

Palestine Guerrillas

Their Credibility and Effectiveness

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Foreword

The Center for Strategic and International Studies has a continuing interest in the conflict-ridden area of the Middle East. The Center has, during the past two years, undertaken several studies of that area. Much of the current Middle East program of the Center was initiated in a two-day conference in March 1968 in London, where many of England's top specialists on the area were brought together for informal discussions on the problems of the entire region.

In September of 1968, the Center held another two-day formal conference at the Royal United Service Institution in Whitehall to bring to conclusion one of its special reports, which assessed the implications of the proposed British withdrawal by 1971 from the Persian Gulf. The findings of the report, published in January 1969, entitled *The Gulf: Implications of British Withdrawal*, were the result of that meeting. The Chairman of the panel was Professor Bernard Lewis of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Following the publication of this report the Center conducted a Seminar on the Middle East on March 5, 1969, which brought together in Washington scholars, military and key members of the media for a day-long discussion on Middle East problems. A report of the proceedings of that conference was prepared by Dr. Sevinc Carlson of the Center's Senior Staff.

At the beginning of this year Professor Walter Laqueur, Director of the London Institute of Contemporary History (Wiener Library), affiliated with the University of Reading in England and also Professor of the History of Ideas at Brandeis University, completed a book entitled *The Struggle for the Middle East: The Soviet Union in the Mediterranean, 1958-1968*. This was done under the annual Distinguished Writer's Award from the Center.

The subject of this paper is the Palestine guerrilla movement, which has grown rapidly in size and importance since the end of the June 1967 war and is currently a topic of much interest and comment. It has definitely added a new and dramatic dimension to the deepening conflict in the Middle East. Yet, thus far, little in-depth analysis and thought have been published on the subject.

The author of the paper is Hisham Sharabi, Professor of History at Georgetown University. He is a Research Associate of the Center and has been affiliated with all previous Center study efforts relating to the Middle East.

Professor Sharabi's research was carried out on the spot last summer under a grant provided by the Center. The Center has also assisted in publishing the following results of his research. The facts, the opinions, and the method of presentation are, however, the responsibility of the author and are not attributable to the Center. For it has been the Center's purpose in its Middle East program to elicit a variety of expertise — political, military and economic — and many differing viewpoints on the problems confronting the area. Professor Sharabi's paper is the latest of such efforts.

We at the Center know that the views contained in his paper will be of great interest and value to Middle East area specialists and to all others who are concerned with a development that, while already highly significant, may yet represent a decisive element in the unfolding Middle East crisis.

Alvin J. Cottrell
Director of Research

Preface

(The solution to the Palestine problem, the late Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, believed, would only come with time—when a new generation of Palestinians emerged free from association with Palestine and without memory of the land and its past. Far from proving Dulles right, the new Palestinian generation has produced a guerrilla movement dedicated to the principle that national liberation can only be achieved by armed struggle.

Until 1967, the Arab states, Israel, and the great powers all have dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict as though the Palestinians did not exist. Now, any decision concerning Palestine would be impossible without the Palestinians.

Perhaps equally significant is the fact that the emergence of the guerrillas has set in motion forces that now threaten radical social upheaval in the Arab world. The importance of the Palestine guerrilla movement, therefore, is not to be assessed solely in terms of the narrow struggle over territory and rights, but against the regional and Third World context of national liberation. It is not unlikely, given the present trend of events, that as Vietnam has imprinted itself on the decade of the 1960s, Palestine might very well be the name to become associated with the 1970s.

This study is a modest attempt to examine two essential features of the guerrilla movement, its *credibility* and its *effectiveness*. In investigating these aspects, one inevitably touches upon closely related problems, such as those of strategy, of information and communication, of escalation, of people's war, and of conditions of political settlement and peace. In dealing with these problems, I have tried to confine myself to the point of view of the guerrillas and to convey the ideas and expectations of various spokesmen and analysts of the two dominant guerrilla organizations, *Fateh* and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, with whom I have discussed these problems at great length.

Over the past two and a half years, during visits to Lebanon and Jordan, I have always been treated with sympathy and trust by the guerrillas. I have had access to confidential material, and matters of great import were freely discussed in my presence. In my analysis, therefore, I have made special effort not to divulge secrets or to betray confidences. If I have in any way misinterpreted or misrepresented anything emanating from or attributed to *Fateh* or the Popular Front, I herewith acknowledge my responsibility and extend my apologies in advance. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my gratitude to all those who have helped me

while in Lebanon and Jordan, but who, in accord with their wishes, must remain nameless.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, for its interest and support of this study. I am particularly grateful to Jon Vondracek for many valuable suggestions in revising and structuring the text.

Washington, D. C., February, 1970

H. B. S.

I.

Are The Palestine Guerrillas Credible?

Credibility is an important instrument in any conflict, particularly in one that has varied audiences and is global in its ramifications. In current usage, credibility is both popular and deceptive. Its loosest applications evoke visions of vast backlogs of empirical evidence, while in its strict and proper sense it means simply trust or belief. As a resource of conflict it also seems to come in limited supply, so that one side's loss is another's gain.

The Palestine guerrilla movement, like almost any party to war, confronts credibility on several levels. Credibility must be established among the guerrillas themselves, it has to be transmitted to their friends and enemies, and the times require its ultimate verification by the tribunal of world public opinion.

Until the June war of 1967, the balance of credibility was overwhelmingly in favor of Israel. Since then, and particularly following the rise and spread of Palestinian resistance, the situation has somewhat changed. This may be attributed to the possibility that, since the war, Israel has more to conceal, while the Arabs have less. At any rate, though Arab credibility, including that of the guerrillas, remained generally low, the Israeli version of things was no longer fully taken for granted; for in the past, Israel's high credibility derived in part from the fact that Arab credibility was so weak. Now, similarly, Arab credibility gained as a result of losses in Israeli credibility.

There are a number of factors that might account for this subtle, but important, shift. Certainly, foremost among these factors is the realization by the Arabs that the crude manipulation of facts could not possibly succeed; that false, insufficient, or inadequate information invariably led to rumor and speculation, confusion, and alienation—to the loss of credibility.

The guerrilla leaders seemed particularly sensitive to this fact and were determined not to commit the mistakes that the Arab information media had for so long committed. To what extent have they succeeded?

A lot has been said about the exaggerated claims of the guerrillas. An examination of their communiqués of 1967 and 1968 shows much to be desired in accuracy and sophistication. They somehow fail to communi-

cate effectively to the world audience. Yet, they have been successful with the Palestinian masses. Palestinians were then hungry for news of battle and of victory. It is hard to tell whether exaggeration began with the disseminators of information or with its recipients. There seems to be little doubt that feedback strongly influenced the manner in which news was communicated by the guerrillas.

But since late 1968, when the guerrillas gained confidence in themselves and won the support of the Arab masses (to which they were primarily addressing themselves), a good deal of self-restraint has been imposed on the way they deal with information. Impressive improvement in communication and information techniques has been introduced, particularly by *Fateh*, and as a result, a gradual but steady rise in guerrilla credibility was achieved.

Defects in Guerrilla Information

The drawbacks from which guerrilla information still suffers may be attributed to two main causes, one of which is probably incorrigible. An objective fact of guerrilla warfare is the impossibility of getting news out before the adversary does. This applies to news regarding activities in occupied territory as well as to news concerning border clashes and raiding activities. The second drawback is subjective and has to do with inter-guerrilla rivalry: when two or more organizations claim credit for the same operation, the inevitable outcome is erosion of credibility in all guerrilla claims. This drawback is correctable only insofar as tighter coordination between guerrilla organizations becomes possible.

Until the war of 1967, perhaps the major defect of the Arab information media was due to an incapacity to recognize and understand the different publics to which it had to address itself. Distinguishing simply between a home and a foreign public, it failed to take proper account of the implications such distinctions had for the means and content of information. Specifically, the central problem was not one of veracity, but rather of conflict between *intensity* and *veracity*: the more intense the news the greater the effort needed to make it credible. Until 1967, the conflict seemed incapable of being resolved in favor of credibility. But since 1967, despite the persistence of emotional appeals, which tend to strain credibility with foreign audiences, much of the exaggeration, wishful thinking, and technical naiveté have been removed.

Flaws in Israeli Information

Israel's position has suffered mainly because of a drift toward an increasingly stringent information policy. The kind of open information

policy that Israel could afford up until 1967 became progressively more costly after the war. The pattern of information control has varied in accordance with Israel's three principal publics: the domestic, the Western, and the Arab. The basic approach has varied among positions of total news blackout, total denial or random selection. News blackouts are used to suppress information completely on a given event or subject before it reaches the public. Total denial is a tactic by which information from outside sources is declared false. Random selection is a sophisticated means of controlling the flow of news by releasing a few items chosen by chance from the total supply of information. By avoiding obvious or persistent manipulation and by regularly communicating unpleasant news, Israel has succeeded in preserving a relatively high credibility. But while the level of credibility with the domestic and Western audiences may have remained high, it has seriously suffered among Israel's Arab audience, particularly among the Palestinians.¹

Another aspect of this problem should be noted. Despite Israel's highly developed communication techniques and command over news outlets, Israel has come to exercise less command over Western media and public opinion. Though Israel has a capacity to make strong appeals—and in times of crisis, as in 1968 when a number of Iraqis including Jews were hanged for spying, to intensify such appeals to an extraordinary pitch—the effectiveness seems to have somewhat declined. This is certainly due not to any technical shortcoming, but rather to other transformations: mounting indifference in Europe and the United States to the kind of issues Israel has come to represent since 1967; general brutalization of the moral sensibility in the West—attributable in the United States mainly to the Vietnam experience—and the radicalization of political consciousness among significant portions of European and American social strata.

Assumptions about Arabs

Israeli leaders hold a view of the guerrillas that is in large part based on certain assumptions concerning Arab psychology and society. These assumptions may have shaped general Israeli attitudes toward the Arabs and have indirectly influenced opinion in Europe and in the United States.

Israel's conception of the Arab is based, in its scientific formulation, on the social-scientific approach, especially the behavioral one. Following the 1967 war, one of the first things the Israeli occupation authorities did was

¹A Palestinian combatant when asked (August 22, 1969), "How true are Israeli reports concerning guerrilla activity?", replied: "The Israelis always lie." Asked about the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC) communiqué's response was that "[although] things are sometimes exaggerated," they are "usually true." For PASC, see Appendix I.

to facilitate investigation by various social scientists of the conditions and psychological attitudes of the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. Prisoners of war, captured guerrillas and young Palestinians put under arrest have been exposed to lengthy interviews designed to enable investigators to make general statements regarding patterns of behavior, personality traits, family relations, and political orientations of Palestinian Arabs belonging to different strata and backgrounds. This approach must have influenced the kind of conception which Israeli analysts (and leaders) have about Arab society and psychology. Motivated primarily by instrumental considerations, these analysts seem to have been influenced in their conclusions more by the need to control than to understand. Let us illustrate this mode of analysis and the kind of conclusions to which it is liable to lead.

An official of the Israeli Foreign Office, explained the motivation of Arab prisoners:

We have questioned many Arab prisoners at great length. We know a great deal about how their minds work, and why. One question we ask prisoners, for example, is 'Would you rather be a manager or an assistant?' More than 80 per cent of them reply that they would rather be an assistant.²

General Y. Harkabi, a former Israeli Intelligence Chief, has provided probably the most comprehensive analysis of the guerrilla movement as seen from the Israeli point of view.³ It may for this reason provide a good example of the sociological and psychological approach above. Some of his conclusions are rather interesting.

The Palestinians, he maintains, call the conflict with Israel "a war of national liberation," not for an objectively analysable reason, but under the impact of psychologically understandable motives—because of "an inclination to project it [the war of liberation] backwards and describe the conflict as if the Palestinians had waged continuous popular guerrilla warfare against the Jews."⁴

The Palestinians always tend to exaggerate their exploits: small attacks "against Jewish settlers" become "heroic acts of guerrilla warfare."⁵ In

²Richard Starnes, "Israel's Deadly Dilemma," *Washington Daily News* (September 16, 1969).

