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Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine

Walid Khalidi*

Zionism's responsibility for the Palestinian exodus and diaspora is an integral part of the genesis of the State of Israel. In their heart of hearts, most Israelis know this, which at least in part accounts for their pervasive sense of insecurity. But the Israeli government will never admit to this responsibility and for the last forty years has tried to divert attention from it through the propagation of the lie that in 1948 the Arab leaders broadcast orders to the Palestinians to evacuate their country preliminary to its "invasion" by the regular Arab armies.

The issue of responsibility for the Palestinian exodus will remain so long as there is a Palestinian problem, but it was particularly acute in the 1950s and 1960s because until the 1967 War, *all* five permanent members of the

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United Nations Security Council were officially committed to the Palestinian right of return to Israel on the basis of UN Resolution 194, which they had annually endorsed for twenty consecutive years. In the last two decades, the highlighting by Israel and the World Zionist Organization (WZO) of the assumed right of return of Soviet Jews and the automatic equation of their desire for emigration from the U.S.S.R. with this right are at least partly designed to submerge and snuff out the Palestinian right of return.

The chief exponent until 1967, outside Israel, of the Israeli version of the Palestinian exodus was the Anglo-Zionist writer Jon Kimche, helped by his younger brother David, then a member of the Israeli intelligence services, and more recently of Irangate fame.

Those of us at the time who took on the Kimches *et al.* adopted a two track approach. Rather than being dutifully mesmerized by the red herring of the Arab evacuation orders, we chose to examine what was actually happening on the ground during the crucial months of the civil war (December 1947–15 May 1948) and, specifically, sought help from those Hebrew sources which were *unavailable* in English translation. An early result was my article “The Fall of Haifa” (*Middle East Forum*, December 1959) and “Plan Dalet” (*Middle East Forum*, November 1961) reproduced below.

Much has been published on 1948 since then, especially in the last year or two. The more recent writings of Israeli scholars (Teveth, Segev, Flapan, Shlaim, Morris) are, in documentation and respect for the facts, light years away from the persistent official Israeli version of the events of 1948. But with the possible exception of Flapan, there is a lingering reluctance even in these writings to see the Palestinian exodus in its Zionist moorings. Morris, for example, unequivocally and commendably confirms the death of the (albeit long-deceased) Arab evacuation orders. But along with the others he views the Palestinian exodus in an historical vacuum. To be sure, he mentions discussions before 1948 in the highest Zionist circles of the “transfer” (euphemism for expulsion) of the Arab population, but he sees no link between this and Plan Dalet. He regards the obvious linear dynamic binding together the successive military operations of Plan D as fragments in an, as it were, cubic configuration accidentally related to one another only through their joint occurrence in the dimension of time. From his perspective, no connection exists between the imperative to “transfer” the Arab population and seize its lands and the imperative to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of Jews it was planned to bring to the new Jewish state. Morris bravely admits the evacuation through force or fear of the bulk

of the 369 Palestinian villages, which he meticulously lists (see Appendix D below). But he subliminally places the moral burden of this, not on the invader, but on the invaded, who by resisting or panicking brought permanent exile upon themselves. If their villages were blown up in order to prevent the return of their inhabitants and to parcel out their farms among existing Jewish colonies and new Jewish immigrants, this was only as an afterthought, an extemporized innovation, a lightning brainwave with no ideological, attitudinal, motivational, or strategic antecedents.

Looking at what was happening on the ground during December 1947–15 May 1948 was the first track we followed in examining the Israeli version of the events of this period; the second track was to challenge the Israeli lie of evacuation orders head on. If the orders were broadcast as the government of Israel, its top leadership, and the Kimches *et al.* insisted, and if these orders reached hundreds of villages and a dozen towns causing their evacuation by hundreds of thousands, surely some trace or echo of these orders should be on record. The obvious place to look was the back files of the Near East monitoring stations of the British and American governments, (the BBC Cyprus listening post and the CIA-sponsored Foreign Broadcast Information Service), both of which covered not only all the radio stations in the Near East, but also the local newspapers as well. I therefore checked the BBC monitoring archives at the British Museum, London and published the result in my article “Why Did the Palestinians Leave?” (*Middle East Forum* July 1959). Not only was there no hint of any Arab evacuation order, but the Arab radio stations had urged the Palestinians to hold on and be steadfast whereas it was the Jewish radio stations of the Haganah and the Irgun and Stern Gang which had been engaged in incessant and strident psychological warfare against the Arab civilian population.

Subsequently and quite separately, the Anglo-Irish writer Erskine Childers went over the BBC monitoring files on his own and reached the same conclusions in his article “The Other Exodus” published in the *Spectator* on 21 May 1961. Meanwhile, I spent a sabbatical year (1960–61) from the AUB at Princeton, where I went through the FBIS files with exactly the same results.

The *Spectator* was owned by the family of the distinguished British statesman and scholar Sir Ian Gilmour. Fortunately, Mr. Gilmour (as he then was) was open-minded on the issue and allowed equal access to his columns to Zionists *and* non-Zionists alike—an unheard of phenomenon at the time, and still a rare one to this day. This enabled the issue to be thrashed out in full public view in a major English periodical. The Childers article brought an immediate and typical response from Kimche, who

accused Childers of being influenced by me. This was, of course, untrue, since Childers had carried out his research quite independently of me and, presumably, in part to check on my own conclusions. But I naturally joined the fray, having just finished my examination of the FBIS files at Princeton. There ensued a triangular debate (joined occasionally by others) between Childers, Kimche, and myself, which lasted until 4 August 1961. An opportunity was thus afforded to flush out every prevarication Kimche was capable of and publicly to put the lie of the evacuation orders in its final resting place—at least as far as serious students of the Middle East are concerned.

Much of the new data revealed in recent Israeli writings confirms the conclusions of my 1961 article on Plan Dalet, while no new evidence has been turned up to cause me to modify any of them. At the same time, although some Israeli scholars agree that the evacuation orders never existed, the *Spectator* correspondence has never been published in full in the U.S. On the other hand, in none of the recent Israeli or non-Israeli writings on 1948 is there a comprehensive or detailed account of Plan Dalet or its predecessors, nor have English translations from Hebrew of their actual texts ever been published.

I was able to locate these texts several years after the publication of my article “Plan Dalet,” and the reader can judge for herself or himself whether they confirm its analysis. This is why, when asked by *JPS* to take a second look at Plan Dalet, I suggested what I did, as explained in the editorial note above. The reader’s attention is particularly drawn to the section entitled “Countermeasures” in Plan C (Appendix A), put into practice as of 1 December 1947 and the “Operational Objectives of the Brigades” of Plan D (Appendix C), put into practice as of 1 April 1948.

