

Selecting Success:  
Recruitment and Insurgent Effectiveness in Civil Wars

Samuel Henry Plapinger  
Boston, MA

M.A. Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, 2014  
B.A. Government, Economics, Wesleyan University, 2012

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Politics

University of Virginia  
May, 2018

SELECTING SUCCESS:  
RECRUITMENT AND INSURGENT EFFECTIVENESS IN CIVIL WARS

© 2018 Samuel Henry Plapinger

## ABSTRACT

Why are some insurgent groups more combat effective than others? With the rise and persistence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the continued resurgence of the Taliban, understanding what drives differences in insurgent effectiveness has become increasingly important for both academics and decisionmakers. Yet the existing academic literature on combat effectiveness, focusing as it does on ultimate conflict outcomes or conventional armed forces, tells us little about the diverse performances of non-state armed actors during conflict or their relative efficacy at lower levels of capabilities. Moreover, the conventional assumption that insurgent factions with more fighters or higher levels of external support are inherently more effective is not borne out by empirical evidence. In practical terms, the failure of policymakers to anticipate and counter the rise of ISIS indicates the need for clear measures of effectiveness that can inform assessments of insurgent viability in real-time, and provide an understanding of why particular armed groups are more combat effective than others.

I fill this gap by developing a framework that both measures and explains insurgent effectiveness during civil wars. To measure effectiveness, I argue that the balance of capabilities between incumbent and insurgent forces shapes how insurgents should fight, and consequently what constitutes combat effectiveness during conflict. To explain effectiveness, I position the relative rigor of insurgent recruitment practices as key in shaping the effectiveness of groups. Insurgent groups that select, induct, train, and socialize recruits in a consistent and comprehensive manner throughout their areas of operation have what I call robust recruitment practices, which generate the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust among commanders and fighters needed to fight effectively in combat.

I test this framework through historical case studies of insurgent group performance during the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971), the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975), and the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991). I use existing works, media reports, and archival sources for the Oman and Eritrea cases. For the Jordan case, I draw on thirteen months of field and archival research in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United States. This research includes 105 separate interviews in Arabic conducted with former Jordanian military/intelligence/government officials and ex-insurgent commanders/fighters from the conflict, as well as archival documents gathered from multiple repositories across the three countries. In each case, I demonstrate through process tracing how the relative rigor of a group's recruitment practices shaped its ultimate combat effectiveness. These findings contribute to scholarship on civil wars, violent non-state actors, and military effectiveness, fill gaps in the historical record of Jordan, and have practical implications for counterinsurgency and peacebuilding.

*For my family*

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1	Introduction . . . . .	1
2	Existing Literature and Approaches . . . . .	6
2.1	“Military Effectiveness” and Insurgent Performance in Civil Wars	6
2.2	Possible Explanations . . . . .	9
3	The Argument . . . . .	10
4	Research Design . . . . .	13
5	Dissertation Roadmap . . . . .	14
<b>2</b>	<b>A Theory of Insurgent Effectiveness in Civil Wars</b>	<b>17</b>
1	Introduction . . . . .	17
2	Conceptualizing and Measuring Insurgent Effectiveness . . . . .	18
3	Explaining Effectiveness . . . . .	31
3.1	Recruiting Insurgents . . . . .	32
3.2	The Origins of Insurgent Recruitment Practices . . . . .	34
4	From Recruitment Practices to Effectiveness . . . . .	43
4.1	Theoretical Predictions and Hypothesis . . . . .	60
5	Assumptions and Scope Conditions . . . . .	61
6	Research Design . . . . .	62
6.1	Case Studies and Case Selection . . . . .	63
7	Conclusion . . . . .	71
<b>3</b>	<b>Fedayeen Effectiveness in Jordan (1968-1971)</b>	<b>72</b>
1	Introduction . . . . .	72
1.1	Testing the Theory in Jordan . . . . .	73
2	The Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971) . . . . .	80
2.1	Context and Background . . . . .	80
2.2	Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)	97
2.3	Military Overview . . . . .	101
3	Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Jordan . . . . .	109
3.1	Fatah: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness . . . . .	114
3.2	PFLP: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness . . . . .	132
3.3	DFLP: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness . . . . .	146

4	Alternative Explanations . . . . .	157
4.1	Favorable Balance of Forces . . . . .	157
4.2	External Support . . . . .	158
4.3	Ideology . . . . .	160
5	Conclusion . . . . .	160
<b>4</b>	<b>The Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975)</b>	<b>163</b>
1	Introduction . . . . .	163
1.1	Testing the Theory in Oman . . . . .	164
2	The Dhofar Rebellion (1964-1975) . . . . .	167
2.1	Context and Background . . . . .	167
2.2	The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) . . . . .	172
2.3	Military Overview . . . . .	176
3	Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Oman . . . . .	180
3.1	PFLOAG, Period #1: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness	182
3.2	PFLOAG, Period #2: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness	202
3.3	PFLOAG, Period #3: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness	225
4	Alternative Explanations . . . . .	250
4.1	Favorable Balance of Forces . . . . .	251
4.2	External Support . . . . .	252
4.3	Ideology . . . . .	253
5	Conclusion . . . . .	254
<b>5</b>	<b>Insurgency in Eritrea, 1961-1991</b>	<b>257</b>
1	Introduction . . . . .	257
1.1	Testing the Theory in Eritrea . . . . .	258
2	The Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991) . . . . .	262
2.1	Context and Background . . . . .	262
2.2	The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) . . . . .	268
2.3	Military Overview . . . . .	270
3	Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Eritrea . . . . .	279
3.1	ELF: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness . . . . .	282
3.2	EPLF: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness . . . . .	308
4	Alternative Explanations . . . . .	333
4.1	Favorable Balance of Forces . . . . .	334
4.2	External Support . . . . .	335
4.3	Ideology . . . . .	336
5	Conclusion . . . . .	337

<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>339</b>
1	Summary of Argument and Findings . . . . .	341
2	Theoretical and Empirical Contributions . . . . .	347
2.1	Contributions to Scholarship and Research . . . . .	347
2.2	Historical Contributions . . . . .	349
3	Policy Implications . . . . .	350
4	Future Research . . . . .	352
<b>A</b>	<b>Measurement and Coding</b>	<b>355</b>
1	Insurgent Effectiveness (DV) . . . . .	355
1.1	Stages of Insurgency . . . . .	355
1.2	Guerrilla Stage . . . . .	356
1.3	Conventional Stage . . . . .	360
2	Insurgent Recruitment Practices (IV) . . . . .	365
2.1	Mobilizing Resources . . . . .	365
2.2	Insurgent Recruitment Strategies . . . . .	367
2.3	Insurgent Recruitment Practices . . . . .	367
3	Mechanisms . . . . .	369
3.1	Uniform Shared Purpose . . . . .	369
3.2	Discipline . . . . .	370
3.3	Interpersonal Trust . . . . .	370
<b>B</b>	<b>Group-Specific Casualties in Jordan</b>	<b>371</b>
1	PFLP . . . . .	372
2	DFLP . . . . .	373

# List of Tables

1.1	Insurgent Groups Examined in the Dissertation . . . . .	13
2.1	Dimensions and Types of Recruitment Practices . . . . .	39
3.1	Recruitment Practices in the Jordanian Case . . . . .	112
3.2	Fatah's Task Execution During Black September . . . . .	120
3.3	PFLP's Task Execution During Black September . . . . .	136
3.4	DFLP's Task Execution During Black September . . . . .	150
3.5	Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Jordan . . . . .	161
4.1	Recruitment Practices in the Oman Case . . . . .	181
4.2	Recruitment Practices and Characteristics of the DLF's Four Founding Elements . . . . .	186
4.3	DLF's Task Execution During the 1964-September 1968 Period . . . . .	188
4.4	DLF Losses During 1968 . . . . .	201
4.5	SAF Losses During 1968 . . . . .	202
4.6	PFLOAG's Task Execution During the September 1968-May 1971 Period	213
4.7	PFLOAG Losses from 1968-1970 . . . . .	223
4.8	SAF Losses from 1968-1970 . . . . .	223
4.9	PFLOAG Losses During 1969 . . . . .	224
4.10	SAF Losses During 1969 . . . . .	225
4.11	PFLOAG's Task Execution During the May 1971 - December 1975 Period . . . . .	232
4.12	PFLOAG Losses . . . . .	249
4.13	SAF Losses from 1971 - 1973 . . . . .	249
4.14	Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Oman . . . . .	255
5.1	Recruitment Practices in the Eritrean Case . . . . .	282
5.2	ELF's Task Execution During the Guerrilla Stage . . . . .	291
5.3	Estimated ELF Losses During Guerrilla Stage . . . . .	298
5.4	ELF's Task Execution During the Conventional Stage . . . . .	300
5.5	EPLF's Task Execution During the Guerrilla Stage . . . . .	314
5.6	EPLF's Task Execution During the Conventional Stage . . . . .	318
5.7	Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Eritrea . . . . .	338



6.1	Summary of Case Study Findings . . . . .	342
A.1	Coding Types of Mobilizing Resources . . . . .	367
A.2	Coding Insurgent Recruitment Strategies . . . . .	367
A.3	Coding Insurgent Recruitment Practices . . . . .	368

# List of Figures

2.1	Robust Recruitment Practices, Mechanisms, and Relative Effectiveness	44
2.2	Deficient Recruitment Practices, Mechanisms, and Relative Effectiveness	44
3.1	Map of Jordan (1972) <i>Source: University of Texas-Austin Libraries</i> . . . . .	81
3.2	Map of Amman (circa 1970) <i>Source: El Edroos 1980</i> . . . . .	107
4.1	Map of Oman (1979) <i>Source: University of Texas-Austin Libraries</i> . . . . .	169
4.2	Map of Dhofar (1979) <i>Source: J.E. Peterson, Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy. London (2007): Sagi Books. Reproduced with permission of The Licensor through PLSclear.</i> . . . . .	170
5.1	Map of Eritrea (1986) <i>Source: University of Texas Libraries</i> . . . . .	263

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the product of nearly six years of doctoral training, study, and research that began right after I completed my undergraduate degree. Along the way, I have collected debts and owe significant gratitude to dozens of individuals.

I am deeply grateful to my dissertation committee of David Waldner, Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl, Todd Sechser, and Allan Stam. I could not have completed this project or my overall course of doctoral study if not for the mentorship, advice, and overall guidance of David. Over the past several years, he has taught me how to think like a social scientist and the importance of posing the right questions about the things we study. I am also grateful for the extraordinary patience David has demonstrated towards me over the years, as well as his unwavering support for my professional development and career aims. I met Jonah in my second year of graduate school, and since then he has been instrumental in shaping my development as a scholar of civil wars and as a professional researcher in the field. Jonah has devoted countless hours to providing advice and guidance about matters professional and personal, and I consider him not just a mentor, but a good friend. I am grateful for Todd's encouragement and support as I have worked through the project, as well as for the advice and guidance he has provided as I navigated my way through graduate school and considered professional opportunities. Al has been an invaluable source of insight about the realities of armed forces and combat, as well as a helpful guide in my quest to blend social science research with practical and policy relevance.

I could not have asked for a better place at which to pursue a doctoral degree than the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia. I am fortunate to have had access to incredibly supportive and engaging faculty and staff during my time in Charlottesville. Though not officially on the committee, Bill Quandt has been a guiding force for the project since its beginning, and I am grateful for his insights, suggestions, and overall support for my research. I am also thankful to Jeff Jenkins for his general support and guidance, and for ensuring that I always had the resources and flexibility needed to stay on track to finish the degree. Sharon Marsh and Bonnie Bragg were superb in making sure I did everything I needed to do to successfully get through the program. My friends and colleagues at UVA made the three years of coursework and training in Charlottesville bearable, and I thank the following people for their support, help, and friendship: Sarah Andrews, Andrew Clarke, Jon Forney, Geoff Gordon, Thomas Gray, April Herlevi, Jeff Jackson, Colin Kielty, Bob Kubinec, Susan Norman, Marc Oppen, Min-Gyu Paik, Brenton Peterson, Abby Post, Paro Sen, and Yu-Jin Woo. A most special thanks to fellow members of the "late night" institution at Gibson Hall: Harrison Frye, Kenny Lowande, and Michael Poznansky.

I was incredibly fortunate during my fieldwork in Jordan and Lebanon to meet people that were willing to share their personal and private experiences, stories, and observations with me about the Black September conflict. I am forever indebted to these kind, giving, and hospitable individuals, without whom this dissertation frankly would not exist, though I do not name them out of respect for their confidentiality and safety. For their insights on beginning fieldwork in Jordan and studying the conflict,

I am grateful to Chuck Cogan, Tex DeAtkine, Dot Ohl, Amb. Bob Pelletreau, Rob Richer, Mohamed Sawaie, Eric Thompson, and Amb. Nick Veliotis. Dr. Muhannad Mubayadin made my archival research visit to the University of Jordan Library hassle-free, and the librarians at the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, particularly Jeanette Sarouphim, were helpful in making my time there productive. Adam Howard at the State Department's Office of the Historian was a great help in directing me towards the relevant resources at the National Archives. Finally, I am grateful to my "Jordanian" family for the incredible warmth and hospitality they have shown me every time I have been in the Kingdom.

After my fieldwork, I was fortunate to spend a year back at home in Boston. During this time, Peter Krause was incredibly supportive as both a mentor and friend, and I appreciate his help in facilitating my affiliation with Boston College during the year. I'm also grateful to the individuals who attended my presentations and workshops at MIT, Harvard, BC, MPSA, APSA, the GIGA Institute of Middle East Studies, and the Trajectories of Change Annual Conference during the year, and provided feedback that was instrumental in making my project better in its early stages.

Much of this dissertation was written during the course of an OCV Predoctoral Fellowship at Yale, and I could not have asked for a better place in which to refine my project and finish the writing. I am very thankful to Stathis Kalyvas for facilitating this opportunity, as well as for his guidance and feedback on my project. Libby Wood, Jason Lyall, and Nuno Monteiro also provided helpful thoughts during our conversations. I feel incredibly fortunate to have ended up as fellow Fellows with Kevin Li and Joon Paik, as well as fellow office member Trinh Luu. Their camaraderie, support, and friendship made the final writing stages significantly less dull and isolating, provided much-needed catharsis, and made the year a genuinely enjoyable one.

Several other individuals provided invaluable insight and feedback on the project at one point or another, whether by reading drafts of chapters, engaging my research during conversation, or providing advice and suggestions. These include Alexei Abrahams, Gerard Alexander, Marsin Alshamary, Aysegul Aydin, Andre Bank, Robert Bates, Stephen Biddle, Deborah Boucoyannis, Ronald Clark Jr., Martha Crenshaw, Fiona Cunningham, Mike Dennis, Josh Goodman, Ryan Grauer, Mehmet Gurses, Andy Haltermann, Danny Hirschel-Burns, Patrick Johnston, Trevor Johnston, Paul Jureidini, Morgan Kaplan, Rana Khoury, Peter Krause, Marika Landau-Wells, Adria Lawrence, Phil Martin, Dan Masterson, Carol Mershon, Stephen Moncrief, Pete Moore, Rich Nielsen, Cullen Nutt, E. Roger Owen, Sarah Parkinson, Evan Perkoski, Costa Pischedda, Sara Plana, Alyssa Prorock, Ernest Robinson, David Romney, Yezid Sayigh, Kelly Stedem, Megan Stewart, Ora Szekely, Caitlin Talmadge, Rachel Tecott, Kai Thaler, Julian Waller, Louis Wasser, Isabelle Werenfels, Mike Woldemariam, and Yael Zeira. Laurie Brand, Bill Quandt, and Sean Yom kindly read drafts of the Jordan chapter and provided their expert feedback and suggestions. I am also grateful to Marc Opper, who read multiple chapters of the project and provided comments that made them much stronger, and to my uncle, Chris Howe, who also took the time to read several chapters and provide insightful feedback.

The research and writing for this dissertation was supported by multiple sources, including a Yale University Order, Conflict, and Violence (OCV) Predoctoral Fellowship, a Smith Richardson Foundation World Politics & Statecraft Fellowship, a Graduate Research Fellowship from the Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College, and a Bucerius Scholarship from the Zeit Foundation's Trajectories of Change Program. At UVA, I am grateful to the Department of Politics, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, the Bankard Fund for Political Economy, the Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures, the Center for Global Inquiry and Innovation, and the Quandt Fund for International Research for their extensive support, in many cases at multiple times over the course of my graduate career. Without these various sources, I could not have done my fieldwork and produced this dissertation, and I am indebted to these various institutes, programs, and institutions for their willingness to invest in me and my project.

Before coming to UVA, I was lucky enough to be mentored by a UVA PhD, Anne Zimmermann. Anne was the one who stimulated my interest in pursuing a doctoral degree and showed me how enjoyable research can be as a profession. I am also grateful to Joyce Jacobsen and Michael Nelson, who were both instrumental in shaping my development as a student while at Wesleyan. Erica Chenoweth helped guide me through the graduate school application process and was always there to lend support. If not consistently present, Rhonan Mokriski has been a guiding force in my intellectual development since he was, as he would put it, "unfortunately" assigned to be my advisor in high school. I would also like to thank Zack, Tom, Tim, Brad, James, Kirk, Cliff/Jason/Robert, Lars, Anthony, Flea, John, Chad, Maynard, Adam, Paul/Justin, and Danny for making the soundtrack to which much of this dissertation was written.

Most importantly, I want to thank my family for their truly never-ending support (and for putting up with me during the many trying times of graduate school). Dad, Mom, Robin, Kate, Caroline, and Aaron have been incredibly supportive over the past six years, to the extent that I cannot begin to repay them. My extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins has equally tolerated and appreciated my pursuits and always been supportive of why I have been a perpetual student (though finally no more!). I am incredibly lucky to be part of such an amazing family, and for the love and patience they have always shown towards me.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1 Introduction

Why are some insurgent groups more combat effective than others? In early 2013, Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and Ahrar al-Sham (AAS) were considered the dominant insurgent groups<sup>1</sup> in the Syrian Civil War, controlling the most non-regime territory and materiel and having the largest number of fighters among the armed opposition.<sup>2</sup> In April 2013, JN and the Islamic State of Iraq formally split, resulting in the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).<sup>3</sup> At its genesis, ISIS controlled no territory and had less fighters and materiel relative to JN and AAS.<sup>4</sup> ISIS also lacked any significant external support, at least to the extent possessed by other actors such as the Free Syria Army (FSA).<sup>5</sup>

By August 2014, however, ISIS had become the most powerful insurgent party to

---

<sup>1</sup>I use “insurgents,” “insurgent groups,” and “armed groups” interchangeably throughout this dissertation. I also use “civil wars,” “insurgencies,” “internal conflicts,” “internal wars,” and “conflicts” interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup>IHS Jane’s 2013.

<sup>3</sup>Barrett 2014b

<sup>4</sup>Anjarini 2013, Birke 2013, IHS Jane’s 2013

<sup>5</sup>White et al. 2013

the conflict, controlling a geographic network of cities, towns and roads that stretched from northern and eastern Syria to central Iraq and contained an estimated population of eight million people.<sup>6</sup> In capturing this territory, it had demonstrated remarkable tactical and operational proficiency, successfully incorporating conventional warfare tactics into its repertoire and defeating or inducing the collapse of sizable parts of the Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>7</sup>

The historical record of other conflicts indicates that such differences in insurgent effectiveness<sup>8</sup> are not unique to the Syrian conflict. In the Liberian Civil War (1989-1997), Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) invaded the country from the Ivory Coast in December 1989, easily defeating units from the Armed Forces of Liberia and taking large swathes of territory in the process, including the second-largest port and all of the country's iron ore and timber resources.<sup>9</sup> In January 1991, Taylor declared himself President of Liberia, with the NPFL controlling more than 90% of the country including the capital.<sup>10</sup> However, the NPFL began to fragment and subsequently lose its territorial holdings, as both pre-existing and newly-formed rival insurgent groups slowly chipped away at its power base after 1991.<sup>11</sup>

At the start of the Tigrayan insurgency in Ethiopia in 1975, the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) held no territory, with its rivals the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP) dominating the Tigray region of Ethiopia.<sup>12</sup> Yet the TPLF was able to expand and subsequently outcompete the EDU and EPRP for territory by 1978, and demonstrated remarkable

---

<sup>6</sup>Barrett 2014b, Gilsinan 2014, Hubbard and Schmidt 2014, NAF 2014, Alami 2014

<sup>7</sup>McFate 2015, Barfi 2016

<sup>8</sup>I use "combat effectiveness," "insurgent effectiveness," and "insurgent performance" interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

<sup>9</sup>Ellis 1999; Lidow 2012, 209

<sup>10</sup>Reno 2011, 180-181

<sup>11</sup>Gerdes 2013, 43-59

<sup>12</sup>Young 1997

operational and tactical proficiency against Ethiopian forces that contributed to its capture of power in May 1991.<sup>13</sup> In Peru (1981-1996), the Shining Path demonstrated a remarkable ability to capture territory in the early years of the conflict, yet its rival Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement was unable to make gains during the same time period, instead pursuing direct confrontation with Peruvian security forces in the cities that had disastrous consequences.<sup>14</sup>

Even in conflicts where the state is relatively weak or absent, there are significant differences in the combat effectiveness of insurgent groups, as the civil wars in Afghanistan and Angola illustrate. In Afghanistan (1992-1996), Hezb-i-Islami (HeI) was initially the most powerful group based on its territorial holdings and combat proficiency. Yet the group was ultimately overtaken by the smaller-sized Taliban, who proceeded to capture nearly 90% of Afghan territory from its civilians by late 1996.<sup>15</sup> Like ISIS, the Taliban was smaller than its rivals and lacked any external backing for the first two years of its existence - the precise period during which the group saw its most rapid successes in combat.<sup>16</sup>

In the Angolan Civil War (1975-1991), the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) initially dominated the insurgent fight against the newly incumbent People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the first few months of the conflict.<sup>17</sup> After a series of clashes with both the MPLA and the newly formed but smaller National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), however, the FNLA was eliminated from existence in February 1976, and the conflict largely became a two-party civil war between UNITA and the incumbent MPLA, which did not fully

---

<sup>13</sup>Young 1997, Gebru Tareke 2009, Ayele 2014

<sup>14</sup>Kent 1993, McCormick 1993

<sup>15</sup>Harpviken 1997, Nojumi 2002

<sup>16</sup>The Pakistani ISI did not start supporting the Taliban until two years after its formation and well after its initial successes led it to overtake HeI as the most dominant insurgent party in Afghanistan. In fact, the ISI switched its support to the Taliban precisely because of the group's proven effectiveness compared to HeI (Harpviken 1997, Sullivan 2007, Christia 2012).

<sup>17</sup>Guimaraes 2001, Lockyer 2008



defeat UNITA until 2002.<sup>18</sup>

This cursory overview of present and past conflicts indicates that insurgents exhibit varying abilities to fight effectively in combat, whether across a set of groups or over time within a single group. Yet conventional wisdom and existing scholarship tell us little about what might account for such differences in insurgent effectiveness. A commonly invoked assumption is that factions with more external support or a favorable balance of forces<sup>19</sup> should be more effective in fighting. Yet, such conventional wisdom is found wanting when considering the recent successes of particular groups in Syria and Iraq, as well as in different historical cases such as Liberia and Afghanistan.

Besides the failure of such conventional assumptions to account for variation in insurgent effectiveness, the relevant academic research on combat effectiveness employs overall conflict outcomes as indicators of relative performance.<sup>20</sup> While fruitful as a line of inquiry into assessing the factors that might shape who wins and loses internal conflicts, such approaches entirely ignore the diverse performances of non-state armed actors *during* civil wars. As such, these works do not allow us to capture differences in the effectiveness of insurgent groups in combat. Research on interstate military effectiveness, with its analytical focus on conventional armed forces that have capabilities far exceeding those of typical insurgents,<sup>21</sup> is likewise limited in its applicability to assessing the performance of such irregular armed forces. In the civil wars literature, insurgent levels of violence are sometimes used as a proxy for effectiveness.<sup>22</sup> However, insurgents' use of violence often has its own purpose and logic - in certain instances, it may be more combat effective for insurgents *not* to use violence.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Marcum 1978, James 1992, Ziemke 2008

<sup>19</sup>"Forces" here refers to both numbers and materiel.

<sup>20</sup>E.g. Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lyall 2010b, Peic 2014

<sup>21</sup>E.g. Biddle 2004, Talmadge 2015, Grauer 2016

<sup>22</sup>E.g. Lyall 2009, Jardine and Palamar 2014

<sup>23</sup>Kalyvas 2006, Weinstein 2007, Balcells 2010

In addition to this conceptual and theoretical gap vis-a-vis insurgents, research that examines counterinsurgent success (and thus implicit insurgent “ineffectiveness”) focuses on either aggregate state counterinsurgency strategy<sup>24</sup> or aspects of incumbent armed forces.<sup>25</sup> Yet such approaches leave the characteristics and behavior of insurgents theoretically unaccounted for. Moreover, when considering the performance of individual insurgent groups in multiparty conflicts (such as those ongoing in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen), these works as a whole are found further wanting.<sup>26</sup>

This dissertation provides a remedy to these shortcomings by developing a framework to measure and explain insurgent effectiveness during combat. In the following chapters, I outline and test a theory that positions the relative rigor of insurgent recruitment practices as shaping their corresponding effectiveness during conflict. I test the framework through historical case studies of insurgent group performance during the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971), the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975), and the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991). Drawing on interviews with ex-combatants, archival research, and existing secondary sources, I show in each case how recruitment practices shaped insurgent effectiveness during combat.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. The next section reviews relevant research on the outcome of interest, and critically assesses its ability to measure and/or explain insurgent effectiveness during combat. I next outline possible explanations and derive associated hypotheses for consideration in the dissertation. I then provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework and research design, and conclude the chapter with a roadmap of the dissertation.

---

<sup>24</sup>Downes 2007, Johnston 2012, Peic 2014

<sup>25</sup>Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lyall 2010a and 2010b, Paul et al. 2010, Friedman 2011, Getmansky 2013, MacDonald 2013

<sup>26</sup>By one measure, such conflicts with two or more insurgent groups constitute one-third of all civil wars since 1945 (Christia 2012).

## 2 Existing Literature and Approaches

### 2.1 “Military Effectiveness” and Insurgent Performance in Civil Wars

Studies of national-level military effectiveness constitute the forefront of theories regarding the military performance of armed forces. In these works, scholars use a variety of different indicators to capture effectiveness in conventional interstate warfare settings. These include overall conflict outcomes,<sup>27</sup> certain combat tasks,<sup>28</sup> and battlefield performance and loss-exchange ratios.<sup>29</sup> While useful for assessing the performance of conventional armed forces, these measures of effectiveness are not suited for application to the context of civil wars and insurgent groups, for two reasons.

First, as stated previously, these works examine military effectiveness in the context of conventional warfare between states, where combat engagements typically consist of using concentrated forces to engage in sustained positional battles. Using such measures in the context of insurgency would imply a teleological progression towards massing forces in combat - something that insurgents try to avoid for both strategic and tactical reasons, particularly in the early stages of insurgency when there is an imbalance between incumbent and insurgent capabilities.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, such a measurement scheme would erroneously reward groups that use conventional tactics even when it is not appropriate to do so. Empirically, the scheme would only apply to insurgent groups that reach conventional capabilities. As such, it would exclude from analysis a significant number of insurgent groups in the historical record that have appropriately employed guerrilla warfare due to limited military capabilities.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>Stam 1996, Lyall n.d.

<sup>28</sup>Pollack 2002, Brooks and Stanley 2007, Talmadge 2015

<sup>29</sup>Biddle 2004, Biddle and Long 2004, Grauer 2011, Grauer and Horowitz 2012, Castillo 2014, Lyall n.d.

<sup>30</sup>Taber 1965, Mao 1989, Guevara 1998, Beckett 2001, Biddle and Friedman 2006.

<sup>31</sup>The use of guerrilla warfare tactics is found in over half of all civil wars fought between 1944-2004

Along with this initial mismatch, developing a consistent definition of what constitutes a “battle” in the context of a civil war is nearly impossible given the general fluidity of combat engagements in asymmetric intrastate environments.<sup>32</sup> Besides this issue, resource and personnel limitations for all armed actors in a civil war may dictate “strategic” withdrawals and concessions to adversaries that may lead to combat “victories” for the latter during the course of the conflict. Moreover, as just previously stated, insurgencies by their very nature typically consist of small-scale indirect engagements between one or more insurgent groups and militarily superior incumbent forces. As such, it is not often that insurgent groups reach the stage where they are intentionally engaging in positional warfare, though this does indeed occur.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, as I will argue in Chapter 2, such situations of relative incumbent-insurgent parity demand a different set of measures of effectiveness from those in the “classic” situation of insurgency with the typical imbalance of capabilities between state and insurgents.

Turning to the literature on civil wars, recent works unpacking the “black box” of armed groups examine various aspects of insurgent behavior, such as cohesion, survival, and control of violence.<sup>34</sup> While potentially related to effectiveness, these works’ analytical priority and focus on other outcomes leaves the performance of insurgent groups during combat unspecified. As noted in the previous section, studies of counterinsurgency effectiveness focus on end-of-war outcomes, relying on which party (incumbent or insurgent) wins/loses/draws at the end of a conflict as a measure of relative effectiveness.<sup>35</sup>

Relying on such end-of-conflict outcomes to capture or measure military effective-

---

(Kalyvas and Balcells 2010).

<sup>32</sup>An exception to such fluidity, and something that can be exploited for analysis (as is done in this dissertation), are offensives or counterinsurgency campaigns during civil wars, which often have clear start and end points and are often fixed vis-a-vis a particular area or location.

<sup>33</sup>Lyall and Wilson 2009

<sup>34</sup>Weinstein 2007, Sinno 2008, Staniland 2014, Hoover Green 2016, Worsnop 2017

<sup>35</sup>e.g. Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lyall 2010b, Peic 2014.

ness during a conflict is problematic, however. Like interstate wars, civil war outcomes are the product of a great deal of uncertainty and chance in terms of the final result.<sup>36</sup> What might make a group effective during war may be completely unrelated to what produces the final result between warring parties. In order to know what makes insurgents effective in combat itself, we need ways to measure insurgent effectiveness *during* a conflict rather than relying on its ultimate conclusion.

Some recent studies have taken this approach, moving away from conflict and organizational outcomes to a focus on within-conflict measures, such as levels of insurgent violence.<sup>37</sup> The theoretical assumption in these works is that more insurgent attacks is indicative of lower counterinsurgent effectiveness and higher insurgent effectiveness. However, there are several different theories about the production of violence in civil war, most of which imply that more violence (or in some cases *any* violence) is not always ideal for insurgents.<sup>38</sup> In some instances, more effective insurgent groups may use less violence, leading us to draw invalid inferences about the relative performance of armed actors in a given conflict.

There is thus a need for a framework for measuring insurgent performance that meets three criteria: (1) covers all potential stages of an insurgency; (2) captures effectiveness prior to the conclusion of a conflict; and (3) measures effectiveness in a way that is distinct from other aspects of insurgent behavior. I discuss this briefly in Section 3 and in greater detail in Chapter 2. In the remainder of this section, I derive potential alternative explanations for consideration in the dissertation.

---

<sup>36</sup>Talmadge 2015, 7

<sup>37</sup>e.g. Lyall 2009, Lyall 2010a, Jardine and Palamar 2014

<sup>38</sup>e.g. Kalyvas 2006, Hultman 2007, Weinstein 2007, Hultman 2009, Metelits 2010, R. Wood 2010, Lilja and Hultman 2011

## 2.2 Possible Explanations

I begin again with research on national-level military effectiveness. These works focus on factors such as civil-military relations,<sup>39</sup> relative military capabilities and/or the balance of forces,<sup>40</sup> societal culture,<sup>41</sup> political regime type,<sup>42</sup> patterns of force employment,<sup>43</sup> command structure “fit,”<sup>44</sup> and military organizational practices (such as promotion patterns and information management)<sup>45</sup> as shaping military effectiveness. Many of these factors, including civil-military relations, regime type, societal culture, patterns of force employment, and military organizational practices, are not immediately relevant for the context of insurgent groups. These various aspects of national militaries, political systems, and societies do not translate over into the context of insurgent groups, given their very different origins and operating conditions.

However, theories about material capabilities and the balance of forces have clear implications for insurgent effectiveness. Indeed, they are implicitly found in some previous scholarship on civil wars looking at insurgent “power” or “capacity.”<sup>46</sup> The notion here is that insurgent groups with relatively more fighters or more advanced weaponry should be more combat effective than groups with relatively less of such features.

In their study on external support for insurgent groups, Byman et al. argue that material support from outside a conflict zone, ranging from diaspora financial support to third-party provision of military materiel and training directly to insurgents, can make for more powerful groups and augment their fighting capabilities. This is often

---

<sup>39</sup>Huntington 1957

<sup>40</sup>Mearsheimer 2001

<sup>41</sup>Rosen 1995, Pollack 2002

<sup>42</sup>Reiter and Stam 2002, Biddle and Long 2004

<sup>43</sup>Biddle 2004, Grauer and Horowitz 2012

<sup>44</sup>Grauer 2011 and 2016

<sup>45</sup>Talmadge 2015

<sup>46</sup>e.g. Cunningham et al. 2009, Jardine and Palamar 2014, Krause 2014.

the logic behind third-party backing for insurgent groups by outside powers.<sup>47</sup> In this regard, we would expect insurgent groups with more external material support to be more combat effective than groups with relatively less of such outside backing.

Besides these two possible explanations, we might also expect that insurgent groups with revolutionary ideologies (such as Marxism-Leninism, Ba’athism, or Islamism) will be more combat effective than factions without such transformative ideologies.<sup>48</sup> The idea here is that revolutionary ideologies motivate combatants more than non-revolutionary ideologies (like rote nationalism), and so they will be more willing to fight. Besides motivating fighters, revolutionary ideologies can also allow an insurgent group to exploit features that make for “robust insurgency” rather than traditional guerrilla warfare.<sup>49</sup>

From these sets of works, we have the following three possible explanations:

**Hypothesis 1** *Insurgent groups that have a more favorable balance of forces are more likely to be combat effective than insurgent groups that have a relatively less favorable balance of forces*

**Hypothesis 2** *Insurgent groups with external support are more likely to be combat effective than insurgent groups with less or no external support*

**Hypothesis 3** *Insurgent groups with revolutionary ideologies are more likely to be combat effective than insurgent groups without such ideologies*

### 3 The Argument

In this dissertation, I propose a fourth possible explanation, one that focuses on insurgent recruitment practices as the key force shaping differences in insurgent effectiveness. I conceptualize recruitment practices as the selection, induction, training, and socialization procedures groups use to choose and incorporate would-be fighters

---

<sup>47</sup>Salehyan et al. 2011.

<sup>48</sup>Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, Balcells and Kalyvas 2015. Also see Uggariza and Craig 2012 and Oppenheim et al. 2016.

<sup>49</sup>Balcells and Kalyvas 2015

into the organization. These practices are a product of a group's particular mobilizing resources and wartime circumstances. Mobilizing resources are those around which the organization is formed, such as ideological orientation or external support, and often prescribe certain recruitment strategies that a group may seek to implement. Wartime circumstances are conditions that affect the normal functioning of the organization, such as a sudden influx of recruits or the loss of a training camp. These two factors interact to shape how groups actually recruit in practice, or their *recruitment practices*.

I classify recruitment practices on the basis of their relative consistency and comprehensiveness. The consistency dimension captures how identical the selection, induction, training, and socialization procedures are within the group, while the comprehensiveness dimension captures how extensive such procedures are. On this basis, I outline two ideal types of recruitment practices, *Robust* and *Deficient*. Robust recruitment practices are those in which would-be fighters are all subject to the same comprehensive selection criteria and induction, training, and socialization procedures when joining a group. Conversely, deficient recruitment practices are those in which individuals are selected according to inconsistent (or no) criteria and/or incorporated in dissimilar ways, such as some recruits undergoing training while others are sent straight to the front lines.

To fight effectively in combat, insurgent groups need three organizational characteristics: uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust. Uniform shared purpose gives fighters a sense of the group's overall objectives - the motivation for why it is waging insurgency. Discipline ensures that fighters will follow orders and exhibit the correct behavior both in combat (e.g. following orders) and towards the civilian population. Interpersonal trust provides the basic foundation needed for executing cooperative tasks in a context of risk and possible death, as well as the basis for



delegating command without adverse consequences. By their nature, robust recruitment practices generate these three characteristics, and groups with such practices are more likely to fight effectively in combat. Conversely, deficient recruitment practices produce the inverse of these positive characteristics – absent/varied/weak shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust – making combat ineffectiveness likely. The main implication from this framework is that groups with robust recruitment practices are more likely to be combat effective than those with deficient recruitment practices.

I define *insurgent effectiveness* as the ability of a non-state armed actor to generate fighting power across the possible stages of insurgency. To measure effectiveness, I first classify conflicts into two possible stages, Guerrilla or Conventional, depending on the relative balance of capabilities between the incumbent and insurgent sides. Specifically, I consider whether insurgents have deployed heavy weaponry (e.g. armor, artillery) in combat or whether insurgents have more or less than  $2/3$  the forces of the incumbent. This balance in turn shapes how insurgents should fight and, consequently, how their effectiveness should be assessed during combat.

In the Guerrilla stage, the marked asymmetry in capabilities dictates a strategy of guerrilla warfare in which insurgent groups should employ tactics like ambushes and hit-and-run attacks, use cover/concealment and dispersion, avoid concentrated frontal assaults, withdraw when outnumbered/outgunned, and be able to decentralize military and tactical decisionmaking. In the Conventional stage, because of the relative parity in capabilities, insurgent military strategy shifts to building the counter-state through positional warfare. This is done through the use of conventional warfare tactics and operations like frontal assaults, maneuver, defenses in depth, and combined arms operations, while being able to coordinate at high levels across units. For each stage, I outline a set of tasks based on the particular tactics and operations that

should be used in it. I use these sets of tasks to evaluate the effectiveness of insurgent actor(s) during a given period of a conflict.

## 4 Research Design

To evaluate this framework along with the three possible explanations, I conduct three historical case studies in the dissertation. I examine insurgent group performance during the civil wars in Jordan (1968-1971), Oman (1964-1975), and Eritrea (1961-1991). As is standard practice in political science research, these cases are chosen on the basis of their values on the independent variable of interest, recruitment practices.<sup>50</sup> In each selected case, there is full variation in recruitment practices, whether across a set of groups (Jordan and Eritrea) or over time within a single group (Oman).

In addition, I selected these cases with a view towards testing the full extent of the stage-based measures of effectiveness, ensuring that the conflicts examined altogether constitute the Guerrilla and Conventional stages. The conflicts in Jordan and Oman were in the Guerrilla stage for their entireties, while the conflict in Eritrea began in the Guerrilla stage and shifted to the Conventional stage in 1974. Examining groups within cases allows me to control for a number of potential confounding factors, such as counterinsurgent strategy and tactics, country-specific characteristics (like terrain and level of development), and insurgent goals.

**Table 1.1.** Insurgent Groups Examined in the Dissertation

<b>Case</b>	<b>Group</b>
Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971)	Fatah Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)
Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975)	Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG)
Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991)	Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)

---

<sup>50</sup>I discuss more on case selection in Chapter 2.

In each case, I outline the participating groups' formation and resulting recruitment practices. I then trace the consequences of these practices for effectiveness during the given conflict, while also evaluating the validity of the three possible explanations. As evidence, I draw on extensive fieldwork including interviews with ex-combatants, archival research, and various types of primary and secondary historical sources and accounts.

For the Jordan case, this includes 105 interviews personally conducted in Arabic with former Jordanian military/intelligence/government officials and ex-insurgent commanders and fighters that participated in the conflict. In addition to these interviews, I use English and Arabic archival resources gathered from multiple repositories in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United States, as well as memoirs and private papers from individuals involved in the conflict. For the Oman and Eritrea cases, I rely on archival research along with existing secondary accounts and memoirs in English and Arabic.

## **5 Dissertation Roadmap**

Chapter 2 develops in greater detail the theoretical framework of insurgent effectiveness briefly introduced in Section 3. I begin by outlining how I measure effectiveness across the possible stages of insurgency. I then discuss the explanatory portion of the framework, positioning the relative rigor of recruitment practices as shaping the corresponding effectiveness of insurgent groups. I also discuss the theoretical scope conditions and assumptions, and provide an overview of the research design used to evaluate the theory and alternative explanations in the dissertation.

In Chapter 3, I combine interviews with ex-combatants, archival research, and secondary sources in English and Arabic to examine the effectiveness of insurgent

groups during the most intense period of the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971). Owing to the lack of existing disaggregated knowledge on the conflict in both English and Arabic, I first provide an extensive overview on the war and its historical progression. Then, drawing on both 105 semi-structured interviews conducted in colloquial Arabic with former Jordanian military/intelligence/government personnel and ex-insurgent commanders and fighters along with a variety of English and Arabic language archival sources, I analyze the fighting performance of the three main insurgent groups, Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), during the “Black September” period of the conflict. The analysis demonstrates how each group’s recruitment practices shaped its relative effectiveness during the fighting episode, and establishes the theory’s internal validity.

Chapter 4 tests the theory of insurgent effectiveness during the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975). Combining historical accounts in English and Arabic, declassified British, American, and Sultanate diplomatic and intelligence documents, and combatant memoirs, I examine the PFLOAG’s trajectory during the conflict. I specifically analyze how its recruitment practices shifted over time and the corresponding consequences for the group’s combat effectiveness. The analysis demonstrates how the PFLOAG’s initial deficient recruitment practices led to ineffectiveness, but that its shift in September 1968 towards robust recruitment practices led to significantly improved combat effectiveness - only to slide back to deficient recruitment practices in late 1970, which rendered it ineffective for the remainder of the rebellion. In so doing, the case study and analysis illustrate the theory’s external validity and its ability to account for changes in effectiveness over time within a single insurgent group.

Chapter 5 examines insurgent effectiveness during the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991). I use archival sources and in-depth histories and accounts of the

conflict to analyze the recruitment practices and effectiveness of the two main insurgent groups, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The conflict began in 1961 in the Guerrilla stage, but shifted to the Conventional stage in September 1974 as a result of the insurgents' capture and subsequent deployment of armor and artillery in combat and expansion in personnel. As in Jordan, recruitment practices varied across the two groups, both of which performed as expected by the theory. The ELF's deficient recruitment practices rendered it ineffective during both Guerrilla and Conventional stages of the conflict, while the EPLF's robust recruitment practices generated one of the most combat effective insurgent organizations on the post-WWII historical record. Besides further establishing the theory's external validity, this case probes its value in application to a conflict with both possible stages of insurgency.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation, summarizing the theory and main findings, highlighting the value of the findings for both scholarship and policy, and discussing areas for future research.

# Chapter 2

## A Theory of Insurgent Effectiveness in Civil Wars

### 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I develop a theoretical framework to measure and explain insurgent effectiveness in civil wars. I start by outlining a conceptual scheme to measure insurgent effectiveness across the possible stages of an insurgency, discussing each stage and the corresponding measures of insurgent effectiveness. After presenting this part of the framework, I turn to explaining insurgent effectiveness, focusing on insurgent recruitment practices, or the manner by which individuals are selected and incorporated into a group as fighters. I start by discussing the origins of insurgent recruitment practices, arguing that they are the product of an interaction between group recruitment strategies and wartime circumstances. I then classify recruitment practices into two types (robust and deficient) based on their relative consistency and comprehensiveness, and discuss why not all groups can have robust practices. I next outline the three mechanisms that link recruitment practices to ultimate insurgent

effectiveness during combat. I then specify the theory’s main hypothesis, outline its assumptions and scope conditions, and discuss the research design used to test the framework in the rest of the dissertation.

## 2 Conceptualizing and Measuring Insurgent Effectiveness

The classic study of interstate military effectiveness defines it as “the process by which armed forces convert resources into fighting power.”<sup>1</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, insurgent groups face the same need to convert resources into fighting power. Yet what “fighting power” means for state armed forces is quite different than what it means for insurgent groups. In this vein, I define *insurgent effectiveness* as the ability of a non-state armed actor to generate fighting power across the possible stages of insurgency.

In terms of measuring effectiveness, some civil war scholarship has implicitly addressed the relative “power” or “capability” of insurgents using a variety of organizational “inputs” as indicators, including the number of fighters,<sup>2</sup> resources,<sup>3</sup> and external support.<sup>4</sup> Though useful proxies, these measures are imprecise. Inputs such as fighters, resources, or external support may have varying effects across armed groups, which can be the result of several factors, including organizational structures, leadership, or even recruitment.<sup>5</sup> They therefore do not directly capture the actual behavior of armed groups or tell us anything about how groups perform during combat.

To mitigate these shortcomings and provide measures of insurgent effectiveness that capture performance during civil wars, I propose to examine a set of concrete

---

<sup>1</sup>Millett et al. 1988, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Valentino et al. 2004, Cunningham et al. 2009, R. Wood 2010, Christia 2012

<sup>3</sup>Pearlman 2009, Krause 2014

<sup>4</sup>Greenhill and Major 2007

<sup>5</sup>Weinstein 2007, Sinno 2008, Staniland 2012, Parkinson 2014

“outputs,” or tasks. These tasks will capture an insurgent group’s ability to convert resources into fighting power and indicate its corresponding effectiveness during conflict.<sup>6</sup> The premise here is that insurgent groups that can execute the outlined tasks should be considered relatively more effective than those that cannot.

I begin with the proposition that internal conflicts<sup>7</sup> themselves can be broken down into phases or stages. Both classic and contemporary works on insurgency have discussed these different stages, particularly concerning how the balance of capabilities between insurgents and incumbents shapes the strategies that should be pursued by insurgents.<sup>8</sup> I distill these into two stages. The *Guerrilla* stage exists when there is marked asymmetry in forces and capabilities between insurgents and incumbents. This is typically at the start of a conflict,<sup>9</sup> and is the “classic” scenario of guerrilla warfare where bands of insurgents indirectly confront incumbent forces and positions.<sup>10</sup> The *Conventional* stage exists once there is a parity in the balance of capabilities between the two warring sides. In what follows, I discuss these two stages in more detail and the associated indicators I use when assessing insurgent effectiveness in each.

**The Guerrilla Stage** In the Guerrilla stage, as a result of the asymmetry in capabilities, the strategy of insurgents is to execute small-scale attacks, operate in mobile

---

<sup>6</sup>While insurgent actors have goals that are often better pursued through calculated coercion rather than the strict application of force (Smith 2003, 35-36), I persist in arguing that one can still examine their specific combat performance using tangible indicators.

<sup>7</sup>The ensuing discussion assumes that the conflict setup is that of one or more insurgent groups fighting against a relatively superior incumbent actor. The other main empirical scenario in which relatively balanced belligerents challenge each other in the absence of a superior government force, often called “symmetric non-conventional” (Kalyvas 2005) or “irregular” (Lockyer 2010) warfare, can be analyzed using this framework. I provide an initial demonstration of this application in Chapter 5’s case study of the Eritrean War of Independence with periods of insurgent infighting, and discuss this further in the Conclusion chapter.

<sup>8</sup>E.g. Knorr 1962, Guevara 1998, Mao 1989, Taber 1965, Kalyvas 2005 and 2006, Biddle and Friedman 2008, Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lockyer 2010

<sup>9</sup>Taber 1965, 27. I outline how I measure the balance of capabilities in Appendix A.

<sup>10</sup>As stated in the previous chapter, existing works have largely neglected conceptualizing and measuring insurgent effectiveness at these lower levels of capabilities, yet conflicts in which insurgents had such capabilities constitute over half of all civil wars fought since World War II (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010).



units, and expand the theatre of confrontation, so as to overstretch and wear down incumbent forces while minimizing their own losses.<sup>11</sup> Insurgents in this stage “will have no business to seek battles and every reason to shun them.”<sup>12</sup> In the words of Mao:

“In guerrilla warfare, select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy’s rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points, and therefore must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated” (Mao 1989, 46).

Even when defending positions (such as bases or lines), insurgent fighters should use indirect and dispersed tactics, such as ambushes, rather than more direct conventional actions, such as static defenses, as well as avoid decisive engagements<sup>13</sup>:

“Insurgent actions are similar in character to all others fought by second-rate troops: they start out at full vigor and enthusiasm, but there is little level-headedness and tenacity in the long run. Not much is lost if a body of insurgents is defeated and disbursed - that is what it is for. But it should not be allowed to go to pieces through too many men being killed, wounded or taken prisoner: such defeats would soon dampen its ardor...if the defense of a sector is entrusted to the home guard, one must avoid getting involved in a major defensive battle, or else they will perish no matter how favorable the circumstances. They may and should defend the points of access etc...but once these are breached, they had better scatter and continue their resistance by means of surprise attacks, rather than huddle together in narrow redoubt, locked into a regular defensive position from which there is no escape” (Clausewitz 1984, 482).

Because of this role vis-a-vis the incumbent, insurgents are overall on the “strategic defensive.”<sup>14</sup> However, they still undertake tactical offensive actions, using surprise and deception and withdrawing once the local balance of forces becomes unfavorable:

---

<sup>11</sup>Taber 1965, 52-54; Clausewitz 1984, 480

<sup>12</sup>Taber 1965, 27.

<sup>13</sup>Guevara 1998, 71. A decisive engagement is “a condition wherein defenders remain in position under assault even after the attackers have gotten close enough that the defenders cannot readily withdraw without being overrun” (Biddle and Friedman 2008, 10fn9).

<sup>14</sup>Mao 1989.

“It will be insurgent strategy not to accept positional warfare and head-on major battles but to induce the opponent to disperse his forces, so that, though these forces are superior in toto, they will be small and vulnerable enough in many localities to permit confident attack by insurgent troops. In such local combat, the insurgents seek to exploit terrain, surprise, and possibly larger forces, and they will disengage themselves as soon as the incumbent command pulls in reinforcements...in luring the enemy’s troops into traps, in preying on his lines of communication, ambushing his columns, and raiding his isolated garrisons, although the over-all strategy is defensive, tactical operations are aggressive whenever and wherever circumstances permit...this strategy [is] based on surprise...mobility and deception” (Knorr 1962, 55).

Drawing on this discussion, I argue that there are several concrete tasks at the operational and tactical levels of insurgent groups that constitute best practices in the Guerrilla stage of insurgency - ones that, if successfully executed, indicate combat effectiveness.<sup>15</sup> At a basic level, insurgent fighters must be able to operate their weapons and make use of them to achieve operational and tactical goals. A group or unit of fighters that lacks the ability to handle weapons and/or does not know the range of such weapons will not be able to effectively use them in combat. Conversely, fighters that know how their weapons work and their accuracy at varying distances and exhibit disciplined use of ammunition can successfully exploit these dynamics to undertake tactical operations (such as ambushes or raids) that overcome the imbalance of forces and produce gains for the group.

Classic works by theorists and practitioners of guerrilla warfare have highlighted several specific tactical actions that should be used by fighters to best achieve the operational aims of inflicting casualties and minimizing personnel losses, including: sabotage, assassinations, ambushes, raids, hit-and-run attacks, sniping, mining, and bombing.<sup>16</sup> The most essential of these tactics is the ambush, which embodies the

---

<sup>15</sup>The following scheme draws on, in some cases directly, Caitlin Talmadge’s excellent framework for assessing battlefield performance of conventional armed forces (Talmadge 2015) and Stephen Biddle’s specification of the “modern system” (Biddle 2004).

<sup>16</sup>Paret and Shy 1962, Knorr 1962, Jureidini et al. 1962, Janos 1963, Taber 1965, Jalali and Grau 1995, Mao 1989, Spencer 1990, Guevara 1998, Marques 2003, West 2008, Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lockyer 2010.

strategic aim of guerrilla warfare in its reliance on exploiting the element of surprise to overcome the imbalance in capabilities, while also requiring a certain level of coordination and discipline across fighters to execute. Because of its centrality to guerrilla warfare, it is useful as a clear benchmark to distinguish among insurgent units and groups.

Much like conventional armed forces that employ the “modern system,”<sup>17</sup> insurgent fighters need to successfully use cover and concealment when operating to both minimize casualties and, in the guerrilla context, maintain the element of surprise. As Biddle argues, “cover and concealment...deny defenders visible targets...[and] are essential to prevent attackers from concentrating their firepower on known defender locations.”<sup>18</sup> Cover and concealment are especially important when an armed force faces an imbalance of firepower.<sup>19</sup> Along with cover and concealment, dispersion is also key for insurgent forces precisely because they are severely outnumbered and outgunned in the Guerrilla stage. Moreover, Biddle writes that dispersion is necessary to maximize the advantages of using cover and concealment:

“To make the most of the potential inherent in the ground, small groups or even individuals must move separately, and at rates determined by the local terrain rather than the progress of their neighbors...Even when units are seen and fired upon, dispersion reduces vulnerability by fewer targets in the blast radius of any given shell, or in the beaten zone of any given machine gun.”<sup>20</sup>

As Biddle notes, both cover and concealment and dispersion require significant time and human resource investments in training and orientation, which not all insurgent groups may be able to do.

The imbalance of capabilities also dictates that guerrilla fighters avoid concentrated frontal assaults and decisive engagements, and that they withdraw when the

---

<sup>17</sup>Biddle 2004, Grauer and Horowitz 2012.

<sup>18</sup>Biddle 2004, 35, 44.

<sup>19</sup>Biddle 2002, 20.

<sup>20</sup>Biddle 2004, 36.

local balance of forces becomes unfavorable. For insurgent fighters, this implies that they must retreat from an engagement when locally outnumbered and/or outgunned by adversarial forces. However, this is not easy. Executing a successful dispersal is akin to executing a withdrawal under fire in a conventional context, which Biddle argues is “among the most technically demanding maneuvers in modern land warfare; conscious self-sacrifice in defense of an untenable position requires a very high order of discipline and motivation.”<sup>21</sup> Given this difficulty, we would expect that not all insurgent groups be able to successfully execute this task, and that those that can should be considered relatively more effective.

Finally, units must demonstrate a capacity for low-level initiative in order to both respond most efficiently to local developments and take the appropriate actions to expand across geographic space.<sup>22</sup> This is done by decentralizing military command within the insurgent group to lower-level commanders.<sup>23</sup> Such delegation allows individuals like field commanders that are better informed about the local situation to take the most appropriate actions in operating in and responding to their unit’s immediate combat environment - without having to go back up the chain of command.<sup>24</sup>

This is especially important for insurgent groups, which must be able to expand their areas of operation and avoid detection by adversaries, particularly incumbent forces.<sup>25</sup> Territorial expansion not only requires the use of tactics such as cover and concealment and dispersion, but also demands an ability to operate in different types

---

<sup>21</sup>Biddle 2004, 48.

<sup>22</sup>This is somewhat akin to the need for “small-unit independent maneuver” in the context of conventional armed forces (Biddle 2004, 35-36; Grauer and Horowitz 2012, Appendix A; Talmadge 2015, 34; Grauer 2016, 27-28).

<sup>23</sup>“Military command” refers to authority concerning the deployment of fighters in a local area, ordering forces to start or stop fighting, and choice of tactics (e.g. how to attack, defend, etc.). Military and tactical decision-making is distinct from that which concerns the overall organization, such as the nature of broader group strategy and objectives.

<sup>24</sup>Grauer 2011, Shapiro 2013, Talmadge 2015.

<sup>25</sup>Taber 1965; Clausewitz 1984, 601; Kalyvas 2006. In the words of Mao: “the command must be centralized for strategical purposes and decentralized for tactical purposes” (Mao 1989, 114).

of terrain.<sup>26</sup> As with any combat environment, the topography and nature of the terrain in which insurgent forces are fighting shape the range of tactics and operations that can be employed in fighting,<sup>27</sup> As a result of these two empirical realities of insurgency that place a premium on local knowledge, field commanders of insurgent groups are the most aware of the operational requirements and possibilities for geographic expansion away from their initial areas of operation. However, delegation brings with it risks of splits and internal takeovers, as well as potential harm for the group's overall unity of effort.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it can only be successfully undertaken in situations where interpersonal trust exists in an insurgent group - a characteristic not all such groups are likely to have.

Before going into initial measurement specifics, I note that these best practices are uniform in their application across both urban and rural areas, with some limited exceptions.<sup>29</sup> For example, when conducting operations such as raids or hit-and-run attacks in an urban area, it is necessary to focus more on securing escape routes so as to avoid entrapment.<sup>30</sup> While urban areas increase the risk of exposure to incumbent forces and provide both more limited maneuver space and the prospect of multi-surface fighting, the same principles hold concerning how to fight. In addition, the increased incentive to engage in small-unit fighting in close range only further reinforces the need to use tactics such as ambushes, dispersion, and cover and concealment.<sup>31</sup>

To gauge a unit or group's relative proficiency in these practices during the Guerilla stage, I ask the following seven questions:

---

<sup>26</sup>Biddle 2004, Zhukov 2012.

<sup>27</sup>Jureidini et al. 1979, Clausewitz 1984, McLaurin et al. 1987, Diehl 1991, Biddle 2004.

<sup>28</sup>Grauer 2011.

<sup>29</sup>Guevara 1998, 29-30.

<sup>30</sup>Jalali and Grau 1995, 397.

<sup>31</sup>On the implications of urban areas for guerrilla warfare tactics, see Marques 2003, U.S. Department of the Army 2002, and West 2008 as examples. On insurgency in cities, see Taw and Hoffman 1994, Sayari and Hoffman 1991, McLaurin and Miller 1989.

- Can fighters operate their weapons? Is marksmanship good?
- Do fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment when fighting?
- Do fighters make use of dispersion when fighting?
- Can the unit successfully execute an ambush?
- Do fighters avoid undertaking concentrated frontal assaults?
- Do fighters withdraw from an engagement when the local balance of forces becomes unfavorable (whether in an offensive or defensive context)?
- Does the unit demonstrate the capacity for low-level initiative?

The responses for each can be used as qualitative indicators of a group’s ability to execute a given task. The tasks can be evaluated over a specified time period of a conflict. In addition, the tasks can be evaluated at different levels of the insurgent group, from the overall organization to an individual unit.<sup>32</sup> The set of questions applies across different contexts and constraints - as Talmadge notes, “effective militaries have to do certain things, whether those things are hard or easy in a particular context.”<sup>33</sup> Likewise, I argue that insurgent groups must be able to execute these particular tasks in order to be effective regardless of the different operating constraints they might individually face once formed and functioning.

As stated previously, the overall strategic aim of insurgents in the Guerrilla stage is to chip away at the incumbent’s hold on power by inflicting losses on it in terms of manpower and materiel, while minimizing their own personnel losses.<sup>34</sup> As Taber notes “They will not seek to hold ground or to contend with a stronger force, but only to confuse and exhaust it and to inflict casualties on it, without taking casualties in return.”<sup>35</sup> Likewise, Che Guevara writes that “[t]he essential task of the guerrilla fighter is to keep himself from being destroyed.”<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, along with the seven task-based indicators, I argue that *losses inflicted* and *losses incurred* can also be used as indicators of the relative effectiveness of

---

<sup>32</sup>I discuss coding procedures for these tasks in Appendix A.

<sup>33</sup>Talmadge 2015, 4.

<sup>34</sup>Guevara 1998, 15; Taber 1965, 28-29.

<sup>35</sup>Taber 1965, 160).

<sup>36</sup>Guevara 1998, 15.

individual insurgent groups. For example, one can examine the ratio of fighter deaths, captures, and/or defections over overall group size within a specified period of time during a conflict. If an insurgent group has the best practices outlined above, it should have a relatively lower percentage of fighter deaths/captures/defections than in situations where it does not have these best practices.

**The Conventional Stage** Once there is parity in the balance of capabilities between the insurgents and incumbents,<sup>37</sup> insurgent strategy shifts from seeking to avoid losses and using indirect tactics to directly challenging incumbent forces in positional warfare.<sup>38</sup> “Parity” in this case means the insurgents have deployed heavy weaponry (such as armor and artillery) in combat against incumbent forces.<sup>39</sup>

As Taber writes, this stage

“begins when the opposing forces of the government and those of the guerrillas have reached a balance, and the insurgents seize the military initiative, now no longer as pure guerrillas, but as mobile columns up to divisional strength, capable of confronting and destroying the army in open battle. Where the insurgents formerly gave way at the approach of the enemy, or depended on hit-and-run ambushes, they will now give battle...when encircled, the rebels, instead of dispersing and exfiltrating under cover of darkness, as before, will concentrate and make a powerful breakthrough...the insurgents will themselves begin to hold territory.”<sup>40</sup>

Insurgents begin to hold territory, which becomes key for them as they work to build the “counter-state,” as noted by Kalyvas:

“Insurgency can best be understood as a process of competitive state building rather than simply an instance of collective action or social contention...State building is the insurgents’ central goal and renders organized and sustained rebellion of the kind that takes place in civil wars fundamentally distinct from

---

<sup>37</sup>Guevara: “when the guerrilla band has reached a respectable power in arms and in number of combatants, it ought to proceed to the formation of new columns...At that instant the columns join, they offer a compact fighting front, and a war of positions is reached, a war carried on by regular armies” (Guevara 1998, 17). Other scholars have discussed how the balance of capabilities shapes the nature of warfare in civil wars (Kalyvas 2005, Lockyer 2010 and 2011).

<sup>38</sup>Taber 1965, 54-55; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, Lockyer 2010

<sup>39</sup>See Appendix A for further details on measuring the stages.

<sup>40</sup>Taber 1965, 50-51.

phenomena such as banditry, mafias, or social movements. Insurgents seek to secure power at the local level, even when they cannot hope to seize the state at the national level. This means conquering and keeping territory - to the extent that this is possible.”<sup>41</sup>

As noted by Kalyvas and others, territorial control becomes essential for armed groups that seek to sustain the procurement of resources, communications, and information/intelligence gathering - processes vital for the warfighting effort.<sup>42</sup> In this stage of a conflict, territory can be gained through political-strategic means, but is usually captured through the use of conventional warfare tactics.

As a result, the *modus operandi* for insurgents in the Conventional stage changes from mobile units undertaking small-scale actions to frontal, concentrated attacks on incumbent positions, fighting pitched battles, and overall engaging in positional warfare with the aim of taking and holding territory. While insurgent groups may still use guerrilla warfare tactics in combat during this stage, the dominant form of operations and tactics that insurgents should use are conventional. These include concentrated frontal assaults, static defenses, retreats, dispersion, cover and concealment, maneuver, defense in depth, fire and movement, counterattacks, fighting withdrawals, and combined arms operations.<sup>43</sup>

To evaluate effectiveness in this stage, I draw in part on Caitlin Talmadge’s framework for evaluating battlefield effectiveness in interstate settings, and ask the following eight questions:

---

<sup>41</sup>Kalyvas 2006, 218.

<sup>42</sup>McColl 1969, Wood 2003a, Kalyvas 2006, Sinno 2008, de la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca 2012, Hansen-Lewis and Shapiro 2015.

This assertion of the imperative of territorial control in the Conventional stage does not preclude the possibility that armed groups may not always opt to undertake tactical operations to capture territory in the midst of conflict. That is, the framework allows for the empirical possibility that armed groups will not always seek to take and hold territory at all times during a war (see Schulhofer-Wohl 2012). Rather, it assumes that the overarching strategic goal for insurgents in this stage is seizing and holding territory.

<sup>43</sup>Leonhard 1991, Biddle 2004, Talmadge 2015, Jones 2016, Jordan et al. 2016; Department of the Army, various



- Can fighters operate their weapons? Is marksmanship good?
- Do fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment when fighting?
- Do fighters make use of dispersion when fighting?
- Can the unit successfully execute basic conventional warfare tactics such as an ambush, concentrated frontal assault, static defense, and orderly retreat?
- Can the group conduct combined arms operations that integrate at least two types?
- On defense, can the unit successfully execute complex tactics such as a defense in depth, fighting withdrawal, or counterattack?
- On offense, can the unit successfully use complex tactics such as maneuver, fire and movement, and small-unit special forces operations?
- Does the unit demonstrate the capacity for low-level initiative and high-level coordination across units?

Again, these questions can be asked across the various levels of the organization, from the overall group down to an individual unit, and apply to both urban and rural areas.

For the first three questions, the same principles from the Guerrilla stage are relevant, as operating weaponry and using cover and concealment and dispersion are essential elements of modern conventional warfare.<sup>44</sup> Ambushes, concentrated frontal assaults, static defenses, and orderly retreats are the basic tactics of conventional warfare, and indicate an elementary capacity for positional warfare.

Combined arms operations and complex offensive and defensive tactics, such as maneuver, defense in depth, counterattacks, and fire and movement, require particular force structures and extensive training and drilling. These operations and tactics are often not even mastered by state armed forces, as Biddle (2004), Grauer and Horowitz (2012), and Talmadge (2015) have shown. It is therefore reasonable to expect insurgent groups, with their more inchoate organizational capacities, to vary in their ability to employ combined arms operations and complex offensive and defensive tactics.

Combined arms operations are particularly challenging for armed forces, but incredibly effective when employed successfully. The combination of infantry and ar-

---

<sup>44</sup>See Biddle 2004

tillery and/or infantry and armor, or even infantry, armor, and naval forces, helps to compensate for the individual weaknesses of each arm alone, while augmenting their individual firepower, mobility, and protection.<sup>45</sup> For example, Biddle writes that

“Artillery can project massive volumes of fire over great distances, but those very distances reduce its accuracy...its immobility limits its capacity to keep up with an advance. Infantry, by contrast, is limited to the weapons and ammunition individual soldiers can carry - hence its firepower potential is much smaller than artillery’s. Infantry fire, however, is more accurate; infantry can find their own targets for immediate engagement; and infantry weapons can be transported as rapidly as the advance itself...Used together...they cover one another’s weaknesses.”<sup>46</sup>

Like complex offensive and defensive tactics, such integration of arms requires intense training and drilling across multiple service weapons, as well as established resupply lines and deep knowledge about operations among more junior officers, as Biddle notes.<sup>47</sup> Such training, drilling, logistics, and knowledge often require organizational capacities and breadth that many insurgent groups may never come close to having.

Finally, a capacity for low-level initiative is also vital in the Conventional stage, as the primacy of local knowledge and the need for quick and efficient local-level responses to developments remain important requirements for an armed force seeking to fight effectively. In addition to such low-level capacity, groups must also have the ability to coordinate at high levels across units. Such coordination is a necessary condition for conducting the kind of combined arms operations just discussed. Moreover, at a strategic level, successful coordination is required for planning and executing campaigns and operations, while ensuring that individual units adhere to their assigned tasks and do not harm the group’s overall unity of effort. But again, insurgent groups will certainly differ in their ability to make the organizational transition from small-arms mobile units to brigade- and battalion-level units that can be

---

<sup>45</sup>FM 100-5, 2-3

<sup>46</sup>Biddle 2004, 37

<sup>47</sup>Biddle 2004, 38

coordinated in a successful manner. We should therefore expect significant variation in terms of insurgents' abilities to successfully execute both aspects of this final task in the Conventional stage.

**Shifting Stages and Variation Within Conflicts** Though the nature of conflict escalation tends to structure the transition from the Guerrilla stage to the Conventional stage as a “natural” progression, a conflict can indeed shift back to the Guerrilla stage from the Conventional stage.<sup>48</sup> As stated previously, the balance of capabilities shapes the particular stage and corresponding appropriate form of warfare, and this balance can and does change over the course of conflict.

For example, the Angolan Civil War escalated to the Conventional stage in November 1975 after vast quantities of troops and materiel were injected by outside interveners into the conflict between UNITA, the MPLA, and FNLA.<sup>49</sup> However, 1976 saw the withdrawal of the U.S. and South Africa as external interveners, vastly tipping the balance of capabilities towards the Soviet-backed and supplied MPLA and returning the conflict to the Guerrilla stage.<sup>50</sup> In measuring effectiveness then, one first determines the particular stage of the conflict through a focus on the balance of forces, and then uses the relevant indicators of effectiveness for the particular stage.

Another potential question concerns the empirical possibility of variation in the type of warfare within a single conflict. For example, the Korean War, American Civil War, and post-1982 Somalian Civil War all included periods of time where a single actor engaged in different types of warfare.<sup>51</sup> In this vein, it is still the overall balance of forces at the belligerent level that determines how a group should fight if it is to be considered effective during combat. For instance, if the balance of capabilities dictates that an insurgent group fight using a guerrilla strategy and one of its units uses

---

<sup>48</sup>Mao noted this - see Mao 1989

<sup>49</sup>Lockyer 2011.

<sup>50</sup>Lockyer 2011, 2360-2361.

<sup>51</sup>Lockyer 2010.

more conventional warfare tactics, the framework I have outlined would consider the given unit to be ineffective. Using conventional warfare tactics without the requisite weaponry will almost always result in disastrous consequences for an insurgent group.

To summarize, I have argued that what it means for an insurgent group to be effective depends on the balance of capabilities between incumbent and insurgent forces. When an insurgency is in the Guerrilla stage, the asymmetry in capabilities (both materiel and personnel) dictates a military strategy comprised of mobile warfare and small-scale attacks and the avoidance of direct confrontations, with the overall aim of minimizing insurgent casualties while inflicting the maximum casualties possible on incumbent forces. Once a conflict progresses to the Conventional stage, insurgent strategy shifts to positional warfare with the aim of taking and holding territory as a means of building the counter-state. To do this, insurgent groups should use more conventional warfare operations and tactics. Having outlined the task-based measures for insurgent effectiveness across the possible stages of a conflict, the next part of the chapter develops an explanatory framework to account for differences in such effectiveness during combat.

### **3 Explaining Effectiveness**

In this part of the chapter, I develop a theory of insurgent effectiveness that links the relative rigor of a group's recruitment practices to its ultimate performance during conflict. I begin by discussing the challenge insurgent organizers face when trying to obtain competent combatants that are committed to the group's methods and goals, and how recruiters consequently address this issue. I then turn to outlining the origins of insurgent recruitment practices (i.e. how would-be fighters are actually recruited and trained for combat), and argue that such practices are a combination of initial

mobilizing resources and wartime circumstances. I then classify ideal types of recruitment practices into two types (robust and deficient), and outline why not all groups are able to have robust recruitment practices. I then discuss the three mechanisms by which the possible types of recruitment practices shape relative effectiveness, and conclude the section by specifying the main theoretical hypothesis to be tested in the dissertation.

### 3.1 Recruiting Insurgents

Recruiting quality members to the cause is one of the first tasks facing nascent insurgent groups. As Guevara observed:

“The life and activities of the guerrilla fighter...call for a series of physical, mental, and moral qualities needed for adapting oneself to prevailing conditions and for fulfilling completely any mission assigned....the guerrilla fighter must have a degree of adaptability that will permit him to identify himself with the environment in which he lives, to become a part of it, and to take advantage of it as his ally to the maximum possible extent. He also needs a faculty of rapid comprehension and an instantaneous inventiveness that will permit him to change his tactics according to the dominant course of the action.”<sup>52</sup>

Insurgent groups, like other clandestine organizations, face significant challenges in meeting this need to select and train adaptable fighters. Besides their inherent illegality (which can itself dissuade individuals from attempting to join a group), insurgents face a collective action problem in getting individuals to join.<sup>53</sup> This is a result of both the small prospect of sharing in the group’s success and the dangers associated with participation in violent conflict.<sup>54</sup> In the context of an ongoing civil war, these personal inhibitions may become slightly ameliorated as a result of the individual quest for survival in a wartime environment.<sup>55</sup> While this instinct may

---

<sup>52</sup>Guevara 1998, 41, 43

<sup>53</sup>See Lichbach 1995

<sup>54</sup>Wood 2003a

<sup>55</sup>Kalyvas and Kocher 2007

indeed bring potential recruits to a group, a challenge still remains: insurgent leadership must find loyal fighters to whom they can provide weapons and trust that orders will be followed. This must be done for the group to maintain even just a baseline operating existence in conflict. Stated more bluntly, recruits must be brought into an insurgent group *beyond* simply joining and being given a weapon with which to fight.

In examining this challenge faced by insurgent organizers, the majority of existing scholarship on recruitment into armed groups and violent clandestine non-state actors focuses on either would-be member preferences for joining an armed group<sup>56</sup> or the “types” of individuals attracted to an incipient insurgent group’s endowment.<sup>57</sup> These works position would-be insurgents as dictating the outcome of recruitment, and in most cases stop short of examining what happens once an individual joins an insurgent group. However, would-be insurgents are not always free to join armed groups whenever, wherever, and however they please. Rather, they may be chosen on the basis of specific selection criteria and then subjected to induction, training, and socialization processes that aim to weed out low-quality or uncommitted individuals, so as to ensure that those who ultimately become members will be both motivated to fight and committed to group dictates and goals.<sup>58</sup>

More specifically, potential insurgent fighters are often chosen with a view towards specific criteria, such as ideological proclivity, ethnic affiliation, or other particular characteristics and qualities.<sup>59</sup> After the initial selection process, would-be members are often subject to investigation and induction processes or trial periods, where they are given initial tasks to perform to demonstrate their commitment and value to the group, as well as their relative ability to fight, while officials investigate them.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup>See Wood 2003, Bueno de Mesquita 2005, Hegghammer 2006, Guichaoua 2007, Humphreys and Weinstein 2008, Arjona and Kalyvas 2008, Gill and Horgan 2013

<sup>57</sup>See Weinstein 2005, Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, Weinstein 2007

<sup>58</sup>Sanin 2008, Densley 2012, Forney 2015

<sup>59</sup>Herbst 2000, Hegghammer 2013

<sup>60</sup>Hoover Green 2011 and 2016; Author interviews with various Fedayeen members - see Chapter

Both during and after such observation periods, insurgent groups often put recruits through intense training courses, including both military instruction and political indoctrination in the group’s overall ideas and goals.<sup>61</sup> Even at this late stage of joining, not all recruits will ultimately remain in the group as fighters, with some dropping out, forced to leave, or assigned to non-military roles in the organization.<sup>62</sup>

Insurgent leaders and commanders thus have quite a bit of agency in selecting their members, and often play the decisive role in determining who ultimately joins a group by relying on specific selection criteria and incorporation procedures to select and build fighters. In other instances, these criteria and procedures are partially or wholly absent or varied, with some individuals exposed to incorporation procedures while others simply join and are sent directly into the fight. In what follows, I develop a theory based on these observations. I specify where insurgent recruitment practices come from, the possible variation in such practices, and how these practices ultimately shape the effectiveness of insurgent groups in the two possible stages of insurgency.

### 3.2 The Origins of Insurgent Recruitment Practices

Insurgent groups have what I call *ideal recruitment strategies*, or the manner in which insurgent leaders and commanders seek to select, induct, train, and socialize recruits into the group. The source of these strategies are found in a group’s *mobilizing resources*, or the means through which insurgent organizers initially build the group. These include pecuniary incentives offered to members and drawn from the extraction of resources such as oil, diamonds, or drugs or from third-party governments, diaspora populations, or private financiers; shared social features such as ethnicity, ideology, or religious affiliation; and/or procedures derived from existing pre-war political parties

---

3.

<sup>61</sup>Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, Sanin and Wood 2014, Oppenheim et al. 2015, Oppenheim et al. [n.d.]

<sup>62</sup>Forney 2015

or clandestine structures.<sup>63</sup> As is clear from these different types, mobilizing resources may be utilized in wartime contexts or constituted by existing pre-war structures (such as political parties or non-martial clandestine organizations) that are subsequently used as the basis for organizing insurgent groups. Insurgent groups rely on mobilizing resources to both attract individuals to the group and transform them into fighters (and therefore “construct” the group), as well as to maintain the group once it is established.

Drawing from the literature on social movements, I argue that insurgent leaders rely on whatever mobilizing resources are most immediately available to them in organizing for rebellion and recruiting initial members.<sup>64</sup> Though this assumption is taken from a somewhat different theoretical context, war, or the prospect of war, places an even higher premium on time and resources than is the case with social movements. As a result, insurgent leaders and/or commanders turn to the nearest available resources that can be used to build and maintain an insurgent group in war. This assumption has been validated in past empirical studies of insurgent organizations.<sup>65</sup> As Hoover Green notes:

“[Most] firms and bureaucracies do not subject agents to the levels of stress and fear that characterize the combat environment; stress and fear shorten agents’ time horizons and lower capacities for rational decision-making.”<sup>66</sup>

Because of such conditions, as well as the immediacy with which insurgent leaders and commanders are forced to draw on mobilizing resources, I argue that their particular choice of such resources is exogenous to the group’s ultimate effectiveness in combat. In other words, the individuals organizing or maintaining insurgent groups

---

<sup>63</sup>Byman et al. 2001, Ross 2003, Humphreys 2005, Wennmann 2007, Sanin and Wood 2014, Staniland 2014

<sup>64</sup>McCarthy and Zald 1977, McAdam et al. 2001.

<sup>65</sup>E.g. Welch Jr. 1980, Reno 2002, Staniland 2014, Hoover Green 2016.

<sup>66</sup>Hoover Green 2016, 621.



do not have the rational foresight that drawing on particular mobilizing resources will have downstream effects that will shape their group’s ultimate ability to perform effectively in combat. Moreover, even if they do have such foresight, they may not have the ability to procure the particularly desired mobilizing resources in a sufficient manner to mobilize for rebellion. Still further, wartime circumstances (which I discuss below), as well as other factors, may disrupt the implementation of the recruitment strategies desired by group leaders.<sup>67</sup>

Building on this discussion, I argue that mobilizing resources serve as the primary sources of the ideal recruitment strategies that shape selection, induction, training, and socialization of would-be fighters into the group.<sup>68</sup> Different mixes of mobilizing resources may generate different ideal strategies regarding the nature of selection criteria and induction, training, and socialization procedures to be used for recruitment. For example, insurgent groups that primarily construct their group based on shared social features, such as ethnic affinity or ideology, may seek to select, induct, train, and/or socialize individuals on the basis of certain criteria and procedures for selection and incorporation adopted from ideological principles.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup>In the case studies, I validate this theoretical assumption using primary and secondary sources to show that insurgent groups’ choice of particular mobilizing resources was either not done intentionally and/or that recruitment practices were driven by concerns unrelated to their potential impact on group effectiveness (e.g. a desire to have the largest numbers of members vis-a-vis other rival groups).

<sup>68</sup>This link between mobilizing resources and recruitment strategies is similar to the theoretical frameworks of Jeremy Weinstein (2007) and Paul Staniland (2014). I differ from Weinstein theoretically in giving significantly more agency to the insurgent group, recognizing that groups often make the final decision concerning who joins and who does not, regardless of the types of individuals their recruitment strategies may attract. As discussed further in this chapter, it is not about who is attracted to the group (i.e. “opportunistic” versus “activist” individuals in Weinstein’s framework), but rather about who is ultimately admitted into the group and what procedures (if any) are subsequently undertaken to transform recruits into fighters. As noted previously, recruitment does not stop after selection, but continues with the various induction, training, and socialization processes groups may employ after initially choosing their members (Gates and Nordas 2010, Forney 2015).

I depart from Staniland’s framework by focusing not on the horizontal and vertical ties of insurgent groups that result from existing pre-war social bases, but instead on the particular way in which groups recruit individuals as fighters given extant pre-war structures they rely on for building a wartime organization.

<sup>69</sup>Sanin and Wood 2014, Oppenheim et al. 2015

This has been seen across space and time since the 1950s, particularly with Marxist-oriented insurgent groups.<sup>70</sup> These groups often drew on the widely-disseminated works of Mao, Lenin, and Guevara as the organizational basis for structuring their groups and the tactical basis for training their fighters in guerrilla warfare doctrine.<sup>71</sup> This trend is what explains the tendency of insurgent groups to train in guerrilla warfare tactics.<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand, a group that primarily draws on external support from a third-party government or diaspora, or revenues from natural resource extraction to support its existence and operation, may seek to recruit without reference to specific criteria. In addition, its external patron may dictate how recruits are to be trained.<sup>73</sup> Groups that base their initial functioning on a peacetime political party or a non-martial clandestine organization may draw on existing membership criteria and procedures for selecting, inducting, and indoctrinating insurgent fighters. Whatever the case, the origins of particular recruitment strategies can be gleaned from examining the criteria and procedures recruiters are instructed to adhere to by leaders and/or commanders in both choosing and incorporating individuals into the group, and the ultimate source

---

<sup>70</sup>Balcells and Kalyvas (2015, 6) quote Hobsbawm to note the success of the Cuban Revolution as beginning the spread of guerrilla warfare around the world.

<sup>71</sup>Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 419-420; Sanin and Wood 2014; Balcells and Kalyvas 2015, 5-7. As discussed in Section 3.1, the aforementioned classic works emphasize the importance of military training in guerrilla warfare tactics centered around a hit-and-run strategy of indirect confrontation (Guevara 1998, Mao 1989, Taber 1965).

<sup>72</sup>There are two potential sources of training doctrine that may lead groups to not use guerrilla warfare as the basis for training fighters. The first potential source are the backgrounds of the insurgent group's leadership and/or founders: these may be former military officers or soldiers, and so may bring particular knowledge and experience that shapes the type of military training to be something other than guerrilla warfare. The second are external patrons, who may shape and dictate military training regimens (see immediate next sentence in text). Even if these two potential sources happen to be operative in a case, the sources are still exogenous to a group's ultimate performance in combat, as such regimens (even when selected intentionally vis-a-vis perceived effectiveness) are only part of the overall recruitment practices that shape effectiveness. As I will argue in Section 3.3, having the appropriate military training is not the whole story of what breeds effective insurgent groups.

<sup>73</sup>For example, after Fatah formed its armed wing in 1965, the group opened a training camp in Syria in which Syrian officers trained would-be Fatah fighters in conventional warfare tactics and operations (Author interviews with former Fatah fighters; see Chapter 3).

for such recruitment instructions.<sup>74</sup>

Besides ideal recruitment strategies, *wartime circumstances* constitute the other major source that shapes how a group ultimately recruits its members. Conditions in wartime environments can affect a group's actual recruitment in ways that produce outcomes different than those initially prescribed by its recruitment strategies.<sup>75</sup> This happens when circumstances or developments during war disrupt the ability of insurgent leaders and commanders to employ their desired selection criteria and induction, training, and socialization procedures in recruiting members. Such circumstances might include the death of mid-level commanders, the loss of a strategic base, major counterinsurgency offensives, or an exogenous shock that leads to a sudden influx of recruits. These disruptive conditions are not immediately related to downstream effectiveness, as they are often the result of previous group actions or other actors responding to prior actions by the group.

**Classifying Recruitment Practices** I argue that wartime circumstances interact with recruitment strategies to shape *recruitment practices*, or the actual processes of selection, induction, training, and socialization carried out by an insurgent group in its areas of operation. The meeting of recruitment strategies with the realities of violent armed conflict implies that recruitment processes often play out quite differently than intended, and therefore can often vary widely across and within insurgent groups.

I take such variation and classify recruitment practices depending on how (1) consistent and (2) comprehensive selection criteria and induction, training, and socialization processes are in a given group. The consistency dimension captures how identical the four aspects of recruitment practices are within the insurgent group. The

---

<sup>74</sup>Such information can be found in internal group documents, secondary works based on primary sources, and/or oral histories and interviews with group members.

<sup>75</sup>This part of the theory draws in part on Forney (2015)'s analysis of militia recruitment during the civil war in Sierra Leone, along with my own fieldwork with individuals involved in the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971) and analyses of insurgent recruitment in other conflicts (e.g. Eck 2007, Gilligan et al. 2015).

comprehensiveness dimension captures how exhaustive the selection and incorporation processes are based on the relative presence of specific selection criteria and the extent of induction, training, and socialization processes for recruits.<sup>76</sup>

Though these two dimensions of recruitment practices allow for conceptualization on a continuum, I specify two broad types: Robust and Deficient. Table 2.1 illustrates the possible combinations of the two dimensions and resulting classification of recruitment practices.

**Table 2.1.** Dimensions and Types of Recruitment Practices

	Comprehensive	Limited
Consistent	<i>Robust</i>	<i>Deficient</i>
Inconsistent	<i>Deficient</i>	<i>Deficient</i>

*Robust recruitment practices* are those in which the insurgent group consistently applies its selection criteria in choosing members and employs comprehensive, identical induction, training, and socialization procedures to incorporate all individuals into the insurgent group. In such situations, recruitment practices are uniform throughout the group in its areas of operation, and include specific selection criteria and induction, training, and socialization procedures to which all recruits are subjected. Members are selected and/or screened according to specific criteria across all recruiters, and those chosen undergo largely identical induction, training, and socialization procedures regardless of where or by whom they are selected. Recruitment continues beyond initial selection, with comprehensive incorporation procedures that include military training in guerrilla warfare, instruction in a code of conduct, and political indoctrination in an ideology.

For example, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) employed strict and consistent selection criteria in choosing its members, along with compre-

---

<sup>76</sup>See Appendix for information on how I code the two dimensions.

hensive military training and required political indoctrination for all recruits.<sup>77</sup> The Taliban in the 1990s utilized a “nationalist-fundamentalist” ideology to guide its selection of fighters, who all undertook religious indoctrination in the group’s particular ideology and military strategy.<sup>78</sup> Marxist-Leninist insurgent groups during the Cold War, such as the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in Turkey, the Communist Party in the Greek Civil War, and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) in Guinea-Bissau, were notorious for their use of ideology not only to guide consistent selection of members, but also as the programmatic basis for political indoctrination that accompanied military training for all fighters.<sup>79</sup> In the first several years of the insurgency in Nepal, the Communist Party’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) relied on a lengthy induction process and compulsory, extensive political education to socialize its recruits as fighters.<sup>80</sup>

*Deficient recruitment practices* are those in which individuals are selected according to inconsistent (or no) criteria, and/or incorporated in inconsistent or limited ways. For example, would-be fighters might be recruited on the basis of criteria specific to mid-level commanders, such as particular ethnic affiliations. Or anyone that seeks to join a group may be allowed to take up arms and fight for the organization. Or fighters may be forcibly recruited through coercion or even abduction. Varied selection criteria aside, new members may be inducted, trained, and socialized in different ways, such as certain recruits undergoing induction processes and/or receiving training and indoctrination and others not. Or recruits may not undergo any induction or indoctrination processes at all, and instead are simply given training in the use of weapons and basic tactics or more conventional training in lieu of guerrilla warfare instruction. In other instances, would-be fighters might simply be given weapons after

---

<sup>77</sup>Sanin 2008, Pachico and McDermott 2011

<sup>78</sup>Ugarriza 2009

<sup>79</sup>Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, Balcells and Kalyvas 2015

<sup>80</sup>Eck 2007, Gilligan et al. 2015

joining and sent directly into combat.

Though its recruitment was selective in the first half of the insurgency in Nepal, the PLA eased its emphasis on ideological indoctrination for fighters in the second half of the conflict around 2001, a change attributed to increasing pressure from the Nepalese Army.<sup>81</sup> In El Salvador, all five insurgent groups that were part of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) umbrella organization became increasingly less selective as the war went on, but at the same time increased their degree of formal training over the same period.<sup>82</sup> The armed groups in Sierra Leone's first civil war during the early 1990s made significant use of forced recruitment, as the former combatant Ishmael Beah recounts in his memoir.<sup>83</sup>

The initial group of fighters in the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) received their military training in Libya prior to the group's 1989 Christmas Eve invasion of the country.<sup>84</sup> After securing territory in the country, the NPFL established military camps for recruits, with the initial training course lasting three months and containing only military instruction.<sup>85</sup> However, individuals were also recruited to the NPFL in newly-acquired territory often by simply handing them guns, with no screening or training involved.<sup>86</sup> In addition, though the content of the training remained the same, the need for more individuals led to a shortening of the training course to three weeks by September 1990.<sup>87</sup> The NPFL's rival, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), had consistent military training (with varying length), but no specific criteria for selecting fighters.<sup>88</sup> As a result of the latter component of recruitment, commanders selected fighters along ethnic lines, with

---

<sup>81</sup>Eck 2007, 30-32

<sup>82</sup>Hoover Green 2011, 193-194

<sup>83</sup>Beah 2007

<sup>84</sup>Lidow 2012, 232-233

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 243-244

<sup>86</sup>Ellis 1999, 78-79

<sup>87</sup>Lidow 2012, 243-244

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 259

such affiliation often serving as the only basis for choosing an individual.<sup>89</sup> In all of these instances, a given set of individuals joining a group had different experiences and requirements (if any at all) for membership.

**Why Don't All Groups have Robust Recruitment Practices?** If robust recruitment practices produce more effective fighters, why don't all insurgent groups have them? I argue that four factors shape why not all insurgent groups are able to have robust recruitment practices. First, as stated previously, the immediate demands placed on insurgent organizers lead them to rely on whatever mobilizing resources are most immediately available. These resources prescribe ideal recruitment strategies that may or may not make for "better" recruitment practices as previously defined. In other words, specific mobilizing resources have particular consequences, but insurgent organizers rarely have control over the types on which they will come to rely.

The selection of such foundational resources at a critical juncture in an organization's formation leads to "lock-in" dynamics, as the organization essentially enters into particular trajectories based on these initial mobilizing resources - trajectories that are hard to alter.<sup>90</sup> As a result, attempts to change or reorient recruitment practices to be "more robust" will likely prove to be quite difficult, especially given that the group will simultaneously be waging war. There is thus an element of both contingency and path dependency at play: whatever a leader has access to for mobilization, be it a preexisting political party or external material support, shapes the nature of the organization that is set in motion as a result.

Second, insurgent leaders, like autocrats aiming to avoid overthrow,<sup>91</sup> may priori-

---

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 259-260

<sup>90</sup>Schneider 1987. This is a result of what Schneider calls the "Attraction-Selection-Attrition" hypothesis: that because of the types of people organizations recruit and retain, it is difficult to bring about change in organizations.

<sup>91</sup>Quinlivan 1999

tize their survival as the group’s leader over concerns about its military prospects. As a result, they may actively avoid or limit the institution of recruitment practices that make for a more effective organization. This is akin to dictators implementing organizational practices within their armed forces that preserve their own survival while inhibiting military effectiveness.<sup>92</sup> Third, the logic of organizational competition may lead a group to prioritize its size over the readiness of its combatants. As a result, the group will intentionally not be selective and/or careful in recruiting fighters, so as to maximize its size. Finally, I argued earlier that wartime circumstances can affect the functioning of an armed organization in unanticipated ways. A group’s ideal recruitment strategy may prescribe the use of consistent and comprehensive selection and incorporation procedures, but the realities of armed conflict may dictate otherwise for its ability to fully implement these procedures in practice.

## 4 From Recruitment Practices to Effectiveness

Having specified the origins of recruitment practices and broadly classified the variation in such practices that serves as the theoretical focus of the framework, I turn now to developing and discussing the mechanisms<sup>93</sup> that link particular types of recruitment practices to varying levels of effectiveness. In Section 1, I outlined several tasks that constitute qualitative indicators of a unit’s effectiveness across the two possible stages of conflict. Successfully executing these particular tasks requires units to have uniformed shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust among group members, all of which are shaped by the nature of a group’s recruitment practices.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 below illustrate the mechanisms generated by robust and deficient recruitment practices and the expected degree of effectiveness. In what follows,

---

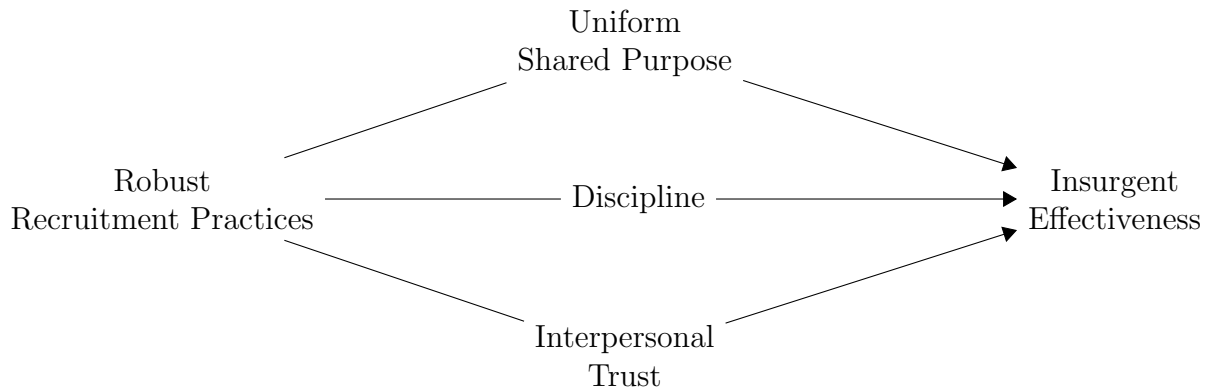
<sup>92</sup>Talmadge 2015 and 2016

<sup>93</sup>A “mechanism” is an invariant causal entity that generates an outcome of interest (Waldner 2016, 28-29). Also see Bennett 2010, Waldner 2007, 2012, 2013, and 2015c.

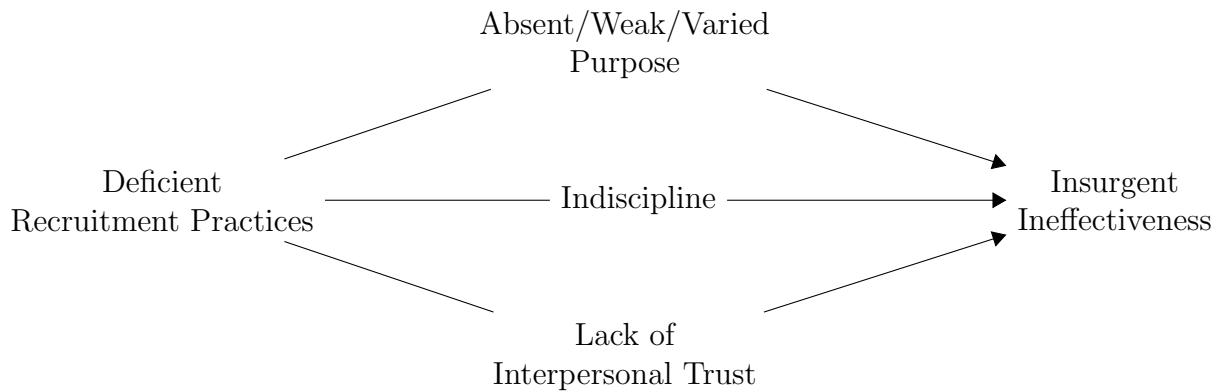


I outline how the type of recruitment practices (robust or deficient) shapes the relative operation of each of these three mechanisms. I also provide illustrative examples of how each mechanism impacts a unit's ability to successfully execute some of the stage-specific tasks.

**Figure 2.1.** Robust Recruitment Practices, Mechanisms, and Relative Effectiveness



**Figure 2.2.** Deficient Recruitment Practices, Mechanisms, and Relative Effectiveness



**Uniform Shared Purpose** To generate tactically proficient and skilled combatants, an insurgent group must address the basic reality that a majority of would-be

fighters will likely have had little to no combat experience or exposure to violent conflict.<sup>94</sup> They therefore must be trained to fight at elementary levels through rigorous instruction in the appropriate tactics and operations for the particular stage of the conflict. As stated previously, this is almost always the Guerrilla stage, which demands comprehensive training in suitable guerrilla warfare tactics and operations.

With regard to the first tasks concerning weapons and tactical actions, groups with robust recruitment practices train would-be fighters in how to handle and operate weaponry, combat skills, appropriate tactics, and how to move together in units to perform military operations. As part of such instruction in guerrilla warfare, future fighters also train to use cover and concealment and dispersion, to withdraw when the local balance of power becomes unfavorable, and to avoid concentrated frontal assaults and decisive engagements. As a result, they gain the ritualized knowledge needed to execute these tasks in combat.<sup>95</sup>

Conversely, with deficient recruitment practices, military training is either haphazard overall or varies across individual combatants. At best, some may have been given comprehensive training in operating weapons, employing appropriate tactics, and conducting operations, while others may have been simply given a weapon and sent to the frontlines without any training whatsoever. Still further, some combatants may have been trained in conventional warfare. As a result, there is a lack of consistent ritualized knowledge across units and fighters needed to successfully execute tactical tasks in the Guerrilla stage, such as avoiding concentrated frontal assaults and withdrawing when outnumbered/outgunned.

---

<sup>94</sup>This may not necessarily be the case in countries that have had multiple internal conflicts; possess relative widespread clandestine activity (such as organized crime); or have military service requirements. It should be noted that recent research indicates that individuals with potentially relevant prior experience (e.g. criminal histories or knowledge of weaponry) do not always make the best fighters or group members, and indeed are often among those least desired by insurgent recruiters (Sanin 2008, Densley 2012, Forney 2015, Kalyvas 2015).

<sup>95</sup>Kenny 2011, Marshall 1947

Yet ritualized military training alone is not sufficient for successful execution of these tasks, as insurgent groups must transform average people into fighters that are able to endure harsh, life-threatening conditions in new and uncertain environments and respond to such conditions in productive ways with little thought.<sup>96</sup> Combatants must also be made to pursue the organization's objectives over their own private goals and operate (at times) independently and without the comfort of immediate camaraderie during combat.<sup>97</sup> As Henderson writes:

“Creating a cohesive unit requires an intensive resocialization process. The determinants of the new recruit's day-to-day behavior must be replaced by a new set of rules based on his perceptions of what his new fellow soldiers and his leaders expect. This type of resocialization is best created through a rites-of-passage process that totally consumes the soldier's attention and efforts for an extended period and from which he emerges with a new or adapted set of operating rules for his daily life. These norms must be firmly grounded in the bonds and expectations formed between him, his fellow soldiers, and his immediate leaders. It must be emphasized that the creation of a cohesive unit is equally important in teaching skills to the soldier. Ideally, both occur simultaneously, and the learned skills are seen as essential for meeting the expectations of fellow soldiers.”<sup>98</sup>

To do this, insurgent leaders must address the reality that what leads individuals to seek membership in an insurgent group is not necessarily the same as what leads them to stay in the group once they have joined.<sup>99</sup> While leaders often provide both pecuniary and non-pecuniary incentives to entice individuals to join and stay in a rebel group,<sup>100</sup> such incentives particularly material inducements, are limited in the degree to which they actively serve to maintain group membership, as recent studies

---

<sup>96</sup>Grossman 1995, Newsome 2003, Strachan 2006.

<sup>97</sup>Clausewitz 1984, 122-123; Strachan 2006. Though just as essential for insurgent groups, this necessity has been largely overlooked in scholarship on insurgency and civil wars, despite the fact that a failure to successfully address this challenge may ultimately render a nascent insurgent group wholly unable to operate. Exceptions include Herbst 2000, Oppenheim et al. 2015, Oppenheim et al. [n.d.], Hoover Green 2016, Worsnop 2016.

<sup>98</sup>Henderson 1985, 18.

<sup>99</sup>Gates 2002, Gates and Nordas 2010

<sup>100</sup>Gates 2002

using survey and interview data with former combatants have shown.<sup>101</sup> Besides the issue of inducements, keeping individuals in the group is not the same as motivating them for combat.

Moreover, unlike non-martial organizations, armed groups cannot compensate individual combatants on the basis of their performance, as such performance is only observable at the unit level or higher.<sup>102</sup> This is especially the case in information-poor combat environments like civil wars. As a result, motivation is needed as a substitute for performance-based material incentives.<sup>103</sup>

In the context of armed forces, such combat motivation becomes a soldier's willingness to fight and kill and die.<sup>104</sup> Successful combat motivation generates a desire among unit combatants to fight, die, and kill on behalf of each other and the overall unit, a willingness that is most likely not intrinsic among those who have joined an insurgent group.<sup>105</sup> This is primarily done by inculcating would-be fighters in the objectives of the group to provide them with a centralized understanding of why and for what they will use force and how group goals will be achieved.<sup>106</sup> Such inculcation often takes the form of political indoctrination in programmatic goals and/or a particular ideological orientation.<sup>107</sup>

The uniform military training and socialization that are key parts of robust recruitment practices cultivates the loyalty, solidarity, and affection, or, more basically, a

---

<sup>101</sup>Guichaoua 2007, Sanin 2008, Oppenheim et al. 2015.

<sup>102</sup>Costa and Kahn 2003, 522.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Kellett 1982, 6-7; Henriksen and Vinci 2007, 89-90.

<sup>105</sup>Kellett 1982, Posen 1993, Grossman 1995, Newsome 2003, Brooks 2007, Castillo 2014.

<sup>106</sup>Guevara 1998, 62; Oppenheim et al. [n.d], Hoover Green 2016

<sup>107</sup>For example, from the time the Chinese Communist Party began its struggle in 1927 until its victory over the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1949, political indoctrination was an important and ongoing aspect of military training. For example, for the Northeast PLA units, "[the] ideological component of the NEPLA's 'Big Training' focused on....inculcating common ideals, a common goal, a common vision, and a shared confidence in their ability to achieve that vision through combat operations" (Tanner 2014, 31).

*uniform shared purpose* within the overall insurgent group and its constituent units.<sup>108</sup> Conversely, because of the inconsistent nature with which recruits are selected and/or the absence of indoctrination, deficient recruitment practices do not generate such uniform shared purpose. Instead, individual combatants can have their own personal motivations for fighting, which may or may not align with the goals of the group. At worst, fighters lack a shared sense of what the group's objectives are and for what force is being used.

Besides combat motivation, uniform shared purpose also enables combatants to be better able to come to terms with the reality and consequences of killing other human beings at close range.<sup>109</sup> As Gervase Phillips notes, the use of formations in which soldiers fought side by side allowed them to avoid confronting the immediate costs of killing other human beings:

“[t]he mass of line infantrymen (as opposed to specialist ‘sharp-shooters’ or riflemen fighting in open formations and deliberately choosing their targets) would rarely be confronted directly by the ethical reality that their own shots were killing and mutilating other human beings. Not only did they deliver these shots *en masse*, thereby diluting any sense of individual responsibility, but, in a major engagement, they also were unlikely to see the effects of their fire clearly.”<sup>110</sup>

With dispersed formations and the use of close-range tactics like ambushes and frontal assaults that are the key features of modern land warfare (whether guerrilla or conventional),<sup>111</sup> combatants instead come face to face with those they are meant to kill and do not enjoy the diminished individual responsibility and effects of their actions that Phillips describes of the 19th century battlefield. Indeed, S.L.A. Marshall's famous study noted that dispersion brought with it lower ratios of fire, presenting commanders with a serious challenge when it comes to morale under conditions of

---

<sup>108</sup>Ingraham and Manning 1981, Fine and Holyfield 1996, Siebold 2007, Kenny 2011, Cohen 2016.

<sup>109</sup>Strachan 2006, 217.

<sup>110</sup>Phillips 2011, 566.

<sup>111</sup>Marshall 1947, Biddle 2004, Strachan 2006, Jordan et al. 2016

dispersion.<sup>112</sup>

However, the socialization of combatants under robust recruitment practices results in fighters that are indifferent and/or desensitized to the realities, destruction, and horror of war and are willing to sacrifice their lives for fellow combatants and take the lives of others of their own individual initiative.<sup>113</sup> Robust practices generate fighters that will not desert units or the group and/or falter or “break” when faced with losing fellow soldiers, either in the precise moment of death or in subsequent battlefield experiences and interactions.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, these individuals are willing and able to fight in isolation as demanded when using tactics such as dispersion and cover/concealment precisely because of the extant uniform shared purpose.

