al-Sulh, *al-Maruniyya al-siyasiyya: sira dhatiyya* [Political Maronitism: A Personal Account] (Beirut: Dar al-Safir, c1976), quoted in Tony Khater, "Lebanese Politics and the Palestinian Resistance Movement, 1967-1976," (Ph.D. thesis, State University New York at Buffalo, 1982), p. 95.

19. Michael C. Hudson, "The Lebanese Crisis and the Limits of Consociational Democracy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, 3-4 (Spring/Summer 1976): 111. See also R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Patterns of Political Leadership: Egypt, Israel, Lebanon* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 11-18; Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama' in Historical Perspective," in Leonard Binder, ed., *Politics in Lebanon* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), pp. 85-106.

20. On the socio-economic and political transformation of Lebanon during this period see: Ilya F. Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Roger Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976).

21. Philip K. Hitti, *A Short History of Lebanon* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 191. The term "feudalism" is somewhat problematic, evoking as it does images of a rather different European model. Still, it will suffice for the purposes of brief description.

22. Paul Saba, "The Creation of the Lebanese Economy: Economic Growth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, p. 12.

23. Ilya Harik, "The Maronite Church and Political Change in Lebanon," in Binder, ed., *Politics in Lebanon*, pp. 31-56.

24. Albert Hourani, "Ideologies of the Mountain and the City," and Tewfik Khalaf, "The Phalange and the Maronite Community: From Lebanonism to Maronitism," in Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, pp. 35, 43-49; Marie-Christine Aulas, "The Socio-Ideological Development of the Maronite Community: The Emergence of the Phalanges and Lebanese Forces," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7, 4 (Fall 1985): 1-27; Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986).

25. "At one level the compromise which the Pact enshrined involved the final integration of the Sunni bourgeoisie [into an independent Lebanon].... For their part of the bargain Christian leaders accepted that the newly independent state belonged to the Middle East... and thus paved the way for easy access to the commercial and financial possibilities of the region.... But above and beyond these considerations, the National Pact also represented an agreement to maintain the economic and political system from which the leaders themselves derived a double advantage. An extra advantage stemmed from the fact that the maintenance of confessionalism provided them with an easy way of re-directing economic discontent against their own leadership towards the members of another religious group." Roger Owen, "The Political Economy of Grand Liban, 1920-70," in Owen ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, pp. 26-27.

26. Institut de Recherche et de Formation en vue de Développement (IRFED), *Besoins et possibilités de développement du Liban*, 2 volumes (Beirut: Ministry of Planning, 1960-61). The agricultural sector, which accounted for about half of Lebanon's workforce, shrunk from over 20% of GDP at independence to less than 10% by the late 1960s. In contrast, the service sector grew to more than 20%. As a result of the internal migration generated by this, Lebanon's urban population grew 146% between 1943 and 1963, with no less than 40% of the total population living in Beirut. See: B. J. Odeh, *Lebanon: The Dynamics of Conflict* (London: Zed Press, 1985), p. 84; Owen, "The Political Economy of Grand Liban, 1920-70," pp. 27-28; Michael C. Hudson, *The Precarious*

Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 61-70.

27. One survey of Sunni attitudes conducted in the late 1970s found a strong correlation between social class and opposition to the status quo, with lower-class Sunni virtually unanimous in their call for a new set of political arrangements in the country. Lower class Sunnis were also more active in street demonstrations and militias, and more sympathetic to the Palestinians. On the other hand over one-fifth of prosperous Sunnis voiced support for pre-civil war (i.e. National Pact) arrangements in the country. See Hilal Khashan and Monte Palmer, "The Economic Basis of the Civil Conflict in Lebanon: A Survey Analysis of Sunnite Muslims," in Tewfic A. Farah, ed., *Political Behavior in the Arab States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 79-81.

28. The 1932 census reported that 51% of the population was Christian (29% Maronite, 10% Greek Orthodox, 6% Greek Catholic, 7% other), and 49% Muslim (22% Sunni, 20% Shi'i, 7% Druze). In order to increase the proportion of Christians to 59%, a quarter of a million predominately Christian expatriates were added to the totals. By 1975 most estimates reversed this ratio, putting the Christian population at perhaps 40% (23% Maronite). The Shi'a had become the largest community in Lebanon at approximately 27% of the total, followed by the Sunnis (26%). Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon* (Harvard: Center for International Affairs, 1979), p. 161; Elizabeth Picard, "Liban: guerre civile, conflit regional," *Maghreb-Machrek* 73 (July-September 1976): 69.

29. Picard, "Liban: guerre civile, conflit regional," p. 79.

30. Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, p. 96. Wade R. Goria, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985) makes a similar argument.

31. Hudson, *The Precarious Republic*, pp. 112-114.

32. In a study of attitudes at three Lebanese universities, Halim Barakat found that between one-quarter and one-half of students rejected the basic foundations of their political system. Barakat, "Social Factors Influencing Attitudes of University Students in Lebanon Towards the Palestinian Resistance Movement," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, 1 (Autumn 1971): 109.

33. The following discussion of Lebanese political groupings derives from a number of sources, most notably: Marius Deeb, *The Lebanese Civil War* (New York: Praeger, 1980); John P. Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation: al-Kata'ib 1936-1970* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974); Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle Over Lebanon* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); Itamar Rabinovitch, *The War for Lebanon 1970-85*, rev. ed., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

34. Frank Stoakes, "The Supervigilantes: the Lebanese Kataeb Party as Builder, Surrogate, and Defender of the State," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, 3 (October 1975): 215-236.

35. Population data from "The Palestinian Journey 1952-87," p. 11. Post-war figures are shown for 1967 and 1982.

36. Shuqayri's demagoguery was to taint international perceptions of the Palestinian movement for years to come, further discrediting him. His story is told in his autobiography *Min al-quma ila al-hazima: ma'a al-muluk wa-al-ru'asa* [From the Summit to the Defeat with Kings and Presidents], (Beirut: Dar al-Awden, 1971).

37. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, *A Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine* (Amman: PFLP Information Department, 1969), p. 57.

38. The text(s) of the Palestine National Charter can be found in Leila Kadi, ed., *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1969).

39. Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinian Dilemma: PLO Policy After Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 1 (Autumn 1985): 88. One 1986 survey of Palestinians in the occupied territories found that 93.5% regarded the PLO as their sole legitimate representative; see: "al-Fajr Public Opinion Survey," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 2 (Winter 1987): 200. On the importance of the PLO as an organizational expression of

Palestinian identity, see Maha Ahmed Dajani, "The Institutionalization of Palestinian Identity in Egypt," *Cairo Papers in Social Science* 9, 3 (Fall 1986); Rubenburg, *The Palestine Liberation Organization*; Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*.

40. 'Ali Hasan Salama of Fateh, cited in *Arab World*, 3 December 1969, p. 12. (Henceforth AW). The brief survey of Palestinian guerilla organizations that follows is drawn from a variety of sources, including: Amos, *Palestinian Resistance*, pp. 325-334; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*; Jureidini and Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics*, pp. 25-29; O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, p. 253; As'ad Abu Khalil, "Internal Contradictions in the PFLP: Decision Making and Policy Orientation," *Middle East Journal* 41, 3 (Summer 1987); DFLP, *The Political Program (May 1981)* (n.p.: Committee for Central Information and International Relations, c1981).

41. For example, the Action Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (1969-71), *Ansar al-Thawra* (1968-72), the Popular Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (1970), the Popular Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Palestine (1972), the Palestine Arab Organization (1969-71), and the *Kata'ib al-Nasr* (Victory Battalions, 1968-70). The latter is now believed to have served as an *agent provocateur* for Jordanian intelligence, providing pretexts for the 1970 suppression of the PLO in Jordan.

42. Interview with Yasir 'Arafat ("Abu 'Ammar"), Baghdad, 29 December 1986.

43. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, p. 242. Palestinian sources report much higher totals, but the trend is similar.

44. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

45. A similar poll in May put guerilla support somewhat lower, with 41% fully supporting the guerillas, and 42% supporting them with reservations. AW, 5 May 1969, p. 4. A study of Lebanese student attitudes to the Palestinian resistance movement found that 94% of Muslim and 55% of Christian students "strongly supported" or "supported" the Palestinian resistance movement, with support strongest among Shi'ites, followed by Sunnis, Druze, Orthodox, Maronites, and Catholics. Guerilla sympathizers were most likely to describe themselves as politically active, Arab or Syrian nationalist, leftist, and secularist. Barakat, "Social Factors," p. 112.

46. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; AW, 29 April 1968, pp. 6-7. al-Wazir added that such was their success that "by 1968-70 an identification card from a *fida'i* organization alone was enough to cross the Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese borders."

47. AW, 12 November 1968, pp. 11-12. The "revolutionary" character of the Palestinian movement might be questioned on the grounds of nationalist basis of Fateh and its rejection of doctrines of class or social revolution, i.e. S. Franjieh, "How Revolutionary is the Palestinian Resistance? A Marxist Interpretation," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, 2 (Winter 1972): 52-60. As argued in Chapter 1, however, a revolutionary challenge is a function of context. In Lebanon the very presence of a generally progressive, non-sectarian, populist liberation movement was dangerous to the defenders of the Lebanese system both as an example, and as a catalyst to the growth of the Lebanese left. Moreover, whatever questions might be raised about the revolutionary content of Fateh's message clearly would not apply to the explicitly revolutionary ideology of the PFLP and DFLP. Mahdi 'Amil, *Madkhul ila naqd al-fikr al-ta'ifi: al-qadiyya al-filastiniyya fi idyulujjiyya al-brujuwaziyya al-lubnaniyya* [An Introduction to the Refutation of Sectarian Thought: The Palestinian Cause in Lebanese Progressive Ideology], (Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 1985).

48. Hilu in AW, 24 June 1969, p. 5; Pierre al-Jumayyil in *Le Monde* (Paris), 22 April 1970, p. 2.

49. (Prime Minister) 'Abdullah al-Yafi, *Muharrir* (Beirut), 31 December 1968, and Charles Hilu, *al-Jarida* (Beirut), 1 January 1969, both in APD 1968, pp. 977, 980. John P. Entelis, "Palestinian Revolutionism in Lebanese Politics: the Christian Response," *Muslim World* 62, 4 (October 1972): 335-351 discusses *Hilf* attitudes towards the Palestinian movement.

50. For the text of Karami's speech as broadcast on Beirut Radio see Jebran Chamieh,

ed., *Record of the Arab World*, April 1969, (Beirut: The Research and Publishing House), pp. 1539-1543. (Henceforth RAW).

51. AW, 9 June 1969, p. 2; *Voice of al-'Asifa* (Cairo), 21 June 1969, in AW, 23 June 1969, p. 9.

52. Text of Junblat's remarks in *Daily Star* (Beirut), 4 June 1969, official translation of Hilu's speech, and Karami's response on *Beirut Radio*, 3 June 1969 in RAW, June-September 1969, pp. 2470-2474; text of Jumayyil statement in *al-'Amal* (Beirut), 6 June 1969, in RAW, June-September 1969, pp. 2475-2476.

53. The characterization is that of Ibrahim Bakr, former Executive Committee member and one of the PLO delegation at the Cairo negotiations (interview, Amman, 20 August 1989). See also Mahmoud Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (London: Quartet Books, 1981), pp. 158-159.

54. Hilu's remarks in *al-Anwar* (Beirut), 5 November 1969, in Daniel Dishon, ed., *Middle East Record 1969-1970* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1977), p. 919 (hereafter *MERRecord*). The Phalange position in *al-'Amal*, 5 November 1969, and Eddé's statement in *al-Jarida*, 5 November 1969, in AW, 5 November 1969, p. 4.

55. Interview with Salah Khalaf ("Abu Iyad"), Tunis, 27 January 1987. The guerillas' original position was detailed by *Radio Damascus*, 27, 28 October 1969; *MERRecord* 1969-1970, p. 919. Still, the PLO was "pleased and surprised" by all that it had been able to achieve in the agreement; interview with Ibrahim Bakr, 20 July 1989.

56. For a detailed look at this process see Sayigh, *Palestinians*, pp. 156-171.

57. Interview with Dr. Fathi 'Arafat, Cairo, 2-3 February 1987. On the initial establishment of Palestinian social services, see Sayigh, *Palestinians*, pp. 171-175; Ghazi Khurshid, "The Palestinian Resistance and Social Work," *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 6 (January 1972): 104-122 [in Arabic].

58. *al-Ahram* (Cairo), 7 November 1969, in *Arab World Weekly*, 8 November 1969, p. 18. (Henceforth AWW).

Chapter 3

1. *Radio Beirut*, 5 December 1969, 4 February 1970, *al-Hayat* (Beirut), 7 January 1970, *Middle East News Agency (MENA)* 20 January 1970, in *MERRecord* 1969-70, pp. 923-925, 927, 929; Jureidini and Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics*, pp. 71-72; AW, 16 January 1970.

2. Text of the communique in AW, 17 January 1970, pp. 18-19. It was widely reported in the Lebanese press at the time that the authorities were preventing Sa'iqa forces from entering Lebanon, and that the communique was more a product of Syrian pressure than Palestinian discontent.

3. *al-Jarida*, 21 November 1969, *al-Hayat*, 3 January 1970, in *MERRecord* 1969-70, pp. 923-924; Statement by the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon, 25 February 1970, in *IDP* 1970, pp. 763-764.

4. AW, 16 January 1970, p. 3.

5. *al-Nahar*, 14 December 1969, in AWW, 17 January 1970, p. 16.

6. *al-Jarida*, 28 May 1970, in *MERRecord* 1969-70, p. 927. Data on Lebanese border operations from *MERRecord* 1969-70, p. 215.