³"Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy," General Y. Harkabi, *Adelphi Papers* 53, Institute for Strategic Studies, London, (December 1968).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 14.

this way, "heroism anticipated in the future is reinforced by inspiration drawn from the past."⁶ As for the past, it is "retouched" to enable Palestinians to proclaim themselves "not only imitators of Mao and Che, but [to have] preceded them."⁷

Armed struggle has special attraction to Palestinians not because, as they say, it is the only kind of struggle by which an underdeveloped people can successfully fight against a technologically superior power, but for psychological and sociological reasons. Palestinians suffer "not only from the agony of defeat, deprivation, refugee status, and living in camps, but from contempt by the other Arabs."⁸ Other Arabs feel contempt toward them because to lose their land and property was a blow to their dignity, for in Arab society "the criterion for position and prestige is ownership of real estate."⁹ Moreover, armed struggle represents "a manly quality, hailed in masculine society."¹⁰ It has "the psychological function of atoning for past failings and inadequacies," and of "counteracting fatalism," which is "proverbial in Arab society."¹¹

This perspective may convince Israelis not only of Arab social backwardness and psychological disabilities, but also confirm Israel's indisputable superiority. This comes out most clearly in military comparisons. According to Israeli General Uzi Narkis, it is an indubitable fact that while the Israeli army constitutes a "tremendous force" springing from "the Jewish people," the Arab armies are so weak and ineffective that "no amount of heavy armament" could significantly change them; for in the last analysis nothing could change "the quality of the Arab soldier or the Arab officer."¹²

But if some change were perceptible, it could only be the result of some external factor. If, for example, Egyptian pilots performed well in combat, it could not be because they have improved, but because "the Russians were directing them."¹³ Thus although the Russians "are not flying" the Egyptian planes, they are "in the operations room" telling the Egyptian pilots what to do—"to go up and break left and do this and do that and all the combinations."¹⁴

The same logic that regarded as unlikely the emergence of a modern Arab military machine capable of confronting Israel has been dominant in the Israeli attitude toward the Palestinian resistance movement.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Maariv* (June 11, 1969). This source is an influential Tel Aviv daily newspaper.

¹³Moshe Dayan in *The New York Times* (October 12, 1969).

¹⁴*Ibid.*

When the Palestinian guerrillas made their appearance as a force in the Arab world following the battle of Karamah, many Israeli leaders predicted that the resistance movement would sooner or later collapse or be crushed. In occupied territories, this would be accomplished by a firm policy aimed at convincing the civilian population not to cooperate with the guerrillas and of the advantages of complying with the occupation authorities. By isolating the guerrillas, intimidating the politicized elements among the Palestinians, and appeasing the inactive majority, the Israeli leaders hoped to take the ground from under the resistance. "Home rule" was eventually to be granted to the pacified territories and Arab-Israeli coexistence would thus be achieved on Israel's terms.

Israeli analysts were convinced that the guerrillas were incapable of sustained action: Palestinians, like all Arabs, lacked the will and the social cohesiveness necessary to support a guerrilla movement. The first serious setback was likely to bring about their total collapse. The fact that there were already so many commando groups pointed to this. But even if the guerrillas were to survive, they were bound sooner or later to fight one another. The Israeli analysts always put great store by the seemingly chronic inability of Arabs to resolve internal differences. Within the guerrilla movement, once interests became vested and the leaders established in positions of mutual rivalry, internecine conflict would be inevitable. In short, the guerrillas were bound to devour one another before the vanguard had been able to transform itself into a genuine popular movement.

Israeli View of Guerrillas

It is important to keep in mind that Israeli authorities have never recognized the existence of a Palestine resistance movement; the guerrillas are "terrorists," "infiltrators," "saboteurs." Palestinian guerrillas falling into Israeli hands are treated as criminals even though they may be wearing uniforms and belong to military units.

It is natural that in Israeli terms the guerrillas, since they do not represent a people, should represent some other interest. Thus, rather than being the "vanguard of the Palestinian liberation movement," as the Palestinian guerrillas claim to be, they are an instrument of Arab strategy (hence, for example, the title of Harkabi's study). The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs defines in an official pronouncement the guerrillas as "terrorist organizations, which present themselves as a Palestine Liberation Movement," but which in reality are "a weapon that all the Arab countries use against Israel in the inter-Arab rivalries."¹⁵

¹⁵(Israel) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Background on Current Themes," (June 9, 1969), p. 2.

Why does Israel persist in considering the guerrillas as "terrorists" rather than as Palestinians fighting for what they regard as their rights? Israel's official position on this is clear-cut: there is no Palestinian people, there are no Palestinian rights. In the words of Golda Meir, Israeli Prime Minister, "There was no such thing as Palestinians [when the Jews came to Palestine after World War I]. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist."¹⁶ Palestinians, therefore, do not have a legal personality; they can put forward no collective claims; and, as far as Israel is concerned, they cannot be a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They "have no role to play in any future peace settlement."¹⁷

The Palestinians from this standpoint are recognized only as "refugees" and, in the occupied territories, as the "local population." Insofar as the refugees are concerned, the Israeli position has always been that the Arab states were responsible for creating the refugee problem and therefore for solving it. The only claim that the Palestinians as refugees may have on Israel is a humanitarian one. As for Palestinians living under Israeli rule, they have no claim except that affording them peace and protection under Israeli occupation law. It is within this general framework that Israeli analysts view Palestinian resistance and formulate policies to cope with it.

Evaluating the Guerrillas

Since the emergence of the guerrilla movement following the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967, Israeli spokesmen have consistently maintained that the guerrillas represented no serious threat and dismissed them as a passing phenomenon on the Middle East scene. As late as June 1969, the Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Yitzhak Rabin, declared:

It is really naive to assume that a few thousand, or 10,000, as they claim, guerrillas, almost all of them outside the territory we control, could achieve something 400,000 Arabs could not.

Of course, they have some nuisance value, but we developed a defense system along the Jordan River and now we catch or kill 85 to 90 per cent of those who try to infiltrate. Eighty per cent of guerrilla activity is restricted to shelling and rocketing from beyond the armistice line, which is clear evidence of their failure.

¹⁶Interview in *The Times* (London) (June 15, 1969).

¹⁷Foreign Minister Abba Eban in *Le Monde* (January 20, 1969).

Their only success was that they put themselves on the political map of the Middle East. But this should worry the Arabs; it does not affect us.¹⁸

Reports by foreign correspondents from Israel, and indeed responsible analyses by Israeli writers in the Israeli press, do not always support the view expressed by Ambassador Rabin and other Israeli spokesmen.

For example, a British reporter writing from Israel in May 1969, maintains that the guerrillas have become "a real and aggressive component in the Israeli nightmare."¹⁹ An American columnist, visiting Israel in the summer of 1969, notes that "thirteen times a day Israelis stop whatever else they are doing to learn whether there has been some crippling new act of terror by their Arab enemies."²⁰ Another American journalist stationed in Israel points out that it is no longer possible to brush aside the Palestinian guerrillas, who have become "a strategic factor in the Arab-Israeli struggle."²¹

In Israel, visitors and journalists are assured by official spokesmen as well as by ordinary citizens that Israel can withstand Arab terror indefinitely. But as incidents within Israel and the occupied territories continue to increase and pressure on the eastern front (Jordan-Syria-Lebanon) and in the Suez Canal zone continues to rise—and with it the rate of casualties—attitudes begin to change. One Western observer notes: "Every month. . . there are dozens of incidents the Israelis never report—highly competent jobs of cutting telephone wires, railway tracks, mining roads, harrassing military camps."²² When the syndicated American columnist, Richard Starnes, visited Israel in September 1969, he found a troubled situation, which official spokesmen refused to admit. He was told by a Western diplomat in Tel Aviv, "They [the Israelis] are not consciously misleading you when they insist that they can endure this level of fighting forever if they have to. They really believe it. They are misleading themselves."²³

Israeli analysts, writing in Hebrew to their home audience, do not normally conceal facts. For example, General Narkis, writing in *Maariv*, gives a glimpse of things that does not quite tally with the official version. "Things have reached such a point that people

¹⁸*The New York Times* (June 23, 1969).

¹⁹*The Observer* (May 18, 1969).

²⁰H. A. Ruskin, *The New York Times* (July 7, 1969).

²¹James Feron in *ibid.* (July 20, 1969).

²²*Christian Science Monitor* (June 21, 1969).

²³*Washington Daily News* (September 15, 1969).

have to be continually injected with morale boosters in order to preserve their confidence in our military strength and to prevent them from losing it altogether."²⁴ Elie Landau, one of Israel's leading military analysts, writes: "The fighting with *Fateh* goes on violently every day. This is never mentioned in the news. . . [Despite severe casualties, they [the guerrillas] keep mounting operations as though nothing has happened."²⁵ Landau is, on occasion, rather outspoken in his comments on the general military situation. He regards guerrilla activity, including the shelling and rocketing from the Jordan Valley, as constituting "a great danger in the long run."²⁶ He does not conceal his alarm at the fact that since 1967, "the war has been waged *within* the cease-fire lines."²⁷ At night, "tens of terrorist bands acting on all fronts force us. . . to exert increasing defense efforts. This makes it doubtful that the element of time is really in our favor."²⁸

Landau's main fears derive from the fact that Israel's offensive strategy, which has been its dominant strategy since 1948, seemed no longer adequate.²⁹ For the first time in 20 years, Israel finds itself immobilized in defensive positions. "Whether we like or not, to be cooped in for months at end in [defensive] positions is bound to have a negative effect on the troops. You cannot compare [the effectiveness] of a soldier carrying out guerrilla operations in the open space on a large scale with that of a soldier sitting in a fixed position—no matter how strongly defended—waiting for the enemy to swoop down on him."³⁰

The costs resulting from this situation for Israel cannot be easily assessed. They may be seen in such things as increasing military expenditure, in continuing partial mobilization, in raising maximum age for reserve duty, in rising psychological tension. They may also be seen in the spiraling rate of casualties.

Israeli Casualties

Since the 1967 war, or to be more exact, since large scale guerrilla activity began in the spring of 1969, the rate of Israeli casualties both military and civilian has noticeably risen.

²⁴*Maariv* (June 11, 1969).

²⁷*Ibid.* (Italics added).

²⁵*Maariv* (June 9, 1969).

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁶*Maariv* (June 12, 1969).

²⁹Landau defines this strategy as one which "always brings the battle to the enemy's territory, whatever the conditions, for it is better for our men to fall on enemy land, in his house, and in his base, than to fall on national soil." *Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

The published casualty figures by both the Israeli and Arab sides are usually rather misleading—and for quite different reasons. From the Arab side we get only partial information and it is presented in a way that makes it difficult to break down into analysable categories; also Arab statistics are usually incomplete and inadequate.

Israeli data, on the other hand, is abundant, systematic, and detailed; but it, too, leaves important questions unanswered, particularly questions relating to the number and type of casualties. For example, which kinds of deaths are officially reported and which are only mentioned in special categories or not mentioned at all? Do “traffic accidents” include deaths caused by mines and booby traps? And are deaths caused by traffic accidents included in the official reports or simply overlooked (as in the reports of the American military spokesmen in Vietnam)? Also, how are fatalities resulting from previous injuries tabulated in the official casualty lists? Are the initial estimates of the ratio of killed and injured brought up to date?

An examination of published Israeli data reveals interesting facts relevant to these questions. The total Israeli casualties for the period June 1967 to July 1969 add up to 1,952.³¹ Fatalities are listed as 401 of the total. This makes the ratio about five injuries to one death. Israeli figures for Palestinian casualties for the same period (which do not include injuries) set guerrilla losses at 461 killed. This is only 60 more killed than the total for Israelis killed during the same period.³² Of 461 guerrilla dead, about half were presumably killed in a single battle, when a large Israeli force crossed the Jordan River on the morning of March 21, 1968 and attacked the refugee town of Karamah.³³ Israeli casualties in that battle were listed at 26 dead and 70 wounded; 204 guerrillas were killed according to the Israeli version.³⁴

³¹The rate of casualties has increased considerably since that date. It must be noted that Israeli casualties up to March 1969 must have constituted only a small proportion of this figure, for guerrilla action had not been wide spread until after the battle of Karamah. See Chapter II n.2, below.

³²This puts the kill-ratio at something like one Israeli to 1.1 Palestinians. It must be kept in mind that the Israeli casualties include those inflicted by “military” as well as by guerrilla forces.

³³The battle in effect marks the beginning of large scale Palestinian resistance; it was instrumental in bringing to light the existence of the Palestine Movement of National Liberation, better known as *Fateh*, and to cause a ground swell of proresistance feeling throughout the Arab world.

³⁴An obvious problem arises here: in counting bodies after an attack on a densely populated town, how can one distinguish between a dead guerrilla and a dead civilian, especially when the guerrillas had not yet adopted the uniform that was later to become identified with their movement?