Some may consider this retrospective look at 1948 a wasteful obsession with the past or at best an academic exercise irrelevant to the challenges of the present. But on this fortieth anniversary, a tribute, if inadequate, is due to the endless sufferings of a whole people. Nor is there any irrelevance: At a time when talk of the expulsion of the Palestinians from what is left of their patrimony is on the increase in Israeli ruling circles, it is only fitting to remind the world of the cruelties perpetrated by these circles in 1948 and of the subterfuges used to camouflage them.

The following is the text of Professor Khalidi’s 1961 article “Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine.” Reprinted with permission.

“Plan Dalet” or “Plan D” was the name given by the Zionist High Command to the general plan for military operations within the framework of which the Zionists launched successive offensives in April and early May 1948 in various parts of Palestine. These offensives, which entailed the destruction of the Palestinian Arab community and the expulsion and pauperization of the bulk of the Palestine Arabs, were calculated to achieve the military *fait accompli* upon which the state of Israel was to be based.

It is only recently that direct reference has been made in English Zionist sources to the fact that such a plan as “Plan D” ever existed. Jon and David Kimche in their book *A Clash of Destinies** give a version of this plan. But Jon Kimche, the senior author of the two, heroically straddling his perennial dilemma, is precariously poised between the necessity for approximation to the truth and the tactical requirements of Zionist propaganda. A still more recent Zionist work in English which makes explicit references to Plan D is *The Edge of the Sword*** by Netanel Lorch. The author, an Israeli and former member of Haganah, is, like many Israelis, not unduly sensitive about public opinion. His account is therefore refreshingly forthright though highly selective. Both the Kimches and Lorch have leant heavily on Hebrew sources, notably *Sefer HaPalmach (The Book of the Palmach)*† vols. 1 and 2 (particularly 2) and on *Qravot 5708 (Battles of 1948)*,†† an equally definitive Hebrew work covering both Palmach and Haganah operations. But neither the Kimches nor Lorch mention these works or acknowledge their striking indebtedness to them. It is therefore only by comparing the Kimche and Lorch versions with *Sefer HaHaganah* and *Qravot* that a truly rounded picture of Plan D can be drawn.

The Territorial Problem

The study of Plan D is important because of the light it throws on the background of the intervention of the Arab regular armies after 15 May 1948 and the consequences of this intervention. It is also important with regard to the origins of the Arab refugee problem. The traditional Zionist account of this problem has been that the Palestine Arabs left on orders broadcast to them by their leaders. It is true that in recent months the Zionists have shown a certain diffidence in stressing this theme too

*New York: Praeger, 1960.

**New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1961.

†Edited by Zrubebel Gilad (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz HaMeuchad, 1953).

††Israel Defense Force (Tel Aviv: Marakhot, 1955).

categorically but they have not altogether dropped it, as is witnessed by David Ben-Gurion's reiteration of this explanation of the Arab refugee problem in his latest speech on the refugees in the Knesset. There is no need here to go into this particular problem. The Zionist claim of the existence of Arab evacuation orders has already been shown to be a piece of mythmaking. What does need to be mentioned here is that the Zionist emphasis on Arab evacuation orders is in fact a skillful propaganda tactic with manifold purposes: it shifts the moral responsibility for the refugees on to the Arabs themselves, puts them on the defensive, and shoulders them with the burden of refutation. Above all it directs the attention from the primary to the derivative: from the actual course of events in 1948 in Palestine to the realm of patience-consuming allegation and counter-allegation.

The ideological premises of Plan D are to be found in the very concept of Zionism. The nineteenth century Zionists of Eastern Europe shared characteristics with many other nationalists of the time. But unlike the other nationalist movements Zionism did not then possess a land it could call its own. The other nationalists were basically trying either to break away territorially from a foreign ruling power or to extract greater concessions in their own territories from such powers. But the Zionists were literally in search of a territory. The land that the Zionists were looking for was one which they wanted to possess and unmistakably stamp with their own image. But what if this land was already possessed by others? The Zionists had to face this dilemma from the very beginning. And we know that as early as Theodor Herzl they had decided that the answer was to be found in the theory of "the lesser evil": in other words, that any hardship inflicted on the indigenous population of the land chosen by them was outweighed by the solution that the Zionist possession of the land offered to the Jewish problem. The yardstick of the lesser evil (consciously or subconsciously applied) became the moral alibi of the Zionist movement, dwarfing and finally submerging the anguish of its victims. Thus Herzl could say with little qualms of conscience of the indigenous population of the land to be possessed: "We intend to work the poor population across the frontier surreptitiously (*unbemerkt*) by providing work for them in transit countries but denying them any employment in our own land." ("The Truth about Palestine" by L. Leonhard in *Libertas*, 1960.) Thus, too, was this principle institutionalized in the Jewish National Fund which financed land acquisition in Palestine and in whose constitution land acquired from the Arabs was to become "inalienably Jewish" and Arab labor was to be excluded from Jewish land.

The Zionist Policy

But if the premises of Plan D can be seen in the very concept of Zionism, the implementation of the plan, too, has origins rooted in Zionist strategic thought. It is the mild, learned, and socialist Chaim Arlosoroff, director of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, who throws the most instructive light on this aspect of the problem. As early as 30 June 1932 Arlosoroff sent Chaim Weizmann a confidential letter (see the *Jewish Frontier*, October 1948) in which he outlined his views on Zionist strategy: Zionist policy, he pointed out, should be judged only against "the relationship of forces of the two peoples contending in the country." The present stage (i.e. in 1932) was that "the Arabs are no longer strong enough to destroy our position but still consider themselves strong enough to establish an Arab state." The next stage will be attained when "the relationship of the real forces will be such as to preclude any possibility of the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine." This will be followed by another stage during which "Arabs will be unable to frustrate the growth of the Jewish community." This will be followed by yet another stage during which "the equilibrium [sic] between the two peoples will be based upon real forces and an agreed solution to the problem." The real test of Zionist policy is whether the next stage in this sequence is attainable on the basis of its current strategy. Arlosoroff concluded that "under present circumstances Zionism cannot be realized without a transition period during which the *Jewish minority would exercise organized revolutionary rule** . . . during which the state apparatus, the administration, and the military establishment would be in the hands of the minority." Arlosoroff is aware that this "might even resemble dangerously certain political states of mind which we have always rejected," but he will "never become reconciled to the failure of Zionism before an attempt is made whose seriousness corresponds to the seriousness of the struggle."

Transfer of the Arabs

Except for the Revisionists, the Zionists did not publicly talk of moving the Arab population from the country. But there is no doubt that the problem was discussed among themselves. As early as 1931 Harold Laski, at that time constantly in touch with Weizmann, wrote to Felix Frankfurter in the U.S. saying that "the economic problem" in Palestine was insoluble

*All italics in quotes were added by the author.