Conversely, with deficient recruitment practices, individuals have been selected according to varying (or no) criteria, and/or have undergone different incorporation procedures (or none at all). As a result, fighters have varying (or no) motivation to fight and kill on behalf of others in the group, as they lack the common experiences of consistent and comprehensive induction, training, and socialization that generate a sense of uniform shared purpose across combatants. While some individuals may still be willing to fight and kill on behalf of particular insurgent leaders or commanders (or of their own personal accord), a broader willingness is absent vis-a-vis fellow fighters within the particular unit and the overall group. In these instances, the shared purpose for fighting will be weak, absent, or inconsistent.<sup>115</sup> Because of the absence of such uniform shared purpose, fighters are not necessarily desensitized to the realities of combat and taking the lives of other human beings. As a result, they may be unable to face the consequences of what they do on the battlefield and attempt to flee their

---

<sup>112</sup>Marshall 1947.

<sup>113</sup>Guevara 1998, 46; Clausewitz 1984, 100-112; Strachan 2006, Wessely 2006, Kenny 2011, Hoover Green 2016, Cohen 2016.

<sup>114</sup>Grossman 1995, Henriksen 2007, Hoover Green 2016.

<sup>115</sup>Henderson 1985.

units and combat overall.

**Discipline** While it does help to reinforce discipline,<sup>116</sup> comprehensive ritualized training and combat motivation that together produce uniform shared purpose do not automatically breed disciplined fighters.<sup>117</sup> Put differently, motivating individuals to use force in pursuit of the group's political-strategic objectives does not necessarily mean that individuals will use force as ordered or limited to the specified targets. Thus, leaders and commanders of insurgent groups, like state armed forces,<sup>118</sup> must ensure that subordinates will follow orders and behave in a *disciplined* manner in combat.

With robust recruitment practices, discipline results. Under such practices, combatants have not only been subjected to the same selection and induction procedures, but are instructed in a consistently enforced code of conduct that outlines clear behavioral expectations vis-a-vis other combatants and non-combatants.<sup>119</sup> Because direct monitoring of fighters is nearly impossible due to the lack of observable and measurable outputs,<sup>120</sup> leaders and commanders rely on sets of rules to structure and outline acceptable and unacceptable behavior and consequences.<sup>121</sup> As a result, both commanders and fighters are on the same page regarding behavioral expectations, and sanctions are understood and enforced for violations. In turn, the costs of monitoring and punishment are lower, as indiscipline from the established code of conduct is more likely to be observable due to the widespread inculcation of behavioral rules. More significantly, better discipline ensures that fighters will follow orders to execute

---

<sup>116</sup>Kenny 2011, 12

<sup>117</sup>Hoover Green 2011, 22-23; Hoover Green 2016

<sup>118</sup>Grauer 2011 and 2016

<sup>119</sup>Weinstein 2007, Kilcullen 2011, Kenny 2011, Bell 2016, Oppenheim et al. n.d.

<sup>120</sup>Gates 2002, Wood 2009

<sup>121</sup>Haer et al. 2011, Bangerter 2012. Such rules include instructions for interacting with civilians, the need to follow orders from superiors, and punishments for violating specified codes of conduct (Ibid.).

operations<sup>122</sup> and act towards non-combatants in ways that will not jeopardize their ability to operate in a given area.<sup>123</sup> In so doing, it also provides those giving orders the authority to do so.

Taken together along with military training, these high levels of combat motivation and discipline allow insurgent fighters to successfully execute the tactical tasks outlined in Section 3. For instance, Biddle notes that

“dispersion and independent small-unit maneuver make it harder for leaders to see and communicate with their troops...at the same time, [dispersion and independent small-unit maneuver] challenge morale and combat motivation by putting more distance between the soldiers themselves, reducing the power of group reinforcement to motivate individual behavior.”<sup>124</sup>

In the context of using such tactics with robust recruitment practices, individual combatants may not be able to see their fellow fighters, yet are able to cohesively persist in the face of enemy fire towards their objective without the (often physical push<sup>125</sup>) they would get from superiors to keep fighting in a situation of concentrated formations.

With deficient recruitment practices, combatants have been subjected to different incorporation procedures (whether limited or comprehensive). Consequently, not all fighters may be aware of group codes of conduct concerning acceptable and unacceptable behavior (if any exist at all). In addition, a lack of selectivity of would-be fighters can enable “saboteurs” to infiltrate the group and intentionally harm its combat operations and overall functioning. In any of these situations, maintaining the discipline of group fighters is a challenge, continuously taking time and resources away from the fighting effort to address misbehavior.

The absence of consistent and comprehensive incorporation procedures produces

---

<sup>122</sup>Wood 2009

<sup>123</sup>Guevara 1998, R. Wood 2010.

<sup>124</sup>Biddle 2004, 38.

<sup>125</sup>Phillips 2011, 566.



units that do not have the standards of basic conduct needed to execute a coordinated action and, more consequently, may not obey the orders of superiors.<sup>126</sup> Regarding the former, a unit may be unable to use dispersion because of the lack of discipline that Biddle highlighted as necessary for successfully employing such formations. In addition, the latter insubordination can have severe and potentially deadly consequences. For example, when operating in the Guerrilla stage of insurgency, combatants might disobey an order to withdraw when the balance of forces becomes unfavorable, leading to heavy losses for the group in a context where avoiding casualties is vital for its survival.

**Interpersonal Trust** Trust<sup>127</sup> among an organization's members has been shown as key in shaping the performance of non-martial organizations<sup>128</sup> and martial organizations alike.<sup>129</sup> For fighters operating in an insurgent unit or group, such mutual credence between one another is even more consequential than in non-martial organizations, given the life-or-death nature of decisions in combat. To get such collective trust, however,

“One must be socialized to risk and competence, and the organization must establish procedures - formal or implicit - by which trustworthiness is created.”<sup>130</sup>

With such procedures, trust between individual members of an organization becomes

---

<sup>126</sup>Wood 2009.

<sup>127</sup>I borrow Mishra (1996)'s definition of “trust”: “one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable” (Mishra 1996, 5). The centrality of “vulnerability” between parties is found in other definitions of trust, which also focus on similar dimensions to Mishra's (e.g. Mayer et al. 1995, Dirks 1999, Hardin 2002, Dietz and Hertog 2006, Pirson and Malhotra 2011). These four dimensions of trust altogether encompass what is necessary for the basis of dependable, transparent relationships and the expectations that superiors are making decisions that are suitable and not opportunistic vis-a-vis subordinates in an organization.

<sup>128</sup>Zand 1972, Kouzes and Posner 1987, Gambetta 1988, Deluga 1995, Rosseau et al. 1998, Zaheer et al. 1998, Dirks 1999, Hunt et al. 2009.

<sup>129</sup>Shils and Janowitz 1948, Henderson 1985, Paparone 2002, Costa and Kahn 2003, Sweeney et al. 2009, Koehler et al. 2016.

<sup>130</sup>Fine and Holyfield 1996, 26-28

a “generalized trust of others,” or *interpersonal trust*.<sup>131</sup>

Robust recruitment practices generate such trust among leaders, commanders, and rank-and-file fighters by virtue of the consistent nature through which recruits are brought into the group and socialized as combatants. Through these procedures, an “institutional basis of trust” is developed that helps to generate positive beliefs about individual members’ trustworthiness, be they leaders, commanders, or other fellow fighters.<sup>132</sup> What is key about the interpersonal trust generated through robust recruitment practices is that it is both unique to the group itself and distinct from potential preexisting sources of trust (such as familial or network ties), rather than an extension of the latter.<sup>133</sup>

In this context, group-generated interpersonal trust reinforces the uniform shared purpose that is generated through indoctrination, particularly the notion that they have a common interest in pursuing the objectives of the group and that interdependence is key for successfully completing performance tasks.<sup>134</sup> And while discipline provides leaders with authority to give orders, the presence of mutual credence enables subordinates to be vulnerable to superiors and leaders to delegate military and tactical decision-making to commanders.<sup>135</sup> Through such generated trust, the insurgent organization’s ability to shape the individual behavior of its combatants is strengthened,<sup>136</sup> providing the foundation for what Dietz and Hertog (2006) call “identification-based trust” among fighters, or “extremely positive confidence based

---

<sup>131</sup>Mayer et al. 1995, 714-715. See also Rotter 1967.

<sup>132</sup>Williams 2001, 378. Also see Granovetter 1973 and 1985. In this vein, the potential for distrust is reduced and replaced by a collective trust in one another (Six 2007).

<sup>133</sup>This does not mean that trust cannot build off of such ties, but rather that it must be developed in a manner specific to the insurgent group itself. See Gismondi 2015.

<sup>134</sup>Fine and Holyfield 1996; Brockner et al. 2001; Six 2007; Six and Sorge 2008, 866; Sweeney 2010; Sweeney et al. 2009, 237-238. While one might question whether such trust developed in training carries over to actual combat, Sweeney 2010 shows that this is indeed the case in his study of trust among U.S. combatants in Iraq.

<sup>135</sup>Sweeney 2010, Mishra 1996, 12-14; Aghion and Tirole 1997

<sup>136</sup>Lindenberg 2000, Six 2007. See Hoover Green 2011 and 2016 for such preference realignment among combatants.

on converged interests.”<sup>137</sup> In this scenario, individuals act trustworthy and trust in one another because it is the “appropriate” thing to do.<sup>138</sup> This is essential for the types of actions required in combat, which require intra-unit cooperation that not only comes from training, uniform shared purpose, and discipline, but also interpersonal trust between combatants.<sup>139</sup>

In contrast, deficient recruitment practices fail to produce interpersonal trust,<sup>140</sup> whether between fighters or among leaders, commanders, and fighters. The lack of procedures to create trust among members fails to diminish preexisting differences in perceived trustworthiness among recruits.<sup>141</sup> Individual fighters have no reason to trust in and no metrics by which to judge their superiors’ competency,<sup>142</sup> given the absence of any consistent and/or comprehensive socialization in what the group’s objectives and methods are. This leads to a lack of individual security for members vis-a-vis the organization - as a result, they are always second-guessing the aims of their superiors.<sup>143</sup> Among fellow fighters, the same concerns about incompetence are compounded by an uncertainty over whether others will cooperate.<sup>144</sup> No generalized trust is created within the unit and/or group, with distrust perhaps emerging instead as a result of the lack of a uniform shared purpose that would normally lead individuals to trust in both one another and the overall group.<sup>145</sup>

In any armed organization, the delegation of command can potentially harm its unity of effort and lead to communication breakdowns and unit separation.<sup>146</sup> With

---

<sup>137</sup>Dietz and Hertog 2006, 563.

<sup>138</sup>Six 2007, 302. Also see Henderson 1985, 25.

<sup>139</sup>Dirks 1999, Paparone 2002.

<sup>140</sup>I point out here that a lack of trust is different from the presence of mistrust - see Lindenberg 2000 and Six 2007 on this critical distinction.

<sup>141</sup>As Mayer et al. 1995, Mishra 1996, and particularly Williams 2001 note, individuals come to organizations with their own personal proclivities for trusting others.

<sup>142</sup>Six and Sorge 2008, Sweeney 2010.

<sup>143</sup>Kier 1998, Koehler et al. 2016, Sweeney et al. 2009, 259-260.

<sup>144</sup>Sweeney et al. 2009.

<sup>145</sup>Dietz and Hertog 2006, 563.

<sup>146</sup>Grauer 2011, 53-54.

deficient recruitment practices, these potential issues are immediately compounded due to the absence of interpersonal trust. Field commanders that have been given military and tactical decision-making power in such scenarios may not only harm the group's warfighting effort through the pursuit of uncoordinated or independent actions, but can also take advantage of such delegated authority to direct their units against the group's leadership or other units, or join with another insurgent group. This can impair the ability to establish a capacity for low-level initiative that is needed for effective combat,<sup>147</sup> as well as the type of relationships that would enable high-level coordination across units.

**Why All Three Mechanisms Are Needed** As the foregoing discussion indicated, these three mechanisms are each equally important and vital in shaping a group's ability to successfully execute all of the stage-specific tasks outlined in Section 1. For example, successfully executing an ambush requires not just ritualized training in the tactic, but also uniform shared purpose, which produces in fighters the ability to endure when faced with the psychological consequences of killing another human being; discipline, which ensures that orders are obeyed and ammunition is used appropriately; and interpersonal trust, which allows for interdependence and belief in the credibility of others to be in their assigned positions and act according to their assigned roles during the ambush.

The same goes for withdrawing from an engagement when the local balance of power becomes unfavorable: a unit must have uniform shared purpose and discipline that provides the high morale and conduct needed to successfully execute a withdrawal. Yet this action also demands interpersonal trust, in that a withdrawal often involves providing cover fire. This is a tactic that demands a high level of mutual credence among fellow fighters, who essentially place their lives in each other's hands

---

<sup>147</sup>Grauer 2011

during such an action.

Even for tasks specific to the Conventional stage, it is the three mechanisms that altogether shape a group's relative ability to execute them, perhaps even more so given the higher complexity of such tasks.<sup>148</sup> Successfully executing a concentrated frontal assault demands uniform shared purpose that provides the motivation needed to confront adversaries in positional warfare and (again) endure in the face of taking another human being's life. Yet such an assault cannot be undertaken unless discipline exists so that fighters obey orders. Indeed, for the assault to be most effective, it needs to be based on the initiative of local unit commanders so that the tactical mission is best matched with the immediate surrounding combat environment. This can only happen when interpersonal trust also is present and exists between leadership and field commanders that enables the delegation of command.

When it comes to combined arms operations, uniform shared purpose is a basic requirement for training combatants and commanders in the coordinated actions and tactics needed to conduct such operations (see next paragraph). In addition, discipline is even more key in the context of combined arms operations, as a disobeyed order can hamper the effectiveness of such operations vis-a-vis their objective given the inherent interdependence of the units conducting the operation. Yet combined arms operations cannot take place unless there is low-level initiative and coordination, which are facilitated by interpersonal trust among leaders, commanders, and fighters and, particularly in this case, across units within the overall group.

### **Transitioning from the Guerrilla to the Conventional Stage (And Back)**

Finally, a lingering question concerns how groups manage the transition between conflict stages, and how that fits into the theoretical framework. According to Kalyvas and Balcells (2010), nearly 54% of all conflicts during 1944-2004 began with a stark

---

<sup>148</sup>Talmadge 2015, 34-35.

imbalance of weaponry between insurgents and incumbents - the Guerrilla stage in this framework.<sup>149</sup> However, conflicts do indeed shift between stages, as various multi-stage civil wars ranging from Angola (1975-2002) to Somalia (1982-1992) to China (1946-1949) to even the ongoing Syrian Civil War (2011-present) illustrate.<sup>150</sup>

To be effective, then, insurgent groups must be able to successfully manage the transition from the Guerrilla to the Conventional stage, as well as a potential “back-sliding” into the Guerrilla stage from the Conventional stage. The former scenario is more likely (and more challenging) as a conflict persists and the materiel possessed by both sides (particularly insurgents) becomes more advanced as a result of external interests and intervention.<sup>151</sup> It is thus essentially that insurgent groups be able to move to positional warfare and fight as conventional armed forces when the balance of forces reaches the appropriate threshold. This shift primarily requires a retraining of commanders and combatants in operating more advanced military technology (such as artillery and armor) and executing the more complex operations and tactics outlined in Section 1. Simply obtaining the weapons and numbers needed to fight using conventional warfare is not sufficient to enable groups to successfully execute the tasks in the Conventional stage.

As I argued earlier, insurgent leaders will have a hard time altering their group’s overall recruitment practices, and especially the mechanisms they have generated, in the midst of conflict. The dynamics of “lock-in” and inertia in the practices of

---

<sup>149</sup>Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 423. Though the authors focus on coding warfare for the entire conflict, their coding scheme allows one to determine whether a conflict reached the Conventional stage (as I define it in this project) within its first full year. This is coded on the basis of what types of weapons (heavy versus light) were possessed by the insurgents and incumbent forces, similar to the coding protocol for conflict stages I outline in the Appendix.

<sup>150</sup>Lockyer 2010 and 2011; Tanner 2014. This is distinct from individual belligerents shifting their strategies during a conflict, as the Communists did in mid-1947 during the Greek Civil War (Nachmani 1990). Again, the particular stage is defined by the objective balance of forces between insurgents and incumbent forces.

<sup>151</sup>Schulhofer-Wohl 2012 argues that outside interests in a civil war exist even without high strategic interests, and tend to increase as conflict endures.

an organization essentially require a wholesale purge of existing personnel in order to comprehensively overhaul the organization.<sup>152</sup> In essence, then, a group's initial practices will condition its relative ability to conduct the necessary retraining needed to successfully shift between the stages. As a result, groups are "stuck" in terms of what they can do to make adjustments vis-a-vis potential stage shifts during the course of a conflict. Their recruitment practices will have either produced the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust needed to shift stages and conduct any necessary retraining, or instead will lack these characteristics that allow for such retraining.

Based on the theoretical account developed earlier in this section, we should expect insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices to be both better able to make this transition and more effective in the Conventional stage than groups with deficient recruitment practices.<sup>153</sup> Such groups already have the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust among constituent members needed to carry out basic fighting orders in a disciplined and coordinated way, and so an order to retrain commanders and combatants will likely be followed. With positional warfare, the goal becomes to take territory even if this results in casualties. Because they were robustly recruited and incorporated into the group, combatants are already prepared for enduring the loss of fellow fighters in battle, minimizing the possibility that they will desert or defect when the frequency of such losses increases.

Conversely, groups with deficient recruitment practices suffer from the command and combat issues produced by the lack of uniform shared purpose, discipline, and in-

---

<sup>152</sup>Schneider 1987.

<sup>153</sup>Once in the Conventional stage, insurgent groups may have indeed retained some non-conventional units tasked with guerrilla warfare. For example, the Chinese Communist Party's military forces had both types of units from the party's founding, and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front retained guerrilla units alongside its conventional forces. However, because the focus in the Conventional stage is on positional warfare and building the counter-state, the units that must play a primary role in this process for the group to be most combat effective are the conventionally organized units.

terpersonal trust. To begin with, units and combatants in this scenario lack consistent and comprehensive training in any type of warfare, which already poses challenges for effectiveness when they engage in combat. With deficient recruitment practices, fighters have no reason to believe that their superiors are competent and credible, which, along with the lack of discipline, creates a situation where orders to shift to positional warfare are not obeyed due to the lack of trust and discipline. Moreover, positional warfare brings with it an increased degree of death and destruction that fighters must endure, and the absence of uniform shared purpose among all combatants makes the risk desertion and defection from units much more likely, neutering the group's ability to prosecute the conflict.

In the context of a shift “back” to the Guerrilla stage from the Conventional stage, groups with robust recruitment practices are again better equipped to make this transition than those with deficient recruitment practices. The former possess the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust to successfully change the overall operating strategy of units and shift to the appropriate tactical style of warfare. If units or combatants do not have the necessary training in guerrilla warfare, retraining in such tactics and operations is possible precisely because of the group's uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust.

In contrast, groups with deficient recruitment practices have varied or no shared purpose, indiscipline, and no interpersonal trust. Attempting to implement a change in the overall operating strategy of the group will prove to be quite difficult. At basic, the lack of discipline and interpersonal trust generated by deficient recruitment practices implies that any orders to shift tactics may not be followed or believed as the correct thing to do. Because of this, some combatants may continue to use conventional warfare tactics that are not suitable given the overall balance of capabilities between the sides, despite the high levels of casualties such actions will produce. The



varied training (if any) that units and/or combatants have received in this scenario compounds the problem, as some may have no military training whatsoever while others may have only received training in conventional warfare tactics. Disaster will likely ensue.

## 4.1 Theoretical Predictions and Hypothesis

To briefly recap the theory: I argue that two conditions, recruitment strategies and wartime circumstances, combine to shape how rebels recruit their members in reality. Recruitment strategies are the selection and incorporation procedures a group seeks to realize, e.g. the desired membership criteria and procedures used to integrate members into the group. Such strategies are a product of the mobilizing resource used to construct and maintain the group, such as shared social features (e.g. ideology, ethnic affinity), natural resource revenues, external support, or existing pre-war organizational structures and/or clandestine non-martial organizations. Wartime circumstances are relatively exogenous conditions that impact an insurgent group's ability to function normally, such as the decapitation of a field commander, a major counterinsurgency offensive, or a sudden influx of recruits.

These two conditions interact to shape what I call recruitment practices, or how individuals are *actually* selected, inducted, trained, and socialized as insurgent fighters. I classify such practices based on how consistently and comprehensively they are carried out in a group's areas of operation. Robust recruitment practices are those in which a group employs consistent criteria in selecting its members along with uniform and comprehensive induction, training, and socialization procedures for recruits. Conversely, deficient recruitment practices are those in which members are selected based on varying (or no) criteria, and/or are inducted, trained, and socialized in different ways (if at all), such as certain recruits undergoing political indoctrination and others

not.

The nature of a group’s recruitment practices in turn shapes whether it has the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust, needed to successfully execute the outlined tasks. Groups with robust recruitment practices generate such uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust - as a result, groups with such practices will likely be more effective in fighting. From this discussion, I specify the main hypothesis to be tested in the dissertation:

**Hypothesis 4** *Insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices are more likely to be combat effective than groups with deficient recruitment practices.*

## 5 Assumptions and Scope Conditions

The universe of cases to which the theory applies consists of insurgent groups with the stated intention of replacing or capturing the state through combat. The theory should also generally apply to secessionist rebellions, as such groups also seek to replace the state in a particular territory. It does not attempt to explain why or how particular armed groups achieve victory at conflict’s end. That is, the dissertation does not aim to explain end-of-conflict outcomes concerning either organizations or the overall war itself (i.e. incumbent or insurgent victory), as other works have done.<sup>154</sup> The framework assumes a relatively superior state actor vis-a-vis insurgent groups in terms of personnel and materiel. The framework also assumes that insurgent groups have passed through the “clandestine phase” to begin functioning as armed organizations, and have successfully procured weapons and materials needed for combat.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup>E.g. Mason et al. 1999, Sinno 2008, Lyall and Wilson 2009, Lyall 2010b, Balcells and Kalyvas 2014, Peic 2014.

<sup>155</sup>I noted in Chapter 1 that insurgent groups pass through this initial phase, and many do not successfully make it through (See Lewis 2017 and Byman 2007 on studies of this phase).

In terms of recruitment, the theoretical framework applies to situations of both voluntary and involuntary recruitment. Involuntary recruitment includes tactics such as the abduction of children<sup>156</sup> or forced recruitment through the threat or actual use of violence.<sup>157</sup> Beber and Blattman find that one-third of armed groups in a random sample of African conflicts used forced recruitment.<sup>158</sup> In a dataset of 91 civil wars, Cohen finds that at least one insurgent group used abduction in 22% of the conflicts and forced recruitment more generally in 46% of the conflicts.<sup>159</sup> As stated previously, such involuntary recruitment falls within the category of deficient recruitment practices. The framework therefore captures the full empirical spectrum of insurgent recruitment practices.

## 6 Research Design

To test this framework, I require fine-grained data on insurgent recruitment practices and organizational characteristics, tactical-level actions, and personnel losses. The best way to evaluate the framework given these data requirements is through historical case studies. This method will allow me to test the hypotheses using fine-grained information to demonstrate operation of the mechanisms linking the relative rigor of insurgent recruitment practices to particular outcomes of group-specific effectiveness during conflicts.

---

During this phase, incipient armed groups must create a politically-relevant identity linked to a cause broader than the initial set of members, recruit initial leaders, procure resources for fighting, establish supply routes that can be protected and maintained, acquire and maintain protective space for organizing/initial training/socialization, and gain dominance over rival insurgent groups. I return to this assumption in the Conclusion chapter.

<sup>156</sup>Becker 2010, Cohen 2016. For a memoir of a former combatant abducted into conflict as a child, see Beah 2007.

<sup>157</sup>Beber and Blattman 2013, Eck 2014, Cohen 2016.

<sup>158</sup>Beber and Blattman 2013, 96

<sup>159</sup>Cohen 2016, 78

## 6.1 Case Studies and Case Selection

As stated in the previous section, the relevant universe of cases are any civil wars in which insurgents have the stated goal of capturing or replacing the state. As a result of the theoretical framework's focus on the insurgent group as the unit of analysis and the importance of combat environments in shaping the nature of fighting, I select cases vis-a-vis insurgent groups *and* on conflict-specific features.

To best ensure that I select cases that contain full variation in the explanatory variable of interest while still minimizing sources of potential bias, I choose cases in part based on rough estimated values of the independent variable from a reading of existing sources on a given conflict. This is a standard practice for selecting case studies in political science, and allows me to avoid a major source of selection bias by not choosing cases based on values of the dependent variable.<sup>160</sup> A remaining concern with this case selection strategy is that I might choose conflicts with insurgent actors that exhibit variation in the independent variable in a manner that corresponds favorably with the dependent variable vis-a-vis my hypothesis. However, there exists no systematic, cross-conflict measurement of group-specific effectiveness across or within conflicts, especially with regard to the measurement scheme I have developed in in this chapter. As a result, it is not possible for me to have selected cases with prior detailed knowledge of the precise outcomes of interest for insurgent groups in the conflicts I chose to study.

Besides these principles of case selection immediately relevant for the independent variable, I also select cases based on conflict characteristics with an eye toward testing alternative explanations, minimizing confounding factors, and ensuring that the cases altogether comprise the complete range of possible stages of conflict. In this vein, I intentionally choose to examine conflicts with either multiple insurgent groups or a

---

<sup>160</sup>Geddes 1990, King et al. 1994

single group. This allows for a more valid test of the theory and alternative explanations either across several groups operating in the same conflict or over time within a single group. Examining cases with these distinct features allows me to control for potential confounders, such as goals, incumbent identity, structural characteristics (state strength, regime type, terrain, development), and counterinsurgency strategy and tactics. In addition, I considered the relative balance of forces, external support, and ideology of participating groups when considering cases.

Besides these criteria, I also intentionally choose cases keeping in mind my existing skills and experience that can help facilitate original research on conflicts (e.g. knowledge of Arabic, previous time spent in particular countries, connections to archives), and the relative extent of existing works that contain the fine-grained information needed for the variables and pathways of interest in the dissertation.

#### **6.1.1 The Cases and Method**

Based on the aforementioned case selection criteria, I examine insurgent effectiveness during the civil wars in Jordan (1968-1971), Oman (1964-1975), and Eritrea (1961-1991). In all three cases, there is full variation in recruitment practices across or within participating insurgent groups, and the practices themselves are exogenous to the ultimate outcomes of effectiveness for each group examined. The groups in all three cases vary in terms of the balance of forces, external support, and particular ideologies, while also exhibiting similarities that allow me to assess the value of each of the three alternative explanations. All three wars are conflicts in which insurgents with identical goals faced the same incumbent and structural conditions. In each of the three conflicts, counterinsurgent actors used the same strategies and tactics against the groups under study. Finally, the three cases altogether comprise the Guerrilla and Conventional stages of conflict, allowing me to fully test the measurement portion of the theoretical framework.

In each case study, I examine the characteristics and conduct of non-state warring parties<sup>161</sup> and their relative effectiveness using the measures appropriate to the particular stage of the given conflict. For the cases of Oman and Eritrea I rely on existing secondary sources, as these provide sufficient detail on the characteristics and conduct of the participating insurgent groups in each conflict. However, existing works on the Jordanian conflict either examine the various insurgent groups in a manner largely divorced from their participation in the war<sup>162</sup>; provide only an aggregated overview of the conflict and its actors<sup>163</sup>; or focus exclusively on particular events during the war, neglecting the broader ongoing conflict.<sup>164</sup> To collect the fine-grained, organization-specific data needed for analysis, I conducted extensive archival research and 105 interviews with former combatants and observers over the course of thirteen months of fieldwork in Jordan, Lebanon and the United States. I discuss this fieldwork on the Jordanian conflict in further detail in Chapter 3.

I use these various sources of evidence to conduct process tracing in each case study to substantiate the causal pathways linking the relative rigor of group recruitment practices to group-specific combat effectiveness. The use of process tracing allows me

---

<sup>161</sup>The operational question of what constitutes a “warring party” has been left largely unaddressed in civil wars scholarship, as even the most prominent datasets do not include measures for this. Cunningham (2011) uses a measure of troop strength relative to the government as one of the criteria for determining the relevant conflict participants in a civil war for his study of civil war outcomes; armed groups must have at least 1% as many troops as the incumbent (Cunningham 2011, 73-74). Fotini Christia’s definition defines “warring groups” as “those groups that existed for a substantial interval during the war or that played a major role in the war’s overall trajectory” (Christia 2012, 218fn2). In her study of armed group formation in Uganda, Janet Lewis (2012) considers an armed group “viable” if it has at least 200 members and maintains at least one base in the target country for at least three months during the conflict (Lewis 2012, 7-8). For the purpose of this dissertation, a *warring party* is an armed group that has at least 100 fighters during the conflict and operates primarily inside the country in which the relevant civil war is taking place.

<sup>162</sup>On this, see: ESAU-47, ESAU-49, Khurshid 1971, Quandt 1971, Hudson 1972, Jabber 1973, Jureidini and Hazen 1973, El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, Sayigh 1997

<sup>163</sup>On this, see: Brown 1971, Hindi et al. 1971, Cooley 1973, Jureidini 1975, Axelrod 1978, Mukhar 1978, Bailey 1984, Lalor 1992, Shemesh 1996, Abu Odeh 1999, DeAtkine 2001, Barari 2008

<sup>164</sup>On this, see: Ledda 1971, Shafiq 1971, Snow and Phillips 1971, Katmattu 1973, El-Edroos 1980, Raab 2007, Nevo 2008, Pedatzur 2008

to move beyond causal inference and covariation to causal explanation.<sup>165</sup> Rather than a pure focus on covariation, process tracing seeks to concatenate “causally relevant events by enumerating the events constituting a process, identifying the underlying causal mechanisms generating those events, and hence linking constituent events into a robust causal chain that connects one or more independent variables to the outcome in question.”<sup>166</sup> Besides its general use as a method of inquiry in political science,<sup>167</sup> process tracing has been widely used in qualitative studies of civil wars.<sup>168</sup>

In what follows, I discuss each selected case in more detail, particularly the variation in recruitment practices across or within the participating insurgent groups.

**Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971)** In Jordan, I examine the effectiveness of the main Palestinian Fedayeen armed organizations that fought against the Jordanian monarchy during the conflict.<sup>169</sup> Fighting between the Fedayeen groups and the Jordanian government began in May 1968 and lasted until July 1971, when the Jordanian Armed Forces drove all of the groups and their fighters out of the Kingdom and into Syria and Lebanon.<sup>170</sup> Though usually viewed as a two-party conflict between the Jordanian state and the uniform collective of “Fedayeen,”<sup>171</sup> the conflict was in fact a multiparty affair, with the twelve factions acting independently of each other and often clashing during the war.<sup>172</sup> The Jordanian conflict was in the Guerrilla stage for its entirety.

In the case study, I analyze the recruitment practices and effectiveness of Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP during the most intense period of the conflict, “Black September” (September 17th - October 1st, 1970). There was full variation in re-

---

<sup>165</sup>Waldner 2007

<sup>166</sup>Waldner 2012, 68-69

<sup>167</sup>George and Bennett 2005.

<sup>168</sup>E.g. Petersen 2001, Wood 2003, Christia 2012, Cohen 2016

<sup>169</sup>Quandt 1973, Sayigh 1997

<sup>170</sup>Various interviews; Katmatu 1973, Mousa 1996

<sup>171</sup>Fearon and Laitin 2003, Sambanis 2004a, Fruchter-Ronen 2008, Nevo 2008

<sup>172</sup>Bailey 1984, Habash 2008. See Chapter 3 for more specifics on the various groups.

recruitment practices across the three groups during the conflict, which was a result of both wartime circumstances and intentional decisions the groups made that were unrelated to concerns about effectiveness. The three were able to recruit for most of the conflict in an relatively unencumbered manner.<sup>173</sup>

Fatah became increasingly open to anyone that wanted to join as the conflict progressed, especially after the Battle of Karameh in March 1968 when the group decided to become a mass organization in order to have as many fighters as possible.<sup>174</sup> The DFLP was also open to all who wanted to join, as it likewise sought to have as many members as possible.<sup>175</sup> Conversely, the PFLP was very selective in choosing members according to a specified set of criteria, and made recruits undergo extensive military training and political indoctrination.<sup>176</sup> These practices were the result of the group's origins in the secretive and selective non-martial organization, the Arab Nationalist Movement.<sup>177</sup>

**Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975)** In Oman, I examine the insurgency waged primarily by the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG)<sup>178</sup> against the Sultanate in the country's southernmost province of Dhofar.<sup>179</sup> The PFLOAG insurgents were finally defeated in December 1975 by a combination of the Sultanate's forces and intervening British, Iranian, and Jordanian

---

<sup>173</sup>The groups indeed incurred Israeli airstrikes that sought to disrupt their operations and capacity, but faced little efforts by the Jordanians to disrupt recruitment and other functions with the exception of infiltration by Jordanian intelligence agents. See Chapter 3 for more on this.

<sup>174</sup>Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, 9; Sayigh 1997

<sup>175</sup>Various interviews; Sayigh 1997.

<sup>176</sup>Author interviews, various; Sayigh 1997, 232-234

<sup>177</sup>Author interviews, various

<sup>178</sup>The initial insurgent group's named changed multiple times throughout the conflict, from the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) in 1964, to the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) in 1968, to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) in 1971, to finally the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) in 1974 (Peterson 1977). There was also a second group that formed in northern Oman during the insurgency, the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (NDFLOAG); the group was quickly wiped out by the SAF in 1970 and its remaining members joined the PFLOAG (El-Rayyes 1976, 102-104).

<sup>179</sup>Peterson 2007



units.<sup>180</sup> The rebellion in Oman constituted the Guerrilla stage of a conflict for its entirety.

In 1965, the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) launched its armed struggle against Sultan Said bin Timur of Oman.<sup>181</sup> The group was essentially a merger of four independent strands of Dhofari opposition inside and outside of Oman, each of which had its own recruitment practices in 1965. However, recruitment changed significantly after the DLF's second congress in September 1968, when the group took a more radical turn in its ideological orientation towards Marxism-Leninism. The DLF purged its ranks of nationalists, altered its recruitment to be more selective, and mandated uniform political indoctrination along with military training for both new and old fighters.<sup>182</sup> This change largely came as a result of the rise to power of the National Liberation Front in South Yemen and the subsequent creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1967, which began to provide support that buttressed the Marxist-Leninist ideological faction within the group.<sup>183</sup>

Recruitment was robust for a few years, but the ideological transformation eventually generated opposition within the PFLOAG's leadership. This escalated into violent infighting in September 1970 between those opposing and favoring the transformation.<sup>184</sup> The PFLOAG continued to have difficulties in implementing the changes in a consistent manner throughout the organization, and began abducting individuals as a mode of recruitment.<sup>185</sup> In addition, on May 25th, 1972, the PFLOAG's school for cadres and commanders in Hawf, South Yemen was bombed by the Sultanate's forces, forcing the group to close the school and rely on dispersed and inconsistent

---

<sup>180</sup>Jeapes 2005

<sup>181</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 84

<sup>182</sup>Halliday 1974, 361-373; Ja'bub 2010, 156-160

<sup>183</sup>Hughes 2015, 93

<sup>184</sup>DeVore 2011, 453-454

<sup>185</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 99-101; Jones 2011, 569; Jeapes 2005, 29-30

methods of commander and cadre recruitment and training in multiple locations.<sup>186</sup> The group's recruitment practices remained deficient for the rest of the conflict until its end in December 1975.

**Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991)** The three-decade-long struggle for Eritrean independence involved two armed groups: the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Because both insurgent groups formed and began fighting prior to the usual coding of the onset of the civil war in 1974,<sup>187</sup> I extend my analysis back to 1961, when nationalist activity first began in the Eritrean region of Ethiopia.<sup>188</sup> Fighting between the Ethiopian army and the insurgents lasted until May 1991, when the EPLF defeated Ethiopian forces in Eritrea and captured the provincial capital of Asmara.<sup>189</sup> The war includes both possible stages of insurgency, beginning in the Guerrilla stage and transitioning into the Conventional stage in September 1974.

The ELF was formed in Cairo in 1960 by three Eritrean exiles, who shared Muslim backgrounds but represented different ethnic and tribal constituencies in Eritrea.<sup>190</sup> To establish their organization inside the Eritrean region of Ethiopia, each of the three leaders funneled money from abroad directly to their respective regionally-based commanders inside Eritrea, who themselves each represented a different ethnic or tribal group in the region.<sup>191</sup> This setup shaped the ELF's initial recruitment practices, as regional commanders chose recruits on the basis of their own ethnic or tribal membership rather than a specific set of group-wide selection criteria.<sup>192</sup> Besides ethnic and tribal divisions, intra-group sectarian divisions were introduced in

---

<sup>186</sup>Ja'bub 2010, 168-169

<sup>187</sup>E.g. Fearon and Laitin 2003, Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2015

<sup>188</sup>Markakis 1987

<sup>189</sup>Iyob 1995

<sup>190</sup>Iyob 1995, 109-111.

<sup>191</sup>Iyob 1995, 111; Woldemariam 2014, 7

<sup>192</sup>Markakis 1987, 115; Connell 2001, 347-348

the mid-1960s, when a significant influx of mainly urbanized Christian recruits led the ELF to add a fifth zonal command exclusively for Christian commanders and fighters.<sup>193</sup>

Indeed, such disjointed selection of recruits was the objective of the exiled ELF leadership, who feared being usurped by their Eritrea-based subordinates.<sup>194</sup> Besides selection, ELF commanders and fighters were trained and socialized in different ways. Some fighters participated in radical military courses in Cuba and China, where they were exposed to leftist and Marxist-Leninist lines of thought and strategy.<sup>195</sup> Others trained by the ELF lacked any such political education.<sup>196</sup> These deficient recruitment practices continued until the ELF was expelled from Eritrea by the EPLF in 1981.

The rival EPLF formed as a result of the fusing of three ELF splinter factions in late 1972.<sup>197</sup> From its beginning, the group had a clear ideological program based on Marxist-Leninism, and these principles drove its selection criteria and incorporation procedures.<sup>198</sup> All recruits were required to undergo a six-month training course, which included both military training and political education.<sup>199</sup> The political component included lessons on class analysis, Eritrean history, and the Eritrean struggle.<sup>200</sup> After the course finished, fighters continued to meet three times a week for political education classes with cadres in their units.<sup>201</sup> Even after the EPLF expanded in size between 1975 and 1979, this system remained compulsory for all members.<sup>202</sup> This compulsory training and indoctrination for EPLF fighters remained in place through

---

<sup>193</sup>Pool 1980, 40. In 1965, the ELF reorganized its military command structure into four zones based on ethnic and tribal lines (Woldemariam 2014, 8).

<sup>194</sup>Gebre-Medhin 1984, 50

<sup>195</sup>Connell 2001, 347

<sup>196</sup>Ibid., 347-349

<sup>197</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1233

<sup>198</sup>Johnson and Johnson 1981; Iyob 1995, 58; Gebru Tareke 2009, 65-69; Connell 2001, 353

<sup>199</sup>Pateman 1990, 84; Connell 2001, 354

<sup>200</sup>Pool 1980, 45-46; Connell 2001, 354

<sup>201</sup>Connell 2001, 354

<sup>202</sup>Pool 1980, 45-46

the late 1980s.<sup>203</sup>

## 7 Conclusion

This chapter developed a framework to measure and explain insurgent effectiveness during civil wars. I first outlined concrete indicators that can be used to assess insurgent effectiveness during the two possible stages of a conflict. I then positioned insurgent recruitment practices as the key factor shaping combat effectiveness, developing the theory step by step from the origins of recruitment practices to theoretical mechanisms linking such practices to ultimate group performance. I then outlined the research design used in the project, including the methods I will use, case selection criteria, and brief characteristics of the three selected cases. Over the course of the next three chapters, I test this framework, beginning in the next chapter with an examination of insurgent effectiveness during the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971).

---

<sup>203</sup>Woldemikael 1991, 34

# Chapter 3

## Fedayeen Effectiveness in Jordan (1968-1971)

### 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I test the framework outlined in the previous chapter and establish its internal validity. Drawing on field and archival research, I analyze insurgent effectiveness during the “Black September” fighting episode of the Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971). The chapter begins by briefly restating the theory and discussing how I test it in the Jordanian case, along with an overview of the sources and fieldwork I draw upon for the analysis. I then provide a historical background on the Jordanian conflict, highlighting the key events and developments during the civil war time period and discussing the military aspects of the Black September fighting episode.

I then turn to the analysis, beginning with a discussion of the general nature of recruitment into the insurgent organizations in Jordan and an outlining of the recruitment practices of the three main groups under study, Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation

of Palestine (DFLP). This is followed by an examination of the recruitment practices, corresponding mechanisms, and combat effectiveness of the three groups during the Black September fighting episode. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limits of potential alternative explanations in the case and a summary of the findings.

## 1.1 Testing the Theory in Jordan

In the previous chapter, I developed a theoretical account of how insurgent recruitment practices shape groups' ultimate effectiveness during civil wars. To briefly recap, the theory predicts that insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices will ultimately fight more effectively across the possible stages of conflict than those with deficient recruitment practices. This is a result of three mechanisms generated by robust recruitment practices: uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust. These enable a group's fighters to successfully execute the tasks that constitute effective fighting in a given stage. With deficient recruitment practices, insurgent groups instead generate no or weak/varied shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust (or even mistrust) among their commanders and fighters. As a result, such groups cannot successfully execute the tasks needed to fight effectively during the possible stages of conflict.

In this chapter, I test the theory, examining the combat effectiveness of insurgent groups during the most intense period of fighting in the Jordanian Civil War. The war, which lasted from March 1968 until July 1971, was fought between ten Palestinian Fedayeen<sup>1</sup> organizations and the Jordanian monarchy and its security forces. Widespread clashes between the two sides occurred in November 1968, February 1970, and June 1970, and escalated thereafter into daily fighting up until mid-September 1970. On September 17th, 1970, the Jordanian Armed Forces began a major service-

---

<sup>1</sup>“Fedayeen” is the romanticized plural form of *fidai'i*, which means “one who sacrifices” in Arabic. I provide more background on the Fedayeen later in the chapter.

wide counterinsurgency offensive against the Fedayeen organizations to clear them from the Kingdom's major cities and towns. This sparked two weeks of intense fighting throughout the country from September 17th until October 1st in what has come to be known as "Black September."<sup>2</sup>

The Jordanian case, particularly the Black September period of the conflict, provides fertile ground for establishing the theory's internal validity for several reasons. First, despite the prevailing conventional assumption that it was a two-party civil war,<sup>3</sup> ten separate insurgent groups fought in the war, though all with the same goal of overthrowing the Hashemite monarchy.<sup>4</sup> Second, recruitment into the groups proceeded for a significant time before major, sustained fighting began, which allows for comprehensive and concrete assessments of each group's recruitment practices prior to the outbreak of major hostilities,<sup>5</sup> while still being able to test the full framework of

---

<sup>2</sup>Many of my interviewees used the phrase "Black September," "The September Events," or "The September War" to refer to both the events during September 1970 and the overall civil war itself. Throughout the chapter, I use "Black September" to refer to the two weeks of fighting.

From the point of view of the Fedayeen organizations (and Palestinians more broadly), the events were "black" because they represented a setback in the quest to liberate the occupied territories and the loss of the key operating base of Jordan, in addition to the death and destruction of Palestinians and their refugee camps. Some individuals on the Jordanian side of the events alternatively use the term "White September" because it represented the restoration of law and order to the Kingdom and the expulsion of the Fedayeen organizations (Author interviews, various).

<sup>3</sup>Nearly all existing works on the conflict (whether in English or Arabic) treat it as between the Jordanian government and the collective "Fedayeen." More importantly, no existing works fully disaggregate the conduct of the various independent armed groups during the Black September episode of the conflict (E.g. Hindi et al. 1971, Quandt 1971, Cooley 1973, Jureidini 1975, Axelrod 1978, Mukhar 1978, El Edroos 1980, 'Abd al-Rahman 1983, Bailey 1984, Khalaf 1991, Lalor 1992, Mousa 1996, Shemesh 1996, Sayigh 1997, Abu Odeh 1999, DeAtkine 2001).

<sup>4</sup>The Fedayeen organizations were ostensibly established with the goal of fighting Israel and liberating Palestine. While the organizations did indeed conduct operations against Israel during the 1968-1971 time period, much of this was exaggerated, according to even the organizations themselves (see Sayigh 1997, 203-207). Moreover, many of the groups had the professed goal of overthrowing the Jordanian regime as part of their objectives, particularly the PFLP and DFLP (Author interviews, PFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Official-C, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Commander-C, DFLP Member-C - see below section on fieldwork for specificities of acronyms). Indeed, all of the Fedayeen organizations participated in the clashes that occurred in the years and months leading up to Black September. Adding to this is the unsurprising belief widely held among former Jordanian intelligence agents and military personnel that the Fedayeen organizations were working to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy since their very first days of existence (Author interviews, GID Official-D, GID Official-T, GOJ Official-Y, JAA Official-X).

<sup>5</sup>The most significant threat the Fedayeen groups faced before Black September were Israeli

the theory and its assumptions. Third, all ten Fedayeen organizations faced the same incumbent and participated equally in the fighting during Black September, while the JAA did not differentiate between the groups in its operations.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the conflict itself was in the Guerrilla stage for its entirety, as the Fedayeen organizations totaled at most 15,000 fighters and had primarily small arms and light weapons, while the JAA had 58,000 troops consisting of armor, artillery, and mechanized infantry units.<sup>7</sup>

Exploiting these characteristics, I analyze the relative effectiveness of the main Fedayeen organizations that fought against the Jordanian state during the Black September period of the conflict. Combining original field and archival research with historical sources in English and Arabic on the war to outline the recruitment practices, I analyze the corresponding performance of the main factions during the fighting episode. I provide more detail on this episode and the broader Jordanian conflict starting in Section 2. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the fieldwork I conducted on the conflict and the types of evidence that will be used in the analysis.

### **1.1.1 Sources Used and Fieldwork on the Jordanian Civil War**

To analyze the recruitment practices and combat effectiveness of the Fedayeen groups during the conflict in Jordan, I rely on interviews with ex-combatants, archival sources, historical accounts, memoirs, and private papers and files of individuals involved with the war. Much of this evidence was gathered during thirteen months of field research in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United States. This fieldwork consisted of both interviews with former conflict participants and observers and archival research at several repositories in the three countries.

During June - August 2015 in the United States, I interviewed former American airstrikes targeting their bases as well as Jordanian population centers.

---

<sup>6</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-D, JAA Official-J, JAA Official-W, JAA Official-G. See Section 4.3 for more on the JAA's posture vis-a-vis the Fedayeen organizations during Black September.

<sup>7</sup>El Edroos 1980, 449-451; Sayigh 1997, 263.



diplomatic, military, and intelligence officials that were based in Jordan before, during, and immediately after the civil war. These initial interviews provided a general sense of the war's progression from individuals that often had direct access to key decision makers on both sides and observed much of the fighting themselves. In addition, they also provided useful background information on the role the U.S. played during the conflict.

Between September 2015 - July 2016, I spent over ten months in Jordan and Lebanon conducting interview and archival research. During this period, I independently networked and personally conducted semi-structured interviews in colloquial Arabic with former participants in and observers of the Jordanian conflict in the two countries. On the Fedayeen side, I interviewed former officials, commanders, fighters, cadres, and ordinary members from all ten major non-state armed organizations<sup>8</sup> that participated in the conflict, including the Palestinian National Liberation Movement [*Fatah*]; the Popular Liberation Forces/Palestine Liberation Army [*PLF/PLA*]; the Palestine Liberation Army [*PLA*]; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [*PFLP*]; the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [*DFLP*]; the Popular

---

<sup>8</sup>Besides the enumerated groups, three other Fedayeen organizations existed in Jordan during the conflict period (1968-71): the Arab Palestine Organization (APO), the Action Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP), and the Popular Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (POLP) (Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, Sayigh 1997). The APO and AOLP were very small organizations, with membership totals estimated at 50 and 100 respectively in December 1970 (CIA 1970). The AOLP was reportedly incorporated into Fatah in December 1970, while the APO disintegrated after the September 1970 fighting (Quandt 1971, 95). In my interviews with conflict participants from both sides and observers, these two organizations are not cited as major Fedayeen participants in the conflict, if mentioned at all, and were often only recalled by interviewees upon inquiry. As for the POLP, it ceased to exist prior to the September 1970 fighting, as its members were either incorporated into the DFLP in mid-1969 or left "Fedayeen action" altogether at that time (Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970; interviews with former DFLP and POLP officials and members).

The Jordanian government and intelligence services did indeed set up Fedayeen organizations as a way to weaken the overall movement, but these organizations were very small and ceased to exist by the start of 1970 (See: "The Fedayeen in Jordan," British Embassy Amman Dispatch to Foreign Office, September 26th, 1968, National Archives/Record Group 59/Records Relating to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, 1966-1972/Box 1; INR memorandum, "Jordan and the Fedayeen: Both Sides Geared for Possible Showdown," July 16, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 23 JORDAN).

Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command [*PF-GC*]; the Vanguard of the People's Liberation War - Saiqa Forces [*Saiqa*]; the Arab Liberation Front [*ALF*]; the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front [*PPSF*]; and the Jordanian Communist Party's Partisan Forces [*Al-Ansar*].<sup>9</sup> On the Jordanian side, I interviewed former Jordanian Armed Forces generals, officers, and soldiers spanning all combat arms and branches; retired officials and agents from Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate (GID)<sup>10</sup>; and former Jordanian government ministers and officials.

The interviews with these two sets of conflict participants focused on individuals' experiences and observations from the conflict period and the organizational characteristics, strategies, tactics, and operations of the conflict's armed actors. I also visited the major sites of fighting during the conflict, often with individuals that fought in such areas during the war. In addition to conflict participants, I interviewed Jordanian civilians to get a more general sense of the conflict's progression and the nature of the fighting.

Despite concluding over 47 years ago, the conflict is still an extremely sensitive topic in Jordan. To this end, I was very fortunate to benefit from some invaluable assistance that helped to facilitate my fieldwork in the Kingdom and enabled me to avoid issues with Jordanian authorities while conducting research on the subject.<sup>11</sup> In addition, I followed a strict protocol for connecting with respondents, contacting potential interviewees only through others that knew them personally.<sup>12</sup> Nearly all

---

<sup>9</sup>In addition to these ten Fedayeen organizations that were participants in the Jordanian conflict, I also interviewed individuals that were in the Communist Action Organization in Lebanon [*OACL*], the DFLP's sister organization in Lebanon at the time of the Jordanian conflict, and the Lebanese Communist Party [*LCP*], which played a key role in both establishing and organizing the Jordanian Communist Party's Partisan Forces.

<sup>10</sup>The GID, or *Mukhabarat*, is Jordan's main (and only) non-martial intelligence agency, and is responsible for intelligence collection and operations both inside and outside of Jordan.

<sup>11</sup>Due to their positions and the sensitive nature of the assistance provided, I refrain from acknowledging these individuals by name or affiliation.

<sup>12</sup>I also followed this protocol when conducting interview research in the United States and Lebanon.

individuals I reached out to agreed to meet with me and be interviewed. In each meeting, I emphasized my knowledge and awareness of the sensitivity of the subject matter, and always informed the interviewee of their right to refrain from answering my questions. Most individuals insisted that it was fine that I use their name, citing both the time that had passed since the conflict ended and their lack of fear of potential repercussions, despite both my own personal intention not to do so given the sensitive subject matter and IRB protocol.<sup>13</sup> As a result, when using material from these interviews, I do not employ any names or other identifying information, instead citing material from interview sources using the individual's organizational affiliation (e.g. Fatah, PFLP, JAA, GID, GOJ, Civilian) and role (e.g. Fighter, Official, Commander) at the time of the conflict.<sup>14</sup> For quotes, I use my direct translation from Arabic to English of what the respondent said. In total, I conducted interviews with 105 separate respondents,<sup>15</sup> in many cases meeting with and/or interviewing individuals multiple times to establish the rapport needed to inquire about personal experiences and observations from the conflict, as well as to gather additional information.

Over the course of these thirteen months of interviews, I also gathered historical documents and other archival materials from institutes and individuals across the United States, Jordan, and Lebanon. Institutes included the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, MD; the Jordanian National Library and the Archives and "Forbidden Collection" of the University of Jordan Library in Amman, Jordan; and the Archives and Special Collections at Jafet Li-

---

<sup>13</sup>The interview research portion of my fieldwork received approval from the University of Virginia's Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-SBS # 2015-0298-00).

<sup>14</sup>Unique interviewees are assigned a random letter to distinguish them from others that had the same position and organizational affiliation.

<sup>15</sup>The breakdown of interviews I conducted with individuals from the ten participating Fedayeen organizations was as follows: 3 ALF, 17 DFLP, 15 Fatah, 1 JCP, 4 PF-GC, 7 PFLP, 1 PPSF, 1 PLF, 1 PLF/PLA, 6 Saiqa. On the Jordanian side, the breakdown was as follows: 27 JAA, 6 GOJ, 6 GID.

brary of the American University of Beirut and the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, Lebanon. I also electronically accessed scanned diplomatic documents from the British National Archives. In addition to the materials in these various repositories, I collected personal notes, memoirs, and documents from individuals with whom I met during the fieldwork. These archival materials provide a valuable written historical background on the conflict, while also serving as a source of corroboration for the information I gathered through the interviews.

In addition to the sources gathered through field and archival research, I rely on existing historical accounts of the Jordanian conflict in English and Arabic. Some of these, such as Yezid Sayigh's book *Armed Struggle and the Search for State* and William Quandt Jr.'s 1971 RAND report *Palestinian Nationalism: Its Political and Military Dimensions*, are themselves based on primary sources and interviews, as are the theses by Paul Jureidini (1975), Randa Mukhar (1978), and Paul Lalor (1992). The warring parties also produced sources based on evidence drawn from their combatants, such as the PLO-published *Al Muqawama Al-Filastiniyya wa Al-Nizam Al-Urduni: Dirasa Tahiliyya lihujmat Aylul* (*The Palestinian Resistance and the Jordanian Regime: Analytical Study of the September Confrontation*), the Jordanian Ministry of Defense's *al-'Amal al-Fidai fi Al-Urdun* (*Guerrilla Action in Jordan*), and Syed Ali El Edroos's *The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979*. Along with these primary source-based published accounts, I draw on published journalistic accounts and English-language newspapers available through the ProQuest Historical Newspapers collection.

## 2 The Jordanian Civil War (1968-1971)

### 2.1 Context and Background

As stated previously, the Jordanian conflict was fought between ten Fedayeen organizations on one side and the various security forces of the Jordanian state on the opposing side. The former included mainly the full-time fighters of each of the ten main Fedayeen organizations, as well as the organizations' individual civilian militias.<sup>16</sup> The latter included (at one point or another) the Jordanian Armed Forces, which consisted of the Jordanian Arab Army (JAA)<sup>17</sup> and Jordanian Air Force (JAF); the Public Security Forces, police forces, and the "Popular Resistance," a pro-government civilian militia.<sup>18</sup> In what follows, I provide a detailed historical overview of the conflict's progression to give the context for analysis. I do this given the aggregated nature of existing historical accounts of the conflict and its absence from civil wars scholarship, so that readers can become familiar with the general background of the conflict before I begin the analysis.

**The Fedayeen in Jordan** After the June 1967 war, in which Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, Palestinian and Arab political figures and organizations began to look for

---

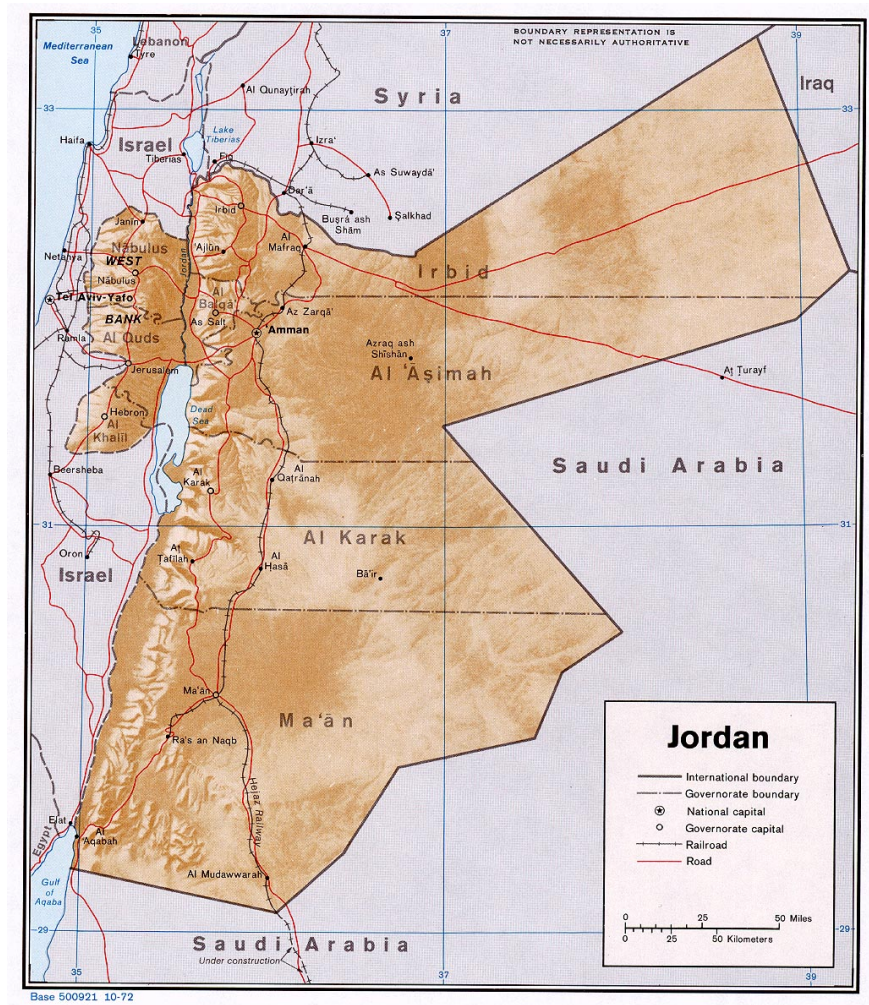
<sup>16</sup>For those Fedayeen groups that established such auxiliary forces, the civilian militias consisted of ordinary civilians that were part-time members and had some limited military training. The militias played a limited role in the fighting with the Jordanian state: during the September 1970 fighting, their primary role was to defend the refugee camps and militia fighters were subordinate to full-time fighters (Author interviews, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, ALF Militia Commander-C, Saiqa Commander-V, DFLP Commander-R, Fatah Fighter-M). Otherwise, they remained dormant during most of the conflict and, following the end of fighting in September 1970, they were largely disarmed ("Fedayeen Sitrep," Amman to Secstate (7156), December 22nd, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN). I do not include the civilian militias in the analysis, as my theoretical focus is limited to the Fedayeen groups' full-time military forces.

<sup>17</sup>I use this and "Jordanian Army" interchangeably throughout the chapter.

<sup>18</sup>Author interview, Civilian-C; El Edroos 1980, 450; Sayigh 1997, 246.

an alternative ways to take back Palestine.<sup>19</sup> After this defeat, the idea of armed struggle through the “Fedayeen” became the dominant political and military means for “liberating Palestine,” with the goal to infiltrate the occupied territories and wage a guerrilla warfare campaign against Israeli forces.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 3.1.** Map of Jordan (1972)  
*Source: University of Texas-Austin Libraries*



In this context, several Fedayeen organizations were established in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the West Bank, with Jordan serving as the main base for these groups

<sup>19</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Official-N, Saiqa Commander-T, ALF Official-G, PF-GC Fighter-A.

<sup>20</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-L, PFLP Official-C.

due to its lengthy border with the occupied West Bank (see Figure 3.1). Many of the newly-established organizations in Jordan were creations or offshoots of local and/or regional political parties such as the Ba'ath Party or Communist Party, all of which had been banned in Jordan since 1957 and purged by Jordanian security forces in spring 1966. With the defeat in the June 1967 war, the parties were tacitly permitted to re-emerge in Jordan in the months that followed, and many began to take the shape of what was becoming the dominant form of political organization in the Kingdom: the Fedayeen group.<sup>21</sup> Thus, what ultimately became many of the Fedayeen organizations in Jordan after 1967 were merely the “reconstituted,” formerly banned political parties that had long traditions of opposition to the Hashemite monarchy.<sup>22</sup>

These groups began to carry out what became known as “Fedayeen action” (*al-'amal al-fida'i*), infiltrating the occupied West Bank from Jordan and conducting ambushes and other forms of sabotage against Israeli forces. Despite many instances where soldiers from the Jordanian Army assisted and even provided cover to Fedayeen fighters during such infiltration operations,<sup>23</sup> these actions often led to tensions and even small-scale clashes between Jordanian soldiers and Fedayeen fighters, with the first occurring in February 1968.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the first “martyr” from such Fedayeen action, Ahmed Mousa from Fatah, was actually killed by Jordanian soldiers upon crossing back into Jordan from the West Bank.<sup>25</sup> Such tensions and clashes were the outcome of both Israeli reprisals for Fedayeen actions (which often resulted in the deaths of Jordanian soldiers and destruction of Jordanian villages) and an official

---

<sup>21</sup> Author interviews, GOJ Official-Y, Saiqa Commander-V, ALF Official-G, DFLP Member-A, Fatah Commander-F; “The Current Jordanian Internal Security Situation,” Amman to Secstate, July 12th, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL JORDAN.

<sup>22</sup> Author interviews, GOJ Official-Y, PFLP Official-D.

<sup>23</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-U, JAA Official-F, JAA Official-D, Fatah Commander-F.

<sup>24</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-U, JAA Official-O. On February 15th, 1968, Israeli forces attacked the Jordanian border village of Karameh, killing 20 Jordanian soldiers and civilians. Afterwards, Jordanian security forces surrounded the village and demanded that the Fedayeen fighters inside surrender their weapons (Sayigh 1997, 177; Abd al-Rahman 1983, 69).

<sup>25</sup> Parsons 2005, 306n28.

Jordanian policy of having a sealed “border” with Israel to avoid any subsequent escalation following the end of the 1967 war.<sup>26</sup>

**The Battle of Karameh and “Dual Authority”** These tensions between the two sides briefly subsided on March 21st, 1968, when the Israeli Defense Forces sent its 7th Armored Brigade, 60th Armored Brigade, 35th Paratroopers’ Brigade, 80th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, five artillery battalions, and four squadrons of fighter planes to stage a three-pronged attack on the Jordanian village of Karameh, where nearly all Fedayeen organizations had bases.<sup>27</sup> This Israeli attack was met by the JAA’s Hittin and Aliya Brigades from the 1st Infantry Division, soldiers from the Royal Guards Brigade, the 60th Armored Brigade, and two armored car regiments from reserves, along with 225-250 fighters from Fatah, 80 fighters from the Popular Liberation Forces (PLF),<sup>28</sup> and elements of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA)’s 421 Battalion.<sup>29</sup> The Israelis were driven back across the river after a full day of fighting and sustained heavy manpower and materiel losses.<sup>30</sup>

In the weeks and months following the battle, intense open competition ensued between the Jordanians and Fedayeen organizations over who played the bigger role in defeating the Israelis at Karameh.<sup>31</sup> This competition between the two sides reignited and further exacerbated the pre-Karameh tensions. More significantly, the popularity of the Fedayeen organizations skyrocketed in the Arab world, leading to an influx of thousands of recruits seeking to join the organizations.<sup>32</sup> This was even the case for

---

<sup>26</sup> Author interview, GID Official-T.

<sup>27</sup> El Edroos 1980, 438; Majali 1998, 38.

<sup>28</sup> The PLF was created in 1968 as the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA)’s guerrilla wing.

<sup>29</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-D, Fatah Commander-F; El Edroos 1980, 439; Sayigh 1997, 177-178.

<sup>30</sup> Sayigh 1997, 178-179.

<sup>31</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-H, GOJ Official-Y. See also Terrill 2001 for a detailed discussion of the competing mythologies that came to surround the events at Karameh. The debate over which side played the bigger role in the battle continues to this day, and was a topic in nearly every interview I had with individuals on both sides of the conflict.

<sup>32</sup> Author interviews, USG Official-E, GOJ Official-Y; “Assessment of Fedayeen Strength” (4162), Amman to Secstate, April 3, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; Sayigh



Fedayeen organizations that did not participate in the battle itself.

With their newfound power in Jordan, the Fedayeen groups began to increasingly challenge the power of the Jordanian state, and the situation developed into a dynamic of “dual authority” (*izdiwajat al-sulta*) within the country. In both the Palestinian refugee camps and several neighborhoods within the Kingdom’s major cities, the organizations set up their own administrative structures, police force, courts, vehicle registration, as well as their own border control and customs.<sup>33</sup> Fedayeen groups began to maintain checkpoints and roadblocks in the Kingdom’s major cities and along its main highways, disrupting civilian traffic and sometimes demanding donations from drivers.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, there were many reported instances where Jordanian soldiers and officers were harassed, assaulted, and even kidnapped (and sometimes killed) by Fedayeen fighters at these checkpoints/roadblocks and on the streets in general; as a result, many security personnel began to change into civilian clothing in order to be able to travel to their homes without hassle when on leave.<sup>35</sup> The Fedayeen organizations also began to interfere in the daily life and social affairs of the Kingdom, to the extent of getting involved in individual marriage disputes and pricing for apartment rentals.<sup>36</sup> Instead of going to Jordanian state institutions, citizens began to go to the

---

1997, 179-184; Mousa 1996, 275-276; Quandt 1973.

<sup>33</sup> Author interviews, USG Official-E, USG Official-L, USG Official-H, JAA Official-X, GOJ Official-Y, Fatah Official-N; “Growing Fedayeen Presence in Jordan” (1027), Amman to Secstate, March 4th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; “Fedayeen Influence in Jordan” (1211), Amman to Secstate, March 13th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; “Growing UNRWA Concern over Fedayeen” (1637), Amman to Secstate, April 4th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; “Role of Fedayeen in August 22-23 Demonstrations” (4023), Amman to Secstate, August 25th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; DeAtkine 2002; Bailey 1984; Sayigh 1997, 182.

<sup>34</sup> Author interview, GOJ Official-Z; “Growing Fedayeen Presence in Jordan” (1027), Amman to Secstate, March 4th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786.

<sup>35</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-D, GID Official-D, JAA Official-W, JAA Official-Y, JAA Official-Z.

<sup>36</sup> Author interviews, GID Official-C, JAF Official-X.

Fedayeen's Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC)<sup>37</sup> to conduct their affairs.

**Increasing Tensions and Escalating Clashes** This expanding "state within a state" in the Kingdom, particularly in its major urban areas, along with continued Israeli reprisals in the Jordan Valley that drove increasing numbers of Fedayeen fighters eastward into such areas, laid the basis for ever-growing tensions between the two sides. These finally boiled over on November 2nd, 1968, when a Saiqa breakaway group led by Taher Dablan named "Battalions of Victory"<sup>38</sup> led demonstrators to attack the U.S. Embassy in Amman. This led to fighting between Dablan's group and Jordanian security forces in various parts of Amman that continued until November 5th and resulted in an estimated 26-30 dead and 112 injured, as well as the wholesale decimation of Dablan's group.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent clashes on April 29th and May 2nd 1969, as well as continued Israeli reprisals in response to Fedayeen infiltrations into the West Bank, led the Hashemite monarchy to attempt a crackdown on the Fedayeen organizations.<sup>40</sup>

On August 8th, 1969, part of a Jordanian Special Forces company raided and destroyed a Fatah base in the village of Northern Shouna in the Jordan Valley, with Israeli mortars guiding them to the base's whereabouts in the village.<sup>41</sup> Then on February 10th, 1970, King Hussein issued a list of restrictions for the Fedayeen organizations, aiming to limit their mobility and operations staged from Jordan into the

---

<sup>37</sup>The PASC was originally formed as a coordinating body for communiques regarding Fedayeen operations in the occupied territories, but soon turned into essentially a Fedayeen police force in Jordan that often displaced Jordan's actual police when it came to public disturbances (Author interviews, PF-GC Official-H, JAA Official-X; INR Research Memorandum, "Jordan and the Fedayeen," 4 April 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 23 JORDAN).

<sup>38</sup>Kataeb AlNasr was established by Dablan after the merger of the Palestine Popular Liberation Front merged with Saiqa in spring 1968, which Dablan opposed (Sayigh 1997, 185).

<sup>39</sup>Amman to Secstate, November 2, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate, November 4th, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Bailey 1984, 41; "Background on Current Roundup" (7321), Amman to Secstate, November 4, 1968, NARA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Sayigh 1997, 184; El Edroos 1980, 442; Mousa 1996, 282-283.

<sup>40</sup>Amman to Secstate, April 29th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate, May 2nd, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Mukhar 1978, 76.

<sup>41</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-S.

West Bank.<sup>42</sup> The Fedayeen organizations vowed to oppose the restrictions while the Army set up roadblocks on the main roads into Amman to implement them. Clashes broke out throughout Amman that continued for three days and pitted the Jordanian Army, armed with rockets and mortars and tanks, against the Fedayeen, who used rifles and bazookas mounted on jeeps.<sup>43</sup> Losses totalled 13 Fedayeen and 4 JAA soldiers.<sup>44</sup> On February 14th, an accord was signed between the two sides, with the Jordanian government suspending implementation of the February 10th restrictions and the Fedayeen organizations increasing their *de facto* control over parts of Amman and Jordan.<sup>45</sup>

Tensions boiled over again in early June, when a confrontation between a Jordanian Special Forces soldier and guerrillas from the PFLP in downtown Amman during a funeral procession escalated into widespread, sustained fighting in Amman and Zarqa that lasted until June 12th.<sup>46</sup> A ceasefire was finally reached on June

---

<sup>42</sup>Bailey 1984, 47; Hindi et al. 1971, 55; "Hussein Enacts Guerrilla Curb," *New York Times*, 11 February 1970; "Amman Tightens Security," *New York Times* 12 February 1970.

<sup>43</sup>Axelrod 1978, 34; Mukhar 1978, 86; Bailey 1984, 47; Mukhar 1978, 86; Jureidini 1975, 55; "Commandos Defy Jordanian Curbs," *New York Times*, 12 February 1970; "Hussein meets with Fedayeen Leaders," Amman to Secstate, February 12th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Amman Situation Report, February 12," Amman to Secstate, February 12th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Tension Continues in Amman," Amman to Secstate, February 13th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>44</sup>Sayigh 1997, 247; Majali 2014; "Hussein in Pact with Guerrillas," *New York Times*, 12 February 1970; "Jordan Reports Accord On Guerrilla Dispute," *The Washington Post*, 14 February 1970.

<sup>45</sup>"Guerrilla Pact with Jordan Averts Clash," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 1970; "Hussein Backs AGIY Before Fedayeen and Popular," Amman to Secstate, February 13th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>46</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-S; "Shooting Incident, American Embassy Officer, 7/8 June 1970," Amman to Secstate, June 8th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Ministry of Defence, June 8th, 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1040; "Old Enmities Fan Jordanian Strife," *New York Times*, 7 July 1970; "Palestinian Guerrillas Clash with Jordanians Near Amman," *The Washington Post*, 8 June 1970; "Situation in Amman at 0800 Local (0600Z) June 10," Amman to Secstate (2518), June 10th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Hussein Accepts Guerrilla Terms, Ousts 2 Generals," *New York Times*, 12 June 1970; "US Attache Slain in Jordan," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 June 1970; "Attempt on Hussein's Life Fails; Jordan Troops Battle Guerrillas," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 June 1970; Axelrod 1978, 34-35; Mukhar 1978, 91; Jureidini 1975, 87-88, 101; Jureidini 1975, 102-103; "Attempt on Hussein's Life Fails; Jordan Troops Battle Guerrillas," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 June 1970; "At Least 100 Die in Amman Clashes With Guerrillas," *New York Times*, 11 June 1970.

The fighting in early June even reached the point where American and German citizens were

14th between the two sides, with casualties from the eight days of fighting estimated to range between 250 and 1,000, with most estimates on the lower end.<sup>47</sup> However, there was almost daily fighting for the rest of the summer, mostly comprised of small incidents involving limited numbers of combatants from the two sides.<sup>48</sup>

The announcement in July 1970 by U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers of what came to be known as the “Rogers Plan” added to the growing friction between the two sides.<sup>49</sup> The Fedayeen organizations vowed to not abide by the terms of the plan, which was accepted by both Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser and King Hussein. Clashes among the Fedayeen groups, a result of different positions vis-a-vis the Rogers Plan, added further to the tension in the Kingdom’s cities.<sup>50</sup> Such tensions escalated into full-scale fighting between the army and Fedayeen groups in

---

evacuated to Beirut, along with all non-essential USG personnel (“Jordan Exodus: Americans Flee Troubled Land,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 1970; “Jordan Sitrep,” (91663), June 12th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Author Interview, USG Official-E). Contributing to this was the PFLP’s seizure of eighty-eight foreign hostages in the Philadelphia and Intercontinental Hotels in Amman, which contributed to King Hussein’s accession to Fedayeen demands that he remove “anti-Fedayeen officials” (Lalor 1992, 183; Sayigh 1997, 252; “Jordan Sitrep,” (91663), June 12th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Hostages taken by DPFLP,” Amman to Secstate, June 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Hostages in Hotel,” Amman to Secstate (2515), June 10th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN). King Hussein apparently attempted to go beyond the Fedayeen demands, reportedly offering Yasser Arafat the post of Prime Minister of Jordan and the freedom to form his own government, which Arafat refused (Sayigh 1997, 252-253).

<sup>47</sup>Shlaim 2009, 321; Brown 1970, 375; Mukhar 1978, 94; Hindi et al. 1971, 494-495; Sayigh 1997, 252.

<sup>48</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-B, PF-GC Official-H; Hassan 1971, 52.

<sup>49</sup>In July 1970, U.S. Secretary of State William Rodgers announced a ceasefire plan for Israel and the Arab states. Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser accepted the terms of the plan, and King Hussein immediately followed suit on July 26th. Demonstrations immediately broke out in Amman and continued for the next few days, and ten of the twelve Fedayeen organizations publicly rejected the Rogers Plan (“Demonstrations in Amman July 27,” Amman to Secstate (3538), July 27th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Fedayeen Protest Efforts July 30-3,” Amman to Secstate (3683), July 31st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN).

<sup>50</sup>Two of the Fedayeen groups, the AOLP and the APO, supported Nasser’s position, which led to armed clashes among several of the organizations on August 5th and 9th (Sayigh 1997, 253; Axelrod 1978, 35-36; Jureidini 1975, 137n; Habash 2008, 96; “Arabs Meet on U.S. Plan; 2 Guerrilla Groups Clash,” *The Washington Post*, 6 August 1970; “2 Commando Units Clash in Jordan; 1 Dies,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 August 1970; “Investigative Committee for Fedayeen Clashes,” *An-Nahar*, 7 August 1970; “The Action Organization and Arab Palestine Organization pull their support for Nasser’s position,” *An-Nahar*, 11 August 1970).

various areas of Amman during the last days of August.<sup>51</sup>

On September 1st, King Hussein's convoy was attacked by DFLP guerrillas in the Mahatta area of Amman, which triggered intense fighting between the JAA and Fedayeen elsewhere in the capital.<sup>52</sup> The Iraqi regime, which had about 17,000 troops stationed in northern Jordan at the time, threatened to intervene if JAA forces did not cease their fire.<sup>53</sup>

However, fighting between the two sides continued in Zarqa,<sup>54</sup> and on September 7th, the PFLP hijacked four civilian airliners and flew two of them to an WWII-era airstrip east of Zarqa named Dawson's Field, which the group renamed "Revolution Airport."<sup>55</sup> Clashes continued and intensified as a result throughout several neigh-

---

<sup>51</sup>Lalor 1992, 214; Jureidini 1975, 156; Hindi et al. 1971, 494-495; Amman to Secstate (4169), August 28th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Guerrillas Battle Jordanian Units," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 August 1970; "Rebels Briefly Seize Jordan Phone Center," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 August 1970; "Amman Fights Break Out 2d Time in 24 Hrs.," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 August 1970; "Guerrillas Battled Near Hussein Palace," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 August 1970; Amman to Secstate (4178), August 30th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Jordan Fighting Reported," *The Washington Post*, 31 August 1970; "Commandos Report Attacks in Amman by Jordan's Army," *New York Times*, 31 August 1970.

<sup>52</sup>Amman to Secstate (4238), September 1st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Try to Slay King Hussein," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1970; "Amman: Attempt to Assassinate the King," *An-Nahar*, 2 September 1970; Lalor 1992, 221-222; Mukhar 1978, 99-100; Hindi et al. 1971, 494.

<sup>53</sup>DCI Briefing for 23 September NSC, September 22nd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00827A002200040002-8; "Iraqi Threat Reported," *New York Times*, 2 September 1970. Iraq's forces in Jordan, which overall consisted of around 200 tanks and some artillery, included elements of the 3rd Armored Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the 4th Infantry Division. The units were stationed in Zarqa, Mafrq, and Ramtha as part of a leftover force from the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Notes from Meeting between King Hussein and President Gamal Abdul Nasser, August 21st, 1970, Private Papers of Lieutenant General Masshour Haditha Al-Jazi; "Jordan and Iraqi Forces," Tehran to Secstate (3355), August 4th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; INR Research Memorandum, "The Fedayeen Movement: Growing Strength and Influence," January 23, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 27 ARAB-ISR; "Israeli Active Defense Doctrine and Iraqi Forces in Jordan" (1700), Amman to Secstate, April 9th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 27 ARAB-ISR/Box 1791).

<sup>54</sup>"Arab League to Mediate Jordan Fight," *The Washington Post*, 7 September 1970; Brown 1971, 39; Lalor 1992, 229; Jureidini 1975, 159.

<sup>55</sup>"Arabs Hijack 4 Jetliners," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 September 1970; "180 Held in Hijacked Jets," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1970; "Hijacking Roundup," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1970. The four hijacked airliners were: TWA Flight 741 (Frankfurt-New York), Swissair Flight 100 (Zurich-New York), Pan Am Flight 93 (Amsterdam-New York), and El Al Flight 219 (Tel Aviv-New York). The first two planes were taken to Dawson's Field in Jordan. The hijackers of the El Al flight were subdued and the plane was diverted to London. The Pan Am flight was taken to Beirut and then Cairo, where it was blown up. On September 9th, a third plane, BOAC Flight 775 (Manama-

borhoods in Amman, and in Ajloun, Zarqa, and the Irbid area.<sup>56</sup> By this point, the fighting had produced 150 dead and 500 wounded since the start of the month.<sup>57</sup> A ceasefire was signed between the government and Fedayeen, but was rejected by the PFLP and DFLP and subsequently the PLO Central Committee after reports of the JAA actions in the Irbid area.<sup>58</sup>

Clashes continued in Irbid and Amman in the following days, with the reported participation of Iraqi forces on the Fedayeen side on September 9th, and a brief lull after a ceasefire was reached on the 10th.<sup>59</sup> On September 11th, Fatah called for the establishment of a “national authority” in Jordan, and the next day, the PFLP blew up the three hijacked planes at Dawson’s Field and transferred the remaining airline hostages to safehouses in Amman and Irbid.<sup>60</sup> The following day, as fighting broke out in Zarqa, several Fedayeen organizations took control of Irbid and declared northern

---

London), was hijacked and flown to Dawson’s Field, where its passengers joined the other airplane hostages. Most of the hostages were moved to Amman in the days following the landings. (See: “4 Jets Hijacked; One, a 747, Is Blown Up,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1970; “Desert Ordeal: Jet Hostages Awaiting Fate,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 September 1970; “Mastermind of Guerillas’ Plane Hijackings Is Apostle of Terror,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 September 1970; Raab 2007).

The hijackings were conducted by the PFLP for multiple reasons, including raising awareness of the Palestinians and Palestinian issue, outbidding the more “moderate” Fedayeen organizations (like Fatah), and as a result of the group’s extremist ideology that called for attacking all elements of “Zionism,” whether in Israel or abroad (Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-V).

<sup>56</sup> “Tensions in Amman Increase,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1970; “U.S. Aide Seized in Jordan Capital,” *New York Times*, 8 September 1970; “Security Situation in Amman,” Amman to Secstate (4477), September 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Hindi et al. 1971, 154; Sayigh 1997, 260.

<sup>57</sup> Sayigh 1997, 260; Mukhar 1978, 101.

<sup>58</sup> “Jordan and Commandos Sign Short-Lived Truce,” *New York Times*, 9 September 1970; “Guerillas Call Off Brief Cease-Fire Pact,” *The Washington Post*, 9 September 1970.

<sup>59</sup> “Security Situation in Amman,” Amman to Secstate (4477), September 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (4504), September 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (4498), September 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Rashid 2015, 173; “Jordan’s Army Clashes Again with Palestinians,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 September 1970; “Heavy Fighting in Amman; Hussein Orders Ceasefire,” *New York Times*, 10 September 1970; Amman to Secstate (4534), September 10th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Jordan General Takes Charge, Fighting Rages,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 September 1970; “Jordan Strife Eases as Pact Is Reached,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 September 1970; “Jordan, Guerrillas Reach New Accord,” *Chicago Tribune*

<sup>60</sup> Axelrod 1978, 37; Sayigh 1997, 260; “New Demands Peril Fragile Jordan Pact,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 September 1970; “Report Guerrillas Hold Yank Vet with Hostages,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 September 1970.

Jordan a “liberated area,” appointing governors for the districts of Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun, and Irbid.<sup>61</sup>

At this point, senior JAA officers went to King Hussein and told him they were moving against the Fedayeen with or without him.<sup>62</sup> Frustrations at all levels of the Army had been mounting for months, particularly due to the limitations King Hussein had placed on the army’s mobility, the Jordanian government’s lack of control over large parts of Jordan, and the monarch’s seeming indecisiveness vis-a-vis the Fedayeen issue.<sup>63</sup> These frustrations went all the way down to the army’s combat units, who often took the initiative without orders in responding to Fedayeen attacks. On September 7th, some soldiers from the 1st Armored Battalion left their base in Jebel Nuzha in response to Fedayeen fire from Nuzha Camp, and began to fire on the camp, only stopping when King Hussein personally intervened in the action.<sup>64</sup> On September 13th, JAA soldiers ambushed a group of Fatah guerrillas in the village of Turrah in northern Jordan, killing twelve of them and losing two JAA soldiers.<sup>65</sup>

In response to these pressures, King Hussein formed a military government comprised entirely of Army and intelligence officials on September 15th.<sup>66</sup> While another ceasefire agreement was signed between the two sides on the evening of the 15th,

---

<sup>61</sup> “Security Situation in Jordan,” Amman to Secstate (4835), September 16th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (4891), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Lalor 1992, 240, 242; Bailey 1984, 57; Robins 2004, 131; “Guerrillas Fortify Newly Seized City to Bar Recapture,” *Los Angeles Times*, 16 September 1970.

<sup>62</sup> Author interview, JAA Official-X.

<sup>63</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-X, USG Official-L; Lalor 1992, 236-238; Abu Taleb 2014, 93. Such frustrations were manifest as far back as June 1970, when the commanders of the 40th Armored Brigade sent a personal letter directly to King Hussein threatening to take serious action against the Fedayeen following the month’s early clashes (Author interview, JAA Official-E).

<sup>64</sup> Author interview, JAA Official-W; Sayigh 1997, 260.

<sup>65</sup> Lalor 1992, 240; Sayigh 1997, 260-261; “Palestinian Commandos, Jordanian Troops Clash,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 September 1970; Hindi et al. 1971, 496.

<sup>66</sup> Bailey 1984, 57. Hussein informed the US Ambassador of this decision, along with a request that the Israelis be asked to not “aggravate” the situation (Amman to Secstate (4808), September 15th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Internal Security,” Amman to Secstate (4831), September 16th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN).

King Hussein and the Army had decided to take military action to “restore law and order.”<sup>67</sup> The PLO responded to the formation of the military cabinet by reinstating the PFLP to the PLO (which it had suspended after the group blew up the hijacked planes) and forming a “joint command” under Yasir Arafat and PLA Chief Abdulrazzaq Yahya.<sup>68</sup>

**“Black September” (September 17th - October 1st, 1970)** On the morning of September 17th, Jordanian Army units moved into Amman and Zarqa, sparking two weeks of bloody fighting throughout the Kingdom in what has come to be known as “Black September.”<sup>69</sup> From September 17th until October 1st, Jordanian security forces and the Fedayeen organizations battled in the streets of Amman, Zarqa, and Mafraq, the hills around Jerash and Ajloun, and the northern villages surrounding Irbid and Ramtha.

The Army was successful in taking back parts of the country from the Fedayeen while repulsing a Syrian intervention,<sup>70</sup> but the Fedayeen fighters continued to main-

---

<sup>67</sup>Amman to Secstate (4808), September 15th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Terms of September 15 GOJ-Fedayeen Agreement,” Amman to Secstate (4837), September 16th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Troops to Leave Amman,” *New York Times*, 16 September 1970.

<sup>68</sup>Lalor 1992, 243; Jureidini 1975, 165.

<sup>69</sup>I discuss this episode of fighting in more detail in Section 2.2.

<sup>70</sup>Just after midnight on September 19th, two armored brigades and a mechanized infantry brigade, all with PLA markings but actually from the Syrian Arab Army’s 5th Infantry Division, crossed the border at Ramtha and began to advance south into Jordan (“Jordan Fighting,” Tel Aviv to Secstate (5165), September 19th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Situation in Northern Jordan,” Beirut to Secstate (8048), September 22nd, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Sayigh 1997, 264). Over the next 48 hours, the intervening Syrian force came to consist of an estimated 300 tanks and sixty 120mm artillery pieces (State to Tel Aviv (154557), September 21st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Lalor 1992, 268). On September 20th, a two-day battle broke out between JAA and SAA armor in the Ramtha-Mafraq-Irbid crossroads just south of Ramtha, pitching about 300 SAA tanks (primarily Soviet-made T-54 and T-55 models) and infantry, along with 120mm artillery support from Fedayeen fighters in the area, against elements of the JAA’s 40th Armored and Khalid Bin Walid brigades, which included 122 tanks, two batteries of heavy artillery, one battery of medium artillery, and five batteries of light artillery (Author interview, DFLP Fighter-C; Central Intelligence Bulletin, September 22nd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200020001-8; Amman to Secstate (5484), September 30th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Sitrep 0700 Local Sept 20,” Amman to Secstate (4945), September 20th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Tel Aviv to Secstate (5171), September 20th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN).



tain control and an open operating presence in various areas of Amman and other parts of the Kingdom after the fighting finished.<sup>71</sup> The two sides began withdrawing from Amman on October 1st, in accordance with an agreement in Cairo signed on September 28th.<sup>72</sup> A ceasefire was signed between the two sides on the 1st, bringing the intense fighting episode to an end but leaving the Fedayeen in continued control of Irbid and maintaining a significant operating presence in Amman and pockets elsewhere.<sup>73</sup> The death toll from the fifteen days of fighting was heavy, with most estimates between 2,000-5,000 killed, of which between 700-1,500 were civilians.<sup>74</sup> Fedayeen fighter deaths totaled 910-960, while the Jordanian Armed Forces suffered 445-600 killed and 1,500-2,000 wounded, along with 5,000-7,000 defections to the

---

With pressure mounting on the JAA (and his own throne) primarily as a result of the Syrian incursion, after receiving the blessing of the cabinet, King Hussein sent an indirect message through the British Ambassador to the United States requesting Israeli assistance to help with repelling the Syrian forces (Author interview, GOJ Official-Y; Ashton 2005, 235-236). However, the Jordanian Air Force (JAF), using one squadron of Hawker Hunters, conducted 20 sorties of strikes on Syrian positions in concert with JAA ground forces (Author interviews, JAF Official-Q, JAF Official-F, JAF Official-X; Tel Aviv to MOD UK, September 23 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1044; Sayigh 1997, 265; Lalor 1992, 265). This combined-arms attack, coupled with then Syrian Defense Minister (and Air Force Head) Hafez Al-Assad's refusal to commit the Syrian Air Force to the intervention (which gave the JAF complete control of the air), allowed the Jordanians to inflict heavy losses on the tank-heavy Syrian forces and begin to push them back into Syria ("Jordan Situation," Tel Aviv to Secstate (5247), September 22nd, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; El Edroos 1980, 455-456).

<sup>71</sup>Amman to Secstate (5402), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Sitrep 2130L," Amman to Secstate (5431), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Security Situation," Amman to Secstate (5390), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Central Intelligence Briefing, September 28th, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200070001-3.

<sup>72</sup>"Situation as of 1600 EDT October 1, 1970," Secstate to Belgrade (162119), October 1st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to FCO, October 1st 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; "Both Sides Begin Amman Withdrawal," *New York Times*, 30 September 1970; Central Intelligence Briefing, October 1st, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017300010002-7.

<sup>73</sup>"North Jordan Truce Pact is Signed," *The Washington Post*, 1 October 1970; "Commandos Hold Sway in Irbid," *New York Times*, 2 October 1970; Central Intelligence Briefing, September 29th, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200080001-2; Central Intelligence Briefing, September 30th, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200090001-1; Central Intelligence Bulletin, October 2nd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017300020001-7.

<sup>74</sup>"Jordanian Casualties," Amman to Secstate (5321), September 28th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Jordanian Casualty Figures," USUN to Secstate (2258), October 6th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Jordanian Casualty Figures," Amman to Secstate (5688), October 7th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Sayigh 1997, 267.

Fedayeen.<sup>75</sup>

**Continuing Conflict and “The Battle of the Forests” (October 1970 - July 1971)** As the Fedayeen fighters began to move from Amman and other major cities to the Jerash and Ajloun areas while others withdrew to Syria with plans of reorganizing and re-entering the Kingdom, the U.S. in early October began replenishing the JAA to make up its losses (particularly in ammunition) that were sustained during the fighting.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, Fedayeen reinforcements in numbers and materiel streamed into northern Jordan from Syria and Iraq, while elements of the various groups remained behind in the capital.<sup>77</sup> And despite the official withdrawal of JAA units from Amman, Jordanian Special Forces maintained a clandestine presence in the capital over the next few months, dressing as Public Security Forces personnel and conducting isolated operations to clear areas with a remaining Fedayeen presence.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup>“Jordanian Casualty Figures,” Amman to Secstate (5688), October 7th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, October 5th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; El Edroos 1980, 459; Sayigh 1997, 267; Majali 2014; Abu Daoud 1999, 381fn38.

Large-scale defections in the magnitude of tens of thousands, which the Fedayeen organizations were anticipating in order to tip the scales in their favor in the inevitable conflict with the Jordanians, did not happen (Hindi et al. 1971, 202). However, on top of the 5,000-7,000 defections that actually occurred, instances of insubordination and outright refusal among JAA troops did indeed occur, some of which had severe consequences. In one instance, a tank company commander ordered his subordinates to deliberately shell in the air over Wehdat Camp to avoid targeting individuals in the camp itself, and one of his subordinates overheard his instructions over the radio and consequently shelled and burned the company commander’s entire tank, killing him (Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X; Majali 2014).

<sup>76</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-C; “Jordan Sitrep as of 0100 EDT Sept. 30, 1970,” Secstate to Naples (160803), September 30th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Situation as of 1600 EDT October 1, 1970,” Secstate to Belgrade (162119), October 1st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>77</sup>Author interviews, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, DFLP Official-V; “Impressions of Amman: Four Days After Ceasefire,” Amman to Secstate (5502), October 1st, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Israeli Estimate on Jordan,” Tel Aviv to Secstate (5626), October 6th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Guerrilla Group Vows to Stay in Amman,” *New York Times*, 30 September 1970.

<sup>78</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-V, JAA Official-T, JAA Official-K; “Arab Observer Committee and GOJ-Fedayeen Relations,” Amman to Secstate (5626), October 5th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN. One such operation occurred in late December 1970, when seven Special Forces troops stormed and took the Lipton Hotel in downtown Amman next to the Al-Hussein Mosque, which had been occupied by a group of fighters from Quwwat Al-Ansar (Author interviews, JAA Official-V, JAA Official-T).

Despite efforts at peace, sporadic fighting continued into October as the JAA sought to enforce the Cairo Agreement and eradicate the Fedayeen presence from the major cities through a “graduated response” strategy.<sup>79</sup> The Fedayeen groups maintained their hold on Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash, and Ramtha in the days following the withdrawals, while the Army fully retook and subsequently occupied Zarqa.<sup>80</sup> On October 13th, King Hussein and Arafat signed an agreement that allowed for the Fedayeen groups to establish bases and keep their militias in the Kingdom’s cities, yet fighting continued.<sup>81</sup> On October 18th, fighting broke out in northern Jordan, as JAA forces expelled the Fedayeen from two villages.<sup>82</sup> That same day, elements of the two sides clashed in Sweileh, and Fedayeen fighters took over the local government in Mafraq.<sup>83</sup> By October 28th, the Fedayeen had reasserted control of Wehdat Camp in Amman.<sup>84</sup>

Clashes occurred throughout the last two months of 1970, particularly as the Army stepped up its campaign in November to clear the Fedayeen groups from remaining areas inside and outside the Kingdom’s major cities and push them towards the Jerash/Ajloun area forests.<sup>85</sup> The government attempted to reassert its control of

---

<sup>79</sup>El Edroos 1980, 460.

<sup>80</sup>“Arab Peace Commission,” Amman to Secstate (5635), October 5th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Jordan Situation in Zarqa and Irbid,” Amman to Secstate (5614), October 4th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “GOJ-Fedayeen Relations: Possible Foot-Dragging in North,” Amman to Secstate (5745), October 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Guerrillas Hold Sway in No.2 Jordan City,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 October 1970; “Jordan Now Controlling Zerqa, Guerrilla Center,” *New York Times*, 3 October 1970.

<sup>81</sup>“GOJ-Fedayeen Accord of October 13,” Amman to Secstate (5890), October 14th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “GOJ-Fedayeen Accord of Oct13,” Amman to Secstate (5889), October 13th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>82</sup>“Jordan Situation,” Tel Aviv to Secstate (5823), October 19th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>83</sup>“Jordan Situation,” Tel Aviv to Secstate (5823), October 19th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>84</sup>“Short Term Prospects for GOJ-Fedayeen Relations: A Quiet Thanksgiving?,” Amman to Secstate (6242), October 28th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>85</sup>“Clashes in Amman November 3,” Amman to Secstate (6387), November 4th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Tense as Transition Period Draws to Close,” Amman to Secstate (6463), November 9th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Fighting Evening 18-19 November,” Amman to Secstate (6650), November 19th, 1970,

most of Amman through re-establishing its administrative presence and conducting sweeps of areas to root out any remaining Fedayeen elements and collect weapons.<sup>86</sup> During this time period, JAA forces expelled the Fedayeen from the city of Jerash on December 8th, while fighting continued between the two sides in Ajloun.<sup>87</sup> By the end of the month, the Army had taken control of Salt, while sporadic clashes continued in Amman into January 1971.<sup>88</sup> On January 8th, the army launched operations against the Fedayeen in Marka, Ruseifah, and the Amman-Jerash road, and cleared the Beqaa refugee camp of Fedayeen.<sup>89</sup> During January 10th-13th, fighting broke out in several areas of Amman.<sup>90</sup>

On January 13th, the government and Fedayeen organizations signed an agreement that officially called for the withdrawal of fighters from cities and towns and the disarmament of the militias.<sup>91</sup> By January 19th, the Army controlled all of the Pales-

---

RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Jordanian Forces Continue to Show Aggressiveness Toward Fedayeen," Amman to Secstate (6737), November 24th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; El Edroos 1980, 460; Sayigh 1997, 275.

<sup>86</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-S, JAA Official-X; Sayigh 1997, 275

<sup>87</sup> "Situation in Jordan," Amman to Secstate (6898), December 7th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Situation in Jordan," Amman to Secstate (6939), December 8th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Continued Fighting in Ajloun Area," Amman to Secstate (6973), December 10th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Lalor 1992, 311; Mukhar 1978, 152; Sayigh 1997, 275

<sup>88</sup> "Renewal of Tension in Jordan," Amman to Secstate (6896), December 7th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Amman Sitrep," Amman to Secstate (7104), December 18th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Gunfight in Amman," Amman to Secstate (7268), December 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Feds/JAA Usher in New Year," Amman to Secstate (0041), January 5th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Security Situation," Amman to Secstate (0099), January 7th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 110; Sayigh 1997, 276.

<sup>89</sup> "Widespread JAA Operations Against Fedayeen Outside Amman," Amman to Secstate (0129), January 9th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "JAA Operations Northeast of Amman," Amman to Secstate (0107), January 8th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Axelrod 1978, 42; El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 110; Lalor 1992, 311; Sayigh 1997, 276.

<sup>90</sup> "New Fighting in Amman," Amman to Secstate (0132), January 10th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Sitrep - Amman," Amman to Secstate (0172), January 11th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Secstate to Amman (005098), January 12th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Sitrep - Amman; Noon Jan 13," Amman to Secstate (0217), January 13th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>91</sup> "Prime Minister's Views on Internal Situation," Amman to Secstate (0241), January 14th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Lalor 1992, 311-312; Mukhar 1978, 134; Sayigh 1997, 277.

tinian refugee camps with the exception of Jerash Camp.<sup>92</sup> Yet fighting continued in Amman during February as the JAA continued its sweep operations to clear the capital of Fedayeen, while the guerrillas took full control of the Dibbin area between Jerash and Ajloun.<sup>93</sup> In March, JAA forces continued their operations in Amman and drove the guerrillas out of Irbid at the end of the month.<sup>94</sup> Clashes broke out again in Amman in early April, while fighting continued in the Jerash area as the Army shelled Fedayeen positions in Dibbin.<sup>95</sup> On April 10th, the last major Fedayeen elements began withdrawing from Amman to Jerash/Ajloun forests after an ultimatum from King Hussein, as JAA units conducted final sweeps of the city during the second half of the month.<sup>96</sup>

In May and June, JAA units began to take up positions in the areas surrounding

---

<sup>92</sup>“UNRWA Assurances Re Situation in Jordan,” Beirut to Secstate (0524), January 19th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>93</sup>El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 110; Mukhar 1978, 132; “Security Situation,” Amman to Secstate (0791), February 11th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Pressure on Fedayeen Increasing,” Amman to Secstate (0780), February 11th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Sitrep,” Amman to Secstate (0801), February 12th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Sitrep,” Amman to Secstate (0847), February 16th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Internecine Fedayeen Fighting,” Amman to Secstate (0989), February 23rd, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>94</sup>Amman to Secstate (1213), March 8th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Military Situation,” Amman to Secstate (1412), March 18th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Bailey 1984, 61; Lalor 1992, 283; Mukhar 1978, 152; Quandt 1973 RAND, 105; El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 110; El Edroos 1980, 461; Sayigh 1997, 278; “PLO Accuses GOJ of Genocide and Trying to Create a Palestinian State,” Amman to Secstate (1532), March 26th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Clash in Irbid,” Amman to Secstate (1529), March 26th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “JAA Operations in Irbid,” Amman to Secstate (1545), March 28th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Renewed Fighting in Jordan,” Amman to Secstate (1558), March 29th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Irbid is Quiet,” Amman to Secstate (1664), April 2nd, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>95</sup>“Amman Sitrep - April 2,” Amman to Secstate (1650), April 2nd, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Conditions in North Jordan,” Amman to Secstate (1676), April 5th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Summary of Recent Fedayeen Terrorism and Current Army Reaction,” Amman to Secstate (1690), April 5th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>96</sup>“Amman Sitrep 100Z April 10,” Amman to Secstate (1792), April 10th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Sitrep April 13,” Amman to Secstate (1799), April 13th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Amman Sitrep April 19,” Amman to Secstate (1915), April 19th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

Dibbin while attacking remaining Fedayeen bases in the Salt and Zarqa areas.<sup>97</sup> On July 5th, the Army began to shell Fedayeen positions in the Jerash/Ajloun area.<sup>98</sup> On July 12th, elements of the 99th Armored Brigade, the Imam Ali Brigade, the Hussein bin Ali Brigade, the Yarmouk Brigade, two Special Forces companies, and supporting artillery attacked the remaining Fedayeen forces in Dibbin.<sup>99</sup> With Fedayeen reinforcements stopped at the Jordanian-Syrian border by the latter's regime, six days of intense fighting took place as the JAA combined armor, infantry, and artillery to drive the Fedayeen out of Jordan into Syria and Lebanon and end the civil war.<sup>100</sup>

## **2.2 Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)**

As mentioned previously, there were ten Fedayeen organizations that participated in the Black September fighting against the Jordanian Armed Forces. For reasons concerning both organizational significance and data availability, I focus in the analysis on the three main insurgent groups: Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). According to both existing studies of the Jordanian conflict and my interviews with conflict participants on both sides and civilians, these three groups were considered the major or “main” organizations in the conflict, particularly during the Black September fighting episode.<sup>101</sup> In addition, the availability of sufficient data on

---

<sup>97</sup>Quandt 1973, 107; Sayigh 1997, 278; Suleiman and Hammadeh 2012, 42.

<sup>98</sup>El-Rayyes and Nahas 1974, 112.

<sup>99</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-S, JAA Official-L; Sayigh 1997, 279.

<sup>100</sup>Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-K, Fatah Fighter-M; “JAA-Jerash Operation” (3276), Amman to Secstate, July 15th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; “Jordanian-Fedayeen Confrontation Jerash” (3318), Amman to Secstate, July 17th, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Bailey 1984, 61; Lalor 1992, 347; El Edroos 1980, 462.

<sup>101</sup>The other groups, which included Saiqa, ALF, Quwwat al-Ansar, PF-GC, PLF/PLA, PPSF, AOLP, and APO, were often dismissed in my interviews as insignificant and playing only very limited roles in the fighting against the Jordanian army during Black September. I exclude the PLA from analysis because it was organized as a regular army, and thus lies outside the scope of my theoretical

both individual group recruitment practices and aspects of performance also limits the focus to these three groups.<sup>102</sup>

The Palestinian National Liberation Movement, or Fatah, was founded as a clandestine organization in the late 1950s by Palestinians in Kuwait.<sup>103</sup> The organization's armed wing, *Quwwat al-'Asifa (The Storm Forces)*, was created in December 1964 and formally announced on January 1st, 1965.<sup>104</sup> In February 1969, Fatah essentially took control of the PLO's apparatus and established its position as the most politically powerful Palestinian Fedayeen organization.<sup>105</sup> The group was founded with no specific ideology, a characteristic which persists until the present time.<sup>106</sup> After the Battle of Karamah in March 1968, Fatah was transformed into a mass organization, an expansion that was accompanied by the influx of thousands into the group as it became the largest insurgent force in Jordan by the start of Black September, with an estimated 4,500-5,000 full-time fighters in arms.<sup>107</sup>

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) has its primary roots in the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), a non-martial clandestine organization founded in the 1950s by Palestinian students studying at the American University of Beirut (AUB).<sup>108</sup> In late June 1967, Dr. George Habbash, an ANM leader and

---

framework.

