



*MILITARY  
STRATEGY  
OF THE P.F.L.P.*

**THE MILITARY STRATEGY  
OF THE  
P. F. L. P.**

INFORMATION DEPARTMENT  
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### Preface

With this book, the P.F.L.P. Information Department begins publication of a series dealing with significant topics related to Palestinian resistance thought and to the problems of the resistance.

It is of concern to us to put it on record that this booklet on the **Military Thought of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** ought to be considered as a continuation of the report issued in 1969 by the Popular Front regarding its political and organizational strategy, which has been published in book form under the title «A Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine.» This is due to the fact that the military thought of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine proceeds directly from the ideological, class and organizational undertaking which forms the foundation of the

commitment of the Popular Front as expressed in its above-mentioned political and organizational report.

Of course, this contribution which has been made possible by the initiative of **Al-Hadaf**\* is aimed primarily at deepening, and enlarging upon, progressive resistance thought and strategy. It is intended to be submitted to the masses and the fighters as part of the intense revolutionary discussion which is taking place in many circles. This discussion aims at enriching revolutionary thinking, establishing it firmly, and ensuring the continuation of the struggle until victory is achieved over the oppressors of the people.

**P.F.L.P.**  
**Information Department**

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\* **Al-Hadaf**: official organ of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, published in Beirut since July, 1969.

## **Effectiveness of the Resistance Movement.**

**Al-Hadaf**: «How do you rate the effectiveness of present commando action from the military point of view, with reference to its tasks at this stage and to its future possibilities?»

**Answer**: «Commando action began in its present form and dimensions after June, 1967 as a direct response to the aggression; as a popular expression — both Palestinian and Arab — of the rejection of that defeat. Nevertheless, we cannot but mention with esteem the fact that al-Fath, Abtal al-'Awda, Shabab al-Tha'r and the Palestine Liberation Front had already

established themselves on the Arab-Israeli front before the defeat. However, the basic beginnings and organizational structures developed after the defeat. Even those which had arisen before June 5th had not taken on their broad form or dimensions until after June 5th.

This means that the resistance movement began as a reaction. But were conditions ready for the start of this movement or not? The answer to this question delineates the development of the movement or, rather, the road on which it presently proceeds.

Conditions were not completely ripe for the start of an organized, deep-rooted, far-reaching resistance movement. Only one of those conditions was present, i.e., the existence of aggression. However, at the time, it wasn't possible to speak of postponing the resistance until the objective conditions had ripened in the traditional sense, and only then begin to resist. Not at all. That was impossible, and indeed would have been a crime. For the principle of legitimate defense prescribes reacting to aggression promptly and with all possible means, whatever the circumstances.

But this also means that the resistance movement itself, since its beginnings and until now, has molded the evolution of those pre-conditions and has even created conditions favorable to the development of action, transforming the struggle from a nationalist reaction into a comprehensive war of liberation.

We mean, when we speak of pre-conditions, the standard of political maturity of the Palestinian and Arab masses, the level of the formation of cadres within the resistance movement, the level of the formation of fighters, the situation of the party, and of the political and the mass organizational formations which underlie this form of resistance and which are its supporters and the soil from which its material and spiritual vigor is drawn. The preparation of these organizational formations is one type of development in this sort of resistance.

If we consider the Palestinian resistance movement on the basis of the assumption that its existence and continuation is a form of victory in this sort of war, when we look upon the deepening of the roots of the resistance within

the ranks of the masses, the development of its cadres and its fighters, and their armament, preparation and training, we find that the resistance movement has taken extensive steps forward, and that it has proceeded on the essential path toward forming the appropriate instrument capable of governing those conditions favorable to the creation of a genuine popular war of liberation.

There are some who say that the war of liberation has already begun and that we have begun advancing within the war of liberation from one phase to another. Were we to consider the resistance movement from this angle, we would see it in a way totally different from our previous view which sees it as a revolutionary nucleus which fosters a climate leading to the creation of a revolutionary force to undertake the advancement of revolutionary action and the launching of a popular war of liberation.»

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## **The Resistance Movement and its Effect Upon the Enemy. I**

**Al-Hadaf:** «The preceding refers to the present status of the resistance movement, its tasks and its horizons. We will return to this subject later in greater detail. But what about the resistance movement at its current level, with reference to its effect upon the enemy? And what is the scope of its present form of confrontation?»

**Answer:** «We can divide the effects of the resistance movement on the enemy into its psychological, material and military aspects.

On the psychological level, the Israeli military always aims at reassuring the Israeli citizen that it is capable of protecting him, his life, his survival and his economic advancement through the suppression of any enemy.

After June 5th and the quick victory which Israel effected, various long-range aims of the war were supposed to materialize, aims which may be summarized as the implementation of security and stability for the Israeli citizen. However, the resistance movement has prevented Israel from realizing that aim and from benefiting from its victory. — It deprived her of the fruit of victory — peace of mind within Israel, whether in terms of military expenditures or of the disruption of development programs, etc. The resistance movement, through its blows at economic and civil targets within the territories occupied in the 1948 and 1967 wars, has been able to render that peace of mind and security absolutely non-existent. Consequently, it has put the Israeli military in a constantly difficult position before its citizens. Of course, the resistance has not reached the point of rendering it impotent, as it sometimes reacts to

commando activities with sudden operations largely against the borders of the Arab states which claim to support the commandos in «infiltrating» and training. But the truth of the matter is that Israel has not been able to direct any blows at the commandos themselves because as small, mobile forces, they work in secret in dispersed areas, carry out their attacks after having gathered together, and then immediately scatter. Thus they do not provide the enemy with a target large enough to enable him to concentrate in order to hit it. Moreover, the fact that the resistance movement is not concentrated in a given place and does not assume defensive positions (in fact it has not yet reached the stage which would allow it to maintain defensive positions) prevents the enemy from delivering a crushing blow. This, in turn, compels the enemy to direct retaliatory blows at Arab borders in order to show its citizens that it is responding. But the truth of the matter is that it is not responding to the commandos as much as it is «responding» to those peaceful citizens who are on those borders adjacent to the areas of commando movement from their bases out-

side, to within the occupied territories. Israel calls this movement infiltration. It is, in fact, the return of citizens who left their land due to overpowering force, to the land which is legitimately theirs, across illegitimate borders which divide the Arab people. This concludes the discussion of the psychological aspects of the effect of the resistance movement on Israel.

As for the material and military aspects, there is the matter of the defence line, or the warning line, which Israel has extended along the borders to prevent the commandos from entering from barbed wire to simple electrical installations, to various forms of entrenchments. A very small part is electronic. Contrary to what the Israelis claim regarding their having installed electronic devices on a wide scale, these devices are in fact limited, electrical warning devices, forming the largest part. All these devices, of whatever type, cost those states which install them, large amounts of money. The Maurice line, the McNamara line and the other defense lines of this type are acknowledged as being financially exorbitant burdens.

Moreover, from the standpoint of guarding these lines, continuous motorized patrols and planned ambushes throughout the night and for long periods of the day also, cost the Israelis military expenditures, which were not necessary prior to the growth of commando action.

In the past, the border guards and farmers of the settlements were capable of giving suitable warning to Israeli units concentrated in the rear, at an operational and tactical distance sufficient to strike at any infiltrators when necessary. At the present time, however, the residents of the settlements are no longer able to undertake this task. Due to this situation, Israel has been compelled to give up one aspect of her former tactics, which was to assemble striking forces at fixed spots, and has been forced to detail a part of those forces. She has not detailed all her forces, of course, for she still has mobile and motorized forces in the rear to carry out counterstrikes. But she has been forced to use at least part of her troops as motorized patrols in setting widespread ambushes, in the long run, a wearing operation. Israel would not have had to resort to this were

it not for her fear of the establishment of contacts between the interior and the exterior.

Add to this the fact that Israel, in order to dominate all the areas lying within the occupied territories, and especially those occupied after the June war, is compelled to distribute her forces in a superficial occupation through use of the «quadrangle» tactic. This tactic is based on motorized units separated at fixed distances and covering all intervening ground with a network of land posts. These posts are in touch with airborne troops or aircraft which are capable of responding immediately and swiftly to any infiltration into the occupied territories. This counters the guerrilla practice of achieving a tactical superiority of 5 to 1 despite an overall strategic inferiority of 1 to 5. This is done so that once a guerrilla force has entered and been observed at a given site, that «quadrangle» zeros-in so as to overcome the local supremacy of the commandos who had intended to use that supremacy against a fixed target. The combat ratio thus becomes reversed in favor of the forces opposing the guerrillas. And in this way, Israel tries to counter local

guerrilla supremacy in given locations.