“unless the British Government uses Transjordan for Arab settlement.” (*Harold Laski* by Kingsley Martin, p. 210) But it was left to the Royal Peel Commission of 1937 to articulate Zionist thoughts. For the commission’s report (p. 391) stated that “if (as a result of investigation) it is clear that a substantial amount of land would be made available for the Jewish area, *the most strenuous efforts* should be made to obtain an agreement for the exchange of land and population.” The report continued, “it should be part of the agreement that in the last resort the *exchange would be compulsory*.” Since according to the partition recommendations of the same report some 1,250 Jews were to fall inside the Arab state as opposed to about one-quarter of a million Arabs in the Jewish state the commission’s use of the word “exchange” (still a favorite word when talking about the future of Palestine Arabs) can only be said to be somewhat unusual. But these recommendations of the commission were not unilaterally suggested by the British side. Weizmann and Ormsby-Gore (then British Colonial Secretary) had thrashed them out together *before* the publication of the commission’s report. According to the minutes drawn up by Weizmann of the meeting on 19 July 1937 between the two men (*Jewish Chronicle*, 13 August 1937) Weizmann had said on the subject of the transfer of the Arab population: “I said that the whole success of the scheme depended upon whether the Government genuinely did or did not wish to carry out this recommendation. The transfer could only be carried out by the British Government and not by the Jews. I explained the reason *why we considered the proposal of such importance*.” The transfer of the Arabs of Palestine was again recommended towards the end of the World War II on two notable occasions. First in 1944 by the Labor Party Executive in Britain, which resolved that “the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in” and secondly by ex-President Herbert Hoover, who in October 1945 advocated a solution of the Palestine problem by “engineering” which involved the transfer of the Arabs of Palestine to Iraq. There is no doubt that at least the first of these recommendations was Zionist-inspired and was almost certainly the work of Laski, who was chairman of the Labor party at the time. The Hoover scheme, if not Zionist-inspired, was blessed by the Zionists (*vide* the two-column letter in its praise in the *New York Times*, 16 December 1945 by Elisha Friedman of the Hadassah Organization). Commenting on this scheme the American Zionist Emergency Council issued a statement to the effect (in the words of the Zionist official periodical *Palestine* vol. 2, nos. 9–10, November–December, 1945, p. 16): “that the Zionist movement has never advocated the transfer of Palestine’s Arab population but has always maintained that Palestine has room enough for its present population, Jew

and Arab, and for several million more of Jewish settlers. The developments of the last 20 years have amply proved this; nevertheless *when all long accepted remedies seem to fail it is time to consider new approaches*. The Hoover plan," the Emergency Council states, "represents an important new approach in the realization of which Zionists would be *happy* to cooperate with the great powers and the Arab."

An Irreducible Minimum

The UN partition recommendation of 1947 heralded the cataclysm. The decision had given the Zionists, who held less than seven percent of Palestine, about fifty-five percent of the country. Officially the Zionist attitude was that this was the "irreducible minimum" that they would accept. But the opportunities now beckoning to them were dazzling beyond words. For although the UN recommendation had (inexplicably) envisaged a peaceable partition, the means of implementation had never been seriously considered. An umbrella of legalism was therefore offered to the side that "acquiesced" in the will of the international community and dutifully proceeded with its implementation. Conversely there need be no limit to the punitive measures to be meted out to those who in defense of their primal rights defied "the will of the international community." The situation in terms of *realpolitik* was susceptible to the fullest exploitation. There were other urgent considerations, too, from the Zionist point of view. The most important was the question of land ownership. Although 90 percent of the Jewish landholdings in Palestine fell within the proposed Jewish state, yet the bulk of the cultivable land in the proposed Jewish state was not Jewish-owned nor even in the category of state domain whose ownership could be automatically assumed by a successor government. Thus, of 13,500,000 dunums (6,000,000 of which were desert and 7,500,000 of cultivable land) in the Jewish state according to the Partition Plan only 1,500,000 dunums of cultivable land were Jewish owned. On 30 January 1948 the *Zionist Review* in its Jewish National Fund Supplement pointed out: "We can purchase 3,000,000 dunums without displacing or causing any injury to the non-Jewish population. As a result we should then have about 4,500,000 dunums out of 7,500,000 which can be utilized. That means 60 percent of the present cultivable area. *Can we afford as a people to hold less than 60 percent of the soil?*"

The problem of land ownership was compounded by the Zionist plans for large-scale Jewish immigration into the proposed Jewish state. The

difficulty here was that there were in fact as many Arabs as Jews in the Jewish state proposed by the UN.

But above all it was the consciousness of power that dictated Zionist policy. As early as March 1946 Haganah had told the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: "If you accept the Zionist solution but are unable or unwilling to enforce it, please do not interfere, and we ourselves will secure its implementation."* Since then the British reluctance for various domestic and international reasons to reply with any severity to repeated Zionist provocations greatly increased Zionist self-confidence. American and Russian backing of Zionism at the UN in 1947 further inflated the Zionist ego. But however exaggerated the Zionist consciousness of power may have been, it did rest upon a basis of fact, particularly in relation to local Arab strength. By the end of March 1948 the Zionists could put in the field three brigades of the Palmach (a highly mobile striking force used wherever it was needed most), six brigades of the KHISH (Khayl Sadeh or Field Force), which operated in six brigade areas into which the country was divided, and two brigades of the Irgun terrorist organization. In addition there were the forces of the KHIM (Khayl Matzav or garrison troops), who were at least as numerous as the KHISH, the Jewish Settlement Police numbering some 12,000, the Gadna Youth Battalions, and the armed settlers.

The arms at the disposal of these forces were plentiful and much in excess of what may be superficially gathered from Zionist sources. Thus Kimche (*Clash of Destinies*, p. 76) quotes Ben-Gurion as declaring that Haganah possessed *inter alia* in April 1947: 10,073 rifles, 444 light machine-guns and 186 medium machine-guns. But these figures do not cover the armaments of the Jewish Settlement Police which, after all, were part and parcel of the Zionist military establishment in the country though not officially part of Haganah. Indeed, there is no reference at all to the J.S.P. either by Lorch or the Kimches. Secondly, even these figures must be a considerable underestimate of Haganah's armory. For example, we know that one Zionist agent working in one country, Poland, was alone able before the beginning of World War II to send 2,250 rifles and 250 machine-guns to Haganah (*The Saving Remnant*** by Herbert Agar, p. 204). The statistical data of Lorch and Kimche must also be viewed against the information obtainable from the Hebrew sources, particularly *Sepher*

*"Head of Command, Jewish Resistance Movement, to Joint Chairman [sic] Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry" 25 May 1946, Jerusalem, p. 11—A stenciled memorandum distributed by The Jewish Agency Delegation during the committee's session.