<sup>102</sup>Information on the Fedayeen organizations' individual recruitment practices in Jordan is very limited in both existing English and Arabic accounts of the conflict and the relevant accessible historical archives. Of existing English or Arabic language accounts of the Jordanian conflict, Sayigh 1997, Quandt 1971, and Directorate of Intelligence 1970 have the most detailed information on individual Fedayeen organizations' recruitment in Jordan, and even these works only allowed for a limited conclusion that there existed differences in recruitment practices among some of the organizations, mostly just in terms of selectivity.

<sup>103</sup>Khurshid 1971, 11; Sayigh 1997, 84.

<sup>104</sup>Mousa 1996, 264. Moving forward, "Fatah" is meant to refer to "al-'Asifa" in this context unless otherwise noted.

<sup>105</sup>Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 5

<sup>106</sup>Author interviews, various Fatah officials and members; Sayigh 1997, 221-222

<sup>107</sup>Author interview, Fatah Official-N; Sayigh 1997, 267. On size estimate, see: Sayigh 1997, Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents.

<sup>108</sup>Sayigh 1997, 71-75.

Palestinian doctor trained at AUB, met with other members of the ANM in Damascus, and in July 1967 the members directed a group of ANM leaders and cadres to go to Jordan to both begin activities in the occupied territories and organize and recruit members within the Kingdom.<sup>109</sup> In late December 1967, the PFLP was officially announced as the ANM's official Fedayeen organization, the result of a merger of the ANM with the preexisting Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), Abtal Al-Awdeh ("Heroes of the Return"), and a group of former Jordanian military officers.<sup>110</sup>

However, at the leadership level, the PFLP failed to resolve personal and ideological differences, that latter of which stemmed from the divisions between the "Left" and "Right" factions within the ANM.<sup>111</sup> These personal and ideological differences led to the breaking off of two factions from the PFLP, with the first in October 1968 when Ahmad Jibril, the longtime leader of the PLF, split off to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PF-GC).<sup>112</sup> In February 1969, Nayef Hawatmeh, a Jordanian Christian leader of the PFLP, split off from the PFLP to form the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) from among the Leftist elements of the PFLP and ANM.<sup>113</sup> After these splits, the PFLP came to espouse a hardcore Marxist-Leninist worldview that saw most Arab regimes as reactionary and capitulating to the West and Israel, and consequently in need of overthrow through a class-based struggle.<sup>114</sup> At the time of the Black September

---

<sup>109</sup> Author interview, PFLP Official-C; Sayigh 1997, 164-165.

<sup>110</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Official-F; Sayigh 1997, 166-167.

<sup>111</sup> These ideological differences were over things such as when to launch armed struggle against Israel and the PFLP's decision to not fight in the Battle of Karameh (Author interview, PFLP Official-C; Sayigh 1997, 228; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 31).

<sup>112</sup> Author interview, PF-GC Official-H; Quandt 1971, 20; Sayigh 1997, 228

<sup>113</sup> Ideology mattered with the DFLP's split, but personal motivations on the part of Nayef Hawatmeh also played a role, according to individuals that were close associates of Hawatmeh (Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, DFLP Official-G).

<sup>114</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X; Quandt 1971, 20; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 35; Sayigh 1997, 232; Hudson 1972, 80-81. George Habash had a famous saying at the time of the conflict with Jordan, which also caught on with other extremist groups like the DFLP: "the road to Jerusalem runs through Amman" - to liberate Palestine, Jordan first had to be liberated from the Hashemite monarchy (Author interviews, PF-GC Official-H, JAA Official-V, JAF



fighting, the PFLP had 1,000-1,500 full-time fighters.<sup>115</sup>

Though it was not officially announced until February 1969, the DFLP was secretly founded in Jordan in August 1968, when a “shadow leadership” within the PFLP established a designated training camp for what eventually became the combat force of the DFLP.<sup>116</sup> At that time, the nascent group began to “steal” incoming PFLP recruits with leftist tendencies and send them to the designated camp for training.<sup>117</sup> While the founding of the DFLP was in part due to the personal motivation of Hawatmeh, the group nevertheless espoused a radical socialist ideology that was slightly more extreme than the PFLP’s orientation. Like the PFLP, the DFLP viewed many Arab regimes as “reactionary agents” that needed to be removed, but also saw the Palestinian struggle as part of the global liberation war against Western imperialism.<sup>118</sup> At its peak in the period leading up to Black September, the group had an estimated 200-300 full-time fighters.<sup>119</sup>

---

Official-Q, GOJ Official-Y).

<sup>115</sup>Range culled from Sayigh 1997, Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents.

<sup>116</sup>Abu Sharif 2014, 50; Sayigh 1997, 229

<sup>117</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-X.

When Hawatmeh formally split in February 1969, he took “a few dozen” PFLP fighters with him to the DFLP (Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-V, DFLP Fighter-A; Sayigh 1997, 230-231). The DFLP also subsumed the Popular Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (POLP) a few months after its founding, gaining 50-60 guerrillas with disparate training, some gained in China (Author interview, POLP Official-D; Sayigh 1997, 231). There were also several days of fighting between the PFLP and newly-established DFLP over control of the former’s offices in Jordan (Author interview, DFLP Official-G).

<sup>118</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Member-C, DFLP Member-A, ; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 44; Hudson 1972, 81. As with the PFLP, the DFLP raised anti-government slogans like “no authority over the authority of the resistance” and “all authority for the resistance” (Author interviews, DFLP Official-G, DFLP Member-C, DFLP Fighter-C).

<sup>119</sup>Range culled from Sayigh 1997, Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents.

## 2.3 Military Overview

### 2.3.1 General Strategy, Capabilities, and Tactics during Black September

*The Jordanian Armed Forces* The official military plan underlying the Jordanian Armed Forces' operations against the Fedayeen during Black September had been in the works since June 1969 and continuously revised and updated.<sup>120</sup> The plan aimed to clear the insurgents from the Kingdom's major cities, with the capital of Amman as the first and main priority, in the first 48 hours after beginning operations, so as to both maintain the initiative and finish operations before regional and global powers could act/intervene.<sup>121</sup> The Jordanian Arab Army (JAA) had around 58,000 troops that participated in the operations against the Fedayeen,<sup>122</sup> and utilized a range of small to heavy weapons, armor, and artillery (including mortars and howitzers) in the fighting, most of which were of British and American origin.<sup>123</sup> At the individual level, Jordanian troops carried Pakistani G3 and American M-14 rifles.<sup>124</sup> Heavier weapons included 106mm recoilless rifles, field artillery and mortars.<sup>125</sup> For the purposes of both mobility and greater firepower, the Army used armored personnel carriers (APCs) (such as M-113, Saracens, and Saladins), scout cars and land rovers, and Patton and Centurion tanks armed with 105mm cannons.<sup>126</sup> In total, the

---

<sup>120</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-D.

<sup>121</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-D, JAA Official-J, GOJ Official-Y, GID Official-D; El Edroos 1980, 450-452.

<sup>122</sup>DCI Briefing for 23 September NSC, September 22nd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00827A002200040002-8; Letter from Colonel Samuel R. Martin to Brigadier General Devol Brett, September 15th, 1971, RG59/Records Relating to Jordan, 1969-1975; Sayigh 1997, 263; Shlaim 2009, 325.

<sup>123</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 191; SIPRI Arms Transfer Database.

<sup>124</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-Z; "Jordan Internal Security," Amman to Secstate (1099), March 1st, 1971, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN.

<sup>125</sup>Amman to FCO, September 26th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Jureidini 1975, 175.

<sup>126</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-N; "Sitrep Fifteen: Jordanian Resume of Current Situation" (7356), Amman to Secstate, November 6th, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to FCO, September 26th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; "Military and Police Equipment for Jordan," BNA/FCO 17/1425; Hindi et al. 1971, 213.

Army had 330 tanks, 350 APCs, 270 armored cars, 1,500 mortars/recoilless rifles, and 100-150 artillery guns.<sup>127</sup>

Mechanized infantry was used in the Kingdom's urban areas for both mobile fire and transporting troops for on-foot house-to-house searches/fighting, and alongside the infantry were light armor and tanks used to target known Fedayeen offices, headquarters, and positions with fire and artillery shelling.<sup>128</sup> Faced with snipers in the cities during the first day of fighting, the JAA relied mostly on tank fire and shelling to target the Fedayeen, and only on the second day began to dismount from armored vehicles and engage in face-to-face combat to clear streets and houses of Fedayeen fighters, going so far as to enter and ascend in houses to take out snipers.<sup>129</sup> For instance, in Jebel Hussein, an area of Amman under heavy Fedayeen control at the start of the fighting, the 1st Royal Guards Battalion (RGB) and 1st Armored Corps formed a battle group together to conduct combined arms operations in the area.<sup>130</sup> The neighborhood was classified into zones of about 3-4 streets for each RGB platoon, whose soldiers would be transported to their assigned streets in M-113 APCs, dismount, and begin house-to-house searches with the aim of capturing or killing any Fedayeen fighters present in the area.<sup>131</sup>

In the latter part of the operations in Amman during the fighting episode, Jordanian troops advanced behind tanks into areas to avoid casualties while blockading sources of Fedayeen fire until the latter ran out of ammunition, and made use of snipers and flares to take out individual fighters.<sup>132</sup> Similar tactics were used in clear-

---

<sup>127</sup>Sayigh 1997, 263

<sup>128</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-H, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-W, Fatah Official-J; Jureidini 1975, 174-176.

<sup>129</sup>Author interview, Fatah Official-J; Central Intelligence Bulletin, September 23rd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200030001-7; Tel Aviv to Ministry of Defence, September 18th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043; Tel Aviv to MOD UK, September 20th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043; Amman to FCO, September 26th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; DeAtkine 2002; Abu Daoud 1999, 356.

<sup>130</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-W.

<sup>131</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-X, JAA Official-I.

<sup>132</sup>"The Situation in Jordan - 24.9.1970," September 24 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Abu Daoud

ing operations in Zarqa, where air defense units were redeployed as infantry soldiers for sweeps.<sup>133</sup> In the northern part of the Kingdom, Jordanian units took up positions around urban areas of Irbid and Ramtha, relying mostly on shelling while undertaking some offensive operations to seize strategic roads and positions vis-a-vis the Fedayeen and intensifying these efforts later in the episode.<sup>134</sup>

***The Fedayeen Organizations*** While a joint defense plan had been drawn up for all of the Fedayeen organizations to defend against the impending JAA attack,<sup>135</sup> it was ultimately not implemented in the fighting.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the “joint command” set up by the PLO on September 15th was ineffective and limited to the Fedayeen leadership level; though some basic joint operations were conducted by organizations against the JAA, all Fedayeen field commanders and fighters instead only took orders from their respective leadership during the fighting, and each faction was on its own in confronting the Jordanian army in terms of strategy and tactics.<sup>137</sup>

As a whole, the Fedayeen organizations numbered about 9,000 full-time fighters and 6,000 part-time militia fighters at the start of the fighting.<sup>138</sup> In addition, very small reinforcements totaling between 100-150 fighters of the PFLP, Fatah, DFLP, and Saiqa were brought into northern Jordan from Syria and Lebanon both just prior to the outbreak of hostilities and during the first few days of the fighting.<sup>139</sup>

---

1999, 377.

<sup>133</sup> Amman to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, October 4th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045.

<sup>134</sup> Central Intelligence Bulletin, September 25th, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200050001-5; Judeidini 1975, 183.

<sup>135</sup> While some groups such as Fatah deny that they wanted a showdown with the Jordanian regime, all of the groups knew a showdown was eventually coming (Author interviews, various; (“Testimonials from the Fighters of Wehdat” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, May 1st, 1971).

<sup>136</sup> Author interview, PLA/PLF Official-V; Sayigh 1997, 260. The plan, which was drafted in June 1970, was extensive and included designs for defensive positions and manpower (See copy of plan in Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, 134-147 and discussion in Natour 2014, 218-220).

<sup>137</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-W, PFLP Fighter-X, PF-GC Fighter-A, Fatah Fighter-L, Fatah Fighter-K, Fatah Fighter-M.

<sup>138</sup> Chart of Fedayeen Organizations, NEA, May 1970, RG59/Records Relating to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, 1966-1972/Box 1; Sayigh 1997, 263.

<sup>139</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Member-D; PFLP Fighter-H, PFLP Fighter-X, OACL Member-C; Tel Aviv to MOD, September 19th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043.

In confronting Jordanian forces, the groups used mostly small arms and light weapons of Eastern Bloc origin from the WWII era, including automatic rifles (such as the Kalashnikov and AVS-36/“Seminov”), anti-aircraft and light, medium, and heavy machine guns (such as the Degtyaryov/RPD, Gorynuv, and M2 Browning guns), submachine guns (such as the DShK), field guns (such as 75mm caliber), anti-tank weapons (such as the RPG-2, RPG-7, and the M40 recoilless rifle<sup>140</sup>), rockets (such as 130mm and 240mm Katyusha rockets), artillery, 60mm and 82mm mortars, anti-tank mines, landmines, and hand grenades.<sup>141</sup> Fatah specifically also had Land Rovers and pickup trucks used for both transporting fighters and mounted machine guns.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the lack of a military plan and ineffective shared command, the Jordanian offensive was nevertheless generally met with Fedayeen defenses comprised of fortifications, fixed artillery and mortar positions, mines along streets and in houses, bodies, and vehicles, and snipers inside houses and on rooftops.<sup>143</sup> General offensive tactics used by the Fedayeen organizations during the fighting included ambushes against passing troops, hit-and-run attacks, direct assaults and raids on Jordanian

---

<sup>140</sup>This weapon was originally given to the Fedayeen groups by the Jordanian soldiers for their raids into the West Bank (Author interview, JAA Official-X).

<sup>141</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Official-V, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-B, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Fighter-L, Fatah Official-J, Fatah Commander-C, Saiqa Commander-V, PF-GC Fighter-A, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H, PLA/PLF Official-Y, JAA Official-X, JAA Official-W, GOJ Official-U; “Dayan Surveys Some Security Threats” (1708), Tel Aviv to Secstate, May 7th, 1969, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 27 ARAB-ISR/Box 1820; Amman to FCO London, September 17th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043; “Days of a Fighter in Jebel Hussein” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 10th, 1970; Hindi et al. 1971, 177-178.

Only Fatah had rockets, artillery, and mortars (Abu Daoud 1999, 354).

<sup>142</sup>Author interview, Fatah Official-J. Many of the Land Rovers used during the Black September fighting episode were stolen from the Jordanian army (Amman to Ministry of Defence, September 29th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Hindi et al. 1971, 198).

<sup>143</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-W, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-X, PFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Official-G, PF-GC Militia Commander-C; “Sitrep 0930 Local,” Amman to Secstate (4858), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (4821), September 16th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Tel Aviv to Ministry of Defence, September 25th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Tel Aviv to Ministry of Defence, September 29th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Hindi et al. 1971, 171-179; “Guerrillas Dig In for Showdown in Jordan Town,” *New York Times*, 17 September 1970; Suleiman and Hammadeh 2012, 40.

positions, sabotage operations to destroy tanks, seizure of buildings and strategic areas throughout the cities and rural areas of middle and northern Jordan, and taking over smaller towns such as Mafraq and Ramtha.<sup>144</sup>

### 2.3.2 The Fighting during Black September

Combining mechanized infantry, armor, and field artillery, Jordanian forces entered the cities of Amman and Zarqa early on the morning of September 17th,<sup>145</sup> sparking two weeks of bloody fighting that spanned the Kingdom's urban and rural areas. In Amman, elements of the 1st Infantry Division and 4th Mechanized Division, along with armored regiments from the 60th Armored Brigade, two Special Forces companies, and artillery, proceeded in two axes towards the center of the city, focusing their main efforts on the Fedayeen-controlled areas of Jebel Hussein, Wehdat Camp, Jebel Ashrafiyeh, and Jebel Amman (see Figure 3.2 below).<sup>146</sup> In Zarqa, el-

---

<sup>144</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Official-V, PFLP Fighter-X, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-V, Fatah Fighter-M; Central Intelligence Bulletin, September 22nd, 1970, CIA-RDP79T00975A017200020001-8; Tel Aviv to MOD, September 19th, 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043; Tel Aviv to Ministry of Defence, September 24th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1044; Jureidini 1975, 167-184; Hindi et al. 1971, 168-251; Suleiman and Hammadeh 2012, 40. The offensive operations were helped by information on JAA positions from Palestinians in the army itself (Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X).

<sup>145</sup> According to then-CIA Chief of Station Jack O'Connell, the JAA operations were supposed to start on September 16th, but were postponed a day for an unsuspecting reason:

"I was told the attack was postponed by one day...I found out later that the king called it off after his sister-in-law, Princess Firyal, went to a fortune-teller in London frequented by members of the Jordanian royal family. The princess, who had just returned to Amman, reported that the fortune-teller said tomorrow was a very bad day for the Hashemite Kingdom, but the day after would be a very good day. The king was enough of a believer not to take a chance. So he postponed the assault, but nobody knew why, because it was kind of embarrassing that a fortune-teller was a source of decision-making advice" (O'Connell 2011, 102-103).

<sup>146</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Official-V, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-V, PF-GC Militia Commander-C; "Siterep 0930 Local," Amman to Secstate (4858), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Siterep 1315 Local," Amman to Secstate (4868), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Siterep 1130 Local," Amman to Secstate (4863), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (4878), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Siterep 1030 Local," Amman to Secstate (4860), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Hindi et al. 1971, 171-172; El Edroos 1980, 451.

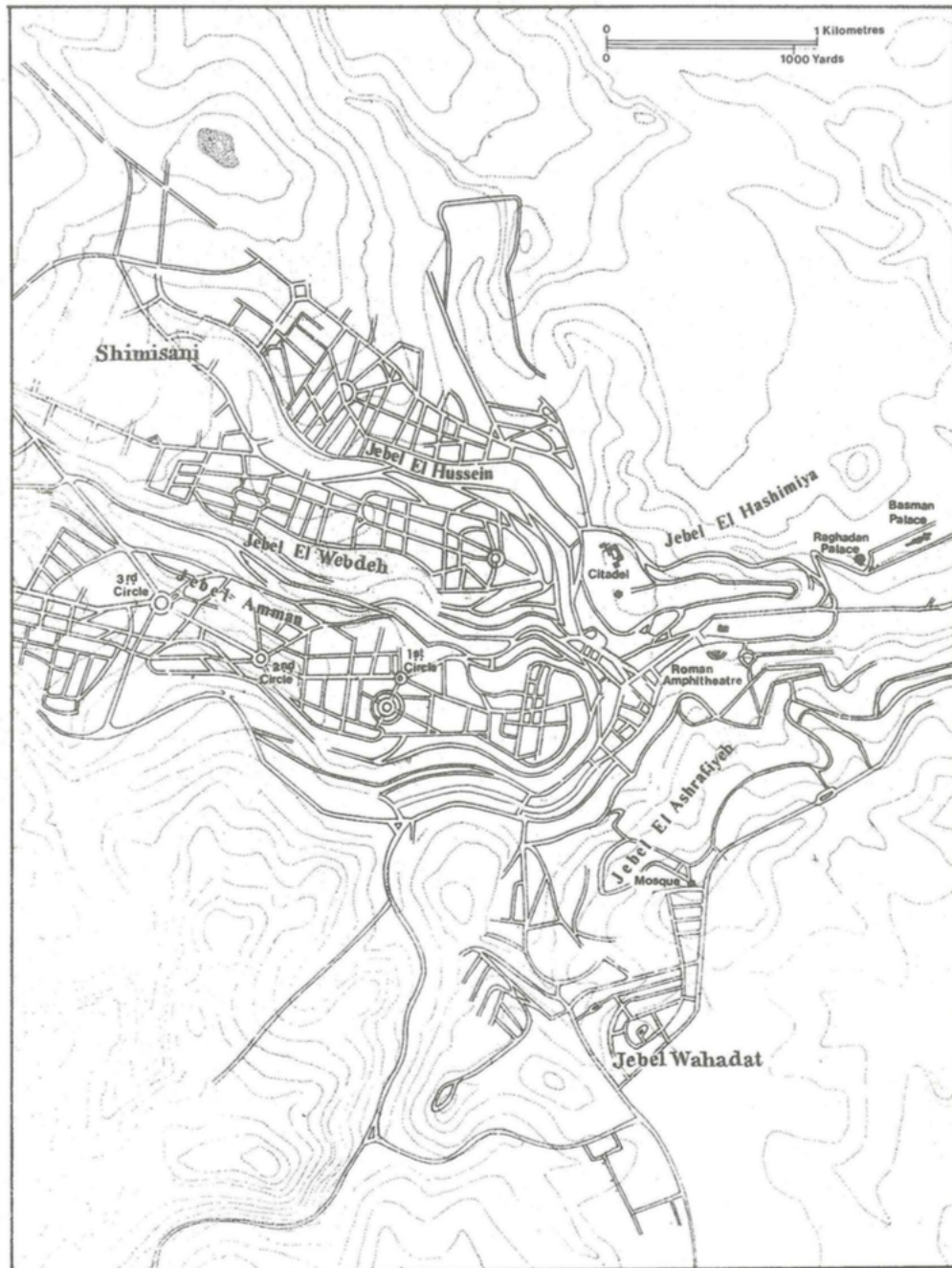
ements of the JAA's 3rd Armored Division, along with the 99th Armored Brigade, a composite garrison of advanced army trainees, and a Special Forces company, focused their efforts on the main refugee camp and the city's main street near Zarqa's army base, attacking with armored vehicles and artillery.<sup>147</sup> In northern Jordan, the 2nd Infantry Division's initial efforts focused on Irbid's outskirts and the cities of Jerash and Ajloun, all of which had come under the complete control of the Fedayeen organizations.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> Author interview, JAA Official-B; Hindi et al. 1971, 169-170; El Edroos 1980, 453.

<sup>148</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G, PFLP Fighter-X; El Edroos 1980, 454. In the north, the 2nd Infantry Division commander refused to carry out the attack orders, and resigned his post (El Edroos 1980, 454; Abu Daoud 1999, 355).

**Figure 3.2.** Map of Amman (circa 1970)  
*Source: El Edroos 1980*



The JAA all-out onslaught into Amman and Zarqa was met with significant Fedayeen defensive resistance: it took two whole days for Jordanian troops to break through guerrilla defenses and successfully occupy Maxim Circle (Jebel Hussein's main traffic



circle located in the center of the neighborhood) and four subsequent days to clear the Hussein Camp, while the army became bogged down around the 1st Circle for several days as it attempted to penetrate into eastern Jebel Amman.<sup>149</sup> In downtown Amman, the army and Fedayeen groups fought during the first few days for control of the main post office building, a strategic location key to entering the downtown area.<sup>150</sup>

Elsewhere in the capital, Fedayeen defenses held off JAA penetration and seizure of Wehdat Camp until September 25th, layed siege to JAA forces' position on Jebel AlQala'a that was not broken until the 22nd, and fought off JAA attacks to maintain control of Jebel Ashrafiyeh, Jebel Taj, and most of Jebel Luweibdeh through the end of the fighting.<sup>151</sup> In Zarqa, the Fedayeen groups rocketed and shelled the JAA base in response to JAA shelling, and the fighting escalated to armed clashes throughout the city; it was not until September 26th that the Army was able to fully control Zarqa and the refugee camps and occupy the area due to the narrow streets and Fedayeen defenses.<sup>152</sup> The Fedayeen groups also undertook several offensive operations during

---

<sup>149</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-X, DFLP Official-V; "Sitrep in Amman 2100 Local Sep 22," Amman to Secstate (5066), September 22nd, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Siterep 1315 Local," Amman to Secstate (4868), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "GOJ Official's Report on Crisis," Amman to Secstate (4906), September 18th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Sitrep 1100L," Amman to Secstate (4930), September 19th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (5083), September 23rd, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to FCO London, September 17th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1043; Tel Aviv to Ministry of Defence, September 25th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Amman to Ministry of Defence, September 29th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Sayigh 1997, 266; Hindi et al. 1971, 198-199, 226; El Edroos 1980, 452; Natour 2014, 232; Abu Daoud 1999, 350, 357.

<sup>150</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-V; Hindi et al. 1971, 176; Abu Daoud 1999, 346.

<sup>151</sup> Author interviews, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, Fatah Fighter-K; "Siterep 1100 Local," Amman to Secstate (4905), September 18th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (5271), September 27th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (5277), September 27th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Secstate (5402), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Sitrep 2130L," Amman to Secstate (5431), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Security Situation," Amman to Secstate (5390), September 29th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to FCO, September 28th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Hindi et al. 1971, 173-175, 191; El Edroos 1980, 452; Rashid 2015, 172; Sayigh 1997, 267.

<sup>152</sup> Author interview, Fatah Member-D; "Jordan Situation in Zarqa and Irbid," Amman to Secstate

the first few days, attacking and occupying several government buildings in Amman and Zarqa.<sup>153</sup>

In the north, Fatah fighters took over the border town of Ramtha and established a supply route for the Fedayeen from southern Syria, laying the logistical foundation for the subsequent Syrian intervention.<sup>154</sup> Elsewhere in the north, Fedayeen groups attacked the JAA's Hussein Brigade near Jerash, which led to fighting and their takeover of the hills north of several villages in the area, and assaulted the HQ of the 2nd Infantry Division near Beit Ras.<sup>155</sup> Nearby, DFLP fighters attacked Eidoon village, while Fedayeen organizations in Irbid and Jerash established defensive perimeters and fought off Army shelling and attacks to maintain full control of the two urban areas through the end of the fighting episode on October 1st, 1970.<sup>156</sup>

### 3 Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Jordan

Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP largely shared a few common conditions for fighters, such as basic physical fitness standards and a recruit's desire to be a fighter (as opposed to a non-martial member of the organization). In addition, as is normally the case with non-state organizations, all three groups faced the risk of potentially recruiting "bad apples" and, more significantly, infiltrators from intelligence agencies

---

(5614), October 4th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Jordan Fighting," Tel Aviv to Secstate (5165), September 19th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Amman to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, October 4th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Hindi et al. 1971, 197-198; Jureidini 1975, 186; Sayigh 1997, 267; El Edroos 1980, 453.

<sup>153</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-Z, JAA Official-V; Hindi et al. 1971, 173-176, 197; Amman to Secstate (4878), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; "Siterep 0930 Local," Amman to Secstate (4858), September 17th, 1970, RG59/DOSCF 1970-73/POL 23 JORDAN; Abu Daoud 1999, 346.

<sup>154</sup> Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M; Ramadan 1971, 354.

<sup>155</sup> Hindi et al. 1971, 179, 192-193, 208.

<sup>156</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, PFLP Fighter-H, PFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Official-G; Amman to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, October 4th 1970, BNA/FCO 17/1045; Hindi et al. 1971, 179, 192-193.

(particularly those of Jordan and Israel).<sup>157</sup> All three groups (as well as the other Fedayeen organizations in Jordan) faced a marked influx of recruits after the Battle of Karameh in March 1968, when the Fedayeen became the center of attention in the Arab world.<sup>158</sup>

As for the pool of Fedayeen recruits, there were generally no systematic preferences across would-be fighters in terms of joining specific organizations.<sup>159</sup> Individuals often tried to join multiple groups, and it was the organization's officials who were the gatekeepers for membership in most cases.<sup>160</sup> In some cases, individuals did not want to join more ideological groups (such as the PFLP or DFLP), and so joined Fatah due to its lack of ideology.<sup>161</sup> In other cases, individuals chose the DFLP precisely because they were attracted to its ideology,<sup>162</sup> or the PFLP because they were already a member in its parent organization, the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM).<sup>163</sup> In other cases, individuals joined groups because they had relatives or friends that were already members of such groups.<sup>164</sup> Overall, there was no consistent ordering of preferences across would-be fighters regarding which particular groups they sought to join - the decision to join was usually based on idiosyncratic features specific to individuals. This mitigates concerns about selection effects shaping the composition of groups. Consequently, insurgent recruitment in Jordan can be considered akin to

---

<sup>157</sup>As part of its normal clandestine operations, the Jordanian GID infiltrated all of the Fedayeen organizations using agents and informants, in some cases as high up as group leadership (Author interviews, GOJ Official-Y, GID Official-T, GID Official-C, GID Official-D). Such infiltration was a risk individuals in the groups were indeed aware of and all faced (Author interviews, Fatah Official-M, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Official-D, DFLP Official-G, Saiqa Commander-V, Saiqa Commander-S).

<sup>158</sup>Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X, Fatah Official-N, Fatah Fighter-M, DFLP Official-G, Saiqa Official-H; Jureidini and Hazen 1976, 14.

<sup>159</sup>The following discussion is based on interviews I did with former officials, commanders, recruiters, and fighters from the Fedayeen groups. As stated previously, a random sampling of former fighters was not feasible.

<sup>160</sup>Author interviews, PF-GC Fighter-A, DFLP Member-A, Saiqa Commander-V, Saiqa Commander-S, Saiqa Official-B, PFLP Official-C.

<sup>161</sup>Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C.

<sup>162</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-A, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-B.

<sup>163</sup>Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>164</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-V, Fatah Commander-F

“as-if” random assignment of fighters into the groups.

Despite these common recruitment conditions, challenges, and risks, Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP differed in terms of the consistency and comprehensiveness of the selection criteria and the processes recruits were subjected to before becoming full-fledged fighters in each group (see Table 3.1). Fatah’s military force had deficient recruitment practices from the start. Anyone could join the group as a fighter, and would-be fighters were not subjected to investigation or any sort of induction process. This openness only increased after the Battle of Karamah, when Fatah’s leaders decided to turn it into a mass organization, expand in size, and take anyone that wanted to join. In terms of military training, Fatah fighters received mixed types, with some getting instruction in conventional warfare while others underwent training in guerrilla warfare. Such training was bereft of any political indoctrination for recruits.

The PFLP, owing to its organizational foundation in the Arab Nationalist Movement (which had its own strict membership criteria), had robust recruitment practices from the start. All individuals were required to meet the same criteria for joining, and all potential recruits were investigated prior to being granted permission to join as recruits and go to training courses. All PFLP fighters received training in extensive guerrilla warfare strategy and tactics, along with required indoctrination in the group’s Marxist-Leninist ideology. Despite sharing the same ideological characteristics as the PFLP, the DFLP had deficient recruitment practices during the conflict. Like Fatah, anyone could join the DFLP as a fighter without background investigation or an induction process. Recruits were trained in guerrilla warfare tactics, albeit at a superficial level, and indoctrination was present and often held as more important than military training. But in reality, it did not run very deep.

**Table 3.1.** Recruitment Practices in the Jordanian Case

	Comprehensive	Limited
Consistent	<i>Robust (PFLP)</i>	<i>Deficient</i>
Inconsistent	<i>Deficient</i>	<i>Deficient (Fatah, DFLP)</i>

As noted previously, the Black September period (and the Jordanian conflict overall) constituted the Guerrilla stage of insurgency.<sup>165</sup> Before going into the analysis, I first validate a few assumptions about using the measures outlined in Chapter 2 for the Guerrilla stage, particularly the losses incurred measure.

First, it must be demonstrated that JAA forces did not distinguish among the various Fedayeen organizations during the fighting. This was indeed the case, as military plans were drawn up and executed to deal with *all* of the Fedayeen organizations without distinction or discrimination.<sup>166</sup> In fact, JAA soldiers that participated in the operations had no idea which particular groups they were facing when engaging in battle, which was the result of both the absence of group-specific identifying features and a lack of interest in which group(s) they were facing at a given time and place.<sup>167</sup> On a related note, JAA unit assignments during the offensive were not done in response to concentrations of particular Fedayeen groups and/or JAA unit composition (i.e. Jordanians versus Palestinians),<sup>168</sup> but rather according to their preexisting deployments based on from the army's defensive positions vis-a-vis Israel after the 1967 war.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup>El Edroos 1980, 449-451; Sayigh 1997, 263.

<sup>166</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-D, JAA Official-J, JAA Official-W, JAA Official-G.

<sup>167</sup>Author interviews, JAA Official-X, JAA Official-Z.

<sup>168</sup>The potential issue here is that JAA unit assignment might have been done so as to avoid potential defections by not placing Palestinian-majority units to areas with heavy concentrations of Fedayeen fighters. At the time of the Black September fighting, more than 50% of Jordanian troops were of Palestinian origin, with such troops primarily in the technical and infantry units (Ohl 2016, 112-113; "Jordan's Armed Forces," January 2nd, 1967, NA/CIA-RDP79T00826A001600010012-5). After the defections of Palestinian-origin officers from the army during the first few days of the fighting, commanding officers of Palestinian origin were indeed placed under observation, but no further actions were taken vis-a-vis the ongoing operations (Author interview, JAA Official-D).

<sup>169</sup>Author interview, JAA Official-D; "Jordan's Internal Defense Problems" (6263), Amman to Secstate, August 22nd, 1968, RG59/DOSCF 1967-69/POL 23 JORDAN).

Second, it must be demonstrated that all Fedayeen organizations equally participated in the fighting during Black September. All ten Fedayeen groups indeed participated in the fighting in Amman, where the most heavy and intense fighting took place, and all ten were deployed throughout the other major areas of fighting in the Kingdom.<sup>170</sup> Finally, it must be demonstrated that Fedayeen casualties were a direct result of fighting and not, for example, the outcome of a single training accident or majority a result of a single attack. While training accidents did indeed happen during the conflict period,<sup>171</sup> none of the three groups (or any of the Fedayeen organizations) was conducting training during the period under study, as all fighters were called up for duty.<sup>172</sup> As the tables of PFLP and DFLP casualties in Appendix B illustrate, the locations of fighter deaths indicate that both groups were intensely involved in even the most heavy areas of fighting in Amman (e.g. Jebel Hussein, Hussein Camp, Jebel Amman, Wehdat Camp) and Zarqa.<sup>173</sup>

In what follows, I draw on interviews conducted with former officials, commanders, cadres, fighters, and ordinary members from Fatah, PFLP, and DFLP to outline and discuss the individual recruitment practices of each group from its founding up until September 1970, the relevant mechanisms that such practices generated, and how these mechanisms shaped relative effectiveness in each case.<sup>174</sup> For each organization,

---

<sup>170</sup> Author interviews, PLA/PLF Official-V, DFLP Official-G, PFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Fighter-W, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, PF-GC Fighter-A, Saiqa Official-C, ALF Militia Commander-C, DFLP Fighter-C, Civilian-M; Sayigh 1997, 263.

<sup>171</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G; Jamjoum n.d.

<sup>172</sup> Moreover, my research on the progression of the conflict, its armed actors, and the available information on the nature of Fedayeen combatant deaths together indicate that the deaths were from street fighting, armor fire, and/or artillery resulting from the clashes both in and outside of the Kingdom's major urban areas (Author interviews, DFLP Member-C, PFLP Fighter-X, Fatah Fighter-M; DFLP Fighter-B; DFLP Cadre-X; DFLP Official-G; Sayigh 1997, 267; Al'Aref 1982, 4-70).

<sup>173</sup> Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain data on fighter death locations for Fatah.

<sup>174</sup> Because my focus was on the practices of the organizations themselves rather than, for example, the typical focus on individuals' reasons for joining groups in the existing literature on insurgent recruitment, sample selection bias is not an overarching concern when drawing conclusions concerning group-level recruitment practices from interviews and other primary sources.

To maximize the validity of the conclusions drawn from the collected data, I still limit my analysis

I also show that the origins of its recruitment practices is exogenous to concerns about the group's ultimate performance during the fighting.

### 3.1 Fatah: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness

#### 3.1.1 Deficient Recruitment Practices

Recruitment into Fatah during its early non-martial period was very secretive and selective, requiring would-be members to have at least one recommendation from a current member and undergo a trial period before receiving full membership status.<sup>175</sup> However, Fatah fighters were not held to the same standards and selection criteria as those who joined the civilian side of the organization.<sup>176</sup> The organization accepted individuals as fighters that came from any ideological and/or political leaning, whether the Muslim Brotherhood, or Ba'athists, or Communists, for example.<sup>177</sup> In the words of former fighters, "anyone could join" (Fatah Fighter-D) and "there were no rejections for those that wanted to join Al-'Asifa" (Fatah Fighter-M). One former Fatah commander described the ease with which he joined the group as a fighter after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War:

---

of effectiveness in the Jordanian conflict here to those Fedayeen groups for which I was able to obtain sufficient information on recruitment practices. To be considered "sufficient," the data on recruitment practices for a given group had to be based on interviews with at least five different individuals that together comprised all possible military roles (official, commander, fighter) in the organization during the conflict and spanned at least two geographic areas (e.g. northern and middle) of Jordan. Adhering to this condition ensured that I would be able to corroborate interviewees' claims about the recruitment practices in their organization across (a) multiple individuals in the organization, (b) the various levels of the organization, and (c) the organization's areas of operation in Jordan.

A more valid data collection strategy using either random sampling or even respondent-driven sampling (Heckathorn 1997) was not possible for several reasons, including: (1) the extensive time that has passed since the conflict ended (45 years); (2) the dispersal of many former combatants to dozens of countries, as well as their deaths; and (3) the extreme sensitivity of the subject itself in Jordan, and my related desire to avoid creating problems by collecting data about the conflict in a relatively public manner.

<sup>175</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-L, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Official-J.

<sup>176</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Commander-C.

<sup>177</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Commander-C, Fatah Commander-F, Fatah Member-E, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Member-D.

“It was the biggest Palestinian organization and was the easiest to get into, because it did not have conditions. It was Fatah - it had no conditions for affiliation. You said ‘I want to be in Fatah,’ so they took you to be in Fatah. And this is how I went, and this is how I entered and received a gun...There was no investigation, there was nothing - it was a chaotic process” (Fatah Commander-F).

This broad acceptance was the product of two foundational characteristics of Fatah: (1) the backgrounds of Fatah’s founders, whose prior affiliations ranged from the Muslim Brotherhood to the Islamic Liberation Party to Ba’athists to Communists; and (2) the (stated) sole aim of the organization to liberate Palestine without any particular ideological designs for the post-liberated makeup of the country.<sup>178</sup>

This openness only increased after the Battle of Karameh, when the competitive quest for manpower among the Fedayeen organizations in Jordan led to Fatah’s full-blown transformation into a “mass organization” that accepted all who sought to join as fighters without any sort of background investigation and/or induction period.<sup>179</sup> Many interviewees recalled seeing busloads of people in Jordan each day going to join Fatah as fighters after Karameh.<sup>180</sup> In the words of a former Fatah fighter in the group at the time:

“At that period, there was a popular rush to be a fighter, and so al-‘Asifa was essentially open to anyone to become fighters. Recruitment was not selective in al-‘Asifa” (Fatah Fighter-M).

---

<sup>178</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Commander-C, Fatah Official-N, Fatah Official-M; Sayigh 1997, 81-92; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 1-8.

<sup>179</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-N, Fatah Commander-F, Fatah Fighter-D, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Member-E. For those that sought to join Fatah as civilian members, the recruitment conditions stayed the same after the Battle of Karameh (Author interview, Fatah Official-M). Several of those I interviewed on the Fedayeen side (both from Fatah and other Fedayeen organizations) noted that Fatah would accept anyone as long as they were Palestinian, but there were instances where a personal connection to a current member or another condition (e.g. military experience) led to non-Palestinians being accepted as fighters (Author interviews, Fatah Member-E, Fatah-Commander-C, DFLP Commander-R). This general restriction to Palestinians was removed after the Battle of Karameh (Author interview, Fatah Commander-C), but such discrimination (and its place in Fatah’s reputation) served as a motivation for individuals to join Fedayeen organizations other than Fatah (Author interviews, DFLP Member-A, DFLP Member-C, Saiqa Commander-S).

<sup>180</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-L, Fatah Official-L, PFLP Official-C, DFLP Member-A.



As one former Fatah official noted, this move further away from selectivity was partially out of the organization's control:

“After the Battle of Karameh itself, the situation changed. Thousands came to us - there was no time, no ability to be selective...So the element of choice was lost, we were unable to take control of the people, like in the beginning...Because of the influx, we did not have the ability to choose. There was no time” (Fatah Official-L).

In the words of another Fatah official at the time:

“Before the Battle of Karameh, the nature of the Palestinian organizations, particularly the nature of the Fatah organization, was a command organization to guide the masses, and was not a mass organization. After Karameh, Fatah transformed from a command organization to a mass organization, open to all. This affected Fatah militarily and politically and organizationally and in terms of training and finances, all of it...[In the beginning], the organization was the basis, the one that sorted the fighters. The fighter, before he fought, had to be organized as Fatah, part of Fatah, then he becomes a fighter and trains in ElHami or elsewhere, but in very small groups, between five to seven. After the Battle of Karameh, what happened? The organization went from a command structure to a mass organization. Okay, who was coming to these training camps? Not members of Fatah, no. People, anyone who wanted to fight was coming in. When there were people entering, there was no checking of membership. Also, perhaps there were bad people, good people, spies, not spies. It became open” (Fatah Official-N).

Yet this transformation into a mass organization was not done completely without intent, as Fatah's leadership made a somewhat conscious decision to expand the group into a “mass organization,” which accelerated the push for open recruitment: “There was a full turn, there was a general idea among some of the leadership, especially the Fatah leadership, to let it be a mass organization.”<sup>181</sup> In addition, the post-Karameh competition among the Fedayeen organizations in Jordan further incentivized such openness, according to one former Fatah official:

“There became a conflict among the organizations as to who could have the highest numbers, a competition. Those that Fatah did not take went to PFLP, those that PFLP did not take went to PF-GC, Saiqa, etc. So the logic was to

---

<sup>181</sup> Author interview, Fatah Official-N

take people so as to not let them to go to the other Fedayeen organizations” (Fatah Official-M).

This transformation into a mass organization, and its downstream effects on Fatah’s recruitment practices, was thus the product of both factors partially out of Fatah’s control and decisions made by the group’s leadership that were driven by the logic of competition and not related to concerns about potential fighter effectiveness.

As a result of such looseness in the recruitment process, individuals in Jordan came to be selected on the basis of personal and preexisting political loyalties, and without reference to any central set of standards or criteria.<sup>182</sup> Individuals could become fighters by virtue of already being a member in the organization or by simply going to any Fatah office and expressing an interest to become a fighter.<sup>183</sup> In the second instance, potential recruits would go to a Fatah office and meet with officials, undergo a physical inspection and interview, and then were directly sent to military training.<sup>184</sup> However, there were instances where individuals would simply tell a current Fatah member that they wanted to join and immediately become part of the group as a fighter.<sup>185</sup>

Unlike with Fatah in the early 1960s or the civilian side of the organization, no initial membership period or vouching was required for would-be fighters, and there was no investigation into the background or affiliations of military recruits.<sup>186</sup> In addition to such fluidity in the selection of fighters, the existence of several different ideological and political trends within Fatah, along with the redundancy of internal directorates (such as intelligence apparatuses), led to the establishment of Fatah military bases and training camps in Jordan that often competed with one another for the same

---

<sup>182</sup>Sayigh 1997, 221-224.

<sup>183</sup>Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M.

<sup>184</sup>Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M.

<sup>185</sup>Author interview, Fatah Commander-F.

<sup>186</sup>Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Official-N.

recruits.<sup>187</sup>

The lack of control over who was entering the organization was similarly reflected in the varied and inconsistent training given to Fatah's recruits. The main Fatah military training courses, which initially lasted about four months, first took place in Syria, and then Jordan and Iraq as well.<sup>188</sup> In these courses, would-be fighters received basic training in small and medium weapons, including Kalashnikovs and RPGs, along with physical fitness and instruction in making topographical assessments for operations.<sup>189</sup> However, the tactical components of military training in Fatah were inconsistent, with some recruits given instruction in guerrilla warfare techniques, while others received instruction in regular army tactics more appropriately suited for conventional warfare between state armies.<sup>190</sup>

Even within the organization's main operating HQ of Jordan, there were differences in military training: "the training programs in the camps were not the same...the leader of the base did what he wanted...there was no unified training."<sup>191</sup> Further adding to these differences in military training were Fatah recruits that underwent special commando training in Algeria, Libya, and China, courses whose content differed from the Fatah-run training courses in the aforementioned Arab states.<sup>192</sup> As a whole, Fatah thus lacked control over the training process for its fighters, who received

---

<sup>187</sup>Sayigh 1997, 224-227. For example, Sayigh notes that the "Islamist" trend within Fatah was able to establish a training camp in Zarqa and, later on, four bases in Jordan for its own exclusive use (Ibid., 226).

<sup>188</sup>Author interviews, Fatah Commander-C, Fatah Commander-F, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Fighter-D, Fatah Official-N, Fatah Fighter-L.

<sup>189</sup>Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C.

<sup>190</sup>Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C, Fatah Commander-F.

<sup>191</sup>Author interview, Fatah Commander-F

<sup>192</sup>Author interview, Fatah Official-L; INR Research Memorandum, "North Africa Comes Alive to the Palestinian Cause," January 17th, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; "Palestine Guerrilla Training Activity in the Benghazi Area," Benghazi to Secstate, April 21st, 1970, RG59/Subject-Numeric Files/Political & Defense/Box 2042; INR Research Memorandum, "Communist China: Peking's Approach to the Arab World," October 23rd, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; INR Research Memorandum, "Communist China/Middle East: Peking Hopes to Prolong Jordanian Crisis," September 22, 1970, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 23 JORDAN.

varied instruction in tactics and operational aims. Besides these inconsistencies, the massive influx of would-be fighters into Fatah after the Battle of Karamah led to training becoming “annotated,” as “there was no time to give care.”<sup>193</sup>

In terms of indoctrination, there was no ideological instruction for Fatah recruits, but instead very limited lessons on Palestinian history and the Palestinian issue.<sup>194</sup> However, the main purpose of this was to instruct would-be fighters about the internal structure of Fatah, rather than to provide any overarching guidance about why they carried a gun and/or why they should be motivated to fight.<sup>195</sup> Any form of extensive indoctrination beyond this basic information came about as a result of individual initiative, rather than something directed by the organization itself.<sup>196</sup> These *deficient recruitment practices*, constituted by a lack of selectivity, investigation, or induction of would-be fighters along with inconsistent military training and absence of indoctrination for recruits, remained as such up to the start of the Black September fighting episode.<sup>197</sup>

### **3.1.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution**

In the period leading up to Black September and during the fighting itself, Fatah’s command structure in Jordan was divided into three geographic sectors: northern, middle, and southern.<sup>198</sup> Each sector had a commander and operations officer, training camp, and a battalion-size grouping of Fatah fighters that were further deployed as units to particular areas of the sector.<sup>199</sup> During Black September, Amman was divided into eight sectors by Fatah, with each receiving an assigned sector commander

---

<sup>193</sup> Author interview, Fatah Official-L. In one instance, training was 45 days long, significantly shorter than the four months before Karamah (Author interview, Fatah Fighter-L).

<sup>194</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Member-D, Fatah Fighter-M.

<sup>195</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C.

<sup>196</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C.

<sup>197</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Commander-F.

<sup>198</sup> Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-F; Natour 2014, 130-131; Sayigh 1997, 182

<sup>199</sup> Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M; Sayigh 1997, 182.

and unit.<sup>200</sup>

During Black September, Fatah undertook operations that did not mesh with traditional guerrilla warfare strategy and tactics, instead fighting in a more conventional manner that led to combat ineffectiveness and fairly significant personnel losses. In the following discussion, I show that this ineffectiveness was a direct result of Fatah's deficient recruitment practices. Specifically, the group's recruitment generated a lack of uniform shared purpose, indiscipline, and an absence of interpersonal trust among and between commanders and fighters that rendered it unable to successfully execute any of the seven tasks (see Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2.** Fatah's Task Execution During Black September

<b>Task</b>	<b>Successful Execution?</b>
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	No
Cover and Concealment	No
Dispersion	No
Conduct Ambushes	No
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	No
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

As mentioned previously, the chaotic nature of Fatah recruitment and its composite sources of military training led to its fighters receiving inconsistent training, with some instructed in conventional warfare and others in irregular warfare. For one former Fatah commander who received training in the organization's camp in Syria, this was a source of problems for when Fatah confronted the Jordanian Armed Forces during Black September:

“The training was the same style of training that the Jordanian Army or the PLA took in their training, this was applied to us. There was no training in

---

<sup>200</sup>Natour 2014, 221

guerrilla warfare or training in the means of resistance, or what was required in terms of tactics or styles of fighting for guerrilla warfare. The training the trainers had gotten was classic military training - they did not have trainers that had the background conditions to train fighters to resist and not in classic military fighting. So we did not graduate as ‘resistance fighters’; we graduated as ‘soldiers.’ So the style of our fighting after graduating was a military style of fighting, whether on the Lebanese front or Golan front or in Jordan. The operations, with some limited exceptions, needed the style of guerrilla warfare - small groups implementing operations” (Fatah Commander-C).

In addition to this mismatch in military training, a former Fatah official remarked that the group gave its individual fighters extensive latitude in how to confront the enemy,<sup>201</sup> regardless of any prescribed tactical doctrine in which they may have been trained:

“We were not pedantic....We would not tell you how to fight. Stand and fight, but as to how, this is up to you...you according to your relative thinking. Move as you want - you are the leader of yourself, but I will tell you to fight in this area. You want to stop here or there and fight, you are free, but the important thing is that you fight. The most suitable to the battle area - do it. And this characterized Fatah, or the training that one got, the freedom of movement, freedom of fighting, he was the leader of himself. Study during training, but later on you are the leader” (Fatah Official-L).

Besides inconsistent military training and extensive fighter latitude down to the lowest level, Fatah’s willingness to accept all ideological trends and subsequently institutionalize the selection and training process along such lines, along with the resulting competition for recruits among various parts of the organization, led to the factionalization of units within the group in Jordan. This had direct consequences for the group’s ability to create a shared purpose across the various military officials, commanders, and fighters in Fatah. It was most directly manifested in the refusal of the “Islamist” faction in Fatah to participate in the fighting against the Jordanian regime. The faction, which was allowed to set up its own training and operations bases

---

<sup>201</sup>Such extensive latitude is distinct from a decentralized military command, the latter of which refers to the locus of decision-making power among mid- and lower-level commanders and not fighters as outlined in Chapter 2.

in Jordan, refused altogether to fight the Jordanian Army during Black September so as to “to avoid fighting fellow Muslims.”<sup>202</sup> Yet all other units of Fatah participated in the fighting against Jordanian forces.

In addition to the variation in shared purpose generated by such factionalization, one former Fatah commander also pointed to the lack of support for political indoctrination in training as a problem for trying to create a shared sense of “the struggle” among fighters:

“For the military forces, we were fighters, and so we were not required to have politics or ideology...The ideological aspect, that which had a relationship with struggle and not politics, had been absent in Fatah. Trying to get the fighters and civilian members to a higher level of awareness in order to be more present around them in the world in order to guide the battle in which one is carrying, to know who one is fighting and against who. So there was a program that covered these aspects, but it was not supported in general. It was mostly an individual initiative. This phenomenon was not general or found in all places...there were no books that all people studied in the same way” (Fatah Commander-C).

Besides the lack of uniform shared purpose, Fatah fighters were notorious for their indiscipline in Jordan. This was largely a result of the group’s open recruitment practices after the Battle of Karameh, as noted by multiple individuals that were in Fatah at the time:

“But after the Karameh operation and the victory that was realized in the Battle of Karameh, and the Fedayeen presence became open, large numbers came, Jordanian and non-Jordanian, to join Fatah. So there were large numbers. Here, there was a problem with how to organize this work, so individuals entered Fatah who were good and who were bad, and this became a problem later on” (Fatah Official-J).

“So after the Battle of Karameh, the subject became hard for us, the result of the influx. There was no observation. Now, I was unable to implement the studying on the ground because there were thousands present, so perhaps some of them were not good, but I am ignorant. This was the reason why there were problems after Karameh” (Fatah Official-L).

---

<sup>202</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G; Sayigh 1997, 226.

“There were people that joined Fedayeen action that were ignorant and politically unaware, so their behavior was bad. They would wear military clothes and carry weapons thinking that they had become the authority and state, and perhaps did wrong things” (Fatah Fighter-K).

When asked about what should have been done to avoid such indiscipline among its fighters and the resulting consequences, one former Fatah official remarked that “instead of accepting everyone, people should have been refused.”<sup>203</sup> Besides these consequences of the recruitment process and lack of indoctrination or guidance, Fatah also lacked a specified and enforced code of conduct for fighters concerning what was acceptable and unacceptable behavior and the consequences of violating norms of conduct.<sup>204</sup>

When combined, the openness in recruitment, lack of any specified or enforced code of behavioral conduct, and absence of indoctrination, generated indiscipline among Fatah fighters. This had direct consequences for the group’s effectiveness writ large and, unfortunately, for civilians in Jordan:

“Fatah, it was the one that opened the door, and accepted all who came. The others did not accept all who came - perhaps they accepted a limited number, but within a framework that did not demand fighters. Fatah accepted huge numbers. Fatah did not need such large numbers of fighters, or armed individuals, let me say, because not all of them were fighting. Even after joining and getting weapons, most of them did not fight, and most did not go to the confrontation line, the ceasefire line. Most did not fire their weapon, except for the training field. *The result of this, and the result of the absence of political indoctrination in Fatah, and the lack of a presence of moral guidance, was a situation of large incompetence in Fatah and, parallel to that, individual actions in the cities abusing civilians* [emphasis added]” (Fatah Commander-F).

This was also seen on the ground, where the absence of discipline among its fighters led to a situation of chaos among Fatah fighters during the Black September fighting, where

---

<sup>203</sup> Author interview, Fatah Official-N

<sup>204</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, Fatah Commander-C.



“Each person acted for themselves during the fighting. For example, one individual might take a civilian’s car because he wanted to go from one place to another in order to bring weapons without thinking about the consequences of this action” (Fatah Fighter-K).

As the former fighter observes, each Fatah fighter acted of their own accord during the fighting rather than together in units or groups. The lack of any coordination among individuals over who would go get weapons, for example, not only detracted from the warfighting effort but also indicated a basic lack of discipline needed to execute orders at the unit level. Along with the aforementioned absence of uniform shared purpose, this indiscipline generated a situation where one Fatah commander observed that during Black September,

“When we fought the Jordanian Army, we did not fight them as a popular resistance militia. The training in Fatah was not appropriate for the confrontation with the Jordanian Army. I was trained classically, not as a resistor, not trained like rebels in Vietnam. This was one of the reasons why we failed in September” (Fatah Commander-C).

Fatah’s use of a more conventional strategy, along with a failure to use appropriate tactics, was manifest on multiple occasions. The group had by far the most extensive arsenal of the ten Fedayeen organizations that fought against the JAA during Black September - its weaponry included automatic rifles (e.g. AK-47s), anti-tank RPGs, 60mm and 82mm mortars, 130mm artillery rockets, 106mm recoilless rifles, and rocket launchers.<sup>205</sup> Yet the group did not maximize the potential advantages of its firepower in combat, and had a poor record in *operating weaponry and marksmanship*.

For instance, Fatah was the only Fedayeen organization with a (potential) mobile force during Black September, which consisted of four Jeeps with mounted 106mm recoilless rifles.<sup>206</sup> The Jeeps were positioned in the area of Wehdat Camp in Amman

---

<sup>205</sup> Author interviews, JAA Official-X, GID Official-C; Sayigh 1997, 182.

<sup>206</sup> Abu Daoud 1999, 345. As noted previously, these 106mm recoilless rifles were given to Fatah by the JAA for use against Israeli forces (Author interview, JAA Official-X). Sayigh writes that Fatah had 80 jeeps for mobility in 1969, but Abu Daoud, the chief Fatah militia commander in Amman during Black September, writes that the mobile force was just four jeeps (Abu Daoud 1999, 345).

to confront Jordanian forces' attempts to penetrate the camp.<sup>207</sup> Rather than taking advantage of the ability to use this heavy firepower in a mobile manner, the Jeeps instead remained in place and fired at Jordanian positions. This made them an easy target for the nearby JAA tanks, which were easily able to neutralize the effect of the heavier weapons.<sup>208</sup> Besides the failure to use potential mobile firepower, Fatah's mortars and field artillery remained unused in the fighting.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, the group was undisciplined in using ammunition during the fighting, and often had to undertake risky operations across sectors of Amman for resupply.<sup>210</sup>

At the strategic level, the orders from Fatah's leadership to its sector commanders were to "maintain our positions only" and exercise "self-control."<sup>211</sup> However, multiple Fatah commanders did not heed this call, and instead set up fixed positions and did not *avoid concentrated frontal assaults* against the advancing Jordanian Army units. Such indiscipline is unsurprising, given the aforementioned lack of a behavioral code of conduct or indoctrination in the group. Besides more conventional operations, Fatah fighters consistently failed to use *cover and concealment* or *dispersion* at the tactical level.

For instance, at the start of the fighting, a unit of Fatah fighters in Jebel AlAkhdar held a fixed "fortified position" on the top of the hill, which the Jordanian Army successfully captured on September 19th after two days of intense fighting between the two sides.<sup>212</sup> Rather than *withdrawing when outgunned/outnumbered* as dictated by guerrilla warfare strategy, the unit of Fatah fighters instead maintained their position and fought for two days before ceding control of the hill.

---

<sup>207</sup>Abu Daoud 1999, 345; Sayigh 1997, 182.

<sup>208</sup>Abu Daoud 1999, 357.

<sup>209</sup>Author interview, PLA/PLF Official-V

<sup>210</sup>Abu Daoud 1999, 360; Natour 2014, 227-228

<sup>211</sup>Natour 2014, 225. Natour was the Fatah sector commander for Jabal Amman during Black September.

<sup>212</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 208; Natour 2014, 225-226; Abu Daoud 1999, 354.

This outcome had severe consequences for other nearby Fatah units. For example, Fatah's sector commander for the Jebel Amman neighborhood opposite to Jebel AlAkhdar reflected on this development for his unit's own position:

"The first day of fighting elapsed with several shelling operations at spaced intervals, however, the promise of the morning of the second day brought us bad news, as the policy of 'self-control' for the Fedayeen forces in the area of Jebel AlAkhdar ended with the fall of this hill in the hands of the Jordanian forces after a series of fighting operations, and this news fell upon us like a thunderbolt when we in Jebel Amman lost our rear protection, and we became completely exposed to the Jordanian artillery and the shelling of us continued day and night, all of the days of 9/19, 9/20, and 9/21, and opened up on us a military front we were not expecting, and the result of the shelling was that we lost ten martyrs and twenty-five injured" (Natour 2014, 226).

Indeed, the loss of Jebel AlAkhdar had repercussions beyond just the increased shelling of Fatah's forces in Jebel Amman, which had consisted of 165 fighters at the start of the fighting.<sup>213</sup> More specifically, the fall of Jebel AlAkhdar to Jordanian forces allowed them a clear view of activity on adjacent Jebel Amman, indicating the need for Fatah's unit in the area to use cover and concealment and dispersion to deny the Jordanian forces easy targets when moving around. On September 22nd, there was a brief break in Jordanian shelling of Jebel Amman, during which the area's sector commander undertook an exposed and concentrated advance that had severe consequences:

"The sun rose on 9/22/1970 with the absolute silence of Jordanian Army artillery, so I undertook with a group of 15 fighters to advance towards the water pump area, and as soon as we put our feet on the first steps of the steps that link Hay Masarweh with the water pump area, three Hown artillery shells fell above us, taking three martyrs immediately, and due to the discharge of air from the shells' explosion, I found myself thrown to the ground in front of the entrance to one of the homes, so I prepared myself immediately, and got up to inspect the other fighters despite the heavy firing of bullets around us, and paused for a moment waiting for the ceasing of fire, and once the chance arrived we were returning to Hay Masarweh in the middle of artillery shells that fell on us from Jebel AlAkhdar, and what saved me was the attention of God

---

<sup>213</sup>Natour 2014, 225.

when artillery shells fell on the house in front of me in which there were several fighters concentrated...two were martyred and one was injured” (Natour 2014, 226).

This use of an exposed and easily visible stairway<sup>214</sup> to move towards an even more exposed and open area (which is also one of the main intersections in Jebel Amman) proved disastrous. The group’s failure to use the physical terrain for cover and concealment and movement in a concentrated formation up the middle of the stairs towards the water pump area made them easy targets for the Jordanian artillery pieces concentrated on Jebel AlAkhdar - leading to the devastating consequences the Fatah commander described.

Besides the fighter deaths, this action also had subsequent consequences that could have been even more fatal for the attacking unit:

“The shelling did not stop and it seemed that our positions were completely exposed, and for that it became a process of concentrating in a place that carried the risk of martyring us all under the rubble, and so there was no choice for us except to leave the position immediately and take cover in a safe place, and so I remembered that near us was a cave, so we went towards it and remained there for close to half an hour when the shelling stopped. It was a big astonishment in hindsight, since the cave in which we took shelter was itself used by us as an ammunition and weapons storehouse, and the reason for our astonishment was that we were taking shelter in a cave that itself was considered a safe place to cover us from shelling, but in reality we were in a situation of taking cover in a place that could perhaps kill us all and cause a catastrophe in the neighborhood if just one shell fell towards us” (Natour 2014, 226).

While this Fatah unit ultimately took cover, it was not until well after the unit had taken fire and incurred several losses - effective cover and concealment requires its use *prior* to the start of an engagement. Even still, the surviving members of the unit all took cover in the same cave, failing to use dispersion to diminish Jordanian forces’ capacity to target them.

---

<sup>214</sup>The ease with which this particular stairway is visible from Jebel AlAkhdar draws on the author’s personal experiences visiting both sites. Although both neighborhoods are more built up than they were at the time of fighting, there is nevertheless still a clear line of sight between the former Jordanian positions and both the stairway and (former) water pump area.

Later on in the September fighting, a group of Fatah fighters met advancing JAA artillery forces in the same area around the main water pump in Jebel Amman, leading to a confrontation that turned into a “pitched battle” in which ten Fatah fighters were killed and 21 were injured.<sup>215</sup> In this case, a Fatah unit again undertook a concentrated frontal assault and failed to withdraw despite being outnumbered and outgunned in the engagement.

Elsewhere in Amman, Fatah units demonstrated the group’s failure to execute the tasks. In Jebel Nuzha (immediately north of Jebel Hussein), a different Fatah unit again exhibited the group’s tendency to not use cover and concealment. The unit had established a 75mm artillery position on the northern part of Jebel Nuzha. The position had some success with inflicting losses against Jordanian tanks, but was set up in an exposed site that eventually had consequences:

“It was possible for the Revolution’s 75mm artillery on Northern Nuzha to shell all of the troop carriers near Tabarbour,<sup>216</sup> which resulted in the destruction of three other troop carriers and the dispersal of the rest. And at 1PM they were able to penetrate the area of Northern Nuzha after disabling the Revolution’s heavy weaponry because it was exposed and in non-strategic positions and after significant shelling” (“Testimonial of Abu Khitab, Fatah Fighter, Northern Nuzha” (Arabic), in Hindi et al. 1971, 457).

Besides its failure to use cover and concealment and dispersion, Fatah also demonstrated an inability to successfully *execute ambushes*. In Northern Jebel Hashemi, a unit of Fatah fighters established several ambush positions to defend against the advancing Jordanian forces into the neighborhood. Unfortunately, these ambushes proved unsuccessful:

“The carriers began at 4:30AM to advance towards Northern Jebel Hashemi from the Nayef and Tabarbour areas, and around 5:30AM began intense and concentrated shelling from all directions on the Fedayeen positions in the hill. And the tanks were able to break the front ambushes and capture one” (Hindi et al. 1971, 177).

---

<sup>215</sup>Natour 2014, 231.

<sup>216</sup>An area immediately east of Jebel Nuzha.

The failure to conduct ambushes aside, even when Fatah undertook successful frontal assaults, these were largely facilitated by a nonexistent or very limited JAA presence. On September 21st, Fatah took part in an operation to seize the Irbid Citadel, but this happened “without resistance,” as there were no Jordanian forces present inside the city at that time.<sup>217</sup>

The same went for the the group’s takeover of the northern border town of Ramtha (which itself ran counter to the need to avoid taking and holding territory in the Guerrilla stage). On September 17th, a unit of 100-150 Fatah fighters moved from their posting in the Golan Heights to Deraa, and then across the border into Jordan where they occupied Ramtha, taking it without any direct clashes with the Jordanian Army units stationed on the outskirts of town.<sup>218</sup> According to a Fatah fighter that participated in the operation to take and hold the town,

“It was not a strong battle...there was shelling, but direct clashes did not happen, because the Jordanian Army was not present in Ramtha city...They tried with artillery shelling in the area, but later on the Syrian Army entered and advanced in the direction of Irbid and the road to Amman, so no real battle happened. It was not hard, it was easy to occupy Ramtha, and the people cooperated with us, the residents” (Fatah Fighter-M).

The group’s subsequent ability to hold the town for multiple days and avoid any real counterattack from the Jordanian Army was not the result of fighting ability, but rather a direct outcome of the Syrian intervention that began on September 19th through Ramtha:

“The Army tried to attack Ramtha before the end of the fighting, but it was not an attack because the Syrian Army advanced after Ramtha, so there were no contact zones for the Jordanian Army...what helped the occupation of the surroundings was the Syrian intervention” (Fatah Fighter-M).

Finally, while Fatah fighters were given latitude at the fighter level in terms of how

---

<sup>217</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 215; Author interviews, DFLP Official-G, PFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>218</sup>Author interview, Fatah Fighter-M.

to pursue combat, the group's field commanders were not given the latitude needed to make decisions during fighting periods. In the words of one former Fatah commander:

"I was authorized militarily, for the area for which I was responsible, to take all the necessary procedures to defend the area from any attack or advance, to prepare the area militarily with ambushes and checkpoints and patrols, in which to guarantee the safety of these areas militarily if an advance happens. [*To take decisions without permission?*] no, no, you are now in a situation of defense, and not a situation of attack...if an attack happened against your area, you needed to defend it - also you as being in the defensive trench, there was power to do this, but you could not take a decision to send a group of fighters to another area unless people attacked you...I only had the power to take decisions to defend. When the resistance became entangled in war with the regime, you are now preparing to defend yourself against danger that was coming to you...No, it was not permitted [to undertake attacking operations]" (Fatah Commander-C).

This *lack of low-level initiative* was the direct result of the absence of interpersonal trust both among and between leaders, commanders, and fighters in the group. This absence itself was largely a product of the Fatah's expansion and open ranks after the Battle of Karameh. As noted previously, the post-Karameh expansion led to the influx of thousands into Fatah to the point where individuals did not know one another - a basic element needed to establish interpersonal trust:

"In the beginning, we knew each other, who you were and what you were. Later on, you came to join us, but there is no time to study you, who you were. After Karameh, yes - anyone that wanted to enter Fatah could enter Fatah. After Karameh, this is what happened. So people entered among us who perhaps, in ordinary circumstances, would not have been able to enter, but this was their right to come" (Fatah Official-L).

This influx of thousands into Fatah was coupled with the lack of any sort of procedures to build interpersonal trust among recruits.<sup>219</sup> In the words of another former Fatah official, the absence of trust stemmed from the lack of indoctrination and indiscipline among Fatah members:

---

<sup>219</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-L, Fatah Official-N.

“This was a problem, this was wrong, the entering of lots of people into Fatah was a problem. People entered that were not at the same level. People began to come, one came that wanted to carry a weapon for himself and show off that he was carrying a weapon, one came that was enthusiastic but had no intellect...If I am carrying a weapon, I must have intellect - carrying a gun without intellect is opportunist. We want people carrying a gun to fight for a specific goal...I am not carrying the weapon to seize your weapons or take your money etc. - this becomes opportunism” (Fatah Official-M).

This presence of indiscipline and opportunism within Fatah gave leaders, commanders, and fighters no reason to place trust in one another, especially when standards of conduct were lacking, overall objectives were unclear, and thousands of individuals were in the group to the point where fighters’ names were unknown to one another. As a result, the group failed to demonstrate a capacity for low-level initiative during the fighting in Jordan.

### **3.1.3 Effectiveness: Losses Incurred**

As a result of its failure to successfully execute the seven tasks while employing tactics and actions more appropriate for conventional warfare, Fatah had fairly significant losses in the two weeks of fighting. The previous discussion of Fatah’s performance indicated multiple instances where failures to avoid concentrated frontal assaults and pitched battles or use cover/concealment and dispersion generated multiple casualties in single incidents.

Unsurprisingly, then, Fatah lost an estimated 400 fighters killed in combat with the JAA during Black September.<sup>220</sup> As noted previously, estimates for the total size

---

<sup>220</sup>The figure of 400 KIA is taken from Yezid Sayigh’s book, which itself is drawn from the PLO Social Affairs Institution’s record of martyrs from the time of the Jordanian conflict. The PLO Social Affairs Institution is responsible for recording and providing benefits for the families of Palestinian prisoners and martyrs. Martyrs were only included in the PLO’s list if they were killed as a direct result of the September fighting. Each individual record included information about name, date of birth, date of death, and location/circumstances of death. In his tabulation of group-specific death estimates from the list, Sayigh only included individuals that had an organizational affiliation listed (Author conversations and correspondence with Dr. Yezid Sayigh, April and July 2016).

Many Fedayeen fighters were also captured during the Black September fighting by Jordanian forces (Sayigh 1997, 267; Author interview, DFLP Fighter-B). Unfortunately, group-specific figures



of Fatah's forces before the start of the Black September fighting were between 4,500-5,000 full-time fighters,<sup>221</sup> meaning that the group lost 8-9% of its overall forces in the two weeks of fighting.<sup>222</sup> Given Fatah's pursuit of a more conventional strategy against a far superior force, the loss of nearly 1/10 of its overall combat personnel in just two weeks of fighting is unsurprising.

## **3.2 PFLP: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness**

### **3.2.1 Robust Recruitment Practices**

The PFLP's strict recruitment practices were drawn directly from those of its parent organization, the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM).<sup>223</sup> The ANM's practices were highly secretive and selective as a result of its clandestine nature during the 1950s and 1960s, with individuals only allowed to join and become full members upon the recommendation of current members and after a strictly applied trial period.<sup>224</sup> For individuals that were members of the ANM at the time of the PFLP's creation, they automatically became members of the group since they already met the group's standards for recruitment.<sup>225</sup> However, anyone new seeking to join the PFLP, whether as a fighter or civilian member, had to have at least one current member recommend them for joining, who would bring them to the PFLP office and provide information about them.<sup>226</sup>

---

are not available for Fatah or the PFLP and DFLP for the time period. As such, I only look at KIA in this case.

<sup>221</sup>These estimates are drawn primarily from Sayigh 1997, which themselves are drawn from his interviews with relevant individuals from the time period. I also corroborate the estimates with Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents

<sup>222</sup>Sayigh 1997, 267

<sup>223</sup>Author interview, PFLP Official-F

<sup>224</sup>Author interviews, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Official-F, PFLP Fighter-V, PFLP Fighter-X

<sup>225</sup>Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>226</sup>Author interview, PFLP Official-D.

Potential fighters had to be committed to the ideals of the PFLP and its ideology of Arab nationalism and later Marxism-Leninism.<sup>227</sup> After this initial step, there was a trial and induction period that usually lasted 3-4 months, during which the individual was assigned certain tasks to carry out to test their commitment to the organization, underwent initial basic military training, was investigated by recruiters, and received initial political indoctrination in the PFLP's ideological platform.<sup>228</sup> The last part of this initial introduction to the organization was done to probe a would-be fighter's potential commitment to the Palestinian cause and, more importantly, "to get him to understand the Palestinian issue, why he came, who he wants to fight and why he wants to fight him...get him to understand love for the Palestinian cause, what is the Palestinian cause - is he prepared to die because of it or no?"<sup>229</sup>

After the trial period, a PFLP official decided whether a recruit became a fighter, civilian member, or could not join the organization at all; those selected as potential fighters were sent for a full-fledged military training course.<sup>230</sup> There were many instances where would-be fighters were refused for "security reasons" or because they were deemed unfit for military action by military officials in the PFLP.<sup>231</sup> Individuals from other countries coming to Jordan to join the PFLP as fighters were also subject to the same selection and induction procedures.<sup>232</sup>

Military training in the PFLP lasted three months and was conducted by former military officers that had joined the group and/or officers from the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA).<sup>233</sup> This training was in "harsh physical conditions," which led to

---

<sup>227</sup> Author interview, PFLP Official-C.

<sup>228</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-H, DFLP Commander-R; Jamjoum n.d., 49.

<sup>229</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-H

<sup>230</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H.

<sup>231</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H.

<sup>232</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>233</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H.

significant numbers of recruits dropping out of the course.<sup>234</sup> In interviews, former PFLP fighters recounted their experiences in the three-month course of instruction in classic guerrilla warfare theory and tactics:

“We trained on the weapons that were available then, such as Carlos machine gun, Port Said, Kalashnikov, Semenov semi-automatic rifle, small machine guns like British Browning guns. Spreading mines, such as the anti-armor or small mines. These were the weapons we trained with, and they were present in our hands...*As for military tactics, they were limited in a sense to to how we can reach and realize the goal and how we can withdraw with the least losses possible* [emphasis added]. Guerrilla warfare...ambushes, raids, withdrawals, spreading containers, cutting off support roads. All of this was in the framework of guerrilla warfare. And the basis of guerrilla warfare is the ambush” (PFLP Fighter-X).

“All types of training: athletics, engineering matters. There were lectures on coldness, the period of coldness, air, using the RPG, how much to cock, how much air, how much distance - these were all studies, you know. Stuff on the types of explosives and bombs etc., all of this was stuff that was written lectures, not just summaries. In addition to weapons, there was running, athletics, military operations - all of this was our training, guerrilla warfare tactics” (PFLP Fighter-H).

In addition, there was instruction in military discipline,<sup>235</sup> while PFLP fighters were trained in line with classic theories of guerrilla warfare with the operational aim of attacking and withdrawing while taking the least losses possible.<sup>236</sup> A significant (and required) part of the training course was political indoctrination, in which cadres instructed trainees about the specific Marxist-Leninist ideology and overall goals of the PFLP.<sup>237</sup> As a former PFLP official stated, “the role of ideological training for PFLP fighter was to give them a sense of direction, and to build political awareness.”<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>234</sup>Sayigh 1997, 181

<sup>235</sup>Author interviews, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-H.

<sup>236</sup>Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>237</sup>Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H. Such indoctrination continued after training was over in the PFLP’s military bases (Author interview, PFLP Official-C).

<sup>238</sup>Author interview, PFLP Official-C

Even after the Battle of Karameh, when the environment in Jordan became even more competitive vis-a-vis recruits, the PFLP's strict recruitment practices continued:

“After the Battle of Karameh, these membership conditions were still maintained and implemented. The PFLP did not just take anyone, as Fatah did. It was not easy for just anyone to enter” (PFLP Official-D).

These *robust recruitment practices*, constituted by the existence of a clear set of consistently applied selection criteria for and investigation of potential fighters, a trial/induction period, appropriate military training in guerrilla warfare and its tactics and operational aims, and required political indoctrination, were maintained through the rest of the organization's time in Jordan up until the start of Black September.<sup>239</sup>

### **3.2.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution**

In the period leading up to and including Black September, the PFLP, like Fatah, had three regional sectors in Jordan: northern, middle, and southern.<sup>240</sup> Each sector had a military official that commanded all the PFLP units within the sector.<sup>241</sup> Units were between 20-30 fighters and had designated military areas of operation within the sector.<sup>242</sup> Like Fatah, the group divided Amman into several sectors during Black September.<sup>243</sup>

Recognizing that the overall balance of forces between the Jordanian forces and Fedayeen organizations worked against them, PFLP fighters saw the need to use guerrilla warfare tactics when fighting the Jordanian Army in Black September. In the words of one former PFLP fighter:

---

<sup>239</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Official-D.

<sup>240</sup> Author interviews, PFLP Official-C, PFLP Fighter-X

<sup>241</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X

<sup>242</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X

<sup>243</sup> “Military Assessment of the Ten Red Days in Jordan” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 24th, 1970.

“Our weapons were limited - small weapons, not valid to fight tanks with the exception of some of the mines, some of the bombs, some of the B2 shells. In terms of military balance, there was no equality. There was a mechanized force fighting you, organized, and you have individual, small weapons. There was never balance...Against the Jordanian Army, we fought in a system of guerrilla warfare. We were not an army and did not have the structural aspects of an army, the structure of companies and battalions and brigades and divisions etc. We did not have this because originally we did not have weapons - we did not have armored weapons or other weapons. It took circumstances of different weapons in order to form a regular army” (PFLP Fighter-X).

This recognition manifested itself in how the PFLP confronted the Jordanian Army during Black September, specifically in terms of the tactics it used across the various areas of fighting in the Kingdom. As the following discussion shows, the group employed classic guerrilla warfare tactics and successfully executed all seven tasks during the two weeks of fighting (see Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3.** PFLP’s Task Execution During Black September

<b>Task</b>	<b>Successful Execution?</b>
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Yes
Cover and Concealment	Yes
Dispersion	Yes
Conduct Ambushes	Yes
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	Yes
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	Yes
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	Yes

To begin with, the manner in which the PFLP confronted Jordanian forces was a direct result of the training in guerrilla warfare that was part of the group’s robust recruitment practices. This training that produced fighters who were clearly aware of the appropriate tactics to be used in confronting the Jordanian Army due to the imbalance of capabilities between the two sides. Besides receiving appropriate military training, a sense of uniform shared purpose was inculcated in PFLP fighters during the

recruitment process through extensive political indoctrination. As stated previously, indoctrination was required for all would-be fighters, starting from the day they joined the organization and continuing after training during deployment:

“Indoctrination was always ongoing, especially political and ideological in the case of the PFLP. This was specific to PFLP ideological views - fighters should have at least some of the basic information about the ideology of the organization. All fighters had indoctrination and had to learn about the ideology of the PFLP” (PFLP Official-C).

Such indoctrination was indeed a motivating force for the group’s fighters, as one former PFLP fighter noted:

“In the PFLP in the training camps there were political educators, who were political people, cadres. They would explain about the dimensions of the Palestinian issue, the dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, etc. - it was a style of mobilization. There were of course lectures, this was in the camp and was required for all fighters....Of course I benefitted from the indoctrination! I benefitted from listening to people that were older than me and more politically experienced than me. I was a student in school and went to become a fighter, so yes I was educated but they had more experience than me. Of course I benefitted from them about the Palestinian reality, the Palestinian past, the complete Palestinian narrative about our previous experiences of Ezzadin Qasim, etc. We benefitted a lot - there was of course mobilization from this” (PFLP Fighter-X).

This uniform shared purpose generated through the group’s recruitment practices was resilient to the point where the group was able to withstand a significant disagreement that developed among the PFLP command in Irbid during Black September:

“As the result of the clashes that were happening, a point of view inside the PFLP group in Irbid began to develop around confronting or withdrawing, how to interact - there was the beginning of the Syrian intervention - how to interact with them. So there were some differences around these matters inside the PFLP leadership in Irbid, so there was no alternative so as to not have the differences progress further inside the PFLP branch in Jordan for myself and a military official to go to Irbid to resolve the issue. The solution came and we preserved the unity of the group and its coherence in the confrontation that had become a battle, to confront the Jordanian aggression against the resistance not in a confrontational attitude - they must be unified in order to confront and to defend themselves” (PFLP Official-F).

In addition to such uniform shared purpose, the PFLP took care to instill discipline among the group's fighters. During the training course, all PFLP fighters were instructed about the group's acceptable code of conduct for its military personnel, and were held accountable for any violations of the code of conduct, with punishments ranging from imprisonment to expulsion from the group to execution.<sup>244</sup> In the words of former officials and fighters, fighter discipline was taken extremely seriously in the PFLP, and transgressions were consistently punished so as to maintain the group's positive reputation:

"There were basic rules PFLP members had to follow, in addition to respecting higher ranks...Behavioral expectations towards civilians: you must be nice to them, try to win their respect, not to boss them, not to abuse their love and care for you, should not cause them misery, like being a public servant or bureaucrat...For example, if you stole from civilian or even verbal abuse, this was totally rejected...no torture, no killing just to kill, no abuse of financial resources, no psychological abuse of civilians. Poor behavior would reflect on the organization itself" (PFLP Official-C).

"We had discipline and strong accountability. The basis of this discipline was that we had to give a picture of the Palestinian Fedayeen that was clean. We respect the feelings of the people: their traditions, their culture. We were strugglers against aggression, and we could not practice aggression on others...We absolutely had mistakes - not every fighter or person that came to volunteer as a fighter had good or great behavior, maybe it was the opposite. Even so, such people were held accountable immediately" (PFLP Fighter-X).

"There was lots of discipline, there was respect for the leader, the leadership. There was accountability - if you did something bad, you were held accountable. Normal, like any soldier in the world...There were instructions for discipline, and of course, yes, there were punishments. All those that did wrong were held accountable, all who did any wrong would be held accountable. There was accountability for this matter, and because of this, the PFLP was more disciplined than other remaining factions" (PFLP Fighter-H).

This uniform shared purpose and fighter discipline manifested itself in a combat force that was able to competently and successfully employ a guerrilla strategy across

---

<sup>244</sup> Author interviews, PLFP Official-C, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Fighter-X, PFLP Fighter-H.

its areas of operation in Jordan during Black September, and successfully execute all seven tasks while minimizing personnel losses. The PFLP exclusively had small arms and light weapons, including the Kalashnikov, Siminov automatic rifle, Browning, RPD, and DshK machine guns, mines, and RPGs,<sup>245</sup> and had a superb record in *operating weaponry and marksmanship* during Black September.

For instance, in the Jebel Hussein neighborhood of Amman, PFLP fighters conducted scout patrols before JAA units entered the neighborhood on the morning of September 17th in order to assess the terrain of the area for positioning of their weapons.<sup>246</sup> A PFLP fighter in the area described how he would confront the Jordanian infantry units advancing into Jebel Hussein from the Sports City area of Amman:

“We would wait until the infantry got close, and I don’t remember that one opened fire, then we rained down fire from our machine guns, and after around two minutes the infantry took to running to behind” (“Days of a Fighter in Jebel Hussein” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 10th, 1970).

The decision to wait until Jordanian troops were close enough reflected clear knowledge of the limited range of the unit’s machine guns and how to best make use of them. Repeating the action helped to contribute to the Jordanian forces’ difficulty in penetrating the area of Amman, as noted in the overview of the conflict provided in Section 2. Elsewhere in Jordan, the PFLP matched its heaviest anti-tank weapons (like mines and RPG-2s) against Jordanian tanks, avoiding the use of smaller weapons against such armor.<sup>247</sup>

Besides operating weaponry and marksmanship, PFLP fighters demonstrated the ability to *execute ambushes, use cover/concealment and dispersion, avoid concentrated frontal assaults*, and *withdraw when outgunned or outnumbered* during the two weeks of fighting. For example, one PFLP fighter stationed in

---

<sup>245</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X; Jamjoum n.d., 70-71

<sup>246</sup> “Days of a Fighter in Jebel Hussein” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 10th, 1970.

<sup>247</sup> Author interview, PFLP Fighter-X



Irbid during Black September described the actions taken in their unit's defense of the city's eastern entrance:

“Firstly, we mined all supply roads or roads that could possibly be used for army's advance, the road from Huwwarah, and different directions, all the roads, even the earthen ones that tanks could use. We tried to lay mines, and fight with the Kalashnikov, small weapons. Of course, we laid out ambushes behind the line of defense, because if there was penetration at night, it would collide with these ambushes. On the sides of the road - you know this area was open, so the enemy is not committed to using the main road, no - perhaps it would penetrate from a different road. We established ambushes all over to protect our positions” (PFLP Fighter-X).

This instance indicates the group's use of cover and concealment in establishing its defensive positions. In line with the classic practice of guerrilla warfare, the PFLP unit set up ambush positions that covered multiple potential avenues of approach for the JAA. These ambush positions were not only well established, but also proved to be successful as the PFLP was able to inflict losses on the attacking Jordanian troops while only losing three of its own fighters during the entire two weeks of fighting.<sup>248</sup>

Elsewhere in Irbid, a contingent of PFLP fighters was assigned to Irbid Camp, the main Palestinian refugee camp in the city.<sup>249</sup> Some of these fighters had come from Lebanon with Fedayeen reinforcements, and moved from the Syrian-Jordanian border to Irbid during nightfall so as to avoid detection by Jordanian troops:

“We walked the distance, something like the whole night approximately, until we arrived to the area we wanted...of course, during the trip, we were faced with some problems and difficulties, but they were not military - there was no fighting. For example, we were walked the distance in hills from flat lands, and we encountered a Jordanian military contingent moving, for example, but they did not see us before we arrived to them - because perhaps there would have been a massacre. So we decided to cross the main street, and then we crossed and arrived to our group” (PFLP Fighter-H).

Exploiting the physical terrain for cover, the PFLP unit was able to avoid detection

---

<sup>248</sup>Author interview, PFLP Commander-X.

<sup>249</sup>Author interview, PFLP Fighter-H.

by Jordanian troops to reach its assigned location. Though Irbid was under siege by the Army, the unit was able to infiltrate the city and reach Irbid Camp.

Several days later towards the end of September 1970, the camp was attacked by the Jordanian Army, and the PFLP contingent, recognizing the imbalance of weaponry between them and the attacking force and the consequent need to withdraw, left from the camp to Syria:

“There was a siege around Irbid. Inside Irbid, in the area where I was, there was no fighting. All sides were blockaded...The last thing was a big attack on Irbid, and we fled. When the attack on Irbid started, people started to flee, for example, to Syria and this area. We fled from this area and arrived to Syrian land.

Of course, there were no weapons for the Palestinian resistance that would allow them to stop this attack. For example I had a Kalashnikov, and the biggest weapon was the B7, an RPG. Of course, when the attack happened and the Jordanian army shelled and there were planes etc., you needed to flee. So the people fled like I told you, and I was one of those people that fled” (PFLP Fighter-H).

In other areas of Jordan, PFLP fighters likewise made use of classic guerrilla warfare tactics with success. A senior PFLP military commander reflected on the tactics the group’s fighters used in Amman against the Jordanian Army and its tanks:

“In Amman there was defense from the militia forces, but defense according to the style of defense in the cities in guerrilla warfare. There were groups of armed clashes against tanks, pouncing on the tanks in a surprise way and then disappearing. The enemy would occupy some positions or squares or streets until the Fedayeen would come out and advance from behind and strike them” (“The Style of Confrontation, Losses, and Defections” (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 31st, 1970).

This description of PFLP units in Amman, whether the most forces were deployed and heaviest fighting took place, indicates that the PFLP engaged in the key elements of guerrilla warfare, particularly through the successful use of ambushes against Jordanian forces as it also did in Irbid.

Further examples from PFLP combat in Amman illustrate the group's units to fight effectively. In Wehdat Camp in southern Amman, PFLP fighters set up barricades, dug in defensive positions in ditches around the camp and away from the group's office, and formed a pursuit squad and a reserves squad to cover emergency supplies.<sup>250</sup> The PFLP's defensive positions in this instance indicate successful use of cover and concealment and dispersion, as the unit spread its positions around the camp in a way that prevented itself from being seen by the attacking Jordanian forces. As a result, they were able to hold off attempts by Jordanian armor to penetrate the camp for several days.<sup>251</sup> One former PFLP fighter that fought in Wehdat Camp during the episode explicitly noted the importance of avoiding concentrated frontal assaults while making use of cover and concealment vis-a-vis the better armed Jordanian forces:

"There was a tank stuck in one of the small alleys, and it was firing in all directions, and we couldn't get rid of it. You would have to either go right up to it, in which case you'd get shot, or you'd have to go around from the main street, and the whole army could see you and you'd certainly get killed...[*What about roofs?*] No, the roofs were exposed to the army positions" (Former PFLP Fighter, in Jamjoum n.d., 96).

In nearby Jebel Ashrafiyeh, one former PFLP fighter described a series of actions he and another fighter from his unit executed, successfully undertaking one ambush, carefully withdrawing, and then launching another ambush from a covered position:

"I put myself in a nominal place, a distance of 150 meters from Ashrafiyeh Hospital and 30 meters from the main street. The armored vehicles came. We had a girl named Nadia carrying an RPG and when they came she moved from house to house and established an ambush position before the armor arrived. And when it arrived she hit four [of them]. The fighters left me there and went to help Nadia withdraw, because behind the armored vehicles were infantry. And it must be that a withdrawal happens under the cover of fire. I was in a room and became by myself...and I said that the place that I am in was

---

<sup>250</sup>Jamjoum n.d., 83; "Testimonials from Fighters in Wehdat" (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, May 1st, 1971.

<sup>251</sup>Author interview, PF-GC Militia Commander; "Testimonials from Fighters in Wehdat" (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, May 1st, 1971.

not appropriate. I took the box of ammunition...in it were 18 bullets, and I advanced with my other leg until I arrived to the Bank Square. I established an ambush position behind a pile of stones at the head of the road overlooking the main street. And in reality I just barely took the square when the army entered. I was stretched behind the stone, and began to strike. Nadia finished and withdrew. She was busy with the armored vehicles, and was hitting them. She returned to us. In reality what I remember is that the army advanced and I struck" ("Testimonials from Fighters in Wehdat" (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, May 1st, 1971).

Finally, the PFLP demonstrated a *capacity for low-level initiative* during the fighting. The group was able to successfully decentralize its military command in Jordan without any adverse consequences. From the regional all the way down to the unit level, the group's commanders were provided with the power to make military and tactical decisions as they saw fit vis-a-vis local developments:

"Amman was divided into sectors and each sector was given a prior mission and the potential axes of advance for the Jordanian Army and the sensitive targets that perhaps if hit would have effect, and the overall plan, in addition to the strength needed for this plan and the coordination between these forces. When the battle began the missions of the implementers were to implement this plan according to the shifting circumstances and according to the daily changing situations, with attempts to change the plans according to changes in the opponent's style" ("Military Assessment of the Ten Red Days in Jordan" (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 24th, 1970).

"Field decisions in a direct clash - these we would decide them on the ground. They shot at you and how you responded. How to attack them, how they attacked you - these were local decisions" (PFLP Commander-X).

The PFLP fighters, moreover, were committed to such decisions, whose authority and responsibility rested with the group's commanders:

"Of course the PFLP office gave us orders in fighting. There was a PFLP official there, and I was committed to his orders. If they failed, we would tell the official. The one who gave the orders was the official in the PFLP office where I was. Success or failure - the responsibility was with the official" (PFLP Fighter-H).

This ability to successfully delegate command was a result of the interpersonal trust present in the PFLP among and between its leaders, commanders, and fighters

- a key product of the group's recruitment process. Indeed, the desire to generate such trust was a significant driver of why the group was so careful in selecting and incorporating its fighters:

“We didn't accept anyone, the Front or the Movement, except after studying him or her, and monitor them. Even when the fida'i work<sup>252</sup> started, we'd take the name and say to reach them, and our people would investigate the person. What if the mukhabarat<sup>253</sup> sent him? The Front didn't take anyone in until after studying them...When you've asked about a girl and you know she's good and her parents are good, you can organize her. So you go to her. You don't take just anyone. Many would come, and we would say 'we don't have an organization' even. You don't just take anyone, there is a huge responsibility, you have to be selective, you need to separate the good from the bad. Not take someone who will spy on you and start giving information” (Former PFLP Fighter, in Jamjoum n.d., 49).

Another fighter interviewed by Jamjoum in his thesis on female PFLP fighters in the Black September conflict corroborated the importance of selectivity and investigation as vital to avoiding adversarial infiltration into the group and providing the conditions for trust in the group:

“The PFLP always worked as a party, even in military and armed work. No one would be allowed in just like that. Maybe some other parties were selective, but we were the hardest when it came to membership. Even during the times of fighting, in the heat of the battle, we wouldn't just take any fighter” (Former PFLP Fighter, in Jamjoum n.d., 75).

Building such interpersonal trust in the PFLP was not only about loyalty to the organization and to one another, but also about competence. As one former PFLP official explained, the reason for such careful and extensive initial selection, screening, and induction procedures at the time in Jordan was because “in the PFLP, loyalty is basic, but competency is also important...you must prove yourself.”<sup>254</sup> This approach

---

<sup>252</sup>As noted previously, “Fida'i” is the singular form of Fedayeen. The interviewee is referring to the beginning of Fedayeen armed action against Israel (and eventually the Jordanians).

<sup>253</sup>As noted in the beginning of the chapter, “mukhabarat” refers to the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), Jordan's main intelligence service.

<sup>254</sup>Author interview, PFLP Official-C.

to building the organization's fighting force on a basis of competency laid the basis for interpersonal trust, which the group was able to use to successfully decentralize its command during the Black September fighting.

### 3.2.3 Effectiveness: Losses Incurred

According to the PLFP's own record, it lost 47 killed in action during Black September.<sup>255</sup> The PFLP had an estimated 1,000-1,5000 full-time fighters,<sup>256</sup> making its KIA during Black September just 3-5% of the group's overall fighting force. When asked what allowed the PFLP to minimize its losses during the Black September fighting relative to the other Fedayeen groups, the group's main military commander responded:

"The use of styles and tactics of defense in cities: firing, disappearance, hiding in houses, evacuating these houses, changing positions, undertaking counterattacks, exploiting the night and the resourcefulness and flexibility, *all of this led to lessening of deaths* [emphasis added]. Also the non-use of fixed defense and the use of mobile defense, building on the Maoist foundation of withdrawing in front of the advancing enemy and then pursuing it when it withdraws and constantly obstructing it" ("The Style of Confrontation, Losses, and Defections" (Arabic), *Al-Hadaf*, October 31st, 1970).

As the commander noted, the group's successful use of mobile warfare, cover and concealment, and withdrawing in the face of an unfavorable balance of forces allowed it to fight effectively against Jordanian forces and minimize its personnel losses in combat.

---

<sup>255</sup>This figure is taken from the official list of martyrs provided on the PFLP's main website, which itself comes from the group's published book *Sijil AlKhalidin (Register of the Immortals)*. See Appendix B.

I note that the deaths figure for the PFLP is lower than that provided by Sayigh in his book (70-80 deaths - see Sayigh 1997, 267). However, I defer to the groups' records themselves over PLO records. Indeed, with Sayigh's figure of 70-80, the PFLP loses between 5-8% of its forces, still just equivalent to Fatah's lower figure of 8%, and still very much consistent with the implications of the two groups' stark differences in terms of tactical proficiency and performance as demonstrated in the previous discussion.

<sup>256</sup>Sayigh 1997, Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents.

### 3.3 DFLP: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness

#### 3.3.1 Deficient Recruitment Practices

After the February 1969 split, a relatively limited number of preexisting PFLP fighters followed Hawatmeh and automatically became DFLP fighters.<sup>257</sup> As noted previously, however, DFLP fighter recruitment had actually begun a few months prior to the February 1969 split from the PFLP, when the “leftist side” of the PFLP that became the DFLP began to “steal” incoming PFLP would-be recruits of leftist tendencies and send them to a separate training camp in Jordan to become fighters for what became the DFLP.<sup>258</sup>

The DFLP itself was open to all who wanted to join as fighters. The lack of selection criteria was a product of both the post-Karameh environment in Jordan, where the competition over recruits incentivized not having any conditions or restrictions for joining as a fighter, and the DFLP’s roots in the split with the PFLP and the resulting need for members.<sup>259</sup> According to a former fighter,

“The race over people was fervent between the organizations in Jordan, who wanted would catch any person there. There was competition between the organizations, Fatah, PF-GC, PFLP, etc. - there was a competition in the direction of who could attract people that were around. *If you wanted to make conditions, you would lose fighters* [emphasis added]” (DFLP Fighter-X).

As a result,

“There were no specific conditions for joining the DFLP. I remember that any person who came to the office could come and say I want to become in the DFLP. Any person that came could register their name, and we would give them an ID card as a member in the DFLP” (DFLP Official-G).

---

<sup>257</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-V, DFLP Fighter-A; Sayigh 1997, 231.

<sup>258</sup> Author interview, DFLP Fighter-X.

It is important here to note that the officials “stealing” would-be fighters for what became the DFLP at this time did not have the same selection restrictions and criteria as their PFLP counterparts (Author interview, DFLP Fighter-X).

<sup>259</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-W.

Besides the lack of selectivity, the recruitment process for fighters into the DFLP was chaotic and bereft of any structural arrangements to deal with incoming members.<sup>260</sup> Unlike the case of the PFLP, there was no interview of or investigation process for would-be fighters, recruits were not required to be recommended by a current member, and there was no trial or induction period.<sup>261</sup> One former DFLP fighter summed up their own recruitment experience and observations of the situation in Jordan at the time:

“There were never any conditions for becoming a fighter in DFLP - it resembled a situation of chaos. When I entered, my friend brought me, I sat, and they did not record my name and I did not complete a form or anything. There was no structural arrangement or administration, nothing” (DFLP Fighter-C).

After joining, all would-be fighters in the DFLP had to undergo an “introductory course” that lasted one month and was essentially a gentle introduction to military training and life as a fighter.<sup>262</sup> As one former fighter recalled, all those who entered this course graduated to the main military training course, implying that this introductory course was not a form of weeding out or screening mechanism.<sup>263</sup> The subsequent basic military training course varied in length from two to five months, and included lessons in handling and using small weapons, such as Kalashnikovs, and instruction in guerrilla warfare tactics.<sup>264</sup> Recruits were trained by individuals from the DFLP and officers from the PLA, as well as leftist officers in the Iraqi forces stationed in Jordan.<sup>265</sup> Yet such training was simplistic, according to one former DFLP official:

“In my opinion, the training of the DFLP was simple. There was no training in tactics or complex operations. According to my observations...and also accord-

---

<sup>260</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Official-G, DFLP Official-J, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-C.

<sup>261</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Fighter-B.

<sup>262</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-B, DFLP Fighter-W.

<sup>263</sup> Author interview, DFLP Fighter-B.

<sup>264</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Official-G, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-B, DFLP Fighter-X.

<sup>265</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-B, DFLP Fighter-X; Sayigh 1997, 231, 236.



ing to, after that, the way people behaved. it is my view that the training was not important training. How to use weapons, etc. - it was not sufficient, like how Fatah sent people to China and Vietnam to train militarily<sup>266</sup>” (DFLP Official-G).

The DFLP placed heavy emphasis on indoctrination, which was often viewed as more important than actual military training and mandatory for all fighters.<sup>267</sup> Indoctrination components included lectures from well-known Marxists, reading and studying materials on the principles of the DFLP, its ideology (Marxism-Leninism), and the Palestinian issue, as well as dialogue and discussions between trainers and trainees about the materials.<sup>268</sup> Yet, the degree of indoctrination varied across individuals - not all DFLP fighters had to study the group’s ideology.<sup>269</sup> As one former DFLP official noted:

“There was an attempt at a sort of ideological indoctrination, but I think it really never was deep enough...If you judge it by the commitment, particularly of the military people, if you judge it by that, it wasn’t all that successful, because people were moving in and out of the organization quite freely and easily” (DFLP Official-J).

As the former official noted, the lack of commitment and motivation among DFLP fighters was manifested in individuals coming and going as they pleased, instead of staying and remaining committed to the group.

These *deficient recruitment practices*, constituted by the lack of selectivity, the absence of any investigation of or induction period for would-be fighters, simple military training, and inconsistent and limited indoctrination, remained in place through 1970, and did not become more rigorous until the years following the organization’s relocation to Lebanon after the Jordanian conflict ended in July 1971.<sup>270</sup>

---

<sup>266</sup>As I showed in the discussion of Fatah’s performance, training in China and Vietnam in fact did not help the group’s combat effectiveness.

<sup>267</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Official-V, DFLP Official-G, DFLP Fighter-B, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Member-A, DFLP Member-C.

<sup>268</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Official-V, DFLP Fighter-C.

<sup>269</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-X

<sup>270</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Cadre-X, DFLP Fighter-X, DFLP Fighter-C.

### 3.3.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution

While in Jordan, the DFLP's command structure consisted of three sectors: northern, middle, and southern.<sup>271</sup> Like Fatah and the PFLP, each sector had a military official who oversaw the units within the sector,<sup>272</sup> and DFLP units were comprised of 15-18 fighters.<sup>273</sup>

When asked about the tactics used by the DFLP in confronting the Jordanian army during Black September, one former fighter simply said that

“There were no tactics. The important thing was that we were confronting, we were confronting this fierce aggression that was attacking us. There were no tactics, we were in the beginning of the revolution. It was not the fighter that was experienced and made a course in Moscow, made a course in Cuba. This was after that. The fighter built himself in Jordan” (DFLP Fighter-W).

The DFLP's task execution mirrored this fighter's recollection of the group's lack of tactical proficiency. The group's commanders and fighters largely failed to follow the traditional *modus operandi* of guerrilla warfare when fighting against Jordanian forces. Rather than engaging in indirect confrontation with the Jordanian Army, DFLP fighters instead attacked Jordanian positions using concentrated frontal assaults, while attempting to hold fixed defensive positions without using cover/concealment or dispersion. As a result of this strategy, the group failed to execute six of the seven tasks<sup>274</sup> and lost a significant portion of its combat personnel during the two weeks of fighting.

---

<sup>271</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Official-G

<sup>272</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Fighter-C, DFLP Official-G

<sup>273</sup> Author interview, DFLP Fighter-W

<sup>274</sup> I was unable to gather or access information on DFLP fighters' abilities in operating weaponry and marksmanship during the Black September fighting, and so code the group's execution on this as “missing.” However, I still conclude that the group had overall poor task execution based on its failures in the other six categories as the following discussion illustrates.

**Table 3.4.** DFLP’s Task Execution During Black September

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	–
Cover and Concealment	No
Dispersion	No
Conduct Ambushes	No
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	No
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

The deficient recruitment practices of the DFLP generated weak and varied shared purpose and indiscipline among the group’s fighters. As noted previously, DFLP fighters received instruction in guerrilla warfare, but such training was simplistic, which had downstream effects for fighter performance. Besides inadequate military training, DFLP fighters seemed to lack the motivation needed for combat:

“I would go to the military bases sometimes to speak with the fighters, and so I saw that they were from among the poor. When you spoke with them about the conflict, you felt that this kind of talk was new for them. In the DFLP bases, there was not a quality of enthusiasm, like a love to fight, an impulsive want...it was not satisfactory” (DFLP Official-G).