This form of fanning out, or superficial occupation, wears down the enemy and causes the over-extension of his forces, impedes training and prevents the existence of a basic assembled striking force. Until the present time, however, the enemy continues to maintain striking forces and is able to carry out counter-attacks on the state level. The resistance movement has not, until now, been able to disperse all the Israeli forces throughout Palestine in the «quadrangular» form, nor has it been able to engage the Israeli army in its entirety. This, of course, is one of the future aims of the resistance movement.

It is well-known that guerrilla warfare derives benefit from the dilemma which the enemy faces:

- either to occupy the entire area with a quadrangular network, dispersing his forces and destroying every guerrilla group which penetrates within this area, thereby weakening himself in a way

which enables guerrilla forces to strike at any of his dispersed units.

- or to adopt another solution, which would be to concentrate in order to respond to the blows of the revolutionary army, thereby leaving some areas vacant. This, however, provides the guerrillas with the opportunity to occupy and dominate these areas and thus to harass the enemy and strike at his rear.

This anxiety and contradiction with which every army trying to resist guerrilla warfare lives, this wavering between dispersion in a «quadrangular» network and concentrating in the form of striking forces for counterattack, has clearly not yet seized the Israeli army. This is due to the fact that the guerrillas have not yet grown sufficiently, either materially or numerically within the interior (although they certainly will eventually) to necessitate such sweeping dispersion. Nor has the Israeli army yet found itself endangered by an offensive aimed at its weak points, which would force it

to concentrate and thereby leaving scope for the guerrillas to work freely in some locales

In the coming development of the guerrillas, after their expansion and the broadening of their assaults in the interior, they will undoubtedly coerce the Israeli army into such over-extension. At that point, any organized revolutionary force (in the sense that it is molded and trained in systematic form, has revolutionary cadres and leadership, or springs from the guerrillas and is joined to the revolutionary army) would be capable of striking at the enemy in any locale. Thus, whenever the enemy concentrates to deal the revolutionary forces a blow, the guerrillas would work from behind with ease, cutting off its lines of communication. At that point, the enemy would fall into the dilemma which would ultimately annihilate it and, we would finally enter into the final phase of guerrilla warfare.

It is possible to summarize all this by saying that the Arab resistance movement harasses the enemy and adds a great deal of bitterness to the taste of his victory, thereby depriv-

ing him of much of what he aims at achieving. But the continued growth of the movement, the development of its methods, the gradual increase of its cadres, and the expansion of its range of operations will enable it to create the necessary climate for a popular war of liberation. This war has not yet started, but it inevitably will, with the cooperation of the guerrillas from whom the revolutionary army will develop under the guidance of their cadres.»

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## **Guerrilla Warfare and the Enemy.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «The general concept raised by this topic leads to the question: from what we see of the activities of the resistance movement and of regular military activity, it appears at first glance that the enemy's army employs something resembling guerrilla warfare more than regular armies ordinarily do. This is not true of regular Arab military activity. Indeed, the enemy sometimes appears in touch with the principles of guerrilla warfare even more than do the operations of the resistance movement itself. For example, the enemy attacks isolated

positions with large forces, it carries out operations of kidnapping and assault which resemble the tactic of «infiltration» counseled by the principles of guerrilla warfare, and indeed carries out such operations more often than classical assaults. Is this conception of the enemy's activity sound? And, if so, how is it to be interpreted?»

**Answer:** «The truth of the matter is that the enemy does not follow the methods of guerrilla warfare, but rather, follows the tactic of special units, which resembles guerrilla activity. The difference between these tactics and the methods of guerrilla warfare is like the difference between a just and an unjust war — the difference being that guerrilla activity is bound to the masses, while operations of suppression are directed against the masses. The distinctive factor is psychological and a matter of morale, and not specifically technical. Like the difference between military activity which threatens and that which liberates, although both are, in fact, suppressive operations, their fundamental roots differ. Ambushing, attacking forward positions, patrolling, assaulting isolated posts with

airborne troops, kidnapping people, etc., all these operations are the same from the tactical standpoint. But either guerillas utilize such tactics while relying on the masses in execution of a strategy of liberation, or suppressive armies or special forces prepared to fight the guerillas use them. And in this situation those tactics are tantamount to a special operation in the service of a strategy of aggression.

The Israeli forces are presently reacting against the Arab countries by means of specialized operations. In the past, these operations had been those of the military units, with those doing the fighting having been chosen from among the best elements. Later they became a detachment or squad of troops chosen from the armored corps or from amphibious troops, to undertake assigned assaults. All these types of troops, now joined by helicopter-borne troops, consist of very highly trained forces, chosen from among the physically strongest soldiers, longest-prepared psychologically, and highly trained technically, specialized in shooting and hand-to-hand combat in order to carry out such operations as those at the Beirut Airport.

southern Lebanon, south of the Dead Sea, etc.»

**Al-Hadaf:** «But why are we not capable of carrying out such operations, either on the commando or regular army levels?»

**Answer:** «On the Commando level, we may notice that all operations which the enemy undertakes spring from the same spirit. The spirit of the specialized operation. The spirit of the raid or the ambush. Or a fixed force assembling against a small objective to strike at it swiftly and then withdraw. However, the existing capabilities of the Arab guerrillas presently active are at variance with those of the Israeli army from the standpoint of training, the existence of air and helicopter means of transport, or the number of armored vehicles undertaking strikes at a small target and then returning.

But from the tactical standpoint, they are on the same level. So that when a group of commandos undertake to enter the occupied territories from the outside, or assembles from within and carries out an assault on a guard post or sets up an ambush for a group of vehicles,

within the limits of its capabilities, it, in fact, undertakes to apply the principles of small specialized operations. When the standards of the Arab guerrillas are raised — numerically, in training and in arms — they will, of course, move to a stage higher than that of merely setting up ambushes for moving vehicles. That is to say, they will set up the ambush and will also capture some of those vehicles, utilizing their weapons, taking their men prisoner, or destroying what had not previously been destroyed. And rather than assaulting a small post, they will attack an airport. At that point, these operations will take on an expanded and larger form.

As for the reason that the Arab armies do not carry out such operations, this is because they, in their basic formation and until the present, have been defensive armies. Throughout all phases from 1948 till the present, they have consisted of forces concentrated on the borders to guard against aggression. Whereas the Israelis were always carrying out acts of aggression, the Arab armies — if they were able — would simply carry out acts of prevention.

Arab strategy has been static and defensive to the extreme. Even its defense has been a non-dynamic one, a stationary defense anticipating a blow without knowing when it would come. And when it did come, this defense would respond to it with gunfire and not with mobility.

All the hostilities which Israel has carried out against the Arab borders have been of this kind : a swift attacking operation, carrying out its assignment then withdrawing, and met only with defensive fire from the Arabs. The Arab armies would be called up for a period but after a time would return to their normal defensive status without responding to Israel's aggressive act with a deterring one.

This follows from the fact that the Arab military apparatus, throughout this period of time, has been unable to put into effect the policy required to fit, a policy of liberation. It has not been predisposed towards escalation and achievement for the purpose of a confrontation of wide scope — and is incapable of acknowledging that before the masses.

The justification of its existence, of its

coming to power, of its overthrow of the old systems and its accusation against those systems of their inability to liberate or to show a bold front, is that it is capable of liberating. In fact, it is not. This feat of confronting the enemy and of being frank with the masses has always caused its position to be one oriented towards covering up matters, preventing the expansion of any entanglement, and non-escalation. As long as the enemy would merely strike and not advance, the matter would stop there. And if the enemy withdrew, this would be deemed as tantamount to having wrapped up the issue!

The Arab armies have not advanced offensively at all. They have not trained for far-ranging offensive operations. Rather, their training and spirit have been defensive. And due to the danger of the overthrow of governments, one eye has always been directed inwards and the other outwards. Their eye directed inwards aims to maintain power, while the other attempts to halt the enemy.

Contrary to this, the Israeli army, ever

since its inception has been an offensive one, relying on the surprise blow and the concept that if it does not strike first, it will be struck. Thus, it strikes according to the principle that the best method of defense is a good offence.

This type of offensive attitude takes root with time within the fighters, and training evolves on the basis of the offense. The enemy knows that Arab circumstances do not permit Arab armies to undertake offensive action. Consequently, it strikes at a suitable site, aiming its blows and raising the morale of its army and population, knowing full well that there will be no response or counterblow. Were it expecting the contrary, it would not have undertaken that sort of adventure which it mounts whenever it sees that it is propitious—quick forays aimed at raising the level of morale of its soldiers and people, carried out in full confidence that the Arab military apparatus will not move against it.