**London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960.

HaPalmach. We know from this book, (Vol. 2, p. 51) that by March 1948 the local Zionist factories in Palestine were producing 100 sub-machine guns *per day* (to be increased to 200 *per day* by the end of the first week of April) and 400,000 rounds of .9 mm. ammunition per month. Moreover, these factories were coping with orders of the magnitude of 150,000 Mills grenades and 30,000 shells of 3-inch mortars—all of which is not mentioned by either Kimche or Lorch or any other English Zionist account of the time. Indeed the local Zionist factories were very resourceful, and, in addition to sten-guns, 2-inch and 3-inch mortars and their ammunition, also produced flame-throwers (a favorite Zionist weapon), PIATS (antitank guns) and a heavy mortar called Davidka which was the Zionist favorite weapon par excellence. According to Kimche (p. 161) the Davidka “tossed a lump of explosive for some 300 yards.” The unsuspecting reader might think that here was some harmless and rather quaint engine. But the fact is that the Davidka tossed a shell containing 60 lbs. of TNT usually into crowded built-up civilian quarters where the noise and blast maddened women and children into a frenzy of fear and panic.

The Real Problem

It was this power which the Zionist authorities now bent to the task of realizing Herzl's vision. The basic features of the situation from the power point of view were as follows: As between the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine the former unquestionably possessed overwhelming power. The Arab strength lay, however, in the fact that they were *in situ*. To be defeated the Arabs had to be dislodged and dislodged they had to be if the Zionists were to get the state “given” them by the UN. For the UN partition decision of November 1947 did not consecrate the existing status quo in Palestine. On the contrary, the partition decision was a revolutionary decision designed to effect a radical territorial redistribution in favor of the Zionists. To succeed the Zionists had to revolutionize the status quo, and action, initiative, and offense were therefore the *sine qua non* for the realization of the Zionist objectives. But there were at least two potentially limiting factors. The first was the presence of the British in Palestine. The second was the regular armies of the neighboring Arab states. The British had declared their intention of leaving Palestine by 15 May 1948. On that day the Mandate would end, and juridically there would a vacuum since Britain refused to share responsibility with the UN during the Mandate as a preliminary to the establishment of the successor states. It was therefore possible that the Arab armies might enter Palestine on 15 May and do so

with legal immunity because of the juridical vacuum. But if the regular Arab armies entered Palestine while the Arabs of Palestine were still *in situ* the forces in support of the status quo in the country (i.e. against the UN partition decision) would be overwhelming. The most urgent problem for the Zionists was therefore to dislodge the Palestine Arabs before 15 May. But how were they to do that with the British still in the country and claiming exclusive jurisdiction over it? The question in the last analysis hinged on the British attitude to partition and the actual time-table of British withdrawal from the country. In spite of what the Zionists may say, the British government was not hostile to the idea of partition as such, though they probably favored a smaller Jewish state than that envisaged by the UN. But it was the time-table of British withdrawal that was the crux of the matter and this was basically a technical military decision in which the requirements of the security of the British forces being withdrawn predominated over all other considerations. At first the chief worry of the Zionists was that the British would maintain effective control over the whole country and surrender it in one go on 15 May, thus facilitating the consolidation of the Arab status quo in Palestine by the regular Arab armies. But it soon became obvious that the British, while maintaining *de jure* authority over the whole country, were surrendering *de facto* power over successive areas of it. This was precisely what the Zionists wanted, for the *de jure* authority claimed by Britain over Palestine acted as a shield protecting the Zionists from the regular Arab armies. This gave the Zionists time to dislodge the Arabs of Palestine and to create by 15 May a new status quo in the country which would be beyond the means of the regular Arab armies to reverse.

The Plans

Zionist military planning was accordingly based upon a two-phased strategy fitted to the situation. In "Plan Gimmel" or Plan C the objectives were, through so-called "countermeasures" to maintain constant pressure everywhere against the Arabs of Palestine while maintaining contact with the Jewish settlements in the area of the proposed Arab state. Yigal Allon, the commander of the Palmach, gave two main reasons for the maintenance of these settlements: "(a) the absolute necessity to divert an enemy advance upon large civilian centers; and (b) when the forces under attack [i.e. the Jewish forces] intend to mount an offensive soon, in order to unite with the settlements that had been cut off." The second phase of Zionist strategy was the all-out offensive to conquer and hold territory in the wake of the

retreating British forces. Logically and operationally, this was a continuous process which was unlikely to stop voluntarily but only if effectively counter-checked. This was the essence of Plan D. In the words of *Qravot 1948* (p. 16), the purpose of Plan D was “control of the area given to us by the UN in addition to areas occupied by us which were outside these borders and the setting up of forces to counter the possible invasion of Arab armies after May 15.” This is explicit enough.

The transition from Plan C to D depended to some extent on the speed and extent of British withdrawal. But there were other considerations too, foremost among which was the economic factor. The Zionist economy in Palestine was delicately balanced and closely interrelated. This directly influenced the rate of mobilization and therefore the hitting power available at any one time to the Zionist High Command. But it was two largely unpredictable factors which in fact dictated the timing of the implementation of Plan D. The first was the extraordinary resistance put up by the Arabs of Palestine. In spite of the explosion of mines in Arab residential quarters, and the repeated and merciless raids against sleeping villages carried out in conformity with Plan C, the Arabs held their ground throughout the period from December 1947 to March 1948. Up to 1 March not one single Arab village* had been vacated by its inhabitants and the number of people leaving the mixed towns was insignificant. It looked in fact as though the Arabs were to remain *in situ* and so frustrate the revolution in the status quo envisaged by the UN decision. Not only that but by the end of March the Zionists had desperately tried and failed to maintain contact between the various parts of the country.

The Crisis in March

No wonder that the UN Palestine Commission gave up, declaring that partition could not be peaceably implemented. No wonder, too, that *Qravot* (p. 15) described this period, particularly the last week of March 1948, “as perhaps the most serious operational crisis” confronted by the Zionists during the entire war of 1948. But even more serious from the Zionist point of view was the reversal that had occurred in the American attitude to partition. By the middle of March the U.S. government had to all intents and purposes turned its back on partition whatever may have been President Truman’s personal feelings on the subject. Dr. Silver of the Jewish Agency

*The author considers himself in error here. At least ten villages out of the four hundred that fell in the period 1948–49 were captured by the Zionist forces by 1 March 1948.

described the new American policy as “a shocking reversal” (*New York Times*, 20 March, p. 3), the American Jewish Congress as “shameful tactics and duplicity” and the Zionist Congressman Celler as “shoddy and underhand turnabout” (*New York Times*, 21 March, p. 6). The most significant comment perhaps came from Dr. E. Neumann, president of the Zionist Organization of America, who said that “if the General Assembly recommendation is nullified there is no doubt about it, the Jews will press the claim for immigration and settlement in *all* of Palestine.”