A former DFLP fighter corroborated these observations, reflecting on their own experience with indoctrination during training and the varied impact it produced across their fellow trainees:

“The fighter’s spirit is not influenced a lot by politics, in that the only mission is fighting. The nature of his mission is like this: let me be interested in the military side more than the political side. This is the reason, and this guides the self-desire of a person, in that he has a desire to indoctrinate himself and not with an outside book, and who does not have such desire, he does not look at the book. So there are differences from person to person: it depended on the desire and depended on you, if you had the desire to be indoctrinated, the acceptance for indoctrination. There were people with me who did not have an interest in indoctrination. It was not a matter of not being convinced, but rather a matter of not having a desire to read, they did not like to read. So from here there were differences from situation to situation” (DFLP Fighter-B).

Such weak and varied purpose was manifested in the decisions taken by some units of the DFLP to not fight the Jordanian Army during Black September. Most prominent was the decision taken by some members of the DFLP leadership to unilaterally withdraw from the city of Irbid on September 23rd and abandon their defensive positions.<sup>275</sup> This was ostensibly done to move behind Jordanian defensive lines and conduct operations against the regime's forces from such a position.<sup>276</sup> In reality, the DFLP contingent withdrew to Deraa in Syria and refrained from further fighting, according to a former fighter that was part of the retreating unit.<sup>277</sup>

DFLP fighters were ostensibly more disciplined relative to Fatah's combatants, as the group had a basic code of conduct for fighters that was often enforced with punishments.<sup>278</sup> However, this code was not comprehensive, as it lacked key instructions:

“With regard to indoctrination in relations with the people and how to interact with the other side, in the street, in all places - this indoctrination was not present” (DFLP Member-C).

In other words, some DFLP members received indoctrination in the group's Marxist-Leninist ideology as noted previously, but the group's fighters in general were not given direction on how to engage with civilians and certain standards of conduct that must be met.

As a result of this lack of discipline, widespread behavioral excesses by DFLP fighters took place both before and during Black September, and were often encouraged by the DFLP leadership and left unsanctioned. The DFLP notoriously raised the slogan of “all authority to the resistance” and “no authority above the authority of the resistance” throughout 1969 and 1970, and its fighters and members would paint these slogans on the walls of government buildings and, in particular, on the

---

<sup>275</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 228-229.

<sup>276</sup>Ibid.

<sup>277</sup>Author interview, DFLP Official-G.

<sup>278</sup>Author interviews, DFLP Commander-R, DFLP Fighter-W, DFLP Fighter-B.

sides of mosques in the Kingdom.<sup>279</sup> In addition, DFLP fighters would often take over mosques in the Kingdom, raise the red flag on the minarets, post pictures of Lenin on the walls, and play his speeches from minaret loudspeakers.<sup>280</sup> Such actions, which were encouraged by the DFLP leadership,<sup>281</sup> deeply offended the conservative religious sensitivities of Jordan's population. In the words of a former DFLP official, "it is my opinion that this cut us off from Jordanian society, in that you could not enter and put a picture of Lenin in a mosque."<sup>282</sup>

Given this weak/varied shared purpose and indiscipline among fighters, it is thus no surprise that during Black September the DFLP fought using largely conventional tactics, which showed in the types of actions the group's fighters undertook during the two weeks of fighting. Exposed, *concentrated frontal assaults* were an element of this strategy - one former fighter described such an action near Hummar Palace located outside of Amman:

"The fighting between us and the Jordanian special forces - they were positioned in front of us, and the clashes began. There was fierce resistance. The fighting was face-to-face, the distance was about 15 meters...they were positioned below. Here the clashes were face-to-face, but they had cover with armor on their base, and we were exposed. Even at that time, *name removed* confronted a tank with a Gorynuv machine gun. He fired at them and they fired at him, and they told him to surrender, and he said he would not surrender. So there were several exchanges of fire, and the last thing was fire from a 150mm machine gun from the tank, which fired and killed him" (DFLP Fighter-W).

Such concentrated frontal assaults devoid of any use of *cover and concealment* or *dispersion* by the DFLP were undertaken in other areas of the Kingdom, and unsurprisingly had similar disastrous consequences. In northern Jordan, DFLP fighters attempted to take the highest hill in Eidoon village south of Irbid, again employing a concentrated frontal assault on JAA soldiers manning the Army's artillery position

---

<sup>279</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Member-C, DFLP Official-G, DFLP Fighter-C.

<sup>280</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G; Sayigh 1997, 244.

<sup>281</sup> Author interview, DFLP Member-C.

<sup>282</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G

there.<sup>283</sup> After taking heavy artillery fire, the DFLP fighters were forced to withdraw from the area.<sup>284</sup>

Elsewhere in the north, a group of DFLP fighters was ordered, along with a group of Saiqa fighters, to establish an ambush position near the Irbid-Ajloun-Jerash crossroads.<sup>285</sup> Upon arriving at the crossroads, they encountered JAA vehicles carrying 500mm machine guns. It became clear the DFLP unit was unable to *conduct ambushes*, because instead of establishing such a position, the unit attacked the JAA contingent. It were immediately decimated through artillery, tank, and machine gun fire from the Jordanian Army's 40th Armored Brigade. As a result, six fighters from the joint force were killed, and the surviving fighters were held in position for three days before finally withdrawing from the area.<sup>286</sup> Rather than using the ambush tactic that the unit had been ordered to employ, the DFLP contingent instead undertook a concentrated frontal assault on Jordanian forces despite being thoroughly outnumbered and outgunned. Consequently, the was trapped for three days and took the aforementioned casualties as a result of the failure to *withdraw when outgunned and outnumbered*.

In Ajloun, a unit of DFLP fighters had taken up a position at the organization's "Cuba Base" in the valley immediately west of the town since June 1970.<sup>287</sup> Prior to the Black September fighting, a Jordanian artillery position in the Ajloun (AlRabd) Castle located above the hills west of the town had intermittently shelled the group's position, and resumed this activity after the JAA operations began on 17 September.<sup>288</sup> Despite this awareness and previous experience of the dangers of remaining below the castle in clear sight of the Jordanian artillery position, the DFLP group

---

<sup>283</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 179.

<sup>284</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-C.

<sup>285</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, 429.

<sup>286</sup>Ibid.

<sup>287</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-B.

<sup>288</sup>Author interview, DFLP Fighter-B.

stayed in the valley after the start of the fighting and the resumption of the shelling from above:

“We were, in the position in Ajloun, we were 25 fighters. We had a position, a base, we would sit in the cave, the base was in a cave. We were in the valley, the army was in the castle. This was before September, and in September, the same thing happened: we were shelled. There was an artillery vehicle in the castle, and this traveled a good distance - it could strike Jerash and strike Sakib, strike the whole forest...when Black September first began, they shelled our position from the AlRabd Castle” (DFLP Fighter-B).

While this DFLP unit indeed tried to make use of the cave for cover from Jordanian fire, the attempted cover proved futile and, along with the unit’s failure to use dispersed formations and instead concentrate in the cave, led to it taking casualties as a result of the persistent shelling.<sup>289</sup>

The DFLP’s poor task execution in middle and northern Jordan was mirrored in the group’s combat actions in southern Jordan during Black September. A DFLP unit commander led a contingent of the group’s fighters and armed individuals from other Fedayeen organizations in a negotiated withdrawal from the city of Kerak a few days after start of the Black September fighting.<sup>290</sup> The forces withdrew to Wadi Mujib, a river that runs into the Dead Sea located north of Kerak.

The DFLP contingent and others concentrated their forces in the narrow river valley despite facing intense fire and shelling from Jordanian Army units and armed local tribesmen positioned above on either side of the valley. Despite classic guerrilla warfare dictating the use of dispersed formations, cover and concealment, and immediate withdrawals from direct engagements with an unfavorable balance of power, the fighters remained in the exposed river valley for five days fighting the local Bedouin forces and army, who eventually called in Hawker Hunter planes to shell the fighters’

---

<sup>289</sup> Author interview, DFLP Fighter-B.

<sup>290</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Cadre-X, Civilian-C. It is important to note that this withdrawal was not in response to an imbalance of forces, but rather the result of negotiations spearheaded by local tribal leaders and the Governor of Kerak to avoid instigating any fighting in the city (Author interview, Civilian-C).

positions.<sup>291</sup> On the fifth day, the field command decided to finally withdraw from the valley after having taken multiple losses and injuries among its fighters.<sup>292</sup> Reflecting on the fighting, one of the DFLP field commanders present in Wadi Mujib reflected on the futility of this decision to stay and fight exposed:

“In Wadi Mujib, it was a battle and it was fighting and it was a direct confrontation with the Jordanian army and tribal men...it was a difficult position because there was no natural cover - we were fighting the form of exposed fighting, without cover” (DFLP Cadre-X).

Even where the DFLP had tactical success with concentrated frontal assaults on Jordanian positions, the successes were more the result of Army withdrawals rather than the fighting ability of the group - much like Fatah. In the north, a group of DFLP fighters took over an abandoned Jordanian Army camp, the Rahbe camp, located on the outskirts of Irbid. A DFLP fighter that participated in the takeover described his unit's actions vis-a-vis the camp:

“No, there was no fighting at the Rahbe camp. When we entered it, there was no Jordanian army - the Jordanian army had withdrawn. Those who advanced before us had driven out the Jordanian army, and most of the Jordanian army that was there, most of them were ‘nationalist’ - all of them surrendered their weapons and joined the revolution - they defected from the army and took control of the camp....We came and occupied without fighting” (DFLP Fighter-C).

Finally, the DFLP did not *demonstrate a capacity for low-level initiative* in Jordan during the Black September fighting. The group did not attempt to fully delegate decision-making to all of its field commanders. The result was that some DFLP sector commanders received specific orders to attack particular locations,<sup>293</sup> while other commanders received orders to not hold or fight for positions,<sup>294</sup> while

---

<sup>291</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Cadre-X, Civilian-C.

<sup>292</sup> Author interview, DFLP Cadre-X.

<sup>293</sup> Sayigh 1997, 262-263

<sup>294</sup> Author interview, DFLP Cadre-X.



still other commanders received complete power of decision-making.<sup>295</sup>

This failure to fully delegate command was a direct result of the lack of interpersonal trust that existed at the highest and lowest levels of the group. At the former level, a lack of trust existed between the DFLP's leader, Nayef Hawatmeh, and his subordinates and sector commanders that reached its peak during the Black September fighting:

“During the fighting, Hawatmeh was apparently not in close contact with other PDFLP leaders, and interpreted their decisions as attempts to undermine his authority” (Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 39).

At the level of fighters, interpersonal trust was likewise absent. This stemmed from incompetence that was the product of inchoate military training and indoctrination, along with the lack of selectivity vis-a-vis recruits, that altogether produced a situation where fighters did not even know one another's names:

“I remember that when I entered the DFLP, no one knew my name, and this continued for a long period where people did not know my name in the DFLP until we entered party cells and had to travel to Europe, Russia and it became necessary to know one's name...There was a situation of attractiveness in Jordan, when lots of people came to join. Because of that, there was no auditing or recommendation of potential members - even registration, as in a form, was not precise. In Jordan, the ranks of the DFLP were more open” (DFLP Fighter-C).

That command was not delegated is therefore unsurprising given the lack of interpersonal trust between and among officials, commanders, and fighters in the DFLP.

### **3.3.3 Effectiveness: Losses Incurred**

Like Fatah, the DFLP's use of a conventional strategy vis-a-vis Jordanian forces had disastrous results for its ability to avoid taking losses. According to the group's own published records of martyrs, the DFLP lost 44 killed during the two weeks of fighting in September 1970.<sup>296</sup> The group was estimated at between 200-300 fighters at

---

<sup>295</sup> Author interview, DFLP Commander-R.

<sup>296</sup> Suleiman and Hammadeh 2012

the start of Black September<sup>297</sup> - indicating that it had between 15-22% of its overall fighting force killed in combat. While the Jordanians indeed used the full brunt of their forces during Black September, the fact that the DFLP perhaps lost nearly one-fourth of its total fighters is significant, particularly when compared to Fatah's losses and especially when compared to the PFLP's KIA figure. A lingering concern might be that the DFLP's significantly smaller size makes this measure somewhat misleading, but its proportionally higher losses are in accordance with the group's failure to successfully execute any of the tasks.

## 4 Alternative Explanations

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I outlined three potential explanations for insurgent effectiveness. The first potential explanation concerned the balance of forces or capabilities, with the implication that an insurgent group with more fighters and/or higher material capabilities should be more effective than a group with relatively less of those assets. The second potential alternative explanation concerned external support - the notion that more outside assistance for an insurgent group would make it more effective in combat. Finally, we might expect groups with more politicized ideologies, like Marxism-Leninism, motivate fighters more than in scenarios where they are absent, and therefore result in higher military effectiveness.

### 4.1 Favorable Balance of Forces

Given its overwhelming advantages in numbers and materiel, the favorable balance of forces hypothesis would predict Fatah as outperforming the PFLP and the DFLP. Fatah indeed had 4,500-5,000 fighters to the PFLP's 1,000-1,500 and DFLP's 200-300, and was the only Fedayeen organization at the time of Black September to have

---

<sup>297</sup>Sayigh 1997, along with Brown 1970, Jordanian Ministry of Defense 1970, Quandt 1971, Mousa 1996, and State Department/CIA documents

field artillery, recoilless rifles, mortars, and a mobile force of trucks with mounted machine guns, while the other two groups just had small and medium weapons and the equivalent of lightly-armed infantry.<sup>298</sup> Indeed, the PFLP's and DFLP's biggest weapon was a grenade launcher.<sup>299</sup>

Yet the PFLP clearly outperformed Fatah, successfully executing all seven tasks during the Black September fighting. Conversely, despite its greater firepower and size, Fatah failed to fight effectively during the two weeks of combat with Jordanian forces, in particular demonstrating an inability to operate its weaponry and overall using a more conventional strategy that generated relatively high casualties. As will be demonstrated in the Oman case, simply having heavy weaponry does not necessarily make a group more effective - what matters is being able to use such weaponry in a competent manner, and such competence is only produced through effective recruitment and training.

## 4.2 External Support

The hypothesis based on levels of external support would predict that Fatah should be more effective than the PFLP and DFLP, given the extensive support it had received from third parties at the time of the Jordanian conflict. These parties included Egypt, Libya, Syria, Algeria, China, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and also individual donations from civilian populations in states in the Gulf and North Africa.<sup>300</sup> This

---

<sup>298</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Fighter-M, DFLP Fighter-B, DFLP Fighter-W, PFLP Fighter-X, PF-GC Militia Commander-C, PF-GC Fighter-C, Saiqa Commander-V, JAA Official-X; Abu Daoud 1999, 354, 357; Sayigh 1997, 182. Saiqa also had similar heavy weaponry to Fatah (Sayigh 1997, 185).

<sup>299</sup> Author interviews, DFLP Official-G; PFLP Fighter-X

<sup>300</sup> Author interview, Fatah Official-N; Natour 2014, 131; Sayigh 1997, 234; Mousa 1996, 265; Quandt 1971, 26; NR Research Memorandum, "North Africa Comes Alive to the Palestinian Cause," January 17th, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; "Palestine Guerilla Training Activity in the Benghazi Area," Benghazi to Secstate, April 21st, 1970, RG59/Subject-Numeric Files/Political & Defense/Box 2042; INR Research Memorandum, "Communist China: Peking's Approach to the Arab World," October 23rd, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; INR Research Memorandum, "Communist China/Middle East: Peking

third party support included financing, weapons and ammunition, provision of formal military training courses, and assistance in developing an intelligence capacity - advantages the PFLP and DFLP either lacked or had in very small quantities.<sup>301</sup> For instance, China provided Fatah with AK-47s, RPG-2 and RPG-7 anti-tank rocket launchers, 60mm and 82mm mortars, and 130mm artillery rockets “in quantities sufficient for 2000 men in 1968, for another 7,000 in 1969, and for 14,000 in 1970.”<sup>302</sup>

For the PFLP, it received some weapons and financing from Libya, Iraq, Sudan, and China, while an initial group of 100 guerrillas were trained in Egypt in 1968 (though Egypt quickly cut off ties thereafter).<sup>303</sup> The DFLP received no external support until mid-1969, and after that got some financing from Syria and very limited weapons from Czechoslovakia.<sup>304</sup> The DFLP did receive material support from Fatah after its founding, as the latter sought to weaken the PFLP.<sup>305</sup> Saiqa also provided arms to the DFLP, and the PLA helped with weapons as well as training in Jordan.<sup>306</sup> One of the group’s that the DFLP absorbed, the Popular Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (POLP), received some training in China for 15 mem-

---

Hopes to Prolong Jordanian Crisis,” September 22, 1970, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 23 JORDAN; “Activities in Cyrenaica in Support of Al-Fatah,” Tripoli to Secstate, June 7th, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1787.

<sup>301</sup> Author interviews, Fatah Official-M, Fatah Official-L, Fatah Official-N; INR Research Memorandum, “North Africa Comes Alive to the Palestinian Cause,” January 17th, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; “Palestine Guerrilla Training Activity in the Benghazi Area,” Benghazi to Secstate, April 21st, 1970, RG59/Subject-Numeric Files/Political & Defense/Box 2042; INR Research Memorandum, “Communist China: Peking’s Approach to the Arab World,” October 23rd, 1969, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 13-10 ARAB/Box 1786; INR Research Memorandum, “Communist China/Middle East: Peking Hopes to Prolong Jordanian Crisis,” September 22, 1970, NA/RG59/DOSCF 1967-1969/POL 23 JORDAN; Sayigh 1997, 180.

<sup>302</sup> Sayigh 1997, 182. Also see Natour 2014, 131 on Chinese-supplied weapons to Fatah during this time period.

<sup>303</sup> Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 42; Shlaim 2009, 325; Sayigh 1997, 235-236; Mousa 1996, 267; Quandt 1971, 22, 26.

<sup>304</sup> Author interview, DFLP Official-G; Quandt 1971, 22, 26; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 48; Mousa 1996, 271.

<sup>305</sup> Author interviews, PF-GC Fighter-A, PFLP Official-D, PFLP Official-C, DFLP Official-G, PFLP Fighter-X, GID Official-T; Directorate of Intelligence 1971, 50.

<sup>306</sup> Sayigh 1997, 231

bers.<sup>307</sup> However, the quality and quantity of external support for the PFLP and DFLP paled in comparison to what Fatah was receiving from multiple states, yet the PFLP outperformed Fatah during Black September.

### 4.3 Ideology

We might expect insurgent groups with politicized or revolutionary ideologies (such as Marxist-Leninism or Ba'athism) to fight more effectively as a result of having fighters that are more highly motivated from indoctrination in such an ideology. In the context of this case study, the implication is that the PFLP and DFLP should be more effective than Fatah, given their Marxist-Leninist orientations and Fatah's lack of such an ideology.

This explanation is correct in predicting Fatah's ineffectiveness and the PFLP's effectiveness. Yet the DFLP, despite having the same Marxist-Leninist orientation as the PFLP, was largely ineffective. If we consider the two groups' recruitment practices, the reason for the divergence becomes clear: ideology must be more than just an attribute of a group - it needs to be successfully inculcated among a group's combatants to have a positive impact on combat motivation.<sup>308</sup> In this vein, recruitment practices are what matter for leveraging the effect of such ideologies, and so on its own as an organizational attribute cannot account for differences in effectiveness across insurgent groups in combat.

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a first test of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 in order to establish its internal validity. Using data gathered through extensive fieldwork combined with secondary sources, I demonstrated how the relative rigor of

---

<sup>307</sup> Author interview, POLP Official-D; Sayigh 1997, 231

<sup>308</sup> See Parkinson 2017 on this important distinction.

insurgent recruitment practices shaped the performance of Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP during the Black September fighting episode of the Jordanian Civil War, which constituted the Guerrilla stage of an insurgency. Table 3.5 summarizes the findings from the analysis of effectiveness during Black September.

**Table 3.5.** Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Jordan

<b>Group</b>	<b>Recruitment Practices</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>
Fatah	Deficient →	Failed Task Execution
PFLP	Robust →	Successful Task Execution
DFLP	Deficient →	Failed Task Execution

In all three instances, the nature of a group's recruitment practices shaped its effectiveness during the fighting episode. As a result of its deficient recruitment practices constituted by a lack of selectivity or any investigation and induction processes for would-be fighters, along with inconsistent military training and no required indoctrination for recruits, Fatah fought ineffectively during the Black September fighting, particularly compared to the PFLP. The group failed to successfully execute any of the seven tasks during the fighting and instead used exposed conventional warfare tactics, which contributed to it losing 8-9% of its overall fighting force KIA. As the previous discussion indicated, Fatah's ineffectiveness was the result of a lack of shared purpose, indiscipline, and the absence of interpersonal trust within the group.

Conversely, the PFLP had robust recruitment practices constituted by clear and consistently applied selection criteria, investigation of would-be fighters along with a trial and induction period, consistent training in the operational aims and tactics of guerrilla warfare, and mandatory political indoctrination in the group's Marxist-Leninist ideology. These practices generated the uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust needed to successfully execute all seven tasks. This allowed the group to fight effectively against the Jordanian army while minimizing its KIA to just 3-5% of its overall forces during the fighting.

Finally, like Fatah, the DFLP had deficient recruitment practices that were constituted by the absence of consistent selection criteria and no investigation of or trial/induction process for would-be fighters, along with consistent but inchoate indoctrination and “simplistic” military training. These practices generated weak and varied shared purpose across fighters, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust. The result was the DFLP’s failure to successfully execute nearly all of the tasks and, like Fatah, its use of a conventional strategy that led the group to lose 15-22% KIA of its overall forces during Black September.

Having confirmed the internal validity of the theoretical framework in this chapter, I next turn to assessing its dynamism through examination of insurgent effectiveness during the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975).

# Chapter 4

## The Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975)

### 1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined insurgent effectiveness across three groups during the same time period of the Jordanian conflict, which allowed me to establish the initial internal validity of the theoretical framework. In this chapter, I demonstrate the dynamic nature of the framework by showing how it can account for varying insurgent effectiveness over time within a single group. To do so, I draw on archival documents, historical accounts, and memoirs in English and Arabic to analyze the effectiveness of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) during the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-1975).

The chapter begins by discussing how I test the theory in the Oman case, along with an overview of the sources used in the chapter. I then provide a historical background of the Dhofar Rebellion, highlighting the key events and developments during the conflict, introducing the PFLOAG, and providing a military overview of the con-



flict. I then analyze the variation in recruitment practices and effectiveness over the course of the conflict, followed by an examination of the three potential alternative explanations vis-a-vis the Oman case.

## 1.1 Testing the Theory in Oman

To briefly recap, the theory predicts that insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices will ultimately fight more effectively across the possible stages of conflict than those with deficient recruitment practices. This is a result of three mechanisms generated by robust recruitment practices: uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust. These enable a group's fighters to successfully execute the tasks that constitute effective fighting in a given stage. With deficient recruitment practices, insurgent groups instead generate no or weak/varied shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust (or even mistrust) among their commanders and fighters. As a result, such groups cannot successfully execute the tasks needed to fight effectively during the possible stages of conflict.

The case of the Dhofar Rebellion enables me to probe the theory's dynamism by examining temporal variation in the variables of interest. During the conflict, the main insurgent group, the PFLOAG,<sup>1</sup> varied in the degree to which its recruitment practices were robust. From the group's formation in 1964 until its second conference in September 1968, the PFLOAG was essentially a merger of different strands of Dhofar opposition that themselves had different recruitment practices. On top of these inconsistencies in selection and incorporation were tensions from the very beginning

---

<sup>1</sup>As noted in Chapter 2, the group underwent several name changes throughout its existence. From its official announced founding in June 1965 until the group's second congress in September 1968, it was called the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF). After the September 1968 conference, the group's name was changed to the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG). After June 12th, 1970, the name was changed to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG). In 1974, the group changed its name to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). Because the group's acronym was PFLOAG for the longest period of time during the conflict, I use this to denote the group for most of the chapter.

between nationalists who purely wanted to secede from Oman and Marxists who wanted broader liberation of the Arabian Gulf. Upon the ascension to power of the National Liberation Front in South Yemen in late 1967, the Marxist faction within the PFLOAG won out and purged the nationalists and their fighters after the group's conference in September 1968. After the conference, recruitment became selective and comprehensive, as the group drew explicitly on Marxist-Leninism to guide training and indoctrination of its fighters at the PFLOAG's training camp in Hawf, South Yemen.

These robust recruitment practices continued until September 1970, when the start of forced recruitment combined with a mutiny within the PFLOAG over the ideological changes led to violent infighting and summary executions of the mutineers and purges of those suspected to be against the changes. In May 1972, things got worse for the PFLOAG when the Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF) conducted airstrikes that destroyed the PFLOAG's training camp in Hawf. This forced the group to subsequently rely on dispersed locations and inconsistent methods for its military training and political indoctrination. These deficient recruitment practices continued through the end of major fighting in December 1975.

In addition to constituting a case that enables me to probe the theory's dynamism by examining temporal variation in the variables of interest within a single group, the Dhofar Rebellion constitutes a second case of a conflict in the Guerrilla stage for its entirety.<sup>2</sup> Like Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP in the Jordanian conflict, the PFLOAG had the goal of overthrowing the incumbent government.<sup>3</sup> Because I examine one insurgent group in this case study, concerns about incumbent discrimination

---

<sup>2</sup>As I show later in the chapter, the PFLOAG did attempt an unwarranted switch to a conventional strategy in 1972, which had predictably disastrous consequences for the group.

<sup>3</sup>I note that this goal was consistent but varied from initially being the sole ultimate goal of the PFLOAG starting with its founding in 1964, to constituting the first goal towards the ultimate aim of liberating the entire Arabian Gulf in 1968, to finally again being the sole ultimate goal of the group after 1974.

vis-a-vis multiple insurgent groups and/or variation in exposure to or participation in combat across insurgent groups do not apply. Finally, unlike the Jordan case where recruitment proceeded largely uninterrupted save for Israeli airstrikes, the PFLOAG was largely forced to recruit in the face of constant Omani and British attempts to disrupt their operations through the use of force and infiltration. As with the next case study of Eritrea in Chapter 5, this feature of the Oman case helps to demonstrate the theory's ability to explain effectiveness in an instance more akin to many civil wars where insurgent groups largely mobilize and operate while facing the constant threat of annihilation by incumbent forces.

### 1.1.1 Sources Used

To analyze and assess the fortunes of the PFLOAG, I rely on archival research, personal memoirs of combatants, and secondary historical sources in English and Arabic<sup>4</sup> which themselves drew on firsthand field and archival research on the rebellion. As the discussion in the next section demonstrates, the British had an extensive military and political presence in Dhofar dating to well before the rebellion began in 1964. This naturally generated thousands of official documents and reports containing information on the fighting and the PFLOAG, as well as weekly situation reports about British operations and combat with the insurgents. Through Archives Unbound online, I was able to access digitized versions of these files on the Dhofar Rebellion after 1971 from the British National Archives (BNA) at Kew in London. For files before 1971, I draw on the collection of British documents contained in Anita Burdett's two edited volumes, *Records of Oman, 1961-1965* and *Records of Oman, 1966-1971*. In addition to UK documents, I also personally gathered declassified USG diplomatic and intelligence documents at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park during a visit in June 2015.

---

<sup>4</sup>For Arabic language sources, I use my own English translation of the original text.

Besides declassified documents, many British officers and soldiers that were participants in the fighting during the rebellion have written memoirs and articles that document their time in the Sultanate and participation in combat. For instance, a few squadrons of the British Special Air Service (SAS) participated in the latter stages of the conflict, which has resulted in the production of dozens of memoirs by former SAS troops that cover their time in Dhofar and provide details on the nature of combat and PFLOAG strategies, operations, and tactics. Granted, one must take these memoirs with a grain of salt given the pervasive orientalism extant within them and distant positions from which these servicemen were in when in Dhofar, which together lead them to collectivize the PFLOAG based on misperceptions in many instances.<sup>5</sup> However, they are useful as sources of information on how the PFLAOG fought in combat engagements at the operational and tactical levels.

In addition to these firsthand accounts, I draw on secondary historical sources in English and Arabic that themselves relied on firsthand interviews with participants from the conflict and/or extensive archival research at repositories in the UK and Oman. I also use press reporting and articles from the time period, which often included key details on the PFLOAG resulting from journalists' visits to the liberated areas of Dhofar during the conflict.

## **2 The Dhofar Rebellion (1964-1975)**

### **2.1 Context and Background**

The Dhofar Rebellion was fought from 1964-1975 between the PFLOAG and the Sultanate's Armed Forces (SAF), the latter of whom was later joined by squadrons

---

<sup>5</sup>As the historian Abdulrazzaq Takriti notes, "...in much of the popular literature, especially the memoirs of British servicemen, the fantastical notion of a grand communist plot to overrun the Gulf is often promoted. This was, of course, far from true..." (Takriti 2013, 128).

of the British Special Air Service (SAS) in September 1970; a Jordanian engineering unit and later the Jordanian Army's 91st Special Forces Battalion in March 1975; and an Iranian military presence that ultimately evolved into a 2,900-strong Battle Group in late 1974. Most accounts of the conflict set its starting date as mid-1964, when a tribal sheikh who was later associated with the insurgents, Musallim bin Nufl, began to sabotage and attack British outposts in the province.<sup>6</sup> While most secondary sources have the conflict ending in December 1975 after the PFLOAG was cleared from its remaining strongholds in Dhofar, the group continued to conduct sporadic operations in the province until May 20, 1979.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this case study, I examine the period from the early 1960s, when the DLF began to form, until December 1975, when major combat operations officially ended in Dhofar and the majority of the PFLOAG surrendered or fled across the border into South Yemen.<sup>8</sup>

The 11-year conflict stimulated significant political and military changes in Dhofar and Oman more broadly. The most significant was a change in Sultanate leadership on July 23rd, 1970, when Qaboos overthrew his father, Sultan Said bin Taimur, in a palace coup with the help of the British.<sup>9</sup> Besides a new ruler, the SAF underwent a rapid expansion in its size, capabilities, and geographic coverage, primarily as a result of the requirements for prosecuting the war in Dhofar. Indeed, J.E. Peterson argues that the Dhofar Rebellion served "to forge the expansion of the SAF's combat and support capabilities, as well as to extend SAF responsibilities to the southern part of

---

<sup>6</sup>Peterson 2007; Price 1975; Takriti 2013, etc. However, bin Nufl technically began his attacks in April 1963 ("The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; Peterson 2007, 189).

<sup>7</sup>Peterson 2007, 487; Takriti 2013, 308.

<sup>8</sup>Peterson 2007, 486; Jeapes 2005

<sup>9</sup>Takriti 2013, 177-181, 188-193. As Takriti notes, only recently have British individuals that were in Oman at the time and involved in the coup openly admitted British involvement and support. The British were increasingly frustrated with Sultan Said's refusal to take effective steps they viewed as necessary to better combat the insurgents in Dhofar, as well as general frustration with his lack of interest in developing Oman.

Oman.”<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 4.1.** Map of Oman (1979)  
*Source: University of Texas-Austin Libraries*



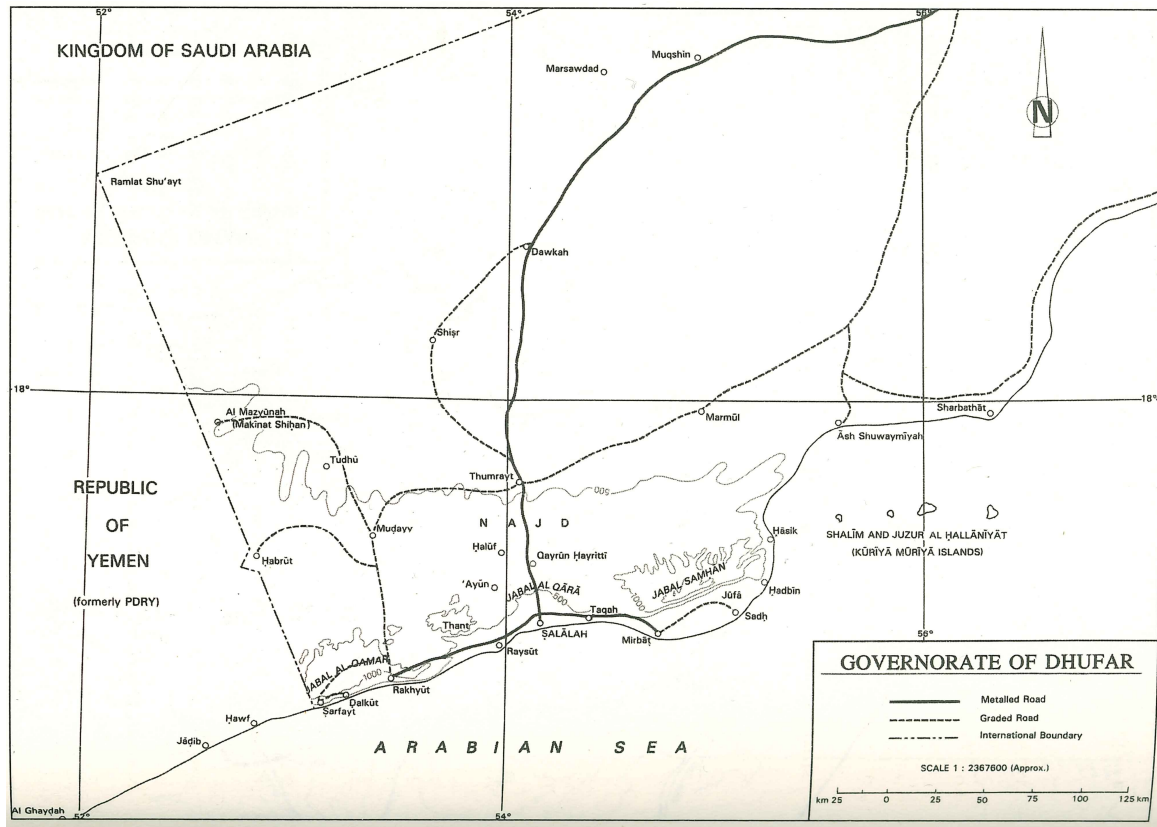
With the exception of some related incidents in northern Oman around June 1971 and skirmishes in the eastern part of South Yemen during the second half of the conflict, the majority of the fighting related to the rebellion took place in the Dhofar Province of Oman, the country’s southernmost geographical unit. The province is 38,000 square miles of mostly desert, save for a stretch of plains between the area’s

<sup>10</sup>Peterson 2007, 183

mountains that run along the province's 200-mile coastline.<sup>11</sup> The Dhofari Mountains consist of three main ranges, Jebel Samahan, Jebel Al-Qarra, and Jebel Al-Qamar, which reach a high peak of about 5,500 feet (see Figure 4.2).<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4.2.** Map of Dhofar (1979)

*Source: J.E. Peterson, Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy. London (2007): Sagi Books. Reproduced with permission of The Licensor through PLSclear.*



The plain of Salalah, which sits between Jebel Al-Qarra and the ocean, is the only fertile area in the province. This is primarily a result of the yearly monsoon season in Dhofar, which is unique to both the province and the entire Arabian Peninsula,

<sup>11</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 33-34

<sup>12</sup>al-'Amri 2004, 31-32; "Some Facts and Figures on Dhofar," August 1972, BNA/FCO 8/1846.

and comes by way of the Indian Ocean.<sup>13</sup> During the season, which lasts from May to September each year, Jebel Al-Qarra becomes flush with vegetation, waterfalls, ponds, and jungles as a result of the consistent rain and permanent mist.<sup>14</sup> While having extensive benefits for habitation, the monsoon (and particularly the mist) severely restricts visibility and movement when combined with the myriad of caves existing in the mountains and the steep nature of the mountains' southern slopes, called the "Jebel" for shorthand.<sup>15</sup> As a result of this, the majority of the population of Dhofar was concentrated in the central area of the province during the rebellion.<sup>16</sup>

This physical geography of the province had implications for both sides in terms of how the conflict was fought during its 11 years:

"SAF movements on the Jabal were severely restricted during the monsoon... Monsoon operations were confined to small patrols, night ambushes on tracks and water points, cordons and searches on Salalah Plain, and escorts along the Midway Road. But insurgent activities were similarly restricted and engagements were minimal until after the monsoon" (Peterson 2007, 205).

"The Dhufari revolution...was dually shaped and constrained by structural factors, by the determinants of physical and human actuality. The struggle against Anglo-Sultanic rule was both enabled and limited by the surrounding material realities. The fastness of the highlands, the spread of caves, the thickness of wild fig and tamarind forests, and the cloak of the monsoon mist, all afforded perfect cover for the revolutionaries. But the countryside was not sufficiently productive to support a long-term war effort. Water was available but not abundant. Livestock herds were profuse but vulnerable to attack. The soil was fertile in places, barren in others, and mostly uncultivated. Thus, waterholes had to be regularly safeguarded and accessed, livestock protected from army raids, and staple foods imported and safely transported to fields of operation. Popular support in the highlands guaranteed full access to village resources, but the low density of the population and the smallness of settlements rendered the revolutionaries vulnerable. Comprising a substantial percentage of the tiny

---

<sup>13</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 34; al-'Amri 2004, 32

<sup>14</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 34; McKeown 1981, 26; Peterson 2007, 184; "The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6

<sup>15</sup>"Some Facts and Figures on Dhofar," August 1972, BNA/FCO 8/1846; Peterson 2007, 184. "Najd" is the shorthand for the mountains' northern slopes ("Some Facts and Figures on Dhofar," August 1972, BNA/FCO 8/1846).

<sup>16</sup>Peterson 2007, 184; Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572.



population, they had no hope of dissolving amongst the villagers ‘like fish in water.’ In that respect at least, their cover was thin” (Takriti 2013, 84).

Besides its physical geography, the social geography of Dhofar also distinguishes it from the rest of Oman. At the start of the rebellion, the province was significantly underdeveloped. Sultan Said bin Taimur treated it like his personal property, and no infrastructural development was undertaken in the province until after 1970, when Sultan Said was overthrown.<sup>17</sup> No industrial or commercial opportunities were available to Dhofaris, and there were no schools in the province at the start of the conflict.<sup>18</sup> The population of Dhofar was also distinct from the rest of Oman. For instance, significant parts of the province’s population had a first language that was not Arabic. Instead, languages such as Shahri and Mehri were spoken, which stem from those spoken in the ancient Southern Arabian kingdoms of Ma’in, Saba’ and Himyar.<sup>19</sup> As a result, thousands of Dhofaris migrated to other countries in the Gulf in search of both work and education. This would have significant consequences for the Sultan, as these Dhofari expatriates eventually came to constitute the core of the PFLOAG.

## **2.2 The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG)**

This outflow of Dhofaris to the Gulf began in the 1940s, and was in part stimulated by the Gulf oil boom.<sup>20</sup> In the ensuing two decades, these expatriates were exposed to “new paradigms of political thought and experience of wide-scale political action.”<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Peterson 2007, 186.

<sup>18</sup>Rabi 2006, 189-191; Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572. For instance, the Sultan intentionally excluded local labor from working for the Dhofar oil company in the 1950s, instead forcing the company to import foreign workers (Cleveland 1971, 96). For excellent information on development in Dhofar before and during this time period, see Janzen 1986.

<sup>19</sup>Peterson 2007, 185; Cleveland 1971, 95; Takriti 2013, 40

<sup>20</sup>Peterson 2007, 186; Takriti 2013, 49; Halliday 1974, 314-315

<sup>21</sup>Takriti 2013, 49

In the Gulf, the 1950s were a time of nationalist and ideological political action, exhibited by organizations such as the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM).<sup>22</sup> Dhofaris in the region also began to mobilize in opposition to the Sultan during the Jebel AlAkhdar rebellion that took place in northern Oman from 1957-1959.<sup>23</sup> As the rebellion went on, Dhofaris began to organize local groupings in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Sharjah.<sup>24</sup> As Takriti notes, these were not formal organizations but still had an aura of mobilization:

“[s]ecrecy was of paramount importance and members swore an oath to it over the Quran, for there was much fear at the time...Yet these were not ‘organized’ in the strict sense of the term, as they lacked charters, political programmes, or cadre registers. Instead, they were networks of youths who shared a common opposite to the injustice suffered under the Sultans” (Takriti 2013, 54).

By the early 1960s, there were multiple strands of Dhofari opposition groups within and without Dhofar, including Dhofaris in the ANM across the organization’s various branches in the Arab world; the Dhofar Benevolent Society (DBS); Dhufar Soldiers Organization (DSO); and the Dhofari-based Musallim bin Nufl and the Bayt Kathir. <sup>25</sup> These various strands began to mobilize and recruit individuals for armed rebellion.

The DBS was created by the Dhofar branch of the ANM, and “its purpose was, ostensibly, to build mosques and aid the poor; in reality it collected funds, recruited members and established political contacts for the purpose of armed rebellion against

---

<sup>22</sup>On the ANM during this time period, see: Al-Hindi and AlNasrawi 2001, Al’Akari 2003, and Barout 1997.

<sup>23</sup>On this rebellion, see: Fayyad 1975, 76-83; Peterson 2007, 63-182

<sup>24</sup>Takriti 2013, 54

<sup>25</sup>Peterson 2007, 186-187; Takriti 2013, 59-62. There were also other relevant organizations that existed at the time but either disbanded or merged. al-Kaff al-Aswad was comprised of Dhofari slaves from Salalah and formed in Qatar, Kuwait, and Salalah itself but disbanded when the DLF was established in 1962 (Peterson 2007, 186). The Socialist Advance Party (SAP) formed in late 1962 and was comprised of Dhofaris who left the ANM out of a desire to launch armed struggle in Dhofar; the SAP dissolved in 1964, with some members going to the ANM and others to the DBS (Takriti 2013, 61-62).

the Al Bu Said dynasty and British influence in the region.”<sup>26</sup> The DSO was comprised of former soldiers in the Trucial Omani Scouts (TOS),<sup>27</sup> Qatar Force and Bahrain Defence Force, all of which merged together in 1964 to create the secret DSO.<sup>28</sup> Not all individuals in the opposition joined the organized groups: Musallim Qaritas, a Dhofari activist in Kuwait, took his own group to Iraq for training at a military camp in 1964.<sup>29</sup> The majority of Dhofaris mobilizing abroad, however, were members of the ANM.<sup>30</sup>

The first armed action in Dhofar was undertaken by bin Nufl and his followers in the Bayt Kathir tribe in Dhofar itself, who attacked an oil lorry in Dhofar in April 1963.<sup>31</sup> This spurred the various groups to meet on December 26, 1964 to form the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF), which formally announced its existence in June 1965 after the group’s first conference in Wadi Nahiz in central Dhofar.<sup>32</sup> The DLF’s initial announced goal was to liberate Dhofar from the Sultanate of Oman.<sup>33</sup> The group’s attack on the fort at Mirbat on 8 November 1965 led to four DLF fighters killed, which ignited tribal opposition to the Sultan in Dhofar since two were from the AlQarra tribe and two were from the AlKathiri tribe (the two most prominent tribes in Dhofar).<sup>34</sup>

The DLF thus encompassed all of the dissident elements inside and outside of Dhofar from the start. Yet, there were significant divisions within the organization

---

<sup>26</sup>Price 1975, 3-4. Also see McKeown 1981, 20; Takriti 2013, 56, 59; Trabulsi 2004, 93; PFLOAG 1974, 6.

<sup>27</sup>The TSO was a force set up by the British in the early 1950s to serve as the armed forces of the Trucial States, those principalities which later became the United Arab Emirates (Takriti 2013, 60).

<sup>28</sup>al’Umari 2004, 63. The DSO was so secretive that the British were not aware of its existence until 1967 (Takriti 2013, 60).

<sup>29</sup>Peterson 2007, 187

<sup>30</sup>Ja’bub 2010, 67-68

<sup>31</sup>“The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; Peterson 2007, 189, 476; Price 1975, 4; Takriti 2013, 62

<sup>32</sup>Barout 1997, 395-396; Trabulsi 2004, 94; PFLOAG 1974, 6.

<sup>33</sup>Takriti 2013, 66-67; Fayyad 1975, 89

<sup>34</sup>Al-‘Amri 2004, 84-85. Also see Trabulsi 2004, 100.

over the ultimate goal of the struggle and the ideological form it would take.<sup>35</sup> These largely stemmed from the dynamics of personnel that initially came to form the group, particularly between those inside or outside of Dhofar. As Peterson notes:

“The brief life of the DLF was characterized by two simmering rifts. The first was ideological, with a growing tension between the Dhufari nationalists such as Musallim bin Nufal and the Marxists such as Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Sayl. This distinction was frequently mirrored by the distinction between Jabal and Salalah” (Peterson 2007, 195).

These tensions continued for a few years until the National Liberation Front (NLF) in South Yemen came to power in late 1967. Subsequent NLF support for the DLF buttressed the ANM faction within the group,<sup>36</sup> which took the opportunity at the DLF’s second congress in September 1968 to purge the organization of the more purely local nationalist elements.<sup>37</sup> The DLF changed its name to the Popular Front of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), and took a hard turn towards Marxist-Leninism.<sup>38</sup> The group’s goal devolved back to just liberation of Dhofar in mid-1974, when it changed its name to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO).<sup>39</sup>

At its peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the group numbered between 600-800 full-time fighters and 1,000-2,000 militia members.<sup>40</sup> During this period, the PFLOAG reached its pinnacle in terms of territorial influence in the province: “The high point of the rebellion was in 1970-71, when PFLO forces controlled the western half of the province of Dhofar, to include much of the coastal plain west of Salalah, and carried out guerrilla strikes in the central and eastern sectors of the province.”<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 96

<sup>36</sup>Takriti 2013, 98

<sup>37</sup>Abir 1974, 102

<sup>38</sup>Ja’bub 2010, 57-58

<sup>39</sup>Takriti 2013, 299-300; Price 1975, 3; Ja’bub 2010, 57-58

<sup>40</sup>Takriti 2013, 285; “The Dhofar Rebellion: An Evaluation by the Defence Secretary of the Sultanate of Oman, Colonel H R D Oldman, OBE, MC,” September 13, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.4; Price 1975, 7

<sup>41</sup>“Tab A: The Dhofar War” (Draft), February 22nd, 1975, NA/RG59/Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1952-1975.

## 2.3 Military Overview

To help contextualize the analysis in the remainder of the chapter, this section provides a military overview of the conflict from its start until the end of major military operations in December 1975. It focuses on the progression of the conflict from a small-scale rebellion to an insurgency that attracted great power intervention from the top echelon of British special forces and regional intervention from Iran and Jordan before it was finally put down after eleven years.

In April 1963, Musallim bin Nufl of the Bayt Kathir tribe in Dhofar undertook an attack on oil company vehicles on the road linking Salalah with Thumrayt.<sup>42</sup> A series of mine incidents and sabotage attacks against RAF vehicles and installations and infrastructure in the province ensued over the next two years.<sup>43</sup> In April/May 1965, Operation Rainbow sent two companies of the Muscat Regiment (MR) to Dhofar to begin operations against these insurgents, and arrested 40 members of the DLF, a significant amount given the group's size of just around 60-120 guerrillas at the time.<sup>44</sup>

However, the DLF persisted, and on June 1-9, 1965 held its first conference in Wadi al-Kabir in central Dhofar, where the aforementioned strands of Dhofar opposition agreed to officially merge.<sup>45</sup> The group declared its founding with three attacks on June 9th against a government convoy, RAF truck, and the *askaris* camp at Raysut.<sup>46</sup> Over the next several months through early 1966, the DLF stepped up its operations, engaging Sultanate forces through attempted ambushes, mining, and frontal assaults on government positions and bases. In response, the Sultanate's forces conducted

---

<sup>42</sup>Peterson 2007, 189, 476; Price 1975, 4; Takriti 2013, 62

<sup>43</sup>Peterson 2007, 189-190; McKeown 1981, 21

<sup>44</sup>Peterson 2007, 192, 477; Barout 1997, 396; Price 1975, 4; Hazelton 2011, 60

<sup>45</sup>Halliday 1974, 317; Peterson 1977, 280; Price 1975, 4; Peterson 2007, 193, 477

<sup>46</sup>Peterson 2007, 193; McKeown 1981, 24.

*Askars* were ethnic Baluchi soldiers who served as an internal police force during this time in Oman.

some cordon-and-search operations, but mostly retained a defensive posture vis-a-vis the insurgents.

In February 1966, the SAF sent further reinforcements to Dhofar, including two infantry companies, artillery forces, SOAF air cover, a recce platoon, and some naval forces.<sup>47</sup> DLF attacks continued, but now often spurred both ground and air engagement through the use of SOAF aircraft. In March 1966, a clearing operation was undertaken in Wadi Nahiz but failed to find any guerrillas.<sup>48</sup> Another operation was conducted along the western coast in late March, and subsequent Sultanate operations sought to target suspected DLF areas of operation.<sup>49</sup> On April 26th, secret DLF members of the Dhofar Force (DF) attempted to assassinate Sultan Said, but failed.<sup>50</sup>

DLF ambushes of and assaults on the Sultanate's forces continued throughout the rest of 1966. The general SAF strategy during this first period consisted of limited patrols and cordon-and-searches, actions aiming to cut off DLF resupply from western Yemen, and maintaining control of major economic and population centers.<sup>51</sup> SAF use of force and its broader strategy during this time period was largely indiscriminate, as the Sultanate lacked effective intelligence about both the DLF and Dhofar itself.<sup>52</sup> For instance, the SAF undertook food denial operations against geographic parts of the province and imposed curfews.<sup>53</sup> This feature of SAF counterinsurgency strategy helped to grow the insurgency as it continued into the late 1960s. Attacks and ambushes continued, and the SAF and SOAF responded in kind with patrols and airstrikes.

At the DLF's second conference in Wadi Hamrin in September 1968, the once-

---

<sup>47</sup>Peterson 2007, 477; McKeown 1981, 28-29

<sup>48</sup>Peterson 2007, 202

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>McKeown 1981, 30; Al-'Amri 2004, 85-87; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570.

<sup>51</sup>McKeown 1981, 38-39; Takriti 2013, 87.

<sup>52</sup>McKeown 1981, 23; Takriti 2013, 138-140; Hazelton 2011, 60-61

<sup>53</sup>Takriti 2013, 86-87

Dhofari nationalist group transformed into a Marxist-Leninist organization seeking the liberation of the entire Arabian Gulf. Continued indiscriminate violence and punishment by the SAF flooded the newly-christened PFLOAG's ranks with recruits, while SAF operations during 1968 and 1969 had some limited successes but largely failed to stem the insurgents' tide.<sup>54</sup> On October 22nd, 1969 a DR company was airlifted to Dhofar as reinforcements.<sup>55</sup> However, PFLOAG attacks continued during 1970, as did the group's geographic expansion and effective operating control. By mid-1971, the SAF was limited to just Salalah and Mirbat, primarily due to Sultan Said's refusal to commit sufficient troops.<sup>56</sup>

However, the neutering of the SAF began to come to an end with Sultan Said's overthrow on July 23rd, 1970 and replacement by Sultan Qaboos. Two squadrons of the British Special Air Service (SAS) began arriving in Dhofar in 1970 to undertake advising and combat missions.<sup>57</sup> Further SAF reinforcements came into the province after Sultan Qaboos's takeover, and the SAS established what came to be known as the *firqat* - paramilitary units comprised of ex-PFLOAG fighters trained and equipped by the British Army Training Team (BATT).<sup>58</sup>

Sultanate counterinsurgency strategy shifted after Qaboos's takeover, relying on the increased forces and, in particular, the *firqats*, to undertake intelligence-based operations against the PFLOAG, with the overall strategic aim to "push the guerrillas into the sparsely inhabited Western sector where they could be destroyed with relative impunity."<sup>59</sup> This was done through careful planning of operations, the establishment of base areas on the Jebel that could be used for subsequent patrol and search oper-

---

<sup>54</sup>McKeown 1981, 39-40; Peterson 2007

<sup>55</sup>D.C. Crawford, Consulate General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, December 30th, 1969, Annual Review for 1969, FCO 1016/791.

<sup>56</sup>Takriti 2013, 147; Peterson 2007, 222-223; El-Rayyes 1976, 96.

<sup>57</sup>Cole and Belfield 2011, 27-29; de la Billiere 1994, 263.

<sup>58</sup>Jeapes 2005

<sup>59</sup>Hazelton 2011, 72

ations, and the integration of SAS, SAF, SOAF, and *firqat* forces in combat. Slowly but surely PFLOAG influence and operating presence began to wane as a result of a series of coordinated operations undertaken by the various forces on the Sultanate's side throughout late 1971 and 1972. On May 25th, 1972, SAF artillery and SOAF airstrikes targeted and destroyed the PFLOAG's training camp and base in Hawf, South Yemen, contributing to the group's continued demise.<sup>60</sup>

On July 19th, 1972, several hundred PFLOAG guerrillas attacked the town of Mirbat, and took significant losses as the combined Sultanate and SAS forces were able to defeat the ill-fated assault.<sup>61</sup> The PFLOAG never recovered from this setback, as the SAF, BATT and *firqats* stepped up operations during the rest of 1972. In fall 1972, the first Iranian forces began arriving to support the Sultanate, and eventually became a battle group of 1,200 men in November 1973.<sup>62</sup> Sultanate operations continued, and in mid-1974 a Jordanian Engineers Squadron deployed to Dhofar and began building the Hornbeam Line to prevent PFLOAG movement eastward from the Western sector.<sup>63</sup>

In November 1974, the Iranian Task Force increased to brigade-size, and participated along with SAF and BATT forces in Operation Nadir, which was a failed attempt to divide the Western sector.<sup>64</sup> Further operations in January 1975 allowed Sultanate forces to establish positions at Stonehenge and Gunlines in western Dhofar near the PFLOAG's critical Shirtshitti Caves complex.<sup>65</sup> In March 1975, the Jordanian Army's 91st Special Forces Battalion deployed to Dhofar to help with securing recaptured areas.<sup>66</sup> Subsequent diversionary operations preparing for the final push

---

<sup>60</sup>Document 120, BNA/FCO 8/1862.

<sup>61</sup>Martinez 2012; Price 1975, 5; Takriti 2013, 304

<sup>62</sup>Ray 2008, 117; Price 1975, 9

<sup>63</sup>Takriti 2013, 305

<sup>64</sup>Jeapes 2005, 193

<sup>65</sup>Peterson 2007, 484; "Tab A: The Dhofar War" (Draft), February 22nd, 1975, NA/RG59/Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1952-1975.

<sup>66</sup>Peterson 2007, 485



on the Shirtshitti Caves complex were undertaken in late 1975, which resulted in the successful blocking of PFLOAG resupply routes from South Yemen.<sup>67</sup>

On October 22nd, 1975, the Frontier Force (FF)<sup>68</sup> began Operation Hadaf, the final push to capture the Shirshitti Caves complex, and succeeded after nearly a month-long siege.<sup>69</sup> Less than a week later, the FF began clearing Dara Ridge, and, on December 2, met up with elements of the Muscat Regiment coming from Sarfayt.<sup>70</sup> On December 11th, Sultan Qaboos declared the rebellion officially over, and the PFLOAG soon withdrew its remaining forces to South Yemen, ending large-scale military combat in Dhofar.<sup>71</sup>

### 3 Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Oman

In Dhofar, insurgent recruitment practices shifted over the course of the conflict. The coalition of organizations that united in June 1965 to form the DLF each brought with them unique recruitment practices that had produced significant variation across group members in terms of how they were selected, inducted, trained, and socialized as future fighters. These deficient recruitment practices continued until late 1968, when, at the group's second conference in Wadi Hamrin in September, the radical nationalists took over the DLF leadership. Subsequent purges of more locally-oriented nationalist leaders and fighters and the opening of Revolutionary Camp in Hawf across the western border of Dhofar in South Yemen ushered in robust recruitment practices.

From this point forward, the newly-christened PFLOAG became selective in its recruitment and required all fighters to undergo identical military training and po-

---

<sup>67</sup>Jeapes 2005, 214-223; Takriti 2013, 306

<sup>68</sup>The Frontier Force (FF) was formerly the Baluch Guard, a unit of Baluchis and essentially akin to a gendarmerie (Peterson 2007, 284, 309).

<sup>69</sup>Jeapes 2005, 224; Takriti 2013, 306

<sup>70</sup>Jeapes 2005, 224; Peterson 2007, 485

<sup>71</sup>Takriti 2013, 307

litical indoctrination in Marxism-Leninism in courses that lasted 6-8 months. These practices continued until September 1970, when internal opposition to the new ideological imposition came to a head, and the group as a result started forcibly recruiting fighters. These deficient recruitment practices continued until the end of the conflict in December 1975.

**Table 4.1.** Recruitment Practices in the Oman Case

	Comprehensive	Limited
Consistent	<i>Robust (September 1968-May 1971)</i>	<i>Deficient</i>
Inconsistent	<i>Deficient</i>	<i>Deficient (1964-September 1968, June 1971-December 1975)</i>

In what follows, I analyze the effectiveness of the PFLOAG during the conflict on the basis of these two shifts in recruitment practices, dividing the analysis into three time periods. The first period is from 1964 until September 1968, when the group had deficient recruitment practices. The second period begins after September 1968, following the shift to robust recruitment practices, and continues until May 1971, six months after the group started engaging in forced recruitment of individuals. The third period begins in June 1971, when the effects of the September 1970 changes would first be seen, and continues until the end of the conflict in December 1975.

In each time period of the conflict, I use archival and secondary sources in English and Arabic to outline the recruitment practices of the PFLOAG and analyze its corresponding ability to successfully execute the tasks. Along with task execution, I also discuss the casualties incurred and inflicted by the group in the given period. As with the Jordan case, I focus on the PFLOAG's full-time fighters in the analysis, and not the members of its militia.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup>The militia formed around the time of the Wadi Hamrin conference in September 1968, and consisted of part-time fighters who would act as lookouts for the main fighting force, as well as a source of recruits for the force.

### 3.1 PFLOAG, Period #1: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness

#### 3.1.1 Deficient Recruitment Practices

When it officially formed in June 1965, the DLF was more of a “coalition” of multiple strands of Dhofari opposition than a unified, cohesive organization. It lacked specific or uniform shared social features around which the organization was built, as well as consistent procedures through which recruits were incorporated as full-fledged fighters in the overall DLF. Instead, the group was a merger of several different elements of dissidents opposed to the Sultan’s rule in Dhofar, each of which had different ways of selecting, training, and indoctrinating individuals as would-be fighters for the armed struggle in the province.<sup>73</sup>

As mentioned previously, the earliest armed force in Dhofar that came to constitute the DLF and undertook military action was led by Musallim bin Nufl of the Bayt Kathir tribe.<sup>74</sup> bin Nufl was a former NCO in the Dhofar Force who was thrown out for failing to return from leave multiple times.<sup>75</sup> bin Nufl drew from among his own tribe and those of other Dhofari tribes in building his early following:

“Musallim recruited his earliest followers from his own Musayhilah section of the Bayt Kathir, a poor section that apparently had no territory of its own...By the time of his second trip to Saudi Arabia, Musallim was able to recruit Sa’id bin Ghiyah, a member of the Bayt Qatn tribe’s shaykhly clan...and thus an important key to recruits from the central Jabal...Sometime after that, Musallim was able to add to his ranks - or at least enlist as an ally - Muhammad Sa’id Sayrad al’Amri, thus strengthening his appeal to the eastern Jabal and particularly to the Bayt al-‘Amri, always rather aloof from the rest of the Qara tribes” (Peterson 2007, 189-190).<sup>76</sup>

After the initial April 1963 attack that unofficially marked the start of the rebel-

---

<sup>73</sup>Tremayne 1974, 39; Peterson 2007, 194; Trabulsi 2004, 96; El-Rayyes 1976, 84.

<sup>74</sup>Peterson 2007, 189

<sup>75</sup>Peterson 2007, 188

<sup>76</sup>See also Jones and Ridout 2015, 138

lion, bin Nufl, bin Ghiyah, and 30 others went to Iraq, where they received training in guerrilla warfare tactics.<sup>77</sup> bin Nufl also went to Saudi Arabia in the mid 1960s, where he received weapons and possibly facilities for training Dhofaris from Imam Ghalib bin ‘Ali al-Hina’i, the Saudi-backed former leader of the 1957-59 rebellion in Jabal AlAkhdar in northern Oman.<sup>78</sup> Price notes that bin Nufl’s Bayt Kathir group came to constitute the “nucleus” of the DLF after it was formed.<sup>79</sup> Additional Dhofari tribal elements, such as the Qarra, also came to form a significant part of the DLF through bin Nufl’s grouping.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, the other previously discussed elements in the Gulf were likewise selecting and training fighters and preparing for armed struggle in Dhofar, albeit with their own organization-specific recruitment practices. In particular, the DBS and ANM were competing with one another over potential Dhofari recruits in the Gulf. This competition between two elements of what would become the DLF had consequences for how recruitment proceeded and the degree to which it was consistent across not only the two organizations, but also vis-a-vis how bin Nufl was recruiting. As Takriti writes,

“The rolling events of 1963 and 1964 made the [ANM]<sup>81</sup> and the [DBS]<sup>82</sup> even more eager to build up their strength in Dhufar and to line up support for armed struggle. Like any two groups operating in one arena, they competed over recruits, patrons, and resources, and were anxious about being undercut and marginalized. Both groups were also alarmed by the tribalists...Such worries pushed the [ANM] towards expediting the establishment of its first cells inside

---

<sup>77</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 86; Price 1975, 4; Fiennes 1975, 133-4; Peterson 2007, 191; Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572; “The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf,” Information Research Department (IRD) Report, July 26th, 1973, BNA/FCO 8/2031.

<sup>78</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 90; Peterson 2007, 190; Jones and Ridout 2015, 138

<sup>79</sup>Price 1974, 4

<sup>80</sup>Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572

<sup>81</sup>Takriti uses “MAN” instead of the more commonly used “ANM” to refer to the Arab Nationalists’ Movement.

<sup>82</sup>Takriti uses “DCA” (Dhofar Charitable Association) instead of “DBS” to refer to the Dhofar Benevolent Society. This is a matter of translation from Arabic to English - the meanings are essentially the same.

Dhufar. In 1964, it sent several leading cadres to the territory, including Said Masoud, Said al-Ghassani, and Mohammad al-Ghassani, setting up [ANM] cells in the capital, Salalah, and in the second largest town, Mirbat and successfully planting a cell inside the Dhufar Force. As for the [DBS], it is almost certain that it had begun mass recruitment in Dhufar” (Takriti 2013, 65).

Indeed, that the DBS had begun recruitment and arms procurement for rebellion at this time period is confirmed in several other sources, including historical studies and British intelligence documents.<sup>83</sup> The DBS was essentially open to any Dhofari that wanted to join.<sup>84</sup> For those members who left the ANM to form the DBS, they purely wanted “Dhofar for the Dhofaris,” rather than the more transnational goals espoused by Dhofaris in the ANM.<sup>85</sup> More importantly, they wanted to actually undertake armed struggle, not merely be indoctrinated.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, the ANM’s recruitment and training during this period was purely ideological, and included no military component until later in the 1960s, when 140-160 members received military training in Iraq.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the training for Dhofaris in the ANM was expedited compared to other ANM recruits, and included ideological opposition to communism and situating the struggle for Dhofar in the broader struggle for Arab liberation and the liberation of Palestine.<sup>88</sup> This orientation was distinct from the DBS, which was more focused on Dhofari nationalism. As a result,

“...two Dhufari political bodies now existed in Kuwait with members spread across the rest of the Gulf. One was the [ANM], firmly organized and pan-Arabist and republican in outlook. The other was the [DBS], loosely structured

---

<sup>83</sup>See: El-Rayyes 1976, 85; McKeown 1981, 20; Price 1975, 3-4; Barout 1997, 396; Trabulsi 2004, 93; Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572.

<sup>84</sup>Takriti 2013, 55

<sup>85</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 93-94; El-Rayyes 1976, 86.

<sup>86</sup>Takriti 2013, 59

<sup>87</sup>Takriti 2013, 56-58; Ja’bub 2010, 77; Halliday 2002, 317; Peterson 2007, 476; Barout 1997, 395; El-Rayyes 1976, 87-88. This training included instruction in guerrilla warfare, weaponry, communication, and sabotage (Takriti 2013, 1, 71). In May 1965, some members of this Iraq-based group were intercepted by Iranian navy boats upon their arrival in the Arabian Gulf, and ultimately ended up in Omani prison (Peterson 2007, 192-3; Barout 1997, 396; El-Rayyes 1976, 88). The rest of the Iraq-based group arrived in Dhofar by different means, and began fighting (El-Rayyes 1976, 88).

<sup>88</sup>Takriti 2013, 58.

around local demands, or what could be called Dhufarism, within a general Arabist framework” (Takriti 2013, 59).

Besides these three strands and their individual recruitment practices and ideological orientations that generated internal contradictions, there was a fourth organized element, the DSO. As noted previously, the DSO was a clandestine organization that was extremely secretive, and all of its members had previous military training and experience in combat.<sup>89</sup> Compared to bin Nufl’s followers, Dhofaris in the ANM, and the DBS, it was the DSO that had significantly more military experience and training when they joined with the others in the June 1965 merger. Like the DBS, the DSO wanted the overthrow of the Sultan, but did not have a more articulate goal or ideology beyond that.<sup>90</sup>

As the foregoing discussion illustrated, the four main elements<sup>91</sup> that came to form the DLF all had different selection and incorporation procedures that began at different times and occurred both inside and outside of Dhofar (see Table 4.2 below). bin Nufl’s recruitment was first limited to those in his tribe in Dhofar, and then whomever bin Ghiyah had recruited before the latter joined the former. The ANM and DSO in the Gulf were both secretive and clandestine organizations known to be very selective, with the former also driven by ideological principles in selecting its members. However, the DBS was, by all indications, not similar in its selection procedures, and was open to any Dhofari that wanted to join.

---

<sup>89</sup>Barout 1997, 396; El-Rayyes 1976, 85. This training and experience primarily came from their service in the TSO and, for many, fighting against the rebels during the Jabal AlAkhdar revolt in northern Oman during 1957-59 (Takriti 2013, 60). On the 1957-59 revolt, see: Fayyad 1975, 76-83; Peterson 2007, 63-182.

<sup>90</sup>Takriti 2013, 60

<sup>91</sup>Between 1959-1964, Dhofaris also trained at Saiqa’s training camps in Syria (Ja’bub 2010, 76). It is unclear if these individuals were part of a specific element or even if they made it Dhofar.

**Table 4.2.** Recruitment Practices and Characteristics of the DLF's Four Founding Elements

Element	Selection	Induction	Training	Ideology
bin Nuff's Contingent	Unknown	Unknown	Guerrilla Warfare	Unknown
DBS	Not Selective	Unknown	Unknown	Dhofari nationalism
ANM	Selective	Unknown	Guerrilla Warfare	Arab nationalism
DSO	Selective	Unknown	Conventional Warfare	Dhofari nationalism

In terms of the DLF's military training, some elements received instruction in guerrilla warfare and others in conventional warfare. Moreover, the training itself varied in terms of location. The DSO members were trained to operate and fight in conventional warfare, while bin Nuff's contingent and the ANM element were trained in guerrilla warfare. In terms of location, a July 1966 internal SAF report lists the names of 66 captured DLF fighters, of whom 4 trained in Iraq, 22 trained in Syria, 37 trained in Taif (Saudi Arabia), and 3 trained in both Taif and Syria.<sup>92</sup>

The lack of a singular ideology and corresponding uniform program of indoctrination meant that the recruits in each of the four elements brought different agendas with them when the DLF was created in 1965. In terms of indoctrination, the ANM's ideological focus and emphasis on political education was not equally matched for those in either bin Nuff's group or the DSO. Indeed, Ja'bub describes the DLF at its creation as having no overarching ideology: "In this stage, it is not possible to describe the revolutionaries as having a certain revolutionary ideology, but rather it was a group of people refusing oppression and seeking to get rid of the regime..."<sup>93</sup> Likewise, a March 1968 British intelligence report on Dhofar noted that in spite of the overarching shared goal of independence for Dhofar, there was significant diversity of ideologies and views within the DLF at the time:

<sup>92</sup>"Rebel List Part 1 - Additions," July 1966, WO 337/10, in Burdett (Ed.), *Records of Oman 1966-1971*, P.179-180.

<sup>93</sup>Ja'bub 2010, 57

“Members of the DLF have many motives individually but are united by their hatred of the Sultan. Some may be Baathist, others have no political thoughts, some are educated, many are illiterate; several were criminals in their own right before the DLF came along to legalise their banditry” (Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572).

Along with this absence of an overall set of guiding principles, enduring tribal rivalries, such as that between the Qarra and the Bayt Kathir, further contributed to these divisions within the DLF over its objectives and ideological direction.<sup>94</sup>

After its formation in June 1965, the DLF “was open to all Dhufaris regardless of tribe or social position.”<sup>95</sup> Volunteers were recruited on an individual basis, and the DLF grew in size by attracting broader sets of recruits from the rural population.<sup>96</sup> This influx into the DLF continued until 1968.<sup>97</sup> After the Sultan forbid any travel out of Dhofar, individuals who might have left instead joined the DLF.<sup>98</sup> These *deficient* recruitment practices, including varied selection criteria and inconsistent military training and political indoctrination, remained in place until the DLF’s second conference at Wadi Hamrin in September 1968.

### 3.1.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution

During the first period of the Dhofar rebellion, the DLF divided Dhofar into three sectors: Eastern, Western, and Central.<sup>99</sup> According to estimates of the DLF’s size during this first period of the conflict, the group had between 60-120 fighters overall, but only 80 operational at any one time.<sup>100</sup> As of April 1966, the SAF presence

---

<sup>94</sup>Fiennes 1975, 69; Report by Major R.J.F. Brown, DIO Salalah, on Dhofar, March 31st, 1968, FCO 8/572; Al-Nu’mani 2016, 68; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.3

<sup>95</sup>Takriti 2013, 83

<sup>96</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 101; Price 1975, 4; El-Rayyes 1976, 88-89.

<sup>97</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 90

<sup>98</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 103-104

<sup>99</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 101

<sup>100</sup>Long brief on RAF Salalah, April 5th, 1968, FCO 8/1089; Takriti 2013, 112; Annual Review, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, January 5th, 1968, FCO 8/570.



in Dhofar included the Northern Frontier Regiment (NFR) (including Tactical HQ, Recce Platoon, and three rifle companies), Red Company, while the SOAF had two Beavers and two Piston Provosts.<sup>101</sup>

Peterson writes that after the first official DLF attack in June 1965, “in the next few years, the scope of the revolt was largely limited to small-scale ambushes of the Sultan’s Dhofar Force in the valleys of central Dhufar.”<sup>102</sup> This is not entirely accurate, however, as the DLF undertook several concentrated frontal assaults and engaged in pitched battles during the time period. As a result of these mixed conventional and guerrilla tactics, the group’s ability to successfully execute the tactical and operational tasks of the Guerrilla stage was generally poor, as Table 4.3 indicates.

**Table 4.3.** DLF’s Task Execution During the 1964-September 1968 Period

<b>Task</b>	<b>Successful Execution?</b>
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	No
Cover and Concealment	Mixed
Dispersion	Mixed
Conduct Ambushes	Mixed
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	No
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

---

Some British reports give higher estimates, one as high as 200 in 1965 (quoted in Takriti 2013, 76). However, most available estimates give figures between 60-120, and this is in keeping with yearly figures found in existing works, particularly on the lower end:

- 1965: **60** (Peterson 2007, 192; Letter from British Consulate General, Muscat, May 29th, 1965, FO 371/179814, in Records of Oman, 1961-1965: 1965, edited by Anita L.P. Burdett); **80** (El-Rayyes 1976, 87)
- 1966: **70** (Peterson 2007, 204)
- 1967: **60** (McKeown 1981, 33)

See: Price 1975, 4; McKeown 1981, 33; Annual Review, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, January 5th, 1968, FCO 8/570; Long brief on RAF Salalah, April 5th, 1968, FCO 8/1089; Peterson 2007, 196; Takriti 2013, 76; Letter from British Consulate General, Muscat, May 29th, 1965, FO 371/179814.

<sup>101</sup>Peterson 2007, 203

<sup>102</sup>Peterson 1977, 280

At the start of the rebellion, the DLF had just nine rifles, some of them individually owned.<sup>103</sup> The early bin Nufl-led DLF group had British Mark-7 anti-tank mines (from Saudi Arabia), rifles, three automatic weapons, explosives and accessories, and grenades.<sup>104</sup> These were British made, and then after 1968 the group's weapons were nearly all Russian- or Chinese-made.<sup>105</sup> In January 1968, the DLF used mortars for the first time, including 2-inch and later 81mm mortars.<sup>106</sup> While it thus had the necessary small arms and explosives to fight using guerrilla warfare, the DLF's *operation of weaponry and marksmanship* during this period was poor. This was likely a result of the fact that large parts of the group either lacked military training or received different degrees of comprehensiveness in and/or types of military training.

As a result, in several instances, fighters from the group either missed their target or seemed to be unaware of the limited range of certain weapons. On November 28th, 1967, a group of DLF fighters sniped at a company at dusk, failing to inflict casualties.<sup>107</sup> On April 5th, 1968, eight DLF rebels took aim at a Desert Regiment (DR)<sup>108</sup> position at Everest in western Dhofar, "firing across a deep wadi at a range of 1000 yards" for ten minutes and again producing no SAF casualties.<sup>109</sup> The same unit's position in nearby 'Araqi was fired on for ten minutes from "long range" on April 15th, 1968, generating no SAF casualties.<sup>110</sup>

In addition, DLF fighters often fired at fortified positions, namely military forts, in a pointless waste of ammunition. On November 30th, 1965, the DLF engaged in

---

<sup>103</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 89

<sup>104</sup>Peterson 2007, 191

<sup>105</sup>Peterson 2007, 221-222; Price 1975, 7

<sup>106</sup>Peterson 2007, 214; Peterson 2007, 216, 478; McKeown 1981, 41; Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790; Incident Report No. 10094OZ from Commander, British Forces, Gulf, to Ministry of Defence, UK, August 10th, 1968, FCO 8/572

<sup>107</sup>Peterson 2007, 210

<sup>108</sup>The Desert Regiment (DR) was part of the SAF.

<sup>109</sup>Peterson 2007, 214

<sup>110</sup>Peterson 2007, 214

an entire night of firing at 25 *askaris* in Sath Fort, but inflicted no SAF casualties.<sup>111</sup> On January 3rd, 1966, several rebels shot at Rakhyut Fort from late evening until sunrise, but produced no casualties.<sup>112</sup>

On June 24th, 1968, Brigadier Corran Purdon, the Commander of the SAF, was involved in an operation and contact with DLF fighters in the Wadi Hinna area (northwest of Mirbat in eastern Dhofar). Purdon later recounted this engagement in a report, noting how poor DLF fire was:

“I went back into the Wadi Hinna with Mike Harvey (CO NFR), a company of NFR and half company of MR and settled accounts. I got involved in a battle and we killed an adoo (enemy)<sup>114</sup> leader and got his Russian (or Chinese) automatic rifle, equipment, and lots of ammunition. I made four captured adoo carry the body back on a pole...The first burst missed Mike and me and our group by about 20 feet. We had an LMG,<sup>115</sup> 4 automatic rifles and some ordinary rifles firing at us from about 300 yards. We won the fire fight. I brought the artillery fire in behind the adoo and then we put half a company of NFR through, who found the adoo pinned down. We killed one with a Sterling and I gave his Russian automatic rifle to the chap who killed him, on the spot. The other adoo withdrew, brassed up by us...we had no SAF casualties...” (Confidential brief by T.G. Alexander (British Forces), July 4th, 1968, FCO 8/572).

Coupled with the lack of discipline displayed in expending ammunition, the DLF’s long-range firing at fixed positions in this and the previous instances points to a lack of knowledge of how to use small individual arms most effectively - by waiting until an adversary is within appropriate firing range (for the group’s British-made rifles at the time, most likely 550 yards, as opposed to 1,000 yards across a valley).

The same lack of discipline in ammunition use and knowledge of weapons systems went for the DLF’s use of its 81mm mortars. The clearest example came in the first recorded attempted DLF activity in which the 81mm mortars were used. On August

---

<sup>111</sup>Peterson 2007, 199

<sup>112</sup>Peterson 2007, 200. These futile firing engagements continued, as a group of 4-6 DLF fighters fired on the OG<sup>113</sup> camp at Rakhyut on December 23rd, 1967, inflicting no casualties but losing one fighter (Peterson 2007, 210).

<sup>114</sup>“Aadoo” is a romanticization of the Arabic word for “enemy.”

<sup>115</sup>LMG: Light Machine Gun

9th, 1968, DLF fighters fired the mortars from Wadi Jarsis northwest of RAF Salalah. However, all eight mortars fired by the DLF landed between 1000-1500 yards short of RAF Salalah, failing to hit any targets.<sup>116</sup> This failure indicates a comprehensive lack of familiarity with mortars and the nature of indirect fire, as one would typically adjust the angle and positioning of the mortar launcher after initially missing the target. Moreover, launching a subsequent eight mortar bombs without adjusting the aim demonstrates a lack of discipline in using ammunition. In other subsequent uses of the 81mm mortars, the DLF missed its targets.<sup>117</sup>

The DLF had some success with using Mark-7 mines to target SAF convoys on the main Salalah-Midway road during these three years, but this targeting did not always result in SAF casualties. Out of 11 reported mine explosions targeting the SAF during this period, only three resulted in deaths, with the remaining eight incidents causing no damage or just injuries.<sup>118</sup> Overall, however, the group's ability to successfully operate and use its weapons during this time period was poor. This remained the case

---

<sup>116</sup>Peterson 2007, 216, 478; McKeown 1981, 41; Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790; Incident Report No. 10094OZ from Commander, British Forces, Gulf, to Ministry of Defence, UK, August 10th, 1968, FCO 8/572; Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, "Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar", FO 1016/804.

<sup>117</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, "Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar," FO 1016/804.

<sup>118</sup>The 11 mine incidents and corresponding SAF losses during this period:

- May 1st, 1963: 0
- August 14th, 1964: 1 dead
- September 23rd, 1964: 0
- October 22nd, 1964: 1 injured
- November 14th, 1964: 1 dead, 1 injured
- June 14th, 1965: 1 injured
- November 6th, 1965: 0
- December 29th, 1966: 0
- January 10th, 1968: 0
- March 28th, 1968: 1 dead, 7 injured
- April 6th, 1968: 1 wounded

Sources: Peterson 2007, 190-213; McKeown 1981, 25

after the DLF received new weapons in 1968, with a January 1969 British intelligence report remarking that “the rebels do not appear to have been taught how to use their weapons properly or to best effect.”<sup>119</sup> In another British diplomatic cable from the same time, the Consul-General of Muscat noted that “their use of weapons has been relatively poor...”<sup>120</sup>

The DLF was mixed in terms of its use of *cover and concealment* when fighting against the SAF in this first period of the conflict. During monsoon season, the group often made use of the thick monsoon mist on the Jebel to conceal their positions and withdraw from an engagement.<sup>121</sup> This was the case in the ambush on July 27th, 1966, in which the DLF fighters inflicted six casualties on B Company of the MR in Wadi Darbat and used the monsoon mist to withdraw.<sup>122</sup> On August 23rd and 24th, 1967, the MR conducted an operation in Jebel Harr, but “all the suspected rebels were able to disappear into the monsoon mist in advance of the arrival of the troops at each home.”<sup>123</sup>

Yet in several instances, DLF fighters failed to take advantage of the highly favorable terrain in Dhofar for guerrilla warfare, engaging in firefights with the SAF from exposed positions without cover. For example, in early June 1965, a platoon of the MR engaged in a firefight with a DLF unit in a Dodge Power Wagon, which (though covered) immediately exposed the rebels position and led to SOAF airstrikes on the Dodge.<sup>124</sup> On March 15th, 1967, 5 DLF fighters ambushed a platoon from the

---

<sup>119</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, “Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar,” FO 1016/804.

<sup>120</sup>D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to Joint Intelligence Group (Gulf), HQ British Forces Gulf, January 29th, 1969, FCO 1016/804

<sup>121</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, “Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar”, FO 1016/804.

<sup>122</sup>McKeown 1981, 31; Peterson 2007, 205; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570; Telegram No.513 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, July 29th, 1966, FCO 371/185365

<sup>123</sup>Peterson 2007, 210

<sup>124</sup>Peterson 2007, 197

MR, wounding an SAF soldier. However, two DLF fighters were captured “after a circling Beaver spotted the group breaking cover.”<sup>125</sup> The breaking of cover in this case clearly had severe consequences.

Besides a failure to sometimes use cover vis-a-vis SAF land forces, on February 5th, 1968, the SAF’s large dhow<sup>126</sup> was on patrol near Rakhyut, and a group of 5 DLF fighters on land engaged the dhow. SOAF reinforcement was called in to target the DLF position, and a Provost wounded a DLF fighter from the group who later died.<sup>127</sup> Firing from an littoral position at the SAF dhow exposed the DLF group, and the SOAF was able to easily target and inflict losses on them.

The DLF was mixed in terms of its use of *dispersion* when engaging the SAF between 1964 and September 1968. In many cases, ambushes were set up with multiple firing positions, such as in the ambushes on July 27th, 1966,<sup>128</sup> September 15th, 1966,<sup>129</sup> May 3rd, 1967,<sup>130</sup> and January 11th, 1968.<sup>131</sup> The failed November 8th, 1965 attack on the Mirbat Fort was undertaken with fighters approaching the fort from all sides and eight main firing positions, reducing DLF vulnerability in the face of SAF fire.<sup>132</sup>

In other cases, however, the DLF fought in concentrated formations, making them easy targets for SAF ground fire and, in particular, SOAF airstrikes. This use of concentrated formations was often the result of the DLF’s employment of pickup trucks for mobility, but came at the cost of increasing their vulnerability to adversary

---

<sup>125</sup>Peterson 2007, 208

<sup>126</sup>A “dhow” is a type of ship typical of the geographic area. Peterson describes it as an “Arab wooden sailing vessel (Peterson 2007, 451).

<sup>127</sup>Peterson 2007, 214

<sup>128</sup>McKeown 1981, 31; Peterson 2007, 205; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570; Telegram No.513 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, July 29th, 1966, FCO 371/185365

<sup>129</sup>Peterson 2007, 205, 205fn1

<sup>130</sup>Peterson 2007, 208

<sup>131</sup>Peterson 2007, 213-214

<sup>132</sup>However, as will be discussed below, the failure to use cover and concealment during this assault on Mirbat Fort proved deadly for the DLF group involved in the attack.

fire. In early June 1965, a platoon of the MR got into a firefight with a DLF group in a Dodge Power Wagon. Two Provost Pistons from the SOAF were called in and shot up the wagon.<sup>133</sup> On February 8th, 1966, 15-20 DLF fighters moving in two Dodge vehicles assaulted a patrol from the NFR's A Company at Muddayy, and SOAF reinforcements came in and immediately targeted the two vehicles, which exploded and led to DLF casualties of one killed and five wounded, including Musallim bin Nufl.<sup>134</sup> SOAF reinforcements were again called in to target a DLF Ford truck on February 10th, 1966, which led to the death of a DLF fighter.<sup>135</sup>

The DLF had a mixed record in terms of *conducting ambushes* during the first period of the rebellion. In some instances, DLF fighters were able to inflict losses on the SAF in terms of personnel and materiel through ambushes. On March 13th, 1966, the A Company of the SAF's Northern Frontier Regiment (NFR) was ambushed by a group of DLF fighters in Wadi Nahiz.<sup>136</sup> The NFR company suffered three killed and five wounded.<sup>137</sup> On July 27th, 1966, B Company of the MR was ambushed in Wadi Darbat and suffered six casualties, one of whom died. Using two machine guns and seven firing positions, the DLF group's initial fire hit the leading platoon and causing 5 SAF casualties, before using the monsoon mist to withdraw as the two following platoons made a flanking attack but failed to inflict any losses on the rebels.<sup>138</sup> The MR's A Company was caught in a crossfire ambush on Midway Road

---

<sup>133</sup>Peterson 2007, 197

<sup>134</sup>Peterson 2007, 200, 477; McKeown 1981, 28; Telegram No. 211 from Foreign Office to Beirut, February 14th, 1966, FO 371/185365

<sup>135</sup>Peterson 2007, 200

<sup>136</sup>Peterson 2007, 194fn2, 201 and 201fn1, 477; McKeown 1981, 29; Al-'Amri 2004, 87; Trabulsi 2004, 102; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570; Telegram No.300 Foreign Office to Bahrain, March 15th, 1966, FCO 371/185365; Telegram No.164 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, March 16th, 1966, FCO 371/185365

<sup>137</sup>At the time, the British had the following to say of the DLF's ambushes: "These rebel attacks have all been well planned and executed...the attacks have shown a degree of competence and determination not previously evident" (Telegram No.164 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, March 16th, 1966, FCO 371/185365).

<sup>138</sup>McKeown 1981, 31; Peterson 2007, 205; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570; Telegram No.513 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, July 29th, 1966, FCO 371/185365.

on May 3rd, 1967, which resulted in the deaths of two SAF soldiers and 7 wounded and no DLF casualties.<sup>139</sup> The DLF wounded two SAF soldiers through an ambush laid on a platoon on December 4th, 1967.<sup>140</sup> On March 6th, 1968, a half company of the DR was ambushed from three positions by 15 DLF fighters while moving south down Wadi Nahiz, which led to two SAF soldiers killed in one minute of fire before the DLF fighters withdrew under cover of a fourth LMG.<sup>141</sup>

However, in many instances, the DLF's ambushes failed to generate any SAF casualties and often resulted in the group itself taking personnel losses because of poor execution and tactical mistakes reflecting a lack of adherence to classic guerilla warfare principles. On December 7th, 1965, a group of DLF fighters ambushed two MECOM oil transporters on the Midway Road, but no SAF casualties were sustained.<sup>142</sup> On May 24th, 1966, 20 DLF fighters ambushed B Company of the NFR on Jabal Dhofar, which resulted in eight SAF soldiers killed and six wounded but at the cost of 10 DLF fighters' lives, including 'Amir Ghanim, the DLF commander for the Wadi Jardum area.<sup>143</sup> These deaths were partially caused by tactical mistakes on the part of the DLF group, as Peterson describes:

“When Emslie was crossing a wadi in his lead Land-Rover, an insurgent group of about twenty opened fire with a Bren gun, killing Emslie. The other three occupants jumped clear but were shot, and a rocket then hit the vehicle. The attackers' leader, 'Amir Ghanim, then rushed the Land Rover with four or five men, but one of the wounded soldiers, Emslie's orderly, shot 'Amir Ghanim before dying himself. Four more DLF LMGs then opened fire, killing another four soldiers and wounding six, making a total of eight killed and six wounded. Staff Sergeant Charshambeh Nur Muhammad (Pakistani Baluch) then rallied the remaining soldiers onto high ground, and fought back over the next two hours before the rebels finally withdrew” (Peterson 2007, 204).

---

<sup>139</sup>Peterson 2007, 208

<sup>140</sup>Peterson 2007, 210

<sup>141</sup>Peterson 2007, 214

<sup>142</sup>Peterson 2007, 199-200

<sup>143</sup>Al-'Amri 2004, 87; Peterson 2007, 196, 204, 478; McKeown 1981, 31; Takriti 2013, 76; Annual Review for 1966, January 4th, 1967, FCO 8/570; Telegram No.332 From Bahrain to Foreign Office, May 25th, 1966, FCO 371/185365.



Instead of rushing the vehicle and undertaking a direct assault, ‘Amir Ghanim and the 4-5 men should have maintained their initial ambush positions, as dictated by classic guerrilla warfare strategy. Moreover, the decision to remain and fight for two hours rather than withdrawing after suffering losses only led to further DLF casualties and no additional SAF deaths.

On February 25th, 1967, twenty DLF fighters ambushed an SAF patrol using two Bren guns, and killed one SAF soldier while wounding another, but at the cost of some rebels wounded by an airstrike conducted by a Provost.<sup>144</sup> A similar result came of the three ambushes conducted by the DLF against of the 3 Company of the DR on January 11th, 1968 near Jabal Dabat, which resulted in two SAF soldiers killed and 5 wounded along with six DLF fighters killed.<sup>145</sup> These losses on the part of the DLF occurred after the SAF brought in reinforcements several times in the form of Provost air strikes and machine-gunning.<sup>146</sup>

On March 15th, 1967, a group of 5 DLF fighters ambushed a platoon of the MR, which resulted in the wounding of one SAF soldier but the capture of two DLF fighters. These DLF personnel losses again occurred because the SAF brought in reinforcements in the form of a Provost monoplane, part of C Company, Artillery Troop, and B Company, and a Beaver reconnaissance plane spotted the DLF group breaking cover.<sup>147</sup> The failure of the group to both withdraw from their ambush positions after reinforcements came or use cover and concealment when doing so resulted in the effective loss of two of its fighters.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup>Peterson 2007, 208

<sup>145</sup>Peterson 2007, 213-214; Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, “Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar,” FO 1016/804.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Peterson 2007, 208

<sup>148</sup>Subsequent ambushes undertaken by the DLF in April 1967; October 9th, 1967; November 9th, 1967; February 3rd, 1968; and June 24th, 1968 had similar results, failing to inflict any losses on the SAF while leading in some cases to DLF fighter deaths (Peterson 2007, 208-215; Annual Review - 1968, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident in the

Contrary to classic guerrilla warfare practice, the DLF engaged in several engagements with the SAF using *concentrated frontal assaults* that had predictably disastrous results for the group. On November 8th, 1965, 20-50 DLF fighters undertook a frontal assault on Mirbat Fort with light machine guns and grenades, using a ladder to scale the fort's wall and enter inside while attacking the fort from eight different sides.<sup>149</sup> In this concentrated frontal assault on the fort, the DLF lost four fighters while the SAF lost none after two hours of fighting.<sup>150</sup> Based on the accounts of DLF participants in the attack on the fort, Al-'Amri writes the following:

“...there was good preparation to reach the roof of the fort using prepared ladders of branches from trees on Jebel Dhofar, and at the head of the group that would implement the operation was one of the DLF command members, Masoud bin Salim Ja'boub...the group moved towards Mirbat Fort armed with some hand grenades and individual weapons in addition to daggers, carrying the ladders prepared for climbing over the walls, and the preparation was good in reality but the timing was not appropriate for the operation, as on the night of the operation there was a full moon, so some thought there should be a delay in the time of implementation, but Ja'boub insisted on carrying out the operation even if just by himself and left the choice for who wanted to withdraw from the operation open to the group, and Ja'boub continued with those who remained after this choice on their path towards Mirbat Fort, and the rotating guard on the surface of the fortress was able to see the raiding group, so he alerted the wali about this, and the wali prepared for the battle, he and his sons and his guards. *So the revolutionaries put the ladders against the walls of the fort and climbed over them led by Ja'boub, and the wali and his sons and askaris opened fire at them using their rifles, and when the revolutionaries had lost the most important element in raiding operations (the element of surprise), they replied to the wali's fire, but they were in the open and the wali and those with him were in a military fortress, so the natural result of the battle was a victory for the wali without losses and the killing of the commander of the revolutionaries' raiding group Ja'boub and with him three other revolutionaries, who were Salim bin Ali Mlayt Tabuk, Bakheit bin Ahmad Suleimoun AlKathiri, and Musallim bin Suhayl AlRajsh AlKathiri* [emphasis added]” (Al-'Amri 2004, 83-84).

The attacking of a fortified position with just individual small arms failed spectacularly and cost the DLF several fighters and a leader.

---

Persian Gulf, January 12th, 1969, FCO 8/1073).

<sup>149</sup>McKeown 1981, 28; Peterson 2007, 199; Takriti 2013, 76

<sup>150</sup>Peterson 2007, 199

During the first period of the conflict, similar frontal assaults on fixed and (often) fortified SAF positions were undertaken by the insurgent group, and in most cases had no positive outcome and/or resulted in DLF casualties. On September 12th, 1964, a group of DLF fighters attacked the MECOM camp at Raysut.<sup>151</sup> June 9th, 1965 saw three attacks, one of which was on the *askaris* camp at Raysut that led to no casualties.<sup>152</sup> On October 1st, 1965, DLF fighters attacked Taqa Fort with grenades and rocket launchers at night, which led to the wounding of one *askar*.<sup>153</sup> June 5th, 1966 saw 36 DLF fighters attack the Red Company's position near Wadi Darbat.<sup>154</sup>

The group again undertook a frontal assault on Mirbat Fort on September 25th, 1966. Using rocket launchers and small arms, 13 DLF fighters began their assault on the fort before dawn, an attack that lasted for two and half hours and resulted in one SAF death. SAF reinforcements came in the form of infantry and air, and the 13 DLF attackers withdrew with one killed and three injured.<sup>155</sup> On August 18th, 1968, the group attacked Mirbat Fort again in a frontal assault,<sup>156</sup> which resulted in DLF casualties:

“...[the DLF] attacked a fort at Mirbat to the East of Salalah and though they persisted in their attack they were finally driven off by a combination of the Sultans Air Force and the garrison of army retainers. Again they sustained more casualties than they inflicted” (Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790).

Running counter to the classic guerrilla warfare prescriptions of dispersed mobile attacks, these repeated concentrated frontal assaults on fixed positions unsurprisingly proved costly for the DLF.

---

<sup>151</sup>Peterson 2007, 190, 476; McKeown 1981, 21

<sup>152</sup>Peterson 2007, 193

<sup>153</sup>McKeown 1981, 28; Peterson 2007, 199; Al-‘Amri 2004, 83

<sup>154</sup>Peterson 2007, 205

<sup>155</sup>Peterson 2007, 205-6; Despatch No.1013 from D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, October 8th, 1966, FCO 371/185365

<sup>156</sup>McKeown 1981, 41; Peterson 2007, 216; Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790

The group's relatively poor performance in executing ambushes was in part due to a general failure of DLF fighters to *withdraw when outgunned/outnumbered*. DLF units did sometimes withdraw before SAF reinforcements came,<sup>157</sup> but in general they would engage in extended pitched battles with SAF units after initiating contact. In almost every engagement the DLF were significantly outnumbered by the SAF in terms of personnel from the beginning, which would dictate almost immediate withdrawal in contexts of a DLF-initiated assault. However, DLF fighters often remained in position despite an initial unfavorable balance of forces, and in many instances continued to do so even after the SAF brought in ground and air reinforcements.

For instance, on October 27th, 1966, two platoons of the C Company of the MR went out in search of water in Wadi Jarsis in central Dhofar and came under attack from a group of DLF fighters. Already outnumbered, the DLF group withdrew but two Provosts arrived and bombed the rebels as they were doing so, leading to an unknown number of DLF casualties.<sup>158</sup> On February 8th, 1966, 15-20 DLF fighters traveling in two Ford trucks assaulted a patrol from the NFR's A Company at Mudday using Lewis guns and rifles, leading to a 45-minute engagement with the patrolling force. SAF reinforcements came in the form of a Piston Provost and a Beaver aircraft, which targeted the two trucks and killed one DLF fighter and wounded five others, including Musallim bin Nufl as noted previously.<sup>159</sup> Besides undertaking a direct assault on the

---

<sup>157</sup>In three instances during this period, DLF fighters withdrew fairly quickly after engaging the SAF. These were:

- 9 November 1967: two sections of a DR platoon ambushed by a group of 16 fighters, "who slipped away when soldiers closed on their positions"; no SAF casualties (Peterson 2007, 210)
- 29 December 1967: B Company platoon of the DR was fired on by 12 insurgents, who withdrew after ten minutes after having wounded one soldier (Peterson 2007, 210)
- 6 March 1968: half company of DR ambushed while moving south down Wadi Nahiz from three positions by 15 DLF fighters; two patrol members killed in one minute of fire before rebels withdrew under cover of a fourth LMG (Peterson 2007, 214)

<sup>158</sup>Peterson 2007, 206

<sup>159</sup>Peterson 2007, 200, 477; McKeown 1981, 28; Telegram No. 211 from Foreign Office to Beirut, February 14th, 1966, FO 371/185365

patrol using a concentrated rather than dispersed formation, the attacking DLF force failed to withdraw from the engagement, instead staying in its concentrated position and fighting a pitched battle.<sup>160</sup>

Finally, in this first period of the rebellion, the DLF did not demonstrate a *capacity for low-level initiative*. The group did not fully decentralize military and tactical decision-making. Instead, decisions about attacks and targets of attacks were made at meetings of sector military committees, “which also determined what strength was necessary and what special tactics were required.”<sup>161</sup> Field commanders therefore did not have the authority to make their own decisions in this first part of the conflict.

### 3.1.3 Effectiveness: Losses Incurred and Losses Inflicted

During the 1964-September 1968 period of the conflict, DLF casualties began to increase as the SAF stepped up its operations against the insurgents after an initially slow start in responding to the rebellion. As the previous discussion of the DLF’s task execution illustrated, the majority of these casualties resulted from the group’s failure to execute some of the tasks, particularly undertaking concentrated frontal assaults, failing to withdraw when outgunned or outnumbered, and not consistently using dispersion and cover and concealment. British assessments mirrored their performance, giving some credit to the DLF for successful ambushes but noting the group’s high

---

<sup>160</sup>In other subsequent engagements, the DLF’s failure to withdraw (particularly when SAF reinforcements came) led to manpower losses. These included an ambush on February 25th, 1967, which led to the wounding of DLF fighters in an airstrike (Peterson 2007, 208); and the capture of two DLF fighters after support was brought in to provide heavy fire against the group’s ambush position on March 15th, 1967 (Peterson 2007, 208). The DLF group that conducted the three ambushes against the 3 Company of the DR on January 11th, 1968 remained in place even after Provosts arrived to bomb, rocket, and machine-gun the rebels; as stated previously, these three engagements ultimately led to six DLF fighters killed (Peterson 2007, 213-214). On August 11th, 1968, the B Company of the NFR set out to find the insurgents that had launched the 81mm mortars at RAF Salalah, and was engaged by a group of 50 DLF fighters in Wadi Jarsis. The fighters attacked an NFR vehicle and damaged a Provost that came to attack them, but ultimately suffered ten killed and six wounded (of whom one also later died) (McKeown 1981, 41; Peterson 2007, 216; Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790).

<sup>161</sup>Peterson 2007, 222

degree of casualties incurred in engagements with the SAF:

October 1966: “The rebels in question have been conducting guerrilla operations...These have been carried out with determination and some skill, through ambushes and occasionally frontal attacks on fortified positions, and have inflicted not inconsiderable casualties and damage...” (Report by M.S. Weir, ”Operation Against Dhofari Rebels,” October 21, 1966, FCO 371/185365)

Annual Review of 1967: “In Dhofar the rebels have been comparatively passive; they have attacked no civilian targets; they have had brushes with S.A.F. patrols during which S.A.F. have tended to come off best” (D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 5th, 1967, FCO 8/570)

Annual Review of 1968: “The Dhofari rebels have lost battles but not their war. They continue to fight for their cause though this has cost them a certain 45 killed and more wounded - against 12 dead and 29 wounded among the Sultan’s Armed Forces...rebels consistently getting the worst of the fighting” (Annual Review - 1968, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, January 12th, 1969, FCO 8/1073)

Based on the available accessible records, we can get a sense of the increasing magnitude of DLF losses during the first period of the conflict. As the last quote indicated, by the end of 1968, the DLF had lost a confirmed 45 killed since the start of the conflict, a significant number given that there were just between 60-120 fighters in the group at this time. More discrete casualty figures for the DLF over the first three years are unavailable (particularly in terms of WIA, captures, and defections), though British assessments throughout 1968 indicate a rising number of killed, captured and/or wounded on the DLF side as the year progressed (see Table 4.4). In total, the DLF lost an estimated 37.5-75% KIA during the first conflict period.

**Table 4.4.** DLF Losses During 1968

Category	January - March 1968	April - June 1968	July - September 1968
Killed	12	2	25
Wounded	15	N/A	19
Captured	N/A	30	N/A

**Table 4.5.** SAF Losses During 1968

Category	January - March 1968	April - June 1968	July - September 1968
Killed	5	N/A	4
Wounded	10	N/A	7

Looking at figures for 1968 gives a further indication of the rising losses for the DLF. The April 1968 first quarter review by the British Consulate General in Muscat noted that the DLF had sustained 12 killed and 15 wounded in the first three months of 1968.<sup>162</sup> These numbers were 2 DLF fighters killed and 30 captured in the second quarter of 1968, and then the numbers skyrocketed to 25 killed and 19 wounded during the third quarter of 1968.<sup>163</sup> Conversely, the DLF's attacks and engagements with the SAF failed to generate any significant number of casualties, or at least anything on par with their own increasing losses (see Table 4.5 above). Indeed, as the Annual Review of 1968 indicated, the SAF lost just 12 killed and 29 wounded during this first period of the conflict.

### **3.2 PFLOAG, Period #2: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness**

On November 30th, 1967, the National Liberation Front (NLF) of South Yemen defeated its rival, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), and took control of the country after the British withdrew. Besides marking a change in the political regime next to Dhofar province, this transformation had profound effects on the DLF. Large parts of both the NLF and DLF shared a common background in the ANM, and some of the leaders in both groups knew each other from

---

<sup>162</sup>Sultanate Balance Sheet, First Quarter review 1968, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 4th, 1968, FCO 8/576

<sup>163</sup>Sultanate Balance Sheet, Second Quarter review, June 27th, 1968, FO 1016/790; Sultanate Balance Sheet, Third Quarter review, October 22nd, 1968, FO 1016/790

previous stays in other Arab countries.<sup>164</sup> Internally, the NLF's victory buttressed the ANM faction of the DLF, and the latter pushed for a second DLF conference at Wadi Hamrin in September 1968. In addition to events in South Yemen, Takriti writes that the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war (and Arab defeat in that conflict) ushered in a shift to "scientific socialism" and Marxism-Leninism within the ANM, which influenced the organization's affiliates in the DLF.<sup>165</sup>

At the group's second conference in September 1968 that took place in Wadi Hamrin in Dhofar, the DLF followed suit, adopting scientific socialism and Marxism-Leninism as the basis for its overall organizational principles.<sup>166</sup> The group released a statement in November 1968 outlining the changes that had been made in the September conference:

"...A commitment to organized revolutionary violence as the sole means for defeating imperialism, reactionism, the bourgeoisie, and feudalism...Ideologically, the congress adopted scientific socialism which constitutes the historic doctrine that guides the struggles of the poor masses for the eradication of colonialism, imperialism, the bourgeoisie, and feudalism; and the scientific method for analyzing reality and understanding contradictions among the people..." (PFLOAG 1974, 12).

To signify this shift to broader objectives of liberating the entire Arabian Gulf on the foundation of its new official ideology, the group changed its name from the DLF to the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG).<sup>167</sup> Likewise, the DLF armed force was renamed the "People's Liberation Army" (PLA).<sup>168</sup> The ANM faction in the group took over the majority of its

---

<sup>164</sup>Takriti 2013, 98

<sup>165</sup>Takriti 2013, 109-111. This happened at the ANM's conference on July 23rd, 1968 in Dubai, when the leftist faction within the Arabian Gulf contingent of the ANM took over the organization (Al-Nu'mani 2016, 70).