If we consider the ratio of paratroopers and commandos in proportion to the number of soldiers in the Israeli army in comparison with that in the Arab armies, we would find that the

ratio in the Arab armies is very small, whereas it is very high within the Israeli army.

At present, even after some inroads have been made in paratrooper and commando tactics, now that there are helicopter-borne commandos and amphibious or similar units, we see that the number of helicopters and the degree of training in their use within the Arab armies is still meager when compared to that of the Israeli army.

On the other hand, Israel is presently making an effort to obtain a quantity of large aircraft and helicopters for the transport of airborne and helicopter-borne troops, especially after having considered the incorporation of the infantry within the paratroopers or helicopter-borne troops, thus having the entire army carried either by vehicles or helicopters.

All these matters regarding the Israeli army proceed, of course, from the basic Israeli tenet, the basic Israeli strategic conviction founded on manœuver along internal lines, as practiced by every state encircled from a number of directions by various powers, and whose

terrain is small. It is compelled to respond to and to strike at a number of fronts. Consequently, its forces must be capable of mobility from one front to another before the latter has become active. Thus, Israel moves against and strikes at the first front, usually the strongest one, then returns to settle accounts with the other fronts, having already pinned them down before striking at the first.

In order to enable any state to carry out such a plan, as did Germany in World Wars I and II, and as did Israel in the 1948 war and even more clearly in 1967, its forces must all be highly mobile.

After the 1967 war, it became clear to the Israeli military that the expansion which it managed to achieve within the occupied territories necessitated more than troops merely carried by land, or armored or borne by half-tracks. Rather it was also necessary for her to have large, helicopter-borne striking forces on a wide scale.

The problem of transport from the Syrian to the Egyptian fronts has now been exacerbat-

ed, since the distances have been multiplied and the desert land of Sinai is unsuitable for transport operations by armored cars or vehicles. As transporting these troops from the Egyptian front to the Syrian one and vice versa has become more difficult, the airborne forces in Israel have undergone development from special forces to support land offenses into those forces undertaking the offense itself.

This is the fundamental reason which has enabled the Israeli army to carry out this form of warfare. As for the Arab armies, by their psychological and material formation, their structure, the quantity of their aircraft, their vehicles and their special forces, they are incapable of undertaking such military operations. The Arab tenet of offense is unclear, whereas the tenet of aggression is the basis of the structure of the Israeli army.

We must at this point mention a development which has occurred within the Egyptian special forces after the June war of 1967, a development which has enabled various Egyptian units to carry out special amphibious, airborne

or land operations against isolated Israeli outposts in Sinai. However, we must here consider these units realistically and objectively, and include in our appraisal and assessments the difference between units which have previously achieved numerous victories over a period of twenty years and those belonging to an army exposed to two large, consecutive defeats within a short period of time.»

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### **The Forms of technology in the Confrontation.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «Is this simply a technological matter? Or is it a matter bound to, and emanating from a clear, existing political notion or ideology? That is, have the Arab armies, and to a lesser degree the guerrillas, been incapable of advancing this spirit of systematic offense in their actual circumstances? Is this current military difference merely a technical matter, or does it proceed from far-reaching political and social causes?»

**Answer:** «The spirit of daring, offensive sacrifice latent within the commandos, the psychological and mental roots from which commando action stems, their categorical rejection of the defeat, their rush to plunge into the battle of liberation, the operations of confrontation carried out by the commandos in spite of their being small — all this has confirmed that they enjoy that creative spirit of offense. I am certain that what prevents the commandos from undertaking operations resembling the specialized ones of the Israelis is merely a material impediment, as represented in weaponry, equipment, and the standards of training and command. All the commando organizations will make an attempt to overcome these material impediments in the course of their development.

As for the Arab armies, the tenet of defense, of reaction, of preventing the widening of entanglements, the absence of a comprehensive plan for a full-scale war of liberation, the loss of the spirit of enterprise and daring of the Arab establishments — all this prevents the existence of such operations. For Israel, the

spirit of aggressive expansionism and the basic political concept, as represented by a clear ideology, has been transmitted to the armed forces which were constructed on an offensive, aggressive and daring basis. All this was before June 5th. After this date it is clear that the Egyptian army in particular began to embrace this offensive spirit well. It is true that it was defeated. It is also true that to enable the army to make the transition from defeat, to standing firm, to victory, it must have small successive victories at the beginning, in order to regain self-confidence and to rebuild its cadres. During the period from June 1967 until the present, the Egyptian army has been able, with the aid of Soviet experts as well as other experts from the socialist countries, to rebuild the army. They have also been able to move to undertaking daring operations unheard of before June 5th; crossing and landing operations have begun, as well as specialized operations which the army carried out in the unoccupied areas between the two armies, in order to obtain information or to effect quick strikes and occupy significant positions. All these things the Egyptian army

has attained and has been able to effectuate in a way different from the rest of the Arab armies. Although this development is undoubtedly taking place within the other Arab armies as well, what has occurred within the Egyptian army is more visible.

With regard to the other Arab armies, this is taking place on a relatively lower level. And all that, of course, follows from the strength of the impetus coming from behind. The army acts in accordance with political conviction. And the boldness of that political conviction, or its introversion flows from its confidence in whether the masses are behind it or not, whether they are able to stand firm no matter what, the extent of the struggle, or whether the internal front is unfirm. From these beginnings, the tenet of offense and daring are created. This is present on the Egyptian front in new form. Thus, we see that the Israelis carry out an amphibious operation, while the Egyptians undertake the occupation of a control post; then the Israelis undertake a strike, and the Egyptians respond with a raid.

That is, the blows are successive. The Israelis, of course, would not permit the Egyptians to have the last blow, or word. Rather, there is always a blow and a counterblow. Continuous engagements. There is never a strike, then general silence and non-response. In other words, from the purely tactical standpoint, the Arab armies are not deficient in that type of training. This sort of warfare does not require a technical level higher than that of some of the officers in the Arab countries, whether in the Syrian army which includes instructors trained in both Eastern and Western countries, or in the Jordanian army which has been trained according to the British doctrine. For the British were among the first masters of commando action in World War II. That is to say, it is assumed that all armies possess the technical knowledge necessary to undertake such operations. There remains the long-range view of that army, the creation of special forces within it, the proportion of those forces, and the starting of daring operations, in the knowledge that all those Arab armies based upon the Soviet doctrine are not supposed to follow the princi-

ple of defense, believing only in the principle of offense as the sole means of war. For the Soviet doctrine, according to which the cadres in the Syrian, Egyptian and other Arab armies were trained in the Socialist countries, maintains that the principle of offense is fundamental, while that of defense is a temporary phase which the army might benefit from to upset the enemy's equilibrium while anticipating the offensive. It is the phase which precedes the offense, and thus it is not considered as a defensive one. The offense is basic, while the defense must be a dynamic and daring one, where raids and reconnaissance activities go on, so that there is no silence. For silence gives the fighter the impression of the lessening of tension which, in turn, develops into a static defense. And static defense, according to military principle, yields nothing but more defeats. It is presupposed, from the standpoint of Soviet military doctrine as adopted by the Arab armies, that those armies are both offensive and daring ones. The ability of these armies to assimilate and implement that doctrine, however, is another matter. Likewise, the entire political mentality and cir-

cumstances at the back of these armies are the factors which determine whether and when it is possible to utilize that doctrine.

The fact that these armies do not undertake such activities does not necessarily conceal a weakness in technology or training. Rather, this weakness emanates from the contradiction between the power of the apparatus (the army) and the spirit which sets that apparatus in motion (politics).»

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## The Confrontation, the Armies and the Organizations.

**Al-Hadaf:** «This would mean, then, that as long as there exists the technological ability and doctrine of the offense with which the Arab armies are supposed to be injected, the problem will come to the point of being solved. Throughout the past twenty years, however, the situation has ultimately wound up in a state of impotence, failure and collapse. This is clear from what is happening now on the borders and has led us to conclude that there exist other factors besides the technological one, or the vision of an officer or a leader; i.e., the matter of organi-

zation. We certainly don't mean to say that the organization of the Israeli state is what provides her with her military prowess, for, in our conception, there exist in Israel, expansionist incentives which every militarist, imperialist and fascist organization of the past century has had. But with regard to the Arab systems, there is no such connection between the nature of those systems and the competence of their plans for liberation or their orientation or conceptions. So, is military competence dependent upon ideological and political factors, and the orientation of a system of the underdeveloped world vis-a-vis the challenges of a developed and superior state? What are the problems in this connection?»

