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AN ANALYSIS OF THE PALESTINE WAR (NOVEMBER 1947 - JANUARY 1949)  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

by

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THE PALESTINE WAR

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## ABSTRACT

The passage of the Plan of Partition by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 29, 1947, set into motion a series of events which is commonly referred to as the Palestine War - a struggle which involved the active participation of the armies of five Arab countries (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Trans Jordan, and Egypt) against the Jews in Palestine and the powerful and globe-girdling World Zionist Organization.

The purpose of this thesis is to give the reader an analysis of the war with particular emphasis devoted to its military considerations. This will include a study of the strategical and tactical concepts involved, and their effect on the course of the war.

"Strategy" is a term which has been given many definitions, but in the opinion of the writer, one of the best is that given by B. H. Liddell-Hart, in his book, Strategy - The Indirect Approach, which defines it as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the end of policy." During the Palestine war the outward and declared policy of the Jews in Palestine and the World Zionist Organization which supported them, was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The Arab states, on the other hand, were determined to prevent the realization of such an undertaking. This thesis is a study of the manner in which the military means of the various participants

in the war were utilized to achieve their policy aims. As such, the tactics employed by the participants, or in more simple terms, the handling of their troops in battle or in the immediate presence of the enemy, has also been considered.

In the following pages, the reader will find in addition to the military considerations affecting the war, a coverage of the conflict as it extended from November 29, 1947, to the signing of the cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel on January 7, 1949. This includes a summary of the United Nations efforts to bring the conflict to a halt and shows how United Nations action affected the strategy and tactics employed by the belligerents. The reader will also find hints of the rivalries and political tensions which existed among the Arab participants in the war, and he will become aware of their damaging effect on the feelings of cooperation and co-ordination between the Arab states, and their ultimate effect on the Arab effort in the war.

The reader is cautioned to remember, however, that this is not a political analysis, or an attempt to delve into the reasons behind the deficiencies of this or that army in the field. For example, in the following pages it is pointed out that the Arab states had no joint plan for the control and co-ordination of their armies in the field. No attempt is made, however, to give the reasons behind this failure, because they are deep and many with roots going far back into the period preceding the

Palestine war. Any such attempt would detract from the purpose of the thesis which is primarily concerned with the manner in which the lack of any joint plan affected the course and the final outcome of the war.

The writer has made a determined effort to obtain the facts regarding the war, but he has been limited in this direction by his lack of fluency in reading the many Arabic language sources which are so important for an honest appraisal of the war. His utilization of such sources was necessarily limited, although several which were deemed important for certain phases of the war, were utilized.

The war has been divided into six different phases, with one chapter being devoted to a study of each. Within each chapter the reader will find the conclusions of the writer with respect to that phase. It is the writer's opinion that conclusions with regard to the Palestine war must be studied in context with the events as they happened, and that any over-all conclusions with respect to military considerations would be misleading to the reader.

The war in Palestine is still a closed story, and it will remain such until the various governments involved see fit to release official facts and figures with regard to the size of their armies which participated in the war, and the type and amount of armament with which they were equipped. The information available and utilized in reference to these considerations is largely

from eye-witness accounts and is in no instance the product of official government releases.

Two maps identified as the 1:250,000 Palestine - North Sheet, and the 1:250,000 Palestine - South Sheet, reproduced and printed by the No. 1 Base Survey Drawing and Photo Process Office, April 1946, from negatives supplied by Survey of Palestine, were utilized to obtain the names and spelling of places in Palestine. In cases where a name was preceded by the prefix "el," such as in "el-Auja," it has been changed by the writer to read "al-Auja" in accordance with the more commonly accepted form of transliteration.

Other maps utilized for obtaining place names were the 1:100,000 Palestine series published by the United States Army Map Service in 1948.

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THE WAR BEGINS

On the 29th of November, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations, by a vote of 33 to 13, with 10 abstentions,<sup>1</sup> adopted the Plan of Partition,<sup>2</sup> which recommended the partition of Palestine into three parts, comprising an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an international enclave of Jerusalem (see map - Annex A). The Partition Plan, which had been the end result of a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) report, was hailed with almost unanimous enthusiasm by the Jewish community,<sup>3</sup> but was referred to by the Arabs of Palestine as the "Death of a Thousand Cuts."<sup>4</sup> By its provisions the approximately 750,000 Jews of Palestine,<sup>5</sup> who had previously owned 1,588,365 dunums<sup>6</sup> out of a total of 25 million dunums of land,<sup>7</sup> or approximately 7% of the total land area of Palestine, were to be given 55% whereas the Arab population of approximately 1,300,000 Arabs were to be given 45% of the total land area of the country.<sup>8</sup>

The Arab reaction was unanimous in its condemnation of the resolution, and soon began to express itself in a series of violent acts against the Jewish segment of the population. Upon receiving notice of the passage of the Partition Plan, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who was then in Damascus in exile from Palestine, issued an order calling for a three-day strike. On December the 2nd, riots broke out in Jerusalem and Arab demonstrators burned a Jewish shopping quarter causing extensive damage. The

Jews loudly complained during these disturbances of what they called the "complaisant attitude" of the British Security Forces, as evidenced by their failure to react quickly and energetically in putting a stop to the actions of the rioting Arabs. The fact that the police and the military forces did no more than their strict duty on this occasion is true. Since the end of the Second World War, Jewish terrorists had killed 127 British soldiers and injured 331,<sup>9</sup> and at this point their feelings towards the Jewish population had reached such a pitch that their apparent reluctance to rush forward and defend Jewish property is not hard to find.

On December the 4th, began a series of attacks on Jewish convoys utilizing the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road, and by the 9th of December, the riots in Jerusalem had spread to Haifa. There were also disturbances in the mixed quarter between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. On December the 11th, a Jewish convoy to the Kfar Etzion group of settlements south of Jerusalem, was attacked on the Hebron road, and in another attack on the following day, on a convoy to the same place, nine Jews were killed. On the 13th, fourteen Jews were killed near Lydda, with five having been killed near Beersheba on the preceding day.

The Jewish reaction to these incidents was immediate, and the Jewish dissident organization of the Haganah,<sup>10</sup> and the more independent Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL),<sup>11</sup> and the Stern Group,<sup>12</sup> began a policy of retaliation, and the scene in Palestine descended to

one of outrage being answered by outrage.

On January 4, 1948, some Jews, dressed as Arabs, drove a lorry containing high explosives into a narrow lane in Jaffa, parked it next to an office building, and blew it up, resulting in a large number of Arabs being killed and wounded. On the following day in Jerusalem, the Arab-owned Semiramis Hotel in the Katamon district, was blown up, with a loss of twenty lives including that of the Spanish Consul. The Haganah claimed responsibility for the act, claiming that the hotel had been the headquarters of Arab terrorists.

The Arabs struck back, and on the 1st of February, blew up the offices of the Jewish-owned Palestine Post. Jewish retaliation on the 18th of February, resulted in six Arabs being killed and thirty-two wounded, as the result of an explosion in a Ramle market place. On the 20th of February, several buildings were demolished by explosives placed in Ben Yehuda Street, the heart of the Jewish business section in Tel Aviv, with over fifty Jews being killed and seventy injured. The Jewish Agency accused the British of complicity and as a result several British soldiers, engaged in rescue work, were killed by Jews. This still further heightened the tension between the British and the Jews.

On March the 1st, the Jewish Stern Group retaliated and blew up a modern building in Haifa in which fourteen lives were lost; whereas on the 11th a wing of the Jewish Agency building in

Jerusalem was demolished, and twelve Jews were killed and ninety injured.

Thus went the tale of outrage and counter-outrage throughout the first phase of the war.<sup>13</sup>

Of the Jews in Palestine, about half were located in the three cities of Tel Aviv (150,000), Jerusalem (100,000), and Haifa (80,000). Half of the remainder were distributed throughout the country in rural agricultural settlements, while the remaining half formed communities in the smaller towns such as Safad and Tiberias. The Jewish agricultural settlements were widely scattered, there being thirty-five in the Valley of Esdraelon, 150 on the coastal plain, forty in the hill country, forty-nine in the northern region of the Jordan Valley, one at the northern end of the Dead Sea, and twenty-five in the Negev.<sup>14</sup> The isolation of many of the settlements and their almost complete dependence on supplies from outlying areas, served to channel the early Arab actions, taken against Jewish convoys,<sup>15</sup> into a pattern of strategy, with the Arabs seeking to occupy the ground dominating the various main roads, and thus obtaining a strangle-hold on communications. They concentrated particularly on the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road, and the Jerusalem-Hebron road, with the object of making it difficult or impossible for the Jews to send supplies along them.

The over-all defensive effort of the Palestinian Arabs at

this stage, however, was largely uncoordinated and unorganized, with action being undertaken by small groups from a particular area, without any regard for coordination with groups from another area. The general feeling which seemed to pervade the Arab community was that if they could effectively blockade the Jewish settlements in their own immediate area, that the settlements would eventually be forced to surrender....a logical deduction if only it had been supported by an over-all organization which could have assigned areas of responsibility and organized a system for the obtaining and supplying of additional arms and ammunition.

In the interim, outside of Palestine, the Arab League continued in its unrealistic attitude towards the Palestine situation....unrealistic in the sense that they failed to recognize the great potential of the Palestinian Arab for defending himself, if only he was supplied with the requisite arms and ammunition, and given some sort of direction. In Palestine itself the Arab Higher Committee,<sup>16</sup> organized and directed at long distance by the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, set up some 275 local national committees in the various Arab towns and villages, whose responsibility was that of local defense. The Mufti and his immediate staff apparently realized the potential strength of the Jews in Palestine, and had consequently made the first move in preparing to counter this force. As to the degree of success of this newly

organized defensive system little can be said.<sup>17</sup> First of all, there was the difficulty in obtaining arms and ammunition to send to the various local national committees for distribution amongst their members, many of whom were armed only with a wide assortment of old and antiquated weapons, and oft times had no more than a few rounds of ammunition. In addition, there was a lack of qualified instructors to guide and train the recruits, who had been obtained by the committees. Thus, although the framework of an over-all directional effort had been initiated, it was floundering in its operational phase. Training was at a low level, and little was accomplished in the way of unifying the efforts of the local groups. As a consequence, the strength which is inherent in control and concentration of force, continued to be lacking amongst the Palestinian Arabs.

On the other side, the Jews also realized the value of the communications network, and particularly that the survival of their many scattered and oft times isolated settlements, depended on the supplies and ammunition that they received via the traffic which moved over the roads.

At first their answer to the Arab domination of the commanding terrain features along the major lines of communication, was to try and supply their settlements by convoys of vehicles escorted by home-made armoured vehicles. The convoy method of supply, however, was far from successful. The nature of the

terrain was such that the convoys were almost completely road-bound, and as such were constantly liable to ambush. The Jewish Agency was strong in its condemnation of the Mandatory Government's attitude with regard to providing protection for the convoys. In a memorandum presented by the Jewish Agency to the United Nations Palestine Commission,<sup>18</sup> it was stated that a senior official of the Mandatory Government had informed the Jewish Agency on December 3, 1947, that it might be interpreted as British implementation of partition, if it was to provide escorts for the supply convoys. The memorandum went on to say that the British, in addition, refused to authorize the Jews to provide their own protection by using the armoured cars, which the Jewish Settlement Police had acquired during the Arab Rebellion of 1936-1939, or to allow the passengers or drivers to carry arms, which resulted in almost completely halting all traffic to the settlements. It was claimed that while the British forces had received orders to observe strict neutrality between the two warring communities, such orders were generally interpreted in a manner prejudicial to the Jews.<sup>19</sup>

The Mandatory Government, on the other hand, refused to openly give its approval for the use of armoured vehicles in escorting convoys, or for the Haganah to come into the open, on the ground that it was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the country until the termination of the mandate. On

December 25, 1947, the Government announced that its security forces would thereafter assure the safety of all traffic on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road, however, the ability of the Government to implement its decision was evidenced, when, on the following day seven Jewish travelers on the road were ambushed and killed.<sup>20</sup>

In December, the governments of the members of the Arab League, as distinct from the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine, openly gave their approval of armed intervention in Palestine by irregular forces. A call for volunteers to fight the Jews went out, and recruiting centers were set up in Damascus, Beirut, Baghdad, and Cairo.

Syria appears to have been entrusted with the chief responsibility for the organizing, training, and arming of the volunteers who had answered the appeal of the Arab League, and a barracks in Damascus was converted into a training center for what was eventually to evolve into the Arab Liberation Army, (ALA).<sup>21</sup> A number of regular Syrian army officers resigned to train the volunteers, and they were aided in their task by a number of European instructors.<sup>22</sup> The army was put under the command of Fawzi al-Qawuqji,<sup>23</sup> a soldier with a background more ideally suited to that of small-scale guerrilla operations, than to the responsibility involved in the control and coordination of an army of volunteers of all ranks and types, and one which was to operate largely on its own initiative during the early phases of the Arab-



Jewish conflict.<sup>24</sup>

On January 9, 1948, the first large-scale attempt by the irregular forces to carry out an organized attack on a Jewish settlement occurred when 600<sup>25</sup> Arab irregulars crossed the border of Syria into Palestine, and attacked the settlements of Dan and Kfar Szold. The defenders of the two settlements managed to hold off the attackers until British troops, supported by armoured cars, arrived on the scene and persuaded the Arabs to call off the attack and to retire into Syria. The British Government thereupon made diplomatic overtures to Syria to insure that there would be no further occurrences of this type, while Britain was exercising the mandate.<sup>26</sup>

Diplomatic negotiations notwithstanding, however, by the latter part of January large detachments of the ALA had begun to infiltrate into Palestine. According to one account,<sup>27</sup> the Military Committee of the Arab League decided to send the first unit into Palestine via Trans Jordan. When the unit reached Deraa on the Syrian-Trans Jordanian border, responsible Jordanian officials in Amman were contacted in order to obtain the necessary permission to allow the unit to pass. Before replying, however, the matter was raised to Sir Alec S. Kirkbride, British Minister in Trans Jordan, who opposed allowing the force of irregulars to cross Trans Jordanian territory into Palestine, on the ground that the Mandatory Government was still responsible for the security of

Palestine, and that the entrance of the force would only increase their difficulties in maintaining law and order.

However, in view of the recriminations which they knew would come from the surrounding Arab states if permission for the unit to cross into Palestine was withheld, Kirkbride and Glubb Pasha eventually gave their approval in accordance with the following listed conditions:<sup>28</sup>

1. That the unit pass secretly after midnight;
2. That the unit pass in one group and be escorted by Trans Jordanian guards in the front and the rear, until it crossed the border into Palestine;
3. That the unit should not pass to the Jerusalem area, but to an area which was defined as Arab under the Partition Plan of November, 1947.

The conditions were accepted, and the unit, under the command of Mohammad Safa and Mohammad al-Huidi, passed through Irbid at night and proceeded to the Nablus district in Palestine where it set up its bivouac.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the months of January and February, the infiltration of the irregular forces into Palestine was continued, with many of the irregular detachments entering Palestine via Trans Jordanian bridges across the Jordan River, with no order having been given to the Arab Legion to oppose their passage.<sup>30</sup> As a result, on February the 14th, the Haganah blew up five

bridges in Galilee in an alleged attempt to check the infiltration.<sup>31</sup>

By the 1st of March it was estimated that a total of seven detachments with a strength of around 5,000 men, had made their way into the country.<sup>32</sup> All its members had been trained to a certain level,<sup>33</sup> and carried a firearm of some description, although there was no standardization in this respect. The heavy equipment "was thought"<sup>34</sup> to include a small number of artillery pieces, a few armoured cars, and several tracked vehicles.<sup>35</sup> The army was not supplied with aircraft.

In Palestine, the ALA was divided up into four independent commands, which have been described as follows:<sup>36</sup>

1. The northern command extended from the Syrian and Lebanese borders and included the cities of Nazareth, Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, and Acre. It was under the personal command of Fawzi al-Qawuqji, with its headquarters located in Tubas, and the bulk of its men concentrated in the Jenin-Tulkarm-Nablus triangle, which was one of the first areas to be evacuated by the British forces.

2. The eastern command was centered in Jerusalem and consisted of approximately 1,200 irregulars<sup>37</sup> under the command of Abdul Kader al-Husseini,<sup>38</sup> and included the cities of Ramallah, Jericho, and Hebron.

3. The western command, consisting of approximately 90

irregulars in the Jaffa area,<sup>39</sup> included the area of Lydda and Ramle, and was under the command of Hassan Salamat.<sup>40</sup>

4. The remaining southern command, which consisted of approximately 600 men in the Julis area,<sup>41</sup> was under the command of a Sudanese, Tariq al-Afriqi.<sup>42</sup>

The arrival of the irregular forces in Palestine had introduced an element of security and hope in the minds of the largely unarmed Palestinian Arabs, but their arrival had also served a negative purpose in that it still further directed the attention of the Arab world away from the necessity and the advantage of developing and organizing the potential strength of the Palestinian Arabs. In addition, with regard to the Palestinian Arabs themselves, the feeling of fear and frustration which they felt in facing what they knew to be a powerful, well armed, and organized Jewish element, while they themselves were unarmed and unorganized ....the feeling of knowing that they were at a disadvantage and of consequently wanting to improve their position....was replaced by a feeling of complacency with the arrival of the ALA. The rumors of its reported strength<sup>43</sup> were such that they felt that it would only be a short time before the Jews were completely crushed.

In the interim, the attacks on the Jewish convoys continued, and the Jewish Agency became more vociferous in its verbal attacks, and accusations of Arab impartiality, against the Mandatory Government. The Jewish contention was that the British,

under treaty, were supplying arms and ammunition to several members of the Arab League,<sup>44</sup> who were supporting the recruiting and arming of volunteers for the ALA, which was being organized and trained in Syria, and subsequently infiltrated into Palestine.

On February 6, 1948, the British Minister of Defense justified British arms deliveries into Arab countries by explaining that his Government had no reason to suppose that arms, assigned to Arab states under treaties, would find their way to Palestine. The statement referred to the new Anglo-Iraqi treaty, signed on January 15, 1948, in which Britain undertook to supply the forces of Iraq with arms, ammunition, aircraft, and other war material....<sup>45</sup>

Within Palestine proper, the British mandatory officials, adopted a non-involvement policy aimed at a speedy evacuation from the country with as little expense, and as little loss of life and face as possible.<sup>46</sup> In support of this policy her security forces were primarily concerned with withdrawal, and on January 20, 1948, the Government announced that predominantly Jewish or Arab areas would be progressively handed over to whichever side was in the clear majority, so that the British troops could concentrate at points of strategic importance, such as Jerusalem and Haifa. This had already been done in the case of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, when on December 15, 1947, the British announced that the policing of the Tel Aviv-Petah Tiqva district would be turned over to the Jews, whereas the policing of Jaffa would be an Arab responsibility.<sup>47</sup>

The Jewish Agency was told that the Haganah would not be interfered with, provided that it was used only in defense, and that there would be no more arms searches, except in the cases of abuse.<sup>48</sup>

In Palestine there were a large number of military camps, air-fields, supply depots, and other installations, which were a legacy of World War II, as well as forty police fortresses, which have been described as "the symbol of British power in Palestine."<sup>49</sup> With regard to military equipment, it was intended by the Mandatory Government to salvage as much as possible for evacuation, and to exercise a strictly neutral policy of not turning over anything to either side. With regard to the police fortresses, the camps, the air-fields, and immovable fortifications, however, it was a different story. Official British policy prior to the evacuation of any of these areas, was allegedly one of complete silence, with the selected date of evacuation a closely guarded secret. The Jews, however, having the advantage of both a central authority which issued orders and made plans, plus an excellent intelligence service, managed to occupy many of these places as the British pulled out. On the other hand, the Arabs in some cases were able to get the jump on the Jews. Charges of collaboration with the opposing side, were made against the British by Arabs and Jews alike, and it must be admitted that in several instances the human element, with its weaknesses, likes, and dislikes, undoubtedly played an

important part in determining which side was to get foreknowledge of any intended evacuation. In this phase, the Jews, with a ready available financial reserve, and an organized intelligence service which had penetrated the inner secrets of many of the administrative offices of the Mandatory Government, generally came out on top.

In February occurred the first all-out offensive action of Qawuqji's ALA. Qawuqji, who had crossed into Palestine on February the 12th,<sup>50</sup> was unwilling to adopt the strategy of the Palestinian Arabs of isolating the Jewish settlements and starving them into submission. It was his intention to push northwards from Tubas, occupying the Jewish settlements as he came to them, and then to carry out a full-scale operation westwards along the Valley of Esdraelon towards Haifa, with the objective of neutralizing all Jewish opposition in the area.

In initiating the opening phase of his operation, an ALA force composed of approximately 500 irregulars<sup>51</sup> moved out against the Jewish settlement of Tirat Zvi, which lies about five miles south of Beisan, and it was here that a forecast of future events, with relation to the ALA, was unfolded.

The operation was under the command of a Syrian whose instructions were to cut the roads leading to the settlement in order to prevent Jewish reinforcements or British troops from interfering with the operation. This done, he was to deploy his

force and invest the settlement, but under no circumstances was he to engage British troops.

In the execution of the plan, however, the demolition teams, whose job it was to destroy the culverts on the roads leading north from the settlement, failed to properly execute their task, and a small force of the 1st Parachute Battalion was subsequently able to by-pass the craters, and proceed to Tirat Zvi. In addition, the sounds of the demolitions apparently alerted the Jews to the impending attack, thus enabling them to fully execute their defensive preparations prior to the initial assault.

Although in command of a sufficient number of men to have enabled the ALA commander to utilize a flanking attack covered by heavy supporting fire, he carried out his initial assault at dawn on the 16th, in the form of a simple frontal attack, unsupported by adequate covering fire, and in a heavy rain which turned the battlefield into a sea of mud. The Jewish defenders, in well dug-in positions, were able to repulse the attack with heavy casualties being inflicted on the Arab force.<sup>52</sup>

With the initial assault broken, the Arabs began reorganizing for another attack. The Jews, however, were able to send out a request to a nearby settlement for police and military assistance and a platoon of the 1st Parachute Battalion stationed at Beisan went to the scene.

A conference between the Arab and British commanders,



resulted in the ALA commander agreeing to withdraw his force.<sup>53</sup>

In the execution of the attack, the ALA irregulars had exhibited much bravery and determination, but they had been employed in a manner which showed little appreciation of basic tactical principles. The attack had been carried out against a strongly fortified position, which had been fore-warned of the operation, thus denying the attacking force the benefit of the principle of surprise. In addition, it had been executed in the form of a frontal assault, over a wet and yielding surface, without any apparent consideration of the advantages to be gained by a flanking movement.

The only thing which could be said to explain the action of the ALA commander, is that he had undoubtedly expected the settlement to offer little resistance, and thus, his attack plan had been drawn up with little consideration being given to alternatives. As to whether the irregulars had learned anything by the operation remained to be seen. One major point had definitely been revealed....the settlements were well-armed and well-defended, and were determined to stand and fight rather than to surrender or withdraw. Such a realization should definitely have been considered by Qawuqji in the formulation of his plans for the future employment of his force. The Jews were at this stage in possession of only 7% of the total land area of Palestine.<sup>54</sup> This fact, plus the exhibited defensive capabilities of the Jewish settlements,

dictated that the Arab effort should be expended in defense and not offense. Subsequent events, however, indicated that this consideration was wholly ignored by the ALA.

In the Jerusalem area, the outlook for the Jews in February, 1948, was dim and unpromising. In the New City of Jerusalem, surrounded by Arab territory, were an estimated 100,000 Jews, while in the Jewish quarter of the Old City, were reputedly another 1,700. To the north of Jerusalem, on the road to Ramallah, were the two isolated Jewish settlements of Nebi Yacob and Atarot, while to the south of Jerusalem lay the Kfar Etzion group of settlements, which were also to a large extent isolated from outside assistance. The Jewish Mount Scopus position, which included the Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University, was completely cut off from the New City.

All supplies for the New City had to be brought from the coast along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road which passed through a sector of territory which was completely dominated by the Arabs, and which was topographically ideal for ambush.<sup>55</sup>

The principal problems facing the Jews of the New City at this date, were food, ammunition, and water shortages. The latter difficulty sprang from the fact that the water supply for Jerusalem came from the wells at Ras al-Ein, which was located approximately twelve miles to the east of Tel Aviv. From this point the water was pumped to Jerusalem by a series of pumping

stations, several of which were in Arab hands. To face these problems a special committee was appointed in February for the purpose of studying the matter, but it was slow in making constructive recommendations. Eventually it set about to the repairing and filling of the old rain-water cisterns, which were contained in many of the older houses and buildings. The progress of the committee, however, remained slow, and in April, Ben Gurion granted its chairman dictatorial powers in order to effectively meet the emergency which was facing them. All stocks of food-stuffs and fuel were requisitioned and a system of rationing was introduced. Large supply convoys from the coast were organized, but only the first two got through safely, with a third convoy being ambushed and forced to turn back.

In February, Colonel Shaltiel, a Haganah officer, had been put in command of the Jerusalem district. Shaltiel had served his apprenticeship in the French Foreign Legion, and thus had a fair background of military training. In Jerusalem, however, he was faced with political as well as military problems, and in addition he had to deal with the confusion and friction which arose in his command over the existence of the independent IZL and Stern Group, and the partly independent Palmach,<sup>56</sup> which took its orders, not from Shaltiel, but directly from the Jewish leaders.

Shaltiel's initial estimate of the situation in Jerusalem

was far from optimistic in view of the military disadvantages, which centered around the difficulties of obtaining supplies, the shortage of water, the high average age of the Jewish population, and the large number of orthodox Jews who refused to fight on religious principles. The fighting force over which he exercised direct control, consisted of approximately a thousand members of the Haganah. Of the independent forces, the IZL allegedly had three armed platoons,<sup>57</sup> while the Stern Group in the area numbered approximately 200 men.<sup>58</sup> The strength of the Palmach fluctuated, in that their orders were received directly from the Jewish leaders, and they were shifted from one part of the country to another as their services were needed. They were not tied down to one commander or relegated to a particular locality.

In view of the military disadvantages of his position, Shaltiel estimated that he could hold the then occupied area of New Jerusalem, and perhaps even extend it, but he did not think that it would be possible to continue to supply and support the outlying settlements, especially in view of their isolated position, and the difficulty in forcing supplies through to them. He recommended that the Jews be withdrawn from the Old City, Atarot, Nebi Yacob, and Kfar Etzion, and that their garrisons be concentrated under him in the New City. He felt that if these changes were carried out, he would be able to hold out indefinitely in the New City, and upon the receipt of reinforcements he would be able

to advance to the south and take the territory surrounding Beit Jala and Bethlehem.

Political considerations, however, took priority, and his recommendations were rejected. He was ordered to continue to hold all the ground which was then under Jewish occupation, and to advance whenever and wherever possible. The Jewish High Command considered that any evacuation would be bad for morale, and that Kfar Etzion, Atarot, and Nebi Yacob, which had already held out for several months, should be able to continue to do so.

On the Arab side, the situation in the Jerusalem area, at an outward glance was good, with the Arab irregular forces in the area under the command of Abdul Kader al-Husseini, a man of great determination and courage. It is difficult to estimate the number of troops under his command due to the drifting in and out of the area of small irregular groups. It can be assumed, however, that they were at least equal in number to the Jewish defenders, and they "anticipated" a large increase in strength.<sup>59</sup>

Strategically, the Arab position was definitely better than that of the Jews in that they had the advantage of being able to maneuver. They had occupied all of the major terrain features which commanded the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road from Latrun to the outskirts of the New City, and they were confident that they could starve the Jews into submission. It is doubtful, however, that an Arab offensive at this stage, directed against

the New City, would have succeeded due to the relatively equal strength of the opposing Jewish forces in the area.

Thus, at the end of March, 1948, the situation in Palestine, as it appeared to the outside world, was that of the Jews striving desperately to maintain their position in Palestine until the end of the mandate on May the 14th, and the Arabs, strongly opposed to any plan of partition, gradually building up to a point where they would eventually be able to completely crush all Jewish resistance.

In the United Nations, however, events were taking a trend which was to radically effect the course of action adopted by the Jewish Agency in the succeeding months of April and May. The five-power Palestine Commission,<sup>60</sup> which had been appointed to implement the General Assembly's Partition Plan, began its work on January the 9th at Lake Success, but found that the fighting in Palestine had served to increase the unwillingness of Britain to assist it in carrying the Assembly's resolution into effect. The British delegation informed the Commission, that in the opinion of the Mandatory Government, if the Commission proceeded to Palestine, it would be in danger of attack by the Arabs, and could definitely expect no cooperation in the implementation of the Partition Plan from the Arab communities.<sup>61</sup> They further stated that the British Government would not be responsible for the Commission's safety, or relinquish partial authority to it before the date on which they

had decided to terminate the mandate (14 May 1948), and that the Committee should therefore not appear in Palestine until a fortnight before the end of the mandate.<sup>62</sup> In addition, it was indicated that the British Government could not comply with the Assembly's resolution<sup>63</sup> to provide the Jews with a seaport, and hinterland for immigration, in that the arrival of large numbers of immigrants and possibly arms, would further inflame the country, and make the withdrawal of the British members of the Palestine administration, and the evacuation of British troops and supplies, more hazardous. Further, the British Government objected to allowing the proposed provisional councils of the Jewish and Arab states to exercise legal authority, or to authorize the formation of armed militias before the end of the mandate.<sup>64</sup>

As the British continued in their withdrawal from Palestine, they made little provision for the shifting of the governmental responsibilities to either the Arabs or the Jews. As a consequence, the two communities became more and more independent of mandatory authority, and were left to rely largely on their own internal organization, which in the case of the Jews, as exemplified in the Jewish Agency, was excellent, but which on the Arab side was weak. The only Arab organization which might have provided some sort of central local authority was the Arab Higher Committee, which had been reorganized and reestablished on November 23, 1945.<sup>65</sup>

Under these circumstances, the United Nations Palestine Commission, on February the 16th, submitted to the Security Council a special report on the problem of security in Palestine, in which it stressed the necessity of being provided with an "adequate non-Palestinian force" which could assist the Commission in carrying out the recommendations of the General Assembly.<sup>66</sup> On the 9th of January, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had told the Palestine Commission at its first meeting that, "You are entitled to be confident that, in the event that it should prove necessary, the Security Council will assume the full measure of responsibility in implementation of the Assembly's resolution."<sup>67</sup> When faced by the Commission's request for armed assistance, however, the matter proved to be less simple. The major responsibility for the supplying of an armed force would have rested on the United States, whose leaders were obliged to consider what the effect of such a move would have on the United States' oil reserves in the Arab countries. United States utilization of these reserves was vital if its own reserves in the Western Hemisphere were to be preserved as a strategic reserve.<sup>68</sup>

As a result, the State Department of the United States had reached the conclusion as early as January the 21st that the United Nations Partition Plan was not workable, and that the United States was under no obligation to support it, if it could



not be carried out without the use of force.<sup>69</sup>

On the 25th of February, the United States representative to the Security Council, Senator Warren Austin, proposed a draft resolution to the Security Council that, in view of the resolution of the General Assembly of 29 November 1947, and the subsequent special report<sup>70</sup> of the United Nations Palestine Commission on its implementation, that the five permanent members of the Security Council<sup>71</sup> should consider whether there was a threat to international peace and security. On March the 5th, the Security Council adopted the resolution, and requested the five permanent members to report to it, within ten days, on the result of their consultations.<sup>72</sup>

On the 19th of March, Senator Austin, reporting on the results of the deliberations of the five permanent members, declared<sup>73</sup> in effect, that the enforcement of the Partition Plan could not be carried out by peaceable means, and that the Security Council was thus obliged to take action which would bring about a cessation of violence, and the restoration of peace in Palestine. He continued by saying that in the opinion of the United States Government, a temporary trusteeship for Palestine should be set up under the Trusteeship Council, in order to give the Jews and the Arabs a further opportunity to reach an agreement regarding the future government of Palestine. To this end he recommended that the Security Council should call for an immediate special

session of the General Assembly to consider the establishment of a temporary trusteeship, and that in the interim, pending the meeting of the proposed special session of the Assembly, that the Security Council should instruct the Palestine Commission to suspend its efforts to implement partition.<sup>74</sup>

The Jews protested vehemently against this reversal of United States policy, and in Palestine the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi, on March 23, categorically rejected any plan to set up a trusteeship regime, even for a short period. The representative of the Jewish Agency to the United Nations, stated that the establishment of a trusteeship would not insure peace, and would have to be maintained by force.<sup>75</sup>

Unable to gain sufficient support for the trusteeship proposal, Senator Warren Austin, on the 30th of March, submitted two draft resolutions, which temporarily shelved the trusteeship proposal and called upon the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee to provide representatives to the Security Council for the purpose of arranging a truce. The resolutions emphasized the heavy responsibility which would fall on the party that failed to observe the truce, and requested the convocation of a special session of the General Assembly to consider further the question of the future government of Palestine.<sup>76</sup>

The Syrian and Egyptian delegates welcomed the proposal for a special session, though Syria reserved its attitude on the

proposal for a truce until the attitudes of both parties concerned had been ascertained. The representative of the USSR stated that his government still considered that the General Assembly's decision in favor of the partition of Palestine into two independent states--Jewish and Arab--was an equitable one.<sup>77</sup> The representative of the Jewish Agency stated that the calling of a special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of the future government of Palestine, represented an unwarranted reversal of the Assembly's November, 1947, decision. He qualified the Agency's acceptance of the truce throughout Palestine<sup>78</sup> by insisting first on the withdrawal of all foreign troops and guerrillas from Palestine; the removal to Trans Jordan of all units of the Arab Legion; the prevention of future incursion from the Arab countries; and the stipulation that a military truce would not exclude the admission of Jewish immigrants, whatever their age group or military condition. In general, what Moshe Shertok, the Jewish Agency's spokesman to the Security Council, was asking, was that a truce should not delay the establishment of a Jewish state. The Jews, he said, had passed the threshold of statehood and refused to be turned back. He accused the British of conniving at the large-scale infiltration of Arab forces across the frontiers, and of continuing to arm the Arab states while denying arms to the Jews, and of allowing the control of the Old City of Jerusalem to be assumed by the Arabs.

On April the 1st, the Security Council adopted the proposed United States draft resolutions, and it was agreed that the President of the Council should discuss the possible terms of a truce in Palestine with accredited Arab and Jewish representatives. It was further agreed to hold informal meetings to discuss the proposals, which the United States delegation had in mind, for trusteeship in Palestine, in order to enable the Security Council to make recommendations to the special session of the General Assembly.

At this point, the future of the Jewish state in Palestine was at its lowest ebb, and the officials of the Jewish Agency, cognizant of the fact that support for the United Nations Partition Plan was gradually fading in the face of a proposed trusteeship, took steps to initiate the provisions of the Partition Plan. Chaim Weizmann said, "Our only chance now, as in the past, is to create facts, to confront the world with those facts and to build on their foundations."<sup>79</sup> In the implementation of this policy, the entire Jewish community was mobilized for action, and its organization and strength were made evident to the entire world.

Until April 1, in the major urban areas, the Jews had largely confined themselves to sniping, mortar shelling, and various acts of terrorism, while in the countryside their activity had been largely limited to hit-and-run attacks, usually carried out at night, against small Arab villages and communities. According to one Zionist source,<sup>80</sup> the Haganah, prior to March, had been

unable to undertake offensive action to occupy the commanding heights along the roads, because it did not have the men or the weapons to do so, and because the British would not have permitted it. Other sources, however, present an entirely different picture of Jewish strength. As far back as 1946, General J. C. D'Arcy, the General Officer Commanding Palestine, had stated to members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry<sup>81</sup> that "from a military point of view" he could enforce a pro-Jewish solution without much difficulty, and that in enforcing such a decision the Haganah could be most helpful. In the event, however, that he was obliged to enforce a pro-Arab solution, he stated that he would have to contend with a "highly efficient" military organization.<sup>82</sup> He estimated that the budget of this organization reached four million dollars a year, and that it would require three army divisions from four to six months to effectively break its opposition, after which there would still remain a certain amount of underground resistance. In the event that the British were obliged to enforce a pro-Arab solution, however, he stated that Arab support would be of no value.

When D'Arcy was asked what would happen if British troops were withdrawn from Palestine, he replied, "If you were to withdraw British troops, the Haganah would take over all of Palestine tomorrow." When asked if the Haganah could hold Palestine under such circumstances, he replied, "Certainly, they could hold it

against the entire Arab world."

Further evidence of Jewish military strength is illustrated in the Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry,<sup>83</sup> which stated: "The general organization is the Haganah....which is completely organized, under a central control and subsidiary territorial commands, in three branches: (a) a static force of settlers (Home Guard) estimated at 40,000; (b) a Field Army trained in more mobile operations, with an estimated strength of 16,000; and (c) a full-time force (Palmach) permanently mobilized and provided with transport, with an estimated peace establishment of 2,000 and war establishment of some 6,000."<sup>84</sup> In addition, the report states that there was the IZL with an estimated strength of 3,000 to 5,000, and the Stern Group, between 200 and 300.<sup>85</sup> Another source<sup>86</sup> has also mentioned the existence of an additional group referred to as the Youth Battalions, which were composed of young volunteers of about seventeen years of age, and which could be transferred from one sector to another according to the needs of the situation.

The Palmach was the mobilized "standing army," a corps d'elite, of the Haganah, and had been founded in May 1941, by Yizhack Sadeh, a former officer in the Russian army in 1917. He was later succeeded in his position as commanding officer of the force, by Ygal Alon, who was subsequently to play a prominent role in the execution of Jewish military operations. The unit was

composed of four battalions, with a fifth in reserve, and it was well trained in guerrilla warfare and commando tactics. It was composed of the better educated volunteers, who were the pick of the towns and the settlements, with a large percentage of its members belonging to the Jewish settlement police.<sup>87</sup>

In 1941, when a German invasion of Palestine was expected, it was planned, in the event of an evacuation, to leave behind a unit of the Haganah to act as a "fifth column." A special mission was set up to train the Jews for this purpose, and a school of instruction was opened at Mishmar Haemek, where picked members of the Haganah received their training. These members were later to become the nucleus of the Palmach. Structurally, it was a self-contained unit, having its own headquarters, organization, and administration. In its earlier stage, just after the end of the Second World War, members of the Palmach were required to work for half a month, and then train for the other half, but as the situation in Palestine deteriorated, it was finally put on a full-time mobilized status. With its high degree of mobility and training, it was especially useful in countering many of the Arab attacks on Jewish settlements, and also in carrying out specialized operations against the Arabs.

The Field Army was formed and organized on a regional basis and consisted of young people who already had some sort of military training, and who were able to get away from their work at frequent

intervals to do a little more. It was the first line of defense,<sup>88</sup> and its personnel stood ready to be called up in any emergency.

In support of the Field Army, was the Home Guard, or the second line of defense, and in this group was included almost every individual able to carry a gun or perform some task of a military nature. Its duty was to defend the villages, factories, and settlements, in which its members worked. Like the Field Army it was confined to its own regions, the primary differences between the two organizations existed in the age of the individuals making up the forces, and in the fact that while the Home Guard was completely static, the Field Army still had some degree of mobility within its assigned area of responsibility.

The Jewish estimation of its military strength in comparison with that of the Arabs in Palestine, is illustrated in a memorandum submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, in which the Haganah stated the following:<sup>89</sup> "As far as the strength of the Arabs in Palestine is concerned, we are in possession of well-founded information. There is no doubt that the Jewish force is superior in organization, training, planning and equipment, and that we ourselves, will be able to handle any attack or rebellion from the Arab side without calling for any assistance from the British or Americans. If you accept the Zionist solution but are unable or unwilling to enforce it, please do not interfere and we ourselves will secure its implementation."



An additional indication of Jewish strength, preparedness, and intention, is evidenced in a conversation in May, 1949, between Aluf Ygal Yadin, Chief of Operations of the Israeli Army during the war, and Harry Sacher, the author of Israel: The Establishment of a State.<sup>90</sup> In the conversation, Yadin states:

"In September 1947, I was called back to resume supervision of training, intelligence, operations, and planning. The hour of decision was come. Even then we were thinking mainly of guerrilla war. We had a plan to deal with them - offensive-defensive, to strike at the enemy. We knew that to defend Jerusalem we should not rely on convoys, but take strategic hills - we had made an intelligence survey. We went through every village in Palestine, and estimated its character, whether it meant trouble or not; and we had a map in which the strategic characters of every Arab village and the quality of its inhabitants were indicated. We had a library of files with the details. We made an air-photographic survey of most of the country; we used to hire a plane at four pounds an hour. We knew in the early months of trouble that the Arabs had nobody to organize them properly, but we had not taken account of the British...."

It is here that another consideration appears with regard to the opening of the Jewish offensive in April, 1948. It has been shown above, that militarily the Jews were capable of undertaking offensive action, and that proceedings in the United Nations had

made such action mandatory if the Jews were to achieve their realization of a Jewish state in fact. An additional factor in favor of offensive action presented itself with the withdrawal from large parts of Palestine of the chief obstacle to an all-out Jewish offensive....the British army.

As has been previously stated,<sup>91</sup> the Mandatory Government, on January 20, 1948, had announced that predominantly Jewish or Arab areas would be progressively handed over to whichever side was in the clear majority, so that the British troops could be concentrated at points of strategic importance such as Jerusalem and Haifa. By April, 1948, the withdrawal of the British forces was well underway,<sup>92</sup> and it had become increasingly clear to the Jews that the principal objective of the British army was withdrawal and not security, and that as long as the Jewish forces refrained from any actions which directly interfered with the withdrawal operation, that they would encounter little opposition in their offensive operations.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, on April 1, 1948, the Jews launched the first of several operations, the primary objectives of which were to seize and occupy in the shortest possible time, as large an area in Palestine as was possible, and in this manner create a military situation which would have an effect on the discussions against partition in the United Nations, and enable the Jews to face the world with a "fait accompli."

The plight of the 100,000 Jews in the New City of Jerusalem helped to determine the area in which the initial effort of the new offensive phase was to be made. On April the 1st, "Operation Nachshon" (see Map - Annex B), the principal objective of which was to open a corridor extending from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by seizing and holding the tactical heights along it, was carried into action. For the execution of the operation, Jewish reinforcements were sent to the Jerusalem area, and the total participating force was estimated at two Palmach units, and two battalions of the Field Army, organized as a brigade on army lines, with the usual auxiliary services operating through a brigade staff. The total strength of the unit has been estimated at 1,500 men.<sup>94</sup>

The plan of action was to attack simultaneously from both the east and the west, with the more highly trained and efficient Palmach units, supported by elements of the Field Army, operating from Jerusalem. The remaining Jewish force, composed almost wholly of members of the Field Army, was concentrated west of Latrun near the village of Khulda, which had been selected as the departure point of all convoys proceeding to Jerusalem during the operation.

On April 1, the Palmach, supported by Haganah field units, began its occupation of some of the heights dominating the approach to Jerusalem, and on April 3, it made its first attack on Qastal, about five miles west of Jerusalem, which was a key terrain feature

dominating that sector of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. The Jewish force positioned itself during the night, and carried out the attack, which was successful, just before dawn. For a short period of time, it managed to hold on to its position, but a counter-attack led by Abdul Kader al-Husseini, forced it to withdraw.<sup>95</sup>

In the west, the Haganah force began a series of actions on the 5th of April, to neutralize Arab interference in the sector which was to be utilized by the convoys as a staging area. Khulda and Deir Muheisin, two Arab villages located approximately three miles west of Latrun, were occupied on the 6th, but British units who wanted the roads in the area kept free for their own use, ordered the evacuation of the two villages. The Haganah complied but remained in the vicinity, and sent what reinforcements it could spare to the east, where heavy fighting was taking place around Qastal.

Early on the morning of the 6th, a Jewish supply convoy, taking advantage of a lull in the fighting, made its way through to Jerusalem. Hostilities were soon renewed, however, and the Palmach carried out a series of assaults on Qastal, taking it on the 8th, only to be driven off a few hours later. On the 9th, after first dispersing their units around the area to cut off any Arab supplies or reinforcements, the Palmach launched another heavy attack and this time it was successful in occupying and holding the position.<sup>96</sup> In the Arab counter-attack which followed, Abdul Kader

al-Husseini, who was personally leading the attack, was killed, and Qastal remained in the hands of the Jews.

On the night of April 11, the Jews carried out a series of night attacks on commanding heights along the road, and Colonia and Lifta were occupied. On the same night, Bab al-Wad, Beit Mahsir, and the surrounding high ground, were occupied, and on the 13th a second convoy, consisting of 175 vehicles from Tel Aviv, succeeded in getting through to Jerusalem. On the 16th, Saris was attacked and the entire village was destroyed. Suba, however, managed to repel all of the Haganah attacks. On the 17th, the Jews managed to force through another convoy of 250 vehicles. Immediately thereafter, the Arabs started a determined counter-offensive, aimed at recovering the territory which had been lost to the Jews. The point of the offensive was directed at Bab al-Wad, which was in reality the gateway to the gorge leading to Jerusalem, and through which the road passed. On the 20th, the Jews tried to push through another convoy of 294 vehicles, but it was heavily attacked at Deir Ayub and scattered. The Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road was again closed to Jewish traffic. The Jews in the New City, however, had received sufficient supplies to enable them to hold out until the completion of the Jewish "Burma Road" approximately six weeks later.

The operation had not been a complete success, however, in that the main objective....that of opening and maintaining a

corridor from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem...had not been achieved. The major portion of the fighting had been centered around the key position of Qastal, and the strong and determined defense, which had been put up by the Arabs under the leadership of Abdul Kader al-Husseini, was one of the principal reasons that the corridor to Jerusalem had been denied to the Jews. Had their forces been able to quickly overrun Qastal, they would have been free, early in the offensive, to concentrate on the other commanding heights along the road. The fact that they were contained in the Qastal area, however, gave the Arabs time to strengthen their defenses in the remaining area adjoining the road. The principle of surprise had been lost at Qastal.

It was during "Operation Nachshon" that the massacre of Deir Yassin, by IZL and Stern Group personnel, occurred to shock the world. Sources agree that on April the 9th, an IZL and Stern Group force of approximately 150 to 200 men attacked the village of Deir Yassin and killed a total of 254 men, women, and children. Further than this, however, the sources do not agree, with the chief variance centering around the question of the complicity of the Haganah in the affair. This writer is convinced that the Haganah had foreknowledge of the intended attack on Deir Yassin, but does not accede to the allegation that it acquiesced in the massacre which followed its occupation.<sup>97</sup>

In his book The Revolt, Menachem Begin, published a letter<sup>98</sup> which Raanan, the IZL Commander in Jerusalem, had received from

Colonel Shaltiel, the Haganah Regional Commander in Jerusalem. In the letter, Shaltiel indicated that he was aware of the intention of the IZL to attack Deir Yassin, and he authorized the attack in order to further a plan to establish a Jewish airfield there.<sup>99</sup> No mention, however, is made of any intended massacre of the population of the village.

In another account,<sup>100</sup> it is related that the IZL and the Stern Group were unable to occupy the village in their initial assault and had called on the Haganah for reinforcements. The additional Haganah strength enabled them to successfully occupy the village,<sup>101</sup> but gave rise to the suspicion that the Haganah had also been implicated in the subsequent massacre. There is no basis in fact, however, to support this claim, for the Haganah withdrew from the village as soon as the occupation was secure, leaving the IZL and the Stern Group in charge. When it withdrew all was in order, and it was subsequent to this that the atrocities occurred with the full blame falling on the IZL and the Stern Group alone.

Following the massacre, the IZL called a secret press conference to announce the fact and proclaimed that it was the beginning of the conquest of Palestine and Jordan.<sup>102</sup> It was only later that they stated that the Haganah had also played a part, and that they were merely acting under official instructions.

The Jewish Agency, on the other hand, denied all

responsibility for the incident,<sup>103</sup> and issued a statement expressing "its horror and disgust at the barbarious manner in which (the) action had been carried out."<sup>104</sup> It also cabled the statement to King Abdullah of Trans Jordan.

On the Arab side, the Arab radio stations and newspapers gave priority to the Deir Yassin incident, with many broadcasts and articles painting vivid descriptions of the atrocities. It was a type of news coverage which was to have a definite detrimental effect on the Palestinian Arabs, many of whom were without arms and thus unable to defend themselves. The announcement of the Deir Yassin massacre made many of them distrustful of the ability of the ALA or the Jihad al-Mukkaddis to provide them with protection against the Jewish forces, and as a result, was an important factor in the large exodus of the Arab population from Palestine which was soon to follow. As Menachim Begin stated,<sup>105</sup> "The legend (of Deir Yassin) was worth half a dozen battalions to the forces of Israel."

Militarily, it was in Jerusalem proper that the greatest threat to the Jewish state existed. Not only were the 100,000 Jews in the New City, and the 1,700 Jews in the Old City, cut off from outside help, but they were strategically in a poor position with the Arabs on the heights to the north of the city, bringing a large part of the New City under fire.

To the northeast of Jerusalem, the Jews continued to hold



their positions on Mount Scopus, which consisted of the University and the Hospital, but they were closely invested on all sides by Arab irregulars. The road connecting Mount Scopus with New Jerusalem passed through the Arab suburb of Sheikh Jarrah, where on April 13th, the Arabs ambushed a Jewish convoy, and killed over seventy-seven people before British troops were able to intervene.<sup>106</sup> The Jews protested that the convoy had been completely harmless, and had contained only essential supplies for the hospital. Neutral investigation, however, revealed that although many of the vehicles in the convoy had Red Cross insignia on them, they were escorted by vehicles containing armed Jews, while some of the lorries had war-like stores in them.<sup>107</sup>

Upon the conclusion of "Operation Nachshon," Colonel Shaltiel directed his attention to Sheikh Jarrah, and during the early hours of April 25th, the village was taken by the Palmach after a battle which lasted for approximately two hours. The village, however, lay on one of the main British evacuation routes, and the British ordered the Jews from the position which they had occupied. The Jews opposed the order, but complied after the British fired a few warning shots, and upon their withdrawal the suburb was reoccupied by the Arab irregulars who were able to pose as Arab inhabitants of the suburb. On April 29th, Colonel Shaltiel made another attempt to reoccupy the area, but he was unsuccessful.

During the last few weeks of the Mandate, the British High

Commissioner for Palestine, in conjunction with the International Red Cross, had tried to bring about a cease-fire in Jerusalem, where the close proximity of the Arabs and the Jews created a situation characterized by almost continuous sniping, and fire-fights. On April 18th, the High Commissioner proposed a local cease-fire which was accepted in principle by the Jewish Agency, but refused by the Arab Higher Committee.

On April the 23rd, the United Nations Security Council established a truce commission for Palestine composed of representatives of those members of the Security Council, which had career consular officers in Jerusalem,<sup>108</sup> and negotiations were begun for a cease-fire limited to the Old City. On April 28th, agreement for the cease-fire was reached, and May 2 was set as the day on which it would go into effect.

On the night of 29-30 April, however, the Haganah launched an attack on the Arab and European suburb of Katamon, a long narrow ridge in South Jerusalem, which had been largely abandoned by its residents, and was being utilized by the Arab irregulars for firing on the Jewish suburbs which it commanded. Under a heavy screen of mortar fire, the Haganah, supported by Palmach units, launched the assault, and after two hours of fighting they succeeded in occupying St. Simeon monastery, and thus gained a toe-hold in the area. At dawn on the following day, the irregulars counter-attacked from the direction of Beit Safafa on the railway line to the south. The

Palmach commander immediately countered with a flank attack against the advancing Arab irregulars and the assault was broken. During the next two days of fighting the Jews managed to occupy the whole of Katamon ridge.

The cease-fire in the Old City, which had been scheduled to go into effect on May 2, accomplished little in bringing hostilities in Jerusalem to a halt, and negotiations for a general cease-fire throughout all of Jerusalem were continued. On May 9, the Arabs announced their readiness to comply with a general cease-fire order in Jerusalem, but now the Jewish Agency refused to accept the invitation of the High Commissioner for cease-fire talks. They defended their position on the ground that the members of the Executive, who were required to participate in such discussions, were in Tel Aviv, and were unable to proceed to Jerusalem. They added, however, that they were currently attempting to remove the obstacles to their trip from Tel Aviv.

The undertaking to which the Jews were referring was that of "Operation Maccabi" which had been launched on May 8, with its ultimate objective being the same as that of its predecessor, "Operation Nachshon"...the opening of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. At this stage, military action in the other areas of Palestine had to a large extent ceased, which enabled the Jews to switch additional forces to the Jerusalem sector to take part in the new operations. Between the 8th and the 11th of May, seven tactical heights

were recaptured by the Haganah,<sup>109</sup> with Beit Mahsir being the last point to be occupied. The area extending eastward from Latrun to Bab al-Wad, however, remained in Arab hands, and the road to Jerusalem remained closed.

In Jerusalem proper, the British forces were able to maintain a precarious cease-fire from 8 to 14 May, but only by opening fire with heavy weapons on whatever side infringed it. On the 12th of May, two days before the termination of the mandate, the High Commissioner issued new proposals for a truce,<sup>110</sup> and again the provisions were accepted by the Arab Higher Committee, but refused by the Jewish Agency.

At 6 A.M. on the 14th of May, the British flags were hauled down from the buildings which had been occupied by the Mandatory Government, and the last of the British troops were withdrawn from Jerusalem. Within a few hours the Haganah, the IZL, and the Stern Group were consolidating their positions in the New City by occupying the areas which had been closed to them prior to the evacuation by the British.<sup>111</sup>

Military action in Palestine following April 1, 1948, was not, however, restricted only to the Jerusalem area. Early in April Fawzi Qawuqji with an Arab force of approximately 1,000 men, and supported by six mountain guns,<sup>112</sup> moved out from Nablus. His immediate objective was the Jewish settlement of Mishmar Haemek, which occupied a strategic position on the main road between Haifa

and Jenin. Jewish forces, utilizing the settlement as a base, had been conducting a series of harassing attacks on Arab vehicles utilizing the road. Following his occupation of the settlement, Qawuqji planned to proceed westwards in order to block the Tel Aviv-Haifa road to all Jewish traffic.