Given the fact that the figures for Israeli casualties apply largely to the period beginning in March 1968 (rather than in June 1967), the ratio of Israeli monthly fatalities must be considered close to, if not exceeding, those of the Palestinians. The Israeli Defense Minister has estimated that in 1969 a total of 119 guerrillas were killed,³⁵ i.e., about 20 per month or 5 per week.³⁶

But there are indications that the Israeli casualty rate might actually be higher than the official figures make it out to be. This need not necessarily mean that deliberate falsification of casualty figures takes place; rather, that statistical data may, when presented in a certain way, convey impressions that sometimes do not quite correspond with the facts. This impression is strengthened by an analysis of official Israeli records concerning the number of Israelis killed in action during the month of June in 1969.³⁷ According to the military spokesman, in June 1969, 22 Israelis were killed, 10 of them in the Suez Canal zone and 12 by "terrorist" action. The name, age, and rank of those killed are given,³⁸ together with the date and area where the action took place.³⁹

On examining the obituary announcements in the same paper during the same period, we find that there were other, obviously Arab-inflicted, fatalities not reported by the military spokesman. How can we be sure that these fatalities did result from "terrorist" or "military" action and not from normal causes?

Most of the obituary announcements make clear the type of death incurred.⁴⁰ When the name of the deceased is followed by such phrases as "fallen martyr," or "died in defense of his country," or "died while performing his duty," then there is little doubt as to the cause of death. This may be checked against announcements where deaths are clearly the result of normal (non-violent) causes; in such cases, we find the name of the deceased usually followed by the acronym *zal* ("May God have mercy on him") as contrasted with *hayad*, ("May God avenge his blood"). In *Maariv*, between June 2 and June 29, 1969, there were 13 obituary

³⁵*The Washington Post* (July 17, 1969).

³⁶In August 1969, however, when the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (the coordinating body of 90 per cent of the Palestine guerrillas, see *Appendix I*.) began putting out monthly casualty reports, the figures for July 1969 were put at 34 dead and 11 injured. *Daily Star* (Beirut, August 10, 1969).

³⁷Daily reports of the Israeli military spokesman in *Maariv* (June 2 – July 1, 1969).

³⁸Except for the name of one soldier killed by "saboteurs" in the Dead Sea area whose name was withheld at the request of his family. *Maariv* (June 22, 1969).

³⁹For the list of names, ranks, and ages see *Appendix I, table (A)*.

⁴⁰Only announcements appearing in *Maariv* are examined here.

announcements indicating deaths resulting from military actions; and there were two news items reporting the deaths of two men killed while performing their military duty. All 15 names do not appear on the list of the military spokesman.⁴¹ Moreover, during the same month, there appears to have occurred five more deaths not reported by the military spokesman and not appearing in *Maariv* at the time of death.⁴² According to the Orthodox tradition, Jews commemorate their dead on the seventh and thirtieth days as well as one year after death. In early July, *Maariv* published the names of five soldiers who must have died thirty or seven days earlier.

If this analysis is correct, then the figures given by the military spokesman for the month of June 1969 are incomplete. It is, of course, possible that some deaths may have resulted from previous injuries and for this reason do not appear on official lists. Even if this were the case, the problem remains. For while this may be consistent with the official system of tabulation, it fails to provide the necessary precision for making the crucial distinction between the number of dead and wounded, and so serves to conceal the correct ratio. Thus, the number of Israelis soldiers who died or were killed in June 1969 could not have been 22, as the military spokesman had officially announced, but closer to 42 (and probably more), as the above analysis suggests.

Counter-Guerrilla Policy

In responding to Palestinian resistance, Israel has followed a hard-line policy based on the punishment/reward and the threat/reprisal principles. Israel's nonconciliatory approach is predicated on the continued possession of overwhelming power, on the capacity and will to punish and retaliate effectively.

Military, political, and economic measures taken by Israeli authorities against the Arab Palestinian population in areas under Israeli rule are classified as "internal policy." The pattern of control varies slightly in each of the four affected areas. The West Bank, with the largest concentration of population (ca. 650,000) and having the greatest contact with the outside world, was at first subjected to a liberal policy allowing for maximum freedom: free circulation of people, "open bridges," economic and educational autonomy. This policy soon gave way to increasingly stringent control. The second area, Arab Jerusalem, though annexed to Israel in 1967, constitutes an integral part of the West Bank complex, and

⁴¹See Appendix I, table (B). We must assume that other deaths may have been announced in other newspapers.

⁴²See Appendix I, table (C).

its population (ca. 65,000) has the same attitudes and aspirations as that of the West Bank. The third area, the Gaza Strip, may be characterized by the fact that over 90 per cent of its population (total population ca. 350,000) is composed of refugees and almost completely cut off from the outside world. Israeli control in the Gaza Strip has been from the beginning of occupation highly repressive and the response of the population correspondingly defiant. In the fourth area, the Arab-inhabited towns and villages of Israel, the Arab population (ca. 300,000) lived under military rule from 1948 until December 1966. With the escalation of resistance, tighter controls have been imposed. A return to military rule is not unlikely.

The response to Israeli occupation and control has differed from one social class to another. In general, the strongest and most active opposition to Israeli occupation has tended to come from the poor and dispossessed classes. This is particularly true of refugees living in camps, peasants living in the small farming villages, and unskilled laborers living in urban centers. As Israeli control became tighter and more repressive, growing numbers among the middle and lower middle classes have tended to take a more defiant attitude toward the occupying forces and to give aid to resistance. This is certainly true of the students and the young educated generation. From the ranks of this group have emerged some of the most militant members of the resistance in the occupied areas. On the whole, the groups that have tended to acquiesce in the fait accompli, and in varying degrees to collaborate with the occupation authorities, have been the big merchants, the landlords, and the higher ranking officials of the old Jordanian bureaucracy.

In its efforts to crush the resistance, Israel adhered to a classic policy of pacification. In its basic structure, this policy most resembles the pacification policy of the French in Algeria, i.e., maintaining the status quo through a system of severe punishment alternating with limited concessions and rewards; and, as in Algeria, the pacification of occupied territory has led to increasing dependence on coercion and repression.

Pacification as well as terror has been carried out in four major ways: systematic arrest, demolishing of homes (neighborhoods), deportations, and economic pressure.

Systematic arrest may include imprisonment for long duration, interrogation and torture. It constitutes a central mechanism of pacification and repression.] -

Who gets arrested?

In conditions where absolute control is denied legitimate sanction and force is the principal means for securing compliance, *everybody* is suspect. Power distinguishes only between categories of suspects, *between* degrés

of complicity. Beyond a certain point, even these distinctions get blurred.

When an incident takes place—e.g., a hand grenade is tossed at an Israeli patrol car—everybody in the immediate vicinity is subject to immediate arrest. The environment of suspicion and the extent of punishment vary in proportion to the intensity or destructiveness of the act.

[Every incident presents the occasion for inflicting punishment and teaching lessons: total curfews extending for days,⁴³ destructive searches, mass arrests.⁴⁴ The point is that not only the guilty but the whole community must suffer. In this way, the group is made to realize the cost of resistance.]

Systematic arrest, then, aims not only at apprehending the guilty, but also at crushing the will to resist. This requires cultivating an environment in which the cost of resistance would become increasingly prohibitive. As a system of control this aims at:

1. *Disrupting daily routine* and creating an atmosphere of constant anxiety. This would provide the ground for eliciting a high degree of compliance, thereby imposing effective control.

2. *Maintaining curfews*, searches, arrests, keeping the resistance off balance and the population unable to collaborate effectively with it. Though all strata suffer as a result, those who suffer most are the urban poor, the day workers, the small shopkeepers, and the farmers.

3. *Undermining morale*. Interrogations, including beatings and torture,⁴⁵ are designed not only to secure confessions but also to break the spirit of potential fighters, and to destroy trust and confidence among individuals. Spies and informers are recruited, and often their presence is leaked out to further disintegrate solidarity among those arrested.

4. *Undermining underground resistance*. Persistent pressure provided by systematic arrest renders difficult the quick reconstruction of resistance networks and disrupts communications between them.

5. *Immobilizing activists*. Indefinite internment of young men deprives the resistance of its muscle and leadership.

⁴³E.g., The foreign editor of *The Times* reports on a curfew imposed on Beit Sahur, an Arab village near Jerusalem, whose inhabitants were suspected of having collaborated with the guerrillas, "For a week nobody was allowed to leave their house or open a window. As the latrines are outside the houses, and as it is very hot in Palestine in August, the result was not pleasant. Outside, the livestock of the villagers died or was requisitioned." *The Times* (October 28, 1969).

⁴⁴"Suspects are frequently held for months at a time without trial, without their whereabouts being known, and without lawyers or relatives being able to visit or contact them." *Ibid.*

⁴⁵"The methods reported to be used follow the pattern familiar from Algeria, Hungary, Vietnam, and elsewhere, including electrical treatment as well as every form of beating. Torture is said to be carried out in the interrogation centers at the Russian compound in Jerusalem, Sarafand camp, and Ashkelon gaol." *Ibid.*

By November 1969, there were, according to *Fateh*, 17,316 Palestinians in Israeli jails, of whom about 25 per cent were accused of resistance or guerrilla activity.⁴⁶

It may be added that *house arrest* constitutes another effective method of freezing potentially dangerous elements and has been used mostly against Arabs living in Israel. A man under house arrest is required to report (several times) daily to the police or military authorities. Obviously, the economic and psychological penalties involved would render anyone in such condition politically impotent.

Demolition of homes is intended as both punishment and deterrent. The power to dynamite Arab houses enables the authorities to compensate for prohibition of capital punishment in Israel. Instead of shooting hostages, the threat of destroying houses has provided an alternative weapon. From Israel's point of view, this weapon has several advantages: houses destroyed in Jerusalem, for example, have made it possible to remove a relatively large number of Arabs from the old city and to confiscate their property; the partial or total demolition of villages, as in the Latrun area overlooking the old Jaffa-Jerusalem road, has eliminated altogether Arab presence in a strategic area and made available for Israel rich agricultural land; the dynamiting of houses in Gaza, Ramallah, Nablus, and elsewhere has caused many influential people to flee the country (or to be deported). Between June 1967 and the end of 1969, over 7,000 homes are reported to have been either confiscated or demolished in occupied territory,⁴⁷ rendering some 50,000 people homeless.

Deportations aim at getting rid of prominent leaders who refuse to collaborate with the occupation authorities. Deportations have been selective. (Attempts at deporting large numbers of refugees *en bloc* were countered by Jordan denying admission to anybody without a return permit). Individual and small group deportations included high officials (e.g., the mayors of Jerusalem and Ramallah), lawyers, doctors, and teachers who, by resorting to nonviolent methods, had generated strong "legal" opposition. Since 1967, several hundred such leaders and intellectuals have been deported. Obviously, the principal goal of this policy is to weaken organized opposition by removing from the scene the most active and articulate figures.

Economic pressure has expressed itself in various forms. On one level it has been used as a way of inflicting collective punishment. In Hebron, for example, the movement of goods and persons was prohibited for days following an attempt on the life of the military governor (September

⁴⁶*Fateh* (weekly) (Beirut, November 20, 1969), p. 6

⁴⁷*The Times* (October 28, 1969).

1969), with the (foreseen) result that the region's principal crop, grapes, then at peak season, was almost totally destroyed. Other methods have been used: special regulations, taxes, and restrictions on production have served to bring Arab economic life under tight Israeli control. A more direct method has been the practice of selective confiscation of private and public property—agricultural land, strategic locations, *waqf* (religious foundations) property, and business concerns. Economic pressure has been applied directly on individuals: professionals as well as vocational or high school graduates have been “encouraged” to emigrate. Palestinians requesting exit permits must sign a statement renouncing the right to return.

External Pressure

Israel's response to external pressure bases itself on two main principles: entrenchment and the power to retaliate.

On the Egyptian front, Israel has dug in along the Suez Canal in a defensive line, the so-called Bar-Lev line, consisting of military fortifications and underground bunkers. Probably Israel's strongest defense factor (but also a source of weakness from the logistical point of view) is the Sinai Desert, which protects the rear of the Israeli forces and cushions its defenses against attack.

On the eastern front, running from the Gulf of Aqaba up the Jordan Valley into the Syrian Heights and southern Lebanon, the picture is rather different. With Israeli agricultural settlements (as well as a few industrial centers, e.g., potash works, electric power plants) concentrated at many points along this front, entrenchment has taken a different form: instead of dug-in trenches as in Sinai, the main advance line of defense consists of electronic fences, watchtowers, minefields, and mobile patrols. Helicopter and armored units operating from behind the advance positions form the main striking force against guerrilla attacks from Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

By adhering to the policy of the retaliatory threat, Israel hoped to deter the Palestinian guerrillas, as well as the Arab regular forces, from attacking Israeli positions and from infiltrating into Israeli-held territory and thus establish the *status quo* equilibrium created by the cease-fire. It sought to mete out severe punishment, demonstrating that armed struggle does not pay.