It is against this background that Plan D was finally implemented. The plan visualized a series of operations which, if they had succeeded, would have left the whole of Palestine in 1948 under Zionist military occupation. It is not the object of this article to describe these operations in detail but simply to list them and point out their objectives:

*1. *Operation Nachshon*: 1 April—

To carve out a corridor connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and by so doing to split the main part of the Arab state into two. (Defeated)

*2. *Operation Harèl*: 15 April—

A continuation of *Nachshon* but centered specifically on Arab villages near Latrun. (Defeated)

3. *Operation Misparayim*: 21 April—

To capture Haifa and rout its Arab population. (Successful)

*4. *Operation Chametz*: 27 April—

To destroy the Arab villages round Jaffa and so cut Jaffa off from physical contact with the rest of Palestine as a preliminary to its capture. (Successful)

*5. *Operation Jevussi*: 27 April—

To isolate Jerusalem by destroying the ring of surrounding Arab villages and dominating the Ramallah-Jerusalem road to the north, the Jericho-Jerusalem road to the east and the Bethlehem-Jerusalem road to the south. This operation by itself would have caused the whole of Jerusalem to fall and would have made the Arab position west of the Jordan altogether untenable. (Defeated)

6. *Operation Yiftach*: 28 April—

To purify eastern Galilee of Arabs. (Successful)

7. *Operation Matateh*: 3 May—

To destroy Arab villages connecting Tiberias to eastern Galilee. (Successful)

*8. *Operation Maccabi*: 7 May—

To destroy the Arab villages near Latrun and by an outflanking movement to penetrate into Ramallah district north of Jerusalem. (Defeated)

9. *Operation Gideon*: 11 May—

To occupy Beisan and drive away the semi-sedentary Bedouin communities in the neighbourhood. (Successful)

10. *Operation Barak*: 12 May—

To destroy the Arab villages in the neighbourhood of Bureir on the way to the Negev. (Partially successful)

*11. *Operation Ben Ami*: 14 May—

To occupy Acre and purify western Galilee of Arabs. (Successful)

*12. *Operation Pitchfork*: 14 May—

To occupy the Arab residential quarters in the New City of Jerusalem. (Successful)

*13. *Operation Schfifon*: 14 May—

To occupy the old city of Jerusalem. (Defeated)

The single asterisks above indicate the operations which were carried out *before* the entry of the Arab regular armies *inside the areas allotted by the UN to the Arab state*. It will be noted that of thirteen specific full-scale operations under Plan D eight were *outside* the area given by the UN to the Zionists. It is interesting to note that the Kimches in their book mention by name only five of these thirteen operations, in spite of the learned introduction to the book by Kimche entitled “On Writing Contemporary History.”

The Palmach Tactics

The best description of one of the means adopted by the Zionists to achieve their objectives in these operations is given by Yigal Allon, the head of the Palmach and the great hero of the war of “liberation.” The quotation is from *Sefer HaPalmach*, vol. 2, p. 286. The translation is literal:

There were left before us only five days, before the threatening date, the 15th of May. We saw a need to clean out the inner Galilee and to create a *Jewish territorial continuity* in the entire area of the upper Galilee. The long battles had weakened our forces, and before us stood great duties of blocking the routes of the Arab invasion (literally *plisha* or expansion). We therefore looked for means which did not force us into employing force, in order to cause the tens of thousands of sulky Arabs who remained in Galilee to flee, for in case of an Arab invasion these were likely to strike us from the rear. We tried to use a tactic which took advantage of the impression created by the fall of Safad** and the (Arab) defeat in the area which was cleaned out by Operation Matateh***—a tactic which worked miraculously well.

**Safad fell on 11–12 May 1948.

***Operation Matateh is no. 7 on the list above.

I gathered all of the Jewish Mukhtars, who have contact with Arabs in different villages, and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs, that a great Jewish reinforcement has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all of the villages of the Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as *their friends*, to escape while there is still time. And the rumor spread in all the areas of the Huleh that it is time to flee. The flight numbered myriads. The tactic reached its goal completely. The building of the police station at Halsá fell into our hands without a shot. The wide areas were cleaned, the danger was taken away from the transportation routes and we could organize ourselves for the invaders along the borders, without worrying about our rear.

As was said above, Plan D had potentially considerable possibilities the limits to which could be set only by an adequate counter-force. A study on the map of the theatres of the operations listed above will indicate that the Zionists were well on the way to the complete military dominance of the whole of Palestine. That they did not entirely succeed in their plans was due not to political scruples or technical limitations but to the long-delayed intervention of the regular Arab armies. This point is conceded by Yigal Allon who again was in a supreme position to know.

This stage of the war, which was made possible by the gradual British evacuation and ended with the invasion of the Arab armies into the country, gave Haganah valuable victories. Thanks to the local offensive war [i.e. plans C & D], the continuity of the Jewish territories was accomplished and also the penetrating of our forces *into Arab areas*. The Arab flight, which reached great numbers, made it easier on our forces to supervise vast areas and was a burden to the enemy, who had to put all of his efforts into the absorption and organization of the refugees. It is easy to imagine the spirit of defeat that the refugees took with them to the Arab areas. *If it wasn't for the Arab invasion there would have been no stop to the expansion of the forces of Haganah* who could have, with the same drive, reached the natural borders of western Israel, because in this stage most of the local enemy forces were paralyzed. (Sefer HaPalmach, vol. 2, p. 186)

APPENDIX A

Text of Plan Gimmel (Plan C), May 1946: Section on Countermeasures

The text that follows is translated from Sefer Toldot Hahaganah [History of the Haganah], vol. 3, ed. by Yehuda Slutsky (Tel Aviv: Zionist Library, 1972), Appendix 39, pp. 1939–43.

A. The aim of a counterattack is to strike at each source at the beginning of an Arab outbreak in order to deter the instigators of the incidents and to prevent the participation and support of the Arab masses. Forceful and severe blows will serve to identify and isolate the active elements.

B. Because of the difficulty in directly engaging the active Arab forces while they are carrying out their activities, the countermeasures we will adopt will mostly take the form of retaliatory operations. Like all retaliatory operations, they will not always be directed only against the executors of a particular action, but will also be aimed at other active groups or those who provide them with assistance.

C. Counterattacks must be appropriate in kind to the operations which led to the retaliation. These attacks must be as immediate as possible, and must affect large areas. The reasons for the retaliation must be detailed to the Arabs in full, using all available means of communication: leaflets, announcements, radio broadcasts, etc.

D. It is preferable that these operations should strike the Arab rear in order to undermine the Arab sense of security.

E. Counterattacks must be divided into two kinds: warning operations and strike operations.

Warning operations will come in response to limited or single Arab operations, and their aim will be to warn the Arabs of what may be expected in the future. These operations will mostly be executed in the same area in which the Arabs were active but they must be accompanied by the widest possible media coverage.

The aim of strike operations will be to punish serious operations carried out against us. These strike operations will be more extensive in nature and at the regional or country-wide level, their goal being severe punishment. For example, if they strike one of the Jewish means of transportation by destroying vehicles along with their passengers, the response should be comprehensive and aim at the destruction of all Arab means of transportation.