His men surrounded the settlement on April 4th, entrenching themselves on the hills and villages overlooking and covering it, and at 1700 hours began an artillery bombardment which was continued throughout the night. On the morning of the 5th, a British force intervened and ordered the Arab force to withdraw. Qawuqji, however, was not present at the scene, and his deputy stated that he did not have the authority to order the withdrawal of the force. It was agreed, however, that the fighting would be temporarily halted, and the British force withdrew.

Late in the afternoon of the 6th, however, the Arab artillery barrage against the settlement was renewed, and on the morning of the 7th, before an assault could be launched, the British force again intervened. The Arab commander of the operation told the British officer that if the Jews agreed not to carry out any further attacks on Arab villages in the area, and would cease all activities directed against Arab traffic on the Haifa-Jenin road, he would withdraw his troops.

The British commander passed the terms to the Mukhtar of the settlement, who stated that he did not have the necessary

authority to give a definite answer to the Arab terms, and that it would be necessary for him to get in touch with his superiors. A twenty-four hours truce was then arranged, and all the women and children were evacuated to another settlement.

On the 8th of April, negotiations were resumed, but the Mukhtar had allegedly been unable to obtain the necessary authority to accede to the Arab demands, and the truce was extended for another twenty-four hours. As the British mediating team was leaving, the Jews remarked that the additional time would enable them to bring up reinforcements during the night.<sup>113</sup> Lt. Colonel C. A. Peel, the Commanding Officer of the British force, remarked that such an action would be in direct violation of the truce. His statement was unheeded, however, and during the night of April 8, the Haganah brought up a large number of reinforcements from Afula and the neighboring settlements, and the strength of the Jewish forces in Mishmar Haemek was built up to two Haganah battalions under the command of Brigadier Epstein.

On the morning of the 9th, when negotiations were again to be resumed, the Jewish representatives failed to appear, and the Arabs, after the events of the preceding night,<sup>114</sup> were unwilling to accede to any further truces. The British force, which was too small to cope with the situation, withdrew, and soon thereafter, Qawuqji's forces carried out several feint attacks against the settlement, but did not follow them through with a determined assault.

On the 10th, the ALA force began a withdrawal from the area but it was forced to fight a delaying action against Haganah elements operating from the settlement, who occupied the surrounding hills and villages as the irregulars stepped out of them, and who engaged the withdrawing ALA force as far east as Megiddo.

This defeat, by what Qawaqji thought to be extremely inferior numbers, had a strong demoralizing effect on the irregulars, and small groups began to drift off from the main body, with their main objective being that of pillage of the countryside, with little attention being given as to whom their victims were.

It was at this stage that Qawaqji, through an intermediary, approached the Jewish Agency, in an attempt to ascertain their attitude towards truce negotiations. Two Jewish envoys were sent to his headquarters at Tubas where he proposed a settlement on federal lines. The Jews rejected his offer, and according to a Jewish source,<sup>115</sup> it was this action of Qawaqji's which finally convinced the Jews that their cause was gaining ground, and that the Arab leaders were becoming demoralized. Jewish confidence grew, and plans were laid for the seizure of the ports of Haifa and Jaffa, and to open communications to the north by their occupation of Tiberias and Safad.

An analysis of the Mishmar Haemek operation, reveals that the major factor which prevented the Arabs from achieving their objective was poor leadership, which was particularly characterized

by a poor estimate of the situation, and bad judgment in the execution of the operation. The strength of the Jewish settlement at the time of Qawuqji's initial bombardment on April 4, had been limited to its settlers, and a small detachment of the Haganah. The area surrounding Mishmar Haemek was the Haganah "Salisbury Plain," or that region in which the tactical training exercises of the Haganah had been conducted for many years, despite the predominantly Arab population in the area. There was not a single platoon leader in the Haganah who had not at one time or another taken part in tactical exercises in the area. Every hill and valley was familiar to them. With such knowledge it was a simple matter to infiltrate reinforcements through to the beleaguered settlement. These facts should have been known and undoubtedly were known to Qawuqji while he was formulating his attack plan against the settlement, and dictated that the operation be carried out in the shortest possible time before Haganah reinforcements were able to reach the settlement.

The argument that British interference prevented him from undertaking early offensive action cannot be defended on the ground that the British force in the area was far too small to even attempt to engage a force the size of Qawuqji's, and at this stage it was known to both Jew and Arab alike that the main British policy was withdrawal, and not the maintenance of the status quo.<sup>116</sup> As has been seen above, once the truce negotiations



broke down and open hostilities became imminent, the British forces withdrew.

Had Qawuqji carefully distributed his 1,000 men in strategic positions around the settlement, and subsequently utilized them in a carefully coordinated attack covered by artillery fire, his chance of success would have been considerably improved.

Aside from Qawuqji's conduct of the operation, however, there is an additional consideration which centers around his employment of 1,000 men in an operation against Mishmar Haemek, when three days before, the Jews had begun an all-out offensive in the Jerusalem area.<sup>117</sup> Qawuqji's occupation of Mishmar Haemek would have produced no great change in the Arab military position in Palestine. Had the Arab forces utilized in the Mishmar Haemek area been employed in the Jerusalem sector, however, there is a good chance that the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road would have remained completely closed to Jewish traffic, with no Jewish convoys going through to Jerusalem. In this case "Operation Nachshon" would have been a complete failure, or it would in any case have required the Jews to switch large numbers of their forces from other areas in Palestine in order to attain their objective. As one Zionist writer<sup>118</sup> has stated, "....(from the) time the Arabs managed to concentrate....their....forces....until the completion of the "Burma Road" six weeks later, the road to Jerusalem was once again closed. But meanwhile "Operation Nachshon" had fulfilled its task

and gained its objective, "supplying Jerusalem with the necessary means for holding out against a prolonged siege."<sup>118</sup>

If these supplies had not reached Jerusalem, it is doubtful that the 100,000 Jews in the New City would have been able to hold out for another six weeks, and the advantages to the Arab cause of a forced surrender of this large group of Jews, are obvious to all. Thus, the operation against Mishmar Haemek was not only a case of poor leadership and misjudgment, but it was also an example of misuse of Arab irregular forces.

Following the completion of "Operation Nachshon," the Jewish military effort was switched to the eastern Galilee area. Here each of the Jewish settlements formed an isolated pocket of resistance, and it was the intention of the Jews to link up the settlements and thus create a single, unbroken front, so that their forces could be concentrated for attack.

In order to attain these goals, "Operation Jephtha," with the dual objectives of opening up the Tiberias-Rosh Pinna road, and the taking and clearing of Safad and its surrounding area, was launched on April 18, 1948.

Safad was a key control point of the roads running from the coast to northern and eastern Galilee. It had a population estimated at 10,000 Arabs and 2,200 Jews.<sup>119</sup> The Arab garrison in the town consisted of about 600 irregulars of the ALA, supported by between 1,000 and 1,500 members of the Home Guard.<sup>120</sup> Of the

Jews, many were orthodox,<sup>121</sup> and thus unwilling to fight, which cut down the number of Jews available for defense to a little over 200.<sup>122</sup> The British forces in the area amounted to fifty-five guardsmen, one troop of 17th/21st Lancers, and a small force of British police in Safad, plus a small mobile reserve at Rosh Pinna.

Strategically, the Arabs occupied the commanding position in the town which was built around the slope of a hill. The top of the hill, which was classified as an Arab area, looked down on the Jewish quarter, 150 feet or so below, which constituted the western half of the town, and which occupied approximately one-third of the circumference of the hill. The eastern and southern parts of the town were completely Arab. Two police posts, one of which was located where the Arab southern sector met the Jewish quarter, and the other just outside the town on the road to Mount Canaan to the northeast, plus the remains of a medieval fortress called the Matzuba, which was located on the top of the hill, constituted the three major strong-points of the town.

Trouble had begun in Safad as early as December, 1947, but until April the action in and around the town had been limited to sniping and attacks on Jewish convoys. The strategic position of the Arabs, which dominated the roads leading into the town, enabled them to keep the Jewish quarter in a virtual state of siege, with only a thin trickle of supplies being brought into the Jewish quarter over back mountain roads at night. Early in April, however,

the Haganah was able to occupy a commanding height in the area, which also enabled them to hinder the movement of supplies into the Arab section of the town.

On April 16, the British forces left Safad, and the two police posts fell into Arab hands thus giving them control over the three major strong-points in the town. On the same day, Haganah reinforcements infiltrated into the Jewish quarter, and preparations were undertaken by both sides for the battle which was soon to follow. At this state, however, the Jews shifted their attention to the first objective of "Operation Jephthah", which was the opening of the Tiberias-Rosh Pinna road.

In Tiberias, the population was roughly half Arab and half Jew, with the Arabs again occupying the best tactical position, which consisted of that portion of the city overlooking the Jewish quarter. Spasmodic fighting had been going on between the two sides for some weeks, but on April the 14th, while truce negotiations, under the direction of Brigadier Colquhoun were in progress, the Jews launched a heavy attack, which after four days, resulted in the defeat and complete evacuation of the Arab population.<sup>123</sup>

The Haganah then turned its attention to clearing the road to the north, and by April 28, they had not only cleared the road, but in addition had occupied the police post and the former British military camp at Rosh Pinna. Still further to the north, when the British withdrew from Malikiya, the frontier post near the Lebanese

border, the Arabs quickly stepped in and occupied it. On April 20, a detachment of the Haganah made an attack on the Arab position, but was repulsed.

By the end of April, the British had completely withdrawn their forces from the whole of eastern Galilee, and the Haganah, reinforced by a Palmach column, now prepared for an all-out attack on the Arab position in Safad. On May the 1st, the opening phases of the attack were carried out with two small Arab villages on the northern outskirts of Safad being taken by the Jews. The next day the Palmach column advanced into Safad proper, where, although supported by the Haganah, it was unable to make any headway against the Arab irregulars who were firmly entrenched in the two police posts and on the hilltop of the town. A large portion of the Arab population, unarmed and lacking confidence in the ability of the irregular forces to hold out against the Jews, and fearful of Jewish reprisals, began an evacuation of the town.

From the 2nd through the 5th of May, the action centered around sniping, and bombings. On the 6th the Haganah carried out an assault against the fortified hilltop, but was driven back with casualties. They then withdrew and reorganized, and at dusk on the 9th, with the Palmach leading the way, began another attack under a heavy covering fire laid down by their giant, homemade, six-inch "Davidka" mortars, each of which fired forty-five pound shells. House-to-house fighting was carried out throughout the night until

seven o'clock the next morning, when the hill-top position and the police post in the southern part of the town were taken. The following day the police post on the road to Mount Canaan was captured after a short, sharp fight, and Arab resistance completely collapsed. By the evening of May 11th, all of Safad and the immediate surrounding area were in Jewish hands.

Thus, after a month's fighting, "Operation Jephtha" had come to a successful conclusion with Safad in Jewish hands, and the road from Tiberias to Rosh Pinna open to Jewish traffic. The Jews were now firmly established in eastern Galilee. It had not been an easy victory, and had the Arab population of the town been adequately prepared for the battle....that is, armed and trained in the tactics of defense....it is reasonable to assume that the town would have been able to hold out against the Jews. The strategical advantage, both by virtue of numbers and tactical position, had been on the side of the Arabs, but military preparedness had been on the side of the Jews.

In western Galilee a sporadic campaign was being conducted by the two opposing sides for control of the Tel Aviv-Haifa coastal road, which was being primarily utilized by the Jews. From Tel Aviv northwards to Zichron, a Jewish settlement about twelve miles south of Haifa, the road passed through what was primarily Jewish inhabited territory. From Zichron onwards, however, the Jews were obliged to detour to the east, over the Carmel Range, and

subsequently enter Haifa via Yagur. Aside from the ever present threat of an Arab ambush to the Jewish convoys, traffic along the road was never brought to a complete standstill.

The major portion of the attention in the western Galilee area was centered on the seaport of Haifa, which was the terminal point of the oil pipeline from Iraq, and a key rail and road communications center. After the partition decision in November, 1947, the Arab inhabitants of the city began preparations for the struggle which they knew was to come, and an Arab National Committee was formed. The Committee was politically responsible to the Arab Higher Committee, but depended for its military support on the Arab League Military Committee established in Damascus.<sup>124</sup>

The direct responsibility for the organization of the Arab defensive effort in the city was given to Lieutenant Muhammad Hamad al-Huneiti,<sup>125</sup> a former Arab Legion soldier, who had resigned his position in order to accept the new duty. The Haifa National Guard, at this stage, numbered seventy-five members, who were armed with a variety of weapons ranging from rifles to wooden clubs and canes. By the time al-Huneiti was killed in a Jewish ambush while bringing in supplies from Lebanon on March 17th, the Guard had been increased to approximately 350 members.<sup>126</sup> Its military potential was severely limited, however, due to the lack of a sufficient quantity of arms, and the logistical problem of providing ammunition for the large variety of rifles which it had

in its possession. On March 28th, Captain Amin Izzedin, a former member of the Trans Jordan Frontier Force, arrived in Haifa as the successor to al-Huneiti. He was accompanied by reinforcements which numbered between thirty and forty men, thus bringing the strength of the Home Guard up to approximately 400 men. Several sources<sup>127</sup> make mention of large numbers of Syrian and Iraqi irregulars<sup>128</sup> arriving in Haifa during the month of April, but at no time is reference made to the approximate number of such arrivals.<sup>129</sup> The Jews, however, under the command of Colonel Carmel, were also reported<sup>130</sup> as bringing in large numbers of reinforcements, and by the 19th of April it became evident that an open battle was about to develop.

British sources<sup>131</sup> have stated that the number of British forces present in Haifa at this stage, were insufficient to control the situation in the event of an open outbreak of hostilities between the Jews and the Arabs, and that it was impossible to bring in reinforcements from other areas to strengthen the British position. Added to this was the fact that the British were occupying a number of tactical positions which would be required by whatever side initially undertook offensive action.<sup>132</sup> In view of this situation,<sup>133</sup> the decision was made to withdraw all the British forces to a concentrated area in the vicinity of the port, and both the Jews and the Arabs were informed of the intended British withdrawal by General Stockwell, the British General



Officer Commanding in Haifa, within an hour of each other.<sup>134</sup>

The announcement was the signal for the commencement of hostilities, and the Jews, from their superior tactical position on the slope of Hadar-Ha-Carmel, overlooking the Arab section of the city, began their offensive operation with a detachment of the Haganah being given the task of capturing Nejdah House, a large concrete building, overlooking and controlling the strategic Rushmiyah Bridge, over which all traffic going eastwards from Haifa had to pass. After a hard fight, which progressed from floor to floor, and room to room, the Haganah detachment occupied the building, but was immediately isolated and pinned down by small arms fire from several directions surrounding the building. Jewish attempts to relieve the isolated detachment during the day, were repulsed.

On the Arab side the situation was one of surprise and disbelief, in that General Stockwell had on numerous occasions stated to the Arab National Committee in Haifa, that the British army would help keep the peace, security, and order in the Haifa area until the month of August.<sup>135</sup>

On the afternoon of the 21st, Colonel Carmel continued in the opening phases of his offensive, by concentrating on a psychological blitz, which had been launched several days previously against the Arab population of Haifa. Koestler, in his book Promise and Fulfillment,<sup>136</sup> describes the Haganah as utilizing its

radio station and loudspeaker vans for broadcasts directed to the Arabs. They warned the Arab population to keep clear of the billets of the foreign mercenaries who had infiltrated into the town; warned them to send their women and children away before new contingents of savage Iraqis arrived; promised them safe conduct and escort to Arab territory; and hinted at terrible consequences if their warnings were disregarded. The Arab population, which had already heard the sounds of the heavy fighting in the Nejdah House took the warning to heart. The memories of Deir Yassin<sup>137</sup> were still fresh in their minds, and a large exodus of the Arab population from Haifa began.<sup>138</sup>

At dusk on the 21st, Colonel Carmel began his all-out offensive, which took the form of a four-pronged attack originating in the Hadar-Ha-Carmel area. Each column took a different route, and proceeded according to the special tasks to which it had been assigned, with the ultimate objective being that of cutting the Arab sector into three parts without any possibility of communicating with each other. In this manner they could be contained and taken one by one.

The Haganah columns continued their movement forward throughout the night, with each column meeting with varying degrees of speed and success. The column which had been detailed to take the Halisa area, met with the heaviest resistance and was forced to fight its way from house to house.

Throughout the battle the Jews made wide use of the

three-inch "Little David" mortars, which had been locally made in Haifa. It was the first time that they had been utilized in the support of a main offensive, and they contributed greatly to the Jewish success.

On the morning of the 22nd, the fighting was still going on, and the Haganah columns had still not reached their assigned objectives, and it was at this point that General Stockwell got in touch with Carmel and asked on what conditions he would accept the surrender of the town.<sup>139</sup> At a meeting on the afternoon of the 22nd, Colonel Carmel gave his terms for a cease-fire, which were in general as follows:<sup>140</sup>

(1) All military equipment and weapons to be handed over within three hours at (list of places follows).

(2) All foreign males to be surrendered within twenty-four hours in order to be repatriated under Haganah supervision.

(3) All Nazis and Europeans in Arab ranks to be surrendered.<sup>141</sup>

(4) The military equipment (referred to in (1) above) to be handed over to the British, but to be later handed over by the British to the Haganah before May 15.

(5) A twenty-four hour curfew during which Arab houses would be searched for arms.

(6) The trial of all persons possessing arms after that.

(7) The removal of all road blocks and obstacles in the Arab quarters.

(8) All further meetings between the two sides (i.e., Arab and Jewish) to be held at the Town Hall.

The Arabs, after a careful consideration of the truce conditions, signified their non-acceptance of the terms. Elias Koussa, lawyer, and liaison officer of the Arab National Committee, is reported to have told General Stockwell and the people attending the truce negotiation conference at the Haifa Town Hall that,<sup>142</sup>

"since the Arabs were panic-stricken and running away through the harbour area, and since General Stockwell was unwilling to intervene, all they could do was to ask the General to take the steps necessary to ensure sufficient transport for these people and their household effects and let them go to the Arab countries."

This request was made on the initiative of the five-member Arab Emergency Committee, which had been formed for the purpose of conducting the negotiations for the truce.<sup>143</sup>

General Stockwell pointed out the folly of such a course,<sup>144</sup> but the Arabs were insistent in their demands. A five day truce was thereupon arranged during which joint British and Haganah check points were established to disarm the Arabs before they left, and the mass evacuation was carried out.

To the south of Haifa, on the 25th of April, the IZL, without prior consultation or coordination with the Haganah, launched an attack on Jaffa.<sup>145</sup> The attack was carried out with a force of approximately 600 men, who were well supplied with small arms, plus three-inch "Little David" mortars, and an ample

supply of ammunition. At the outset, the attack was carried forward, but the limitations of the IZL as a field force soon became apparent. Not long after the assault was underway, the IZL force broke up into small detachments, with each fighting its own battle without any cohesion or coordination with the other attacking IZL units, and after twenty-four hours of fighting, the Arab irregulars brought the spasmodic IZL advance to a halt. Lacking reinforcements, and unable to regain the initiative, the IZL was forced to call upon the Haganah for aid. Command channel difficulties, due to the independence of the two organizations from one another, caused a delay in effecting coordination between the two units, and it was not until the 29th of April that the assault was renewed. In the coordinated attack which followed, the Arab defenders were gradually forced back, and on May the 13th, Jaffa surrendered, with almost its entire population evacuating the city ahead of the occupying Jewish forces.

In the countryside around Jaffa and Tel Aviv, the Jews had also been expanding their territory, and on May 1, the Haganah occupied the Arab villages of Salamah and Yazur. On April 25, the British had evacuated Lydda airport, and an immediate battle ensued for its possession, with the Jews eventually gaining the upper hand, and completing its occupation. On the 27th, however, the British moved in again and forced the Jews to leave. Several days later, when the British finally moved out,

Arab irregulars were able to move in and occupy the airport, and they repulsed further Jewish attempts to again regain its possession.

On the coast, Acre still held out and blocked the road to the north. A large British military camp was located near the city, and the British made no secret of their intention to keep the city under their protection until the final evacuation of all British forces in the immediate area. In preparation for the eventual assault on the city, the Jews occupied the surrounding area, including a height to the east of the city....Napoleon's Hill....which commanded the area for miles around.

On the 16th of May, the evacuation of British troops from the Acre area was completed, and a concentrated barrage of mortar and naval gun fire was laid on the city from Napoleon Hill and from Jewish ships in the harbour. Following the lifting of the artillery barrage, Jewish forces began their initial assault, which failed in penetrating the outer defenses of the city. Psychological warfare was then brought to bear on the Arab inhabitants, with loudspeakers being used to tell the people that they were cut off from all outside help and that they were needlessly throwing away their lives. Soon thereafter, a second assault was carried out, and the outer defenses of the city were found abandoned with the Arabs taking refuge within the walled Old City. The Arabs, surrounded on all sides, and concentrated in the small area encompassed by the

Old City, were extremely vulnerable to Jewish mortar fire, and consequently asked for the Jewish surrender terms. Several hours later they were accepted, and again the entire Arab population evacuated the city, rather than face the feared consequences of the Jewish occupation.

From Acre the Israelis pushed northwards toward the Lebanese frontier, which they reached on May 23rd, and where they halted their advance. No military action of any importance took place during this movement to the north, with the Arab irregulars engaging only in light skirmishes with the advancing Israeli force.

In the south of Palestine, Jewish military activity was primarily directed to the survival of their scattered, and oft-times isolated, settlements, while activity on the Arab side was largely limited to a series of raids against the settlements, by semi-nomadic Bedouins, who inhabited the area. By March, 1948, the Jews had succeeded in reinforcing the settlements with additional personnel and military equipment, and had in addition established a mobile striking force which roamed from one settlement to another, thus maintaining intercommunications, and aiding any settlement which became heavily besieged. Generally, however, the settlements were strongly fortified, and largely self-sufficient, having laid away large stocks of ammunition and food in anticipation of a prolonged siege.

The last military action to be considered during this

phase of the war, is the occupation by the Arab Legion of the Kfar Etzion group of settlements,<sup>146</sup> which were located approximately fourteen miles south of Jerusalem, just off the Hebron road. The settlements were garrisoned with approximately 400 members of the Haganah, and were well protected by a series of barbed-wire belts and mine fields. The Jewish High Command had already rejected Colonel Shaltiel's suggestion that the inhabitants of Kfar Etzion be evacuated and brought to Jerusalem,<sup>147</sup> and they were convinced that the settlements would be able to hold out.

Prior to the end of March, 1948, Jewish supply columns had managed to reach the settlements on a fairly regular schedule, but on the 27th of the month, a convoy, which was on its way back to Jerusalem after having delivered its load of supplies, was ambushed. Its leading vehicles were destroyed and the entire convoy was brought to a halt. The remaining vehicles immediately withdrew to the deserted Arab village of Nebi Danial, and called, via a wireless transmitter, for air support. Four<sup>148</sup> aircraft came to the aid of the group and dropped hand-grenades and home-made bombs on the besieging Arab force, but they were able to do little damage.

On the following day, British forces intervened in the battle and negotiated a cease-fire, after which they escorted the Jewish survivors back to Jerusalem. Jewish losses had been particularly heavy with over forty of their group being killed,



and almost their entire armoured car (home-made) force in the Jerusalem area, which had been concentrated to protect the convoy, being lost.

Subsequent to this action, all further supplies to the settlements were either smuggled through at night, or air-dropped. The Arab irregulars surrounding the settlements continued to press them closely, but small groups of Jews were still able to slip through the Arab lines at night, and carry out nuisance attacks on Arab traffic utilizing the Hebron-Jerusalem road.

This was the situation, when, on May 13th, two companies of the Arab Legion were assaulted on the Hebron road in the Kfar Etzion area, and immediately thereafter deployed, and carried out a well-executed assault against the settlements.<sup>149</sup> Supported by several armoured cars and four three-inch mortars, they penetrated the mine fields and barbed-wire belts, and carried out their assault in the conventional form of a holding fire accompanied by flank attacks, and one by one of the Jewish settlements were occupied. All of the Jewish survivors were treated as prisoners of war, and were subsequently transferred to Trans Jordan.

United Nations action, as extending from April, 1, had been highlighted on April 5, by a United States proposal, informally ventilated by Senator Austin to members of the Security Council,<sup>150</sup> that the Trusteeship Council should administer

Palestine through a Governor-General until such time that a plan of government, approved by a majority of both the Arab and Jewish communities, was agreed upon.<sup>151</sup> The proposal had left blank the names of the governments on which the proposed Governor-General could call upon for military support, but in a conversation with Garcia-Granados<sup>152</sup> on April 26, Senator Austin is reported to have said,<sup>153</sup>

"I cannot accept the contention that trusteeship is impossible of enforcement. I still hope that Great Britain will keep her forces in Palestine, and use them to enforce trusteeship with the cooperation of the United States and such other nations as may be willing to help."

On April the 20th, a special session of the General Assembly met at the recommendation of the Security Council to consider further the future of Palestine, and the United States proposal was submitted for consideration. It is reported that several senior Zionist officials, including Moshe Shertok, were willing to accept the proposal as a temporary expedient, but were overruled by Ben Gurion.<sup>154</sup>

While the debate in the General Assembly over the United States proposal continued, the United States representative opened discussions with the United Nations representatives of the Arab Higher Committee, and the Jewish Agency, with reference to the steps which had been taken to implement the truce resolution of April 17, 1948. It was soon evident that an impasse had been reached with the representative of the Jewish Agency stating the

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Jews would cease firing as soon as the Arabs did the same, and the representative of the Arab Higher Committee stating that if the Jews observed the terms of the truce, and the situation was frozen both politically and militarily, then the Arabs would cease fire.

The net result of the General Assembly's debate, was the establishment on April the 23rd, of a truce commission for Palestine,<sup>155</sup> and the appointment on May 14, of Count Folke Bernadotte as United Nations Mediator for Palestine.

In the interim, differences between the United States' State Department and the political advisers of President Truman, began to fade away as it became more and more certain that when the Mandate ended on May the 14th, there would be neither truce, nor an interim arrangement during which sides could strive to reach an acceptable agreement, and the question became one of how soon United States recognition would be extended to the future Jewish state.

At 4:00 p.m., on May 14, 1948, in the Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art, Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, and the first phase of the war came to an end.

One feature which had strongly stood out during the first phase of the war, was the complete evacuation in many cases of the Arabs from their towns and villages, such as Haifa, Jaffa, Tiberias, and numerous other places. One writer<sup>156</sup> has termed this as a voluntary evacuation, without attempting to explain what

he meant by the term "voluntary." It can be said that the Arabs had in many cases evacuated their cities and villages without being forced to do so at the point of the enemy's guns, but the fact also remains that the Jews had conducted a thorough psychological campaign to condition the minds of the majority of the Arab population to evacuation, rather than to face the occupation by Jewish forces. The Jewish Agency had publicly condemned the tragedy of Deir Yassin, but at a later stage their military operations oft-times included psychological warfare directed against the opposing Arab population, during which such incidents as Deir Yassin were again brought to the attention of the Arabs. Such reminders, backed up by Jewish pamphlets and broadcasts urging them to leave, plus the rumors of enemy atrocities which oft-times circulated amongst a besieged Arab population, which was in many cases weaponless and unable to defend itself, succeeded in many cases to cause the population to evacuate.<sup>157</sup> There is little evidence to support the claim of several Jewish sources<sup>158</sup> that orders had been broadcast to the Arabs to leave Palestine in order to pave the way for the entry of the regular Arab armies<sup>159</sup> nor has any evidence of such an order been found in the newspapers of the various Arab presses.<sup>160</sup> Contrariwise, the plans of the Arab Higher Committee for a resistance campaign, had been based on the supposition that the Arab civil population would stay put, so that an active underground could be organized against the Jews.

The mass refugee movement, however, had shattered all Arab hopes of such an underground resistance campaign. In addition, it is quite obvious that the presence of a large Arab civil population in the area occupied by the Jews, would have worked to the advantage of the Arabs, in that the presence of half a million Arabs in the Jewish state would have been a definite security and economic liability to the Jews.

A point which still further indicated the non-existence of such an order, is the fact that the Arab states had nothing to gain by encouraging such a mass evacuation,<sup>161</sup> in that it not only hindered the subsequent movements of the regular Arab armies, but in addition, it saddled the Arab governments with a new and overwhelming, political, social, and administrative responsibility, at a time when their concentrated effort should have been directed towards the war.

In looking back on this first phase of the war, it is evident to all that the Jews had come out on top. What remains below the surface, however, and not so open for all to see, is the fact that it was not simply a case of 1,300,000 Arabs against 750,000 Jews. Organization, and its counterpart, disorganization, also played a large part in determining its outcome. Implementation of the Partition Plan had envisaged the gradual transfer of authority from the British Mandatory Government to the United Nations Palestine Commission. Britain, however, had not officially

voted for partition, and the Mandatory Government had adopted a policy<sup>162</sup> which it hoped would be interpreted as neither supporting or opposing the provisions of the Partition Plan. Complete cooperation with the Palestine Commission, it was feared, would be interpreted as support of partition, and as a consequence, authority was not handed over to the Commission. The net result of this situation was that, as the Mandatory Government gradually withdrew its forces,<sup>163</sup> the machinery of government which it had set up during the preceding twenty-five years, gradually came to a standstill, with courts ceasing to function, schools and hospitals shut down, and postal and municipal services ceasing.<sup>164</sup>

The effect of this sudden shut-down in the machinery of government had a widely varying effect on the Jewish and the Arab communities. During the mandate, the Jewish society, though superficially under the Mandatory Government, had largely been governed and directed by the Jewish Agency, which had been recognized by the Mandatory Government as an autonomous body in charge of the internal affairs of the Jewish community.<sup>165</sup> Thus, as the Mandatory Government withdrew, the Jewish Agency was able to step in and take over in its stead, thus continuing to provide the Jewish community with a central organization and control.

Conversely, the Arabs had no organization equivalent to that of the Jewish Agency.<sup>166</sup> Many of its leaders were living in exile out of the country, and its political organization had

largely been smashed by the British during the Arab Rebellion of 1936-1939. Thus, it was largely the Mandatory administration which ran the affairs of the Arab community, and when it ceased to function there was no longer a central organization in Palestine to hold the Arabs together, or to provide them with that central authority necessary to organize their efforts. It was this action of the Mandatory Government of failing to carry out its governmental responsibilities to the end of the Mandate which, according to Jon Kimche, in his book Seven Fallen Pillars,<sup>167</sup> "led to the Jewish state more effectively than any step taken by the United Nations."

The entire first phase of the war was an illustration of an organized force, actively supported by a world-wide organization, which supplied it with money and arms, against a disorganized force, which had as its backing little more than the sympathy of its Arab neighbors. The small quantity of arms that it was able to obtain from these neighbors was negligible, and with regard to the aid provided in the form of the ALA, it is the opinion of the writer that the defense of Palestine depended first upon the Arabs of Palestine, and that the entrance of the ALA into Palestine during this initial phase of the war, did more harm than good.

At the time of the entrance of the ALA into Palestine, the Jews were occupying approximately 7% of the total area of the



country. According to the United Nations Partition Plan of November, 1947, the Jews were allotted 55%<sup>168</sup> of the total land area. The principal objective of the Arabs during this first phase was to prevent the implementation of the provisions of the Partition Plan....or, in other words, to prevent the Jews from occupying the area which had been allotted to them. The main emphasis of the Arab effort should thus have been on defense. Instead, the answer of the Arab League was to send into Palestine an army of volunteers,<sup>169</sup> which adopted the theory of attack and not defense, and which concentrated the major portion of its strength in the Nablus area....an area which had been assigned to the Arabs under the Partition Plan. The strategical implication of such a situation is that the ALA was located outside of the area in which it could have been utilized for the prevention of partition.

The ALA represented a force which was subsidized and supported by the Arab League, and as such, it was the major recipient of the arms and funds which were raised by the League in the form of contributions from its member states. Had it not been for the existence of the ALA, the aid would undoubtedly have gone to the local Palestinian resistance groups, which had already been to a certain extent organized by the Mufti.<sup>170</sup>

The Arab military situation as it existed in Palestine was that of the ALA receiving its orders from the Military Committee of the Arab League, and the local national committees, established

by the Mufti, receiving their orders through the Arab Higher Committee. At the upper level there was little evidence of coordination of effort between the two groups, and even if such had been the case, it would have been difficult to carry out. Time was short, and there was little opportunity to draw up plans mutually acceptable to both groups. It was a situation where the Arab effort was being expended down two different channels, when, with time running out, even a concentrated effort would severely have taxed their abilities to prepare the Palestinian population for the battle ahead. The results, however, would undoubtedly have been vastly different from those which followed.

The suggested concentration on the arming and organization of the Palestinian Arabs in preference to the ALA, is supported by the fact that the leaders of a nation are usually the ones that are in the best position to define the weaknesses and the needs of that nation. Such was the position of the Arab Higher Committee in contradistinction to that of the Arab League. As early as December, 1947, Haj Amin al-Husseini had informed those responsible in the Arab League of the necessity of reinforcing the principal cities, and of adequately arming the populace to defend them.<sup>171</sup> The unawareness of the Arab League to the situation is illustrated in its response to this suggestion, which was as follows:<sup>172</sup> "It is not necessary at all to arm Jaffa because the Partition Resolution put Jaffa in the Arab area, so there is

absolutely no fear of any Jewish aggression against it. As for Haifa, the English will never allow the Jews to occupy it, because they want to make it a free port, and the confirmations we have assure us."

On the 17th of April, 1948, Dr. H. F. Khalidi, the Secretary General of the Arab Higher Committee, during a visit to Cairo, drafted a memorandum to the Arab League, embodying his and the Arab Higher Committee's views on the security of the major towns in Palestine. Dr. Khalidi stated that Arab defense in Palestine should be centered around the cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa, in that if they were occupied by the Jews it would result not only in the expulsion of their inhabitants, but also in the collapse of Arab resistance in the surrounding rural areas. He recommended that a force of 1,500 trained men, suitably equipped, be immediately sent to each of these cities.<sup>173</sup>

Had the Arab League thrown its support behind the Arab Higher Committee, and had the Palestinian Arabs been armed and organized, the net result would have been a fighting force composed of individuals familiar with the terrain of the area, and most of all, of individuals who had a stake in the area....people who would have been fighting to defend their homes.<sup>174</sup> The Palestinian Arabs needed first arms, and second, officers and experts for the purpose of organizing and coordinating their activities.<sup>175</sup> The least of their needs was an army over which the

Arab Higher Committee had no control, for not only did it absorb that war material which, but for its existence, would have been given to the Palestinian Arabs, but it gave them a cudgel to depend upon, without which they would have been obliged to look to themselves, and only to themselves, for providing the fighting strength in resisting the Jews.

FOOTNOTES

1. Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations. 1947-1948, p. 247; Glubb, John Bagot, A Soldier With the Arabs, p. 60.
2. Department of Public Information 1947-1948, op. cit., pp. 247-256; Hurewitz, J.C., Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. Vol. II. A Documentary Record 1914-1956, pp. 281-295.
3. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Arab-Israeli War-1948, p. 32, however, states that Jewish opinion was divided, and although none were wholeheartedly for it, Jerusalem being the sore point, it was dubiously accepted, chiefly because it gave legality to a Jewish state.
4. Ibid., p. 32.
5. Cattan, Henry. "Plunder in the Holy Land." Al Kulliyah - The Middle East Forum. Vol. XXX, No. 2. February, 1955. p. 10.
6. A Survey of Palestine, p. 244; one dunum = 0.247 acres.
7. Cattan, op. cit., p. 10.
8. Khalidi, Walid, "Suqut Filastin," Al-Thaqafah Al-Arabiyyah. Issue #1, June, 1957, p. 51; The World Almanac-1957. New York, New York World-Telegram and The Sun, 1957. p. 421, which quotes the United Nations Partition Plan partitioning Palestine into two independent states, one of which was to be an Arab state encompassing 4,500 square miles. The separate enclave of Jerusalem would have an area of 289 square miles; thus giving the Jewish state an area of 5,373 square miles, out of the 10,162 square miles (see A Survey of Palestine, op. cit., p. 103) which had previously constituted the total land area of Palestine.
9. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 33; Kirk, George, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 252.
10. Ibid., pp. 211-212.
11. National Military Organization.

12. Fighters for the Freedom of Israel.
13. The preceding general listing of outrages, is by no means to be taken as a complete presentation of the retaliatory actions undertaken by the two opposing sides during the first phase of the war. The incidents presented have been selected to give a general picture of the situation as it existed during this initial period.
14. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 32, says there were only seventeen settlements in the Negev.
15. See above, page 2.
16. In A Survey of Palestine, op. cit., p. 84, it is reported that largely through the intervention of Jamil Mardam Bey, Syrian Minister in Egypt, a new Arab Higher Committee of twelve members representing all the political parties had been formed. The Palestine Arab Party obtained five places thereon. On 27 November, 1945, the Committee informed the High Commissioner that they had been established "to assume responsibility for political and national affairs in the name of the Arab population of Palestine," and asked for the High Commissioner's "support and recognition of it as representing the Arab population of Palestine." They added that "neither this committee nor its composition is the same as the Arab Higher Committee which was founded in 1936." An acknowledgement to this communication was sent to the Committee on the High Commissioner's behalf on 8 December. There was no permanent chairman appointed for the second Arab Higher Committee, with the chair being taken in rotation at each session. It was generally recognized that Haj Amin al-Husseini, though not formally listed as such, was still regarded as being the head of the Committee.
17. For a view that the Arab Higher Committee, directed by the Mufti from outside Palestine, was far better organized during this fighting than it had ever been before, and that the local national committees which it had set up in all the Arab towns and some 275 villages, with their para-military offshoots, worked fairly efficiently, see Hurewitz, J.C., The Struggle for Palestine. New York, Norton, 1950. p. 309.

18. Koestler, Arthur, Promise and Fulfillment-Palestine 1917-1949, p. 153.
19. Kirk, op. cit., p. 252.
20. Koestler, op. cit., p. 154.
21. According to Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 79, an interpreter in the Arab Legion headquarters translated their title into Arabic under the meaning of "The Salvation Army."
22. Wilson, Major R. D., Cordon and Search-With 6th Airborne Division in Palestine 1945-1948, p. 182.
23. Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars: The Middle East - 1915-1950, p. 205, lists General Ismail Safwat Pasha, Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Army, with his headquarters in Damascus, as the officer commanding the Arab Liberation Army; General Ismail Pasha, was also the head of the Military Committee of the Arab League in Damascus, and as such was also Commander in Chief of the Arab Liberation Army. Wilson, op. cit., p. 182, describes Fawzi al-Qawuqji as the Field Commander of the Army with his headquarters in the Arab Triangle of Jenin-Tulkarm-Nablus.
24. Fawzi al-Qawuqji had been an active leader in the field during the latter part of the Arab rebellion against the British in Palestine from 1936 to 1939. He was a Moslem from Tripoli, who had served in the Ottoman Army during the First World War, after which he became an intelligence officer to the French in Syria, and then later assumed the post of military adviser to Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia. In 1941, as an officer in the Iraqi army, he had fought against the British, after which he escaped to Germany. At the end of the war he was a prisoner of the Russians for a short time, but he was subsequently released and granted sanctuary in France, from where he returned to Syria.
25. Wilson, op. cit., p. 160, puts the strength of the Arab force at 130.
26. Kirk, op. cit., p. 253.
27. Al-Tell, Colonel Abdullah, Karithat Filastin. Memoirs of Abdullah Al-Tell, pp. 10-11.

28. Al-Tell, op. cit., p. 11.
29. This report of alleged British concurrence with the entrance of Arab irregular forces into Palestine is contradicted by Wilson's statement that "the British would not tolerate the incursion of irregular forces." See Wilson, op. cit., p. 150.
30. The Trans Jordan Frontier Force was disbanded in mid-January 1948.
31. Koestler, op. cit., p. 156.
32. On January the 16th, the Associated Press reported from Damascus that Syrian irregulars were sifting by the hundreds across the unguarded sections of Palestine's northern frontier. Following this, numerous articles appeared in newspapers, AP bulletins, etc., about the infiltration of irregular forces into Palestine. Kirk, op. cit., p. 260, states that by the 1st part of April, the Arab Liberation Army had been reinforced to a strength of between 6,000 and 7,500 men, preponderantly Syrians and Iraqis with an Egyptian contingent at Gaza, who were based, largely with British tolerance on localities within the territory assigned to the Arab states by the resolution on partition. Wilson, op. cit., pp 181-182, states that the strength of the "army" by the end of February, 1948, had perhaps reached 10,000, but that this figure might have been on the high side. Reinforcements were thought to be arriving from the neighboring Arab states at a rate of 1,000 a month.
33. Koestler, op. cit., p. 155, however, refers to the personnel of the Arab Liberation Army, as being "composed of a small number of professional officers, and the riff-raff of the bazaars in Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad, and hired for the Holy War for a shilling or two per day." Wilson, op. cit., p. 166, however, states that the first prisoners of the Arab Liberation Army were taken on February the 4th, and that the soldiers, six in number, were found to be first-class guerrilla troops with a high morale, discipline, pride in themselves, and faith in their cause.
34. Ibid., p. 182.



35. The statement with regard to tracked vehicles being utilized by the Arab Liberation Army at this early date, or even of the possession of such vehicles, has not been proven.
36. Al-Tell, op. cit., p. 10.
37. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 37.
38. Also commander of the Palestine Holy Army.
39. As quoted by \*Aaref al-\*Aaref, al-Nakba. Vol. I, p. 246, from a report dated March 28, 1948, sent by Najm ed Din Adil, Commanding Officer of the ALA garrison in Jaffa, to the Military Committee of the Arab League. The report also states that there was an additional Jaffa force (composed of Jaffa inhabitants) of 320.
40. Al-Tell, op. cit., p. 10.
41. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 37.
42. Al-Tell, op. cit., p. 10.
43. See Wilson, op. cit., p. 150.
44. Iraq, \*Jordan, and Egypt.
45. Koestler, op. cit., p. 157; Iraq repudiated the treaty - signed at Portsmouth on 15 January 1948, before the end of the month because of violent nationalist demonstrations against it. On March 15, 1948, Great Britain signed a new twenty-year treaty of mutual defense and friendship with Trans Jordan, which was, with the necessary changes, identical in phraseology with the rejected Anglo-Iraqi instrument.
46. Peretz, Don, Israel and the Palestine Arabs, p. 5.
47. Kirk, op. cit., p. 252.
48. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 38.
49. Wilson, op. cit., p. 144.
50. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 39; Kimche, op. cit., p. 203, however, states that Qawuqji arrived at Tubas on January the 25th; Al-Tell, op. cit., p. 11 also lists January

25th as Qawuqji's arrival date in Palestine, and adds that he passed through Trans Jordan where the British made it a condition of his entrance into Palestine, that he should not be stationed in any area except that which was defined as part of the Arab state according to the terms of the Partition Plan; Glubb, op. cit., p. 79, however, states that Qawuqji arrived in Palestine on February the 12th, passing through Amman en route.

51. Wilson, op. cit., p. 184.
52. Ibid., p. 182, lists casualties on the Arab side as eighty with about half being killed, while the Jews suffered one killed and two wounded.
53. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 39, gives no reason for the Arabs breaking off the action and withdrawing; Wilson, op. cit., p. 184, however, states that the Arab Liberation Army commander agreed to withdraw under the condition that, in order not to lose face with the Jews, that the British force should simulate a battle by putting down a concentration of mortar and machine-gun fire to the flank of the Arab Liberation Army force. The British commander, Major R. Steele agreed, and at the appointed time the barrage was begun and the Arabs started to withdraw. Wilson further states (page 185) that the Syrian, commanding the Arab Liberation Army forces, was relieved of his post on the following day.
54. See above, footnote #8.
55. The area to which reference is being made is that section of the road running east from Latrun to Jerusalem.
56. The mobilized striking force of the Haganah.
57. The writer was unable to obtain information regarding the armed strength of an IZL platoon.
58. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 54.
59. Ibid., p. 37, however, puts the number of irregulars under his command as 1,200.
60. Consisting of the representatives of Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama, and the Philippines.

61. Kirk, op. cit., p. 255.
62. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 38; however, an advance party of four members of the Commission's staff did arrive in Palestine on the 22nd of December, but they met with a minimum of cooperation from the British authorities, and in the existing chaos they found themselves in practice restricted to the British military zone of Jerusalem.
63. As contained in the Partition Plan; see Department of Public Information 1947-1948, op. cit., p. 248.
64. The reference with regard to the non-authorization of the formation of armed militias before the end of the mandate, was a formal statement of policy only. Informal recognition of the Haganah had already been extended in Britain's willingness to allow the organization to be utilized in defensive action. See above, page 14.
65. In October, 1937, the first Arab Higher Committee had been declared unlawful, and its members arrested and deported to the Seychelles, with the exception of the Chairman, Haj Amin al-Husseini and Jamal Husseini, who managed to escape to the Lebanon. With cessation of the organization's activities, the Palestinian Arabs had been obliged to look to the Mandatory Government for a central authority, and it was not until November 23, 1945, the date on which the organization of the second Arab Higher Committee was announced, that the Palestinian Arabs once again had a central Arab body to again organize their activities. The time between its organization, and the unofficial start of the Palestine War on November 29, 1947, however, was not enough to enable the new organization to effectively assume the responsibilities which were so suddenly thrust upon it during the British withdrawal from Palestine.
66. Department of Public Information 1947-1948. op. cit., p. 256.
67. Kirk, op. cit., p. 257.
68. The United States\* share of the oil production of the Arab countries (not including Persia) in 1947, amounted to 72% of their total production.

69. Kirk, op. cit., p. 257.
70. See above, page 24.
71. The United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and France.
72. Department of Public Information 1947-1948, op. cit., p. 407.
73. Against the objections of the Soviet Union, which in the previous December had called upon the Security Council to assume full responsibility in carrying the Partition Plan into effect.
74. According to Daniels, J., The Man of Independence, pp. 318-319, the decision to cease supporting partition was said to have been made by the State Department without reference to Truman, but in Forrestal, op. cit., p. 406, it is pointed out that by March the 29th Truman was ready to agree that the United States would take part in implementing a trusteeship "up to the limit of our ability," Khalidi, Walid, "Suqut Filastin," op. cit., p. 52, states that President Truman announced his support of United Nations trusteeship over Palestine as a temporary solution, on March the 25th.
75. Department of Public Information 1947-1948. op. cit., p. 410.
76. The United States delegate explained that it was his government's view that the immediate cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a truce in Palestine were not the most urgent objectives - and that although the United States believed that the trusteeship was essential to establish order, it felt that there should be no delay by debate over details of the temporary trusteeship (prior to the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a truce in Palestine), and to this end, the draft resolution had omitted any mention of trusteeship. Department of Public Information 1947-1948. op. cit., p. 411.
77. Ibid., p. 411.
78. Which the British High Commissioner for Palestine had broadcast on April the 3rd.
79. Khalidi, Walid. "The Exodus of the Arab From Palestine." Arab Review. Vol. II, No. 4. January, 1960. p. 6.

80. Pearlman, Moshe. The Army of Israel. New York, Philosophical Library, Inc., 1950. p. 95.
81. See Crum, Bartley C. Behind the Silken Curtain. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1947. p. 220, for a full report of the conversation.
82. Undoubtedly referring to the Haganah.
83. Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, April 1946. p. 40.
84. Kimche, op. cit., p. 214, however, states that the only organized military force at that time (April 1, 1948) was the Palmach - (which) numbered four battalions, 2,000 men for all Palestine.
85. Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, op. cit., p. 41.
86. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 72.
87. Jewish force which was recognized by the Mandatory Government as that Jewish organization responsible for the protection of the Jewish settlements.
88. With the Palmach being considered as an offensive unit.
89. As quoted in Khalidi, "The Exodus of the Arabs from Palestine," op. cit., p. 7.
90. See Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, pp. 215-217, for a complete report of this conversation.
91. See above, page 13.
92. For a detailed account of the withdrawal of the various units of the British Army in Palestine, see Wilson, op. cit., pp. 178-181.
93. Ibid., p. 179, gives his version of the situation by stating "....it was thought at one time that there might be a security force to take over the country....it was not forthcoming, however....and....Britain....prepared to withdraw leaving a vacuum behind....Not that anyone expected it would remain a vacuum for long....In many cases (the filling) took place before the British had

left, because the further the withdrawal progressed the fewer the troops available for the maintenance of law and order, and those which were available were largely committed on tasks of major importance such as the guarding of communications."

94. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 55.
95. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 99, lists April the 3rd as the date of the capture of Qastal, but leaves the strong-point in Jewish hands until April the 8th, when it was re-occupied by the Arabs following a strong counter-attack.
96. The Arabs defending Qastal have been described as villagers, totally without military training, and with very few weapons and little ammunition. In his book, A Soldier With the Arabs, Glubb Pasha (op. cit., p. 80) recalls that while standing in the street in Ramallah one day in April, 1948, a man arrived in town by taxi, and jumping out in the street shouted: "The men fighting in Qastal have no ammunition. Has anyone got any rifle ammunition? I will pay cash." He ran through the street until he had collected about two hundred rounds of miscellaneous ammunition. The Arabs unorganized and undisciplined fought doggedly. Then Abdul Kader was killed and no other leader arose to replace him.
97. This is not to say, however, that once the act had been completed that the Haganah did not take advantage of the psychological aspect of the massacre, and use it in a campaign designed to encourage the evacuation of the Arab population from territory which had been designated as part of the Jewish state according to the Partition Plan.
98. Begin, Menachem, The Revolt-Story of the Irgun, pp. 162-163.
99. According to Begin, Ibid., p. 163, an airfield was established at Deir Yassin, and for a time served as the only means of communication between besieged Jerusalem and the coast.
100. O'Ballance, op. cit., pp. 57-58
101. No mention is made by Begin, op. cit., of the participation of the Haganah forces in the occupation of Deir Yassin.

102. Schmidt, Dana Adams, New York Times. April 10, 1948.
103. Undoubtedly referring to the massacre.
104. Koestler, op. cit., p. 160.
105. Begin, op. cit., p. 164.
106. Kirk, op. cit., p. 261, states that the seventy-seven killed were doctors, nurses, university teachers and students and states that it was a retaliatory action for the Jewish massacre of the inhabitants of Deir Yassin.
107. According to Reynier, who was the head of the delegation in Palestine of the International Red Cross through the period of hostilities, and who was called upon by the Jewish Agency to investigate the Sheikh Jarrah incident, the Jews admitted to him (as quoted in Kirk, op. cit., p. 261) that they used the red shield convoys for re-victualling and relieving their troops in the Hadassah Hospital. They contended that this was justifiable on the ground that their troops were at the hospital only to defend it.
108. The United States, France, and Belgium. The representative of the government of Syria indicated that his government was not prepared to serve on the Commission.
109. Recaptured in the sense that a large portion of the territory gained by the Jewish in "Operation Nachshon" had been retaken by the Arabs in their counter-offensive of April 17th.
110. These proposals were for a cease-fire, with no admission of arms or other fighting equipment; the admission of essential civilian supplies to be subject to checking by an impartial body acceptable to both sides; the routes into Jerusalem to be open for essential supplies and unarmed persons, but without any substantial increase in either the Arab or the Jewish population or in armed strength; in return for free access to the Jewish quarter of the Old City, the Jews should evacuate the Arab suburb of Katamon. Kirk, op. cit., p. 266.
111. For alleged British-Jewish collusion which enabled the Jews to occupy the strategic complex of buildings in the center of the city commonly referred to as "Bevingrad," see Khalidi, Walid. "The Fall of Haifa." Middle East Forum. Vol. 35, #10. December, 1959. p. 26.

112. Wilson, op. cit., p. 187, states that he was also supplied with armoured cars. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 109, lists his armament as including three French 75 MM guns, and a large quantity of French mortars.
113. Wilson, op. cit., p. 188.
114. On the night of the 8th, the Haganah had carried out an attack on the adjoining village of Abu Shusha, and partially destroyed it.
115. Kimche, op. cit., p. 216.
116. See above, page 34, for an analysis of British policy at this particular period.
117. "Operation Nachshon."
118. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 107.
119. Sacher, op. cit., p. 234; Koestler, op. cit., p. 208, listed the Arab population in Safad as 12,000, and the Jewish population as 1,500.
120. Wilson, op. cit., p. 197, put the strength of the Arab irregulars in the area at 3,000-4,000 (estimated) plus a number of pieces (artillery) and armoured cars.
121. Safad was a spiritual center of Judaic tradition, and was thus selected by many orthodox Jews as a permanent place of residence.
122. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 45; Wilson, op. cit., p. 197, puts the strength of the Haganah in Safad and the surrounding area, at 600, with strong reinforcements available from the Rosh Pinna area.
123. Ibid., p. 46, however, states that truce negotiations between the two sides had been broken off when a detachment of the Arab Liberation Army entered the town.
124. It was this sort of arrangement which was to do irreparable harm to the Arab cause, and greatly inhibit the ability of the Palestinian Arabs for local defense, in that the majority of the arms and ammunition obtained by the Arab League Military Committee (on which the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine was largely dependent



for military aid) was distributed to the Arab Liberation Army.

125. Referred to as Mohammad Bek in O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 49; and Sacher, op. cit., p. 241.
126. Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., p. 23.
127. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 50; Wilson, op. cit., pp. 176, 190.
128. Many from the now disbanded Trans Jordanian Frontier Force.
129. Wilson, op. cit., p. 176, does, however, state that "hundreds . . . were reported to be in the Suq and adjacent areas."
130. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 50; Wilson, op. cit., p. 190.
131. Ibid., p. 191; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 50.
132. These positions formed a dividing line between the Jewish and Arab forces, and as a consequence, any determined offensive effort would have necessitated their occupation.
133. And regardless of the fact that the British were still responsible for the maintenance of law and order in Palestine up to the expiration of the mandate.
134. See Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., pp. 25-32, for evidence indicating that the Jews knew of the intended British withdrawal well ahead of this date, and also of alleged British collusion with the Jews in providing them with this information; Begin, op. cit., p. 165, stated "The British commander at Haifa announced the evacuation of his forces at the end of April. The Haganah knew the date and mobilized its forces for the decisive clash; Wilson, op. cit., p. 192, however, states that ". . . there was no question of one side being in a position to plan an offensive through prior knowledge. . . . Unfortunately the Arabs seized on this distorted theory in order to lessen the blow of defeat and avoid recriminations for their own shortcomings;" It is the opinion of the writer that the situation as it subsequently occurred, did indicate that the Jews had prior knowledge of the intended British withdrawal, but he does not agree that substantial proof has been provided to prove that the British actually provided the Jews with this information. It is more probable that the Jews, through their excellent intelligence

organization were able to obtain the information either by penetration or by purchase from some individual who was in possession of the knowledge; Al-Ghuri, Emil, 15 May 1948, p. 59, says that the British army had already been withdrawn when the announcement was made.