Under prevailing circumstances, deterrence and punishment could be achieved by three kinds of threats: by all-out ground strike; by day-to-day retaliation (limited air strikes); and by a combination of these involving medium and large scale operations. Since the 1967 war, itself a large scale “all-out strike,” Israel's retaliatory strategy has been determined by two

factors: Israel's decisive air superiority, and its hypersensitivity to casualties. The battle of Karameh (March 21, 1968), in which probably no more than 300 guerrillas (with artillery support from the Jordanian army) not only stood their ground against a superior Israeli force but seem to have inflicted heavy losses on it, marked a turning point for both the guerrillas and the Israelis. For the latter, the battle clearly showed that land action not always achieves the goals of limited retaliatory strategy; the benefits were more than offset by the high casualty rate. After Karameh, Israel largely abandoned the tactic of ground action in favor of the air strike.⁴⁸ Israel's air superiority provided its capacity to retaliate and, as such, the basic component of its "active defense" strategy. Maintenance of this superiority thus became a primary objective of state policy.]

From the Palestinian (and general Arab) point of view, Karameh represented the beginning of a wholly new phase of resistance. The guerrillas burst onto the scene as a major factor in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. *Fateh*, the main commando group to make the stand at Karameh, began getting sufficient support in the Arab world to recruit several thousand Palestinians who flocked to join the resistance. But perhaps most important of all, Karameh was responsible for restoring Arab self-esteem and for showing the Palestinians that they not only could face the Israelis militarily, but that only through armed struggle could they ever hope to defeat Zionism. Thus, while Israel abandoned the initiative in land action and resorted to a "defensive" strategy based on air power, the Palestinian guerrillas proceeded to lay the groundwork for a strategy of popular struggle based on protracted war.

Evaluation of Israeli Strategy

How successful has Israeli strategy been in combating the guerrillas and suppressing resistance?

1. Clearly, by the end of 1969, the pacification policy seems to have failed. Stability within the framework of the *status quo* was not achieved and the guerrillas were not isolated from the population. Resistance steadily mounted.

2. On the other hand, the insurrectionary situation, which the guerrillas sought to bring about, was not created, except possibly in the Gaza strip. Israel may have thus succeeded in preventing revolutionary (insurrectionary) conditions from developing, or from developing more rapidly. By tolerating verbal opposition, even strikes and demonstrations,

⁴⁸Israel, however, may be forced to resort to a ground action tactic as the Lebanese front opens up.

the Israeli authorities provided, at least in the early stages of occupation, effective safety valves preventing large scale upheavals.

3. Underground resistance, despite vigorous and sometimes ruthless measures taken against it by the Israeli military and police, became securely entrenched not only in Gaza and the West Bank but in some Arab towns in Israel as well. Continued guerrilla attacks, sabotage, and individual attacks against Israeli military personnel attest to the fact.

4. Infiltration into and from Israeli-occupied areas continued, despite better and more effective detection measures. Messengers, porters (of arms, explosives, and ammunition), and "sleepers" as well as combatants seemed to have regular access to occupied territory.⁴⁹ Guerrilla bands carried out sabotage missions deep in Israel (Haifa, Affuleh, Tantura, Tel Aviv); caches of arms, obviously brought in from the outside, were being regularly uncovered. Certain areas along the Jordan River, where the terrain offers more protection, were better defended than others. In these areas, especially between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea, infiltration by late 1968 probably became very difficult. Even here, however, electronic fences, mine fields, and observation posts were being breached daily. Night forays were carried out regularly and the most sophisticated defenses appeared no longer sufficient to prevent penetration of the cease-fire line. To the south of the Dead Sea, and in the north along the Syrian and Lebanese cease-fire lines, the system of defense was thinner, consisting mainly of stretches of barbed wire, intermittent minefields, and mobile patrols. It would probably be impossible for Israel really to seal all its borders along the cease-fire lines, including the easily defended stretches in the upper Jordan Valley. At any rate, even if the technological possibility existed, it would probably have a prohibitive cost and an unguaranteed efficacy. As it is, Israeli defense costs have increased significantly since 1967. Israel now has the highest military expenditure per capita in the Middle East and one of the highest in the world. As a result of escalating resistance, military spending reached an estimated \$3 million a day by 1969. Military service has been raised from 30 months to 36 months and service in the reserve has been raised from age 49 to age 55, which means that over 10 per cent more labor is withdrawn from industry.

5. It is doubtful that Israel's reprisal policy has been very successful. For one thing, it has proved too costly, and its deterrent effect has

⁴⁹Israeli spokesmen claim that about 90 per cent of infiltrators are intercepted, captured, or killed (see, e.g., Ambassador Rabin's statement, p. 1., above). This is somewhat exaggerated or applies only to certain strongly defended stretches of the cease-fire line. Guerrilla sources claim that on certain infiltration routes they have had not a single casualty (as of August 22, 1969, when the statement was made to the writer). In any event, it is difficult to see how one can determine the ratio of interception if one does not know the number of those not intercepted.

progressively decreased. Israel has not been able to make threats and inflict punishment with impunity without incurring counter reprisals. Maximizing the adversary's cost expectancy (by the threat to retaliate) has not always meant minimizing its own costs. On the contrary, since the intensification of resistance, Israel, in order to keep credible its threat and thereby reasonable the expectancy, has had to accept increasingly higher costs.

6. Perhaps equally important, the effectiveness of Israel's air superiority seems to have been somewhat over-rated as far as the guerrillas were concerned. According to Dana Adams Schmidt, Middle East correspondent for *The New York Times*:

The effects of aerial bombardment [and related forms of attack] are illusory so far as destroying the will to resist is concerned.

Of particularly questionable effect are the air raids on commando 'bases.' These bases have only the flimsiest physical substance. The men scatter to their slit trenches while the planes at best knock down some shacks and tents which can be set up anew elsewhere tomorrow.⁵⁰

Indeed, from the standpoint of the Palestinian commandos the Israeli air attacks seemed to have the opposite effect. "I wish to emphasize," a *Fateh* spokesman said in September 1969, that Israeli air attacks strengthen us rather than weaken us. In fact, we are gratified by them for they constitute for the commandos a form of baptism by fire, so to speak. . . . Every military man knows that dependence on air power to destroy an enemy is a laughable matter; the battle is first and foremost one of infantry, face to face.⁵¹

⁵⁰Dana Adams Schmidt, *The New York Times* (June 29, 1969).

⁵¹*Free Palestine* (September 1969).



Weapons used by Fatch guerrillas

II.

How Strong Is The Guerrilla Movement?¹

It is impossible to arrive at any definite or exact figures on guerrilla strength. The Palestine Movement for National Liberation (*Fateh*), the dominant and numerically the largest guerrilla organization, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the second most important though numerically much smaller organization, may have trained between them by the end of 1969 between 30,000 and 50,000 men. It must be immediately added that not all trainees necessarily become regular combatants; nor is all military training designed to produce regular combatants (guerrillas). Since late 1968, increasing attention has been given by both *Fateh* and the Popular Front to training and indoctrinating political cadres, and to creating popular militia in the Palestine refugee settlements of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Military training takes place within the refugee settlements and in special training camps in Jordan and Syria. The latter provide systematic training courses consisting of physical exercise, handling of various types of fire arms, tactics of urban warfare, and political education. Regular courses normally take two to three weeks. Each camp can handle up to 150 recruits at a time. While it is difficult to give exact estimates of the size of the popular militia, it may be assumed that the entire adult refugee population between the ages of 15 and 45 would sooner or later become trained militia.²

¹All information in this section is derived either directly from guerrilla sources, or from interviews, or from personal observations on the scene.

²They total between 200,000 and 250,000 men. According to figures published by the Research Center of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Palestinian people in 1967 numbered about 2,350,000. Of these, 57 per cent were refugees. (For the purposes of this discussion, Palestinian refugees are defined as all those persons dispossessed by the Israelis of their land or property or both.) The 43 per cent "non-refugee" Palestinians were distributed as follows: 20 per cent in the West Bank, 6 per cent in Gaza, 12 per cent in "small" Israel, and 5 per cent in other Arab countries and North America.

In terms of geographic distribution, the vast majority of Palestinians (94 per cent) lived in or around what used to be Palestine: 52 per cent in Jordan (including West Bank), 17 per cent in Gaza, 13 per cent in Syria and Lebanon, and 12 per cent in Israel.

Since the 1967 war, nearly two-thirds of all Palestinians (1,400,000) have lived under Israeli rule; and in Jordan (East Bank) the proportion of refugees to non-refugees has risen to a ratio of 2:1.

The training of regular commandos is of course qualitatively quite different from that of the militia. To be accepted for commando training requires stringent qualifications of age, health, psychological state, etc. It takes longer and costs more to produce a few hundred commandos than it does a few thousand popular militia. It takes a commando recruit eight to twelve weeks to complete the basic training course. Specialization and advanced training are carried out in Egypt and Algeria; a few missions are known to have been sent to China and North Vietnam. In late 1969, a core of Palestinian instructors was formed from men trained abroad and with long combat experience in Palestine, making possible advanced and specialized training in Jordan.

When in the months following Karamah hundreds of volunteers flocked to join *Fateh*, the most precious commodity and most difficult to find was qualified instructors. *Fateh* used every kind of instructor it could find; it mattered little whether or not he had proper political education or was genuinely revolutionary in outlook. As a result, the quality of training suffered. Fresh recruits were often roughly treated; physical punishment was not uncommon, and many cases of desertion were reported. During this period of sudden expansion and growth, other mistakes were made on the administrative and organizational levels. A high price was paid for this. It is estimated, for example, that as much as 50 per cent of deaths incurred during this period occurred *in training*, mostly as a result of inadequate medical facilities and supplies.

By the following summer (1969), the situation had undergone significant change: the arms supply, the medical facilities, and the general administrative structure were transformed. Training was now rational, streamlined, and professional. Punishment was discarded altogether and replaced by a system of self-criticism based on the Chinese model. The training program, greatly refined, corresponded to specific combat needs and was more pragmatic in orientation. Instructors were not only plentiful, but better qualified from both the professional and political points of view. Strong emphasis was put on political education; in most camps, this meant a minimum of two to a maximum of ten hours a week. Every training camp was provided with a small library on revolutionary theory and guerrilla warfare. In the Popular Front camps, emphasis was put on Marxist-Leninist and Maoist writings. *Fateh's* camp libraries had a wider range, along side Mao and Giap one saw books on the Islamic conquests and Arab history.

The quality of better training was reflected in improved performance. Casualties, particularly fatal ones, dropped considerably. For example, the number of operations carried out by *Fateh* commandos (*al-Assifah*) rose from 43 operations in August 1968 to 480 operations (carried out by

Fateh and other guerrilla organizations of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command) in August 1969. At the same time, the number of casualties dropped in reverse proportion.³ Progress was rapidly achieved in the procurement of arms. The Russian-made Kalashnikov automatic rifle, a highly effective assault weapon, has become standard equipment among the guerrillas. The Katiusha rocket (adjusted in guerrilla workshops to meet specific needs) has proved to be an extremely effective weapon: with a range of up to 8,000 meters, it has brought a variety of important targets within the reach of the guerrillas and greatly increased their fire power. This has been further bolstered by the R.B.J. anti-tank recoilless rifle and the bazooka, which have also become standard equipment of commando units. In addition, self-detonating and electrical mines, mostly of Chinese make, have been used extensively by the guerrillas. A significant addition to the guerrilla arsenal has been Russian made anti-aircraft guns acquired by *Fateh*. These weapons have proved invaluable in forcing Israeli planes to make their target runs at higher altitudes and in the boost to morale given by the possession of a weapon against Israeli air power. It is significant that Israel has admitted the loss of 6 planes over Jordan since its air strikes across the Jordan began in August 1968. (PASC has claimed 11 Israeli planes downed since that date.) In terms of the limited number of missions flown, even the loss of 5 planes is rather high.⁴

The guerrillas are not composed, as has been generally maintained, mostly of college graduates and intellectuals.⁵ The rank and file is predominantly of peasant and lower middle class background, with the great majority coming from refugee camps. A survey made among a thousand guerrillas shows, however, an exceptionally high degree of literacy: only 6 per cent were illiterate and the majority had either a primary or a secondary school education (54 per cent and 32 per cent respectively). Eight per cent were college graduates.⁶

A significant aspect—indeed revolutionary in its social implications—of the development of the resistance movement has been the increasing involvement of women and children in revolutionary activity. Girls

³See details of operations and casualties published by *Fateh* in *watha'iq askariyyah* [Military Documents], Vol. I, (Amman, 1968), pp. 226-249, and *Fateh* (weekly) (Beirut, October 1, 1969), p. 1.