**Answer:** «The problems are not technological. If the struggle was between the Arab states as part of the developing world and Israel as a base and bridgehead of the advanced, imperialist world within the «third world», we could say that the difference might be technological. But the truth of the matter is that Israel does not fight with Israeli weapons, nor do the Arabs

fight with Arab weapons. The struggle is not between Arab and Israeli industry, as it was, for example, between German and French industry, a matter in which the one which equips its army with better weaponry has an advantage over the other.

There are the Arab weapons coming from the Socialist Countries which are likewise industrially advanced. The weapons from both sides are at a corresponding level of excellence. It is true that Israel manufactures some light weapons, improves upon some heavy equipment, and is now diligently trying to attain independence in weapons manufacture. The possibilities of using weaponry, of patrolling and of training are not impossible tasks, however, but rather, are quite possible. The Arab establishments have implemented these for a period of time, while Israel has always done so.

But the issue here, as we have already said, is the political thought which exists behind the use of those weapons. We have noted that the Israeli political notion is one of expansionism

and the creation of a Zionist state, but we do not see that the Arab states likewise possess a political strategy upon which to build long-range military planning. Rather, there are only «plans» which are always no more than reactions to the situation. Moreover, the organization of these Arab establishments since 1948 until the present has not been along the only lines which would allow them to coalesce with the masses: their requesting everything from the masses, the masses granting everything to them while having the utmost confidence in them, to the point where they participate in a protracted war which might escalate to an unlimited extent, and which may necessitate great sacrifices and agonies. All the while, the internal front remains firmly cohesive, and continues to support combat action, etc. On the contrary, we note that there is a system, an army and a people, sometimes interlocking and sometimes not, consulting it sometimes and sometimes not.

Further, if we wanted to look upon the battle as a struggle between underdeveloped countries as part of the «third world» against, a

spearhead implanted by the advanced imperialist world, then it is incumbent upon the Arab states and the «third world» to practise some form of fighting which corresponds to their underdevelopment. This is so because their technological ability is not sufficient to confront American technology, knowing, as we have said, the fact that we have access to Soviet weaponry and technology, equal in quality and quantity to that which they possess.

Whenever the underdeveloped countries of the «third world» confront advanced states, they use the strategy of a protracted war. Such a strategy requires a people ready to bear all its stipulations and imbued with a deep-rooted and radical doctrine which makes them believe that this war is in their interest, and that the leadership in power is part of them, acts on their behalf, and does not constitute a petrified class above them. At that point, it is within their capacity to conduct a long-term war in which they might exhaust their more advanced foe, while simultaneously upsetting the balance of power, with they themselves undertaking the counterattack.

Throughout this period, which might last for tens of years, if there is not absolute coalescence between the leadership and the masses, it is impossible to hold out. If there did exist an absolute coalescence, the ability to hold out would thereby continue throughout that period until the enemy was exhausted. And after the exhaustion of the enemy, it would be possible to upset the balance of power. Until such exhaustion has been completed, however, in the first phases, there will be many losses, agonies and sacrifices which the people must bear.

The existence of the ideology of a given class, that of the proletarian masses, is in the possession of the people and the establishment. The existence of the fateful bond between the masses and the state, as represented by class unity, is the factor which permits the continuation of the struggle for a long period of time: the period of a protracted war, carried on until such time when the enemy is exhausted and the balance of power is upset.

On the other hand, as long as there doesn't exist in the countries surrounding Israel this

type of state, in which the masses are coalesced with their leadership, and where the leadership throws itself into the struggle with all its power because of its knowledge that the masses are fully behind it: countries whose leadership is prepared to hold out before a rough way of life and to carry out continuous assaults, to expose itself to an unsettled life and to killing for tens of years; and as long as what does exist consists of establishments and armies that are neutralized by simply being defeated; then the issue will remain one of building up the army. Once again Israel will advance and annihilate each army separately. That will be followed by a period of stagnation and then a period of rebuilding along the same lines. Then another strike, and another period of stagnation, and so on.

What is needed is a people completely mobilized and armed, so that when Israel strikes at the army, there will be a gun in each home and a grenade in the pocket of each citizen. The Israeli army, at that point, would be unable to enter any city, or at least not until having paid the price. Even an attempt to occupy a village,

could not be achieved without sustaining grave losses. Over a period of time, this would make it possible to exhaust the enemy in preparation for the counterattack.

At the present time, however, it is sufficient for the enemy army to strike and occupy as it wills, and there is nothing to wear it out in the long run. It has no borders at which it must halt, except for those drawn for it by its allies, the imperialists, in their plans, or the borders of «the furthestmost administrative extent», at which every army is compelled to stop by virtue of administrative requirements.

The solution is neither in technology nor is it in training, but exists rather, within the basic structure of Arab society. Is it prepared for war? Is it a cohesive class formation in which each individual senses that he is not subject to any exploitation, that he is bound to the soil and thus defends it, fighting while confident that struggle is in his own interests, and that there is no one covertly conspiring against him? A long-term war cannot continue and triumph as long as a class exists which benefits from rul-

ing and another class exists which is subjected to exploitation. Nor can it do so as long as the class which so benefits acquires all gains during peacetime, and then obliges the exploited class to pay the price with its blood in the midst of the hell of the struggle.

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## **Necessity of Marxism-Leninism for the Fighter.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «Let us return to the subject of the resistance movement and guerrilla warfare. There appears to be a missing link here, which would pull all the parts of this picture together. It seems possible to us to point that link out by asking the limited question: is it necessary, even from the purely military standpoint, that the fighter in a guerrilla war be a Marxist-Leninist within the framework of the present confrontation and its historical circumstances. Militarily speaking, what is the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and liberation wars?»

**Answer:** «The Popular Front does what is within its capability, to develop its role in the resistance movement, and to proceed from its present role to a more evolved phase in the guerrilla war. However much the issue develops within guerrilla warfare, we must bear in mind that reaching the point of a popular war of liberation requires the following: guerrilla warfare plus psychological warfare. For a popular war of liberation consists of a revolutionary war which utilizes an indirect revolutionary strategy which depends, according to Lenin, upon **«postponing activities until such time as the demoralization of the enemy is permitted by directing the decisive blow against it with ease.»**

The answer here is directed towards psychological warfare, which aims at the following:

1. to demoralize the enemy and to fragment it materially, while draining it in the long-run until it is ready for the decisive blow, and
2. preserving our own state of morale

throughout the long operation of exhausting the enemy, since that operation, materially and morale-wise, as is well-known, is a reciprocal one. Thus, to demoralize the enemy, it is necessary to begin with a psychological war, capable of creating internal contradictions within it, in order to call up one of its classes, that of the proletariat, against the state of exploitation exercised against it and the Arabs.

In order for our morale to hold out despite the length of time it takes to drain the enemy, so that there is no decline of morale which contradicts the successive setbacks, the agonies and the difficulties, and so that the fighter does not reach the point of losing hope, there must be a theory. A theory is necessary in order to enervate the enemy, while at the same time preventing discouragement during the psychological war, itself a basic component in transforming guerrilla warfare into a popular war of liberation.

But why Marxism-Leninism specifically?

Why must the fighter necessarily be a Marxist-Leninist? And why does the Popular Front assume a Marxist-Leninist stance, in the sense that it induces all its rank and file and its cadres to embrace Marxist theory?

The answer is that the Popular Front proceeds along this definitive course on the basis of a socio-political evaluation. The Popular Front considers the proletariat class — workers, peasants, residents of the refugee camps and the impoverished — as the substance of the revolution, its instrument, its fuel and its objective. It is thus incumbent upon us to adopt that theory which makes the interests of that class, its own in the revolution. Likewise, class unity and the coalescence of the leadership with the rank and file, of which we have spoken in the previous section, as two basic pre-conditions for a long-term war and for its continuation, can be accomplished only after having reached a high degree of class awareness and understanding of the class theory which advocates revolution — i.e., that of Marxism-Leninism. This does not mean that Marxism-Leninism is no more than a tool with which to achieve victory. Rather,

it is simultaneously the tool and the objective. A tool to achieve victory for the purpose of restructuring a society after the victory on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, itself an objective.

In short, if we want to keep the spark of revolution burning in spite of all difficulties and setbacks, if we do not want our revolution to be simply a spontaneous outburst without a range of vision, and if we want to be prepared for a revolutionary war of long duration which is based on psychological warfare, then the guerrilla must embrace a theory. Thus, in view of the fact that the proletariat class is the substance of our revolution, then our theory is inevitably the theory of the proletariat: Marxism-Leninism.»