135. Ibid., p. 59.
136. Page 207.
137. Aided by Arab and Jewish propaganda alike.
138. Within a week following the surrender of Haifa, it is estimated that there were only 8,000-10,000 Arabs left in Haifa out of a normal population of some 80,000. Later this figure was still further reduced. Wilson, op. cit., p. 194.
139. This move was strongly protested against by the Arabs, who state that at this time the fighting was still going on, and Stockwell's move had been the desperate plight of the Arabs clear to the Haganah commander. As stated in Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., p. 29, "The fighting was still going on, and the decision was not so plain to Colonel Carmel as to General Stockwell." Professor Khalidi continues "....no Arabs had as yet requested Stockwell to seek the conditions of the Zionists, and no Arab had yet talked of surrender;" Wilson, op. cit., p. 192, however, states that ".... early, on April 22nd, when complete Jewish victory was assured, members of the Arab National Committee approached the G.O.C. with the request that he should forthwith open truce negotiations on their behalf with the Jews."
140. Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., pp. 30-31.
141. Ibid., p. 31, says there were in fact none.
142. As quoted in Ibid., p. 32.
143. There is no evidence to support the claim that the Arab evacuation of Haifa was carried out in accordance with orders received from the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine.
144. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 52.

145. Jaffa and Tel Aviv were actually twin cities connected to each other by a narrow strip which was largely inhabited by Arabs, as was Jaffa proper.
146. Consisting of four settlements.
147. See above, page 20.
148. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 96, states that one Piper Cub came to the assistance of the group.
149. Glubb, op. cit., p. 78, states, however, that the Arab Legion attack on the Kfar Etzion group of settlements was a planned operation, and not merely the result of a group of Legionnaires suddenly losing their temper over being attacked on the Jerusalem-Hebron road. He points out that according to the United Nations Partition Plan, the Kfar Etzion group was located in an Arab area, and was in a position to cut off Hebron from Jerusalem after the end of the mandate. In addition, at this particular point, an Arab Legion convoy loaded with supplies which had been obtained from the British in Egypt, was expected along the road, and thus, Glubb Pasha states, "we decided to remove the Kfar Etzion colonies before they could destroy our convoy and cut us off from Hebron."
150. As an emergency measure to insure public order and the maintenance of public services after the end of the mandate.
151. Sacher, op. cit., p. 108, suggests that Austin's motion to drop partition had caused the Arab League, which had met in Cairo on April 11th, to decide on formal war against the Jews.
152. Member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.
153. Garcia-Granados, Jorge. The Birth of Israel. p. 277.
154. Kirk, op. cit., p. 267; Bilby, Kenneth W., New Star in the Near East, p. 260, quotes Ben Gurion as quashing the argument for trusteeship, by saying "now or never."
155. See above, page 41.
156. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 63.

157. It should be added that the publicity which the Arab press and radio gave to reported Jewish atrocities, in large measure backfired, and contributed to the general demoralization and subsequent flight of the non-combat - ant Arabs.
158. Pearlman, op. cit., pp. 116-117; Kimche, op. cit., p. 217.
159. For a study made to determine the existence of evidence that Arab leaders had broadcast orders to the Arabs to leave the country in order to pave the way for the entry of the regular Arab armies into Palestine, see Khalidi, Walid. "Why Did the Palestinians Leave?" Middle East Forum. Vol. 35, #7, July, 1949. pp. 21-24, 35; Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., pp. 22-32; and Khalidi, "The Exodus of the Arabs from Palestine," op. cit., pp. 4-9.
160. With one exception - that of a Lebanese daily called Sada al-Janub, which has a small circulation in the village of Marjeyoun in South Lebanon. Khalidi, "Why Did the Palestinians Leave?" op. cit., p. 22.
161. Following their occupation of Jaffa and Acre, the Zionists estimated the total number of Arab refugees at more than 150,000. Kirk, op. cit., p. 263.
162. See above, page 13.
163. Civil and military alike.
164. Khalidi, "The Exodus of the Arabs from Palestine," op. cit., p. 5; but also see Kimche, op. cit., p. 225, which describes the situation in almost identical terms.
165. The Jewish Agency had been provided for in the text of the Mandate for Palestine (24 July 1922). It was to be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social, and other matters, as might effect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interest of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country. Hurewitz, J.C., Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, op. cit., pp. 107-108.
166. Reasons as to why there was no equivalent Arab Agency go back much further than the scope of this paper and will not

be touched upon.

167. Page 225.
168. See above, footnote #8.
169. The Arab Liberation Army.
170. See above, pages 5-6.
171. Arab Higher Committee of Palestine in Cairo, (as told by Haj Amin al-Husseini) Haqa'iq an Qadiyat Filastine (Truths About the Problem of Palestine), p. 63.
172. Ibid., p. 63.
173. Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," op. cit., p. 25.
174. This is not to criticize either the motives or the good intentions of the members of the Arab Liberation Army, many of whom gave their lives in fighting for a cause which they believed to be right.
175. Khalidi, "Suqut Filastin," op. cit., p. 51.

THE ARAB ARMIES ENTER PALESTINE

The announcement of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, brought the war into that phase which encompassed the entry of the regular armies of the Arab League states into Palestine. It lasted from May 15th to June 11th, 1948, when the first truce came into effect.

For the purpose of convenience and clarity, (rather than to relate the events as they occurred in a strictly chronological order) the country will be divided up into separate battle sectors, each of which will be dealt with in turn. These battle sectors, and the principal opponent of the Israelis in each, have been set up as follows:

1. The southern sector: against the Egyptians;
2. The Jerusalem-Latrun sector: against the Arab Legion;
3. The northeastern sector: against the Syrians and the Lebanese;
4. The Jenin sector: against the Iraqis; and
5. The central sector: which encompassed the military operations which occurred in the area of Tel Aviv and the Valley of Sharon to the north, and which were largely confined to skirmishes with Arab irregulars, and Arab inhabitants of the area.

The Southern Sector

In the south, it was the Egyptian army which was to bear

the brunt of the fighting, but as late as May 12th, the Egyptian government was still undecided as to whether it would send its army into Palestine.<sup>1</sup> A personal account<sup>2</sup> relates that in the early part of May there were various forecasts and conflicting reports as to what the official stand of the Egyptian government would be with regard to intervention in Palestine, but that it was "beginning to appear" that there was a possibility of Egypt entering the war.

Militarily, the army was almost completely unprepared for the task of carrying out a full-scale war, with a total force of nine battalions,<sup>3</sup> only three of which had been concentrated near the Palestine border. In 1947, the British Military Mission which had been responsible for the training of the Egyptian army, was withdrawn and with its withdrawal the Egyptian service and maintenance of the heavy equipment which it had received from the British army, was almost completely halted. The net result was that on May 15th, the Egyptian army did not have a single efficient tank<sup>4</sup> that it could utilize in accompanying the invading force, which was divided up into two brigades.<sup>5</sup> In addition, it found itself limited in its ability to provide sufficient transport for the soldiers making up the force.

The plan of action decided upon by the Egyptians was for the largest brigade group to advance northwards along the coastal road in the direction of Tel Aviv, while the second brigade group

was to advance inland via al-Auja, Beersheba, and Hebron, and subsequently link up with the Arab Legion at a point just south of Jerusalem. (See map - Annex C). The commanding officer of the entire force was Major General Ahmed Ali al-Mawawi.

On May 15th, both brigade groups crossed the border into Palestine. The largest brigade, after detaching a unit of infantry to reduce the Jewish settlement of Nirim which had been bypassed, moved northwards along the coastal road toward Khan Yunis, which was held by Arab irregulars and the Home Guard, and occupied the airfield. The other brigade moved off towards al-Auja, and took over the police post in that area.

The settlement of Nirim, which was located approximately four miles inland from the British camp at Rafah, was held by a strong platoon of the Haganah. In their approach for the subsequent assault, the Egyptians shelled the settlement in the hope of destroying its defenses, but its defenders, who were well dug-in, suffered only light damage which was limited to several buildings. Immediately following the lifting of the artillery barrage, the Egyptians launched a frontal assault, which was soon broken up by heavy small arms fire. The Egyptian army unit then withdrew leaving the settlement to be contained by Arab irregulars.

In the interim, the main brigade group pushed northwards and engaged the Jews at the settlement of Kfar Darom, which was approximately four and a half miles north of Khan Yunis. The



settlement was situated close to the coastal road, near a railroad station, and was defended by a garrison of settlers and a small detachment of the Haganah. Again, though subjected to a heavy artillery barrage, the defenders managed to repulse the subsequent infantry assault. As time was important, the position was bypassed with the Arab irregulars again being given the responsibility for the containment of the settlement.

On the evening of the 15th, the main body entered Gaza, and from here on its advance was considerably slower due to the appearance of logistical problems, which had not been considered or provided for, prior to the entrance of the Egyptian army into Palestine. The unit's next contact with the Israelis was at the settlement of Deir Suneid, which was captured after a ten hour battle on May 20th. This was followed by the occupation of another small settlement, Yad Mordekhai, which was located approximately eight miles north of Gaza, and where the Israelis, from their well-defended positions, were able to hold off the attacking force for two days. The Egyptians had learned from their previous failures, however, and now followed the tactical approach of a combined attack, which involved an artillery barrage followed by the utilization of armoured cars to cover the advancing infantry. Yad Mordekhai fell on May the 23rd.

From here the Egyptians pressed on and occupied the Arab towns of Majdal and Ascalon, and then directed their attention

against the large Jewish settlement of Negba, which, located half-way between Majdal and Faluja, hindered the way of the Egyptians eastwards along the Majdal-Beit Jibrin road. On June the 2nd, the Egyptians carried out a full-scale attack using both artillery and armoured cars in support of the infantry, but the Israelis, in their well defended positions, held out firmly, with damage from the artillery barrage being limited to the destruction of the buildings of the settlement. When the Egyptian casualties began to mount, and no headway was made against the settlement, Negba was left to be contained by the irregulars, while one unit of the brigade<sup>6</sup> moved eastwards to Beit Jibrin. The remaining portion of the brigade pushed northwards, bypassing the Jewish settlement of Nitzanin, and entered Isdud. From Isdud a unit was dispatched to attack Nitzanin, which was subsequently occupied by a well-planned and well-executed movement, which again combined both artillery and armoured cars in support of the infantry. This was the third success of the brigade group, and indicated that its various components were beginning to function as a battle team.

Isdud, which the Egyptians had entered on May 29th, was only twenty miles south of Tel Aviv, and the Israelis, realizing that the Egyptians were approaching within striking distance of their provisional capital, moved a portion of their force southwards from Rehovot to a commanding point on the road just to the

north of Isdud, where they set up a defensive position. Small Egyptian units probed the new Israeli position, but no determined attack was launched until June 7th, when the Israelis were forced to withdraw to a line of Arab villages approximately one mile to the rear of the position where a new defense line was quickly set up.<sup>7</sup>

Here the Egyptian advance was brought to a halt while the Egyptian commander, under the cover of an artillery and sporadic aircraft bombardment of the Israeli position, regrouped his force in preparation for a new offensive. Time, however, was slipping by and no further military actions other than minor patrol skirmishes occurred in the Isdud area before June 11th, on which date the first truce came into effect.

In the interim, the second Egyptian brigade group moved from al-Auja northwards through Arab territory to Beersheba, which was entered on May the 20th. From Beersheba the advance was continued through Hebron and on to Bethlehem, the defense of which was handed over to the Egyptians by the Arab Legion on the morning of May the 22nd.

Up to this point the brigade had advanced without making any contact with the Israeli forces, but on the 22nd it moved out against Ramat Rahel, which was located approximately two miles northeast of Beit Jala, and was the southernmost point held by the Israelis in their Jerusalem defensive set-up. The settlement

was brought under heavy artillery fire, and then hit with a flanking attack which caused its defenders to withdraw. Jewish reinforcements from Jerusalem, however, soon arrived and a counter-attack was immediately carried out. By nightfall on the 22nd, the position had been re-occupied by the Israelis.

In the days that followed, there was sporadic fighting in the area, with neither side suffering an appreciable change in position. Ramat Rahel changed hands several times, but at this point the Egyptian advance towards Jerusalem had been halted, and it was not renewed prior to the beginning of the June 11th truce.

On the surface, the success achieved by the Egyptians during the four weeks of fighting extending from May 14th to June 11th, was evident for all to see. A careful study of the situation, however, reveals that the Egyptians had actually forced themselves militarily into a corner, from which it would prove difficult to extricate themselves. Area-wise, they had occupied a large area of Palestine with almost the entire Negev enclosed within the limits of the perimeter established by the Egyptian forces. The method in which the occupation had been carried out, however, presents the situation in a different light, in that the occupied area consisted largely of a narrow strip along the main metalled roads, while the open spaces in-between were left free, and were covered by small mobile, Israeli units which moved from settlement to settlement, helping them whenever the pressure from the Arab irregulars became too great.

The Egyptian forces had apparently been sent into Palestine by their High Command, with the underlying intention of occupying the largest area possible, with little attention being given to the means by which the area would subsequently be held and defended. As the situation stood on June 11th, the Egyptian forces were spread out over a wide area in a defensive line which had little depth, and no fixed defensive positions. The line extended roughly from Rafah, on the Egyptian-Palestinian border, northwards along the coastal road to Isdud; from Majdal eastwards along the Majdal-Beit Jibrin road to a point where it intersected with the Hebron-Jerusalem road, and thence north to Bethlehem, and south to al-Auja (see map - Annex C) - an area of almost 110 miles, defended by five Egyptian battalions, which were already feeling the difficulties involved in maintaining front line troops when confronted with long and difficult lines of communications, and a lack of suitable means of transport for both troops and supplies.

Abdul Nasser has stated in his Palestine War Memoirs,<sup>8</sup> that the situation near and on the front lines on June 2, 1948, was as follows:

"I found scattered forces thinning out the nearer they approached the front line position facing the enemy. Small....in number....they (covered) a vast extent of territory....reduced....to individual outposts (with the) primary responsibility to defend themselves.... There were no reserves that could be thrown into the attack. We ceased fighting as an army, and had turned after our entry into Palestine into individual un-co-ordinated groups."

The result of such a position, was that the Israelis succeeded in pinning the Egyptians down to their widely scattered positions, monopolizing the right of movement, concentration, and attack.

At this point, however, it should be pointed out that the Egyptian army had been restricted in its selection of a course of action to that of either occupying the narrow defensive perimeter outlined above, or of limiting itself to the two defensive lines extending north from Rafah to Isdud, and from al-Auja to Bethlehem. Its subsequent choice of also occupying the east-west Majdal-Beit Jibrin position, was the best selection it could make in view of the other alternative, but it limited its future action to that of defense and not offense.

Its preparations prior to May 14th, which had been largely limited to the grouping of a small force in Gaza, permitted no further action than that described above. For the Egyptians to have struck directly through to Tel Aviv would have been extremely dangerous without the co-operation of the Arab Legion, which apparently had no intention of pushing through to Tel Aviv, and subsequently linking up with the Egyptian army. Had the Egyptian army pushed on alone, it would have been cut to pieces by the Israeli forces, which were operating from points within a few miles of their supply dumps, whereas, the Egyptian lines of communications in the Tel Aviv area would have been extended to over 250 miles.

The action of the Egyptian army in occupying a perimeter which enclosed almost the entire Negev, dictated that during the subsequent truce, reinforcements and supplies be rushed forward to strengthen their defensive positions, and that offensive action could again be undertaken only after their defensive position had been improved.

The blame for the position in which the Egyptian army found itself, however, did not rest with the Egyptians alone, but with all of the Arab countries for not agreeing on an over-all plan of operation with specific objectives assigned to each army, and a willingness on the part of all for co-ordination and co-operation. As the situation stood, however, each army was left to fight its own battles, and to win its own objectives according to the area from which it entered Palestine, and according to the whims of its own General Staff which were in many cases completely out of line with the situation on the front lines.

#### The Jerusalem-Latrun Sector

In the Jerusalem-Latrun sector, it was the Arab Legion which shouldered the burden of the responsibility for defense of the area against the Jews, and for any offensive action which was to be undertaken in the area. The personnel strength of the Arab Legion contingent which entered Palestine on May 15th, has been estimated at from 4,500<sup>9</sup> to 9,050<sup>10</sup> men. Structurally, the Arab Legion was broken down into two brigades composed of four

"mechanized regiments;"<sup>11</sup> two twenty-five pounder batteries composed of four guns each; and seven garrison companies,<sup>12</sup> which had received no tactical training.

On the morning of May 15th,<sup>13</sup> the Arab Legion crossed Palestine via the Allenby Bridge, and immediately deployed to its assigned areas of responsibility, in accordance with instructions which had been received from its Commander in Chief, Lieutenant General John Bagot Glubb Pasha. The 1st Brigade, which consisted of the 1st and the 3rd Regiments, proceeded to the Nablus area, where the 1st Regiment was assigned the responsibility of guarding the approaches to Nablus from the west and the north, and the 3rd Regiment was designated as a reserve to be held in the Nablus area.

The "3rd Brigade,"<sup>14</sup> consisting of the 2nd and the 4th Regiments, was dispatched to the Ramallah area.

Jerusalem was completely by-passed by the Arab Legion. This latter step had been taken on the advice of Glubb Pasha,<sup>15</sup> who contended that its defense would demand over 2,000 Arab Legion troops, and that this large number of troops could not be spared in view of the large area which had to be defended by the Arab Legion.<sup>16</sup> He held that the major effort in Jerusalem should be expended in achieving a truce in the city, and that Arab Legion troops should be withheld unless it became obvious that a truce could not be established.



In the interim, however, the Jews in Jerusalem began an all-out offensive on the heels of the departing British troops. The strategic area of "Bevingrad"<sup>18</sup> had allegedly been guarded by both British and Haganah forces prior to the evacuation by the British,<sup>19</sup> and upon their subsequent withdrawal, was completely taken over by the Jews.

Early on May 15th, the Haganah advanced in three columns with the intention of clearing Jerusalem of its Arab population and completing its occupation of the city. Officers of the Haganah in specially prepared vans fitted with loudspeakers, drove through the streets calling out in Arabic, "The Jericho road is still open. Fly from Jerusalem before you are all killed."<sup>20</sup> The 1st column completed the occupation of "Bevingrad" (see map - Annex D), and took the adjacent Russian compound. It then turned its attention to the prominent group of buildings to the east and adjacent to the Old City wall, of which the Monastery of Notre Dame de France, was the most formidable, and most strategically located, in that it commanded the road running north to Ramallah. The second column moved off to the north where it first took the Italian School, which also overlooked the road to Ramallah, and then launched an attack on the Arab suburb of Sheikh Jarrah, which fell to the Jews at the end of the day, and enabled them to establish contact with the Jewish garrison of the Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus.

The third column, moving from Katamon Ridge, took and occupied in turn, the Greek Colony, the German Colony, the railroad station, and Allenby Barracks, and thus obtained control of the major approaches into Jerusalem from the direction of Bethlehem.

By the evening of May 15th, the Jews had managed to occupy a major portion of the New City, and were preparing for a major assault on the Old City, with the hope of relieving the 1,700 Jews who were isolated by the Arabs in the Jewish quarter.

On the 16th of May, two independent infantry garrison companies<sup>21</sup> of the Arab Legion, moved up the road leading from Jericho to Jerusalem and established themselves in the Good Samaritan Inn, which was located approximately midway between the two points. On the 17th they moved forward and occupied the Mount of Olives, which overlooks Jerusalem from the east.

In the interim, the Palestine Truce Commission labored in vain to reach an agreement acceptable to both sides, and the Trans Jordanian government and King Abdullah continued to be besieged with pleas from the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem to come to their aid. On ~~May~~ 17th, King Abdullah acquiesced to their requests, and ordered that units of the Arab Legion be immediately dispatched to Jerusalem. For over twenty hours, however, Glubb Pasha held off from complying with the order in the hope that a truce in the city would still be achieved, but a study of the situation revealed that unless immediate aid was provided, the

entire city, including the Old City, would fall to the Jews. Accordingly, on the morning of the 18th, he ordered one of the two infantry garrison companies on the Mount of Olives to enter the Old City, where they were immediately dispersed along its walls to check the expected Jewish attack.<sup>23</sup>

It was soon obvious, however, that an additional 100 men would not be sufficient to check the Jewish advance and that additional reinforcements had to be brought in immediately. The units of the 1st and the 3rd Brigades, however, had already been deployed and assigned areas of responsibility, with the 2nd Regiment in the Bab al-Wad area, and the 4th Regiment engaged with the Israelis at Latrun. To the north, the 1st Regiment was reportedly engaged with the Israelis at Qalqiliya, while the 3rd Regiment was being held in reserve as a safeguard against any Jewish breakthrough.

On the night of the 18th, however, isolated detachments were contacted and ordered to Jerusalem, and at 3:45 A.M., on the morning of May 19th, the Arab Legion attacked Sheikh Jarrah. The attacking force, amounting to approximately 300 men, consisted of one company of infantry, a squadron of armoured cars, four six-pounder guns, and four three-inch mortars. The artillery in support consisted of four twenty-five pounders, which were unable to maintain a continuous barrage due to a shortage of ammunition. By 7:30 in the morning, Sheikh Jarrah had been cleared of Jews,

and the Arab Legion force continued to advance along the Ramallah-Jerusalem road towards the Old City, fighting its way into the Arab residential quarter of Musrara which had been largely occupied by the Jews.

In the early hours of the afternoon, several armoured cars of the Arab Legion reached the Damascus Gate and established contact with the Arabs in the Old City. The main force, however, reinforced by a company from the 1st Regiment, and now consisting of approximately 500 men, halted its advance and established itself in Sheikh Jarrah. At dusk, the armoured car unit, which had broken through to the Damascus Gate, also retired to Sheikh Jarrah on the premise that armoured cars were of no use at night in the narrow streets.

Up to this point, the Arab Legion force in Jerusalem had been composed of a collection of sub-units, which had been drawn from several different areas. With heavy fighting still going on in Jerusalem, it was essential to withdraw these odd companies and to replace them with a single tactical unit. The 3rd Regiment in Nablus,<sup>24</sup> which had been held in reserve behind the 1st Regiment, was the only unit available, and on the 21st of May it was dispatched to Jerusalem, reaching Jerusalem in the early morning hours of the 22nd. The column immediately passed through the Sheikh Jarrah quarter and into the Musrara quarter which was dominated by the Monastery of Notre Dame de France, which had been

captured by the Jews on the 15th of May. The 3rd Regiment was assigned the task of capturing this fortress-like building, but in its progress through the Musrara quarter, two companies of the regiment became lost, and it was not until two o'clock in the afternoon that they were finally located, and guided into defensive positions near the walls of Notre Dame.

At noon on the 23rd, the attack, supported by two six-pounder anti-tank guns, and four three-inch mortars, was launched. The artillery, however, had little effect on the walls of the building.<sup>25</sup> As the infantry advanced towards the objective it came under heavy fire from the Jewish defenders, and from Jews in the Italian Hospital approximately 300 yards to the north, and the French Hospital directly behind Notre Dame. It was not until it had almost reached Notre Dame, and its own supporting fire lifted, however, that the assault was broken off. The following day, the 24th, the attack was renewed, but heavy casualties caused the attack to be brought to a halt, and the objective of seizing Notre Dame was abandoned. Of the 200 infantry soldiers who had been assigned the task of taking Notre Dame, over half had been killed or wounded.

Meanwhile, in the Old City, the two companies of the Arab Legion, plus the Arab irregulars, were fighting two battles. One directed against the Jews in the Jewish quarter of the Old City, and the other, that of defending the Old City against the attacks

of the Jews from the outside. They manned the walls from Zion Gate, through the Citadel, and around to the Damascus Gate.

Before the entry of the Arab Legion, the Palmach on Mount Zion had broken into the Old City and made contact with the Jews inside.<sup>26</sup> They were subsequently forced to withdraw as a result of strong Arab pressure, and the Zion Gate was again blocked up. The Jews had remained on Mount Zion, however, and occupied the huge Church of the Dormition, the belfry of which overlooked a large part of the Old City from the south, just as Notre Dame overlooked it from the north. High in the belfry, Jewish snipers were able to take a heavy toll of anyone in the Old City careless enough to expose himself.

The action against the Jewish quarter in the Old City was largely restricted to house-to-house fighting, with little artillery or mortar support. Approximately 100 men of the Arab Legion supported by Arab irregulars and civilian police participated in the action, and the Jews isolated from outside help and supplies were gradually forced into a small area, and finally surrendered on May 28th. All men of military age, including the Palmach and Haganah members in the Old City,<sup>27</sup> were transferred as prisoners of war to Trans Jordan, while the old men, women, and children, were sent back across the lines to the Jewish side under the supervision of the Red Cross.

Thereafter, action in Jerusalem was mainly limited to

sniping and mortar barrages, until June the 5th, when the Jews began a new offensive in the New City directed at recapturing the suburb of Sheikh Jarrah. The attack, however, was repulsed. Then on the 8th, they launched an attack with the aim of clearing the Musrara quarter of all its Arab inhabitants, and by the 9th, the major portion of the area was in Israeli hands. They then mounted another attack against Sheikh Jarrah in a final effort to link up with their Mount Scopus position. The Arab Legion, however, launched a heavy counter-attack against the advancing Israeli column, causing it to scatter, and thus bringing the attack to a halt. This was the last major action in the City of Jerusalem prior to the beginning of the truce on June 11th.

Other military actions in the Jerusalem area during the period extending from May 14th to June 11th, had taken place to the north and west of Jerusalem. In the north, the Jewish settlement of Atarot had been attacked and taken by elements of the Arab Legion on May 16th, and on May the 23rd, the Jewish settlement of Neve Ya-agov was occupied. In both cases, however, the Israeli defenders had slipped away to Jerusalem before any heavy fighting had developed.

To the west, a company of the 1st Regiment, which was now situated in Ramallah,<sup>28</sup> was delegated the responsibility of taking a high hill located to the northeast of the village of Abu Gosh.<sup>29</sup> The hill dominated the road leading from Abu Gosh to Biddu, and

then to Ramallah.<sup>30</sup> The Israeli garrison defending the hill numbered approximately seventy or eighty men, and the summit of the hill was well protected by barbed-wire belts, and mine fields. The company of the 1st Regiment, however, supported by three-inch mortars and two twenty-five pounders, assaulted the position on May 26th, and after a battle lasting approximately one hour, overran the position, and thus assumed control over the road leading to the north, and ended the possibility of a Jewish thrust against Ramallah from this direction.

Further military action in the area to the west of Jerusalem centered about the Jewish attempt to once again re-open the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. The Jews, as a result of "Operations Nachshon and Maccabi,"<sup>31</sup> controlled that section of the road extending from Lifta, on the outskirts of New Jerusalem, westward to a point just short of Bab al Wad. The section from Bab al-Wad westward to Latrun, however, was firmly in Arab hands, and it was control of this portion of the road which closed it to Jewish traffic.

Glubb Pasha, realizing the importance of maintaining a block on all Tel Aviv-Jerusalem traffic, dispatched the 4th Regiment to Latrun to strengthen its defenses, and to reinforce the Arab irregulars who were defending the city. The Arab Legion force occupied positions in and around the Latrun police post, and the nearby Trappist Monastery, which gave them control of the



gorge-like section of the road extending approximately three miles to the east.

The Israelis, on the other hand, had decided to attack Latrun in an attempt to break the Arab strangle-hold on the road, and a brigade was hastily formed for the purpose. From the outset, however, the operation was poorly planned and directed, and subjected to unexpected delays due to the failure to provide for certain items of equipment such as water bottles and containers, and the Arab Legion at Latrun was alerted well in advance of the impending attack.

On the night of May 26th, the attack was launched in the form of a frontal assault which ran directly into the fire of the alerted Arab forces. The assault was completely broken, with over 800 casualties being inflicted on the attacking force. The following night, another assault, using the same line of approach, was carried out, and again the attack was repulsed with heavy Israeli losses.

The Jews were determined, however, that Latrun be occupied, and night after night, they continued their assaults, with little progress being made against the firmly entrenched Arab Legion forces. Prior to the initiation of the truce, a former American army Colonel, David Marcus, appeared on the scene, and began to direct the Israeli operations in the area. Under his guidance, the attacks were more carefully co-ordinated, utilizing supporting

fire and flanking movements, but the Arab Legion continued to hold fast, and the Jewish casualties continued to mount. On the night of June 9th, Colonel Marcus was killed by one of his own sentries. He had contributed much to the Israeli cause, including the innovation of bringing his infantry into the battle zone in jeeps rather than allowing them to be carried a limited distance in civilian busses or lorries, and then requiring them to march fully laden the remainder of the way before beginning an assault. This idea of "mounted" infantry appealed to the Israeli commanders and was adopted and developed on a large scale. It proved to be extremely advantageous to them in the latter stages of the war, especially in the south.

While the attacks against Latrun were in progress, the Israelis were busy in carrying out another project in the area, which was that of constructing a by-pass road around Latrun, extending from Deir Muheisin to Bab al-Wad (see map - Annex E), a distance of approximately six miles. The operation was preceded by the occupation of the Arab villages of Beit Jiz and Beit Susin, and the subsequent construction effort was a well-guarded secret. On June 6th, the first shipment of supplies was dispatched over the road, although they had to be hand-carried for a short distance at one place, where the road was not quite finished, and transferred to vehicles waiting on the other side of the obstruction. The road, which was subsequently referred to

as the "Burma Road," was completely opened to Jewish traffic on June 10th.

Any analysis of the military action in the Jerusalem-Latrun area, during the period of fighting extending from May 14th to June 11th, must necessarily center around Glubb Pasha's refusal to order Arab Legion troops into the fighting in Jerusalem until May 18th, when, in his own words, he had stated that,<sup>32</sup>

"the Holy City was....not only of immense moral and religious value. It was the key to the military situation. It was on the very crest of the mountain range. If the Jews captured the whole of Jerusalem, they could drive down the main road to Jericho, and the whole position in Palestine would be turned. If the Jews could seize Allenby Bridge, the Arab Legion in Palestine would be cut off from its base and would suffer a military disaster. Either, therefore, we must arrange a truce in Jerusalem or else we must concentrate on holding the city, in which case the remoter rural districts might be lost."

In the above-quoted excerpt lies the key to the situation. Strategically, Jerusalem was important both from the aspect of its 100,000 Jewish inhabitants, who were located in the center of a predominantly Arab area, and secondly, from its position, the domination of which would have enabled the Jews to strike at the heart of Palestine from several directions, and to paralyze the efforts of that force which it regarded as the strongest and most dangerous that it had to face - the Arab Legion.

The manner in which the Jews had launched their

offensive in Jerusalem immediately upon the departure of the British troops, should have made it obvious to all that the conquest of all of Jerusalem was their objective, and that a truce could not be brought about<sup>33</sup> in the face of the refusal of the Jews to relinquish any newly occupied territory, and the Arabs refusing to recognize a truce which allowed the Jews to retain possession of such territory.

Glubb Pasha's statement<sup>34</sup> that, "If we move into Jerusalem....we shall use up half our army," cannot be justified when Glubb Pasha himself stated, in reference to the scattered, independent units which he had employed in the initial Arab Legion venture into Jerusalem, that<sup>35</sup> "our intervention in Jerusalem had been carried out at only a few hours notice, with the result that divisional headquarters had been obliged to use several sub-units which happened to be at hand. The operation had been sufficient to halt the Jewish offensive and to clear Sheikh Jarrah."

This intervention had occurred on May 18th, four days after the Jewish offensive in Jerusalem had been well underway. It is the opinion of the writer that a vastly different situation in Jerusalem would have occurred, had several units of the Arab Legion been dispatched directly to Jerusalem at the termination of the mandate on the night of May 14-15, with instructions to capture and hold such key points as the Monastery of Notre Dame

de France, the Church of the Dormition, and other buildings which overlooked and controlled the surrounding area. Under these circumstances the main body of the Arab Legion could have been dispatched as planned, and withheld from the Jerusalem area until it had been ascertained whether a truce would be put into effect.

The argument that the entrance of the Arab Legion forces into Jerusalem would have been a direct affront to the United Nations in view of the protracted internationalization of the city, could have easily been answered in face of the Jewish offensive action in the city. The Arab force could have entered the city with the objective of maintaining a status quo, and preventing any additional territory from falling into Jewish possession. United Nations reaction against such a move would necessarily have had to be limited.

An additional aspect of this phase of the war which demands consideration is the apparent failure of the Arabs to discover any trace of the activity involved in the construction of the "Burma Road," and of consequently undertaking military action to bring its construction to a halt. Although the major portion of the construction effort had been carried out while the Jewish offensive was being directed against Latrun, thereby serving to focus the attention of the Arabs on its defense, it is difficult to conceive the fact of the Jews constructing a road through six miles of Arab dominated territory, without at least

one Arab discovering evidence of the construction effort, and reporting the information to the Arab Legion forces in Latrun. From the time of the Arab counter-offensive, which had brought "Operation Nachshon" to a halt on April 17th, to June 6th, when the first supplies over the "Burma Road" were sent through to Jerusalem, the Jews had been restricted to supplying the Jews in Jerusalem by air, and by supplies transported to the city by men and mules over the hills at night. Such columns had to pass through Arab territory and were constantly subject to attack and ambush, thus limiting the ability of the Jews to supply Jerusalem by this method. The new road, however, removed all such difficulties, and with its opening a Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem route was once again open to Jewish traffic and a regular flow of supplies began to pour into the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. The apparent failure of the Arabs to discover traces of the route while it was still in its construction phase, and before the Jews had time to organize an adequate system of defense for the road, had a definite detrimental effect on the Arab military effort.<sup>36</sup>

#### The Northeastern Sector

In the northeastern sector the Arab effort was limited largely, but not completely, to military action by the Syrians, who, with a force which has been estimated at between 800<sup>37</sup> and 4,000<sup>38</sup> men, attacked the Israelis in two places. Their main assault was launched in the area of Samakh on the southern shore

of Lake Tiberias (see map - Annex F), while the other was carried out against the Jewish settlement of Mishmar Hayarden, which was located south of Lake Hule. Other actions in the area included the Israeli attack on Nebi Yusha, the Lebanese action against Malikiya, and the Syrian attempt to overrun the Jewish settlement of Ein Gev.

In the main Syrian thrust, the mechanized brigade moved down from the Heights of Jaulan, towards the southern end of Lake Tiberias. In its approach it split into three columns, with the first, which was the strongest, being directed against Samakh; the second against the twin Daganayas, two settlements to the west of Samakh; and the third moving southwest with the objective of cutting the road running south from Samakh to Beisan.

On May the 16th, Samakh was attacked from the air, and bombarded by artillery, and on the 17th, the Syrians carried out a full-scale infantry assault, supported by both armour and artillery. The attack was well-coordinated and directed, but the Syrians were unable to completely overrun the objective with the Israelis rushing in reinforcements from Tiberias. Small probing actions were carried out by the Syrians during the night, and on the morning of the 18th, Samakh fell before a renewed Syrian attack. The Israelis, however, succeeded in holding on to a group of buildings comprising the Jewish-owned hydro-electric works, which were located just to the west of the town, and several Syrian attempts to drive them out were repulsed.

The second column, which had been assigned the task of capturing the twin Daganayas, definitely lacked the coordination and leadership which characterized the first, and it was not until the 19th of May that it was prepared to begin its assault against the Israeli settlements. In the interim, the Israelis had succeeded in reinforcing the settlements with both men and armament, as evidenced by the appearance of two 65-mm guns and a flame thrower. Israeli aircraft also appeared on the scene, and by bombing and strafing the advancing Syrians, broke up the initial assault.<sup>39</sup>

Reinforcements were sent from the first to the second column, and on the 20th, the Syrians resumed their attack. This time it was led by light armoured vehicles,<sup>40</sup> which initially penetrated the Israeli defenses, but soon came under the fire of the two 65-mm guns, which, firing at point-blank range, put several of the Syrian armoured vehicles out of action. The armour was forced to begin a withdrawal, and the infantry, unable to proceed without armoured support, was also forced to withdraw, thus bringing the Syrian offensive in the area to a halt.

Regarding the third column to the south there is little information available. Although it was able to reach its objective, which was the road leading from Samakh to Beisan, it was unable to block the road to Jewish traffic due to the wide deployment of its force, which initially had only been approximately



300 strong.

Thus, the Syrian offensive in the area south of Tiberias had succeeded in obtaining little more than a foothold in Palestine. Tactically, the entire operation had been carried out in a manner which greatly lessened its chances of success. The main criticism rests in the division of the brigade, which had no reserve in support, into three columns, two of which were assigned objectives the achievement of which would have contributed little to the improvement of the Syrian position. Had the entire mechanized brigade been utilized in the attack against Samakh, its occupation could have been quickly effected, and the entire column, with the exception of a small unit to occupy the position would have been left free to carry out further concentrated attacks against objectives of strategical importance. The three column advance of the Syrians, however, had divided the strength of the Syrian force, and had been carried out with a complete lack of coordination. The situation of one column completing its attack before the second even engaged the enemy, enabled the Israelis to switch their forces from one area to another in accordance with the needs of the situation.

In the area to the south of Lake Hule, the Syrian effort was directed against a bridge over the River Jordan, and the Jewish settlement of Mishmar Hayarden. The Syrian plan was to seize the bridge, occupy Mishmar Hayarden, and then push forward

to cut the road from Rosh Pinna to Hulata, followed by an advance westward in conjunction with the Lebanese attacks from the north. It eventually hoped to make contact with both the Lebanese forces in the north, and Qawuqji's ALA in the west, thus completely isolating the Jewish settlements in the Hule Valley to the north.

In the execution of the plan, the Syrians seized the bridge, and after a short skirmish, occupied the village of Mishmar Hayarden, which was developed into a fortified bridgehead. The column then began to move westward, but soon ran into strong Israeli opposition along the line of rising ground approximately two to three miles west of the River Jordan. After their initial assault failed to penetrate the Israeli defenses, the Syrians halted their advance and concentrated on consolidating their bridgehead position. No further military action of any consequence was carried out in this area during this phase of the war.

On the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias, the Jewish settlement of Ein Gev provided an excellent example of the extent to which the Jewish settlements had been fortified, and to a large extent, made self-sufficient, in order to hold out against the Arabs, even though completely isolated from outside aid. Ein Gev with its only contact with the outside being restricted to boat trips across Lake Tiberias at night, was enclosed to the east by high hills, which had been occupied by the Syrians, and from which

the settlement was exposed to a heavy artillery bombardment. Its defenders, however, were well dug-in, and though almost all of its buildings were destroyed by artillery fire, the settlers were able to hold out and defend themselves, successfully repulsing a Syrian attack on June 10th.

Further to the north, on May 17th, the Israelis carried out a successful assault against the police post and village of Nebi Yusha, which was important strategically in that it enabled the Israelis to control this area of the frontier and prevent a possible link-up of the Syrian and Lebanese forces.

The Israelis then turned their attention to the frontier post of Malikiya on the Lebanese border, and occupied it after a brief skirmish. Several days later, however, they were in turn forced to withdraw in the face of a strong Lebanese attack, consisting of approximately 800 men,<sup>41</sup> who subsequently occupied the village. There was no further military action of any consequence carried out by the Lebanese army during this opening phase of the war.

Other military actions in the northern area were restricted to minor operations carried out by local groups, which had little effect on the strategical position of either side.

#### The Jenin Sector

On May the 15th, the Iraqi contingent, consisting of one armoured car regiment, and a battalion of infantry, under the

command of General Taher, concentrated in Trans-Jordan, near the Palestine frontier.<sup>42</sup> Against Arab Legion advice it attempted to cross the River Jordan at a point which was roughly opposite Beisan, which had been occupied by the Israelis on May 12th. The crossing was repulsed, whereupon the Iraqis, in an agreement with the Arab Legion, moved south through Trans Jordanian territory, and passed, via Jericho, into the Nablus area, replacing the 1st Regiment of the Arab Legion, which moved to Ramallah.<sup>43</sup>

The Iraqi forces were immediately dispersed throughout the triangular area encompassed by the three towns of Nablus, Jenin, and Tuikarm, the latter of which was only ten miles from the sea. The ALA had been assigned the responsibility of defending the area to the north of the Iraqi position, including the Galilee area. This area of responsibility included the Mount Gilboa Range, and a series of villages to the north of Jenin, which formed a buffer area between the Iraqi position, and the Israeli position in the Valley of Esdraelon to the north. On May 28th, the Israelis began an advance on Jenin, directing the point of their attack against this buffer area, and in a series of moves in which they encountered little opposition, they occupied the villages of Zir'in, Nuris, Sandala, Muqeibili, Jalama, and Arrana. (See map - Annex G). On June 3rd, the advance on Jenin proper was made. At the same time, a diversionary movement was made against the Iraqi flank from the east, by a second Israeli

force which moved out from the area of Beisan and seized the Arab villages of Deir Ghazzala and Faquqa.

In the main attack from the north, there were two columns of approximately 450 men each, which moved against Jenin. One column seized and occupied a hill to the southwest of the town, while the other column posted itself on another hill to the southeast. The Iraqi troops defending Jenin had selected a police fortress, which was in a strong commanding position, as their strong-point, and were able to bring both Israeli columns under heavy small-arms fire. One column, however, was able to force its way into the outskirts of the town before its advance was brought to a halt by the Iraqi defenders. In the afternoon, Iraqi reinforcements arrived from Nablus and a counter-attack, supported by aircraft, was carried out against the Israeli column which had penetrated into the town, and it was forced to retire. Later in the afternoon, the Israeli force, supported by armoured cars, made another unsuccessful attempt to assault the Iraqi position, and thereupon broke off all action in the Jenin area. Jewish losses had been heavy, while those suffered by the Iraqis had been negligible.

Thus, the main Iraqi contribution to the over-all Arab effort during this first phase of the war, had been largely limited to the occupation of the Jenin-Tulkarm-Nablus area, with its only major military engagements being limited to its early failure

to penetrate the Israeli defenses in the Beisan area, and its subsequent defense of Jenin. No offensive operations, or attempts to enlarge its area of occupation, were subsequently undertaken by the Iraqi forces.

In the northern sector, bordering the coastline, the only military action was the Israeli occupation of Acre,<sup>44</sup> and their subsequent push to the Lebanese border.

#### The Central Sector

This included the area around Tel Aviv, and to the north, where the Plain of Sharon, which was largely in Israeli hands, bordered on the western edge of the hilly Samarian Triangle. In the northern part of this sector, action was largely limited to local skirmishes, with the one major operation centering around the Israeli occupation of Qaqun, which was subsequently turned into a heavily fortified base of operation for action against Tulkarm, an Iraqi strongpoint.

A little farther to the south, in the vicinity of Qalqiliya, the Arabs began a limited push to the coast, which was soon abandoned in the face of an Israeli counter-thrust which was able to take and occupy the Arab village of Kfar Saba.

Near Tel Aviv, with the object of building a defensive screen around their provisional capital, the Israelis undertook a series of minor operations, which involved the clearing of all

Arab inhabitants and irregular troops from the area extending from Sarafand in the south, northwards to Petah Tikva, thus shielding Tel Aviv and making it more secure against any attacks from the hills to the east. Other than this, however, there was no further military activity in the area, with no attempt being made by either the Iraqi army, or the Arab Legion to push through to the coast.

United Nations action during this phase of the war had been primarily limited to the debate centering around the wording and interpretation of several draft resolutions calling for a cease-fire in Palestine. Finally, on May 29, 1948, a draft resolution,<sup>45</sup> submitted by the United Kingdom, and calling for a four weeks truce period, was adopted by the Security Council. By June 1st, both the provisional Government of Israel, and the Arab states had signified their acceptance of the terms of the truce resolution, with both parties, however, qualifying their acceptance on the basis of certain assumptions which they held were implied in the terms of the resolution.<sup>46</sup>

On June 4th, however, Count Folke Bernadotte, the United Nations mediator, informed the President of the Security Council, that he had been negotiating with the parties concerning the effective date of the truce and that the main question obstructing agreement was that of Jewish immigration into Palestine during the truce. The difficulty had arisen with regard to interpreta-

tion of paragraphs "three" and "four" of the resolution, which referred to "fighting personnel" and "men of military age."<sup>47</sup> The mediator subsequently interpreted this to mean that no fighting personnel, i.e., men belonging to a military unit or bearing arms, should be introduced into Palestine or any Arab country during the period of the truce. He held that the resolution did not prohibit immigration, and that it did not appear to place any complete and positive ban on the inclusion of men of military age in such immigration, and thus, he decided that free immigration of men, women, and children, under and above the age group of 18 to 45 should be permitted. In addition, a limited number of men of military age were to be permitted to enter, the number to be at the discretion of the mediator. These men were to be kept in camps of a non-military nature under the surveillance of United Nations observers during the period of the truce.

This interpretation was accepted, and on June 10th, the mediator informed the Security Council of the acceptance by all parties concerned of the truce proposals. The truce was to go into effect on June 11, 1948, at 6 A.M., G.M.T.

Thus, another phase of the war in Palestine had been brought to a close. Territorially, in a comparison of that area allotted to the Arabs in accordance with the Partition Plan of November 29, 1947 (see map - Annex A), and the area under occupation of the Arab armies on June 11, 1948 (see map - Annex H), the



gains of the Arabs were tremendous, but below the surface other considerations of great importance had arisen.

The first consideration reveals that Arab gains, as represented graphically,<sup>48</sup> present a picture which is deceiving to the viewer, especially when it is realized that the largest territorial gain is that area represented by the Negev, which, according to the Partition Plan, had been designated as part of the Jewish state. In the Negev, actual physical occupation of the area by the Egyptian army was restricted to the narrow defense perimeter which extended, roughly, from Rafah northward to Isdud; from Majdal eastward to the point of intersection with the Hebron-Jerusalem road, and thence north to Bethlehem, and south to al-Auja. (See map - Annex C). In between this defensive perimeter, there still existed a total of twenty-two Jewish settlements, which had been by-passed by the advancing Egyptian army, and which continued to hold out, with an Israeli mobile force maintaining communications between them. Complete Egyptian occupation of the Negev would have entailed either the complete reduction of these settlements, or the strengthening and widening of the defensive perimeter to the extent that they would be completely cut off from outside aid, and thus forced into a position of surrender. As yet, neither of these conditions had been fulfilled.

A second consideration which revealed itself, was the fact that the Arab states had vastly underestimated the strength

of the Jews in Palestine, and as a result, had failed to adequately prepare themselves for the war which followed, or to completely dedicate themselves to bringing the war to a successful conclusion. A heavy propaganda barrage which portrayed the Arab states as possessing armies of gigantic proportions,<sup>49</sup> actually back-fired in that it gave the people of the Arab world a false sense of security, and destroyed any willingness on their part for self-sacrifice in preparation for an all-out war effort. The Arab people were unable to consider the war in a serious manner, when it was felt that it was a simple matter of their armies entering Palestine and walking over the Israeli forces at will. United Nations observers and Red Cross officials were frequently heard to say that when they were in Tel Aviv or Haifa they felt a tension that they did not feel in the Arab capitals. In the former there was an atmosphere of war exhibited by rationing, abstention from comforts and amusements, and an over-all direction of effort to war. In the latter, however, life went on as usual, and the atmosphere, aside from internal dissensions, was one of over-all calm. The attitude with regard to which the Arab states and their populations approached the war is well summarized by the following quote taken from Constantine K. Zurayk's The Meaning of Disaster.<sup>50</sup>

"How painful are those observations which we hear from foreign visitors and witnesses who had come to the Arab countries at the time of the fighting and who did not see in them any sign of real war,

but who saw instead thousands of automobiles gluttonously devouring one of the most important materials of war, and who watched the people busying themselves with pastimes and pleasures, parties, and social activities, just as they had done previously. The war, launched by their states and the other Arab states, made no change in their habits, nor did it prevent them from having any of their pleasures. When one of us heard, or hears, the observations of these critics, be they sincere or not, he finds himself incapable of replying. He only feels deep shame inside."

Viewed objectively, one would find it difficult indeed to provide an excuse for the state of unpreparedness in which the Arab states entered the war. The failure to correctly appraise the strength of the Jews is inexcusable in the face of the estimation of Jewish strength, which was given as early as April, 1946, in the Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.<sup>51</sup> In addition there was the report of the Iraqi Deputy Chief of Staff,<sup>52</sup> who was sent into Palestine prior to the termination of the mandate, with the task of appraising the Jewish forces, and making recommendations as to the probable Arab strength which would be required to effectively deal with them. After studying the problem at first hand, he recommended that the Arab states should commit all their available forces, and that a combined Arab High Command should immediately be set up. Otherwise, he said that the Arab states should make preparations to come to terms with the Zionists. His advice, however, was almost completely disregarded.

Claims that the Arab states did not have either adequately

equipped or trained armies; that they had little heavy, service-able armament and were unable to secure more in the face of strong Jewish competition, backed by an almost unlimited supply of money; and that they had long lines of communication<sup>53</sup> to contend with, are also unsupportable if they are utilized as explanations for the unpreparedness of the Arab states. The fact that such weaknesses did exist is true, and the fact that they did exist demanded that the Arab states take measures to counter them in the best manner possible - that of a well-planned, and well coordinated attack, under a supreme Arab High Command, with the objective of striking as quickly and decisively as possible, before the Jews were able to receive and utilize the large amount of war equipment which was already on its way to the Jews in Palestine.

That such action was never taken is well illustrated by the fact that some Arab states, such as the Egyptian government<sup>54</sup> and Syria, were still undecided as to whether they would send their armies into Palestine. Indications of this indecisiveness are evident in a telephone conversation which occurred after May 15th, and which is referred to in King Abdullah's "al-Takmilah,"<sup>55</sup> as follows:

"Damascus had called Amman, saying that it was doing so because of certain thoughts which President al-Quwwatli (who was at that time being visited by the Arab League Secretary (General Azzam Pasha) wished to express. The message referred to the necessity of refraining from advancing into Palestine

and of providing the Palestinians with all possible arms and funds, and promised that if the Arab uprising actually got under way and needed effective assistance such aid would be given."

With regard to the Arab High Command under a supreme Commander-in-Chief, it can be said that it existed in name only, with King Abdullah having been given the position as the supreme Commander. The authority exercised by the Commander-in-Chief, is well illustrated by the following excerpt from Glubb Pasha's A Soldier With the Arabs:<sup>56</sup>

"....Egypt offered the title of supreme commander to King Abdullah, but when His Majesty requested an order of Battle of the Egyptian army, his request met with no reply, nor did he ever receive or dispatch a single official letter in his capacity as commander-in-chief."

The failure of the various Arab armies to follow the directions of King Abdullah, has been attributed to their distrust of Abdullah's intentions. The fact that Abdullah may not have had the intention of attempting to take part in any plan designed to drive the Jews into the sea, is supported by what occurred in a meeting<sup>57</sup> between the Trans Jordanian Prime Minister, Taufiq Pasha al Huda, and the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Ernest Bevin, in the spring of 1948, during which Taufiq Pasha allegedly stated<sup>58</sup> that in response to requests and petitions from Palestinian Arab notables, requesting the help and protection of the Arab Legion as soon as British forces were withdrawn from Palestine, the Trans Jordanian government accordingly proposed to

send the Arab Legion across into Palestine at the end of the mandate, to occupy that part of Palestine awarded to the Arabs, which was contiguous with the frontier of Trans Jordan. To this the British Foreign Secretary is reported to have stated,<sup>59</sup> "It seems the obvious thing to do, but do not go and invade the areas allotted to the Jews." The Trans Jordanian Prime Minister is then reported to have answered,<sup>60</sup> "We should not have the forces to do so even if we so desired." Glubb Pasha, however, continues that when this conversation took place, neither the British nor the Trans Jordanians knew that the Arab League would intervene, or that the Arab states would send troops into Palestine. Facts such as this, however, were sufficient to make the other Arab states distrustful of Abdullah's intentions, and thus unwilling to put themselves under his command, except in name only.

It is not the intention of the writer, however, to delve into the myriad of political undercurrents, which also had their effect on Arab co-operation and co-ordination. It is sufficient to say that such co-operation and co-ordination were almost completely lacking. Several sources<sup>61</sup> have made mention of a "master plan" which the Arab armies were to follow in their invasion of Palestine. Glubb Pasha, however, states<sup>62</sup> that though the Israelis claimed knowledge of an Arab master plan, combining the strategy of all the Arab armies, no such plan existed, nor had any attempt been made to prepare one.<sup>63</sup>

The conduct of the Arab armies on their entrance into Palestine indicates that such a plan did not exist, or if it did, that they suddenly realized that they did not possess the military strength to push through to the coast, and that any extension of their forces to the coast would make them completely vulnerable to Israeli counter-thrusts.

In summary, it can be said that the Arab states had not taken adequate preparations for their part in the phase of the war extending from May 15th to June 11th, 1948. As stated by Abdul Nasser in his Palestine War Memoirs,<sup>64</sup>

"There was no concentration of forces, no accumulation of ammunition and equipment....no reconnaissance, no intelligence, (and) no plans."