7. Muhsin in *al-Nahar*, 4 January 1970, AWW, 17 January 1970, p. 16; interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. Asked what proportion of the Cairo Agreement was implemented during the 1969-75 period, the Fateh Central Committee member also suggested the figure of 50%.

8. *MERRecord* 1969-70, p. 211.

9. According to the survey, 46% of the Lebanese population expressed "absolute support," 40% "reserved support," and 11% "no support" for the guerillas. Asked about guerilla activities against Israel from Lebanese territory, 32% expressed "absolute support," 30% "reserved support," and 34% "no support" for such activities. *al-Nahar*, 17 November 1969; Michael W. Suleiman, "Crisis and Revolution in Lebanon," *Middle*

East Journal 26, 1 (Winter 1972): 11-24.

10. Concluding statement issued by the 7th session of the PNC, *IDP* 1970, p. 828.

11. Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Cairo, 9 November 1986. Dr. Sha'th was delegated responsibility for establishing new links with the Christian community in 1969, and served as the Fateh/Palestinian representative to a number of Christian organizations from 1968 to 1974.

12. Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War*, p. 82.; Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 161.

13. Lebanese army communique, and statement by Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon in *AW*, 19 March 1970, p. 3; Junblat's comments in *AW*, 20 March 1970, p. 2.

14. *AW*, 26 March 1970, p. 3, 27 March 1970, pp. 2-3; Jonathan Randal, *Going All the Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers and the War in Lebanon*, rev. ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), p. 116.

15. *AW*, 26 March 1970, p. 3, Statement issued by Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon, *IDP* 1970, pp. 779-781; Yasir 'Arafat in *al-Ahram* (Cairo), 23 May 1970, in *IDP* 1970, pp. 807-808; *AW*, 31 March 1970, pp. 2-3, 23 May 1970, p. 3; April agreement in *Middle East Reporter* (henceforth *MER*), 23 May 1987, p. 7; text of six-point PLO-Lebanese agreement as published in *al-Anwar*, 29 May 1970, *AW*, 30 May 1970, p. 21; Statement by Minister of Information, in *IDP* 1970, p. 813; *MER* 1969-70, p. 927, 929.

16. *AW*, 16 May 1970, p. 11, 1 June 1970, p. 2.

17. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 166. For Junblat an additional attraction was Franjiyya's agreement not to undo the legalization of the SSNP, *Ba'th* and Communist parties which Junblat had decreed shortly before vacating the Ministry of the Interior. Franjiyya was also on very close personal terms with President Asad of Syria, who in turn supported the PLO and LNM in Lebanon. Without the support of Junblat's parliamentary bloc Franjiyya would not have secured his one-vote margin of victory in the August 1970 elections.

18. Text of statement by Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon in *AW*, 2 November 1970, pp. 7-8; *Daily Star*, 1 January 1971, in *RAW* 1971, p. 279; Jureidini and Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics*, p. 74; *ARR*, 1-15 January 1972, p. 23; *AWW*, 8 January 1972, p. 34. Sa'iqa was also involved in conflict with the Popular Nasirite Organization in Sidon in August 1970, stemming from tension arising from Nasir's acceptance (and Syria's rejection) of the 1970 Rogers Peace Plan. The matter was resolved after PASC and PLO intervention. *Daily Star*, 25 August 1970, *Voice al-'Asifa* (clandestine), 25 August 1970, in *RAW* 1970, pp. 5144-5145.

19. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle In Palestine*, p. 242. Major Israeli attacks into Lebanon were mounted in January 1971 (against the fishing village of Safarand); 10 January 1972; 25-28 February; 9 March; 12 May; 21 June; 8 and 16-17 September (in retaliation for the killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games), 15 October, and 24 November 1972.

20. *MER*, 23 May 1987, p. 7.

21. *ARR*, 1-15 January 1972, p. 22; 16-31 January 1972, p. 45; 16-30 June 1972, p. 306-307; *AW*, 25 September 1972, p. 2; Edgar O'Ballance, *Arab Guerilla Power 1967-1972*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 206, 209.

22. *ARR*, 15-28 February 1973, p. 84.

23. PLO Executive Committee statement, *Wafa* (Palestine News Agency), 10 April 1973; Statement by PSP leader Kamal Junblat, *al-Muharrir*, 14 April 1973; see also the statement by the Arab Front for Participating in the Palestinian Revolution, *al-Muharrir*, 17 April 1973; all in *IDP* 1973, pp. 433-436.

24. *ARR*, 1-15 May 1973, pp. 205-206; Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 162. The cost of the border closure between May 8 and the eventual agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese government on May 17 was later estimated at £115-125 million (\$35 million); *al-Nahar*, 4 July 1979, p. 9 (*JPRS*).

25. Statement by the PLO Executive Committee regarding the clashes in Lebanon, *al-Muharrir*, 6 May 1973, in *IDP* 1973, pp. 439-440.

26. Text of the Milkart protocols in Lebanese Center for Documentation and Research, *Lebanese-Israeli Negotiations*, (Beirut: CEDRE, 1984), pp. 265-269. See also Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East*, pp. 235-236.

27. Said et al, *A Profile of the Palestinian People*, p. 13; O'Ballance, *Arab Guerilla Power 1967-1972*, p. 205.

28. George Habash, *al-Akhbar* (Beirut), 4 August 1973, in *IDP 1973*, pp. 457-458 (emphasis added). For Palestinian views on the lessons of Black September, see also Nabil Sha'th, ed., *al-Muqawama al-filastiniyya wa-al-nizam al-urdui* [The Palestinian Resistance and the Jordanian Regime], (Beirut: Center for Palestine Studies, 1971).

29. Salah Khalaf (Fateh), *al-Hurriyya*, 18 June 1973, pp. 7-8; Abu Adnan (DFLP), *al-Siyasa* (Kuwait), 17 June 1973 (*JPRS*).

30. 'Arafat's remarks in *WAFS*, 25 January 1975, *ARR*, 16-31 January 1975, p. 80. The PFLP's position can be found in *Tasks of the New Stage*, (Beirut: PFLP Foreign Relations Committee, 1973), p. 110; George Habash, *al-Akhbar*, 4 August 1973, *IDP 1973*, pp. 455-456.

31. Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle: Israel, the United States, and the Palestinians*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1984), pp. 181-182; Randal, *Going All the Way*, pp. 188-194. On Israel's historic involvement in South Lebanon, see: Hof, *The Galilee Divided*; Elaine Hagopian and Samih Farsoun, eds., *South Lebanon AAUG Special Report No. 2*, (Detroit: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, August 1978).

32. Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, p. 125; Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War," p. 267.

33. *al-Nahar*, 12, 13 June 1973; *AWW*, 16 June 1973, pp. 15-18. According to Nabil Sha'th, however, the PFLP, DFLP, and PFLP-GC had caused "deep problems" in relations with the Lebanese government during the May crisis for which "Fateh paid the price." Interview, 9 January 1987.

34. One survey of conditions found an average of ten persons per one room in the al-Shiyah quarter; in the al-Maslakh and Karantina quarters 85% of inhabitants lived in small huts accommodating, on average, 8-14 persons. There was no running water or electricity. See: Walid W. Kazziha, *Palestine in the Arab Dilemma*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 41-43; Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," *MERIP Reports* 19 (August 1973): 3-14; Middle East Research and Information Project, "Lebanon A Year Later: The Crisis Deepens," *MERIP Reports* 30 (August 1974): 26-28.

35. *ARR*, 16-31 January 1973, p. 33; Gorla, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon*, p. 136. The emergence of the "revolutionary-socialist-democratic-secular" critique of the status quo among Lebanese students is examined in Halim Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife: Student Preludes to the Civil War*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).

36. *ARR*, 16-31 January 1973, p. 33; Jumayyil memorandum to President Franjiyya cited in Stoakes, "The Supervigilantes," p. 222.

37. *al-'Amal al-Shahri*, May 1977, pp. 25-35, cited in Khater, "Lebanese Politics and the Palestinian Resistance Movement, 1967-1976," pp. 209-212. The report was signed by Joseph Abu Khalil, Charles Dahdah, Karim Pakraduni, Ibrahim Najjar, and Antoine Najim.

38. *ARR*, 16-30 September 1973, p. 413, 1-15 January 1974, p. 6; Khater, "Lebanese Politics and the Palestinian Resistance Movement, 1967-1976," p. 142.

39. Interview with Yasir 'Arafat, Baghdad, 29 December 1986; Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 171-172; *AW*, 11 April 1973, p. 11. The PLO was later to maintain that approval for its own military preparations was received from President Franjiyya himself, who admitted to Lebanon's inability to defend the camps. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 167; Shafiq al-Hut, cited in Alan Hart, *'Arafat*, p. 365; interview with Yasir 'Arafat in *al-Nahar al-'arabi wa al-duwali*, 27 August-2 September 1984, p. 22.

40. *al-Hurriyya*, 18 June 1973, pp. 7-8.

41. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. The Palestinian delegation also included Salah Salah of the PFLP, Yasir 'Abd al-Rabbu of the DFLP, and a Sa'iqa representative; on the other side were Amin Jumayyil, Joseph Chader, and Karim

Pakraduni of the Phalange politburo. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 162-163; "Resolutions of the Lebanese Phalange Party," *al-Amal*, 26 September 1972, in *RAW* 1972, p. 1576; *al-Amal*, 29 September 1973, in *IDP* 1973, pp. 467-468.

42. For Yasir 'Arafat, the ability of the PLO to participate in the October war was one of the most important contributions of its Lebanese base; interview, 29 December 1986. The Syrian government's subsequent attempts to diminish or ignore the Palestinian contribution on the Golan front was one of the early causes of the friction between 'Arafat and Syrian President Asad that emerged after 1976. For details of PLO military operations during the war, and the brief improvement of the Lebanese political climate, see Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 121-133, 163.

43. Text of Seventh Arab Summit Conference Resolutions in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, 3 (Spring 1975): 177-178.

44. Political Program adopted by the 12th session of the Palestine National Council, *IDP* 1974, p. 449. For background to the 10-point program see Gresh, *The Struggle Within*, pp. 156-171.

45. *ARR*, 16-31 June 1974, p. 267; Statement by the PFLP announcing its withdrawal from the PLO Executive Committee, and joint communique issued by Palestinian Rejection Front, *IDP* 1974, pp. 500, 512-513.

46. *al-Amal*, 30 May 1974, in *IDP* 1974, pp. 444-445.

47. Manchester *Guardian*, 7 January 1975. Among the larger Israeli attacks during this period were those of 12 April 1974, against six Lebanese villages; heavy air-raids on May 16 and June 18-20; the sinking of 30 Lebanese fishing boats in Tyre, Sidon, and Ras al-Shak on July 8; a series of clashes along the border zone October 28-November 5; artillery shelling, a car bombing, and air-raids on December 7, 10, 12 and 30; and cross-border raids 1-4 and 11-17 January 1975.

48. Tawfiq al-Safadi (secretary-general of the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon), *al-Nahar*, 24 April 1974, p. 3 (*JPRS*), emphasis added. *ARR*, 16-31 October 1973, p. 501, 1-14 February 1974, p. 48, 1-15 March 1974, p. 83, 1-15 July 1974, p. 288; statement by al-Safadi in *al-Nahar*, 18 April 1974, in *IDP* 1974, p. 430. The October 1973 freeze was reported solely by Lebanese sources; the others were all confirmed by PLO spokespersons. Major Palestinian attacks likely staged from Lebanon during this period include the 11 April 1974 attack against Qiryat Shemona (PFLP-GC) and the 15 May 1974 attack against Ma'alot (DFLP), both of which resulted in very heavy Israeli civilian casualties; a June 13 raid on Shamir (PFLP-GC); a June 24 attack on Nahariya (Fateh); a December 6 raid on Rosh Haniqra; and a 5 March 1975 attack in Tel Aviv (Fateh).

49. A survey conducted by the Palestine Research Center at this time found that 80% of refugees in Lebanon opposed the idea of a Palestinian "mini-state" on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. See Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 142; Picard, "Liban: guerre civile, conflit régional," p. 58.

50. *ARR*, 1-15 March 1974, p. 83, 1-15 August 1974, p. 324, 16-31 October 1974, p. 456, 16-31 January 1975, p. 94; *New York Times*, 22 August 1974, p. 4; Jumayyil statement in Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World, *CEMAM Reports* 1975 Vol. 3, (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq, 1975), pp. 15-23.

Chapter 4

1. According to the Phalange version of events, the bus contained armed ALF guerillas, firing weapons. Most PLO accounts describe the passengers as civilians, although 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad of the ALF states that they were ALF members. Interview, Amman, 28 December 1986. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 164 suggests that the incident was not the responsibility of the Phalange, but rather a LNP-engineered provocation.

2. The following account of the Lebanese civil war is drawn from: Edward P. Haley and Lewis W. Snider, eds., *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1979), Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War*; Deeb, *The*

Lebanese Civil War; Petran, *The Struggle Over Lebanon*; Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*; and Antoine Khuwayri's *Hawadith lubnan 1975* [The Events of Lebanon 1975], (Beirut: Manshurat Dar al-Abjadiyya, 1976), and *al-Harb fi lubnan 1976* [The War in Lebanon 1976], 3 volumes (Beirut: Manshurat Dar al-Abjadiyya, 1977).

3. Statement by the General Secretariat of the Arab Front for Participating in the Palestinian Revolution, *al-Muharrir*, 26 April 1975, p. 3, in *IDP 1975*, pp. 407-408; Pierre Jumayyil quoted in *al-Nahar*, 30 April 1975, p. 2 (*JPRS*).

