ARAB / ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE CASE OF
FATAH PARAMILITARY

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Abstract

This thesis provides a composite picture of the Islamic concept of intelligence traces the historical roots of Islamic intelligence activities and explains the (Ideological) relationship between the Islamic religion and the intelligence concept adhered to by modern Arab and Islamist paramilitary groups. Special reference is made to Fatah movement which has been taken up as a case study. The thesis shows that the two main sources of Islam (the Quran and the *Sunnah*) provided the regulative codes of practice towards intelligence activities. Prophet Muhammad's intelligence tradition offers the ideal model that the Arab / Islamic paramilitary groups emulate. Referring to the Islamic roots, the research seeks to point out that the hallmarks of the Islamic intelligence concept which emerged from the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's tradition, became the framework that accommodated 'Arab / Islamic modern paramilitary intelligence activities', such as Fatah's. The thesis uses the modern concept of the intelligence to identify the ancient activities and compares data process within the intelligence cycle. The range of activities is broad: clandestine collection, counterintelligence, analysis and dissemination, and covert action. It also introduces the Arab intelligence tradecraft such as the uses of safe houses, methods of communication, secrecy and concealments...etc. This thesis also aims to correct the perception that Arab intelligence concept developed after the emergence and expansion of the Islamic Empire.

Dates of Important Events

Birth of Prophet Muhammad	570
First Revelation	610
Muhammad's Ministry Begins	613
Muhammad Arrives in Medina	June 622
First Muslim Raids against Meccan Caravans	January 623
Raid near Rabigh	February 623
Banu Dhamra Raid	June-October 623
Other Muslim Raids	October 623
First Break with Jewish Tribes	November 623
Nakhla Raid	March 15, 624
Battle of Badr	April 624
Attack on Banu Quraidha (Jewish Tribe)	April 624
Battle of Uhud	March 625
Exile of Banu An-Nadheer	September 625
Battle of Khandag (Ditch)	March-April 627
Banu Lahyan Raid	January 628
The Truce of Hudaibiya	March 628
Conquest of Kheibar	September 628
Battle of Mu'ta	September 629
Muhammad's Omra Pilgrimage to Mecca	February 629
Capture of Mecca	January 630
Battle of Hunayn	February 630
Death of Prophet Muhammad	June 632
Arab-Israeli War	1948
Suez invasion	1956
Fatah Establishment	1959
Foundation of PLO	Jun 1964
Arab/ Israeli War (six days war)	June 1967
Battle of Karameh	March 1968
Yasser Arafat Chairing the PLO	February 1969
PLO War of attrition	1969-1970
Black September	1970

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Intelligence has since time immemorial played a significant role in defending both states and paramilitary groups. Through intelligence, many dangers and threats both foreign and domestic were averted. In providing forecasts, reliable information on all manner of issues and threats, states and paramilitary organizations become better equipped to make appropriate decisions and carry out policies aimed at achieving their own agendas.[1] Across history intelligence has always proved to be of vital importance not only to politicians and policy makers but also to military leaders as well: Its effective use has led to the "killing or saving of millions."[2]

History also indicates that no insurgency can survive without an effective intelligence capability.[3] It is axiomatic that in order to survive and carry on fighting for their cause, large and well-organized paramilitary organizations depend on the collection and analysis of intelligence.[4] These secretive organizations develop highly sophisticated intelligence, counter-intelligence and security systems as well as programmes for covert political action and overt use of violence. They resort to these tactics in order to achieve their political, psychological and morale-boosting purposes.

A paramilitary group is defined by the DOD *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* as "a force or group distinct from the regular armed forces of any country, but resembling them in organization, equipment, training, or mission".[5] In practical usage, however, the term has come to apply to everything from self-defence forces or UK Home Guard-style militias, to counter-guerrilla "death squads". Throughout this study, it will be used in its broadest sense: "a group of civilians organized to function like a military unit" in implementing guerrilla agendas including terrorist tactics and carrying out specific duties. These duties include, on the dark side, acts of violence, sabotage, hijacking, subversion, kidnapping, assassination, raiding private or state-owned facilities and more recently, suicide-bombing.

The strategies and activities of paramilitary groups have attracted the attention of academic researchers as well as veteran soldiers in the field of combating terrorism. Interest in this vital issue has significantly intensified since the atrocities of September 11, 2001 and the Jihadist attacks in Spain, the UK and elsewhere. These tragic events have generated a deep controversy about how much or how little information we have about the terrorists and their organizations.[6]

A wealth of scholarship and in-depth case studies dealing with terrorist or paramilitary groups has appeared, but most such studies have concentrated on discussing or analyzing aspects such as their ideological, social or political background, fundraising tactics, supporters, methods of arms procurement, leaderships and operations, while not enough attention has been paid to the investigation of their organizational structure, security systems or intelligence apparatuses. The dearth of scholarship on such paramilitary matters may be explained by the immense difficulties which researchers encounter when attempting to access documents containing highly sensitive and confidential information. Beside the multilayered secrecy with which security and intelligence matters are surrounded, paramilitary members are loath to offer any assistance to researchers for fear that they might be liquidated if they were even perceived to have divulged any secrets pertaining to their organizations.