⁴It is difficult to assess the impact of the guerrillas' acquisition of the new Blowpipe rocket, which can be carried and operated by one man and which, with an 80 per cent accuracy rate, is considered one of the most lethal anti-aircraft weapons ever invented.

⁵A statement on a "Wall newspaper" in one of *Fateh*'s training camps in Jordan declares: "Revolutionary culture is not a monopoly of university graduates; it is not the specialty of doctors and engineers. The social class most inherently receptive to revolutionary ideology is the working people."

⁶*Le Monde* (weekly) (July 16, 1969), p. 3

between the ages of 18 and 30 have joined commando organizations as nurses, typists, and teachers in commando-run schools. But they have also been incorporated in regular commando units. Teen-age girls have participated in operations across the cease-fire lines and have taken part in combat missions inside Israeli-occupied territory. Scores of Palestinian girls are in Israeli jails. Now a few thousand girls form part of the regular cadres of *Fateh* and the Popular Front.

Boys between the ages of 10 and 15 have been systematically recruited into *Ashbal* (Tiger Cub) organizations in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Potentially, the *Ashbal* constitutes the most revolutionary element in the Palestine resistance movement. By now several thousand in strength, they constitute significant reserve units. Already some *Ashbal* units have been committed to battle in support of regular commandos. In September 1969, the Popular Front used *Ashbal* units in a series of bomb attacks against Israeli targets in Europe.

A visitor talking to leaders and administrators, and to combatants in base camps, comes back with the clear impression of extremely high morale. Perhaps most evident are the sense of purpose and energetic activity that dominate Palestinian life everywhere. Imbued with recent hope, brought about by the emergence of the guerrillas, Palestinians seem possessed by a new spirit. Despite political differences, a single outlook dominates their activity; and engaged as they are in day-to-day struggle, they seem less prone to exaggeration and wishful thinking than other Arabs. Certainly they have little illusion about defeating Israel in the near future, but equally little doubt about "the final collapse of Zionism." Noteworthy is the attitude most Palestinians have toward their adversary. There is little hate, especially in training camps and among combatants. In one training camp an intensive course in modern Hebrew was being offered, and in most training centers the elements of the language are taught. The fear that Israeli military superiority had created among Palestinians during the past two decades seems to have been dispelled. Familiarity with the Israeli after 1967 has apparently destroyed not only fear of but respect for him as well; a capacity, formerly lacking, for assessing Israel's strengths and weaknesses, and for understanding Zionist motivations and goals, seems to have rapidly developed.⁷

⁷Particularly in the guerrilla bases, there is a tendency to look down upon the Israeli as an enemy. One Palestinian commando, aged 20, put it in these words: "Whether we like it or not, we will be dealing with these people for a long time to come. We have to be patient and we must overcome our feelings . . . There is nothing to respect or admire in them. And their leaders are mean and without honor." Interview, PFLP camp, Jordan Valley, August 20, 1969. See Appendix III, (F).

III.

Why The Multiplicity of Guerrilla Organizations?

To answer this question we should first consider revolutionary experience elsewhere. All liberation movements in the Twentieth Century have experienced two fundamental transformations before emerging as united fronts.

The first stage of revolutionary activity always saw the almost simultaneous rise of several groups, which, though different from one another in organization and ideology, strove toward the same goals. This emergence occurred at certain definite junctures, in response to certain definite developments. In these groups one discerns a common denominator, a fundamental characteristic, the fact that they all articulate a common thrust.

The second stage saw the tension among the various groups resolving itself either by unification within a broad framework or by fragmentation and eventual collapse. Though the successful emergence of a national front was the product of different processes in different situations, the nature of each process depended above all on the development of resistance. As each group shaped itself *in practice*, it determined its relation to the other groups and shaped the attitude of the masses toward it.

In no case was formation of a *viable* front the result of artificial agreement or the product of the amalgamation of *equals*. Where groups joined on the grounds of expediency, their unity was invariably short-lived. Under conditions of armed struggle, there always emerged a *leadership* group whose performance and power conferred upon it a special status that made it the obvious center around which the front tended spontaneously to organize. The emergence of more than one status group did not disrupt the process of amalgamation, but required devising the workable means of accommodation and cooperation that could be achieved under the specific circumstances.

A further observation may be made. In the past, when the movement toward unification failed to materialize at this stage, alternative forms of cooperation presented themselves as resistance continued to escalate. At this point, with resistance no longer the monopoly of an active vanguard minority, but one to which the masses had become committed, a broad

national front became a vital necessity. With the whole weight of the people behind the resistance, the leadership could no longer afford division. One of the status groups had to dominate the framework fashioned by the prevailing relationships. The group (or groups) that persisted in opposition was reduced to an outside faction and, outside the revolutionary mainstream of the broad national front, it was regarded as counter-revolutionary, hence a legitimate target of suppression.

It is important to note that in all cases in which a front was successfully established, the ideological aspect was temporarily muted. The reluctance to uphold a clear-cut ideological position was necessitated both by the need to provide a broad doctrinal base acceptable to the full spectrum of national opinion and by the priority that pragmatic considerations had in the struggle for liberation.

The development of Palestinian resistance to date fits more or less into this model. The movement is probably on the threshold of total popular involvement. The war of 1967 was crucial in bringing about fundamental transformation of consciousness and in the corresponding pattern of behaviour. Of the resistance organizations that now came to the fore, only two had full-fledged and autonomous existence before the war: *Fateh* and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Doctrines

From a doctrinal point of view, the two movements differed widely. In practical terms, this was expressed in the strategy and political position of each. The Front upheld certain ideological principles that conditioned all its political and strategic thinking. It held that only total revolutionary transformation based on activating the masses, i.e., the peasants, the urban workers, and the refugees, could convert guerrilla war into a people's war; the middle class, the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals—elements strongly represented in *Fateh*—were declared incapable of carrying the revolutionary struggle to its logical end. It also declared that the revolution should engulf all of Arab society and bring the revolution to every corner of the Arab world. This meant that the struggle should not be confined to Palestine or its targets limited to Israel and the occupied territories, but should include the whole context of the Palestinian confrontation. It should be against "world Zionism," "imperialism," "Arab reaction," as well as against Israel. With the publication of its "Political Program" in February 1969,¹ the Popular Front emerged as a full-fledged Marxist-Leninist movement with strong Maoist tendencies.

¹*Al-barnamaj al-siyassiy* [The Political Program] (mimeographed, February 1969), pp. 11-17.

From the standpoint of *Fateh*, the Popular Front represented an ideological, doctrinally-committed party. *Fateh*'s policy was quite clear on this question. Insisting on the futility of ideological commitment at this stage of development ("when Palestinians are still fighting to liberate their homeland"), it stood for a broad national front. Its leaders did not wish to alienate important portions of the population whose backing and financial support were essential to the development of the movement, at least in its initial phases. Still, *Fateh*'s opposition to ideological or political commitment may be said to have been only tactical and temporary. Its leaders tended to agree with Debray's position, that to form a political party at the outset of struggle was merely premature—the guerrilla is the party nucleus in the making. They saw the party and the doctrine developing with the development of the struggle.² (In contrast, the Popular Front, taking Mao's position, maintained that only the revolutionary party "armed with correct thought" could provide the valid doctrine and strategy for liberation.³)

Despite its pragmatism, *Fateh* has tended, partly as a result of pressure from its own leftist elements and partly because of criticism by the Popular Front, to give increasing attention to political organization and to develop more focused political positions. The transformation of the guerrilla nucleus into a political organization was under way much earlier than anticipated.

The Popular Front

In organization and strategy, the Popular Front, limited in resources and size, pursued certain lines of action. In the towns and villages under occupation, it emphasized the cell type of organization; in the Jordan Valley and along the Lebanese frontiers, it reduced its camp bases to a minimum. From the beginning, the Popular Front upheld the principle of total war: if Israel used napalm to kill civilians, dynamited homes in retaliation for commando activity, and engaged in collective punishment, then the guerrillas were justified in refusing to distinguish between civilian and military targets or to limit themselves to a single kind or field of action. The Front, as a result, concentrated on urban sabotage and on "special" operations, such as plane hijackings and bombings in foreign countries. As its spectacular operations increased in number and variety and daring, it gained in prestige and influence, and the number of

²*Al-thawrah al-filastiniyyah* [The Palestinian Revolution] (July 15, 1968), pp. 7-8.

³*Op. cit.*, *Al-barnamaj al-siyassiyy*, p.3.

its followers and supporters rose rapidly. For the first time an avowedly Marxist-Leninist movement won a popular base in the Arab world. This is particularly significant in that hitherto all Arab communist parties had failed to make headway in the proletarian and peasant classes and had remained small factional groups dominated by ineffectual petit bourgeois intellectuals. In its weekly *al-Hadaf*, established in August 1969, which is perhaps the most sophisticated leftist publication in the Arab world, the Popular Front has striven to provide political education to the Arab public and to show by political exposure how "correct thought" may be used as an instrument of struggle. The impact of *al-Hadaf* has been extraordinarily great in influencing the political thinking and orientation of a significant portion of the rising younger Arab generation.

Fateh

Fateh's success, unlike that of the Popular Front, is to be attributed not to any particularly spectacular strategy or dazzling militant ideology, but rather to a supple, farsighted, and exceedingly competent leadership which was able in a short period of time to establish the political and military primacy of the movement within Palestinian resistance. Indeed, it was probably the capacity to move so surely after Karamah from the military (guerrilla) to the political (organizational) sphere that enabled the movement to establish itself firmly as the leading guerrilla organization and the rallying point of Palestinian resistance. *Fateh* quickly became a state within a state—it soon had its own well-trained, well-equipped army, its own hospitals, schools, social security, and tax collectors—not only by virtue of the Arab people's generous financial support, but also thanks to the careful planning and practical approach of its leadership. In February 1969, *Fateh* achieved a significant victory when it was able to win a sufficient majority in the Palestine National Council to gain control of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁴ Yasir Arafat, *Fateh's* official spokesman, was elected chairman of the executive committee of PLO and many of his colleagues took over other key positions. At one stroke *Fateh* came to control not only the administrative and financial network of the PLO but also the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA, with regular units numbering about 12,000 men) and the Popular Liberation Forces (guerrilla units drawn from the PLA), which formed part of the PLO. Simultaneously, *Fateh* gained the official recognition and representation that the PLO had enjoyed since its founding in 1964 as the official representative of the Palestinian people; it could now participate in all top-level Arab deliberations and maintain official representatives in all

⁴See Appendix I.

Arab countries. *Fateh's* first task was to clean up the top-heavy, bureaucratized PLO and to disentangle the problems of the PLA, which years of inaction had infested with a parasitic and self-seeking officer clique. With deliberation and patience, *Fateh* also proceeded to smooth out the divisive elements within the resistance created by the multiplication of guerrilla groups. The establishment of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command, and the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief of the PLA as its chairman, tended to control the proliferation of the "stencil organizations." It also provided a common base for coordinating action and formed the first concrete step toward organizing a broad front to bring together guerrilla and resistance groups under one roof.



A four-man commando unit in the Jordan Valley



Time-bomb blast in a Jewish quarter of Jerusalem

IV.

The Next Phase¹

Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon, each in its own way, attempted to crush the guerrilla movement and failed. In retrospect, the developments which took place between the battle of Karameh (March 1968), when Israel sought to put an end to the guerrillas once and for all by massive land assault, and the similar attempt of the Lebanese army to achieve the same goal in October 1969, manifest all the elements that characterize the formative stage. In March 1968, hardly anyone outside of Jordan had heard of *Fateh* or of Yassir Arafat (Abu Ammar); within less than a year and a half, by the time the Lebanese military had made their move against the guerrillas in Lebanon, *Fateh* had become a major political force in the Middle East and Arafat a leading political figure. The Palestine guerrillas had not only put the Palestinians on the map of the Middle East but now threatened the very structure of the prevailing *status quo* in the region.

The growth of the guerrilla movement into a popular revolutionary movement could still be thwarted by certain developments: agreement among the great powers on a political settlement, a sudden shift in Israeli policy toward peace, or conflict between *Fateh* and the Popular Front. Still by 1970 the initial and probably most decisive stage had been completed. Escalation of the resistance and the groundwork for protracted confrontation now appeared necessary.

Only at this point did the true nature and the real issue of the resistance begin to emerge. Transformations that the leaders of the vanguard had long foreseen now took form and meaning. For example, just before the 1967 war, when *Fateh* had no more than a handful of followers, a *Fateh* spokesman was asked by a correspondent of the French periodical, *Les Temps Modernes*, about the movement's final objective; his answer was, "to negotiate with Israel."² Negotiating with Israel presupposed two things: protracted armed struggle, the determination to wage indefinite war; and the rise in Israel of a Jewish leadership capable of negotiating with Palestinians on equal grounds.