F. Strikes must be carried out against the following targets:

1. Striking at the political leadership.
2. Striking at agitators, their financial backers, and others.
3. Striking at the executors of operations and those who provide them with shelter.
4. Striking at high-ranking Arab officers and officials.
5. Striking at Arab transportation.
6. Striking at vital economic targets (water installations, flour mills, etc.).

7. Attacks on villages, neighborhoods, and farms used as bases for the Arab armed forces or for their organization, launching, and retreat, etc.

8. Striking at clubs, cafés, meetings, assemblies, and the like.

G. The aim of striking at the political leadership is the following:

1. Doing damage to their property.
2. Imprisoning members in order to hold them hostage or prevent them from performing their activities.
3. Expelling them or physically harming them in some other way.

These operations will be carried out by (Arabist) individuals, or by units the size of a squad or sub-squad which are equipped with light arms and whose line of retreat is as secure as possible.

H. The aim of striking at agitators and financial backers is the following:

1. Doing damage to their property.
2. Doing damage to their printing presses.
3. Harming them physically.
4. Expelling or imprisoning them in certain cases.

These objectives will be realized along the line specified in section G.

I. The aim of striking at the executors of operations and those who shelter them is the following:

1. Expelling them.

2. Doing damage to their property.

3. Imprisoning them in certain cases in order to collect information or hold them hostage. Such operations will be executed by units the size of a squad or sub-squad if the site of the operation is small and close to our bases, and will be executed by units the size of a platoon or larger if the site is far from our bases.

J. High-ranking Arab officers and officials will be targeted as specified in section G, above.

K. The aim of striking at Arab transportation is the following:

1. Carrying out punitive measures against a particular service route or an individual vehicle through sabotage.

2. Striking at services by damaging vehicles and targeting suspected travelers.

3. Destroying the Arab transportation network either wholly or in part.

The operations mentioned in 1 above will be carried out by damaging the service stations along that route, or by sabotaging its vehicles, or by stopping one or more vehicles on the road, evacuating the passengers, and destroying them. The operations mentioned in 2 above will be carried out by setting up ambushes on the road, evacuating passengers, and physically harming the passengers suspected of active assistance against us, and destroying the vehicles. The operation will be executed by about one or two squads. The operations mentioned in 3 above will be executed by carrying out attacks on the service stations and destroying the vehicles. The force needed for such missions is one or two platoons.

L. The aim of operations directed against clubs, cafés, meetings and assemblies, etc. is the following:

1. Dispersal of inflammatory gatherings.

2. Encircling the places mentioned above when they contain known leaders and agitators in order to imprison them or expel them.

3. In some cases, it is necessary to demolish one of the above-mentioned places after evacuating people from it.

The force needed to carry out such operations will be determined by the particular circumstances and will range from a sub-squad to a platoon or more.

M. Striking at Arab economic targets is difficult because of the scarcity of vital projects which, if hit, would paralyze or severely damage the Arab economy. There are few industrial projects and most are of a non-vital nature for the manufacture of tobacco, soap, etc. Striking at such establishments is not always in our interest because it may result in swelling the ranks of the Arab force by scores of unemployed workers. This does not mean that these targets should be removed from consideration, but

establishments must be sought which, if hit, would lead to the most effective consequences possible, such as water reservoirs in urban areas, flour mills, the [olive] oil industry, and the like. The importance of strikes against such targets lies in their implementation on a wide scale, whether locally or regionally. Striking at such targets does not require a large force; in most cases a force the size of a squad or sub-squad is enough to mount an operation against a single specific target.

N. The aim of launching attacks against villages, neighborhoods, farms, and hamlets is the following:

1. Kidnapping or expelling leaders and members of gangs and those who assist them.
2. Punishing villages that provide gangs with shelter, by destroying their property.
3. Attacking villages where an armed Arab force is located.

For the execution of operations mentioned in 1 above, see Section I above.

For the execution of operations mentioned in 2 above, the village will be surrounded by a force whose size will vary with the circumference of the village and the resistance expected from it (the size of the force will range from a platoon to a company). A part of this force—at least half—will enter the village and carry out acts of sabotage by setting fire to and blowing up targets. If the objective is general punitive action, everything possible should be set on fire and the houses of the instigators and participants in operations must be demolished.

As for the operations in 3 above, they will be implemented according to the principles relating to attacks on an entrenched hostile force.

O. Most operations should be carried out under cover of darkness because of the difficulty of movement [in the daytime]. In addition, due consideration should be given to returning men and equipment to their bases.

P. In order to implement the countermeasures detailed in this chapter in an effective manner, active and extensive intelligence and reconnaissance networks must be set up and the Arabist units must be developed.

Q. Propaganda will have a large effect on the extent to which incidents are publicized and on the deterrent value this will have on the Arab masses. Therefore, an extensive propaganda network must be organized by the following means:

1. Radio.
2. Leaflets.
3. Whispering campaigns diffused by Arabs or Arabists.

Each of our countermeasures should be widely publicized and reverberate in every Arab village.

APPENDIX B

Text of Plan Dalet (Plan D), 10 March 1948: General Section

The text that follows is translated from Sefer Toldot Hahaganah [History of the Haganah], vol. 3, ed. by Yehuda Slutsky (Tel Aviv: Zionist Library, 1972), Appendix 48, pp. 1955–60.

1. Introduction

(a) The objective of this plan is to gain control of the areas of the Hebrew state and defend its borders. It also aims at gaining control of the areas of Jewish settlement and concentration which are located outside the borders [of the Hebrew state] against regular, semi-regular, and small forces operating from bases outside or inside the state.

(b) This plan is based on three previous plans:

1. Plan B, September 1945.
2. The May 1946 Plan*
3. Yehoshua Plan, 1948.**

(c) Since these plans were designed to deal with the situation inside the country (the first two plans deal with the first phase of incidents, while the third plan deals with the possibility of invasion by regular armies from the neighboring countries), the aim of Plan D is to fill the gaps in the previous

*This is plan Gimmel or Plan C

**This is an early version of Plan D, so-called after Yehoshua Globberman, a Haganah commander killed in early December 1947. Plan D itself was finalized on 10 March 1948.

three plans and to make them more suitable for the situation expected to obtain at the end of British rule in the country.

2. *Basic Assumptions*

This plan is based on the following basic assumptions:

(a) *The Enemy*

1. Expected composition of forces:

—The semi-regular forces of the Liberation Army affiliated with the Arab League, which operate from already occupied bases or bases to be occupied in the future.

—The regular forces of neighboring countries, which will launch an invasion across the borders, or will operate from bases inside the country (the Arab Legion*).

—Small local forces which operate, or will operate, from bases inside the country and within the borders of the Hebrew state.

All three forces will be activated at the same time in accordance with a joint operational plan, and will sometimes engage in tactical coordination.

2. Actual operations expected from the enemy:

—Isolation and, if possible, occupation of the eastern Galilee, western Galilee, and the Negev.