And in the fighting which followed they failed to exhibit the spirit of co-operation and co-ordination which are so essential to allies in the field. As stated by a former Palestinian representative to the Arab League, Musa al-"Alami,"<sup>65</sup>

"In the face of the enemy the Arabs were not a state, but petty states; groups, not a nation; each fearing and anxiously watching the other and intriguing against it. What concerned them most and guided their policy was not to win the war and save Palestine from the enemy, but what would happen after the struggle, who would be predominant in Palestine, or annex it to themselves, and how they could achieve their own ambition. Their announced aim was the salvation of Palestine, and they said that afterwards its destiny should be left to its people. This was said with the tongue only. In their hearts all wished it for themselves; and most of them were hurrying to prevent their neighbors from being predominant, even though nothing remained except the offal and the bones."

It has been stated above<sup>66</sup> that "the Arab states had vastly underestimated the strength of the Jews in Palestine." This tendency of underestimating Jewish strength and preparedness, however, was not limited to the Arab states alone, in that it was generally held throughout the world that it would only be a matter of days or a few weeks before the Jews were completely crushed by the Arab armies. The fact that the Jews were short of airplanes, and heavy armament in the form of artillery and tanks, at the outset of the war<sup>67</sup> is true, but what most people fail to realize is that the Jews had placed large orders for military equipment in various countries, and that by May 14th, much of the equipment was already on its way of Israel. Moshe Pearlman, in his book The Army of Israel, states that,<sup>68</sup>

"....a week after (May 14th) arms, ammunition and aircraft began to flow into Israel. Planes came in literally one by one, and were flung into action within hours. Rifles and machine guns were rushed against the enemy within a day of their arrival by ship and by air. Armoured half-tracks arrived to give mobility and protection to forward troops at danger points. A few more field pieces<sup>69</sup> came in and were rushed from one front to another, wherever the battle was hardest. Gun crews who had been trained on dummy weapons for only a few hours were in action with real guns almost as fast as they were rushed off the quay."

Pearlman also states that there were several definite military reasons as to why the Arab armies failed in their objective of crushing the Jews. One of these reasons he lists as follows:<sup>70</sup>

"....the quick and heavy flow of Jewish arms and recruits into the country, which included a



considerable quantity of guns, planes, armoured cars, half-track vehicles, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, petrol stocks, food, a few tanks and machinery and materials for Israel's war industries. This equipment made possible the emergence of the Haganah as a fighting army, and enabled Israel to become self-sufficient in many types of weapons and ammunition."

He further stated that the material came from a host of countries in a variety of ways, and that much of the war equipment had been destined for the Arab states, but had been diverted by a number of ruses to Israel.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to the large amount of war material and equipment which arrived for the Jews after May 14th, one must also realize that by April, 1948, secret Jewish arsenals in Palestine were pouring out three-inch mortars, mortar ammunition, Sten guns, and small-arms ammunition. A giant six-inch mortar, known as the "Davidka,"<sup>72</sup> had also been developed locally, for the purpose of filling in for the lack of artillery. It had immense blasting power, though its range was limited.

Kenneth Bilby, former Near East correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune, who arrived in Palestine before the withdrawal of the British troops from Palestine had been completed, stated<sup>73</sup> that from April, 1948, on, he never saw a Jewish soldier at any front unarmed.

The fact that large shipments of war material and equipment were on their way to Israel by May 14th, demanded that the Arabs armies unite in a concentrated effort to reduce the Jewish

state in the shortest possible time. Their failure to co-ordinate their operations; the method in which pre-war preparations had been carried out; plus underlying political currents and jealousies, however, rendered this impossible, thus giving the Jews the time they needed to equip their forces, and prepare them for their future status as an army.

FOOTNOTES

1. Khalidi, Walid. "Why Did the Palestinians Leave?" Middle East Forum. Vol. 35, #7, July, 1959, p. 24.
2. Nasser, Gamal Abdul. The Palestine War Memoirs of President Gamal Abdul Nasser. (As translated by Walid Khalidi). p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 6; each battalion comprised approximately 700 men; Official figures with regard to the actual strength or armament of the Egyptian army on May 14th, 1948, are not available. Unofficial estimates of the strength of the invading force have been placed at figures varying from 2,000 (according to Khalidi, Walid. "Suqut Filastin," Al-Thaqafah Al-Arabiyah. Beirut, Issue #1, June 1957, p. 54) to 10,000 men (according to O'Ballance, Edgar. The Arab-Israeli War - 1948. pp. 77, 89, and Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, p. 94. Glubb Pasha, in A Soldier With the Arabs, p. 94, however, has admitted that he was unable to obtain any information as to the strength of the invading Egyptian army, and was forced to rely on O'Ballance for his estimation of their strength; both Sacher, op. cit., p. 212, and O'Ballance, op. cit., pp. 89-90, give almost identical figures for their estimations of Egyptian army strength and armament, but no indications are given as to their sources of information; in the absence of official sources for this information, the writer has relied on the information contained in the translated version of Gamal Abdul Nasser's Palestine War Memoirs for figures regarding personnel strength. With regard to armament, again in the absence of official figures, it can only be said that the invading Egyptian army was equipped with a small amount of light artillery and armoured cars. Again sources vary widely in their estimations with O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 175, and Sacher, op. cit., p. 212, crediting the Egyptians with one twenty-five pounder artillery regiment, and an undisclosed number of six-pounders. They further include an armoured unit of Sherman and Matilda tanks, a machine-gun battalion, anti-aircraft artillery, fifteen fighter aircraft, and five transport planes which had been converted to bombers; Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars, p. 198, also mentions the presence of Matilda and Sherman tanks; Abdullah Tell in his Karithat Filastin. Memoirs of Abdullah Tell, states that the Egyptians were equipped with light weapons such as rifles, machine guns, and a small number of three-inch mortars. He states that there

was no heavy armour or field guns except for a group of howitzers. Again the writer has been fit to accept the versions tending to minimize the Egyptian armament figures, in that such figures are supported in the subsequent military action which occurred in this southern sector. Had Egypt invaded Palestine with a force of 10,000 men, heavily supported by armour, artillery, and planes, it would not have stopped its forward movement at Isdud. The Egyptian army was subsequently bolstered by the calling up of reserves and by volunteers from the Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, but this added manpower was available only in the latter stages of the war. Newspaper accounts listing the strengths of the various regular Arab armies at high figures can be considered as figures existing on paper only, and as part of a propaganda campaign which was exploited for political reasons, and with the accompanying hope that Israel would be coerced into a position of negotiation.

4. Hollingsworth, Clare, The Arabs and the West, p. 175.
5. Information regarding the composition of each brigade is not available.
6. The 1st Battalion.
7. The Arab villages had previously been cleared of their Arab inhabitants by Israeli units.
8. Page 14.
9. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 90.
10. Tell, Colonel Abdullah, op. cit., p. 85; again in the absence of official government figures, the writer is obliged to rely on those individuals, who, by virtue of their relationship with the Arab Legion, should be able to give reliable figures with regard to its strength. But even amongst the writings of such individuals as Glubb Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Legion, and Abdullah Tell, a former Colonel in the Arab Legion and commander of the Jerusalem sector, there are major discrepancies between them with regard to both personnel strength and armament. Abdullah Tell's figure of 9,050 men includes a total of 1,200 Trans Jordanian irregulars, which would reduce the actual strength of the Arab Legion contingent which entered Palestine on May 15th to 7,850 men.

11. Lorried infantry battalions.
12. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 90; Abdullah Tell, op. cit., pp. 86-87, gives a complete breakdown of the weapons and armament of the Arab Legion force. Tell lists the number of twenty-five pounder guns, which accompanied the unit, at twenty-four, rather than just the eight listed by Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 90.
13. The mandate had officially expired at midnight, May 14-15, 1948.
14. This was in reality the 2nd Brigade, but its name was changed for the purpose of deception.
15. With the approval of the Trans Jordanian government and King Abdullah. See Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 108.
16. The Arab Legion area of responsibility included the districts of Hebron, Judea, and a major portion of Samaria, and encompassed a front of almost 160 miles.
17. Although the mandate did not officially come to an end until midnight, May 14-15, the British evacuated Jerusalem on the morning of May 14th. See Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 99.
18. See above, Chapter I, footnote #111.
19. Khalidi, Walid, "The Fall of Haifa." Middle East Forum. Vol. 35, No. 10. December, 1959, p. 26.
20. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 99.
21. The 1st and the 8th.
22. A force of approximately 100 men.
23. Prior to the arrival of the Arab Legion company, the Palmach had managed to force the Zion Gate, and had made contact with the Jews in the Old City, bringing them both reinforcements and supplies. The attack was not supported, however, and Arab pressure forced the attacking force to withdraw, after which the Gate was once again blocked with heaps of rubble and coils of wire.
24. In view of the fact that the Arab Legion had been compelled

to fight in Jerusalem, and that Samaria had been consequently largely denuded of troops, Glubb Pasha had proposed that the Iraqi army take over Samaria. The proposal was agreed to and the first Iraqi elements began to arrive in Nablus on May the 22nd, and the 1st Regiment, less one company which had been dispatched to Jerusalem, moved south to the Ramallah area.

25. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 124, states that "a pea-shooter could have been as effective as a six-pounder against the walls of Notre Dame.
26. See above, footnote #23.
27. Numbering approximately 300.
28. See above, footnote #24, for information regarding transfer of the unit from the Nablus area.
29. Abu Gosh was located approximately seven miles to the west of Jerusalem on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road.
30. The hill had been the site of a British radar station during World War II, and thus had been given the name of "Radar."
31. See above, Chapter I, pp. 35-38, 43-44.
32. Glubb, Pasha, op. cit., pp. 107-108.
33. Aside from being enforced by a United Nations armed force.
34. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 101.
35. Ibid., p. 115.
36. It has been reported that there was evidence that Glubb Pasha had learned of the existence of the road and its location and that he was preparing to cut it. See O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 109.
37. Khalidi, Walid, "Suqut Filastin," p. 54.
38. Koestler, Arthur, Promise and Fulfillment - Palestine 1917-1949, p. 305; no official figures have been published with regard to the strength of the army which was utilized by the Syrians in their initial strike into Palestine; O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 81, and Hollingsworth, op. cit.,

- p. 188, however, state that the army had one crack mechanized brigade which was used in the initial assault; Ibid., p. 188, however, states that it was utilized only during the initial days of the war, and that it was subsequently withdrawn for the task of guarding Damascus; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 81, credits the Syrians with being in possession of fifty aircraft. No mention is made, however, of the type or serviceability of the aircraft.
39. Sacher, op. cit., p. 265, states that a single Israeli aircraft appeared on the scene and intervened with no particular effect.
  40. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 140, states that twenty-two tanks and armoured cars took part in the attack.
  41. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 94, states that the Lebanese utilized one battalion, numbering approximately 1,000 men in the initial assault; both O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 81, and Sacher, op. cit., p. 211, put the strength of the entire Lebanese army in May, 1948, at 3,500, plus an armed gendarmerie of approximately 2,000; no official figures, however, on the strength of the Lebanese army at this period are available; the importance of Lebanon to the Arab war effort, lay not in its armed force, but in its strategic position, and the fact that it acted as a supply maintenance, and air base for Qawuqji's ALA, and the Syrian Army.
  42. Again sources vary with regard to the strength of the initial force committed by the Iraqis to the Palestine war, with Glubb Pasha, op. cit., putting the Iraqi force which took the field on May 15th at 3,000; Sacher, op. cit., p. 210, at 15,000; and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 115, at between 8,000 and 10,000.
  43. See above, footnote #24.
  44. See above, Chapter I, pp. 62-63.
  45. See Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-1948, p. 427, for the complete text of the May 29, 1948 truce resolution.
  46. For a summary of these assumptions see Ibid., p. 428.

47. Paragraph "three" called upon "all governments and authorities concerned to undertake that they will not introduce fighting personnel into Palestine; Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Trans Jordan, and Yemen, during the cease fire," and paragraph "four" called upon "all governments and authorities concerned, should men of military age be introduced into countries or territories under their control, to undertake not to mobilize or submit them to military training during the cease fire."
48. Again considered in the light of that area of Palestine which had been designated as Arab according to the Partition Plan.
49. One example was an article which appeared in the December 13, 1947, edition of the Al-Kutla (Cairo) which was headlined, "500,000 Iraqis Getting Ready To Go To War." Dothan. The Arab War Against Israel, p. 53.
50. Page 18.
51. See pages 39-41 of referenced report.
52. See Sacher, op. cit., p. 210; Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 93; and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 83.
53. The distance from Baghdad to Haifa is 700 miles, while that from Cairo to Haifa is almost 300 miles.
54. Khalidi, Walid, "Why Did the Palestinians Leave?", op. cit., p. 24.
55. Page 23.
56. Page 85.
57. During which Glubb Pasha acted as the interpreter.
58. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 65.
59. Ibid., p. 66.
60. Ibid., p. 66.
61. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 123; Sacher, op. cit., p. 246.
62. Glubb Pasha, op. cit., p. 65.



63. Khalidi, Walid, "Suqut Filastin," op. cit., p. 54, also states that there was no such plan; but Abdullah Tell, op. cit., pp. 80-81, states that there was a General Plan for the Arab armies. He states that the Plan was secret, and that according to it, Palestine was divided into areas of responsibility as follows:
1. The northern area close to Lebanon and Syria to be the responsibility of the Syrian and Lebanese armies, and the Salvation Army (ALA). It included the area from Ras Nakoura and Tiberias up to the borders of the Iraqi area of responsibility.
  2. The central area: Begins from the borders of the Syrian army in Tiberias and Samakh to the area of Hebron in the south; under the responsibility of the Iraqi and Jordanian armies.
  3. The southern area: extending from the Hebron area up to the west coast, under the responsibility of the Egyptian and Saudi armies.
  4. The armies of Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq will meet in Haifa. The Egyptian and Jordanian armies will meet in Tel Aviv.
64. Page 8.
65. al-\*Alami, Musa, "The Lesson of Palestine." The Middle East Journal. Vol. 3, No. 4. October, 1949, p. 385.
66. See above, page 128.
67. Only one shipment of arms (from Czechoslovakia) had arrived for the Jews prior to May 14th. It had contained 4,500 rifles and 200 light machine guns. The smuggling of arms and ammunition in small quantities, however, had been going on for a considerable length of time.
68. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 131.
69. O\*Ballance, op. cit., p. 73, quotes the first arrival of armament as consisting of a batch of twenty anti-aircraft guns.
70. Pearlman, op. cit., pp. 145-146.
71. Ibid., p. 146.

72. See above, Chapter I, page 53; Bilby, Kenneth W., New Star in the Near East, pp. 26-27; and Cohen, Yeruham, "How Israel Came to Galilee." Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, p. 11
73. Bilby, op. cit., p. 27.

### III

#### THE FIRST TRUCE

At 6 A.M., G.M.T., on June 11th, 1948, the first truce, which was to last for a period of approximately four weeks, went into effect. The underlying principle of the truce was that neither side should thereby gain any military advantages, which made it essential that neither of the opponents be allowed to bring in either personnel or material during the period of its enforcement. The Provisional Government of Israel, however, insisted that immigration be allowed to continue, while the Arab states opposed any further increase in Jewish personnel strength. An additional consideration, which had been a major stumbling block to a theoretical acceptance by both sides of the truce provisions, was in regard to the provisioning of Jerusalem during the truce period. The principle of "no military advantages" was in this case interpreted to mean that during the truce, sufficient food and water was to be allowed to enter Jerusalem to allow its inhabitants to live on it for a period of four weeks. Thus, in accordance with such measures, the food stocks of Jerusalem at the end of the truce, were to be at the same level that they were in the beginning. The Red Cross was to supervise the inspection and control of all Jewish convoys entering Jerusalem from the coastal plain to the west, but in the subsequent implementation of the arrangement, the control exercised by the Red Cross was incomplete

and inefficient. Jewish transports were reported to be entering Jerusalem day and night, and all Arab protests to the Truce Commission, and to Count Bernadotte, produced only promises to investigate, but there was no halting of the convoys.<sup>2</sup>

On the Jewish side, the advent of the truce had been a welcome occurrence, as it gave them a breathing period during which they were able to devote almost their entire attention to a centralization of authority, and the reorganization and training of their armed forces, which included the absorption of large quantities of war material which were pouring into Israel in an ever-increasing stream.

On the Arab side, however, the truce was accepted with reluctance, for they, more than anyone else, were finally beginning to realize that the time for a concerted effort against the Jews had been at the very outset of the war, and that the Jewish military forces were increasing in strength with each and every passing day.

Militarily, however, the truce also had its advantages for the Arab states, and this was especially true with regard to the Egyptian army and the Arab Legion, whose forces were thinly spread over a wide area, and badly in need of a breathing period during which they could regroup their forces, strengthen their defensive positions, bring up supplies, and finally, if sufficient reserves and supplies were available after the strengthening of

their defensive positions, to make preparations for offensive action.

The commonly held theory that had it not been for the imposition of the truce, the Arab states would have been able to completely defeat the newly-formed Jewish state, cannot be supported. At the time of the inception of the truce, the Arab states, due to poor pre-war preparation, had reached the limit of their ability for making any further concentrated military thrusts. The ammunition supplies of the majority of the Arab states, and especially of Egypt and Trans Jordan, had reached a stage where they were barely sufficient for defensive action, and completely negated the possibility of further offensive moves. On the Jewish side a similar situation prevailed, with any further military action being largely limited to that of defense. Thus, for both sides, the truce period from a military standpoint, presented advantages. The method, however, in which it was subsequently utilized by the two sides, turned it into one of great advantage to the Jewish state and one of great disadvantage to the Arab states.

On the Jewish side, the truce period was utilized to achieve a centralization of authority, and for the reorganization and training of its armed forces. For a complete picture of this process of evolution, however, it is necessary to relate a few of the major political events which occurred immediately after Ben

Gurion's proclamation of the formation of the Jewish state.

Pending the setting up of duly elected bodies, the then existing National Council was appointed to act as the Provisional State Council, and the National Administration which was then functioning, was to continue as the Provisional Government of Israel. A Cabinet of twelve members was formed with Ben Gurion becoming the first Prime Minister, and also assuming the duties of the Minister of Defense.

By May 15th, the entire reserve of the Palmach had been ordered to active duty, and the Field Army, with a total strength estimated at 16,000 men,<sup>3</sup> was mobilized as fast as military equipment became available. Small units were expanded into battalions, and battalions into brigades, and the Israeli military forces gradually began to take the form of an army.

On May the 20th, a "state of emergency" was formally declared in Israel, and a "Defense Order," and a "Control of Man-Power" ordinance, was passed by the Provisional Government. The "Defense Order" authorized conscription in times of emergency, and decreed that the National Army was to be composed of land, air, and naval forces, under a combined General Staff. All members of these forces were to be required to take an oath of allegiance to the State, and the creation and maintenance of any other armed forces in the country was expressly forbidden.

Under the "Control of Man-Power" ordinance, a complete

mobilization of everyone between the ages of 17 and 55 was authorized, and in accordance with its provisions, all males between the ages of 18 and 36, unless already serving in the army, were immediately drafted for agricultural work, while those of 17 years of age were called up for two months of military training.

On May 28th, the "Defense Order" was promulgated, and the National Army was formally established, with the naval and air sections of the Haganah becoming an integral part of its command. In addition, although women had been active members of the Haganah from the time of its inception, an auxiliary women's service was now formed, the members of which were attached to either the land, air, or naval forces, as required, after first receiving basic training in the handling of small arms.

The provision of the "Defense Order" of May 20th, which expressly forbade the creation or maintenance of any armed organizations in the country other than the National Army, made it inevitable that an eventual showdown would occur between the Provisional Government and the still independent organizations of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL) and the Stern Group. On April 27th, prior to the end of the mandate, the Haganah and the IZL had ratified an agreement according to which the IZL was to constitute a separate brigade under its own officers within the Haganah; submit to Haganah discipline; and before taking any action obtain the approval of the Haganah. On June 8th, however, a Provisional

Government spokesman referring to appeals to financial donors abroad for the support of the IZL and the Sternists, said<sup>4</sup> that since both organizations had been voluntarily dissolved, and since their members had joined or were about to join the National Army, those purporting to raise funds for their support as fighting organizations, were guilty of fraud. He stated that all parts of the National Army were financed from a central fund, and that none of them could claim separate financial assistance.

The IZL's retort<sup>5</sup> was that it had not dissolved, but had merely promised to cease its operations as an underground movement in those areas under Jewish control. In such areas, however, it intended to continue its identity as a political movement. In Jerusalem it would continue to function as an armed organization until the city was completely under Jewish domination, and for such purposes it would continue in its collection of money.

Tension between the Provisional Government and the IZL still further rose when it was made known by the Provisional Government that the arrangement, whereby the IZL members were to serve in their own special battalions under their own N.C.O.'s and battalion commanders under a National Army brigade command, was only a temporary measure. In addition, there was the opposition of both the IZL and the Stern Group against maintenance of the truce which they regarded as "a shameful and unconditional surrender."<sup>6</sup> The Provisional Government, however, was well aware



of the benefits to be obtained during the brief respite in hostilities, and Ben Gurion declared<sup>7</sup> that, "The Government will not suffer any attempt to be made by anyone in our midst to break the truce, and bring to naught the undertaking given by the Government of Israel to the United Nations."

Several days later, when the IZL informed the Provisional Government that it had collected a quantity of arms abroad and that they, along with 900 recruits, would be arriving on a ship called the "Altalena," the issue between the two groups came to a head. The Provisional Government ordered that the arms be handed over to the National Army, while the IZL demanded that one-fifth of the arms and ammunitions on board should be given to IZL unit in Jerusalem, while the remainder should be equally divided between the National Army and its IZL battalions.<sup>8</sup>

This, however, was equivalent to the setting up of an independent army, with its finance, armament, and policy independent from that of the state, and Ben Gurion refused to grant the request, stating that stern measures would be taken if all the arms and ammunition were not handed over to the National Army as ordered.<sup>9</sup>

On June 22nd, however, in open defiance of the government which had issued a decree declaring civil disobedience to be treason, the IZL brought the "Altalena" to Tel Aviv, after the National Army had blocked its efforts to unload its cargo further

to the north,<sup>10</sup> although the 900 recruits had allegedly been successfully disembarked.

Ben Gurion immediately ordered the National Army to prevent the IZL from unloading the ship's cargo, and a brigade of the Palmach from the Latrun area was dispatched to Tel Aviv to reinforce the forces of Colonel Ben-Gal, the commander of the Israeli forces in the Tel Aviv area. In the subsequent action which occurred in the face of the IZL's attempts to unload the ship, fifteen men were killed, and the "Altalena" was sunk by mortar fire. The IZL leaders announced that the ship had contained four million rounds of small arms ammunition, 300 Bren guns, 5,000 rifles, 150 spandaus, five Caterpillar-track armoured vehicles, and thousands of bombs.<sup>11</sup> If this was true, it was a serious loss to Israel at a critical time, but on the other hand, the possession of such armament by groups which refused to recognize the supreme authority of the central government, would have been a serious menace to the new state.

As a result it was decided that the special concessions, which had been given to members of the IZL in the National Army<sup>12</sup> would no longer be allowed, and a committee headed by Ben Gurion was set up to reorganize the army on a completely national basis, with a strong central command. The strong measures taken by Ben Gurion against the IZL, which had involved the use of Jews against Jews, created a Cabinet crisis, but public opinion was

overwhelmingly on the side of Ben Gurion, and he was able to continue in his plans with little opposition.

On June 28th, the National Army took the oath of allegiance to the state, and most of the members of the IZL took it as well. Thus, with the exception of the Jerusalem area, the IZL ceased to exist as a separate military organization.<sup>13</sup> The Palmach, however, retained its own headquarters and distinctive character, but apart from this the whole Israeli army was unified.

On the day that the oath of allegiance was taken by the army, the tight security measures which the Israelis had maintained on military personalities and order of battle information, was somewhat relaxed and the names of various army commanders were published. The Chief of Staff was Brigadier Yaacov Dori,<sup>14</sup> who had been the former Chief of Staff of the Haganah. The Chief of Military Operations and Planning was Colonel Yigal Yadin, an archaeologist who had written a thesis on the "Wars in Ancient Palestine," and Brigadier Chaim Ladkin was appointed as Commander in Chief of the Air Force, while Commander Mordechai Limon was appointed to command the navy.<sup>15</sup>

In June, an army unit called a "Front" was set up. In size it was larger than a brigade, and it varied in strength according to the task to which it was assigned, and the circumstances. The total number of these "Fronts" was four, and their general areas of jurisdiction were as follows:<sup>16</sup>

1. The First Front - The northern one, which covered Galilee and the northern border of the Samaritan Triangle;
2. The Second Front - Extended from Zikhron Ya'akov to Petah Tikva, and covered the western border of the Samaritan Triangle;
3. The Third Front - Covered Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road;
4. The Fourth Front - The southern one, which extended from Nes Tsiyona, and included all territory south and east from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Under this new set up, which took the place of the regional brigade areas, which had formerly made up the Israeli defense system, the Israelis increased flexibility in both movement and command, with all the troops of the "Front" coming under the control of the "Front" commander. Under the old system of regional brigade areas some troops came under the Brigadier's control, while others did not, thus complicating the chain of command, and in turn affecting the control and co-ordination of troops within a certain specified area.

Additional innovations which were to have a far-reaching effect on the efficiency of the National Army, were also introduced into its ranks. Up to this point, the Israeli soldiers had been clad in a variety of uniforms with no distinguishing badges of rank or insignia, nor was much attention paid to military courtesy or discipline. In the process of reorganizing the army, the question arose of maintaining the system of no ranks, saluting, military pomp and ceremony, or of building the army along

conventional lines. Two conflicting schools of thought arose, and it was pointed out by those who wanted an army on unconventional lines that the Palmach had been run on an informal basis without military trimmings and discipline, and that it had been able to carry out its duties with a large measure of success.

The conventional school, however, which consisted primarily of officers who had seen service in the regular armies of other countries, pointed out that the Palmach was a small body of volunteers who were the pick of the country, and who were strongly imbued with an ideal. Conscription, they pointed out, would bring about an inevitable lowering in the quality of the men forming the National Army, and in view of the unification of the National Army the specialized conditions under which the Palmach had operated would no longer be in effect. It was also pointed out that the handling of large bodies of troops under conditions of war, required the exercise of strict discipline and control if tactical unity was to be maintained under enemy pressure.

Ben Gurion, however, favored the conventional type of army, and the National Army was built on a pattern similar to that of the British Army, in which many of the Israeli officers had served during the Second World War. Ranks were introduced, officers' messes were opened, differential scales of pay for the different ranks were set up, and a disciplinary code was enforced.

The Palmach, the majority of which had been opposed to the

idea of military courtesy and discipline, was also adapted to the new system of organization and control, although for a short period it was allowed to retain its own headquarters and special status. It was required, however, to accept conscripts into its ranks, but it was allowed a certain degree of selectivity in its choices, and in this manner continued to remain the "corps d'elite."<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the Israelis also concentrated on securing an adequate supply of armament for their newly organized National Army, and their representatives scoured Europe and the United States for military supplies. The sea was now open for transport with the Egyptian naval blockade having little effect, and the United Nations truce observers being too few to cause any sort of appreciable decrease in the flow of military supplies to the country. Czechoslovakia,<sup>18</sup> with a government-owned arms industry, was ready and willing to sell small arms, guns, bombs, and ammunition to Israel, and a regular airlift from Prague to Aqir, near Rehovat, was organized.<sup>19</sup> Flying-fortresses were smuggled out of the United States, and Beau-fighters out of Great Britain, and upon their arrival in Israel were manned by experienced pilots who had served with the Royal Air Force, and the Australian, South African, and United States Air Forces. By the end of the truce, the Israeli air force was ready to undertake offensive action against the Arabs. In addition, the Israelis had acquired

several small ships and coastal craft, which formed the nucleus of a growing navy.

Thus, on July 9th, Israel stood ready for renewed offensive action with a National Army well supplied with small arms, ammunition, armour, and some artillery, plus the added support of an operational air force and navy. The breathing space provided by the first truce had been well utilized.

On the Arab side, however, the situation was not that of a complete direction of effort toward arriving at an improved state of readiness for the renewal of hostilities which were almost certain to follow. Although the majority of the Arab states undertook action to augment the size of their armies in the field, and to resupply and reinforce them with ammunition and heavy equipment when it was available, the over-all preparations for a renewed offensive were sporadic, and showed little traces of the all out exertion of effort which would have been needed to bring the Arab armies up to an efficient fighting level.

Abdul Nasser, a staff officer of the 6th Battalion, in commenting on the situation of the Egyptian army in Palestine during the truce, stated<sup>20</sup> that there was a general feeling that fighting would not be resumed, and that while the other side buzzed with activity, there was little activity on the Egyptian side. He further added<sup>21</sup> that the Egyptian High Command gave little indication of being aware of the situation, and he reports<sup>22</sup>

it as being "industriously absorbed in the writing of detailed histories of what had happened from the day the fighting started until the truce." Several sources,<sup>23</sup> however, do mention that the personnel strength of the Egyptian army in Palestine was increased, and that it was restocked with ammunition, and reinforced with additional twenty-five pounder guns and 4.2 mortars. Mention is also made of the appearance of British Spitfires in the Egyptian air force.<sup>24</sup>

With regard to action taken for the purpose of increasing the fighting ability of the armies of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, little can be said except that extensive recruiting campaigns were carried out in each of the countries during the truce, and as a result the personnel strengths of their respective armies were materially increased.<sup>25</sup> The Arab Liberation Army (ALA) was re-organized and reduced in number to around 2,000 men.<sup>26</sup> It was placed completely under Lebanese command,<sup>27</sup> and was supplied and maintained entirely from Lebanese bases.

Glubb Pasha has stated<sup>28</sup> that one of the principal weaknesses of the Arab Legion at the time of the beginning of the first truce, was in reference to manpower. The Arab Legion was badly under-manned for the task of defending the area over which it was regarded as being responsible, and it was definitely unable to undertake any sort of offensive action due to the complete absence of reserve strength, and the fact that its stock of ammunition had



reached a point where even defensive action had to be limited in its scope. When approached by Glubb Pasha with regard to permitting further recruiting efforts for the purpose of enlarging Arab Legion ranks, Taufiq Pasha, the Trans Jordanian Prime Minister, is reported to have said,<sup>29</sup> "There won't be any more fighting....no more fighting. I and Nuqrashi Pasha<sup>30</sup> are agreed on that, and if we two are agreed, we can sway the rest....No more fighting, and no more money for soldiers." As a result of this attitude, the four weeks respite from fighting was almost completely wasted with regard to strengthening the Arab Legion's position in Palestine.

Regrouping operations, however, were carried out, but this was done with no increase in strength. In Jerusalem, three independent garrison companies were grouped to form the 6th Regiment, while three additional garrison companies were formed into the 5th Regiment. This increased the facility of control over the units, but as stated above, allowed the Arab Legion no increase in strength.

An additional difficulty, which had to be faced by the Arab Legion during the truce period, resulted from an order received from the British government on May 30th that all seconded British officers in the Arab Legion immediately leave their commands. This sudden withdrawal of British officers, which had undoubtedly been ordered by the British government as part of its

implementation of the British-sponsored resolution calling for a four weeks truce in Palestine,<sup>31</sup> was a hard blow for the Arab Legion to face during the early stages of the war in that it included all operations staff officers, both the brigade commanders and the commanding officers of three of the four infantry regiments, and all the trained artillery officers.<sup>32</sup> The artillery batteries,<sup>33</sup> which had been formed only three months previously, were hit especially hard in that none of the Trans Jordanian officers were at that stage fully competent to direct the fire of the guns. The spirit and enthusiasm of the troops, and the conscientiousness of the Arab officers who took the place of the departing British officers, however, saved the Arab Legion from collapse and enabled it to successfully continue its mission up to the initiation of the first truce. During the subsequent four weeks period, it was necessary to almost completely reorganize the command structure of the Arab Legion so as to bring its units under the leadership of Arab officers, with Glubb Pasha, however, retaining his position as Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Legion.

The British-sponsored May 29th resolution had also called upon all governments to refrain from sending war material to any of the belligerents, and on June 3rd, Britain revoked all arms export licenses.<sup>34</sup> Iraq, Trans Jordan, and Egypt, whose armies had been primarily British trained, supplied, and equipped, and who depended on Britain for ammunition for their British-made

• weapons, were caught almost empty-handed. Large surpluses of ammunition had not been built up prior to the war, and after its initiation no determined effort was made to alter the supply situation, with the Arab states apparently under the belief that the British would continue in their supply of arms and ammunition. The Arab states were thus obliged to look to other markets in their quest for arms and ammunition, but it soon became evident that they were laboring under severe handicaps. The four weeks truce period was much too short a period to effectively organize a world-wide buying organization, and the Arabs were also handicapped by their lack of contacts behind the Iron Curtain, which was the main area from which arms could be obtained. The Western Powers, from whom the Arab governments had previously obtained their arms, were following the Security Council resolution of May 29th and refused to sell arms to any of the interested parties.<sup>35</sup> The Arabs were at an additional disadvantage in that they had no factories in which they could manufacture such weapons as mortars and bombs, whereas the Jews were largely self-sufficient in the manufacture of such weapons, and also in that of small arms ammunition.

It should have been obvious to all that unless the Arabs were able to secure the required arms and ammunition, and then to adopt the new armament to their fighting forces, that the truce be continued. Any renewal of hostilities would have demanded

that the Arabs continue expending their ammunition without any renewal of their ammunition stocks, thus weakening their military position, while the Israelis, supported by a steady incoming flow of war material, daily grew stronger. Count Bernadotte, in his book To Jerusalem,<sup>36</sup> while referring to the period before the end of the truce stated, "Information reaching us about this time from various sources strengthened my impression that the Arabs, from a military point of view, were in a difficult position. If they continued the war and if they did not then get material help from England or some other quarter, they would probably have no prospect whatever of winning it."

The situation<sup>37</sup> demanded that the truce be extended until such time as the Arabs were able to secure a continuing supply of ammunition. The argument that this could not have been done in view of the fact that the Jews were daily growing stronger, cannot be supported in that the Israelis, with established sources of supply, would have continued to grow stronger even if they were engaged in hostilities. The Arabs on the other hand, in the face of a renewal of hostilities, would have been required to expend their ammunition without any renewal of their reserve stocks, thus weakening their military position. During the truce the weakness of the Arab military position<sup>38</sup> would have had no detrimental results, and steps could have been taken to remedy it, but in the event of renewed hostilities, the odds of losing all they had

gained were against them.

King Abdullah apparently realized the dangers inherent in a renewal of hostilities, and in the hope of preventing such an occurrence made a series of visits to Cairo, Riyadh, and Baghdad, with the hope of winning support for his views, and convincing their rulers of the perils of a renewal of fighting when the Arab Legion's stock of ammunition had almost been completely exhausted. The Arabs, he believed, had reached the peak of their potential military achievement in Palestine, and as such he wanted the Arab states to begin negotiations with Israel while they still had bargaining power.<sup>39</sup> His trips, however, won him little support, and as the time for the end of the truce approached, the Arab League Political Committee, was summoned to Cairo. Taufiq Pasha, the Trans Jordanian Prime Minister, had received explicit instructions from King Abdullah that he was to direct his efforts to a renewal of the truce, and that "under no circumstances should the armistice be broken....until the army had obtained the light and heavy material it needed."<sup>40</sup> He was accompanied by Major General Abdul Qadir Pasha al-Jundi, the deputy Chief of Staff for the Arab Legion, who was to act as his advisor.

In Cairo, however, the Political Committee was under pressure. During the early period of the war the Egyptian radio and press had given large coverage to the fighting in Palestine, with special attention devoted to the success of the Egyptian army.

Little mention, however, was made of the extent to which the Egyptian army was being forced to exert itself in order to just defend the area it had occupied. Offensive action was no longer a major consideration of the army commanders, with almost their entire effort being expended towards the strengthening of their defensive positions. The public, however, was unaware of the real situation, and only knew that the fighting had been stopped while the Egyptian army was apparently pushing forward almost completely unopposed, and as such, public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of a renewal of hostilities.

The Political Committee bowed to public opinion, and the decision was made to renew hostilities on the premise that the Arab armies would engage in "defensive action" only.<sup>41</sup>

The decision of the Arab League Political Committee is difficult to justify when viewed from a standpoint other than that of merely satisfying public opinion. According to Glubb Pasha,<sup>42</sup> all the Chiefs of Staff of the Arab armies were in favor of prolonging the truce, in that the shortage of ammunition and equipment had put them in a position where they were unable to conduct a concentrated offensive. In addition, the Military Committee of the Arab League had reported that the prospects of further warfare were most unfavourable to the Arabs.<sup>43</sup> When Glubb Pasha asked Taufiq Pasha how the Arab Legion was to continue fighting without ammunition, Taufiq Pasha is reported to have answered,<sup>44</sup> "Don't

shoot unless the Jews shoot first."

The supposition put forward<sup>45</sup> that the politicians of the Arab countries had agreed on a renewal of hostilities in the hope that the Security Council would forcibly put a stop to hostilities and thus relieve them of the responsibility for such an action is untenable, in that there is little to support the view that public opinion, even under such circumstances, would have altered its feelings and absolved their respective governments of blame had they obeyed such a United Nations order.

The decision of the Political Committee to renew hostilities, and the course of action which the Arab armies were to follow - that of "defense and not offense" - "defend and not attack" - put the Arabs in a position where they had everything to lose and nothing to gain, for in order to gain in a military situation where one is fighting against an enemy who has an almost unlimited source of supply, it is necessary to attack and defeat his forces. In their refusal to follow this policy, the Arabs had given the initiative to the Israelis, who were now able to deploy their forces in accordance with the requirements of the situation, and without any fear of an Arab offensive. The Arab armies, on the other hand, deprived of the initiative, were obliged to sit and wait, and shift their forces over their respective fronts to meet the various Israeli thrusts.

Thus, for the Arabs the truce period had been wasted with

little being done to establish an efficient central command in order to increase the over-all co-ordination of their various armies, or to build up their depleted stocks of ammunition. The decision to resume hostilities had been taken against military advice, for political reasons, and under conditions which presented little hope of victory.

The activity during the truce period had not, however, been limited to the Jews and the Arabs alone. The United Nations mediator in Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte, had also been active throughout the period, and one result of his efforts was an agreement between the Arabs and the Jews on the demilitarization of the Mount Scopus area, which included both the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital. The location of Mount Scopus, and its commanding height which dominated a large section of the Arab quarter of Jerusalem, made it strategically advisable that the position be occupied by the Arab Legion. An additional consideration presented itself however, in that although the position was cut off from the Jewish-occupied portion of Jerusalem, it was still garrisoned by Jewish forces, and any assault would have entailed a well planned operation supported by artillery and mortar fire. The Trans Jordanian government, however, had been informed that both the Hospital and the University had been built with funds voluntarily subscribed in the United States<sup>46</sup> and Great Britain, and that any attempt to destroy or capture these buildings would



produce great indignation in those countries.

Accordingly, when Count Bernadotte suggested that the area be demilitarized and handed over the United Nations, the Trans Jordanian government was willing to accept the proposal. The Jews also signified their acceptance, but requested that they be allowed to leave Jewish civil police in the buildings to prevent pilfering of the medical equipment in the Hospital and the literary treasures in the University. The request was granted, but it was made clear that thereafter Mount Scopus would be solely under United Nations control. It was also Bernadotte's intention to gradually replace the Jewish with United Nations police. Little, however, was done in this direction during the period of hostilities.

On June 30th, the mediator informed the Security Council by telegram that, as a result of his consultations with representatives of the interested parties, he had on June 28th and 29th, presented to the Arab and Jewish authorities in Cairo and Tel Aviv, respectively, papers setting forth in outline his views and suggestions for a possible approach to a peaceful adjustment of the future situation in Palestine. The mediator stressed that these suggestions had been presented tentatively, with the objective of discovering a common ground on which further discussion and mediation might proceed. The suggestions, as presented, were generally as follows:<sup>47</sup>

- a. That the Arab area of Palestine (to be determined by negotiation with the mediator) be united to Trans Jordan, and that Trans Jordan, so constituted, form a union with Israel.
- b. That the purpose and function of the Union should be to promote common economic interests, to operate and maintain common services, including customs and excise, to undertake development projects, and to co-ordinate foreign policy and measures for defense.
- c. That each member of the union, subject to the Instrument of Union, should exercise authority over its own internal affairs including its foreign relations.
- d. That recognition be accorded to the right of the residents of Palestine, who, as a result of the conditions of war had left their homes, to return to their homes without restriction and to regain possession of their property.

With reference to territorial matters, the mediator proposed that:

- a. The Negev be included whole or in part in Arab territory<sup>48</sup>
- b. That Western Galilee be included whole or in part in Jewish territory.
- c. That Jerusalem be included in Arab territory, with municipal autonomy, freedom of Jewish communication, and special arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places.
- d. That the status of Jaffa be considered.
- e. That a free port be established at Haifa, with the area of the free port to include the refineries and terminals.
- f. That a free airport be established at Lydda.

Both sides, however, rejected the mediator's proposal as a basis for discussion. The Provisional Government of Israel held

that the proposal ignored the General Assembly's resolution of November 29, 1947; and that the Provisional Government would not agree to any limitation of its free sovereignty as would occur under the principle of Economic Union. It further stated that the Jewish people would never acquiesce in the inclusion of Jerusalem in Arab territory, regardless of the form of autonomy which would be given to the Jewish inhabitants of the city.

The Arabs in rejecting the mediator's proposal, offered a counter-suggestion which provided for a unitary state in the whole of Palestine, with protection for the Jewish minority.

By a cablegram dated July 5th, the mediator informed the Security Council that on July 3rd and July 5th he had submitted proposals to the parties concerned for a prolongation of the truce, but that he had received no reply. He thus asked the United Nations to appeal to the interested parties to accept in principle the prolongation of the truce for such a period as might be agreed upon in consultation with the mediator.<sup>49</sup> A United Nations draft resolution, submitted by the United Kingdom, and embodying the requests of the mediator, was accepted by the Security Council.

On July 7th, the mediator stated that the truce should be prolonged with the definite understanding that the continued supply of food, water, and other essential non-military supplies, would be assured for Jerusalem. This suggestion was also approved

by the Security Council.

At the 332nd meeting of the Security Council, on July 8th, 1948, major consideration was directed to a cable which had been received from the Provisional Government of Israel, in which Israel noted its acceptance of the prolongation of the truce, for an additional thirty days, and its rejection by the Arab states. The cable further noted that on July 8th, at 1 A.M., G.M.T., an Egyptian force consisting of two armoured columns and infantry had launched an attack against Israeli positions in southern Palestine and that a battle was currently in progress.<sup>50</sup>

The United States delegate to the Security Council, Phillip C. Jessup, noted that Israel's acceptance of the proposal for the prolongation of the truce had created a situation in which the Security Council had no other choice than to find that there was a threat to the peace under Article 39 of the Charter. According to Mr. Jessup, the fact that one of the contesting parties had freely indicated its willingness to prolong the truce subsequently deprived the other party of the right to resort to force under the premise of self-defense.

The representative of Syria pointed out that it should not be difficult to understand the Arab hesitation in accepting a prolongation of the truce, which was enabling the Jews to strengthen their positions, and thus working against the interests of the Arabs. He continued that in such a situation the Arabs

had no other choice than to defend themselves, but that if the Jews abandoned their plans to establish a separate Jewish state in Palestine, they would be assured of all rights on an equal footing with the rest of the population of Palestine.

The Israeli representative countered by saying that Israel's decision to accept the mediator's proposals for an extension of the truce had been based on the Charter of the United Nations and that its decision to defend itself was likewise based upon the same premise, in that the case of aggression by the Arab states was beyond any doubt.

On July the 9th, the mediator sent a further appeal to all parties for a ten-day extension of the truce, while he proceeded to Lake Success to personally present a full report to the Security Council on his negotiations and the Arab and Jewish replies to his several proposals. He appealed to both parties to accept an unconditional cease-fire in Palestine for a period of ten days extending from 12 noon, G.M.T., July 10, 1948.

The Provisional Government of Israel accepted the new cease-fire proposal, and informed the mediator that it was ready to issue the necessary cease-fire orders as soon as it was notified that the proposal had likewise been accepted by the Arab governments. No reply, however, to the mediator's appeal for the ten-day cease-fire was received from the Arab states,<sup>51</sup> and the war in Palestine proceeded into that phase commonly referred to as

"The Ten Day Offensive."

FOOTNOTES

1. The decision of the United Nations mediator with regard to this question has already been considered. See above, Chapter II, p. 126.
2. Glubb, John Bagot, A Soldier With The Arabs, p. 143.
3. See above, Chapter I, p. 30.
4. Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, p. 274.
5. Ibid., p. 274.
6. Ibid., p. 274.
7. Ibid., p. 274.
8. See Begin, Menachem, The Revolt-Story of the Irgun, p. 156.
9. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Arab-Israeli War-1948, p. 130.
10. See Begin, op. cit., pp. 172-173, for a detailed account of this action.
11. Ibid., p. 155; part of the cargo, however, had been unloaded prior to the sinking of the "Altalena." According to Begin, pp. 170-171, the unloaded portion consisted of two thousand modern rifles, about a million rounds of .303 ammunition, and 250 Bren and other machine-guns.
12. See above, page 150.
13. On September 2, 1948, the IZL announced that its military forces would be disbanded within a month, and its men absorbed into the National Army. The militant organization was to be replaced by the "Freedom Party" which was to be a purely political movement, and which was to be formed by the merger of the IZL and the Revisionist Party, with the IZL in charge of the party executive.
14. Pearlman, Moshe, The Army of Israel, p. 8; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 131.
15. Ibid., p. 132.

16. Ibid., p. 132; Sacher, op. cit., p. 275.
17. On November 1, 1948, the Palmach was dissolved, and with its dissolution control within the National Army was centralized under the General Staff.
18. Where the Communists had seized control of the government in February, 1947.
19. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 138.
20. Nasser, Gamal Abdul, The Palestine War Memoirs of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, p. 17.
21. Ibid., p. 18.
22. Ibid., p. 18.
23. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 137, Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars, p. 250.
24. Again in the absence of official figures with regard to the number of additional Egyptian troops dispatched to the front line zones during the truce, or in the amount of military material supplied, the writer is unable to quote with accuracy figures pertaining to the Egyptian military build-up; Abdul Nasser, in his Palestine War Memoirs makes no mention of any appreciable increase in the number of Egyptian troops on the front lines during the truce; although O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 137, and Kimche, op. cit., p. 250, quote the Egyptian front-line force as being built up to 18,000 men.
25. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 137, states that the Iraqi army in Palestine was increased during the truce to about 15,000 men, which figure included four battalions of Palestinian Arabs who had been recruited locally, and a number of Iraqis who had left the ranks of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) in order to join the Iraqi army.
26. This reduction in force was largely due to the fact that the majority of the Iraqi members of the ALA left its ranks in order to join the Iraqi army. In addition, the ALA was plagued by a large number of deserters.
27. Although Qawuqji retained his position as field commander of the ALA.



28. Glubb, op. cit., p. 143.
29. Ibid., p. 145.
30. Mahmud Fahmi Muqrashi, the Egyptian Prime Minister.
31. Which had been adopted by the Security Council on May 29, 1948.
32. Glubb, op. cit., p. 134.
33. Two in number with each containing four twenty-five pounders.
34. This move was later followed by Britain's suspension on July 12th of its financial subsidy to the Trans Jordanian government. On July 28th, however, a 500,000 pound installment of the British subsidy was paid to Trans Jordan in recognition of its acceptance of the second truce. See Kirk, George, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 282.
35. This was the official position of the governments. Private individuals, however, operating in the interest of financial gain, did surreptitiously and illegally sell arms, ammunition, and heavy equipment to the Provisional Government of Israel; Glubb Pasha, in A Soldier With the Arabs, op. cit., p. 157, states, "As far as is known, no arms or ammunition were received by the Arabs during the truce. They had no contacts in Communist countries, nor did they have the facilities for secret purchase and smuggling which were available to Israel, owing to the presence of Jews in every country in the world."
36. Page 261.
37. As pertaining to the Arab side.
38. This is especially in reference to their lack of ammunition, and their inability to resolve this handicap during the short time allowed them by the four weeks truce period.
39. The possibility of other underlying motives for his visits also exist - such as the truce being turned into an armistice with that portion of Palestine occupied by his forces being annexed to Trans Jordan.
40. Abdullah Ibn al-Husayn, King, Al-Takmilah--My Memoirs Completed, p. 25.
41. Dearden, Ann, Jordan, p. 70; Glubb, op. cit., p. 151.

42. Ibid., p. 151.
43. Dearden, op. cit., p. 71.
44. Glubb, op. cit., p. 150.
45. Ibid., p. 151.
46. Ibid., p. 146; Dearden, op. cit., p. 73.
47. See Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations. 1947-48., p. 432, for a detailed account of the memorandum.
48. Which territory would be united to Trans Jordan.
49. Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 433.
50. Ibid., p. 435; Pearlman, op. cit., p. 157, a pro-Zionist source, describes the Egyptian attack as occurring on the night of July 8-9, whereas Kimche, op. cit., p. 251, reported the Egyptians as launching their attack on the night of July 7-8.
51. Speaking before the Security Council on July 15th, the representative of Egypt stated that the Arab governments were still considering their reply to this appeal. In the interim, however, full hostilities had been resumed. See Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 435.

#### IV

#### THE TEN DAYS OFFENSIVE

The next phase of the war which is commonly referred to as "The Ten Days Offensive," extended from July 9th to July 18th, and was initiated by action on the southern front. As early as July 6th, several of the Egyptian battalions then operating in Palestine<sup>1</sup> had been alerted for renewed military action and assigned specific objectives.<sup>2</sup> The plan of action called for the occupation of Beit Duras (see map - Annex I) by the 7th Battalion, followed by the occupation of Sawafir Gharbiyya and Sawafir Sharquiyya by the 6th Battalion, but a costly error by one of the Egyptian soldiers upset the entire operation.

The original assault against Beit Duras, on the night of July 8-9,<sup>3</sup> was a success,<sup>4</sup> with Egyptian troops entering and occupying the village. Shortly thereafter, however, the Egyptian force was obliged to withdraw because of its own artillery fire which had been drawn on the village. An Egyptian soldier, who had been responsible for signaling the artillery as to whether the occupation had been a failure or a success, mistakenly signalled that it had been a failure, and the artillery fire was begun in preparation for a renewed assault. The subsequent plans for the assaults on Sawafir Gharbiyya and Sawafir Sharquiyya, which had depended on the successful occupation of Beit Duras, were consequently of no value, and Israeli troops

reoccupied Beit Duras.

On the 9th of July the Israelis attacked \*Iraq Suweidan, but were unable to occupy its major strategical feature, the police fortress, which dominated the country for miles around. They then directed their attention to the north-north-east against the Egyptian concentration at \*Ibdis, and in its occupation succeeded in capturing a large amount of Egyptian war material which had been stockpiled in the area.<sup>5</sup>

The following day, the 10th, the Egyptians began an attack against Julis which was soon broken up by the Israelis. The main reason for the failure of the attack was attributed to the confusion and disorganization which was existent in the front line Egyptian command during this period.<sup>6</sup>

The priority of men and material with regard to Israeli operations, however, was elsewhere, and following these opening operations, military activity on the southern front was reduced to a series of skirmishes and fire-fights. This period of relative inactivity lasted until the 16th of July when part of the Israeli armoured unit, which had been active in the assault on Lydda, was rushed southward to join the Israeli forces which were being gathered for an all-out attempt at penetrating the main Egyptian east-west defense line which extended from Majdal on the west to Beit Jibrin in the east, and was the main barrier separating the Israeli forces in the north from the now isolated

Jewish settlements in the Negev.

On the night of the 16th, the Israeli attacking force gathered at Hatta, just north of the Madjal-Beit Jibrin road, and then under the cover of darkness began its movement towards Karatiya (see map - Annex I), which was considered the weakest point in the defense line. The route followed was first to the southeast, and then a sharp cut-back to the southwest, which enabled the force to approach Karatiya from the rear. The attack was carried out in complete surprise, and the village was occupied by Israeli troops. Its possession broke the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, and gave the Israelis a direct land connection with the south. The route, however, passed through strong Egyptian defense positions and was constantly subject to Egyptian artillery and mortar fire, which limited its use to night convoys only.

Further to the south, an Egyptian column of approximately 1,400 men<sup>7</sup> launched an attack on the Jewish settlement of Berot Yezhak near Gaza, which was defended by a garrison of approximately 70 settlers, plus a platoon of Israeli soldiers. The attack was begun by an artillery barrage which was followed by an infantry assault. The heavy fire laid down by the defenders, however, soon dispersed the infantry advance, and the attack took the form of an artillery and tank bombardment, with no further assaults being carried out by the infantry.

Action on the southern front now ground to a halt.

From an affirmative standpoint little can be said to the credit of either side in their conduct of operations on the southern front, during this phase of the war. Operations had been carried out sporadically, and seemingly as independent actions without any apparent connection with any over-all strategical plan. During the first truce, the main Egyptian activity had centered about the strengthening of the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line through the erection of barbed-wire, and construction of defense fortifications. Planning, with regard to future or coordinated operations with the other Arab armies, was almost completely absent. The planning which was carried out was limited and restricted. The villages of Beit Duras, Sawafir Gharbiyya and Sawafir Sharqiyya, were the only points fixed for occupation in the front-line planning which took place during the truce.<sup>8</sup> Beyond that the troops and their front-line commanders were left completely in doubt as to what their subsequent missions might be. As Abdel Nasser had so aptly put it in his Palestine War Memoirs,<sup>9</sup> "Our O.C. was subject to instruction issued from Cairo that bore no relation to the requirements of the situation." Control and co-ordination were almost completely lacking in the conduct of operations as was evidenced in the Egyptian attack against Julis, during which the main attack from the west was called off while it was in the process of successfully completing its assigned mission. The Israeli defenders of Julis were then able to concentrate their full attention on

the small force which was proceeding against it from the south, and the entire operation was smashed.

An additional consideration which hampered the Egyptian operations, was the disposition of the Egyptian forces, which during the period extending from their initial entrance into Palestine to June 11th, had occupied almost all of the southern Negev, and on July the 9th were trying to hold this area with a total of five battalions. As one source<sup>10</sup> puts it:

"The chief interest of our High Command as it appeared was to occupy the largest extent of territory possible. But the only result of this was that the four battalions were dispersed at the end of long lines of communications. They became so scattered that their main concern was to defend themselves and protect their lines of communications. Our High Command no longer had a reserve to use against the enemy....our commander was a commander with no troops to command, or at best a commander of a string of outposts scattered over a wide front....we had lost all power of initiative....to the enemy."