¹This section and the following are based on official statements and declarations made by *Fateh* and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and on interviews in Jordan with spokesmen and members of the two organizations during August 18-23, 1969.

²*Les Temps Modernes* (June 1967), p. 216.

Protracted Struggle

As for protracted struggle, all resistance leaders are convinced that this stage is inevitable. In the new phase, no decisive military victory is expected. Instead, a long series of small battles would take place, resulting in the progressive wearing down of the enemy. This stage would see mounting death and destruction: Israeli planes would sooner or later broaden their target areas to include the entire economic infrastructure of the surrounding areas. But the expansion of destruction and the rise in casualties would only lead to widening the "grievance community" and thus to expanding the forces of resistance. Internal contradictions would become more sharply defined and the counterrevolutionary forces more clearly differentiated from the revolutionary elements, with the result that the masses would move closer to their vanguard. As sizeable portions of the population became drawn into both the resistance and the support of the Palestinians, the level of political consciousness would rise; sooner or later the realization would become universal that either the people will successfully resist Zionism or be crushed by it.

The Palestinian analysts maintain that negotiations with Israel are not likely to take place in the near future. They are agreed that Israel would not accept any settlement now that failed to fulfill its basic requirement to secure its military and political hegemony in the region.

In this view, a political settlement based on the prevailing state of affairs is not possible. Zionist leaders both in Israel and the United States appear convinced that so long as the United States and the world Jewish community continue to support Israel it can hold out indefinitely and inflict severe punishment on the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab countries that give them help.

The present leadership in Israel could not, the Palestinian analysts maintain, be persuaded to change its attitude or policy. For some time to come, it may be expected to put increasing stock in Arab disunity and underdevelopment, thereby assuring Israel's superiority on all levels. More important perhaps is its confidence that Israel has not yet used all the means of power at its disposal; it has strategic targets it has not yet hit and strategic weapons it has not yet used.

Thus, from this standpoint it is necessary to create the conditions under which the Arab social and political shortcomings can be transcended and the maximum mobilization of available resources achieved, if the full fury of Israel's potential destructiveness is to be withstood in a long people's war. Only by Vietnamizing the Arab situation, the Popular Front

spokesmen insist, can there be hope for successfully canceling out Israel's technological superiority and inexhaustable external resources.³

The *Fateh* analysts see the possibility of escaping a Vietnam-like tragedy. The alternative could come as a result of a change of heart within Israel, among the rank and file of the Israeli people, leading to a loss of support for the present Zionist leadership (in the United States) and the rise of a new leadership with a new policy based on peace and reconciliation. But *Fateh* is in agreement with the Popular Front on the essential precondition for such possibility: *the revolutionary transformation of the guerrilla movement into a movement of popular liberation.*

Palestinian Peace Plan

As the Palestinian leadership works for all-out war, it simultaneously strives to find a viable foundation for peace. Specifically, what kind of plan do Palestinian analysts consider viable, i.e., acceptable to Israeli and Jewish public opinion?

They admit that declarations made hitherto with regard to a *secular, democratic* Palestine in which Jew and Arab would live in equality and peace, do not suffice. Except for a few progressive intellectuals and leftist groups, no one in Israel is likely to consider this formula sufficient. The Zionist thesis is still dominant in Israel and among world Jewry: exclusive Jewish sovereignty in an exclusive Jewish state.

For the Palestinians this seemingly irreconcilable contradiction can only be overcome by commitment to a position which makes clear the distinction between the Jewish entity and the Zionist state: *it should be made clear that it is not Jewish survival that is at stake, but the survival of the Zionist state; that the guarantee of the former can only be achieved by the dissolution of the latter.* The dilemma of the Palestinians may be that, dedicated to the liberation of Palestine, they must at the same time prove that in abolishing the Zionist state they thereby establish the foundation on which Arab-Jewish co-existence in Palestine, and Jewish existence in the Arab world, can be achieved.

In the PLO's Planning Center, as well as among responsible analysts of *Fateh* and the Popular Front, serious and systematic effort is being made by specialists in various fields to spell out the kind of plan the resistance movement could adopt as a basis for future peace. The Palestinians are convinced that any effort in this direction should, if it is to have any chance at all, rise above the level of propaganda. It is not enough to convince Jewish public opinion of the Palestinians' determination and capacity to wage war indefinitely; it is essential simultaneously to put forth credible alternatives to war.

³See Appendix IV, (A).

Two schools of thought have emerged around this problem, neither of which, however, seems to have gained full acceptance by *Fateh* or the Popular Front—but elements of both seem destined to determine future thinking about the subject.

One school posits an “Algerian solution”: if the Jews in Palestine continue to insist on an exclusive Jewish state and to reject the idea of Arab-Jewish co-existence in a secular Palestinian state, the only position the resistance can adopt is to invite those among Israel’s Jews who accept the idea of the secular state to remain in liberated Palestine as equal citizens with guaranteed religious and cultural rights. It would also facilitate the departure of those who wish to leave, with compensation for abandoned property as in the case of the French colons in Algeria after independence. This view emphasizes the fact that Zionist opposition to Arab integration is due not to religious or cultural factors, but to economic and political ones. As in the case of French colons in Algeria, the aim of Zionist settlers in Palestine is to strengthen and consolidate their economic, social, political, and military interests, not to share them with the native population. The only relationship Zionism can have toward the indigenous population is precisely the colonial relationship of domination, exploitation, and oppression. If this is the case, then there is no point in spending time and effort on elaborating abstract peace proposals. All effort should be channeled toward winning the war.

The other school of thought opposes the “Algerian solution” and proposes the “One-man, One-Vote solution.” This view argues that to present the problem in terms of the “Algerian solution” would alienate elements in Israel that could eventually be pried away from Zionism. It maintains that certain groups, which may now oppose an Arab-Israeli reconciliation based on equality and co-existence, may change their minds as the war of liberation progresses and as the prospects for Zionist hegemony based on a Zionist imposed peace dim. This position stresses the distinction between oriental (Arab) and European (central and east European) Jews, not only in cultural but also in social class terms. As the Palestine revolution unfolds and its true progressive and socialist content becomes evident a significant transformation is bound to take place in the thinking and attitude of broad strata of Israeli and world Jewry. It is not enough, therefore, to address oneself to the small minority that might “stay on,” or to attempt lowering the level of threat perception of certain target groups by convincing them of the genuineness of Palestinian peace proposals. It is rather only by transcending chauvinistic *racial* and *national* prejudices and by establishing a firm socialist base for the new state that there can be sincere and effective response on the part of sizeable portions of Israel’s disaffected classes. The advocates of this standpoint also argue

that it may even be possible before too long to establish contact with Jewish groups in Israel and win them over to the liberation movement, thus establishing the cornerstone of Arab-Jewish alliance. They see as inevitable the moral isolation and psychological disintegration of Zionism, which, in turn, will bring about the conditions for settlement and peace.

These ideas have driven both *Fateh* and the Popular Front to abandon the concepts of the "bi-national state" and the multi-confessional society (after the Lebanese model), and to seek consensus on basic principles to guide the search for an over-all, generally acceptable *Palestinian* solution.]

But all solutions are inextricably bound up with expanding the armed struggle in the next phase.



Graduation ceremony of members of Fateh's women auxiliary corps

V.

Problems and Prospects of The Next Phase

The strategic thinking of the guerrilla leaders is based on a number of fundamental assumptions:

1. That the Egyptian front will hold out, which is central;
2. That the Egyptian (as well as the Jordanian, Syrian, and Iraqi) forces will continue to improve in equipment and military effectiveness;
3. That Israel's over-all military superiority, even if maintained, will be checked and qualified by increasing Arab strength and coordination;
4. That a defensive war of attrition will be maintained within an escalating framework resulting in increasing severe losses for Israel.

Guerrilla strategy would in the short term concentrate on harassing and bedeviling the enemy, aiming at his nerve and morale as main targets, and on evading frontal military confrontation.

Escalating guerrilla warfare is likely to take a quantitative rather than a qualitative direction—intensification of guerrilla activity, consolidation of bases and lines of communication, strengthening and broadening of political positions in surrounding areas (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon). From the operational standpoint, qualitative change is likely to appear in the selection of targets; the new range of targets would, in addition to military and economic targets, probably include an increasing variety of civilian targets. Furthermore, it will probably increase in proportion to the number of civilian targets hit in Israeli reprisals in the occupied territories and surrounding areas.

As the guerrilla forces establish themselves firmly along the Lebanese-Israeli armistice lines, operations from Lebanon may be expected to increase. The occupation of strategic points in the southern and eastern hills of Lebanon would now ensure direct supply routes to Syria, and at the same time make possible the opening up of the most important front for the guerrillas. *Fateh* (with its allied organizations) is likely to continue to enjoy virtual monopoly over border operations, while the Popular Front is likely to concentrate on operations inside occupied territories. But both *Fateh* and the Popular Front will probably continue to infiltrate the rural areas under Israeli control with "sleepers," to strengthen and increase mobile bands in Gaza, Hebron, and Galilee, and to expand the underground resistance networks. In addition, *Fateh* may decide to launch the kind of large scale attacks it initiated in the late spring of 1969, of hitting

over a wide front utilizing several units operating simultaneously. The Popular Front may be expected to carry out more attacks by small bands or cell units against urban, industrial, and military targets.

Israeli reaction to escalation in this new phase is likely, according to *Fateh* and Popular Front analysts, to take the course described below.

Occupied Territories

In occupied territories (including Arab areas under Israeli rule) the policy of pacification would gradually be transformed into a policy of repression. Israel would move toward ruthless repression and eventually establish control by terror. It is to be expected that villages and whole neighborhoods¹ would be subjected to systematic demolition and collective arrests would become common practice, with entire communities being uprooted, resettled or detained, as happened to over two million Arabs during the Algerian revolution. At the same time, sentences would become more severe, deportations more frequent, and economic pressure more oppressive.

According to this view, a reign of terror in occupied territory is inevitable. It is expected that, while increasing terror may not succeed in eliminating internal resistance, it is likely to make certain kinds of operations difficult. It is believed that terror (breeding counter-terror) will end in alienating all strata of the population and in driving ever increasing numbers into active resistance. In the dialectic of terror and counter-terror, resistance is likely to undergo qualitative change—it may become insurrectional. It is when this point is reached, i.e., *general insurrection*, that Israel may be driven to bring its full force to bear upon the Palestinian population, paralysing it altogether. This may be possible, the Palestinian analysts think, only if Israel succeeds in sealing off the Palestinians under Israeli rule from those constituting the resistance forces in surrounding areas.

There is general agreement that in the next phase the brunt of Israel's fury will probably be felt not so much by the guerrillas as by the Palestinians under Israel's sway.

Surrounding Areas

In surrounding areas, Israel is expected to continue the same threat-reprisal policy, aiming at deterring the enemy and keeping him off balance. But in the next phase, other considerations may also arise.

¹This in fact has already taken place, much as the analysts had forecast. Halhul, a small village near Hebron, was practically leveled to the ground following a grenade attack against an Israeli patrol on October 29, 1969.

On land, apart from border shellings, ground-to-ground missiles, aerial strikes, Israel would at some point have to decide on the mode in which it may best utilize its two basic options: territorial expansion (occupation of strategic areas) and massive land thrusts (e.g., against Damascus).

For a time (until the end of 1968), there was some fear among the guerrilla organizations that Israel might occupy the East Bank, or at least the hills on the eastern side of the Jordan River. This could probably have sealed off the West Bank altogether. Such fear has since almost disappeared. The guerrilla leadership is now convinced that although Israel may still strike across the Jordan River, it will not risk occupying the East Bank (it would be too costly in lives). Instead, they see three alternative possibilities.

The first is in Jordan, where the most likely thrust would be toward the strategic area of Mafrak, the hub connecting the main highway system between Jordan and Syria, and Jordan and Iraq. Its occupation would result in Jordan (and the guerrilla forces) losing its main sources of supply from Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The occupation of Aqaba in the south—a relatively easy matter—would seal off the country (except for unreliable desert routes to the east) from the outside world and probably put Jordan under Israel's mercy.

The second possibility would be in the direction of Mount Hermon, toward an area of nearly 20 square miles lying at the foot of the lower slopes of the mountain where the demarcation lines of Syria, Lebanon, and Israel meet. Controlling this area would enable Israel to destroy the guerrilla bases concentrated here, cut off southern Lebanon from Syria, and gain a commanding position in the region.

Israel's third potential target would be the entire area of southern Lebanon up to the Litani River. The occupation of this wide area would bring other gains besides the strategic one. But unlike moves in northern Jordan or Mount Hermon, the occupation of southern Lebanon is likely to create serious political complications having adverse international consequences for Israel. For this reason advance in this region, if it does take place, would probably be piecemeal, coinciding with internationally favorable circumstances.