—Infiltration into the heart of the area of Sharon and Emek Hefer** in the direction of Qalqiliyyah–Herzliya and Tulkarm–Netanya, roughly.

—Isolation of the three major cities (especially Tel Aviv).†

—Disruption of food supply lines and other vital services such as water, electricity, etc.

3. Expected tactical methods:

—Attacks by the regular and semi-regular forces on settlements, using heavy infantry weapons, as well as field artillery, armored vehicles, and the air force.

—Air strikes against centers within our cities (especially Tel Aviv).

—Harassment operations carried out by small forces against transportation arteries and settlements to give the operations mentioned above direct

*This was a British-commanded and financed army of King 'Abdallah's Transjordan, units of which served in Palestine under British army orders until the end of the mandate on 15 May 1948.

**Sharon is the coastal plain between Haifa and Tel Aviv, Emek Hefer being its central section (in Arabic Wadi al-Hawarith).

†The two others are Jerusalem and Haifa.

or tactical support. These forces will also carry out sabotage operations against vital economic facilities and terrorist raids within cities.

(b) *The Authorities*

This plan rests on the general assumption that during its implementation, the forces of the [British] authorities will not be present in the country.

In the event that British forces continue to control certain bases and areas, the plan must be modified to deal with this situation in these areas. Additional instructions will be issued in this regard.

(c) *International Forces*

This plan rests on the assumption that there will be no international forces stationed in the country which are capable of effective action.

(d) *Operational Objectives*

1. Self-defense against invasion by regular or semi-regular forces. This will be achieved by the following:

—A fixed defensive system to preserve our settlements, vital economic projects, and property, which will enable us to provide governmental services within the borders of the state (based on defending the regions of the state on the one hand, and on blocking the main access routes from enemy territory to the territory of the state, on the other).

—Launching pre-planned counter-attacks on enemy bases and supply lines in the heart of his territory, whether within the borders of the country [Palestine] or in neighboring countries.

2. Ensuring freedom of military and economic activity within the borders of the [Hebrew] state and in Jewish settlements outside its borders by occupying and controlling important high-ground positions on a number of transportation arteries.

3. Preventing the enemy from using frontline positions within his territory which can easily be used for launching attacks. This will be effected by occupying and controlling them.

4. Applying economic pressure on the enemy by besieging some of his cities in order to force him to abandon some of his activities in certain areas of the country.

5. Restricting the capability of the enemy by carrying out limited operations: occupation and control of certain of his bases in rural and urban areas within the borders of the state.

6. Controlling government services and property within the borders of the state and ensuring the supply of essential public services in an effective manner.

3. *Assignment of Duties*

In view of the operational objectives outlined above, the various armed services are assigned the following duties:

(1) Strengthening the fixed defensive system designed to defend the zones, and coordinating its deployment on the regional level. In addition, the main enemy access routes to the lands of the state must be blocked through appropriate operations and measures.

(2) Consolidation of the defensive apparatus.

(3) Deployment in major cities.

(4) Control of the main transportation arteries country-wide.

(5) Encirclement of enemy cities.

(6) Occupation and control of frontline enemy positions.

(7) Counterattacks inside and outside the borders of the country.

(a) *The Fixed Defensive System*

1. The fixed defensive system in rural areas depends on two main factors: using protected areas for the purpose of defending the circumference, on the one hand, and blocking main transportation routes used by the enemy, on the other hand.

2. The security arrangements pertaining to the zones in rural areas, which were originally designed to repel small enemy forces, must be modified in terms of planning and reinforcement to suit the tactical measures expected to be employed by semi-regular or regular enemy forces. This will be effected according to instructions issued by the operations branch in charge of defense and planning in rural areas.

3. In addition, if we take into consideration the tactical measures expected to be employed by the enemy, efforts must be made to make a transition from a positional defense to a regional defense, so that the unit of defense is the region and not the zone.

4. In order to achieve this objective, the following steps must be taken:

a) Transformation of the regional staff from an administrative staff to a general staff (selection of a location, setting up a communications network, etc.)

b) Formation of a regional mobile reserve, to be recruited from the forces appointed to the zones, which would reinforce the forces or carry out counterstrikes in the zones within each region according to pre-arranged plans.

c) Adaptation and incorporation of the plans concerning fortification and opening fire in the zones to those of the region, as far as possible, taking into consideration geographical circumstances and types of weapons used. These plans must also be coordinated with the operations of the regional mobile reserves.

5. Settlements which because of their geographical location cannot be included in a fixed regional defense plan must be organized into local defense zones. Accordingly, they must be equipped to block transport roads used by the enemy, or if tactical circumstances permit, to control the heights, setting up fortifications and barricades and laying mines, etc. This will be done in addition to activating the zone's defensive apparatus. Additional forces must be assigned to carry out these duties, as will be detailed below. These specifications also apply to isolated regions.

6. Blocking the main enemy transportation routes.

a) The main enemy transportation routes which link his lands to the lands of the state, such as roads, bridges, main passes, important crossroads, paths, etc. must be blocked by means of: acts of sabotage, explosions, series of barricades, mine fields, as well as by controlling the elevations near roads and taking up positions there.

b) A system of barricades must be set up in addition to the fixed defensive system. The tactical plans concerning barricades must be adapted to and coordinated with the defensive plans concerning the zones located near these barricades. They must also be coordinated with the regional defense plans if this is possible from the geographical point of view.

(b) *Consolidation of Defense Systems and Barricades*

The following operations must be carried out if the fixed defensive system is to be effective and if the rear of this system is to be protected:

1. Occupation of police stations. *

*These "police stations" were in fact fortresses, fifty of which were built by the British throughout Palestine after the Arab rebellion of 1936-39 in order to control the Arab population.

2. Control of government installations and provision of services in each and every region.

3. Protection of secondary transportation arteries.

4. Mounting operations against enemy population centers located inside or near our defensive system in order to prevent them from being used as bases by an active armed force. These operations can be divided into the following categories:

—Destruction of villages (setting fire to, blowing up, and planting mines in the debris), especially those population centers which are difficult to control continuously.

—Mounting combing and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village and conducting a search inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be wiped out and the population must be expelled outside the borders of the state.

The villages which are emptied in the manner described above must be included in the fixed defensive system and must be fortified as necessary.

In the absence of resistance, garrison troops will enter the village and take up positions in it or in locations which enable complete tactical control. The officer in command of the unit will confiscate all weapons, wireless devices, and motor vehicles in the village. In addition, he will detain all politically suspect individuals. After consultation with the [Jewish] political authorities, bodies will be appointed consisting of people from the village to administer the internal affairs of the village. In every region, a [Jewish] person will be appointed to be responsible for arranging the political and administrative affairs of all [Arab] villages and population centers which are occupied within that region.

