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FEDAYEEN -- "MEN OF SACRIFICE"

PREFACE

This essay addresses itself especially to the outlook for unity among the various fedayeen groups and to their individual relationships with Arab, Soviet, and Chinese support. The essay concludes that effective or lasting unity among the fedayeen -- whether subversive, military, or political -- faces a myriad of divisive forces, but that as individual groups or in temporary alliances the fedayeen will nonetheless continue to represent a seriously disruptive element in Middle East politics.

Constructive comment on this essay has been received from the Office of National Estimates, The Office of Current Intelligence, and The Clandestine Service. In view, however, of the complexities of the fedayeen question, the quickly-changing scene, and the uneven quality of available intelligence, the judgments of this initial study of the subject should be considered provisional. Any comments on its data or judgments should be addressed to the essay's author, Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl, and to this Staff.

Similarly, a companion SRS Annex is being published separately, discussing the many fedayeen organizations in some detail: their origins, ideological leanings, strategy and tactics, organization and funding, and their ties to Arab sources of support.

This present essay -- and the Annex -- contain information available through 1 November 1970.

Hal Ford
Chief, DD/I Special Research Staff

FEDAYEEN -- "MEN OF SACRIFICE"

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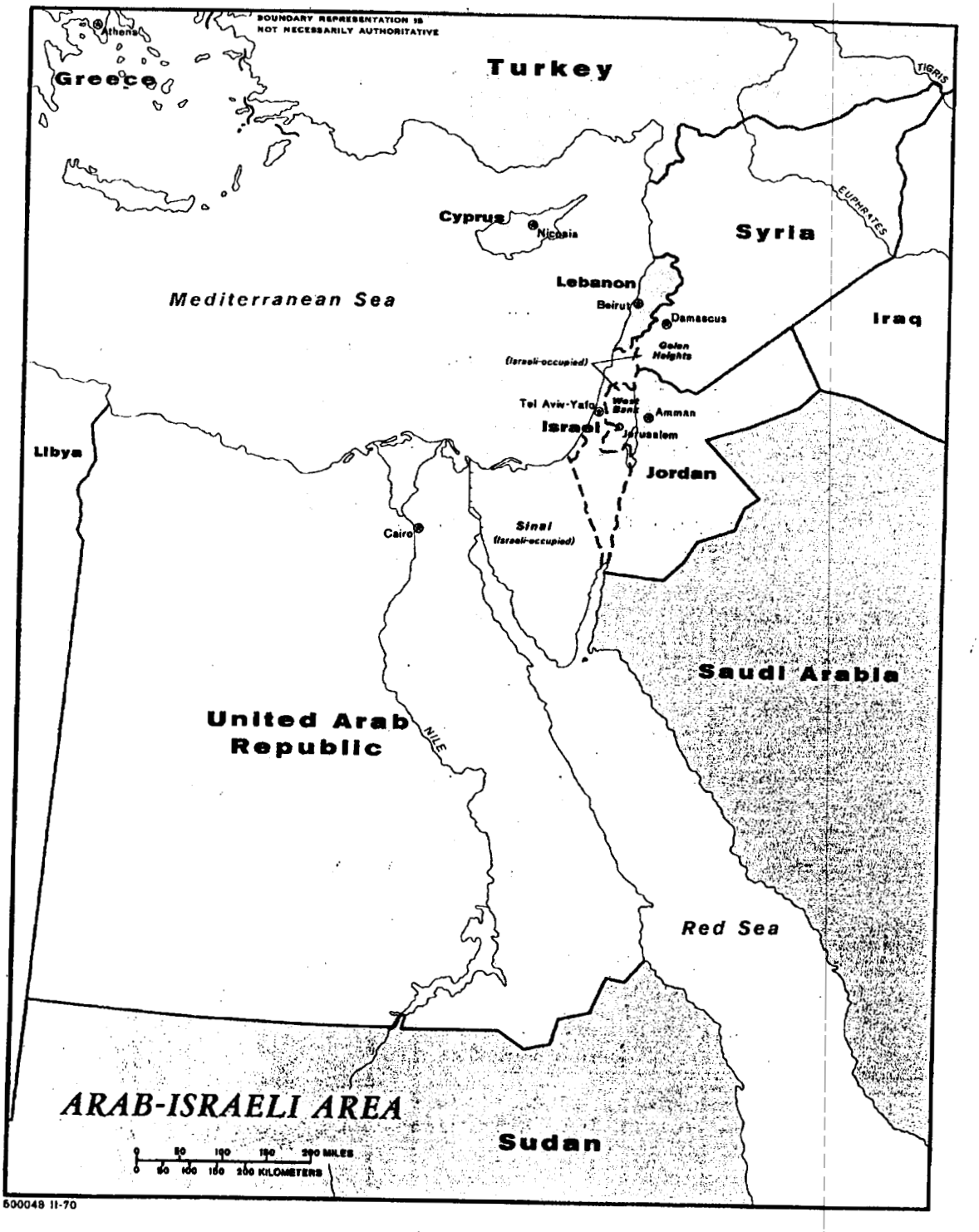
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SUMMARY

Of the many explosive Middle East elements which have accumulated since the June 1967 war, the Palestinian fedayeen -- literally, "Men of Sacrifice" -- have emerged as the most unstable. The craving among Arab populations for an heroic image, magnified by the war's humiliation, has heightened the romantic cause of Palestine "liberation" and the prestige of its protagonists, the fedayeen. The subsequent political potency of the fedayeen movement, despite its unimpressive military capabilities and performance, is thus based largely on the emotionalism of the Palestine issue among Arab populations, the fact that such anti-Israeli sentiment is about the only unifying force in the Arab world, and the resulting reluctance of Arab regimes to move against this force.

Accordingly, since the 1967 war the Palestinian Arab resistance movement has risen from the status of an unimportant and somewhat pathetic movement, totally subservient to a few Arab states, to become a largely independent, if heterogenous, force capable of significantly affecting Middle East politics. The fedayeen movement has won treatment as a near-equal by many Arab states and has compelled the rest of the world to take its grievances and claims seriously. Fedayeen prospects will to some degree depend on the extent to which this emotional backing persists in a war-weary Arab world and continues to be manipulated successfully by Yasir Arafat, chief of Fatah, the most significant group, and by other, lesser fedayeen leaders. Nonetheless, individual

This paper relies primarily on clandestine reporting particularly for the internal structure and operations of the various fedayeen organizations. The reporting is quite good on political aspects of the subject such as the maneuverings of the fedayeen groups, their internal disputes, and their ideological and tactical views. However, our information is more scanty on such important matters as the number of armed men in each group, the sources and mechanics of funding, and details of the sources and methods of delivery of arms shipments to the fedayeen.

fedayeen actions or temporary alliances will continue to have the capability of perhaps upsetting even the best of intentions -- in a part of the world where these are in short supply.

An array of forces operates against effective and lasting unity among the fedayeen groups. True, there has been pressure for unification. It has come at times from those fedayeen groups which hope to dominate a unified organization, or from smaller groups which desire protection from the Jordanian authorities, or from various Arab and Communist states which would prefer dealing with a single organization. Some success in unification has been achieved: mostly, although not entirely, within the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The condition of fedayeen unity at any one time, however, has varied with the extent of the political and military dangers faced by the movement and by the individual fedayeen groups: Fatah, relatively strengthened by the Jordan civil war, has been encouraged to resume its many past attempts to impose its will on its smaller competitors. To a considerable extent what prospects exist for success are linked to Arafat's talents, and his fall or demise would be a serious blow indeed to Fatah. But in any case, the Palestine resistance movement is simply divided on so many scores -- differing compositions, ideologies, personal ambitions, strategic views, tactics, ties with this and that element within this and that Arab state, stands vis-a-vis Communist revolutionary aims, and relations with Soviet and Chinese support -- that the odds would seem to favor a general continuance of fedayeen competition, shifting alliances, and occasional semi-unity.

A chief, continuing need -- and weakness -- of all these fedayeen organizations has been money and arms. In this search, they have turned to individual contributors as well as to Arab governments. They have requested aid from all the Arab states, and the latter have complied by giving limited and sporadic support, in varying degrees, to those groups which these governments feel will best

advance their own interests. But such promises have generally exceeded actual contributions for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, the inability of these states to control the fedayeen has made them reluctant to donate generously. Financing the Palestinian resistance is not of immediate practical advantage to many of them, particularly those more remote geographically and less involved politically.

The various fedayeen groups have also looked to the Communist world for both material support and political recognition, each generally seeking to enhance its own stature at the expense of its competitors, albeit within a general desire for international support of the broad fedayeen cause. Since 1969 the Soviet Union has become more receptive than previously to dealing with the fedayeen, both because the fedayeen have become a stronger and more important element in the Middle East, and because the Soviets are anxious to prevent the Chinese from gaining influence. The USSR is hindered in its ability fully to embrace the Palestinian cause, however, by the practical consideration that the fedayeen groups are not amenable to Soviet control. The USSR is also hindered by its recognition of Israel's right to exist, and its support for the 1967 UN resolution; and by Moscow's commitment to the interests of the UAR, which are themselves often in conflict with those of the fedayeen.

As of the autumn of 1970, relations between the Soviets and the fedayeen are not so close as might be expected, in spite of Soviet promises of material support and propaganda concessions -- including some vague Soviet movement toward acceptance of the Palestinian Arab right to establish a national state on some unspecified portion of Palestinian territory. The fedayeen are particularly displeased at present by the degree to which the USSR seems still interested in exploring a general negotiated settlement, and by the failure of the Soviets to follow through on private indications that they would supply material aid directly to the fedayeen. While several Palestinian groups have for two years purchased Soviet-

made arms from East European countries and received them from Arab army stocks, they are anxious for the increased supplies and recognition which direct, publicly-acknowledged deals with the USSR would entail. The Soviets, for their part, want to increase their influence with the fedayeen but are reluctant to be tied too closely to them. Moscow's attitude will probably retain this ambivalence, the Soviets trying to maintain good relations with these groups without committing themselves to positions incompatible with broader Soviet interests.