As for massive land thrusts for punitive or deterrent purposes, the guerrilla analysts believe that Israel would not be likely to take too many risks even within delimited areas. In Jordan, where both the regular Syrian, Iraqi, and Jordanian and the guerrilla lines of resistance have become more or less stable, it would be crushingly costly for Israel to undertake Karamah-size raids. Also, the outcome would at best be uncertain. It would take extraordinary circumstances for the Israeli leaders to decide on massive land action in Jordan. In the Hermon region the situation may not

be as costly, at least for a time; but the outcome seems equally uncertain.

What would most inhibit Israel from occupying additional strategic territory? Mainly, the Palestinian analysts argue, the fact that the acquisition of new territory in Jordan, Syria, or Lebanon would necessarily embroil Israel with the problem of additional hostile populations. Israel lacks the necessary manpower to hold down new, populated occupied territories. The resistance leaders seem almost eager to see Israel expand for the more Israel holds the more it has to defend, and the broader the target areas for the guerrillas. Moreover, people, when they begin to feel the harsh yoke of occupation, inescapably turn from observers into participants. This is why, from the standpoint of the Palestinians, the loss of additional territory to Israel is regarded as nothing but a gain in additional mass support.

Massive attacks (without avowed territorial or strategic conquests) are bound to occur in the next phase. For Israel this type of attack would be motivated not only by military requirements, but also by internal political and psychological requirements. Guerrilla analysts argue that so long as Syria maintains its position as supplier, base, and springboard for the guerrilla movement, it is bound to remain, next to Egypt, Israel's prime target in the next phase.

Paradoxically, Israel's air superiority is viewed by the guerrilla analysts as possessing an element advantageous for the guerrillas. It represents a sort of dependence that Israel will be unable to overcome. It imposes on Israeli strategy limitations from which it will not be able to rid itself without breaking this dependence. Ultimately, Israel will be forced to rely on nuclear weapons.² In any event, air superiority will remain inherently ineffective in guerrilla warfare, and become progressively less effective as the surrounding countries become increasingly capable of defending themselves.

In the next phase, the resistance leaders expect not merely intensification of Israeli aerial strikes but the transformation of the range and nature of the strike targets. While raids against guerrilla bases and supply lines would continue to mount, attacks against communication centers, power plants, and industrial and military installations (in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan) would become inevitable on larger and larger scales. Before too long, Israel, like the United States in North Vietnam, would take as its target the destruction of the economic infrastructure of the neighboring countries.

²Israel's decision to declare nuclear capability would probably come about as a result of definite challenge to its clear-cut superiority in the air, or as a result of mounting rate of casualties with no prospect of their being checked, or both.

Dangers to the Movement.

In the next phase, the guerrilla movement would still have to face dangers threatening its existence. Four such dangers stand out:

— 1. *Internal conflict*, which would occur particularly between *Fateh* and the Popular Front. This threat has greatly decreased with escalation of resistance and with renewed moves toward forming a broad resistance front. In the earlier stages, the dispersal of the guerrilla movement among a variety of organizations could have possibly led to the dissolution of the movement or its suppression by Arab governments. But the take-over of the PLO by *Fateh* and the establishment of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC) brought most of the guerrilla organizations into one framework and put an end to the proliferation process. Still, the conflict may theoretically reach the point of armed collision. Inasmuch as agreement on doctrine and ideology seems impossible, any form of concrete unity between the two movements may be ruled out. It may be assumed, however, that so long as guerrilla activity continues to rise, differences between the two organizations can be contained and modes of cooperation can be devised within the framework of a broad national front.

— 2. *Repression by Arab governments*. Potentially, contradiction (in varying intensities) exists between the guerrilla movement and all the Arab regimes; in the final analysis, the "Palestinian revolution" represents not merely a movement for the liberation of Palestine, but a total *social* revolution involving the entire Arab world. The threat of an armed Palestinian people has been most immediately felt by Jordan and Lebanon. These two countries are most directly involved, not by choice, but by geographic accident. The attempts by the Jordanian monarchy and the Lebanese oligarchy to crush the guerrillas (November 1968 and October 1969, respectively) points up the inevitable contradiction. In both cases, however, the attempts came too late—the guerrillas had already gained a popular base. The threat of other Arab governments turning against the guerrillas is likely to remain so long as the contradiction exists. With time, however, significant elements in the Arab armies and security forces are likely to be won over by the guerrillas and thus may be unwilling to fight against them, as has happened in Jordan. It would seem that especially in the case of Jordan and Lebanon, where the threat posed by the guerrillas appears most serious, counter-guerrilla action is possible only if outside forces intervene in some form or another.

— 3. *Israeli action*. Possibly there was a time when Israel could have carried out a successful "surgical" operation against the nascent guerrilla movement in Jordan. Karamah put an end to that possibility. That battle caused a shift in Israeli policy toward exerting pressure on the Arab

regimes, especially Jordan and Lebanon, to put down the guerrillas themselves. This policy has to some extent been successful. In the next phase, if an Israeli attack against the East Bank were to take place, it would certainly have as its main objective crushing the guerrilla leadership, to accomplish what was not accomplished at Karameh and to do what the governments of Jordan and Lebanon could not do. But, as already pointed out, such a possibility seems rather remote unless radically new elements arise to transform the prevailing relations of forces, such as a Palestinian takeover in Jordan. (It should be mentioned that in its present strategy, Israel would continue to assume that so long as Nasser remains in power, the guerrilla movement will continue to have strong support and that consequently, if Nasserism were overthrown and replaced by an inner-oriented Egyptian regime, the Palestinian guerrillas would be seriously weakened and could possibly be crushed by a large scale combing operation. While the assumption may tend to oversimplify the relationship, the link between a militant (Nasserite) Egypt and the continued growth of Palestinian power cannot be.)

4. *Big-power political settlement.* In the short run, agreement by the great powers on a political settlement probably constitutes the greatest threat to the Palestine guerrilla movement. It would bring about the immediate tranquilization of the situation and simultaneously the creation of an environment fundamentally inimical to the growth of guerrilla power. Certain elements that had fervently supported Palestinian resistance would now be inclined to relinquish their support; others might even become actively hostile; and governments, committed as most of them already are to political settlement based on the November 22, 1967, Security Council resolution, would want to see an end of the Palestine guerrillas. Of course, the possibility of a political settlement presupposes Israel's acceptance of it, which would constitute a drastic shift in Israeli policy. In this respect, one can say that in 1970-71 perhaps the greatest threat to the Palestine guerrilla movement is likely to come not from conflict between *Fateh* and the PFLP, nor from the Arab governments, nor from Israeli military action, *but from an Israeli shift in policy or a great powers' agreement on a political solution to the Middle East crisis.*

Short of that, the Palestine guerillas may yet succeed in changing the face of the Middle East.³

³See Appendix V.

Appendices

*In the following, all translations from the Arabic are by the author.
The headings in quotation marks are taken from the documents cited.*

Appendix I.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

Palestine National Congress

Guerrilla Organizations

Workers' Unions

Student Organizations

Women's Organizations

Independent Representatives

PLO Executive Committee

Palestine Liberation Army

Popular Liberation Forces

PLO Information Center

PLO Research Center

PLO Planning Center

Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC)

Fateh (al-Assifah)

PLA

PLF

Vanguard Liberation

Battalions (*al-Sa'iqah*)

Front of Arab Liberation

**Popular Democratic Front
for the Liberation of
Palestine**

The Za'rour Group

The Jibril Group¹

¹The last three groups are splinters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Dr. George Habash, the only major guerrilla organization outside PASC.

Appendix II.

Israel Casualties

(A) Military Fatalities Reported by Tsahal Spokesman, June 1-29, 1969¹

	Date Reported	Name	Age	Military rank ²
(1)	6/1/1969	Dagan, Itzhak	28	<i>Rav Seren</i>
(2)	6/1	Jarhi, Mordehai	19	<i>Rav Torai</i>
(3)	6/4	Weizgal, Ya'acov	26	<i>Rav Torai</i>
(4)	6/4	Sinai, David	28	<i>Samal</i>
(5)	6/4	Shemesh, Aharon	24	<i>Torai</i>
(6)	6/7	Sambour, Zalman	19	<i>Torai</i>
(7)	6/7	Gal, Iliyahu	30	<i>Torai</i>
(8)	6/12	Eini, Avraham	18	<i>Torai</i>
(9)	6/12	Sidakai, Avraham	18	<i>Torai</i>
(10)	6/13	Levin, Dr. Oded	31	<i>Samal</i>
(11)	6/13	Klein, Nadav	25	<i>Segan</i>
(12)	6/15	Azzam, Ramzi	25	<i>Samal</i>
(13)	6/15	Shahrabani, Moshe	22	<i>Torai</i>
(14)	6/15	Agase, Arie	22	<i>Segan</i>
(15)	6/15	Lendsman, Yaron	19	<i>Torai</i>
(16)	6/16	Gilai, Yosef	26	<i>Segan</i>
(17)	6/16	Cohen, Shalom	20	<i>Torai</i>
(18)	6/18	Reubeni, Ezra	22	<i>Torai</i>
(19)	6/18	Mizrahi, Haim	60	(civilian employee of <i>Tsahal</i>)
(20)	6/19	Malcha, Yom Tov	20	<i>Torai</i>
(21)	6/24	Kornblau, Yosef	20	<i>Torai</i>
(22)	6/22	(Name and rank withheld)		

¹*Tsahal—Tsava Hagana et-Yisrael*: The Army for the Defense of Israel.

²*Torai*, Private; *Rav Torai*, Corporal; *Samal*, Sergeant; *Segan*, Lieutenant; *Rav Seren*, Major.

**(B) Military Fatalities not Reported by Tsahal Spokesman, June 1-29, 1969
(Obituaries and News Items)**

	Date of obituary notice	Name
(1)	6/2/1969	Kizminiski, Haim
(2)	6/8	Itzkovitch, Meir
(3)	6/8	Cohen, Shraga
(4)	6/8	Shlomo, Tsook
(5)	6/8	Sebariege, Daniel
(6)	6/9	Rostoker, Benjamin (news item)
(7)	6/11	Goli, Amnon ben Shalom (news item)
(8)	6/17	Zend, Israel
(9)	6/19	Reubeni, Ezra
(10)	6/19	Kotner, Israel
(11)	6/20	Geiger, Mordechai
(12)	6/25	Heimelfarb, Yoram
(13)	6/25	Ahiassaf, Shmuel
(14)	6/29	Deutsch, Eitan
(15)	6/29	Marce, Harry

	Date of Announcement	Name
(1)	7/11/1969	Itzhak, Sheshani
(2)	7/11	Wizeback, Johny
(3)	7/13	Itsheak, Hava
(4)	7/13	Yigal, Hava
(5)	7/31	Zahavi, Yeheshua

Appendix III.

Fateh Doctrine

(A) "Let the Revolution Break Out"

"The Palestinian revolutionary movement alone has the final responsibility for upholding Arab right [in Palestine].

"Creating 'revolutionary institutions' without first achieving revolutionary accomplishments inevitably leads to aborting the revolution and emptying it of its content.

"Launching the revolution is achieved by establishing training camps, organizing popular militia and armed youths, and building a Palestinian civil defense.

"The basis and propellant of the Palestinian movement is armed struggle.

"Let our slogan for this phase be: Let the Palestinian revolution begin. . . ."¹

(B) "When Should Armed Struggle Begin?"

"To say that to begin action against the enemy will only provoke him is a false claim. Israel is under constant alert and needs no provocation [to fight]. The thesis that a change of the political structure of the surrounding Arab countries is the precondition for launching the Palestinian revolution is a wrong thesis. The contrary is true: it is the Palestinian revolution that will transform the Arab world and raise it – by peaceful means or violently – to the level required by the great Arab revolution. The Palestinian revolution, when it breaks out, will expose the Arab regimes before the Arab masses. The soundness or rottenness of a regime will be determined by the attitude it takes toward the Palestinian revolution, which will in turn determine its fate. . . ."²

¹*Fateh, Kayf tanfajir al-thawrah al-sha'biyyah al-musallahah* [How Popular Revolutions Break Out] (Amman, 2nd. ed., 1967), p. 29.