4. *al-Hawadith* (Beirut), 3 October 1975, p. 9 (*JPRS*).

5. Zuhayr Muhsin, *al-Tali'a* (Damascus), 4 November 1975, p. 4 in *IDP 1975*, p. 504.

6. On Syrian views, decision-making, and policy during the civil war see: Adeed I. Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis* (London: Macmillan Press, 1980); Karen Rasler, "Conflict and Escalation in Lebanon: A Dynamic Analysis of Civil War and Intervention," (Ph.D. thesis, Florida State University, 1981); Naomi Joy Weinberger, *Syrian Intervention in Lebanon: The 1975-76 Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

7. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 175; George Habash in *PFLP Bulletin*, July-August 1975, p. 3; Haytham Ayyubi, "Eight Israeli gains from the Civil War in Lebanon," *Shu'un filastiniyya* 60 (October/November 1976): 26-31 [in Arabic]; *al-Hurriyya*, 7 July 1975, pp. 6-8 (*JPRS*). The appointment of G. McMurtrie Godley as US ambassador to Lebanon in 1974 was also cited as evidence of a plot in the making. Prior to his Lebanese posting, Godley had served as US ambassador to Laos, where he had been involved in US covert activities.

8. Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, pp. 90-92, 124. According to Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, the first formal Phalange-Israel contact came in March 1976. *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984). There was some initial opposition within the Phalange to dealings with Israel, although these muted as the Lebanese right's position grew more tenuous. Contacts between Chamoun and Israel were considerably older, possibly dating back to the 1958 civil war. These were reactivated after the May crisis of 1973, and cemented by a secret meeting between Camille Chamoun and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1976. Randal, *Going All the Way*, pp. 200-201.

9. Nabil Sha'ith in *al-Nahar*, 4 May 1975, p. 12 (*JPRS*).

10. *ARR*, 16-30 April 1975, p. 252, 263, 1-15 May 1975, p. 280, 1-15 June 1975, p. 348. The PLO leadership's desire to avoid provocative incidents was made clear in July, following the kidnapping of Col. Henry Morgan, a US military officer, in Beirut. Although an unknown Lebanese group claimed responsibility for the act, an internal PLO investigation revealed that the PSF and PFLP-GC were actually involved. When these groups refused to respond to requests that Morgan be freed, the PLO issued a strongly-worded statement, citing the organizations by name, condemning the act as one of "anarchy and irresponsibility" and vowing that the revolution would "take all necessary measures to protect its gains, security, and stability." Morgan was subsequently released July 12. *New York Times*, 10 July 1975, p. 1; *ARR*, 1-15 July 1975, p. 400.

11. The PLA contingent from the Hittin Brigade was deployed following an agreement between Karami and Zuhayr Muhsin; it later withdrew September 17 after a direct request from Franjiyya to Asad. *ARR*, 1-15 September 1975, p. 499, 1-15 December 1975, p. 662. 'Arafat, Hani al-Hasan, and 'Ali Hasan Salama of Fateh, Zuhayr Muhsin of al-Sa'iqa, Yasir 'Abd Rabbu of the DFLP, and Tawfiq al-Safadi of the Higher Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon were among those who took an active part in the proceedings of the Committee.

12. Quiet lines of communication were kept open through Fateh's 'Ali Hasan Salama. In his first and only full press interview in April 1976, Salama (assassinated by Israel in January 1979) remarked of these contacts: "Ignorance breeds enmity. Many people on the other side are convinced they are threatened. That's why you always find them on the defensive. They genuinely believe that we want to take Lebanon away from them. It is up to us to prove to them that we love Lebanon as much as Shaykh Pierre [al-Jumayyil] and Sa'id 'Aql do.... [Since the start of the civil war] we have not missed a single opportunity to intervene or mediate to stop the fighting. This is not a tactical effort. It is part of our

strategy to put an end to the internecine strife in Lebanon. Even when we had to fight back in self-defense, we were fully aware that dialogue was essential." *Monday Morning* (Beirut), 29 January-4 February 1979, pp. 16-26. The Fateh/PLO leadership also generally accepted the need (rejected at this time by Junblat) for Phalangist representatives on the various ceasefire committees. *al-Hawadith*, 3 October 1975, p. 9 (JPRS).

13. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 166-170.

14. *Filastin al-thawra*, 29 June 1975, p. 7, 9, in *IDP 1975*, pp. 428-429.

15. *al-Nahar*, 15 October 1975, in *IDP 1975*, p. 492.

16. Zuhayr Muhsin, in *ARR*, 16-31 July 1975, p. 146, 16-31 October 1975, p. 579; *al-Tali'a*, 4 November 1975, in *IDP 1975*, p. 405.

17. Kamal Joumlat [Junblat], *I Speak for Lebanon*, (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 112.

18. *PFLP Bulletin*, July-August 1975, p. 3.

19. Interview with Abu Layla (DFLP Politburo), Damascus, 10 February 1987. Similar analyses were voiced by Sa'id 'Abd al-Hadi and Dr. Jamil Hilal of the DFLP Central Committee; interviews, Damascus, 18, 20 December 1986.

20. *al-Hurriyya*, 7 July 1975, pp. 6-8 (JPRS).

21. *ARR*, 16-30 April 1975, p. 251; MERIP, "Lebanon Explodes: Battles of Survival," *MERIP Reports* 44 (February 1976): 8; Communiqué issued after a meeting of the Palestinian Rejection Front, *Ila al-Amam* (Beirut), 21 November 1975, pp. 8-9, in *IDP 1975*, p. 516.

22. "Memorandum of the Standing Conference of the Superior-Generals of the Monastic Orders of Lebanon submitted to the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies," *al-Nahar*, 7 November 1975, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, 1-2 (Autumn 1975-Winter 1976): 295-297.

23. *al-Nahar*, 14 January 1976, in *IDP 1976*, pp. 360-361.

24. Sa'd Sayil on *Voice of Palestine* 9 January 1976 (FBIS); also *Voice of Palestine* (Algiers), 14 January 1976, in *ARR*, 1-15 January 1976, p. 11.

25. By this time the PLO could field about 10-15,000 guerillas in Lebanon, supported by a similar number of militia and up to 3,000 PLA troops, for a total of about 25,000. Within the LNM, the largest forces were contributed by the PSP (about 2,500 fighters and up to 15,000 militia); the LCP (over 2,000 fighters and militia); the SSNP (up to 2,000); and *Murabitun* (over 1,000). The two *Ba'ih* parties each contributed a further 1,000 or more each, and the remaining leftist and Nasirite groups in the coalition some 2-3,000 altogether. The largest rightist militias were the Phalange (over 15,000 armed members); the LNP (3,500); *al-Tanzim* (1,500); the Zgharta Liberation Army (1,500); and the Guardians of the Cedars (1,000). About 20 smaller rightist militias also existed. Before its disintegration early in 1976, the Lebanese Army consisted of about 19,000 troops. Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, p. 68, 71, 82; Odeh, *Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict*, pp. 213-218.

26. Text of the Constitutional Declaration in Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, pp. 189-191.

27. Communiqué No. 1 issued by Brigadier Ahdab, *al-Nahar*, 12 March 1976, in *IDP 1976*, p. 384.

28. Junblat, *I Speak for Lebanon*, pp. 15, 74, 113, 115.

29. *ARR*, 16-31 March 1976, p. 186.

30. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 181.

31. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 29 December 1986.

32. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 183.

33. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 186-187; interview with Yasir 'Arafat, 30 December 1986.

34. Interviews with Dr. Nabil Sha'ith, 9 November 1986, and with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. The debate within Fateh over its "Lebanese" policy, and in particular the extent of its support for Junblat and the National Movement, was among the factors that led to the resignation of Khalid al-Hasan from the Fateh Central Committee. Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, pp. 209-210.

35. Interview with Abu Layla, 10 February 1987. The text of Salah Khalaf's "Junya" speech of 22 May 1976 can be found in Khuwayri, *al-Harb fi Lubnan*, vol. 2, pp. 195-196. Khalaf himself later protested he had been misquoted; interview, 24 January 1987.

36. *ARR*, 16-31 March 1976, p. 202; "Pax Syria vs. Democracy in Lebanon," *PFLP Bulletin*, March-April 1976, p. 1. Sa'iqa response on *Radio Damascus*, 25 March 1976, in *IDP* 1976, p. 388.

37. In fact, the acrimony between Junblat and Asad at their March 27 "reconciliation" meeting only served to cement their rift. For Khalaf's, Junblat's, and Asad's versions of these and other meetings in March and April, see: Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 183-187; Junblat, *I Speak for Lebanon*, pp. 81-82; Asad's speech to Syrian local councils, *Radio Damascus*, 20 July 1976 (*FBIS*), also in Itamar Rabinovitch, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985*, rev. ed., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 201-236.

38. The text of the agreement, published in *al-Safir* (Beirut), 17 April 1986, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1976): 275. The Palestinian delegation also included Khalaf, Faruq Qaddumi, Nimr Salih, Zuhayr Muhsin, and Nayif Hawatima. Despite its support for the accord, the National Movement's reservations are evident in the communique it issued April 17 announcing approval. *Beirut Radio*, 17 April 1986, in *IDP* 1976, pp. 410-411.

39. *ARR*, 16-30 April 1976, p. 271, 15 May 1976, p. 302; *New York Times*, 6 May 1976, p. 1; interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. Opposition to PLO-Egyptian rapprochement was noted by PFLP spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif in *Monday Morning*, 9-15 May 1976, pp. 12-13.

40. *Wafa*, 9 May 1976, in *ARR*, 1-15 May 1976, p. 287.

41. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 187-188; *ARR*, 1-15 May 1976, p. 287; interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; communique issued by the command of the Palestinian revolution on the Tripoli incidents, *Wafa*, 14 May 1976, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1976): 281-282; *Filastin al-ithawra*, 31 May 1976. Up until this point Fateh/PLO criticism of Syria had been restrained not only by the desire to preserve relations, but also by the very real threat of retaliation by the Syrian intelligence services.

42. Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, p. 135.

43. *Wafa*, 2 June 1976, p. 9, in *IDP* 1976, p. 426.

44. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 188; *al-Safir*, 8 June 1976, p. 1 (*JPRS*); Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, p. 82, 169; interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986. According to al-Wazir, prior arrangements had been made by Fateh with many Sa'iqa cadres and officers to assure their defection in the event of a confrontation. He also maintained that elements of the PFLP-GC, as well as al-Sa'iqa, were part of the Syrian plan. In any event, Syrian intervention provoked a split within the PFLP-GC: although its leader, Ahmad Jibril, was generally sympathetic to Damascus, a large portion of the organization's membership fought alongside the PLO against Syria under the leadership of Muhammad al-Abbas. In 1977 the latter group formed its own organization, the Palestine Liberation Front, led by Abbas and Tal'at Ya'qub.

45. The defence of Sidon was commanded by then Major Sa'id Musa Muragha (Abu Musa) of Fateh, commander of the Joint Forces in the south. Later in 1977 he was shot and wounded in Nabatiyya by unknown (possibly Syrian) gunmen, but survived to become a Colonel and Deputy Chief of the Joint Forces Central Operations Room, under Brig. Gen. Sa'd Sayil. In 1983 Abu Musa would lead an unsuccessful rebellion against 'Arafat's leadership.

46. *al-Thawra* (Baghdad), 2, 9 June 1976, quoted in Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, p. 136.

47. *Time*, 22 August 1977, p. 23; *New York Times*, 1 September 1976, p. 2, and 2 September 1976, p. 2. Israel's interest lay in the continuance of the conflict, not Syria's outright victory over the PLO. According to Khalaf, this led to occasional relaxations of the Israeli blockade so that fighting would not "end prematurely for lack of weapons." Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 193.

48. Initial Israeli contacts with Christian Lebanese soldiers in the southern village of

al-Qulay'a in 1975 led to the opening of the "Good Fence" by early 1976, and military aid later that spring. For a detailed account, see Beate Hamizrach, *The Emergence of the South Lebanon Security Belt: Major Saad Haddad and the Ties with Israel 1975-1978* (New York: Praeger, 1988), pp. 63-75.

49. US position in *New York Times*, 2 June 1976, p. 1; Robert W. Stookley, "The United States," in Haley and Snider, eds., *Lebanon in Crisis*, pp. 225-248; Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, pp. 87-89. On the Soviet position, see: Galia Golan, *The Soviet Union and the PLO*, (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 184, 190, 192-193; Darwisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, p. 137; Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 193-194.

50. On Chamoun's motives in launching the Tall al-Za'tar siege see his memoirs, *Crise au Liban* (Beirut, 1977). The PLO charged that Syria assisted the siege, pointing to the presence of a Syrian Colonel in the LF operations room, Syrian fire support, and Sa'iq'a's role as a "fifth column" in the camp. *Wafa*, 12, 14, 18 August 1976; *Tall al-Za'tar* (Beirut: PLO Unified Information, 1977). Similarly, members of (pro-Syrian) *Amal* played a role in the fall of the Nab'a area of Beirut to the LF in August 1976; Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, pp. 48, 197.

51. Text of the agreement and joint communique, *al-Ba'th* (Damascus), 30 July 1976, in *IDP 1976*, pp. 459-461. Because 'Arafat refused to travel to Syria until Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon, the Palestinian delegation was headed by Faruq Qaddumi. It included Yasir 'Abd al-Rabbu (DFLP), Talal Naji (PFLP-GC), and 'Abd al-Muhsin Abu Mayzar of the PLO Executive Committee; Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu Mazin) and Muhammad Ghunaym (Abu Mahir) of the Fateh Central Committee, Salah Ra'fat of the DFLP Politburo, and Fadl Sharuru of the PFLP-GC Politburo.