<sup>166</sup>Al-Nu'mani 2016, 70, Halliday 1974, 330; Price 1975, 4; Takriti 2013, 109-111; Fayyad 1975, 94; "The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.3

<sup>167</sup>Price 1975, 4; "The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.3-4; PFLOAG 1974, 12.

<sup>168</sup>Takriti 2013, 114



leadership positions and began to consolidate its power.<sup>169</sup> That this was a major turning point was made clear to the British author Fred Halliday upon his visit to Dhofar in 1970:

“In long discussions with members of the PLA, of the general population and of the PFLOAG General Command, the history and strategy of the revolution became clear. The turning point had been 1968, when the new leadership and ideology had been adopted and it had been decided to launch a political and social revolution inside the liberated areas” (Halliday 1974, 330).

Those who did not support the turn towards scientific socialism and Marxism-Leninism either left the group or were forcibly purged.<sup>170</sup> Among those who were gone after the Hamrin conference included Musallim bin Nufl, who had already been on the outs from the group for some time before he was officially kicked out.<sup>171</sup> Further signaling this purge of the more locally-oriented elements was the fact that just three of the original eighteen leaders of the group from the first conference in 1965 were re-elected at the September 1968 conference.<sup>172</sup> Overall, however, most commanders and fighters in the group initially acquiesced to the changes that were implemented after September 1968, given the new influx of weapons that came with the transformation, the post-1967 war feelings among the group’s fighters that increased morale and a desire to fight, and the unattractiveness of leaving the group to face the “Sultan’s oppression.”<sup>173</sup>

### 3.2.1 Robust Recruitment Practices

As a result of this organizational transformation along ideological lines, fighter membership in the PFLOAG became selective after September 1968.<sup>174</sup> Ja’boub notes

---

<sup>169</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 94; Monick 1982, 5

<sup>170</sup>Fiennes 1975, 69-70; Al-Nu’mani 2016, 71-72. El-Rayyes 1976, 94-97. Some accounts claim that the older “nationalist” leaders opposed to the shift were not just purged, but actually all executed (e.g. Tremayne 1975, 47).

<sup>171</sup>Fiennes 1975, 69-70; Halliday 1974, 366.

<sup>172</sup>Price 1975, 4; Takriti 2013, 113; El-Rayyes 1976, 94; Halliday 1974, 366.

<sup>173</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 156; El-Rayyes 1976, 100-101

<sup>174</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 162-163; PFLOAG 1974, 12.

that this choice to be selective in choosing fighters was driven not by a desire to have more militarily effective fighters, but rather because of the importance of the non-military missions (e.g. educating the masses) fighters would be given that were considered as much if not more important than their military tasks.<sup>175</sup> Peterson corroborates this change, noting how recruitment became more selective and membership harder to achieve during this time period: “In the beginning, anyone who joined the Front was considered a party member. However, the leadership later realized that membership had been spread too thinly and should be restricted to those who had been properly indoctrinated and were fully committed.”<sup>176</sup> The shift in recruitment practices was thus unrelated to concerns about the group’s combat effectiveness, and were instead driven by a desire to ensure that fighters were politically prepared to transform Dhofari society.

After the September 1968 conference, the PLA continued to draw recruits from among the people of Dhofar, and opened up its ranks to women. The group established a special camp for women fighters, who eventually came to constitute a third of the PLA.<sup>177</sup> Besides Dhofaris, the PLA also began to take those who fled Dhofar for South Yemen, primarily children who were usually orphans of PFLOAG fighters or civilians killed in the conflict.<sup>178</sup> For these children, the PFLOAG opened its “Lenin School” in December 1969, which provided a four-month course with instruction in reading and writing and indoctrination in Marxism-Leninism, along with some very limited military training.<sup>179</sup>

Besides serving the purpose of educating the displaced population, the school

---

<sup>175</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 162

<sup>176</sup>Peterson 2007, 220

<sup>177</sup>Fiennes 1975, 151; Takriti 2013, 121-122; Ja’boub 2010, 160

<sup>178</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 171.

<sup>179</sup>Price 1975, 7; El-Rayyes 1976, 121; Al-‘Amri 2004, 132-133; Ja’boub 2010, 171-172; Takriti 2013, 123-124. By mid-1971, the school was educating 400 children between the ages of six and sixteen (Al-‘Amri 2004, 132).

course also provided a pool of potential recruits for the PLA: “[In addition] to literacy lessons, the Front organized political cells. And if the literacy lessons are open to all, the political cells were a selection process, as they qualify their members to join the Front’s organization with a minimum of three months.”<sup>180</sup> It was the newly-established Popular Militia that became the main source of recruits for the PLA, however. Militia members were selected by field commanders to go for training courses in Revolution Camp,<sup>181</sup> and all from the liberated areas of Dhofar who wanted to become fighters in the PLA had to first be part of the Militia.<sup>182</sup>

Both military training and political indoctrination became requirements for being in the PLA, whether for new recruits or those already in the organization as fighters.<sup>183</sup> The new leadership saw the need to retrain even those from Dhofar who already had experience handling weapons and fighting, so as to ensure that all were properly prepared for the changed goals of the group.<sup>184</sup> Takriti notes that this was driven by the following logic vis-a-vis Marxism-Leninism:

“Making its Dhufari appearance in the post-1968 period, its practical introduction to a pre-existing struggle was bound to be ridden with complexity...PFLOAG came to be treated by leftist leaders less as a Front, and more as a party. The principal aim was to create a formidably organized force, bound by ties rendered unbreakable by ideology. This was expressed in the Maoist slogan *al-Fikr Yaqud al-Bunduqiyya*, ‘thought leads the rifle’...The Commissars oversaw the reproduction of centralizing practices in every Dhufari gathering” (Takriti 2013, 262).

For new recruits, political and military training primarily took place at the Revolutionary Camp, which opened in Hawf, South Yemen in late 1968.<sup>185</sup> The Camp’s trainers primarily included three current PFLOAG members, one who received train-

<sup>180</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 121. Also see Ja’boub 2010, 158.

<sup>181</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 157, 160; Trabulsi 2004, 138; Halliday 1974, 327.

<sup>182</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 138

<sup>183</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 95; Thwaites and Sloane 1995, 76; Ja’boub 2010, 156-157.

<sup>184</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 158; Trabulsi 2004, 142.

<sup>185</sup>Long brief on RAF Salalah, April 5th, 1968, FCO 8/1089; Trabulsi 2004, 140; El-Rayyes 1976, 115, 118.

ing in Iraq (Amr bin Jamideh) and two who were in the DSO (Abu George Kashoub and Saeed Ali Qatn), according to interviews with graduates of the Camp from that time period.<sup>186</sup> El-Rayyes describes a typical day in training, drawing on his observations from being in Dhofar at the time:

“The day in the camp is divided into different military and political and study activities. The hours after breakfast are dedicated for military training, followed by lunch and literacy lessons, then two additional hours of military training until the time of dinner (around 5PM), which is followed by the political lessons. And the women’s band receives the same political and military training that the men receive. And the military training includes theoretical and strategic lessons and tactics of guerrilla warfare and urban warfare in addition to exercises with live ammunition on different types of weapons and explosives” (El-Rayyes 1976, 118-119).

Trabulsi’s account of training<sup>187</sup> from this time period matches that of El-Rayyes.

Drawing on different sources, Al-‘Amri describes training at this time in similar terms:

“The day begins with athletic training, a break for tea, then the morning military line that continues until noon in the designated training area in the camp, then a break for lunch, then literacy lessons for two or three hours, then the evening military line until sunset, and then dinner. And the training day concludes with a political or intellectual lesson organized by one of the political commissars, continuing for two or three hours each day” (Al-‘Amri 2004, 131).

These two accounts are corroborated by Halliday, describing a typical day of training based on his own observations from a visit to Revolution Camp in 1970:

“The day at the camp began at dawn, around 5.00 a.m., when members arose, assembled in the central part and saluted the PFLOAG flag. After breakfast, in cooking which the whole camp participated, there were usually four hours of military training, on the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare in the mountain areas and in towns, and the use of weapons and explosives. After lunch there was a literacy class, followed by two more hours of military training, until it

---

<sup>186</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 158; Takriti 2013, 115-116, 123; Jinahi 1975, 45; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6.

Other unsourced accounts from the time period claim that the Camp’s trainers were Chinese advisors or PFLOAG members that had received training in China (Cleveland 1975, 99-100; Price 1975, 7). However, these are fairly soundly disputed by others based on visits with the PFLOAG during the time period of focus (e.g. Halliday 1974, 333).

<sup>187</sup>Trabulsi 2004, 140

was time for supper at sunset around 5.00 p. After supper were four hours of political education, following the condensed twenty-five course prepared for basic political instruction” (Halliday 1974, 375).

The daily military training described by the three writers consisted of instruction in how to use weapons and move in the field, and included both applied military training and military lessons.<sup>188</sup> The former included military drills and direct training on how to use weapons and physical fitness training exercises, while the latter included “theoretical lessons in military science.”<sup>189</sup> Military training in the Camp also included instruction in how to provide simple medical care and first aid, primarily from Cuban doctors and those PFLOAG members who had received medical training through courses abroad.<sup>190</sup>

Political indoctrination for PLA recruits consisted of instruction in the works of the PFLOAG, readings of Mao’s *Red Book* and works by Guevara and Castro, lessons on historical materialism, and materials from other liberation movements.<sup>191</sup> As most who joined the PFLOAG could not read or write, most of the instruction was done using lectures, though the courses also provided literacy lessons for recruits to the PLA.<sup>192</sup> Lessons included instruction in “The Qualities of a Revolutionary Fighter,” along with information on the PFLOAG’s principles of democratic centralism, Marxism-Leninism, and national liberation and class struggle.<sup>193</sup> The aim of including the educational part along with military training for the PLA is captured in a quote from Ja’boub taken from an article by the author Ali Hussein Khalaf:

“The two programs ensure the education and preparation of fighters (male and female), to join the ranks of the People’s Liberation Army as an effective

---

<sup>188</sup>Price 1975, 7; Takriti 2013, 115-116; Ja’boub 2010, 158-159; Halliday 1974, 374-375.

<sup>189</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 159

<sup>190</sup>Ja’boub 2010, 164-165; Takriti 2013, 303

<sup>191</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 119; Ja’boub 2010, 121-122, 129-131; Halliday 2002, 369-370; Trabulsi 2004, 140-141; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.4

<sup>192</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 119; Ja’boub 2010, 116; Halliday 2002, 369-370; Al-‘Amri 2004, 131.

<sup>193</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 119-120; Ja’boub 2010, 121-122; Al-‘Amri 2004, 131-132; Halliday 1974, 370.

force, where many new concepts and values are established that form a viable foundation for the completion of self-indoctrination from one direction, and collective indoctrination from the other direction..." (Ja'boub 2010, 116-117, taken directly from Khalaf 1973, 32-33).

These training courses lasted between 6-8 months, after which individuals were sent to the PLA as full-time fighters.<sup>194</sup>

For those fighters that were already in the organization and remained after the purges in September 1968, they too underwent political indoctrination in the group's new principles within their assigned areas of Dhofar.<sup>195</sup> As Takriti notes:

"The politicization of the PLA was also undertaken by means of allocating political commissars to the companies and platoons. The trainers in the camp and the commissars were initially drawn from a group of 10 Dhufaris who were sent immediately after the Hamrin conference for a military and political course in China. Their appointment had profound effects on PFLOAG's structure and ideology since they consistently held the most radical views and assumed sensitive positions in the leadership. In the field, they had considerable authority and usually worked closely with the military commanders. In the Revolution Camp, they had full control" (Takriti 2013, 115-116).

That there was retraining of preexisting fighters is consistent with a marked decrease in the number of engagements during the first quarter of 1969, according to British diplomatic reports.<sup>196</sup>

These *robust* recruitment practices, including selective membership and consistent and comprehensive military training and indoctrination of fighters, continued until September 1970. Around that time, the PFLOAG began to forcibly recruit individuals for the PLA, moving away from a selective choosing of future fighters to a more random method of wholesale abduction.<sup>197</sup> Also occurring in September 1970 was an internal mutiny within the PFLOAG, after which the remaining anti-leftist elements

---

<sup>194</sup>Takriti 2013, 115; El-Rayyes 1976, 118; Jinahi 1974, 47; Al-'Amri 2004, 131

<sup>195</sup>Ja'boub 2010, 156, 158.

<sup>196</sup>D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 14th, 1969, "Sultanate Balance Sheet for first quarter 1969, FCO 1016/790.

<sup>197</sup>Fiennes 1975; Weekly Report up to 1200 hours on 31 August 1971, August 31st, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667; Tremayne 1974, 40-41; Ray 2008, 62,

in the PFLOAG were either executed or fled to the SAF (about 36-40 in total).<sup>198</sup> The group's response to the mutiny added to the challenges it was facing in getting recruits for the group, reinforcing the new strategy of forced recruitment, particularly after Sultan Qaboos announced a general amnesty at the same time.<sup>199</sup> However, these changes did not come into effect for about six months after the September 1970 incidents - while the selection process changed, the military training and political indoctrination aspects of recruitment did not immediately change. As such, this period of analysis of the conflict continues until May 1971, when the first batch of PFLOAG recruits taken in the context of deficient recruitment practices would have been deployed in combat.

### 3.2.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution

During the second time period of the conflict, the balance of forces continued to favor the SAF in terms of both force size and weaponry, with around 900 infantry and artillery soldiers mostly from the Northern Frontier Regiment (NFR) and Desert Regiment (DR) of the SAF; the Dhofar Force (DF) consisting of a 100-person company and 45-person HQ company; and 400 *askars*.<sup>200</sup> In addition, September 1970 saw the first deployment of the British SAS B Squadron in Dhofar to train the SAF reconnaissance platoons, while a second SAS squadron secretly deployed in Dhofar to participate directly in operations against the PFLOAG.<sup>201</sup> Takriti notes how the Sultanate had “numerical superiority, with a total strength of 3,700” at this time.<sup>202</sup>

This imbalance of forces dictated that the PFLOAG, with an estimated 600-700

---

<sup>198</sup>Takriti 2013, 266; El-Rayyes 1976, 100-101; Al-‘Amri 2004, 112-113.

<sup>199</sup>Takriti 2013, 264

<sup>200</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, “Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar”, FO 1016/804).

<sup>201</sup>Cole and Belfield 2011, 27-29; de la Billiere 1994, 263

<sup>202</sup>Takriti 2013, 145

fighters at its peak during this period in late 1971,<sup>203</sup> continue to pursue a strategy of guerrilla warfare vis-a-vis the SAF and its British partners. The PFLOAG continued to operate in three sectors in Dhofar, Western, Central, and Eastern.<sup>204</sup> Each sector contained 2-3 units (or *firqat*), each with its own permanent commander, second in command, and political commissar.<sup>205</sup> The units rotated every 2-3 months to explicitly de-emphasize tribal connections.<sup>206</sup> Besides the companies within the three sectors, a mobile PFLOAG company was added after 1968 to serve as reinforcement for “intense combat.”<sup>207</sup> In general, the PFLOAG operated in groups of 20-30 fighters.<sup>208</sup>

Given that recruitment practices changed in late September 1968 and that the training and socialization process took about six months, we would expect to see improvements in the PFLOAG’s fighting ability at latest in April 1969, if not earlier given the retraining and resocialization of preexisting fighters that took place after the Hamrin conference in September 1968. Indeed, such a positive shift in tactical effectiveness compared to the previous year was observed around that time:

May 1969: “Large-scale operations were mounted along al-Qatn to the east and west of the Midway road, but achieved only incidental contact with the insurgents, confirming the Front’s reluctance to engage large groups of the SAF in open country (unlike the previous year, when an NFR company had lost nine men in a pitched battle in the same area)” (Peterson 2007, 224).

This post-September 1968 general improvement in PFLOAG effectiveness is noted in multiple intelligence assessments from the time period:

“By mid-1968, the rebels were able to make daylight raids on Salalah and Mirbat, and by the end of the year the rebels were fairly well-equipped and

---

<sup>203</sup>Takriti 2013, 174, 285; “The Dhofar Rebellion - An Evaluation by the Defence Secretary of the Sultanate of Oman, Colonel H R D Oldman, OBE, MC,” September 13, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667; El-Rayyes 1976, 113.

<sup>204</sup>Takriti 2013, 115

<sup>205</sup>Peterson 2007, 220; Takriti 2013, 115

<sup>206</sup>Peterson 2007, 221

<sup>207</sup>Takriti 2013, 115

<sup>208</sup>“The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6, P.4; El-Rayyes 1976, 90-91.



organized, and more aggressive...They avoid pitched battles with the Sultan's armed forces, and as a result, losses have been low on both sides. The rebels favor tactics such as the mining of roads, the ambushing of patrols, and the use of mortars to shell targets...The front undertook new military initiatives in Dhofar, and the number of rebel attacks increased markedly. By mid-1970 the rebels controlled the coastline from the Aden border to within a few miles of Salalah and held many coastal villages - such as Mirbat and Sath - east of Salalah. They moved at will through the mountains and along numerous overland routes. The environs of Salalah were sporadically attacked" ("The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6).

May 1970: "Recent British reports indicate that in the past year the rebels' equipment has improved and their tactics have become more aggressive and effective. Rebel bands operate freely in the western third of the province and have been able to over-run several small forts garrisoned by pro-Sultan irregulars. They have successfully mortared the RAF camp near the Sultan's residence at Salalah, inflicting minor damage. The rebels generally avoid pitched battles with the British-officered Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) but the latter are thinly spread and hampered by terrain" (Murphy (NEA/ARP) to Sisco (NEA), "Situation in Muscat/Oman," May 20th, 1970, NA/RG59/Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1952-1975).

This eventually resulted in a scenario where "the sultan's forces were fighting a strictly defensive war that restricted them exclusively to Salalah and neighboring villages...the PFLOAG remained on the offensive during the first year after the coup, establishing full control over the 'Red Line' (the road between Salalah and the small base at Thumrait) by destroying the four remaining SAF posts along the road by May 1971."<sup>209</sup> These improved tactics of the PFLOAG, as demonstrated in Table 4.6 and the following discussion, allowed them to operate freely and essentially control most of Dhofar by mid-1971, as the SAF intentionally limited its positions to Salalah and Mirbat.

---

<sup>209</sup>Allen and Rigsbee 2000, 66-68. Also see: Price 1975, 5; Peterson 2007, 227.

**Table 4.6.** PFLOAG’s Task Execution During the September 1968-May 1971 Period

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Mixed
Cover and Concealment	Yes
Dispersion	Yes
Conduct Ambushes	Yes
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	Yes
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	Yes
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	Yes

In 1968, the PFLOAG started receiving Chinese and Russian weapons, which largely replaced their British-made weapons that were used during the previous period.<sup>210</sup> By 1970, the PFLOAG had several different makes of machine guns, including conventional rifles, 14.5mm KPV heavy machine guns, Shpagin 12.7mm heavy machine guns, SKS semi-automatic carbines, Gorynuv medium machine guns, Siminov rifles, Kalashnikov assault rifles, Degtyarov RPDs, and portable rocket launchers.<sup>211</sup> In terms of indirect fire and heavier weapons, the PFLOAG had 2-inch and 3-inch mortars, 81mm mortars, 75mm howitzers, and a Chinese-made “36” 57mm recoilless rifle.<sup>212</sup>

The PFLOAG demonstrated some improvement in *operating weaponry and marksmanship*. The improvement over the previous period is also noted in a British diplomatic report in April 1969:

---

<sup>210</sup>Peterson 2007, 221-222

<sup>211</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, “Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar,” FO 1016/804; Cleveland 1975, 100; Peterson 2007, 225; Takriti 2013, 147; HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, to D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, April 3rd, 1969, draft minute, FO1016/790; Kennedy 1989, 65; Arkless 1988, 139.

<sup>212</sup>Peterson 2007, 222. As Peterson notes, the “36” was essentially a copy of the American M-18 57mm recoilless rifle (Peterson 2007, 222).

“On four occasions during the quarter the rebels gave evidence of greater expertise. Firstly, mortar fire directed at a SAF position was corrected so as to bring bombs within 15 yards; secondly a rebel ambush held its fire until a SAF patrol was within optimum range of the rebels’ Russian assault rifles; thirdly, the ramp which carried the road from Salalah down the landward side of the encampment was efficiently blown with plastic explosives; fourthly, a Strikemaster was very nearly brought down by automatic fire” (D. Pragnell, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 14th, 1969, Sultanate Balance Sheet for first quarter 1969, FCO 1016/790).

The Shpagin 12.7mm gun in particular increased the effective firing range of the PFLOAG, which allowed them “to target the Midway road from outside small-arms range on the ridges running parallel to the road.”<sup>213</sup> Moreover, the PFLOAG deployed some of its heavy machine guns in an anti-aircraft role in the Western Sector, demonstrating knowledge of the versatility of its heavier weapons. In engagements with the SAF, the group’s increased accuracy of small arms fire was noted by SAF observers and participants. On August 12th, 1970, a group of PFLOAG fighters attacked an SAF convoy on Salalah Plain, in a stand-off attack.<sup>214</sup> The use of stand-off tactics demonstrated an appropriate knowledge of weaponry’s range that would still allow the rebels to attack the SAF unit.

On January 14th, 1971, the 3 Company of the DR engaged with 50 PFLOAG fighters for over 11 hours, and rebel fire described as “accurate” and coming from all sides during the engagement, leading to one SAF casualty.<sup>215</sup> On January 18th, 1971, the 2 Company of the SAF’s Dhofar Regiment (DR) sustained three casualties from PFLOAG mortar and small arms fire in Wadi Darbat.<sup>216</sup> On April 15th, 1971, a Dhofar Gendarmerie patrol engaged with 35 PFLOAG fighters in Wadi Arzat, the latter using 2-inch mortars, small arms, and heavy machine gun fire. No casualties were sustained, but “enemy fire control and tactical movement was said to be good.”<sup>217</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup>Peterson 2007, 225

<sup>214</sup>Peterson 2007, 247

<sup>215</sup>SITREP for week ending 26 January 1971, January 26th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>216</sup>SITREP for week ending 26 January 1971, January 26th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>217</sup>Weekly Report up to 1200 hours on 19 April 1971, April 19th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

Success with mines continued somewhat as well: on September 29th, 1968, an SAF soldier was killed when a truck activated a Mark-7 mine.<sup>218</sup> Four SAF soldiers were injured when a mine went off and damaged a 3-tonner of the DR's recce platoon.<sup>219</sup>

While it saw general success with small arms fire, mines, and occasional success with mortar fire, the PFLOAG continued to fail in multiple instances to use its mortars accurately and effectively. On several occasions, PFLOAG mortar fire did not hit its intended targets and/or cause any damage or casualties among the SAF targets. This was the case in multiple instances during the time period, including several times in late 1968 and late 1969 with PFLOAG targeting of RAF Salalah.<sup>220</sup> On December 21st, 1970, a group of PFLOAG fighters fired 81mm mortar rounds at the MR's B Company camp at Adonib, failing to hit any targets or cause any casualties.

Besides issues with mortars, the PFLOAG did not hold back when using its ammunition. A March 1969 British intelligence report notes that "the large numbers of rounds fired by the PFLOAG in engagements argues a good supply of ammunition."<sup>221</sup> However, a June 1971 PFLOAG internal report written by the political commissar of the Ho Chi Minh Unit in the Central Sector noted that, among other issues, there was a "lack of ammunition conservation during contacts and, in particular, when firing at

---

<sup>218</sup>Situation report No.010740Z from Commander, British Forces, Gulf to Ministry of Defence, UK, August 13th, 1968

<sup>219</sup>Peterson 2007, 232

<sup>220</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, "Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar", FO 1016/804; HQBF Gulf to Cabinet Office London, August 23, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1571; Sitrep for Week ending 29 December 1970, CBFG to RBDWC/MODUK, December 29th, 1970, FCO 8/1667; D.C. Crawford, Consulate General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, December 30th, 1969, Annual Review for 1969, FCO 1016/791; Weekly Report up to 1200 hours on 19 April 1971, April 19th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667.

<sup>221</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclosing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, "Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar", FO 1016/804.

aircraft.”<sup>222</sup> These two separate accounts corroborate the fact that discipline in using ammunition was still poor among the PFLOAG fighters in this second period of the conflict.

The PFLOAG Retired Major General Tony Jeapes, an SAS Commander in Dhofar during the early 1970s, wrote the following on the PFLOAG’s ability to *use cover and concealment* during this time period of the conflict (1971):

“I had plenty of evidence as to the adoo’s fighting capability. They were brave men, not afraid to push home an attack if SAF made a blunder. They were skillful as using ground to provided covered approaches and their brown skins and dull clothing gave them natural camouflage. Whereas the SAF tended to stay in one place, the adoo were constantly moving, probing the SAF flanks, working around them to cut off their withdrawal and using every dip and fold of the ground to advantage...The adoo move out from the cover of their hills by night on to the plain until they are within range, fire off some shells or bombs and then scurry off back into the shelter of the jebel before the SAF artillery can range in on them. The adoo patrol will come out one night and set up the heavy base plate position, covering the plate itself with sand. The next night they return with the barrel and bipod and the exact amount of bombs to be fired. They fire them off, dismantle the mortar, kick sand over the base plate, which can be used another night, and flee. By the time the SAF shells are bursting around the firing position the crew are well into the shelter of the jebel” (Jeapes 2005, 22-23).

Racist description aside, Jeapes’s summary observation indicates excellent use of the natural terrain for cover and concealment, both in terms of unit movement and disguising firing positions and weapons. This observation aligns with other accounts of PFLOAG cover and concealment during this time period of the conflict. On August 23rd, 1969, the PFLOAG overran the town of Rakhyut in western Dhofar, which it would ultimately hold until January 1975.<sup>223</sup> The PFLOAG was able to do this by using the monsoon mist to infiltrate and occupy positions of strength around the town during the monsoon season before attacking it at the end of August:

---

<sup>222</sup>Takriti 2013, 276; Jeapes 2005, 129.

<sup>223</sup>Peterson 1977, 281; Peterson 2007, 225, 479; Cleveland 98; Takriti 2013, 146; El-Rayyes 1976, 96; Al-‘Amri 2004, 123.

“In the event the monsoon period was quiet, but the DLF took advantage of it to infiltrate men and supplies not only to keep five Infantry companies of SAF actively engaged in the Central Sector, but to occupy in some strength positions in the western area of Dhofar, notably the coastal village of Raikhut which they attacked at the end of August capturing or killing the Sultan’s garrison of askars” (D.C. Crawford, Consulate General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, December 30th, 1969, Annual Review for 1969, FCO 1016/791).

Based on his assessment of PFLOAG fighting during the period, Takriti notes how the PFLOAG took advantage of the terrain to successfully hide themselves and move closer to the most strategic position of the SAF (RAF Salalah):

“On the whole, the PLA fighters stuck to the tree line on the Jabal. They avoided the open desert where they could be easily targeted by jets and they were also cautious wherever they operated in the plains. They deployed the classic guerrilla tactic of operating in small groups - rarely more than 20 or 30 - over a large area. By doing so, they hoped to draw the soldiers into ground of their own choosing...During the monsoon of 1969, there was a marked improvement in revolutionary performance...The thick foliage of the season allowed them to establish positions that were dangerously close to Salalah” (Takriti 2013, 145-146).

Al-‘Amri had a similar conclusion with regard to the group’s ability to use cover and concealment during this time period, noting the PFLOAG’s

“knowledge of the nature of the terrain and exploiting it to realize the element of surprise that is the basis of guerrilla warfare, which itself depends on ambushes as its own basis...and the revolutionaries exploited the season of rainfall in Dhofar for their benefit, so in the monsoon season the revolutionaries would hit all of the government forces’ military positions, doing so through sneaking under cover of clouds and over the foliage and shrubs spread on the plain to strike the air base at Salalah, or the Um AlGhawarif Camp, or AlFouj Camp in the Arzait area at the eastern entrance to the city of Salalah” (Al-‘Amri 2004, 123).

Besides PFLOAG fighters’ use of cover and concealment, the group made use of the terrain and foliage to disguise its firing positions. For example, a 75mm recoilless rifle position on the top of Jebel Aram (west of Taqa) was wreaking havoc in the town of Taqa for several days in late April 1971. In response, the SAF launched Operation

Gibbet in early May 1971 to take out the PFLOAG firing position. The PFLOAG withdrew before the operating forces arrived (see discussion below), and Jeapes (a participant in the operation) describes how the position was set up:

“It was easy to see why it had been impossible to spot the firing position from Taqa. The gun had been cleverly sited on a flat area between two large rocks and roofed over with bushes for camouflage. Only the muzzle could be seen from Taqa and the backblast would be masked by the rocks and bushes” (Jeapes 2005, 122).

During this period of the conflict, the PFLOAG consistently used *dispersion* when operating, reducing its units’ vulnerability to SAF firepower and SOAF airstrikes. For example, between October 23rd and November 1st, 1969, there were six clashes between the SAF and PFLOAG near the Midway Road in central Dhofar, which led to one wounded SAF soldier.<sup>224</sup> Reflecting on PFLOAG tactics during these six engagements, a British diplomat noted that the rebels moved “in small groups of 2 to 5 strong. Such tactics will present only fleeting targets to SOAF and make SAF’s task of gaining control of central sector harder.”<sup>225</sup> As Biddle notes, dispersion is used precisely for that purpose: to deny the adversary easy targets, particularly when the adversary has superior firepower,<sup>226</sup> as the Sultanate did.

Indeed, this use of dispersion was a general trend exhibited by the PFLOAG during these middle years of the conflict from 1968-1971. As Jeapes wrote at the time of his deployment in 1971:

“The battalion in Dhofar had had a hard time...they had been driven off the jebel, they were surrounded by mines, they were taking casualties, *and the enemy offered no tangible target, nothing SAF could bring their weaponry to bear upon* [emphasis added]” (Jeapes 2005, 29).

---

<sup>224</sup>D.C. Crawford, Consul-General, Muscat to M.S. Weir, Bahrain Residency, November 1st, 1969, FCO 8/1072

<sup>225</sup>D.C. Crawford, Consul-General, Muscat to M.S. Weir, Bahrain Residency, November 1st, 1969, FCO 8/1072

<sup>226</sup>Biddle 2004

The group demonstrated an improved ability to successfully *execute ambushes* during this time period of the conflict. PFLOAG fighters often took up multiple firing positions when undertaking ambushes and demonstrated the discipline and patience needed to target Sultanate forces. For example, on July 12th, 1971, the recce platoon of A Company of the MR was ambushed by a PFLOAG contingent in three separate groups at Wadi Jardum. The SAF situation report details how the “leading APC was hit by several RPG 2...casualties one seconded British officer killed, one contract officer, and three Baluchis wounded.”<sup>227</sup>

In conjunction with multiple firing positions, the PFLOAG also demonstrated the ability to combine knowledge of their weapons’ ranges with the element of surprise in an ambush. For example, an SAF report recalls how “a rebel ambush held its fire until a SAF patrol was within optimum range of the rebels’ Russian assault rifles.”<sup>228</sup> In another instance on September 17th, 1970, the PFLOAG executed a series of ambushes against SAF forces undertaking Operation Conqueror to open the Midway-Salalah road after the end of the monsoon season. In the first incident, 5-6 PFLOAG fighters using automatic weapons opened fire on a convoy of the MR’s B Company, wounding a soldier. Three hours later, a “platoon-sized” group of rebels opened fire on the same convoy using five Russian-made Shpagin machine guns.<sup>229</sup> The citation for one of the SAF soldiers involved and killed in the two incidents is the following:

“On 17 September 1969 during Operation Conqueror to clear the Midway road, Private Ghazi was driving a stores 3-ton vehicle, with a medium machine gun mounted on the back and was involved in two actions with the enemy. In the first action Private Ghazi was with the leading platoon clearing the axis of the road, when they came under accurate fire from 400 yards. Ghazi...left his cover and drove directly onto the enemy position with the medium machine

---

<sup>227</sup>SITREP for week ending 20 July 1971, July 20th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667.

<sup>228</sup>“The Dhofar Rebellion - An Evaluation” by the Defence Secretary of the Sultanate of Oman, Colonel H R D Oldman, OBE, MC,? September 13, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>229</sup>Peterson 2007, 225



gun firing throughout...by his aggressive action shocked the enemy into a hasty withdrawal...Some three hours later, as the convoy approached Ambush Corner, Ghazi's vehicle...came under extremely heavy and accurate fire from five different positions. The enemy obviously intended to put this vehicle with the medium machine gun out of action and thus concentrated against it the maximum weight of fire. This soon caused it to catch fire...Ghazi...left his cover and climbed onto the back of his vehicle thereby exposing himself to a hail of bullets...he was shot in the head and died minutes later" (In Peterson 2007, 226fn1).

Though written to honor an SAF soldier, the citation indicates the skilled nature of the PFLOAG in executing ambushes. First, as per classic guerrilla warfare strategy, the rebels set up an initial ambush position for an adversary convoy on a road, waiting until they were in close range (400 yards) before opening fire and striking the vehicle "accurately." In the second ambush, the rebels had set up a second position with a platoon-sized group and fired on the B Company convoy from five different positions, killing two SAF soldiers, wounding three, and taking just one casualty in the form of a wounded rebel. Besides illustrating the group's ability to successfully execute an ambush, these two engagements indicate the group's continued use of dispersion when attacking the SAF.

Unlike the previous period of the conflict, where PFLOAG fighters repeatedly attacked fixed and fortified SAF positions using concentrated formations, in this period the group generally *avoided concentrated frontal assaults*. And even when the PFLOAG engaged in frontal assaults on a fixed position, they did so in a dispersed way, attacking a fixed position from multiple directions and only when the local balance of forces was in their favor. For instance, on January 6th, 1970, a group of 50 PFLOAG fighters attacked Taqah Fort with mortars and rockets, firing from several positions.<sup>230</sup>

Jeapes describes another engagement in early 1971 where the PFLOAG avoided using concentrated frontal assaults and instead fought according to classic guerrilla

---

<sup>230</sup>Peterson 2007, 230, 479; Takriti 2013, 147.

warfare tactics:

“Another SAS patrol had gone out the with Northern Frontier Regiment on the north of the jebel. A GPMG, which again SAF were not yet equipped with, was carried by Trooper Alex Glennie...He was with the reserve platoon of a company which had carried out the usual SAF operation of moving by night into a defensive position and as dawn broke, the adoo began to snipe them and move around their flanks. After some minutes probing fire, the adoo must have thought they had found a weakness in the reserve platoon for they began to push home an attack. Glennie opened fire with a long burst from his GPMG. Abruptly all shooting stopped and for perhaps half a minute there was total silence as both sides considered this new weapon...they were brave men and began the attack again. A group of four or five men began to skirmish up a shallow wadi towards Glennie, moving up in short dashes from rock to rock whilst a light machine-gunner to a flank kept the SAF heads down” (Jeapes 2005, 60).

Rather than moving in a concentrated formation towards the SAF gun position, the PFLOAG fighters instead used fire and maneuver, dispersing their forces and using fire from a flank to suppress SAF return fire. Besides demonstrating an avoidance of concentrated frontal assaults, this action on the part of the PFLOAG indicates incredible tactical skill, particularly for an insurgent group - fire and maneuver is hard even for professional state armies to master.<sup>231</sup>

In general, the PFLOAG paid careful attention to the local balance of forces when engaging with the SAF during this period, and *withdrew when outgunned/outnumbered*. While the group had increasing de facto control of several parts of Dhofar as this time period of the conflict went on, this was largely due to an absence or intentional withdrawal of the SAF. Consequently, when the SAF decided to try and retake areas of the province back starting in the second half of 1970, the PFLOAG would withdraw from these areas rather than attempting to hold the territory. In 1970, an SAF assessment noted that “the Front’s methods of operation were based on classic but still unsophisticated guerrilla tactics: keeping to small groups, an emphasis on

---

<sup>231</sup>Biddle 2004. I note, however, that fire and maneuver using small arms fire in a small group is indeed much easier than coordinating armor, artillery, and infantry to use the tactics. Even still, the use of the tactic by insurgents in this case is still impressive.

minelaying, only attacking when possessing tactical advantage and quickly melting away when confronted.”<sup>232</sup>

The PFLOAG’s actions during the time period mirror this general assessment. On December 5-8, 1968, during NFR operations against the PFLOAG, “rebels seemed to have withdrawn extensively before the operation, which had therefore not been as effective as hoped.”<sup>233</sup> In the September 17th, 1969 ambush incidents, the PFLOAG withdrew immediately once the SAF started to close in on their position.<sup>234</sup> On February 23rd, 1971, Operation Everest began, in which an infantry company of the BATT, the Firqat Salahdin, an MR company, and Coastal Patrol dhows, moved to recapture the port town of Sath in the east.<sup>235</sup> Rather than standing and fighting, the PFLOAG forces in the town withdrew prior to the attack:

“...so they arrived at the edges of the city at 1:00AM on the next day, and the operation began to take back the city at dawn on February 24th (*sic*), and that force was able to recapture the city with ease, influenced by the withdrawal of Front individual after they felt that they did not have the capabilities to confront the government force...” (Al-‘Amri 2004, 181-182).

Indeed, Tony Jeapes, a participant in the operation, confirmed that the town was recaptured without resistance, noting that all of the PFLOAG fighters had withdrawn prior to the SAF operation.<sup>236</sup> In May 1971, a PFLOAG 75mm recoilless rifle position on Jebel Aram west of Mirbat had been firing on the town of Taqa (to its east) for several days.<sup>237</sup> In response, two SAS troops and elements of the Firqat Khalid Bin Waalid and Firqat Salahadin moved towards the position in Operation Gibbet on May 4-5.<sup>238</sup> Again, the PFLOAG fighters manning the fixed position on the top of

---

<sup>232</sup>SAF assessment paraphrased in Peterson 2007, 228.

<sup>233</sup>Extract from minutes of 49th MCCPC meeting, December 26th, 1968, FCO 8/1089.

<sup>234</sup>Peterson 2007, 226fn1

<sup>235</sup>Jeapes 2005, 69-79

<sup>236</sup>Jeapes 2005, 69-79

<sup>237</sup>Peterson 2007, 259

<sup>238</sup>Ibid.

Jebel Aram withdrew before the government forces reached the position, using cover fire as the gun was removed from the mountain top.<sup>239</sup>

In this period of the conflict, the PFLOAG had the *capacity for low-level initiative*, decentralizing military and tactical decision-making to local military field commanders and political commissars.<sup>240</sup> As Peterson noted, “The PLA never seemed to have a proper hierarchical structure; instead, area commanders inside Dhufar were virtually autonomous in coordinating activities in their own areas...”<sup>241</sup> Indeed, after 1968, it was the local political commissars that had the authority over military operations, an authority that remained absolute within the PFLOAG until June 1971.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.2.3 Effectiveness: Losses Incurred and Losses Inflicted

The PFLOAG’s increasing success in executing the tasks and fighting effectively using guerrilla warfare was matched by a decrease in casualties incurred during this time period of the conflict. Table 4.7 displays casualty figures from 1968-1970, drawn directly from J.E. Peterson’s 2007 book.<sup>243</sup>

**Table 4.7.** PFLOAG Losses from 1968-1970

Category	1968	1969	1970
Confirmed Killed	46	31	20
Reliably Reported Killed	25	25	7
Wounded	34	39	24
Captured	26	7	N/A

**Table 4.8.** SAF Losses from 1968-1970

Category	1968	1969	1970
Killed	13	7	N/A
Wounded	22	24	14

---

<sup>239</sup>Jeapes 2005, 112-122

<sup>240</sup>Ray 2008, 62

<sup>241</sup>Peterson 2007, 219

<sup>242</sup>Al-‘Amri 2004, 106; Takriti 2013, 262

<sup>243</sup>Peterson 2007, 222. Peterson draws on British and Omani archival documents for these figures.

As the table indicates, PFLOAG casualties declined over the course of this time period of the conflict. This is despite the group stepping up its rate of attacks after using most of the early part of 1969 for training.<sup>244</sup> Indeed, if we look at the data on casualties for 1969 in Table 4.9 below,<sup>245</sup> we see just a slight increase in the second quarter and then a decrease in the third quarter. This overall trend downwards is in line with the group’s improved effectiveness during this conflict period as demonstrated by its improved ability to successfully execute nearly all seven tasks.

**Table 4.9.** PFLOAG Losses During 1969

Category	January - March 1969	April - June 1969	July - September 1969
Killed	4	6	1
Wounded	15	3	3
Captured	3	N/A	0

<sup>244</sup>“The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; Takriti 2013, 147.

From a July 1969 British diplomatic report: “Between 1 January and 1 April figures for casualties were: SAF Killed: N/A Wounded: 7 Captured: N/A; Rebels Killed: 4 (+ possibly 10) Wounded: 15 Captured: 3. By contrast in the last quarter of 1968, 25 rebels were killed and 19 wounded. The decrease reflects a decrease in the number of engagements. This was due in part to the fact that the launches, which had been available during the previous quarter and so had made possible sea-borne surprise attacks on rebel positions, failed mechanically and had to be withdrawn. Another reason almost certainly was that the rebels had acquired sufficient respect for the fighting ability of the Northern Frontier Regiment to wish to avoid engagements. A related cause was that more rebels were outside Dhofar. There were reports of 24 having gone to China for training and of others being trained at Mukahha by PRSY forces. One theory is that they disengaged with the twin objectives first of building up their strength through training and by acquiring new weapons and second of re-engaging in June or July with the monsoon cloud and rain to give them better cover and with the Northern Frontier Regiment replaced by the possibly less hard hitting Muscat Regiment...The Dhofari rebels seem to have used the three months in training new cadres and in acquiring new weapons...” (D. Pragnell, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 14th, 1969, Sultanate Balance Sheet for first quarter 1969, FCO 1016/790).

<sup>245</sup>Data taken from: D. Pragnell, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, April 14th, 1969, Sultanate Balance Sheet for first quarter 1969, FCO 1016/790; D.G. Crawford, Consul-General Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, third quarterly report for 1969, October 13th, 1969, FCO 1016/791; D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, July 14th, 1969, Balance Sheet for second quarter 1969, FCO 1016/790.

**Table 4.10.** SAF Losses During 1969

Category	January - March 1969	April - June 1969	July - September 1969
Killed	N/A	2	2
Wounded	7	7	4

### **3.3 PFLOAG, Period #3: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness**

#### **3.3.1 Deficient Recruitment Practices**

As noted in the previous section of the chapter, the PFLOAG<sup>246</sup> began to forcibly recruit children through abduction starting in late 1970.<sup>247</sup> This practice began after the failure of a voluntary approach that consisted of asking parents for permission to enlist their children.<sup>248</sup> This shift, along with increasing opposition to the PFLOAG from among the Dhofari population due to their ideological imposition and coercive tactics, reinforced the tactic of forced recruitment as the conflict continued in the 1970s.

Besides forced recruitment, a mutiny against the PFLOAG leadership in eastern Dhofar broke out in September 1970. Frustrated with the PFLOAG's imposition of Marxism-Leninism and prohibition on the practice of Islam, a local group of disenchanted members, led by members of the local military committee and mostly belonging to the Qarra tribe, arrested 36-40 men and women of the group on September 12th.<sup>249</sup> Negotiations for the prisoners' release were successfully held soon after,

---

<sup>246</sup>I noted earlier in the chapter that the group changed its name in August 1974 to the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman" (PFLO), signaling a shift in focus to just Oman (El-Rayyes 1976, 108). However, I continue to use PFLOAG for the rest of the chapter, with the aim of lessening the confusion for the reader.

<sup>247</sup>Ray 2008, 61-62; Jeapes 2005, 25

<sup>248</sup>Fiennes 1975, 146

<sup>249</sup>Takriti 2013, 265-266; Al-'Amri 2004, 171-172; Barout 1997, 409

and the revolt was brutally crushed by September 30th by the PFLOAG leadership through the executions of 30 cadres.<sup>250</sup>

As Takriti notes, this action had profound consequences for the PFLOAG's reputation among Dhofaris, and, more significantly, for internal dynamics within the group and among its fighters:

“Such internal violence was unprecedented. For the first time, lethal punishment had been administered within the revolution on a large scale, tearing the fabric of the Dhufari body politic and destroying the bonds of camaraderie. The families of the executed were traumatized and some of their relatives who were enrolled in PFLOAG began to harbour new vengeful attitudes towards the leadership. Tribalism, which had gone into a temporary slumber under the effects of collective mobilization, was reawakened. There were now cadres who raised their rifles with the Front but turned their hearts towards revenge. More significantly, a new character, fear, had made its presence felt. It fed on the callousness in handling revolutionary lives, the ease with which they were terminated” (Takriti 2013, 266).

To add to this, Sultan Qaboos announced a general amnesty in September 1970, giving disenchanted members in the PFLOAG a safe out from the group that they had previously lacked.<sup>251</sup> The group did receive some more fighters after merging with the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (NDFLOAG) in December 1971, but these were only limited numbers, selectively recruited but all of whom received different training and indoctrination.<sup>252</sup>

Things only got worse for the PFLOAG as time went on. Until May 1972, military training and indoctrination continued somewhat uninterrupted in Hawf,<sup>253</sup> though

---

<sup>250</sup>Takriti 2013, 266

<sup>251</sup>Takriti 2013, 264; Ja'boub 2010, 156; El-Rayyes 1976, 100-101.

<sup>252</sup>The NDFLOAG was formed in 1968 with the aim of starting similar activities to the PFLOAG in northern Oman (Peterson 2007, 236-7; Takriti 2013, 164). The group “recruited cautiously,” and most of its members received training in Iraq, China, in Fatah camps in Jordan, at the PFLOAG's Hawf camp, and/or in Egyptian and Syrian military academies (Price 1975, 5; Takriti 2013, 170). The group tried to initiate armed struggle in June 1970 with two attacks, but these both failed and most of the members were arrested (Takriti 2013, 170). The remaining members went to the PFLOAG.

<sup>253</sup>Ja'boub 2010, 166

with abducted individuals rather than voluntary recruits. Saeed Jinahi's recount of his visit to Revolution Camp in 1971 corroborates this notion:

"In the early morning the camp meets standing in front of the flag...then training begins. There are no fields as the reader would imagine, the training fields are hills and reefs and valleys, and they are tough drills...but this helps to create hardened cadres who will sacrifice and are capable of guiding revolutionary action in the hardest and toughest circumstances. After noon the literacy lessons begin, and before the sunset, political indoctrination lessons, and in the evening they take up guarding" (Jinahi 1974, 46).

However, on May 25th, 1972, the SOAF bombed several parts of Hawf, including the PFLOAG's office, Revolution Camp, and Cadres' School.<sup>254</sup> This forced the group to close its camps in Hawf and send trainees to different areas to perform military tasks and reinforce local leadership, disrupting recruits' training while the group set up a training camp in western Dhofar.<sup>255</sup>

As a direct result, PFLOAG cadres and commanders started to receive different training courses when dispersed throughout Dhofar, and the group also started sending individuals abroad for training, particularly to China.<sup>256</sup> The Soviets and North Koreans also helped the PFLOAG during this time period with training.<sup>257</sup> The group did eventually reopen the camps at Hawf after the strikes and resumed the six-month training courses, but the combination of forced recruitment with the disruption in training had its consequences.<sup>258</sup> Moreover, the PFLOAG headquarters were struck again on October 19th, 1975 by SOAF aircraft and destroyed.<sup>259</sup> Adding to this situ-

---

<sup>254</sup>Halliday 1974, 338.

<sup>255</sup>Ja'boub 2010, 167. Ja'boub's account of this development is based on her interviews with several former PFLOAG leaders and cadres from the time period (Ja'boub 2010, 166fn36, 187-188). On the training camp within Dhofar, see: SITREP as of 14 November 1971, November 14th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668.

<sup>256</sup>Ja'boub 2010, 167-168; Peterson 2007, 323; "The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf," Information Research Department (IRD) Report, July 26th, 1973, BNA/FCO 8/2031.

<sup>257</sup>Peterson 2007, 324

<sup>258</sup>On the camp being reopened and functioning, see: "Oman Intelligence Report No.48" (26 August - 8 September 1973), September 8th, 1973, BNA/FCO 2022

<sup>259</sup>Jeapes 2005, 224



ation was an influx of non-Dhofari fighters and foreigners into the PFLOAG after its June 1971 conference in Rakhyut, which “officially opened PFLOAG ranks to more Arab and international volunteers.”<sup>260</sup>

The deficient nature of PFLOAG recruitment was seen in a 1973 British intelligence report, which noted that 50 members of the military wing of the PFLOAG’s bin Dhaheeb Unit went to west of Simba (i.e. Sarfayt) to train a different unit, the bin Hajja unit, in March/April 1973, “showing them basic military skills and leading them in stand off attacks on Simba. bin Hajja unit is made up of volunteers from PDRY, soldiers, police, and civilians.”<sup>261</sup> It is clear from this instance that recruitment had reached the point where the group was relying on individuals from the PDRY to form a PFLOAG unit, and had to have the unit train in Dhofar and immediately participate in attacks against the SAF. This was a marked departure from the uniform and comprehensive nature of PFLOAG recruitment in the previous period of the conflict.

Further decay in the PFLOAG’s recruitment practices is illustrated by evidence in 1974 that the age of newly trained recruits was getting younger with time (14-18 years old) - indicating that the PFLOAG was relying more and more on abducted recruits for frontline manpower.<sup>262</sup> These *deficient* recruitment practices, consisting of involuntary selection through forced recruitment, inchoate and disparate training and indoctrination, and the absorption of differently trained fighters from the NDFLOAG, continued until the end of the conflict in December 1975.

### **3.3.2 Effectiveness: Task Execution**

As stated in the previous section, forced recruitment of Dhofari children into the PFLOAG began in late 1970. Given that training and indoctrination continued to be

---

<sup>260</sup>Takriti 2013, 277

<sup>261</sup> “Oman Intelligence Report No.47” (26 August ? 8 September 1973),? BNA/FCO 8/2022.

<sup>262</sup> “Oman Intelligence Report No.60” (10 February - 23 February 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233.

six months' long, we would expect to see the downstream effects of this change in recruitment on fighting performance around mid-1971, which is in fact precisely when things started to go very bad for the PFLOAG in Dhofar. Successive SAF operations began in mid-1971 in an attempt to clear specific areas of Dhofar of the group's presence, and continued for the next few years as external forces intervened on the side of the Sultan to help with counterinsurgency. As the following discussion shows, the shift back to deficient recruitment practices had significant consequences for the PFLOAG's ability to withstand these offensives and fight effectively in combat.

During this period, the PFLOAG had 600-800 full-time fighters and 1,000-1,200 Militia mebers.<sup>263</sup> Consequently, the SAF still maintained a significant numerical and materiel advantage during this period, one that only increased with the Jordanian and Iranian interventions on the side of the Sultan towards the end of the conflict.<sup>264</sup> Along with these regional interventions, two squadrons of Britain's Special Air Service (SAS)<sup>265</sup> deployed to Dhofar to help the Sultanate, forming the British Army Training Team (BATT) to both raise and train irregular forces to assist with the fight against the PFLOAG and participate directly in operations.<sup>266</sup> These *firqats*,<sup>267</sup> as they came to be known, were primarily composed of former PFLOAG fighters that defected to the SAF. The firqats, numbering 1,400 by August 1974,<sup>268</sup> played a key role in providing intelligence on the PFLOAG, as well both patrolling and participating in active engagements against insurgent forces. To give a sense of the overwhelming favorable

---

<sup>263</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 113; Takriti 2013, 306; Tremayne 1975, 49; Price 1975, 7; "The Mountain and the Plain," Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; "The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf," Information Research Department (IRD) Report, July 26th, 1973, BNA/FCO 8/2031; "Oman Intelligence Report No.64" (7 April - 20 April 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233

<sup>264</sup>Price 1975, 9; Peterson 2007, 483; Shraah 2011.

<sup>265</sup>The SAS is Britain's premier special forces unit

<sup>266</sup>Jeapes 2005; Cole and Belfield 2011.

<sup>267</sup>"Firqat" is the anglicized plural of "firqa," which in Arabic means "division" in a military context.

<sup>268</sup>Akehurst 1982, 61

balance for the SAF vis-a-vis the PFLOAG, the following 1975 U.S. diplomatic cable is helpful:

“The balance of forces is heavily on the Government side: Some 6000 Omani troops, led by some 350 British officers and non-coms and supplemented by some 1400 tribal irregulars are reinforced by some 3000 Iranians and (soon) a 750-man Jordanian battalion for a total force of some 12,000, confronting an estimated 600 guerrillas” (“Tab A: The Dhofar War” (Draft), February 22nd, 1975, NA/RG59/Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1952-1975).

During this time period, the Sultanate became increasingly aggressive in its operations, moving into previously-held PFLOAG territory, establishing positions, and undertaking ambushes and other attacks on known rebel positions. These moves included large-scale deception operations and the construction of two fences, the Hornbeam Line (formally constructed in May 1974) and the Damavand Line (May 1974), both designed to physically prevent PFLOAG resupply and movements from western Dhofar and South Yemen.<sup>269</sup>

In this final period of the conflict, the PFLOAG still divided Dhofar into three main sectors for its operations and fighting.<sup>270</sup> In Western Dhofar, there was the bin Ghoutha Division at 120 fighters; in Central Dhofar, the 9th of June Brigade, comprised of three units (Suhayl, Ahmad Tarish, Bin Taheer); and in Eastern Dhofar, the main brigade comprised of four units of 60 each (bin Daheem, Saif, Eastern, Southern).<sup>271</sup> The unit breakdown stayed the same moving forward, though the names of some units were changed in 1974.<sup>272</sup> By April 1974, the group was estimated at 745 full-time fighters and 1,000-1,200 militia members.<sup>273</sup> This was broken down into 335 fighters in the western area; 180 in the Ho Chi Minh area (southwestern Dhofar);

---

<sup>269</sup>Ray 2008, 148-151, 164; Jeapes 2005, 161, 203

<sup>270</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 113-114; Price 1975, 7

<sup>271</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 113-114

<sup>272</sup>Price 1975, 7

<sup>273</sup>“Oman Intelligence Report No.64 (7 April - 20 April 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233

120 in the centra area; and 110 in the eastern area.<sup>274</sup>

As a result of the deficient recruitment practices that came to mark the PFLOAG after late 1970, the group's military performance suffered. The forced recruitment and inconsistent, rushed training and indoctrination took its toll on the group's fighters, morale, and combat effectiveness. Nowhere were these consequences more clearly seen than in the ill-fated PFLOAG assault on Mirbat on July 19th, 1972, when several hundred PFLOAG fighters attacked SAF and BATT positions near Mirbat. In this single engagement, the PFLOAG lost between 10-13.33% of its overall fighting force in the five-hour pitched battle that ensued after the initial attack.<sup>275</sup> This attack was a complete break with the strategy of guerrilla warfare. For the SAF, the PFLOAG's failure in this engagement was their win:

“Merbat was of course the highlight of the period and must be counted as one of the greatest successes of the whole war. Never before have so many rebels been killed in one action and psychologically it must have been one of the heaviest blows to the rebels' morale. *It is still not clear why the rebels abandoned their usual tactics and launched a daylight frontal assault on a fortified position* [emphasis added]” (“Dhofar,” British Embassy Muscat to FCO, August 22, 1972, BNA/FCO 8/1846).

In almost every other aspect, the final period of the rebellion went as Mirbat went for the PFLOAG, as Table 4.11 and the following discussion illustrate.

---

<sup>274</sup> “Oman Intelligence Report No.64 (7 April - 20 April 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233

<sup>275</sup> Martinez 2012, Price 1975, 5. See below for further discussion of the Battle.

**Table 4.11.** PFLOAG’s Task Execution During the May 1971 - December 1975 Period

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	No
Cover and Concealment	No
Dispersion	Mixed
Conduct Ambushes	Mixed
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	No
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

In addition to the Russian and Chinese machine guns and indirect weapons the group received during the previous period, the PFLOAG began to receive Chinese shotguns, heavier machine guns, 75mm mortars with 7.5km range, and 122mm Soviet-made Katyusha rockets with 11km range.<sup>276</sup> In 1972, the organization also established a workshop to undertake maintenance of weaponry, as the previous lack of one was “affecting performance adversely.”<sup>277</sup> As of 1974, the organization had RPG 7s, DShK heavy machines, PMN anti-personnel mines, AK-47s, and Soviet-made 14.5mm ZPU-1 towed anti-aircraft guns.<sup>278</sup> The AK-47s replaced the SKS rifles, which were given to Militia members.<sup>279</sup> In August 1975, the PFLOAG received SAM 7 and SAM 7b missiles from the USSR, which had a range of 12,000 feet.<sup>280</sup>

Yet while the PFLOAG’s weaponry became even more sophisticated and advanced as the conflict went on, its use of such weaponry generally did not match this rising trend, demonstrating poor *operation of weaponry and marksmanship*. The group continued to be mixed in terms of its accuracy with small arms fire, often

<sup>276</sup>El-Rayyes 1976, 114; Tremayne 1974, 40

<sup>277</sup>Takriti 2013, 277

<sup>278</sup>Tremayne 1974, 40; Takriti 2013, 304; “Oman Intelligence Report No.64” (7 April - 20 April 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233

<sup>279</sup>Tremayne 1974, 40

<sup>280</sup>Takriti 2013, 306; Hazelton Diss, 96

hitting targets in close engagements with the SAF. However, Tony Jeapes noted that “it was all very well for theorists to say that most of the adoo’s automatic fire went overhead; it was true...”<sup>281</sup> In addition, the PFLOAG still demonstrated indiscipline when it came to ammunition, often shooting at SOAF aircraft with small-arms fire.<sup>282</sup> This indiscipline led to ammunition shortages later in the period.<sup>283</sup>

The group continued to struggle with operating its mortars and recoilless rifles during the period, failing to hit intended targets on multiple occasions throughout the four final years of the conflict. For example, on July 5th, 1971, three 75mm recoilless rifle shells overshot RAF Salalah, while five 82mm mortar bombs fired at HH Bravo<sup>284</sup> on the perimeter of RAF Salalah caused just “slight damage” and no SAF casualties.”<sup>285</sup> The next day, four 75mm recoilless rifle shells were fired at Akoot, and the following day two 82mm mortars overshot HH Delta (a position on the perimeter of RAF Salalah airfield).<sup>286</sup> An NFR Company and Firqat Tariq Bin Zaid were patrolling on July 9th and 10th, 1971 near Akoot, and came under fourteen rounds of 60mm mortars from PFLOAG fighters, yet took no casualties.<sup>287</sup>

This poor ability to use mortars and recoilless rifles (RCL) generally continued throughout the period. On August 21st, 1971, mortar attacks on SAF positions around RAF Salalah failed.<sup>288</sup> On November 7th, 1971, a recoilless rifle round hit the 2 Company of the DR’s mess at Akoot, killing the company commander and wounding

---

<sup>281</sup>Jeapes 2005, 197

<sup>282</sup>Arkless 1988, 113-114

<sup>283</sup>Peterson 2007, 332-333

<sup>284</sup>“HH Bravo” refers to one of the defensive positions outside of RAF Salalah (Arkless 1988, 22).

<sup>285</sup>SITREP for week ending 13 July 1971, July 13th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>286</sup>SITREP for week ending 13 July 1971, July 13th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>287</sup>SITREP for week ending 13 July 1971, July 13th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>288</sup>HQBF Gulf to Cabinet Office London, August 23, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1571; Sitrep for Week ending 29 December 1970, CBFG to RBDWC/MODUK, December 29th, 1970, FCO 8/1667; D.C. Crawford, Consulate General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident, Bahrain, December 30th, 1969, Annual Review for 1969, FCO 1016/791; Weekly Report up to 1200 hours on 19 April 1971, April 19th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

the cook.<sup>289</sup> However, the situation report for the incident goes on the note that “these were the first casualties caused by enemy attacks against Akoot (in which more than 120 rounds of RCL have been fired so far this year).”<sup>290</sup> This ineffective PFLOAG fire at the SAF’s position at Akoot continued throughout 1972.<sup>291</sup> The same went for PFLOAG mortar and recoilless rifle attacks on the MR position at Sarfait during the summer of 1972, which averaged about forty per day and generally missed their targets with the exception of August 20th when 61 rounds hit the position but “casualties were light.”<sup>292</sup> This trend continued during the first half of 1973, over the course of which “some 2,300 assorted shells and mortar bombs fell on the SAF position, but caused few casualties and little damage to the strongly constructed sangars.”<sup>293</sup>

Similar inaccuracy in PFLOAG mortar and RCL fire was noted elsewhere in Dhofar during the time period. A November 26th, 1971 weekly situation report noted that “a number of machine gun, mortar and RCL attacks have been made by the enemy against the Op Leopard base, NW of Adonib; no own casualties have been sustained.”<sup>294</sup> On November 17th and 18th, 1971, the PFLOAG launched 75mm recoilless rifle attacks on RAF Salalah, but “shells from the first attack fell 1000 metres short of the Hedgehogs, and from the second attack between the Hedgehogs and RAF Salalah.”<sup>295</sup>

This ineffectiveness with mortar fire and other heavier weaponry continued throughout the rest of the final conflict period. A September 1973 British intelligence report noted the following about PFLOAG fighters in the central area of Dhofar: “CA Unit mortarmen are not much good, their sights are inefficient, they have no maps,

---

<sup>289</sup>SITREP as of 14 November 1971, November 14th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668

<sup>290</sup>SITREP as of 14 November 1971, November 14th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668

<sup>291</sup>Arkless 1988, 107-108

<sup>292</sup>Ray 2008, 93

<sup>293</sup>Ray 2008, 146. Also see Akehurst 1982, 69.

<sup>294</sup>SITREP as of 26 November 1971, November 26th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668

<sup>295</sup>SITREP for week ending 23 November 1971, November 23rd, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668

and their aiming is done by guesswork.”<sup>296</sup> The group struggled to use the 122mm Katyusha rockets they received from the USSR as well, firing ten rockets on RAF Salalah and the SAF Diana positions nearby during October-November 1973, but “all landed harmlessly, well clear of their targets.”<sup>297</sup> Similar struggles were exhibited by the PFLOAG when it came to using the SAMs they received from the USSR in late 1974. While the group was able to bring down a Strikemaster on August 19th, 1975, “in total, 23 [SAM 7s] were fired in Dhufar, 3 of them hitting their target.”<sup>298</sup>

The PFLOAG generally did not make use of *cover and concealment* when fighting during this final period of the conflict. On many occasions, PFLOAG firing positions during ambushes or stand-off attacks were exposed, making them cannon fodder for SOAF aircraft that would be immediately called in by government ground forces. For example, in May 1972, a patrol by elements of the NFR and Z Company was fired on at Wadi Arzat, but the SAF party was able to radio in an SOAF Strikemaster, who easily targeted the PFLOAG’s Shpagin HMG and effectively silenced it using machine guns and Sura rockets.<sup>299</sup>

In an attack during Operation Jaguar, the PFLOAG used a mix of small arms and a heavy machine gun (HMG). However, as the SAS trooper Michael Kennedy recalled from the engagement, the HMG was easily spotted by his force:

“A high-velocity round cracked overhead...There was a split-second pause, then the whole of the high ground erupted - AK 47s, RPD light machine guns and somewhere a heavy machine gun hammering out its deadly rhythm...‘There it is!’ screamed Jimmy and Lou in unison. Jimmy rattled off a fire-control order. ‘Range 400 metres. Go right 100 metres from the rocky outcrop. Heavy machine gun concealed in the tree-line. Lay.’ My eyes were drawn to the area indicated. It looked like a fire in the tree-line, streams of bluish smoke rising from the top branches of the thorn bushes. It was the HMG. It must have just recently been dragged out of the arms cache, the preservation grease and oil burning as the weapon grew hotter. It was a mistake, a real giveaway...‘Rapid fire!’

---

<sup>296</sup> “Oman Intelligence Report No.47” (26 August - 8 September 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022.

<sup>297</sup> Ray 2008, 154; Peterson 2007, 483.

<sup>298</sup> Takriti 2013, 306

<sup>299</sup> Ray 2007, 81-82



screamed Jimmy. Sean squeezed the trigger and hammered out the burst of thirty rounds...Stream after stream of tracer zapped into the area of the heavy machine gun...The Adoo HMG had stopped firing..." (Kennedy 1989, 66-67).

While the HMG was indeed concealed by the foliage, Kennedy's observations indicate that the PFLOAG had failed to prepare its usage, which ended up revealing the gun's position and enabling the SAS's gun to effectively silence it. This failure to adequately cover a gun position stands in sharp contrast with the PFLOAG's effective cover and concealment in the previous period - for instance, in its use of the 75mm recoilless rifle position on Jebel Aram in May 1971 that took several days for Sultanate forces to mitigate.

This was a pattern during the last period of the conflict. Earlier on July 29th, 1971, a group of 28 PFLOAG fighters were in the process of setting up a gun position at Wadi Sahalinawt, and were attacked by SOAF jets using machine gun fire and rockets.<sup>300</sup> In this instance, the failure to establish the machine gun in a covered and concealed position made it and the fighters an easy target from the air. In June 1972, Operation Narr was launched to set up ambushes along likely PFLOAG approaches towards the Salalah Plain.<sup>301</sup> No ambushes were conducted by the SAF, but Brian Ray (the commander of the operation) recalls what happened instead through the use of SAF artillery:

"We saw no *adoo*, but there were no attacks on the plain. As daylight came I told Hugh Colley to engage areas which intelligence sources had indicated were occupied by the enemy. We could pinpoint these exactly from our positions at the foot of the escarpment....Hugh gave the orders to his guns and quickly and precisely the fall of shots were corrected by the forward observation officers with A and B Companies. It was a lesson in accurate gunnery and afterwards, through these same intelligence sources, we learnt that the enemy had suffered casualties; but perhaps more importantly, the gunfire had been so unexpected and effective that the wavering morale of the less-committed *adoo* had been

---

<sup>300</sup>SITREP for week ending 3 August 1971, August 3rd, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1667

<sup>301</sup>Ray 2008, 94

lowered. The number of SEPs<sup>302</sup> steadily increased...” (Ray 2008, 95).

While intelligence sources certainly helped locate the PFLOAG positions during this operation, the fact that the positions were identifiable implies that the rebels were not using effective cover and concealment to hide their locations. As a result, they became easy targets for the SAF’s artillery guns, leading to PFLOAG casualties. In September 1974, a PFLOAG convoy of camels was moving supplies from South Yemen across western Dhofar, easily spotted due to its trek in open valleys.<sup>303</sup> In just two days, 200 camels were killed as a result of these exposed positions, crippling the supply chain. This lack of cover for convoys was a general issue for the PFLOAG during the third period of the conflict.<sup>304</sup>

The PFLOAG was mixed in terms of its use of *dispersion* in the last period of the conflict. Peterson notes that the group “perhaps attempted to capitalize on its superior position on the Jabal by turning away from classical guerrilla doctrine in 1971 and increasing the size of units until they were operating almost as conventional units.”<sup>305</sup> Indeed, this was the case on several occasions. In Operation Jaguar, a massive effort by the Sultanate forces to clear the eastern part of Jebel Dhofar of PFLOAG fighters during October-December 1971, the government brought to bear two SAS squadrons (100 men), two SAF companies (250 men), a recce platoon and a platoon of Baluch *askars* (100 men), and five firqats (300 men).<sup>306</sup> In response to this heavy concentration of SAF forces in the area, the PFLOAG concentrated its forces in the eastern Dhofar, rather than dispersing them as would be appropriate when operating in the Guerrilla stage of a conflict.<sup>307</sup> As Takriti notes:

---

<sup>302</sup> “Surrendered Enemy Personnel” - refers to PFLOAG fighters that defected and went over to the government side.

<sup>303</sup> Akehurst 1982, 68

<sup>304</sup> Akehurst 1982

<sup>305</sup> Peterson 2007, 266

<sup>306</sup> Jeapes 2005, 133; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; Allen and Rigsbee 2000, 68; Kennedy 1989, 62.

<sup>307</sup> Jeapes 2005, 135-142

“Under SAS command, Jaguar began on 2 October 1971 with the moving of 1,000 troops to the Jabal. By 11 October, 100 square kilometres of the Jabal had been ‘cleared.’ There were three options available to the revolutionaries in response: concentrating their forces further and attacking the new Anglo-Sultanate positions; splitting their forces into smaller units and initiating a series of small engagements; or temporarily withdrawing and waiting for the Anglo-Sultanate forces to move further west. From a tactical perspective, the latter two options were the correct ones, since the revolutionaries were facing an army with heavier weapons, greater numbers, and air cover. *However, the revolutionaries chose to concentrate their forces in the East...after fierce fighting, the Sultanate managed to achieve dominance, if not complete control over the Eastern Area* [emphasis added]” (Takriti 2013, 284).

In another instance, on August 16th, 1972, the PFLOAG concentrated its forces in a cave when being pursued by an SAF force. A British cable described the tactical response by the SAF that ensued:

“They were pursuing a group of rebels, perhaps remnants from the Marbat force, who finally holed up in a cave. SAF reinforcements were brought in with SOAF support. In the ensuing action on 16 August, 9 enemy were killed and 1 was wounded and captured” (“Dhofar,” British Embassy Muscat to FCO, August 22, 1972, BNA/FCO 8/1846).

Rather than dispersing and splitting into small groups, the PFLOAG chose to group its forces in an enclosed space, which had disastrous consequences with 9 fighters killed and 1 wounded/captured.

On October 26th, 1974, a PFLOAG resupply group of 80 strong crossed the Hornbeam Line. Broken into three large groups, the resupply group came close to being fired on but went separate directions right before SAF contact was about to be initiated:

“On 26 October came the only major crossing in the Line’s existence, involving no more than eighty men, mostly carrying mines, rockets, and radio batteries, from west to east...the first news we got of its size was from Nigel Marshall, a Jebel Regiment officer out with a small reconnaissance patrol north of the Hammer Line. It was just getting light and he was crossing a piece of low ground...He could scarcely believe it when he saw about a kilometre away one of the largest hosts of enemy ever assembled during the war. They were in three large groups...They were harassed by artillery and Strikemasters and

contacted twice during the rest of their journey but they then successfully dispersed to their several destinations, although it was believed that some had been wounded” (Arkless 1982, 75-76).

Rather than breaking up into much smaller groups, the 80-person PFLOAG convoy was concentrated, making for initial easy SAF targeting. While dispersion was used somewhat, the initial concentration and sighting had given them away to the SAF, and the PFLOAG group suffered casualties as a result. However, the group did indeed make use of dispersed formations during the period in some instances. In 1974, Peterson writes that the PFLOAG “tended to move in smaller groups” and would move fighters at night “using small numbers” to avoid detection.<sup>308</sup>

The PFLOAG’s ability to successfully *conduct ambushes* dropped off significantly during this last period of the conflict, though overall was still mixed. During the previously discussed Operation Jaguar, a group of PFLOAG fighters attempted to set an ambush position as the group’s heavy machine gun targeted an SAF party advancing towards a water hole west of Jibjat on October 9th, 1971.<sup>309</sup> Kennedy, an SAS participant in the engagement, recalls the following:

“The Adoo HMG had stopped firing, but the crackle of small-arms fire came from all directions...Suddenly the radio crackled into life...‘Ambush party, high ground to the right, watch my tracer’. He dropped the radio receiver, grabbed his SLR and fired off about a dozen tracer rounds into the high ground on the right flank, indicating the Adoo firing position. Sean swung the gun round, laid the sight on, and sent a stream of tracer hammering into the ambush area, blasting the ambush party to eternity” (Kennedy 1989, 67).

The area in which the engagement occurred had plenty of foliage and vegetation, yet the PFLOAG’s ambush group was easily spotted by the SAF battle force and destroyed by GPMG fire.

---

<sup>308</sup>Peterson 2007, 333. Also see: SITREP as of 4 December 1971, December 4th, 1971, BNA/FCO 8/1668.

<sup>309</sup>Kennedy 1989, 65-66

On March 12th, 1974, the four platoons of A Company and BATT troopers undertook an operation to track down the PFLOAG's Firqa bin Dhabeeb unit in Wadi Sha'ath, west of Salalah near the Hornbeam Line.<sup>310</sup> The platoons split up into two each to set up an ambush position that would trap the 50-60 strong PFLOAG force, but ended up falling into a rebel ambush which evolved into a six-hour firefight.<sup>311</sup> However, C Company, mortars, and SOAF Strikemasters were brought in to support the SAF forces, and losses were inflicted on both sides, with the government forces losing two killed and two injured but the PFLOAG losing five killed and nine wounded from the engagement.<sup>312</sup>

Other similar ambushes occurred during this period where the PFLOAG successfully inflicted casualties but also took heavy casualties itself. During the government forces' first attempt in Operation Darb to capture the Shirshitti Caves complex (a major store and supply base for the PFLOAG) in January 1975, a 600-man force moved on the caves and was caught in several PFLOAG ambushes, which resulted in Sultanate casualties but "heavy insurgent casualties."<sup>313</sup> Even with this ambush, Jeapes describes how the PFLOAG deviated from a typical ambush, noting that "they managed to creep up close and opened fire with machine guns and RPGs, causing several casualties but losing several men themselves."<sup>314</sup> Abandoning their ambush positions, these rebels moved in closer towards their targets, giving their positions away and taking losses as a result.

The next day, the SAF attacking force advanced further towards the Shirshitti Caves, leading to the following episode:

"...Two Company started down the slope. The leading platoon broke cover and strode confidently in arrowhead formation across the clearing; the company

---

<sup>310</sup>Peterson 2007, 334

<sup>311</sup>Ray 2008, 183-185

<sup>312</sup>Ray 2008, 185; Peterson 2007, 334

<sup>313</sup>Peterson 2007, 353-354; Jeapes 2005, 196-203; Ray 2008, 190-191

<sup>314</sup>Jeapes 2005, 197

headquarters broke cover too and followed them; then came the second platoon, and the third. When the leading platoon were half way across the clearing a few shots rang out. There was a pause of a second or two and then the whole of the far hillside exploded into life: heavy, medium, and light machine guns, recoilless guns, mortars, rocket launchers, and small arms. The leading platoon went down as if scythed..." (Jeapes 2005, 199).

This ambush initially appeared to be a successful one; however, tactical mistakes by the PFLOAG started leading to losses on their side:

"Watson, meanwhile...noticed a line of adoo in single file creeping their way around the back of the Red Company platoon on the hillock. He shouted out an order and the four men fired together in a vicious volley. Three adoo dropped dead and the remainder dived for cover, their outflanking manoeuvre finished" (Jeapes 2005, 200).

Instead of withdrawing from the fight, the PFLOAG attempted a flanking maneuver. This would normally be a smart move, but they group moved in a single file line, with no attempt to use cover/concealment or dispersion. As a result, they were easily neutralized. Total casualties from the multi-week operation for the PFLOAG were 25 dead and 50 wounded and for the SAF 12 dead and 21 wounded.<sup>315</sup>

However, not all PFLOAG ambushes failed during this final conflict period. On December 5th, 1974, 15-20 PFLOAG fighters ambushed an Iranian company position at Hill 880 20km south of Manston in western Dhofar.<sup>316</sup> The 190-man company, armed with RPG teams, 81mm mortars, 57mm RCL teams and Firqats, had set up a fixed position with sangars.<sup>317</sup> The PFLOAG group attacked from the south and south-west, killing nine Iranian soldiers and losing no casualties themselves.<sup>318</sup> I do note here that the Iranian battle group that came to Dhofar wholly lacking in

---

<sup>315</sup>Peterson 2007, 355

<sup>316</sup>Peterson 2007, 346

<sup>317</sup>"Sangars" are fortified positions established at military positions to protect soldiers from heavy weaponry bombardment, akin to temporary bunkers.

<sup>318</sup>Arkless 1982, 83-84; Price 1975, 9.

counterinsurgency warfare training, as numerous accounts of the conflict point out.<sup>319</sup> However, this instance illustrates that the PFLOAG was not completely incompetent in its ability to execute ambushes during this time period, though in most instances the group's attempts led to losses.

While the PFLOAG did engage mostly in stand-off attacks during this time period rather than close range assaults on government forces,<sup>320</sup> the group did not wholly *avoid concentrated frontal assaults* on government positions. Indeed, the most infamous combat engagement of the Dhofar rebellion, the Battle of Mirbat on July 19th, 1972, was the clearest illustration of this failure. Even before the July 19th battle, the PFLOAG had attacked Mirbat five times between June 5-18 in 1972.<sup>321</sup> Assembling a force of between 200-300 fighters at Jebel Massif northwest of Mirbat on July 18th, 1972,<sup>322</sup> the PFLOAG attacking force had small arms, machine guns, mortars, grenades, rocket launchers and a 84mm Carl Gustav recoilless rifle.<sup>323</sup> The aim was to isolate and occupy the BATT and SAF positions at Mirbat.<sup>324</sup> The PFLOAG attacking force would face 25 DG in the perimeter fort near Jebel Ali; one Omani

---

<sup>319</sup>Jeapes 2005, Arkless 1982, Ray 2008. Arkless notes: "The inexperience of the soldiers led them into siting their sangars so that not only could they not support each other but in some cases they could not fire at all because they were sited immediately behind others. Amateurs who play in League Division One - away from home - tend to lose" (Arkless 1982, 84).

<sup>320</sup>Ray 2008, 104

<sup>321</sup>Peterson 2007, 296fn1

<sup>322</sup>Estimates of the number of fighters used by the PFLOAG in the attack on Mirbat vary widely:

- Price 1975: 100
- El-Rayyes 1976: 100
- Akehurst 1982: 200
- Arkless 1988: 200
- Kennedy 1989: 250
- Martinez 2012: 250
- Ray 2008: 250
- de la Billierie 1994: 300
- Al-'Amri 2004: 300

In general, it is taken that PFLOAG attacking force far outnumbered the government forces at Mirbat.

<sup>323</sup>Kennedy 1989, 80-81

<sup>324</sup>Al-'Amri 2004, 197; Peterson 2007, 298

gunner manning the 25-pound gun; 30 *askars*, 30 firqat, and nine SAS troopers (later reinforced by the 23-person G Squadron of the SAS<sup>325</sup>).<sup>326</sup>

The PFLOAG attacking force split up into three groups,<sup>327</sup> with the first group tasked with establishing 81mm and 82mm mortar positions north of Mirbat to provide support fire; the second group tasked with attacking the target (SAF and BATT positions near the town) from the northwest; and the third group tasked with attacking from the southeast towards SAF positions.<sup>328</sup> The attacking force moved towards Jebel Ali at dawn, taking out the 9-man DG platoon stationed there, and continued to advance towards Mirbat.<sup>329</sup> After this initial attack, the PFLOAG mortar positions began firing towards Mirbat; while the first wave of mortar fire overshot the target and landed 150m into the ocean, the second began to hit its targets.<sup>330</sup>

What ensued was a 5-hour long pitched battle, in which both sides used small arms fire, heavy weaponry, mortars and airpower (on the BATT/SAF side), as the PFLOAG attempted to take control of the SAF and BATT positions. Former SAS trooper Kennedy describes a PFLOAG movement he observed during the attack:

“Forty well-armed Adoo formed into an extended line and began moving at a brisk pace across in front of me towards the DG fort, following the line of a shallow wadi that ran between the perimeter wire and the Jebel Ali...‘Open fire!’ screamed Mike urgently....we opened fire simultaneously, unleashing a hail of GPMG and .50-calibre bullets at the assaulting Adoo troops. The running figures became a focal point where the red tracer and exploding incendiary rounds converged in a frenzied dance. It rained fire and lead. Where moments before there had been an orderly advance, parts of the line now faltered and collapsed. Figures staggered under the impact of the heavy .50-calibre rounds, falling, twisting, screaming...” (Kennedy 1989, 91).

---

<sup>325</sup>The SAS’s G Squadron happened to be in Dhofar in preparation to relieve the A Squadron on the same day, and was deployed by air to provide support and reinforcements a few hours after the battle started (Kennedy 1989, 81).

<sup>326</sup>Kennedy 1989, 81; Jeapes 2005, 152; Martinez 2012, 520; Peterson 2007, 297-298.

<sup>327</sup>Peterson writes that the attacking force split up into four groups (Peterson 2007, 298).

<sup>328</sup>Al-‘Amri 2004, 197; Kennedy 1989, 81

<sup>329</sup>Arkless 1988, 198-199; Peterson 2007, 298

<sup>330</sup>Al-‘Amri 2004, 197; Kennedy 1989, 86-89.



Besides being part of a frontal assault on a fixed position during the day (and thereby easily visible to the defending forces), this tactical action by the PFLOAG is not in keeping with classic guerrilla warfare strategy. Rather than moving in a dispersed formation, the force moved in a concentrated line of attack, making themselves an easy target for SAF and BATT fire. As a result, when SOAF Strikemasters came in to provide initial close air support, several PFLOAG fighters were exposed and consequently killed by fire from the aircraft.<sup>331</sup> The battle ended up costing the PFLOAG between 80-100 killed in action and several more wounded or captured by SAF/BATT.<sup>332</sup> One estimate put the rebels' losses in the battle as high as 10% of their overall fighting force at the time, though this is based on a total estimate of 2000 full-time PFLOAG fighters.<sup>333</sup> If we take 80 as the number of PFLOAG fighters lost and the more widespread overall size estimates of 600-800 full-time fighters for the time period, then the PFLOAG lost between 10-13.33% of its overall forces just in this one engagement. As for government forces, they lost just seven overall (5 DG, 1 *askari*, 1 gunner, and 2 SAS troopers).<sup>334</sup>

Besides the Battle of Mirbat, on several other occasions, the group resorted to concentrated frontal assaults on SAF forces and/or positions. Following an ambush

---

<sup>331</sup>Kennedy 1989, 105-106

<sup>332</sup>There is no consensus on the exact losses for the PFLOAG in the battle, though nearly all accounts describe them as significant relative to the size of the attacking force. Estimates include:

- 29 killed and 11 captured (Takriti 2013, 304)
- 29 killed, 12 injured/captured (Al-'Amri 2004, 198)
- 38 PFLOAG dead bodies, "more like 80 total dead" (de la Billierie 1994, 278)
- 41 killed/wounded/captured; ultimately estimated 86 "put out of action" (Peterson 2007, 302)
- 70 killed (El-Rayyes 1976, 104)
- 80 to 200 killed, along with 25 more in intra-PFLOAG fighting after their withdrawal (Martinez 2012, 523)
- 86 killed, unknown number wounded (Ray 2008, 100)
- "just under a hundred" (Jeapes 2005, 158)

<sup>333</sup>Martinez 2012, 523

<sup>334</sup>Martinez 2012, 523; Ray 2008, 100; de la Billierie 1994, 277.

attempt in 1972 near Akoot that wounded a few SAF soldiers, a group of PFLOAG fighters resorted to charging the involved SAF Saladin armored cars, with the latter expending heavy machine gun fire towards the former.<sup>335</sup> The HMG fire killed several rebels, who besides moving directly towards the SAF armored cars failed to withdraw when these reinforcements were brought in.<sup>336</sup>

On another occasion, a joint SAS/SAF patrol was undertaking an operation to dismantle a PFLOAG Katyusha position near the Zakhir Tree in the Shirshitti Caves complex region in western Dhofar. The force was 15-strong, with a supporting force of an NFR B Company platoon and three armored cars.<sup>337</sup> An engagement ensued and lengthened after the PFLOAG sent reinforcements in a direct assault on the SAF party:

“...the mist cleared for a few seconds and there only fifty yards away stood the Zakhir Tree...Bell’s eye was caught by a movement above them...Three figures appeared out of the mist. Both sides saw each other at the same time but the GPMG gunner fired first and two adoo dropped. The third and another SAS man fired together. The third adoo spun round and fell but two of his bullets had found their mark...coming down the hill towards them from the west...a line of troops was advancing...the enemy’s fire began to pour into the wadi...” (Jeapes 2005, 215-216).

Rather than withdraw after taking initial losses (3 killed), the PFLOAG sent in reinforcements and ended up taking further losses (6-7 killed) because of this concentrated movement towards the SAF’s position.<sup>338</sup>

On multiple occasions during this time period, PFLOAG fighters did not *withdraw when outgunned or outnumbered*, often leading to extended engagements and pitched battles in which they took losses. In summer of 1972, a BATT patrol am-

---

<sup>335</sup>Arkless 1988, 152-153; Ray 2008, 79.

<sup>336</sup>Ibid. Arkless notes that a colleague observed traces of *quat* (the narcotic popular in Yemen) on the faces of the dead PFLOAG fighters, so “it was probable that the Adoo were ‘high’ when making their charges” (Arkless 1988, 153).

<sup>337</sup>Jeapes 2005, 214-220

<sup>338</sup>Peterson 2007, 370

bushed a PFLOAG group north of Taqa, which evolved into a pitched battle. David Arkless, a member of an RAF's Air Despatch Squadron, recalls the incident:

“The patrol was successful. A few days later they ambushed the Adoo and fought a pitched battle with them. The Adoo fought fiercely and courageously, as did our lads. Two of the Adoo were pinned down on a slope behind some rocks with no chance of escape but would not surrender when they were called upon to do so. After another exchange of fire there was an explosion behind the rocks and then silence. After a while the patrol closed in and came upon the two bodies of the Adoo lying shredded by grenade splinters” (Arkless 1988, 196).

Rather than withdrawing, the two PFLOAG fighters remained in place and ended up paying for the decision with their lives.

In another instance on May 23rd, 1972, Red Company of the DR and B Company of the NFR undertook an operation to move from the SAF's established position at Sarfait in western Dhofar toward “Capstan,” the SAF name for a position that would allow them to begin cutting off the main PFLOAG resupply line from Hawf into western Dhofar.<sup>339</sup> Brian Ray, the commander of the NFR at the time, described the operation and the engagement with the PFLOAG that ensued:

“It didn't take the *adoo* long to react. They swiftly built up a force of some seventy-five men and made a number of determined attacks on the Capstan position, supported by heavy firing from mortars, machine guns, and recoilless guns. In the fierce firefight that ensued, and which continued spasmodically throughout the hours of daylight, SAF gradually achieved the upper hand. It speaks well for the bravery and determination of the *adoo* that they continually pressed forward with a force inferior in numbers to that of the defenders. Red Company and B Company GPMGs and mortars took their toll, and the enemy casualties mounted. As was their custom they soon split into smaller groups and, although these proved more difficult to locate and hit, they lost the possibility of properly co-ordinating their attacks. SAF casualties in comparison were light...” (Ray 2008, 84).

While the PFLOAG's “bravery and determination” may have impressed Ray, their failure to withdraw from the engagement despite being outnumbered is clear and con-

---

<sup>339</sup>Ray 2008, 82-83

sequences in terms of casualties. At the same time, the PFLOAG group's stubbornness did not result in any SAF killed, only wounded casualties.<sup>340</sup>

In another instance, the NFR C Company was conducting an ambush operation against the PFLOAG in late 1972. As the Company Commander leading the operation, Christopher, wrote in an account:

“Shortly after 7 a.m. two *adoo* lead scouts appeared over the top of this knoll, heading directly for Hamed Hamdan's position. He waited until they were about 25 metres away before opening fire and killing the right-hand man with his first burst. However, the other *adoo* (a woman) was only wounded and fired a complete magazine on automatic at him...It was extremely difficult to locate her as she was almost hidden by trees and by this time heavy return fire was coming from the remainder of the enemy patrol who were in fire positions behind the bare knoll. However, eventually the GPMG gunner saw her doing a snake crawl back down the wadi and a burst from him stopped all further movement...” (Account of operation in Ray 2008, 111-112).

Ray goes on to note that “Later this *adoo* group called up reinforcements and Christopher's men engaged them successfully with mortars, artillery and, eventually, Strike-masters.”<sup>341</sup> This was yet another instance where a PFLOAG group's failure to withdraw while being outnumbered and outgunned led to the group taking casualties.<sup>342</sup>

In the final period of the conflict, the PFLOAG had localized control of military matters, but failed to successfully *demonstrate capacity for low-level initiative*. Military and tactical command was indeed decentralized as a result of the internal chaos within the organization that increased as the final years of the rebel-

---

<sup>340</sup>A subsequent engagement in June 1972 where the Firqa al Mutaharika (along with the NFR's B Company) pursued a group of 3-4 PFLOAG fighters in Wadi Jarsis resulted in the former taking a casualty, as the rebels remained in place and exchanged fire with the superior Firqa force rather than withdrawing immediately (Ray 2008, 95-96). Besides failing to withdraw, the rebels had been positioned at the top of a hill in a wide open valley - a textbook illustration of failure to use cover and concealment.

<sup>341</sup>Ray 2008, 112

<sup>342</sup>Another example further illustrates this trend. On October 27th, 1972, elements of the SAF, including the NFR B Company, an FF platoon, two MR platoons, and two firqas launched Operation Sikkeen to ambush a PFLOAG position at the Killi waterhole along the Hornbeam Line (Ray 2008, 112-115). Rather than withdraw as the government forces were helicoptering into the position, the rebels in the position stayed and exchanged fire with the incoming force, which resulted in at least one casualty on the PFLOAG side (Ray 2008, 114-115).

lion proceeded.<sup>343</sup> However, this decentralization came with significant issues that harmed the PFLOAG's overall unity of effort in combat. For instance, following the failed attack in the Battle of Mirbat in July 1972, there were reports of infighting among insurgents in which 25 were killed.<sup>344</sup> In another instance, PFLOAG leadership disarmed individuals "suspected of disloyalty."<sup>345</sup>

That such deleterious circumstances resulted is not surprising given the harm that forced recruitment produced within the group, particularly concerning the lack of interpersonal trust generated by such practices. For example, a British intelligence report, drawing on information from PFLOAG defectors, reported in September 1973 that "there is no trust between the fighters and the leaders nor between the leaders themselves. If, for instance a Firqa leader were to be demoted, it is to be expected that he might surrender."<sup>346</sup>

### **3.3.3 Effectiveness: Losses Inflicted and Losses Incurred**

As a result of their poor task execution, PFLOAG casualties and defections unsurprisingly mounted as time went on during the third period of the conflict. Starting after mid-1971 and continuing for the rest of the conflict, the government forces largely took the initiative, aggressively undertaking operations to clear PFLOAG fighters from areas of Dhofar and set up positions and hold them in previously "no-go" zones.<sup>347</sup> This is in contrast to the government's disposition before mid-1971, which was largely to maintain defense of the few areas within Dhofar that it controlled. The impetus for this change was largely the coming to power of Sultan Qaboos on July 23rd, 1970 - Qaboos proved to be a much more willing actor in the fight against the PFLOAG.<sup>348</sup>

---

<sup>343</sup>O'Neill 1980, 222-223

<sup>344</sup>Peterson 2007, 302

<sup>345</sup>"Oman Intelligence Report No.47" (12 - 25 August 1973)? BNA/FCO 8/2022.

<sup>346</sup>Oman Intelligence Report No.47" (26 August - 8 September 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022.

<sup>347</sup>Peterson 2007, 254-293; Akehurst 1982, 60-65; Jeapes 2005

<sup>348</sup>Takriti 2013

Tables 4.12 and 4.13 below illustrate the total annual losses incurred for the two sides between 1971 and 1975, based on the figures available from declassified British intelligence reports from the time period.<sup>349</sup>

**Table 4.12. PFLOAG Losses**

Category	1971	1973
Confirmed Killed	126	63
Reliably Reported Killed	255	126
Wounded	242	32
Captured		
SEPs	350	115

**Table 4.13. SAF Losses from 1971 - 1973**

Category	1971	1972	1973
Killed	34	44	41
Wounded	104	108	139

Additional casualty breakdowns from archival documents can give us an idea of the significance of PFLOAG losses during this final period. Over the period of time from September 21st, 1972 until October 1st, 1973, the collective SAF/BATT/Firqats lost 38 killed and 139 wounded, while the PFLOAG lost 86 confirmed KIA, 89 reported KIA, 58 confirmed WIA, 75 reported WIA, 4 captured, and 111 SEPs.<sup>350</sup> Going back to January 1971, these same categorical totals for the PFLOAG by October 1st, 1973 were 353 confirmed KIA, 525 reported KIA, 132 confirmed WIA, 431 reported WIA, 28 captured, and 712 SEPs.<sup>351</sup> Over this same nearly three-year period, the collective SAF/BATT/Firqats lost 102 killed and 320 wounded.<sup>352</sup>

<sup>349</sup>Table figures drawn from: “Oman Intelligence Report No.50” (23 September - 6 October 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022; “Oman Intelligence Report No.61” (24 February - 9 March 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233; Ray 2008, 147fn.

<sup>350</sup>“Oman Intelligence Report No.50” (23 September - 6 October 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022

<sup>351</sup>“Oman Intelligence Report No.50” (23 September - 6 October 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022

<sup>352</sup>“Oman Intelligence Report No.50” (23 September - 6 October 1973), BNA/FCO 8/2022

Casualties over longer timespans illustrate the mounting losses on the PFLOAG side. Between 1 January 1971 - 26 February 1974, the total losses for the PFLOAG were: 384 confirmed KIA; 156 confirmed WIA; 545 reported KIA; 463 reported WIA; and 767 SEPs.<sup>353</sup> Between July 1970 and May 1974, the PFLOAG lost 417 KIA, 167 WIA, 829 SEPS, and 30 captured.<sup>354</sup> These latter two sets of figures indicate the consistent losses the PFLOAG was taking in terms of KIAs and defectors over the majority of the final period of the conflict.

Given that the PFLOAG started the period with about 600-800 full-time PLA fighters and never went higher,<sup>355</sup> these losses are significant. Even just with the confirmed figures (417 KIA, 829 SEPs, and 30 captured) for the aforementioned nearly four-year period between July 1970 - May 1974, this implies a significant loss in manpower for the group. If we assume that the losses figures include both full-time fighters and members of the Popular Militia, a simple calculation shows that the PFLOAG lost between 62.4-77.9% of its overall fighting force during this final period of the conflict. The mounting PFLOAG losses and defections and relatively consistent government losses, along with the previous discussion of the PFLOAG's task execution during this last period of the conflict, indicate that the group had become largely ineffective in combat in the third and final period of the rebellion.

## 4 Alternative Explanations

In Chapter 1, I outlined three potential alternative explanations for insurgent effectiveness. The first potential explanation concerned the balance of forces or capabilities, with the implication that an insurgent group with relatively more fighters

---

<sup>353</sup> "Oman Intelligence Report No.61" (24 February - 9 March 1974), BNA/FCO 8/2233

<sup>354</sup> Peterson 2007, 348

<sup>355</sup> This assertion based on April 1974 intelligence estimate of the group at 745 full-time fighters, in combination that increasing defections were likely making this total trend downward throughout this conflict period. Indeed, Peterson estimates the PLA at 250 full-time fighters in January 1975, down from 600 in mid-1974 (Peterson 2007, 348).

and/or advanced material capabilities should be more effective than a group with relatively less of those features. Applied to a single group in a given case, we would expect the period in which the group had a relatively more favorable balance of forces to be the one in which it was most effective in a relative sense.

The second potential alternative explanation concerned external support - the notion that more outside assistance for an insurgent group would make it more effective in combat. Applied to a single group, we would expect that the conflict period in which the group received the relatively highest degree of external assistance would be the one in which it fought most effectively. Finally, a potential explanation based on ideology argues that groups with politicized ideologies motivate fighters more than groups in which such ideologies are lacking, and therefore would result in higher military effectiveness as a result of higher combat motivation.

## **4.1 Favorable Balance of Forces**

In the first period of the conflict, the PFLOAG had about 80 full-time fighters at the time and only small arms and some mortars; in the second period, 600-700 full-time fighters and increasingly advanced weaponry including heavy machine guns and recoilless rifles; and in the third period, 600-800 full-time fighters and further advanced heavy weaponry, including Katyusha rockets and SAM 7s.

On this basis, we would expect PFLOAG effectiveness to nonmonotonically increase as the conflict went on. Yet as the previous discussion in the chapter showed, the PFLOAG's tactical effectiveness did not consistently increase over time, but instead fluctuated: first ineffective, then effective, then ineffective. This was indicated both by the group's relative ability to execute the stage-specific tasks and the patterns of casualties incurred by the group. Thus, a favorable balance of forces cannot explain the variation in effectiveness exhibited by the PFLOAG over the course of



the rebellion.

## 4.2 External Support

External support was present from the very beginning of the Dhofar Rebellion. Indeed, the DLF was born in 1964 out of Egyptian pressure on the various strands of Dhofari opposition to unify before receiving support. Outside assistance to the group steadily increased during the conflict, though waned during the last few years of the fighting. Besides Egypt, support at one point or another during the conflict in the form of financing, weapons, training, or other material forms came from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, China, the Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, North Korea, Libya, and South Yemen.<sup>356</sup> The PFLOAG also had close relations with several other militant organizations during the time period, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and Fatah.<sup>357</sup>

In 1967, the PFLOAG received a host of new weapons, including heavy machine guns like Siminovs and Degtyorovs, mortars, and recoilless rifles.<sup>358</sup> But to make use of these weapons effectively, the group needed to properly train on them, which they failed to do. As a 1969 British intelligence report noted:

“Training must play an increasing part in the rebel preparation. As long as they were only armed with rifles, their ability to handle such weapons coupled with inherently good fieldcraft carried them through, *but more sophisticated training is required if best use is to be made of the new weapons. So far there are few signs that this is being done* [emphasis added].”<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>356</sup>Peterson 2007, 190, 323-325; El-Rayyes 1976, 93, 116-117; Tremayne 1974, 41; Takriti 2013, 103-106, 295-296, 302-304; Trabulsi 2004, 94-95, 107; Halliday 1974, 317; McKeown 1981, 36; Barout 1997, 400; “The Mountain and the Plain,” Intelligence Memorandum, May 19, 1972, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130079-6; Annual Review - 1968, D.C. Carden, Consul-General, Muscat, to HE Sir Stewart Crawford, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, January 12th, 1969, FCO 8/1073; Murphy (NEA/ARP) to Sisco (NEA), “Situation in Muscat/Oman,” May 20th, 1970, NA/RG59/Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1952-1975.

<sup>357</sup>Takriti 2013, 302-3

<sup>358</sup>Takriti 2013, 103-6; El-Rayyes 1976, 93; Peterson 2007, 221

<sup>359</sup>Lt. Col. Grove-White, Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ British Forces Gulf, March 10th, 1969, enclos-

As this quote indicates, receiving external support (in this case in the form of advanced weaponry) did not automatically translate into increased fighting prowess for the PFLOAG. This is why the group's mixed performance in operating its weaponry and marksmanship during the second conflict period is unsurprising. Yet an explanation on external support would predict that the receipt of such weapons would result in increased accurate firepower and combat effectiveness.

The same goes for general military training. The first group of PFLOAG cadres who went abroad to China for training right after the Wadi Hamrin conference came back and imparted the lessons they learned throughout the PLA and in the group's training camp. After the training camp at Hawf was disrupted in May 1972, many PFLOAG cadres again started going abroad for training to the USSR. Despite receiving advanced training abroad in both periods, the group fought even more poorly in the third period of the conflict than it did in the second period, when its fighters were mostly all trained in Hawf. What matters here then is the degree to which a group can leverage its outside support to augment its preexisting recruitment practices and therefore fight more effectively, not simply the nature or degree of external support it receives from third parties.

### 4.3 Ideology

As most of the chapter's discussion has indicated, the PFLOAG eventually became a hardline Marxist-Leninist organization that engaged in intense political indoctrination of its fighters (and eventual forced indoctrination after September 1970). We would therefore expect the group to fight more effectively during the second and third period of the conflict than it did during the first.

However, as the discussion in the third section demonstrated, the PFLOAG fought

---

ing research paper by Joint Intelligence Staff, HQ BF Gulf, January 20th, 1969, "Possible Effects of RAF Salalah arising from threats to Sultan in Dhofar," FO 1016/804

relatively worse in the third period of the conflict than it did during the first, yet this was a time after its members had been socialized in a revolutionary ideology. Indoctrination may have motivated fighters, but the abduction and forced recruitment that the group began after September 1970 did not produce the same uniformed shared purpose that existed during the second conflict period. The defections from the PFLOAG to the government side that started around the same time as forced recruitment indicate that while ideology was constant, group-level combat motivation was not. As was the case in Jordan with the PFLP and DFLP, it is thus more about what groups do with an ideology and how it is inculcated among members that ultimately shapes fighting effectiveness, rather than simply having such an ideology as an attribute of the group.

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter presented a second test of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Using the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman as a case study, I examined the recruitment practices and effectiveness of the main insurgent group, the PFLOAG, during the conflict. This chapter also established the dynamism of the theory, demonstrating its ability to explain changes in recruitment and effectiveness over time within a single group.

Like the Jordanian conflict, the civil war in Dhofar constituted the first Guerrilla stage of insurgency, with the Sultanate's forces having a significant advantage in terms of numbers and material, one that only grew as the conflict went on. Dividing the conflict into three analytical periods based on the group's recruitment practices, I demonstrated how the nature of the group's practices (robust or deficient) shaped both its relative ability to execute the tactical and operational tasks and corresponding degree of casualties incurred in each period.

In the first period of the conflict, the hodgepodge coalition of the four strands of Dhofari opposition to the Sultan came together in 1965 to form the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF), each bringing with them different ways of having recruited, trained (if at all), and indoctrinated (if at all) its members who came to form the core of the group's fighters. As a result of these deficient recruitment practices, the DLF's performance was overall poor in combat. The group correspondingly lost a high percentage of fighters based on available KIA data (between 37.5-75% of its overall forces).

In the second period, the group's recruitment practices became robust, as it took a turn towards Marxist-Leninism and purged elements of the group not in agreement with the new ideological orientation. During this middle period of the conflict, the newly-named PFLOAG fought well, successfully executing nearly all of the tasks while losing consistently fewer and fewer KIA (13.9-16.7% of its overall force during the second period of the conflict).

The robust recruitment practices continued for about two years until September 1970, when opposition to the group began to increase and its response was to begin abducting individuals for membership. Things got worse in May 1972 when the organization lost its central training camp in South Yemen, and recruitment remained deficient thereafter. As a result, the group's effectiveness took a dive, as it failed to successfully execute any of the tasks while casualties and defections mounted as the fighting continued. The available data indicate rising PFLOAG losses during the final period of the conflict, with the group losing between 62.4-77.9% of its overall forces.

**Table 4.14.** Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Oman

Period of Conflict	Recruitment Practices	Effectiveness
#1: 1964-September 1968	Deficient →	Failed Task Execution
#2: September 1968-May 1971	Robust →	Successful Task Execution
#3: June 1971-December 1975	Deficient →	Failed Task Execution

Having confirmed the external validity of the theoretical framework in this chapter and demonstrated its ability to explain temporal changes in recruitment and effectiveness, the next chapter turns to evaluating the combat effectiveness of the two main insurgent groups that fought in the Eritrean War of Independence.

# Chapter 5

## Insurgency in Eritrea, 1961-1991

### 1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the performance of the PFLOAG during the Dhorfar Rebellion in Oman, which allowed me to both establish the initial external validity of the framework and illustrate its ability to explain variation in insurgent effectiveness over time. In this chapter, I further demonstrate the theory's external validity by explaining the differences in effectiveness of the two main insurgent groups, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), during the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991). The analysis of the Eritrean insurgency also enables me to probe the framework's applicability to a conflict with both the Guerrilla and Conventional stages.