²*Ibid.*, p. 32

(C) Social Ideology

"Some people criticize us for not having formulated a social ideology for the revolution. The fact is that as a revolutionary movement responding to the needs of our struggling people, who seek to return [to their homeland] in dignity and freedom, we can adhere neither to classical theories nor to rigid idealistic concepts; they have no relevance to our situation. The struggle that will determine our destiny demands bringing together all the revolutionary forces which honestly struggle for liberation, and this requires evading Byzantine discussions concerning the social forms and structures following liberation. Such debates will only fragment the revolutionary forces by leading them to put forth slogans that can have no meaning for us on this level of struggle. On the general Arab level, the struggle demands that we attract the Arab masses to our side. The same [ideological neutrality] is needed to guarantee for our movement the support of all sincere and devoted elements, regardless of their social or ideological orientations. In short, during this phase we cannot afford to engage in side battles which will only dissipate our energies and weaken our revolutionary front and its popular support. . . .

"The bloody battle with Zionist occupation is one of survival and not over a social ideology, it is a struggle of life and death, of being or not being. In such a struggle ideological differences ought to disappear and the people ought to join together in a broad revolutionary front to dismantle the political, social and economic structure of the oppressor state, and uproot Zionism from our noble soil.

"Thus at the beginning of armed struggle we have to build first of all the revolutionary nucleus whereby we can defend our just cause. This can be achieved only by arming the Palestinian people, for it is only as an armed revolutionary structure that we can achieve unity on the levels of planning, action, and leadership. By forging the unity of the revolution we will assure the support of the masses to the revolution. . . .

"Our duty in the present phase is to create the revolutionary mainstream and its organized and highly conscious cadres, to broaden it until it becomes capable of carrying out the task of liberation. This requires building popular support that will bolster the revolution and protect its rear against the pro-imperialist and counter-revolutionary forces in the Arab world, and back it morally and financially. Every Arab country has its own problems, which necessarily limit official Arab support to our revolution; we must in this phase welcome any amount of support or aid we can get. We must build a strong

revolutionary base — a spring-board and a protective shield. We must mobilize the masses of the Arab world so that the effectiveness of their support would increase day by day as our armed struggle daily spreads and grows.

“Cooperation and unity within the revolution is the concrete and living expression of our ideology. The spread of revolutionary resistance in our occupied lands is the cure of all the [social] ills of our people and the solution of all its [political] problems. Let our slogan be: ‘The land belongs to the revolutionary arms that liberate it.’”³

(D) Fateh Membership

“Membership requires commitment to the following:

“1. To the political and military program of the Palestinian revolution, and to the [rules of] organization of the Palestine Movement of National Liberation (*Fateh*)

“2. To the principle of armed struggle. . . the principle that people’s revolutionary war is the only way to liberation.

“3. To the principle that *Fateh* and *Assifah* [the military wing of *Fateh*] constitute one indivisible unity: every member of *Fateh* is a combatant. . . .

“4. To revolutionary morality and revolutionary values.

“5. To the principle of democracy in regard to the movement and in relation to the masses.”⁴

(E) The Human Factor in People’s War of Liberation

“I can summarize the difference between the two methods of warfare by saying that in a classic war arms and not the human element (though important) are the determining factor; whereas in a popular war the human element is more important than arms. [In the latter] the army grows gradually through fighting; to start with, it is composed of small groups, increasing in number, until total mobilization is achieved, whereby it will be possible to enter into decisive battles with the enemy. . . .”⁵

³*Fateh, Min muntalaqat al-'amal al-fida'i* [Starting Points of Guerrilla Action] (Amman, 2nd. ed., 1967), pp. 64-65, 67.

⁴*Al-thawrah al-filistiniyyah* [The Palestinian Revolution], (July 15, 1969), p. 11.

⁵Yassir Arafat, *Free Palestine* (London, June 1969), p.3.

(F) The Enemy As Viewed by a 24-year old Guerrilla

“Whether we like it or not we will be dealing with these people for a long time to come. We have to be patient and we must overcome our feelings. They think that just because they have the planes and the machines and scientific knowledge they can subjugate us. Go see how they treat our people in Nablus and Gaza and Khalil [Hebron] and in the old occupied territory [1948], as if they were not human beings.

“These people are full of hate and madness. There is nothing to respect or admire in them. Their leaders are mean and without honor.”⁶

⁶Interview with a *Fateh* Commando, Jordan Valley, August 20, 1969.

Appendix IV.

Doctrine of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

(A) "People's War"

"To prepare the entire people for war means to create the people in arms. This requires popular unity and mobilization of all the people's capacities within a national front, including within it all forces actively fighting the enemy (except the vacillatory ones, which can be neutralized). The Vietnamese have given us the concrete example of national unity within a front joining together national groups which differ from one another in social orientation, religious background, and class interest. This front fights the enemy under the slogan, 'Unity: A Great Unity for a Great Victory,' which was coined by Ho Chi Minh and realized by the Vietnamese people in their long and difficult struggle — a slogan that has become the cry of all struggling people everywhere.

"From national unity emerges the people's army, composed of all citizens, of men and women devoted to the revolutionary cause. The people's army is dedicated to serve the working people, and it is this quality that gives it its popular character; this holds true whether it is a regular army or whether it consists of militia or guerrilla forces, or of all these combined. This kind of people's army transforms the confrontation with the enemy from one between two [conventional] armies into a confrontation between a people in arms and an [invading] army. Arming all the people thus transforms the situation and converts it, as Mao Tse-Tung put it, into 'an armed environment capable of swallowing up any invader...'

"We Arabs are great in numbers but victims of underdevelopment and fragmentation. Our imperialist enemy is vicious and determined to bend us to his will to safeguard his vital interests. It is our duty to attack him 'at every point of confrontation' (Mao) and to hit his interests everywhere. 'Where the enemy is there is the front' (Mao). But imperialism does not give up just because the banner of rebellion has been raised against it. It can strike at us directly or through its agent, Israel; it can deter us or 'teach us a lesson;' it can apply pressure on us and use conspiracy and espionage in fighting us. But it cannot defeat us, except through total lightning war. For our part,

we can defeat imperialism through protracted war on a broad Arab front encompassing all of the Arab world — by creating another Vietnam.

“We decided to follow a strategy of protracted warfare not arbitrarily, but out of awareness of the [nature] of the contradiction between us and our enemy, of the conviction that this strategy alone can resolve this contradiction [in our favor]. Because our struggle is a just struggle we are confident that we can mobilize all of our human resources and all of our natural resources, and win the support of all the progressive and peace-loving peoples of the world. The war that our enemy is waging against us is an unjust war, and he can sustain it only by possession of a technologically superior war machine. He is incapable of protracted struggle, and after every new aggression he loses another portion of world opinion. Our decision [to follow the strategy of protracted war] is based on the realization that there exists a correspondence between the points of strength and weakness on our side and those on the side of the enemy. We see the necessity of increasing the enemy’s weaknesses and of preventing him from utilizing his strong points, of using our strong points and minimizing our weak ones, so that a balance may be reached that would allow us to move to a position of superior strength. At that point it would finally become possible to defeat the enemy and to achieve victory and liberation. . . .

“A quantitative balance now exists [between the Arab states and Israel] resulting from the Soviet Union rearming the Arabs and the West supplying Israel with arms. Neither East nor West will allow this balance to be broken. Thus, as far as the Arab states are concerned, they will never be able to possess sufficient power to win a decisive victory [over Israel] in a conventional war. To try to catch up with [Israel’s] technological superiority and thereby to effect a qualitative change in the balance of power that would change the existing quantitative balance in our favor would constitute a long-term undertaking requiring many years to accomplish. So there is no alternative to the long road of protracted struggle and great sacrifice. It will be a struggle for survival in which the enemy would be prevented from dealing us a lightning blow (that could jeopardize the very fate of the Arab people) and forced to enter into many protracted battles in which ‘strategic attraction’ would alternate with ‘crushing confrontations’ with guerrilla and popular militia forces supported by [conventional] revolutionary armies equipped with modern weapons. [Every effort should be made] to raise the level of technological efficiency of the Arab armies, for the machine and modern technology are not

incongruent with revolutionary war, on the contrary they bolster it and make possible the attainment of victory at a lesser cost in sacrifice, suffering and bloodshed.

"Technology is a strategic potential that the enemy has managed to employ to his best advantage, achieving thereby several undeniable victories. But the human potential also constitutes a strategic source of power that the Arabs could use to great advantage if they knew how to mobilize and organize it. . . . The assertion that the victory of Israeli technology is inevitable is as unscientific and untenable as the assertion that the victory of the human element of the Arab side is inevitable. What is scientifically valid is that inevitable victory belongs to the technologically superior side when engaged in a lightning war, and that inevitable victory belongs to the side with the greater human potential when engaged in a protracted war.

"These are evident truths, but there are those who are not quite convinced by them. These people still put their hopes in conventional armies and would risk a fourth confrontation. They forget that it is a basic error to follow strategy just because it was proved successful under certain conditions at a certain place and time. It is as though they have not heard of the movement of world liberation or learned the lesson of the three Arab-Israeli wars."¹

(B) The Three Aspects of People's War

"The basic lines of the wars of national-democratic liberation having socialism as a goal are now clear and well-known throughout the world: the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party, a broad national front, and the principle of armed struggle. This three-dimensional framework is the most effective and proven in practice. The Party mobilizes the workers and the peasants and bases the movement on scientific socialism; the Front mobilizes the various national classes and groups willing to join the battle of liberation; and the Principle of Armed Struggle transforms guerrilla warfare into a people's war of liberation."²

¹*Al-muqatil al-thawri* [The Revolutionary Fighter] (June 15, 1969), pp. 4, 6-8.

²George Habash, *al-Hadaf* [The Target] (December 20, 1969), p. 8.

Appendix V.

Political Settlement

(My last interview before leaving Jordan in the summer of 1969 was with the leader of a PFLP guerrilla unit. The meeting took place in a deserted village not far from the Jordan River north of Karameh. The leader was a young man of about 23 years of age, a college graduate with a highly developed political consciousness. A few hours after the interview he was killed on a routine reconnaissance patrol in occupied territory.)

Question: "Can the Palestinian revolution succeed by resorting only to armed struggle, don't you believe a political solution possible?"

Answer: "Our position on this is clear — our position [in the Popular Front] as well as that of *Fateh*. A political solution, as the one the big four are now talking about, would mean legitimizing Zionist presence in Palestine — something we have refused to do for 50 years. For me there can be no bargaining about fundamentals. Palestinians either have an inalienable right to their homeland or they don't. The UN Charter upholds the right of self-determination as foremost among all human rights. The UN General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland and to exercise their right of self-determination.

"Of course, political settlement would mean crushing the Palestinian revolution. For there can be no settlement unless the Palestinians are disarmed, disbanded, and brought back to the status of refugees. The Palestinians have to be defeated in order to have their problem settled. In whose interest is such a settlement?

"You ask me about armed struggle and whether the revolution can succeed. Well, we have picked up the gun, and we are not really ready to put it down. No one will make us do this — not the Americans, not the Russians, not Hussein, not Nasser, not the Jews.

"You see, only by fighting for our rights can we win them. We have learned this at considerable cost. We have also learned that our liberation — and that of the entire Arab people — can be achieved only by fighting and dying. Talk and compromise only further degrade us. And freedom is not bestowed from above. We are often misunderstood when we say that what we are engaged in is a *revolution*. Those who favor settlement are people who have social position, money, power, and want to maintain things as they are with only minor adjustment. These people do not want to fight. They include many individuals who are verbally for the revolution, but who will be

among the first to abandon it. They include army officers who wear impressive uniforms and command well-equipped troops, who prefer to safeguard their position and privileges to risking fighting a war of uncertain outcome. These people do not understand the meaning of revolution because in their hearts they are not quite convinced of the threat of colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. Only the masses, the poor and the dispossessed and the revolutionary elements of the young generation are capable of rejecting compromise in favor of protracted armed struggle. Yes, in the end we shall have political settlement, but not before we have liberated ourselves — from reaction as well as from Zionism and imperialism. When that happens not only would Palestine be liberated, but all of Arab society. I can assure you that before we put down the gun, we will have assisted at the birth of the new man in the Arab world.

“One thing outsiders always fail to understand. Talking in terms of costs and benefits, they think rash many of our attitudes and ideas. In the revolutionary perspective the calculus of costs and benefits does not apply, because it refers to a frame of evaluation that no longer obtains. There is nothing commensurate with a human death. When your comrades fall in battle, death becomes bearable. One’s entire outlook changes. Terrible sacrifices lie ahead. But I have no choice. When you become a revolutionary you tend to see everyday reality in absolute terms. Compromise, bargaining, profit, lose their meaning. With this gun in my hand and the knowledge that these comrades will fight and die on my side, I lose the habit of thinking as I once did, defensively, calculatingly, egocentrically. When we say, with the Cubans, Victory or Death, we literally mean it. This has already given us a taste of liberation.

“Accepting settlement, stopping armed struggle, will bring civil war.”