As indicated in the above quoted excerpt - the situation of the Egyptian armed forces in Palestine on July the 9th, was that of a small force occupying a large area. A situation which leant itself only to defense on a limited scale, and severely limited the extent to which offensive operations could be carried out.

The aim of the Egyptian High Command in Cairo was difficult to see. Circumstances clearly indicated that offensive operations were not a part of its plans - this left but one

alternative, which was that of defense. In other words, the initiative had been surrendered to the Israelis.

On the opposing side, the conduct of their military operations also indicated a definite lack of objective planning with regard to the southern front. The priority of men and material was elsewhere, and their actions on the southern front, during the opening stages of this phase of the war, were limited largely to countering the weak offensive thrusts of the Egyptian army in the area to the east of Isdud. It was only on the 16th of July, after the offensive operations on the other fronts had gotten well under way, that Israeli operations on the southern front began to assume direction and purpose. This was exemplified by the organized attack on Karatiya which had the ultimate objective of splitting the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, and establishing a corridor to the isolated Jewish settlements in the Negev. But here too, the Israelis had miscalculated in that the area in which the penetration was made, was a strong Egyptian defensive position extending in depth to a distance of approximately five miles. Thus, any Israeli convoys utilizing the passage into the Negev, had to run the gauntlet of Egyptian artillery and mortar fire, and the risk of mine fields specially planted to disrupt the Israeli traffic to the south. The damage to the Egyptian defense line as a result of the penetration, was negligible, and effectively cut the line only on the Majdal-Beit Jibrin road, which



for all purposes had already been rendered almost completely useless prior to the capture of Kartiya. This was due to the Israeli occupation of commanding terrain features along the road which exposed all east-west Egyptian traffic along the road to heavy Israeli fire.

As has been indicated, the main direction of the Israeli military effort was elsewhere, and generally it could be said that during the truce, the Israeli High Command had planned to undertake four separate offensives in the renewed phase of fighting which they knew was to come. These offensives were to be directed against the Central front, and against the Syrian wedge at Mishmar Hayarden in the Lake Hule region. In addition, they planned to attack Qawuqji's Arab Liberation Army which was operating in the Galilee area, plus initiating a renewed offensive in the Old City of Jerusalem.

#### The Central Front

On the central front the Arabs held the line of villages from Ras al-'Ein in the north, the source of the Jerusalem water supply, down through and including Majdal Yaba, Qula, Yahudiya, Wilhelma, Beit Nabala, Lydda, Ramle, and Latrun (see map - Annex J). This was roughly the demarcation line on the central front which radiated from Ramallah, the main Arab supply base and central headquarters. Superficially, the Arab position appeared strong, but a close examination of the situation reveals numerous

weaknesses in the defensive set-up.

The Iraqi army to the north was holding the front lines in the Samaria district, with its southern flank reaching to Majdal Yaba. Between this point and Latrun, a distance of fifteen miles, there existed a gap which was principally filled by the two Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle and the surrounding Arab villages. Arab troop concentrations in this fifteen-mile gap, however, were almost completely lacking, with the first Arab strong-point appearing in the Latrun area which was occupied by the 3rd Brigade of the Arab Legion, consisting of the 2nd and the 4th Regiments.

The only regular Arab troops filling the fifteen-mile gap were represented by the 5th Independent Infantry Company, composed of approximately 100 men, and a few armoured cars<sup>11</sup> which had been dispatched to Lydda by Glubb Pasha a day before the commencement of the first truce for utilization as a bargaining point in the event that the first truce should be prolonged as a result of diplomatic negotiations. Other than this the main defensive force was made up of the inhabitants of the towns and villages, many of whom were unarmed, and approximately 500 Trans Jordanian volunteers<sup>12</sup> armed with rifles supplied by the Arab Legion. In addition to the weakness in armed strength, a further liability in the defensive set-up existed in the surrounding topography of the area, with Ramle and Lydda being located on a flat coastal plain with the first foothills beginning some five miles to the east and

extending as far as the Latrun-Beit Nuba-Beit Sira-Saffa line, where the terrain gradually evolved into high hills cut with gulleys and passes which are so ideal for defense.

On the Jewish side, a protective belt of fortified villages and positions surrounded Tel Aviv, acting as a buffer against the adjoining Arab lines. Between Beit Nabala and Lydda was the Jewish settlement of Ben Shemen, which, although under a state of seige, still held out against the surrounding Arabs. Its position was such (see map - Annex J) that it was afforded excellent observation through binoculars of both Lydda and Ramle, and was consequently able to keep an accurate count of vehicles moving into the two towns from the east.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the road between Ramle and Latrun was blocked by the Israelis who held the villages of Gezer and al-Qubab.

In line with this situation, the Israelis set into motion the opening phases of a military operation, the principal objectives of which were the widening and strengthening of the ring of Israeli occupied territory around the provisional capital of Tel Aviv, and the widening of the corridor to Jerusalem. Number one priority was given to this operation and responsibility for its accomplishment was delegated to Colonel Yigal Alon at whose disposal was placed the crack military unit of the Israeli armed forces, the Palmach, which was now almost a division in strength, comprising a total of over 6,000 men.<sup>14</sup> Operationally, the Palmach

was divided into three columns, which were in effect brigades which numbered approximately 2,000 men each. In addition, Alon was supplied with jeeps, half-tracks, armoured cars, and some light field artillery. Air support was also made available.

The Israelis believed that Latrun, Ramle, and Lydda were strongly held and defended by soldiers of the Arab Legion, and that an all-out effort would be necessary in order to reduce these points. Thus the operation was divided into two phases with the first devoted to the capture of Lydda and Ramle. Alon planned to use two brigades<sup>15</sup> in the first phase, in which his aim was to first isolate the Lydda-Ramle position before assaulting it. Following this he intended to enter the second phase of his operation, which involved transferring the weight of his entire force against Latrun in another encircling movement.

A review of the Arab position in the Lydda-Ramle area<sup>16</sup> will readily show that the Israeli estimate of the situation with regard to estimated Arab strength in the area was in error. The maximum number of soldiers of the Arab Legion available for utilization on the Jerusalem-Latrun-Lydda front, a distance of some thirty miles, plus the garrisoning of the Old City of Jerusalem against what seemed an imminent attack, was no more than 4,000 men.<sup>17</sup>

On July the 9th the Israeli offensive was put under way, with one brigade advancing from near Tel Aviv, and heading in a

southeasterly direction, while the other struck out from Gezer and headed due north. These two brigades were to join forces in the area to the east of Ramle and Lydda, and then mount a joint attack against the two cities (see map - Annex J for an outline of the area).

On the 10th, the northern brigade took the villages of Yahudiya<sup>18</sup> Qula, Rantis, and at-Tira, by a series of flanking movements which were carried out both during the day and the night, supported by heavy concentrations of mortar fire, and air support as needed. From Wilhelma, the main Israeli force moved southward to Deir Tarif, where it became involved in a fierce battle with elements of the 1st Regiment of the Arab Legion, which had been switched from the Nebi Samwil sector outside of Jerusalem, northwest to Beit Nabala which it reached at 3 P.M. on July 10th.<sup>19</sup> The Arabs carried out a series of counter-attacks supported by armoured cars in an all-out attempt to re-open the road to Lydda. The Israelis held on, however, bypassed the Deir Tarif-Beit Nabala strong-point,<sup>20</sup> and occupied al-Haditha to the south, thus almost completing the northern arc of the encircling movement. Safiriya and Lydda airport had already fallen to a small Jewish force which had operated in conjunction with the main striking element.

Meanwhile the southern brigade, proceeding northward from Gezer, crossed the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road, and by the morning of

the 10th had taken the Arab villages of Innaba, Jimzu, and Daniyal (see map - Annex J). It then continued northward to relieve Ben Shemen, and by nightfall on the 10th had joined the northern brigade at al-Haditha. The encircling movement was now complete, and Lydda and Ramle were completely cut off from the main supply base at Ramallah, and the Arab Legion troops at Latrun.

During the 10th and the 11th, the Arab Legion was flooded by appeals to come to the aid of the inhabitants of Lydda and Ramle, but Glubb Pasha, reducing the situation to the two alternatives of either attempting to save Lydda and Ramle, or the whole country, decided on the latter, and concentrated his attention on building up a defensive position on the Imwas-Salbit-Jimzu-al-Haditha line<sup>21</sup> (see map - Annex J).

On the 10th, while the encircling action was in progress, several Israeli jeeps carried out a dash into Lydda proper, and after several trips up and down the streets of the city, firing machine guns and throwing hand grenades, the small force withdrew, after what had apparently been a reconnaissance attempt at checking the city's defenses.

Then on the 11th, an assault was carried out by the two combined brigades. The anti-tank ditch surrounding the town of Lydda, was breached and the attack was off to a good start. It was soon brought to a halt, however, by the men of the 5th Independent Infantry Company, who, numbering a little over a

hundred men, had stationed themselves in the police post which was the commanding feature in the area, and which possessed excellent fields of fire. Orders to surrender brought no reply, with the small garrison and the inhabitants of the two towns still hopeful for the arrival of reinforcements from the Arab Legion.

On the afternoon of the 11th, the 1st Regiment, which was engaged with the Israelis at Deir Tarif,<sup>22</sup> sent a troop of armoured cars to Lydda to ascertain the situation. It drove past the Israeli settlement of Ben Shemen, which was now reinforced with Israeli troops, and engaged enemy concentrations on the outskirts of Lydda, scattering several Israeli infantry units, and causing them to regroup and change some of their positions. The armoured cars were unsupported, and when the Israelis realized that this was not the advance guard of a relief column, they attempted to cut the road back to Deir Tarif. The armoured cars immediately withdrew, but only after they had ascertained that the Israelis were present in the area in strength.

Glubb Pasha, deciding that any effort to relieve the city by an armed force would only result in the loss of such a force for future action, decided to withdraw all forces to the east in an attempt to establish a defense line extending from Latrun northward. He ordered the withdrawal of the 5th Independent Infantry Company and it made good its escape on the night of July 11-12, and withdrew to Beit Sira (see map - Annex J).

On the 12th of July, a patrol from Beit Sira to Jimzu was unable to break through to Lydda, and a second armoured car patrol which proceeded from Deir Tarif towards Lydda was also halted. On the morning of the 12th, word was received that Lydda and Ramle had surrendered and had been occupied by the Israeli forces, while to the north, Ras al-'Ein was taken from the Iraqis. By the evening of the 12th, the entire area west of the Ras al-'Ein-Lydda road was under Israeli occupation.

The Lydda-Ramle area now became the scene of a mass evacuation. Shortly after their occupation of Lydda and Ramle, Israeli vans with loudspeakers drove through the streets of the cities ordering all the inhabitants to leave, and those that refused were forcibly ejected.<sup>23</sup> The only exceptions were men of military age who were arrested and moved to concentration camps. The Israeli policy was now openly one of clearing out the entire Arab population before them.<sup>24</sup> During the next two or three days, similar operations took place in the surrounding villages and hamlets, and it has been estimated that from 30,000 to 60,000 Arabs were uprooted and forced eastward in the direction of Ramallah.<sup>25</sup>

Colonel Alon now turned his attention to Beit Nabala, which he had been obliged to by-pass during the initial stages of his operation, and it fell to him on the 13th. The victory represented little as far as a comparison of Israeli-Arab Legion



strength was concerned in that the 1st Regiment had withdrawn to the north shortly before the arrival of the Israeli force. Alon, realizing the serious manpower problem which was facing the Arab Legion, had counted on either capturing or containing the defenders of Beit Nabala. The Regiment's withdrawal, however, had prevented this.

Now that the Palmach was in full occupation of Lydda and Ramle, Colonel Alon was determined to complete the second phase of his operation which was the occupation of Latrun. He proposed to do this by capturing Beit Nuba and Beit Sira (see map - Annex J), and thus outflank Latrun from the north. In addition, the capture of Beit Sira would have cut the road connecting Arab Legion forces with their supply base at Ramallah, plus opening the road to Ramallah for the Israeli forces which would have enabled them to strike at the heart of the Trans Jordanian defensive position, and also at that of the Iraqi army.

To meet the advance of the Palmach, the commander of the 3rd Brigade had withdrawn two companies of the 2nd Regiment from Latrun and had taken over the 5th Independent Infantry Company which had slipped out of Lydda on the night of July 11-12.<sup>26</sup> This force was grouped around Beit Sira under the brigade commander's personal command.

On July the 15th, following a regrouping operation, the Palmach resumed its advance in force from Lydda, by way of Jimzu,

and on the morning of the 16th they attacked al-Burj and Bir Ma'in (see map - Annex J). Al-Burj was occupied, but was again recovered by forces of the 2nd Regiment on the afternoon of the same day. The brigade commander then decided, however, that he did not have enough men to hold the position, so he abandoned it in the evening and withdrew to the Beit Sira crossroads.

In the interim, the 1st Regiment, which had been the main Trans Jordanian defensive element in the Deir Tarif-Beit Nabala area, had withdrawn to the north just prior to the Israeli occupation of Beit Nabala on the 13th.<sup>27</sup> According to the account as given by Glubb Pasha in A Soldier With the Arabs, it had been ordered to contact<sup>28</sup> the Iraqi army at Majdal Yaba. Thus, on July the 16th, while the Israelis were attempting to push through to Beit Sira, which was defended only by the two companies of the 2nd Regiment and the 5th Independent Infantry Company, the 1st Regiment was pushing away towards the north. It allegedly engaged an Israeli force at Qula, and after driving it from its position proceeded in a northwesterly direction pursuing the withdrawing Israeli garrison.

In the interim the Security Council continued in its efforts at bringing about a cessation of hostilities, and at the 333rd meeting of the United Nations Security Council on July 13, 1948, the United Nations mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, made an oral statement explaining and amplifying a written report which

he had submitted to the Council on July 12th, concerning his activities in connection with bringing about a cessation of hostilities, and his negotiations for the peaceful adjustment of the future situation in Palestine. He concluded his statement by saying that, for the time being, he had exhausted all the powers at his disposal, and that it was up to the Council to adopt measures to put an end to the renewal of hostilities in Palestine.<sup>29</sup>

At the 334th meeting, on July 13th, the representative of the United States stated that the report submitted by the mediator and the renewal of hostilities had made it imperative for the Council to adopt immediate action to bring a halt to further military action, and to that end he submitted a draft resolution, which after minor amendments and additions, was adopted on July 15, 1948, by a vote of 7 to 1 (Syria) with Argentina, Ukrainian S.S.R., and the U.S.S.R. abstaining.<sup>30</sup>

The resolution in effect ordered all governments and authorities concerned to refrain from further military action and to this end to issue cease-fire orders to their military and paramilitary forces. These orders were to take effect at a time to be determined by the mediator, but in any event not later than three days from the time of the adoption of the resolution. The wording of the resolution left no doubt in the minds of all parties concerned that any failure to comply with the resolution would result in the adoption of sanctions against them. The

resolution further provided for an immediate and unconditional cease-fire in the City of Jerusalem, which was to take effect within twenty-four hours from the time of the adoption of the resolution, and instructed the mediator to continue in his efforts to bring about the demilitarization of the City of Jerusalem. The truce was to remain in effect in accordance with the terms of the new resolution, and with that of May 29, 1948,<sup>31</sup> until a peaceful adjustment of the future situation in Palestine was reached.

Although strongly opposed by the Israeli military commanders and advisers, who felt that they should be allowed to fight on until complete victory had been achieved, the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Israel informed the United Nations by a cablegram, dated July 16, 1948, that it had decided to comply with the Security Council's resolution for a resumption of the truce in Palestine and for an immediate unconditional cease-fire in Jerusalem, and that it would issue the necessary cease-fire orders to its forces as soon as it was notified that all the Arab Governments and authorities concerned had likewise accepted the conditions and issued the orders manifesting their acceptance.

In a cablegram dated July 17, 1948, the Secretary General of the Arab League informed the United Nations that the Arab states had decided to accept that portion of the resolution dealing with the cease-fire in Jerusalem. This was followed with a

further cablegram on July 18th, in which the Secretary General of the Arab League amplified that any renewed truce should be subject to conditions which would remedy the defects of the preceding four-week truce. These conditions included the cessation of all Jewish immigration during the duration of the truce, and the return of Arab refugees to their homes, plus a guarantee on their lives and property. He further stated that the duration of the truce should be limited.

The cablegram went on to say that in view of the fact that the Security Council persisted in considering the continuation of hostilities in Palestine to be a breach of the peace, and because it expressly threatened to apply sanctions against the Arab states if they refused to cease hostilities, the Arab states had no other alternative than to accept the Security Council's resolution of July 15. It further stated, however, that a mere cessation of hostilities would not bring peace to that part of the world.<sup>32</sup>

On July 16, 1948, the mediator informed the parties concerned by a cablegram that the cease-fire would take effect at 3 P.M., G.M.T. on July 18. In response, the Arab states and the Provisional Government of Israel informed the mediator that they had issued the requisite cease-fire orders to their forces.<sup>33</sup>

On the 17th there was a lull in the fighting in the Latrun area while both sides reorganized after the heavy fighting

of the 16th, and orders were received by the front-line units that their respective governments had agreed to comply with the Security Council resolution of July 15th, and that the truce would go into effect at the time which had been set by the mediator.<sup>34</sup>

Early on the 18th, the Palmach launched a heavy attack against the Beit Sira-Saffa front, in what appeared to be a last all-out attempt at severing the connections between Latrun and Ramallah. A detachment of the 1st Regiment, which had been recalled from the engagement at Qula<sup>35</sup> was moving southward from Kharbata and engaged the left flank of the Israeli attack on Saffa, and forced it to fall back to al-Burj. Meanwhile the southern end of the attack came up against the 5th Independent Infantry Company at the Beit Sira crossroads, and was forced to fall back to Bir Ma'in after suffering heavy losses. The plan to outflank Latrun from the north had failed. Israeli probes had, however, succeeded in occupying several dominating features along the road between Latrun and Beit Nuba, thus seriously affecting the free flow of traffic and forcing the Arab Legion convoys to travel cross-country from Latrun to the Beit Sira area.

Later, on July the 18th, the Colonel Alon decided on one last effort to accomplish what had been one of his main objectives - the capture of Latrun.<sup>36</sup> The attack was carried out by two Palmach brigades<sup>37</sup> supported by an armored force of two Cromwell tanks, three other tanks, ten Bren-gun carriers, and a number of

armoured half-tracks.<sup>38</sup> The 2nd Regiment had mounted a six-pounder gun on the roof of the police post at Latrun, which had an excellent field of fire, but which was in full view of the enemy. A duel developed between the tanks which were apparently spearheading the Israeli attack, and the Trans Jordanian six-pounder gun, and in the ensuing exchange of fire, all five of the tanks were put out of action.<sup>39</sup> The infantry in their positions at Latrun could see the Israeli infantry in the semi-circle of foothills which surrounded the post to the south, west, and northwest, forming for an attack, but it never materialized presumably due to the break-up of the armoured spearhead. The encircling movement against Latrun had been halted, with the cease-fire bringing down the curtain on an operation which, had it succeeded, might have opened the door to the conquest of all of Palestine.

Action on the central front, however, had not only been limited to the Ramle-Lydd-Latrun area, in that part of the operation to widen the corridor to Jerusalem involved still further action to the south. At the beginning of "The Ten Days Offensive," Egyptian troops from the Bethlehem area had begun an infiltrating movement northward over the Jerusalem-Ramle railway line, towards the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway, where they hoped to make contact with the Arab Legion troops to the north of it in the Nabi Samwil area, where the 1st Regiment had been replaced by three garrison companies which now formed the 5th Regiment.<sup>40</sup> Part of Colonel

Alon's task was to push back the Egyptians and thus widen the gap between the two Arab armies.

With the fall of Lydda and Ramle on July the 12th, Alon diverted the Palmach brigade, which had not participated in the occupation of Lydda and Ramle, to the area between the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway and the Ramle-Jerusalem railroad (see map - Annex K) and on the 13th, the Egyptian-held village of Sar'a was captured. The next day Suba was taken, and Deir 'Amr was occupied a day or so later. The Jewish settlement of Hartuv was recovered and on the morning of the 18th Ishwa and Deir Rafat fell. (See map - Annex K). By July the 19th, the entire area between the railway line and the road was held by the Israelis. In the area south of the railway, they had managed to clear the territory of all major Arab opposition, as far south as Beit Jibrin, with the thinly-spread Egyptian forces pulling back into the Judean hills to the east.<sup>41</sup> To lessen the chance of one Egyptian unit aiding another, the Palmach brigade was split into small columns so as to carry out the attack over as wide an area as possible, and thus rendering it impossible for the Egyptians to gather their forces to meet any one concentrated effort. Night marches and the element of surprise which they carried with them, also materially contributed to the Israeli success.

Any analysis of the fighting which took place on the central front during this phase of the war, demands that careful



attention be directed to one particular point - the loss, and the manner of the loss, of Lydda, Ramle, and the surrounding area to the Jews. The consensus of opinion of the Arab World was, and is today, that they had been betrayed - that Glubb Pasha had deliberately withheld<sup>42</sup> his forces from the Lydda-Ramle area and allowed it to be occupied by the Israelis.

Glubb's explanation of the reasons behind the Arabs' accusations is as follows: He states that immediately after the end of the truce, the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Ernest Bevin, issued an appeal to both sides to cease fighting. This was soon followed by the occupation of Lydda and Ramle by Israel, which led to the accusations against him and the Arab Legion. He states that the Arabs had reasoned thusly:

"Mr. Begin wanted the war to stop. The Jews had agreed to renew the truce (but) the Arabs had refused. Therefore, in order to persuade the Arabs to stop fighting, Mr. Bevin had ordered me to allow Israel to capture Lydda and Ramle. The Arab Legion could easily have defended these places....but I had prevented them from doing so, in accordance with Mr. Bevin's secret orders....I had sacrificed tens of thousands of Arabs in order to further Britain's wicked intrigues."<sup>43</sup>

In the immediately preceding pages<sup>44</sup> I have attempted to present both Glubb's account and reasoning as to the surrender of Lydda and Ramle, and I have presented the situation as it was represented by Abdullah al-Tell<sup>45</sup> which was in almost direct opposition to that of Glubb's. Which view is correct, or false,

is a matter for conjecture, with each side having its arguments and rebuttals. For the purpose of this paper it is sufficient to condense the entire matter into one question which is as follows: "If the 1st Regiment, with its alleged 1,000 men, had been employed in a military manner directed towards the defense of Lydda and Ramle, would it have been sufficient to have prevented the capture of Lydda and Ramle by the Israelis?"

In answering this question from a purely military standpoint, and without regard for the many alleged political considerations, it is the opinion of this writer, that the withholding of Arab Legion forces (including the 1st Regiment) from the direct defense of Lydda and Ramle, enabled the Arabs to subsequently prevent what might have been a complete Israeli breakthrough of the Arab central defensive position, which could ultimately have resulted in not only the loss of Jerusalem, but all of Palestine.

The geographical location of Lydda and Ramle, prior to their occupation by Israeli forces, was similar to that of an arrow projecting into Israeli occupied territory, filling a gap of fifteen miles, which extended from Majdal Yabda in the north to Latrun in the south. The Israelis had set as one of their principal objectives the encirclement and subsequent occupation of this area. Into this effort they put one of their ablest military commanders, and the crack Palmach force, a highly mobile unit of over 6,000 men, well supported by armour. A force, the

entire portion of which could be directed towards one concentrated aim. In opposition to this force we have that of the Arab Legion, with a Palestinian force of approximately 4,000 men, responsible for defending a front of almost thirty miles, and unable to expend its entire force in one concentrated operation. Its forces had been committed with a definite area to defend. To the south was its ally the Egyptian army, thinly spread out over a wide front, and unable to carry out a successful offensive operation even if co-ordination between the two armies had been present. To the north, with its southern flank extending to Majdal Yaba, was the Iraqi army. Had Glubb Pasha been able to rely on its all-out support in a co-ordinated effort against the Israelis, a plan for the defense of the two cities might have evolved. Trust and complete reliance was lacking, however, and Glubb was obliged to rely on the force he commanded of approximately 4,000 men, who were low on ammunition and distributed over a wide front, against a crack Israeli force of over 6,000 men.

In addition to this there were the topographical features of the area to consider. Under certain conditions it is definitely possible for a smaller force to hold back a larger one of superior strength for an indefinite length of time. This is particularly feasible in a mountainous area where the smaller force is able to concentrate its defensive strength on the main routes of communication passing through the area. In the case

of Lydda and Ramle, this sort of defensive strategy could not be relied on. Lydda and Ramle and the surrounding area were situated on a broad, flat, plain, with the area to the east gradually merging into soft rolling hills. It is only when one goes approximately ten miles to the east that the terrain assumes the sharply, irregular features that are so ideal for defense.

The projection of the Lydda-Ramle area into Israeli occupied territory, rendered it particularly susceptible to an encircling movement, and this fact was capitalized on by the Israelis. Their operation was carried out in the form of a pincer movement composed of two Israeli Palmach columns.<sup>46</sup> The columns, advancing from the north and the south were backed by a third column which was held in reserve, presumably in anticipation of Glubb's entering into an all-out battle with the encircling forces. Had Glubb deployed the 1st Regiment against either of the pincer movements, or had he retained the 1st Regiment in Beit Nabala, after Lydda and Ramle had been encircled, it is highly probable and strategically feasible that Colonel Alon would immediately have dispatched the third reserve Palmach brigade against Glubb's forces. A co-ordinating movement with the other two Palmach brigades could have resulted in a containment of the entire Arab Legion force, leaving only 3,000 Arab Legion soldiers to defend the remaining front. A strong Palmach force could then have penetrated the Arab Legion defense line extending from Latrun

north to Kharbata, and pushed straight through to Ramallah, and then southward to outflank Jerusalem, or northward to Nablus behind the Iraqi army. Had such a penetration been effected, it is quite probable to assume that all of Palestine would have fallen. The Arab Legion was still intact, and as one pro-Zionist source<sup>47</sup> puts it, "the one Israeli disappointment in this offensive was that few Legion prisoners had been taken, in that Abdullah's most precious possession was his soldiers." The breaking of the Arab Legion would have removed one of the greatest threats in Palestine to the Israeli forces.

Criticism, however, must be levelled against the poor co-ordination and control exercised by the Arab Legion command over the 1st Regiment, which formed a sizeable portion of the Trans Jordanian defensive element. Poor communications may have been the reason for the delay in shifting the force from its pursuit of the Israeli forces in the Qula area to the Latrun-Kharbata defense line. Its arrival in the area was just barely in time to meet the last determined Israeli effort in the Saffa-Kharbata area.

Additional criticism of the conduct of Arab defensive action is that there was little co-operation between the Arab armies. Allegedly, the Iraqis had been informed of the intended Arab Legion withdrawal from the Lydda-Ramle area,<sup>48</sup> but nothing had been said to the Egyptians, the Syrians, or the Lebanese. The

movement of the Egyptian troops northward toward the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road in the area southwest of Jerusalem, could be interpreted as an attempt at joining up with the Arab Legion forces located to the north of the road, but here again, there was no indication of co-operation between the two forces. Although it is true that the Arab Legion was engaged in a pitched battle for the defense of Latrun, there is no reason why several units would not have been delegated the responsibility of moving southward towards the advancing Egyptians. Not only would a join-up of the two forces have effected a complete cut-off of Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, but it would also have acted as a diversionary action to draw attacking Israeli units away from the hard-pressed Latrun area, or from one of the other fronts.

It can definitely be said that the Arab Legion's withdrawal from the Lydda-Ramle area, had enabled the Jews to switch additional forces to other fronts. The "Voice of Israel"<sup>49</sup> on July the 15th, stated that the Israeli occupation of Lydda and Ramle had increased the possibility of intensifying Israeli operations in the south.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the loss of Lydda and Ramle, with the resultant expulsion of the tens of thousands of Arabs from the area, had a serious morale effect on the Arab population. Against these points, however, must be weighed the analysis supporting the withdrawal, for even with their forces intact, the Arab Legion barely succeeded in stopping a complete Israeli

penetration of the Latrun-Kharbata defense line.

On the Israeli side, credit must be given to Colonel Alon for the manner in which he conducted the Israeli operation. To carry out the objectives assigned to him, Alon had in effect a full division of 6,000 troops, divided into three brigades of 2,000 men each, under his command. He had been presented with a responsibility which was new to Israeli commanders in the field - that of dealing with a large force engaged in a single operation, along with its resulting problems of control, communications, and administration. The operation could have gotten completely out of hand, had it not been for careful planning and the intelligent employment of his force. In carrying out his operation he had proceeded step by step instead of utilizing reckless smashes. This had been necessitated by what he thought was a heavy concentration of the Arab Legion in the Lydda-Ramle area, and around Latrun. Thus, in each new maneuver he was always ready to fall back in an orderly fashion to a position capable of absorbing the shock of a strong Arab Legion counter-attack. The tactics of encirclement, with a strong column in reserve, were good, and showed that the Israelis had learned by their previous failures.<sup>51</sup> The beginning vestiges of the use of the "strategy of indirect approach"<sup>52</sup> could be seen in their conduct of operations.

From a technical point of view, the novel feature of the fighting was the large-scale use of jeeps by the Israelis, both as

weapons and personnel carriers in the forward areas. It enabled them to move with speed, and over terrain which was ordinarily not passable to wheeled vehicles, and gave them a definite advantage in their conduct of offensive operations.

### The Syrian Front

During the period of the first truce, both sides, the Israelis and the Syrians, had been digging in, and preparing for the resumption of hostilities. The Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden (see map - Annex F) was heavily fortified, and its Syrian garrison was increased and reorganized into two brigades, each containing three small battalions of infantry, instead of two as formerly, with artillery and armour in support. Total Syrian strength around the bridgehead has been estimated at 2,500 men.<sup>53</sup> The Arab situation in the Hule area was such that they were able to keep the road from Rosh Pinna northward to the Jewish settlements, under the continuous threat of artillery fire - from the Syrians in the east and the Lebanese in the west.

The main Israeli strongpoints in the area to the west of the Jordan Valley were (running south to north) Safad, Ramat Naftal, Manara, and Givat Am. These were isolated points rather than a strong defensive line, and as such, if the Israelis adopted a strategy of defense, would have given the Syrians the pick of the time and place whenever they chose to attack.

The Israeli estimate of the situation anticipated that



the Syrians were preparing to launch an attack with the objective of linking up with Qawuqji's forces in central Galilee, and the Lebanese at Malikiya.

Thus, in a counter-move, against this anticipated action, the Israeli High Command set up an offensive operation which was given the name "Baresh," and the object of which was to drive the Syrians out of Palestine. In preparation for this operation, field battalions were mobilized, reinforcements were sent, and armoured vehicles, half-tracks, some light artillery, and mortars were allotted, with western Galilee being denuded of men and material to support the effort against the Syrians.

The Israeli plan of action, which was developed to carry out the operation, proved to be a complex arrangement involving the use of four columns, each composed of approximately 500 men, and each allotted a separate task and objective.

The first column was to assemble at Hulata (see map - Annex F), and then cross Lake Hule to Dadara<sup>54</sup> from where it was to push on and occupy the heights of Dabboura.<sup>55</sup> Following this it was to continue its way south in a push to cut the road leading from Mishmar Hayarden to the Syrian bases in the east.

The second column was to move from Hulata southward along the shore of Lake Hule to the River Jordan, at a point where it was about a hundred yards wide<sup>56</sup> - a position just to the south of Lake Hule. Here it was to build a bridge and effect a night

crossing of the River, after which it was to advance and cut the same road extending from Mishmar Hayarden eastward, at a point a little to the west of the place where the first column was to cut it.

The third column was to move forward to some high ground just to the west of the bridgehead, and open up a holding action to cover the River crossing of the second column.

The fourth column was to act in conjunction with the third column, and was to take up a position just to the south of the area to be occupied by the third column - an area also covering the Syrian bridgehead.

On the night of July the 19th, "Operation Barosh" was put into action. The first Israeli column successfully crossed Lake Hule during the night, but its advance toward the heights of Dabboura was discovered and the column was brought under heavy Syrian artillery fire. They succeeded, however, in occupying the heights which had been lightly held, but then, instead of pushing on and completing the task of cutting the road to the south, the column remained where it was. No satisfactory explanation has been given for this sort of conduct, in that the column had suffered few casualties in its initial action, and was thus to all purposes still operationally fit to carry out its mission.

The second column, starting from Halata, proceeded along the shore of Lake Hule and reached the selected spot on the River

Jordan where the crossing was to be made. The plan had been to build a pontoon-type bridge with the materials they had carried with them, but due to a miscalculation, there were an insufficient number of boats<sup>57</sup> to complete the task. At this point, their presence was discovered by the Syrians who immediately brought them under small arms fire, which due to the inexperience of many of the Israeli troops, caused a great amount of confusion, thereby adding to the general disorganized state which had taken hold of the second column. The bridge-building project, however, was continued under the cover of darkness and under haphazard Syrian small arms fire, and the bridge was successfully completed. By daylight, however, only a small number of troops had crossed to the other side, and these remained dispersed on the far bank. Thus the original object of the column, which had been to cut the road to the southeast, was not fulfilled.

The third and the fourth columns occupied the positions which they had been assigned, and opened fire on the bridgehead position, but there was no co-ordination and little damage was done to the well-constructed Syrian defenses.

At daylight, on July the 10th, the Syrians began a heavy counter-attack, and their artillery bombarded the positions which the third and fourth Israeli columns had occupied. The Israelis suffered numerous casualties as they had been unable to dig-in on the barren, rocky ground. Their light artillery was out-ranged by

the Syrian armament, and Syrian aircraft bombed and strafed the Israeli concentrations and the roads leading to them.

Immediately thereafter the Syrians began their advance with infantry supported by tanks, against the newly occupied Israeli positions to the west of the bridgehead. The artillery barrage was well co-ordinated with the advancing forces, and the curtain of fire was lifted as the troops advanced. An infantry battalion was put against each of the positions held by the two Israeli columns, and after fierce fighting, the Israelis were forced from the high ground, barely managing to retain one small foothold.

At about the same time, the other Syrian brigade attacked the Israeli column which was in the act of attempting to cross the River Jordan. Again the attack was preceded by an artillery barrage. The small party which had crossed the river to the east side, suffered heavy casualties and was forced to withdraw leaving wounded and equipment behind. The Syrians crossed the river and pursued the withdrawing Israeli force northward towards Hulata. There, however, Israeli reinforcements arrived, and a stand was made south of the village, and the Syrian advance was held.

On the following day, the 11th, the Syrians concentrated their attention on the first column, which was still occupying the heights of Dabourra. Once again the Syrian counter-attack was preceded by artillery fire, and followed closely by infantry

supported by armour. The Israelis, however, were well dug in and managed to hold off the attack. Following several additional attempts to dislodge the Israelis, the Syrians withdrew.

For the next several days, a stalemate set in around Mishmar Hayarden, with the forces on both sides remaining static, but keeping up a steady exchange of small-arms and artillery fire. On July the 18th, when the truce came into effect, the Syrians were still firmly in possession of their bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden, although it was now solidly contained by Israeli positions in and around Mahanayim and Aiyelet ha-Shahar (see map - Annex F).

During this phase of the Arab-Israeli war, the Israelis had initiated the action in the area. Their operation, however, had failed in its objective of overwhelming the Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden, and they had been decisively repulsed with heavy casualties. They had managed to retain Dabourra, but they had been required to give up ground below Hulata. Looking at the action from another angle, however, it could be said that "Operation Baresh" had had some degree of success, in that it had apparently destroyed any offensive plans which the Syrians may have had, and by remaining inactive, the bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden could serve no useful purpose.<sup>58</sup>

With regard to the Israeli operation there are several points open to criticism. The first is in regard to the division

of the Israeli force into four columns, each of which was given a separate task as a part of a co-ordinated operation. This sort of planning, when backed by an adequate reserve force to give aid to any column meeting unexpected opposition, can be defended, but in this instance, where the Israelis were giving priority to actions on other fronts, and where they were barely able to muster sufficient forces to carry out the operation,<sup>59</sup> it indicated poor strategical planning. The co-ordination of the four columns was quickly upset by unexpected delays, and without reserve forces to save the situation, the Israeli offensive was broken.

The Israeli objective of isolating Mishmar Hayarden from its main bases to the east was good, but it is hard to find an explanation as to why the first and second columns were given almost identical tasks of cutting the road to the east. In addition, the plan had shown little pre-attack planning or consideration, in that the area selected for occupation by the third and fourth columns, was rocky and barren, and prevented the Israeli troops from digging-in, thus exposing them to the Syrian artillery fire. Again the lack of sufficient bridging material at the point where the crossing attempt was to be made, showed a definite lack of attention to detail. The operation had depended on speed and a complete crossing by daybreak. Instead, the lack of materials had caused a bottleneck which, at dawn, found the major portion of the second column still on the west side of the river lacking

adequate protection against the Syrian artillery. In addition, they were unable to provide the small force, that had crossed the river, with adequate fire power, which led to their being completely routed.

The whole plan seemed to have been initiated on the premise that little opposition would be encountered. This, and only this,<sup>60</sup> could have accounted for the failure to provide an adequate reserve force to support the four column operation, which could definitely be termed as having been over ambitious in the light of the priority operations being conducted by the Israelis on other fronts.

It was a difficult plan, the major portion of which was to have been accomplished during the first night, and one which would have tried even the most tested and experienced of military staffs. The Israelis seemed to lack the excellent control over the operation which they had exhibited in other military actions.

By the 15th, the Israelis had begun to re-group and re-organize, and on the 18th they were in the process of mounting another attack, but due to the beginning of the second truce they were unable to put it into operation.

On the other hand, full blame for the failure cannot be attributed solely to the Israelis, in that the Syrians also contributed much which led to the failure of "Operation Barosh." The alertness of the Syrian forces at night had eliminated the element of surprise, and the counter-action initiated by the

Syrians had been almost immediate. The counter-attacks, which were launched at daybreak, were well co-ordinated and well timed, and made good use of the enemies' weaknesses. They had acquitted themselves well during the operation, and were about to launch a new assault on Dabourra when the second truce stopped all military action.

Further action in the area had centered around the Israeli settlement of Ein Gev, which was located on the east shore of Lake Tiberias, and which had been under a constant seige since the beginning of the war. It had been heavily shelled by the Syrians, but had not been exposed to any direct attacks, with the main Syrian effort being directed towards repulsing Israeli operations in the area of Mishmar Hayarden. On the 17th and 18th, however, the defenders of Ein Gev went on the offensive, and succeeded in capturing several of the heights overlooking the settlement, thus giving them a relief from the heavy bombardment to which they had been subjected.

#### THE FIGHTING IN GALILEE

In central Galilee it was Qawuqji who was still in direct control of the Arab Liberation Army, (ALA) which had now been re-organized and reduced to a strength of around 2,000 men, although ostensibly it was Lebanon which exercised command over the Army, and kept it supplied with war material. Headquarters for the ALA had been set up in Nazareth, and the surrounding mountainous area



was dominated by Qawuqji's men.

On the opposing side, the Israelis held a narrow strip of land extending from Haifa to Beisan through the valley of Esdraelon, and in the west they held the coastal plain extending from Acre northward, known as the valley of Zebulon. The Arabs in the adjoining mountainous areas posed a constant threat to these areas, and it was in answer to this threat that the plans for "Operation Dekel" were formulated. The main objectives of the operation were the occupation of the mountainous area immediately adjoining the valley of Zebulon, and the occupation of Nazareth. Colonel Moshe Carmel, the commander of the Israeli forces in Haifa was designated as commander of the operation. For its execution Colonel Carmel was given command of the "Anglo-Saxon Brigade," which had been transferred north from the Latrun area,<sup>61</sup> and which consisted of a battalion of battle experienced soldiers, plus a newly formed battalion, together with several mobilized units of the Field Army. In addition, he was supplied with armoured cars, half-tracks, jeeps, anti-tank guns, and mortars.

Execution of the operation was to be carried out in four steps, with each step to be completed before the next was undertaken.<sup>62</sup> His first step was to attack Tel Kisan (see map - Annex L), a high area approximately two and a half miles east of the Acre-Haifa road, which dominated the area for miles around. He began his operation on the night of July 9th, and by a flank

march<sup>63</sup> and careful positioning of his forces, he was subsequently able to attack the hill position from the rear, catching its defenders by complete surprise, and obtaining an easy victory. He then turned his brigade northward, and in turn took the villages of al-Makr, Judeida, Abu Sinan, Kafr Yasif, and Kuweikat,<sup>64</sup> (see map - Annex L) thus forming a buffer zone between the south-central portion of the valley of Zebulon, and the Arab-dominated heights to the east.

In his third step, he turned his force to the east along the Birwa-Rama road. He soon encountered strong Arab resistance, however, and the advance was brought to a halt. Rather than attempting to push on against this determined opposition, Carmel left a small group to keep the Arab irregulars in the area occupied, and withdrew his main body to a regrouping area. Prior to arriving at the regrouping area, however, he detached one battalion to relieve the isolated Israeli village of Yehiam, which was situated just to the south of the Nahariya-Tarshiha road. This was done successfully, and the Arabs were forced to withdraw to the east, thus relieving the northern portion of the valley of Zebulon from Arab pressure. This action had been accomplished during the first three days of fighting.

Following the regrouping operation, Colonel Carmel turned his brigade toward Nazareth. His plan of action was to create a diversion by attacking Ilut<sup>65</sup> to the west of Nazareth, while his

main striking force, a lorry-borne battalion, assaulted Nazareth from the north via Saffuriya,<sup>66</sup> which was the main source of water for Nazareth. The defensive ring, which had been built around Nazareth, had been especially fortified on the south, which was the section closest to the east-west Israeli strip, and the direction from which it was assumed that any enemy attack would be made.

The offensive was opened on July the 13th, by a night attack on the Arab stronghold of Shafa 'Amr, (see map - Annex L) and after a brief engagement the village was taken, thus opening the road extending southeast to Nazareth. The next day, the village of Ibillin, just to the north of Shafa 'Amr was taken, and from there Carmel's force entered into the main phase of their operation. The column which had been detailed to make the diversionary attack on Ilut was delayed in its approach to the village due to the hilly country separating it from the main highway. The area was ideal for defense and the Arabs made the most of the situation bringing the movement against Ilut to an almost complete halt.

A few miles to the north, Carmel's main body was caught in an ambush which resulted in the loss of several armoured cars, and also served to delay his progress toward Saffuriya. On the 16th, however, Carmel resumed his advance, and forced his way into the town which was completely occupied around mid-day. The Israeli forces had been on the go for several days without a let-up, and were on the verge of fatigue, but Carmel, relying on speed,

and desiring to take advantage of a co-ordinating movement which was being carried out against several Arab villages to the east, forced his troops on to Nazareth which was only six miles away. Approximately three miles outside of the city, Carmel's force made contact with Qawuqji's men, who fought a delaying action as they slowly retired into Nazareth. Speed, however, being the main consideration, caused the Israelis to follow closely and as a result they suffered several casualties.

In the outskirts of Nazareth, the Israeli advance was brought to a temporary halt when it ran up against the main defensive positions which had been erected around the city. These, however, were soon penetrated, and the majority of the Arab defenders retired into three heavily fortified positions - a monastery, an orphanage building, and the police post, which were immediately brought under heavy artillery and small-arms fire. One by one the points were taken and by nightfall most of Nazareth was in Israeli hands. Qawuqji and his staff made tentative plans for a counter-attack, but on the following day, he and what remained of his Nazareth garrison, slipped away to the north.

During his advance towards Nazareth, Carmel had been unable to completely clear the area adjoining the roads of Arab forces, and his entire line of communications was consequently being subjected to a continuing series of Arab counter-attacks. Accordingly, as soon as he had moved in enough men to garrison Nazareth, he

moved northward, spreading his force in the shape of a fan, and in the remaining two days of fighting he took most of the Arab villages dominating the Birwa-Rama road, and also those along the road from Shafa 'Amr north to Birwa. When the second truce came into effect he had begun to advance northward along the road from Rama to Tarshiha.<sup>67</sup>

Additional fighting which had taken place in the Galilee area during this phase of the war, occurred around the Israeli village of Segera (see map - Annex L) which was surrounded on three sides by the Arab villages of Lubiya, Turan, Kfar Kana, and 'Ein Mahil. During the first truce, Segera had been strengthened and reinforced by an anti-tank ditch which had been dug around the village but little additional effort had been expended in the construction of additional defensive structures. Consequently, on July the 9th, when Qawuqji opened his limited offensive operations (Note as undertaken during "The Ten Days Offensive") by an attack on Segera, it was barely able to hold off his attack, and again the failure of Qawuqji to press on with his attack gave the Israelis a breathing spell, and enabled them to conduct a counter-attack in which they were able to drive the Arabs from the high ground overlooking the village.

During the evening of the 9th, and again on the morning of the 10th, Qawuqji's men made several unsuccessful assaults against the village, after which they settled down to what was apparently an attempt to starve it into submission.<sup>68</sup> All

further offensive action by Qawuqji during this phase of the fighting was restricted to counter-attacks and raids along Carmel's lines of communication.

On the 15th, the defenders of the village, in conjunction with the Israeli attack which was then being carried out against Saffuriya, began a local offensive, and by the morning of the 16th had succeeded in causing the small besieging force to begin a withdrawal.<sup>69</sup> On being notified of the Israeli occupation of Nazareth, the Arab force broke off all contact with the Segera defenders and slipped away to the north.

On the 17th, the Segera garrison carried out an attack on the neighboring Arab village of Lubiya but the initial assault was repulsed. On the following day, after being reinforced by elements from Carmel's Nazareth force, offensive action was renewed, and the villages of Turan and then Lubiya were occupied. Mopping up operations were then conducted along the road to Tiberias, and on the 19th, the day after the second truce had gone into effect, the Israelis were still in the process of carrying out offensive operations - occupying Nimrin to the north, and 'Ein Mahil to the south of the Nazareth-Tiberias road. (See map - Annex L).

In an analysis of the Galilee fighting, much is to be said in support of the manner in which Carmel executed "Operation Dekel," the major portion of which had been carried out under

difficult conditions. A large portion of his forces had been switched to the Mishmar Hayarden area just prior to the renewal of hostilities, while the Palmach was being utilized solely in the central area. To carry out his operation, Carmel was supplied with a unit which had been shifted from the Latrun sector, and almost half of which was composed of a newly formed battalion. Reserve strength was lacking, which necessitated careful control of the entire operation in all of its stages. Recklessness and loss of control and co-ordination could have resulted in his force being completely cut to pieces in the mountainous area which was so ideally suited for defensive operations. Carmel overcame this problem by a well-planned, step-by-step advance, which combined the principles of speed, surprise, and mobility. In addition, he made full use of darkness both for movement and fighting. Carmel was conscious of his limitations and made no attempt to extend himself. This is well illustrated by the action taken following his encounter with heavy Arab opposition on the Birwa-Rama road. Rather than involving his force in a battle which would have absorbed men and arms, he left a covering force to hold the enemy, and then later, after his main objective of occupying Nazareth had been accomplished, began a renewed operation against the Arab positions along the Birwa-Rama road, but this time from the direction of Rama (see map - Annex L). The resultant withdrawal to the north of the irregular Arab forces, which were now sandwiched between an Israeli force advancing from the west and another from

the east, enabled Carmel to occupy the major Arab positions overlooking the road with a minimum of effort. In his attack plan against Nazareth, the diversionary attack against Ilut seemed superfluous and unnecessary, in that there was little diversionary effect to be obtained. The village was situated in an area of proximity to Nazareth, and it was quite obvious to Qawuqji where the main brunt of the attack would fall. In addition, it indicated a defect in his pre-attack planning in that a patrol operation conducted before the attack would definitely have revealed that the terrain surrounding Ilut was not favorable to an attacking force. Had Carmel sent a small group around to the south in a purported attempt to attack Nazareth from the direction in which Qawuqji was expecting the main effort, a definite diversionary action would have been created. Instead, Qawuqji was left free to concentrate his attention in the area to the north of Nazareth, which resulted in an ambush of Carmel's force, plus the necessity of Carmel overcoming a delaying action outside of Nazareth.

On the Arab side, credit must also be given in that the majority of the Arab irregulars had fought well. The failure of Qawuqji to completely stop Carmel's advance can only be attributed to Carmel's superior military aptitude, and the fact that Qawuqji did not exploit the defensive nature of the terrain to the extent possible. A diversionary attack by Qawuqji on the valley of Zebulon, in conjunction with a Lebanese operation from the north, while



Carmel was in the process of mounting his attack on Nazareth, would undoubtedly have caused Carmel to divert his force back to the Valley of Zebulon area and saved Nazareth from being overrun. The time element involved would have been too short to have enabled Carmel to redirect his force to meet the new threat and then again renew his operation against Nazareth. Again, in his attack on the Israeli village of Segera, Qawuqji had exhibited a characteristic which had manifested itself several times during the first phase of fighting - that of breaking off an attack before it had been fully mounted, thus turning what could well have ended in victory, into failure. Qawuqji had again failed to show the type of leadership that justified his position of directing the operations of the ALA.

The only other action in the Galilee area during this phase of the fighting centered around the village of Tira, an Arab stronghold south of Haifa. This fell to an Israeli force on the night of the 16th, and was followed by Israeli action against the Arab villages of Jaba<sup>o</sup> and \*Ein Ghazal, whose positions enabled the Arabs to carry out sniping operations on Israeli traffic between Haifa and Tel Aviv. This minor operation had completely secured the Haifa-Tel Aviv road to the Israelis.

#### Jerusalem

In and around Jerusalem there was little activity during this phase of the war. At 8 o'clock on the morning of July 16th,

Glubb Pasha opened an offensive in the New City from Musrara into the Jewish quarter of Mea Sherim, which had as its objective the general improvement of his position in Jerusalem, plus the occupation of a number of jumping-off points for future offensive actions. The attack started well and several blocks of buildings were occupied by the Legionnaires, with the Arab soldiers, many of whom were from the desert, doing extremely well in the unfamiliar house-to-house fighting. At 12 o'clock noon on the 16th, however, with full scale fighting beginning in the Latrun area, all men of the Arab Legion that could be spared other than for defensive action, were rushed to Latrun from Jerusalem, and the offensive came to a halt.

On the opposing side, the Israeli High Command had also made plans for an offensive operation in Jerusalem, and Colonel David Shaltiel, the commander of the Israeli forces in the area, publicly declared that he needed only four days to take the Old City. His preparations for the attacks were slow, however, and when he finally realized the speed at which the United Nations organization was capable of working, he hastily rushed into the action, which was given the name of "Operation Kadeem."

On July the 17th the first steps of the operation were put into motion, with a heavy mortar and artillery barrage being directed against the Arab defenders in the Old City. The Israeli assault, which immediately followed on the lifting of

the barrage, was repulsed, however, with the Israelis suffering heavy casualties. Before they were able to regroup for another attack, the second truce came into effect, and the offensive was brought to a standstill. Shaltiel was severely reproached for his delay in beginning the operation. He had not, however, anticipated that the period of fighting would be limited to ten days only, and thus he took care to insure the thoroughness of his preparations before he launched his assault on the Old City, which was known to be well-defended by the Arab Legion and Arab irregulars.

In reviewing the action in the Jerusalem area, an attempt must be made to arrive at the reason for Shaltiel directing his major effort into taking the well-defended Old City, when, as an alternative, he could have attacked some of the thinly-held Arab localities in the Sheikh Jarrah district, or involved his forces in an encircling movement of the Old City prior to making his assault. Either of the alternatives would have had a greater chance of succeeding, plus the fact that they would have created a diversionary action which would undoubtedly have diverted Arab Legion troops away from the Latrun area and back to the defense of the Old City, which was definitely one of King Abdullah's priority areas of defense. The direct Jewish attack on the Old City had been anticipated, and the defenders were regarded as being well able to hold out against this sort of Jewish offensive

action.

Thus, the only reason that can be seen for Shaltiel's action was that it was for prestige purposes, plus IZL and Stern Group insistence that this be the objective. A more strategically feasible plan would definitely have had a greater chance of success.

Thus, other than the limited Arab Legion offensive which never really got underway, and "Operation Kadeem" which started late, military action in the Jerusalem area had been mainly confined to shelling, intermixed with minor skirmishes and patrol action. On the 16th of July, New Jerusalem experienced its first air raid, but it had relatively little effect in contrast to the mortar and artillery barrages to which it was being almost continually subjected.

In an over-all summarization of "The Ten Days Offensive" it could definitely be said that the Israelis had been on the offensive, while the Arabs had in the large part, been on the defensive, with their offensive actions being limited to several minor attacks by the Egyptians on the southern front; Qawuqji's brief operation against Sejera; and Glubb Pasha's brief campaign in Jerusalem which was brought to a halt by the Israeli offensive against Latrun. In the northeast, the Syrian operations in the vicinity of Mishmar Hayarden must be termed defensive actions, undertaken in an attempt to counter the Israeli offensive directed

against the bridge-head.

The situation had been one where the Israelis, by taking the offensive, had gained the initiative and its corresponding privilege of choice. It was the Israelis who were able to pick the objectives, and it was the Arabs who were consequently forced to shift their forces to meet the Israeli thrusts, and who were thus in several instances unable to utilize their defensive set-up to advantage.<sup>70</sup>

The main action had taken place on the central front, where the Palmach, under Colonel Alon, had taken Lydda and Ramle, along with many of the adjacent villages, and had thus widened and strengthened the defensive belt that encircled Tel Aviv. In addition, he had been successful in his attempt to widen the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv corridor. His thrust against Latrun, and his attempt to penetrate the Latrun-Kharbata defensive line had failed, but it had also served to divert Arab Legion forces from Jerusalem and thus brought a halt to the Arab offensive which had just barely gotten underway in the city.