**Al-Hadaf:** «You mentioned previously that the present stage is one of building the fighting apparatus of the revolution and of creating a revolutionary climate. In your estimation, what are the tasks which will present themselves during the coming period, with regard to the relationship of the resistance movement to the present social-political reality, and to those

areas which are nominated to become the revolutionary centers in the near future, such as the East Bank and south Lebanon? How will the Popular Front approach those tasks? And how will it attempt to perform them with regard to its relationship with the villagers and the masses, and with regard to the existing socio-economic reality?»

**Answer:** «The Popular Front considers the creation of a revolutionary climate to mean the preparation and the cultivation of a proper groundwork for the revolution. In view of the fact that the Popular Front considers the workers, the peasants and the residents of the refugee camps as the basic implement and the genuine fuel of the revolution, it takes it upon itself to construct its political and military organizations, to the widest extent possible, in the midst of this class. It simultaneously attempts to attract whatever sections possible of the petit bourgeoisie, and to induce revolutionary intellectuals to leave their class positions and to join the struggle along with the dispossessed classes.

This is on the level of the rank and file. As for the political and military cadres, the groundwork has already been laid among them, so that they might take up their duties within the popular war of liberation.

It is true that the creation of a revolutionary climate will be accomplished by means of organization. However, it will also be accomplished by means of political education campaigns and the political stimulation of all the people. All the people will not come to enter the organizational setup, automatically, but, rather, there will remain sectors which merely endorse it. Making the masses aware and arming them for the purpose of creating a revolutionary climate in this area is a basic part of the program of the Popular Front. During this time, it will be necessary to conclude alliances with groups of the progressive petit bourgeoisie, in addition to deep-rooted alliances with those leftist groups within the resistance movement, as well as those within the entire Arab area, for the sake of producing a leftist nucleus around which the masses can rally to create that climate. As for the scope of activity of the Popular Front and

whether it will limit itself to the occupied territories and the East Bank or whether it will expand to south Lebanon and other areas, it is possible to say without breaching security, that the Popular Front is already active within the occupied territories, as well as within some surrounding Arab areas. Moreover, the range of its activity will expand to comprise all that territory surrounding Palestine, and that area which may become part of the «Arab Hanoi» in the future.

In this fashion, with the continuation of the battle within the occupied territories, and the continuation of assaults on the Imperialist-Israeli enemy everywhere, and by mobilizing the revolutionary masses all over the Arab world to become the support of the resistance movement, its propagators and its backbone, the movement will not be depleted of its capacities, activity and political backing.

By means of all this, the Popular Front will ignite the fires of revolution, protect it, and induce the popular masses to reject the defeat and the fact, whether of occupation or of the

Arab reality which had led to the occupation. For the occupation would not have been possible were it not for that Arab reality. Thus, the rejection is threefold: the rejection of the occupation, as well as its roots; the rejection of that system which caused the defeat; and the rejection of that class structure which has obstructed the development of a popular war of liberation.»

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## **The Resistance Movement and its Effect Upon the Enemy. II**

**Al-Hadaf:** «With regard to the controversial relationship between the resistance movement and the enemy in the process of the struggle, has the resistance movement, during the period between June 1967 and the present, produced a political effect upon Israeli society, has it deepened the contradictions within it, and what are the possibilities for the future?»

**Answer:** «The relationship between the enemy and the liberation movement exists within the framework of the Arab-Israeli issue, as was

clearly manifested after the June 5th war in particular. It has now been tangibly confirmed that Israel is a military and economic center, whose basis is a chauvinistic, reactionary mentality and which uses fascism and aggression as a basic doctrine to achieve expansionist objectives on Arab soil. On the other hand, the Arabs are the owners of the land, and seek peace with honor. Israel, however, is an aggressive nucleus which rejects this and, as one would expect, obstructs any genuine opportunities for peace.

This issue has become clear to the socialist countries and to the countries of the «third world» which have not been exposed to Zionist deception. Likewise, revolutionary intellectuals in the West have begun to sense that in fact an enmity exists, and that the June war was an escalation of that enmity. Accordingly, those intellectuals have begun to sense the meaning of the Arab national liberation movement and its horizons.

This movement of change has only slowly been transmitted to the West, but is being transmitted even more slowly within Israeli society.

If Western societies consist of a climate which is of only average receptivity to notions related to the Arab-Israeli struggle, this is so by force of their origins, their interests and the antecedent notions which they have inherited. Israeli society consists of a soil unreceptive to quick results. This is not because it is fundamentally unreceptive to such cultivation only, but because of the effects Israeli propoganda which has gone on unopposed for a long period of time, and which has been reinforced by deceptions and confessional, chauvinist matters. All this has contributed to the emergence of an Israeli inferiority complex, to fear, and to a feeling of danger.

Then the 5th of June came along to upset their conceptions, and to fill them with feelings of arrogance and insolence.

These things have rendered even the Israeli proletariat, that class whose interest lies in the termination of the Israeli entity, of little efficacy. It thus engages only in passive resistance, and plays a two-fold role: it exploits the Arabs and oppresses them, while it, itself, is

exploited by imperialism, capitalism and Zionism, even more severely. It is like the German working and peasant classes during World War II who served expansionist German capitalism, while grinding underfoot members of their own classes belonging to other nationalities.

It may be that this Israeli class, in the last analysis, has no intention of resisting Zionism. This does not mean, however, that it is a hopeless case. For through the continuation of the resistance movement, its escalation and its presentation of a draft for a democratic Palestinian state, meaning the mutual co-existence of the members of all creeds in a socialist, democratic state, then hopes in this sphere will grow.

Even though the continued presentation of this plan has not yet led to fruitful results, nevertheless, after the progressive nature of the resistance movement has seeped in, and after having convinced certain sectors that it is not at all fascist or chauvinistic, it is possible for it to reach deep pockets within Israeli society, not to mention the Arab pockets in those

territories occupied before June 5, 1967. Some of those sectors will then act positively, while some others will continue to wait it out. And when the time comes for the counter-offensive of the revolutionary forces to begin, these pockets will go into action and work behind enemy lines, helping to fragment this hostile society, thereby dissipating its power. The formation of those pockets is proceeding satisfactorily. Moreover, the counter-offensive has not yet begun, which thus makes them appear to be smaller than their actual size.»

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## **Arab Horizons of the palestinian Resistance Movement.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «As long as the question has been raised regarding the controversial relationship between the resistance forces and the enemy, there is another question, actually previously raised, regarding a similarly controversial relationship between the Palestinian resistance movement and the Arab national movement. The relationship between the solution to the problem of the liberation of Palestine and the destruction of that old, defeated society, makes it seem that the bond between the Palestinian resistance movement and the Arab national

movement is unavoidable. In the first place, what is the military conception of that relationship and, secondly, what is its political conception?»

**Answer:** «With respect to the Palestinian resistance movement, there exist a number of tendencies which present the Arab-Israeli struggle as one between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the area. These tendencies assert that this struggle bears no relation to the Arab situation, or that the Arab situation is independent of the issue, at least at the present time. We must consider the matter to be a Palestinian one and fight the enemy within the occupied territories. The error here is clearly two-fold:

1. It renders the issue an exclusively Palestinian one, and the struggle a Palestinian-Israeli one, and
2. It ignores the fact that the cause of this present reality is the Arab reality in its entirety, and does not visualize the essential underlying causes of that Palestinian reality.

The truth of the matter is that it is impossible to isolate the Arab-Israeli struggle from Arab circumstances as a whole. Any attempt to render the battle simply a Palestinian one aids those dissonant voices which appear from time to time in some Arab countries for the purpose of making their territory off-limits to resistance activity. In addition, it renders the battle incapable of producing long-range results. Likewise, the battle, on the part of Israel, is not against the Palestinian people alone. It is true that the Palestinian people are those who lost their land. But there are territories belonging to other Arab countries which are also occupied. And there are plans to occupy other lands as well.

Seen in this light, the battle becomes a comprehensively Arab one, and is thus related to the presently existing Arab systems, as is seen from the viewpoint which raises the following inquiries: 'Do these systems, by their existence and practices aid the cause of liberation or not? Do they aid the prospect of holding out or not? Are they part of the battle or part of those forces which are carrying out the

struggle or not? Do they attract to themselves part of the battle or part of those forces which are carrying out the struggle or not? Do they draw to themselves part of the Israeli war effort and the Israeli army or not?'

It is from this angle that we must consider the issue.

The Popular Front does not consider the battle as an exclusively Palestinian one. Rather, it sees it as an Arab one. It also discerns the horizons of this battle. If it is made to be an Arab one in which the masses participate and which the entire Arab region pushes itself into, with the Arab people putting into it all its potentialities — human, psychological, economic and the capacity for guerrilla warfare, if there was a «Hanoi» in a state adjacent to occupied Palestine which would permit an Arab «Viet Cong» to arise and engage in daily clashes with the enemy in the entire Arab area — at that point, it would be possible to enter a war of long duration.