52. Rejection Front in *ARR*, 1-15 August 1976, p. 498, 16-31 August 1976, p. 527; Qaddumi in *Wafa*, 31 July 1976, in *IDP 1976*, p. 461.

53. For details of these meetings as seen by a Phalange politburo member who served as one of Sarkis' chief aides, see: Karim Pakradouni, *La paix manquée: le mandat d'Elias Sarkis (1976-1982)*, 2nd ed., (Paris: Editions FMA, 1984), pp. 36-38.

54. Text of letter from PLO Chairman 'Arafat to President Sarkis, *Wafa*, 23 September 1976, p. 2, in *IDP 1976*, pp. 477-478.

55. Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*, pp. 158-159.

56. Hani al-Hasan, Sa'd Sayil, and Abu Firas of Fateh represented the PLO at the reconvened Shtura meeting, at which Syria demanded that the pro-Syrian National Front, rather than Junblat and the National Movement, henceforth be accepted as the representative of the progressive movement in Lebanon. Salah Khalaf, in *al-Hawadith*, 15 October 1976, in *IDP 1976*, pp. 486-488. 'Arafat was later to claim that the October 12 Syrian offensive was launched to abort a break-through in negotiations between Sarkis and the PLO, thus establishing a military *fait accompli* for the forthcoming Arab summit conference. *The Middle East*, December 1976, pp. 16-20.

57. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 195-196; see also Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, pp. 74-75, 78; Hart, *Arafat*, pp. 428-429.

58. On the latter point, Khalid al-Hasan later commented "Faysal was our protector, and Faysal had the power and influence within the Arab world to prevent Kissinger from turning Lebanon into his private killing ground. I am not saying that Faysal would have stopped the civil war from starting. I am saying that if he had lived, he would have used his influence with other Arab leaders to bring the situation under control..." Hart, *Arafat*, p.417. The DFLP and PFLP were more suspicious of the Saudi role, suggesting that it had an active interest in weakening the resistance by dragging out the Lebanese conflict.

59. For the text of the Riyadh summit resolutions, see Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, Appendix IV. In his speech to the summit conference, Sarkis placed the primary blame for the civil war on the Palestinians, stating that "the present conflict did not stem from social or political demands but from the fact that certain members of the resistance did not abide by the existing agreements." *AWW*, 24 December 1977, p. 25. Resolutions of the Arab League summit conference, *al-Ahram* (Cairo), 27 October 1976, in *IDP 1976*, pp. 492-493.

Chapter 5

1. Zuhayr Muhsin, *Monday Morning*, 6-12 December 1976.
2. *ARR*, 16-30 November 1976, p. 712, 1-15 December 1976, pp. 743-744; 16-31 December 1976, p. 722.
3. *Voice of Palestine*, 8 December 1976 (*FBIS*); *ARR*, 16-31 December 1976, p. 771.
4. *WAFA*, 28 November 1976, in *AWW*, 4 December 1976, pp. 9-10.
5. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 198 comments on the physical threat directly felt from the Syrian ADF by many Palestinian leaders at this time.
6. Statement issued by PLO Central Council, in *AWW*, 18 December 1976, p. 19.
7. *ARR*, 1-15 December 1976, p. 743; Zuhayr Muhsin quoted by *SNA*, (Riyadh) 28 January 1977 (*FBIS*). According to Salah Khalaf, President Asad flatly told Khalil al-Wazir, Nimr Salih and himself in an April 1977 meeting that because he doubted their "seriousness and capacity to lead," he had decided "not to take the PLO leadership into account" any longer. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, p. 200.
8. Zuhayr Muhsin, quoted by *QNA*, (Doha) 15 February 1977; *Voice of Palestine*, 12, 13 February 1977, *SNA*, 13 February 1977 (*FBIS*); *MECS* 1976-77, p. 194; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, p. 83.
9. *INA*, 11 June 1977 (*FBIS*); *ARR*, 1-15 June 1977; *Damascus Domestic Service*, 15 February 1977 (*FBIS*).
10. *al-Ba'th* (Damascus), 24 November 1976, in *MECS* 1976-77, p. 195.
11. Political statement issued by the 13th session of the Palestine National Council, *WAFA*, 21 March 1977, in *IDP* 1977, pp. 348-349. For details of the session, see *MECS* 1976-77, pp. 182-184, 195; Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization*, pp. 85-86. Some Rejection Front delegates openly condemned Syrian policy during the PNC session, and a surprisingly large number of Council members refused to support the otherwise routine re-election of (pro-Syrian) Khalid al-Fahum as PNC Speaker (172 votes were cast in his favor, 69 against, 21 abstentions, and 27 members were absent).
12. *WAFA*, 21 March 1977, in *IDP* 1977, pp. 348-349.
13. The strongest position in this regard was that adopted by Etienne Saqr of the Guardians of the Cedars, who demanded that all Palestinians be completely disarmed and expelled from Lebanon. (During the civil war, his militia had called upon each Lebanese to "kill one Palestinian," so that "not one will remain.") On January 24, the Lebanese Front as a whole adopted as its official policy to "liberate all occupied Lebanese territory and to try to distribute the Palestinians residing in Lebanon among the members states of the Arab League, each according to its [absorbitive] capacity." *al-Amal*, 10 December 1976, p. 4 (*JPRS*); statement signed by Camille Chamoun, Sulayman Franjiyya, Pierre Jumayyil, and Father Sharbil Qassis, *Beirut Domestic Service*, 23 January 1977 (*FBIS*).
14. *Beirut Domestic Service*, 12 January 1977, *Voice of Lebanon*, 12 January 1977 (*FBIS*); *ARR*, 1-15 January 1977, pp. 10-11.
15. *MECS* 1976-77, pp. 514-516, 521-522. Within the PLO leadership, the "Lebanese interpretation" was seen as a cover for, and product of, Syrian pressure. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.
16. *al-Nahar*, 28 May 1977; the LNM's response (supporting the PLO and condemning the Front for its attitude) was issued a few days later, *al-Nahar*, 1 June 1977, in *IDP* 1977, pp. 371-373.
17. Faruq Qaddumi in *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 67 (June 1977): 51-52.
18. *MECS* 1976-77, p. 517, 520, 522; *Beirut Domestic Service*, 25 July 1977 (*FBIS*); *Middle East Reporter*, 25 July 1977, p. 4 (henceforth *MER*); Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, pp. 126-127. The accord appeared to be a softening of the publicly-stated "Lebanese interpretation" of the Cairo Agreement in a number of respects, most notably its rejection of numerical (ratio) limits on Palestinian forces in the camps; the greater role envisaged for PASC; recognition of the PLO's role in camp defence; and the rights of Palestinians in Lebanon.
19. The weapons collected included 12 cannons, 36 mortars, 40 anti-tank weapons, 9 anti-aircraft guns, 63 rockets, and 95 machine guns and other light arms. *ARR*, 1-15 August 1977, pp. 638-639; *Beirut Domestic Service*, 30 July, 3 August 1977 (*FBIS*);

MER, 11 August 1977, p. 5. The PLO security committee was headed by Nimr Salih (Fateh), Yasir 'Abd Rabbu (DFLP), and 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad (ALF). *Voice of Palestine*, 26 July 1977 (FBIS).

20. Interview with Ahmad Sidqi al-Dajani, Cairo, 9 December 1986; interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.

21. Col. Sa'id Musa Muragha, in *New York Times*, 2 September 1976, p. 2.

22. In January 1977 a Syrian ADF battalion did deploy as far south as Nabatiyya; it was withdrawn the following month.

23. *ARR*, 16-30 September 1977, pp. 779-783. For details of developments in south Lebanon, see Hamizrachi, *South Lebanon Security Belt*, pp. 77-155.

24. *ARR*, 1-31 October 1977, p. 877; PFLP statement to *Baghdad Domestic Service*, 26 September 1977, ALF statement to *INA*, 1 November 1977 (FBIS).

25. Salah Khalaf, *QNA*, 8 November 1977; *MER*, 14 November 1977; Yasir 'Arafat, *Voice of Palestine* (clandestine), 14 November 1977, *Voice of Palestine* (Cairo), 27 September 1977 (FBIS). The principle of "equal withdrawals" was the most official of these positions, agreed upon at joint meeting of the PLO and LNM leaderships. Given Israel's interests in the south and Haddad's claim to be an indigenous militia incapable of "withdrawal," it was no more likely to occur than the others.

26. According to Karim Pakradouni (then acting both as Sarkis' political advisor and as a member of the Phalange politbureau), the PLO now withdrew points it had previously reached agreement upon with the Lebanese government. Pakradouni, *La Paix Manquée*, pp. 118-119.

27. Lebanese Premier Salim al-Huss was quick to deny any Lebanese involvement. *Beirut Domestic Service*, 12 March 1978 (FBIS).

28. Bjørn Skogmo, *UNIFIL: International Peacekeeping in Lebanon, 1978-1988*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), pp. 7-16. Terms of reference for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were subsequently endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 426 (19 March 1978): to "confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore international peace and security, and assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area"; and to "use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to ensure that its area of operation is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind." *Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 (1978)* UN Doc. S/12611.

29. Salim al-Za'nun (Fateh, deputy PNC Speaker) quoted by *QNA*, 19 March 1978 (FBIS).

30. Salah Khalaf hinted at the possibility of the city's fall in comments to *QNA*, 21 March 1978 (FBIS). For a similar view from within the PFLP see "South Lebanon Explodes," *MERIP Reports* 66 (April 1978): 4, 6.

31. 'Abd Rabbu to *INA*, 22 March 1978, Qaddumi to *Damascus Domestic Service*, 26 March 1978 (FBIS); for an account of the Waldheim-'Arafat meeting based on its unpublished minutes, see Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, p. 135. According to (UN Undersecretary-General) Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 190, 192 the PLO resisted efforts to deploy the Lebanese army in the south at this stage.

32. PFLP statement carried in *al-Siyasa*, (Kuwait) 10-12 June 1978, in *AWW*, 17 June 1978, pp. 8-9; Rejection Front statement to *INA*, 10 April 1978, Rejection Front-DFLP joint statement reported by *Reuters*, 4 May 1978 (FBIS); interview with Samih Abu Kuwayk, Damascus, 17 December 1986.

33. Interviews with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; Dr. Nabil Sha'th, 8 January 1987. It was reported at the time that the split with Fateh pitted Abu Da'ud, Salah Khalaf and Nimr Salih, Fateh military commanders Colonel Abu Musa and Colonel Khalid al-'Amla, and Naji 'Allush of the Writers' Union, against the Fateh conservatives including 'Arafat, Khalil al-Wazir, and Khalid al-Hasan. Some of the former group came to Abu Da'ud's formal defence not so much out of support for his actions, but from the fear that any purge of his supporters might presage a general purge of the Fateh "left." And, in the end, the bonds which united the senior Fateh leadership prevailed with a very public show

of solidarity during guerilla graduation ceremony a few days later. Abu Da'ud was removed from several of his positions, but was later partially rehabilitated within the movement. Naji Allush moved to Baghdad, where he first cooperated with Abu Nidal and later formed his own short-lived organization. Two of those arrested by "Force 17" (Fateh's special security unit) were less fortunate. They were later executed for extortion and the arms offences, a punishment which the Iraqi-controlled *Voice of Palestine* radio station charged was politically motivated. *Voice of Palestine* (clandestine), 19 June 1978, *Voice of Palestine* (Baghdad), 20 June 1978 (FBIS).

34. Memorandum submitted to the Fateh Central Committee, *al-Thawra mustamirra* (Beirut), 27 May 1978, p. 4, in *IDP* 1978, pp. 466-468.

35. Central Council communique, *Wafa*, 21 May 1978, p. 1; interviews with Sabir Muhi al-Din (PFLP), Damascus, 18 December 1986; Dr. Jamil Hilal (DFLP), 20 December 1986; 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad (ALF), Amman, 28 December 1986; Sa'id Musa Muragha, Damascus, 10 January 1987. For details of UNIFIL-PLO relations, see Skogmo, *UNIFIL*, pp. 41-56; Nathan A. Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping on Arab-Israeli Fronts: Lessons from the Sinai and Lebanon*, SAIS Papers in International Affairs 3, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 21-22; 102-103.

36. In the first six months of its operation (April-September 1978) UNIFIL suffered nine attacks from "armed elements" (Palestinian or LNM forces), resulting in three UN deaths. In the first six months of 1979 there were only four such exchanges of fire; in the first half of 1980, no direct attacks and only eight "close firings" were reported. During the period January 1979-June 1980 some 200 infiltration attempts by 1,435 fighters were turned back by UNIFIL. In contrast, in the first half of 1980 there were six direct attacks and 143 close firings upon UNIFIL by the "*de facto* forces" (Haddad), resulting in five UN deaths. In the first half of 1981 there were two clashes and 236 close firings. Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping on Arab-Israeli Fronts*, pp. 21-22; 102-103.

Chapter 6

1. James A. Reilly, "Israel in Lebanon, 1975-1982," *MERIP Reports* 108/109 (September/October 1982): 17.

2. "Zionist Designs on South Lebanon: A Historical Perspective," *Palestine* 4, 5 (15-30 March 1978): 10-13; a similar perspective is offered by: "Israeli Terror and Expansionism in Lebanon," *Palestine* 5, 8 (1-15 May 1979): 10-12; "Israeli Colonization of South Lebanon," *Palestine* 6, 13 (16-31 July 1980): 24-25; "Israeli Expansionism in South Lebanon," *Palestine* 7, 19 (16-31 October 1980): 3. The Zionist movement's early territorial claims to south Lebanon and Moshe Dayan's 1955 proposals to establish a pro-Israeli Christian Lebanese mini-state were both cited as evidence of Israeli ambitions in the area.