The chapter begins by briefly restating the theoretical framework and discussing how I test it in the Eritrean case, along with an overview of the sources used in the chapter. I then provide a historical background of the Eritrean conflict, highlighting the key events and developments during the conflict, introducing the ELF and EPLF, and providing a military overview of the war. I next discuss the variation in recruit-

ment practices and effectiveness over the course of the conflict for each of the two groups, followed by an examination of the three potential alternative explanations vis-a-vis the Eritrean case.

## **1.1 Testing the Theory in Eritrea**

To briefly recap, the theory predicts that insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices will ultimately fight more effectively across the possible stages of conflict than those with deficient recruitment practices. This is a result of three mechanisms generated by robust recruitment practices: uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust. These enable a group's fighters to successfully execute the tasks that constitute effective fighting in a given stage. With deficient recruitment practices, insurgent groups instead generate no or weak/varied shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust (or even mistrust) among their commanders and fighters. As a result, such groups cannot successfully execute the tasks needed to fight effectively during the possible stages of conflict.

The Eritrean case allows me to further establish this framework's external validity by comparing the performance of the two main insurgent groups that fought against the Ethiopian regime during the thirty-year conflict. Both groups had the goal of expelling the Ethiopian forces from the province of Eritrea and achieving Eritrean independence, and the fighting spanned the urban and rural areas of the province of Eritrea. In terms of incumbent discrimination vis-a-vis the ELF and/or EPLF, the nature of the conflict was such that the Ethiopian regime only discriminated in one episode (1978-79), when they focused primarily on the EPLF in conducting their offensive. As I demonstrate later in the chapter, this is not an issue for the theoretical analysis.

The ELF and EPLF varied in their recruitment practices during the conflict,

with the former deficient and the latter robust during the conflict. Distinct from the Jordan case, where recruitment proceeded largely uninterrupted, during the 1970s and 1980s the ELF and EPLF were largely forced to recruit in the face of Ethiopian attempts to disrupt their recruitment through repeated airstrikes and offensives - akin to the Oman case. This feature of the Eritrean conflict helps to again demonstrate the theory's ability to explain effectiveness in an instance more akin to many civil wars where insurgent groups must largely operate in secret while facing a constant threat of annihilation by the state.

The conflict also featured two episodes of infighting among the ELF and EPLF, from 1972-1974 and 1980-1981. After the second episode ended in August 1981, the ELF was effectively eliminated from the conflict space. The conflict thereafter became a single-party insurgency between the EPLF and the Ethiopian state. I include these episodes of infighting in the analysis, and address how they fit into the measurement framework in the respective sections.

In addition to demonstrating the theory's external validity, the Eritrean conflict constitutes a case that includes both the Guerrilla and Conventional conflict stages. From September 1961 - September 1974, the balance of forces between the two rebel groups and Ethiopian forces dictated that the former use a guerrilla strategy. After September 1974, the two factions had equal the manpower of Ethiopian forces in Eritrea and subsequently deployed heavy weaponry in combat. Consequently, the conflict shifted to the Conventional stage as the ELF and EPLF continued to capture armor and artillery from the Ethiopians in subsequent years and deploy it in combat. This feature of the Eritrean conflict allows me to probe the framework's link between recruitment and effectiveness across both possible stages of insurgency, rather than just in the Guerrilla stage as with the previous two case studies of the conflicts in Jordan and Oman.



### 1.1.1 Sources Used

To analyze and assess the recruitment and effectiveness of the ELF and EPLF, I rely on archival research, personal memoirs of officials and combatants on both the Eritrean and Ethiopian sides of the conflict, secondary historical sources in English and Arabic,<sup>1</sup> and Western media reports. My lack of Tigrinya, Tigre, and Amharic language skills rendered me unable to access sources on the Eritrean conflict in these languages. However, I rely on works which themselves leveraged these particular sources, enabling me to somewhat mitigate this issue. In addition, some works on the conflict written in these three languages have been translated into English, which largely enables me to overcome this problem (save for any differences lost due to translation).

In terms of primary source materials leveraged in the analysis, I draw on official publications of the ELF and EPLF and their sister organizations abroad to demonstrate certain characteristics of the groups and/or corroborate accounts of fighting during the conflict. In addition to these primary source documents, there are some firsthand accounts that have been published by former combatants on both sides of the conflict. When possible, I corroborate these accounts with declassified documents and/or other sources, so as to best ensure accuracy with the overall sources upon which I am relying for the analysis.

I also use secondary sources that themselves are based on interviews with ex-combatants and access to relevant Eritrean and Ethiopian archives. Access to pertinent archives on the conflict is generally highly restricted, particularly in Eritrea and somewhat less so in Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup> However, several authors have obtained access to the most relevant existing primary sources. For instance, Weldemichael (2013)

---

<sup>1</sup>The first decade or so of the Eritrean conflict saw a lot of outside Arab interest, which continued for the majority of the war. In addition, many of the leaders of both the ELF and EPLF had close ties with the Arab world. As a result, there exist a non-trivial amount of Arabic language sources on both the two groups and the conflict.

As with previous chapters, I use my own English translations of Arabic sources.

<sup>2</sup>Author conversation with Michael Woldemariam, May 16th, 2017

and Tedla (2014) make heavy use of primary documents from multiple sources in Eritrea, including Eritrea's Research and Documentation Center (RDC); declassified intelligence reports and cables of the Eritrean Police Force in Asmara; and sets of interviews with early members of the ELF conducted by the German researcher Gunter Schroder. Likewise, Abbay (1998) interviewed former EPLF fighters in Eritrea during the 1990s. Gebru Tereke gained extensive access to Ethiopian military and intelligence archives for his 2009 book, as did Fantahun Ayele for his 2014 book on the Ethiopian Army. More recent academic works by Tricia Redeker Hepner (2009); Michael Wolde-mariam (2011, 2014); and Costatino Pischedda (2015) draw on their own interviews with former ELF and EPLF fighters. The interviews in these works focus primarily on the internal dynamics of the insurgent groups and their conduct during the conflict, providing useful information for the analysis in this chapter.

In terms of Western diplomatic, military, and intelligence sources, the U.S. Government had a military base (Kagnew Station) in Eritrea until 1977, when it closed due to the fighting.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this presence; a general concern about Ethiopia as one of the U.S.'s closest allies in East Africa until the late 1970s; and increasing Soviet involvement in the region, there exist thousands of declassified cables and situation reports from the State Department and CIA that cover the Eritrean conflict and its actors. I accessed these documents through multiple electronic repositories, including the CIA's CREST database at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland; the Declassified Document Reference System through the University of Virginia's library; the Digital National Security Archive hosted at George Washington University; and the Defense Intelligence Agency's Electronic Reading Room.

Finally, the thirty-year conflict was widely covered in the Western press, partic-

---

<sup>3</sup>Kagnew Station itself was primarily used for the collection of signals intelligence and communication for branches of the U.S. military ("Stonehouse: first U.S. collector of REDACTED signals," NSA Document, Digital National Security Archive, available at <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB501/docs/EBB-21.pdf>).

ularly after 1974, and products of this include several journalistic accounts of visits to liberated areas of Eritrea. These accounts are based on interviews with officials, commanders, and fighters from the two main rebel groups, as well as embedding with insurgent units in combat. Some prominent examples are the American journalist Dan Connell's multiple volumes and collected writings from his frequent visits to Eritrea during the conflict. Besides such volumes, I use daily English language newspaper articles accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers to reconstruct the conflict's trajectory and progression and obtain information on the conduct of the war by its belligerents.

## **2 The Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991)**

### **2.1 Context and Background**

The Eritrean insurgency primarily involved two insurgent groups, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), waging a thirty-year struggle for independence against the Ethiopian government. The latter was represented by the Imperial Ethiopian Army (IEA) and its post-1974 successor, the Ethiopian Revolutionary Army (ERA).<sup>4</sup> The specific aim of the Eritrean insurgent organizations was to free the northernmost province of Ethiopia, Eritrea, from control of the central Ethiopian government (see Figure 5.1 below).

---

<sup>4</sup>Note: I use "Ethiopian forces," "Ethiopian government," "government," and "Dergue" (after September 1974) interchangeably throughout the chapter to refer to the Ethiopian side that fought in the conflict.

**Figure 5.1.** Map of Eritrea (1986)

*Source: University of Texas Libraries*



Eritrea is 45,754 square miles, and contains a 745-mile long coastline on the Red Sea.<sup>5</sup> The main geographic divisions are between the arid lowlands of the coastal and western areas and cooler highlands in the central area (or “Kebessa”), with the latter containing the majority of Eritrea’s population.<sup>6</sup> The highest point in Eritrea is the Emba Soira, which stands at just under 10,000 feet and is located in the southern part

<sup>5</sup>Killion 1998, 1

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.; Tedla 2014, 15; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 38-39; Killion 1998, 2; Erlich 1983, 2; CIA World Factbook 2018

of the central highlands.<sup>7</sup> Nine different ethno-linguistic groups reside in the province: Tigrinya, Tigre, Bilen, Rashaida, Hidareb, Saho, Nara, and Afar.<sup>8</sup> The majority of the population are Tigrinya- and Tigre-speaking, and the population itself is split about 50-50 between Christians (Coptic, Roman Catholic, Protestant) and Muslims.<sup>9</sup> The sectarian population concentrations roughly resemble the topographical and economic divide, with the lowlands having a majority of Muslims and based on pastoralism, while the highlands were majority Christian and a sedentary agricultural economy.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to the 1950s, the province was under Italian colonial rule from 1891-1941 and then British administration from April 1941 - September 1952.<sup>11</sup> During this period of British rule, Eritrean liberation and nationalist movements began to form within the province, primarily as associations and political parties. These included the Association of Love for the Country of Eritrea (MFHE), Muslim League (ML), Liberal Progressive Party (LPP), and the Unionist Party (UP).<sup>12</sup> These various organizations were divided in terms of overall aims, with some wanting unification with Ethiopia and others wanting Eritrean independence.<sup>13</sup> For instance, the UP (as obvious from its name) wanted unification with Ethiopia, while the ML and LPP both wanted independence.<sup>14</sup>

In their early stages, the associations and parties spanned Christians and Muslims and ethnic groups in the province, but once Ethiopian support for the unionist elements began to trickle in, there was a “resurgence of ethnic, religious, and provincial cleavages that had been subordinated to the more universal anti-colonial and na-

---

<sup>7</sup>Killion 1998, 2-3

<sup>8</sup>Tedla 2014, 13; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 38-39; Killion 1998, 4-5; Erlich 1983, 2-3

<sup>9</sup>Tedla 2014, 13; Killion 1998, 4-6; “Eritrea.” *The World Factbook* 2017. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2018.

<sup>10</sup>Killion 1998, 5

<sup>11</sup>Bizouras 2013

<sup>12</sup>Iyob 1995, 56-7; Tedla 2014, 18-22; Bizouras 2013, 27; Markakis 1987, 62-63

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.; Ellingson 1977

<sup>14</sup>Tedla 2014, 21; Bizouras 2013, 29-30; Iyob 1995, 56-7

tionalist sentiments.”<sup>15</sup> As the decade went on, the organizations became even more fractured, with the Eritrean Church joining on the side of the unionists.<sup>16</sup> This culminated in Muslim-Christian riots and targeted violence in Asmara during February 1950, which were sparked by the killing of an ML leader by *shifta*.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, these early associations and parties laid the basis for the nationalist movement that soon was to form. However, when the Allied Powers took control of Italy’s colonies after WWII ended, the issue of Eritrea’s status fell to the UN, which in December 1950 chose for the province federation with Ethiopia.<sup>18</sup> This was followed by elections in March 1952 for a parliament, the drafting of a constitution in the same year that adopted Tigrinya and Arabic as official languages, and the foundation for a genuine democratic system of governance in the province.<sup>19</sup> The British departed in September 1952, and Eritrea was officially part of Ethiopia. However, the Ethiopian state began to “Amharize” the Eritrean administrative apparatus and increase its power in Eritrea. This led to growing hostility towards Ethiopian rule, along with an increasing “politicization of ethnicity” among Eritreans, as Bizouras notes.<sup>20</sup>

This continued “erosion of Eritrean autonomy”<sup>21</sup> led to increased resistance to the status quo, particularly as pro-union elements carried out assassinations of pro-independence elements and democratic erosion continued.<sup>22</sup> In November 1958, the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) was founded in Port Sudan as a secular organization dedicated to non-violent resistance to Ethiopian rule and independence achieved through a coup.<sup>23</sup> Three years later, the ELF formed, formally initiating the

---

<sup>15</sup>Iyob 1995, 66

<sup>16</sup>Bizouras 2013, 33; Ellingson 1977, 266; Iyob 1995, 75-78; Markakis 1987, 68-69

<sup>17</sup>*Shifta* is the Arabic word for bandits (Gebre-Medhin 1989, 147-148).

<sup>18</sup>Trevaskis 1960, 91-98; Iyob 1995, 63-4.

<sup>19</sup>Bizouras 2013, 34-35; Tedla 2014, 28; Markakis 1987, 92-93

<sup>20</sup>Bizouras 2013, 36-37; Iyob 1995, 89-91; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 171-172

<sup>21</sup>Iyob 1995, 91

<sup>22</sup>Iyob 1995, 91-92; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 124-127; Markakis 1987, 92-95

<sup>23</sup>Iyob 1995, 98; Tedla 2014, 33. Interestingly enough, contrary to the ELF (see Section 6.3, the ELM had very strict recruitment practices: “Induction into the organization included an oath to

armed struggle against Ethiopia while violently eliminating the ELM in 1965.<sup>24</sup>

The ELF's internal differences and factionalization eventually led to splits that themselves coalesced into the EPLF in September 1973, and over the course of the next eight years the two groups fought both each other and the Ethiopian regime for independence in Eritrea. In 1981, the EPLF eliminated the ELF from the conflict, and fought the Dergue for ten more years before emerging victorious in May 1991 on the heels of the victory of the coalition of insurgent groups that took control of the rest of Ethiopia around the same time.<sup>25</sup>

Warfare during the conflict ranged from small-scale guerrilla clashes to positional, territorial fighting involving infantry, armor, artillery, and naval forces on both sides, while the Ethiopian military made extensive use of airpower. The fighting during the conflict spanned the majority of the Eritrean province and included both rural and sustained urban battles. Precise casualty figures for the Eritrean conflict are not available, but an Ethiopian official estimate of casualties between 1975-1983 put the figures at 90,000 Ethiopian soldiers, 9,000 ELF/EPLF fighters, and 280,000 civilians.<sup>26</sup> Also, famine during 1983-85 in Ethiopia including parts of Eritrea, in part exacerbated by Ethiopian counterinsurgency actions, claimed the lives of an estimated 400,000 people.<sup>27</sup>

The conflict witnessed international intervention on both sides, in the form of both covert and overt external assistance and outright provision of direct combat support. The ELF received support in the form of money, weapons, and training from Syria, Libya, Iraq, China, Cuba, South Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and several Palestinian

---

support the aims outlined in the organization's preamble, an undertaking to donate 3 percent of earnings, and attendance at bi-weekly meetings" (Iyob 1995, 100). Also see Kibreab 2008, 150.

<sup>24</sup>Bizouras 2013, 41-42; Iyob 1995, 100-107; Kibreab 2008, 151-152

<sup>25</sup>At the same time as the Eritrean insurgency, the Ethiopian state faced several other insurgencies in Tigray, the Ogaden, and several other provinces. For an excellent overview of these various internal wars during the time period, see Gebru Tareke 2009.

<sup>26</sup>de Waal 1991, 122

<sup>27</sup>de Waal 1991, 5

Fedayeen organizations.<sup>28</sup> The EPLF received no external support during the conflict, and instead was on its own during its existence and fight against the Ethiopian regime. However, the EPLF did receive combat assistance from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)<sup>29</sup> in several instances during the conflict.<sup>30</sup>

On the government side, the armed forces of Ethiopia received significant military assistance from the United States up until around 1977, when U.S.-Ethiopian relations deteriorated.<sup>31</sup> After 1977, the Soviet Union became the Ethiopian Army's main backer of weapons and financing, and provided military advisors for the Army's Red Star Offensive against the EPLF in 1982.<sup>32</sup> From the USSR, the Ethiopians also received Katyusha rocket launchers, APCs, tanks, long-range artillery, and fighter jets.<sup>33</sup> Besides the USSR, the Ethiopians received support from several Eastern Bloc countries, as well as Cuban advisors starting in the late 1970s (the latter of whom participated in operations in Eritrea).<sup>34</sup> The USSR also directly intervened in the conflict in December 1977, providing firepower support from its naval forces, embedding advisors attached to Ethiopian units down to the brigade level, participating directly in the planning of military operations, and (according to some accounts) flying sorties

---

<sup>28</sup>Bell 1974, 434-7; Markakis 1987, 113; Ammar 1992, 56; Gebru Tareke 2009, 62-3; Tedle 2014, 70; CIA-RDP79-00927A004700120001-9; CIA-RDP79-01194A000200120001-1; CIA-RDP78S05450A000100140003-1; "From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army."

<sup>29</sup>The TPLF was the frontrunner in the insurgency that started in Ethiopia's Tigray province in 1974 and ultimately captured the Ethiopian state in May 1991. On the TPLF's involvement in the Eritrean insurgency, see Weldemichael 2014. For general overviews of the Tigrayan insurgency, see Young 1997 and Gebru Tareke 2009.

<sup>30</sup>These included combat against the armed peasants during Operation Raza in mid-1976, several hundred fighters deployed to help the EPLF combat the ELF during the 1980-81 infighting episode, the deployment of 3,000 fighters to the Sahel during Ethiopia's Red Star Campaign offensives in 1982, and in March 1988 during the battle for Massawa (Tedale 2014, 110, 122; Gebru Tareke 2009, 178-179; Ayele 2014, 127; de Waal 1991, 187, 235; Gebru Tareke 2009, 251-258; Pateman 1990, 94; "From the Experiences..." (Part VIII); Bereketeab 2000, 201-202; Connell 1993, 205).

I note that these episodes of cooperation were equalled by episodes of contention and disagreement between the two groups. For more on the EPLF-TPLF relationship, see Weldemichael 2014.

<sup>31</sup>Lefebvre 1991

<sup>32</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 134-7, 228-9

<sup>33</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 161; CIA-RDP84S00552R000100030003-4

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.; CIA-RDP81B00401R002100010002-9; Weldemichael 2013, 162.



and operating tanks.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.2 The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)

The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was founded in July 1960 in Cairo by three exiles: Idris Mohammed Adem, Idris Osman Glawedos, and Osman Saleh Sabbe.<sup>36</sup> But as with Musallim bin Nufl in Dhofar, the first attack was not carried out by a member of the group, but rather by a local bandit in Eritrea named Hamid Idris Awate.<sup>37</sup> After eliminating the largely pacifist ELM in 1965, the ELF remained the sole armed opposition actor in the province.

This lasted until the late 1960s, when problems within the ELF led to a series of defections, internal opposition, and the ultimate breakoff of three splinter groups starting in 1970.<sup>38</sup> The first group, known as the Population Liberation Forces (PLF-I),<sup>39</sup> was led by Osman Saleh Sabbe and formed in July 1970.<sup>40</sup> The second group broke off in March 1970 and became known as the Population Liberation Forces (PLF-II), led by Isais Afwerki.<sup>41</sup> The third splinter group, “Obel” (also named after where it first met in Eritrea), broke off from the ELF in November 1970 and officially formed in December 1971.<sup>42</sup>

After jockeying, movement of individuals between groups, and a brief episode of Eritrean opposition infighting started by ELF attacks on the Obel and PLF-I forces

---

<sup>35</sup>Firebrace and Holland 1984, 54; Connell 1980, 56-57; CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume XVII, Horn of Africa, Part 1*, eds. Louise P. Woodroffe (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2016), Document 39.

<sup>36</sup>Iyob 1995, 109-111; “From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army” (Part I).

<sup>37</sup>Tedla 2014, 48-58; “From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army” (Part I); Markakis 1987, 111.

<sup>38</sup>On this process, see Halliday 1971, 65-66; Pool 2001, 63-70; Weldemichael 2013, 85-91, 136-144; Kibreab 2008, 161-170; Bereketab 2000, 190-194. For the official ELF account, see ELF 1979.

<sup>39</sup>This is the name given in Eritrean historiography.

<sup>40</sup>Tedla 2014, 97; Woldemariam 2011, 107; Sishagne 2007, 153.

<sup>41</sup>Tedla 2014, 98. This group is also commonly referred to as the “Ala” group in Eritrean historiography, after the initial location in which its first meeting was held (Woldemariam 2011, 69).

<sup>42</sup>Tedla 2014, 98-99

in February 1972, 250 PLF-I fighters, 150 PLF-II fighters, and 20-30 Obel survivors agreed to merge in the same month to officially form the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (EPLF).<sup>43</sup> The three splinters declared an intention to formally integrate their forces and establish one cohesive organization with a unified political platform and ideology.<sup>44</sup> With the exception of a brief spell of internal opposition during 1973 known as the *manqa* episode that was brutally crushed,<sup>45</sup> and the expulsion of Sabbe in 1975,<sup>46</sup> the EPLF saw no fragmentation or splinters for the rest of the conflict.

Subsequent splits from the ELF included the *falool* movement in 1976-77, which was a largely Christian-led internal opposition movement within the ELF during 1976-77 that sought greater representation for Christians within the group.<sup>47</sup> This opposition mushroomed, leading to internal infighting that reached the highest levels of the organization when a *falool* unit of the ELF ambushed and killed two ELF leaders in Danakil, leading to "all-out" conflict within the ELF.<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, 2,000 *falool* fighters of the ELF defected to the EPLF in summer 1977.<sup>49</sup> In 1978, the ELF again faced internal opposition, this time primarily from Muslim members who

---

<sup>43</sup>Bereketeab 2000, 193-194; Connell 2001, 351; Tedla 2014, 103; Woldemariam 2011, 180-182; Sishagne 2007, 156. "Forces" was eventually replaced with "Front" in 1977.

<sup>44</sup>Connell 2001, 351; Pool 2001, 72-76; Erlich 1983, 121; Tedle 2014, 103; Woldemariam 2011, 173.

<sup>45</sup>In this episode (named after the Tigrinya word for bat), new Christian recruits that joined the EPLF in spring 1973 through the appeal of the PLF-II element in the organization brought with them viewpoints that led to criticisms of the PLF-II leadership, primarily focused on its lack of ideology. These eventually spread to the broader EPLF, and focused on the group's poor communication that often led to units fighting themselves during the ELF-EPLF civil war between 1972-1974 and brutal repression of internal opposition. The internal disagreements and divisions continued until May 1974, when a jury was set up and sentenced those leading the opposition to death. See: Iyob 1995, 116-117; Markakis 1987, 135; Woldemariam 2011, 186-195; Pool 2001, 76-81.

<sup>46</sup>As a result of the EPLF leadership's desire to avoid the issues of the ELF, the ELF founder Sabbe was kept at arm's length as the head of the EPLF's Foreign Mission after the group's formation. As this relationship worsened in 1974-75, Sabbe signed an agreement with the ELF-RC and started mobilizing fighters of his own, forming the Eritrean Liberation Front-Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF) (Tedla 2014, 109-110; Bereketeab 2000, 200; Pishedda 2015, 132; Markakis 1990, 63). The ELF-PLF had no effective military capability, however, and was kept around by the ELF-RC more as a "factor to be manipulated in the contest with the EPLF" (Tedla 2014, 110; CIA-RDP84S00552R000100090003-8, 16n9; Markakis 1987, 140).

<sup>47</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 119-120; Tedla 2014, 113-115.

<sup>48</sup>Iyob 1995, 120

<sup>49</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 121

had been imprisoned in the 1960s and were seemingly opposed to the ideological direction of the ELF when freed in 1975.<sup>50</sup> Known as “yameen,”<sup>51</sup> these opposition elements began to recruit their own fighters, but ELF security infiltrated the group and decimated it in mid-1978.<sup>52</sup>

There were several attempts at unifying the ELF and EPLF in the years following the initial split, but these ultimately all failed.<sup>53</sup> Any hope for unity ended with the 1981 expulsion of the ELF to Sudan by the EPLF and the former’s subsequent disarmament by the Sudanese government. As a result, from 1972 onwards, the Eritrean opposition became a two-party insurgency, and remained so until 1981, providing ample ground for comparison of the two groups’ effectiveness. At their peaks, the ELF had 15,000 full-time fighters while the EPLF was estimated at 30,000 full-time fighters and 20,000 militia members when the conflict ended in May 1991.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.3 Military Overview

To provide context for the subsequent analysis, this section provides a military overview of the conflict from its start in September 1961 until its conclusion in May 1991. This helps to situate the ELF and EPLF as insurgent organizations in the overall military progression of the conflict, as well as to provide general context for the Guerrilla and Conventional stages of the conflict.

The ELF began guerrilla operations in September 1961, primarily targeting police forces, which constituted the only Ethiopian presence in the province until 1964.<sup>55</sup> In

---

<sup>50</sup>Tedla 2014, 115-116; Woldemariam 2011, 121

<sup>51</sup>The Arabic word for “right.”

<sup>52</sup>Tedla 2014, 116

<sup>53</sup>For instance, the two fronts signed a unity agree in October 1977, but remained separate organizations and continued to clash with each other off and on until the 1981 expulsion of the ELF from Eritrea (Bereketeab 2000, 200).

<sup>54</sup>CIA-RDP97S00289R000200200008-8; CIA-RDP87T00289R000100430001-1; Pateman 1990, 120-1; de Waal 1991, 182

<sup>55</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 118

March 1964, the 12th Brigade of the 2nd Division of the Ethiopian Army (a force of 3,000 troops) began to engage the rebels as well, along with a force of Israeli-trained commandos known as “Commandos 101” that reached battalion size by the end of the decade.<sup>56</sup> Between February - March 1967, the first major Ethiopian offensive took place (Operation Thrash) and included all units of the 2nd Division operating in Eritrea.<sup>57</sup> The Ethiopian forces took on each of the ELF’s five regional zones one by one, taking advantage of the zones’ lack of communication, coordination, and assistance with one another.<sup>58</sup> Two other operations followed, Operation Weed Out in June 1967 and Operation Flame from June-July 1967, with the aim of eliminating ELF presence in Massawa and the central highlands, respectively.<sup>59</sup>

As a result of these offensives and a slowdown in outside aid after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the ELF did not undertake many operations against Ethiopian personnel targets towards the end of the 1960s, instead engaging in primarily sabotage operations against economic installations, airplane hijackings, and train derailments.<sup>60</sup> Starting in 1970, the Ethiopian 2nd Division began to undertake further operations against the Eritrean insurgents.<sup>61</sup> However, between 1972-1974, nearly all of the armed action in Eritrea was between the ELF and newly-formed EPLF as they fought each other for primacy.<sup>62</sup>

After the September 1974 overthrow of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, the Ethiopians sent 5,000 more troops to Eritrea to reinforce the 9,000 soldiers already

---

<sup>56</sup>Ayele 2014, 23; Gebru Tareke 2009, 62; Weldemichael 2013, 119; Erlich 1983, 38

<sup>57</sup>Ayele 2014, 23-24; Tedla 2014, 82. The remaining 2nd Division units outside of Eritrea at the time were brought into the province from Gondar and Tigray (Kibreab 2008, 158; Sishagne 2007, 133-4).

<sup>58</sup>Kibreab 2008, 157

<sup>59</sup>Ayele 2014, 24

<sup>60</sup>Tedla 2014, 91-94; Halliday 1971, 63; Bell 1974, 437; CIA-RDP79T00975A013800030001-5; CIA-RDP79T00975A013800030001-5; CIA-RDP79T00975A013400080001-4; CIA-RDP79-00927A007300050001-8

<sup>61</sup>Bell 1974, 438

<sup>62</sup>Sishagne 2007, 157-158

stationed in the province.<sup>63</sup> At this point, the ELF and EPLF had significantly expanded and were relatively evenly matched with Ethiopian forces in Eritrea, with the ELF and EPLF each having 6,000-15,000 fighters.<sup>64</sup> The conflict consequently shifted to the Conventional stage, and the two fronts began a joint offensive on the provincial capital of Asmara on December 22, 1974. The offensive lasted well into 1975, but ended with the Ethiopians retaining control of the provincial capital.<sup>65</sup> Ethiopian Army tactics in response to the offensive on the provincial capital were brutal, and civilians often bore the brunt of these reprisals. In one episode, several civilians in Asmara were chosen at random by the Army and hung in their doorways using piano wire.<sup>66</sup>

To reinforce their troops in Eritrea, the regime in May 1976 organized 25,000-30,000 peasants, gave them two weeks of training, and sent them into the province to fight against the insurgents.<sup>67</sup> This episode, Operation Raza, was an utter failure, however, as the ELF, TPLF, and EPLF routed the peasants before they even entered the province.<sup>68</sup> In addition, July 1977 saw the outbreak of the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia, which led the Ethiopians to move a “significant proportion” of their troops away from Eritrea to fight the Somali forces.<sup>69</sup>

The two fronts exploited these failures and reduced Ethiopian presence in Eritrea to capture major towns and villages in the province over the next two years, in addition to coming into possession of tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery captured

---

<sup>63</sup>Charles Mohr, “Ethiopia is Said to Move Army Units Into Eritrea,” *New York Times*, November 27, 1974; “5,000 Crack Troops Sent To Eritrea,” *The Irish Times*, November 29, 1974; CIA-RDP85T00875R001000070032-5

<sup>64</sup>Tedla 2014, 108; Woldemariam 2011, 154; Erlich 1983, 71-72. At the low estimate for both, this is still just 2,000 combatants less than the Ethiopians’ deployment in the province.

<sup>65</sup>Erlich 1983, 71

<sup>66</sup>“Reign of Terror in Asmara,” *The Irish Times*, December 28th, 1976; Michael Dobbs, “The iron hand that holds Eritrea,” *The Guardian*, December 24th, 1976

<sup>67</sup>Gebbru Tareke 2009, 177-178; ELF 1981, 23; “From the Experiences...” (Part VI).

<sup>68</sup>Ayele 2014, 127; Tedle 2014, 110; Gebbru Tareke 2009, 178-179; “From the Experiences...” (Part VI)

<sup>69</sup>Tedla 2014, 112, 116

from Ethiopian forces. The ELF captured Elabered, Agordat, Tessenei, Mendefera, Aligeder, Geluj, Debarora, and Om Hager,<sup>70</sup> while the EPLF took over Nakfa, Afabet, Keren, Segeneyti, D'gsa, Doguali, Decamare, and Karora.<sup>71</sup> As a result of these developments, the two fronts collectively controlled 90% of the province by the end of 1977, with the Ethiopian regime controlling only Asmara, Assab, Barentu, Adi-Qeyeh, and "parts of Massawa."<sup>72</sup>

In March 1978, the Ethiopians finally defeated the Somalis with Soviet help, and shifted their attention back to Eritrea, beginning operations in June 1978 to recapture insurgent-controlled Eritrea. The units deployed to Eritrea were organized into seven task forces, with each task force responsible for taking back a specific area of the province.<sup>73</sup> Ethiopian Army reinforcements were brought from the Ogaden, bringing the total forces in Eritrea on the Ethiopian side to 86,722.<sup>74</sup> Besides the Ethiopian manpower increase, Soviet intervention in the form of both materiel provision and advisors significantly improved the Ethiopians' ability to prosecute counterinsurgency in Eritrea at both the operational and tactical levels.<sup>75</sup> As a result, Ethiopian offensives

---

<sup>70</sup>Tedle 2014, 111; "From the Experiences..." (Part VII)

<sup>71</sup>Fekadu 2002; Ayele 2014, 127; Pateman 1990, 87; Markakis 1987, 141; Erlich 1983, 77; Sherman 1980, 89-92.

<sup>72</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 160; Markakis 1990, 65. The EPLF tried to take over Massawa on December 23rd, 1977, but lost a big battle in which it sustained 200 dead and 400 wounded (Gebru Tareke 2009, 292; Connell 1993, 154).

<sup>73</sup>"From the Experiences..." (Part VIII); de Waal 1991, 113; Fekadu 2002, 296; Weldemichael 2009, 1237; Ayele 2014, 133-4. One of the seven task forces was responsible for going after insurgents in Tigray (Ayele 2014, 134).

<sup>74</sup>Ayele 2014, 133-134; Weldemichael 2013, 162; Tedla 2014, 117-118; Weldemichael 2009, 1238. The figure of 86,722 includes the aforementioned task force responsible for Tigray.

<sup>75</sup>Connell 1980, 57. Connell specifically notes that "the new Soviet presence changed the character of the war by escalating it to a higher level of sophistication through the introduction of massive quantities of armoured vehicles, heavy artillery and air support which was for the first time coordinated against the lightly armed guerrillas. In sharp contrasts to earlier Ethiopian assaults characterised by human wave attacks by the largely peasant militia and random aerial and artillery bombardment, the current battles saw complex tactical manoeuvres on multiple fronts, preceded by intensive pinpoint bombing and shelling on carefully selected weak points in the EPLF's defences. The new Soviet-designed tactics centre around lightning drives by self-contained armoured and infantry forces which more closely resembled the Nazi 'blitzkrieg' than the human wave attacks of...Ethiopia's previous Eritrean campaigns...Hundreds of Soviet-supplied and in some cases Russian-driven armoured cars and tanks spearheaded drives against EPLF positions...the infantry appeared to play a secondary

during 1978 and 1979 succeeded in recapturing most of the province from the ELF and EPLF.<sup>76</sup> In the midst of the offensives, the EPLF initially resisted but ultimately began withdrawing to its base area of Nakfa in the Sahel province in what has become known as the “Strategic Withdrawal,” while the ELF attempted to confront the Ethiopian offensives and took significant personnel losses.<sup>77</sup>

The Ethiopians reached the last EPLF outpost of Nakfa in late 1978, and began operations to take it in January 1979 with two task forces. Fighting against 5,000 EPLF fighters along with two ELF brigades,<sup>78</sup> the two task forces undertook a series of frontal assaults on the insurgents’ positions that failed.<sup>79</sup> In subsequent offensives in January-February, April, and July 1979, the Ethiopians attempted to flank the EPLF from the Red Sea but failed to dislodge the EPLF from its base at Nakfa.<sup>80</sup> In November 1979, the EPLF pushed the Ethiopian forces all the way back south to their command post at Afabet.<sup>81</sup>

During these 1978-79 operations, Ethiopian forces lost between 20,000 and 35,000 soldiers in combat.<sup>82</sup> Besides manpower losses, the Ethiopians lost significant amounts of materiel to capture by the EPLF, including tanks, armored vehicles, field artillery, mortars, antiaircraft guns, antitank guns, and heavy machine guns.<sup>83</sup> Of this materiel,

---

role to MiG fighter bombers, heavy artillery and Stalin’s organs (multiple rocket launchers) which pounded away at long range at light-armed guerrillas to open narrow paths for concentrated thrusts by armoured vehicles” (Connell 1980, 57).

<sup>76</sup>Gebru Tareke 2002, 474

<sup>77</sup>Weldemichael 2009; Markakis 1990, 66; Cliffe 1984, 93-94.

<sup>78</sup>The majority of the ELF withdrew to its base area in Barka in the face of the 1978-79 Ethiopian offensives, but sent two brigades to the Sahel area to participate in the Eritrean defense of the EPLF base area. These two brigades remained deployed in the Sahel until July 7th, 1980, when they were withdrawn in the midst of ELF-EPLF infighting (Weldemichael 2009, 1259fn112; Connell 1993, 202).

<sup>79</sup>Ayele 2014, 135-136; Weldemichael 2009; Markakis 1990, 66

<sup>80</sup>Ayele 2014, 136; Weldemichael 2009; Pateman 1990, 89-90.

<sup>81</sup>Ayele 2014, 136

<sup>82</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1262

<sup>83</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 229; Connell 1980, 59; Weldemichael 2009, 1262. Gebru Tareke’s account gives a sense of the magnitude of what the EPLF “acquired” during the 1978-79 fighting: “19 tanks, 31 armored cars, 28 field artillery, 162 mortars, 45 antiaircraft guns, 387 antitank guns, and 384 heavy machine guns” (Gebru Tareke 2009, 229).

the estimated 80 tanks and armored vehicles captured by the EPLF were immediately deployed in combat by the insurgent group.<sup>84</sup>

After the November 1979 failure, there were no Ethiopian military operations in Eritrea from December 1979 - January 1982, and the EPLF used this time to reinforce its defenses at Nakfa.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, another round of infighting began in 1980, in what has become known as the “second civil war” between the ELF and EPLF. The infighting lasted until August 1981, when the EPLF drove the ELF out of Eritrea into Sudan, ending the latter’s participation in the Eritrean conflict.<sup>86</sup>

Ethiopian operations in Eritrea resumed with the Red Star Campaign in 1982, which lasted from February to May and involved 84,000 Ethiopian troops fighting against 22,000 fighters from the EPLF and 3,000 from the TPLF.<sup>87</sup> The Ethiopians attempted to take Nakfa with these forces using a three-pronged attack, but failed and lost an estimated 37,176 casualties (27% of its combat force in the area of operations), while the insurgents sustained an estimated 15,000 casualties (of which 3,600 were killed and the rest wounded).<sup>88</sup>

In February 1983, the Ethiopian Army attempted to preempt a suspected EPLF offensive, and attacked the group’s southwestern defensive fronts at Nakfa. However, this failed when the EPLF counter-attacked in June and recaptured areas taken by the Ethiopians.<sup>89</sup> In January 1984, the EPLF went on the offensive, capturing the town of Tesseney. In February, the group destroyed an entire Ethiopian armored division at Algena and captured significant equipment in the process.<sup>90</sup> In both operations,

---

<sup>84</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1262

<sup>85</sup>Ayele 2014, 136-138

<sup>86</sup>Connell 1993, 208; “From the Experiences...” (Part VIII); Tedle 2014, 122; Bereketeab 2000, 202. The Sudanese government disarmed the remaining ELF factions, ending their constitution as an armed group (Woldemariam 2011, 132; Connell 1993, 208).

<sup>87</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 229; Ayele 2014, 139

<sup>88</sup>Ayele 2014, 141-143; Gebru Tareke 2009, 238-239.

<sup>89</sup>Ayele 2014, 145; Pateman 1990, 91; de Waal 1991, 122

<sup>90</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 249; de Waal 1991, 122; Firebrace and Holland 1984, 55; CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2



the EPLF employed tanks and armored vehicles in combat against the Ethiopians.<sup>91</sup> These successes put the EPLF in control of the entire Red Sea coast from Karora to Massawa by mid-1983.<sup>92</sup>

On July 5th, 1985, the EPLF undertook a surprise attack on Barentu and captured it after just 24 hours of fighting, seizing tanks and artillery from Ethiopian forces in the town.<sup>93</sup> However, the Ethiopian Army subsequently brought in more reinforcements to Eritrea for Operation Red Sea, which was launched in August 1985.<sup>94</sup> The operation dealt severe setbacks to the EPLF by capturing the group's main training camp and taking back several recently captured towns from the insurgent group.<sup>95</sup>

The Ethiopians again attempted to take Nakfa in Operation Bahra Negash in November 1985, deploying four divisions of 45,853 troops against the EPLF.<sup>96</sup> As a result of last-minute changes in the plan and delays in troop landings, the EPLF was able to prepare its defensive positions such that no offensive was launched by the Ethiopians - who instead were forced to withdraw to Algena.<sup>97</sup> The operation ended as a failure after a few weeks, with the Ethiopians losing 14,422 casualties in the fighting - nearly a third of the operation's initial combat force.<sup>98</sup>

The Ethiopian Army was reorganized into four commands after November 1985, with the Nadaw command at Afabet serving as the main command post in Eritrea, though no offensives were undertaken up through 1987.<sup>99</sup> In December 1987, the EPLF began an offensive on the Nadaw command post and pushed the Ethiopians back further from Nakfa, while capturing Soviet weaponry and destroying four brigades.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup>de Waal 1991, 122; Firebrace and Holland 1984, 55-56; CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2.

<sup>92</sup>Ayele 2014, 145

<sup>93</sup>de Waal 1991, 181; Pateman 1990, 92; Gebru Tareke 2009, 249

<sup>94</sup>de Waal 1991, 181

<sup>95</sup>Ayele 2014, 146; Pateman 1990, 92

<sup>96</sup>de Waal 1991, 181; Ayele 2014, 146-147.

<sup>97</sup>de Waal 1991, 181; Pateman 1990, 92

<sup>98</sup>Ayele 2014, 150

<sup>99</sup>Ayele 2014, 152

<sup>100</sup>de Waal 1991, 182; Pateman 1990, 93; Gilkes 1995, 45; Gebru Tareke 2009, 251; Tesfai 2002, 100

On March 17th, 1988, the EPLF fought a three-day battle for Afabet, taking control of the town, destroying the 14th, 19th, and 21st Divisions of the Ethiopian Army, and capturing 50 tanks and a series of arms.<sup>101</sup> Afabet had been an Ethiopian command post since 1979, and its loss led the Ethiopian regime to withdraw its forces from the province's main urban areas, effectively conceding northwestern Eritrea to the EPLF.<sup>102</sup> In April 1988, the EPLF overran Army defenses at Halhal, though its attempt to take Keren in May failed.<sup>103</sup>

Fighting in Eritrea subsided during 1989, as the Ethiopian regime grappled with the TPLF-led insurgent challenge in Tigray province and rebellion elsewhere in the country.<sup>104</sup> On February 8th, 1990, combat in Eritrea resumed as four divisions of the EPLF, including mobile infantry with armored and mechanized units, launched an assault (“Operation Fenkil”) on Sheib, where three brigades of the Ethiopian Army's Sixth Flame Division were stationed, and captured the position after just five hours of fighting.<sup>105</sup> The EPLF units continued down towards the port city of Massawa despite aerial bombardment, and on February 9th took control of the Asmara-Massawa road, continuing to move eastward towards the port city while capturing Dengolo, Dogali, and Gurgusum.<sup>106</sup> On February 11th, the EPLF began shelling government positions in Massawa and captured the initial Ethiopian command base at Forto, while the group's speedboats attacked the Ethiopian naval base just north of the city.<sup>107</sup>

At dawn on the same day, what Gebru Tareke describes as “perhaps the biggest and most violent mechanized battle of the war” began, with an estimated 90 Ethiopian tanks engaging 50 EPLF tanks over an area between Gugursum and the northern out-

---

<sup>101</sup>de Waal 1991, 187, 235; Gebru Tareke 2009, 251-258; Pateman 1990, 94

<sup>102</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 259; Ayele 2014, 157; de Waal 1991, 235.

<sup>103</sup>de Waal 1991, 235; Gebru Tareke 2009, 259

<sup>104</sup>de Waal 1991, 240; Pateman 1990, 94

<sup>105</sup>Ayele 2014, 180; Gebru Tareke 2009, 293

<sup>106</sup>Ayele 2014, 181; Gebru Tareke 2009, 294

<sup>107</sup>Ayele 2014, 182; Gebru Tareke 2009, 294

skirts of Massawa.<sup>108</sup> The insurgents subsequently gained control of Ethiopian ammunition depots and brought in reinforcements, trapping government forces primarily in the port area and naval base of Massawa and shelling the areas using land- and sea-based artillery and mortars.<sup>109</sup> On the 12th, the EPLF captured the naval base.<sup>110</sup>

Ethiopian commanding officers' pleas for reinforcements were not answered, and senior commanders began committing suicide as the insurgents moved closer to their positions on February 13th.<sup>111</sup> The Ethiopian Air Force began bombing supposed EPLF targets, but the group nevertheless gained full control of Massawa on February 17th.<sup>112</sup> The city's fall to the EPLF was devastating for the Ethiopian regime, as Massawa was a key point of supply for its armed forces in Eritrea, in addition to its economic value as a port.<sup>113</sup> The EPLF again made off with significant materiel, capturing 80 tanks, 8 rocket launchers, and 20,000 heavy and light weapons from the Ethiopians in the battle.<sup>114</sup>

The Ethiopian Air Force conducted periodic airstrikes on Massawa over the next several months, leading to the deaths of hundreds of civilians but not the recapture of the city.<sup>115</sup> In February 1991, the EPLF began an offensive from Danakil towards Assab, and in May 1991 the group captured Decamare after several days of fighting.<sup>116</sup> As the Ethiopian armed forces continued to sustain significant losses in operations against the EPRDF in Tigray province and elsewhere, the EPLF started moving towards Asmara in mid-May, leading senior Ethiopian commanders and officials in the provincial capital to begin planning their escapes.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 294-295

<sup>109</sup>Ayele 2014, 182; Gebru Tareke 2009, 295

<sup>110</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 295-296

<sup>111</sup>Ayele 2014, 182-183

<sup>112</sup>Ayele 2014, 182-183; de Waal 1991, 240; Gebru Tareke 2009, 296

<sup>113</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 297

<sup>114</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 297

<sup>115</sup>de Waal 1991, 240; Connell 1993, 234-235

<sup>116</sup>de Waal 1991, 249; Connell 1993, 235, 245

<sup>117</sup>Connell 1993, 246; de Waal 1991, 249.

On the morning of May 24th, 1991, EPLF tanks rolled into Asmara as thousands of panicked Ethiopian soldiers rushed to flee the city.<sup>118</sup> With the EPRDF's takeover of Addis Ababa on the same day, the Ethiopian regime finally collapsed, and the EPLF assumed *de facto* control of all of Eritrea, ending the 30-year civil war. At the end of a two-year buffer period that allowed the EPRDF to stabilize Ethiopia, Eritrean independence was made official in April 1993 with a national referendum in which independence received 99% of the vote.<sup>119</sup>

### 3 Insurgent Recruitment and Effectiveness in Eritrea

Turning to the analysis, I begin by providing a general overview of insurgent recruitment practices in Eritrea. The early ELF drew on whomever they could find, but as civilians in Eritrea became subject to increasingly harsh actions by Ethiopian counterinsurgency forces in the 1960s, hundreds came to join the ELF.<sup>120</sup> These continued into the mid-1970s, which made volunteers quite easy for the ELF and the newly-formed EPLF.<sup>121</sup> According to a former Ethiopian official, between 300-800 fighters were fleeing Eritrean cities each month during the mid-1970s to join the fronts as a result of Ethiopian actions.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, the ELF received an estimated 7,000 new recruits in the last few months of 1974 to reach 10,000 fighters,<sup>123</sup> while the EPLF likewise ballooned during the same time period from 2,000-2,500 fighters in 1974 to 11,000-13,000 in 1975.<sup>124</sup>

In terms of selection into particular groups, there was no observed systematic

---

<sup>118</sup>Connell 1993, 245-246

<sup>119</sup>Connell 1993, 248

<sup>120</sup>Woldemariam 2014

<sup>121</sup>Bereketeab 2000, 197; Iyob 1995, 119; Tedla 2014, 107-108.

<sup>122</sup>Giorgis 1989

<sup>123</sup>Sishagne 2007, 159; Ammar 1992, 78

<sup>124</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1238

motivation across would-be fighters to join one group or the other. Multiple historical accounts of the conflict based on interviews with former ELF and EPLF fighters emphasize the fact that decisions about which group they joined were based on contingencies, such as which group happened to be operating in one's area or whether one had a relative in a particular front.<sup>125</sup> As former ELF member Tesfay Degiga observed, "Encounters with members of the fronts were clandestine; there was a lot of randomness determining who you would join: you would join the first group you would bump into."<sup>126</sup>

Drawing on interviews with fighters from both fronts, Sishagne likewise notes that "the majority of the new recruits fled into whichever front they happened to contact first."<sup>127</sup> Kibreab confirms this, noting from his own interviews that "[i]n most cases, when new volunteers (recruits) joined the armed struggle, with the exception of a few who belonged to the underground cells or units, the initial decisions of the majority were not underpinned by any prior knowledge of the two fronts. Where volunteers (later fighters) ended up was, in most cases, a purely random occurrence. It was therefore common for siblings to join one or the other organization depending on who they knew and where they happened to be at the time when they joined the struggle."<sup>128</sup>

There was thus no consistent ordering of preferences across would-be fighters that might lead certain types of individuals to systematically select into a particular group, mitigating concerns about the self-selection of "better" fighters into a specific group. In other words, recruitment into the groups was not a story of EPLF rejects going to the ELF, but rather individuals joining groups contingent on local factors like

---

<sup>125</sup>Hepner 2009, 28, 57; Woldemariam 2011, 128-129; Connell 1993, 84; Kibreab 2008, 337-348; Pool 141-142

<sup>126</sup>Interview with Tesfay Digiga by Costantino Pischedda, quoted in Pischedda 2015, 169fn386

<sup>127</sup>Sishagne 2007, 159

<sup>128</sup>Kibreab 2008, 337

familiarity with preexisting members or geographic proximity - akin to “as-if” random assignment of fighters into the groups.

The ELF and EPLF both faced the same potential risks of recruiting “bad apples” and possible infiltrators from Ethiopian security forces and intelligence, and drew from the same potential pool during the conflict. Yet their recruitment practices could not have been more different. After the ELF’s founding, the group’s commanders inside Eritrea selected individuals based on the varying ethno-linguistic affinities of particular areas, and provided inchoate military training and limited to no political indoctrination to would-be fighters. Despite attempts to reorient itself away from these recruitment practices, the ELF repeatedly failed - demonstrating how hard it is for insurgent groups to alter recruitment practices once they are established. As a result, the ELF had deficient recruitment practices for the duration of its participation in the conflict, right up until it was expelled from Eritrea by the EPLF in August 1981.

On the contrary, EPLF recruitment practices, primarily due to the group’s ideological foundations, were robust from the start. The group carefully selected and screened recruits for combat and ideological dedication, and subjected those chosen to a uniform, intense program of military training and political indoctrination in the group’s ideological orientation. These robust recruitment practices remained in place until the EPLF’s capture of Asmara in May 1991 that effectively ended the conflict.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>I note that the EPLF did use a form of conscription in the 1980s, particularly during the Ethiopian Army’s 1982 Red Star campaign (Pool 2001, 152; Gebru Tareke 2009, 72; Woldemariam 2011, 221). In this dissertation’s framework, such recruitment would normally render a group’s practices to be classified as deficient. In this case, however, I do not consider such a practice sufficient to change the classification, for the following reasoning.

To start, the system was more limited than typical conscription where individuals have no choice about joining. Drawing on a variety of human and written sources, de Waal described the EPLF’s conscription system in the following terms:

“The majority of the fighters in the EPLF were undoubtedly volunteers. Many young men fled from the conscription operated by the Ethiopian government and instead joined the government. Throughout the 1980s, the EPLF operated a draft to fill the

**Table 5.1.** Recruitment Practices in the Eritrean Case

	Comprehensive	Limited
Consistent	<i>Robust (EPLF)</i>	<i>Deficient</i>
Inconsistent	<i>Deficient</i>	<i>Deficient (ELF)</i>

In what follows, I analyze the effectiveness of the ELF and EPLF during the years in which the groups participated in the Eritrean conflict. For each group, I begin by outlining the recruitment practices, and then assess its ability to successfully execute the tasks in the Guerrilla stage and Conventional stage. Along with task execution, I also discuss casualties and defections incurred by each group in the Guerrilla stage whenever available data allows.

### 3.1 ELF: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness

#### 3.1.1 Deficient Recruitment Practices

While it indeed had a nationalist orientation given its separatist goals vis-a-vis the Ethiopian regime,<sup>130</sup> the ELF had no specified ideology beyond the goal of Eritrean independence.<sup>131</sup> Iyob notes that “the early ELF did not have a clear ideological

---

remainder of its ranks. The principle and the implementation varied from place to place, but essentially it consisted of a quota of conscripts levied on all Eritrean communities inside Eritrea, and occasionally was extended to refugee camps in Sudan. According to the testimony of refugees in Sudan, each community was left to decide how to fill its quota, but on occasions the EPLF itself would choose whom to take if no conscripts were delivered” (de Waal 1991, 307).

The system described by de Waal is indeed characteristic of forced conscription, albeit in a fairly benign manner. More importantly, as Pool notes, “most of those conscripted were placed in the zonal armies and for some the zonal army became a conduit into the EPLA” (Pool 2001, 152). The zonal armies were akin to people’s militias - distinct from the full-time fighters of the EPLF, not participating full time in direct combat (Gebru Tareke 2009, 74), and thus outside the scope of the analysis here (which focuses on full-time fighters). Pool also goes on to note that “conscription into the zonal armies of the western and eastern zones also had the intent of expanding the representation of Bani Amir and Afar in the EPLF” (Pool 2001, 153). Conscription in this instance was therefore not entirely random, but rather had a specific logic to it. Moreover, its overall impact on the group’s recruitment was minimal by all accounts, as the majority of conscripts went into the EPLF’s militia rather than the group’s full-time fighting force - the main focus of the analysis in this chapter.

<sup>130</sup>Sherman 1980, 54

<sup>131</sup>Bereketeab 2000, 190. Also see Bereketeab 2016, 52.

line...its membership reflected a broad ideological spectrum which included fervent Marxists and Islamic fundamentalists...ideology remained a secondary factor to the defiant nationalism that united the disparate elements of the ELF.”<sup>132</sup> Hepner corroborates these observations, concluding from her interviews with former ELF fighters that the group’s ideology evolved into a “pluralist nationalism” that “retained a fluidity and flexibility capable of accommodating multiple identities and backgrounds.”<sup>133</sup> As noted previously, the first individual to take armed action in the name of the ELF was not necessarily even invested in what nationalist goals the group had.<sup>134</sup>

A State Department assessment conducted in April 1967 concluded that “there are no indications that the Arab arms and possibly Communist input to the ELF has yet produced a Communist or even extremist political program.”<sup>135</sup> Indeed, Osman Saleh Sabbe, a leader in the ELF, remarked in an interview conducted in April 1969 that “the Chinese People’s Republic gives us military aid. But there is no Communist tendency in the ELF program, though we have some individuals who think along Communist lines.”<sup>136</sup>

Rather than being built around an ideological orientation, then, the ELF was instead constructed on the basis of other mobilizing resources - more specifically, the varying ethno-linguistic and tribal affiliations of its three founding leaders in

---

<sup>132</sup>Iyob 1995, 110. This is corroborated by several other scholars: Gebru Tareke 2009, 59; Markakis 1987, 116; Connell 2001, 346; Firebrace and Holland 1984, 29.

<sup>133</sup>Hepner 2009, 35, 42

<sup>134</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 59. The commander of the 2nd Division of the Ethiopian Army wrote in September 1962 that:

“It is well known that until about a year ago bandits in Eritrea resorted to robbery only to overcome their economic deprivation. However, over the last one year they have been contacted by the Jebha and Harakat organizations and encouraged to claim that they have become shifta fro Eritrean independence and not for robbing” (Commander of the Second Division to Army Intelligence Headquarters, September 1962: E.P.A., UI/1462, quoted in Sishagne 2007, 129).

<sup>135</sup>“Assessment of Eritrea,” Addis Ababa to Department of State, April 28th, CREST/CIA-RDP78S05450A000100140003-1.

<sup>136</sup>“Eritrean rebel sights revolutionary buildup,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 5, 1969.



exile and their corresponding field commanders inside Eritrea, as well as pecuniary resources from several Arab states. The three individuals who founded the group in 1960 were of different backgrounds: Idris Mohammed Adem (Beni-Amer from Barka region), Idris Gelawdewos (Bilen from Senhit), and Osman Salah Sebbe (Saho from Massawa).<sup>137</sup> Each of the three leaders, working from Cairo at the start of the ELF's formation, established areas inside their respective native regions of Eritrea to which they appointed local commanders and funneled weapons and money.<sup>138</sup>

While the ELF had strict recruitment criteria on paper that called for potential members to be at least 16 years old, believe in the cause and have a willingness to sacrifice, have the recommendation of two existing members of the organization, and successfully pass through an observation period before being accepted,<sup>139</sup> these conditions and criteria were not implemented or followed when selecting fighters or developing an overall program to do so.<sup>140</sup> Instead, "the pattern of recruitment into the ELF and its original organizational structure reproduced within the front through the 1960s a variety of Eritrean social, cultural, and historic divisions...from the very beginning, nationalist sentiment notwithstanding, the use of clan and tribal linkages became part of the process of recruitment into the armed struggle."<sup>141</sup>

The ELF attempted to address the consequences of these practices with a reorganization in 1964, structuring the group into four zones and adding a fifth for Christian recruits in 1965.<sup>142</sup> Each zone was responsible for a geographic area of Eritrea from

---

<sup>137</sup>Markakis 1987, 110; Woldemikael 1993, 186; Pool 2001, 49

<sup>138</sup>Hepner 2009, 38; Gebru Tareke 2009, 61; Tedle 2014, 79. A Revolutionary Council was established in 1962 closer to Eritrea in Kassala, Sudan to better coordinate exchanges between the exiled leadership and its commands inside the country, but this was essentially bypassed as the leaders-in-exile in Cairo continued to deal directly with their appointed zonal commanders (Ammar 1992, 57-58; Bereketeab 2000, 190).

<sup>139</sup>See "List of Eritrean Liberation Front" (17 June 1960) in Hassan 1996, 101.

<sup>140</sup>Bereketeab 2000, 186

<sup>141</sup>Pool 2001, 49-50

<sup>142</sup>Kibreab 2008, 153. This was based on the Algerian experience of using *wiliyas* during its independence struggle (Bereketeab 2000, 188).

which it would draw recruits and operate.<sup>143</sup> Yet zonal commanders continued to chose fighters exclusively on the basis of their own individual ethnic and kinship affiliation, rather than according to any overarching set of selection criteria that was uniform across units in the group.<sup>144</sup>

Indeed, the setup of the zones along ethnic and/or sectarian lines only further exacerbated the existing internal problems of the ELF, reinforcing extant disparate selection patterns while introducing an element of sectarian discrimination by adding an exclusive zone for Christian fighters.<sup>145</sup> Pool notes that “...each zone was meant to recruit no more than one-third of its fighters from the zone in which it operated, although this guideline was rarely followed.”<sup>146</sup> Indeed, Markakis notes that “although the plan called for recruits to be sent to a training detachment, whence they were to be assigned to zones according to need, in fact recruitment, training, and assignment were done locally, and the fighters in each zone were natives of the area. Likewise, the zone commands were made up of persons native to each region.”<sup>147</sup>

This “ethnicization” of the recruitment process led to the zones eventually becoming competitors with one another for resources and recruits. Moreover, post-training fighter deployment was done based on zonal-ethnic affiliation and each zone effectively developed its own army, further reinforcing the zonal competition.<sup>148</sup> This reached the point where there were even clashes between ELF zones, as well as attacks on Christian fighters after the Ethiopian offensive of mid-1967 and fights over zone bound-

---

<sup>143</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 79-80; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 173. Kibreab notes: Zone One included Barka, Agordat, Barentu, and Tessenei; Zone Two included Senhit and Sahel (including Nakfa and Keren); Zone Three included Akele Guzai; Zone Four included Semhar and Dankalia (including Massawa and Assab). Zone Five, which was added in 1965 for Christian fighters, comprised Hamasen (including Asmara and Mendefera) (Kibreab 2008, 153)

<sup>144</sup>Markakis 1987, 114-115; Hepner 2009, 38-39; Bereketeab 2016, 31, 34.

<sup>145</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 79-80; Woldemikael 1993, 187; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 173; Kibreab 2008, 153-154.

<sup>146</sup>Pool 2001, 51. For evidence of this guideline, see ELF 1979, 33.

<sup>147</sup>Markakis 1987, 110-114

<sup>148</sup>Kibreab 2008, 152; Pool 1980, 40-41; Bereketeab 2000, 188; Bereketeab 2016, 31.

aries.<sup>149</sup> In terms of recruitment and incorporation of fighters into the ELF, Kibreab notes that the reorganization and subsequent procedures “made it difficult for the rank and file to welcome newcomers to the armed struggle. Those who volunteered to take up arms were met with suspicion, mistrust, and even bullying...”<sup>150</sup>

The ELF again attempted to address these issues with a reorientation away from the zonal system in 1971, but this was ineffective because of the group’s lack of an overall strategic program.<sup>151</sup> Indeed, a later reflection on the period by some of the ELF’s early leaders noted the following:

“In hindsight, the Eritrean fighters saw the creation of the Regional Commands as a negative experience in Eritrea. The regionalist-ethnicist model of mobilization deepened division between the fighters and the people. Each division acted alone and did not care for any coordination with the other ELA divisions. The other divisions were seen as rivals at best, if not ‘enemies’. Each regional division also created allegiance to leadership figures in the Supreme Council and the Revolutionary Command in Kassala based on ethno-regional affiliations and individual interests. This led to widespread corruption and abuses.”<sup>152</sup>

Isais Afwerki, who would later go on to be one of the leaders in the EPLF and Eritrea’s first (and, so far, only) president, recalled the consequences of the ELF’s selection procedures during this period in an April 1992 interview with the journalist Dan Connell:

“In those days it was something like an obligation to join the movement for national liberation. Emotionally and sentimentally, everyone was with the ELF...The shocking thing was that during high school, you never knew who was from what tribe, from what region, because there was not a hint of that kind of thing. *But in the ELF, everything was based on your clan or tribe.* This created the ground

---

<sup>149</sup>Gebre-Medhin 1989, 173; Medhanie 1986, 29; Kibreab 2008, 153-158; Bereketeab 2000, 189. Kibreab uses the term “warlordism” to describe the dynamics created by the zonal structure during the time period (Kibreab 2008, 153).

<sup>150</sup>Kibreab 2008, 152-153. Likewise, Sishagne writes that ‘the commanders in the field owed loyalty to individuals in the political leadership and not to a central authority as such. The rank and file in the army owed allegiance only to their immediate chiefs, who for the most part belonged to the same ethnic and linguistic group. The organization had not even come up with a clearly defined objective for their rebellion by the second half of the 1960s’ (Sishagne 2007, 129-130).

<sup>151</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1238-1239; Bereketeab 2016, 104-106

<sup>152</sup>“From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army” (Part III)

for a new outlook, a reformist trend. Anyone who got there with high nationalistic feeling would be in the camp against the ELF leadership. It was not a battle of ideas or ideals - it was a question of whether there was nationalism or not. You would never talk about 'Eritrea' inside the ELF; always it was tribes or clans or religious affiliations that mattered.”<sup>153</sup>

These inconsistent selection patterns were coupled with disparate military training and political indoctrination during the 1960s and 1970s. The first fighters that joined what came to be the ELF had no uniform military training, and instead were chosen because they had previous combat experience.<sup>154</sup> These early fighters were a mix of ex-Sudanese Army Eritrean soldiers, individuals trained by the British to fight roving bandits (*shifta*) in previous years, and former *shifta* themselves who had been transformed into “freedom fighters.”<sup>155</sup> As mentioned previously, the first “ELF ” attack inside Eritrea was not even conducted by people recruited and trained by the leadership in exile, but rather by a group of individuals led by Idris Awate, a former bandit with no initial political aspirations or motivations.<sup>156</sup>

Besides ex-Sudanese Army soldiers and *shifta*, the ELF began sending recruits for training in China, Cuba, Egypt, and Syria as early as 1963, where they received military training in guerrilla warfare and ideological indoctrination.<sup>157</sup> Up to 350 ELF fighters received training in Syria, Iraq, China, and Cuba during the 1960s, as well as Sudan.<sup>158</sup> However, even this was done on a sectarian basis: Muslims trained in Syria, while Christians trained in Sudan.<sup>159</sup> Conversely, those that joined and were trained in Eritrea received inchoate political indoctrination, which was “not well organized,”

---

<sup>153</sup>Connell 2001, 347. Emphasis added.

<sup>154</sup>Markakis 1987, 111; Pool 1980, 40.

<sup>155</sup>Markakis 1987, 111; Sishagne 2007, 128; Tedla 2014, 55; Bereketeab 2000, 185; Ammar 1992, Appendix IV-a. See Appendix IV-a in Ammar 1992 for lists of the earliest fighters in the ELF.

<sup>156</sup>Sishagne 2007, 128

<sup>157</sup>Markakis 1987, 111-112; Hepner 2009, 40; Connell 2001, 348-349; Pool 2001, 54; Weldemichael 2013, 71

<sup>158</sup>Tedla 2014, 70

<sup>159</sup>Erlich 1983, 23-24

according to one former ELF fighter.<sup>160</sup>

This disparate training and indoctrination had consequences. As Markakis notes of the ELF in the late 1960s, “with the influx of younger, educated men and Eritrean workers from the surrounding countries, the rebel ranks had become heterogeneous and contradictions emerged between the former simple soldiers who had led the guerilla bands and the newcomers who had trained abroad.”<sup>161</sup> Moreover, these individuals returned to Eritrea and often became commissioners and, as noted previously, began to engage in a push for reform of the ELF - further exacerbating the internal issues in the organization and threatening the existing leadership.<sup>162</sup> As late as the mid-1970s, the ELF lacked any significant political education element during recruitment and training - new recruits to the ELF often remarked about the “crudeness of what passed as political education” in the group.<sup>163</sup>

Indeed, the ELF itself observed much the same of its practices even after the 1965 and 1971 reorganizations, reflecting on this period in an official 1979 publication that:

“The organizational and military structure of the ELF was very weak...no political orientation was given to members of the Liberation Army who remained chained to the backward tribal, regional and confessional allegiances...This division of the ELA into separate zones, based on the Algerian model - which was not objectively suitable to Eritrean realities - to some extent expanded the fighting arm of the ELA but at the same time widened the differences and fears of the fighters and the people...the military commanders were given free hand to engage themselves in unrevolutionary practices. Each zonal command recruited from its ‘own’ localities and entered contest with the others. Cooperation among the zones became virtually non-existent. The so-called Revolutionary Command in Kassala could not control the ELA divisions. Each zonal commander created his direct links with the Supreme Council...This (*sic*) regional commands became mini-kingdoms without a central organ to direct their activities.”<sup>164</sup>

As a consequence of these recruitment practices, “the zone divisions became fertile

---

<sup>160</sup>Former ELF fighter interviewed in Sherman 1980, 60. Also see Connell 2001, 347-349.

<sup>161</sup>Markakis 1987, 113

<sup>162</sup>Bereketeab 2000, 191

<sup>163</sup>Markakis 1987, 140

<sup>164</sup>ELF 1979, 32-34

ground for mushrooming sub-national configurations, in short, the basis for ethno-linguistic enclaves and cleavages. As a result, serious ethnic, tribal and clan conflicts beset the NLM, thereby diluting its nationalist character.”<sup>165</sup> After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, there was an influx of recruits into the ELF, further exacerbating these issues.<sup>166</sup> Yet recruits of whom leaders/officials were suspicious were executed, particularly Christian recruits.<sup>167</sup> Even after a single training center was established that would train and subsequently deploy all ELF fighters to zones regardless of affiliation, recruitment and training were still done locally, as ethnicity remained the “organizing principle” of both the zonal system and recruitment into the ELF.<sup>168</sup>

This disorganization continued into the 1970s, and its consequences were exacerbated as streams of recruits flocked to the ELF in response to Ethiopian counterinsurgency actions. Markakis writes that “the training detachment was never activated, and the fighters clustered in homogenous groups in their home areas.”<sup>169</sup> As Weldemichael notes, the training center was “frequently ignored or bypassed. Recruits, upon joining the independence fighters, were trained and retrained by the units with which they first came into contact. In the absence of formal, consistent indoctrination and streamlining of recruits, the influx of volunteers deepened ethnic rifts.”<sup>170</sup>

The ELF was able to start training its recruits inside Eritrea beginning in the mid-1970s, but the lack of focus on socialization and indoctrination continued at the combatant level.<sup>171</sup> This inchoate indoctrination produced a situation among the

---

<sup>165</sup>Bereketeab 2016, 58

<sup>166</sup>Erlich 1983, 23

<sup>167</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 83-84

<sup>168</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 80-82; Markakis 1987, 114-115

<sup>169</sup>Markakis 1987, 115

<sup>170</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 152-153. Weldemichael notes that the ELF’s cadre school had practices that, in this dissertation’s framework, could somewhat be described as “robust,” but “in the absence of strict implementation guidelines and a political doctrine or philosophy to glue them together, the ELF failed to reflect the shining qualities of the school and its recruits” (Weldemichael 2013, 153). Also see Bereketeab, a former ELF member, on the ELF cadres’ school (Bereketeab 2016, 36).

<sup>171</sup>Sherman 1980, 60

fighters that led Sherman to note in the late 1970s that “the basic contradictions in ELF political ideology are those that exist between the leadership, some of whom possess Ba’athist sympathies, and the rank and file, who have little or nothing to do with any form of Pan-Arabism.”<sup>172</sup> Besides the preexisting selection and training/indoctrination procedures, the ELF started using forced recruitment in the late 1970s due to rising defections to both the Ethiopians and EPLF.<sup>173</sup> These *deficient* recruitment practices, including inconsistent and inchoate selection criteria and a lack of extensive training or indoctrination procedures, continued until the effective end of the ELF’s existence in 1981.

### **3.1.2 Effectiveness**

The previous section outlined the deficient recruitment practices of the ELF during the years in which it participated in the insurgency (1961-1981). Based on this classification, we would expect the ELF to be generally ineffective in combat across both the Guerrilla and Conventional stages of the Eritrean conflict. Moreover, we would expect the ELF to be unable to effectively make the transition between the stages, particularly from Guerrilla to Conventional. This was indeed the case, as the ELF generally fared poorly in combat during the years in which it participated in the conflict, whether facing Ethiopian forces or the EPLF.

**Effectiveness: Task Execution during the Guerrilla Stage (September 1961 - September 1974)** During the Guerrilla stage of the conflict, the ELF was initially organized into 2-3 platoons and a “semiclandestine hit squad.”<sup>174</sup> In 1963, the ELF was reorganized into platoons of about 40-50 fighters each, and reorganized again into seven platoons in mid-1964.<sup>175</sup> In the mid-1960s, the ELF was reorganized into

---

<sup>172</sup>Sherman 1980, 53

<sup>173</sup>Connell 2003a, 486-487; Weldemichael 2009, 1238.

<sup>174</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 70

<sup>175</sup>Tedla 2014, 71-72

five regional zones. In 1971, the group was reorganized, with a centralized command replacing the zonal command.<sup>176</sup>

Both intelligence assessments and historical accounts recount the ELF's use of guerrilla warfare tactics during this stage of the conflict.<sup>177</sup> However, the group was generally ineffective, failing to successfully execute a majority of the tasks while employing tactics more along the lines of conventional warfare during the Guerrilla stage of the conflict, as Table 5.2 indicates.

**Table 5.2.** ELF's Task Execution During the Guerrilla Stage

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Yes
Cover and Concealment	No
Dispersion	Yes
Conduct Ambushes	Mixed
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	No
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

In terms of *operating weaponry and marksmanship*, the ELF had a fairly positive record during the Guerrilla stage. The first ELF band led by Awate had very simple individual arms in the first attack in September 1961: "The only arms in possession of the ELA unit were: 1 Abu-Ashera gun of British make that was held by the leader and 3 old guns of Italian origin,"<sup>178</sup> along with swords and daggers.<sup>179</sup> Subsequent attacks by Awate's group involved similar weapons, such as the Mannlicher-Carcano and Albini-Braendlin infantry rifles.<sup>180</sup> The group subsequently

<sup>176</sup>Woldemariam 2014, 12-13; Markakis 1990, 59; Tedla 2014, 100-102

<sup>177</sup>e.g. CIA-RDP78S05450A000100140003-1; CIA-RDP79-00927A007200020003-0; CIA-RDP79-00927A007300050001-8; Pateman 1990, 84; Tedla 2014, 61; Bell 1974, 440; Campbell 1975, 545

<sup>178</sup>"From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army" (Part I)

<sup>179</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 69

<sup>180</sup>Tedla 2014, 49



received more sophisticated arms starting with AK-47 rifles from Syria in 1964, along with lightweight, mobile artillery pieces, light automatic weapons, mortars, bazookas later in the 1960s.<sup>181</sup> The ELF also received land mines and machine guns of Russian and Czech manufacture.<sup>182</sup>

Based on the available evidence for this period of the conflict, the ELF demonstrated a consistent ability to inflict losses on the Ethiopian police forces and subsequent Ethiopian Army forces in the province during the Guerrilla stage. In the late 1960s, the group displayed improved integration of explosives into their operations, effectively sabotaging economic installations in a series of operations in 1969 and 1970.<sup>183</sup> These operations were likely staged by individuals that received specific sabotage training in Syria and had recently returned to Eritrea.<sup>184</sup>

However, the ELF demonstrated a poor record in its *use of cover and concealment* during the Guerrilla period of the conflict. In December 1970, the Ethiopian forces undertook a series of operations in Eritrea aimed at avenging the death of the 12th Brigade Commander killed in the previous month. Eritrea was placed under a state of emergency, and Ethiopian Army and Air Force assets were deployed to the Keren area of the province, which became the 12th Brigade's HQ.<sup>185</sup> Despite this open movement of Ethiopian forces into the area, a group of ELF fighters still established a camp on the hills near the monastery of Debre Sina, east of the central town of Keren.<sup>186</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup>Tedla 2014, 70; Weldemichael 2013, 154; Eric Pace, "Cuba Said to Agree to Train Eritrean Guerrillas," *New York Times*, March 2nd, 1967; Donald H. Louchheim, "Ethiopia's Little War is Hard to Hide," *Washington Post*, April 30th, 1967.

<sup>182</sup>"In Troubled Ethiopia, Eritreans Press Separatist Drive," *New York Times*, March 27th, 1974

<sup>183</sup>CIA-RDP79T00975A013400080001-4; CIA-RDP79-00927A007300050001-8

<sup>184</sup>*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969-1972*, eds. Joseph Hiltz, David C. Humphrey (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2005), Document 268.

<sup>185</sup>"Travellers report shooting, arrests in Ethiopia's Eritrea province," *The Jerusalem Post*, December 27th, 1970

<sup>186</sup>Jim Hoagland, "Eritrea: Rebellion Fading?" *The Washington Post*, June 4th, 1972

Using a mix of artillery, air strikes, and infantry, the Ethiopian forces attacked the ELF unit camped near the monastery.<sup>187</sup> Despite the coming Ethiopian offensive, the ELF unit still had maintained its camp in an easily accessible and exposed area, rather than setting it up in a more covered area or splitting up into smaller units to facilitate concealment. As a result, the Ethiopian forces “smashed the encampment” and killed an estimated 500 in the clash.<sup>188</sup> This failure to use cover and concealment in establishing a position cost the ELF unit dearly in this case, and was on display again during the 1972-74 civil war with the EPLF. While it indeed outnumbered the EPLF 4 to 1, the the ELF still failed to use cover and concealment repeatedly during the infighting episode, instead pursuing EPLF fighters in the open field.<sup>189</sup> This contributed to the group taking heavy losses during the fighting.<sup>190</sup>

The ELF generally made use of *dispersion* during the Guerrilla stage. When Awate was the leader of the ELF in 1961-62, Tedla notes from an Ethiopian Intelligence document that he “followed a strategem of ‘scattering his men whenever the police force was on the verge of taking any drastic steps.’ For the sake of organizational convenience, he split up the band into three different small elusive groups who would circulate around the major towns...”<sup>191</sup> In general, the ELF during these first two years of the conflict “appeared in small groups, in order to not draw the attention of the police.”<sup>192</sup> This is likely due to the aforementioned fact that the very early fighters were comprised of experience *shifta* and ex-Sudanese Army soldiers, and so had some military experience with guerrilla-style warfare and activities - albeit only partial experience/training given the aforementioned failure to use cover

---

<sup>187</sup>Jim Hoagland, “Eritrea: Rebellion Fading?” *The Washington Post*, June 4th, 1972

<sup>188</sup>Jim Hoagland, “Eritrea: Rebellion Fading?” *The Washington Post*, June 4th, 1972

<sup>189</sup>Pischedda 2015, 154fn350

<sup>190</sup>Tedla 2014, 104-105; Markakis 1987, 134-135; Woldemariam 2011, 183

<sup>191</sup>Tedla 2014, 56

<sup>192</sup>“Eritrea: The Western Provinces - Miscellaneous (Top Secret),” Report 227 (30 October 1962), Ethiopian Military Intelligence/07/01, RDC, quoted in Tedla 2014, 57.

and concealment.

The group demonstrated a mixed record in *conducting ambushes* during the Guerrilla period of the conflict. In fall 1963, the group ambushed a police convoy in Jengeren near the city of Keren, but lost one of the attackers after the incident due to a wound sustained from the ambush.<sup>193</sup> In early 1964, the ELF ambushed a police convoy and killed 17 officers.<sup>194</sup> On November 21st, 1970, the ELF ambushed a convoy of the Ethiopian Army's 2nd Division outside of Asmara. In the ambush, the 2nd Division's commander, Teshome Erghetu, was killed.<sup>195</sup> The ELF staged the ambush next to a blown-out bridge, indicating good use of terrain-based obstacles to slow down the progress of the intended convoy; an American intelligence assessment called it a "well-executed ambush...this one was apparently aimed specifically at the division commander."<sup>196</sup>

The record remained mixed throughout the period, however. For example, in June 1972, the ELF ambushed an Ethiopian convoy on the Keren-Mensura road, which led to a pitched battle in which casualties were sustained on both sides, including 7 fighters killed and 9 wounded for the ELF.<sup>197</sup> Another ELF ambush on the Hagaz-Mensura road later in the same month led to a pitched battle over territory in which the ELF lost 5 fighters.<sup>198</sup>

During the Guerrilla period of the conflict, the ELF did not always *avoid concentrated frontal assaults*, and consequently took losses as a result of such actions. In September 1963, a group of fighters attacked a police station in Hacıota in broad daylight, taking over the station but losing a fighter in the attack.<sup>199</sup> On March 15th,

---

<sup>193</sup> "From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army," Part II

<sup>194</sup> Weldemichael 2013, 119

<sup>195</sup> Sherman 1980, 79; Bell 1974, 439; Halliday 1972, 62; "From the Experiences..." (Part V); CIA-RDP79T00975A017600080001-8

<sup>196</sup> Bell 1974, 439fn15. Quote from CIA-RDP79T00975A017600080001-8.

<sup>197</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VI)

<sup>198</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VI)

<sup>199</sup> Tedle 2014, 61-62; "From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army," Part II; Wel-

1964, the ELF engaged the Ethiopian 2nd Division for the first time in “face-to-face” combat in Togoruba, and predictably lost 18 fighters killed and four wounded in the single engagement.<sup>200</sup> Just a little over a month later, on April 20th, the ELF confronted Ethiopian soldiers at Bushuqua, killing 13 soldiers but losing five fighters as a result.<sup>201</sup>

In June 1965, the deputy head of the ELF, Tahir Salem, spearheaded an attack on a fixed Ethiopian position at Adobaha, with both sides taking losses.<sup>202</sup> In 1966, the ELF again exhibited its tendency to use frontal assaults on fixed positions when it attacked an Ethiopian camp in Agordat, inflicting losses but losing two of its own.<sup>203</sup> On November 7th, 1966, the ELF simultaneously attacked several Ethiopian positions around Eritrea, inflicting losses but losing 11 of its own fighters as a result.<sup>204</sup>

This pattern of frontal assaults on fixed positions continued throughout the first Guerrilla period of the conflict, with the September 1968 Battle of Halhal a prime example of the ELF’s tendency to use the tactic. On September 6th, 1968, ELF fighters attacked Ethiopian positions at Halhal, which led to a two-day pitched battle in which the rebels lost between 45-65 fighters, including the Zone Two commander.<sup>205</sup> As the ELF recounts, “It was a heroic attack by ELA fedayeen jumping into the military compound to take it over by force. However, due to a betrayal by a police collaborator, the intended outcome was reversed and the ELA lost over 45 martyrs, among them, the leader of the Second Division, Omar Hamid Izaz.”<sup>206</sup>

---

demichael 2013, 118-119

<sup>200</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 119; Denden n.d.

<sup>201</sup>ELF 1981

<sup>202</sup>“From the Experiences...” (Part V)

<sup>203</sup>“From the Experiences...” (Part V)

<sup>204</sup>ELF 1981, 19

<sup>205</sup>Sherman 1980, 77; Campbell 1975, 545; Kramer 1971, 62; Tedle 2014, 86; (“From the Experiences...” (Part IV); ELF 1981, 20; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume E-5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969-1972, eds. Joseph Hiltz, David C. Humphrey (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2005), Document 270.

<sup>206</sup>“From the Experiences...” (Part V)

The ELF did not always *withdraw when outgunned and outnumbered*. On December 3rd, 1961, Awate led a group of 25 ELF fighters to attack a farm in the Barentu District; a police force eventually arrived and rather than withdraw, the ELF group remained and fought. In the ensuing engagement, the ELF killed one policeman and injured four but saw one of its own captured and eventually sentenced to death.<sup>207</sup> Later that month on December 24th, an ELF platoon of 7-12 fighters engaged with police forces in Shllul, and the platoon leader was captured as a result.<sup>208</sup> On January 9th, 1962, Awate led an ELF group “encountered” a police group in Cheru led by the police commander of Agordat - rather than withdrawing, Awate and his group remained and fought, leading to the death of one ELF fighter and the the capture of three.<sup>209</sup>

On September 15th, 1966, the ELF engaged with Ethiopian forces for seven hours at Mihlab in Senhit Province. The ELF inflicted losses on the Ethiopian forces, but lost 21 fighters killed and four wounded in the engagement.<sup>210</sup> There were occasions during the Guerrilla stage in which ELF fighters would withdraw from areas upon the approach of Ethiopian forces, but this was not a consistent practice.<sup>211</sup> For instance, the ELF planned to undertake an attack in Fode in October 1968, which the local Eritrean police found out about and consequently sent two truckloads of men in arms as reinforcements. Nevertheless, the ELF band persisted in the attack despite the unfavorable balance of forces, and lost three killed and 12 wounded in the ensuing battle.<sup>212</sup> In June 1972, the ELF again engaged in a pitched battle after initiating an ambush on Ethiopian forces, and consequently lost 7 fighters killed.<sup>213</sup> In the same

---

<sup>207</sup>Tedla 2014, 53

<sup>208</sup>Tedla 2014, 54

<sup>209</sup>Tedla 2014, 54

<sup>210</sup>Tedla 2014, 77

<sup>211</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 124

<sup>212</sup>Interview with Al Haj Mussa Ali in Ammar 1992, Appendix IV-(b)

<sup>213</sup>“From the Experiences...” (Part VI)

month, the ELF lost 9 fighters killed and 13 wounded in another battle with Ethiopian forces.<sup>214</sup>

Finally, during the Guerrilla period of the conflict, the ELF failed to demonstrate a *capacity for low-level initiative*. The authority for pursuing operations indeed rested with local field commanders, who could make military and tactical decisions themselves.<sup>215</sup> As Markakis notes, “each zone had its own command composed of the commander, his deputy, a political commissar, and officers for security, logistics, and medical care. The fighters were grouped in squads of six men, led by officers appointed by the zone command...according to the sketchy formal arrangements made at this time, zone commands were allowed wide latitude of decision in military, administrative, and economic matters.”<sup>216</sup>

However, the aforementioned issues with central command and discipline meant that field commanders often pursued actions that went counter to the overall ELF unity of effort. For example, the continuous competition of the ELF zones during the 1960s resulted in outright fighting between zones for control over operating areas, counter to the group’s ultimate goal of fighting the Ethiopian forces.<sup>217</sup> Field commanders in the ELF thus had the ability to take the initiative, but often did so in ways that harmed the group’s overall progress during this period of the conflict.

**Effectiveness: Losses Incurred during the Guerrilla Stage (September 1961 - September 1974)** The ELF’s poor task execution during the Guerrilla stages of the conflict was mirrored in the high levels of defections and casualties it saw during the period. After the 1967 Ethiopian offensives against the ELF, “large numbers of ELF fighters were captured or gave themselves up to the Ethiopian government.”<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> “From the Experiences...” (Part VI)

<sup>215</sup> Tedla 2014, 74-79

<sup>216</sup> Markakis 1987, 114

<sup>217</sup> Tedla 2014, 78

<sup>218</sup> Iyob 1995, 113. Also see Markakis 1990, 122; Kibreab 2007, 157-158; Sishagne 2007, 139.

These defections accelerated after the Ethiopians declared a general amnesty in mid-1967, which led to further members leaving, including the commander of the ELF's Zone Five and 19 of his fighters.<sup>219</sup> Another high-ranking defector was the commander of the ELF training center.<sup>220</sup> According to a government report cited by Sishagne, between September 1969 and August 1970, 281 ELF fighters surrendered to the Ethiopians.<sup>221</sup>

Besides defections, available estimates indicate that the ELF took heavy casualties in combat during the Guerrilla stage. As the previous discussion of the ELF's task execution indicated, the ELF repeatedly lost fighters in action in as a direct result of failing to successfully execute the tasks. We can also look at the group's total losses in fighting with both the Ethiopian forces and EPLF during the Guerrilla stage. Table 5.3 displays figures taken from the ELF's official account<sup>222</sup> of fighting during the Guerrilla stage, using discrete figures.<sup>223</sup> Given that the ELF at most consisted of 2,000 fighters during the Guerrilla stage, Table 5.3 indicates that more than one-fourth of its overall fighting force was KIA - a performance in concert with the group's poor task execution during this stage of the conflict.

**Table 5.3.** Estimated ELF Losses During Guerrilla Stage

Category	Total
KIA	452
WIA	122
Captured	4

---

<sup>219</sup>Erlich 1983, 24

<sup>220</sup>Tedla 2014, 83-84

<sup>221</sup>Sishagne 2007, 142fn96.

<sup>222</sup>"From the Experiences...", Parts I-VI

<sup>223</sup>Excluding instances where the account indicates that "many" casualties were sustained by the ELF.

**Effectiveness: Task Execution during the Conventional Stage (September 1974 - August 1981)** In late 1974, with Haile Selassie recently deposed and the two Eritrean fronts receiving an influx of thousands of recruits and deploying heavy weaponry in combat, the ELF (and EPLF) appropriately began fighting Ethiopian forces using a conventional strategy. The influx of thousands of recruits into the ELF and EPLF brought the groups on par size-wise with the Ethiopians, and led to the ELF's reorganization of its forces into battalion and brigade levels.<sup>224</sup> The start of the Conventional stage was marked by a joint ELF-EPLF offensive on the city of Asmara in December 1974 that lasted for several weeks, followed by a few years of ELF expansion into other parts of Eritrea lacking Ethiopian state presence.

When the Ethiopians finally launched offensives in mid-1978 to recapture areas of Eritrea, they somewhat concentrated on the EPLF as a result of its superior fighting ability.<sup>225</sup> This should have provided the ELF with more room to fight effectively and retain its territory during the Conventional stage of the conflict, given that the burden of resistance was on the EPLF. Nevertheless, the ELF engaged Ethiopian forces during these offensives and predictably took heavy losses, as its inability to execute nearly all of the tasks in this stage led to general ineffectiveness in combat during the Conventional stage of the conflict.<sup>226</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup>Tedla 2014, 108

<sup>225</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1246. Also, see subsequent sections on EPLF performance.

<sup>226</sup>I was unable to gather or access information on the ELF's use of dispersion during the Conventional stage, and so code the group's execution on this as "missing." However, I still conclude that the group had overall poor task execution based on its failures in the other six categories, as the following discussion illustrates.



**Table 5.4.** ELF's Task Execution During the Conventional Stage

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Mixed
Cover and Concealment	Yes
Dispersion	–
Basic Conventional Warfare Tactics	No
Combined Arms Operations	No
Complex Defensive Tactics	No
Complex Offensive Tactics	No
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative/High-Level Coordination	No

The ELF's record in *operating weaponry and marksmanship* was mixed during the Conventional stage of the conflict. In 1974, the ELF received an influx of antitank and antiaircraft guns and artillery from external patrons, along with automatic weapons mines, mortars, machine guns, and Czech and Russian rifles (such as Kalashnikovs and Doshkas).<sup>227</sup> Tanks were captured by the ELF during the Conventional stage of the conflict, but it seems the group never attempted to employ them in combat, as will be discussed further below.<sup>228</sup>

The ELF *fedayeen* units often staged assassinations in the capital of Asmara during the second half of the 1970s, and had a fairly good record of kills.<sup>229</sup> In 1979, the ELF downed several Ethiopian transport aircraft with SA-7 surface-to-air missiles.<sup>230</sup> Both of these types of targets are considered “soft” targets, but nevertheless demonstrate at least somewhat basic competency in the ELF's ability to operate weapons. However, the ELF demonstrated poor marksmanship with anti-aircraft guns: an observer of the group's month-long siege of Tesseni during May 1977 noted the daily

---

<sup>227</sup>“Reign of Terror in Asmara,” *The Irish Times*, December 28, 1974; “Ethiopian Rebels Fighting After 12 Years,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 11, 1974; Richard Trench, “Eritreans link up in fight for own country,” *The Observer*, May 1st, 1977; Richard Trench, “Eritrean guerillas on the warpath,” *South China Morning Post*, June 12th, 1977

<sup>228</sup>“From the Experiences...” (Parts VI and VII); Pischedda 2015, 164.

<sup>229</sup>Wrong 2005, 260-265

<sup>230</sup>CIA-RDP79T00912A002700010037-0

Ethiopian F5's that would bomb insurgent positions and then "fly away to the impotent anger of anti-aircraft guns that rarely found their target."<sup>231</sup> Fighters were, however, able to assemble and disassemble small arms, such as the Kalashnikov, indicating knowledge of the gun's structure and operation.<sup>232</sup>

The ELF's record in terms of using *cover and concealment* was overall good during the Conventional stage. One journalist embedded with an ELF unit recounted how the unit carefully infiltrated Asmara at night during the joint ELF-EPLF siege of the provincial capital in July 1977, so as to avoid Ethiopian patrols and checkpoints.<sup>233</sup> During the the group's siege of Barentu in mid-1977, an observer noted that ELF fighters "move stealthily through the blanket of foliage, silent and unseen..."<sup>234</sup> The ELF also camouflaged its structures and training camps in its base areas from Ethiopian airstrikes, and limited its activity during the day.<sup>235</sup>

The ELF lacked the ability to successfully use *basic conventional warfare tactics* during the Conventional stage. In the face of the Ethiopian Army's fall of offensive targeting EPLF-held Decamare in late September 1977, the ELF and EPLF established a 15-mile defensive line south and west of Asmara.<sup>236</sup> The ELF was tasked with defending a critical point in the defensive line, yet lasted just 30 minutes after the Ethiopian forces advanced before fleeing its position, allowing the government troops to penetrate further south.<sup>237</sup>

During the subsequent mid-1978 Ethiopian offensive in Eritrea, the ELF con-

---

<sup>231</sup>Richard Trench, "Rebels step up pressure on Addis Ababa," *The Irish Times*, September 12th, 1977

<sup>232</sup>John Darnton, "4 in Eritrea Tell How War Has Engulfed Their Lives," *New York Times*, July 13th, 1977

<sup>233</sup>"Just blow yourself up if we are caught," *The Observer*, July 10th, 1977

<sup>234</sup>John Darnton, "Eritrean Rebel Army Set for Decisive Test," *New York Times*, July 11th, 1977

<sup>235</sup>John Darnton, "Eritrean Rebel Army Set for Decisive Test," *New York Times*, July 11th, 1977; John Darnton, "4 in Eritrea Tell How War Has Engulfed Their Lives," *New York Times*, July 13th, 1977; Richard Trench, "Eritrean guerrillas prepare for independence," *The Irish Times*, September 8th, 1977

<sup>236</sup>Connell 2003a, 113

<sup>237</sup>Connell 2003a, 114

fronted the Army head-on in three of the Army's five areas of advance, primarily in open terrain.<sup>238</sup> Weldemichael writes the following of ELF actions vis-a-vis this Ethiopian advance that started on June 13, 1978:

“On the Humera-Omhajar front, Ethiopian forces easily overcame ELA resistance, occupying the Eritrean border town of Omhajar on June 17, 1978. Less than two weeks later, the second unit of the Ethiopian army broke through ELA defenses in Mereb-Shambiqo, lifted the siege on Barentu and liberated the besieged Ethiopian forces in that town. Although brief and ultimately futile, the ELA offered its boldest resistance against the Ethiopian forces on the Mereb-Adi-Khwala Front. Eight ELA battalions of the 72nd, 75th, and 77th Brigades crossed into Tigray where they momentarily halted the Ethiopians by effectively intercepting the advance units of the 503rd ‘A’ Sub-Task Force. But whereas the Ethiopians were continuously reinforced, the ELA lacked reinforcement. Moreover, the ELF was busy with its internal political troubles. The Ethiopian forces, therefore, not only regained their captured tanks but also pushed back the ELA. After Mereb, the ELA was engaged in no significant action. When the ELF vacated the major towns and the highway, the Ethiopian army marched to Asmara.”<sup>239</sup>

Lionel Cliffe confirms this ELF failure during the Ethiopian offensive, noting that the ELF “for a time did attempt to stand firm but were crushed.”<sup>240</sup>

Frontal assaults are not problematic in the Conventional stage, given that combat becomes about positional warfare and the destruction or attrition of enemy forces. In the same vein, neither are fixed defenses. Yet the absence of a local favorable balance of forces, the lack of designated reinforcements to back up the ELF's frontal assaults and defensive positions, and the absence of defensible positions in open terrain rendered its use of such tactics futile in the confrontation with Ethiopian armored and mechanized forces. Indeed, as noted by Connell, the group's inability to sustain frontal assaults was a general feature during the Conventional stage of the conflict.<sup>241</sup> This failure to successfully execute basic conventional warfare tactics is

---

<sup>238</sup>Cliffe 1984, 94; Woldemariam 2011, 126; CIA-RDP79T00975A030700010128-9

<sup>239</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1247

<sup>240</sup>Cliffe 1984, 94. Ayele also confirms the “swift” victories of the Ethiopians over the ELF during the operations (Ayele 2014, 133).

<sup>241</sup>Connell 2003a, 107

further indicated by how quickly the ELF's defenses were overrun by the Ethiopians, as indicated in the above excerpt.

As Weldemichael's description of ELF fighting also notes, the internal issues of the ELF, stemming from the long-standing organizational divisions and lack of uniform purpose and discipline, had a direct impact on the group's ability to effectively prosecute combat.<sup>242</sup> Indeed, Weldemichael notes from his interview with Zemhret Yohannes, an ELF cadre at the time, that "the ELF in general did not take the battles seriously. While in the midst of combat the Ethiopian forces visibly were being reinforced and the ELA was running out of supplies...truckloads of ammunition were sitting idly in Barka."<sup>243</sup>

As a result of these failures in executing frontal assaults and fixed defenses, ELF forces were pushed back all the way into northwestern Eritrea at the end of the June 1978 offensive. Moreover, the group's decision to pursue positional confrontations with the advancing government forces had severe consequences - it lost significant amounts of territory and, by its own count, sustained 1,395 fighters killed in action during combat with Ethiopian forces during 1978.<sup>244</sup>

In terms of *combined arms operations*, the ELF's record was poor during the Conventional stage of the conflict. The group captured limited numbers of tanks, but never attempted to employ them in combat.<sup>245</sup> The ELF obtained artillery,<sup>246</sup> yet there is no clear evidence that they ever sought to use it in combined arms operations. Instead, the group employed it in isolation to shell Ethiopian positions. The sole recorded instance where a combined arms operation was attempted involving

---

<sup>242</sup>This observation is based directly on interviews Weldemichael conducted with former ELF members from the time period.

<sup>243</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1247fn68

<sup>244</sup>"From the Experiences..." (Part VIII)

<sup>245</sup>Pischedda 2015, 164. I note that this assessment is drawn from a scouring of existing information on combat engagements involving the ELF after the Conventional stage began in September 1974, as well as the two interviewees Pischedda quotes in his dissertation.

<sup>246</sup>"Reign of Terror in Asmara," *The Irish Times*, December 28, 1974

the ELF was the joint ELF-EPLF attack on Barentu in May 1978, in which ELF infantry joined EPLF tanks in a frontal assault on the Ethiopian-held town in western Eritrea.<sup>247</sup> However, the operation was a complete failure, as the two fronts failed to coordinate their actions during the operation. According to an EPLF doctor present, “there were no synchronized, effective, and well-coordinated assaults on the Ethiopian camps inside Barentu.”<sup>248</sup>

The ELF demonstrated an inability to successfully execute *complex defensive tactics* during the Conventional stage of the conflict. Weldemichael notes that the ELF’s failures and setbacks during the June 1978 Ethiopian offensive were in part due to its inability to acknowledge the nature of terrain shaping combat, as well as the group’s generally inability to execute a defense in depth during the conflict:

“ELF internal weaknesses compounded - and were compounded by - the objective disadvantage the ELF faced in combating Ethiopian forces in three theatres of operations. Western Eritrea, in contrast to the rugged terrain of southern Eritrea, was difficult for any force to defend. The vast, open landscapes of western Eritrea made the number of troops and their armament crucial in determining the outcome of battle. The Ethiopians absolutely outnumbered and out-gunned the ELA, which had not fully developed trench warfare tactics that might have been better suited for defense. Lack of political leadership capable of strategic thinking under pressure...held back the ELA from taking drastic measures.”<sup>249</sup>

Again, Weldemichael links the ELF’s ineffectiveness in combat directly to its organizational shortcomings, particularly its lack of an overall strategic vision - in this case both poor decisionmaking and, more significant for this analysis, the inability to successfully use a defense in depth against a numerically and capably superior force.

The ELF demonstrated a relatively poor record in executing *complex offensive tactics*, such as maneuver and special forces operations. On April 4th, 1977, the group began an assault on Tessenei that was partially successful, and elected to place

---

<sup>247</sup>Connell 2003a, 205; Connell 1993, 157, 159

<sup>248</sup>Fekadu 2002, 271-272

<sup>249</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1248

the town under siege, mortaring it from a nearby banana plantation.<sup>250</sup> The siege continued for a month, after which the ELF took control of Tessenei but at the cost of 70 fighters dead.<sup>251</sup> Also in April 1977, the group began an assault to take Barentu, a strategic location in the western area of Eritrea. The assault ultimately failed, and the insurgents subsequently placed the town under siege.<sup>252</sup> The siege ended a few weeks later when several thousand peasant militiamen were brought in as Ethiopian reinforcements and broke the ELF's encirclement.<sup>253</sup>

The ELF's failure in both assault and encirclement (the latter a classic element of maneuver) was a direct result of the lack of uniform shared purpose in the ELF. Indeed, the group itself admitted as much in its reflection on the battle: "heroic attacks were organized during an extended period of time...Some of the problems that caused failure in the timely liberation of Barentu included: the adverse effects of the 'Falool'<sup>254</sup> movement that slackened morale of many fighters...Barentu cost the ELA a great deal."<sup>255</sup> It is unsurprising that internal divisions that reached the point of violence between units and members of the ELF would subsequently have an adverse impact on the morale of ordinary ELF fighters, and the group paid the price in its failed assault on and subsequent siege of Barentu.

This inability to execute encirclement/sieges continued, with the failed siege at

---

<sup>250</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VII); Richard Trench, "Eritreans link up in fight for own country," *The Observer*, May 1st, 1977

<sup>251</sup> Markakis 1987, 141; Sherman 1980, 89; Connell 2003a, 85; Richard Trench, "Eritrean guerillas on the warpath," *South China Morning Post*, June 12th, 1977; Gwynne Roberts, "The rebel band that grew into an army," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 17th, 1977

<sup>252</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VII); Connell 2003a, 85

<sup>253</sup> Sherman 1980, 91

<sup>254</sup> As a reminder, the "Falool" movement was a largely Christian-led internal opposition movement within the ELF during 1976-77 that sought greater representation for Christians within the group (Woldemariam 2011, 119-120). This opposition mushroomed and generated its own opposition, leading to internal infighting that reached the highest levels of the organization when a "Falool" unit of the ELF ambushed and killed two ELF leaders in Danakil, leading to "all-out" conflict within the ELF (Iyob 1995, 120). Ultimately, 2,000 "Falool" members of the ELF defected to the EPLF in summer 1977 (Woldemariam 2011, 121).

<sup>255</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VII)

Agordat in August 1977 that followed the ELF's initial attack on August 14th.<sup>256</sup> Though the ELF ultimately succeeded in taking the town after two weeks of fighting, this only happened when the Ethiopian forces were able to break through the siege.<sup>257</sup> Besides a failed execution of the encirclement maneuver, the siege cost the ELF 300 dead and 400 wounded in just two weeks.<sup>258</sup>

In addition to failure in the attempted elements of maneuver, the ELF demonstrated a general inability to execute small-unit special forces operations during the Conventional stage. During the ELF's fight for Mendefera in August 1977, a group of 40 ELF *fedayeen* stormed the castle at the center of the town, where there was a "well-entrenched enemy force."<sup>259</sup> While the overall ELF units attacking the city captured it after two weeks of fighting,<sup>260</sup> the *fedayeen* operation failed, with all 40 fighters killed in the operation. Besides its failure in the special forces sense, this type of operation during an assault is more along the lines of an attritional formation as opposed to maneuver formation. Even the ELF's successful special forces-type operations during the Conventional stage were more a result of inside help rather than ELF skill. For instance, the ELF managed to free 900 of its prisoners from an Asmara prison on February 12th, 1975.<sup>261</sup> However, prison wardens facilitated the ELF units' entry into the prison and helped the prisoners escape.<sup>262</sup>

Finally, the ELF did not demonstrate a *capacity for low-level initiative or high-level coordination* during the Conventional stage of the conflict. As internal divisions multiplied within the organization during this time period, field commanders

---

<sup>256</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VII); Sherman 1980, 92

<sup>257</sup> "Eritreans celebrate victory," *The Guardian*, September 16th, 1977

<sup>258</sup> "Eritreans celebrate victory," *The Guardian*, September 16th, 1977

<sup>259</sup> "From the Experiences..." (Part VII)

<sup>260</sup> "Eritrean guerrillas poised to take Red Sea ports," *The Guardian*, August 26th, 1977

<sup>261</sup> ELF 1981; Wrong 2005, 249-250; "1,000 Inmates Escape in Eritrea With Guerrillas' Help," *New York Times*, February 15th, 1975

<sup>262</sup> Markakis 1987, 138

gained *de facto* control over military and tactical decision-making,<sup>263</sup> yet were often subject to harsh punishments for supposed transgressions or failures. For instance, the ELF executed one of the commanders that participated in the joint EPLF-ELF failed assault on Barentu in May 1978 for “dereliction of duty.”<sup>264</sup> The previously discussed splintering and internal opposition within the ELF during 1977 and 1978 likewise indicates a failure to successfully have low-level initiative without the specified issues of splits or defections.<sup>265</sup>

In terms of high-level coordination (or any coordination, for that matter), Pool notes that the ELF’s conduct during the July/August 1978 Ethiopian offensive demonstrated that the group had significant issues in this regard, including “poor coordination, lack of discipline, and divisions among leaders.”<sup>266</sup> A former ELF military leader at the time notes that “there were anarchic divisions within the ELF...We had very poor logistical preparation...there was conflict between military intelligence and civilian intelligence”<sup>267</sup> Several of Pishedda’s ELF interviewees note that these issues played a direct role in the ELF’s poor performance and defeat vis-a-vis both the Ethiopians in 1978-79 and the EPLF in 1981.<sup>268</sup>

A particular incident helps to illustrate how severe the military/tactical decentralization and lack of coordination issues were for the ELF all the way up until its last days as an armed force in the Eritrean conflict. On July 7th, 1980, the ELF withdrew its two brigades from the Sahel area, which had been engaged in joint defense of the Nakfa positions alongside the EPLF since mid-1979.<sup>269</sup> The decision to withdraw the two brigades was supposedly made to reinforce ELF units in the Barka area. However,

---

<sup>263</sup>CIA-RDP79T00975A027200010020-7

<sup>264</sup>Connell 1993, 159

<sup>265</sup>See Appendix for coding of the tasks.