Without this range of vision, victory would not be possible.

As for the form of the states surrounding Israel, or rather, one surrounding state which could participate in this form of battle and which could, by its nature, be an «Arab Hanoi», it must necessarily and inevitably be a socialist one, as we said earlier. It must be a state which relies on the masses, which emanates from them, which believes in their ideology, and which fights for their sake effectively and in a way which enables them to back it and to make sacrifices for a long period of time, while confident of final victory for that class which carries on the struggle.

Viewing the surrounding states and evaluating them by this measure, that is, as to whether they are fit to be the «Arab Hanoi», provides the horizons for the Palestinian resistance movement and the vision toward which the Popular Front aims.

Were we to find that one of those states was unfit to be the «Arab Hanoi», should the Palestinian resistance movement change it; is such change the role of the Arab masses? It is necessarily the role of the Arab masses. The

Arab struggle, the Palestinian resistance movement presently existing, create a revolutionary climate by showing that it is possible to confront an oppressive power, that technological superiority is not everything, and that the tank and airplane are weapons which can be opposed. In short, its role in this sphere is tantamount to being the yeast of the revolution and a school for the masses in all the Arab countries, displaying before them that an army is, in fact, a power which can be overcome by the masses, even poorly armed masses. The lesson here is that the Palestinian resistance movement, in spite of its numerical smallness, has seriously affected the largest and most powerful army in the region — the Israeli army — which was capable of defeating the Arab armies within a matter of hours and of inflicting substantial damage. In this sense, it constitutes an example for those masses qualified to carry out a revolution and for every force which desires a «Hanoi», measures each Arab state in order to determine whether that state is capable of being a «Hanoi», and then takes action towards that end.

The continued existence of the Popular Front, its relationship with the masses and its continuing to hold out from day to day against all enemies, is an objective in itself. Consequently, there is a controversial relationship with the Arab states neighboring Israel, and also a sort of «secret debate» which is now in practice taking place between the Palestinian resistance movement and the Arab masses — that of providing an example on the one hand, and anticipating a reaction by the Arab states on the other.

In this connection, I would like to stress here on the matter of «continued existence»; the continued existence of the Popular Front is deemed to be an aim in itself. This is so, because continued existence in this sort of war, i.e., a war of long duration, is in itself a victory. The aim in such a war is not to be in a hurry for victory, but rather, to postpone the decisive victory until the exhaustion of the enemy has been accomplished, and it has become incapable of warding off the final blow. As long as the resistance movement, its flame and its escalation continue to exist, this signifies that victory

is approaching. For its existence is a form of victory, a step along the road.

Going on to answer the rest of the question, it is necessary to speak about cooperation between the guerrillas and the regular armies. On the strategic level, as we observe from Arab military writings in general, there is a considerable and grave distortion regarding this matter which many have slipped into. I, myself, was among those who were thus deluded and who, after the defeat of June 1967, did not know how to distinguish between their broad hopes and what part of those hopes the regular Arab armies were in fact able to realize. They tried to deceive themselves with unrealistic notions simply in order to cradle those hopes which were all that they had left. There may be in the writing of these words an element of self-criticism which I have directed inward after having found sufficient time and the atmosphere to read up on these matters more deeply. Those who call for cooperation of the guerrillas with the regular armies, or at least with some of them, ordinarily use as their basis — as I have done more than once — the teachings of

Mao Tse Tung, Guevara and other revolutionary theorists who call for the cooperation of the guerrillas with the regular armies. Most of them use as their basis Mao Tse Tung's teaching that it is impossible to strangle the enemy with one hand, but rather, that will only be accomplished with both hands — the guerrillas on the one hand, and the regular armies on the other.

The distortion here is the result of isolating this teaching from tangible reality and considering it abstractly. It is certain that Mao, when he said this, did not have in mind an army whose nature and make-up was that of those presently existing around the occupied territories. Rather, he was speaking of an army descended from the people and whose cadres are constituted of guerrillas who have developed with time and who have grown numerically and in weaponry, to the point of becoming a regular force in size and tactics. By its nature, its relationships, its class roots and the defense of its own class, it is a revolutionary army which has preserved its revolutionary nature.

At present, cooperation does take place between the guerrillas and some of the Arab ar-

mies on the tactical level. As for strategic cooperation, however, this is subject to the nature of those armies, their range of vision, the class which they serve, the nature of their cadres and their strategy. Is it the strategy of a quick war, or one of long duration? Are they qualified for such a war? All these questions must be answered before presenting the subject of cooperation between the guerrillas and the regular armies. As for true and deep-rooted cooperation which needs no discussion, it is that which will exist between the guerrillas, or what will be left of them, and those of them who will develop into an army in the long run. If they continue to exist, that is — for continued existence means that it is accompanied by the development culminating in the stage of revolutionary army which undertakes regular operations.»

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## «The Military Base» : Its Meaning and Reality

**Al-Hadaf:** «The resistance movement, in the communiques which it has issued for the past two years, has used conventional expressions which have a purely technical meaning. Here we feel that it is necessary to examine, all the connotations of these technical terms. We have in mind here such terms as «commando bases», «shelling with rockets», and «large operations». What are the true meanings of these expressions and their necessary elements?»

**Answer:** «We Will begin with the word «bases». The «base» in the sense which it has for the Popular Front in particular, and for all the commando organizations in general, is constituted of a group of fighters located at some site inside or outside the occupied territories who are actively striking at the enemy. It may be a single base aiming those blows or the concentration of a number of bases striking at one target, in order to effectuate their temporary and local superiority and then to disappear. In its daily life, it pursues a program of military or political preparation, keeping in contact with the masses, and maintaining its own continued existence. For the continuation of its existence is part of the process of creating a revolutionary climate.

We do not require of every base or, more exactly, it is not required of it to carry out a specific number of military tasks during a given period of time, since it does not simply constitute an assault position for special units located on the borders, or what in combat is called an «advanced outpost» from which raids or

reconnaissance operations are sent out. Rather, it is a revolutionary nucleus. What it does in combat is to perform one of its tasks and take part in destroying the enemy and creating a revolutionary climate. Should circumstances require it to remain stationary and to continue to educate its members politically, to prepare them and to raise their military standards, that too is a continuation of the process of creating a revolutionary climate. Likewise, if it deepens, expands and enriches its contacts with the masses, then this is a revolutionary nucleus — a shifting nucleus, for the bases of the Popular Front move around most of the time for reasons related to security and danger from the air. The activities of these bases include maintaining their own existence, preparation on the military level and political education. Their very contacts with the masses constitute the maintenance of the spark, the flame of the revolution and its continuation. Their existence is thus an objective in itself. And the ends which they attain in striking at the enemy are likewise objectives in themselves.

This applies to both those bases within and

without the occupied territories. It goes without saying that the bases without are more numerous, while those within are fewer. The make-up of those inside is more precisely secret. Their methods are likewise tactically distinct from those of the external bases, which practice the methods of guerrilla warfare, while the internal ones apply the methods of «secret warfare». It goes without saying that we do not consider that there is an «interior» or an «exterior», for we consider that the land is one and that there is only an imaginary line demarcating the borders, no more and no less, and that half the people are on this side, while the other half is on the other. The land of this people is half occupied and the other half free. They move from their own land to their own land, without delineating what is internal and what is external. Thus, we can say that some of those bases are within the occupied bridgehead, while some are without. There exist bases within the occupied territory, and those within territory exposed to the risk of occupation.

These bases are not precedent-setting in the Palestinian arena. All resistance move-

ments, historically speaking, have had their bases, whether within the area under occupation, or behind the lines of the enemy, or, at times, on the borders between two states. It is inconceivable, however, to contemplate the notion of borders in the Arab area, for it is a single Arab territory. But examples of bases on the borders between two states in international revolutionary experience may be furnished by the bases in China for entering North Vietnam, in North Vietnam to enter South Vietnam, in France to enter Spain, in states surrounding Greece to enter it, etc.

The issue of the states surrounding the local of the revolution taking the position of mere spectators, especially when they are states belonging to the same nation as the people revolting and exposed to the same danger, is a theoretical issue to be rejected from the beginning.»

**Al-Hadaf:** «By this sense of the word 'bases', a meaning is thus made clear which differs from what the masses are given to understand through most military communiques. In this

context, 'bases' takes on the meaning of purely military barracks which carry out military operations exclusively, and have no other task. Our question relates to this sort of general definition. What is the proper definition, or its necessary elements?»