3. Text of Lebanese parliamentary declaration in *ARR*, 16-30 April 1978, p. 288.

4. *Voice of Palestine*, 25 April 1978 (FBIS).

5. Statement by Talal Naji (PFLP-GC/PLO Executive Committee), quoted by *Beirut Domestic Service*, 24 May 1978 (FBIS). The meeting was also attended by Interior Minister Dr. Salah Salman, ADF commander Colonel Sami al-Khatib, Salah Khalaf, Sa'd Sayil, PLO UN representative Basil 'Aql, Zuhayr Muhsin, and Yasir 'Abd Rabbu of the DFLP. Over time, relations between Sarkis and al-Huss had deteriorated. According to Pakradouni, *La Paix Manquée*, pp. 109-110, the PLO took advantage of this to secure the Prime Minister as a valuable ally.

6. There had been two previous attempts to deploy the Lebanese Army in the south, both of which failed. In April 1978 a detachment of Lebanese troops was sent to take control of the Army barracks in Nabatiyya, but it dissolved after being harassed by units of the LAA. Later that summer a full battalion of Lebanese soldiers had advanced south from the Biqa', only to be shelled and blocked by Haddad's militia at the village of Kawkaba. This unit too eventually broke up.

7. Salah Khalaf, quoted by *QNA*, 29 May 1978 (FBIS).

8. Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'ath, 9 November 1986. This was particularly true when Junblat was able to mobilize support for his position from within the PLO, among Fateh radicals, the DFLP or Rejectionist elements.

9. "The Transitional Program of the Lebanese National Movement," in *MERIP Reports* 61 (October 1977).

10. Junblat, *I Speak for Lebanon*, p. 110; cf. Inam Ra'd (SSNP, Vice-chairman of the LNM Central Political Council) in *MERIP Report* 73 (December 1978): 14-15.

11. By 1981 the LNM comprised sixteen member organizations: the PSP, LCP, OCA, SSNP, the Arab *Ba'ith* Socialist Party, the Organization of the *Ba'ith* Party, the Front of Patriotic Christians, the Arab Socialist Action Party, the Democratic Lebanese Movement, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Independent Nasirites Movement (*Murabitun*), the Arab Socialist Union, the Popular Nasirite Organization, the Arab Socialist Union-Nasirite Organization, the Unified Working People's Forces-Nasirite Forces, and the Arab Socialist Union-Arab Legions. Above and beyond this, a host of other "parties" were associated with the LNM, including the Revolutionary Nasirite Organization, the Movement of Arab Lebanon, the Arab Revolutionary Movement, the Partisans of the Revolution, the Arab Socialist Union-Political Bureau, the Arab Socialist Union Party, the Vanguards of Popular Action, the Organization of Arab Youth, the Units of the Arab Call, and the Movement of Arab Revolution. Other organizations, like the Arab Democratic Party and the October 24 Movement (both in Tripoli) remained outside the National Movement orbit, aligned with Syria or Libya. *MER*, 27 June 1981, pp. 13-18, 4 July 1981, pp. 12-16. In July 1981, Salah Khalaf noted that 58 armed groups operated in the West Beirut area alone. Petran, *Struggle Over Lebanon*, p. 270.

12. George Habash in *al-Khalij*, (Abu Dhabi) 4 October 1987 (*FBIS*); interview with Mustafa al-Zibri, 10 February 1987.

13. Interview with Abu Layla, 10 February 1987.

14. Khalil al-Wazir did suggest, however, that "our way of dealing with the Lebanese National Movement was also in need of a different approach—we were not reviewing with them the lessons of the long relations between each other, and neglecting to deal with those who were dealing only with their own benefits." He placed primary blame for this on the pressure of events. Interviews with Yasir 'Arafat, 29 December 1986; Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

15. *MER*, 11 April 1981, pp. 18-20, 18 April 1981, pp. 22-23.

16. Randal, *Going All the Way*, p. 109-155; *MER*, 31 January 1981, pp. 9-11, *MER*, 20 June 1981, pp. 13-17. A more sympathetic account of the Lebanese Forces examining their formal organization is provided by Lewis W. Snider, "The Lebanese Forces: Wartime Origins and Political Significance," *Middle East Journal* 38, 4 (Winter 1984).

17. Text of Bayt al-Din declaration in *MER*, 21 October 1978, pp. 17-18.

18. *Wafa*, 5 October 1978, Salah Khalaf in *al-Kifa al-'Arabi* (Beirut), 9 October 1978, in *ARR*, 1-15 October 1978, p. 716.

19. "The Lebanese Fascists: Pawns on the Chessboard of Eretz Israel," *Palestine* 4, 5 (15-30 March 1978): 14.

20. Salah Khalaf in *MER*, 13 November 1978, pp. 2-3; *MER*, 14 November 1978, p. 3-4; interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. Despite Abu Iyad's comments regarding Syria, the dialogue was also in part an attempt to outflank Damascus by re-establishing a direct line of communications between the PLO and the Lebanese right.

21. *Voice of Palestine*, 28 November 1978, in *ARR*, 1-15 December 1976, p. 876. A similar position was set forth by Faruq Qaddumi in *Monday Morning*, 15-21 December 1978.

22. On the political revitalization of the Lebanese Shi'ite community during this period, see: the excellent analysis by Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, pp. 48-58; see also Picard, "De la 'communaute-classe' à la resistance 'nationale': pour une analyse du rôle des Chi'ites dans le système politique libanais (1970-1985)," *Revue française de science politique* 35, 6 (December 1985): 999-1028; Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

23. According to figures released by the Lebanese government in the spring of 1981,

by early 1980 the war in the south had killed 1,300 civilians, created over 8,000 invalids and 10,000 orphans, and displaced 259,000 persons. Eight towns and villages (including al-Khiyam, with a pre-war population of 30,000 persons) and some 10,000 homes had been destroyed; 21,500 houses had been damaged. 11,000 dunums (hectares) of tobacco crops, 51,000 dunums of olive groves, and 70,000 dunums of citrus orchards were also totally destroyed. *MER*, 4 April 1981, p. 9.

24. *The Middle East*, August 1980, p. 22; *MECS 1979-80*, pp. 618-620.

25. The disappearance—and eventual reappearance—of the twelfth Imam is a central tenet of “twelver” Shi’ism, to which the great majority of Lebanese Shi’ites belong. See Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 161-171.

26. Salah Khalaf to *al-Watan* (Kuwait), 25 November 1981, in Norton, “Harakat Amal,” in Edward E. Azar et al., *The Emergence of a New Lebanon: Fantasy or Reality* (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. 188. For its part, *Amal* publicly expressed nothing but strong support for the Palestinian cause and revolution.

27. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987. Reflecting this, Khalaf issued an appeal to *Amal* in February 1982: “We address our brothers in the *Amal* movement, not the schemers in *Amal*, but the brother nationalists whom we know—take the initiative in the *Amal* movement and participate in the joint command and the joint forces in the south so that we can prevent all evil elements and schemers in various areas from scheming in southern Lebanon. We reaffirm that we are concerned about the *Amal* movement...that they will be with us in the same trench...” *Voice of Palestine*, 3 February 1982 (*FBIS*). To observers in the south, however, *Amal* generally appeared on the defensive, and the Syrian role secondary at most. Personal communication, Richard Norton, 8 February 1989.

28. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.

29. *AWW*, 24 April 1982, p. 18.

30. Interview with Abu Layla, 10 January 1987.

31. *al-Nahar al-‘Arabi wa al-Dawli*, 24-30 May 1982, pp. 13-15 (*FBIS*).

32. Junblat, *I Speak for Lebanon*, p. 55. It is interesting to note that throughout the period 1969-82 and despite the close alliance between the two, the PSP would not permit the stationing of significant numbers of Palestinian troops in Druze-held areas of the Shuf Mountains.

33. This was particularly true of the mafia tradition of the Franjiyya clan, and of the less sophisticated gangsterism of many of the innumerable armed groups of Sunni urban neighbourhoods. The LNP and Phalange were heavily involved in Lebanon’s lucrative smuggling and “protection” rackets. See Randal, *Going All the Way*, p. 125, 133-134.

34. Junblat, *I Speak for Lebanon*, p. 12, 111.

35. “The situation in the south was particularly severe, where the Azmis of the “Revolution”... committed ugly acts of theft, crimes, rape and oppression... Like the neighbouring Arab regimes, Fateh ruled the territories under its control through its *amn* (security) services.” As’ad Abu-Khalil, “Druze, Sunni and Shi’ite Political Leaderships in Present-Day Lebanon,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7, 4 (Fall 1985): 47. The reference here is to Lt. Colonel ‘Azmi Sughayyir, commander of PLO forces in Tyre, who was later killed in action in June 1982. Other senior Fateh officers in Lebanon gained notorious reputations for corruption, notably Colonel Hajj Isma’il, the PLO commander at Sidon (who in June 1982 fled his post in the face of the Israeli invasion, taking his unit’s funds with him) and Colonel ‘Atallah ‘Atallah, the chief of Fateh military intelligence. Within the PFLP, Abu Ahmad Yunis (a member of the PFLP Politburo, and one of its chief experts on Lebanese affairs) was executed for corruption some time before the PFLP’s 1981 Congress. Abu-Khalil, “Internal Contradictions in the PFLP,” p. 368. For Palestinian commentary on the extremely negative impact of such corruption, see: Khalidi, *Under Siege*, pp. 32-33; Fouad Moughrabi, “The Palestinians After Lebanon,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, 3 (Summer 1983): 212, 214-215.

36. Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, pp. 175-176.

37. Nabil Hadi, “Lebanese Isolationist Propaganda and the Palestinian Resistance,”

Shu'un filastiniyya 102 (May 1980): 5-30 [in Arabic]. Although *Voice of Lebanon* exaggerated or often manufactured incidents, it gained a wide audience by virtue of the even greater unreliability of the "progressive" radio stations.

38. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 27 January 1986. Fouad Moughrabi has argued that "In the era of petrodollars, Beirut was a corrupting influence on the PLO. The Palestinians became 'Lebanonized' in the process—adopting the political style of traditional Lebanese sectarian politics." See: Moughrabi, "The Palestinians After Lebanon," p. 12. A similar observation has been voiced by 'Isam al-Qadi of al-Sa'iqa (in whose view Beirut was "like pre-revolutionary Havana," interview 20 December 1986) and 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad of the ALF (interview, 28 December 1986).

39. *Voice of Palestine*, 1 February 1978, *SNA*, 3 February 1978 (*FBIS*); *AWW*, 4 February 1978, pp. 4-5; *ARR*, 16-31 January 1978, pp. 50-51, 72-73; *AWW*, 11 February 1978, pp. 23-24; text of decree in *Palestine* 4, 11 (June 1978): 30-34; *Voice of Palestine*, 6 June 1979 (*FBIS*); *MER*, 6 June 1979, pp. 2-3; *MER*, 5 December 1979, pp. 3-4; *al-Wa'an*, 2 July 1980, p. 11; *MER*, 5 July 1980, pp. 16-19; *MECS* 1979-80, p. 251.

40. *Filastin al-thawra*, 9 June 1980; *MECS* 1979-80, p. 251. Dr. Nabil Sha'th estimated that dealing with the deteriorating security environment by now took up 90% of the PLO's Lebanese decision-making. Interview, 8 January 1987.

41. Hart, *Arafat*, pp. 40-44; interviews with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, 9 November 1986, 8 January 1987; and 'Isam al-Qadi, 20 December 1986. According to the latter, "We called for two or three to be hanged to deter the others. We didn't succeed because 'Arafat wasn't interested in such things."

42. The information of Palestinian institutions that follows is drawn from: Rubenburg, *Institutional Infrastructure*; *Filastin al-thawra*, 2 June 1984, pp. 29-31; Yonis, "L'invasion du Liban et la situation sanitaire des Palestiniens," pp. 39-52; *PRCS Information Bulletin* (Cairo: PRCS, c1984); Michael Hudson, "The Palestinians After Lebanon," *Current History* 88, 480 (January 1983): 5-9, 34; Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians in Lebanon: Social Repercussions of Israel's Invasion," *Middle East Journal* 38, 2 (Spring 1984): 255-266; 'Arafat, *al-Sihha wa-al-harb* [Health and War], (Nicosia: PRCS Central Organization for Information and Education, 1984).

43. Minutes of meeting between Soviet and PLO delegations, Moscow, 13 November 1979, in Raphael Israeli, ed., *The PLO in Lebanon: Selected Documents* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 53; *MECS* 1981-82, p. 326; *Voice of Palestine* 25 July 1981 (*FBIS*).

44. Interviews with Dr. Fathi 'Arafat, 4 February 1987, and with former director of PRCS hospital in Tyre, Cairo, 4 February 1987; Yonis, "L'invasion du Liban et la situation sanitaire des Palestiniens," pp. 39-52.

45. *Palestine* 5, 11 (June 1979): 15-16.

46. "Abu Leila [Layla]: Confronting the Dilemmas of the PLO in Lebanon and Jordan," *MERIP Reports* 83 (December 1979): 15-16. PLO attempts to maintain basic services such as electricity and water often provoked still greater Lebanese resentment of the Palestinian role; Khalidi, *Under Siege*, pp. 30-31.