The Chinese have not been fettered by such barriers, responsibilities, and conflicting commitments and have thus been much freer to embrace the Palestinian cause. This support has been unlimited only in the realm of propaganda, Chinese material aid being largely confined to providing training assistance and limited quantities of small arms. Peking's main interest is in doing what it can, through encouragement of the fedayeen, to help maintain enough tension in the area to embarrass the Soviets and undercut them in the Third World, and to prevent a settlement and a U.S.-Soviet Middle East agreement. The scope of increased Chinese support is likely to remain limited, but the Chinese will doubtless continue to get a lot for their money, in the way of presence and disruption.

For their part, the fedayeen appreciate the brash moral support given them by the Chinese, and some -- particularly Arafat -- have sought to play the Soviets off against the Chinese. Most fedayeen leaders recognize, however, that in the long run the attitude of the Soviet Union is much more important to them than that of China. For unlike China, the Soviet Union is a super power whose military forces are directly at hand, and the USSR will inevitably be involved in any negotiations affecting the future of the area.

I. THE FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT

The Origins of the Fedayeen

The fedayeen -- literally, men of sacrifice -- are armed fighters committed to the return of the Palestinian Arabs to their homeland. They represent many different political philosophies, strategies, and tactics. Some favor terrorism, some traditional commando-type operations. A negligible force in the Middle East before the June 1967 war, the fedayeen have emerged since then as a markedly instable element in a particularly explosive part of the world. Their success has been primarily political, a result of their psychological impact in the Arab world.

The fedayeen receive some degree of support from every Arab state, since anti-Israel sentiment provides one of the few unifying issues in the divided Arab world. This sentiment is magnified by the plight of the 700,000 Palestinians* who were displaced by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and resettled in improverished UN refugee camps, mostly in Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and Lebanon. Their fellow Arabs have made little effort over the years to absorb the refugees, but have preferred to use them instead to dramatize Israel's "illegitimacy" and "inhumanity."

The dispersal of the Palestinians was reflected in the initial fragmentation of their leadership and the weakness of their organizations. Before the June 1967 war, their two main political organizations were the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The ANM was founded by Palestinian

*This figure has since grown to almost one and a half million now registered with the UN Relief and Works Agency.

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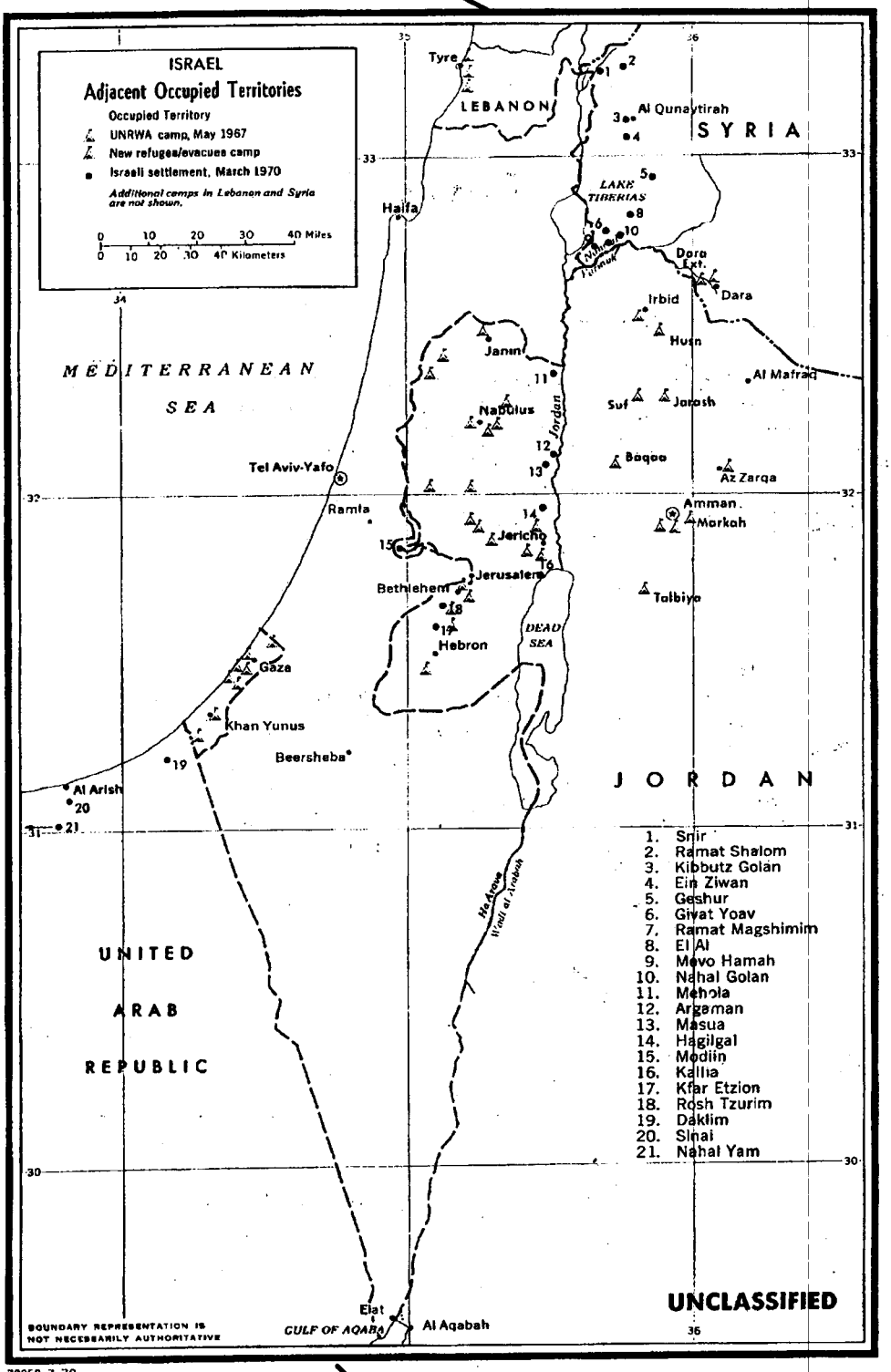

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intellectuals in the late 1940s, dedicated to a pan-Arab philosophy aiming at liquidation of the state of Israel. It established branches throughout the Middle East, each of which adapted to local conditions and became essentially non-Palestinian local parties. The international ANM itself never achieved any real degree of cohesion or power and by the late 1960's had ceased to function. The PLO, on the other hand, was officially established by the 1964 Summit Conference of the Arab states and for the next five years was largely a UAR puppet, operating rather ineffectually behind a facade of militancy. The only actively militant group of any consequence in the immediate pre-1967 war was Fatah, which depended at the time primarily on Syrian favors for its existence.*

The 1967 war gave the fedayeen the impetus they had lacked. The thousands of Palestinians who now fled from the West to the East Bank of the Jordan provided a fertile source of both new recruits and logistic support. The fact that Syria, Jordan, and the UAR had now also lost territory to Israel resulted in increased world-wide diplomatic support for a change in the Middle East status quo and a rectification of existing boundaries. In addition, the Arab states had lost face once more as a result of their humiliating defeat, and the Arab world was in search of an heroic image to bolster its damaged pride.

Fatah Strength and PLO Respectability

Yasir Arafat, who rose to prominance after the war as the chief spokesman for Fatah, was quick to see and seize the opportunity. As the only group which has conducted commando operations into Israel with even a minor degree of success,** Fatah was in a position to capitalize on the

*A number of small Palestinian fedayeen groups did operate ineffectually during the 1950's, some with Egyptian support.

**Fatah commandos, operating from bases in Syria, had infiltrated first into Jordan; then teams of four or five men had crossed the border into Israel where they conducted small-scale ambushes and bombings.

Arab yearning for military action and victories. The organization stepped up its raids into occupied territory, and when Israel retaliated with large-scale attacks across the border, Fatah reaped the benefits of increased prestige and more recruits. Although Fatah is a military organization, it appears to have a large number of "civilian" members who assist in its fund-collecting, propaganda, logistic support, and so forth. Thus it has made good use of its sympathizers in the Palestinian community.

Fatah itself had been founded primarily by conservative Palestinians, including some members of the Muslim Brotherhood,* and had always received some financial support from wealthy Palestinians throughout the Arab world, yet it relied at first primarily on Syria for material aid, as only the radically militant Syrians were willing before the 1967 war to back guerrilla operations.** After the war, Arafat asked for and received additional financial aid from other Arab states, particularly the conservative, oil-rich kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but also the more radical Algeria, Iraq, and to a lesser extent the UAR. All of these states were anxious to capitalize on Fatah's increasing prestige and hoped in the process to gain control of the organization.

*The Muslim Brotherhood is an organization dedicated to unity based on Islam. Ideologically, it has always been highly conservative, if not reactionary, and furnished much of the initial opposition, for example, to the new Egyptian revolutionary regime in the 1950s. The Brotherhood has accordingly received financial support from the conservative Arab world (especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait).

**The Syrians had also put Fatah in contact with China, Cuba, and North Vietnam; some small arms and training assistance was accordingly provided by the Chinese before the war.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the most traditional of the Palestinian political/military groups. Completely the creature of the UAR, the PLO was formally established by the Arab Summit Conference of 1964. This gave it a stamp of legitimacy and political respectability not achieved by any of the other groups. The units of its military arm, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), have served as auxiliary forces attached to the armies of Syria, Iraq, and the UAR. Although vocally militant before the June 1967 war, the PLO had done nothing to fight Israel actively except to create its own guerrilla wing -- the Palestine Liberation Forces (PLF). When PLA units disintegrated during the war, PLO prestige sank. The organization tried to pull itself together during 1968, but it was divided into factions and no effective leadership emerged. The guerrilla wing was still not operating effectively and even the PLO's mentor, the UAR's Nasir, began to look increasingly to Fatah as the real Palestinian power.