The fact that the Israelis now had a central, unified command, with a general staff to plan and direct the movements of their troops, was well demonstrated during this phase of the fighting. The Israelis had conducted a campaign which, at its outset, included simultaneous operations on four fronts. Control throughout the over-all operation had been excellent as exemplified

by the switching of forces from one front to another as the need arose. At a lower level, the conduct of the operations on the various fronts, with the exception of that in the Mishmar Hayarden area, had also exhibited close co-ordination and control.

The Israelis seemed to have abandoned the use of frontal attacks, and now carried out their attacks only after a careful consideration of the strategical and tactical principles involved as was exemplified by their utilization of the principles of diversion, surprise, and movement. The new National Army had been put to a test, and in this phase of fighting it had definitely come out on the top.

On the Arab side, the chief criticism lies in their failure to undertake offensive action, and the consequent surrender of the initiative to the Israeli forces. Their conduct during the fighting indicated that almost no military planning of any value had been undertaken during the preceding truce period. Co-ordination between the various Arab states had definitely been lacking in that there was no indication of any planned supporting actions.

This short phase of fighting had developed into one in which the Arabs had been put on the defensive, and in any battle in which the defensive element is faced by a foe supplied with a sufficient amount of manpower, weapons, and ammunition, plus extreme mobility, the tide of victory usually swings to the offen-

sive force. In this instance the Israelis had managed to occupy 677 square miles of territory<sup>71</sup> allotted to the Arabs under the Partition Plan. Offensive action, as contrasted to defensive action, had definitely won out.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gamal Abdul Nasser in his The Palestine War Memoirs of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, pp. 10 and 13, has identified the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th, and 9th Battalions as being in Palestine on this date.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Pearlman, Moshe, The Army of Israel, p. 157; the entire chronology of events concerning the fighting which took place on the southern front during the opening phase of "The Ten Days Offensive," is a matter of confusion and contradiction amongst the sources dealing with the period. Major points of contradiction deal with dates and objectives against which the various assaults were launched. A close comparison of the information contained in Ibid., pp. 157-161; Nasser, op. cit., pp. 25-31; and Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars, pp. 21-33, however, enables a person to get a clear picture of what took place during this initial period.
4. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 157, however, says that the Egyptians were "badly mauled."
5. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
6. See Nasser, op. cit., pp. 27-31.
7. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Arab-Israeli War-1948, p. 142.
8. Nasser, op. cit., p. 21.
9. Ibid., p. 17.
10. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
11. Glubb, John Bagot, A Soldier With The Arabs, p. 157; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 145.
12. Tell, Colonel Abdullah, Karithat Filastin. Memoirs of Abdullah Tell, p. 247.
13. During the 1st phase of the open fighting, as extending from May 15th, Glubb Pasha had allegedly offered to conduct an all-out attack on Ben Shemen, but had been opposed by the mayors of the surrounding Arab villages on the ground that they were on good terms with the people of Ben Shemen, and



also that any such attack would direct the attention of the Israeli army to the area. See O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 143.

14. Ibid., p. 144; Kimche, op. cit., p. 254; Glubb, op. cit., p. 159, however, gives the total as being 6,500 men.
15. A total of 4,000 men; Tell, op. cit., p. 255, however, says that only 1,000 Jews participated in the battle for Lydda and Ramle.
16. See above, pp. 184-186.
17. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 145; Kimche, op. cit., p. 255, says 3,000; two sources, Ibid., p. 255, and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 145, mention that during the 1st truce, the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, had begun to organize opposition to King Abdullah in Trans Jordan, and that part of the Arab Legion had consequently been recalled to Trans Jordan in order to maintain internal security; Glubb, op. cit., p. 159, states that the Arab Legion was able to muster only 1,200 men in the Latrun area to stand against the Palmach offensive.
18. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 151, states that Yahudiya was bypassed, while O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 146, and Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, p. 278, describe its capture.
19. Glubb, op. cit., p. 159; it is at this point that a dispute, unsettled to this day, arose, in that Tell, op. cit., pp. 247-253, states that Glubb Pasha, on July 8, 1948, in carrying out his part of a British conspiracy to hand over Lydda and Ramle to the Jews, dispatched the 1st Regiment, which had been stationed in the Lydda-Ramle area, north to Tubas, which was under the jurisdiction of the Iraqi forces. Tell alleged that in this way, Glubb Pasha removed from the Lydda-Ramle area the only force which was capable of stopping the Jewish advance. This is in distinct opposition to Glubb Pasha's narration (Glubb, op. cit., p. 159) that the 1st Regiment was stationed in the Nebi Samwil sector until the 10th of July; Tell, op. cit., p. 255, still further states that the 1st Regiment contained 1,000 soldiers and more than forty heavy and light armoured vehicles and supporting heavy artillery, plus a battery of 2.4 mortars; Kimche, op. cit., p. 255, also mentions that Glubb withdrew two battalions of the Arab Legion from the Lydda-Ramle area

before the Israeli attacks on the towns; and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 145, speaks of Glubb withdrawing his troops from the area and making Beit Nabala the center of his local defensive system; O'Ballance, however, may have been referring to the 5th Independent Infantry Company, which was ordered to withdraw on the night of July 11-12.

20. Ibid., p. 146, describes Deir Tarif as falling to the Israelis on July 10th, but Pearlman, op. cit., p. 151 speaks of the Israelis as being held at Deir Tarif, while Glubb, op. cit., p. 159, tells of the 1st Regiment occupying Deir Tarif on the afternoon of the 10th.
21. Al Haditha and Jimzu had been occupied by the Israelis on the 10th, but Glubb was not aware of this until the 11th, when he was so informed by a patrol which had found Jimzu occupied by the Israelis.
22. Glubb, op. cit., p. 161.
23. Kimche, op. cit., p. 254, says "a flood of 60,000 panicky Arab refugees was compelled to take the road to the near-by Arab lines."
24. Ibid., p. 254.
25. Figures on the number of Arabs who were forced from the Lydda-Ramle area, vary considerably between sources such as Bilby, Kenneth W., New Star in the Near East, p. 44, who listed the number of those expelled at 40,000; while Kirk, George, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 281, lists the number at 60,000 including Arab refugees from Haifa; Glubb, op. cit., p. 162, mentions 30,000; while Tell, op. cit., p. 254, states "tens of thousands."
26. See above, page 190.
27. But see above, footnote #19; hereagain the sharp dispute between Glubb Pasha and Abdullah Tell arises. According to Abdullah Tell, op. cit., pp. 250-251, the 1st Regiment was in the Tubas area where it had been ordered on July 8th.
28. Not by Glubb Pasha but apparently by someone at unit level - as Glubb states, (op. cit., p. 168) "It was obvious to us (but not of course, at unit level) that the main battle was for the possession of the Beit Sira crossroads."

29. Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-48, pp. 435-436.
30. Ibid., p. 441.
31. Ibid., p. 427.
32. Ibid., p. 442.
33. Ibid., p. 442.
34. See above, page 196.
35. See above, page 193.
36. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 161, describes the attack as taking place on the night of July 18-19, which would have been after the truce had gone into effect.
37. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 147, says that only one brigade was used.
38. Glubb, op. cit., p. 170.
39. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 148; and Glubb, op. cit., p. 170; Pearlman, op. cit., p. 161, however, simply states that the attack was led by an armoured column but that "a mishap to the leading tank prevented it from reaching its target before (the) truce stopped the action."
40. Glubb, op. cit., p. 159.
41. The area occupied by the Israeli forces from Hartuv south to Beit Jibrin was not strongly held by the Israelis and on October 17th, a new offensive was launched with the objective of completely eliminating all Arab opposition in this area.
42. According to some sources such as Tell, op. cit., p. 250, and Kimche, op. cit., p. 253, the word is "withdrew" his forces from the Lydda-Ramle area and allowed it to be occupied by the Israelis.
43. Glubb, op. cit., p. 165.
44. See above, pp. 187-192.

45. See above, footnotes #19 and 42.
46. Brigades of approximately 2,000 men each.
47. Sacher, op. cit., pp. 280-281.
48. Kimche, op. cit., p. 256.
49. Official broadcasting voice of the Provisional Government of Israel.
50. Tell, op. cit., p. 259.
51. They had previously carried out their assaults by direct frontal assaults.
52. In other words, attack from the rear, utilization of the element of surprise, the cutting off of communications, etc. Israeli employment of the "strategy of indirect approach" was fully utilized in the October and December fighting, which is fully covered in Chapter VI of this text.
53. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 150.
54. Israeli held.
55. Syrian held.
56. Sacher, op. cit., p. 282, say 100 feet.
57. To act as pontoons.
58. An additional point of interest is that after the beginning of the second truce on July 18, 1948, the Syrians engaged in no further offensive actions other than light skirmishes against the Israelis.
59. And then at the expense of denuding the western Galilee area.
60. Negating a complete disregard of military strategy.
61. It had apparently been switched to the north as a result of the Palmach assuming responsibility for the central sector.
62. This was undoubtedly due to his lack of reserves. It should be remembered that western Galilee had been almost completely denuded of troops as a result of their transfer to the

eastern front for participation in "Operation Barosh" against the Syrians; see above, page 208; from this it must be assumed that priority was being given to the operation against the Syrians in that Carmel was left to accomplish what he could with the forces available. On the 14th of July (the period during which a stalemate was in effect on the Syrian front) troops were again switched from the eastern front back to the western sector in order to participate in the operation against Nazareth.

63. Obviously for the purpose of concealing his true objective.
64. The majority of these villages were defended by their inhabitants who were usually poorly armed and thus able to offer little resistance. The main elements of the ALA were concentrated away from the coastal area, back in the more easily defendable hill area.
65. Both Sacher, op. cit., p. 287, and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 157, describe a preliminary diversionary action which was to be made on Iltit which they say was located east of Nazareth - no such town exists.
66. Referred to by Ibid., p. 157, as Saffurna.
67. Following the truce, however, he was unable to effectively occupy the entire area, and the section extending westward from Rama to Majd al-Kurum was reoccupied by forces of the ALA.
68. Qawuqji's position enabled him to cut off the village's main supply route to the south.
69. The major portion of Qawuqji's force around Segera had been switched to the Nazareth area to take part in the defensive action against Carmel.
70. Example - Nazareth and the Galilee area.
71. Bilby, op. cit., p. 44.

THE SECOND TRUCE

At 3 P.M., G.M.T., on July the 18th, 1948, the second truce or "shooting truce" as it came to be known, went into effect. The reluctance with which the truce had been accepted by both sides brought an atmosphere of over-all tension to the situation, with both sides unwilling to admit to the slightest concession, or to submit to tolerance of any action by the opposing side which could be interpreted as trying to alter the existing situation - both sides were ready to resume armed action at a moment's notice. The net result was an atmosphere permeated with an uneasiness which sifted from the minds of the leaders down to the soldiers occupying the front-line battle positions, and exemplified itself in numerous incidents which involved small arms firing, and occasional shelling, especially in the Jerusalem area. There were numerous complaints from both sides, charging the other with infringement of the truce provisions, but to the world at large it appeared that the Arab states were committing a major portion of the armed aggressions. One United Nations observer, in answer to a comment that the Arabs were mostly to blame for the truce violations, stated, "The Jews are better at paper work. They write five protests to every one that you put in. Anyone who reads only the protests would think the Arabs were always in the wrong."<sup>1</sup> Between July 18 and September 4, 1948, there were some 300 complaints and incidents reported to the mediator.<sup>2</sup>

The tension was further heightened by an Israeli proclamation on the 26th of July, which declared the New City of Jerusalem to be Israeli-occupied territory,<sup>3</sup> and appointed a military governor, Bernard Joseph, for the area. The Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL), which still existed as an independent military organization in the area, announced on August 8 that it would obey the orders of the new military governor.<sup>4</sup>

Three days later, the 29th of July, Moshe Sharett,<sup>5</sup> the Israeli Foreign Minister, raised tension to a new height by his statement that the Provisional Government of Israel no longer regarded the United Nations Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947, as binding in view of Arab aggression; that it might demand the inclusion of Jerusalem in the Jewish state; and that in the final peace settlement that it would ask for a redrafting of boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

Later he told Count Bernadotte that Arab refugees would not at present be re-admitted into Israeli-controlled territory because of the over-riding considerations of public security, the outcome of the war, and the stability of the future peace settlement. On the occasion of reported violations of the truce by the Egyptians, he announced that his government viewed with alarm an indefinite prolongation of the truce, in that it could not maintain a large army indefinitely, nor as a sovereign nation submit to the authority of United Nations mediating and supervising

staff, and that cooperation would be continued with the mediator only if progress was made towards peace and the Arab states agreed to negotiate.<sup>7</sup>

Then on August 9, 1948, the Provisional Government of Israel took a further step by announcing a program for the mass immigration of 600,000 Jews from Europe, of whom 30,000 had already arrived since the 14th of May. It hoped that eventually another 800,000 Jews would come from the Moslem countries.<sup>8</sup>

Tension, already high in the city of Jerusalem, was still further heightened on August 12, when Arabs, who were identified as irregulars,<sup>9</sup> blew up the water pumping station at Latrun in an attempt to completely eliminate the possibility of any agreement being reached between King Abdullah, Count Bernadotte, and the Jews, whereby the Jews would obtain a share of the water in the event that the Ras al-'Ein-Jerusalem water pipeline was again put into operation.<sup>10</sup>

The United Nations resolution of 15 July, had demanded that "the mediator continue his efforts to bring about the demilitarization of the city of Jerusalem...."<sup>11</sup> The question of demilitarization went deeper however, with both sides reluctant to agree to a full demilitarization scheme. In a cable, dated 18 August from the mediator to the Security Council, he stated that firing had practically never ceased in Jerusalem, and that the situation was gradually getting out of hand.<sup>12</sup> It was now becoming obvious



that peace and security could not be secured in Jerusalem merely by a departure of Israeli and Trans Jordanian military forces. The resulting vacuum would have immediately been filled by Arab and Jewish civilians seeking to assert their rights. Without adequate supervision it was apparent that the net result would have been renewed all-out fighting in Jerusalem. The mediator, fully conscious of this, reported to the Security Council on August 18 that, "Even if both parties were to agree on the issue, demilitarization could not be put into effect without a strong and adequately armed United Nations force to be provided immediately. Under these conditions, I wish to inform you that I have serious doubts whether demilitarization can be attained in the near future."<sup>13</sup>

Security Council action on the mediator's recommendations was in the form of advice and criticism, requesting him to "double his efforts to bring about the demilitarization of Jerusalem in spite of all the difficulties."<sup>14</sup>

The shooting and harrassing in Jerusalem continued until the 2nd of September when the Provisional Government of Israel and Trans Jordan agreed to a cease-fire in the city.

In the interim, Count Bernadotte, hampered by a numerically deficient staff of observers, and by an obvious unwillingness on the part of the Security Council to provide him with military backing, continued in his efforts to arrive at some

solution which would provide the basis for a permanent peace, or failing that, an armistice between the two opposing forces. On September 16, 1948, twenty-four hours before his assassination, he prepared a progress report<sup>15</sup> for submission to the General Assembly, the significant provisions of which were as follows:

(1) That the area known as the Negev,<sup>16</sup> south of a line extending from the sea near Majdal, east-southeast to Faluja,<sup>17</sup> and then from Faluja north-northeast to Ramle and Lydda,<sup>18</sup> and then following the line established in the General Assembly's partition resolution of 29 November 1947, would be known as Arab territory, and in view of the historical connection and common interests of Trans Jordan and Palestine, be merged with the territory of Trans Jordan. In return, the area of Galilee<sup>19</sup> would be defined as Jewish territory; (2) the port of Haifa was to be declared a free port; and (3) the airport at Lydda was to be declared a free airport; (4) the city of Jerusalem was to be considered separately and placed under the control of the United Nations; and (5) Arab refugees were to be allowed to return to their homes in Jewish-controlled territory, and their repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation, and payment of adequate compensation for the property of those choosing not to return, should be supervised and assisted by a specially organized United Nations Conciliation Commission.<sup>20</sup>

It was the intention of Bernadotte to provide a plan which

would give each side a solid and homogenous block of territory instead of the cross-overs, pockets, and narrow corridors which had been proposed in the November 29, 1947 partition resolution. The resulting situation was what had originally been a series of "tentative" suggestions presented by the mediator to the Arab and Jewish authorities on 27 June 1948,<sup>21</sup> had now become a definite program submitted to the General Assembly for consideration, and possible enactment.

To the Arab governments the proposals were distasteful. For the efforts which they had poured into the battle, including the loss of lives and the expenditure of large sums of money; for whatever hopes and plans they may have had for Palestine, they were to get nothing, with all the gains going to Trans Jordan, which was considered by many of the Arab states as being the least deserving of any. The Arab delegations to the Arab League rejected the plan, stating that the only solution was a single sovereign State of Palestine without any partition.

To Israel, the proposals contained in the progress report were completely unacceptable, and on October 3rd the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, formally rejected them. The reasons for Israel's rejection of the proposals were obvious. It opposed the giving up and consequent abandonment of the twenty-five Jewish settlements in the Negev area which was to be designated as Arab territory, and which area comprised almost two-

thirds of the territory which had been designated as Jewish in the 1947 partition resolution.<sup>22</sup> The idea of accepting back into its territory thousands of Arab refugees, who were considered to be antagonistic to the Israeli regime and a consequent unstable element, was to be avoided, as was the economic strain which she would be required to assume in their rehabilitation. In addition, she was opposed to the giving up of Ramle and Lydda, which had been occupied during the preceding "Ten Days" offensive, and Galilee, she felt was hers for the taking.

In Paris, where the Assembly was meeting, the Israeli delegation condemned the Bernadotte proposals with the following statement:

"The territorial changes proposed in the mediator's report result in an entirely inequitable apportionment of land between Israel and the Arab states. They would cut off about two-thirds of Israel's territory, deprive her of the only land reserves available for development, cripple existing and potential prospects for the scientific utilization of natural resources, and stunt Israel's progress and growth for generations to come. The beneficiary of these changes, which according to the plan is to be an enlarged State of Trans Jordan, emerges from the proposed arrangement with an area more than nineteen times that of the State of Israel."<sup>23</sup>

The Jewish reaction to the mediator's proposals expressed itself violently, when on September 17, while driving from Government House to the YMCA building in Jerusalem, Count Bernadotte was murdered by members of the Stern Group, who from the beginning of the first truce had adopted a threatening attitude towards the

mediator and his United Nations observers, and openly demonstrated against him when he visited Jerusalem from 9 to 11 August 1948.<sup>24</sup>

For over twenty-four hours no action was taken by the Israeli authorities, and members of the Stern Group wandered freely about the Jewish occupied section of Jerusalem. The excuse offered for the delay was that the Israeli military authorities had been reluctant to move troops from their defensive positions in Jerusalem because they had expected Arab attacks.<sup>25</sup>

World opinion, however, forced the Israeli authorities into action, and over 400<sup>26</sup> members of the Stern Group, including their leader Nathan Friedmann-Yellin, were arrested. The murderers, however, were never brought to justice, and no determined effort was made to find them. Friedmann-Yellin was sentenced on February 10, 1949 to eight years imprisonment for membership in a terrorist organization, but was immediately released under a simultaneous proclamation of a general amnesty, and he subsequently took his seat in the Israeli Parliament to which he had been elected.<sup>27</sup>

The lightness with which the murder was taken is illustrated by the incident which took place on October 9th when guards at the Jffa prison were overpowered and the arrested members of the Stern Group released. Some escaped at once, but the remainder stayed in the prison and held a party to which both the press and the public were invited.<sup>28</sup> The Swedish government complained of the gross negligence of the Provisional Government of Israel in

investigating Count Bernadotte's murder, and nearly two years passed before the breach was closed by an Israeli admission of "organization deficiencies and inexperience."<sup>29</sup>

Count Bernadotte was succeeded by his assistant, Doctor Ralph Bunche, an American negro, who placed Bernadotte's proposals of September 16th, before the General Assembly for consideration. George Marshall, the American Secretary of State, promptly endorsed the report and urged the parties and the General Assembly to accept it in its entirety, while Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, informed the House of Commons that the recommendations had the whole-hearted support of the Government, and stated that "it would be best for all concerned if they were adopted in their entirety."<sup>30</sup>

The First Committee, to which the progress report as a whole had been submitted for consideration, considered the mediator's report at the 161st to 166th meetings, held from 15 to 20 October 1948, and at the 200th to 228th meetings held from 15 November to 4 December 1948.<sup>31</sup> Up to the time of its first consideration on October 15th, however, the two belligerents were left to their imagination as to what the First Committee's final recommendations would be. World sympathy, which was reflected in the United Nations, had been aroused by the assassination of the mediator, and by the negligent manner in which the investigation had been handled by the Israeli authorities. As a result,

during the first few weeks following his death, the possibilities of favorable consideration and ultimate passage of the report in the form of a resolution, seemed highly probable. The Israeli leaders had something new to think about.

In the interim the external facade of unity amongst the Arab states was showing its first outward signs of cracking, when on August 6, 1948, King Abdullah in a proclamation to the Arab Legion, said, "Your army has preserved the holiness of Jerusalem. We and the others went into this fight jointly. We are here. Where are the others? We have fought and progressed, but we have not seen this progress made by others."<sup>32</sup>

Then on September 22nd,<sup>33</sup> the Arab League still further showed its opinion of the recommendations contained in Count Bernadotte's progress report, and particularly in regard to the suggested merger of "Arab territory" in Palestine with that of Trans Jordan, by its formation of an "Arab Government of All Palestine." The members of the "Cabinet" for the new government proved to be nearly all supporters of the ex-Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, an arch enemy of Abdullah.<sup>34</sup> It was proclaimed that a "Constituent Assembly" would meet at Gaza on September the 29th to pass a vote of confidence in the new government, which was recognized by all the Arab League States except Trans Jordan. Trans Jordan's opposition to the new government manifested itself in Abdullah's refusal to allow any official of the "Arab Government

of all Palestine" to operate in any territory held by the Arab Legion.

In the interim, King Abdullah's supporters had been organizing a "National Palestine Congress" and on October 1st, 5,000 notables, claiming to represent the Palestine Arabs and the people of Trans Jordan, met at Amman to denounce the Gaza Government and call on Abdullah to take Palestine under his protection.<sup>35</sup> The rift amongst the Arab states was growing wider and becoming more obvious, and the Israeli leaders had something else to consider and think about.

The certainty that there would eventually be a renewal of hostilities was a fact obvious to all but the most short-sighted of individuals, and the primary question facing the two combatants was "when?" Following the death of Bernadotte, tension reached new heights, and incidents, especially in the Jerusalem area, began to multiply. In addition, it is quite plausible to assume that the obvious had made itself known to the Jewish leaders. By this I refer to a situation which took its existence from the relative impotence which had been displayed by the United Nations organization in regard to the strict enforcement of its resolutions - a situation from which it could be deduced that if you don't hold a piece of territory too firmly, you stand in danger of losing it by political decree; whereas, if you are in solid military control, political recognition generally follows the rule



of conquest.

It was thus that the Jewish government prepared to make its next military move. The rift amongst the Arab states was now an open fact for all to see - a situation ideally opposed to Arab military co-ordination. In addition, the Jews were faced with the possible favorable United Nations consideration of the Bernadette proposals. In the minds of the Jewish leaders, the time for action had come, and that action was to be directed towards the occupation of the Negev, and in that manner face the world with a "fait accompli."

Militarily, the Jews were ready. The truce resolution of May 29, 1948, had stipulated that no war material - munitions, planes, tanks, or guns - was to be introduced into the territories of the belligerents,<sup>36</sup> and according to the provisions of the truce resolution of July 15, 1948,<sup>37</sup> the same arrangements were to apply during the second truce. United Nations supervision, which was to insure that this provision was adhered to by the belligerents, called for a large body of observers and equipment, and the enlarged staff provided for the mediator during the second truce consisted of ten Swedish officers, and 300 American, French, and Belgian officers, together with technical personnel to man its eighteen aircraft, four naval vessels, and large fleet of motor vehicles, plus the many radio sets and other equipment. The observers were stationed in Haifa, Aqir, Natanya, Ramat David, Tel Aviv,

Tiberias, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Gaza, and Ramallah, as well as at Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Akaba, Baghdad, Basra, Alexandria, Cairo, al-Arish, and Port Said.<sup>38</sup>

During the middle of August, it had become clear to the mediator that his staff, although larger than during the first truce, was still too small and he therefore requested the services of an additional 300 enlisted men to act as observers and to assist the officer observers in their work. At the time his progress report was made public<sup>39</sup> eighty-four United States enlisted men had arrived, and the mediator had also secured four French and seventy-eight United States enlisted men to serve the observers as auxiliary technical personnel.<sup>40</sup>

Numbers, however, proved to be a poor consideration, in that no United Nations observers ever got within the gates of certain military bases in the new state of Israel. Dr. Walter Eytan, The Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, wrote to Count Bernadotte and explained the ban by saying that Israel had received information that certain airfields in Egypt and other Arab states were not being covered by observers, and that Israel therefore, was not obligated to have all its airports blanketed.<sup>41</sup>

While this contention was being argued back and forth, aircraft, guns, ammunition and other war material continued to pour into Israel daily, and the training and equipping of the National Army went on at a fast rate. Israeli agents, backed by

millions in American dollars raised by the United Jewish Appeal, continued to be active throughout the world bidding for arms.<sup>42</sup> In the United Nations, Russia and her satellites continued to give active political support to Israel, and the arsenals of Czechoslovakia were open to its buying agents. From air bases in Czechoslovakia behind the Iron Curtain, the secret airlift across the Mediterranean Sea to Israel,<sup>43</sup> continued to operate and Israeli military supplies increased enormously, while its small but already efficient airforce expanded rapidly.

On November 13, 1948, the London Daily Telegraph reported from Hof, Bavaria, as follows:

"Czechoslovakia has supplied the Israeli Air Force with at least 100 Messerschmitt fighter planes; a Jewish informant declared here today. He asked that his identity be withheld for fear of reprisals. '...Airfields at Zatec, Chomutor, Rekycany, and Pisek were used to dispatch the planes,' he said. 'Pilots flying supplies to Palestine included former United States Air Force officers and Hungarians.'<sup>44</sup> As many as four transports a day had left Zatec."

The British Foreign Office estimated that the Israeli Air Force, after deducting losses in combat, increased from 40 to 114 machines between the first truce and the end of 1948.<sup>45</sup>

With regard to the increase in man-power of the National Army during the second truce period, there is little reliable information available. One source<sup>46</sup> has set the strength of the Israeli army at 120,000, but makes no attempt to break this total down into the actual make-up of the army. The only fact of

which one can be definitely certain is that there was an increase. In accordance with the truce resolution of May 29, 1948,<sup>47</sup> the provisions of which were to be interpreted in conjunction with the provisions of the truce resolution of July 15, 1948, no "fighting personnel" were to be introduced into any of the belligerent countries during the cease-fire, and any men of military age introduced into countries or territories of the belligerents, were not to be mobilized or submitted to any military training during the cease-fire.

Difficulty ensued over the interpretation of the paragraphs referring to "fighting personnel" and "men of military age" and in his inquiry as to whether the Security Council had intended the resolution to permit Jewish immigration of men of military age, the mediator was informed that the basic intent of the resolution was to be interpreted as meaning that "no military advantage should accrue to either side as a result of the truce."<sup>48</sup> The mediator's subsequent interpretation was that the resolution did not prohibit immigration, nor that it placed any complete or positive ban on the inclusion of men of military age in such immigration. He thus decided that free immigration of women, children, and men under and above the age group of 18 to 45 should be permitted, and that a "limited" number of men of military age were to be permitted to enter with the number to be at the discretion of the mediator. These men were to be kept in non-military

camps under the surveillance of United Nations observers during the period of the truce.

The doors of immigration thus remained open to the new state, and it is interesting to speculate as to how many of these men of "military age" escaped from the "non-military camps" and became members of the National Army. As has been mentioned previously,<sup>49</sup> on August 9th, the Israeli government announced that a program of mass immigration of 600,000 Jews from Europe was in operation, and that 30,000 had already arrived since May 15th. In addition to this source of man-power there were also the illegal channels of immigration which had worked so well during the mandate, and which undoubtedly continued to operate throughout the second truce, bringing in men well able to serve as soldiers in the Israeli Army. Again, however, I must caution the reader to remember that this is again a point of mere speculation as no definite figures on illegal entry during the second truce period are available. Then, again, there was the method in which the stipulation prohibiting men of "military age" from receiving military training, was obeyed. One source<sup>50</sup> has stated, "ostensibly the Jews abided by this provision; secretly they inducted scores of immigrants as fast as they arrived. The government (Jewish) reasoned that more war had to be fought and that nothing should halt the victory march of the fast developing army."

The Jews were ready, and the general area at which they

intended to strike was pin-pointed for all to see. The possibility of losing the Negev through United Nations approval of the Bernadotte proposals of September 16th, had already presented itself to the Jewish leaders. The thought of losing the territory which it had been allotted in accordance with the partition resolution of November 29, 1947, and the consequent advantages that went with it such as an outlet on the Red Sea, an area for future development and expansion, and the possibility of finding mineral resources in the remoter desert, was too much to bear. The Israelis decided to gamble the future suzerainty over the Negev on the old military rule of calculated risk, and from all fronts, such as northern Galilee, the Jordan Valley, and the Arab triangle, troops, artillery, and armoured vehicles moved southwards in a carefully planned military build-up.<sup>51</sup>

During the "Ten Days Offensive" there had been little military action on the Egyptian-Israeli front, with the Egyptians expending the major portion of their effort in consolidating their defensive positions. The area occupied by the Egyptians (see map - Annex M) consisted of a number of strips which were situated primarily astride the north-south, east-west metalled roads in the Negev area. They encompassed the coastal strip which extended northward from Rafah to Isdud. This strip, which was wedged between the sea on one side and Jewish mobile forces operating in the Negev on the other, included the metalled coastal road and a rail-

road which the Egyptians had put into order and were using to bring up supplies and equipment to their front line troops. A second strip extended itself from al-Auja in the south, northward through Bir Asluf, Beersheba, Hebron, and then on to the Bethlehem area which was occupied by Arab Legion forces. Connecting these two strips laterally was the east-west front which followed a line extending from Majdal on the west to Beit Jibrin in the east, and then northeast from Beit Jibrin into the mountains of Judea. A road connecting Beit Jibrin with Hebron and hence intersecting the eastern north-south defensive strip also fell within Egyptian occupied territory but was not heavily fortified.

The defense strips were all narrow, and had little or no depth being only around five miles wide at the widest point, and narrowing down to two miles at other points. The Egyptians, having already over-extended their lines of communications, were unable to make any concerted efforts at broadening their holdings, and were thus tactically vulnerable with their defensive position being based on one of static defense with little or no reserve strength. A possible Israeli penetration at any one of several strategic points poised a constant threat to their long, extended lines of communication, especially in view of their lack of strong, mobile reserves to rush to the support of threatened points, and their inability to mount strong attacks or counter-attacks for the purpose of relieving the pressure created by an

attacking Israeli force. It was this weakness which was later exploited by the Israelis to negate the defensive value of the well dug-in Egyptian defensive positions,<sup>52</sup> which were strongly fortified with wire, trenches, and well-disposed zones of fire.

An additional threat poised to the Egyptian defense-perimeter, other than the Israeli forces which it faced to the north, was the presence of some twenty-five Jewish settlements to the south of the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, plus the existence of Israeli mobile forces which operated in accordance with British long-range, desert-patrol operations, and which maintained communications between the settlements.

Already as early as the 8th of September the Israelis had given some indication of their future plan of action by their occupation of a series of hills covering the road from Faluja south to Beersheba, and on the 29th of September they occupied al-Maqhaz<sup>53</sup> (see map - Annex M) thus further tightening their hold on communications in the area sandwiched between the Egyptian defense-positions. These early Israeli operations had an additional effect other than merely restricting Egyptian inter-communications to the main defensive strips, in that they served to direct Egyptian attention to the possibility of a main Israeli penetration attempt of the east-west defense line in the area east of Faluja, with the ultimate objective of joining up with the Israeli defensive positions to the south. They thus had a diversionary value in direct-



ing attention away from the area in which the main penetration attempt was eventually to be made.

On October 6th, the Egyptians began a series of counter-attacks on the Israeli occupied positions near Tal al-Quneitira and al-Maqhaz, and several points further south, but they were unable to dislodge the Israelis from their positions. These Egyptian counter-attacks were later listed as examples of Egyptian violations of the truce regulations, and described as "Egyptian attacks on Israeli heights near Tal al-Quneitira and Khirbet Makhaz."<sup>54</sup>

During the periods of active fighting the Israelis had supplied the twenty-five Jewish settlements south of the Majdal-Beit Jibrin Egyptian defense line by air-drops, and also by convoys filtered through the Egyptian defense positions at night.

The most practicable road by which the Jewish settlements could be supplied ran from Israeli-held Karatiya, south to Huleiqat, (see map - Annex M) which was an Egyptian stronghold, and then south-southeast to the main pocket of Jewish settlements. Thus it was only with Egyptian consent that large Israeli supply columns could move southward for the purpose of provisioning the settlements. On the other hand, the Egyptians required the use of the east-west, Majdal-Beit Jibrin road to supply their troops to the north in the area of Beit Jibrin and Bethlehem. Israeli positions to the north of this road, however, were able to bring

the road under heavy fire whenever it was used by Egyptian supply columns.

On the 18th of August, the United Nations Truce Commission decreed that the east-west, Majdal-Beit Jibrin road should be open for six hours a day, and that the Hatta-Karatiya-Huleiqat road should be open to Israeli convoys for the other six hours in the day. The order was accepted by Israel, and conditionally accepted by the Egyptians on the condition that the Israelis cease to supply or reinforce the settlements by air during the truce.<sup>55</sup> Israel, however, refused to discontinue this means of supply or to subject it to United Nations supervision until the Egyptians allowed the road convoys to pass. The Egyptians in the interim continued to stand by their condition of agreement to the arrangement, and the system completely failed with a resumption of Israeli firing on Egyptian east-west traffic, and Egyptian refusal to allow Israeli southbound convoys to pass Huleiqat.

The Egyptian refusal to allow Israeli supply convoys to pass in accordance with the Truce Commission ruling, gave the Israelis the break they wanted, and they were able to launch a heavy propaganda barrage in order to favorably acclimate world opinion for the eventual armed outbreak. The picture presented to the world was one of twenty-five isolated settlements behind the Majdal-Faluja line slowly being throttled and starved because of Egyptian intransigence. Lieutenant Colonel N. Lorch of the

Israeli General Staff stated that, "The problem of supplies to the settlements forced Israel to take the initiative, particularly since there were indications that the present military situation was contemplated as a basis for a political solution, which would leave Israel without the Negev."<sup>56</sup> It was quite clear to the well-informed that it was the Negev and not the settlements contained therein which was forcing the Israelis to action. In his book New Star in the Near East, Kenneth W. Bilby gives a personal eyewitness account<sup>57</sup> on the situation of several of the isolated settlements - "I drove by jeep to two of the settlements and found them well stocked with food, water, and munitions. They had constructed expert underground fortifications, and while the buildings were a bit battered by shellfire, no one dreamed of capitulation. Children had been evacuated, crops were growing in the surrounding fields, and the settlers, with superb morale, were prepared to sit it out indefinitely." It was United Nations action and the strong possibility that the Negev would be awarded to the Arabs that had forced the Israeli hand.

Moshe Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, and Prime Minister Ben Gurion were against the resumption of hostilities at this point<sup>58</sup> but the Israeli army commanders strongly maintained their position that the time to resume military operations was at hand. Ben Gurion finally assented, and the final plans for bringing "Operation Ten Plagues" into motion were carried out, with the

additional troops needed by the Israelis in the area south of the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, being air-lifted into the Negev, and later by the passage of a large mobile force through the east-west Egyptian defense position into the Negev.

An accurate assessment of the Egyptian forces present in the Negev at this period is difficult if not impossible to make. The difficulties lie not in the lack of sources giving estimates of the numbers of troops and their breakdown, but in the ability to obtain what could be correctly termed an "accurate" breakdown. To this day, no official figures have been released by the Egyptian government on the number of forces which actually participated in the action of "Operation Ten Plagues." One source<sup>59</sup> has given a fairly detailed breakdown of the numbers of battalions, companies, squadrons, etc., which participated in the operation, but has neglected to mention the number of troops making up each battalion and company, which differed according to the country from which they had originated.<sup>60</sup> Several sources<sup>61</sup> have further agreed that it was equipped with three regiments of field artillery, two machine gun battalions, and one armoured unit including light tanks, plus limited air support. The Egyptians were credited with having nine reserve battalions,<sup>62</sup> a number unrealistically high in view of the inability of the Egyptians to provide reserve support when it was needed throughout the battle. This latter deficiency, however, could also have been due to lack of adequate

mobile transport to carry the reserve to various points as needed, or the fact that early Israeli military actions badly cut-up the lines of Egyptian communications.

With regard to the number of regular infantry battalions which were ready and available for employment by the Egyptians in the battle there is little information available. The fact that the Egyptian forces in the Negev had been reinforced and had received much additional war material during the truce cannot be disputed. It was not a case of one side adhering to the provisions of the July 15 truce resolution and the other disobeying - it was a case in which both sides knew that there would be an eventual renewal of hostilities and prepared accordingly.

With regard to the opposing Israeli forces which took part in the operation, the information is even more limited with an estimation having been made that approximately 15,000 troops had been mustered for the attack, the backbone of which was the Palmach. In addition there was the existence of the greatly improved Israeli airforce<sup>63</sup> and the small but efficient navy.<sup>64</sup>

In summation, the only real first-hand conclusion which can be made regarding the strength of the two opposing forces is that they were approximately equal. During the conduct of "Operation Ten Plagues," it was the physical deployment of the forces, the methods in which they were used, and an Israeli concentration on an almost completely mobile attacking force against a

static Egyptian defense position, and not an overwhelming superiority of arms or men on one side and not the other which decided the outcome.

On October 15, Walter Eytan of the Israeli Foreign Ministry wrote the Truce Commission that Israel intended to send a supply convoy through to the Negev settlements. Either just before or while the letter was being delivered, a sixteen truck convoy - described by one Zionist source as a "fighting convoy"<sup>65</sup> tried to move south from Jewish positions at Hatta and Karatiya across the Egyptian defense line. The Egyptians fired on the convoy with mortar and machine-gun fire and forced the convoy - referred to by another source as a "decoy" convoy - to withdraw after two trucks had been completely destroyed. The way to a renewal of hostilities had been opened, and to the outsider the burden of the blame had fallen on the Egyptians.

On the second day of action, the Truce Commission issued a stern cease-fire order, but it was answered by Dr. Eytan in a letter to General Riley, Chief of Staff of the Truce Commission, as follows:

"In view of the continuous Egyptian attacks by land and from the air against Jewish settlements, positions and communications in the Negev, and of the obstinate refusal of Egyptian authorities to honor the Central Truce Supervision Board's decision in Case No. 12 (the order allowing Jewish convoys to move into the Negev) culminating in an all out attack on the Israeli convoy on the Karatiya road October 14, the Provisional Government of Israel cannot see its way to order the suspension of operations in

the area concerned until it obtains full guaranties from the Chief of Staff that passage of traffic to and from the Negev will be allowed by the Egyptians unmolested."<sup>66</sup>

The Israelis had hit at the weakest point of United Nations supervision in the Holy Land - its ability to give a guarantee of anything. General Riley's only choice, as the Israelis well knew, was to throw the question of a cease-fire back to the Security Council, where it would require several days before the matter could be brought up, debated, voted on and recorded. Time was gained, and the Israelis were determined to gauge the pace of their offensive with the estimated time required for the political action.<sup>67</sup> Correspondents were initially barred from the front, and a general news blackout over the area was imposed, with the reason undoubtedly being that eye-witness accounts of a large Israeli advance into the south might spur the Security Council to quicker action.

The question as to who had broken the truce has been described by one source as being "rather academic...." that the Egyptians by blundering had managed to shoulder most of the blame."<sup>68</sup> In answer to Israel's charge that the Egyptians had fired on the Israeli convoy and thus forced the Israeli forces into military action, the Egyptian army commander counter-charged that an Israeli armoured-car attack had been launched in the Karatiya-Huleiqat vicinity during the night of October 14th, and that it had developed into an all-out Israeli offensive on the

morning of the 15th.<sup>69</sup> Dr. Ralph Bunche, the acting mediator, reported that the Israeli army had made a deliberate attack on the Egyptian army, which could not be explained by the excuse that the Egyptians had fired on a convoy.<sup>70</sup>

If it was imperative at any time, it was now that the other Arab states should have struck at Israel's denuded northern and central fronts, in order to ease the pressure on the hard-pressed Egyptian forces. Baghdad radio filled the air with violent vocal attacks on the Jews who they accused of breaking the truce, and promised that the Iraqi army would launch an attack from the Arab triangle. In action, however, the Iraqis maintained their positions, and the Arab Legion, the Lebanese and Syrian armies remained quiet - "Operation Ten Plagues" was now in full gear and the Egyptians were left to fight it alone.



FOOTNOTES

1. Glubb, John Bagot, A Soldier With The Arabs, p. 177.
2. Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-48, p. 310.
3. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Arab-Israeli War-1948, p. 167; Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, p. 290.
4. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 167.
5. Formerly Moshe Shertok.
6. Sacher, op. cit., p. 290.
7. Ibid., p. 290.
8. Ibid., p. 290.
9. Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 443.
10. Ras al-'Ein, the source of the water supply for Jerusalem, had been occupied by the Israelis on July 12th. Several water pumping stations between Ras al-'Ein and Jerusalem, however, were in Arab hands. Thus, before the water pipeline between Ras al-'Ein and Jerusalem could again be used, it was necessary that the Arabs and the Jews come to some agreement in this respect. The destruction of the water pumping station at Latrun, however, removed any such possibility. Shortly after the destruction of the pumping station, the Jews put into operation a new pipeline from Ras al-'Ein to Jerusalem, bypassing the areas under Arab control. The Arabs in Jerusalem, on the other hand, were obliged to obtain their water needs from old wells and cisterns which were abundant in the Old City.
11. Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 436.
12. Ibid., p. 444.
13. Sacher, op. cit., p. 292; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 167.
14. Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 445.
15. Ibid., pp. 304-307.

16. Jewish territory under the provisions of the United Nations Partition Plan of November 29, 1947.
17. Both of which would be in Arab territory.
18. Both of which would be in Arab territory.
19. Arab territory under the provisions of the General Assembly's Partition Plan of November 29, 1947.
20. See Department of Public Information, op. cit., p. 306, for information regarding the intended organization and duties of this commission.
21. See above, Chapter III, p. 168.
22. Although Moshe Sharett, on July 28th, had stated that the Provisional Government of Israel no longer regarded the United Nations Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947, as binding. See above, p. 238.
23. Sacher, op. cit., p. 131.
24. United National, Security Council. Official Records, 3rd year, no. 116 (October 14, 1948), p. 15.
25. Kirk, George, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 285.
26. Sacher, op. cit., p. 132, says 200.
27. Kirk, op. cit., pp. 286-287.
28. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 170.
29. See New York Times, 10 March, 20 June, and 6 July 1950.
30. Sacher, op. cit., p. 131.
31. Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations, 1948-49, p. 167.
32. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 170.
33. Kirk, op. cit., p. 286, says that the proclamation was on September 20th.
34. Glubb, op. cit., p. 190.

35. Kirk, op. cit., p. 286.
36. Department of Public Information 1947-48, op. cit., p. 427.
37. Ibid., p. 436.
38. Ibid., p. 311.
39. September 16, 1948.
40. Department of Public Information 1947-48, op. cit., p. 311.
41. Bilby, Kenneth W., New Star in the Near East, pp. 41-42.
42. See above, Chapter III, p. 157.
43. See above, Chapter III, p. 157.
44. Glubb, op. cit., p. 191.
45. Kirk, op. cit., p. 286, quoting from The Times, Diplomatic Correspondent, January 6, 1949.
46. Glubb, op. cit., p. 195.
47. Department of Public Information 1947-48, op. cit., p. 427.
48. Ibid., p. 429.
49. See above, page 239.
50. Bilby, op. cit., p. 46
51. Ibid., p. 50.
52. Lorch, Lt. Colonel N., "Narrative." (In Liddell Hart, B. H., Strategy The Indirect Approach, p. 394).
53. Sacher, op. cit., p. 295.
54. Pearlman, Moshe, The Army of Israel, p. 173; Khirbet Mukhaz is more correctly referred to as al-Maghaz.
55. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 175.
56. Lorch, Lt. Colonel N., op. cit., p. 393.

57. Bilby, op. cit., p. 49.
58. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 175.
59. Sacher, op. cit., p. 212.
60. Saudi Arabia, Sudan, etc.
61. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 174; and Sacher, op. cit., p. 212.
62. Ibid., p. 212.
63. See above, pp. 250-10.
64. See above, Chapter III, p. 158.
65. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 176.
66. Bilby, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
67. For a summary of the action as it occurred in the United Nations during this period see Department of Public Information 1948-49, op. cit., pp. 176-186.
68. Sacher, op. cit., p. 295.
69. Kirk, op. cit., p. 287.
70. Glubb, op. cit., p. 226.

THE OCTOBER FIGHTING TO JANUARY 7, 1949

Initial operations, as undertaken by the Israeli Army in "Operation Ten Plagues," (see map - Annex M) began at 6 P.M. on the 15th of October when the Israeli air force bombed the airfield at Al-Arish, the principal Egyptian supply base, plus the additional supply and administrative centers of Gaza, Majdal, and Beit Hanun, as well as centers of communication and troop concentrations at Faluja, Deir Suneid, and Isdud. The main objective of the air raids was to establish complete Israeli air supremacy in the area, and although the destruction of advance airfields and landing facilities was not enough to completely neutralize the Egyptian air force, it was sufficient to give the Israelis what amounted to almost unchallenged control of the Negev airspace during the opening days of the operation.

Later, on the same night, a strong Israeli column supported by armor, advanced unopposed to a point just south of Beit Jibrin, where it occupied several adjacent high points and cut the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, thus cutting off direct communications between the Egyptian forces in the Faluja and Bethlehem areas.

At the same time, simultaneous operations were being conducted against the Egyptian north-south defensive strip, extending from Rafah northward to Isdud. Here Israeli guerrilla forces

drove a deep wedge into the Egyptian defensive position near the village of Beit Hanun, bringing the coastal road under heavy fire and severely hampering the flow of supplies to the north. Further south a series of raids were carried out with the objectives of blowing up the bridges and railroad line between al-'Arish, Rafah and Khan Yunis in a further attempt at severing Egyptian communications to the north. The road between Rafah and Khan Yunis was mined by the Israeli forces and all northbound traffic was brought to a temporary halt.

Thus, on the morning of October the 16th, although very little fighting has as yet taken place, the Egyptian communications had been severed in the north, and threatened in the west, and the stage was set for the Israeli penetration attempt of the east-west defense line. This took the shape of a joint attack by armour and infantry against an Egyptian strongpoint near the village of 'Iraq al-Manshiya. The attack, however, was soon broken up as well-directed artillery fire destroyed several Israeli tanks, and forced the then unsupported infantry, which suffered heavy casualties, to take cover.<sup>1</sup>

The capture of 'Iraq al-Manshiya had been intended to enable the Israelis to threaten from the rear the Egyptian defense positions in the vicinity of a major road junction, located approximately two miles to the west of 'Iraq Suweidan. The Egyptian defenses in the area were based on a number of hills in the

immediate vicinity of the junction, and on the police fortress of 'Iraq Suweidan, which dominated the country for miles around. The junction itself was under the protection of strong defensive positions located on two prominent heights immediately to the north and to the south of it. On the night of October the 16th, the Israeli attacking column, which had been reinforced by remnants of the column which had been earlier repulsed in the attack on 'Iraq al-Manshiya, blocked the road on either side of 'Iraq Suweidan. This was in turn followed by a two-column attack by the Palmach against the two heights controlling the road junction. After severe fighting, the southern arm was successful, while the other column, after several unsuccessful attempts at penetrating the Egyptian defenses on the northern hill, turned and joined forces with the Israeli column to the south. The Egyptians had proved that they knew how to organize for defense and also how to defend.<sup>2</sup> This ability, however, was almost completely offset by their heavy concentration on a static defensive position, and the lack of mobile reserve strength.

On the 17th of October, the Egyptians began a series of counter attacks in the 'Iraq Suweidan area in an attempt to drive the Israelis from their newly occupied positions, and thus restore communications between Majdal and Faluja. The southern height, controlling the road junction, came under heavy attack, but the Israelis were able to maintain their position. In an attempt to

draw part of the Israeli effort away from the \*Iraq Suweidan area, the Egyptians carried out an assault on the Israeli supply base at Julis, which was located to the north of the junction. The attack would undoubtedly have succeeded, but Egyptian reinforcements coming up from Kaukaba in the south were turned back by the heavy Israeli fire which now dominated the road junction. On the night of the 17th-18th, the Egyptians evacuated the northern height which had managed to hold out in spite of being cut off from all reinforcements, and full control of the junction fell to the Israelis, who immediately moved to the south and occupied Kaukaba, and prepared for an attack on Huleiqat, a heavily fortified Egyptian position astride the road, and blocking the Israeli path to the Negev.

Strong Egyptian resistance around Huleiqat caused the Israelis to spend the 18th and part of the 19th in carrying out probes in the area to the east of Huleiqat with the intention of bypassing the strongpoint. Egyptian defenses in the area, however, resisted all attempts at penetration, and Israeli attention was redirected to the capture of Huleiqat. At noon of the 18th, Beit Tima, a supply point to the west of Huleiqat, was taken, and Huleiqat itself was completely isolated and cut off. On the night of October 19-20, it was heavily attacked, and by dawn it had been overcome. The Israelis were through the Egyptian defensive belt,<sup>3</sup> and the road to the Negev, though narrow



was open.

The Israelis immediately set about to widening the gap, and moved first to the east, but were unable to turn the Egyptian defense line. The Egyptians stood firm at all points extending from the police fortress at 'Iraq Suweidan in the west to 'Iraq al-Manshiya in the east, a distance of approximately six and a half miles. This area, which had previously resisted the Israeli probe attempts, developed into an isolated area of resistance known as the Faluja pocket. The besieged garrison was commanded by a Sudanese officer, and composed mainly of Sudanese troops numbering approximately 2,500. The pocket narrowed to a depth of one mile at some points, and at no point exceeded a depth of four miles. Between October the 19th and the 22nd, six Israeli assaults were made on 'Iraq Suweidan without success.<sup>4</sup> Though completely surrounded, outnumbered, and under heavy fire, the Sudanese commander refused all offers to surrender. It was an admirable defense, and a credit to him and his men.

The Egyptian forces in the coastal strip to the west were already in the process of a withdrawal to the south as a result of the Israeli wedge at Beit Hanun, which carried with it the threat of pushing through to the Mediterranean Sea, and thereby cutting off all Egyptian forces in the coastal area to the north. The Israelis, rather than engaging these forces and forcing them to stand and fight, were content to hold fast. The withdrawal of

the Egyptian forces removed the threat to the narrow Israeli corridor to the south, and the Israelis were able to direct their efforts in another direction.

The only line which now connected the Egyptian-held Bethlehem area with its headquarters at Gaza, was an inland road which ran via al-Auja, Bin Asluf, Beersheba, and Hebron - a long and roundabout route which made communications extremely difficult. The more direct route a little further to the north, which ran from Gaza to Beersheba, and then on to Hebron, had already been threatened by the main Israeli drive to the south, and was cut off in several places by Israeli mobile patrols operating in the Negev. The direct route leading from Gaza northward to the Majdal-Beit Jibrin road, and then east to Hebron, had been completely severed, and the road leading from Faluja southward to Beersheba had been cut off by the Israeli occupation of Tal al-Quneitira and al-Maqhaz several weeks before the opening of the main offensive.

Beersheba was the key Egyptian control point, and its capture would have resulted in an almost complete severance of Egyptian communications between the eastern and western sectors - it was to this end that the Israeli effort was now directed.

During the Beersheba operation the excellent mobility and co-ordination of the Israeli forces was brought into evidence. Immediately after the occupation of Huleiqat, a large part of the

force which had been used in the capture, was rushed eastward to the Israeli settlement of Mishmar Hanegev (see map - Annex M) about ten miles northwest of Beersheba, where it joined forces with a small detachment from the settlement. At the same time, other Israeli units, which had been based at Revivim near Bir Asluj, moved northeast towards Beersheba with the objectives of preventing reinforcements from reaching Beersheba from Bir Asluj; intercepting any Egyptian forces which might break to the south; and to carry out a diversionary attack from the south while the main attack was being launched from the north.

On the 19th and 20th, Beersheba was heavily bombed from the air, and on the night of the 20th the Israeli troops moved into their attack positions. At 0400 hours, on the 21st of October, a heavy artillery and mortar bombardment was launched, and continued for several hours. Immediately thereafter the Israeli troops moved forward in a direct attack on the village which was defended by approximately 500 men, comprising some 300 regulars and over 100 local volunteers,<sup>5</sup> plus a small amount of light artillery.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, a light, diversionary attack was made on the village from the south, and by 0945 hours the Egyptian garrison had surrendered. The Egyptian command officer had been caught by surprise at the suddenness of the Israeli attack, and had been uninformed of the Israeli breakthrough in the main defense line to the north.

The capture of Beersheba completely severed communications

between the Egyptian garrison in the Hebron area, and its parent forces to the south, thus cutting it off from any further supplies or maintenance, plus severely hampering its ability to engage in any further hostilities. Glubb Pasha, upon being informed of the capture of Beersheba, sent a mixed column of armoured cars and lorried infantry to the Hebron area in an attempt to save what he could of the situation. The Egyptians in the interim, pulled their right flank southward to a point just north of Bir Asluj. The Israelis, however, instead of pushing onward to Hebron, restricted their efforts in the area to probing operations carried out by small armoured columns, and switched the main point of their offensive to the western coastal area in the vicinity of Beit Hanun. On the 22nd of October, following a heavily concentrated attack, Beit Hanun was overrun, and the northsouth coastal road and railroad completely severed. Egyptian communications were now restricted to a narrow strip of seashore along which they were able to maintain only a trickle of supplies. Attempts were made to supply their forces in the north by sea, but here the small Israeli navy made an important contribution to the over-all Israeli effort, and restricted Egyptian sea operations to a bare minimum. In an Egyptian-Israeli naval engagement on the night of October the 21st, the flagship of the Egyptian navy, the "King Farouk" was sunk.<sup>7</sup> The Egyptian High Command, realizing the perilous situation of their troops in the coastal area

to the north of Beit Hanun, began an all-out withdrawal to the south.