47. Lee O'Brien, "Campaign of Terror: Car Bombing in Lebanon," *MERIP Reports* 118 (October 1983): 23-26; *MECS* 1981-82, pp. 707-708. According to *Monday Morning*, 5 October 1981, no less than 544 bombs exploded in Lebanon that year, and 107 others were dismantled.

48. Reilly, "Israel in Lebanon," p. 19; *Voice of Palestine*, 2 October 1981 (*FBIS*); interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987; Khalaf to *Voice of Palestine*, 18 May 1982 (*FBIS*).

49. *Voice of Lebanon*, 28 March 1982, 11 May 1982 in *MECS* 1981-82, pp. 707-708, 729.

50. *Voice of Palestine*, 18 May 1982 (*FBIS*); interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.

51. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

52. Statement by PLO Executive Committee on Camp David Accords, *Wafa*, 19

September 1978, p. 15, in *IDP 1978*, p. 506.

53. Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 67-68.

54. Reilly, "Israel in Lebanon," p. 19; *Voice of Palestine*, 2 June 1979 (FBIS).

55. *MECS 1980-81*, p. 215, 220.

56. The PFLP-GC and PLF were particularly inventive in this regard, adopting such methods as balloons and motorized hang-gliders to circumvent Israeli defences.

57. Yezid Sayigh, "Palestinian Military Performance in the 1982 War," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, 4 (Summer 1983): 3-24, and "Palestinian Armed Struggle," pp. 95-112. For the theoretical grounds for "regularization" by one of its leading exponents, see the interview with Sa'd Sayil in *Shu'un filastiniyya* 105 (August 1980): 33-48. Fateh's three brigades were the Qastal forces (the largest), deployed in the Sidon-Tyre-Arnun-Nabatiyya area; the Yarmuk forces, deployed south of Jizzin in the Rihan-'A'ishiyya area; and the Karama forces, deployed in the 'Arqub. Their total strength was put by Israeli sources at 8,000 fighters, supported by 6-7,000 other guerillas and militia in Beirut and Tripoli, and 4-5,000 PLA in West Beirut (Hittin, Qadisiyya) and south of Damur ('Ayn Jalut), for a total armed strength (1982) of 20,000. *MECS 1981-82*, pp. 132-134; *IDF Journal* 1, 2 (December 1982): 12-14. Sayigh suggests a lower figure of 4,000 fighters (including Lebanese allies) in the south, 6-7,000 members of the Joint Forces in Beirut, and 3,000 in the Biqa' and Tripoli.

58. Sayigh, "Palestinian Military Performance," p. 9. Up to one hundred T-34s were acquired in 1979, although fewer than this were actually deployed in Lebanon. Ostensibly acquired as mobile gun-platforms, the purchase also seems to have been motivated by a desire to match the several dozen tanks given Haddad and the Phalange by Israel; by the prestige involved; and by the usual self-reinforcing dynamics of arms acquisition processes. Interviews with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; Salah Khalaf, 27 January 1987; Sa'id Musa Muragha, 10 February 1987.

59. General Mobilization Order in *MECS 1980-81*, pp. 318-319; see also pp. 298-300. Previous mobilizations had been ordered in 1978 and during the civil war.

60. Recommendations of the PNC Military Committee, in *MECS 1980-81*, p. 318. Although Khalil al-Wazir insisted that the regularization of the Palestinian military forces was a natural evolutionary process (interview, 30 December 1986), some members of the PLO Executive Committee saw it as part of a broader process of assuring central command and control over Palestinian military forces in Lebanon; interviews with Majdi Abu Ramadan, Cairo, 16 November 1986; Dr. Ahmad Sidqi al-Dajani, 9 December 1986.

61. Text of Bayt al-Din implementation plan in *ARR*, 16-31 October 1978, p. 771.

62. *MECS 1979-80*, p. 142; Pakradouni, *La Paix Manquée*, pp. 199-200.

63. *al-Nahar*, 17 November 1979, in *MECS 1979-80*, p. 598.

64. *al-Nahar*, 17 November 1979, in *MECS 1979-80*, pp. 598-599.

65. *MECS 1979-80*, pp. 599-600; interview with Yasir 'Arafat, 29 December 1986.

66. Statement by PLO Executive Committee, *Voice of Palestine*, 6 February 1980, in *IDP 1980*, p. 43.

67. The following account of the July 1981 fighting is based on: *MECS 1980-81*, pp. 215-218; Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security*, pp. 85-90. Muhammad Salah, *al-Harb al-filastiniyya - al-isra'iliyya, 10-24 tammuz 1981* [The Palestinian-Israeli War, 10-24 July 1981], (Beirut: Manshura Filastin al-Muhatala, 1981); Ahmad Shahiyn, "Events of the War," *Shu'un filastiniyya* 119 (October 1981): 146-160 [in Arabic], and Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, pp. 304-305.

68. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; Hart, *Arafat*, pp. 443-444; *WAFA*, 25 July 1981, in *IDP 1981*, pp. 249-251; minutes of a meeting of the al-'Asifa Forces General Command (25 July 1981), in Israeli, ed., *PLO in Lebanon*, pp. 174-176.

69. *Voice of Palestine*, 25 July 1981 (FBIS). According to one member of the Executive Committee at the meeting, 'Arafat presented a summary of the current political and military situation to the assembled Palestinian and LNM leaders (whom he had tacitly not informed of his prior acceptance) and urged them to agree to the ceasefire. At this point, a PLO liaison officer entered the room and despite broad hints from the PLO

chairman that the subject was still under discussion and had not yet been formally decided, announced that the PLO's acceptance of a ceasefire had been acknowledged by the UN command. Considerable laughter followed; 'Arafat thanked the officer and asked the participants for their formal decision. A short while later the meeting agreed.

70. Interview with Major A. (*al-'Asifa* forces), Baghdad, 4 January 1987.

71. Interview with Dr. As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, Amman, 23 December 1986.

72. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

73. The five previous Palestinian-Israeli wars were, by the PLO's count, those of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon in 1978. By the Islamic calendar, both the 1973 and 1981 wars fell in the month of Ramadan. Yasir 'Arafat to *Voice of Palestine*, 26 July 1981 (*FBIS*); Khalil al-Wazir to *Monday Morning*, 27 July- 2 August 1981, pp. 56-63; *Shu'un filastiniyya* 119 (October 1981), especially the articles by Shafiq al-Hut ("The Sixth Arab-Israeli War"), Mahmud Sa'id ("The Triumph and the Dilemma"), Mahjub 'Amr ("The Palestinian Ramadan War: The Situation and Results"), Hanna Shahiyr ("Israel's Appraisal of the Results of the July War: 'Our Military and Political Fiasco'," Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman ("The Israeli Appraisal of Military Performance in the July War"), and *Shu'un filastiniyya's* interview with Sa'd Sayil: "We Created a Psychological Gap Between the Israeli Citizen and his Leaders."

74. *Voice of Palestine*, 24, 26 July 1981 (*FBIS*).

75. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986. That the ceasefire applied to both cross-border shelling and infiltration was indirectly admitted by al-Wazir to *Monday Morning*, 27 July- 2 August 1981, pp. 56-63.

76. *Voice of Palestine*, 26 July 1981 (*FBIS*). According to one then-member of the Fateh Central Committee, 'Arafat was prepared to "liquidate" the PFLP-GC if they attempted to sabotage the agreement (interview with Samih Abu Kuwayk, Damascus, 17 December 1986). Similarly, a member of the PFLP Politbureau confirmed that his organization reached the "edge of [military] conflict" with Fateh over the 1981 ceasefire decision (interview with Sabir Muhi al-Din, 18 December 1986.) See also Schiff and Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, p. 84-86.

77. Interviews with 'Isam al-Qadi (al-Sa'iqa), Damascus, 20 December 1986; Dr. Jamil Hilal (DFLP), 20 December 1986; 'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad (ALF), 28 December 1986.

78. Yoel Marcus, "The War is Inevitable," *Ha'Artez*, 26 March 1982, in Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle*, p. 199.

79. Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security*, pp. 100-101. Sharon's broad strategic ambitions in Lebanon were evident in his rejection of US proposals (put forward by Habib in September 1981) for a withdrawal of PLO heavy weapons in the south in exchange for an IDF withdrawal from the Haddad enclave and an end to low-level overflights. Instead, the Israeli defence minister demanded an evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut and north Lebanon. Schiff and Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, pp. 41-42.

80. Interviews with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.; Dr. Fathi 'Arafat, 4 February 1987; 'Arafat, *al-Sihha wa-al-harb*.

81. Ya'ari and Schiff, *Israel's Lebanon War*, p. 88-89.

82. Interview with Samih Abu Kuwayk, 17 December 1986, who was one of the members of the Fateh delegation to Syria. The dispute over the text of the agreement centered around a reference to Iran; the original Damascus text referred to the Islamic Republic as a "strategic ally," while the Beirut text merely noted Iran's support for the Palestinian cause—a revision which no doubt reflected 'Arafat's desire not to alienate Iraq and others over the issue.

83. Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security*, pp. 107-108.

84. Ya'ari and Schiff, *Israel's Lebanon War*, pp. 91-92; *MECS* 1981-82, p. 131. According to Fateh's Abu Da'ud, 'Arafat could only have resisted internal pressures to return fire at the risk of an open rebellion; Hart, *Arafat*, pp. 450-451.

85. Text of the withdrawal agreement in *Department of State Bulletin* 82, 2066 (September 1982): 2-5. On the course of the fighting and the PLO's decision to withdraw from Beirut, see Khalidi, *Under Siege*.

Chapter 7

1. Khalidi, *Under Siege*, p. 17.
2. Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, 9 November 1986.
3. Interview with senior aide to 'Arafat and member of the Fatch Revolutionary Council, November 1986.
4. "Lebanon is very important for Syria, and when Syrian and Palestinian policy conflict it leads to what happened in 1976." Interview with 'Isam al-Qadi, 20 December 1986.
5. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 27 January 1987.
6. Suhayl Natur, "Could Palestinian Concessions Have Prevented the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon?" *Shu'un filastiniyya* 136/137 (March/April 1983): 29-42 [in Arabic].
7. At their peak in 1970, some 390 Palestinian operations from Lebanon resulted in some 174 Israeli casualties. The number of Palestinian cross-border attacks fell thereafter. In 1981 (a year which saw two-weeks of intense cross-border fighting in July), the IDF reported 141 cross-border incidents with a much lower casualty toll. Although Palestinian shelling did provoke significant panic in Qiryat Shemona and other Israeli development towns on the northern frontier, by this time the locus of confrontation had been pushed northwards into south Lebanon.
8. Although others would disagree, at least some West Bank PLO figures hold this view. Interviews with Mustafa Milhelm (PLO Central Council), Amman, 25 December 1986; 'Abd al-Jawad Salih (former member of PLO Executive Committee), Amman, 24 July 1989. Similarly, Sabri Jiryas argued in an article in *Shu'un filastiniyya* (January-February 1985) that the gains of Palestinian armed struggle had sometimes been marginal, and that much greater attention was needed to building support mechanisms for political mobilization in the occupied territories and international diplomatic activities.
9. Interview with Sa'id Musa Muragha, 10 February 1987.
10. After the 1982 war, a great deal of criticism of the PLO's military structure and deployment was voiced, especially with regard to the regularization of PLO forces and the acquisition of some types of heavy weapons. In this debate, however, relatively little attention was given to evaluating the interrelationship between military operations and Palestinian political strategy. One notable exception is an incisive analysis of the weaknesses of Palestinian armed struggle by Yezid Khalaf, who argued that not only had Palestinian military action often been poorly conceived and ineffectively implemented, but that it had also not been clearly tied to Palestinian political objectives. See: Khalaf, "About Palestinian Military Thought," *Shu'un filastiniyya* 150/151 (September/October 1985): 33-55 [in Arabic]; see also, Sayigh, "Palestinian Armed Struggle."
11. According to PNC Speaker (1971-84) Khalid al-Fahum, the PNC had almost no influence over PLO policy in Lebanon; interview, Damascus, 20 December 1986.
12. Interviews with Dr. Ahmad Sidqi al-Dajani, 9 December 1986; Dr. As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, 15 and 23 December 1986; and members of the Office of the PLO Chairman.
13. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.
14. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.
15. In the latter half of the 1970s, this challenge was surpassed by the "adjunct irritant" posed by Arab-sponsored guerilla organizations. Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, 8 January 1987.
16. Both the DFLP and PFLP, for example, had been publicly critical of attempts by Salah Khalaf of Fatch to resurrect the PLO-Phalange dialogue in 1978. Privately, however, members of the senior leadership of both groups suggest that they did not have a problem with dialogue *per se*, but rather with the way in which it was being conducted (interviews, Damascus, December 1986-February 1987).
17. O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine*, pp. 159-160.
18. Interview with Salah Khalaf, 24 January 1987.

Chapter 8

1. Text of 'Arafat's farewell speech to the Lebanese people, Wafa, 29 August 1982, pp. 2-5.

2. According to the *Times* (London), 22 September 1982, p. 13, the PLO forces withdrawn from Beirut were relocated to: Algeria (600); Tunisia (1,000); Sudan (500); North Yemen (850); South Yemen (1,100); Jordan (260 of the PLA Badr Forces); Iraq (135 or more); Syria (6,450, including the remaining PLA units). Although Damascus was now the nominal seat of the PLO leadership, many of the PLO's diplomatic offices and the offices of the PLO chairman opened in Tunis; the PLO journal *Falastin al-thawra* and the DFLP's *al-Hurriyya* in Nicosia; SAMED eventually moved its headquarters to Amman, and the Palestine Red Crescent Society to its Palestine Hospital in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis. *MER*, 4 September 1982, pp. 6-10.