<sup>266</sup>Pool 1980, 51

<sup>267</sup>Gime Ahmed, interviewed by and quoted in Pishedda 2015, 162

<sup>268</sup>Pishedda 2015, 163fn371, 163fn372

<sup>269</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1259fn112; Connell 1993, 202



the head of the ELF's military intelligence at the time, Gime Ahmed, asserts that the decision was made by the then-head of the ELF's military office, Abdallah Idris, to help in the latter's bid to take control of the overall organization.<sup>270</sup> Such a decision served to be contrary to the overall unity of effort of the ELF, further indicating a failure of the group to successfully decentralize command and undertake high-level coordination.

## **3.2 EPLF: Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness**

### **3.2.1 Robust Recruitment Practices**

The EPLF had a clear ideological program based on Marxist-Leninism from the very beginning.<sup>271</sup> A "socialist movement,"<sup>272</sup> the group viewed the struggle in Eritrea as not just nationalist, but one in which the masses had to be liberated and educated and traditional Eritrean society transformed along socialist lines during the conflict.<sup>273</sup> As Firebrace and Holland noted, "The EPLF set themselves two tasks in the liberation struggle - to overthrow Ethiopian rule and to transform traditional Eritrean society...The EPLF's project for Eritrean society is based on a specific analysis of its respective classes and an assessment of their relationship to the liberation struggle."<sup>274</sup>

The group thus put its ideology as central and driving the overall cause. As Gebru Tareke writes:

"The EPLF saw itself as a coalition of revolutionary intellectuals, workers, and peasants engaged in a struggle to liberate Eritrea from Ethiopian colonialism...the EPLF was preeminently a military machine; but it was not

---

<sup>270</sup>Based on interviews done by Costantino Pischedda - see Pischedda 2015, 167fn380

<sup>271</sup>Johnson and Johnson 1981; Sherman 1980, 49-54; Iyob 1995, 58; Gebru Tareke 2009, 65-69; Connell 2001, 353

<sup>272</sup>Johnson and Johnson 1981, 188; Firebrace and Holland 1984, 30-31

<sup>273</sup>Sherman 1980, 49-54; Gebre-Medhin 1989, 174-188

<sup>274</sup>Firebrace and Holland 1984, 30-31

militarist or militaristic, for political and ideological objectives dictated military actions...The front's main concern was political and ideological. Tasks were performed by its political commissars and party cadres, and it had no leaders whose sole responsibility was military."<sup>275</sup>

This radical ideology stemmed primarily from the EPLF's founders' experiences training in Cuba and China during the 1960s, when they were part of the ELF.<sup>276</sup> In particular, their exposure to Mao's teachings on warfare and Marxist-Leninism laid the basis for the type of organization they wanted to create. From its founding in October 1972, the EPLF drew on these ideological principles for its robust recruitment practices.<sup>277</sup>

The group was highly selective in choosing its recruits, and required all would-be fighters to undergo the same process of joining the group, while requiring recruits to provide "extensive information on social, ethnic and religious background."<sup>278</sup> Based on interviews with former fighters from the group and archival documents concerning recruitment, Weldemichael notes that the EPLF:

"attracted Eritrean youth in such numbers that it had to turn away some at a time when its rival had resorted to forced conscription in some parts of the country...I have spoken with several individuals, for example, who were turned down for one or another reason, and those who were told they were too young at first were accepted a year or two later...all new recruits - without exception - were required to travel on foot from wherever they joined the struggle to the EPLF's rear base in Sahel, a trek of more than one hundred miles through the country's most hostile landscape. In the process of surviving hardships of

---

<sup>275</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 67-69. Also see the EPLF's *National Democratic Programme of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front* (1977) and *Selected Articles from EPLF Publications (1973-1980)* (1982).

<sup>276</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 87, 137, 155; Connell 2001, 346-349. Romedan Mohammed-Nur and Isais Afwerki both trained in China during the 1960s, and "had shown a keen interest in the Chinese experience and learned organizing techniques..." (Weldemichael 2013, 137). Other subsequent prominent EPLF figures also received training in China and Cuba (Kibreab 2008, 158-159). This helps to mitigate concerns about whether the EPLF's choice of ideology was endogenous to the strategic environment. Instead, it was the result of the exogenous introduction of an ideological worldview for the would-be EPLF founders. As far as written history on the conflict allows, there is no reason to believe the EPLF founders nefariously took the ideological training in Cuba and China with the intention of splitting from the ELF in the future.

<sup>277</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 65-69

<sup>278</sup>Pool 2001, 98; Weinstein 2005, 617-618

seemingly unending nightly marches, volunteers built endurance, cultivating an early sense of camaraderie with one another and with the fighters who led them to the training center. After months of rigorous military training and political indoctrination, they exited EPLF training center completely transformed into a highly cohesive, disciplined fighting force.”<sup>279</sup>

The former EPLF fighter Bereket Habte Selassie corroborates Weldemichael’s account, recounting his own 1974 journey to the group’s base in the Sahel to join the group in his memoir.<sup>280</sup>

All recruits chosen to be fighters, even former Ethiopian soldiers and policemen that defected to the group,<sup>281</sup> were required to undergo a six-month training course that included both military training and political education in the EPLF’s ideology and strategy.<sup>282</sup> This military training was based in doctrine that derived directly from the group’s ideological orientation.<sup>283</sup> Based on interviews with EPLF members, David Pool describes a typical day in EPLF training camp:

“The programme of political and military education was demanding. A typical day would begin at 4 a.m. with two hours of physical education, followed by an hour of military education and then breakfast. After breakfast and until 4 p.m., there would be literacy classes and language training and rest. At four in the afternoon two hours of political education were given.”<sup>284</sup>

Military training included instruction in how to operate rifles and other small arms, as well as skill training.<sup>285</sup> Upon its capture of heavier weaponry like armor and artillery, the EPLF retrained its fighters to use these heavier weapons, and moved fighters on the frontlines across different types of weaponry so they could learn how to use them.<sup>286</sup> This retraining continued up through the late 1980s.<sup>287</sup> The EPLF

---

<sup>279</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 156-157 and 156fn17.

<sup>280</sup>See Selassie 2007, 314-316.

<sup>281</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 156

<sup>282</sup>Sherman 1980, 60; Pateman 1990, 84; Connell 2001, 354; Connell 2003a, 91; Weinstein 2005, 617-618; Weldemichael 2009, 1238.

<sup>283</sup>Weldemichael 2013, 155

<sup>284</sup>Pool 2001, 99-100

<sup>285</sup>Pool 2001, 153

<sup>286</sup>Pool 2001, 151-152

<sup>287</sup>Wrong 2005, 332

also instructed its trainees in military doctrine, administering exams at the end of training courses and mandating that all recruits pass before being deployed.<sup>288</sup> In the late 1980s, with the EPLF essentially constituting a conventional military force, the group began having its senior commanders undergo general staff courses.<sup>289</sup>

The political component of the training course included lessons on class analysis of Eritrean society, Eritrean history, and the struggle for independence, all conducted in the Tiginiya language.<sup>290</sup> This political education continued after fighters were deployed.<sup>291</sup> Several accounts emphasize the importance of indoctrination in socializing would-be fighters as EPLF combatants. As Tareke notes:

“When individuals voluntarily joined the movement, they did so for a variety of reasons...these diffuse and idiosyncratic sentiments were molded into a common nationalist perspective and commitment through a program of resocialization and politicization. By stressing national unity, the authenticity and legitimacy of the struggle, and the egalitarian ideas guiding it, the front fashioned an army of unquestionable political reliability and absolute loyalty, imbued with self-discipline and self-sacrifice.”<sup>292</sup>

From her interviews with former EPLF combatants, Redeker Hepner corroborates the presence and importance of such socialization of would-be fighters in the group’s ideology and its aim to transform Eritrean society:

“As heroes and guardians of that new society, fighters provided a role model for all other Eritreans who invested in the cause. The *tegadelti*, or fighters, literally embodied the new nationalist subject...[the EPLF was] seeking to change existing social relations rather than uncritically reproduce them...one of the most powerful ways in which it tried to accomplish such change was through the breaking of all former identities and allegiances among its recruits and resocializing them as members of the front.”<sup>293</sup>

---

<sup>288</sup>Pool 2001, 98. For instance, this included instruction in how to conduct fighting withdrawals, which the EPLF would undertake during the conflict (see section on EPLF performance during Conventional stage) (Weldemichael 2009, 1241).

<sup>289</sup>Pateman 1990, 94

<sup>290</sup>Pool 1980, 45-46; Connell 2001, 354; Pool 2001, 100

<sup>291</sup>Pool 2001, 100

<sup>292</sup>Gebre Tareke 2009, 69

<sup>293</sup>Redeker Hepner 2009, 47-48

Even after the EPLF expanded in size between 1975 and 1979, the system of recruitment and socialization was compulsory for all would-be fighters, and these practices, including both the selection and socialization procedures, remained intact. In the late 1980s, introductory training and political indoctrination were shortened to three months for men and six for women and boys.<sup>294</sup> In addition, as noted previously, the EPLF resorted to limited forms of conscription at certain points during the 1980s.<sup>295</sup> Nevertheless, these *robust* recruitment practices for full-time fighters, including selective membership, induction, and consistent and comprehensive military training and indoctrination of fighters, continued through the end of the conflict in May 1991.

### **3.2.2 Effectiveness**

The previous section outlined the robust recruitment practices of the EPLF during the years it participated in the conflict (1972-1991). Based on this value, we would expect the group to be generally effective in combat across the Guerrilla and Conventional stages, as well as have the ability to transition between the stages. This was indeed the case, as the EPLF was generally able to successfully execute nearly all of the stage-specific tasks in both the Guerrilla and Conventional stages of the Eritrean conflict.

**Effectiveness: Task Execution during the Guerrilla Stage (February 1972 - September 1974)** The EPLF briefly participated in the Guerrilla stage of the conflict for about two and a half years. Much of that time was spent both staving off attacks from the ELF, which sought to liquidate it, and establishing itself as an armed organization. I include in this analysis what is known in Eritrean historiography as the “first civil war” between the ELF and EPLF, which lasted from February 1972-

---

<sup>294</sup>Pool 1980, 45-46; Woldemikael 1991, 34; Connell 2001, 359-360; Pool 2001, 98; Gebru Tareke 2009, 67-68

<sup>295</sup>See footnote 127

October 1974.<sup>296</sup> The EPLF at the time was a much smaller organization than the ELF, estimated to have about 500 total fighters to the latter's 2,000.<sup>297</sup> Because the two fronts essentially had the same material capabilities, the balance of personnel between the ELF and PLF prescribes a guerrilla strategy for the EPLF vis-a-vis the ELF. It is therefore appropriate to consider the EPLF's ability to execute the Guerrilla stage-specific tasks with regard to combat with the ELF up until the very end of the infighting episode.<sup>298</sup>

As the two fronts fought each other during 1972-1974, the Ethiopian government for the most part sat back and watched. Indeed, there were no major government offensives during the time period.<sup>299</sup> Most of the Eritrean-Ethiopian clashes during this period were initiated by either the EPLF or ELF, and the next major Ethiopian offensive to occur was not until after the September 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, when the conflict shifted to the Conventional stage. During the Guerrilla stage, the EPLF was generally effective, successfully executing four of the six tasks for which there exists accessible information.<sup>300</sup>

---

<sup>296</sup>The initial ELF attacks on the various splinters were on the Obel forces and PLF-I. The former essentially disintegrated after the February 1972 attack (with some joining the EPLF (Iyob 1995, 116)), while the latter had some survivors who ultimately joined what became the EPLF in February 1973 (Tedla 2014, 104).

<sup>297</sup>Kibreab 2008, 212; Pischedda 2015, 148. Pischedda's estimates of the two fronts' sizes are based on both interviews with relevant figures from the ELF and EPLF and secondary sources.

<sup>298</sup>This is the case for most of the "first civil war" with the exception of the tail end, when the groups' sizes (especially the EPLF) had increased to the point where conventional tactics (absent conventional capabilities) for the EPLF were more appropriate for combat (Bereketeab 2000, 197).

<sup>299</sup>According to Ethiopian military archives, there were apparently ten counterinsurgency operations conducted in Eritrea between April 1971-January 1973 (Ayele 2014, 25). However, other primary and secondary sources seem to indicate that these did not result in major combat engagements with the Eritrean insurgents. This inactivity on the part of the Ethiopians is confirmed in Woldemariam's interview with an EPLF commander from the time period (Woldemariam 2011, 111). Pischedda quotes another individual saying that the ELF intercepted Ethiopian communications that expressed glee about the Eritrean infighting (see Pischedda 2015, 150).

<sup>300</sup>I was unable to gather or access information on the EPLF's ability to conduct ambushes during the Guerrilla stage, and so code the group's execution on this as "missing." In fact, a survey of accessible information on combat engagements involving the EPLF during the Guerrilla stage seems to indicate that the group was primarily defensive in its posture, and did not undertake offensive actions that might include ambushes. However, I still conclude that the group had overall proficient task execution based on its successful or mixed ability vis-a-vis the other five tasks, as the following

**Table 5.5.** EPLF's Task Execution During the Guerrilla Stage

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Mixed
Cover and Concealment	Yes
Dispersion	Yes
Conduct Ambushes	—
Avoid Concentrated Frontal Assaults	Yes
Withdraw when Outgunned/Outnumbered	Yes
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative	No

The EPLF demonstrated a mixed record in *operating its weaponry and marksmanship* during the Guerrilla stage. The group had relatively sophisticated weapons from the start, marked by Kalashnikovs which were donated by Libya.<sup>301</sup> In addition, the group had Seminovs and Gorynuv machine guns - weapons that far outperformed the single-shot rifles the ELF had at the time.<sup>302</sup> The group was able to exploit these materiel advantages to stave off repeated ELF assaults on its areas of control during 1972-1974. However, a lack of coordination sometimes led EPLF fighters to accidentally fight and shoot each other during this period. As Pool notes, the EPLF and ELF were mostly indistinguishable in combat, which often led to friendly casualties.<sup>303</sup>

The successful defensive positions that the EPLF established in the Sahel provided natural *cover and concealment* for the group's fighters vis-a-vis the ELF, of which the EPLF made widespread use. Woldemariam notes that the Sahel's "harsh, mountainous topography allowed the relatively small organization to conceal itself from the larger Jebha."<sup>304</sup> In combination with such cover and concealment, the remnants of what eventually became the EPLF *dispersed* early on to avoid detection

---

discussion illustrates.

<sup>301</sup>Markakis 1987, 135

<sup>302</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 185

<sup>303</sup>Pool 2001, 134

<sup>304</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 182

by Ethiopian authorities, as well as to find resources that were lacking in their initial staging areas.<sup>305</sup> During combat, the EPLF made extensive use of “thinly spread” forces during the first few years of this period, appropriate for the larger ELF forces it was facing.<sup>306</sup> Later, as the two fronts became equal in size, the EPLF began to concentrate its forces against the ELF,<sup>307</sup> foreshadowing its ability to transition to conventional warfare and successfully use related tactics.

During the infighting episodes with the ELF, the EPLF largely *avoided concentrated frontal assaults*, instead adopting a defensive posture and resisting the ELF’s repeated attempts at destruction using limited forces.<sup>308</sup> Indeed, the EPLF operated in area that was very favorable for defense, with the Sahel area being high ground.<sup>309</sup> Moreover, the strategy of the ELF vis-a-vis the EPLF enabled the latter to avoid the need to withdraw from areas, instead establishing defensive positions to fend off ELF attacks (which it did successfully). In the words of an EPLF member,

“The ELF was a much bigger organization, but it was not smart. They could have gathered all their forces and destroyed us. But instead they would send one force at the time, rather than an overwhelming one. That was the wrong strategy. Their was kind of a bravado...We had prepared good defenses, very good trenches.”<sup>310</sup>

These attacks by the ELF often lasted several days.<sup>311</sup> Yet the ELF’s limited force strategy enabled the EPLF to essentially maintain its forces through defensive tactics - in line with the classic overall aim of guerrilla warfare strategy: to preserve one’s forces and minimize losses. This strategy of avoiding extended engagements continued for the next several months in 1973, as combat between the ELF and EPLF consisted

---

<sup>305</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 178; Pool 2001, 66.

<sup>306</sup>Pool 2001, 133

<sup>307</sup>Pool 2001, 133

<sup>308</sup>Tedla 2014, 105

<sup>309</sup>Markakis 1987, 137; Woldemariam 2011, 181-182

<sup>310</sup>Interview with Adhanom Gebremariam in Pishedda 2015, 154fn350

<sup>311</sup>Pool 2001, 133



primarily of “running battles up and down the length of Sahel province.”<sup>312</sup>

The EPLF appropriately *withdrew when outgunned or outnumbered*. For instance, during the March 1972 ELF attack on the PLF forces in Danakil, the latter fled to the Sahel rather than staying and confronting the ELF.<sup>313</sup> Only later did the EPLF engage in pitched battles (such as the one in Gereger in mid-March 1973). However, at that point, the group had essentially evened the scales in terms of manpower vis-a-vis the ELF, making such direct confrontation with another insurgent force appropriate.

Finally, the EPLF failed to demonstrate a *capacity for low-level initiative*. The group had a decentralized military command for most of this time period, with a single EPLF formal organization not established until August 1973. Because it was essentially a merger of three separate organizations, each element of the EPLF kept its own organizational infrastructure and together formed a joint command, with each of the three organizations having its own command.<sup>314</sup>

This was not effective, however, as the EPLF saw several instances where its forces mistakenly attacked one another, such as in February 1973, due to poor communications between units and local commands.<sup>315</sup> The EPLF eventually established a centralized command that mitigated these issues later in the period, but overall lacked the capacity for low-level initiative in ways that did not harm the group’s overall unity of effort.<sup>316</sup>

**Effectiveness: Losses Incurred during the Guerrilla Stage (February 1972 - September 1974)** As a result of its general ability to successfully execute the tasks during the Guerrilla stage, the EPLF had relatively low defections and casualties ac-

---

<sup>312</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 183

<sup>313</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 181; Kibreab 2008, 213

<sup>314</sup>Markakis 1987, 134-135; Pool 2001, 134

<sup>315</sup>Pool 2001, 134

<sup>316</sup>Kibreab 2008, 340

according to available sources. A primary leader of Obel, one of the EPLF splinters, was captured and imprisoned by the ELF in February 1972.<sup>317</sup> However, official Ethiopian documents, which have an incentive to play up defections (or perhaps even fabricate numbers), note that there were very few EPLF defections.<sup>318</sup>

In terms of losses, available and accessible data are spotty as the EPLF did not publicize its own losses,<sup>319</sup> but there were an estimated 100 casualties each for the ELF and EPLF during the first few months of 1973.<sup>320</sup> However, in the most significant battle of the first ELF-EPLF civil war in Gereger (Sudan) that took place in mid-March 1973, the ELF suffered 130 fighters killed and 100 wounded, while the EPLF had just 19 casualties overall.<sup>321</sup> In conjunction with the group's general ability to successfully execute the tasks during the Guerrilla stage, it is unsurprising that the group was able to minimize its losses against the ELF in the battle.

**Effectiveness: Task Execution during the Conventional Stage (September 1974 - May 1991)** After the Ethiopian Revolution in September 1974, the Eritrean conflict shifted to the Conventional stage. As the EPLF grew in size and captured more and more heavy weaponry from Ethiopian forces, the group was able to continue to sustain its conventional strategy against the government forces. In this section, I discuss the record of the EPLF in executing the stage-specific tasks during the Conventional stage of the conflict, from September 1974 until the EPLF's victory in May 1991. I generally discuss them in the order they are outlined in Table 5.6, but at certain points examine major engagements during the period and discuss how the aspects of the given engagement indicates the EPLF's successful execution of several particular tasks.

---

<sup>317</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 181

<sup>318</sup>Gebre Tareke 2009, 67

<sup>319</sup>Pool 2001

<sup>320</sup>CIA-RDP79-00927A010100060001-5

<sup>321</sup>Woldemariam 2011, 183

**Table 5.6.** EPLF's Task Execution During the Conventional Stage

Task	Successful Execution?
Operate Weaponry and Marksmanship	Yes
Cover and Concealment	Yes
Dispersion	Yes
Basic Conventional Warfare Tactics	Yes
Combined Arms Operations	Yes
Complex Defensive Tactics	Yes
Complex Offensive Tactics	Yes
Capacity for Low-Level Initiative/High-Level Coordination	Yes

During the Conventional stage of the conflict, the EPLF demonstrated an excellent ability in *operating weaponry and marksmanship*. Nearly all of the EPLF's heavy weaponry was acquired through capture from Ethiopian forces.<sup>322</sup> By 1977, the EPLF had moved beyond its initial weapons to M-14 and other light assault rifles, Kalashnikovs, trucks, mortars, tanks, and armored cars - all captured from the Ethiopian forces after the battles in Nakfa, Decamare, and Keren.<sup>323</sup> Over the course of the next several years, the group captured further weaponry from Ethiopian forces, including artillery pieces, heavy machine guns, armored cars, rocket launchers, antiaircraft guns, and more tanks.<sup>324</sup> After seizing Afabet in March 1988, the group captured 130mm mortars and BM-21 rocket launchers for the first time, along with 50 tanks, long-range Soviet artillery, and “millions of rounds of ammunition.”<sup>325</sup> On the eve of independence in 1990, besides 12 infantry brigades, a heavy weapons brigade, and artillery and engineering corps, the group had 150 tanks and armored vehicles, organized into two tank battalions.<sup>326</sup>

<sup>322</sup>CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2

<sup>323</sup>Connell 2003a, 91; Connell 1993, 97

<sup>324</sup>Pateman 1990, 91-92; Gebru Tareke 2009, 229; Firebrace and Holland 1984, 51

<sup>325</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 256; Gilkes 1995, 39.

<sup>326</sup>Pateman 1990, 82-83; Pateman 1990b, 120-121

A 1990 report written by the MOND's Chief of Military Intelligence quoted by Gebru Tareke noted that the EPLF had "superb intelligence and dexterity at handling modern weapons."<sup>327</sup> This showed in the setup of their heavier weapons during the Ethiopian offensives on Nakfa during the early 1980s, leading Ethiopian military intelligence to note that the EPLF's "machine guns and other weapons were positioned to achieve maximum result."<sup>328</sup> In the battle for Afabet, an observer noted that the pattern of shots on Ethiopian corpses indicated that EPLF fighters had shot most in the head, face, or chest - implying superior close-range targeting.<sup>329</sup> When establishing defensive positions, the EPLF made excellent use of landmines, which often proved decisive in slowing down Ethiopian assaults on the group's positions.<sup>330</sup> Besides being excellent operators of weaponry, the EPLF was able to maintain and repair its weaponry, particularly tanks, through its own repair shops and maintenance crews and an extensive transportation network for servicing and providing spare parts.<sup>331</sup>

The group was able to successfully use *basic conventional tactics* such as ambushes, concentrated frontal assaults, static defenses, and orderly retreats, and made use of *cover and concealment* during the Conventional stage of the conflict. During the Ethiopian attack on Elabered on November 25th, 1978, the EPLF successfully ambushed Ethiopian troops, using cover and concealment to great effect. Rather than confronting the Ethiopians' 90-tank offensive head-on in the narrow canyon, the insurgents instead withdrew from the town and established ambush positions in the brush.<sup>332</sup> After the tanks met no resistance in the town, they moved into the valley and began preparing dinner.<sup>333</sup> The EPLF fighters then "leapt out of the brush and

---

<sup>327</sup>Gebru Tareke 2002, 491

<sup>328</sup>Ayele 2014, 150

<sup>329</sup>Tesfai 2002, 116

<sup>330</sup>Ayele 2014, 149

<sup>331</sup>Firebrace and Holland 1984, 58, 73-74; Connell 2003a, 32; Cliffe 1984, 95; Connell 1993, 97

<sup>332</sup>Connell 1993, 171; Weldemichael 2009, 1253

<sup>333</sup>Ayele 2014, 134

opened fire with hand-held rocket-propelled grenades and homemade firebombs...The tanks broke formation and tried to retreat but some thirty were cut off and abandoned.”<sup>334</sup> In the ensuing 48-hour battle, there were heavy losses on both sides, and the EPLF was subsequently able to push back the tanks from the canyon through successful counter-attacks before withdrawing its forces from Elabered under the cover of darkness.<sup>335</sup>

During the Ethiopian offensives on Nakfa during the 1980s, the group’s fighters often would only carry out attacks during bad weather so as to avoid air strikes.<sup>336</sup> Besides its use during combat engagements, the EPLF made use of cover and concealment when engaging in logistics and supply operations as well. For instance, during the six-month long EPLF siege of Nakfa from September 17th, 1976 to March 20th, 1977, the group relied on vehicles and camels moving at night for resupply so as to avoid Ethiopian airstrikes.<sup>337</sup>

The EPLF also made use of *dispersion* during this period of the conflict. Besides dispersion at the tactical level (see below discussion), the EPLF dispersed its command in the Sahel area to protect against aerial bombardments.<sup>338</sup> After a senior EPLF official defected to the government, the EPLF moved its command so as to negate any intelligence the official might provide to the Ethiopians on their locations.<sup>339</sup>

The EPLF was able to successfully integrate the heavy equipment it captured from the Ethiopians into its repertoire to conduct *combined arms operations*. At the conflict’s end in 1991, the guerrilla group that started out as a small-arms, light infantry force fielded 150 tanks organized into two tank battalions, had a dedicated

---

<sup>334</sup>Connell 1993, 172

<sup>335</sup>Connell 1993, 172; Weldemichael 2009, 1254

<sup>336</sup>Ayele 2014, 150

<sup>337</sup>Ayele 2014, 130

<sup>338</sup>Connell 1993, 210; Wrong 2005, 287

<sup>339</sup>Connell 1993, 210

artillery brigade, and fast attack speedboats that served as a fledgling naval force.<sup>340</sup> The tanks and artillery were not just for show, either - the EPLF repeatedly demonstrated an ability to conduct operations that combined these various arms to great effect.

During the 1982 Red Star Campaign, the EPLF deployed tanks, armored vehicles, and field artillery in confronting the Ethiopian offensives.<sup>341</sup> On February 23rd, 1982, in the midst of a multi-front Ethiopian offensive on Nakfa, EPLF units responsible for defending the eastern side undertook a counterattack against Ethiopian units that had recently taken several hills nearby hills: "Using tanks, 82 and 120 mm mortars, 85 and 120 mm artillery, ZU-23 and ARPG-7 launchers, the EPLA counterattacked in force to retake the hills and block the corridor that the assailants had opened at a heavy price."<sup>342</sup> The successful combination of several types of combat arms, in this case tanks and artillery, proved successful in staving off the particular element of the Ethiopian offensive and recapturing positions.

In its February-March 1984 offensive, the EPLF deployed tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery in its attack on the Northeastern Sahel front of Ethiopian defensive lines.<sup>343</sup> As Firebrace and Holland write of the offensive, "EPLF fighters with mechanised armour pushed through the North East Sahel front, and in a classic 'pincer' movement over a 100km front destroyed an Ethiopian armoured division..."<sup>344</sup> In the EPLF attack on Barentu in July 1985, the group used a mix of infantry and heavy weapons brigades (including artillery and armor) in conducting the assault, first sending in infantry to engage Ethiopian defensive positions and then using artillery and armor as reinforcement and suppressive fire.<sup>345</sup> As a result, the EPLF was able to

---

<sup>340</sup>Pateman 1990, 82-83; Pateman 1990b, 121

<sup>341</sup>Ayele 2014, 139

<sup>342</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 235

<sup>343</sup>de Waal 1991, 122; Cliffe 1984, 94-95; CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2

<sup>344</sup>Firebrace and Holland 1984, 55-56; Pateman 1990, 91

<sup>345</sup>"The Battle for Barentu," 1985, *Africa Events* 1(11):54-56; Ayele 2014, 146

take the town after less than 24 hours of fighting.<sup>346</sup>

In the February 1990 assault on Massawa, the EPLF integrated its artillery and armored forces with its nascent naval force to launch a multi-pronged land- and sea-based attack on Ethiopian positions in the city's port area and naval base. The group engaged in armored warfare and shelled Ethiopian positions from air and sea, in combination with a simultaneous naval offensive on Ethiopian positions.<sup>347</sup> Gebru Tareke notes of the EPLF in the battle that "their coordination of infantry, artillery, tank, and naval forces proved superior to those of the enemy."<sup>348</sup>

The EPLF was able to successfully execute *complex defensive tactics*, like defenses in depth, even in the face of repeated Ethiopian offensives that brought significantly overwhelming firepower and personnel to bear on the insurgents' positions. Between April - July 1979, there were two major Ethiopian offensives that attempted to capture Nakfa and the surrounding EPLF-held areas. During these engagements, 5,000 EPLF fighters armed with light and medium weapons faced Task Forces 506 and 508 and pro-government militia units that eventually reached a total of 32,000 troops in July 1979.<sup>349</sup> The EPLF successfully held off these offensives with superbly built defensive lines containing interlocking lines of fire from well-camouflaged positions. Drawing on Ethiopian military and intelligence reports from the operations, Ayele writes:

"Those troops who had reached the EPLF trenches reported about the nature of the defense lines. The insurgents had built two lines of semicircular trenches. The frontline was a ditch with no overhead protection. A few meters behind the frontline defense, there was another trench strengthened by big logs, stones, and sandbags. The army did manage to overrun the frontline defenses but failed to break the second line of trenches. The insurgents had also positioned various types of light and heavy guns camouflaged and completely hidden from air strikes. Since the EPLF trenches were on the escarpment and top of the Naqfa

---

<sup>346</sup>Pateman 1990b, 142

<sup>347</sup>Ayele 2014, 181-182

<sup>348</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 297

<sup>349</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1260

Mountains, the army's positions in the low-lying areas appeared in clear detail before the eyes of the insurgents. The narrow and zigzag road to the town of Naqfa was heavily mined and vigilantly guarded by camouflaged weapons. The rebels had prepared their defenses in such a way that they could avoid direct hits from tanks, artillery, and combat aircraft. The semicircular defense lines enabled the insurgents to outflank assailants through a pincer maneuver. When the assailants rushed to the EPLF positions, they were machine-gunned from left and right.”<sup>350</sup>

As a result of the EPLF's defenses and counterattacks (see below), the Ethiopians lost 15,000 casualties during these two offensives, which both failed.<sup>351</sup>

This ability to successfully prepare and execute a defense in depth was consistent in subsequent years, as illustrated by the preparatory measures taken by the EPLF before Operation Red Star in 1982: “Before the launching of Operation Red Star, the EPLF took other measures to strengthen its defenses around Naqfa and weaken the government's capability. For about seven months, the EPLF rebels had been digging new bunkers, trenches, and foxholes around Naqfa. Aerial photographs taken before the operation revealed that the EPLF had already prepared three rings of trenches around the town.”<sup>352</sup> In its 1984 defense against the Ethiopian offensives on Nakfa, the group again displayed its ability to execute a defense in depth combined with cover and concealment to great effect, according to a CIA report at the time:

“The Eritreans, although inferior in numbers and equipment to their opponents, have exploited effectively the difficult terrain to neutralize Ethiopian advantages. According to several journalists who have been to the Nak'fa front, rebel positions are well camouflaged and deeply dug into the hillsides. These positions reduce the effectiveness of Ethiopian armor and mechanized units, artillery, and airstrikes. As a result, Ethiopian forces are often involved in fighting that requires continued infantry assaults against fortified, high-ground positions without effective support from their heavy weapons.”<sup>353</sup>

In general during the Conventional stage, the EPLF made “skillful use of trenches

---

<sup>350</sup>Ayele 2014, 136

<sup>351</sup>(CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2

<sup>352</sup>Ayele 2014, 137-138.

<sup>353</sup>CIA-RDP85S00317R000300050001-2, 3



and mines” to construct its defenses.<sup>354</sup> Besides an excellent preparation of a defense in depth, this particular defense had the additional desired outcome of forcing the Ethiopians to fight in an unfavorable scenario in which infantry was essentially matched against fortified, asymmetric positions, as the EPLF effectively neutralized the Ethiopian forces’ ability to employ anything beyond small arms or crew-served weapons.

This ability to establish solid defenses positioned the EPLF well for conducting successful counterattacks, which it was able to do on multiple occasions during the Conventional stage. During the series of operations the Ethiopian regime launched in 1979 to take Nakfa, the EPLF’s defensive positions not only prevented Ethiopian breaches, but also enabled its units to undertake counterattacks. After the Ethiopian offensive ended in mid-February 1979, the EPLF began a counter-attack that pushed the Ethiopians back to their starting positions.<sup>355</sup> On July 14th, 1979, the 10th Brigade of the Ethiopian Army “crawled within five meters of the EPLA trenches...Before the soldiers could launch their surprise attack, however, ‘the bright moonlight’...exposed the Ethiopian soldiers. The EPLA opened fire, battle raged and fierce hand-to-hand combat followed...In the morning, the EPLA launched a counter-attack, pushing back Ethiopian forces and occupying their positions.<sup>356</sup> In November 1979, the EPLF launched a major counterattack that pushed the Ethiopians all the way back to Afabet, 35 miles south of Nakfa.<sup>357</sup>

The EPLF again demonstrated its ability to launch successful counterattacks, including those using flanking maneuvers, during combat in the midst of Ethiopia’s Operation Bahra Negash in November 1985:

“Since the insurgents had positioned their machine guns at strategic locations

---

<sup>354</sup>Gebru Tareke 2002, 491

<sup>355</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1258

<sup>356</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1261. Also see Ayele 2014, 135-136

<sup>357</sup>Ayele 2014, 136

and planted mines along their defense lines, the commanders came to conclude that Naqfa could only be captured through a nocturnal operation. On November 12, 1985, at 2000 hours, the Nadaw Command launched the second phase of Operation Bahra Negash. A forty-minute artillery bombardment and the clearing of landmines by the army engineers preceded the advance to EPLF positions. With the exception of a few lucky ones, most of the troops of the first wave were machine-gunned or blown up by antipersonnel mines. The Sixth Airborne Brigade and the Eighteenth Mountain Infantry Division fought with extraordinary courage and tried to overwhelm the rebels. As usual, the insurgents counterattacked by flanking units from left and right and forced the government forces to retreat.”<sup>358</sup>

As a result, the EPLF was able to inflict 14,442 casualties on the Ethiopian Army, the latter itself noting the key role of the group’s counterattacks in shaping the failure of Operation Bahra Negash.<sup>359</sup>

The EPLF also demonstrated the ability to successfully execute fighting withdrawals. This is most clearly seen with the group’s infamous “Strategic Withdrawal” during the 1978-79 Ethiopian offensives in Eritrea. As the Army moved on the group’s positions, the EPLF began to withdraw from its areas of operation to its base around Nakfa in the Sahel area of the province. The groups first began withdrawing its forces from the southern towns of the province in June 1978, following the beginning of the Ethiopian offensive and the ELF abandonment of its positions in the area.<sup>360</sup> Initially withdrawing to Keren, the EPLF decided to further retreat towards the Sahel after the Ethiopians airlifted the Army’s 10th Division to Massawa to attempt a flanking attack on the group’s position in the central highlands of the province.<sup>361</sup>

The EPLF was able to hold off advancing Ethiopian units and slow their advance northward, while preventing the government forces from surrounding the EPLF in certain areas because of the group’s ability to fight until its defenses had been evac-

---

<sup>358</sup> Ayele 2014, 149-150.

<sup>359</sup> Ayele 2014, 150

<sup>360</sup> Weldemichael 2009, 1250

<sup>361</sup> Connell 1980, 57; Pateman 1990, 89

uated.<sup>362</sup> This is the essence of a successful fighting withdrawal: a designated unit resists until defenses are evacuated and the retrograde operation is complete. As Connell noted in January 1979, “none of the towns was actually taken by military force. Instead, the EPLF fought outside the towns and pulled back after they were fully evacuated. The retreat of their large military units was carried out systematically to contract the fixed base area to a third the size it had been seven months ago.”<sup>363</sup>

As noted in Chapter 2, to avoid alerting the adversary of movements, fighting withdrawals should be done at night or in “adverse weather.”<sup>364</sup> The EPLF closely adhered to this prescription during the withdrawal, using nighttime for the evacuation of its troops from defensive positions such that Ethiopian forces had no idea they had even withdrawn. The withdrawal from Elaberet in November 1978 is illustrative of this:

“Once its civilian and political branches were safely out of Keren, the EPLF pulled its forces from their trenches at Ilaberet under the cover of darkness. Unaware of this retreat, Ethiopian forces started pounding the empty defenses in the early hours of the morning. Anxious that their barrage had failed to initiate a counter-bombardment, the on-site Ethiopian command dispatched a reconnaissance team to investigate the silence across the line. The team could not find any trace of human activity.”<sup>365</sup>

Weldemichael explicitly links the ability and success of the EPLF’s withdrawal to the training and indoctrination its fighters received. He notes that the group began preparing its combatants for the withdrawal after the Ogaden War ended in 1978: “During this time, the EPLF started teaching its fighters about the Chinese Long March and other similar experiences of withdrawals. Tenaciously holding to its belief that its cause was righteous, the Eritrean leadership readied itself for any eventuality

---

<sup>362</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1253

<sup>363</sup>Connell 1980, 58-59

<sup>364</sup>FM 100-5, 11-4

<sup>365</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1254

by reminding its ranks and civilian base that a people's war was not a smooth ride.”<sup>366</sup>

Besides their acceptance of the decision to withdraw, the morale of EPLF fighters was high during and after the withdrawal, as observed by journalists that accompanied the combatants on their retreat to the Sahel.<sup>367</sup> As Biddle notes,<sup>368</sup> a fighting withdrawal is potentially very dangerous for the morale of a unit, as it can easily be viewed by fighters as a loss or unnecessary concession. The fact that the EPLF was able to successfully execute the withdrawal and maintain fighter morale, particularly when the group was so close to capturing the entire province, indicates the uniform shared purpose that such training and indoctrination had inculcated among the group's fighters.

The “Strategic Withdrawal” was not a one-off episode, as the EPLF successfully executed another fighting withdrawal in Barentu in 1985. EPLF infantry, armor, and artillery units helped capture the town on July 6th, 1985 after just 24 hours of fighting. Subsequent Ethiopian pressure and increasing attacks on the town, culminating in a multi-directional assault by infantry and portions of two divisions of the Ethiopian Army in mid-August during Operation Red Sea, led the EPLF to decide to withdraw from Barentu.<sup>369</sup> The withdrawal proceeded in an “orderly fashion” on August 24th, with the EPLF retreating with heavy weaponry initially captured from the Ethiopians in the takeover of the town.<sup>370</sup>

In terms of *complex offensive tactics*, the EPLF was able to successfully employ various forms of maneuver, use fire and movement to great effect, and conduct small-unit special forces operations during the Conventional stage of the Eritrean conflict. The EPLF's ability to maneuver was superb, according to even Ethiopian

---

<sup>366</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1241

<sup>367</sup>Weldemichael 2009, 1244

<sup>368</sup>Biddle 2004, 48

<sup>369</sup>“The Battle for Barentu,” 1985, *Africa Events* 1(11):54-56

<sup>370</sup>Pateman 1990b, 143

assessments. Gebru Tareke paraphrases from a report written by Ethiopia's MOND Chief of Military Intelligence in 1990 that the EPLF had "quick and efficient tactical manoeuvres."<sup>371</sup> Several examples illustrate this ability, starting with the six-month EPLF siege of Nakfa from September 1976 - March 1977. After failing to take the town by force, the EPLF opted for the classic maneuver tactic of encirclement (or siege). During the course of the siege, the EPLF's 3,000 fighters aimed to wear down the encircled Fifteenth Infantry Battalion, rather than engage them through contact - the essence of maneuver. For instance,

"[The EPLF] knew that government troops had a critical shortage of ammunition. They, therefore, designed various methods to force the besieged soldiers to fire and use up their ammunition. On many occasions, the insurgents staged mock offensives at night so that their adversaries would be thrown into panic and fire all their bullets. In addition to staging mock offensives, the rebels put helmets on sticks and moved them back and forth on the horizon to dupe the troops into opening fire. Initially, the soldiers were deceived and fired many bullets on those inanimate targets before discovering that it was a trick..."<sup>372</sup>

Besides essentially trolling the Ethiopian forces, the EPLF dug new trenches at night to further surround the garrison and deny it resupply.<sup>373</sup> As Ayele notes, this had the dual effect of better positioning the group for an offensive to take the garrison and also reducing the space in which Ethiopian supplies could be airdropped and insurgents be targeted using airstrikes.<sup>374</sup> Ayele notes that starvation indeed resulted from these EPLF tactics, while soldiers with medical issues went untreated and those with clothes that became infested with lice.<sup>375</sup> The EPLF's siege operation proved highly successful, as the number of Ethiopian troops went from 297 at the start of the encirclement on September 17th, 1976 to just 170 after one month.<sup>376</sup> During the

---

<sup>371</sup>Gebru Tareke 2002, 491

<sup>372</sup>Ayele 2014, 130

<sup>373</sup>Ayele 2014, 131

<sup>374</sup>Ayele 2014, 131

<sup>375</sup>Ibid.

<sup>376</sup>Ayele 2014, 131-132

episode, the EPLF often undertook surprise attacks at night, exploiting the cover of darkness.<sup>377</sup> According to a declassified Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessment of the Eritrean insurgency in March 1977, this siege tactic was commonly used by the EPLF to great effect during the conflict, such as in Elaberet in April 1977.<sup>378</sup>

The EPLF repulsed a 1,700-person relief unit in November 1976, and on March 22nd, 1977, the group launched its final assault to take the Nakfa garrison, succeeding in its third attempt by breaking through an opening in the Ethiopians' trenches.<sup>379</sup> The insurgents were able to exploit this breakthrough of the Ethiopian defensive lines to "launch a two-pronged attack on the remaining defensive positions."<sup>380</sup> Though they took further losses, the EPLF was able to induce the collapse of the Fifteenth Infantry Battalions' garrison at Nakfa and capture it.<sup>381</sup> Besides encirclement, the EPLF's use of breakthrough and exploitation in seizing Nakfa indicates another successful use of maneuver.

The EPLF also demonstrated its ability to successfully use two classic elements of maneuver, the flank and the envelopment, in the Battle of Afabet in March 1988. Employing just over 10,000 fighters, the EPLF launched a three-pronged attack on the Ethiopian garrison at Afabet on March 17th, 1988, facing an Ethiopian command post with 15,223 soldiers in arms.<sup>382</sup> Gebru Tareke recounts the attack, illustrating the success of the group's flanking maneuver that eventually enveloped the Ethiopian forces and set up the takeover of Afabet:

"The command posts of the front lines were instantly destroyed. The attackers swept over the first line of trenches, which extended for over sixty kilometers, with amazing agility and ease, pushing the untrenched and disheartened de-

---

<sup>377</sup>Ayele 2014, 130

<sup>378</sup>*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume XVII, Part 1, Horn of Africa, 1977-1980*, ed. Louise P. Woodroffe (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2016), Document 9; Sherman 1980, 89.

<sup>379</sup>Fekadu 2002, 38; Ayele 2014, 132-133

<sup>380</sup>Ayele 2014, 133

<sup>381</sup>Sherman 1980, 88; CIA-RDP79T00975A030000010004-3.

<sup>382</sup>Tesfai 2002, 102; Ayele 2014, 154;

fenders back toward the second and third lines of defense. To the right flank, the Seventieth Division, under Philipos Wolde Yohanes, made a wide sweep to infiltrate the command's position from the rear by quickly overwhelming the Twenty-first Division. Headed by Ali Ibrahim, the Sixty-first Division drove through the central gap between the Fourteenth and Nineteenth Divisions and marched along the Hedai Valley to capture the strategic Meshalit Pass and subsequently close the critical Keren-Af Abet route...the command's outer defenses were shattered...The Eighty-fifth Division, led by Gabre Egziabher Andemariam (Wichu), had moved southward parallel to the coast with the aim of closing the escape routes along the Felket-Sheeb gorges and then completing an envelopment. It was held up at Kemchewa...where the Twenty-ninth Mechanized Brigade fought doggedly, without reinforcements, for nearly a whole day....[Deciding to retreat, the Twenty-ninth Division] hurriedly headed for Af Abet...As it reached Ad Sherum, a choke point between mountains, its lead vehicles were hit with 100 mm guns. The burning tank and truck blocked the route. The convoy of about six dozen tanks, APCs, and lorries loaded with missiles, BM-21 rockets, mortars and artillery was pinned down on the lower ground without any exit points.<sup>383</sup>

The three-pronged attack by the EPLF from the north of Afabet was able to quickly penetrate Ethiopian defenses using flanking maneuvers and a frontal assault, sweep around to the southern “back” side of the Ethiopian position, and trap the retreating 29th Division in a perfectly executed ambush.<sup>384</sup> After two days of intense fighting, the EPLF captured Afabet on March 19th.<sup>385</sup> One of the participating EPLF division's commissar, Adhanom, explained the logic for the EPLF's use of maneuver during the battle for Afabet to Almseged Tesfai, an Eritrean journalist:

“This is an offensive of annihilation, of total disintegration and rout. If the enemy resists, you just do not waste time and men...you clear his wings and isolate him. You may leave a platoon to stand guard, just in case. Isolated troops, no matter their number are of little effect. In this manner, you cut off the enemy's lines of communication and cohesion.”<sup>386</sup>

Such logic is in precise alignment with the reason for using maneuver versus attrition when attacking: to preserve one's forces while seeking advantages that allow for defeat

---

<sup>383</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 254

<sup>384</sup>Gilkes 1995, 39; Tesfai 2002, 108

<sup>385</sup>Ayele 2014, 156; Gebru Tareke 2009, 256

<sup>386</sup>Tesfai 2002, 111-112

of the enemy through isolation or rendering its forces useless.<sup>387</sup>

The EPLF again made successful use of a flanking maneuver during its assault on Sheib on February 8th, 1990 as part of Operation Fenkil, the offensive that would ultimately culminate in the group's seizure of Massawa. Moving on the Ethiopian Sixth Division HQ in two directions, the EPLF

“began wide outflanking movements along the ridges on the western and eastern sides. One unit rushed toward Weqiro on the left while the main column raced towards Ghedghed, where it split into three. The right wing swerved to Adi Ile to outflank the Sixth, or Nebelbal, Infantry Division...The central unit marched straight to the division's command post...The attackers...broke through the main defense line...”<sup>388</sup>

After five hours of fighting, the EPLF units took the Division's command post.<sup>389</sup>

During these various combat operations, the EPLF demonstrated an ability to use fire and movement. In the EPLF's offensive that finally captured Nakfa on March 22nd, 1977, as the insurgents advanced towards Ethiopian positions, EPLF units made use of their fire to specifically suppress Ethiopian fire and aiming ability. In the words of Ali Ibrahim, an EPLF company commander in the offensive,

“Each fighter followed the steps of the one in front. During this time, the enemy was shooting at us. Our comrades behind us fired back so they [the Ethiopians] could not hold their heads up to aim. In that way, we entered the town. The Ethiopians were in big holes, surrounded by sacks of sand. When we reached the place where the enemy could see us, we ran desperately, moving forward in two waves - one threw bombs, while the other charged ahead.”<sup>390</sup>

This successive mixing of suppressive fire and movement is exhibitivive of classic fire and movement: designating particular forces to engage in suppressive fire so that other designated strike force units can advance forward. This EPLF ability to use fire and movement remained consistent. An Ethiopian military intelligence report

---

<sup>387</sup>Leonhard 1991, 19-20

<sup>388</sup>Gebre Tareke 2009, 293-294

<sup>389</sup>Gebre Tareke 2009, 294; Ayele 2014, 180

<sup>390</sup>Ali Ibrahim, quoted in Connell 1993, 94



on the EPLF's combat and tactics during the Ethiopian offensives on Nakfa in the 1980s noted the EPLF's excellent use of fire and movement to defend recently taken positions: "After capturing a given point, they swiftly moved machine guns to give cover to their fighters and repulse counterattacks."<sup>391</sup>

Besides maneuver and fire and movement, the EPLF demonstrated an ability to successfully conduct small-unit special forces operations during the Conventional stage of the conflict. The group created a commando unit for "special warfare" that was given separate training and political education.<sup>392</sup> In January 1982, a commando unit from the EPLF attacked the HQ of the the 35th Brigade in Asmara.<sup>393</sup> On May 20th, 1984, an EPLF commando unit conducted a raid on the Ethiopian Air Force base at Asmara.<sup>394</sup> Using rocket launchers and hand grenades, the commandos destroyed ten airplanes and damaged eight others in a raid that damaged an estimated one-fifth of the overall air force.<sup>395</sup> The EPLF undertook another similar attack on January 14th, 1986, when a unit again penetrated Asmara airport and destroyed an estimated 40 aircraft and set fire to the ammunition and fuel depots.<sup>396</sup>

Finally, the EPLF demonstrated a *capacity for low-level initiative and high-level coordination* during the Conventional stage of the conflict. Military and tactical decision-making was decentralized in the EPLF, even when fighting conventionally.<sup>397</sup> For instance, during Operation Red Star in 1982, "the EPLA's operational tactics were based on a decentralization of initiative to local forces who acted creatively in accordance with changing circumstances on the ground..."<sup>398</sup> Drawing on observation and interviews with EPLF fighters and commanders, David Pool writes

---

<sup>391</sup>Ayele 2014, 150

<sup>392</sup>Pool 2001, 152

<sup>393</sup>Gebru Tareke 2002, 476-477

<sup>394</sup>Pateman 1990, 91; Ayele 2014, 145-146.

<sup>395</sup>Firebrace and Holland 1984, 57-58

<sup>396</sup>Pateman 1990, 92; Ayele 2014, 150-151

<sup>397</sup>Ayele 2014, 144

<sup>398</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 244

that the group was a

“highly centralized and disciplined military and political organization with spheres for initiative left to cadres. Similarly, battalion, brigade, and divisional commanders had significant scope for local initiative. The EPLF’s capacity to withstand Ethiopian offensives and greater power was facilitated by the combination of a highly centralized command structure and scope for individual initiative.”<sup>399</sup>

After 1987, regional commanders were given even more initiative in planning attacks, furthering enabling low-level initiative.<sup>400</sup> Gebru Tareke notes that “even though command was centralized, unit leaders, with transistor radios in hand or tucked under their arms, enjoyed considerable freedom of action.”<sup>401</sup> Individual unit leaders were accorded authority to make decisions at the tactical level.<sup>402</sup>

The centralized discipline of the EPLF lent itself to high-level coordination, which was further facilitated by the geographic proximity of planners and officials in the Sahel between 1978-1984.<sup>403</sup> Electronic communications facilitated subsequent coordination among EPLF units, which was evidentiary in the division-level offensives that the EPLF conducted during the second half of the 1980s, particularly those on Afabet in 1988 and Massawa in 1990.<sup>404</sup>

## 4 Alternative Explanations

In Chapter 1, I outlined three potential alternative explanations for insurgent effectiveness. The first potential explanation concerned the balance of forces or capabilities, with the implication that an insurgent group with more fighters and/or

---

<sup>399</sup>Pool 2001, 150

<sup>400</sup>Pateman 1990, 93; Pool 2001, 151; Woldemikael 1991, 35

<sup>401</sup>Gebru Tareke 2009, 71

<sup>402</sup>Tesfai 2002, 118-119

<sup>403</sup>Pool 2001, 151

<sup>404</sup>In his memoirs, Almseged Tesfai tells of being with a commander of one of the EPLF’s division participating in the attack on Afabet, recounting the sophisticated coordination of the EPLF divisions and movements during the battle (Tesfai 2002, 108-110).

advanced material capabilities should be more effective than a group with relatively less of those features. The second potential alternative explanation concerned external support - the notion that more outside assistance for an insurgent group should make it relatively more effective in combat than groups with relatively less outside assistance. Finally, a potential explanation based on ideology argues that groups with politicized ideologies motivate fighters more than groups in which such ideologies are lacking, and therefore produce higher military effectiveness as a result of higher combat motivation.

## 4.1 Favorable Balance of Forces

The ELF's size steadily grew as the conflict went on, from 44 fighters in 1962 to between 11,000-13,000 at its peak in 1979.<sup>405</sup> We would therefore expect the ELF's effectiveness to nonmonotonically increase as the conflict went on, given that its size increased. Yet this was clearly not the case, as the ELF consistently failed to successfully execute the tasks in both the Guerrilla and Conventional stages.

If we juxtapose the two groups, an explanation based on the balance of forces still bears no fruit. In 1974, the ELF and EPLF were both estimated at 2,000-2,500 fighters, and the two fronts' sizes remained relatively equal through the 1978-79 timeframe of the conflict. Yet the two groups diverged in their performance during this same time period, with the EPLF outperforming the ELF in terms of task execution during the Conventional stage. The outcome of the first episode of ELF-EPLF infighting further confirms the inability of a favorable balance of forces explanation to account for the variation in effectiveness seen during the Eritrean conflict. As noted earlier in the chapter, the EPLF was able to withstand a direct onslaught by the ELF for two years, despite having at most just 500 fighters to the ELF's 2,000 combatants.

---

<sup>405</sup>Tedle 2014, 68; Pateman 1990, 88; Weldemichael 2013, 160

## 4.2 External Support

Many historical accounts on the Eritrean conflict emphasize the role that external support played in the founding of the ELF and its subsequent sustainability during the first decade of the conflict.<sup>406</sup> Indeed, the ELF had a broad base of external backers, with material support and/or training provided at one time or another by Syria, Libya, Iraq, China, Cuba, South Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and several Palestinian Fedayeen organizations.<sup>407</sup> Indeed, group's slowdown in operations/actions during 1968-69 is attributed in intelligence reports to a cutoff of Arab funding after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>408</sup> However, undertaking operations and tactical actions is distinct from actually executing them successfully, and the ELF's performance demonstrated this. For instance, external support to the ELF resumed not too long after the 1967 war ended, yet the ELF's inability to execute the tasks remained constant.

Conversely, the EPLF wholly lacked any substantial external backer for the entirety of the conflict, with the exception of the Eritrean diaspora that primarily contributed financially.<sup>409</sup> As a result, the group was forced to be self-sufficient in procuring the military resources needed to wage an insurgency. According to this alternative explanation, we would expect the EPLF to perform worse than the ELF given its lack of external support. Yet as the chapter's analysis demonstrated, the EPLF was generally successful in executing the very same tasks that the ELF overall failed to execute, despite lacking such external assistance.

---

<sup>406</sup>e.g. Markakis 1987, 111-112; Gebru Tareke 2009, 62-63; Tedle 2014, 48-70; Bell 1974, 434

<sup>407</sup>*Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume E-5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969-1972, eds. Joseph Hiltz, David C. Humphrey (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2005), Document 287; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume E-6, Documents on Africa, 1973-1976, eds. Peter Samson, Laurie Van Hook (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 91; CIA-RDP79-01194A000200120001-1; Lobban 1972, 13; Tedle 2014, 48-58

<sup>408</sup>e.g. Geremaw 1971, 277; CIA-RDP79-00927A007200020003-0

<sup>409</sup>Tedle 2014, 102; Woldemariam 2011, 215

### 4.3 Ideology

In Chapter 3, we saw that ideological differences could be a potential factor shaping group effectiveness. This was the notion that the PFLP might have outperformed Fatah because it had fighters motivated by a revolutionary ideology. In the Eritrean case, we might likewise expect the EPLF to fight more effectively than the ELF because the former's fighters were more motivated than the latter's as a result of the EPLF's Marxist-Leninist ideology. We can consider this potential explanation at two levels: (1) the strategic level - combatants will be more motivated to fight, die, and kill; and (2) the tactical level - combatants will be more motivated to do what it takes to fight effectively, and so will use the appropriate tactics.

In considering the strategic-level explanation, I begin with the premise that being motivated to fight is not necessarily equivalent to fighting effectively. For instance, a combatant might be motivated to fight, but being able to work in a unit to execute an ambush is a different matter. Or a fighter might be motivated to kill, but may have poor marksmanship as a result of inadequate training. Thus, at the strategic level, an ideology might translate into an increased willingness to fight, but, absent proper military training and discipline, can lead to disastrous consequences for an insurgent group.

If we consider the second tactical-level explanation, we find that still required is the inculcation of the particular ideology among a group's combatants. As was demonstrated in Chapter 3 with the case of the DFLP in Jordan, a group merely having a stated ideology is not the same as the specific worldview itself being successfully indoctrinated and inculcated among the group's fighters.<sup>410</sup> Such indoctrination requires robust political education in concert with appropriate military training for the possible stages of a conflict. Because the EPLF's revolutionary ideology was incul-

---

<sup>410</sup>See Parkinson 2017 on this important distinction.

cated in the context of the group's overall consistent and comprehensive recruitment practices, it is again the latter through which the effect of ideology on combat performance operates.

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter presented a third test of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, as well as its application to a conflict including both the Guerrilla and Conventional stages. Using the Eritrean War of Independence as a case study, I examined the recruitment practices and effectiveness of the ELF and EPLF during the conflict. Dividing the conflict into two periods based on its particular stage, I demonstrated how the nature of each group's recruitment practices (robust or deficient) shaped its relative ability to execute the tactical and operational tasks in each stage.

The legacy left behind by the way in which the ELF formed had consequences for its recruitment practices - a legacy from which it never recovered. The ethnicization and sectarianization of the recruitment process, varied military training, and inchoate political indoctrination all contributed to producing fighters that were ineffective in combat. As a result of such deficient recruitment practices, the ELF generally failed to execute any of the stage-specific tasks across the Guerrilla and Conventional stages. It consequently lost nearly one-fourth of its fighting force during the Guerrilla stage.

On the contrary, the EPLF's strict Marxist-Leninist principles guided the group's recruitment practices, which consisted of uniform and consistently applied selection criteria and comprehensive military training and political indoctrination. As a result, the group was generally able to execute nearly all of the tasks in the Guerrilla and Conventional stages, while also successfully transitioning between the stages.

**Table 5.7.** Recruitment Practices and Effectiveness in Eritrea

Stage	Group	Recruitment Practices	Effectiveness
<i>Guerrilla</i>	ELF	Deficient	→ Failed Task Execution
	EPLF	Robust	→ Successful Task Execution
<i>Conventional</i>	ELF	Deficient	→ Failed Task Execution
	EPLF	Robust	→ Successful Task Execution

Having confirmed the external validity of the theoretical framework in this chapter and demonstrated its ability to explain dynamics of recruitment and effectiveness in a conflict spanning the Guerrilla and Conventional stages, I conclude the dissertation in the next chapter with a discussion of the overall implications of these findings for scholarship, policy, and future research.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusion

This dissertation began with a puzzle, one most recently and prominently posed by the case of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). At the time of its genesis in April 2013, ISIS controlled no territory and had less personnel and materiel than other prominent insurgent groups in Syria, like Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), Ahrar Al-Sham (AAS), and the various Free Syria Army (FSA)-affiliated factions. Yet just seven months later in December 2013, ISIS had marginalized these other actors and established a strong foothold in both eastern Syria and northwestern Iraq. By July 2014, the group controlled virtually all of northeastern Syria and western Iraq.

This rapid rise of ISIS over its peers during 2013 and 2014 caught American policymakers off-guard,<sup>1</sup> and represented just the latest instance of a phenomenon that has remained understudied in academic scholarship on both civil wars and military effectiveness. Scholars of conflict have examined related aspects of insurgent behavior like violence, cohesion, and organizational survival, but have neglected to explain

---

<sup>1</sup>“Obama Admits U.S. Intelligence Didn’t See ISIS Coming,” *TIME.com*, September 28, 2014, <http://time.com/3442254/obama-u-s-intelligence-isis/>; Peter Baker and Eric Schmitt, “Many Missteps in Assessment of ISIS Threat,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2014 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/30/world/middleeast/obama-fault-is-shared-in-misjudging-of-isis-threat.html>.



insurgent effectiveness *during* combat. Likewise, international relations scholars have constructively studied interstate military effectiveness, but their theories and measurement frameworks are appropriately limited when it comes to assessing insurgents - the latter of which often have significantly limited military capabilities in comparison to conventional armed forces.

In this dissertation, I have sought to rectify these shortcomings of existing scholarship and practical knowledge. Motivated by both an intellectual interest and practical desire to understand the rise of ISIS and the broader question of why some insurgent groups are more combat effective than others in civil wars, I developed a framework to both measure and explain insurgent effectiveness during conflict. Using extensive fieldwork and historical case studies, I analyzed the performance of insurgent groups during the conflicts in Jordan (1968-71), Oman (1964-75), and Eritrea (1961-91). In all three cases, I demonstrated that the relative rigor of a group's recruitment practices shaped its corresponding effectiveness during combat. This was the case whether examining effectiveness across multiple insurgent groups (Jordan and Eritrea) or within a single group over time (Oman), as well as in both possible Guerrilla and Conventional stages of conflict.

In what follows, I provide a detailed summary of the theoretical argument and case study findings in the dissertation. I then discuss the contributions of the dissertation to scholarship, particularly research on civil wars, violent non-state actors, and broader military effectiveness. Next, I outline the implications of the dissertation's findings for policy. I conclude the chapter and dissertation with a discussion of directions for future research.

# 1 Summary of Argument and Findings

I have undertaken three tasks in writing this dissertation. First, I outlined a framework for conceptualizing and measuring insurgent effectiveness during conflict. Existing academic and policy studies of combat effectiveness either relied on end-of-conflict outcomes as measures of effectiveness or did not address lower levels of insurgent capabilities. In response to this gap, I developed a scheme for assessing the combat effectiveness of insurgent groups, focusing on their relative ability to successfully execute a defined set of tasks based on the relative balance of capabilities between incumbent and insurgent forces. This framework enables me to capture the full range of insurgent fighting capacities, from hit-and-run attacks to combined arms to complex maneuver operations, that exist in the historical record.

Second, to explain variation in insurgent effectiveness, I developed a theory that focuses on recruitment practices and positions the relative consistency and comprehensiveness of such practices as shaping insurgent effectiveness. I argued that insurgent groups with robust recruitment practices will ultimately fight more effectively across the possible stages of conflict than those with deficient recruitment practices. This is a result of three mechanisms that robust recruitment practices produce – uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust – that enable a group’s fighters to successfully execute the tasks that constitute effective combat in a given stage. With deficient recruitment practices, insurgent groups instead generate no or weak/varied shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust (or even mistrust) among their commanders and fighters. As a result, such groups cannot successfully execute the tasks needed to fight effectively during conflict, whether in the Guerrilla or Conventional stages.

Third, I tested the theory using a qualitative research design, while laying the basis for a future quantitative evaluation of the framework. Selected based on their values

on the independent variable (recruitment practices) as well as conflict-level features, I examined insurgent group effectiveness during the Jordanian Civil War (1968-71), the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman (1964-75), and the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-91) (see Table 6.1). Besides each exhibiting variation on the independent variable, these three cases also allowed me to fully test the theory's measurement component, as the three altogether constitute the two possible stages of insurgency.

**Table 6.1.** Summary of Case Study Findings

Case	Conflict Stage	Organization/ Period	Recruitment Practices	Effectiveness
Jordan	Guerrilla (September 1970)	Fatah	Deficient	Ineffective
		PFLP	Robust	Effective
		DFLP	Deficient	Ineffective
Oman	Guerrilla (1964-December 1975)	PFLOAG (1964-September 1968)	Deficient	Ineffective
		PFLOAG (September 1968-May 1971)	Robust	Effective
		PFLOAG (June 1971-December 1975)	Deficient	Ineffective
Eritrea	Guerrilla (September 1961-September 1974)	ELF	Deficient	Ineffective
		EPLF	Robust	Effective
	Conventional (September 1974-May 1991)	ELF	Deficient	Ineffective
		EPLF	Robust	Effective

For the case study of the Jordanian Civil War, I drew on thirteen months of extensive field and archival research. This research included 105 interviews I personally conducted with ex-combatants and archival materials gathered from several repositories in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United States. I used these original sources of information to analyze insurgent effectiveness during the most intense period of fighting in the Jordanian conflict, the Black September episode. The war, including the Black September episode, was in the Guerrilla stage for its entirety. Examining the three main insurgent groups that fought against the Jordanian regime during Black

September, I showed how each group's recruitment practices shaped its performance during the two weeks of combat.

Fatah's deficient recruitment practices, driven by the logic of competition with the other Fedayeen organizations, dictated that anyone could join the group and fight however they wanted to. These practices generated a lack of uniform shared purpose, indiscipline, and the absence of interpersonal trust among and between the group's commanders, fighters, and officials. As a result of these characteristics, Fatah failed to successfully execute any of the seven tasks during the two weeks of fighting against Jordanian forces, taking significant losses despite its relatively massive size.

Conversely, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) adopted its parent organization's recruitment procedures and adapted them to select fighters for the group. Individuals that wanted to join the PFLP had to undergo an extensive background investigation and induction process to prove their dedication to the organization and its cause. Subsequent military training was used to weed out would-be fighters, and included instruction in guerrilla warfare and consistent indoctrination in the group's Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation. As a result of these practices, the PFLP had uniform shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust. This altogether enabled the group to fight effectively and successfully execute all seven tasks during the Black September fighting episode, while minimizing its personnel losses.

Like Fatah, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) decided to take anyone that wanted to join the group out of a desire to have as many members as possible. This openness was coupled with inchoate military training and political indoctrination in the group's Marxist-Leninist ideology. Consequently, the DFLP had varied and weak shared purpose, indiscipline, and a lack of interpersonal trust among and between the group's members at different levels. These characteristics led to the group failing to execute six of the seven tasks during Black September, instead using

more of a conventional military strategy and tactics and paying dearly in terms of losses.

The second case study of the dissertation looked at the varying effectiveness over time of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), the main insurgent group that fought against the Sultanate during the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman. The rebellion was in the Guerrilla stage for its entirety, with incumbent forces increasing in size as the conflict went on. During the first period of the conflict (1964-September 1968), the group was essentially a coalition of four elements of Dhofari opposition to the Sultanate, each of which brought its own recruitment practices to the merger. Altogether, these deficient recruitment practices meant that the organization's fighters were selected, inducted, trained and socialized in different ways. As a result, the group fared poorly overall during the conflict period, failing to successfully execute nearly all of the seven tasks and taking significant personnel losses.

At the start of the second period of the conflict (September 1968 - May 1971), the PFLOAG underwent a radical transformation (pun intended) and was able to shift its recruitment practices to be more robust in nature. The Marxist-Leninist contingent of the group executed a full takeover, purging non-Marxist-Leninist elements and retraining and reorienting the group's fighters in the newly dominant ideology of scientific socialism. The PFLOAG used these principles to guide the selection of fighters, subjecting them to uniform instruction in military training and indoctrination. As a result of these recruitment practices, the group fought well during this second period of the rebellion, successfully executing nearly all seven tasks while exhibiting a marked decrease in personnel losses from the first period.

The robust recruitment practices continued for about two years until September 1970, when the PFLOAG began abducting recruits en masse as civilian opposition to

the group began to increase. This shift to deficient recruitment practices was exacerbated when the SOAF struck the PFLOAG's main training camp across the border in Hawf, South Yemen in May 1972. As a result, the group had to resort to training recruits in its areas of operation within Dhofar in a disparate manner. Consequently, the PFLOAG failed to execute any of the seven tasks successfully, while seeing its personnel losses significantly increase from the previous period.

In the third case study, I investigated the effectiveness of the two main insurgent groups, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), during Eritrea's thirty-year war for independence. The conflict began in the Guerrilla stage and continued as such until September 1974, after which the insurgents began to deploy heavy weaponry in combat and received a massive influx of recruits. Consequently, the conflict shifted to the Conventional stage.

The ELF had deficient recruitment practices from its genesis, a product of the external support and patronage system its initial leaders established at the group's founding. Subsequent ethnicization and sectarianization of the recruitment process exacerbated these practices, as did varied military training and the lack of an overall ideology. Despite repeated attempts to revamp its recruitment practices during the 1960s, the ELF was unable to alter the "lock-in" dynamics that took hold when the organization was established. As a result, the group generally failed to successfully execute any of the stage-specific tasks in either stage of the conflict.

Conversely, the EPLF had robust recruitment practices from the start. The group's strict Marxist-Leninist principles guided its selection of fighters, as well as its military training in guerrilla warfare and political indoctrination for combatants. The result of these practices was a highly combat effective insurgent organization that made the transition from waging guerrilla warfare to engaging in positional warfare against one of Africa's most powerful militaries. The group's ability to integrate heavy weaponry

was matched by its execution of sophisticated conventional warfare tactics at a level that few insurgent groups have ever reached in the post-WWII era.

In each of these three cases, I showed how a group's recruitment practices shaped its performance in combat and how the balance of forces, external support, and ideology did not. In the Jordan case, I demonstrated how recruitment practices shaped the relative operation of three mechanisms – uniformed shared purpose, discipline, and interpersonal trust – which themselves were consequential for group-level effectiveness. In the Oman and Eritrea cases, I demonstrated that this theoretical relationship again held both over time and across groups, respectively. Moreover, this relationship obtains across the two possible Guerrilla and Conventional stages of conflict. In addition, the theoretical findings hold whether a group has just 200-300 fighters and small weapons (DFLP) or over 30,000 fighters with armor, artillery, and naval forces (EPLF). In terms of conflict-level features, the theory is able to consistently measure and explain effectiveness across both urban and rural areas - the fighting in all three conflicts included significant levels of combat in both environments.

Taken altogether, the findings from these three historical case studies enable us to draw some general conclusions about the theory's broader applicability. Most immediately, it is clear that the non-tangibles of insurgent groups - specifically their organizational procedures and practices - still occupy a primary place in shaping organizational behavior. Regardless of how many fighters a group has or the degree of external support it is receiving from third party actors, what ultimately proves consequential for its resulting behavior are its own organizational characteristics.

As the examples of Fatah in Jordan and the ELF in Eritrea (to an extent) illustrate, an insurgent group may have high "scores" vis-a-vis both balance of forces and external support, but this ultimately may mean nothing if it cannot leverage such size or support to augment its existing organizational capabilities. Moreover, the cases of

the DFLP and PFLOAG indicate that for insurgent groups, merely having an ideology is not the same as effectively exploiting it to motivate combatants. Socialization of combatants matters if it is to serve the purpose of translating ideas into action. What these findings show is that recruitment matters for insurgent behavior - particularly combat effectiveness.

## 2 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

### 2.1 Contributions to Scholarship and Research

As mentioned previously, the project is the first study to systematically measure and analyze insurgent effectiveness during conflicts, adding to civil wars scholarship on insurgent behavior.<sup>2</sup> My exposition of insurgent performance also speaks to the literatures on civil war duration/termination<sup>3</sup> and negotiated settlements.<sup>4</sup> As prior scholarship has shown, insurgents may continue to fight with the aim of outcompeting their peer rivals rather than settle for peace,<sup>5</sup> while incumbent elites may be more willing to negotiate in contexts where a single insurgent group is demonstrably powerful.<sup>6</sup>

Identifying and accounting for the factors driving insurgent effectiveness provides a more complete understanding of these dynamics that affect the prospects for peace and the likelihood of negotiations. For instance, my interviews with former members of the weaker insurgent groups in the Jordanian conflict indicate that such groups initiated clashes with the Jordanian Armed Forces with the hope of overtaking the stronger factions, who themselves sought peaceful coexistence with the state as a

---

<sup>2</sup>Weinstein 2007, Staniland 2014, Cohen 2016.

<sup>3</sup>E.g. Walter 2002, Toft 2010

<sup>4</sup>Licklider 1995, Greenhill and Major 2007

<sup>5</sup>Fjelde and Nilsson 2012, Schulhofer-Wohl 2013

<sup>6</sup>Wood 2000



result of their more powerful positions. On the other side, former Jordanian government, military, and intelligence officials noted in interviews that they were unwilling to commit to peaceful coexistence with the Palestinian armed groups as a result of the divisions and lack of a cohesive negotiating partner among the armed opposition, and so chose instead to escalate the conflict, undertaking a massive counterinsurgency offensive to forcefully expel the groups from Jordan.

The dissertation's theory and findings also contribute to the literature on violent non-state actors. As these actors are considered a major threat to national security and international order, understanding how they mobilize and recruit individuals through primary evidence is essential for comprehending and preventing their violent actions. Yet scholars have primarily focused on individuals' motivations for joining non-state actors,<sup>7</sup> rather than *how* individuals join such actors. My exposition of insurgent recruitment through interviews with former recruiters and members sheds light on the means used by organizers to mobilize and socialize individuals to commit violence on behalf of the group, providing knowledge that can be used to counter such activity. This also adds to more recent scholarship examining the use of institutions and other mechanisms to shape and control combatant behavior in non-state armed organizations.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, this study of insurgent performance also contributes to the general literature on military effectiveness. Though I analyze insurgent groups in the dissertation, my analysis of recruitment, induction, training, and socialization points to a new aspect of conventional armed forces to consider when examining their military performance. This adds to recent work that emphasizes the role of organizational factors in explaining interstate military effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>E.g. Hegghammer 2006, Horgan 2009, Gill and Horgan 2013

<sup>8</sup>See: E. Wood 2009, Cohen 2010, Forney 2015, Oppenheim et al. 2015, Hoover Green 2011 and 2016.

<sup>9</sup>Talmadge 2015, Grauer 2016

## 2.2 Historical Contributions

Besides theoretical scholarship, the fieldwork I conducted on the Jordanian Civil War has allowed me to produce the first disaggregated study of the conflict existing in English or Arabic. This remedies extant accounts of the Jordanian conflict, which either examine the ten insurgent groups in a manner divorced from their participation in the war<sup>10</sup> or provide only an aggregated overview of the conflict's actors, attributing instances of violence during the conflict to the collective "Fedayeen" rather than to the individual armed groups.<sup>11</sup>

The Black September conflict is still a very sensitive topic in Jordan for reasons concerning both the demographic balance in the Kingdom and broader regional security situation. As a result, the conflict has received limited attention in prominent English and Arabic language works on Jordan's history, with some exceptions.<sup>12</sup> The general history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East more broadly also devotes little attention to the details and progression of the conflict.<sup>13</sup> Memoirs by individuals that were involved on both sides of the conflict generally go into little daily- or tactical-level detail on the nature of the conflict or its fighting and conduct.<sup>14</sup> Documentaries, such as Al-Jazeera's *Shahid 'ala Al'Asr (Witness to History)* or *Hikayat Al-Thawra (Stories of the Revolution)*, are either set at the general level or focus on elite decisionmaking.<sup>15</sup>

Through my interviews and archival research, I was able to gather novel disaggre-

---

<sup>10</sup>Khurshid 1971, Sayigh 1997

<sup>11</sup>Hindi et al. 1971, Jureidini 1975, Mukhar 1978, Bailey 1984, Lalor 1992, Shemesh 1996, Abu Odeh 1999, Al-Tal 2010.

<sup>12</sup>The latter include Mousa 1996 and Shlaim 2009.

<sup>13</sup>Exceptions include Sayigh 1997

<sup>14</sup>On the Jordanian side, see Mawaneis n.d., Rashid 2015, Abu Taleb 2015. On the Fedayeen side, see Abu Iyad 1981, Abu Daoud 1999, Yahya 2006, Ghattas 2012. On the American side, see Raab 2007 and O'Connell 2011.

<sup>15</sup>See Lieutenant General (Ret.) Nathir Rashid's interview on *Shahid 'ala Al'Asr*, which aired on October 14th, 2008. The relevant episodes of *Hikayat Al-Thawra* are "Karamah," "Hanoi Al'Arab," and "Aylul Al'Aswad,"

gated data on the war's various actors and their organization and conduct, including each group's origins, recruitment, structure, and ideology. Drawing on this multi-sourced data, I reconstructed the historical progression of the conflict and conduct of its individual armed organizations in combat. Besides its utility for the theoretical analysis in the Jordan case study, this research consequently fills significant gaps in the historical record of Jordan, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Middle East more broadly.

### 3 Policy Implications

In addition to theoretical scholarship, the dissertation's theory and findings have implications for policy. Most broadly, civilian and military policymakers have limited time and resources. Thus, their ability to ascertain which of the various insurgent factions in a civil war are more or less powerful before the conflict concludes is vital for maximizing the efficacy of conflict management and counterinsurgency responses - particularly when attempting to assess long-term military threats. Yet, as noted in the Introduction, existing academic and policy research<sup>16</sup> has failed to outline measures of insurgent combat effectiveness that enable assessments prior to a conflict's end or in ways distinct from other theorized aspects of insurgent behavior (like groups' use of violence).

The framework outlined in this dissertation helps to begin to fill this gap. It outlines measures that can be applied to enable real-time assessments of insurgent effectiveness in ongoing conflicts, even using just open-source information. Moreover, it provides a uniform scheme for assessing such effectiveness, whether insurgents are limited to small arms or have fielded heavy weaponry in combat. Besides assessment, the project's findings concerning recruitment practices and insurgent effectiveness

---

<sup>16</sup>The latter refers to unclassified research.

point to an aspect of violent non-state actors that can be targeted to effectively diminish their capacity through small-scale actions such as infiltration and/or targeted strikes on training camps and recruitment centers.

Identifying and accounting for insurgent effectiveness also has implications for the design of negotiations and transitional frameworks for ongoing civil wars, peacebuilding tasks that often fall to third-party stakeholders, as ongoing Western-led initiatives in Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan illustrate. As these efforts aim to build inclusive and secure post-conflict societies, they must effectively take into account the relative power of insurgent actors and the nature of insurgent recruitment practices during conflict. Both of these aspects of insurgent actors have been shown to shape key postwar outcomes, such as the likelihood of a negotiated settlement's implementation,<sup>17</sup> post-settlement fighting,<sup>18</sup> the relative success of ex-combatants' societal reintegration,<sup>19</sup> and the degree of electoral competition after civil war.<sup>20</sup>

By utilizing the indicators of within-conflict effectiveness and the metrics for insurgent recruitment developed in this dissertation, practitioners can both identify who the key actors are likely to be in postwar society and take account of how combatants were recruited prior to a conflict's end. Knowing which parties will likely be political contenders in postwar society and which former combatants may oppose postwar political institutions based on how they were recruited and socialized as fighters during the conflict can help stakeholders develop negotiating frameworks and DDR programs for ex-combatants accordingly to ensure lasting security and peace after civil war.

---

<sup>17</sup>Kirschner and Von Stein 2009

<sup>18</sup>Atlas and Licklider 1999

<sup>19</sup>Humphreys and Weinstein 2007, Daly 2011

<sup>20</sup>Dresden 2015

## 4 Future Research

This dissertation suggest that future research on insurgent behavior should move beyond structural and environmental factors, and continue to focus on the organizational features of insurgent groups. In addition, the findings in this dissertation provide the basis for further analyses using the framework across a broader set of cases. In this regard, the project raises several topics for future research.

To begin with, the theoretical framework outlined in this dissertation is well-suited for a broader cross-conflict quantitative test. The challenge in this context is to collect and code the necessary data on the relevant variables of interest and aspects of insurgent groups. Particularly hard to gather are cross-conflict data on the organizational characteristics and tactical-level actions by insurgent groups during combat. Nevertheless, the framework outlines clear variables of interest for which data can be collected and analyzed across and within conflicts to probe its broader applicability.

Another area of future research is the process by which insurgent groups form. Little existing work has been done on this, with Staniland (2014) and Lewis (2017) constituting notable exceptions. As noted in this dissertation, recruitment practices are often shaped by the origins of the insurgent organization, or at the very least established during its genesis. As the previous chapters illustrated, these include pre-existing political parties and non-martial clandestine organizations. For instance, in the case of Jordan, the PFLP, Saiqa, ALF, and Quwwat al-Ansar all formed from such preexisting entities. Future work can explore how these prewar bases do or do not map on to insurgent organizations.

On a related note, I wrote in Chapter 2 that this dissertation is concerned with insurgent groups that have successfully made it out of the so-called “clandestine phase” - the stage of formation that precedes the actual beginning of armed rebellion

by the group. Not all would-be insurgent groups make it out of this phase, however, as Lewis's research has shown in the case of Uganda.<sup>21</sup> Byman has also studied this in a theoretical manner, with brief applications to the cases of Hezbollah, Fatah, and Egypt's Al-Jihad group.<sup>22</sup> Yet further research is needed to understand more generally why some groups become viable and make it out of this stage across a broader set of cases.

Turning to fully formed insurgent groups, one related area for future research concerns technological innovations and their potential impact on insurgent operations and tactics. For instance, does the advent of cyber operations change the nature of insurgent kinetic operations, and, if so, how? Does an insurgent group's ability to exploit social media and other open-source intelligence lessen its need to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) prior to operations? Though these do not seemingly bear on the theoretical framework outlined in this dissertation, these technological changes and innovations can impact the degree of effort needed to execute the tactical and operational tactics in the possible stages of conflict, and therefore require future study.

Finally, we might ask about the role of recruitment practices in the effectiveness of other organizations similar to insurgent groups, like state militaries, paramilitaries,<sup>23</sup> criminal organizations, and even security organizations like the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). While these entities have different standards and criteria for what constitutes effectiveness, their main organizational activities are centered around the production of violence and/or security. To what extent do the selection and incorporation procedures for combatants/employees used by these organizations and/or their constitutive units shape corresponding effectiveness? Future research

---

<sup>21</sup>Lewis 2017

<sup>22</sup>Byman 2007

<sup>23</sup>See Forney 2015 for an excellent exposition of how recruitment shapes the relative cohesion of militias in Sierra Leone.

should test the theory's focus on recruitment practices in contexts outside those of insurgent organizations.

# Appendix A

## Measurement and Coding

### 1 Insurgent Effectiveness (DV)

#### 1.1 Stages of Insurgency

I outline here the measurement and coding used to classify insurgencies into either the Guerrilla or Conventional stages, and draw in part on the scheme used in Lockyer 2010/2011. As stated in Chapter 2, I distinguish these two stages based on the relative balance of capabilities among the warring sides (incumbent and insurgents). “Capabilities” can refer to two aspects of a belligerent: (1) its weaponry or military technology and (2) its size in terms of full-time fighters.

The first aspect captures the means possessed by a belligerent through which harm and destruction are inflicted on adversaries in combat and the nature in which that is done.<sup>1</sup> This first indicator also captures the main factor which can alter the capacity of a warring side (especially insurgents) to undertake more aggressive and direct operations vis-a-vis adversaries (i.e. its actual “physical ability,” as Lockyer (2010) notes, to pursue a conventional strategy vis-a-vis its opponents). Military technology is often disaggregated by categories that refer to weapon size and operation, such as small arms (e.g. pistols, rifles) or light weapons (e.g. heavy machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, RPGs, recoilless rifles) versus heavy/large weapons that are towed (e.g. artillery, Howitzers) and armor (e.g. tanks, IFVs, APCs).<sup>2</sup> Insurgents usually only have small arms and/or light weapons (which in part dictates the pursuit of guerrilla warfare strategy and tactics), and lack any heavier weapons or armor. In a context where insurgent actors have heavier weapons such as armor or artillery, I consider whether these have been deployed in combat by insurgents. This information can be drawn

---

<sup>1</sup>I note that Kalyvas and Balcells (2010) rely exclusively on this aspect in coding the particular “technology of rebellion” in a given conflict. See their Appendix.

<sup>2</sup>Small Arms Survey, Department of the Army 2016



from accounts of combat, declassified intelligence reports based on reconnaissance, memoirs, and media reporting.

If insurgents do not have heavy weaponry or possess such weaponry but have not deployed it in combat, I then consider the balance of personnel between insurgents and incumbent forces. This measure has been used in various studies as an indicator of military capabilities in both state and non-state contexts.<sup>3</sup> For this second aspect, I examine the size of the belligerents based on estimates taken from primary and secondary sources. Information about force size for insurgent groups is notoriously suspect, but drawing size estimates from multiple independent sources can generate, in the worst case scenario, at least a plausible range of a group's overall size. In addition, group size is common to all belligerents and can be easily compared across actors.

Keeping these two aspects in mind, I classify a conflict into either the Guerrilla or Conventional stage using the following scheme. I first determine whether the insurgents deployed armor or artillery in combat. If yes, I classify the conflict as being in the Conventional stage. If no (or if the insurgents only have artillery and no armor), I next examine the balance of forces on the insurgent and government sides. If the numerical capabilities of the insurgent side (whether a single group or multiple groups collectively) are less than 2/3 those of the incumbent side, I classify the conflict as being in the Guerrilla stage. This "2/3" threshold is the point at which the impact of numbers begins to be felt in individual operations and engagements - in this situation, insurgents are no longer as physically constrained in force size vis-a-vis the government, and so can begin to concentrate forces to engage in direct confrontations.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Guerrilla Stage

### 1.2.1 Task Execution

In Section 2 of Chapter 2, I outlined the following seven questions to be used as qualitative indicators of effectiveness in the Guerrilla stage:

- Can fighters operate their weapons? Is marksmanship good?
- Do fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment when fighting?
- Do fighters make use of dispersion when fighting?
- Can the unit successfully execute an ambush?
- Do fighters avoid undertaking concentrated frontal assaults?
- Do fighters withdraw from an engagement when the local balance of forces becomes unfavorable (whether in an offensive or defensive context)?

---

<sup>3</sup>E.g. Mearsheimer 2001, Valentino et al. 2004, Cunningham et al. 2009, Christia 2012, Lockyer 2010 and 2011

<sup>4</sup>Whether such confrontations without armor are a smart decision is another matter - I leave discussion of this for the following sections.

- Does the unit demonstrate the capacity for low-level initiative?

In their evaluation of Biddle's theoretical framework, Grauer and Horowitz (2012) code a given military's force employment vis-a-vis the modern system based on whether it adheres to the tenets of that system as opposed to using a more concentrated, frontal assault-based approach relying on centralized command. In the same vein, I evaluate a given insurgent group's successful execution of these tasks based on the degree to which it exhibits affirmative practices for each task (and therefore fights effectively as a guerrilla force) or pursues more conventional tactics, such as frontal assaults and the use of fixed defenses, etc. This indeed simplifies reality, as insurgent groups may (and do) use a mix of irregular and conventional tactics when fighting. However, I argue that the nature of the Guerrilla stage specifically prescribes the use of guerrilla tactics as a result of the imbalance of capabilities between incumbent and insurgent forces, and so it is fair to assess a group on this basis when analyzing insurgent performance in this particular stage of a conflict.

I use the following coding scheme to assess the degree to which a given group was effective during a specific period of the conflict.<sup>5</sup> As evidence, I rely on information on the nature of a group's conduct in combat gleaned from conflict accounts, interviews, primary and secondary historical sources, and media sources to evaluate each of the seven questions:

1. To evaluate whether a unit's fighters could successfully operate their weapons and gauge marksmanship, I focus on descriptions of relative firepower accuracy and discipline in using ammunition and weaponry ranges. Specifically, I consider all weapons that a group used during the given time period, and evaluate fighters' abilities to operate the weapons and discipline in terms of ammunition usage. I then make an assessment based on such descriptions and code Yes or No according to the general trend exhibited by the group based on all available and recorded combat engagements and sources of information.
2. To evaluate whether fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment, I use primary and secondary sources to determine whether a unit was on offense or defense in an engagement (i.e. attacking or defending). If on offense, I determine whether a unit's combatants made intentional use of terrain for cover and concealment to protect against adversary fire when undertaking the attack. If they did, I code Yes; if not, I code No. The most extreme converse would be a direct frontal assault on an adversary's position. If on defense, I determine whether a unit established defensive positions in a way that sought to use cover and concealment to protect their positions against attacking adversarial fire. If

---

<sup>5</sup>The following coding scheme is original, but some parts are adapted from the schemes used in Talmadge 2015 and Grauer and Horowitz 2012. To ensure that I reduce potential bias stemming from relying on historical sources that may have omitted information about a given group's conduct in combat, I require that at least three different independent sources cover two separate geographic areas of operations when assessing a group's performance on each task during a given period of a conflict.

they did, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the use of cover and concealment during a given time period of the conflict, I code Mixed.

3. To evaluate whether a unit could successfully use dispersion when fighting, I examine their formations to determine whether they are deployed in a way that aims to diminish the adversary's capability to "destroy friendly formations through mass fires and maintain such formations" during the engagement.<sup>6</sup> This is indicated by whether or not units are dispersed or concentrated. I code Yes if the former is the case. If units bunch up under fire or no attempt is made to use dispersion, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the use of dispersion by a group during a given time period of the conflict, I code as Mixed.
4. To evaluate whether a unit could successfully execute an ambush, I examine all observed engagements in which the said group participated and look for evidence that it indeed could do so. In this particular example, I consider a successful ambush one in which adversary combatants are killed by the group's fire and/or are forced to withdraw while the group itself suffers no losses, in which case I code Yes; if not, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the relative success of ambushes, I code Mixed.
5. To evaluate whether fighters avoid undertaking concentrated frontal assaults, I examine all engagements participated in by a given group based on available conflict accounts and sources. If any included concentrated frontal assaults, I code No. If not, I code Yes.
6. To evaluate whether fighters dispersed and withdrew when the local balance of forces became unfavorable, I examine all engagements participated in by a given unit and determine whether there were any in which the local balance of forces favored the adversary in terms of manpower and weaponry. In such engagements, if the unit dispersed and withdrew from such fights, I code Yes. If the unit did not withdraw, I code No.
7. To evaluate whether a unit had the demonstrated capacity for low-level initiative, I determine whether military and tactical decision-making was successfully decentralized without actions that harmed the group's overall unity of effort or progress towards its strategic goal. This first entails determining whether the authority for such decision-making rested with group leadership and/or regional leadership, or at the level of the smallest unit. If with the former, I code No. If with the latter, I determine whether field commanders undertook any actions that significantly harmed the group's overall unity of effort, such as fighting with another unit or breaking off from the group. If command was decentralized and such instances did not occur, I code Yes. If command was decentralized and such instances did occur, I code No.

In this Guerrilla stage, to be considered effective, a unit must have the highest affirmative responses on all seven indicators. Otherwise, units are considered as ineffect-

---

<sup>6</sup>Grauer and Horowitz 2012, Appendix.

fective. In practice, units and groups that typically fail to use cover and concealment and dispersion and execute ambushes likely also fail to avoid concentrated frontal assaults and withdraw when faced with an unfavorable balance of forces. Considering effectiveness as somewhat of a dichotomy is therefore empirically justified when evaluating effectiveness in the Guerrilla stage.

### **1.2.2 Losses Inflicted/Incurred**

In addition to relative task execution, I wrote in Section 2 that two additional measures could be used to confirm a given group's effectiveness in combat: (1) the number of casualties inflicted on incumbent forces by a given insurgent group and (2) the number of casualties/defections/captures incurred by a given insurgent group. Both measures have precedent from similar indicators used in the military effectiveness literature vis-a-vis state armed forces (e.g. Biddle 1996, Biddle and Long 2004, Lyall n.d.). Data on both measures is not easy to come by in the context of civil wars, particularly for the second measure (Lacina and Gleditsch 2005, Lacina 2006). Basic data on the number of casualties inflicted by particular armed actors is relatively more challenging to find, as it requires detailed knowledge on the identity of participants in individual engagements during civil war. As a result, I employ casualties incurred when possible and position it as a secondary indicator of effectiveness in the Guerrilla stage.

For data, I draw on the records of insurgent groups themselves (many of whom have a tradition of recording the deaths of individual fighters) and from other primary and secondary sources such as newspaper articles and firsthand accounts of the conflict. Using this measure requires providing the context of fighter deaths and demonstrating that they were indeed the result of fighting and not, for example, the outcome of training. In addition, using this measure requires that one demonstrate that all groups under study participated relatively equally in the fighting and that incumbent forces did not distinguish among the groups in their operations. I gather such information from primary and secondary sources, particularly through interviews with former combatants and accounts of conflicts.

In terms of analysis, I examine this measure over the course of fixed temporal engagements, such as a clearly delineated counterinsurgency offensive. To make casualties incurred comparable both across and within groups over time, the ratio of casualties incurred over estimated force size is used. For example, in the Jordanian case, I examine the performance of the three main Fedayeen groups during the Black September fighting episode of the civil war, which occurred from September 17th - October 1st, 1970. In assessing each group's performance, I look at the ratio of individual group casualties incurred over group size estimates from the start of the fighting episode.

## 1.3 Conventional Stage

### 1.3.1 Task Execution

In Section 2 of Chapter 2, I outlined the following seven questions to be used as qualitative indicators of effectiveness in the Conventional stage:

- Can fighters operate their weapons? Is marksmanship good?
- Do fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment when fighting?
- Do fighters make use of dispersion when fighting?
- Can the unit successfully execute basic conventional warfare tactics such as an ambush, concentrated frontal assault, static defense, and orderly retreat?
- Can the group conduct combined arms operations that integrate at least two types?
- On defense, can the unit successfully execute complex tactics such as a defense in depth, fighting withdrawal, or counterattack?
- On offense, can the unit successfully use complex tactics such as maneuver, fire and movement, and small-unit special forces operations?
- Does the unit demonstrate the capacity for low-level initiative and high-level coordination across units?

I evaluate a given insurgent group's successful execution of these tasks based on the degree to which it exhibits affirmative practices for each task according to standard operating procedures of conventional infantry fighting forces. I draw on several field manuals published by the United States Army to determine what constitutes successful execution of the various tasks, as well as the work of Caitlin Talmadge (2011, 2015). I consider the relative complexity of actions and their execution by an insurgent unit, and the following scheme reflects this. For instance, drawing directly on Talmadge 2015, I evaluate a unit's ability to conduct basic elements of offense and defense as exemplified in concentrated frontal assaults, static defenses, and orderly retreats.<sup>7</sup> These actions are the most basic elements of conventional offensive and defensive tactics.

I use the following coding scheme to assess the degree to which a given group was effective during a specific period of the conflict in the Conventional stage.<sup>8</sup> As evidence, I rely on information on the nature of a group's conduct in combat gleaned from conflict accounts, interviews, primary and secondary historical sources, and media sources to evaluate each of the eight questions:

1. To evaluate whether a unit's fighters could successfully operate their weapons and gauge their marksmanship, I focus on descriptions of relative firepower ac-

---

<sup>7</sup>Talmadge 2015, 34

<sup>8</sup>To ensure that I reduce potential bias stemming from relying on historical sources that may have omitted information about a given group's conduct in combat, I require at least three different independent sources covering at least two separate geographic areas for this information when making a general decision about a group's execution of a task in the Conventional stage.

curacy and discipline in using ammunition and weaponry ranges. Specifically, I consider all weapons that a group used during the given time period, and evaluate fighters' abilities to operate the weapons and discipline in terms of ammunition usage. I then make an assessment based on such descriptions and code Yes, No, or Mixed according to the general trend exhibited by the group based on all available and recorded combat engagements and sources of information.

2. To evaluate whether fighters make use of terrain for cover and concealment, I use primary and secondary sources to determine whether a unit was on offense or defense in engagements (i.e. attacking or defending). If on offense, I determine whether a unit's combatants made intentional use of terrain for cover and concealment to protect against adversary fire when undertaking the attack. If they did, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If on defense, I determine whether a unit established defensive positions in a way that sought to use cover and concealment to protect their positions against attacking adversarial fire. If they did, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the use of cover and concealment during a given time period of the conflict, I code as Mixed.
3. To evaluate whether a unit could successfully use dispersion when fighting, I examine their formations to determine whether they are deployed in a way that aims to diminish the adversary's capability to "destroy friendly formations through mass fires and maintain such formations" during the engagement.<sup>9</sup> This is indicated by whether or not units are dispersed or concentrated. I code Yes if the former is the case. If units bunch up under fire or no attempt is made to use dispersion, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the use of dispersion by a group during a given time period of the conflict, I code as Mixed.
4. To evaluate whether a unit could successfully execute basic conventional tactics such as ambushes, concentrated frontal assaults, static defenses, and orderly retreats, I examine the historical record of engagements for the given time period of analysis in the conflict and assess the general degree to which a participating unit was able to successfully execute these three tactical actions.
  - To evaluate whether a unit could successfully execute an ambush, I examine all observed engagements in which the said group participated and look for evidence that it indeed could do so. In this particular example, I consider a successful ambush one in which adversary combatants are killed by the group's fire and/or are forced to withdraw while the group itself suffers no losses, in which case I code Yes; if not, I code No. If the record indicates variation in the relative success of ambushes, I code Mixed.
  - I consider a successful concentrated frontal assault one in which the unit has a local favorable balance of forces, establishes an assault position,<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Grauer and Horowitz 2012, Appendix.

<sup>10</sup>An "assault position" is a "covered and concealed position short of the objective from which final preparations are made to assault the objective" (FM 3-90, 3-4).

advances on an adversary's fixed position in concentrated formations with the aim of overrunning the latter's position, and captures it.<sup>11</sup> If the attacking unit captures the position, I code Yes; if the unit fails to capture the position, I code No. If the record exhibits variation, I code Mixed.

- For a static defense, I determine whether a unit prepared fixed firepower positions in a given area, is able to successfully defend the position against adversary attempts to capture it, and has designated forces for reinforcements.<sup>12</sup> Depending on the unit's record during the time period of study, I code Yes, No, or Mixed.
  - For an orderly retreat, I consider whether a unit is able to successfully withdraw its fighters from an area of engagement without defections or insubordination. Depending on the unit's record during the time period of study in executing orderly retreats, I code Yes, No, or Mixed.
5. To evaluate whether a unit could successfully conduct combined arms operations integrating at least two types (e.g. infantry, artillery, armor, airpower), I determine whether such types were integrated during combat by the group's units in the set of engagements during the period of study. Evidence of this would include close coordination of infantry and armored forces in moving to take territory; the use of ground forces to halt the advance of enemy forces which could then be targeted using airpower; and/or the use of armor and/or artillery to suppress enemy fire so that friendly infantry can advance. If the types were integrated along the lines of these examples, I code Yes; if not or if conducted very poorly according to historical accounts, I code No. If success varied, I code Mixed.
  6. To evaluate whether a unit could employ complex defensive tactics, I examine the record of engagements and assess the degree to which a unit successfully used more complex defensive actions like a defense in depth, counterattack, and fighting withdrawal. For each of the three tactical actions that constitute complex defensive operations, I examine all engagements during the time period of study.
    - For a defense in depth, I examine the setup of the unit's defenses in the context of engagements and determine whether there were several spaced layers of fighters deployed throughout the area being defended that enable multiple engagement areas; trenches dug (if appropriate to the terrain) and/or other forms of cover and concealment used in ways that provide the defending unit the ability to maneuver and engage in counterattacks; and direct and indirect fire positions. If these elements are present and a unit generally is able to successfully defend areas using this tactic, I code Yes. If generally not and/or if simpler single line defenses are used instead, I code No. If the record is varied, I code Mixed.

---

<sup>11</sup>See FM 3-90, 3-30

<sup>12</sup>FM 3-90, Chapter 9

- For a counterattack, I determine whether there was a dedicated counter-attack force prior to the engagement, and subsequently if the said reserve forces were employed in an attack undertaken *after* the adversary begins their attack.<sup>13</sup> In terms of a successful counterattack, I assess whether the action was able to halt the progress of the attacking enemy; isolate, inflict losses and/or destroy the attacking enemy forces; and/or regain territory previously lost in the attack. If the preparatory actions were taken and the counterattack resulted in at least one of these three outcomes, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If there was variation across the engagements, I code Mixed.
  - For a fighting withdrawal, I consider whether a unit's forces have a rear-guard defensive component and a detachment left in contact<sup>14</sup>; the unit attempts to withdraw only when adversary view of the attempt is non-existent or minimal; the use of firepower during the withdrawal (particularly the advantageous use of heavy forces such as armor or mechanized infantry, as well as artillery and mortar fire); and the prepared use of delay obstacles and techniques (such as burning bridges, barriers/roadblocks, and ambushes). I also consider the degree of casualties incurred in the context of the withdrawal, the extent of friendly defections, and the successful movement of combat power away from the enemy (i.e. not leaving weaponry behind). If these elements of the withdrawal are present and casualties, defections, and materiel left behind are zero or reasonably small, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If the record indicates variation, such as some instances of withdrawals that lead to high levels of casualties and others that do not, I code Mixed.
7. To evaluate whether a unit could employ complex offensive tactics, I examine the record of assessments and assess the degree to which a unit used maneuver, fire and movement, and small-unit special operations forces.
- Maneuver is the primary essential element of modern conventional warfare,<sup>15</sup> and is more complex than attritional actions like a concentrated frontal assault. In this regard, I consider accounts of its movement towards and around areas of engagement, rather than attempting to confront enemy forces head-on in concentrated formations. Key forms of maneuver include envelopments, turning movements, infiltrations, penetration, flank attacks, breakthrough and exploitation actions, and encirclements.<sup>16</sup> To

---

<sup>13</sup>This is drawn from the discussion of counterattacks in FM 3-90, 5-15.

<sup>14</sup>This is "an element left in contact as part of the previously designated (usually rear) security force while the main body conducts its withdrawal" - it is meant to deceive the adversary into believing that the force is still in place (FM 3-90, 11-72).

<sup>15</sup>See Biddle 2004, Leonhard 1991

<sup>16</sup>FM 3-90, 3-25; FM 3-90-1, Chapter 1; Jordan et al. 2016; Biddle 2004. Frontal attacks are also considered a form of maneuver, but to be most effective should be used in conjunction with other forms of maneuver (FM 3-90-1, 1-84).



assess whether a unit can maneuver, I look for evidence concerning the degree to which it uses the aforementioned forms of maneuver versus concentrated attritional formations when operating in combat. If the former, I code Yes; if the latter, I code No; if varied, I code Mixed.