**Answer:** «The meaning of the word 'bases' differs with the make-up of each organization. If some organization believes that present activity should be purely military activity, then the bases in this case will be military or semi-military ones which represent outposts that perform special tasks on a given level. But if the make-up of a resistance organization is political and military, and it deems itself to be a revolutionary nucleus more than anything else, and in a phase of preparing for a popular war of liberation, then the role of the fighters in that organization would be simultaneously political and military. The Popular Front considers its bases to be of this type, and it is possible to apply the same assertion to those of comrades in some of the other organizations.

Guerrilla activity, in its relation to the

masses, in providing them with an example and in respecting their property presents a pattern for the masses of the distinction between the guerrillas and the armies which they have previously witnessed. This is especially true in that the bases in the vicinity of the borders surround themselves at all times with armed peasants. They arm and train them and offer medical services to them. With the existence of these bases, we are now able to witness an ordinary armed peasant open fire on an Israeli patrol, fighting because he is committed to the land which he defends, to the weapon which he carries, and also to the framework of the organization which provides him with training and, in doses, gives him an ideological awareness. Indeed, we have come to witness the participation of some of the peasants in combat patrols in such ways guiding the fighters to trails and giving them assistance and first aid when necessary.

These bases, in this political-military form, constitute a part, a basic part, of the process of creating a revolutionary climate.»

## «Large Operations» and «Shelling».

**Al-Hadaf:** «This takes care of the term 'bases'. Now, what about such terms as 'large battles' and 'shelling with rockets'?».

**Answer:** «With regard to 'large operations', the size of the operation is a question which corresponds to the strategic evaluation of the phase through which the resistance movement is passing. If one of the resistance organizations considers itself in the phase of making ready, or of beginning the first stage, or in the heart of the first stage, its basic concern, then, would

be to be parsimonious and wary in carrying out small operations, concentrating on one point, striking, and then disappearing. Only when this stage develops will it move to the second stage — the stage of consolidation, and then to the third stage — the stage of the counter-offensive. At that point, strategic parsimony will be transformed into strategic striking. For the purpose of achieving strategic aims in this situation, large operations will be undertaken, even if it costs us sacrifices, since the bases will already have been formed in the first phase and will have acquired a revolutionary impetus, and small successive victories will have created self-confidence. On the other hand, if successive or large defeats were to take place in the first stage, this might lead to extinguishing the spark at a time when the first priority is to intensify that spark. Thus, the resistance movement does not take those large operations upon itself in the first stage but, rather, undertakes small operations which are one hundred percent certain to be successful.

The large operations which some organizations undertake, therefore, are due

to the estimation of those organizations of the stage through which we are currently passing. Whoever estimates that we are still in the first stage, preparing ourselves to begin, are those organizations which are carrying out ordinary activities.

The organizations which announce that they are undertaking large operations on a wide scale and are «going for broke» with large numbers of commandos are those that undoubtedly evaluate the situation as having finished with the first stage and started the second. The significance here is not the issue of undertaking large operations or not, for these operations constitute a tactic which serves a given strategy. Rather, the significance lies in the use of a tactic of one given stage in another one. Using the tactic of the small operation in the second stage of guerrilla warfare is a form of hesitating, while the use of the large operation in the stage of making ready, is rash and wasteful.

The basic issue here is not a matter of the large or the small operation, but is the definition of the stage that we are passing through.

The Popular Front is not of the opinion that we have already moved on to the second stage, which requires the large operation. If others do see it that way, it is their point of view.

We come now to the third expression, 'shelling the enemy with long-range weapons', whether with rockets or mortars. This is one technique in striking at the enemy, when that enemy has taken measures to prevent getting near him, or when the terrain does not permit infiltrating to a spot near enemy positions except at night, or when hostile military targets are surrounded by unfriendly inhabitants — a special situation which markedly appears and imposes itself in the Arab-Israeli war. In view of this, reaching a military target becomes a dilemma in itself, since every one of the Israeli inhabitants constitutes in this situation, a warning element against the resistance movement.

Striking at long distance, then, is one method. However, its use imposes one condition of the three which we have previously mentioned, or more than one of them at one and the same time.

Striking at the enemy with rockets or mortars constitutes one form of harrassing the enemy, which inflicts losses upon him, exposes him to be on constant alert, with all the material and psychological discomforts of that state of alert.

This type of striking is in keeping with the principle which advocates «striking at the enemy wherever you can, and at a time of your own desire and choosing.» The important point is to inflict damage upon him, to drain his blood drop after drop until they accumulate to form a hemorrhage which will lead to anemia and, consequently, to altering the balance of power in favor of the weak over the strong.

There is one small reservation here. When we strike at the enemy with long-range weapons, he will respond. This response will be directed toward the bases carrying out the strike. Thus, these bases must be mobile. In addition, however, the enemy will also take that shelling as a justification to occupy more land. To this, we say that the enemy has no need for justifications to occupy more land. Thus, it is necessary for us to have forces to prevent deterrent

activity. These are the Arab forces. So that if shelling with rockets leads to an aggression against Arab territory, this requires participation from Arab territories and their armies in responding to and deterring it.

However, this type of shelling carries with it a grave negative aspect. If the organization which carries it out is not endowed with an offensive and daring attitude and disposition, this may become the easiest means by which to strike at and inflict damages on the enemy, while subsequently sapping the spirit of engagement of the fighters. This situation would lead to the neutralization of their daring spirit.

But if the organization or its psychological make-up gives it an outstandingly daring spirit, the act of shelling with rockets would then be a positive factor, enabling it to help in inflicting losses on the enemy by itself, or in covering hit and run operations.»

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**«Operations Abroad»,  
from the Military Standpoint.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «In the exposition of your discourse on combat, you cited the principle «strike at the enemy wherever you can, and at a time of your own desire and choosing.» This principle calls for a look, from the military standpoint, at the operations outside occupied Palestine carried out by the Popular Front. How do you view this?»

**Answer:** «The external operations of the Popular Front proceed from the basic political policy which the Front uses in appraising the enemy

and its camp. There are economic and psychological reasons for striking at external targets.

From the military standpoint, however, there is a principle of guerrilla warfare which at all times confirms and demands the necessity of striking at the enemy everywhere possible, with the greatest degree of violence possible. For violence is the basic principle of war.

Striking external targets, and specifically interdicting aviation and maritime routes, is not seen to be striking at civilian targets as much as at purely military ones. This is so because Israeli society as presently constituted, its use of all civilian facilities for military purposes, renders every such facility a military target. This was confirmed after the June war, as was the military character of El Al Airlines. As for the pilots of the airline, as part of the military reserves of Israel, they support its military effort. For this reason, we are able to say that these external operations do not cause harm to civilians, but rather to military personnel, in spite of their being in civilian clothing. For the difference between the civilian and the

military man is the difference between those who use armed force and those who do not.

Why strike outside the occupied territories all over the world? Why don't the Palestinian people exercise their right to strike within their occupied territories, but not the rest of the world? The reason is that the Palestinian people, unlike other peoples, were ousted from their land after the occupation, and so they no longer possess a land. And they were evicted by a conspiracy against them on the part of a large number of states. The world, therefore, is responsible for their condition. It is unnatural for the world to commit a crime, and then not have to bear its consequences.

These states, due to the indifference of their people, took a decision to eject the Palestinian people from their land; it is therefore the responsibility of the resistance movement to keep this matter before the attention of those people and to keep alive in their minds the fact that our external operations are the inevitable result of their hostility towards the Palestinians, manifested through continued support of Israel.

Also from the military standpoint, the effect of these activities is a psychological one. The Israeli soldier on the borders who is sometimes able to succeed in halting the entry of supply, reconnaissance or combat patrols, therefore increases his conviction that he is able to continue to do so. And so he is victorious. But when he finds that there are blows falling upon him from every direction — not necessarily affecting him directly, but affecting his compatriots and his own interests — then he questions whether his presence on the borders is, in fact, the final deliverance, and whether his military victory is solving the problem.

Undoubtedly, the escalation of these operations and their encompassing all Israeli transportation facilities, exposes the enemy to losses and to its relative severance from the world, especially when it has no link by land with the world. Thus, continuous and exacting exposure of the whole of its lines of communication to danger is seen as one way of impairing its war effort in the long run. This is in addition to the negative effects on the morale of the soldiers

which accumulate as they perceive that they are impotent in warding off that danger.

When people tell the Popular Front to strike only within the occupied territories, it is as if they were saying, «Come on and fight your enemy. But first, give him the chance to determine the place and the weapon. Come on and take the bull by the horns!» No. Guerrilla warfare does not accept this logic. Nor does it accept exposing itself to enemy strong points. It only accepts exposure to the weakest points, striking at them with maximum strength, and then disappearing.