In February 1969 the PLO, anxious to survive, came to terms with Fatah, which was eager to acquire political legitimacy. Fatah essentially took control of the PLO's political apparatus.* Since then, as spokesman for both the most

Yasir Arafat
Chairman PLO Central
Committee and Fatah

*Fatah has had more trouble, however, in its attempts to dominate the PLA. This military organization has clung stubbornly to its autonomy and receives support not only from the Fatah-controlled PLO but from the countries in whose armies PLA units serve.

powerful fedayeen group (Fatah)* and the only politically respectable organization (PLO), Arafat has clearly been the foremost Palestinian leader and is recognized in the Arab world as the virtual equivalent of a chief of state. His leadership of Fatah has not been unchallenged, however, and he will presumably continue to be pressed, particularly by left-wing elements in that organization.

The PLO/Fatah organization is on record as supporting establishment of a secular, democratic Palestinian state in which all -- Jews, Moslems, Christians -- will participate equally. Fatah statements have also promised that anyone currently living in Palestine as well as those exiled from it will be entitled to Palestinian citizenship, thus rejecting the contentions of some fedayeen that only those there before either the 1948 war or the influx of Jewish immigrants beginning in 1918 would be acceptable.** Arafat has said that pre-1947 Palestine must constitute the territory of the new state and that Israel, and probably Jordan as it now exists, will disappear. He rejects the November 1967 UN resolution and all other peace proposals which do not incorporate Fatah's demands. While Arafat and most of the Fatah leadership have not taken an ideological position hostile to conservative Arab forces, since the 1967 war Fatah's membership has steadily become more leftist as a result of the influx of new, better-educated, young Arabs. It is possible that pressure from this wing of the organization will gradually push the more conservative old guard (led by Arafat) toward a more radical political platform.

*Fatah had an estimated 7,000 armed commandos in the fall of 1970, plus many thousands of supporters and trainees upon whom it could draw. The PLF, which employs similar tactics and often cooperates with Fatah, had an estimated 1,000.

**In conflict with this public position, however, was the private consensus arrived at by the September 1969 Palestine National Council (the legislative body for the PLO): the figure for a Jewish population must be based on the 1948 Jewish population of Palestine.

Fedayeen Groups Multiply

After 1967, other Palestinian groups quickly jumped on the bandwagon, and there was a mushrooming of lesser fedayeen groups reflecting a wide spectrum of political beliefs and military strategies. All the groups (with the exception of the Communist Partisan Forces) agree on the basic goal: liquidation of Israel as a Jewish state and establishment of a new state in Palestine. They also agree on the need to oppose any sell-out peace proposal which does not satisfy their demands for the "liberation" of Palestine. They differ, however, on the not-so-minor matters of how liberation should be achieved, what other revolutionary events should accompany it, what form the new state should take, with whom they should be aligned, and who the leader of the movement should be.

George Habbash
Leader PFLP

Following the 1967 war, the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) sponsored a fedayeen group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). As indicated above, the ANM had advanced a pan-Arab philosophy, and overtones of this have been passed on to its militant offshoots. Both the PFLP, which terms itself a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist group, and the splinter organization which separated from it in early 1969, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP), argue that a revolution must occur throughout the Arab world, and that the battle for the liberation of Palestine is part of this. However, the PFLP leader, George Habbash, places more emphasis on pushing now for

the liberation of Palestine, while the PDFLP chief, Naif Hawatmah, considered a Maoist, sees the Palestinian struggle as inseparable from that for world-wide "liberation" and calls for all-out, protracted "people's war." Both groups call for the eventual overthrow of "bourgeois reactionary" Arab governments which they list as practically all Middle East governments, including those generally considered radical, but Lebanon and Jordan in particular. But, in spite of the similarity of their ideological positions, these two fedayeen groups and their leaders are bitter rivals.

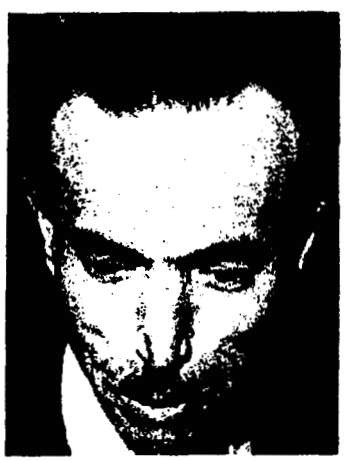
Naif Hawatmah
Leader PDFLP

Another PFLP splinter, the PFLP General Command, which broke with the PFLP in late 1968, considers itself apolitical and has disavowed any desire to overthrow Arab governments or undermine their authority. This group, however, was among the most intransigeant about accepting a cease-fire during the Jordan civil war of September 1970, possibly because it feared it would be eliminated by Jordanian authorities, and possibly also because its leader, Ahmad Jabril, who is fanatically committed to the liberation of Palestine, now saw Jordan as obstructing this goal.*

*In the fall of 1970 the PFLP had an estimated 1,000 armed members, the PDFLP had about 700, the PFLP General Command probably no more than one or two hundred. The PFLP and PDFLP both have political ties to political groups derived from the old ANM organization and thus have a number of political supporters, especially in Lebanon.

A host of smaller* fedayeen groups espouse a variety of ideologies 1. The Arab Palestine Organization (APO), itself a splinter of the PFLP General Command, was pro-Nasir and presumably is still pro-UAR. 2. The Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP), which separated from Fatah in early 1969, is led by Isam Sartawi and is fiercely defensive of its independence. Although it considers itself pro-Baath and supports the pan-Arab, socialist views of the Baath Party, it is not tied to the Baathist rulers of either Iraq or Syria. 3. The Popular Struggle Front (PSF) began as an independent group, merged briefly with Fatah, then split again in late 1968; the group's leader, Bahjat Abu-Gharbiya, has been termed a Marxist, but the ideological leanings of the organization are not clear. 4. The Peoples Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (POLP) is rabidly Marxist-Leninist but numerically insignificant.

Isam Sartawi
Leader AOLP



Bahjat Abu-Gharbiya
Leader PSF

Artificial Fedayeen Creations

In addition to these independent, essentially spontaneous Palestinian fedayeen groups, there are several organizations created by outside forces with ulterior

*None numbers more than several hundred members; some probably have well under a hundred.

motives. The largest of these is Saiqa,* the creature of the Syrian Baath.** Saiqa has participated in some military operations against Israel, but its principal role has been as a subversive force in the neighboring Arab countries of Jordan and Lebanon, particularly the latter. Totally controlled from Damascus, it has apparently been responsive to a Syrian Baath faction at odds with Syrian strongman Asad and at times has been given orders not approved by Asad. Asad is said to have feared that Saiqa might be used against him by his Damascus enemies, and when after the Jordanian civil war Asad staged a coup to seize full power from those enemies he is reported to have used regular troops to disarm their Saiqa guards. In the wake of this November 1970 coup there were indications that Asad planned to crack down on Saiqa and possibly even to eliminate it as a semi-independent organization by forcing it to subordinate itself to Fatah. If Asad holds on to power and carries through with this intention (both highly uncertain), Fatah's relative position would be considerably strengthened, since Saiqa contains some two to three thousand commandos, is the second largest fedayeen group, and thus is the chief numerical counterbalance to Fatah.

Less is known about the fedayeen organization created by the rival Baath regime in Iraq. However, this group, the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), is far smaller than Saiqa and is probably designed essentially to counter Saiqa and

*Estimated to have some 2,000 armed men in the fall of 1970.

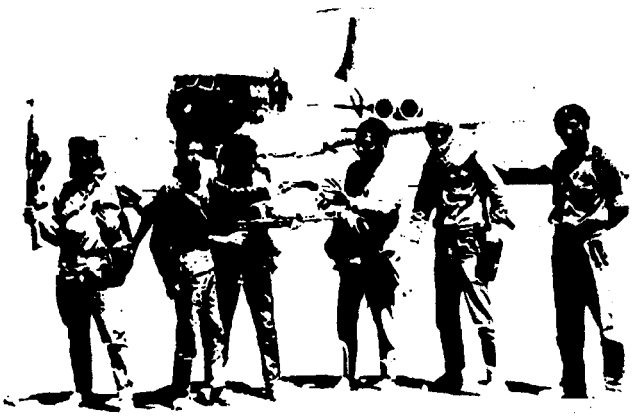
** The Baath Party is a pan-Arab organization whose political philosophy is rabidly Arab nationalist and socialist. It has established regional branches in many Arab countries. Its mutually antagonistic branches in Syria and Iraq have gained power and are in competition for leadership of the whole Baath movement.

advance Iraq's interests. Palestinians serve in both Saiqa and the ALF, and lip service is paid by the two organizations to the goal of liberating Palestine; but both groups exist primarily to advance the Arab nationalist, socialist, pan-Arab views and private interests of their mentors.

Still another group Quwat Al Ansar (the Partisan Forces) was created by the Communist parties of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq in late 1969 (though its formation was not announced until the spring of 1970), in a somewhat belated attempt by these parties to regain the popular support they had been losing over the previous two years to the fedayeen movement. The formation of the Partisan Forces was approved by the Soviet Union and reflected a shift in the Soviet position from hostility to tacit approval of fedayeen action. The Partisans differ from the other fedayeen groups on a number of issues. Tied to the formal positions of the Communist parties which created them, they have been forced to finesse their position on the liberation of Palestine and elimination of Israel as a Jewish state, inasmuch as the Soviet Union and the Arab Communist parties recognize Israel's right to exist. The Partisans are also defensive on the questions of a peaceful settlement and support of the UN Security Council resolution of 1967, both of which the Soviets ostensibly support. The Partisans probably number no more than several hundred, have not participated in military actions against Israel, and exist primarily to advance the interests of the Arab Communist parties.