- For fire and movement, I first determine whether a unit has dedicated sub-units for both supporting fire and movement and is able to use it to gain ground and/or an objective. If these criteria are met with minimal casualties, I code Yes; if not and/or if there are friendly casualties, I code No. If the general record indicates variation, I code Mixed.
  - For small-unit special operations forces, I consider whether a unit attempts to conduct special forces operations,<sup>17</sup> such as direct action or special reconnaissance missions, and the relative success of such operations (given by whether the objective was achieved without casualties). If such missions were undertaken successfully, I code Yes; if not, I code No. If varied, I code Mixed.
8. To evaluate whether a unit had the demonstrated capacity for both low-level initiative and high-level coordination, I first determine whether military and tactical decision-making was successfully decentralized without actions that harmed the group's overall unity of effort or progress towards its strategic goal, as well as the degree of coordination across high-level units (e.g. those beyond a battalion). To address the first aspect, I determine whether the authority for military decision-making rested with group leadership and/or regional leadership, or at the level of smaller units. If with the former, I code No. If with the latter, I determine whether field commanders undertook any actions that significantly harmed the group's overall unity of effort, such as fighting with another unit or breaking off from the group. If command was decentralized and such instances did not occur, I code Yes. If command was decentralized and such instances did occur, I code No. For high-level coordination, I consider whether a plan existed at higher levels of units (such as divisions or corps) and the degree to which that was executed with low-level initiative in responding to developments during a given engagement. If this was affirmative and to a high degree, I code Yes; if not, I code No. For a positive coding on this task, a unit must receive Yes for both sub-tasks.

In the Conventional stage, to be considered *effective*, a unit and/or group must have the highest affirmative responses on all seven indicators. Units or groups that are able to operate their weaponry and have good marksmanship, use cover and concealment and dispersion, execute basic conventional tactics, and have capacity for low-level initiative are considered *adequate*. Those units and groups that are unable to do these more basic elements of conventional warfare are considered *ineffective*. I use this multi-tier classification scheme for the Conventional stage because the task

---

<sup>17</sup>Drawn from FM 3-05

space magnitude is much wider for armed forces than in the Guerrilla stage. Using a dichotomous scheme would lead to a loss of information and oversimplify general empirical variations exhibited by insurgent forces that participate in the Conventional stage.

## 2 Insurgent Recruitment Practices (IV)

### 2.1 Mobilizing Resources

To measure the independent variable (insurgent recruitment practices), I begin by coding mobilizing resources. Mobilizing resources refer to resources or pre-existing structures that can be used to construct and maintain an insurgent organization (see Weinstein 2007, Lewis 2012, Staniland 2014). More specifically, these are the particular resources used as the basis of building a group's membership during its formative period as an insurgent organization. Mobilizing resources include pecuniary incentives appeals based on shared social features (such as ethnic affinity or ideological principles). Besides resources, would-be insurgent leaders can also use pre-war structures (such as political parties or clandestine organizations) to serve as the mobilizing basis for building an insurgent group.<sup>18</sup> As stated in Section 2.3, I argue that a group's particular mobilizing resources shapes its recruitment strategy. To code for the relative intensity of particular mobilizing resources, I examine the formative period of an insurgent group, focusing on the initial appeals and actions undertaken by leaders to organize the group and the tactics used to attract the first set of individuals outside its leadership.

The relevant indicators for coding mobilizing resources are provided in Table A.1. I rely on primary and secondary sources to code this information, including internal group documents, interviews with group members, group publications and propaganda; secondary sources that contain descriptive information on these aspects of the group from either firsthand research and/or media/policy reports; and declassified diplomatic and intelligence documents. With each of the three types of mobilizing resources, I rely on the existence of the particular mobilizing resource and its role in appealing to the first set of recruits to the group. By "first set of recruits," I mean the individuals that form the initial influx of rank-and-file fighters into the group, or the first cohort of individuals outside the leadership that join the group.<sup>19</sup> Though it

---

<sup>18</sup>Such structures may themselves have been built using particular mobilizing resources, but what is more important in this context are the existing prewar structures themselves.

<sup>19</sup>Though this verges on having the coding for mobilizing resources overlap with coding for recruitment strategies, I emphasize that my focus in the context of mobilizing resources is only on the appeals made to initial recruits, and not on the criteria and procedures that the groups seek to use based on internal instructions provided to recruiters (e.g. the focus of recruitment strategies, as discussed next). In this way, there still remains an empirical distinction between what I focus on in coding mobilizing resources versus what I focus on in coding recruitment strategies.

is theoretically possible for groups as a whole to appeal to would-be fighters based on all three types of mobilizing resources at the same time, this is empirically very rare among nascent insurgent organizations (Staniland 2014).

I code an insurgent group's mobilizing resource as *pecuniary* if (1) the group has financial support from a third-party government, diaspora population, or private financiers at the time of its formation and (2) these resources are used to make the first set of appeals to recruits. For example, if a group makes initial appeals through the offer of salaries to would-be fighters, I would code the group's mobilizing resource as pecuniary. These two criteria are usually well-documented in even secondary sources on conflicts, as they are often a key point of analytical focus for both scholars and others (e.g. policymakers, intelligence analysts, counterinsurgents) alike.

I code an insurgent group's mobilizing resource as *shared social features* if there is (1) evidence of a shared ideological platform or ethnic affinity and (2) this platform provides the basis for appeals to the first set of recruits. For example, if a group forms around a shared ethnic affiliation and only selects individuals with natural membership in that category, I would code the group's mobilizing resource as shared social features. Evidence for these two criterion can be found in internal group documents, minutes of group conferences/meetings, interviews with group leadership and combatants (whether firsthand or from existing works), and secondary studies of conflicts.

I code an insurgent group's mobilizing resource as *prewar structures* if they rely on an existing pre-war structure, such as a political party or non-martial clandestine organization, to serve as the basis for staffing the group with initial fighters. Evidence of members of these structures automatically becoming fighters in the group and/or the use of preexisting recruitment criteria indicate the use of this type of mobilizing resource to build the insurgent group. For example, if a preexisting political party is transformed into an insurgent organization and all of its civilian members become would-be fighters in the group and subsequent members are recruited on the basis of the party's original membership criteria, I would code the group's mobilizing resource as prewar structures. Information on this aspect of insurgent groups and their relation to pre-war structures is also often found in the same types of conflict-specific works just discussed.

**Table A.1.** Coding Types of Mobilizing Resources

*Pecuniary:*

- Presence of financial support from a third-party government/diaspora/private financiers or natural resource extraction at the time of group formation
- Appeals to initial recruits based on material incentives

*Shared Social Features:*

- Existence of a shared ideological platform among group leadership
- Appeals to initial recruits based on ideological principles

*Prewar Structures:*

- Reliance on existing pre-war structures, such as political party or non-martial clandestine organization
- Appeals to initial recruits based on recruitment tactics used for prewar structure

## 2.2 Insurgent Recruitment Strategies

To code insurgent recruitment strategies, I rely on the questions listed in Table A.2. As the questions in the table indicate, I seek to understand the specific *desired* criteria for membership in the group and the nature of the induction, training, and socialization procedures (if any) proposed by organizers to be used in incorporating members as full-fledged fighters. In addition to these aspects of the recruitment strategy, I also seek to determine why particular criteria and/or incorporation procedures were (or were not) present.<sup>20</sup> As with the coding of mobilizing resources, I evaluate these questions using primary and secondary sources, in particular focusing on the instructions for selection and incorporation provided to recruiters.

**Table A.2.** Coding Insurgent Recruitment Strategies

*Selection Criteria:*

- Did the group have instructions for specific selection criteria for recruits? If so, what were they?
- What was the basis of these criteria?

*Incorporation Procedures:*

- Did the group have induction/training/socialization procedures?
- What were the components of these procedures supposed to entail?
- What was the basis of these criteria?

## 2.3 Insurgent Recruitment Practices

To measure and code insurgent recruitment practices, I rely on the questions listed in Table A.3. The aim here is to understand the degree to which recruitment strate-

---

<sup>20</sup>This line of inquiry allows me to evaluate the theoretical link between particular mobilizing resource and recruitment strategies.

gies were successfully implemented in practice, and if not, the reasons for the failure and the actual nature of recruitment practices. To recall, my theory argues that recruitment strategies interact with wartime circumstances to shape actual recruitment practices, and that wartime circumstances can and often do disrupt insurgent recruitment in ways unintended by the group. As such, the questions inquire about the relative consistency and comprehensiveness of recruitment strategies *as implemented in practice*, as well as the reasons for any variation in these two dimensions.

I first seek to determine the specific criteria and procedures used in selecting and incorporating members into the group. The focus here is on the exact membership criteria recruits employed by recruiters to choose from among the pool of potential fighters. I then seek to determine to whether procedures like induction processes or trial periods were used before individuals could become full-fledged members. Finally, I assess the comprehensiveness of any military training and/or indoctrination/education recruits received. To the extent that any of these incorporation procedures are present, I focus on the relative consistency with which they were implemented within the group's areas of operation.

**Table A.3.** Coding Insurgent Recruitment Practices

<p><i>Selection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How were individuals selected as fighters in the group's areas of operation?</li> <li>-Did this selection process differ from the criteria specified by the group's overall recruitment strategy? If so, how and why?</li> <li>-Was this selection criteria/process implemented consistently across the group? Did it change at all over the course of the conflict?</li> </ul> <p><i>Trial Period/Induction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Was there a trial or induction period before individuals could become members/fighters?</li> <li>-If any, what did it consist of and how long was it?</li> <li>-Was there investigation of would-be fighters?</li> </ul> <p><i>Military Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Was military training provided/required? How long was it?</li> <li>-What were the components of military training? (e.g. overall operational aims, tactics to be used)</li> </ul> <p><i>Indoctrination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Was political indoctrination provided to would-be fighters? If so, was it required?</li> <li>-What were the components of indoctrination? Was it a formal program? Did they include instruction in the reason for fighting, the aims of the group, its history, and/or the ideological principles relied on by the group?</li> <li>-Was there a specific widely used/distributed set of materials for indoctrination?</li> </ul> <p><i>Incorporation Procedures (in general)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Were the incorporation procedures consistent across the group? Did they change at all over the course of the conflict?</li> <li>-Did the incorporation procedures differ from the criteria specified by the group's overall recruitment strategy? If so, how and why?</li> </ul>
--

I evaluate these questions using primary and secondary sources, in particular focusing on the reality of recruitment as it played out before (if applicable) and during a given conflict. This information on recruitment practices should be relatively easier to obtain than information on recruitment strategies, as it is based on how the insurgent group existed and operated in reality rather than as desired by the group's leaders and organizers.

I code an insurgent group as having robust recruitment practices if the following two conditions are met: (1) recruits are chosen according to a set of specified, consistently used selection criteria and undergo the same incorporation procedures, regardless of where or by whom they are initially recruited and (2) such incorporation procedures include both investigation of and a trial/induction period for would-be fighters; formal military training in guerrilla warfare aims and tactics; and political indoctrination in the group's overall aims.

If recruits are selected on varying criteria, whether as a result of where or by whom they are recruited or as a result of the group's recruitment strategy lacking any specific selection criteria, I code recruitment practices as deficient. If recruits are selected on the same criteria yet are subject to varying incorporation procedures (such as some recruits undergoing indoctrination and others not), I code recruitment practices as deficient. If recruits are selected on the same criteria yet undergo no incorporation procedures, I code recruitment practices as deficient.

## **3 Mechanisms**

### **3.1 Uniform Shared Purpose**

To code for uniform shared purpose, I focus on the nature of military training and indoctrination carried out by insurgent groups vis-a-vis recruits. I first look back to how consistent and comprehensive military training and political indoctrination are for recruits. To confirm that the military and non-military training does indeed motivate combatants in the way theorized, I then rely on firsthand testimonies from combatants on their experience with such training and its relationship to any feelings of shared purpose they had with fellow fighters and their degree of understanding of for what and why they fight. This information will be drawn from my own interviews with combatants or secondary works or reports that use interviews covering the topic of fighter training and indoctrination. I code an insurgent group as having successfully motivated its combatants if two conditions are met: (1) recruits undergo the same training and political education/indoctrination concerning the aims of the insurgent group and its ideological principles; and (2) recruits have an expressed sense of shared purpose and an understanding of for what and why they are fighting as a result of such training.

## 3.2 Discipline

To code an insurgent group's degree of discipline, I rely on indicators concerning both the relative existence and enforcement of rules regulating combatant behavior. I first examine whether there was an existing code of conduct to regulate members of a given insurgent group. The existence of such codes can be gleaned from group publications, interviews with multiple members, declassified intelligence documents on the group, and secondary works containing primary sources. Besides the existence of codes of conduct, I also seek to determine if recruits were instructed in the rules in the code of conduct and if they were enforced in practice. For this determination, I assess what the most important rules in the group were, what (if any) were the primary responses/punishments to such violations, and a general assessment of how often such major violations were punished.

To examine these two aspects of conduct, I use information on combatant behavior both on an individual level and towards civilian populations collected through interviews with group members and non-combatants/observers or taken from conflict-specific reports (e.g. NGOs and IOs). I then juxtapose the rules and information on behavior to determine whether violations of the most important rules were sanctioned. I focus on violations of the most important rules rather than violations of all rules for reasons of limited data availability. This more narrow focus still allows me to gauge the relative degree of discipline in a given insurgent group: if commanders do not punish violations of the most important rules in the code of conduct, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the group lacks the ability to maintain overall fighter discipline. Based on this information, I code an insurgent group as successfully maintaining discipline if three conditions are met: (1) a clear code of conduct existed; (2) fighters received instruction in the said code of conduct; and (3) punishments for violating the most important rules of the code of conduct were consistently meted out.

## 3.3 Interpersonal Trust

To code the relative presence of interpersonal trust generated by the insurgent group itself, I look in part at the degree of comprehensiveness of training, indoctrination, and conduct procedures within the organization. In addition, I examine whether individuals in a given unit knew each other personally (at least by name), as well as drawing on interviews with individuals to gauge their sense of interpersonal trust, loyalty, and competence vis-a-vis others in the group.

## Appendix B

### Group-Specific Casualties in Jordan



# 1 PFLP

No.	Name	Date of Death	Location of Death
1	Farouq Qandil	9/17/70	AlHashemi Camp
2	Azzat AlBaghdadi	9/17/70	Amman
3	Abdelreda Shaker	9/17/70	Amman
4	Jamal Ahmad	9/17/70	Amman
5	Mahmoud Shawr	9/17/70	Hussein Camp
6	Ragheb Abdulrahman	9/17/70	Hussein Camp
7	Azzat AlIodawi	9/17/70	Jebel Hussein
8	Majid AlHimuni	9/17/70	Jebel Joufa
9	Salim AlToutnaji	9/17/70	Jebel Joufa
10	Ismail Tabaja	9/17/70	Mahatta
11	Mousa Abdulrazzaq Na'na'	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
12	Nabil Mousa Samarah AlAsmar	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
13	Yusef Ziadeh	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
14	Nidal Ahmad	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
15	Ibrahim Nimr	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
16	Muhammad Abu Shanb	9/17/70	Wehdat Camp
17	Salim Muhammad Rashid AlSalamiyya	9/17/70	Zarqa
18	Hassan Ghousheh	9/17/70	Zarqa
19	Abdullah Salim	9/17/70	Zarqa
20	Muhammad Abu Sharar	9/17/70	Zarqa
21	Nayef 'Afouneh	9/17/70	Zeezna Camp
22	Ahmad Shaker AlKhawaja	9/17/70	
23	Shakeib Aliyan AlUwaidi	9/17/70	
24	Mohammad Abdulrahman Hassan Alaqm	9/17/70	
25	Ibrahim Abduljabbar	9/17/70	
26	Ahmad Awad	9/17/70	
27	Nabil AlHashash	9/17/70	
28	Fahim 'Anizan	9/18/70	Irbid Camp
29	Mikhael Qaleit	9/18/70	Jebel Ashrafiyeh
30	Mahmoud Jaber	9/18/70	Jisr AlHamam
31	Mustafa Zain	9/18/70	Wehdat Camp
32	Muharab Abu Jabal	9/19/70	Amman
33	Atta Nazal	9/19/70	Amman
34	Mahmoud Mahmoud	9/19/70	Ruseifa
35	Ali Kaf	9/19/70	Zarqa
36	Abdullah AlHelo	9/20/70	Wehdat Camp
37	Ahmad Eid	9/20/70	Wehdat Camp
38	Abdulrazzaq Bakr	9/20/70	
39	Maher Abu Assab	9/21/70	AlMasadar (Amman)
40	Salah Khadar	9/21/70	Amman
41	Ref'at Odeh	9/23/70	Hussein Camp
42	Samir AlBaitar	9/23/70	
43	Salim Abu Zeina	9/25/70	Jebel Taj
44	Ziad AlRamhi	9/26/70	Jebel Ashrafiyeh
45	Ahmad Bakir	9/26/70	
46	Mahmoud Suleiman	9/27/70	Wehdat Camp
47	Fathi Dahbour	9/28/70	Jebel Amman

Source: PFLP website (<http://pflp.ps/ar/martyrs/>), which is taken from the group's book *Sijl AlKhalidin (Register of the Immortals)*. Accessed April 5th, 2017.

## 2 DFLP

No.	Name	Date of Death	Location of Death
1	Atwal AlKurdi	9/17/70	Amman
2	Ahmad AlJaleel	9/17/70	Jebel Qala'a - Amman
3	Abdelmunim AlHadidi	9/17/70	Zarqa
4	Hameedu	9/17/70	
5	Waleed AlDa'da'	9/18/70	Mahatta
6	Muhammad AlHamamra	9/18/70	Zarqa
7	Ibrahim Abbas	9/19/70	Amman
8	Amal AlKarmi	9/19/70	Jebel Amman
9	Adeeb AlAmri	9/19/70	Jebel Amman
10	Waleed Dabiyani	9/19/70	Amman
11	Hani AlRimawi	9/19/70	Amman
12	Salameh Abu Shteivi	9/21/70	Amman
13	Hashem Hashish	9/21/70	Amman
14	Ramadan Abu Asba'	9/21/70	Amman
15	Aissa AlSawabini	9/21/70	Amman
16	Abdhaloum Ghaniam	9/21/70	Jabal AlQusour
17	Raja Irqawi	9/21/70	Amman
18	Jameel Said	9/21/70	Hay AlMasarweh - Jebel Amman
19	Zaki AlSardi	9/21/70	Wehdat Camp
20	Jihad Hashem	9/21/70	Hussein Camp
21	Abdullah Abdfattoul	9/21/70	Jebel Amman
22	Sharif AlSa'adi	9/22/70	Zarqa
23	Tawfiq Abu Shehab	9/22/70	Jerash
24	Hossam Jaber	9/22/70	Zarqa
25	Sami Abboudi	9/22/70	Hay AlMasarweh - Jebel Amman
26	Khalil AlAMaghrabi	9/22/70	Amman
27	Harbi Hadidi	9/22/70	Amman
28	Nayef Sha'ban	9/23/70	Hussein Camp
29	Bassam Awad	9/23/70	Ahadath Kufra - Irbid
30	Khalid Abu Shaneb	9/24/70	
31	Nimr As'ad	9/25/70	Amman
32	Ali Mustafa	9/25/70	Amman
33	Samer Aoud	9/25/70	Amman
34	Nayef Abu Haweej	9/26/70	Amman
35	Faysal Hmeedi	9/26/70	Amman
36	Muhammad Safi	9/26/70	Northern Marka
37	Talal AlKurdi	9/26/70	Amman
38	Khalil Khalil	9/26/70	Amman/Ruseifa
39	Muhammad Afaneh	9/26/70	Amman
40	Mahmoud Sakhra	9/26/70	Wehdat Camp
41	Samir Hussein	9/27/70	Amman
42	Khalid Abu Snina	9/28/70	Hussein Camp
43	Taha Abu Hanish	9/28/70	Jebel Hussein
44	Muhammad Ja'afar	9/30/70	Amman - Jebel Joufa

Source: Suleiman and Hammadeh 2012

# References

## Archival and Primary Sources

United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, 1763-2002

Central Files

Subject-Numeric Files (1963-1973)

Records relating to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, 1966-1972

Records Relating to Jordan, 1969-1975

Records Relating to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, 1962-1975

Record Group 341: Records of Headquarters U.S. Air Force (Air Staff), 1934 - 2004

Files of Dr. Robert Seamans

Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, via the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST)

British National Archives (accessed electronically through Archives Direct and Archives Unbound)

FCO 17: Foreign Office, Eastern Department and successors: Registered Files (E and NE series)

Declassified Documents Reference System (accessed through University of Virginia Library)

Electronic Reading Room, Defense Intelligence Agency

Digital National Security Archive, George Washington University

Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, Lebanon

Materials and Internal Documents on the Palestinian Fedayeen Organizations

Jafet Library, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

Archives and Special Collections

*Nahar* Electronic Archive

University of Jordan Library, Amman, Jordan

“Forbidden Collection”

Library Archives

## Arabic Newspapers Collection

Jordanian National Library, Amman, Jordan

Newspapers Collection

Jafet Library, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

Archives and Special Collections

*Nahar* Electronic Archive

Private Papers of Professor William B. Quandt, Jr.

Work Notes, Historical Newspapers of Palestinian Fedayeen Organizations

Private Papers of Lieutenant General Mashhour Haditha al-Jazi (Courtesy of Omar AlJazi)

Private Papers of Lieutenant General (Ret.) Sami AlQadi

Archival Papers of Palestine Hospital (Courtesy of Dr. Nasri Khoury)

## Official Publications

*Adulis* Various Issues. Brussels and Washington, DC: Foreign Relations Bureau of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front - European and North American Desks.

Association of Eritrean Students in North America and Association of Eritrean Women in North America. 1978. *In Defence of the Eritrean Revolution Against Ethiopian Social Chauvinists*. New York: AESNA.

Burdett, Anita L.P. 1997. *Records of Oman 1961-1965*. Slough: Archive Editions Ltd.

Burdett, Anita L.P. 2003. *Records of Oman 1966-1971*. Slough: Archive Editions Ltd.

Denden, Osman Saleh. *Mu'arkat Iritriyya, AlJiza' AlAwwol (Battle of Eritrea, Part One), 1961-1970*. n.p.

Eritreans for Liberation in North America (EFLNA) and Association of Eritrean Women in North America (AEWNA). 1978. *Eritrea: Revolution or Capitulation*. New York: EFLNA.

Eritrean Liberation Front. 1977. *16 Years of Armed Struggle: September 1, 1961 - September 1, 1977*. Beirut, Lebanon: ELF Foreign Information Centre.

Eritrean Liberation Front. 1978. *The ELF's National Democratic Line*. Beirut, Lebanon: ELF Foreign Information Centre.

Eritrean Liberation Front. 1979. *The National Democratic Revolution Versus Ethiopian Expansionism*. Beirut: ELF Foreign Information Centre.

- Eritrean Liberation Front. 1981. "Diary of the Revolution (1961-1981)." *The Eritrean Newsletter* 44:17-26.
- Eritrean People's Liberation Front. 1977. *National Democratic Programme of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front*. n.p.
- Eritrean People's Liberation Front. 1982. *Selected Articles from EPLF Publications (1973-1980)*. Eritrean People's Liberation Front.
- Eritrean People's Liberation Front. 1989. *Eritrea: Dawn After a Long Night*. Eritrean People's Liberation Front.
- Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969-1972; Jordan, September 1970*, eds. Linda W. Qaimmaqami and Adam M. Howard (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008).
- "From the Experiences of the Eritrean Liberation Army." Reports based on *Experiences of the ELA: 1961-82* (Arabic), by Abdullah Idris and Mahmoud Hassab (early leaders of the ELF). Available at [http://snitna.com/From\\_the\\_Experiences\\_of\\_the\\_Eritrean\\_Liberation\\_Armey\\_ELA.pdf](http://snitna.com/From_the_Experiences_of_the_Eritrean_Liberation_Armey_ELA.pdf) Accessed and downloaded on January 4th, 2018.
- Jordanian Ministry of Defense. 1970. *al-'Amal al-Fidai fi al-Urdun (Guerrilla Action in Jordan)*. Amman: Ministry of Defense.
- Liberation* Various Issues. Beirut: Eritrean People's Liberation Front Central Bureau of Foreign Relations.
- Moral Guidance Directorate, General Command of the Jordanian Armed Forces. 1973. *AlFedayeen bayn AlRiddah wa AlIntihar (The Fedayeen between Apostasy and Suicide)*. Amman: n.p.
- Moral Guidance Directorate, General Command of the Jordanian Armed Forces. 2009. *AlTarikh Al'Askari lilQuwwat AlMusalleha AlUrduniyya/AlJaish Al'Arabi 1921-2008 (Military History of the Jordanian Armed Forces/Arab Army 1921-2008)*. Amman: n.p.
- National Union of Eritrean Women. 1981/1982. *Women in the Eritrean Revolution: Eye Witness Reports and Testimonies*. New York: National Union of Eritrean Women.
- PFLOAG. 1974. *Watha'iq AlNidal AlWatani, 1965-1974 (National Struggle Documents)*. Beirut: Dar Al-Tali'a.
- PLO Research Center. 1971. *Black September*. Beirut: PLO Research Center.
- The Gulf Committee. 1974. *Documents of the National Struggle in Oman and the Arabian Gulf*. London: The Gulf Committee. (English language version of PFLOAG 1974)
- The Gulf Committee. 1975. *Women and the Revolution in Oman*. Leeds: The Gulf Committee.

## Secondary Sources

- Abbay, Alemseged. 1998. *Identity Jilted or Re-Imagining Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrayan Nationalist Struggles*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Abd al-Mawla, Muhammad. 1976. *Thawrat Iritriya wa al-Sira'a al-Dawli fi al-Bahr al-Ahmar (The Eritrean Revolution and The International Conflict in the Red Sea*. Beirut: Dar Al-Odeh.
- ‘Abd al-Rahman, As’ad. 1983. “Tatawwurat wa Tafa’ulat Qadiyat Filastin Ma’ al-bi’a al-Rasmiyya al-‘arabiyya 1967-1973 (Developments and Interactions of the Palestinian Issue with the Formal Arab Environment, 1967-1973).” *Shu’un Filastiniyya* 136-137.
- ‘Abd al-Rahman, As’ad. 1987. *Munathama alTahrir alFilastiniyya: Jadhurha, Ta’ssissha, Masaratha (The Palestine Liberation Organization: Its Roots, Its Foundation, Its Trajectories)*. Beirut: PLO Research Center.
- Abdullah, Ibrahim. 1998. “Bush path to destruction: the origin and character of Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone.” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36(2):203-235.
- Abir, Mordechai. 1974. *Oil, Power and Politics: Conflict in Arabia, the Red Sea and the Gulf*. London: Frank Cass.
- Abu Daoud. 1999. *Filastin: Min AlQuds ila Munich (Palestine: From Jerusalem to Munich)*. Beirut: Dar An-Nahar.
- Abu Iyad. 1981. *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle*. New York: Times Books.
- Abu Odeh, Adnan. 1999. *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Abu Sa’dah, Ahmad Abalfattah. 2000. *Iritriya min al-kifah al-musallah ila al-istiqlal (Eritrea from Armed Struggle to Independence)*. Dimashq: n.p.
- Abu Sharif, Bassam. 1984. *Awraq Aylul (September Papers)*. Amman: Dar Al-Jaleel.
- Abu Sharif, Bassam. 2014. *Wadih Haddad: Thaer Aw Irhabi? (Wadih Haddad: Revolutionary or Terrorist?)*. Ramallah, Palestine: Al-Ra’a for Studies and Publishing.
- Abu Taleb, Fakhri. 2014. *Mudhakarar: Alliwa AlRakn AlMutaga’id/AlSafir wa Al’Ayyan AlSabiq Fakhri Abu Taleb (Memoirs: (Ret.) Major General/Former Ambassador and Senator Fakhri Abu Taleb)*. Amman: n.p.
- Adam, Muhammad Burhan Hassan. 2000. *Harakat Tahrir Iritriya Mahatta min Mahattat Nidalna al-Watani: Mudhakkirat Shakhsiyah (The Eritrean Liberation Movement, from Stage to Stages of Our National Struggle: Personal Memoirs)*. n.p.

- Adams, Barbara D. and Robert D.G. Webb. [n.d.] "Trust in Small Military Teams." Guelph, Ontario, Canada: Humansystems Incorporated.
- Aghion, Philippe and Jean Tirole. 1997. "Formal and Real Authority in Organizations." *Journal of Political Economy* 105(1):1-29.
- Ahmad, Aisha. 2015. "The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia." *International Security* 39(3):89-117.
- ‘Aish, Usama. 1997. "Wasfi Al-Tell: Eyadat Qira’a (Wasfi Al-Tell: A Re-reading)." [Unpublished MA Thesis]. Amman, Jordan: University of Jordan.
- Akehurst, John. 1982. *We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965-1975*. Salisbury, UK: Michael Russell.
- Akerlof, George A. and Rachel E. Kranton. 2005. "Identity and the Economics of Organizations." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19(1):9-32.
- Alami, Mona. (4 September 2014). "The Islamic State and the Cost of Governing." [sada.carnegieendowment.org/sada/2014/09/04/islamic-state-and-cost-of-governing](http://sada.carnegieendowment.org/sada/2014/09/04/islamic-state-and-cost-of-governing). hnsr.
- Al-‘Amri, Muhammad Said Duraybi. 2004. *Dhofar: al-thawrah fi al-tarikh al-‘Umani al-mu’asir, 1964-1975 (Dhofar: The Revolution in Modern Omani History)*. Beirut: Riyad al-Rayyis lil-Kuttab wa-al-Nashr.
- AlAref, Aref. 1982. *Awraq Aref AlAref (Papers of Aref AlAref)*, 2nd edition. Beirut: PLO Research Centre.
- Al‘Ikri, Abdulnabi. 2003. *AlTanzimat AlYasariyya fi AlJazeera wa AlKhaleej Al‘Arabi (Leftist Organizations in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf)*. Beirut: Dar AlKanoos AlAdabi.
- Allen, Calvin H. and W. Lynn Rigsbee II. 2000. *Oman Under Qaboos: From Coup to Constitution 1970-1996*. London: Frank Cass.
- Ammar, Wolde-Yesus. 1992. *Eritrea: Root Causes of War & Refugees*. Baghdad: Sindbad Printing Co.
- Andrews, Rhys, George A. Boyne, Jennifer Law, and Richard M. Walker. 2009. "Centralization, Organizational Strategy, and Public Service Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19:57-80.
- Anjarini, Suhaib. (1 November 2013). "The Evolution of ISIS." *Al-Monitor*. [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2013/11/syria-islamic-state-iraq-sham-growth.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2013/11/syria-islamic-state-iraq-sham-growth.html).
- Arjona, Ana. 2015. "Wartime Institutions: A Research Agenda." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(8):1360-1389.
- Arjona, Ana M. and Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2008. "Rebelling Against Rebellion: Comparing Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Recruitment." In *Understanding Collective Political Violence*, edited by Yvan Guichaoua. Palgrave.

- Arkless, David C. 1988. *The Secret War: Dhofar 1971/1972*. London: Kimber.
- Asal, Victor and R. Karl Rethemeyer. 2008. "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks." *Journal of Politics* 70(2):437-449.
- Ashton, Nigel J. 2005. "A 'Special Relationship' sometimes in spite of ourselves: Britain and Jordan, 1957-73." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33(2):221-244.
- Ashton, Nigel J. 2006. "Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role during the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan." *The International History Review* 28(1):94-118.
- Ashton, Nigel J. 2012. "For King and Country: Jack O'Connell, the CIA, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1963-71." *Diplomatic History* 36(5):881-910.
- Atlas, Pierre M. and Roy Licklider. 1999. "Conflict Among Former Allies After Civil War Settlement: Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad, and Lebanon." *Journal of Peace Research* 36(1):35-54.
- Axelrod, Lawrence. 1978. "Tribesmen in Uniform: The Demise of the Fida'iyyun in Jordan, 1970-71." *The Muslim World* 68(1):25-45.
- Ayele, Fantahun. 2014. *The Ethiopian Army: From Victory to Collapse, 1977-1991*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- 'Ayyash, 'Abdullah. 2014. *Jaysh al-Tahrir al-Filastini wa Quwwat al-Tahrir al-Sha'biyyah wa Dawruhum fi Muqawamat al-Ihtilal al-Israeli 1964-1973 (The Palestine Liberation Army and the Popular Liberation Forces and their roles in the Israeli Occupation Resistance, 1964-1973)*. Beirut: Markaz Al-Zaytoon al-Dirasat wa al-Istisharat.
- Bahre, Nugusse. 2007. "The Arab World and the Eritrean War of Independence." In *Proceedings of a Workshop on Aspects of Eritrean History, 20-21 September 2005, Asmara*, edited by Tekeste Melake. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Bailey, Clinton. 1984. *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge, 1948-1983: A Political History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bakke, Kristin M., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee J.M. Seymour. 2012. "A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2):265-283.
- Balcells, Laia and Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2015. "Revolutionary Rebels: Past and Present." Paper presented at the Insurgency Board, RAND Corporation, April 7th, 2015.
- Bangerter, Olivier. 2012. *Internal Control: Codes of Conduct within Insurgent Armed Groups*. Occasional Paper #31, Small Arms Survey.
- Barfi, Barak. 2016. "The Military Doctrine of the Islamic State and the Limits of Ba'athist Influence." *CTC Sentinel* 9(2):18-23.



- Barnes, Samuel H. 1966. "Ideology and the Organization of Conflict: On the Relationship Between Political Thought and Behavior." *The Journal of Politics* 28(3):513-530.
- Barrett, Richard. 2014a. *Foreign Fighters in Syria*. The Soufan Group.
- Barrett, Richard. 2014b. *The Islamic State*. The Soufan Group.
- Barter, Shane. 2013. "State Proxy or Security Dilemma? Understanding Anti-Rebel Militias in Civil War." *Asian Security* 9(2):75-92.
- Barout, Muhammad Jamal. 1997. *Harakat AlQawameen Al'Arab: AlNash'ah, Al-Tatawwur, AlMasa'ir*. Damascus: Arab Centre for Strategic Studies.
- Beah, Ishmael. 2007. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books.
- Beber, Bernd and Christopher Blattman. 2013. "The Logic of Child Soldiering and Coercion." *International Organization* 67(1):65-104.
- Becker, Joy. 2010. "Child Recruitment in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Nepal." In *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*, edited by Scott Gates. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Beckett, Ian F.W., 2001. *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents Since 1750*. London; New York, Routledge.
- Bell, Andrew M. 2016. "Military Culture and Restraint toward Civilians in War: Examining the Ugandan Civil Wars." *Security Studies* 25(3):488-518.
- Benotman, Noman and Rosen Blake. (8 January 2013). *Jabhat al-Nusra: A Strategic Briefing*. The Quilliam Foundation.
- Bereketeab, Redie. 2000. *Eritrea: The Making of a Nation, 1890-1991*. Uppsala University.
- Bereketeab, Redie. 2016. *Revisiting the Eritrean National Liberation Movement, 1961-91*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Bernal, Victoria. 2000. "Equality to Die For?: Women Guerrilla Fighters and Eritrea's Cultural Revolution." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 23(2):61-76.
- Beyene, Taddese (ed.). 1989. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Volume 2. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- Biddle, Stephen. 2002. *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College.
- Biddle, Stephen. 2004. *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Biddle, Stephen and Jeffrey A. Friedman. 2008. *The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute.
- Bimbi, Guido. 1982. "The National Liberation Struggle and the Liberation Fronts." In *The Eritrean Case*. Rome, Italy: Research and Information Center on Eritrea.
- Birke, Sarah. (27 December 2013). "How al-Qaeda Changed the Syrian War." *New York Review of Books Blog*. <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2013/dec/27/how-al-qaeda-changed-syrian-war/>.
- Bizouras, Nikolaos. 2013. "The Genesis of the Modern Eritrean Struggle (1942-1961)." *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4(1):21-46.
- Blashford-Snell, John. 1978. *A Taste for Adventure*. London: Hutchinson.
- Bondestam, Lars. 1980. "External Involvement in Ethiopia and Eritrea." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Brockner, Joel, Phyllis A. Siegel, Joseph P. Daly, Tom Tyler, and Christopher Martin. 2001. "When Trust Matters: The Moderating Effect of Outcome Favorability." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42(3):558-583.
- Brooks, Risa A. and Elizabeth A. Stanley, eds. 2007. *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Brown, Neville. 1970. "After the Showdown: Jordan is on the Move." *New Middle East* 48:20-24.
- Brown, Neville. 1970. "Palestinian Nationalism and the Jordanian State." *The World Today* 26(9):370-378.
- Brown, Neville. 1970. "Jordan's Precarious Truce: How long can it last?" *New Middle East* 21:9-13.
- Brown, Neville. 1971. "Jordanian Civil War." *Military Review*. United States Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2005. "The Quality of Terror." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3):515-530.
- Buhaug, Halvard and Scott Gates. 2002. "The Geography of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 39(4):417-433.
- Byman, Daniel. 2007. *Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*. RAND Occasional Paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Byman, Daniel, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan. 2001. *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Campbell, John. 1970. "Rumblings along the Red Sea: The Eritrean Question." *Foreign Affairs* 48:537-548.

- Cafarella, Jennifer. 2014. *Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria: An Islamic Emirate for Al-Qaeda*. Middle East Security Report 25, Institute for the Study of War.
- Castillo, Jasen J. 2014. *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Caverley, Jonathan D. and Todd S. Sechser. [n.d.]. "Military Technology and the Duration of Civil Conflict." Working Paper, MIT and the University of Virginia.
- Chaliand, Gerard. 1980. "The Guerilla Struggle." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Cheney, Stephen A. 1984. "The Insurgency in Oman, 1962-1976." Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps.
- Christia, Fotini. 2012. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clausewitz, Carl Von. 1984. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cleveland, Ray L. 1971. "Revolution in Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman." *Middle East Forum* 47(3/4):93-102.
- Cliffe, Lionel. 1984. "Dramatic Shifts in the Military Balance in the Horn: The 1984 Eritrean Offensive." *Review of African Political Economy* 30:93-97.
- Cliffe, Lionel. 1988. "The Eritrean Liberation Struggle in Comparative Perspective." In *The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace*, edited by Lionel Cliffe and Basil Davidson. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Cliffe, Lionel and Basil Davidson. 1988. *The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Cohen, Dara Kay. 2010. "Explaining Sexual Violence During Civil War." [PhD Dissertation]. Stanford University.
- Cole, Roger and Richard Belfield. 2011. *SAS Operation Storm*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.
- Collier, Paul. 2000. "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(6):839-853.
- Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." The Centre for the Study of African Economies Working Paper Series 128.
- Connell, Dan. 1980. "The Changing Situation in Eritrea." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Connell, Dan. 1993. *Against All Odds: A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

- Connell, Dan. 2001. "Inside the EPLF: The Origins of the 'People's Party' & Its role in the Liberation of Eritrea." *Review of African Political Economy* 28(89):345-364.
- Connell, Dan. 2002. *Rethinking Revolution: New Strategies for Democracy and Social Justice*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Connell, Dan. 2003a. *Taking on the Superpowers: Collected Articles on the Eritrean Revolution (1976-1982), Vol. 1*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Connell, Dan. 2003b. *Building a New Nation: Collected Articles on the Eritrean Revolution (1983-2002), Vol. 2*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Connell, Dan. 2005. *Conversations with Eritrean Political Prisoners*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Cooley, John K. 1973. *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*. London: Frank Cass.
- Costa, Dora L. and Matthew E. Kahn. 2003. "Cowards and Heroes: Group Loyalty in the American Civil War." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118(2):519-548.
- Cunningham, David E. 2011. *Barriers to Peace in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham, David E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Saleyhan. 2009. "It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4):570-597.
- Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Kristin M. Bakke, and Lee J.M. Seymour. 2012. "Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow: Dual Contests and the Effects of Fragmentation in Self-Determination Disputes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1):67-93.
- Dagne, Theodoros. 1992. "EPRDF's Rise to Political Dominance." *Ethiopian Review* 2(12):17-20.
- Daly, Sarah Zukerman. 2011. "Bankruptcy, Guns, or Campaigns: Explaining Armed Organizations? Post-War Trajectories." [PhD Dissertation]. MIT.
- De La Billiere, Peter. 1994. *Looking For Trouble: SAS to Gulf Command, The Autobiography*. London: HarperCollins.
- De la Calle, Luis and Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca. 2012. "Rebels without a Territory: An Analysis of Nonterritorial Conflicts in the World, 1970-1997." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(4):580-603.
- DeAtkine, Norvell B. 2001. "Urban-Warfare Lessons: The Jordanian-Palestinian Conflict of 1970." *Special Warfare*:1-9.
- De Atkine, Norvell. 2002. "Amman 1970: A Memoir." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6(4).
- Della Porta, Donatella. 1995. *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Deluga, Ronald J. 1995. "The Relation Between Trust in the Supervisor and Subordinate Organizational Citizenship Behavior." *Military Psychology* 7(1):1-16.
- Densley, James A. 2012. "Street Gang Recruitment: Signaling, Screening, and Selection." *Social Problems* 59(3):301-321.
- Department of the Army. 1993. FM 100-5, *Operations*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2001. FM 3.05-20, *Special Forces Operations*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2001. FM 3-90, *Tactics*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2002. FM 3.06-11, *Combined Arms Operations in Urban Terrain*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2003. FM 3.05-201, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2006. FM 3-21.20, *The Infantry Battalion*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2006. FM 3-05, *Army Special Operations Forces*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2013. FM 3-90-1, *Offense and Defense, Volume 1*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. 2016. Army Regulation 710-3, *Inventory Management Asset and Transaction Reporting System*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- de Waal, Alex. 1991. *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia*. Human Rights Watch.
- Dickinson, Elizabeth. 2013. *Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria's Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home*. Analysis Paper 16. Saban Center, Brookings Institution.
- Diehl, Paul F. 1991. "Geography and War: A Review and Assessment of the Empirical Literature." *International Interactions* 17(1):11-27.
- Dietz, Graham and Deanne N. Den Hertog. 2006. "Measuring Trust Inside Organizations." *Personnel Review* 35(5):557-588.
- Dines, Mary. 1980a. "The Ethiopian 'Red Terror'." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Dines, Mary. 1980b. "The Land, the People, and the Revolution." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.

- Dines, Mary. 1982. "The Social Transformation of Eritrean Society Under the E.P.L.F." In *The Eritrean Case*. Rome, Italy: Research and Information Center on Eritrea.
- Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency. 1970. "Fedayeen - 'Men of Sacrifice'" (Reference Title: ESAU - XLVIII). Intelligence Report.
- Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency. 1971. "ESAU L: The Fedayeen." (Annex to ESAU - XLVIII: Fedayeen - "Men of Sacrifice"). Intelligence Report.
- Dirks, Kurt T. 1999. "The Effects of Interpersonal Trust on Work Group Performance." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84(3):445-455.
- Doyle, Michael W. and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dresden, Jennifer Raymond. 2015. "From Combatants to Candidates: Electoral competition and the legacy of armed conflict." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.
- Driscoll, Jesse. 2012. "Commitment Problems or Bidding Wars? Rebel Fragmentation as Peace Building." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1):118-149.
- Dzirkals, Lilita A., Konrad Kellen, and Horst Mendershausen. 1976. *Military Operations in Built-Up Areas: Essays on Some Past, Present, and Future Aspects*. Report R-1871-ARPA, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.
- Eck, Kristine. 2007. "Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal." Paper presented at the 36th Annual Conference on South Asia and the 2nd Annual Himalayan Policy Research Conference, Madison, WI; 10-14 October 2007.
- Eck, Kristine. 2014. "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment." *Security Studies* 23(2):364-398.
- Eckstein, Harry. 1965. "On the Etiology of Internal Wars." *History and Theory* 4(2): 133-63.
- Egensteiner, Eva Beth. 1995. "The Dream Becomes a Reality (?): Nation Building and the Continued Struggle of the Women of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front." [PhD Dissertation: University of Southern California].
- El Edroos, Syed Ali. 1980. *The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979: an appreciation and analysis of military operations*. Amman: The Publishing Committee.
- el-Khazen, Farid. 2000. *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Ellingson, Lloyd. 1977. "The Emergence of Political Parties in Eritrea, 1941-1950." *The Journal of African History* 18(2):261-281.
- El-Rayyes, Riad Najib. 1976. *Dhofar: AlSira' AlSiyasi wa Al'Askari fi Khaleej Al'Arabi (1970-1976) (Dhofar: The Political and Military Conflict in the Arabian Gulf (1970-1976))*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.

- El-Rayyes, Riad Najib. 2000. *Qadaiya Khasira: Min AlIskanduroun ila AlBalqan wa min Oman ila AlShishan*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- El-Rayyes, Riad Najib. 2002. *Watha'iq AlKhaleej Al'Arabi, 1968-1971*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- El-Rayyes, Riad Najib. 2004. *Sira' AlWahat wa AlNaft: Humum AlKhalij Al'Arabi bayn 1968-1971*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- El-Rayyes, Riad Najib. 2007. *AlJanib AlAkhr Liltarikh: Asfar Sihafi fi Turuq Al'Alam*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- El-Rayyes, Riad N. and Dunia Nahas, editors. 1974. *Guerrillas for Palestine: A study of the Palestinian commando organizations*. Beirut: An-Nahar Press Services.
- Erlich, Haggai. 1983. *The Struggle Over Eritrea, 1962-1978: War and Revolution in the Horn of Africa*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1958. "Industrial Sociology: The Study of Economic Organizations." *Social Research*.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1975. *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Faddab, Taher Ibrahim. 1994. *Harakat Tahrir Iritriya wa masiratha al-tarikhiya fi alfitra ma bayn 1958 ila 1967 (The Eritrean Liberation Movement and its historical trajectory in the period between 1958-1967)*. Al-Qahirah: Mutaba'a AlShorouq.
- Farer, Tom J. 1979. *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: The Widening Storm*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Farrell, Theo and Antonio Giustozzi. 2013. "The Taliban at war: inside the Helmand insurgency, 2004-2012." *International Affairs* 89(4):845-871.
- Fayyad, Ali. 1975. *Harb al-Sha'bi fi 'Uman: wa yantasiru al-Hufah (War of the People in Oman: And the Barefoot Triumph...)*. Beirut: al-Ittihad al-'Amm lil-Kuttab wa al-Suhufiyyin al-Filastiniyin.
- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97(1):75-90.
- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2007. "Civil War Termination." Unpublished paper, Stanford University.
- Fekadu, Tekeste. 2002. *Inside Eritrea's War for Independence: Journey from Nakfa to Nakf, Back to Square One, 1976-1979*. Asmara: Sabur Printing Services.
- Fekadu, Tekeste. 2008. *The Tenacity and Resilience of Eritrea, 1979-1983*. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Fiennes, Ranulph. 1975. *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

- Fine, Gary Alan and Lori Holyfield. 1996. "Secrecy, Trust, and Dangerous Leisure: Generating Group Cohesion in Voluntary Organizations." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 59(1):22-38.
- Firebrace, James and Stuart Holland. 1984. *Never Kneel Down: Drought, Development and Liberation in Eritrea*. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Forney, Jonathan Filip. 2015. "Who Can We Trust with a Gun? Information Networks and Adverse Selection in Militia Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2004. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48:269-292.
- Fortna, Virginia Page and Reyko Huang. 2012. "Democratization after Civil War: A Brush-Clearing Exercise." *International Studies Quarterly* 56:801-808.
- Gambetta, Diego. 1988. "Can We Trust Trust?" In *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*, edited by Diego Gambetta. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Gardiner, Ian. 2006. *In the Service of the Sultan. A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword.
- Gates, Scott. 2002. "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1):111-130.
- Gates, Scott and Ragnhild Nordas. 2010. "Recruitment and Retention in Rebel Groups." Paper prepared for the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2-5, 2010.
- Gebre-Medhim, Jordan. 1984. "Nationalism, Peasant Politics & The Emergence of a Vanguard Front in Eritrea." *Review of African Political Economy* 30:48-57.
- Gebre-Medhim, Jordan. 1989. *Peasants & Nationalism in Eritrea: A Critique of Ethiopian Studies*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Gebru Tareke. 2002. "From Lash to Red Star: The Pitfalls of Counter-Insurgency in Ethiopia, 1980-82." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40(3):465-498.
- Gebru Tareke. 2009. *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Geremaw, Taye. 1971. "Rebellion in Eritrea." *Survival* 13(8):274-280.
- Getmansky, Anna. 2013. "You Can't Win if You Don't Fight: The Role of Regime Type in Counterinsurgency Outbreaks and Outcomes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(4):709- 734.



- Ghattas, Nazih (Abu Nidal). 2012. *Mudhakarat Nazih Abu Nidal: Min Awraq Thawra Maghdoura (Memoirs of Nazih Abu Nidal: From the Papers of a Treacherous Revolution)*. Damascus: Dar Qadmis for Publishing and Distribution.
- Ghebre-Ab, Habtu. 2013. *Massacre at Wekidiba: The Tragic Story of a Village in Eritrea*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Gilkes, Patrick. 1995. "The Battle of Af Abet and Eritrean Independence." *Northeast African Studies* 2(3):39-51.
- Gill, Paul and John Horgan. 2013. "Who Were the Volunteers? The Shifting Sociological and Operational Profile of 1240 Provisional Irish Republican Army Members." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25:435-456.
- Gilligan, Michael J., Prabin B. Khadka and Cyrus Samii. 2015. "Insurgent Organization and Social Preferences: Evidence from Nepal's Maoists." Paper Presented at the Lansing B. Lee Jr./Bankard Seminar in Global Politics, University of Virginia, September 16th, 2015.
- Giorgis, Dawit Wolde. 1989. *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Gismondi, Mark. 2015. "Familism and War: The Radius of Trust as an Element of National Power." *Security Studies* 24(4):631-661.
- Gottesman, Les. 1998. *To Fight and Learn: The Praxis and Promise of Literacy in Eritrea's Independence War*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6):1360-1380.
- Granovetter, Mark S. 1985. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3):481-510.
- Grauer, Ryan D. 2011. "Commanding Military Power: Organizational Sources of Victory on the Battlefield." [PhD Dissertation]. University of Pennsylvania.
- Grauer, Ryan D. 2016. *Commanding Military Power: Organizing for Victory and Defeat on the Battlefield*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grauer, Ryan D. 2017. "Uncertain Victory: Information Management and Military Power." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2(1):18-38.
- Greenhill, Kelly M. and Solomon Major. 2007. "The Perils of Profiling: Civil War Spoilers and the Collapse of Intrastate Peace Accords." *International Security* 31(3):7-40.
- Grossman, Dave. 1995. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Back Bay Books.
- Guevara, Ernesto (Che). 1998. *Guerrilla Warfare*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

- Guichaoua, Yvan. 2007. "Who Joins Ethnic Militias? A Survey of the Odua People's Congress in South western Nigeria." HiCN Working Paper 26.
- Guimaraes, Fernando. 2001. *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Habash, George (with George Malbrunot). 2008. *George Habash: AlThawriyyun La Yamoutun Abadan (George Habash: Revolutionaries Never Die)*. Beirut: Dar Al-Saqi.
- Haer, Roos, Lilli Banholzer and Verena Ertl. 2011. "Create compliance and cohesion: how rebel organizations manage to survive." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22(3):415-434.
- Hage, Jerald and Michael Aiken. 1967. "Relationship of Centralization to Other Structural Properties." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 12(1):72-92.
- Haile-Selassie, Teferra. 1997. *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1991: From a Monarchical Autocracy to a Military Oligarchy*. New York: Kegan Paul International.
- Halliday, Fred. 1969. "Class Struggle in the Arab Gulf." *New Left Review* 58:31-37.
- Halliday, Fred. 1971. "The fighting in Eritrea." *New Left Review* 1(67).
- Halliday, Fred. 2002 (1974). *Arabia Without Sultans*. London: Saqi Books.
- Halliday, Fred. 1977. *Mercenaries: "Counter-insurgency" in the Gulf*. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- AlHajj, Abdullah Juma'. 1996. "AlHarakat AlWataniyya AlIritriyya: AlJabhat Al-Sha'biyya liTahrir Iritriyya (The Eritrean National Movement: The Eritrean People's Liberation Front)." *Iritriyya: Dirasa Meshiya Shamila (Eritrea: A Comprehensive Study)*, edited by Abdulmailk Odeh. Cairo: al-Munazzamah al-'Arabiya lil-Tarbiyah wa-al-Thaqafah wa-al-'Ulum, Ma'had al-Buhuth wa-al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyah.
- Hansen-Lewis, Jamie and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2015. "Rebel Control of Civilians: Persuasion and the Limits of Coercion." Paper presented at the Insurgency Board, RAND Corporation, April 7th, 2015.
- Harkabi, Y. 1968. "Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy." Adelphi Papers 53. London: The Institute for Strategic Studies.
- Hardin, Russell. 2002. *Trust and Trustworthiness*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Hassan, Bilal. 1971. "Ahdath Aylul wa Mas'uliyat al-Nizam al-Urduni (The September Events and the Responsibility of the Jordanian Regime)." *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 1:39-55.
- Hassan, Hamdy Abdulrahman. 1996. "AlHarakat AlWataniyya AlIritriyya: AlJabhat AlTahrir AlIritriyya (The Eritrean National Movement: The Eritrean Liberation Front)." *Iritriyya: Dirasa Meshiya Shamila (Eritrea: A Comprehensive Study)*, edited by Abdulmailk Odeh. Cairo: al-Munazzamah al-'Arabiya lil-Tarbiyah wa-al-Thaqafah wa-al-'Ulum, Ma'had al-Buhuth wa-al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyah.

- Hattar, Jihad. 1977. *Dhikrayat 'An Muarkat Aylul: AlUrdunn 1970 (Memories about the Battle of September: Jordan 1970)*. Beirut: Markaz Abhath.
- Hawatmeh, Nayef. 1997. *Nayef Hawatmeh Yatahadith (Nayef Hawatmeh Speaks)*. Amman: Dar Al-Jaleel.
- Hayward, Philip. 1968. "The Measurement of Combat Effectiveness." *Operations Research* 16(2):314-323.
- Hazelton, Jacqueline L. 2011. "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare." [PhD Dissertation]. Brandeis University.
- Hazen, Jennifer M. 2013. *What Rebels Want: Resources and Supply Networks in Wartime*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Heckathorn, Douglas D. 1997. "Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations." *Social Problems* 44:174-199.
- Hegghammer, Thomas. 2006. "Terrorist recruitment and radicalisation in Saudi Arabia." *Middle East Policy* 13(4):39-60.
- Hegghammer, Thomas. 2013. "The Recruiter's Dilemma: Signalling and Rebel Recruitment Tactics." *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1):3-16.
- Heger, Lindsay, Danielle Jung, and Wendy H. Wong. 2012. "Organizing for Resistance: How Group Structure Impacts the Character of Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24(5):743-768.
- Hegre, Havard and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(4):508-535.
- Heikal, Yusef. 1971. *Filistin Qabl wa Ba'd (Palestine Before and After)*. Beirut: Dar al-'ilm lilmlayeen.
- Henderson, William Darryl. 1985. *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat (Leadership and Societal Influence in the Armies of the Soviet Union, the United States, North Vietnam, and Israel)*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press.
- Henriksen, Rune. 2007. "Warriors in combat - what makes people actively fight in combat?" *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30(2):187-223.
- Henriksen, Rune and Anthony Vinci. 2007. "Combat Motivation in Non-State Armed Groups." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20:87-109.
- Hensel, Howard M. 1982. "Soviet policy towards the rebellion in Dhofar." *Asian Affairs* 13(2):183-207.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. "The Organization of Rebellion in Africa." Paper prepared for the conference on "The Economics of Political Violence," held at Princeton University, March 18-19, 2000.
- Hindi, Hani and Abdullahi AlNasrawi. 2001. *Harakat AlQawameen Al'Arab: Nash'ataha wa Tatawwurha 'abr Watha'iqha, 1951-1968, AlKitab AlAwwol 1951-1961*. Beirut: Mu'assassa AlAbhath Al'Arabiyya.

- Hindi, Khalil, Fouad Bawarshi, Shehadeh Mousa, and Nabil Ali Sha'ath. 1971. *Al Muqawama al Filiastiniya wal-Nizam al Urduni: Dirasa Tahliliyya lihuajmat Aylul (The Palestinian Resistance and the Jordanian Regime: Analytical Study of the September Confrontation)*. Beirut: Markaz al-Abhath PLO.
- Hiro, Dilip. 1993. *Lebanon, Fire and Embers: A History of the Lebanese Civil War*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Holliday, Joseph. 2012. *Syria's Maturing Insurgency*. Middle East Report no.5, Institute for the Study of War.
- Hoover Green, Amelia. 2011. "Repertoires of violence against non-combatants: The role of armed group institutions and ideologies." [PhD Dissertation]. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Hoover Green, Amelia. 2016. "The commander's dilemma: Creating and controlling armed group violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5):619-632.
- Houtart, Francois (ed.). 1979. *Revolution in Eritrea: Eyewitness Reports*. Brussels, Belgium: Le Comite Belge De Secours A L'Erythree.
- Houtart, Francois. 1980. "The Social Revolution in Eritrea." In *Behind the War in Eritrea*, edited by Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and Bereket Habte Selassie. Nottingham: Spokesman.
- Howk, Jason. 2008. "A Lion in the Path of Oman's Nationalization: Insurgency in Oman from the 1950s through the 1970s Examined through Social Movement Theory." Center for Contemporary Conflict, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.
- Hubbard, Ben and Eric Schmitt. (27 August 2014). "Military Skill and Terrorist Technique Fuel Success of ISIS." *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/world/middleeast/army-know-how-seen-as-factor-in-isis-successes.html>.
- Hudson, Michael C. 1972. "Developments and Setbacks in the Palestinian Resistance Movement 1967-1971." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1(3):64-84.
- Hughes, Geraint. 2009. "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32(2):271-305.
- Hultman, Lisa. 2007. "Battle Losses and Rebel Violence: Raising the Costs for Fighting." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19(2):205-222.
- Hultman, Lisa. 2009. "The Power to Hurt in Civil War: The Strategic Aim of RENAMO Violence." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35(4):821-834.
- Humphreys, Macartan. 2005. "Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4):508-537.
- Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2006. "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 100(3):429-447.

- Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. "Demobilization and Reintegration." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(4):531-567.
- Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2):436-455.
- Hunt, Matt, Tracy M. Lara, and Aaron W. Hughey. 2009. 'Establishing and Maintaining Organizational Trust in the 21st Century.' *Industry & Higher Education* 23(2):71-77.
- IHS Jane's. 2013. "Analysis: Syria's insurgent landscape." *IHS Aerospace, Defence, and Security*. <http://www.ihs.com/pdfs/Syrias-Insurgent-Landscape-oct-2013.pdf>.
- Ingraham, Larry H. and Frederick J. Manning. 1981. "Cohesion: Who Needs It, What Is It, and How Do We Get It to Them?" *Military Review* 61:2-12.
- International Crisis Group (ICG). 2013. *Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition*. Middle East Report No.131.
- Ishiyama, John and Anna Batta. 2011. "Rebel Organizations and Conflict Management in Post-Conflict Societies 1990-2009." *Civil Wars* 13(4):437-457.
- Iyob, Ruth. 1995. *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Ja'bub, Muna Salim Saeed. 2010. *Qiyadat AlMujtami'a Nahaw AlTaghyeer: AlTarjiba AlTarbuwiyya LiThawra Dhofar (1969-1992) (Community Leadership for Change: The Educational Experience of the Dhofar Revolution (1969-1992))*. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat LiWahda Al'Arabiyya.
- Jacquín-Berdal, Dominique. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Jalali, Ali Ahmad and Lester W. Grau. 1995. *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*. Foreign Military Studies Office, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.
- Jama'ni, Dhafi. 2007. *Min AlHizb Ila AlSijn (1948-1994) (From the Party to the Prison)*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes LilKutb wal-Nashr.
- James, W. Martin. 1992. *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola 1974-1990*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Jamjoum, Hazem. [n.d.]. "Daughters of Aylul." Unpublished Manuscript.
- Janos, Andrew C. 1963. "Unconventional Warfare: Framework and Analysis." *World Politics* 15(4):636-646.
- Janzen, Jorg. 1986. *Nomads in the Sultanate of Oman: Tradition and Development in Dhofar*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

- Jardine, Eric and Simon Palamar. 2014. "Numerous, Capable, Well-Funded Rebels: Insurgent Military Effectiveness and Deadly Attacks in Afghanistan." *Terrorism and Political Violence* online.
- Jeapes, Tony. 2005. *SAS Secret War: Operation Storm in the Middle East*. London: Greenhill Books.
- Jenkins, Brian Michael. 1971. *The Five Stages of Urban Guerrilla Warfare: Challenge of the 1970s*. RAND Corporation.
- Jenkins, Brian Michael. 1972. *An Urban Strategy for Guerrillas and Governments*. RAND Corporation.
- Jenkins, Brian Michael. 1974. *Soldiers Versus Gunmen: The Challenge of Urban Guerrilla Warfare*. RAND Corporation.
- Jentzsch, Corinna. 2014. "Militias and the Dynamics of Civil Wars." [PhD Dissertation]. Yale University.
- Jentzsch, Corinna, Stathis N. Kalyvas, and Livia Isabella Scubiger. 2015. "Militias in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Jinahi, Said Ahmad. 1974. *Kuntu fi Dhofar: Mushahadat fi 'Ard AlThawra (I was in Dhofar: Views from the Land of Revolution)*. Beirut: Dar Ibn Khaldun.
- Johnson, Chalmers. 1962. "Civilian Loyalties and Guerrilla Conflict." *World Politics* 14(4):646-661.
- Johnson, Michael and Trish Johnson. 1981. "Eritrea: The National Question and the Logic of Protracted Struggle." *African Affairs* 80(319):181-195.
- Johnston, Patrick. 2008. "The Geography of Insurgent Organization and its Consequences for Civil Wars: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone." *Security Studies* 17(1):107-137.
- Jones, Jeremy and Nicholas Ridout. 2015. *A History of Modern Oman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jordan, David, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, and C. Dale Walton. 2016. *Understanding Modern Warfare*. New York: Cambridge.
- Jureidini, Paul A., Norman A. La Charite, Bert H. Cooper, and William A. Lybrand. 1962. *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*. Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, The American University.
- Jureidini, Paul. 1975. "The Relationship of the Palestinian Guerrilla Movement with the Government of Jordan: 1967-1970." [PhD Dissertation]. Washington, D.C.: American University.
- Jureidini, Paul A. and William A. Hazen. 1976. *The Palestinian Movement in Politics*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co.

- Jureidini, Paul A., R.D. McLaurin, and James M. Price. 1979. *Military Operations in Selected Lebanese Built-Up Areas, 1975-1978*. U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory, Aberdeen, MD.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2005. "Warfare in Civil Wars." In *Rethinking the Nature of War*, eds. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom. Abingdon: Frank Cass, 88-108.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. and Laia Balcells. 2010. "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 104(3):415-429.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. and Matthew Adam Kocher. 2007. "How 'Free' is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem." *World Politics* 59(2):177-216.
- Kasfir, Nelson. 2005. "Guerrillas and civilian participation: the National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981-86." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43(2):271-296.
- Kasozi, A.B.K. 1994. *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Kattmattu, Muhammad. 1973. *al-Muqawama al-Filastiniyya wa Ma'rakat al-Ahrash (The Palestinian Resistance and the Battle of the Woods)*. Beirut: Mu'assassa Al'Arabiya Lildirasat wal-Nashr.
- Kaufman, Herbert. 1971. *The Limits of Organizational Change*. University, AL: The University of Alabama Press.
- Kellett, Anthony. 1982. *Combat Motivation: The Behaviour of Soldiers in Battle*. Springer.
- Kennedy, Michael Paul. 1989. *Soldier "I" S.A.S.*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Kenny, Paul. 2010. "Structural Integrity and Cohesion in Insurgent Organizations: Evidence from Protracted Conflicts in Ireland and Burma." *International Studies Review* 12:533-555.
- Kenny, Paul. 2011. "Organizational Weapons: Explaining Cohesion in the Military." HiCN Working Paper 107.
- Kent, Robert B. 1993. "Geographical Dimensions of the Shining Path Insurgency in Peru." *Geographical Review* 83(4):441-454.
- Khalaf, Ali Hussein. 1973. "Come With to Dhofar the 8 year-old named the Armed Revolution" (Arabic). *Al-Bilagh* 13.
- Khalaf, Jameel Mustafa Hassan. 1991. "AlUrdunn wa AlMunazmama AlTahrir Al-Filastiniyya (1964-1974) [Jordan and the PLO (1964-1974)]" [Unpublished MA Thesis]. Irbid, Jordan: Yarmouk University.

- Khalil, Ghazi. 1976. "Durus Mustafada min Tajriba alMuqawama fi AlUrdunn (Beneficial Study from the Resistance's experience in Jordan)." *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 55:69-77.
- Khalil, Ghazi. 1976. "Qabl AlKhorouj min alUrdunn: Waqa'i wa Ahadath (Before Leaving Jordan: Realities and Events)." *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 58:51-59.
- Khurshid, Ghazi. 1971. *Dalil Harakat al-Muqawama al-Filastiniyya (Guide to the Palestinian Resistance Movement)*. Beirut: PLO Research Centre.
- Kibreab, Gaim. 2008. *Critical Reflections on the Eritrean War of Independence: Sowing Capital, Associational Life, Religion, Ethnicity and Sowing Seeds of Dictatorship*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Kieh, George Klay. 1992. "Combatants, Patrons, Peacemakers, and the Liberian Civil Conflict." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 15:125-143.
- Kier, Elizabeth. 1998. "Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness." *International Security* 23(2):5-39.
- Killion, Tom. 1998. *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Knorr, Klaus. 1962. "Unconventional Warfare: Strategy and Tactics in Internal Political Strife." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 341:53-64.
- Koehler, Kevin, Dorothy Ohl, and Holger Albrecht. 2016. "From Disaffection to Desertion: How Networks Facilitate Military Insubordination in Civil Conflict." *Comparative Politics* 48(4):439-457.
- Koos, Carlo. 2014. "Why and How Civil Defense Militias Emerge: The Case of the Arrow Boys in South Sudan." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37:1039-1057.
- Kouzes, James M. and Barry Posner. 1987. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Krause, Peter. 2013. "The Political Effectiveness of Non-State Violence: A Two-Level Framework to Transform a Deceptive Debate." *Security Studies* 22(2):259-294.
- Kramer, Jack. 1971. "Africa's Hidden War." *Evergreen Review* 94:25-29, 61-63.
- Kramer, Roderick M. 1999. "Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Emerging Perspectives, Enduring Questions." *Annual Review of Psychology* 50:569-598.
- Krause, Peter. 2014. "The Structure of Success: How the Internal Distribution of Power Drives Armed Group Behavior and National Movement Effectiveness." *International Security* 38(3):72-116.



- Krause, Peter. 2017. "Coercion by Movement: How Power Drove the Success of the Eritrean Insurgency, 1960-1993." In *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics*, edited by Kelly M. Greenhill and Peter Krause. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lacina, Bethany. 2006. "Explaining the Severity of Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(2):276-289.
- Lacina, Bethany and Nils Petter Gleditsch. 2005. "Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths." *European Journal of Population* 21:145-166.
- Ladwig III, Walter C. 2008. "Supporting allies in counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19(1):62-88.
- Lalor, Paul. 1992. "Black September 1970: The Palestinian Resistance Movement in Jordan, 1967-1971." [PhD Dissertation]. University of Cambridge.
- Ledda, Romano. 1971. *La battaglia di Amman (The Battle of Amman)*. Rome: Editori Riuniti.
- Lefebvre, Jeffrey A. 1991. *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia 1953-1991*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Legrand, Felix. 2014. *The Colonial Strategy of ISIS in Syria*. Arab Reform Initiative.
- Leites, Nathan. 1951. *The Operational Code of the Politburo*. RAND Corporation.
- Leites, Nathan Constantin and Charles Wolf. 1970. "Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts." RAND Report 462. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Leonhard, Robert. 1991. *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory and Air-Land Battle*. Novato, CA: Presidio.
- Lewis, Janet Ingram. 2012. "How Rebellion Begins: Insurgent Group Formation and Viability in Uganda." [PhD Dissertation]. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Lichbach, Mark. 1995. *The Rebel's Dilemma*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Licklider, Roy. 1995. "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993." *American Political Science Review* 89(3):681-90.
- Lilja, Janine. 2009. "Trapping Constituents or Winning Hearts and Minds? Rebel Strategies to Attain Constituent Support in Sri Lanka." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21:306-326.
- Lilja, Jannie and Lisa Hultman. 2011. "Intraethnic Dominance and Control: Violence Against Co-Ethnics in the Early Sri Lankan Civil War." *Security Studies* 20(2):171-197.
- Lindenberg, Siegwart. 2000. "It Takes Both Trust and Lack of Mistrust: The Workings of Cooperation and Relational Signaling in Contractual Relationships." *Journal of Management and Governance* 4:11-33.

- Lister, Charles. 2014. *Dynamic Stalemate: Surveying Syria's Military Landscape*. Brookings Doha Center.
- Lobban, Richard. 1972. "Eritrean Liberation Front: A Close-Up View." *Munger Africana Library Notes* 13.
- Lobban, Richard. 1976. "The Eritrean War: Issues and Implications." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10(2):335-346.
- Lockyer, Adam. 2010. "The Dynamics of Warfare in Civil War." *Civil Wars* 12(1-2):91-116.
- Lockyer, Adam. 2011. "Foreign Intervention and Warfare in Civil Wars." *Review of International Studies* 37:2337-2364.
- Lucas, Russell E. 2008. "Side Effects of Regime Building in Jordan: The State and the Nation." *Civil Wars* 10(3):281-293.
- Lund, Aron. (9 September 2014). "Syria's Ahrar al-Sham Leadership Wiped Out in Bombing." *Syria in Crisis*. <http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=56581>.
- Lupfer, Timothy T. 1981. *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*. Leavenworth Papers No.4, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.
- Lyall, Jason. 2009. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3):331-362.
- Lyall, Jason. 2010a. "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War." *American Political Science Review* 104(1):1-20.
- Lyall, Jason. 2010b. "Do Democracies Make Inferior Counterinsurgents? Reassessing Democracy's Impact on War Outcomes and Duration." *International Organization* 64:167-192.
- Lyall, Jason. n.d. *Paths of Ruin: How Identity Determines Military Effectiveness in Modern War*. Book Manuscript.
- Lyall, Jason and Isaiah Wilson, III. 2009. "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars." *International Organization* 63(1):67-106.
- MacDonald, Pauk K. 2013. "Retribution Must Succeed Rebellion? The Colonial Origins of Counterinsurgency Failure." *International Organization* 67(2):253-286.
- Machida, Robert. 1987. *Eritrea: The Struggle for Independence*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

- Majali, Bakr Khazr. 1998. *AlMalaf AlWatha'qi liMu'ark AlKarameh, AlKhamees 21 Adhar 1968 (Documentary Files for the Battle of Karameh, Thursday March 21st, 1968)*. n.p.
- Majali, Bakr Khazen. 2014. *Sajl AlKhalideen: AlJaish Al'Arabi...AlQuwwat AlMusalleh AlUrduniyya: Sajl Sharaf AlShuhada AlKhalideen, 1937-2013 (The Record of Immortals: the Arab Army...Jordanian Armed Forces: Honorable Record of Immortal Martyrs)*. Amman: n.p.
- Majed, Ziad. 2010. *Hezbollah and the Shiite Community: From Political Confession-alization to Confessional Specialization*. The Aspen Institute.
- Malas, Nour and Maria Abi-Habib. (28 August 2014). "Islamic State Economy Runs on Extortion, Oil Piracy in Syria, Iraq." *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Mampilly, Zachariah. 2011. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life During War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mao, Tse-Tung. 1989. *On Guerrilla Warfare*. Translated by Samuel Griffith. Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps.
- March, James G. and Herbert A. Simon. 1958. *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Marcum, John A. 1978. *The Angolan Revolution, Volume II: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962-1976)*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Markakis, John. 1987. *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Markakis, John. 1990. "The Nationalist Revolution in Eritrea." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 26(1):51-70.
- Marks, Thomas A. 2003. "Urban Insurgency." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 14(3):100-157.
- Marques, Patrick D. 2003. "Guerrilla Warfare Tactics in Urban Environments." [Unpublished MA Thesis]. Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and Staff College.
- Marshall, S.L.A. 1947. *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*. New York: Morrow.
- Martinez, Ian Illych. 2012. "The Battle of Mirbat: Turning Point in the Omani Dhofar rebellion." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23(3):517-526.
- Mawanies, Mahmoud Hammad. [n.d.]. *Mu'arik Lam Tahasum (Battles Unresolved)*. [n.p.].
- Mayer, Roger C., James H. Davis, and F. David Schoorman. 1995. "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust." *The Academy of Management Review* 20(3):709-734.

- McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1973. *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82(6):1212-1241.
- McColl, Robert W. 1969. "The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 59(4):613-631.
- McCormick, Gordon H. 1993. *Sharp Dressed Men: Peru's Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement*. RAND Report. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- McKeown, John. 1981. "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance." [MPhil Dissertation: University of Cambridge].
- McFate, Jessica Lewis. 2015. *The ISIS Defense in Iraq and Syria: Countering an Adaptive Enemy*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War.
- McKnight, D. Harrison, Larry L. Cummings, and Norman L. Chervany. 1998. "Initial Trust Formation in New Organizational Relationships." *Academy of Management Review* 23(3):473-490.
- McLain, David L. and Katarina Hackman. 1999. "Trust, Risk, and Decision-Making in Organizational Change." *Public Administration Quarterly* 23(2):152-176.
- McLauchlin, Theodore. 2010. "Loyalty Strategies and Military Defection in Rebellion." *Comparative Politics* 42(3):333-350.
- McLaurin, R.D., Paul A. Jureidini, and David S. McDonald. 1987. *Modern Experience in City Combat*. Technical Memorandum 5-87. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD: U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory.
- McLaurin, Ronald D. and R. Miller. 1989. *Urban Counterinsurgency: Case Studies and Implications for U.S. Military Forces*. Technical Memorandum 14-89. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD: U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory.
- McLaurin, Ronald D. 1991. "From Professional to Political: The Redecline of the Lebanese Army." *Armed Forces & Society* 17(4):545-568.
- Medhanie, Tesfatsion. 1986. *Eritrea: Dynamics of a National Question*. Amsterdam: B.R. Gruner.
- Melake, Tekeste. 2007. *Proceedings of a Workshop on Aspects of Eritrean History, 20-21 September 2005, Asmara*. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Mengisteab, Kidane. 2003. "African Traditional Institutions of Governance: The case of Eritrea's Village *Baito*." In *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*, ed. Olufemi Vaughan. Ibadan, Nigeria: Sefer Books.

- Metelits, Claire. 2010. *Inside Insurgency: Violence, Civilians, and Revolutionary Group Behavior*. New York: NYU Press.
- Meyerle, Jerry and Carter Malkasian. 2009. *Insurgent Tactics in Southern Afghanistan, 2005-2008*. CNA Analysis and Solutions.
- Millett, Allan R. and Williamson Murray. 1988. *Military Effectiveness*, vols. 1-3. Boston: Allen and Unwin.
- Mintzberg, Henry. 1979. *The Structure of Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Mishra, Aneil K. 1996. "Organizational Responses to Crises: The Centrality of Trust." In *Trust in Organizations*, edited by Roderick M. Kramer and Thomas Tyler. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Moch, Michael K. and Edward V. Morse. 1977. "Size, Centralization and Organizational Adoption of Innovations." *American Sociological Review* 42(5):716-725.
- Moloney, Ed. 2007. *A Secret History of the IRA*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Monick, S. 1982. "Victory in Hades: The Forgotten Wars of The Oman 1957-1959 and 1970-1976, Part 2: The Dhofar Campaign, 1970-1976." *Scientia Militaria* 12(4):1-26.
- Monick, S. 1983. "Victory in Hades: The Forgotten Wars of The Oman 1957-1959 and 1970-1976, Part II: The Dhofar Campaign, 1970-1976, Section B." *Scientia Militaria* 13(1):1-15.
- Moroni Bracamonte, Jose Angel and David E. Spencer. 1995. *Strategy and Tactics of the Salvadoran FMLN Guerrillas: Last Battle of the Cold War, Blueprint for Future Conflicts*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Mottern, Nicholas. 1988. *Suffering Strong: The Journal of a Westerner in Ethiopia, the Sudan, Eritrea and Chad*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Mousa, Suleiman. 1996. *Tarikh al-Urdun Fi al-Qurn al-Ishrin, 1958-95 (Jordan's History in the Twentieth Century, 1958-95)*. Amman: Maktabet al-Muhtasib.
- Mukhar, Randa Nasri. 1978. "A Study of Political Violence: The Jordanian Internal War of 1968-1971." [Unpublished MA Thesis]. Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut.
- Mueller, Tanja R. "From rebel governance to state consolidation - Dynamics of loyalty and the securitisation of the state in Eritrea." *Geoforum* 43:793-803.
- Murad, 'Abbas. 1973. *al-Dawr al-Siyasi li al-Jaysh al-Urduni, 1921-1973 (The Political Role of the Jordanian Army, 1921-1973)*. Beirut: Markaz Abhath PLO.
- Mutawi, Samir. 1987. *Jordan in the 1967 War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Natour, Mahmoud (Abu AlTayyib). 2014. *Harakat Fatah bayn AlMuqawama wa alIghtiyalat, alMajlid alAwwal 1965-1983 (The Fatah Movement between the Resistance and the Assassinations, Volume One 1965-1983)*. Amman: Al-Ahliyya lilNashr wa alTawzi'.
- Nachmani, Amikam. 1990. "Civil War and Foreign Intervention in Greece: 1946-1949." *Journal of Contemporary History* 25:489-522.
- Nazmi, Raouf (Mahjub 'Umar). 1971. *al-Ashrafiyeh: Qissat Mustashfa al-Ashrafiyya khilal Ahdath Aylul fi 'Amman (AlAshrafiyeh: Stories of the Ashrafiyeh Hospital During the September Events in Amman)*. Beirut: Dar Al-Tali'a.
- Nevo, Joseph. 2008. "September 1970 in Jordan: A Civil War?" *Civil Wars* 10(3):217-230.
- New America Foundation (NAF). 2014. "How much of Iraq does ISIS control?" <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/isis/analysis>.
- Nilsson, Desiree. 2008. "Partial Peace: Rebel Groups Inside and Outside of Civil War Settlements." *Journal of Peace Research* 45(4):479-495.
- Nilsson, Desiree. 2010. "Turning Weakness into Strength: Military Capabilities, Multiple Rebel Groups, and Negotiated Settlements." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 27(3):253-271.
- Norton, Augustus Richard. 1987. *Amal and the Shia: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Al-Nu'mani, Shameesa Abdullah. 2016. *AlKhitab AlSahafi fi Harb Dhufar: Jaridat Oman 1972-1975 (Press Discourse in the Dhofar War: Oman Newspaper 1972-1975)*. Beirut: Mu'assassat AlArabiya LilDirasat Wa Al-Nashr.
- O'Ballance, Edgar. 1974. *Arab Guerrilla Power, 1967-1972*. London: Faber and Faber.
- O'Connell, Jack. 2011. *King's Counsel: A Memoir of War, Espionage, and Diplomacy in the Middle East*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- O'Neill, Bard E. 1978. *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- O'Neill, Bard E. 1980. "Revolutionary War in Oman." In *Insurgency in the Modern World*, edited by Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Ohl, Dorothy Smith. 2016. "The Soldier's Dilemma: Military Responses to Uprisings in Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and Syrian." [PhD Dissertation]. Washington, DC: The George Washington University.
- Oppenheim, Ben, Abbey Steele, Juan F. Vargas, and Michael Weintraub. 2015. "True Believers, Deserters, and Traitors: Who Leaves Insurgent Groups and Why." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(5):794-823.

- Oppenheim, Ben, Juan F. Vargas, and Michael Weintraub. [n.d.]. "Learning How Not to Fire a Gun: The Impact of Combatant Training on Civilian Killings." Working Paper, UC-Berkeley, Universidad del Rosario, and Yale University.
- Otto, Sabine and Nynke Salverda. 2015. "Inside Organizations: Determinants of Rebel Group Splintering and Structural Integrity." Paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA, February 18-21.
- Ouchi, William G. 1977. "The Relationship Between Organizational Structure and Organizational Control." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 22(1):95-113.
- Owen, R.P. 1973. "Rebellion in Dhofar - A Threat to Western Interests in the Gulf." *The World Today* 29(6):266-272.
- Pachico, Elyssa, and Jeremy McDermott. 2011. "Can the FARC Still Train Their Soldiers?" *InSight Crime*.  
[www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/inside-can-the-farc-still-train-their-soldiers/](http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/inside-can-the-farc-still-train-their-soldiers/)
- Paparone, C.R. 2002. "The Nature of Soldierly Trust." *Military Review* 45-53.
- Paret, Peter and John W. Shy. 1962. *Guerrillas in the 1960's*. New York: Praeger.
- Parker, Christopher S. 1999. "New Weapons for Old Problems: Conventional Proliferation and Military Effectiveness in Developing States." *International Security* 23(4):119-147.
- Parkinson, Sarah. 2014. "Money Talks: External Funding, Generational Effects, and Cohesion in Militant Organizations." Paper Presented at the Lansing B. Lee Jr./Bankard Seminar in Global Politics, University of Virginia, March 24th, 2014.
- Parkinson, Sarah. 2017. "Mythologies of Militancy: Ideology and Intimacy in Rebel Groups." Paper presented at the OCV Workshop, Yale University, November 6th, 2017.
- Parsons, Nigel. 2005. *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: From Oslo to al-Aqsa*. London: Routledge.
- Pateman, Roy. 1990a. "The Eritrean War." *Armed Forces & Society* 17(1):81-98.
- Pateman, Roy. 1990b. "Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite: Aspects of the Eritrean Revolution." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 28(3):457-472.
- Pateman, Roy. 1998. *Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea press.
- Pearlman, Wendy. 2009. "Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process." *International Security* 33(3):79-109.
- Peic, Goran. 2014. "Civilian Defense Forces, State Capacity, and Government Victory in Counterinsurgency Wars." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37(2):162-184.

- Perkins, Ken. 1988. *A Fortunate Soldier*. London: Brassey's Defence Publishers.
- Perkoski, Evan. 2015. "Organizational Fragmentation and Trajectory of Militant Splinter Groups." [PhD Dissertation]. University of Pennsylvania.
- Perrow, Charles. 1986. *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Petersen, Roger D. 2001. *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons From Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Peterson, J.E. 1977. "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation in the Arabian Peninsula: The Rebellion in Dhufar." *World Affairs* 139(4):278-295.
- Peterson, J.E. 2007. *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy*. London: SAQI Press.
- Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1981. *Power in Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company.
- Phillips, Gervase. 2011. "Military Morality Transformed: Weapons and Soldiers on the Nineteenth-Century Battlefield." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41(4):565-590.
- Pirson, Michael and Deepak Malhotra. 2011. "Foundations of Organizational Trust: What Matters to Different Stakeholders?" *Organization Science* 22(4):1087-1144.
- Pischedda, Costantino. 2015. "Wars Within Wars: Understanding Inter-rebel Fighting." [PhD Dissertation: Columbia University].
- Pollack, Kenneth M. 2002. *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Pool, David. 1980. *Eritrea: Africa's Longest War*. London: Anti-Slavery Society.
- Pool, David. 1980. "Revolutionary Crisis and Revolutionary Vanguard: The Emergence of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front." *Review of African Political Economy* 19:33-47.
- Pool, David. 1998. "The Eritrean People's Liberation Front." In *African Guerrillas*, edited by Christopher Clapham. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Pool, David. 2001. *From Guerrillas to Government: The Eritrean People's Liberation Front*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Posen, Barry. 1993. "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power." *International Security* 18(2):80-124.
- Price, D. L. 1975. "Oman: Insurgency and Development." *Conflict Studies* 53.
- Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience.



- Pugh, D.S., D. J. Hickson, C. R. Hinings, K. M. Macdonald, C. Turner and T. Lupton. 1963. "A Conceptual Scheme for Organizational Analysis." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 8(3):289-315.
- Pugh, D.S., D. J. Hickson, C. R. Hinings, and C. Turner. 1968. "Dimensions of Organization Structure." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 13(1):65-105.
- Purdon, Corran. 1993. *List The Bugle: Reminiscences of an Irish Soldier*. Antrim, Northern Ireland: Greystone Books.
- Quandt, William B. 1971. *Palestinian Nationalism: Its Political and Military Dimensions*. RAND Report R-782-ISA. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Quandt, William B. 1973. "Political and Military Dimensions of Contemporary Palestinian Nationalism." In *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, edited by William B. Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Quinlivan, James T. 1999. "Coups-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East." *International Security* 24(2):131-165.
- Raab, David. 2007. *Terror in Black September: The First Eyewitness Account of the Infamous 1970 Hijackings*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rabi, Uzi. 2006. *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa'id bin Taymur, 1932-1970*. Brighton: Sussex.
- Ramadan, Wafiq. 1971. *AlUrdun: Harb Alikhwa (Jordan: War of Brothers)*. Beirut: Al-Nahar Press Services.
- Rashid, Nathir. 2015. *Mudhakarati: Hisab al-saraya wa hisab al-qaraya (My Memoirs: Account of the Decision-makers and Account of the Villages)*. Amman: Al-Ahliyya for Publishing and Distribution.
- Ray, Bryan. 2008. *Dangerous Frontiers: Campaigning in Somaliland and Oman*. South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military.
- Redeker Hepner, Tricia. 2009. *Soldiers, Martyrs, Traitors, and Exiles: Political Conflict in Eritrea and the Diaspora*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Regan, Patrick. 1996. "Conditions for Successful Third-Party Interventions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40(1):336-59.
- Reno, William. 2002. "The Politics of Insurgency in Collapsing States." *Development & Change* 33(5):837-858.
- Reno, William. 2007. "Patronage Politics and the Behavior of Armed Groups." *Civil Wars* 9(4):324-342.
- Reno, William. 2011. *Warfare in Independent Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robins, Philip. 2004. *A History of Jordan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Romanelli, Elaine. 1991. "The Evolution of New Organizational Forms." *Annual Review of Sociology* 17:79-103.
- Ross, Michael. 2003. "Oil, Drugs, and Diamonds: The Varying Roles of Natural Resources in Civil War." In *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*, edited by Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Rosseau, Denise M., Sim B. Sitkin, Ronald S. Burt, and Colin Camerer. 1998. "Not So Different After All: A Cross-Discipline View of Trust." *Academy of Management Review* 23(3):393-404.
- Rotter, Julian B. 1967 "A new scale for measurement of interpersonal trust." *Journal of Personality* 35(4):651-666.
- Rotter, Julian B. 1971. "Generalized Expectancies for Interpersonal Trust." *American Psychologist* 26(5):443-452.
- Rubin, Avshalom Haviv. 2010. "The Limits of The Land: Israel, Jordan, the United States, and the Fate of the West Bank, 1949-1970." [PhD Dissertation]. University of Chicago.
- Sabbe, Osman Saleh. 1970. *The History of Eritrea*. Beirut: Dar Al-Masirah.
- Sabhi, Ibrahim bin Mahmoud bin Saeed. 2009. *AlTattawur AlTarikhi liDowlat AlMu'assasat fi Sultanat 'Uman (Historical Developments of State Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman)*. Mu'assasa 'Uman LilSahafa wa AlNashr wa Ali'alan.
- Saif, Abdulrahman Ahmad. 2015. *Tatawwur Dawlat Saltanat 'Uman (Evolution of the State of the Sultanate of Oman)*. Amman: Dar AlMu'tazz lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'.
- Salibi, Kamal. 1993. *The Modern History of Jordan*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2001. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part I)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(3): 259-282.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004a. "What is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6):814-858.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004b. "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2):259-279.
- Sambanis, Nicholas and Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl. 2015. "Civil War as Sovereignty Rupture: Coding Intra-State Conflict, 1945-2012." Working Paper, Yale University and University of Virginia.
- Sanin, Francisco Gutierrez. 2008. "Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War." *Politics & Society* 36(1):3-34.

- Sanin, Francisco Gutierrez and Antonio Giustozzi. 2010. "Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33:836-853.
- Sanin, Francisco Gutierrez and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2014. "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2):213-226.
- Sati-Ayoubi, Nur. 2014. *Lighting a Small Candle That Continues to Grow Brightly: Dr. Sami Khoury's Memoirs*. Amman, Jordan: National Press.
- Sayari, Sabri and Bruce Hoffman. 1991. *Urbanization and Insurgency: The Turkish Case, 1976-1980*. RAND Corporation.
- Sayigh, Yezid. 1997. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schneider, Benjamin. 1987. "The People Make the Place." *Personnel Psychology* 40:437-453.
- Schneider, James J. 1987. "The Theory of the Empty Battlefield." *Military Science* 132(3):37-44.
- Schubert, Frank. 2006. "'Guerrillas Don't Die Easily': Everyday Life in Wartime and the Guerrilla Myth in the National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981-1986." *International Review of Social History* 51(1):93-111.
- Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonah. 2012. "Dynamics of Civil Wars: The Causes and Consequences of Subsidies to Armed Groups." [PhD Dissertation]. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Seawright, Jason and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2):294-308.
- Selassie, Bereket Habte. 2007. *The Crown and The Pen: The Memoirs of a Lawyer Turned Rebel*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Serequeberhan, Tsenay. 1989. "The Eritrean People's Liberation Front: A Case Study in the Rhetoric and Practice of African Liberation." Research Report, William Monroe Trotter Institute, University of Massachusetts at Boston.
- Shapiro, Jacob. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sharabi, Hisham. 1970. "Palestine Guerrillas: Their Credibility and Effectiveness." Supplementary Papers of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University.
- Shaver, Andrew and Jacob Shapiro. 2015. "The Effect of Civilian Casualties on Wartime Informing: Evidence from the Iraq War." Paper presented at the Insurgency Board, RAND Corporation, April 7th, 2015.

- Shraah, Ibrahim Faour. 2011. "Jordan's Military and Developmental Role in the Sultanate of Oman in 1975: 'The Jordanian Military Archive Source.'" *Social and Human Scientific Studies* 38(3):827-848. (Accessed at: <http://journals.ju.edu.jo/DirasatHum/article/view/2990/2634>).
- Shemesh, Moshe. 1996. *The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974: Arab Politics and the PLO*. London: Frank Cass.
- Sherman, Richard. 1980. *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution*. New York: Praeger Special Studies.
- Shils, Edward A. and Morris Janowitz. 1948. "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12(2):280-315.
- Shlaim, Avi. 2009. *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Siebold, Guy L. 2007. "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion." *Armed Forces & Society* 33(2):286-295.
- Sinno, Abdulkader. 2008. *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Sishagne, Shumet. 1989. "The Genesis of the Differences in the Eritrean Secessionist Movement (1960-1970)." In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Volume 2*, edited by Taddese Beyene. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- Sishagne, Shumet. 2007. *Unionists and Separatists: The Vagaries of Ethio-Eritrean Relation 1941-1991*. Hollywood, CA: Tsehai Publishers & Distributors.
- Six, Frederique. 2007. "Building interpersonal trust within organizations: a relational signalling perspective." *Journal of Management & Governance* 11(3):285-309.
- Six, Frederique and Arndt Sorge. 2008. "Creating a High-Trust Organization: An Exploration into Organizational Policies that Stimulate Interpersonal Trust Building." *Journal of Management Studies* 45(5):857-884.
- Slater, Dan and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(10):1301-1327.
- Smith, M.L.R. 2003. "Guerrillas in the mist: reassessing strategy and low intensity warfare." *Review of International Studies* 29:19-37.
- Spencer, David E. 1990. "Urban Combat Doctrine of the Salvadoran FMLN." *Infantry* 80(5):17-19.
- Staniland, Paul. 2012a. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security* 37(1):142-177.
- Staniland, Paul. 2012b. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1):16-40.

- Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 1965. "Social Structure and Organizations." In *Handbook of Organizations*, edited by J.G. March. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Strachan, Hew. 2006. "Training, Morale and Modern War." *Journal of Contemporary History* 41(2):211-227.
- Suleiman, Fahd and Mu'astim Hammadeh. 2012. *Aishu Min 'Ajil Filastin: Shuhada' AlJabha AlDimoqratiyya liTahrir Filastin (They Lived for Palestine: Martyrs of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine)*. Beirut: Dar AlTaqaddum Al'Arabi.
- Susser, Asher. 1994. *On Both Banks of the Jordan: A Political Biography of Wasfi Al-Tall*. Essex: Frank Cass & Co.
- Sweeney, Patrick J. 2010. "Do Soldiers Reevaluate Trust in Their Leaders Prior to Combat Operations?" *Military Psychology* 22:S70-S88.
- Sweeney, Patrick J., Vadia Thompson, and Hart Blanton. 2009. "Trust and Influence in Combat: An Interdependence Model." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 39(1):235-264.
- Taber, Robert. 1965. *War of the Flea: A Study of Guerrilla Warfare Theory and Practise*. New York: L. Stuart.
- Takriti, Abdelrazzaq. 2013. *Monsoon Revolution: Republicans, Sultans, and Empires in Oman , 1965-1976*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Al-Tal, Said. 2010. *Al-Urdun wa Filistin: Wajhat Nathar 'Arabiya (Jordan and Palestine: Arab Point of View)*. Amman: Mu'assassa AlWiraq Lilnashr wa AlTawzi'.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. 2011. "Explaining Military Effectiveness: Political Intervention and Battlefield Performance." [PhD Dissertation]. MIT.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. 2015. *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tanner, Harold M. 2014. "Learning Through Practice: Lin Biao and the Transition to Conventional Combined Operations in China's Northeast, 1946-1948." *Journal of Chinese Military History* 3:3-46.
- Taw, Jennifer Morrison and Bruce Hoffman. 1994. *The Urbanization of Insurgency: The Potential Challenge to U.S. Army Operations*. RAND Corporation.
- Teclesion, Mebrahtu. 2007. "The Development of Eritrean Aspiration for Independence and the United States (1941-1974)." In *Proceedings of a Workshop on Aspects of Eritrean History, 20-21 September 2005, Asmara*, edited by Tekeste Melake. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Tedla, Michael Weldeghiorghis. 2014. "The Eritrean Liberation Front: Social and Political Factors Shaping Its Emergence, Development and Demise, 1960-1981." [MPhil Thesis: Universteit Leiden].

- Terrill, W. Andrew. 2001. "The Political Mythology of the Battle of Karameh." *The Middle East Journal* 55(1):91-111.
- Tesfai, Alemseged. 2002. *Two Weeks in the Trenches: Reminiscences of Childhood and War in Eritrea*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Tesfai, Brook. 2007. "The Demise of the Red Star Campaign, 1982." In *Proceedings of a Workshop on Aspects of Eritrean History, 20-21 September 2005, Asmara*, edited by Tekeste Melake. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Thompson, James D. 1967. *Organizations in Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Thwaites, Peter and Simon Sloane. 1995. *Muscat Command*. Barnsley, UK: Leo Cooper.
- Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Indianapolis: Addison-Wesley.
- Toft, Monica Duffy. 2010. "Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?" *International Security* 34(4):7-36.
- Toft, Monica Duffy and Yuri Zhukov. 2015. "Islamists and Nationalists: Rebel Motivation and Counterinsurgency in Russia's North Caucasus." *American Political Science Review* 109(2):222-238.
- Tompkins Jr., Paul J. and Chuck Crossett. 2012. *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare, Volume II: 1962-2009*. USASOC.
- Townsend, John. 1977. *Oman: The Making of a Modern State*. London: Croom Helm.
- Trabulsi, Fawwaz. 1972. "The Liberation of Dhofar." *MERIP Reports* 6:3-11.
- Trabulsi, Fawwaz. 2004. *Dhofar: Shehada min Zaman AlThawrah (Dhofar: Witness from the Time of the Revolution)*. Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- Tremayne, Penelope. 1974. "Guevara Through the Looking Glass: a View of the Dhofar War." *RUSI* 113(9):39-43.
- Tremayne, Penelope. 1975. "From Resistance to Revolution." *The Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 105:36-50.
- Trevaskis, G.K.N. 1960. *Eritrea, A Colony in Transition: 1941-52*. London: Oxford.
- Tronvoll, Kjetil. 1998. *Mai Weini, A Highland Village in Eritrea: A Study of the People, Their Livelihood, and Land Tenure During Times of Turbulence*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Tseggai, Araya. 1988. "The History of the Eritrean Struggle." In *The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace*, edited by Lionel Cliffe and Basil Davidson. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Ugarriza, Juan E. 2009. "Ideologies and conflict in the post-Cold War." *International Journal of Conflict Management* 20(1):82-104.

- Ugarriza, Juan E. and Matthew J. Craig. "The Relevance of Ideology to Contemporary Armed Conflicts: A Quantitative Analysis of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(3):445-477.
- 'Umar, Mahjoub. 1977. "Aylul fi Janoub AlUrdunn (September in Southern Jordan)." *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 71.
- Van Creveld, Martin. 1982. *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Viterna, Jocelyn S. 2006. "Pulled, Pushed, and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army." *American Journal of Sociology* 112(1):1-45.
- Viterna, Jocelyn S. 2013. *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Waldner, David. 2007. "Transforming Inferences into Explanations: Lessons from the Study of Mass Extinctions." In *Theory and Evidence in Comparative Politics and International Relations*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow and Mark Irving Lichbach. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Waldner, David. 2012. "Process Tracing and Causal Mechanisms." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Social Science*, edited by Harold Kincaid. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Waldner, David. 2013. "What Makes Process Tracing Good? Causal Mechanisms, Causal Inference, and the Completeness Standard in Comparative Politics." In *Process Tracing in the Social Sciences: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, edited by Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Waldner, David. 2015a. "Causal Mechanisms and Qualitative Causal Inference in the Social Sciences." For inclusion in *Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Social Science: A Dialogue*, edited by Michiru Nagatsu and Attila Ruzzene.
- Waldner, David. 2015b. "Aspirin, Aeschylus, and the Foundations of Qualitative Causal Inference." Working Paper, University of Virginia.
- Waldner, David. 2015c. "Process Tracing and Qualitative Causal Inference." *Security Studies* 24(2):239-250.
- Waldner, David. 2016. "Invariant Causal Mechanisms." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 14(1/2):28-34.
- Walter, Barbara. 2002. *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Weinstein, Jeremy. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4):598-624.
- Weinstein, Jeremy. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Welch Jr., Claude. 1980. *The Anatomy of Rebellion*. Albany, NY: State University Press of New York.
- Weldeghiorghis, Michael. 2007. "Women in the Eritrean Struggle for Independence." In *Proceedings of a Workshop on Aspects of Eritrean History, 20-21 September 2005, Asmara*, edited by Tekeste Melake. Asmara: Hdri Publishers.
- Weldemichael, Awet T. 2009. "The Eritrean Long March: The Strategic Withdrawal of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), 1978-1979." *The Journal of Military History* 73(4):1231-1271.
- Weldemichael, Awet T. 2013. *Third World Colonialism and Strategies of Liberation: Eritrea and East Timor Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weldemichael, Awet T. 2013. "African Diplomacy of Liberation: The Case of Eritrea's Search for an 'African India.'" *Cahiers d'études africaines* 212:867-894.
- Weldemichael, Awet T. 2014. "Formative Alliances of Northeast African Insurgents: Eritrean Liberation Strategy and Ethiopian Armed Opposition, 1970s-1990s." *Northeast African Studies* 14(1):83-122.
- Wennmann, Achim. 2007. "The Political Economy of Conflict Financing: A Comprehensive Approach Beyond Natural Resources." *Global Governance* 13:427-444.
- Wessely, Simon. 2006. "Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown." *Journal of Contemporary History* 41(2):269-286.
- West, John. 2008. *Fry the Brain: The Art of Urban Sniping and Its Role in Modern Guerrilla Warfare*. Countryside, VA: Spartan Submissions Incorporated.
- White, Jeffrey, Andrew J. Tabler, and Aaron T. Zelin. 2013. *Syria's Military Opposition: How Effective, United, or Extremist?* Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
- Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. 1992. *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Woldemariam, Michael. 2011. "Why Rebels Collide: Factionalism and Fragmentation in African Insurgencies." [PhD Dissertation: Princeton University].
- Woldemariam, Michael. 2014. "Battlefield Outcomes and Rebel Cohesion: Lessons from the Eritrean Independence War." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0:1-22.
- Woldemichael, Berhane. 1989. "Ethiopian Military in Disarray." *Review of African Political Economy* 44:60-63.
- Woldemikael, Tekle Mariam. 1991. "Political Mobilization and Nationalist Movements: The Case of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front." *Africa Today* 38(2):31-42.
- Woldemikael, Tekle Mariam. 1993. "The Cultural Construction of Eritrean Nationalist Movements." In *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?*, edited by Crawford Young. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.



- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2000. *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003a. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003b. "Modeling Robust Settlements to Civil War: Indivisible Stakes and Distributional Compromises." SFI Working Paper 2003-10-056, Sante Fe Institute.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2009. "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics & Society* 37(1):131-162.
- Wood, Reed M. 2010. "Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence Against Civilians." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5):601-614.
- Worrall, James J. 2014. *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman: Political, Military, and Diplomatic Relations at the End of Empire*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co.
- Worsnop, Alec. 2017. "Who Can Keep the Peace? Insurgent Organizational Control of Collective Violence." *Security Studies*
- Wrong, Michela. 2005. *I Didn't Do It For You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Yayha, Abdulrazzaq. 2007. *Bayn Al'Askariyya wa alSiyasa: Dhikriyat (Between Military and Politics: Memoirs)*. Amman: Dar Al-Jaleel.
- Young, Eric. 1994. "The Victors and the Vanquished: The Role of Military Factors in the Outcome of Modern African Insurgencies." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 7(2):178-195.
- Young, John. 1996. "The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34(1):105-120.
- Young, John. 1997. *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaheer, Akbar, Bill McEvily, and Vincenzo Perone. 1998. "Does Trust Matter? Exploring the Effects of Interorganizational and Interpersonal Trust on Performance." *Organization Science* 9(2):141-159.
- Zand, Dale E. 1972. "Trust and Managerial Problem Solving." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17(2):229-239.
- Zartman, I. William. 1993. "The Unfinished Agenda: Negotiating Internal Conflicts." In *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End*, edited by Roy Licklider. New York: New York University Press.
- Zartman, I. William. 2000. "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond." In *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*, edited by Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

- Zelinsky, Aaron and Martin Shubik. 2009. "Research Note: Terrorist Groups as Business Firms: A New Typological Framework." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(2):327-336.
- Zeratsion, Samson. 2003. *The Final War*. Asmara: Sabur Printing Services.
- Zhukov, Yuri M. 2012. "Roads and the diffusion of insurgent violence: The logistics of conflict in Russia's North Caucasus." *Political Geography* 31:144-156.
- Ziemke, Jennifer J. 2008. "From Battles to Massacres." [PhD Dissertation]. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Ziyadaddine, Yaqoub. 2015. *AlBidayat: Sira Dhatiyya...Arba'een Sena fi AlHarakat AlWataniyya alUrduniyya (The Beginnings: Resume...Forty Years in the Jordanian National Movement)*. Amman: Dar Ward AlUrduniyya LilNashr wa Al-Tawzi'.