In the interim, during the time that the operations in the Negev were in progress, an Israeli column from Hartuv, near the Jerusalem-Ramle railroad line, moved southward and eastward, clearing the country as it advanced. Its principal aim was to widen the narrow Israeli-held strip of territory connecting Tel Aviv with the New Jerusalem, and then move on to Hebron. As it pushed southward it occupied all the villages as far as Beit Jibrin, and then it turned eastward toward the Jerusalem-Hebron road where, according to one Zionist source,<sup>8</sup> it was halted by the cease-fire.<sup>9</sup>

In this short offensive, which had begun on the 17th of October away from the main fighting, the Israelis had occupied almost all of the southern Judean hill area which acted as a bulwark between the newly occupied Negev to the south, and the Arab forces to the north. In addition, it further widened the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem corridor, and put the entire stretch of railroad from Tel Aviv to Battir, a point just outside of Jerusalem, in Israeli hands. The Israelis immediately set about constructing an alternative route called the "Road of Valour" which ran from the coast to Jerusalem, and it was formally opened in December, 1948. This road was further south than the original "Burma Road" diversion, which had been constructed mainly as a

by-pass, and which was in dangerous proximity to Arab-held Latrun.

From the beginning of the October fighting on the 15th of October, Dr. Ralph Bunche, the United Nations Acting Mediator, had made every effort to bring the fighting to a close, but without military backing to give him support, he was obliged to restrict his activities to pleas to the two sides to cease hostilities, and to submit reports to the United Nations on the seriousness of the situation. At a meeting of the Security Council on October 19th, attention was directed to a communication from the acting Foreign Minister of Egypt protesting against Zionist attacks by air and by land in violation of the truce; a letter from the representative of the Provisional Government of Israel drawing attention to the breach of the truce by Egyptian forces in the Negev; and the report of the Acting mediator to the Secretary-General concerning the serious outbreak of fighting in the Negev sector of Palestine. In his communication, the Acting mediator noted that the appeal which he had issued for a temporary unconditional cease-fire, had been accepted by the Egyptian government on the sole condition that it be accepted by Israel. The Israeli reply, however, had amounted to a rejection in that it offered to negotiate, but ignored completely the request for a cease-fire.<sup>10</sup>

The Security Council immediately drafted a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, the time of which was fixed by the Acting Mediator, at 12:00 noon on 22 October 1948. In a

letter, dated 23 October 1948, the Acting Mediator informed the Security Council that, pursuant to its resolution of October 19, 1948, both the Egyptian and Israeli governments had replied that the necessary cease-fire orders had been given. Thus, after seven days of fighting, the battle had come to a close with the Negev open to the Israelis; communications between the Negev settlements secured; Beersheba, the key control point in inter-communications between the Egyptian forces, in Israeli hands; the Egyptian forces in the Hebron-Bethlehem area cut off from the south; the Egyptian army cleared from the northern Negev with the exception of the Faluja pocket and the Gaza coastal strip; and the forward battle headquarters of the Egyptian army located at Majdal, in the process of evacuation to the south. The objectives of "Operation Ten Plagues" which, as stated by General Yigal Yadin, Chief of the General Staff, Israel Forces, were "to open the way to the Negev and (to) dislocate the enemy's deployment...."<sup>11</sup> had been achieved, and Israel was now able to look forward to a still further objective - the clearance of the Egyptian forces from the entire Negev.

The strategy and tactics utilized by the Israeli forces during the conduct of "Operation Ten Plagues," had, in their own words,<sup>12</sup> been based on the principles of strategy as presented by B. H. Liddell-Hart, in his book Strategy-The Indirect Approach the essence of which is that a commander, charged with obtaining

a military decision, has a responsibility to seek it under the most favorable circumstances in order to produce the most profitable result. In other words, that his aim is not primarily to seek battle, but to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by battle is sure to do so.<sup>13</sup> It was this principle on which the planning of "Operation Ten Plagues" was based, and the application of this principle can be seen time and time again throughout the conduct of the campaign.

In order to bring the principle into practice the Israeli commanders concentrated on three main aims which were as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- (1) To cut the enemy's lines of communications, and thus paralyze his physical build-up;
- (2) Seal him off from his avenue of retreat, and in this manner undermine his will and destroy his morale;
- (3) To hit his centers of administration and disrupt his communications, thus striking a major blow at the ability of central headquarters to co-ordinate the activities of its forces in the field.

The direct Israeli assaults on the Egyptian strongpoints along the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, however, could be cited by many as an argument against the above, however, it must be remembered that the aim, as stated, is not "to seek battle,"



but where it cannot be avoided it must be undertaken under the most favorable circumstances possible to produce the most profitable result. In the case of penetration of the Majdal-Beit Jibrin defense line, it was obvious to all where the main penetration attempt would have to be made. The main lines of communication, which would also have to be utilized by the Israelis in their move to the south, plus the main pocket of Israeli settlements, lay in an area south of the line extending from 'Iraq al-Manshiya eastward. The main Israeli attempt was thus restricted to this area. In order to minimize the resistance to be encountered, the Israelis preceded the main effort by heavily bombing the main administrative and supply centers of the Egyptian army in Palestine, and by creating a strong diversionary attack in the vicinity of Beit Hanun. This wedge, which posed a constant threat of breaking through to the coast and consequently cutting off the Egyptian forces to the north, caused the Egyptians to divert a large portion of their already insufficient reserve forces to the area, and in this manner made the long, static defense line of the Egyptians even more vulnerable to attack by the highly mobile Israeli forces. The destruction of bridges, and the blowing up of large segments of the railroad, plus the mining of the coastal road between al-Arish and Khan Yunis, severely hampered the ability of the Egyptians to send supplies to the north; and the subsequent bringing under fire of the coastal road near Beit

Hanun almost completely cut off the flow of supplies to the north with the exception of a small amount which they were able to send north along the narrow coastal strip between Beit Hanun and the sea.

In the north, the Israeli column which broke through and cut the east-west road at a point slightly to the west of Beit Jibrin, served to cut off any Egyptian reinforcements from the direction of the Bethlehem-Hebron area. Thus, prior to the beginning of the main attack, the area to be attacked had been almost completely isolated, with communications to outlying areas either completely cut off or seriously impaired.

It was only then that the main attack was launched. The element of surprise was completely lacking for the Egyptians knew the area in which the attack would be made. The Israelis began a series of movements to find the weakest point in the line, and following their failure to take 'Iraq al-Manshiya by a direct assault, they quickly moved the forces involved westwards to take part in the assault of the heights which controlled the key road junction to the area. The break-through was followed by another probe to discover the weak points, and failing to find a by-pass to the east, Huleiqat was first isolated and then assaulted and taken.

Disruption of communications and consequent dislocation of the Egyptian forces was the immediate aim of the Israeli

offensive, and thus the next logical step was the seizure of the point which controlled communications between the eastern and western sectors of the Negev - Beersheba. It was here that the extreme mobility of the Israeli infantry was brought into evidence, in that a large part of the forces utilized in the capture of Huleiqat were immediately transported across the desert to Mishmar Hanegev, almost 30 miles away, to take part in the attack on Beersheba.<sup>15</sup> The excellent co-ordination and control which the Israeli commanders exercised over operations was evidenced by the aerial bombing which preceded the attack, and the movement northward of the Israeli troops stationed at Revivim, southeast of Beersheba, and their subsequent utilization in a diversionary attack.

Capture of Beersheba completely dislocated the Egyptian defensive set-up, in that eastern and western troop dispositions were cut off from each other. The eastern element in the Bethlehem-Hebron area was completely isolated and cut off from its supply source, and henceforth had to rely on the Arab Legion for logistical support - an army which was barely able to keep its own soldiers in the field supplied with ammunition.

The question can logically be asked: "Why didn't the Israelis launch a full-scale attack at Beit Hanun with the objective of pushing through to the sea and in this way completely isolating the Egyptian army in the coastal strip in the north?" It is the opinion of the writer, that the Israelis deliberately

refrained from cutting through to the sea, on the theory that if they did completely cut off the one avenue of withdrawal available, the Egyptians would have been forced to turn and fight. Prior experience had already proved that they would not surrender even if hopelessly outnumbered. An additional consideration was the fact that the heaviest concentration of Egyptian strength lay in this area, and the Israelis, if possible, were desirous of avoiding an all-out battle with the force which was probably equal to it in strength. Thus, the escape route was left open, but the potential threat of cut-off remained, and another well known military axiom came into play. This axiom states that the nearer the cut-off point lies to the main force of the enemy, the more immediate the effect, whereas the further back it takes place, the greater the effect. Here the Israelis were threatening a cut-off close to the rear of the main force of the enemy. The effect was almost immediate as was evidenced by the Egyptian withdrawal which began as early as October 17th from Majdal. This personal opinion is still further strengthened by a principle of Liddell-Hart's in which he states that "while there are cases in which the destruction of the enemy's armed forces was economically achieved through their disarming by surrender, such 'destruction' may not be essential for a decision, and for the fulfillment of the war aim. In the case of a state that is seeking, not conquest, but the maintenance of its security, the aim is fulfilled if the threat be

removed....if the enemy is led to abandon his purpose."<sup>16</sup>

In this case it was withdrawal of the Egyptian forces, and not battle, that the Israelis desired. This was especially true in view of the potential threat of an attack by the other Arab states on Israel, while it was involved in what could have turned out to be an all-out struggle with the strongest segment of the Egyptian army in Palestine, plus the fact that the battle could have lasted for weeks. In view of United Nations pressure for a cessation in hostilities this was definitely to be avoided.

The Israeli forces made the threat of cut-off even more real by their capture of Beit Hanun on October the 22nd, which undoubtedly had a strong psychological effect on the minds of the Egyptian commanders and caused them to hurry the withdrawal. The success of the scheme is evidenced in that Isdud was evacuated on October the 27th, and on November the 5th, the evacuation of Majdal was completed without a shot being fired, and the Egyptian left flank was pulled back to Beit Lahiya, just north of Gaza which was the location of the Egyptian General Headquarters and nerve center of the Egyptian forces. Two Israeli settlements, Yad Mordekhai and Nitzanin, which had been occupied by the Egyptians in May, were once again in Israeli hands.

This, then, was the basis of the Israeli strategy and tactics utilized during "Operation Ten Plagues." It has been utilized against an Egyptian plan of defense which was basically

static, and which almost completely lacked any semblance of a mobile reserve, which could be switched from one point to another to meet any concentrated attack by the highly mobile Israeli forces. Even without the valuable element of surprise, the Israelis were able to pick the time and the place of the attack. When this is considered in light of the fact that the Egyptian defense lines were no deeper than five miles at any point, and that the Egyptian northern front was caught between two independent Israeli forces,<sup>17</sup> the strategical and tactical implications become even more apparent.

The excellent control and co-ordination exercised by the Israeli commanders over their forces also acted strongly against the Egyptians, who were severely hampered by an almost complete breakdown in their communications, and the resultant inability to coordinate the movements of their forces.

In summary it could be said that the following main points combined to bring about the Israeli successes during "Operation Ten Plagues:" (1) the long lines of communications which it was necessary for the Egyptians to maintain to keep their troops in the field supplied; (2) the fact that the main Egyptian defense-positions were static and completely lacking in depth; (3) the lack of sufficient mobile reserves to send from one point to another as the situation demanded; and (4) the fact that the Egyptians were on the defensive, while the Israelis, with a mobile army, and

supported by a navy and air force which came under the authority of the Operations Branch of the Army, and whose operations could thus be readily co-ordinated with the moves of the army, were on the offensive. A point which gave the initiative to the Israelis and enabled them to shift their forces as desired - a situation completely unsuitable to the Egyptians burdened by a static defense-position and a lack of mobile reserves.

With regard to the lack of support provided the Egyptians by their Arab allies, there is little to be said except that it was not provided. Excuses given for this lack of support varied from the charge that the Egyptians had not informed the other Arab states as to what was happening,<sup>18</sup> to the claim that the Egyptians had stated that "the Egyptian government has no need of anyone's assistance."<sup>19</sup> The real reasons behind this lack of support are beyond the scope of this paper, and the only thing which can be definitely said in regard to its effect on the military outcome of this first phase of the October fighting, is that it had a definite detrimental effect on the Arab cause. The Israelis had taken a calculated risk that if they restricted their activities only to the Egyptian front, that the other Arab armies would remain quiet. Relying on this assumption, the Israelis had denuded their northern and eastern fronts of men and material, and concentrated their striking power on the Egyptian front. What the effect would have been had the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and

Trans Jordan, plus the forces of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA), suddenly moved forward on the weakened defense-positions of the Israelis, is merely conjecture, but this I do know - had the other Arab armies struck at the same time that the Israelis made their push to the south, there would have been an immediate necessity for the Israeli Operations Branch to divert a large number of their forces northward to face the new threat. The resultant lessening of pressure on the Egyptian front could have meant the difference in the success or failure of "Operation Ten Plagues."

Glubb Pasha has stated that he knew nothing of the Israeli successes until they had happened,<sup>20</sup> and that when so informed (October the 21st) he had one of two courses of action open to him. The first was to begin an offensive in the Latrun or Jerusalem area in a diversionary attempt to draw the Israeli forces away from the south. This, however, was decided against in that the main action in the south had almost come to a halt, and there was thus little to be gained in the way of diversion. The second alternative was to send a force to the Hebron area in an attempt to save what it could of the situation. This line of action was adopted, and on October the 22nd, an improvised column consisting of two companies of infantry, and a squad of armoured cars, comprising a total of approximately 350 men,<sup>21</sup> was dispatched to Hebron. In the interim, overtures were made to the Iraqi government that its forces take over the occupation of the Latrun area



from the Trans Jordan army, so that the relieved troops could be transferred to the Hebron area, which would have made possible a direct attack on the Israeli forces pressing in on the Faluja pocket. The Iraqis replied that they were unable to take over Latrun, which left the Arab Legion with the responsibility of defending its original front from Beit Nabala in the north to a point southeast of Jerusalem, plus the newly added burden of the Hebron district in the south. The Iraqis, Syrians, and Lebanese, refused to change their dispositions.<sup>22</sup>

During the evening of October the 26th, the Arab Legion column swung out of Hebron and down a narrow, winding road to Tarqumiya (see map - Annex M) where it stopped for the night. The 27th was spent in resting and in maintenance of the vehicles, and on the 28th it was decided to send out a column composed of seven armoured cars to reconnoiter the Beit Jibrin area. Upon approaching Beit Jibrin, an advance unit of the small force reported an Israeli force of approximately thirty armoured cars advancing on the road in their direction.<sup>23</sup> The vehicles of the Arab Legion were quickly deployed in an inverted "V" with the point directed towards Beit Jibrin. The Israeli column, which had ignored the most basic of military principles of sending out an advance unit to precede the main body, was caught completely by surprise, and in the encounter which followed, was completely routed.

The Arab Legion then proceeded in its plans for defense

of the Hebron area by placing a force astride the Beersheba-Hebron road south of Dhahiriya, and establishing defensive positions to cover the area, which comprised approximately 600 square miles. In the face of an all-out Israeli attack, this could not have been done by the 350 men allotted for the task, except that the area was mountainous, and ideally suited for defense against the mobilized Palmach, which had been developed into an improvised armoured division consisting of a few tanks, but mainly armoured cars, Bren carriers, armoured half-tracks, and a large number of jeeps.

The question is oft times asked as to why the Israelis accepted the cease-fire resolution of October 19th, when, militarily, it seemed to deprive them of a sure and complete victory in the Negev. The only and only logical answer that can be given to this question is that the Israelis were forced into it by political considerations, and had no alternative other than to agree to acceptance of the cease-fire resolution, or face an aroused United Nations, plus the possibility of an imposition of sanctions. Israel had in many cases openly flouted the United Nations such as by its importation into Palestine of war material and equipment under the very eyes of the United Nations observers, and by its breaking of the second truce on October the 15th when "Operation Ten Plagues" was put into motion. It could not take the risk of driving the United Nations too far.

In the interim, however, the ALA under the direction of

Fawzi al-Qawuqji, set into motion a series of incidents which was soon to lead to another outbreak of hostilities. During the first truce the ALA had been reorganized and placed on a more regular footing.<sup>24</sup> It had been supplied with armoured vehicles, guns, and other war material by Lebanon, under whose control it now operated. Nominally a Lebanese officer, Colonel Shukai was in command,<sup>25</sup> and there were a number of Lebanese officers serving in its ranks. For all practical purposes, however, Qawuqji was still its leader.

During the first truce the ALA had been assigned the responsibility for the defense of the Galilee area, but during the "Ten Days Offensive" it had lost most of lower Galilee, including Nazareth, to the Israelis, and had withdrawn to upper Galilee, where it occupied a rectangular area about twenty miles long and fifteen miles wide. Although there was little likelihood that Qawuqji would ever undertake a major offensive on his own, he presented a constant threat in conjunction with one or more of the regular Arab armies. Strategically he was in an excellent position for a co-ordinated effort. Operating from the vantage-point of the high ground of northern Galilee, he could undertake an offensive against any one of the three narrow strips held by Israel which surrounded his territory - such as against the Valley of Zebulon to the west in conjunction with the Lebanese; against the Valley of Esdraelon to the south in

co-ordination with the Iraqis; or against the Valley of the Hule in conjunction with the Syrians.

On the 22nd of October, Qawuqji, in what may either have been a diversionary attempt to relieve the pressure on the Egyptian front, or an effort to take advantage of a situation in which it appeared as though the Israelis were fully occupied, attacked the redoubt of Sheikh Abed, which was located on the edge of a mountain ridge 2,500 feet above the Hule Valley overlooking the Jewish settlement of Manara. His forces then moved down into the valley and cut the Metulla-Rosh Pinna road, and defeated a small Israeli force which attempted to restore normal traffic on the highway. Israel protested the actions to the United Nations and on the 25th of October stated that unless the attacks on the road convoys ceased, it would take appropriate action.<sup>26</sup> The Arab irregulars ignored the warning and proceeded to occupy several hill positions to the south of Manara, and the Israelis were provided with an excuse for the launching of "Operation Hiram," (see map - Annex N) which had as its objectives the expulsion from Palestine, or if possible, destruction of Qawuqji's ALA, and the conquest of all upper Galilee. The Operation was to be launched under the command of Colonel Carmel who had previously operated against Qawuqji in "Operation Dekel."

The area held by Qawuqji was ideally suited for guerrilla warfare, or for defensive action. For a highly mobile force it held one major disadvantage which was the paucity of adequate

roads - a factor which should definitely have operated against the mobile forces of the Israelis and to the advantage of the defenders of the area. Two north-south, and four east-west roads were all that could be used for vehicular traffic. The rest of the area was criss-crossed by footpaths, some of which were even too difficult for mules. The key to the entire system of communications was the village and road-junction of Sasa (see map - Annex N) where the Bassa-Tarbikha and Nahariya-Tarshiha roads coming from the coast, joined up with the Farradiya-Meirun road from the south, and with the Malikiya road running north into Lebanon, which was Qawuqji's base of supply.

Qawuqji's forces were divided up into three sections called "Yarmuk" brigades. One section occupied the area south of the Acre road with its western base located at Majd al-Kurum, and its eastern base at Rama; the second held the northeastern area with its main elements based at Sasa and Jish; and the third held the northwestern sector with its main element based at Tarshiha, which was Qawuqji's center of operations.

The Israeli operation was to be carried out in the two main phases. The first was to encompass holding operations in the south and the southwest along with an attack on Tarshiha from the west. At the same time, the main force, consisting of light armoured cars, half-tracks, and infantry was to push west from Safad with the objective of capturing the road junction at Sasa,

and then join forces with the Israeli arm advancing from the west. The second part of the plan was to eliminate the remnants of the ALA caught in the pincer movement, and to push northeast along the Malikiya-Metulla road clearing the area of all Arab forces and thereby securing the group of Jewish settlements in the Hule Valley below.

The Israeli air force was to bomb the main objectives of Tarshiha, Sasa, and Malikiya, on the afternoon preceding the zero hour, and was to thereafter be on call to give support to the attacking ground forces as needed. Artillery was scarce with only about a dozen field guns being attached to the main body. Air support was counted on to make up for this deficiency.

The entire success of the operation depended, both for political and military reasons, on crushing Qawuqji's forces before any regular Arab army had time to intervene, and before he could reorganize and recover from the initial assault; and thus, although the area was poorly suited for armour, it was decided to utilize it to spearhead the main force advancing on Sasa from the east. The Israelis were again relying on the military rule of "calculated risk" in an attempt to achieve speed which they regarded as the most important factor in the operation.

"Operation Hiram" was launched at dusk on October the 28th. During the afternoon of the same day, the Israeli air force had bombed the main objectives.<sup>27</sup> The diversionary attacks in the

south and the southwest were carried out, but did not accomplish the intended objectives in that, rather than pinning down Qawuqji's forces in the area, Qawuqji ordered their withdrawal to a position north of the Acre road, i.e., into the area of the main objective. The retreating units, however, were largely in a disorganized state, and were consequently of little aid in providing additional defensive strength to the area.

In the west, the initial attack of the Israeli column advancing on Tarshiha from Kabiri had failed due to strong Arab defensive positions, and poor pre-attack planning on the part of the Israeli commander leading the attack. Tarshiha was again heavily bombed on the 29th, and just before and immediately after the bombing, the majority of the irregular forces evacuated the village. At dawn on the 30th, another bombardment was carried out and the remainder of the garrison surrendered. Without waiting as ordered, the Israeli column pushed on to join Colonel Carmel at Sasa.

In the interim, while this activity was being carried out, the main attack proceeded from the east towards Sasa, with the first objective being the village of Meirum. The attack had also started at dusk on the 28th, but the clearing of mines and road blocks took longer than expected and Meirun was not occupied until eight o'clock on the morning of the 29th. The armoured vehicles and half-tracks then pushed quickly onward toward Safsaf,

which was taken just before noon. While reorganizing at Safsaf, an Arab counter-attack was repulsed. The column then continued on to Jish which controlled a minor road junction. Meanwhile, Qawuqji had persuaded a regular Syrian battalion to come to his aid at Jish, but the Israelis moved swiftly and caught the Syrians completely by surprise, before they had taken up their assigned positions, and scattered them after inflicting heavy losses. Jish was then occupied and another Arab counter-attack repulsed.

Carmel then continued on toward Sasa and the main road junction. Sasa was a high, fortified position, ideally situated for defense. On the evening of the 29th it was bombarded by artillery, and at night it was hit by a heavy assault. By midnight, the village and the junction had been occupied, and Qawuqji and his staff had fled to the north. At noon on the 30th, the Israeli column from Kabiri joined up with Carmel at Sasa and the pincer movement was completed. It had not, however, achieved its aim of sealing off the section of the ALA to the south, in that many of them escaped north to Lebanon before effective patrol operations could be setup.

Colonel Carmel was now able to concentrate on the remaining portion of his plan, which had as its aim the clearance of the remaining portion of northern Galilee, and securing the Hule Valley to the Israelis. His first act was to send one column



westward along the Lebanon-Palestine frontier road, clearing the Arabs from the area and capturing the village of Tarbikha. The other column was sent along the frontier road in an easterly direction, taking the village of Saliha and then occupying Malikiya, the frontier post. In a co-ordinating action, Israeli forces stationed in the upper Jordan Valley began to move northward and joined Carmel at Malikiya, who thereupon proceeded northward up the Hule Valley, forcing back all opposition and overcoming the positions of the ALA around Manara which put up only a slight resistance. He then crossed the Lebanon-Palestine border and occupied a stretch of territory extending from the Wadi Dubbe in the north to Malikiya in the south, completing his operation at six o'clock on the morning of October the 31st.

Thus, two and a half days after it had begun, "Operation Hiram" came to a close. It had been an almost complete success with all of Galilee in Israeli hands; Qawuqji driven out; the ALA broken up; and Lebanon invaded. The only point at which it failed to accomplish its objective was that it was unable to completely isolate and capture many of the Arab irregulars who had initially been caught in the pincer movement.

The Israeli successes were due to clear and precise planning, complete control, speed, co-ordination of forces, and the integration of arms, which was particularly well exemplified by the excellent use made of the air force throughout the

operation. In addition, the Israeli successes were due to luck, or in another manner of speaking, the failure of Qawuqji to effectively exploit the major point which could have brought him victory - by this I refer to the use of armoured vehicles by the Israelis in an area which was completely unsuited for such employment. There were few roads, and the rugged terrain of the area restricted all vehicular traffic to these roads, which made the armoured column particularly susceptible to ambush and the fire of tank destroyers. Along with this there was the additional fact that the Israelis had used this armour to spearhead their attack. Had Qawuqji, through ambush, been able to destroy several of the leading vehicles and then covered the narrow road with heavy fire, he could have caused a delay which might have meant the difference between victory and defeat. The co-ordination of the Israeli forces would definitely have been upset, which would undoubtedly have required a complete change in the basic plan of the operation.

The Israelis had balanced the necessity for speed and surprise against the element of security and took a risk that paid off. Against an organized and well-directed defense they would undoubtedly have been stopped with a heavy loss of vehicles. Qawuqji's use of counter-attacks against an enemy which was expecting and waiting for such actions, was an exhibition of poor defensive planning. Had he concentrated on the destruction of

bridges, and the blowing up of narrow avenues of approach on the narrow mountain roads, he would undoubtedly have succeeded in breaking up the attack.

It has been said that "the traditional Arab dislike of a prolonged defensive battle seems to be at the root of the answer to their wholesale defeat, as their individual bravery was never questioned even by their enemies."<sup>28</sup> This statement I cannot agree with in that there were many instances throughout the war in which the Arabs had occupied defensive positions and engaged in prolonged defensive action. Leadership, or rather, lack of leadership, is undoubtedly a better answer to their failure in many instances to stand and fight. Soldiers in the field must be directed. When leadership fails, personal emotions begin to rule the individual soldier's mind, and soon the weaker members of the command, with leadership gone, begin to withdraw away from the scene of battle. In the remaining soldiers, a sense of "what can I do alone" develops, and they also then begin to take part in the general withdrawal away from the main action. This situation could be particularly applied to the members of the ALA whose morale was extremely low, and which had been reduced even lower by the action of the Israeli air force.

Something must also be said with regard to the Israelis and the apparently reckless act of using armour to spearhead their attacks. The Israeli commanders were well aware of the risk which

was taken, but they had compared this risk against the corresponding necessity for speed, and found the latter to be on the winning side. In an apparent effort to reduce the element of risk they had employed the tactical concept of a dispersed advance with a concentrated single aim, i.e., against one objective, the road junction at Sasa. Had the main attack from the east been brought to a halt there was still the chance that the attack from the west would have succeeded in gaining the objective, although its chances of success would have been greatly reduced. The ability of the Israelis to utilize the indirect, strategical approach had been curtailed in the area due to the lack of roads and the nature of the terrain. The concept of hitting at the administrative nerve centers before the operation, such as by their pre-attack bombing of Tarshiha and Sasa, had been employed however, as had the concept of sealing off the avenues of escape; which they had sought to employ by the large pincer movement from the east and the west.

In mid-October, in conjunction with the October offensive, the Israelis began the occupation of the eastern Negev. At the outset of the war, the Israelis had evacuated the settlement which had been located at the northern end of the Dead Sea, plus all the area to Sodom which was located near the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. Throughout the war Sodom had been completely isolated, and received its supplies by air. It had suffered no

attack, and the morale of its inhabitants was high. So high, in fact, that on June the 2nd they had attacked a Trans Jordanian police post located in an area near the settlement. It was Sodom which was made the first objective of the Israeli operations in the Eastern Negev, and in October an Israeli column from the west crossed over the rough terrain which formed the approaches to Sodom and made contact with its garrison. It then moved northward and occupied Masada and Ein Gadi, which were both small villages located near the Dead Sea. The terrain and physical make-up of the area was rough and uneven, and almost impassable to wheeled vehicles, however on the 20th of November a rough track, passable to all motorized traffic, was opened to Sodom via Kurnub. They had encountered no military opposition in carrying out their operation, and thus, by the end of November, 1948, the eastern Negev was also classed as Israeli-occupied territory.

Following the October 22nd cease-fire, there remained a quiet tension in the Negev area. The October 19th resolution<sup>29</sup> had been vague and indefinite with regard to the withdrawal of both parties from any area which they had not occupied prior to the outbreak of hostilities on the 15th of October. The entire matter regarding the withdrawal had been described in the resolution as "the basis for further negotiations looking towards insurance that similar outbreaks will not again occur...."<sup>30</sup>

On the 25th of October the Acting mediator had sent identical communications to the Egyptian government and the Provisional Government of Israel regarding the procedures to be followed in the withdrawal of their respective troops to positions held on October 14th, and for the establishment of provisional truce lines. Israel replied to the communication of the Acting mediator by stating that the return to "the military status quo ante" was defined by the Security Council as a possible subject for further negotiations and did not imply an absolute injunction. A dispute immediately arose in the interpretation of the October 19th resolution, with one side arguing that it was to be interpreted as meaning that withdrawal was a preliminary condition to further negotiations,<sup>31</sup> and Israel maintaining that negotiations were to be a prior condition of withdrawal.

The issue was in a sense solved by a Security Council resolution on November 4, 1948, which expressly called upon the interested governments to withdraw their forces to the pre-October 14th positions. The withdrawal orders were stated as follows:

- "(1) To withdraw those of their forces which have advanced beyond the positions held on 14 October, the Acting Mediator being authorized to establish provisional lines beyond which no movement of troops shall take place;
- (2) To establish, through negotiations conducted directly between the parties, or failing that, through the intermediaries in the service of the United Nations, permanent truce lines and such neutral or demilitarized zones as may appear advantageous, in order to ensure

henceforth the full observance of the truce in that area. Failing an agreement, the permanent lines and neutral zones shall be established by decision of the Acting Mediator."<sup>32</sup>

It was also proposed that the provisions of the withdrawal should also be applied to the Galilee area, and the United Kingdom submitted a draft resolution to that effect, but after a brief discussion the resolution was postponed for later consideration. On 16 November, this draft resolution was dropped by the United Kingdom, and the representative of Syria proposed an amendment to the effect that the resolution of 4 November should also be applied to the Galilee area. This amendment, however, was rejected.

In the interim, however, Israel had done nothing which indicated compliance with the provision of the November 4th resolution referring to "withdrawal of forces," nor had the Acting mediator fixed any date at which time the withdrawal was to be completed - a stipulation which had been a part of the provision.<sup>33</sup> Thus no action was taken against Israel for its failure to comply with the provisions. The good intentions of the Security Council had again been sidetracked by the ambiguity involved in the interpretation of the provisions of the resolution, and the conditions which had to be fulfilled prior to its being able to take any sort of disciplinary action.

Then on 10 November, the Acting mediator submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council in which he recommended action

to be taken by the Security Council to bring about an armistice between the two opposing forces. In the discussions that followed the representative of Syria made a suggestion to the effect that the previous resolutions adopted by the Council should first be implemented before any new steps were taken. This suggestion, however, was not adopted, and on 17 November a new resolution was passed by the Security Council<sup>34</sup> which called on all parties directly involved in the Palestine conflict to begin negotiations, either directly or through the Acting Mediator, directed at establishing an armistice in Palestine. The negotiations were to include a delineation of permanent armistice demarcation lines, and a withdrawal and reduction of the armed forces of the parties concerned as would ensure the maintenance of the armistice during the transition to permanent peace in Palestine.

On the 19th of November, the Provisional Government of Israel informed the Security Council that it had withdrawn all its forces which had advanced into the Negev after the 14th of October. It stated, however, that before that date, Israeli mobile forces had already been operating in the area. On this premise it refused to evacuate the territory, which included Beersheba, on the ground that it comprised an area which had already been occupied by Israeli troops, and was thus theirs because of "successful defense."<sup>35</sup> The fact that this sort of reasoning was readily subject to debate can easily be seen. Application of this theory



to the northern Galilee area was something that could not be rationalized.

Meanwhile, as the United Nations carried out its discussions and continued in its passage of resolutions, the situation in the Negev continued to worsen. The Egyptians had evacuated Isdud on the 27th of October and Majdal on the 5th of November, and retired to a point just north of Gaza.<sup>36</sup> The trapped Egyptian forces in the Faluja pocket added an element of uncertainty to the situation in that there was always the possibility of an attempted break-out, or action by one or more of the regular Arab armies directed towards rescue of the besieged group. On the 9th of November the police fortress of 'Iraq Suweidan fell to Israeli forces. It was claimed that the Egyptian forces in the 'Iraq Suweidan area had made an unsuccessful escape attempt and had been overcome in the succeeding Israeli counter-attack.<sup>37</sup>

In the Jerusalem area, however, the situation became relatively quiet. On or about November 17th, the Israeli authorities in Jerusalem had suggested a cease-fire between themselves and the Arab Legion in the city. On November 28th, Colonel Abdullah Tell of the Arab Legion, and Colonel Moshe Dayan, who was commanding the Israeli forces in the Jerusalem area, met and agreed on the major conditions for the cease-fire, which was to go into effect on the 29th of November. This cease-fire was later extended to the Latrun area.<sup>38</sup> A fourteen day cease-fire was also

agreed upon between the Israeli and Syrian forces.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile on December 1st, at a meeting in Jericho, which was attended by many prominent leaders of Arab Palestine<sup>40</sup> and also of Trans Jordan, Abdullah was proclaimed "King of Arab Palestine." In reaction, the other Arab states and a number of Asian and Latin American states combined with the Soviet Bloc on December 3rd at the General Assembly meeting in Paris, to defeat the paragraph in the late mediator's recommendations (now embodied in a British resolution) to combine Arab Palestine with Trans Jordan. Nevertheless, on December the 13th, the Trans Jordan parliament officially approved the union, and decreed that thereafter the combined territories would be known as the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.

The reaction of the Arab world was immediate. The Arab League declared that the union was contrary to all their former agreements in which they had agreed that Palestine should not be partitioned. Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia publicly proclaimed that the union was invalid, and from Cairo King Farouk sent letters to all the Arab states except Jordan, in which he violently denounced King Abdullah. Abdullah became the victim of threats and warnings. To offset the Mufti's accusations Abdullah simply appointed a new Mufti - Sheikh Husam-ud-din Jarallah, a man of pro-Hashimite and pro-British sympathies, and an old rival of Haj Amin al-Husseini.<sup>41</sup>

In answer to Farouk's accusation against Abdullah, Sheikh

Ja'bari, the Mayor of Hebron, sent Farouk an open letter which was a severe indictment of what he called Egypt's broken pledges, and which closed with the following words:

"....during six months of war the Arab armies occupied ten small Jewish settlements while the Zionist flag flew over ten big Arab towns and more than 400 Arab villages....Let us, the people of Palestine, save at least what is left to our country, by peaceful means."<sup>42</sup>

The breach in Arab solidarity which had gradually been becoming more evident, was now an open fact for all to see.

Meanwhile, the Israelis continued in their refusal to allow supplies for the Faluja pocket to pass through their territory on the ground that the Egyptians had tried to smuggle through arms in one of the convoys.<sup>43</sup> This claim, however, was not affirmed, nor has there ever been any official United Nations denial or verification of the attempt due to the Israeli refusal to permit United Nations observers to set up check-points in the area. Day airdrops of supplies into the area could not be carried out due to superior Israeli air-strength in the Negev, and night-drops were rendered difficult because of the size of the pocket which had now been reduced to an area of three miles in length and one mile in depth.

Egypt was thus left with the alternatives of evacuating Faluja through hostile enemy territory; allowing it to be starved into surrender; or carrying out operations with the objective of relieving the pressure on the besieged area. They adopted the

latter course, undoubtedly to the great satisfaction of the Israeli military planners.

Between the 19th and 21st of November, the Egyptians began an advance eastward from their positions between Gaza and Khan Yunis, in what was presumably an attempt to relieve the pressure on the Faluja pocket.<sup>44</sup> They proceeded to occupy Tal Jamma and Tal al-Far'a, and shelled the Jewish settlements of 'Imara and Mivtahim. On the 7th of December, the Egyptians advanced to al-Ma'im with an armoured force of sixteen tanks supported by infantry,<sup>45</sup> where they were engaged by Israeli forces who disabled five of the tanks.<sup>46</sup> The Israelis, who examined the tanks, claimed that they were of American manufacture of the Locust type, and declared that they had been given by the English to the Egyptians during the second truce.<sup>47</sup>

The Egyptian forces had now established a series of points which cut direct communications between the Jewish settlements of Berot Yitschak and Nirim. On the 10th of December, a small Egyptian column advanced from Rafah and began an assault on Nirim, but was repulsed.<sup>48</sup> The Israelis, thereupon, began a heavy counter-attack and recovered all the points which had been occupied by the Egyptians, and moved into a position which again threatened the coastal road; but this time at a point near the Egypt-Palestine border, south of Beit Hanun, where it had already established a deep wedge in the direction of the sea.

By their refusal to allow the Egyptians to send supplies through to the Faluja pocket, the Israelis had forced the Egyptians to adopt a course of action which was directed towards renewed warfare - a course which it was obvious that the Israelis wanted them to adopt in that Egypt still posed a threat in the Negev. The Egyptians were equal in strength to their Israeli opponents, but the method in which their renewed operations were carried out showed no indication of strategical planning, which could be interpreted as either relieving the forces in the Faluja pocket, or of causing any sort of dislocation of the Israeli forces, which might have led to their forced withdrawal northwards. There had been no diversionary actions; no real threat to Israeli supply bases or important lines of communications; and no apparent consideration of the principles of objective or surprise. Their operations had amounted to a thrust into the desert - an area containing several Israeli settlements to be sure, but an area of little strategic value, and one which had been almost completely by-passed by the Egyptians in their initial thrust into Palestine. The only point at which Israeli communications had been in any manner threatened was in the thrust at Nirim and this attack was beaten off. The other attacks could not even be classed as diversionary in that they posed no threat to Israeli communications or supply points, but only to the Jewish settlements which were well protected and able to hold off the Egyptian

forces without additional help. When finally forced back to their original attack positions, the Egyptians had accomplished little in the way of relieving the Faluja pocket, and had, in addition, given the Israelis an additional reason for their renewal of all-out offensive action.

On the 22nd of December, the Israelis launched "Operation Ayin," (see map - Annex O) the main objective of which was to drive the remaining Egyptian forces out of Palestine. The reasons as later given by Israeli spokesmen and writers,<sup>49</sup> for the renewal of hostilities were that the Egyptians had been bringing into Palestine a large number of reinforcements, plus great quantities of supplies for what would eventually evolve into an attempt to relieve Faluja;<sup>50</sup> that Egypt had made a succession of attacks on Israeli settlements close to the frontier; and that Egyptian aircraft had raided Haifa, Tel Aviv, and the outskirts of Nazareth.<sup>51</sup>

They further stated, however, that what had actually caused the Israelis to renew military operations was information which had been conveyed to them by the Chief of the United Nations truce supervision staff, General Riley, that the Egyptians would accept the proposals contained in the November 14th Security Council resolution to open armistice negotiations, only on the condition that Israel first released the Faluja brigade.<sup>52</sup>

The Israelis, apparently looking for a way in which to justify the reopening of the offensive, interpreted the Egyptian

reply, as passed on to them by General Riley, as a blunt refusal of Egypt to negotiate, and as a retraction of their agreement to accept the provisions of the November 14th resolution with regard to entering negotiations for an armistice. One Zionist writer expressed the Israeli reaction as follows:

"To Israel, this, taken with the attacks earlier in the month, appeared as a further example of Egypt's delaying methods and as an earnest of hostile intentions. Moreover, Egyptian troops, as Israel recalled, were still on the soil of Israel and Palestine. They were considerably beyond their frontier and were using their encroachment on Palestinian territory....the Gaza strip....as a forward base from which to raid Jewish settlements. For the Egyptians continuance of the truce enabled them to maintain position won by aggression."

"The Government of Israel thereupon informed General Riley that in the light of Egypt's withdrawal of her truce offer to enter into immediate armistice negotiations, Israel reserved freedom of action to defend its territory and hasten the conclusion of peace."<sup>53</sup>

That the Israeli justification for the renewing of hostilities had been put on a weak foundation, was indicated by General Riley's report to the Acting Mediator which disclosed systematic evasions by the Israelis of the terms on which the truce had been reimposed after the October fighting, such as by their refusal to allow United Nations observer posts to be set up in this region; and the Israeli spokesman's attempt to make compliance with those terms dependent on full Egyptian compliance with the provisions of the November 15th Security Council resolution.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, there was the statement of the Acting Mediator, which was read before the Security Council on the 28th of December, and which stated:

"I must also report my view that the intransigent attitude assumed by the Israeli authorities on the situation of Faluja is a major factor in preventing progress toward implementation of the resolution of the Security Council of 16 November."<sup>55</sup>

Regardless, however, of justifications or condemnations, hostilities had been renewed, and "Operation Ayin" was being brought underway. Again the major consideration of the Israeli forces was speed - speed, in order to accomplish a "fait accompli" before any of the other Arab armies resumed military action in conjunction with the Egyptians, and before the United Nations had any opportunity to go into action.

The Egyptian dispositions were in the shape of a letter "U" (see map - AnnexO) and were based primarily on the metalled road network. The left, or western wing, extended itself northward along the coastal road to Beit Lahiya, a small village just to the north of Gaza. The eastern wing extended itself northward on the Auja-Asluj-Beersheba-Hebron road, stopping at a point approximately twenty miles south of Beersheba. These two wings were connected laterally by the Rafah-al-Auja road, which was shaped in the form of a bow bending southward from Rafah into Egyptian territory and then northward to al-Auja, and by another road further to the south which ran from al-Auja to Abu Aweiglia in Egyptian territory, and then to al-Arish where it intersected



with the coastal road running north to Rafah. In addition, there was the Egyptian force in the Faluja pocket, which had been reduced in size by the loss of 'Iraq Suweidan on November the 9th, and now extended from a point slightly west of Faluja to a point just east of 'Iraq al-Manshiya, and then there were also the Egyptian forces in the Hebron area. The latter, however, were unlikely to engage in any offensive action without aid from one or more of the other Arab armies.

The Egyptian dispositions were based on two premises, of which one proved correct, whereas the second turned out to be erroneous and ultimately led to their defeat. The first of these was that in a sparsely populated area, such as the southern Negev, the one that controlled the lines of communications would be master of the entire area; the second, that the lines of communications in this area were identified with the existing metalled roads, and that it was along these roads that the mechanized Israeli army would, of necessity, launch its attacks. They thus based their defenses on a series of high points along the roads with the main fields of fire directed along and towards the roads. Little attention was paid to depth, and the open spaces between the roads were not filled in or adequately patrolled. The only apparent lessons which the Egyptians had learned from "Operation Ten Plagues" appeared to be that the Israelis specialized in night attack, and that the Israeli air force was now a force to be

reckoned with. As a result, alertness during the night was increased, and their new positions were carefully camouflaged. They failed, however, to realize that the strategy of indirect-approach which had been followed by the Israelis during "Operation Ten Plagues," was now the guiding factor in their strategical and tactical planning.

The Israeli plan of action was to create a strong diversionary effort in the western sector to hold down as large an enemy force as possible, and then to shift the main weight of the attack against the eastern wing in an attempt to force it back beyond the Egyptian border. Following this, the Israeli forces were to swing back to the northwest and carry out an attack on al-Arish. This, they felt, would cause an evacuation of the Gaza strip due to the threat of being cut off from Egypt. If the threatened cut in communications failed to bring about an evacuation, it was to be accompanied by an all-out attack on Gaza in what was to be the last stage of the battle.

On December the 22nd, "Operation Ayin" was launched by a series of Israeli air attacks on Egyptian airfields and troop concentrations at Rafah, Khan Yunis and Gaza, followed by heavy artillery shelling of the Egyptian strongpoints along the entire western wing. It became obvious that an attack was about to be launched, and that the main force of the offensive would be in the western sector. Then, on the night of the 22nd, the Israeli

forces occupied a series of hills about eight miles south of Gaza, thus threatening the communications between Gaza and Rafah. The Egyptians rose to the bait, and reacted quickly to what they thought was an all-out attempt to try and cut the road between Gaza and Rafah, and moved against the Israeli bulge with a large armoured force, and in the resultant fighting forced the Israelis out of several of the newly occupied positions. The feint had been a success, and the Egyptians, under the impression that a new operation was being launched with the object of gaining possession of the coastal strip, called upon her Arab allies for aid in the form of diversions to relieve the pressure. The call was in vain - Saudi Arabia, the Yemen, Syria, and the Lebanon, all promised to intervene but did nothing. King Abdullah of Jordan did not even reply, and the Iraqi intervention amounted to the shelling of a few Israeli villages<sup>55a</sup> near their positions. This was the sum total of aid given by the other Arab countries in response to the Egyptian request.

In the interim, having successfully diverted the attention of the Egyptians to the coastal strip, Colonel Alon, who was in charge of the execution of "Operation Ayin," began carrying out the main portion of the operation, which was the clearing of the Beersheba-al-Auja road up to and including al-Auja. To the Egyptians, the eastern sector appeared quiet. In their military estimate of the situation they had reasoned that any Israeli

attack in the area would originate from Beersheba, and would follow the metalled highway leading to Bir Asluj and then to al-Auja. In line with this reasoning they had prepared strong defensive positions along the road down which the Israelis were expected to advance. The country on either side of the road was barren, rocky, and trackless, and further to the west merged into soft sand which was considered passable only to camels. The Egyptian commander was apparently of the opinion that the expanses were too great and the country too difficult for traverse by the Israeli forces, and he thus failed to set up his defenses in depth. Further to the south, the Egyptian defenses were built around Bir Asluj, and al-Mushrafa, which was located midway between Bir Asluj and al-Auja. The Egyptians were ready and waiting.

The Israelis, however, had other plans. As a result of a photographic survey, they had discovered the remains of an old Roman road, which ran from Beersheba in an almost straight line to an area near al-Auja.<sup>56</sup> (See map - Annex O). The road was reconnoitered by an expert reconnaissance team which reported the road to be repairable for the passage of wheeled vehicles, and Israeli engineers were able to make the road passable, not only for wheeled vehicles, but also for light armour. The work was carried on without the Egyptians apparently ever becoming aware of the effort. This was due to the fact that the Egyptians were almost completely "road bound," and because the patrols they sent

out were very limited in the scope of the area they covered. Why the Egyptian air force did not discover the project is unknown.

In carrying out its operation, the main Israeli force moved southward from Beersheba, along the old Roman road to al-Khalasa. Here the force was divided up into two columns each of which was composed of jeep-borne infantry, plus light armour in the shape of armoured cars and half-tracks. The half-tracks also carried infantry, and the entire force was mobile.

The largest of the two columns, the al-Auja column, moved along the Roman road towards al-Auja, and on nearing it split with one branch turning southeast to engage the Egyptian garrison at al-Mushrafa. The Egyptians, with their defenses arranged for an attack along the main road from the north, were taken completely by surprise and overrun. Al-Mushrafa had been the center of an interlocking system of defense in which the three positions of al-Auja, al-Mushrafa, and Bir Asluj had been linked. Now Bir Asluj and al-Auja were isolated from each other and unable to aid in mutual defense. The other branch of the al-Auja column turned off to the southwest and cut the road between al-Auja and Rafah at a point a little to the west of al-Auja. Again the Egyptians were caught by complete surprise and quickly overcome.

While the al-Auja operation was in progress the smaller of the two columns, the Bir Asluj column, branched off at al-Khalasa and advanced southeast across rough terrain and invested

Bir Asluj, where again the defenders were caught unawares by the attack, which had been launched from an unexpected direction.

Speed was one of the primary objectives of the Israelis, and thus, while Bir Asluj was being attacked, a third Israeli column, smaller than the other two but again completely mobile, moved out of Beersheba, swung out through the desert to the East, by-passed Bir Asluj, and joined up with the Israeli force which had previously overrun al-Mushrafa. Together the two columns headed southwest to al-Auja in order to participate in the main assault on the village.

By the night of the 24th of December, the Israelis had closed in around al-Auja and the Egyptian garrison was almost completely surrounded except for a small area which had been left open to the desert to the south. It had been cut off from its northern outposts, and the roads connecting it with Rafah and Abu Aweigila were blocked by the Israelis. At dawn, on the 25th of December, the attack was launched by the Israelis and after holding off the attacking forces for two days, the Egyptian garrison, which had been completely cut off from all reinforcements and supplies, withdrew into the desert to the south. Colonel Alon's forces then moved into the village, and by dawn of the 27th, al-Auja and the strategic road junction were occupied by the Israelis. At almost the same moment, Bir Asluj, which had been heavily besieged for almost three days, fell and the main

road from Beersheba to al-Auja was cleared of all Egyptian forces and opened to Israeli traffic.

In the western section the Israelis continued to maintain pressure, and in several places had made deep penetrations which cut communications between Gaza, Khan Yunis, and Rafah.

Thus, by the evening of the 27th, the first portion of "Operation Ayin" had been completed. The eastern wing of the Egyptian defense position had been completely destroyed, and the western wing was being seriously threatened, and now the Israelis entered into phase two of their operation, which it was hoped would cause a complete evacuation of Egyptian forces from the Gaza strip.

Immediately after occupying al-Auja, Colonel Alon sent one mobile column along the road to the coast, where it joined up with the Israeli forces which were in a position overlooking Rafah. Another column was sent south along the road to Abu Aweigila, the large Egyptian supply base, just inside Egyptian territory. Abu Aweigila fell on the night of December 28, and the Israeli column then continued northward toward al-Arish. Moving quickly, it surprised the Egyptians at the airfield near Bir Lahma, which was only ten miles from the coast, and occupied the position. The attack had been so sudden that several Egyptian aircraft were captured intact on the ground.<sup>57</sup>

At this decisive point, however, political pressure

intervened, and Israel was forced to look to a quick cessation in hostilities. On the 29th of December, the Security Council passed a resolution<sup>58</sup> calling for an immediate cease-fire, and implementation of the resolution of November 4th, particularly with respect to withdrawal of forces to positions held prior to October 14th. In addition, on December the 31st, Great Britain threatened military intervention against Israel, unless Israeli troops were withdrawn from the Sinai, which Great Britain considered to be under her over-all protection, in accordance with the provisions of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty. On January the 2nd, the Israeli leaders issued orders ordering the withdrawal of their forces from Egyptian soil.

Upon receipt of the orders to withdraw from Egyptian territory, Colonel Alon's forces, after inflicting a great deal of damage on Egyptian supply bases, and military installations and facilities,<sup>60</sup> switched the point of their attack towards the frontier village of Rafah. By January the 6th, his men had begun to close in around Rafah, occupying a cemetery overlooking the town, and on that same day, just as the Israelis were completing the final preparations for an all-out assault on Rafah, Egypt, now led by Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, informed the Acting Mediator's staff that they were willing to enter into negotiations for an armistice if Israel would agree to a cease-fire.<sup>61</sup>

On January 6, 1949, the Acting Mediator informed the



President of the Security Council that the governments of Egypt and Israel had unconditionally accepted a proposal providing for a cease-fire to be effective at 12:00 hours G.M.T. on 7 January 1949, which was to be immediately followed by direct negotiations, under United Nations chairmanship, for the implementation of the resolutions of November 4 and 16, 1948.<sup>62</sup> The military portion of the Arab-Israeli war which involved the concepts of strategy, and the subsequent employment of tactics in battle, had been brought to a close.

For the Israelis, "Operation Ayin" had been an almost complete success. Again their operations had been conducted in accordance with the principles as expressed by Liddell-Hart, in his book Strategy-The Indirect Approach, and again, the Egyptians, by their concentration on the maintenance of defense-positions without any consideration of depth, had played directly into the hands of the attacking Israeli forces.

The eastern and western wings of the Egyptian defensive set-up had been layed-out along the principal road networks in the area, and had been limited in depth, with the major consideration being directed toward the strengthening of the fixed positions covering the roads themselves. This, on the premise that any Israeli attacks from the north would have to follow the metalled roads. Their defensive pattern was further weakened by the apparent limitations put on their patrol operations away from

the main lines of communications. This is especially well illustrated by their apparent failure to discover any indications of Israeli activity in reconditioning the old Roman road for vehicular traffic, when the distance between the Roman road and Bir Asluj was only ten miles.

Against such a defensive set-up, the principles of indirect strategy were ideally suited. The over-all attack had been preceded by an air attack against the main Egyptian administrative and supply centers, followed by the diversionary ground attack against the western wing of the Egyptian defensive set-up. Then, when the Egyptian forces had been gathered and positioned to meet what appeared to be the main Israeli thrust, the Israelis began their operation against the eastern wing, insuring, however, that pressure was maintained against the western wing, thus pinning down the Egyptian forces which might have been switched to meet the main brunt of the attack.

One of the principles of military strategy is maintenance of aim, or setting an objective, and then utilizing your forces to obtain that objective. Thus, any action taken by an opposing force which frustrates the maintenance of aim of the enemy, will undoubtedly be to his benefit. In the eastern sector, the main aim of the Egyptians had been to turn back any attack coming from the north down the Beersheba-Bir Asluj-al-Auja road, and their forces and defences had been distributed and constructed

with this aim in mind. The Israelis, however, rather than carrying out a direct assault on positions prepared for such an assault, executed a carefully co-ordinated action which fully exploited the principles of movement and surprise, and the cutting and sealing off of the enemy forces. Their surprise attack on al-Mushrafa, and its consequent effect of cutting in two the inter-system of defense of the three main Egyptian defensive points, was an excellent example of employment of all of the principles in one operation.

The dislocation of an enemy's forces, or a move which upsets the enemy's disposition and dislocates the distribution and organization of his forces can be accomplished by separating his forces; by endangering his supplies; and by menacing the route or routes by which he could retreat in case of need in order to re-establish himself in another base. A movement to the rear of the enemy tends to combine these effects, and the Israelis utilized this principal to its extreme.