3. On the post-Beirut diplomatic environment, see Emile Sahliyyeh, *The PLO After the Lebanon War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), esp. pp. 71-84.

4. For analysis of the post-war political environment in Lebanon, see Abu-Khalil, "Druze, Sunni and Shi'ite Political Leadership"; Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a*, pp. 84-143; Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon*, pp. 295-383.

5. Lebanese police estimates reported in *Race & Class* 24, 4 (Spring 1983): 341. PLO military losses from Yezid Sayigh, "Israel's Military Performance in Lebanon, June 1982," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, 1 (Autumn 1983): 63.

6. According to UNRWA, almost all of 'Ayn al-Hilwa and 20-50% of other camps in the south were destroyed in the invasion. *Jerusalem Post*, 1, 3 July 1982. For an overview of the Palestinians' post-1982 situation in Lebanon, see Marie Christine Aulas, "Lebanon's Palestinians: Life at Ground Level," *MERIP Middle East Report* 119 (November-December 1983): 24-26; Khalidi, "The Palestinians in Lebanon," pp. 255-266; Hudson, "The Palestinians After Lebanon," pp. 5-9, 34. The financial losses incurred by the PLO as a result of the Lebanon war were estimated at \$350-400 million.

7. Khalidi, *Under Siege*, pp. 174-178.

8. Statement by the PLO Executive Committee on the massacres in West Beirut, Wafa, 18 September 1982. The PLO placed direct blame for the killings on the IDF. Full "material and moral responsibility" was also placed on the US for the failure of its security guarantees, and on the MNF for its early withdrawal. The Israeli government's own investigation found Ariel Sharon and several senior officers of the IDF guilty of negligence, but rejected direct Israeli responsibility; see The Commission of Inquiry into Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut [Kahan Commission], *Final Report*, published as *The Beirut Massacre* (Princeton: Karz-Cohl, 1983).

9. Schiff and Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, pp. 236, 240; *MER*, 18 September 1982, p. 15; Dov Yermiya, *My War Diary: Lebanon, June 5-July 1, 1982* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

10. Khalidi, "Social Repercussions," p. 260; 1982; *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 September 1982. Although approximately 250,000 Palestinians in Lebanon were 1948 refugees or their descendants, *L'Orient le Jour* (Beirut), 27 September 1982 reported government plans to reduce the number of Palestinians in Lebanon to as few as 50,000.

11. That the 'Arafat-Jumayyil meeting took more than five months of tortuous diplomacy to arrange was an early indication of the PLO's newfound weaknesses in Lebanon. In November 1982 Fatah decided to open dialogue with the Lebanese President, following a meeting between Salah Khalaf and Amin Jumayyil in Rabat that month. Through Saudi and other intermediaries, the PLO pressed for a new PLO-Lebanese accord that would allow the Palestinians to rebuild the camps; reopen some Palestinian offices in Beirut and attach a symbolic PLO military presence to the Lebanese Army. The Lebanese government refused, calling instead for an unconditional withdrawal of PLO forces from the Biqa' and the north. The refugee camps would be relocated away from Lebanese population centers, and brought fully under Lebanese law and control. Only Palestinians registered with UNRWA in 1948 (and their descendants) would be allowed to remain in Lebanon. A meeting between 'Arafat and Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq Wazzan brought no real change in these positions; nor did the meeting with Jumayyil in

March. *KUNA* (Kuwait), 3 November 1982; *AFP* (Paris), 9 November 1982; *Beirut Domestic Service*, 14 November 1982; *AFP*, 26 February 1983; *al-Madina* (Jidda), 22 November 1982, p. 1; Shafiq al-Hut interviewed by *AFP*, 29 January 1983; 'Arafat interview in *al-Nahar al-'arabi wa al-duwali*, 20-26 December 1982, pp. 16-17; *Beirut Domestic Service*, 1 February 1983; *AFP*, 23 December 1982; *Beirut Domestic Service*, 7 March 1983; *Voice of Palestine* (Algiers), 10 March 1983 (*FBIS*).

12. Responsibility for the blast was claimed by the "Front for the Liberation of Lebanon of Foreigners," which six days earlier had bombed a Palestinian headquarters in Syrian-controlled Shtura, killing forty; see O'Brien, "Campaign of Terror," p. 26; *MER*, 2 October 1982, p. 6-8. In June 1983 the Lebanese Army closed the center after allegedly finding explosives there. Director Sabri Jiryas and PLO military liaison officer Lt. Col. Yusuf Rujayb were deported. *Voice of Palestine*, 21 June 1983 (*FBIS*); *DFLP Bulletin*, March 1984, pp. 16-17.

13. Text of the May 17th Accord in Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security*, pp. 327-338.

14. Charter of the Lebanese National Salvation Front in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, 1 (Autumn 1983): 231-232. The LCP, OCA, SSNP, (pro-Syrian) *Ba'ih*, Arab Socialist Union, and Arab Democratic Party also joined the LNSF.

15. Officially the PLO declared that it would not be an "obstacle" to Israeli withdrawal, but also refused to publicly commit itself to withdrawing (although Lebanese Foreign Minister Elie Salim suggested it had done so privately). Khalil al-Wazir suggested that the PLO might withdraw after Israel did so, on the basis of a new PLO-Lebanese agreement granting the PLO offices in Beirut, security and the continued operation of its social services, and a symbolic military presence attached to the Lebanese army. For a summary of these positions see *MECS* 1982-83, pp. 278-280.

16. Closing statement of PLO Central Council, 6 August 1983, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, 1 (Autumn 1983): 231-232. The PLO continued to express its support for the LNSF even as the latter threw its verbal support behind 'Arafat's opponents within the PLO; *Voice of Palestine*, 6 September 1983 (*FBIS*).

17. According to the Lebanese army these forces (operating under the title of "The Forces for the Return to Beirut") were drawn from the PFLP, DFLP, and units of Fateh loyal to Abu Musa. *Beirut Domestic Service*, 7, 8 September 1983 (*FBIS*). These groups (particularly the latter) sought to demonstrate that, in contrast to the Fateh mainstream, they remained committed to armed struggle. They were encouraged at this juncture by Syria, which wished to aid Junblat without openly intervening. By the end of September, however, Israeli and Lebanese pressures led Junblat to order most Palestinian units out of the Shuf. *Jerusalem Post*, 3 October 1983, pp. 1-2.

18. The PLO, for example, claimed it had launched 355 joint operations with the "Lebanese National Movement" in June, July and August 1983; during this same period, Lebanese sources reported 128 attacks on the IDF. Cf. interview with Yasir Arafat in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, 1 (Autumn 1983): 4, and "Operations Against the IDF," in *Lebanese-Israeli Negotiations*, pp. 317-320. Most attacks against the IDF at this stage were organized by the Lebanese National Resistance Front, founded in September 1982 by the OCA, the LCP and ASAP and later joined by others. As Asad Abu-Khalil notes, the LNRF enjoyed strong support from the PFLP and DFLP, which "[learning] from the tragic pre-1982 experience of the Palestinian resistance in south Lebanon... shunned publicity and accepted to give all credit for their operations to the Front." Abu-Khalil, "Druze, Sunni and Shi'ite Leadership," pp. 52-53. Later *Amal* and the Shi'ite fundamentalist group *Hizb Allah* would play the major role in attacks on the IDF.

19. These included military officers Col. Sa'id Musa Muragha, Col. Abu Khalid al-'Amla, Col. Muhammad Bakr, Lt. Col. Ziyad al-Sughayyir, Lt. Col. Wasif 'Urayqat, and Nimr Salih and Samih Abu Kuwayk of the Fateh Central Committee. It will be noted that many of these had also been opposed to the 1978 deployment of UNIFIL and 1981 ceasefire. For further discussion of the looseness of the rebel coalition, see Rashid Khalidi, "Behind the Fateh Rebellion," *MERIP Reports* 119 (November/December 1983): 8; on the nature of their demands, Sahliyyeh, *The PLO After the Lebanon War*, pp. 87-114, 139-175.

20. Account of Aden meeting in *al-Safir*, 26, 27 June 1983, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13, 1 (Fall 1983): 169-180. Statement issued in Tripoli, 16 January 1983, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, 4 (Summer 1983): 245-249.

21. 16th PNC resolutions in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, 4 (Summer 1983): 250-254.

22. Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syrian Policy in Lebanon and the Palestinians," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 8, 1 (Winter 1986): 13-19.

23. In October, the Islamic Unification Movement launched attacks against the Tripoli offices of the LCP, killing fifty Communist Party cadres and their families. Although 'Arafat rejected LCP accusations of involvement, the incident worsened already rapidly deteriorating relations between Fateh and the Lebanese left, and between Fateh and the PFLP and DFLP. *MER*, 5 November 1983, p. 5, *Voice of Palestine* 14 October 1983 (FBIS).

24. A poll by *al-Baydar al-siyasi* (East Jerusalem), 3 December 1983 found that 95% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza supported 'Arafat's leadership; similarly, a 1986 poll reported that only 1.2% of Palestinians in the territories supported Abu Musa; "al-Fajr public opinion survey," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 2 (Winter 1987): 203.

25. Statement by PFLP-DFLP Joint Command, 16 October 1983, in *DFLP Bulletin*, November 1983, pp. 1-6. The "Democratic Alliance" was formally established early the next year.

26. See Sahliyyeh, *The PLO After the Lebanon War*, pp. 178-184.

27. For a summary of the proceedings, see *MECS* 1984-85, pp. 181-194.

28. Text of the Amman Accords in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, 3 (Spring 1985): 206. PLO diplomacy in this period is examined by Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinian Dilemma: PLO Policy After Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 1 (Autumn 1985).

29. Text of announcement by the PNSF, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, 4 (Summer 1985): 207-210.

30. Israeli intelligence estimated that 2,000 Palestinian fighters had returned to Beirut by late 1984; other sources suggested that 9-10,000 armed Palestinians were present in Lebanon, in Tripoli (2,000), the Biqa' (2,500), the Shuf (2,500), and Beirut (2,000) and Sidon. See *MECS* 1984-85, p. 219. These numbers are clearly overestimates given the number subsequently available for the defence of the camps in fighting with *Amal* in 1985. While some previously-evacuated forces had been reintroduced into Beirut and the south, most were local Palestinian residents. Certainly given the obvious need for self-defence, the greater ease of infiltrating arms and money (rather than personnel), and the thousands of resident Palestinian youths reaching military age, Palestinian groups had little trouble expanding their political and military infrastructure in this way. Interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

31. In Beirut Fateh loyalists were said to comprise the majority; when Syria attempted to redress this by allowing some of Abu Musa's forces to enter Beirut, most promptly defected. *MECS* 1984-85, p. 219.

32. On the "first round" of the camps war, see: "Le siège des camps palestiniens de Beyrouth," *Revue d'Études Palestiniennes* 17 (Autumn 1985), 67-128; Elaine C. Hagopian, ed., *Amal and the Palestinians: Understanding the Battle of the Camps* (Belmont, Mass.: AAUG Press, 1985); Camille Mansour, "Au delà du siège des camps palestiniens de Beyrouth: la montée en puissance du mouvement Amal et ses limites," *Maghreb-Machrek* 109 (July-September 1985): 64-82.

33. *Damascus Domestic Service* 22, 23 May 1985 (FBIS). See also the comments of Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Shar' to the emergency session of the Arab League on the camps war, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 1 (Autumn 1985): 193-195.

34. The LNDF comprised the PSP and several other Lebanese leftist parties. A partial text of the agreement (less its preamble, praising Syria and condemning "Arafat's deviationist line") can be found in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 1 (Autumn 1985): 199-200; the full text reported by *Voice of the Mountain* (PSP, clandestine), 18 June 1985 (FBIS).

35. Statement of Fateh Central Committee on the Damascus Agreement, 21 June 1985, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 1 (Autumn 1985): 200-202.

36. *MER*, 20 July 1985, pp. 7-9, *Voice of Lebanon*, 22 July 1985 (FBIS). Bizri warned that large amounts of money and arms were pouring into the city to arm Palestinian groups; *Monday Morning* 22-28 July 1985, pp. 14-16.

37. *MER*, 7 September 1985, p. 2; text of PNSF ceasefire in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 2 (Winter 1986): 213. After the March-April fighting (in which more than 40 persons died) a joint PSP-SSNP-LCP-Ba'th disengagement force was established, but to little lasting effect. *Beirut Domestic Service*, 12, 14 April 1986 (FBIS); *Monday Morning* 14-20 April 1986, pp. 10-11. 'Asim Qansuh of the Ba'th noted the failure of the PNSF secure control of the camps from Fateh, and called for "complete liquidation of all 'Arafatists.'" *Monday Morning*, 21-27 April 1986, pp. 22-23.

38. *Middle East International*, 12 June 1986, pp. 4-6 (hereafter, *MEI*).

39. Technically, the camp didn't refuse, but offered to hand over thirty AK-47s, one RPG-7 rocket launcher and a self-loading rifle, a mere fraction of the probable total. *Amal* walked out of the meeting and tightened the siege. *Egyptian Mail* (Cairo), 11 October 1986, p. 1; *Times* (London), 11 October 1986, p. 6.

40. *MER*, 20 December 1986, p. 6. Small contingents from the PFLP, DFLP, and Abu Nidal's Fateh-Revolutionary Council also remained in Maghdusha; interview with Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986.

41. According to a report prepared by the DFLP in December 1986, the camps war had already destroyed some 3,000 Palestinian homes in Rashidiyya camp near Tyre, 80% of the homes in Shatila camp in Beirut, and 50% of the homes in Burj al-Barajina; *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 3 (Spring 1987), 223-230. In June 1987 UNRWA reported some 33,210 homeless Palestinians displaced from Tyre and Beirut. For their condition, see *MEI*, 26 September 1987, 13-15.