From this point of departure, external operations achieve this goal. For they face an isolated objective, and a sensitive one which is susceptible to the jolt. They strike swiftly, and the blow causes losses to the enemy.

All these reasons make the Popular Front determined to persist in this line of action and to escalate it. And it calls upon the other organizations to participate in this method — the method of violence which liberates — in order

to respond to Zionist violence, which grinds the Arab masses underfoot and subjugates them.

This type of activity is also a reply to imperialism and its support of Israel, and constitutes a threat to its interests. So far, the results have not been great. But if these operations are escalated, and all Zionist and imperialist interests are exposed to serious danger, then considerable advantages will accrue, and significant setbacks for the enemy will result in the long run.»

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## **Propaganda Consequences of Striking at Civilians.**

**Al-Hadaf:** «The Israeli enemy sometimes claims that the resistance movement places charges and explosives in buildings, public places or parking lots which injure innocent civilians, and considers this as sabotage. Their statements sometimes find an echo in some circles of world public opinion. How does the Popular Front feel about this?»

**Answer:** «There is a great deal of falsification in such claims. The make-up of Israel, the form of colonialist imperialism which it practices,

its form of mobilization and its methods make the entire Israeli population a tool of aggression. If the soldiers practice active and direct suppression, then the civilians who make up the military reserves, have already practiced suppression when they were in active service. Likewise, they support aggression by their presence in the area, and they profit from the results of aggression and the ejection of the original population.

The families of fighters in unjust wars ordinarily constitute a factor opposing the aggression, especially when the war drags on for a long period of time. The citizens discover that they are losing their wealth and their sons in an unjustified war, and that any gains that are won, benefit only a small class. The situation in Israel, however is totally different. If the American soldier in Viet Nam receives incessant letters from his family appealing to him to renounce the war, those families in the United States thereby constitute a factor totally opposing the aggression. But in the case of Israel, the overwhelming majority of the families constitute one of the forces which supports

the Israeli military. They form part of the hostile activity and are the basic justification for driving out the Arab population from the occupied territories. They are thus directly responsible for the conditions under which the Palestinian people have lived for more than twenty years. In addition to this, the mere existence of this population structure constitutes a powerful factor in their morale, and makes the Israeli soldier, while fighting, not think of retreating as much as of protecting the family which he brought and settled there. Thus did the colonialists come to the country, drive its people out and begin to profit from it. For this reason, they are all equally exposed to the danger of the reaction of the original possessors of the land.

There is a point which we must treat here. Why don't we at the same time inquire how Israeli planes, during their raids on cities, are able to distinguish the civilian from the soldier. Doesn't the entire world know that the casualties of air raids in all wars include more civilians than soldiers? And that the number of soldiers in general and commandos in particular

injured or killed as a result of Israeli raids is negligible as compared to the number of civilians? And this to be sure, notwithstanding the distinction between Arab civilians wounded and killed by Israeli air raids of revenge while in their own country, not attacking anyone and Israeli civilians wounded and killed by commando activity, while they are aggressors, share in the aggression and support its existence.»

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## **The P.F.L.P. and the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC)**

**Al-Hadaf:** « From the military standpoint, how do you feel about the lack of participation on the part of the Popular Front in the Palestine Armed Struggle Command? We know the political position which the Popular Front has announced, of course. But what about the details, militarily speaking?»

**Answer:** «If we look at this issue as a subject by itself, then it would appear as if it were negligence on the part of the Popular Front and non-participation in the unity of the resistance movement.

But this is not the case. It must be looked at in terms of its political and military implications.

Military participation in the Palestine Armed Struggle Command should follow only upon the achievement of political agreement. This is due to the fact that, if military action is the implement, then political policy is the soul. Only after the achievement of political agreement, therefore, can military participation follow.

The question should not be why the Popular Front does not join the Palestine Armed Struggle Command, but why it does not participate in the Palestine Liberation Organization. This is a question which the Popular Front has answered more than once. It has presented its ideological line, and has demanded a minimum program. When these things are achieved, there will be created for the resistance movement a military general staff, or a single operations room, or a single military command for matters of execution and technique.

The basic course of action at present is to study the possibilities for cooperation and unity of commando action and the forces of the resistance movement — Palestinian or Arab — within a minimum program and agreement upon both short-range and long-range points. After agreement is reached by the political leadership on these matters, creating the formula for military cooperation will require little effort.

With respect to what the Palestine Armed Struggle Command has accomplished from the military standpoint, it is not yet possible to consider it as constituting a general staff for the organizations which have joined it, in spite of all the effort expended. There will be no operations command which gives strategic direction to participating organizations as long as the guerrilla war permits decentralized action.

The Palestine Armed Struggle Command up to the present has not taken this line. It now consists of a command which restricts itself to creating military discipline. It also contains an arrangement to solve differences among the

commando organizations, attempts to get rid of discrepancies in the various communiques, and includes an information body which issues those communiques after the execution of operations. However, it does not plan those operations, nor does it gather them within the framework of a unified strategy.

Many devoted and aware people within the Palestine Armed Struggle Command have attempted to obtain the formation of an operations room, military planning and other systematic and scientifically planned steps. Until now, however, they have not achieved the results requested. We hope that they will be successful in the immediate future, since it would be a beneficial step toward improving and developing commando activity.»

## The Israeli Military and the Future.

**Al-Hadaf:** «Now that we have covered nearly all aspects of the resistance, can we lay out a basic idea of the future probabilities on the practical level? What do you think the next step of the Israeli military will be? What would be its consequences?»

**Answer:** «The Israeli army has achieved a military victory. But it has not yet attained the object of the war, i.e., the creation of a situation of permanent peace in which it could devote itself to economic construction and penetration within the area without danger. How-

ever, it does not want to lose those military gains as happened in 1956 ; rather it wants to preserve them as security in maintaining their position of power.

The non-capitulation of the Arabs, however, and their newly-acquired tenacious stand, in part due to the material and moral support extended by the Soviet Union, China and all other socialist and peace-loving nations, means that there exists the possibility of raising the standard of Arab military preparedness and moving to the stage of reversing the June defeat. And the beginning of small, successful offensive operations may lead to the raising of the people's and the army's morale.

The expansion of commando action and its profound impression upon the masses, necessitated that Israel contemplate steps towards achieving the following strategic objectives.

- to maintain the morale of the residents and army in Israel, a state of tension, and the spirit of the offense.
- to prevent the Arab armies from regaining self-confidence.

- to put the Arab people in a defensive position so that they do not advance to an offensive posture.
- to prevent the commando movement from spreading, especially in Jordan.
- to prevent the commandos from operating in Lebanon and Syria.
- to prevent the commandos from penetrating deeply within the occupied territories.
- to prevent the people from aiding the commandos, and to isolate them from each other.
- to heighten the contradiction between what is promised and what is achieved by the commandos and the Arab governments.
- and, finally, to set the commandos and their leadership on the one hand, and the leadership of the Arab armies and Arab rulers on the other, at odds, and to force them either to assume a negative position (not to react) or a positive one (striking at the commandos on the part of the system). Israel has in fact succeeded in heightening these last two contradictions and has created a wide gap among

the fighters, which lessens their ability to hold out and brings closer the possibility of surrender.

The strategic objectives which serve the object of the war may be translated into the following types of tactical missions:

1. to carry out small, powerful strikes in designated places by means of air-borne troops.
2. to occupy parts of neighboring territories in order to «purge» them of the commandos, and then to withdraw immediately.
3. to occupy areas which are isolated, in order not to arouse world reaction, and then to withdraw immediately afterward.
4. to continue offensive operations, and not to move into a defensive position.
5. to threaten the neighboring Arab countries with deterrent air strikes, in order to prevent commando activity from developing roots amongst the masses.
6. to fragment morale, and to attempt to sow

dissension among the various commando organizations, or between the organizations and the Arab states.

- 7 to increase the blowing up of homes and forced emigration, along with increased rewarding of collaborators.

For these missions, Israel uses troops of special units, such as airborne commandos, frogmen and armored forces to the level of the brigade, in addition to the air force which enters without opposition the air space of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and, with some difficulty, Egypt.

However, it would not be feasible for Israel to occupy territory and remain there, at least not as long as the Big Four continue to meet, and as long as there exist possibilities for a peaceful solution, or, more aptly, a capitulationist solution.

On the other hand, should all these possibilities disappear — that being due to the pressure of a mass movement — and the meetings of the Big Four be suspended, then Israel would be compelled to plunge into another war and

to occupy new objectives, in order to attain the security which she has not achieved. And will not!»

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