Fedayeen Tactics -- The Use of International Terror

The fedayeen have relied traditionally on the use of commando-type raids across the Israeli border by small teams of men, aimed primarily at military targets (outposts, military vehicles, patrols), but also, in terrorist fashion, at Israeli civilian targets. This is still the approach advocated by the larger, less radical groups (particularly Fatah), but it has been a singular failure. The Israelis have killed and captured large numbers of



PFLP terrorists and Jordanian soldiers pose in front of hijacked plane–September 1970.

Triumphant terrorists atop wreckage of hijacked plane

Jordanian soldiers survey effect of explosives.

All that remains–September 1970.

guerrillas and the latter have conducted few successful operations of any significance.*

A number of the smaller fedayeen groups have not had the manpower to throw into such a doubtful venture and have turned instead to the use of terror against targets other than Israel. While Hawatmah of the PDFLP is theoretically more radical than Habbash, since he calls for an immediate Maoist peoples' war, it is Habbash of the PFLP who has actually employed the most radical tactics to date of any fedayeen leader. For it is the PFLP which has conducted most of the fedayeen international terrorist operations, the most spectacular one being the successful hijackings of four airplanes in September 1970. Habbash's principal objectives in this respect appear to be to attract attention to the Palestinian cause and gain support for it, to discourage air travel to Israel, and to bolster the prestige of the PFLP and himself.

While the PDFLP has supported similar operations, it has claimed credit for only one, and has stressed the need to wait until it is strong enough to carry out sustained operations (i.e. protracted war). The PFLP splinter group, the General Command, originally shunned such tactics in favor of more traditional commando-type operations in Israeli-occupied territory but turned to international terrorism when its financial situation became precarious. In February 1970 it carried out the most infamous fedayeen operation to date: the bombings of two European airliners, one of which crashed, killing all on board. The Arab Palestine Organization, the Popular Struggle Front, and the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine have also endorsed the use of terror

*Since the Jordan crisis of September 1970, the fedayeen have been too immobilized and too concerned with their own survival and reorganization to conduct much in the way of operations. Jordanian army leaders have also indicated that they would seek to prevent any such operations while the ceasefire with Israel continues.

and have been responsible for one or two bombings each; all undoubtedly hope to strengthen their own reputations through such spectacular operations.

But the use of such tactics is in a sense a sign of weakness, indicating that the organization involved is unable to muster more direct, traditional techniques to the task of changing the status quo. Neither Fatah nor the PLO's fedayeen wing (the PLF) has indulged in this kind of terror to date.* Arafat has consistently condemned its use as being counterproductive and damaging to the Arab image, and in any event he has been too concerned to date with gaining international legitimacy and support and with retaining his existing backing to adopt this tactic. Organizations backed by states vulnerable to Israeli retaliation or to international pressure, such as Saiqa, the ALF, and the Partisan Forces, have also shied away thus far from international terrorism.

In addition to weakness, a general characteristic of the groups which engage in international terrorism is fanaticism. Habbash and Hawatmah, for example, both seem to view the world in black and white terms -- life will be perfect when the dual goals of world revolution and the liberation of Palestine are achieved. Ahmad Jabril, leader of the PFLP General Command, is fanatically consumed by the single goal of liberating Palestine, as is Ahmad Zarur, leader of the pro-Nasir Arab Palestine Organization which broke with Jabril's group Isam Sartawi, leader of the pro-Baath Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine, also seems to have fanatic characteristics.

*There have been recurring reports that Fatah was considering terrorist operations, including assassinations, but no such action has yet materialized. A 1968 hijacking of an Israeli airliner, attributed by some rumors to Fatah, is believed to have been carried out by the PFLP.

In contrast, Arafat operates in the real political world and deals in compromise. He is committed to no particular political philosophy and is willing to discuss alternate approaches, even to the basic issues of the nature and borders of the future state of Palestine. He can talk to both the Saudi Arabians and the Chinese, taking whatever he can from each and convincing each that he is their country's best hope for future influence over the fedayeen. This method of operation tends to make Arafat a less spectacular figure than the more explosive Habbash and at times he has lost headlines to his competitor. It is Arafat, however, not Habbash, who has built a large, fairly well-funded organization, has gained sharply increased international influence in the past three years, and comes the nearest to predominance within the fedayeen worlds.

Arab Aid to the Fedayeen

All of the Arab states support the fedayeen to some extent. They are of course virtually compelled to do so by the emotionalism of the issue, although the degree and nature of their support varies considerably, some of the conservative and distant states (such as Morocco and Tunisia) feeling little compulsion to become directly involved. Other conservative states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have made sizable contributions to Fatah,* reflecting both the presence in these countries of large Palestinian communities and the hope of these states that Fatah, more conservative at least initially, will exert a moderating influence on the fedayeen movement. In late 1970 there were indications that Saudi Arabia was becoming disenchanted with Fatah and was cutting back at least temporarily on fund-raising efforts.

*Individual Palestinians in these countries have contributed to other organizations as well but without government backing.

The radical Arab states have supported the fedayeen enthusiastically, if not always generously, seeing the movement as a potential force for change in the area and hoping to subvert this force to their own particular interests. Syria, consistently the most militant of the Arab nations, was the first in the immediate prewar years* to give meaningful support to the fedayeen movement, supplying Fatah with arms, training, and equipment even before the 1967 war. When Fatah began to exercise some independence, the Syrians shifted their emphasis to their own organization, Saiqa. They have nonetheless continued to supply Fatah with some aid and training, and to act as a conduit for arms aid from China.** Syria also supports the Hittin Forces, the PLA brigade attached to the Syrian army which in turn supplies support to the Palestine Liberation Forces in north Jordan. The Syrians have flirted somewhat with Hawatmah and the PDFLP, probably because of the PFLP's courtship of Syria's rival, Iraq; and following the September 1970 Jordanian crisis, Hawatmah and other PDFLP leaders were said to have fled to Syria and to have begun running the organization from there.

Iraq has supported a number of groups; it constantly tries to gain control of them and frequently drops them when they do not prove malleable. It has provided intermittent assistance to Fatah and is probably reluctant to cut all ties with this powerful organization in spite of Fatah's independence. Following the escape of George Habbash from a Syrian prison in late 1968, Iraq reportedly received him warmly and promised him weapons; only small quantities of arms have been delivered,

*The UAR had provided some assistance to small fedayeen groups as early as the mid-1950's.

**In return, Fatah reportedly supplies Syria, as well as Iraq and Jordan, with intelligence data from inside the occupied territories.

however, possibly reflecting a refusal by Habbash to follow Iraq's orders. Similarly, the pro-Baath Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP) was reportedly promised some aid by Iraq in 1969, but in the spring of 1970, the AOLP's leader Sartawi indicated that this would probably not be forthcoming, inasmuchas the AOLP had refused to do what Iraq wished. Since mid-1969 Iraq has apparently concentrated on its own Arab Liberation Front. However, Iraqi forces in Jordan, including the PLA's Qadisiyah Brigade attached to those forces, have provided logistic support and weapons to a number of fedayeen groups at different times (particularly the PLF, Fatah, and the PFLP General Command).

Unlike Iraq, Algeria has not flitted from group to group and has not tried to impose its control; instead, it has concentrated its favors on Fatah, banking on that organization's potential for dominating the Palestinian movement. In addition to supplying arms and training to Fatah, Algeria has provided it with consistent propaganda support and has urged other Arab states to concentrate their attentions on Fatah.

Since joining the ranks of the radical Arab states in 1969, Libya has stepped up its promises of assistance to various fedayeen groups, but it, too, has concentrated on Fatah.

In any event, Libya,

a strong supporter of Egyptian policy, is said to have stopped all payments to the PFLP in July 1970; on 4 August, the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council indicated that it would continue to give arms and funds to the liberation movement led by Fatah.

The UAR's position with respect to the fedayeen has been somewhat ambivalent. Nasir saw the fedayeen as a potential threat to his own leadership in the Arab world and also realized that they were a disruptive force over which he had almost no control. However, he also realized that the movement was too popular to squelch and was useful as an outlet for the Arab desire for military action. Although the UAR supported the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) for many years, it has not supported the ANM's fedayeen offshoots to any extent. In early 1969 it reportedly gave Habbash some small arms and medical supplies, but was soon disenchanted by the PFLP's use of terror and stopped this support. The PLO was created in 1964, largely to provide a facade of militancy against Israel, and as noted above, was virtually an Egyptian puppet until Fatah gained control of it in early 1969. Nasir was not pleased with this development or with Arafat's rise but accepted both fairly gracefully, and the UAR has continued to supply some aid to both the PLO and Fatah, particularly training assistance. In the summer of 1970, however, when the fedayeen vigorously condemned Nasir's acceptance of the cease-fire proposal, Nasir retaliated by denying them the use of radio facilities, halting fedayeen fund-raising activities, and deporting some Palestinian "extremists." He also indicated that he would suspend all aid to the fedayeen. So far as is known, the UAR's position with respect to the fedayeen remained essentially unchanged in the first six weeks after Nasir's death.

The Fedayeen Threat to Jordan and Lebanon

The issue of state/fedayeen relations in most Arab nations hinges on what the country involved wishes to do for or to the fedayeen. However, for Lebanon and Jordan,

and particularly the latter, the question is more complex. Both countries have large Palestinian populations,* concentrated in refugee camps, and sizable contingents of fedayeen who operate outside the law and are capable of mustering considerable civilian backing.** Furthermore, fedayeen operations across the borders of these countries into Israel have brought reprisal attacks which the Lebanese and Jordanian armies have been unable to contain. The problem is further compounded by the potential and inclination of the radical states of Iraq and Syria to use the situation to subvert the Lebanese and Jordanian governments and to threaten intervention, a threat fulfilled by the Syrians during the September 1970 Jordanian crisis.