The present study will examine how one particular Arab paramilitary group handles intelligence activities such as clandestine collection, analysis and dissemination, counterintelligence and covert action. The study will argue for and demonstrate the relevance of an Arab / Islamic concept of intelligence which has afforded Islamic and Arab paramilitary groups a rich and accessible model whose practices and approaches they have freely drawn upon and emulated. Further, it will be argued that rather than any foreign influence, Fatah's intelligence doctrine reflects an Arab / Islamic approach. The research will then focus on tracing this concept among the leaders of one of the most important Arab and Islamic paramilitary groups, Fatah, which will be taken as a case study. It will be seen that the paramilitary groups which mushroomed in the Arab and Islamic world after World War II and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 have exerted immense efforts to build and develop security and intelligence organs in order that they may influence the course of events at the regional and international levels. In implementing their intelligence activities, these organizations have been inspired by the rich Islamic heritage which constituted an intellectual and doctrinal frame of reference. Despite the modern technical and technological advances achieved in intelligence work, to these paramilitary groups, the Islamic heritage is, as it were, the foundation stone upon which they based their concept of intelligence and a benchmark for their plans.

To most zealous Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and other religious groups, the main source of intelligence concept remained unaffected and unchanged by the developments across the ages, being deemed to be good for all ages and circumstances. For

example, the Quran (the Holy Book of Islam) legitimizes intelligence work, especially when it involves hardships, sacrifices or risks taken in defence of Islam

> Nothing could they [Muslims] suffer or do, but was reckoned to their credit as a deed of righteousness, whether they suffered thirst, or fatigue, or hunger, in the cause of Allah, or trod paths to raise the ire of the Unbelievers, or received any injury whatever from an enemy: for Allah suffereth not the reward to be lost of those who do good.[7]

This verse according to Quranic commentator, Muhammad Alqasimi, refers to the fact that to defend the faith Allah enjoins Muslims to inflict as much damage upon the enemy as possible and that the more the intelligence workers are exposed to hazards and perils, the closer they get to obtaining divine rewards from Allah for the efforts they exert.[8]

While the Quran contains the basic moral and legal principles which regulate intelligence work, Prophet Muhammed's *Sunnah* represents a second source and a set of practical examples embodying the Quranic tenets and rules. In Islam, it is incumbent upon all believers to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammed and refrain from disobeying his call. Those who respond positively are promised ample reward in this life and the next. In the national conscience of the Muslims, "Muhammed was a great fighter and skilful military commander"[9] whose "memory persists in the minds of modern Jihadis".[10]

The third source is jurisprudence and its process of '*Ijtihad*', which means exercising one's judgment in deriving and deducing religious opinion on some point that is not mentioned in the Quran or in Prophet Muhammed's traditions. *Ijtihad* is based upon a widely accepted principle in jurisprudence which permits individuals to do all that is not expressly prohibited by Allah or Prophet Muhammed. In the fields of intelligence and security, *Ijtihad* provides much needed flexibility and freedom to do all that is in the interest of the Muslims anywhere and at any time. In theory, this is intended to reconcile Islam with all new inventions and technologies, provided that these do not run counter to the Islamic tenets contained in the Quran and Traditions.

The Islamic concept of intelligence played a significant part in initiating the intelligence activities of the Islamic organizations. It provided the leaders of Islamic and nationalist organizations a model and a living example for their own intelligence apparatuses to follow and emulate. Fatah's reliance on the Islamic model when setting up its apparatuses and carrying out clandestine activities by all possible means was a major factor behind its success as an intelligence actor.

Islamic intelligence activities did not themselves arise *ex nihilo*; the early Islamic intelligence work was an extension and continuation of the clandestine activities of pre-

Islamic Arabia. In those early times, in communities where allegiance to the tribal leader was of paramount importance, able-bodied men with special capabilities were employed to carry out specific intelligence duties against rival tribes. These men, variously called *'Uyoun' (eyes),* *'Rabee'a'* (gazing observer), *'Tala'e'* (herald), and *'Adila'* (scouts), were instrumental not only in achieving victory against their master's enemies but also in strengthening his grip over his own tribesmen. Tribal leaders relied heavily on them, especially in times of crisis and tribal warfare. The *Rabee'a,* for example, performed a task akin to that of the present-day early warning device: his duty was specifically confined to watching the land of the enemy from a distance. The *Tala'e* were employed as scouts whose duties were to survey a battlefield before launching a raid against a specific target.[11] Despite their crude and as yet undeveloped methods, these intelligence activities and military tactics served their purpose and responded to the needs of the ancient communities. In point of fact, they constitute an intelligence concept which reflected the prevalent culture and circumstances of those communities and can rightly be called the precursor of the Islamic concept of intelligence.