The use of speed and its consequent effect in not giving the enemy a chance to reorganize is well illustrated by Alon's swift push to Abu Aweigila and al-Arish. Again it had been a situation involving a highly mobile Israeli force against the Egyptians who seemed to insist on utilizing a static defense.

Again the question presents itself as to why the Israelis had not expended their all-out effort in the western sector in order to force an Egyptian evacuation of the Gaza strip. The

answer to this must again follow the same reasoning given for the Israeli failure to push through to the coast during "Operation Ten Plagues."<sup>63</sup>

The strongest disposition of the Egyptian forces was in the Gaza strip, and the Israelis definitely preferred an Egyptian evacuation of the area to a show-down battle in which the ultimate destruction of the enemy's forces would have been the objective. Had hostilities continued, there is a strong possibility that the Egyptian forces, faced with the possibility of being sealed off from their homeland by an Israeli breakthrough to the coast in the Rafah area, would have carried out an evacuation of the Gaza strip, just as they had one earlier with their forces based at Isdud and Majdal.

In summary, it could be said that the Egyptian weaknesses had centered around one main point - the concentration on a static defense position, lacking in depth, devoid of reserve strength, and an almost complete unawareness of what was happening a few miles distant from their defense lines. The Israelis, who were in the attack, had the benefit of being on the initiative, and consequently of being able to utilize the principles best suited to the weaknesses of the Egyptian defense-position. The subsequent employment of the principles of indirect strategy had had its effect and made its mark.

FOOTNOTES

1. O'Ballance, Edgar, The Arab-Israeli War-1948, p. 178;  
Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State, p. 295.
2. Yadin, General Y., "A Strategical Analysis of Last Year's Battles." (In Liddell Hart, B. H., Strategy-The Indirect Approach. Appendix II., p. 395.)
3. The distance from the junction to Huleiqat was only three and three-quarters miles.
4. Sacher, op. cit., p. 297.
5. Ibid., p. 297.
6. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 180.
7. Sacher, op. cit., p. 300; Pearlman, Moshe, The Army of Israel p. 207.
8. Sacher, op. cit., p. 298.
9. But see page 288 following.
10. Department of Public Information, Yearbook of the United Nations. 1948-1949, p. 178.
11. Yadin, op. cit., p. 389.
12. Lorch, Lt. Colonel N. "Narrative." (In Liddell Hart, B. H., Strategy-The Indirect Approach. Appendix II., p. 396.)
13. Liddell Hart, B. H., Strategy-The Indirect Approach, p. 339.
14. Lorch, op. cit., p. 387.
15. Although the main attack was not begun until 0400 hours on the morning of the 21st, the Israeli troops assumed their battle positions on the night of the 20th, approximately twelve hours after the capture of Huleiqat.
16. Liddell Hart, op. cit., p. 338.
17. Colonel Alon's from the north, and the reinforced Israeli mobile column, operating inside the Negev, from the south.

18. Glubb, John Bagot, A Soldier With the Arabs, p. 199.
19. Abdullah ibn al-Husayn, King Al-Takmilah--My Memoirs Completed, p. 26.
20. Glubb, op. cit., p. 199.
21. Ibid., p. 200.
22. Ibid., p. 201.
23. See page 276 *supra*.
24. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 185.
25. Sacher, op. cit., p. 300.
26. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 191.
27. See above.
28. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 192.
29. Department of Public Information, 1948-49, op. cit., p. 178.
30. Ibid., p. 178.
31. Ibid., p. 179.
32. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
33. Ibid., p. 181.
34. Ibid., p. 183.
35. Kirk, George, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 289.
36. See page 284 *supra*.
37. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 221.
38. Glubb, op. cit., p. 216.
39. Sacher, op. cit., p. 304.
40. As distinguished from that area of Palestine occupied by the Israeli forces, see O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 194.

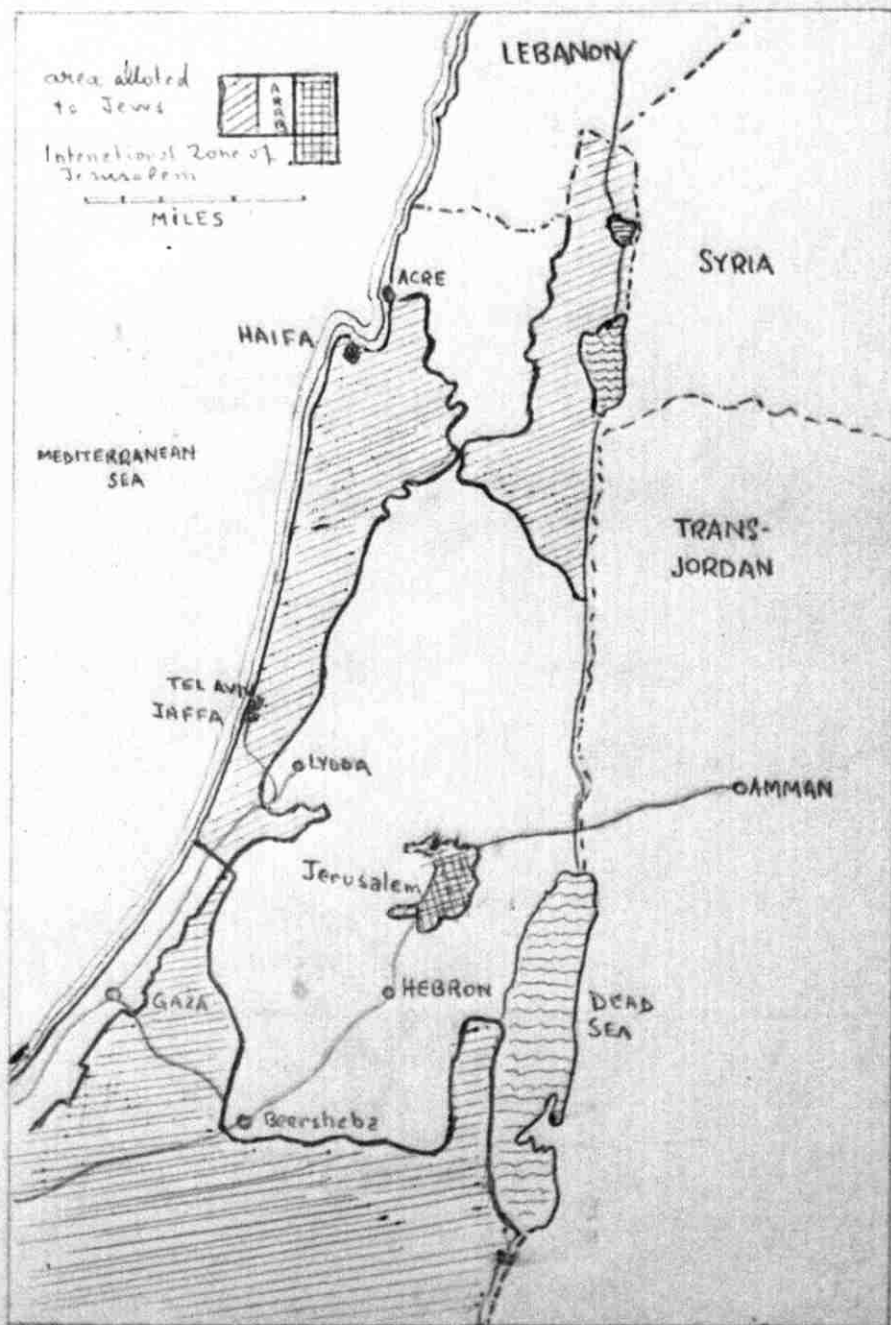
41. Kirk, op. cit., p. 290.
42. Shawran, Benjamin. "Jordan Annexes Palestine." Middle East Affairs. April, 1950.
43. Sacher, op. cit., p. 303.
44. Glubb, op. cit., p. 217. Sacher, op. cit., p. 304.
45. Sacher, op. cit., p. 304.
46. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 195.
47. Sacher, op. cit., pp. 304-305.
48. Ibid., p. 305; Glubb, op. cit., p. 217; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 195.
49. Pearlman, op. cit., pp. 221, 224, 226; Sacher, op. cit., pp. 304-305.
50. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 221.
51. Kirk, op. cit., p. 291.
52. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 226; Sacher, op. cit., p. 305, however, represents the Egyptians as demanding the withdrawal of the Israelis forces from the Negev; as does O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 198.
53. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 226.
54. Kirk, op. cit., p. 292.
55. Department of Public Information 1948-49, op. cit., p. 183.
- 55a. Sacher, op. cit., p. 305.
56. According to Pearlman, op. cit., p. 233, the Israeli commanders of the attack on al-Auja and Bir Asluj knew of the track as a result of the many months they had spent in the Negev while hunting and exploring as members of youth movements and of the Palmach.
57. O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 201; Yadin, op. cit., p. 399; Pearlman, op. cit., p. 237, describes one of the aircraft as a Spitfire.

58. Department of Public Information 1948-49, op. cit., p. 183.
59. Kirk, op. cit., p. 293, quotes Israeli sources such as Sacher, op. cit., p. 306, and Pearlman, op. cit., p. 241, as giving accounts of the continued presence of Israeli forces south of Rafah as late as 7 January 1949. A check of a map will reveal that this does not necessarily mean that Israeli forces were still occupying Egyptian territory, and could well have been within the territory of Palestine. Kirk, op. cit., p. 293, however, further reports that British air reconnaissances, which were being flown from the R.A.F. bases in the Canal Zone, were stated to have revealed a fresh Israeli incursion in strength into Egyptian territory on the 6th of January. Yadin, op. cit., p. 401, and O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 201, speak of Israeli forces "occupying a group of hills to the south of the al-Arish-Rafah-al-Auja roads," as late as January the 7th. This would definitely have put the Israelis in Egyptian territory at this late date.
60. Pearlman, op. cit., p. 237.
61. Kirk, op. cit., p. 293; O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 201; Mahmud Fahmi Nuqrashi, the former Egyptian Prime Minister had been assassinated by a member of the Ikwam al-Muslimum on December 28, 1948.
62. Department of Public Information 1948-49, op. cit., p. 184.
63. See pages 282-284, *supra*.



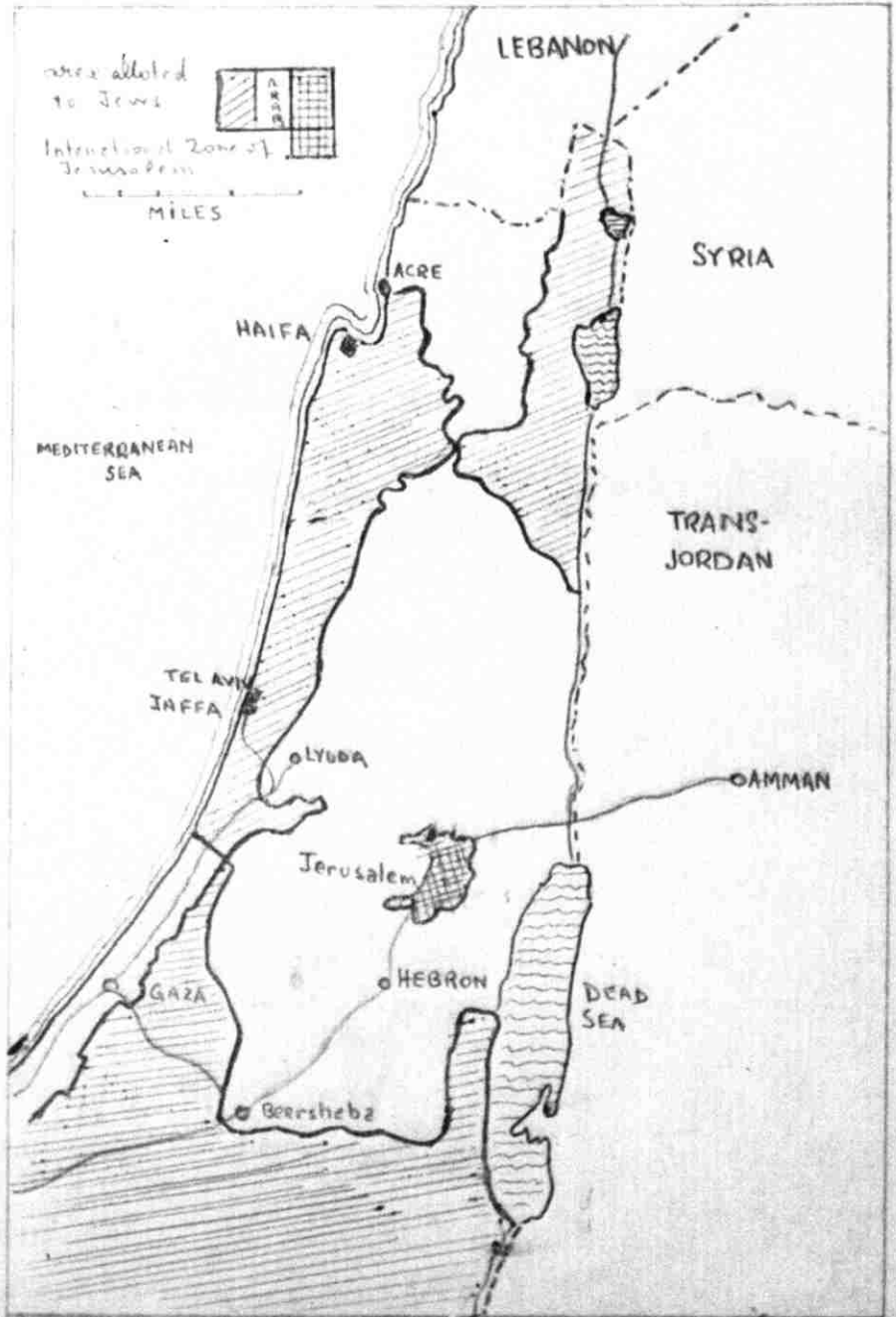
# ANNEX A.

## United Nations Partition Plan

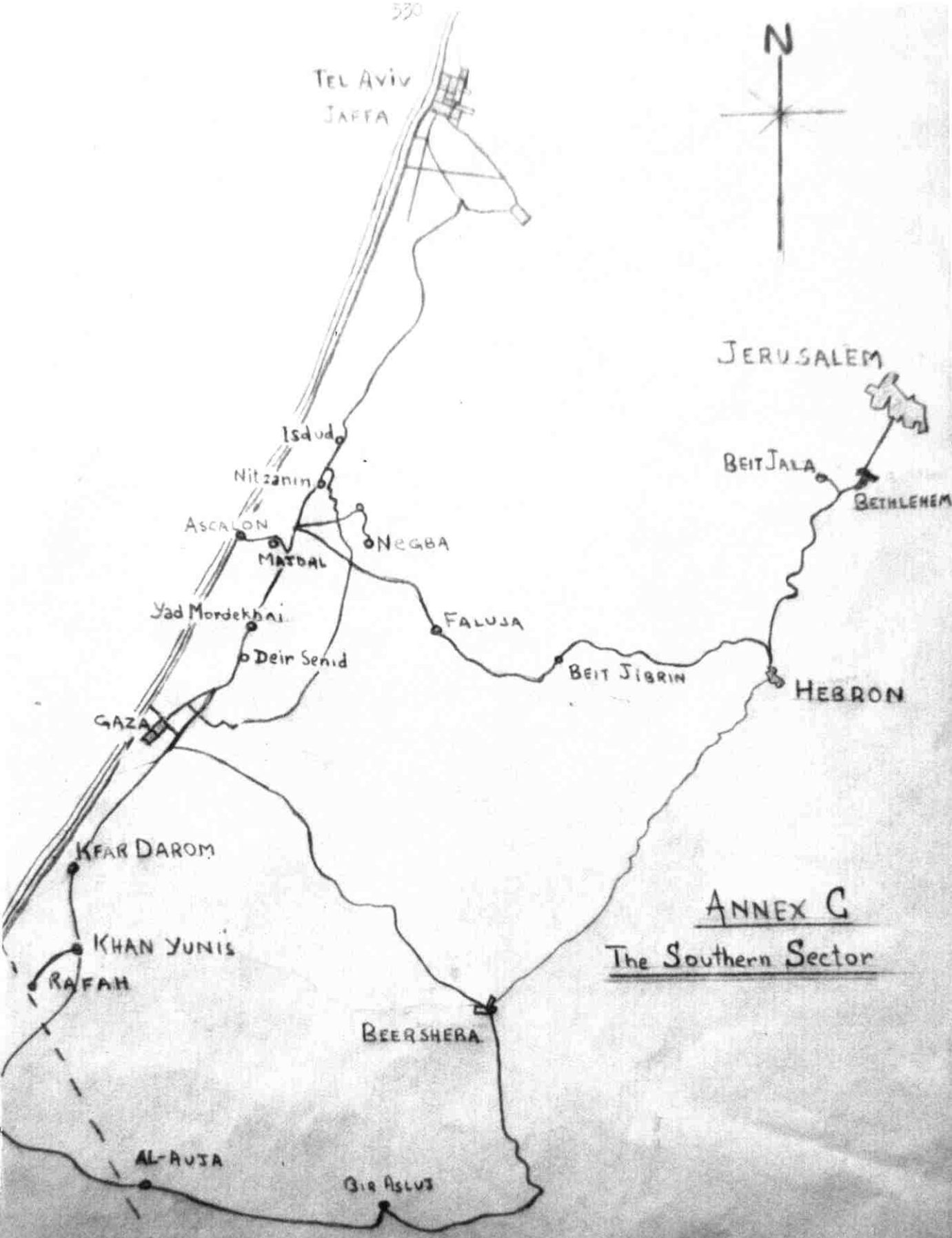


# ANNEX A.

## United Nations Partition Plan







JERUSALEM

BEIT JALA

BETHLEHEM

TEL AVIV  
JAFFA

Isdud

Nitzanin

ASCALON

MATDAL

NEGBA

Yad Mordekhai

Deir Senid

FALUJA

BEIT JIBRIN

HEBRON

GAZA

KEAR DAROM

KHAN YUNIS

RAFAH

BEERSHERA

AL-RUSA

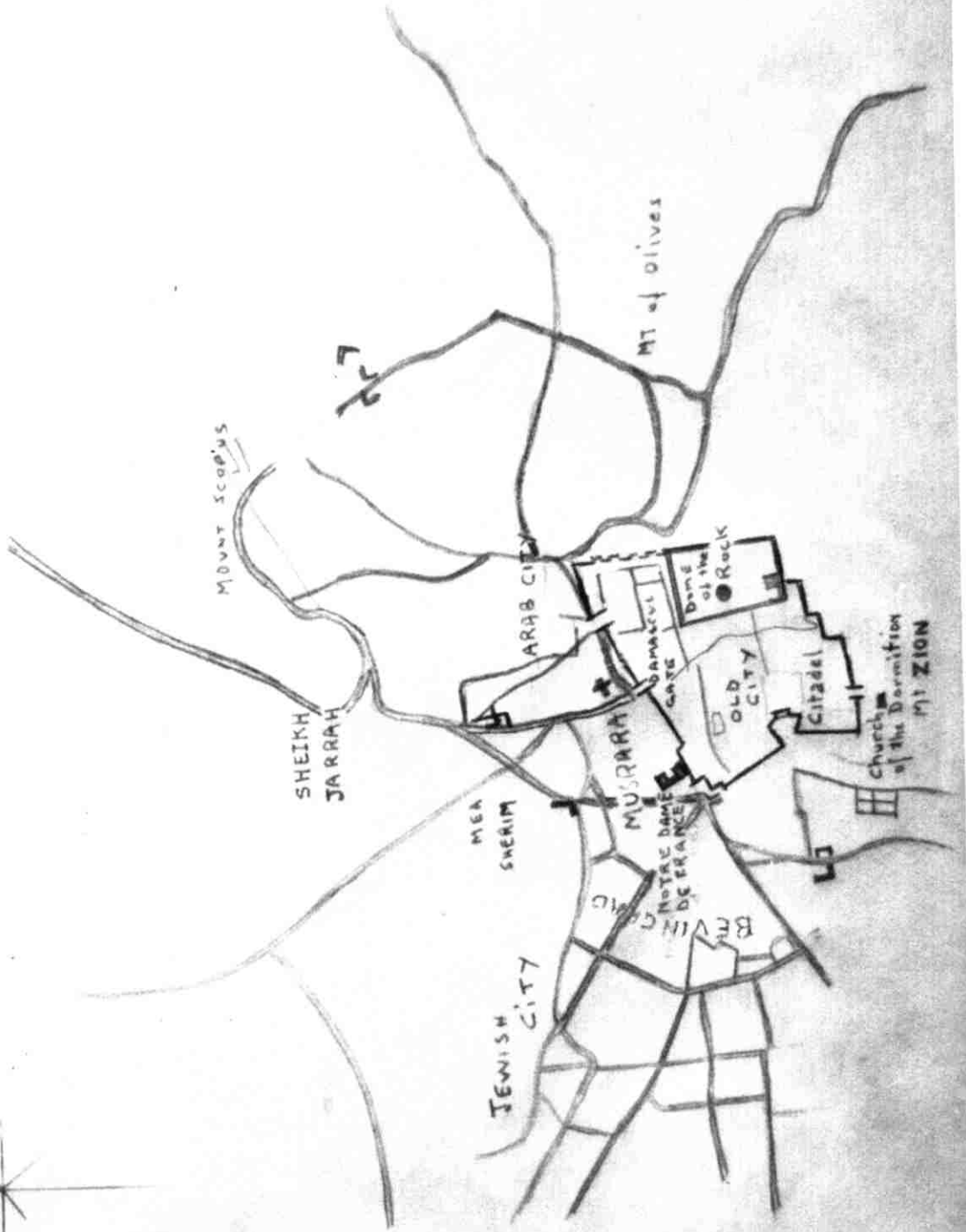
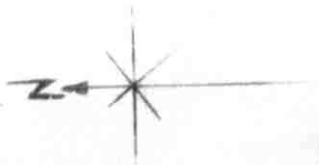
BIR ASLUJ

ANNEX C

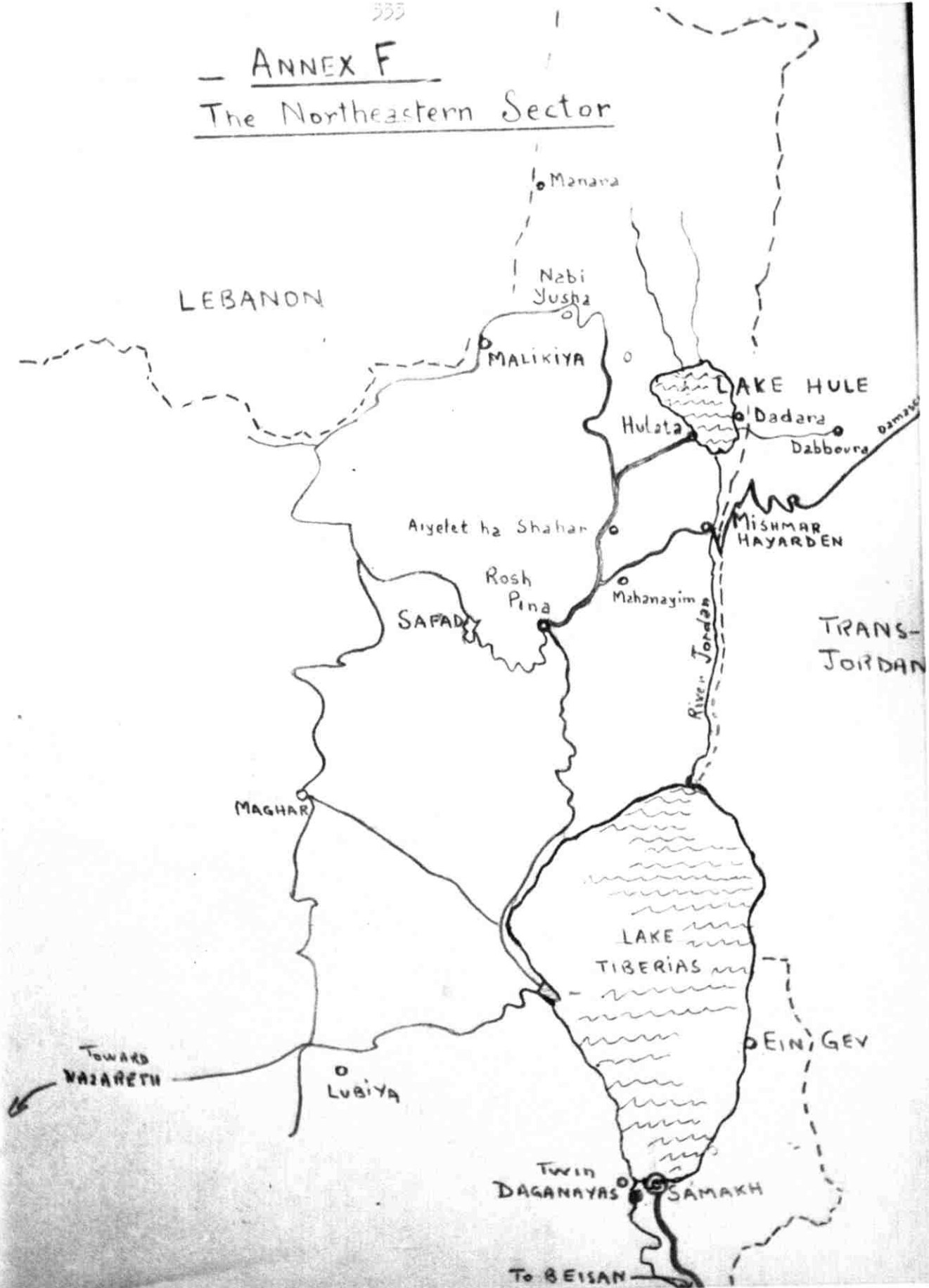
The Southern Sector

ANNEX D

Jerusalem

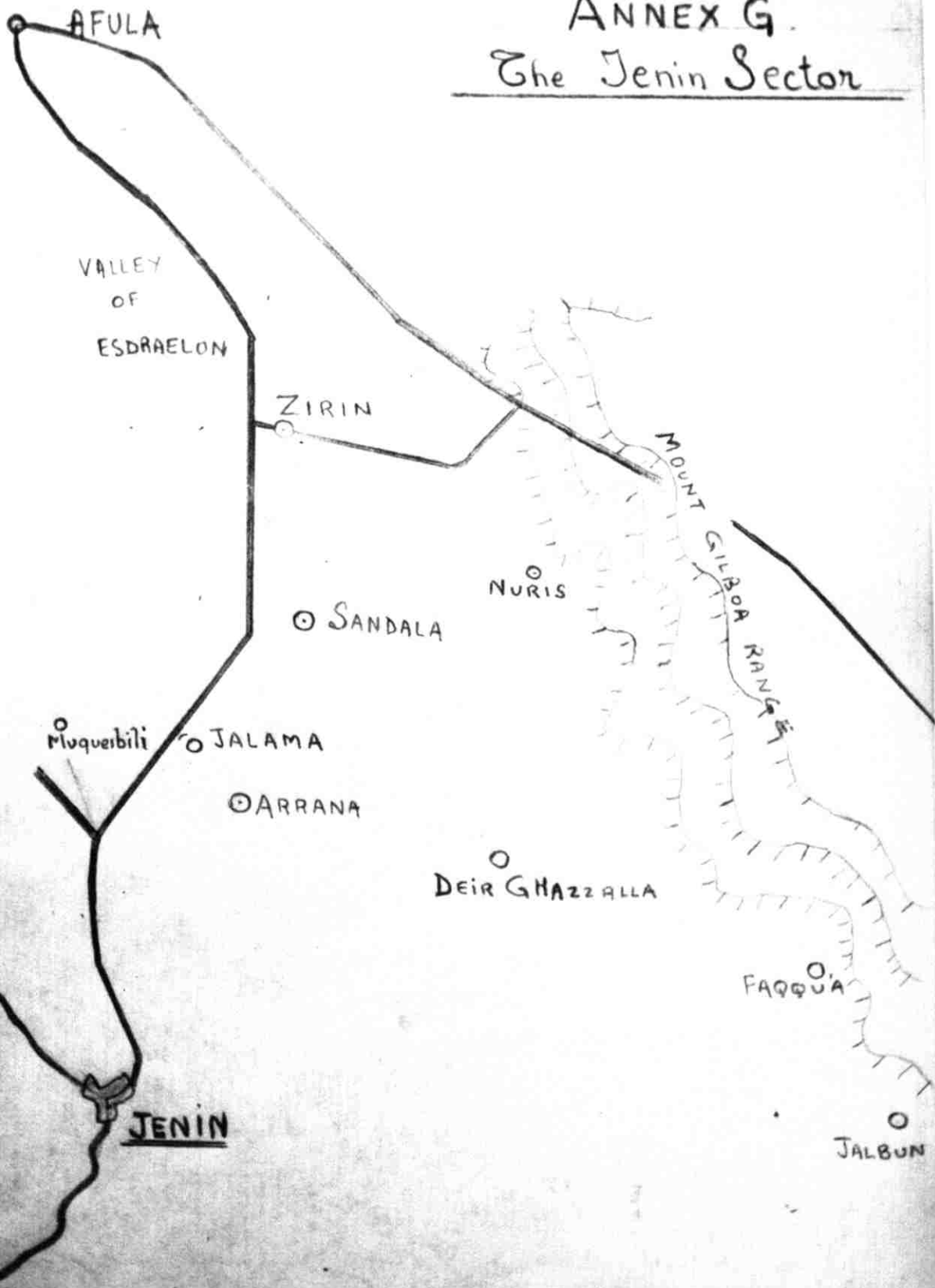


ANNEX F  
The Northeastern Sector



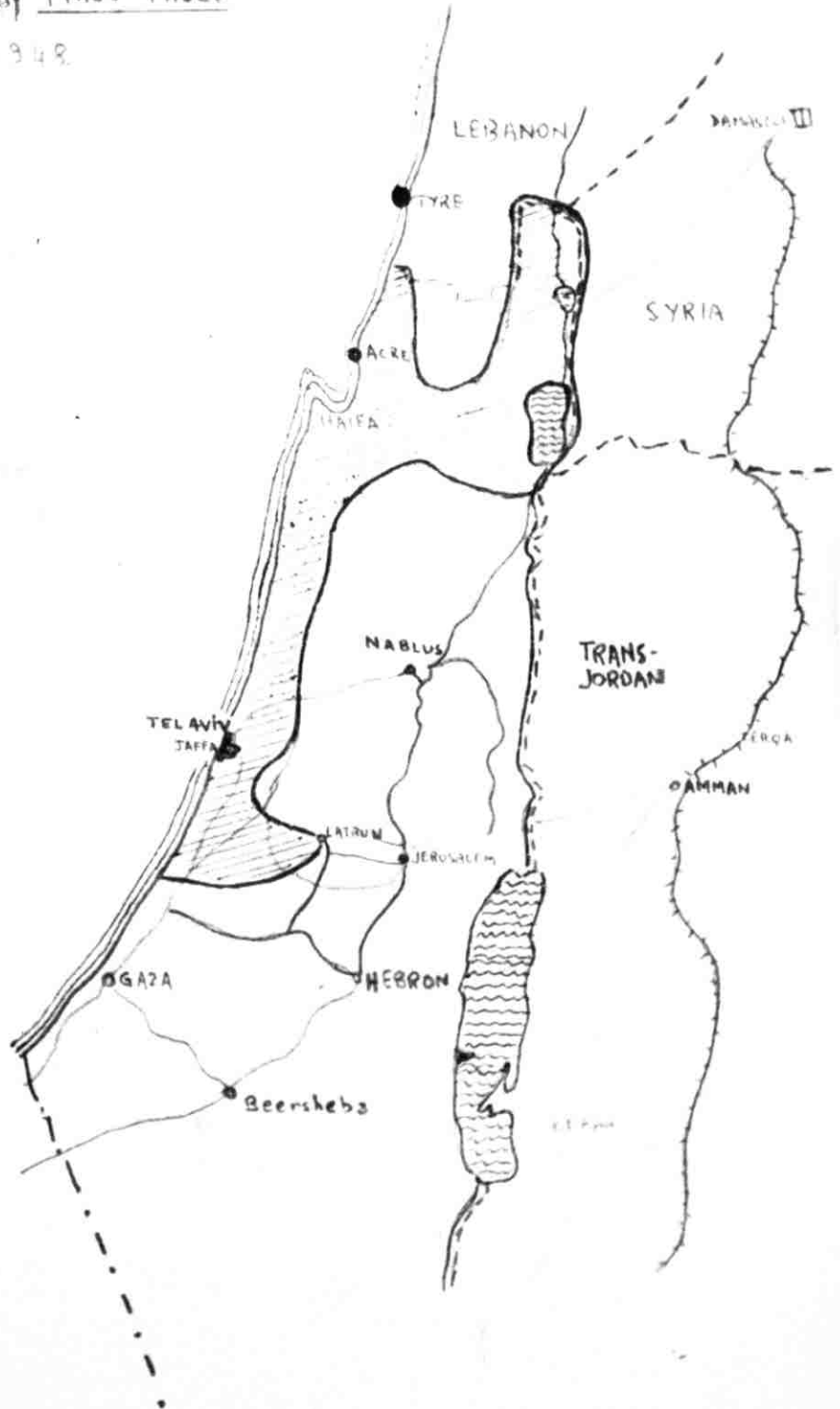
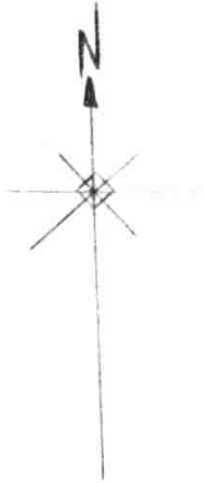
# ANNEX G.

## The Jenin Sector



# ANNEX H

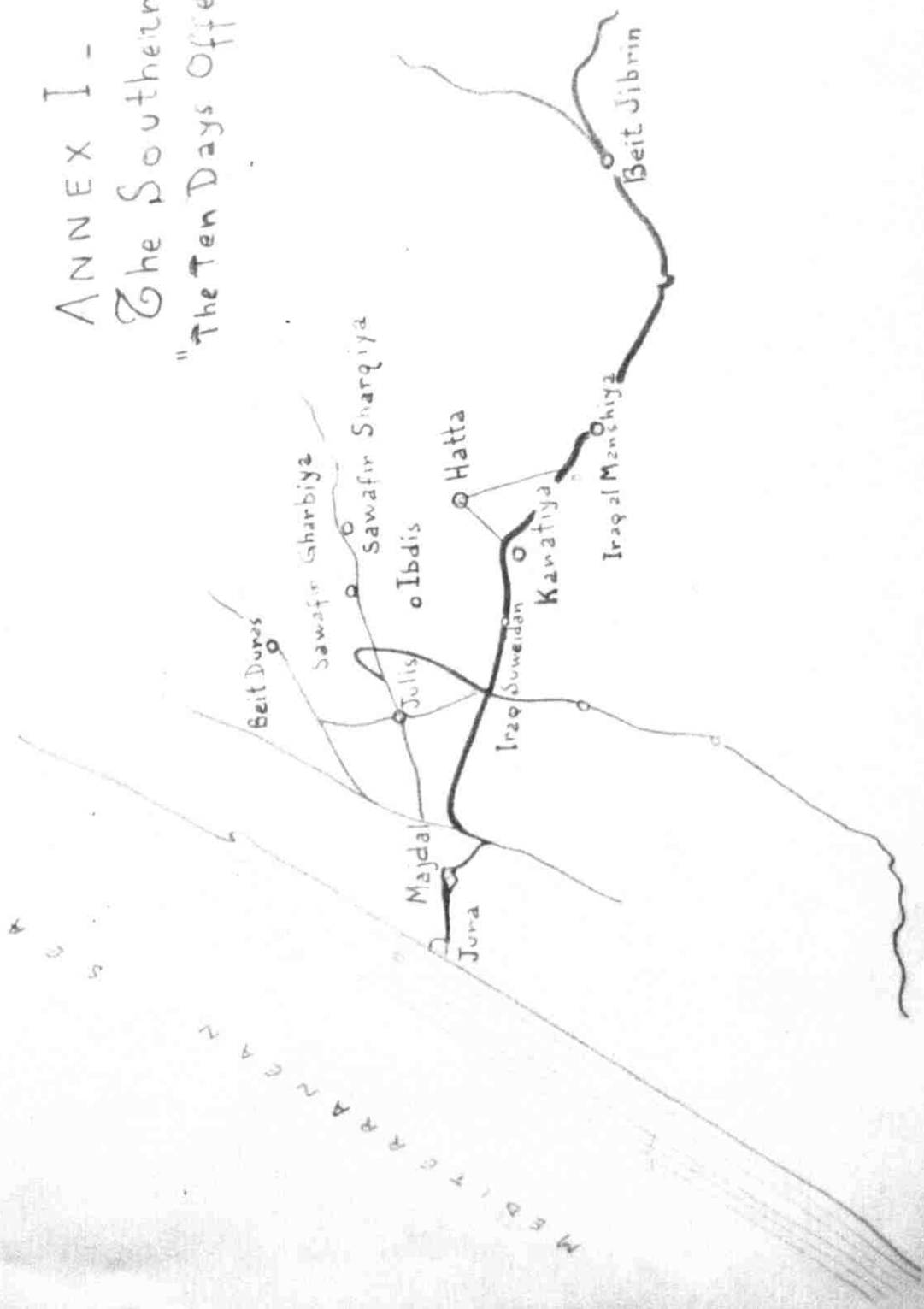
Situation at  
beginning of First Truce  
June 11<sup>th</sup> 1948.



ARAB	
JEW	

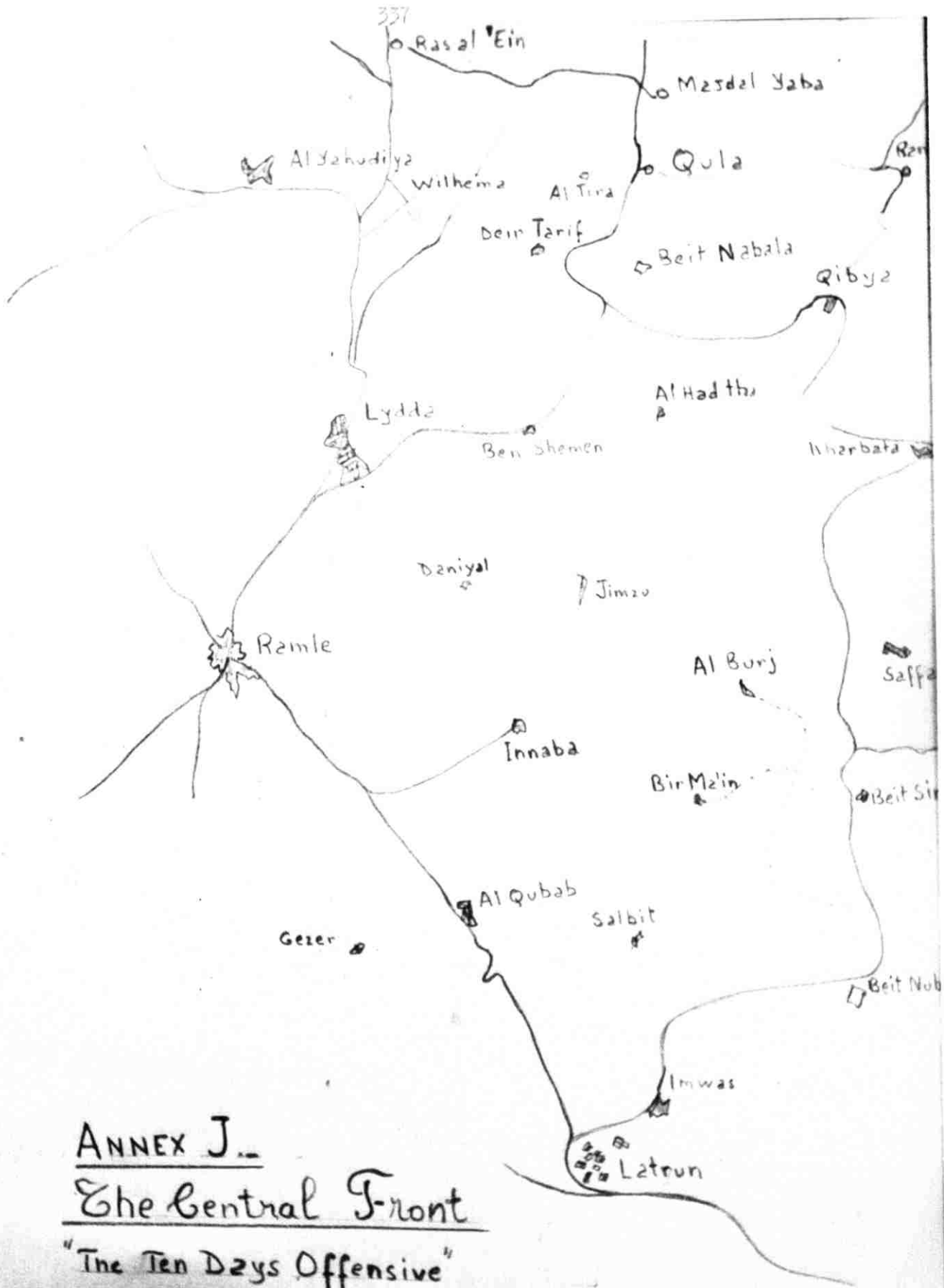


# ANNEX I - The Southern Front "The Ten Days Offensive"



4  
6  
5

M E D I T E R R A N E A N S E A



ANNEX J.  
The Central Front  
 "The Ten Days Offensive"



MEDITERRANEAN SEA



TIBERIAS  
o Nimrin

Lubiya

Segera

Turan

Shajara

Ein Mahil

NAZARETH

Ilt

AFULA

ESDRAELON

ANNEX L

WESTERN GALILEE  
"OPERATION DEKEL"

HAIFA

ACRE

Al-Makar

Kafar Yasif

Kuweikat

Abu Sinan

Tarshiha

Rama

Judeida

Birwa

Tel Kisan

Billin

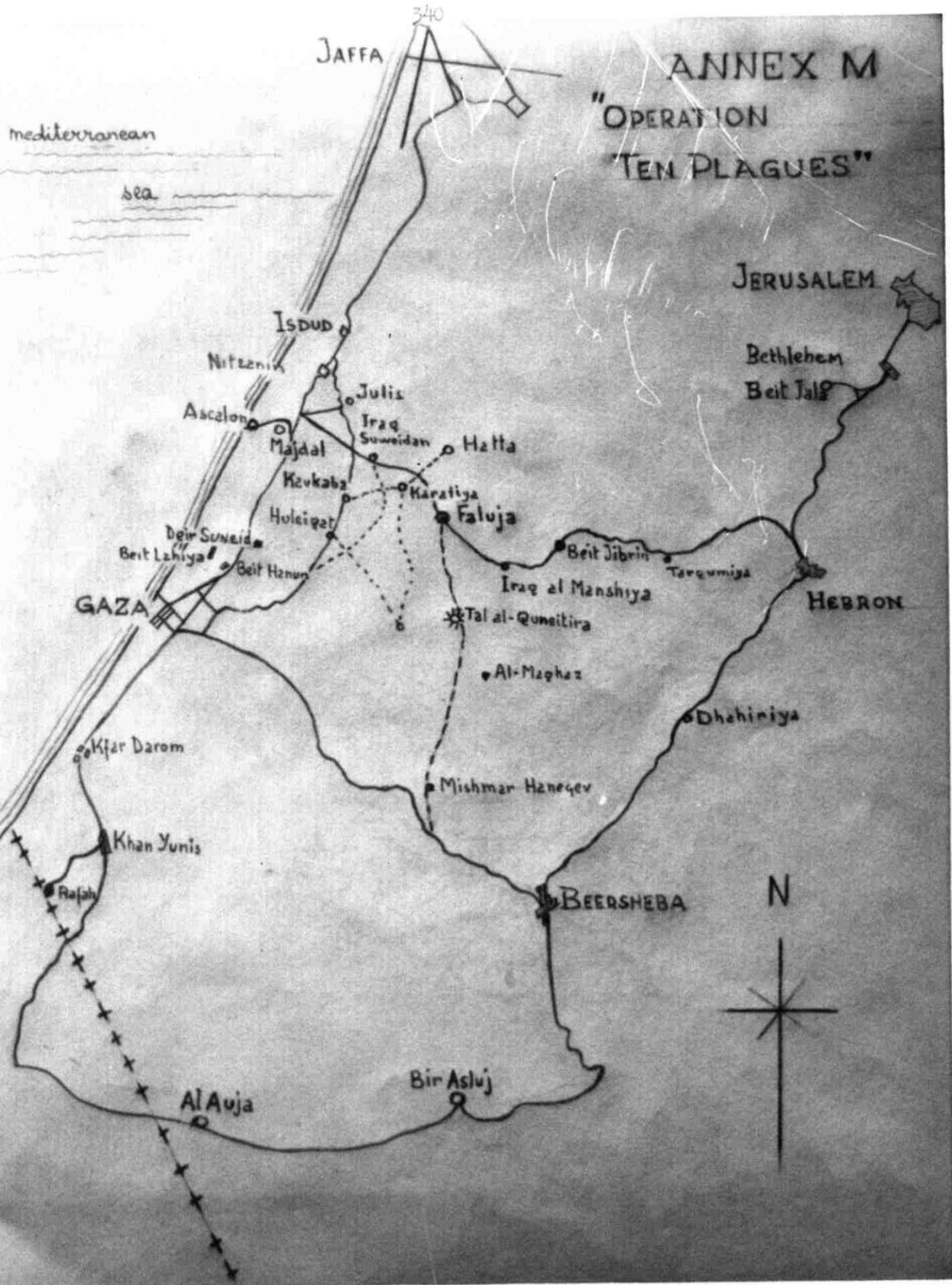
Shafa' Amr

Saffuriya

Kafar Kana

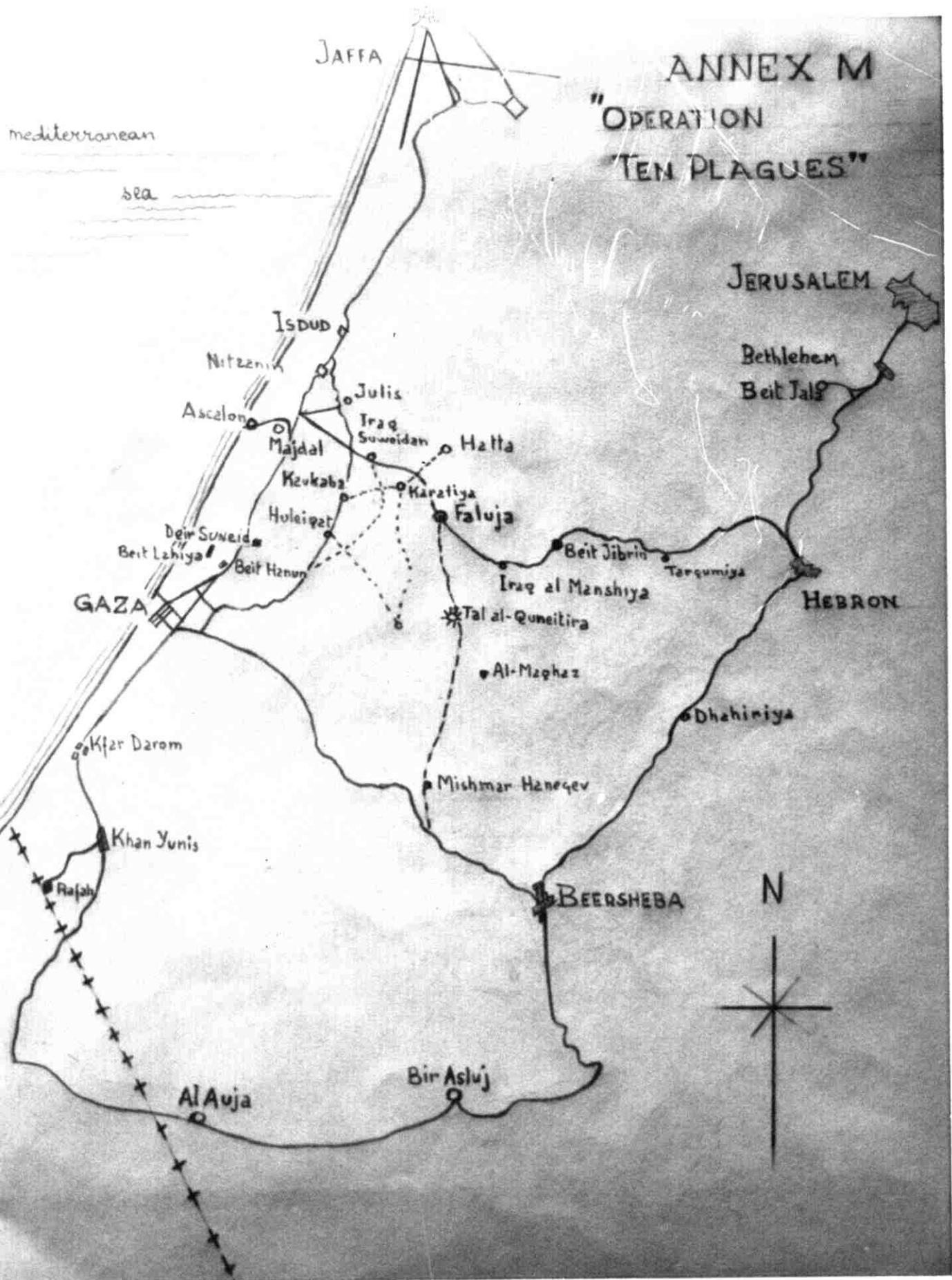
Mediterranean  
sea

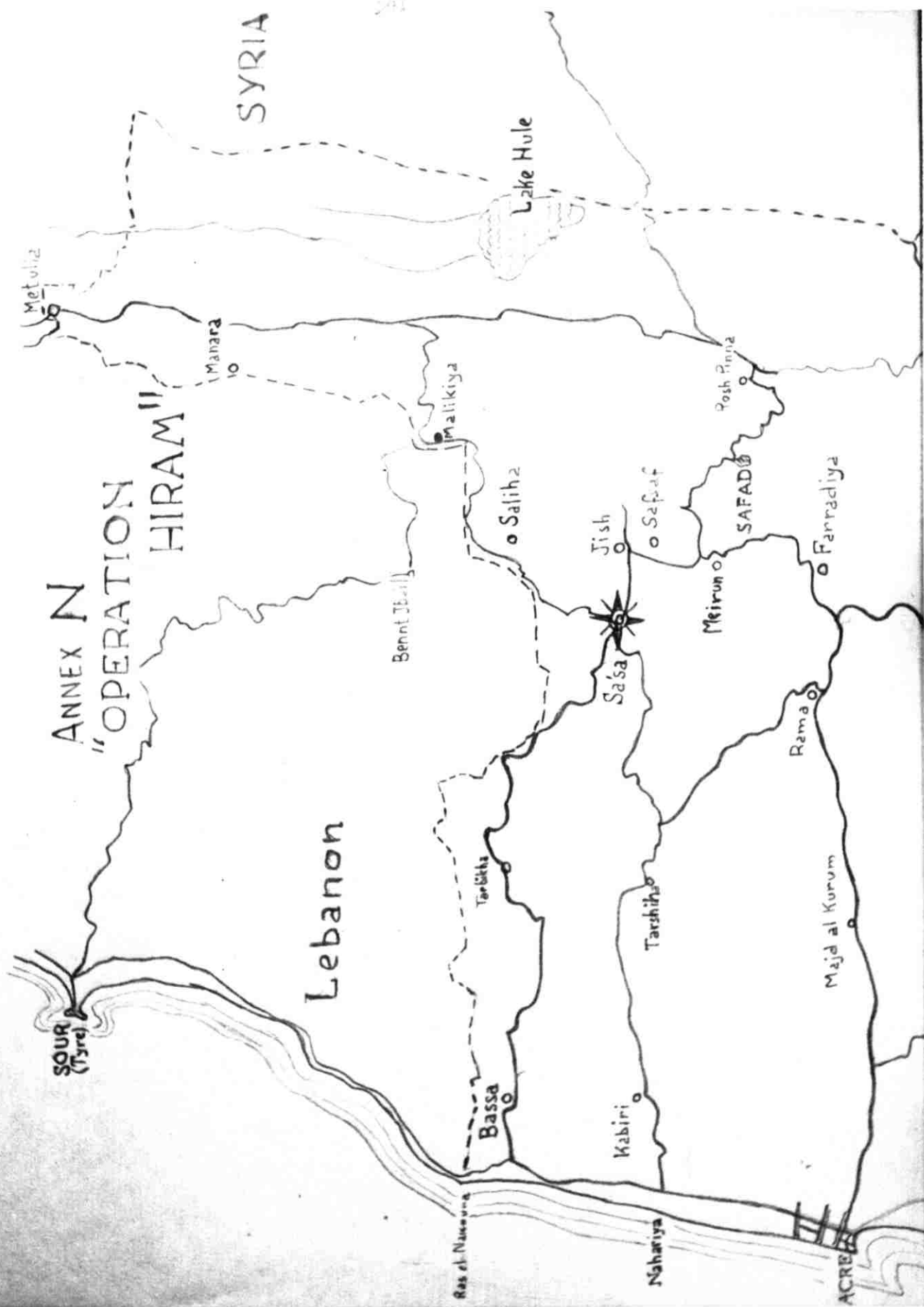
# ANNEX M "OPERATION TEN PLAGUES"



# ANNEX M "OPERATION TEN PLAGUES"

Mediterranean  
Sea





# ANNEX N "OPERATION HIRAM"

SYRIA

Lebanon

Lake Hule

Metuliz

Manara

Malikiya

Rosh Pinna

Bennt Jbul

Saliha

Jish

Safaf

SAFAD

Farradiya

Meirun

Sa'sa

Rama

Majd al Kurum

SOUR (Syria)

Ras el-Namrun

Kabiri

Tarchit

Bassa

Nahariya

ACRE





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