*About half of Jordan's population of slightly over two million is Palestinian. There are about 250,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, out of a population of 2,750,000.

**In the fall of 1970, of an estimated 12,000 armed, combat-ready fedayeen, over 9,000 were said to be stationed in Jordan, including almost all the Fatah, PLF, PFLP, and PDFLP forces. Saiqa had many commandos in Lebanon and many more still in Syria. The actual numbers are elusive and vary considerably depending on source and time. Arafat's estimate in the fall of 1970 was that there were 30,000 fedayeen militia in Jordan; the Jordanian estimate was 25,000. Both figures are probably inflated, but may include both commandos activated during the crisis and those still in training, as opposed to other, lower estimates which include only full-time fedayeen.

II. THE QUESTION OF FEDAYEEN UNITY

The Fatah/PLO Merger

Pressure for unification of the fedayeen movement has come from a number of sources: large fedayeen groups which hope to dominate a unified organization, small groups which desire the protection of such an organization against the Jordanian government, and various states, Arab and Communist, which would like to deal with a single group they could control. However, even more potent factors are working against such unity; these include the great diversity in political philosophies and tactics of the various fedayeen groups, the fact that no group is willing to sacrifice its own independence (and no group leader his dream of ultimate dominance), and the desire of each state concerned to have the group it supports emerge predominant. One consequence of these conflicting desires has been a proliferation not only of fedayeen groups but of bodies purporting to unify them, each dominated by a slightly different constellation of forces.

That degree of fedayeen unity which has emerged since the 1967 war has been achieved primarily within the framework of the PLO and has tended to increase the influence and authority of Arafat. The main challenge to Arafat for leadership of the fedayeen movement has been George Habbash, who for a long time refused to participate in the joint fedayeen organizations created under Fatah and PLO sponsorship. Instead he called for a "truly unified," broad national front, in other words, for an organization not controlled by Fatah, and possibly receptive to his own more charismatic style of leadership.

The first major achievement in the drive for fedayeen unity came with Fatah's successful attempt to gain control of the PLO apparatus in February 1969. Fatah had laid the groundwork for this takeover by forcing acceptance of its own slate of delegates to the Palestine National Council* scheduled to meet in February. Fatah had been assisted by the PFLP's refusal to participate in the preparations for the Council. The boycott of the meeting itself by the PFLP, the Palestine Liberation Army, and some PLO figures helped Fatah to gain control of the PLO Executive Committee, the PLO's executive body. As the result of this major victory, Fatah emerged as the most powerful fedayeen organization and possessed a base of legitimacy. This was also a considerable personal victory for Arafat, who became Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and thus gained a platform from which to claim to speak for the whole Palestinian movement.

Creation of Palestine Armed Struggle Command

While the political aspects of fedayeen unity are important in terms of the movement's leadership and its dealings with various states, the main emphasis in the drive for unity has been on creating a joint military coordinating body. This seems logical because the ostensible raison d'etre of all fedayeen groups is a military one: to regain the Palestinian homeland through the use of force. In fact, however, the main purpose of such joint military bodies has been to protect their members from liquidation by Jordanian authorities. The larger fedayeen groups have backed such organizations to the extent that they could dominate them. The smaller groups have participated in them for their own protection.

*The Palestine National Council was the supreme body of the PLO as established by the summit conference of the Arab states in 1964; it was the legally constituted and recognized Palestinian legislative body. It dispersed after the June 1967 war and was resurrected by agreement of the PLO, Fatah, and the PFLP.

One of the first actions of the new PLO Executive Committee, as constituted in February 1969, was to establish a military coordinating body called the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC). As chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, Arafat also became Commander-in-Chief of the PASC.* The functions of the PASC included unifying security patrols in Amman and guard units in refugee camps, issuing military communiques for its members, and, most importantly, providing insurance against a crack-down by Jordanian authorities on any of its members. By mid-1969 most of the smaller fedayeen groups had joined the Command; the PFLP had not.**

The Challenge of the Unified Fedayeen Command

The PFLP frequently criticized the Palestine Armed Struggle Command in the months following its creation and called for the establishment of a "broader" national front. The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) was also unhappy with the Command, as constituted, and in December 1969 announced that it was "freezing" its relationship with the organization. It stated, however, that it still considered itself a member of all "joint action formulas"; in other words, it still considered itself protected from King Husayn by the Command but not bound by its internal relations.

*The organization's Chief of Staff was Abd-al-Razzaq Yahya, soon also to be commander of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). Appointed as Arafat's man to both posts, Yahya soon demonstrated his own independence, and he and Arafat have since had a series of disputes.

**Nor had the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine, whose leader Isam Sartawi feared Fatah's domination more than Jordanian repression. Those who had joined included Fatah, The Palestine Liberation Forces (PLF), Saiqa, the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), the Popular Struggle Front (PSF), the Arab Palestine Organization (APO), the PFLP General Command, and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP).

In February 1970 an attempt, probably spearheaded by the PFLP, was made to undermine the Fatah-dominated PASC by establishing a new group outside the PLO framework, to be called the Unified Fedayeen Command (UFC). Formation of the Unified Command was prompted by Jordan's 10 February 1970 issuance of a new law-and-order decree, designed to tighten controls over the fedayeen. On the same day that Jordan issued these regulations, ten fedayeen groups issued a statement in the name of the Unified Fedayeen Command,* asserting their unity and rejecting the decree. Faced with a united fedayeen movement which was in effect threatening civil war, King Husayn backed down and suspended enforcement of the regulations.

This crisis had begun while Arafat was in Moscow** and the Unified Command was established without his participation. Partly because of this, Fatah's position in the new, more broadly-based organization was less dominant than it was in the Palestine Armed Struggle Command. Arafat had clearly been outmaneuvered. Because the Unified Command was widely credited with having forced Husayn to retreat, Arafat could hardly dispute its existence. Instead, he accepted its formation, stating that it would complement the PASC.

Having gained their first victory, the groups wishing to undermine Fatah's predominant position immediately began a campaign to have the Unified Fedayeen

*The membership was the same as that of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command but also included the PFLP, AOLP, and eventually the Peoples Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (POLP).

**This was probably not a coincidence. It is likely that King Husayn took advantage of Arafat's absence to try to impose the new controls.

Command supersede the PASC. The PFLP went even further, urging that the PLO itself be eliminated, presumably to be replaced by a more formalized version of the Unified Fedayeen Command. The proposal to abolish the PLO met heavy opposition not only from Fatah, but also from the Palestine Liberation Army, whose existence after all is dependent on that of the PLO. The PLA is said to have threatened to eliminate the groups causing disruption if they did not desist.

Compromise -- The PLO Central Committee

In May 1970 a compromise was reached between the two conflicting viewpoints. At that time a National Unity Agreement was issued, calling for establishment of a Central Committee which would be responsible to the Palestine National Council and would replace the Unified Fedayeen Command. The Council approved this proposal when it met in June. While the new PLO Central Committee was established within the PLO framework and Arafat was named its chairman, this organization had a far broader membership than had the PLO Executive Committee, and Fatah's ability to impose its control was curtailed. The Executive Committee was not abolished, however, and considerable ambiguity remained on the question of which organization was supreme. A similar problem existed in the military realm. The Palestine National Council at its June meeting also approved the creation of a Supreme Military Command, again headed by Arafat but with a more diffused leadership than that of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command and designed to replace the latter. However, the PASC apparently continued to function.

Thus in mid-1970 a multitude of joint fedayeen organizations existed and no one was particularly happy with the situation. The position of Fatah (and Arafat) had been weakened somewhat, but Fatah, as the most powerful group by far, was still dominant. The PFLP had succeeded in whittling away at Fatah, but was no more willing than before to submit to control from another

body. The PFLP immediately made it clear that despite membership in the new groups it retained the right to carry out independent operations. In September 1970 it thus ignored Central Committee orders not to destroy the three planes it had hijacked and to release the hostages it held. The Central Committee exerted its authority briefly, suspending the PFLP from membership. However, it readmitted the group after several days, thus demonstrating that it did not have the power, or possibly the will, to enforce its own regulations.

During the Jordan civil war of September 1970, the PLO Central Committee was recognized as the only legitimate fedayeen bargaining body, and Arafat clearly emerged as its spokesman. What effect the Jordan crisis would have on the structure of the fedayeen movement was not immediately apparent, although it appeared that the more radical groups had suffered the most and that Fatah had emerged relatively stronger. Several reports soon after the crisis indicated that Fatah was trying to establish control over the entire movement. According to Isam Sartawi, leader of the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP) and a long-time Fatah opponent, by the end of October 1970, Arafat was issuing orders for the whole movement in complete disregard for what anyone else thought. Sartawi said that the PLO Central Committee at that point had not met for weeks.

In mid-November, however, the Central Committee announced that the fedayeen groups planned a formal merger of their military and political organizations. This was to be discussed at a meeting scheduled for 25 November. Such a merger at this time would presumably represent a success for Fatah in its efforts to form a united front totally dominated by itself. If effected, it would indicate the extreme weakness of the smaller groups and suggest that they feared their own elimination (either by Jordanian authorities or by Fatah itself) if they did not comply. Such an agreement on the part of the smaller groups would nonetheless probably reflect only an effort on their part to buy time until they could rebuild their organizations. In the long run, the numerous factors working against fedayeen cooperation are likely again to predominate.