(c) *Deployment in Major Cities*

Positions will be taken in the large cities according to the following principles:

1. Occupation and control of government facilities and property (post offices, telephone exchanges, railroad stations, police stations, harbors, etc.)

2. Protection of all vital public services and installations.

3. Occupation and control of all isolated Arab neighborhoods located between our municipal center and the Arab municipal center, especially those neighborhoods which control the city's exit and entry roads. These neighborhoods will be controlled according to the guidelines set for

combing villages. In case of resistance, the population will be expelled to the area of the Arab municipal center.

4. Encirclement of the central Arab municipal area and its isolation from external transportation routes, as well as the termination of its vital services (water, electricity, fuel, etc.), as far as possible.

(d) Control of Main Transportation Arteries on the Regional Level

1. Occupation and control of locations which overlook main regional transportation arteries, such as police stations, water pumps, etc.

These elevated locations will be transformed into fortified surveillance posts to be used, when the need arises, as bases for a mobile defensive force. (In many cases, this operation will be coordinated with the occupation of police stations, which aims at consolidating the fixed defensive system.)

2. Occupation and control of Arab villages which constitute a serious obstruction on any of the main transportation arteries. Operations against these villages will be carried out according to the specifications given under the item pertaining to the combing of villages.

(e) Enemy Cities Will Be Besieged according to the Following Guidelines:

1. By isolating them from transportation arteries by laying mines, blowing up bridges, and a system of fixed ambushes.

2. If necessary, by occupying high points which overlook transportation arteries leading to enemy cities, and the fortification of our units in these positions.

3. By disrupting vital services, such as electricity, water, and fuel, or by using economic resources available to us* or by sabotage.

4. By launching a naval operation against the cities that can receive supplies by sea, in order to destroy the vessels carrying the provisions, as well as by carrying out acts of sabotage against harbor facilities.

(f) Occupation and Control of Frontline Enemy Positions

Generally, the aim of this plan is not an operation of occupation outside the borders of the Hebrew state. However, concerning enemy bases lying directly close to the borders which may be used as springboards for infiltration into the territory of the state, these must be temporarily

*The meaning in the original is unclear.

occupied and combed according to the above guidelines, and they must then be incorporated into our defensive system until operations cease.

Bases located in enemy territory which are intended to be temporarily occupied and controlled will be listed among the operational targets for the various brigades.*

(g) *Counterattacks Inside and Outside the Borders of the State*

Counterattacks will be used as auxilliary measures for the fixed defensive system in order to abort the organized attacks launched by semi-regular and regular enemy forces, whether from bases inside the country or from outside the borders.

Counterattacks will be launched according to the following guidelines:

1. Diversionary attacks; i.e., while the enemy is launching an attack against one of our areas, [our forces will launch] a counterattack deep inside another area controlled by the enemy with the aim of diverting his forces in the direction of the counterattack.

2. Striking at transportation and supply routes deep inside enemy territory, especially against a regular enemy force which is invading from across the border.

3. Attacking enemy bases in his rear, both inside the country [Palestine] and across its borders.

4. Counterattacks will generally proceed as follows: a force the size of a battalion, on average, will carry out a deep infiltration and will launch concentrated attacks against population centers and enemy bases with the aim of destroying them along with the enemy force positioned there; alternatively, this force may split up to carry out secondary operations, such as acts of sabotage and diversion on the enemy's military transportation routes and arteries.

5. A detailed list of counterattacks will be included in the [list of] operational targets** of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH].†

4. *Duties of the Armed Services*

(a) Allocation of duties in the fixed defensive system:

*See Appendix C, below.

**This list is not in the Hebrew original of this document.

†PALMACH is short for *Plugot Machats*, i.e., crushing battalions. By spring 1948, this force was made up of three brigades (Yiftach, Harel, and HaNegev) numbering just above 8,000 men. See Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987), 861.

1. The following duties are the responsibility of the Garrison Force [KHIM]*: defense of the zones and of isolated and fortified posts and formation of the regional reserves.

2. Within the framework of the fixed defensive system, the Field Force [KHISH]** are responsible for the following duties:

—Operations to block enemy transportation routes. For this purpose, every blocking operation will be assigned, on the basis of its importance and type, a specified Field Force unit whose size is appropriate to the nature of the mission.

—In addition, the Field Force brigade in question will be responsible for duties related to consolidating the fixed defensive system, as outlined in section 3 (b).

3. In special and exceptional circumstances, Field Force units may be positioned in the regions or zones, or in isolated and fortified positions, in order to reinforce zonal or regional defense. Efforts must be made to decrease the number of such cases, as far as possible.

4. In addition to the duties detailed above, the Field Force's responsibilities in the context of the fixed defensive system generally consist in mounting local counterattacks involving units no smaller than a company (larger units should be used if possible) against enemy units while they are attacking the fixed defensive system in order to block their lines of retreat and destroy them. These counterattacks will usually be launched from fixed operational bases which will be specified for the Field Force in the context of the duties for which it is responsible in the region as a whole.

These instructions require that the Field Force units be concentrated as much as possible, and not be divided up into secondary units.

5. The chain of command in the cases mentioned above will be in accordance with Addendum 1 to the Order concerning Regional Infrastructure, November 1947.

6. In circumstances in which the blocking system (which the Field Force is responsible for defending) is incorporated into the zonal or regional defensive system, the commander of the Field Force battalion concerned will appoint the commander in charge of the entire defensive system.

(b) 1. In addition to the duties assigned to the Field Force brigade in

*KHIM is short for Khayl Matzav, the second line troops. By fall 1947, they numbered about 32,000. See Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, 862.

**KHISH is short for Khayl Sadeh, the front line troops. By 1 May 1948, they numbered about 30,000. See Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, 861.

question concerning the consolidation of the fixed defensive system, the brigade will also carry out the following duties:

- Consolidation of positions in the cities.
- Control of main transportation arteries country-wide.
- Encirclement of enemy cities.
- Occupation and control of enemy frontline positions. This will be effected in accordance with the operational duties assigned to the various Field Force brigades.*

In order to carry out one or all of these duties, the supreme command can assign units of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH], which constitute the country-wide reserves, to the Field Force.

2. During the implementation of joint missions with the Field Force, units of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH] will fall under the command of the Field Force brigade that controls the area in which these units are operating.

3. After completion of the mission, the units of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH] will rejoin the country-wide reserves.

4. Efforts must be made to ensure that the period during which units of the country-wide reserves are assigned to the Field Force is as short as possible.

(c) 1. The Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH] is responsible for carrying out counterattacks inside and outside the borders of the country.

2. The supreme command may reduce the number of duties assigned to one or another of the Field Force brigades as it sees fit (i.e. those related to the siege of enemy cities, control of transportation routes and occupation of frontline positions) and allocate them directly to the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH] instead.

(d) The various departments and services of the general staff are required to complete the above planning instructions in their various areas of responsibility and to present the plans to the Field Force brigades.

*See Appendix C, below.