42. The Sunni community feared that *Amal*'s attacks on the Palestinians (predominately Sunni, and traditional sponsors of Sunni militias before 1982) would further marginalize the already weakened Sunni community. Suppression of various predominately Sunni, pro-Palestinian militias (the *Murabitun* by *Amal* and the PSP in May 1985, Beirut's small "Sixth of February Movement" by *Amal* in June 1986, and Syrian measures taken against the Islamic Unification Movement in Tripoli in September-October 1985) only reinforced the impression, despite the fundamental differences between these groups and the traditional Sunni elite. The Druze community and Junblat were also concerned by the rising power of *Amal*. At the same time, both the Druze and Sunni leaderships continued to oppose the reestablishment of a Palestinian armed presence. The PSP stressed that it rejected any return to the "self-security principle" that had endured in Palestinian camps before 1982; Junblat quoted by *Voice of the Mountain*, 12 June 1985 (FBIS). Similarly, Sunni Mufti Hasan Khalid noted his opposition to a return of the Palestinian armed presence; *al-Itihad al-ushu'i* (Abu Dhabi), 1 August 1984, p. 11 (FBIS). Earlier Salim al-Huss had made a similar point, but added that Lebanese militias should be disarmed too; *al-Nahar*, 27 May 1985 in *Revue d'études palestiniennes* 17 (Autumn 1985): 88.

43. The PSP reportedly allowed (or was bribed to allow) Palestinian use of its port facilities at Khalde after the first round. The Lebanese left (OCA, LCP) retained generally good relations with their Palestinian counterparts, and were accused on occasion by Syria of supplying the Palestinians with arms. The fundamentalist *Hizb Allah* (excepting some local commanders) supported the Palestinians out of ideological commitment to armed struggle against Israel, and as a function of their own hostility to Syria and rivalry with *Amal*. (In some cases, the Palestinians were also able to use divisions within *Amal* itself to their advantage.) Finally, the Lebanese Forces provided Fateh with transit routes for men and material as LF relations with Damascus badly deteriorated from January 1986. Although Fateh sought to deny this, 'Arafat's appearance on Lebanese Forces TV in November 1986, and contacts with Amin al-Jumayyil confirmed at least some level of cooperation.

44. DFLP criticism of Syrian policy, both direct and indirect, often led to the

harassment of its cadres and the periodic suppression of its publications. The PFLP was also subject to such pressures, although its traditional political opposition to 'Arafat, coupled with Syria's need to retain PFLP participation in the PNSF if the latter was to retain any credibility, gave it considerably greater leverage vis-à-vis Damascus. Interviews, Damascus, December 1986 and February 1987.

45. Interviews, Damascus, December 1986 and February 1987. Syrian operatives within Abu Musa's group were widely blamed for a remote control bomb that killed Fateh's senior officer in Shatila in January 1987; *MEI* 7 October 1988, pp. 17-18.

46. On the "iron fist" policy announced by Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin on 4 August 1985, see Penny Johnson, "The Routine of Repression," *MERIP Middle East Report* 150 (January-February 1988): 3-7, 10-11.

47. *MEI*, 7 February 1986, pp. 3-4; text of statement by King Husayn, 19 February 1986, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, 4 (Summer 1986): 206-232; Fateh Revolutionary Council statement, 19 June 1986; Jordanian statement on the closure of PLO offices, 8 July 1986; Jordan's Five-Year development plan for the occupied territories, August 1986; all in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 1 (Autumn 1986): 201-212.

48. Text of PNC resolutions *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16, 4 (Summer 1987): 196-201; text of CC resolutions in *DFLP Bulletin*, November 1987, pp. 7-9.

49. George Habash in *al-Khalij* (Abu Dhabi), 4 October 1987 (*JPRS*).

50. Interviews with Mustafa al-Zibri, 10 February 1987; Abu Layla, 10 February 1987; Yasir 'Arafat, 29 December 1986; Khalil al-Wazir, 30 December 1986; Salah Khalaf, 27 January 1987; and others.

51. Ironically, the 1982 war also served to weaken the security of Israel's northern border. Previously, the July 1981 ceasefire had brought an end to most cross-border attacks. In 1985-87, however, there were 40 shellings of northern Israel and another 18 attempted infiltrations across the border, in addition to hundreds of attacks on the south Lebanon security zone itself. In 1988, the rate of attempted attacks against Israel from south Lebanon increased still further. *Ha'Arezt*, 10 June 1988, p. 3 (*FBIS*).

52. The agreement was the product of negotiations initiated after a conciliatory speech made by Nabih Berri in Ba'lbak on August 30; *MER*, 19 September 1987, p. 6. Under its terms *Amal* agreed to lift the sieges, release detainees, and allow camp residents to move freely and rebuild their homes. The PLO agreed to vacate its positions east of Sidon. Both sides agreed to halt hostile military and propaganda activity. Joint committees (with Syrian participation in Sidon and Tyre) would oversee implementation. Text of the agreement, and of PLO Executive Committee endorsement, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, 2 (Winter 1988), pp. 211-212; a slightly different version (detailing the positions to be evacuated) was published in *DFLP Bulletin*, November/December 1987, pp. 10-11. Although it was first hoped to implement the agreement by October 5, difficulties arose over timing. Illustrative of its power around Sidon, the PLO then seized additional positions east of the city in mid-October to place further pressure on *Amal*. Nabih Berri subsequently met with Nayif Hawatima in Algiers two weeks later to discuss implementation of the agreement. *MER*, 10 October 1987, p. 10.

53. The eleven-point agreement called for a stable ceasefire, military disengagement, and the normalization of PLO-*Amal* relations; tellingly, it was also characterized by Zayd Wahba (Fateh's senior commander in Lebanon) as confirmation that "good neighborliness cannot be attained except through Fateh". *MER*, 21 January 1989. In fact, some tensions continued, with *Amal* complaining of a Fateh military build-up in the Sidon and Tyre areas in the spring of 1989.

54. Multiple factors led to the Beirut fighting: the defection of a number dissidents to Fateh in Sidon, and Fateh's closure of dissident offices there; Fateh's expulsion of dissidents from Shatila and Burj al-Barajina; the desire of Fateh-PC to undermine any Fateh rapprochement with Syria; Fateh's apparent belief that Syria's position was weak enough to allow an intensification of measures against Syrian-backed groups; and Syrian anger at reports of Fateh backing for *Hizb Allah*. *MER*, 28 May 1988, p. 14, 2 July 1988, pp. 5-6; *MEI*, 7 October 1988, pp. 17-18.

55. Fateh, of course, was vituperative in its comments on the Beirut fighting; the Fateh Central Committee labelled it part of a "Zionist-imperialist conspiracy" by a "renegade regime" (Syria) and "a band of mercenary agents" (the dissidents) to "mar the image of the Palestinian struggle" and "drive our masses in the occupied land to desperation." *Voice of Palestine* (San'a), 10 July 1988 (FBIS). More importantly, however, the dissidents' Syrian-supported assault on the camps was also strongly condemned by others within the PLO. Although the PFLP and DFLP remained largely neutral in the fighting, they signalled that they would not do so in the future; the PFLP's *al-Hadaf* 3 July 1988 noted that by their attacks, Abu Musa's followers "have placed themselves outside Palestinian national history." In the occupied territories, there was similar condemnation of Abu Musa by the "Unified National Leadership of the Uprising" in its periodic leaflets (numbers 21 and 22). By the summer of 1989, Sa'iqa, the PFLP-GC and Fateh-PC had virtually no contact with the mainstream PLO; one senior DFLP official noted that his organization had virtually "given up" on trying to reconcile Damascus with Fateh. Interviews with 'Isam al-Qadi, Damascus, 3 August 1989, and with member of the DFLP Politburo.

56. This was evident in Fateh's initial assertiveness against Syrian-backed dissidents in the summer of 1988, and again in 'Arafat's support for 'Awn. Certainly, there were some direct gains to be had from 'Arafat's support for 'Awn, as evidenced by 'Awn's statement in January 1989 that the Palestinian presence was now a "civilian" one (and hence no longer a problem), and by recurrent reports that 'Awn was allowing Fateh transit facilities through areas controlled by the Lebanese Army. 'Arafat's position could also be seen as a reward to Iraq ('Awn's strongest backer) for its past support of the mainstream PLO, and as an attempt to weaken Damascus-based Palestinian groups by maintaining high levels of Palestinian-Syrian tension. Palestinian critics of 'Arafat's position, however, argued that given the geographic location of Palestinian camps in Lebanon (in areas of Syrian control, or surrounded by pro-Syrian militias) his gestures were hardly likely to enhance Palestinian security. Given this, 'Arafat's almost legendary dislike for Hafiz al-Asad (an attitude fully reciprocated) seems to have also played a significant role in shaping this stand, reflecting the unilateral and idiosyncratic impact that the PLO leader can sometimes have on PLO policy. Interview with member of DFLP Politburo, August 1989.

57. A brief summary of some of these events shows the extent of the problem. In August 1987 the commander of "Force 17" in Lebanon, Rasim al-Ghul, was assassinated. In September an attempt was made on the life of Fateh's local political chief, Abu 'Ali Shahin. Shahin and Fateh's military commander in Lebanon were subsequently recalled to Tunis. Later that month fifty Palestinian fighters were poisoned in 'Ayn al-Hilwa camp, an act attributed to revenge for al-Ghul's killing. In November, fighting broke out between Palestinian guerrillas and the PNO. In February 1988 a local dispute led to the kidnapping of two Scandinavian UNRWA workers by Fateh guerrillas for over three weeks despite 'Arafat's efforts to secure their immediate release. In March, two Oxfam officials were "detained" for five days by Abu Nidal's Fateh-Revolutionary Council (FRC). That same month another Palestinian military commander, Farid Hurani, was killed in an ambush. This latter incident sparked internal clashes, leading to a partial Fateh clamp-down in 'Ayn al-Hilwa camp. In January 1989 further clashes took place in 'Ayn al-Hilwa between Fateh loyalists and dissidents. In April and May, another Force 17 commander (Bassam Hurani) was assassinated in Sidon. Attacks were also made against Fateh's senior representative in Lebanon, Zayd Wahba, and another ranking PLO official amidst reports of dissatisfaction in Fateh ranks (fuelled by the suspension of cross-border attacks, and cuts in pay to Fateh fighters), and by growing tensions between Fateh and the PFLP-GC and FRC. In September-October another wave of attacks occurred, which *Voice of Palestine* labelled "an extension of the schemes that have been carried out against the Palestinian presence in Sabra, Shatila, and Burj al-Barajina"—a clear reference to Syrian-backed dissident groups. Of the more than 2,500 Palestinian fighters around Sidon, at least 1,800 are Fateh loyalists. *MEI*, 12 September 1987; *MER*, 21 November 1987, pp. 5-6, 28 May 1988, p. 14, 17 June 1989, pp. 14-16; *Voice of Palestine* (Baghdad) 18 October 1989 (FBIS).

58. Official text in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 18, 2 (Winter 1989): 213-216.

59. *New York Times*, 15 December 1988.

60. Such pressures were evident, for example, at Fatah's Fifth General Congress in August 1989, which called upon the PLO to "intensify and escalate armed action and all forms of struggle." Before and after the congress, both 'Arafat and Salah Khalaf repeatedly pointed to such pressures, the former suggesting that "moderation has its limits." *Jordan Times*, 26 July, 23 August 1989. Such comments, of course, did not merely reflect the pressures building within the Palestinian movement; they also represented part of a deliberate effort by the PLO to exert pressure on US policy by raising the specter of future Palestinian radicalism. In the meantime, Ahmad Jibril of the PFLP-GC complained that "'Arafat and his organs are obstructing factions that want to engage in armed struggle... [going] so far as to put security barriers before some of these operations.'" *al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio* (clandestine), 25 August 1989 (FBIS).

61. Israeli attacks (and local opposition), for example, prevented the PLO from constructing a *Voice of Palestine* transmitter near Sidon for broadcasts to the occupied territories. Generally the IDF refrained from striking Fatah targets while Fatah refrained from cross-border attacks, a policy admitted by Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin; *Washington Post*, 29 March 1989. Attacks by other Palestinian groups in south Lebanon, however, frequently led to calls (both by Likud members of the government, and by the Israeli government as a whole) for an end to US-PLO dialogue; see for example *New York Times*, 7 February 1989. In October 1989, an Israeli government report released by Shamir's office accused Palestinian groups (other than Fatah) of having launched 18 cross-border attacks since December 1988, most from south Lebanon. It concluded that such actions constituted a violation of PLO commitments to the US, and urged a suspension of US-PLO dialogue. *Montreal Gazette*, 26 October 1989. Yizhak Shamir himself had earlier argued that Palestinian "terror attacks" and "incursions" rendered the PLO an unfit partner for negotiations when he visited Washington in April—one month after rejecting a March 7 offer by 'Arafat to negotiate a ceasefire in south Lebanon; "Address by Yitzhak Shamir to the American Enterprise Institute, 6 April 1989," in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, 4 (Summer 1989): 176-179.

62. Political Communiqué of the 19th PNC, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, 2 (Winter 1989): 217. The reference to "children of the RPGs" is to the young men and women who fought against Israel and *Amal* in Lebanon, and whose RPG-7 grenade-launchers became a dominant symbol of Palestinian resistance in the pre-intifada 1980s.

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PNC - Palestine National Council
 CC - PLO Central Council
 EC - PLO Executive Committee

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