Another factor bearing on the question of unity in late 1970 was the possibility that Fatah could forcibly impose its will on the lesser groups. That it was having some success in this was indicated by mid-November reporting that Sartawi's organization, the AOLP, had been dissolved as an independent organization and subsumed by Fatah. Fatah's ability to force such integration on other groups will depend to a large extent on the future of Saiqa. Asad's intentions with respect to the group and his ability to carry out those intentions will determine Saiqa's future role as a counterbalancing force to Fatah. If Saiqa itself is eliminated as an independent organization and essentially absorbed by Fatah, the ability of the lesser groups to maintain their own independence will be considerably reduced.

Thus, the basic question of fedayeen unity at any one time revolves around the willingness and need of the participants to cooperate. In the end, the degree of unity accepted is simply a reflection of the pressures, both internal and external, on the movement and the individual assessments of the various groups of their own best interests. When threatened, either indirectly as with the United States peace proposal of July 1970 or directly with military force, the fedayeen have tried to present a united front. Their reaction to the US plan was to issue a joint resolution of denunciation. Their reaction to threats to their survival has been to form joint military bodies designed to protect them through combined strength.

Such threats tend to be transitory, however, and when they pass and the fedayeen no longer feel threatened, the differences among them tend to come to the fore and the question reverts to one of power politics. Fatah has for the most part used the periods of crisis to its own advantage, skillfully manipulating the forces working for unity in order to increase its own predominance within the movement. This success is largely attributable to the diplomatic skill of Yasir Arafat and the prospects for unity would undoubtedly suffer were he to be removed from

the scene. Arafat's ability (not unlike that of Nasir) to talk sympathetically and persuasively to widely varied groups and countries as well as the prestige he has built up in the past several years have been instrumental in helping to forge the weak ties of unity that have thus far been created. Presumably, if Arafat now feels that he can best enhance Fatah's control over the other fedayeen groups by discarding the mechanisms he has so laboriously constructed and by building new ones, he will do so. But unless Fatah grows strong enough forcibly to impose and then maintain its own control over the other organizations, the long-term prospects of meaningful fedayeen unity are modest.

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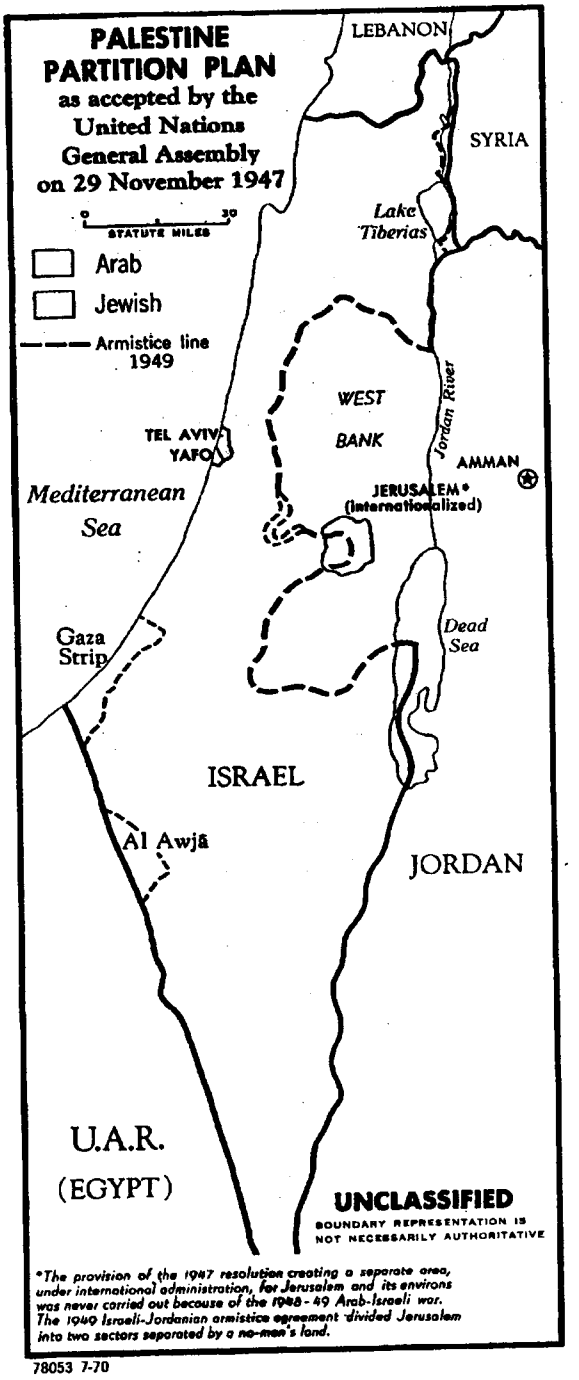

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III. COMMUNIST DEALINGS WITH THE FEDAYEEN

Soviet Policy Towards the Fedayeen

From Hostility to Tolerance

The basic impediment to closer Soviet-fedayeen relations has been the USSR's continuing recognition of Israel's right to exist. This recognition is obviously incompatible with the claims of the Palestinians that the land is theirs and that Israel as a Jewish state must go. While Soviet commentators have at times stated that Israel took more land than was stipulated in the United Nations Palestine Partition Plan of November 1967, thus implying that some readjustment of the 1948 borders might be called for, they have more commonly treated this as an academic issue, not to be taken seriously. The Soviets have concentrated their demands for rectification on the territories occupied in 1967; in so doing they have consistently supported the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967, which the Palestinians do not accept. Thus, both Soviet recognition of the state of Israel and Soviet support for a peaceful solution based on the UN resolution stand in the way of a complete Soviet-fedayeen alliance. In addition, more practical considerations, especially Soviet inability to control this very disruptive force, have worked against such an alliance.

In the immediate aftermath of the June 1967 war, the Soviet position towards the fedayeen was one of hostility. Soviet commentators frequently condemned Arab "extremists" and their "destroy-Israel" slogans, and the Soviets generally viewed guerrilla raids into Israeli-occupied territory as being counterproductive. In the spring of 1968, however, the Soviets began to modify their line. This reflected the growing strength and popular appeal of the fedayeen movement in the Middle East, as well as Soviet concern that the Chinese would gain

influence with this potentially important force. The Soviets may also have reasoned that the immediate prospects of gaining an acceptable solution to the Middle East situation were slight, and that some military pressure on the Israelis might push the latter toward compromise. Soviet reporting on fedayeen activities was carefully limited, however, to operations in the occupied territories. The Palestinians' right to repel the Israeli invaders from these lands was recognized, but not their right to regain all of Palestine.

In July 1968, the Soviets took a step toward establishing closer contacts with the fedayeen by agreeing to receive Fatah leader Arafat secretly in Moscow. Arafat apparently saw Kosygin, but the available evidence is too thin and scattered to draw any firm conclusions about what was said. The Soviets may indeed have promised to furnish indirect support through the UAR, but even so it is doubtful that any significant material support resulted. It is true that the Egyptians about this time did begin supplying Fatah from Egyptian army stocks with small quantities (never more than five percent of Fatah's total) of Soviet-made light arms, as the Syrians had been doing since 1965. Although a CPSU official later implied that the Soviets replenished these stocks, there is no way of knowing if this was really intended as direct compensation for Egyptian and Syrian aid to the Palestinian guerrillas.

[redacted] this statement casts doubt on the existence of such a clear-cut Soviet-UAR-fedayeen deal.

Whatever the case, after the summer of 1968, the Soviets seem to have become more willing to allow the East Europeans to sell weapons -- for hard cash -- to Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Forces. Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia were first reported making such sales

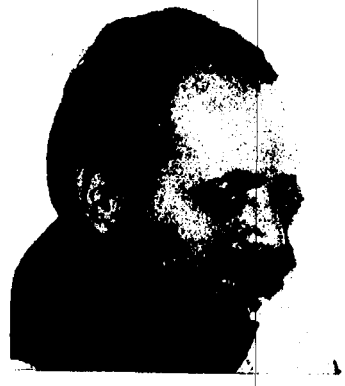
in mid-1968, almost certainly with Soviet concurrence.* In the same period, there was one other indirect sign of somewhat greater Soviet favor toward Fatah: in late July, the Lebanese Communist Party, which had previously been aloof if not hostile to the Palestinian armed struggle, reportedly decided to give some active support (providing medical attention and hiding places) to Fatah forces in south Lebanon. This decision probably also had Soviet acquiescence.

Although the Soviets were now flirting with Fatah, they remained concerned about the organization's Muslim Brotherhood connections and its close ties to conservative Arab countries. This distrust was and still is reciprocated by many Fatah leaders (including Arafat), who disapprove of Soviet support for a peaceful solution and doubt Soviet willingness to help them. In late March 1969 Arafat is said to have met in Algiers with Soviet President Podgornyy.

Because of this mutual distrust, the Soviets kept open other channels of communication, primarily with the UAR-backed Palestine Liberation Organization through the

*A Bulgarian-registered ship had reportedly landed such arms in Syria as early as June 1968 for Fatah and the PLF; Czechoslovakia was said to be selling fedayeen groups weapons directly, shipping them to Latakia, where they were then routed to Jordan and Lebanon.

PLO's Beirut representative Shafiq Al-Hut. This dialogue continued throughout 1968 and early 1969 and may have been partly responsible for the Soviet decision to permit East European countries to sell weapons to Fatah and the PLO's fedayeen wing, the Palestine Liberation Forces.



Shafiq Al-Hut
PLO Representative
in Beirut

The Shift to a Stronger Pro-Fedayeen Line

The Soviets seem to have responded favorably both to the PLA/Fatah merger and to the creation of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command in early 1969, seeing such unifying steps as simplifying the question of with whom to deal. Press coverage of operations into the occupied territories increased. At the same time a greater distinction began to be drawn between the "moderate" fedayeen (presumably Fatah/PLO) and the "extremists" (probably the more radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which had refused to enter either of the new unified organizations).*

In the early fall of 1969, [redacted] the CPSU had recently decided to increase cooperation with the fedayeen, probably for the same reasons that the Soviets had decided to talk with them in the first place: hope that this would put pressure on Israel, the growing strength of the fedayeen movement, and fear of being outmaneuvered by the Chinese. The Soviets may also have been influenced by the new

*The Soviets identified the "extremists" as those who use the slogan "the worse the better," thus trying to tie them to the Chinese. In fact, the Chinese were aiding Fatah and the PLO, not the PFLP.

promise of a unified movement with which the USSR could more comfortably deal. In order to provide the theoretical justification for a more pro-fedayeen posture, the Soviets had to put their support for the Palestinian cause in terms strong enough to justify armed struggle.

The terms chosen were first spelled out by CPSU Politburo member Shelepin in an October 1969 speech to the World Federation of Trade Unions Congress in Budapest. Shelepin described the "struggle of the Palestinian patriots" as a "just national-liberation and anti-imperialist struggle" which "we will support." This was the strongest public position ever taken by a Soviet leader on the Palestinian struggle; previous statements had supported the "legitimate" as opposed to "national" rights of Palestinians, thus implying the right of Palestinians to return to Israel or to Israel-conquered territory but not to restore a national state in Palestine.

Additional evidence soon confirmed that the use of the new formulation was a conscious, joint decision of the Soviet leadership. On 11 December, speaking at a luncheon in honor of a visiting UAR delegation, Kosygin repeated Shelepin's words almost verbatim. Further testimony to the Soviet shift was provided by a November 1969 Kommunist article by V. Rumyantsev, Chief of the Middle East/North Africa Sector of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department: Rumyantsev stated that the Palestinians were "struggling for the restoration of their national rights" and that all progressive forces were supporting the movement.

By their increasing, although still sporadic, use of the phrase Palestinian "national" rights, the Soviets were flirting with a question they were unwilling to deal with directly: that of Palestinian claims to the territory of Israel proper. Several commentators in mid-1969 indicated that Israel had occupied a larger territory than was provided by the November 1947 partition plan, and that the boundaries fixed at that time are in fact the legal boundaries of Israel. Such propaganda statements were probably intended as partial sops to the fedayeen demand that Israel should be abolished.

However, these statements probably failed to satisfy the fedayeen because they continued to indicate that a state of Israel should exist in Palestine, albeit on a greatly reduced scale. And they contradicted the continuing Soviet assertions of support for the 1967 UN resolution which had strongly implied that the prewar 1967 borders would be the final, recognized ones.

The Soviets have toyed lightly with the related issue of what to do with whatever territory Israel would be asked to relinquish -- whether to hand it over to the Palestinians or to Jordan. A Soviet propaganda broadcast of mid-1969 explored with apparent approval the idea of establishing a Palestinian state on the Jordan West Bank, but by and large Soviet public comment has dealt deprecatingly with what is viewed as an Israeli desire for such a buffer state. However, there has been at least one recent indication that the Soviets would be receptive to negotiations concerning a possible Palestinian state on the West Bank. In Cairo in October Kosygin is said to have urged Arafat to deal with the United States as the only power capable of regaining the West Bank and Gaza. Arafat rejected the advice.

Practical Effects of Propaganda Shift

Following Kosygin's December 1969 statement of support for the fedayeen, [redacted] that Kosygin had not meant to imply that the Soviets would arm the commandos or help them materially. However, there were some indications that the Soviets were considering increasing their material support. In October 1969 a Lebanese Communist Party delegation visited Moscow where it was received by Politburo member Kirilenko and CPSU International Department Chief Ponomarev. At this time the Soviets consented to the Lebanese Communist Party's desire to form a guerrilla organization of its own, and informed the LCP that they would not only assist this effort but would aid other fedayeen groups with money, training, and medical supplies. The remarks of the Soviet leaders

suggested continuing concern, however, that the USSR might be linked to fedayeen terrorist activities if the Soviet Union were publicly identified as supplying arms directly to the fedayeen. Ponomarev also declared that the Soviets would not establish direct relations between the CPSU and fedayeen, but would use such Soviet "mass organizations" as the Komsomol, trade unions, and the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Committee as intermediaries to make public contact with them. Almost all subsequent official dealings between the Soviets and the fedayeen have in fact been handled through the Solidarity Committee.

In the fall of 1969, this committee invited the PLO to send a delegation to the USSR. When originally issued, the invitation reportedly was extended only to Palestine Liberation Army representatives, but by December Arafat was added. Arafat himself was said to be reluctant to go, probably because he was skeptical about Soviet willingness to provide meaningful aid, and possibly also because he did not wish to antagonize either the Saudis or the Chinese. However, other members of the PLO Executive Committee finally persuaded him that the mere fact of the visit would be a diplomatic victory for the fedayeen.

The concrete results of the delegation's ten-day visit in February were unclear. The communique issued after the visit included the apparently standard formulation that the Soviet people support the "national liberation and anti-imperialist struggle" of the Palestinians. The Soviets seem to have made additional vague promises of material support but may have linked them to the question of further unification of the fedayeen movement. Though indefinite, their comments led to some wishful thinking on the part of the fedayeen. One member of the delegation said that the whole delegation came away convinced the Soviets would supply arms directly to the resistance movement and assist with training. However, he also reported that the Soviets had indicated they would deal only with the Palestine Liberation Army because their arms were "conventional weapons for a conventional army." Arafat himself admitted that no agreement on aid had been reached, but professed not to be disappointed because, he said, he had expected no more than he got.

Relations In Flux

In the wake of this visit, several remarks made publicly by low-level Soviet officials in the spring of 1970 went well beyond any previous Soviet statements on the Palestinian issue. On 18 April, the Soviet charge in Baghdad told Arab newsmen that the Soviet people supported the Palestinian struggle to "liberate" the occupied territory and to establish a "democratic Palestinian state." Two days later, the Soviet press attache in Amman went even further, saying that the Soviet Union

> supports the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state, and. . .supports every struggle aimed at toppling all regimes based on racist fanaticism such as the present regime in Israel.

Although these statements were subsequently disavowed, they reveal the thinking of some Soviet officials and suggest that the question of how far to support Palestinian "national" rights was being debated in the Soviet Union.

In any event, by the summer of 1970 the Soviets seem to have pulled back somewhat from support of the Palestinian cause. In his 12 June election speech, Brezhnev reaffirmed the right of Israel to exist, calling simply for assurances of the "legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine." This marked a return to the old formula on Palestinian rights which had been used before Shelepin and Kosygin in late 1969 implied that the Palestinian struggle was one for "national" rights.

This statement was accompanied by other indications that the Soviets were dragging their feet on the fedayeen issue. At this time (see p. 39) they seemed to pull back from their previous position of support for the Partisan Forces, the fedayeen group established by four Arab

Communist Parties with Soviet approval in late 1969. In addition, there was no indication as of the fall of 1970 that the Soviets were yet supplying any direct material support to the Palestinians. Various fedayeen leaders have reacted since the summer of 1970 by privately expressing increased displeasure with the Soviets; these have included Arafat and even such a normally pro-Soviet fedayeen leader as PLO Beirut representative Shafiq Al-Hut.

Two major Soviet policy actions since mid-1970 were particularly harmful to Soviet-fedayeen relations. The first was Soviet acquiescence in the July 1970 U.S. ceasefire proposal which the fedayeen vigorously condemned. The Soviets also supported Nasir's decision to suspend fedayeen propaganda broadcasts from Cairo, and tried to persuade the fedayeen to mute their opposition to the peace proposal and to cut back on their operations so as not to jeopardize the agreement. In addition, the Soviet position adopted during the September Jordanian civil war was hardly likely to win fedayeen gratitude, since the Soviets showed themselves anxious above all to prevent Israeli or U.S. intervention, and apparently wanted the fighting stopped at all costs. Following that crisis, the Soviets tried to recoup their political losses among the Palestinians by claiming, with little credibility, that their support for the guerrillas during the civil war had been wholehearted.

In early October, Premier Kosygin met with Arafat in Cairo, where both men were attending Nasir's funeral. Kosygin tried to mend Soviet fences with Fatah, suggesting that Arafat send two Fatah representatives to Moscow to discuss relations in view of Nasir's death and the Jordan crisis. Arafat was not receptive, answering that the Soviets had rejected Fatah's previous efforts to establish relations and he saw no reason to reopen the dialogue. Kosygin indicated Soviet willingness to give aid to the Palestinians, provided that the latter were willing to coordinate their activities with the Arab

peaceful solution have always been at variance with those of the fedayeen, and for a considerable time after the 1967 war they opposed fedayeen activities. However, these parties were aware of the fact that they were losing popularity and members as a result of their stand, and quickly took advantage of the shifting Soviet line in the spring of 1968. The Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) was the first to shift from hostility to support. In mid-1968, the LCP reportedly promised some logistic support to Fatah (hiding places, medical attention), and in early 1969 the LCP and Fatah were said to be discussing LCP participation in fund-raising for Fatah in return for Fatah's training of LCP members.

When the Soviets took a still stronger pro-fedayeen tack in mid-1969, the LCP decided to further modify its own position from verbal and logistic support of the armed struggle to actual participation in that struggle. In September 1969, the LCP proposed to the Communist Parties of Jordan, Syria, and Iraq the establishment of a coordinating committee to discuss some form of joint participation in Palestinian guerrilla activities. Both the proposal and the subsequent agreement of the three other parties probably had Soviet approval. In November representatives of the four parties met and agreed that they would establish a joint partisan organization, but decided not to formalize such a body until the spring of 1970.*

*In the meantime the individual parties were proceeding with their own separate arrangements to establish armed forces. For use at home, the LCP began to set up a body known as the Popular Guard, whose purpose was described as defensive, to protect Lebanon from Israeli attack. The LCP began sending its members to Syria for training assistance from various fedayeen organizations. The Jordanian Party was also said to be training its members in guerrilla tactics.

In late December 1969, representatives of these Parties met in Moscow with CPSU Secretaries Suslov and Ponomarev and were reportedly promised support. The timing of these preliminaries to setting up a Communist fedayeen group coincided with the public statements being made by Shelepin and Kosygin, calling for support of the "national liberation struggle" of the Palestinians, as well as with Soviet issuance of an invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organization to send a delegation to Moscow.

Establishment of Partisan Forces

In March 1970 the Communist Party of Jordan (CPJ) surprised the LCP, and probably the other Communist Parties as well, by jumping the gun on earlier arrangements and unilaterally announcing its establishment of Quwat Al-Ansar (Partisan Forces). The CPJ proclaimed that it was joining the armed struggle and moreover defended, contrary to Soviet policy, the right of the Palestinians to strive for what it termed the supreme goal of the resistance movement, "the liberation of Palestine." The CPJ's action was apparently prompted by panic, accompanied by internal dissension, and precipitated by the February 1970 crisis in Jordan between the government and the fedayeen. In the wake of that crisis, dominant forces in the CPJ reportedly felt that the party must either take a strong position in support of the Palestinian resistance or lose still more local prestige. Because of the CPJ's unilateral action, the Partisan Forces appeared for some time to be a creature of that party alone, rather than a joint venture of the four parties.

Early in the following month, representatives of the four participating Communist parties met again in Iraq and agreed on various practical steps (such as fund raising and establishing offices and bases) to be taken jointly in setting up the Partisan Forces. There was considerable debate over the political line to be taken, and they agreed to meet again to discuss this.

When the representatives did meet in May, the Syrian delegate offered a draft which called explicitly for the "liberation of Palestine," and the representatives of the four parties adopted it. It seems likely, however, that in so doing they exceeded their authority. Neither the Soviet Union nor most of the Arab Communist Parties have directly and unambiguously called for the liberation of Palestine, either before or since this episode.*

Following passage of this resolution, the Soviet attitude toward the Partisans grew notably cooler. In the summer of 1970 the Soviets indicated that they did not wish to receive a delegation of the Partisan Forces which was obviously in search of aid. While it is possible that this simply reflected the increased Soviet caution about the Palestinian cause visible at the time, it may also have indicated some reluctance to be identified with a clear-cut endorsement of the "liberation of Palestine." It was not until September 1970 that a Soviet journal (New Times) first acknowledged the group's existence.

In any event, the Soviets have thus far seemed reluctant to supply aid directly even to these Communist Partisan Forces, although the Soviets have apparently not objected to such dealings being handled by the East Europeans. In the summer and fall of 1970 the Partisan Forces were apparently receiving some material support from Bulgaria, Poland, and possibly East Germany.

*Only the CPJ, in its March 1970 announcement establishing the Partisan Forces, has recognized the right of the Palestinians to strive for the liberation of Palestine. The Soviets themselves have supported what they have termed the Palestinians' "national" or "national-liberation" rights, but have deliberately failed to define what they mean.

As of the fall of 1970, the Partisan Forces had not yet engaged in any anti-Israel operations, and apparently did not consider themselves strong enough to do so. They had several bases in Jordan and probably only several hundred armed men. At this time they were still in the process of organization and training. The Partisans are reported to have participated in the September fighting against King Husayn and to have acquitted themselves well, although their entry into the fighting was belated because of a delay in receiving permission from their parent parties and the Soviet Union. Although they suffered considerable casualties and reportedly afterward retained only a few bases in north Jordan, their political position relative to the other fedayeen groups, previously extremely weak, may have been somewhat improved by the civil war.

Chinese Policy Toward the Fedayeen

Unfettered by long-standing or involved relationships in the Middle East, not vitally concerned by reason of proximity or economics, and anxious to undermine both U.S. and Soviet interests wherever possible, the Chinese have given both vocal and material support to the Palestinian fedayeen. The Chinese do not have diplomatic relations with Israel and have referred to Israel as an "artificial creation of U.S. imperialism." They are thus not limited in their ability to support the Palestinian cause and are free to attack the Soviets both for calling Israel "an independent national state" and for supporting the 1967 UN resolution.

While the Chinese have also condemned the Soviets for criticizing "extremists" in the Middle East, they, like the Soviets, have chosen to deal primarily with the less radical, more important, and more predictable fedayeen groups. In mid-1970 they referred to Fatah as the only organization representing the true Palestine national liberation movement. Peking regards Fatah as capable of unifying the fedayeen and accomplishing the national aims of the Palestinian struggle precisely because it is a "national"

organization rather than a class-based one. [redacted] once the Palestinian victory is won, a class struggle will ensue within Fatah for the "further development" of the revolution.

As early as March 1965 the Chinese received Ahmad Shuqayri, then head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); and Peking thereafter became the first non-Arab capital to accredit a permanent PLO representative. Ever since then, the Soviets have denounced Shuqayri as "pro-Chinese." Peking also began dealing with Fatah at about this time, and thereafter provided training to members of both Fatah and the PLO. During 1968 Fatah reportedly also began receiving equipment, medical supplies, and some financial aid from China. Fatah may have had to pay for at least some of what it received, because in February 1970 Arafat stated that Fatah used Saudi Arabian money to buy arms from China.

Ahmad Shuqayri
First PLO Leader

In the five years since 1965, the Chinese have furnished training assistance within China to a maximum of one or two hundred fedayeen annually, and since 1968 Chinese instructors are reported to have trained additional guerrillas in Syria. In the summer and fall of 1970 there were several reports that a few Chinese advisors were actually serving with fedayeen units, and that some were even captured in the September Jordan civil war.*

*While further confirmation of these reports is needed, their credibility is somewhat enhanced by the fact that Chinese advisors at this time were known to be participating in the Dhufar rebellion in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. The Chinese Communists have thus proven themselves willing to commit a small number of their nationals to an active role in an Arab "national liberation struggle."

Fatah's Arafat has not been hesitant about playing the Soviets and Chinese off against each other. Following his return from Moscow in February 1970, he accepted an invitation to visit China. While it is not known exactly what promises he received, Arafat himself has stated that the Chinese promised him arms, and in June 1970 a shipment of rifles and spare parts reportedly did arrive in Latakia for Fatah from China. After his visit Arafat was effusive in his praise of the Chinese -- in marked contrast to his lukewarm statements concerning the Soviets.

During this visit, the Chinese are said to have pressed Arafat for further unification of the fedayeen movement and to have urged that the Palestinians begin to conduct more operations inside Israel proper and to operate from bases within the occupied territory, in accordance with Mao's strategy. They also reportedly expressed opposition to terrorist bombings and plane hijackings, calling these "amateur" tactics. None of these points, however, seems to have been made a precondition to support for Fatah.

Following Nasir's acceptance of the U.S. ceasefire proposal in July 1970, the PLO sent a delegation to Peking to discuss the situation. This delegation received whole-hearted support from the Chinese for their rejection of the proposal, which was not surprising since Peking had already reportedly urged Arafat to attempt to persuade Nasir not to accept a peaceful settlement. has plausibly reported that at this time the Chinese offered further financial and military aid to the PLO, apparently additional to what had been promised to Arafat.

The Chinese desire to undermine any chance of stability in the Middle East is reported to have also led to a decision in the fall of 1970 to give some minimal assistance to the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, despite good evidence of Chinese displeasure with the PFLP's tactics. In September, the Chinese are said to have told the PFLP's leader, Habbash, that they disapproved of the

group's "adventurism" in hijacking planes. They are also said to have indicated unhappiness with the PFLP's performance in the Jordan crisis in September, saying that the PFLP should not have acted independently of Fatah, which they called the sole representative of the Palestine resistance movement.

Chinese apparent willingness to promise Habbash some token financial and arms assistance despite these major misgivings about the PFLP suggested that Peking was determined to use every instrument that could possibly assist its current purposes in the Middle East. In September 1970, K'ang Sheng, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Party's Politburo, summed up the present Chinese goal by stating that the Chinese are aiding the fedayeen in order to keep tension high in the area and to prevent a U.S.-Soviet agreement there.

Despite these various Chinese ties with fedayeen groups, certain key limitations exist. China's support in fact has been much more moral than material, consisting for the most part of only some training and some light arms. The Chinese do get a lot of political and prestige return for their modest input, but Chinese power is distant, Soviet power is not. This the various fedayeen leaders appreciate fully. And although they continually express their thanks for the strong sympathetic support furnished by China, they have been careful to keep their options and channels of communication open to Moscow, knowing that the future of the area will be far more influenced by Soviet military and political moves than by Chinese.*

*This belief has in fact at times inhibited some important fedayeen leaders from public dealings with the Chinese. In early 1968, PLO Beirut representative Shafiq Al-Hut reportedly rejected an invitation to visit China, as he then feared this might harm any chance of receiving Soviet aid. More remarkably, Naif Hawatmah, leader of the ostensibly pro-Maoist Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also rejected such an invitation in early 1970 for the same reason.

ABBREVIATIONS

AL ANSAR	Partisan Forces
ALF	Arab Liberation Front
ANM	Arab Nationalist Movement
AOLP	Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine
CPI	Communist Party of Iraq
CPJ	Communist Party of Jordan
CPS	Communist Party of Syria
LCP	Communist Party of Lebanon
PASC	Palestine Armed Struggle Command
PDFLP	Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLA	Palestine Liberation Army
PLF	Palestine Liberation Forces
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC	Palestine National Council
PSF	Popular Struggle Front
Saiqa	Vanguard Organization for the Popular Liberation War
UFC	Unified Fedayeen Command