To the Islamic paramilitary groups of our present time, which have no fixed or declared headquarters and which mainly operate underground and couch their plans in total secrecy, the early Arab intelligence practices afforded a readily available model and intellectual frame of reference. When setting up their intelligence apparatuses, these paramilitaries draw their inspiration from the practices of Prophet Muhammed. To them, all the laws and rulings governing intelligence work are set forth in the Quran and *Sunnah*. Among the numerous paramilitary groups in the Arab world, some, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and *Hamas*, have always been linked to Islam, while others operate under deep cover, professing secularism although their core ideology is Islam. Of these, the most significant paramilitary group is the Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fatah.

Fatah is among the most prominent Middle Eastern paramilitary groups and has been a player on the regional and international scenes over the last five decades. The present investigation will focus on this organization in order to find answers to a number of questions. Chief among these is whether Fatah possesses an intelligence capability and of what sort? i.e. whether it has a special apparatus or apparatuses entrusted with the task of executing intelligence and security duties. This investigation will examine the templates or doctrine of intelligence employed by Fatah and will also assess whether it succeeded or failed in its pursuit of intelligence activities. In drawing up a composite picture of Fatah's intelligence doctrine, the roots of the Organization's leaders and cadres who were tasked to

construct and supervise the intelligence apparatuses of the organization at various points in history will be investigated.

Until January 2006, when *Hamas*, *Harakat al-Muqāwamat al -Islāmiyyah*, "Islamic Resistance Movement" scored a landslide victory in the Palestinian general elections, over the main Palestinian paramilitary group, which had always been at the head of the movement for Palestinian national independence, was Fatah. This latter group was, until the Oslo negotiations in the early 1990s, considered a terrorist organization, particularly in Israel. But this was not the case throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds and in much of the wider international community. Indeed, as early as the mid-seventies, the umbrella organization which Fatah led and operated under, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was accorded observer status at the UN General Assembly in 1974[12] and Israel later recognized it as a legitimate partner in the Middle East peace process. Furthermore, Fatah has since 1974 not appeared on the US State Department list of terrorist organizations.

The choice of Fatah as the subject of a pilot case study is based on the group's success and strength as an organization espousing armed struggle which has shown considerable ability to organize political and intelligence tactics to achieve its objectives. The organization has furthermore evinced a well-established structure, consistency and resilience over decades, and has carried out numerous operations, which have had a noticeable impact not only on Israel but also on the wider Middle East region, particularly in Syria and Lebanon.

The other reason for this choice was the striking resemblance between the circumstances under which the non-state based Fatah movement rose on the Middle Eastern political scene and those under which early Islam rose and grew in stature and influence in Mecca and Medina. The displacement, suffering and persecution to which the founders of Fatah were subjected at the hands of the occupation forces were to a large degree similar to Quraishi persecution of those who embraced the new religion. Like the early converts to Islam who felt compelled to resort to armed struggle in order to defend their faith and build their own state, the Fatah leaders espoused armed struggle as a legitimate way to wrest back their lands and live as a free nation.

From its inception in the late 1950's, Fatah's strategic aim of liberating the occupied lands and the holy Aqsa Mosque, which in Islam is third only to Mecca and Medina, won the movement many followers and supporters in Palestine and throughout the Arab and Muslim world. This ambitious objective echoes the aims of the early Muslims

who strove under Prophet Muhammed's banner to liberate the Kaaba from the clutches of the polytheist Quraishis and return to Mecca from which they had been forcefully evicted.

A glance at the history of Fatah will show that there are three distinct stages through which it passed before it finally crowned its achievements with the creation in 1993 of the Palestinian Authority. These stages are first the clandestine underground stage, which was marked by absolute secrecy. During this period the Fatah founders, like their Muslim predecessors, resorted to extreme caution when approaching new recruits. They also employed such intelligence tradecraft as concealment and safe houses. Fatah's first safe house in Kuwait is but a latter day "Dar Al-Arqam", the first hideaway in Islam.

This period was followed by the "open" stage during which the Fatah leaders were actively engaged in consolidating and widening their power base, especially in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Just as Prophet Muhammed's followers were brutally victimized, subjected to severe reprisals and forced to flee their homes in Mecca when it was felt that they constituted a threat to Quraishi hegemony, the Fatah followers too had a similar fate. They were meted out heavy blows in 1970 in what Palestinians and their sympathizers now call "Black September". During that eventful month, the Jordanian military launched a massive assault on Palestinian positions in Jordan when it was perceived that Fatah and other Palestinian groups posed a threat to the authority of the Jordanian crown and government. During this open stage Fatah was in point of fact operating under immense pressures from Arab regimes which were, despite all ostentations and pretentions, quite suspicious of and hostile towards Fatah, especially as Fatah's aggressive strategies and initiatives snatched the Palestinian card away from the hands of these regimes which had always sought to exploit the Palestinian issue for their own private interests.

The third stage during which Fatah embarked upon establishing a new stronghold in Lebanon resulted in the creation of what the Lebanese negatively refer to as the "Fakahani Republic". This echoes the efforts exerted by the early Muslims to use their newly established state in Medina as a power base and springboard for their return to Mecca which they indeed were able to do when they conquered it or "opened" (Ar. Fatah) it eight years later. The choice of the Arabic word "Fatah" for the new Palestinian movement is therefore laden with significance as the name is both highly emotive and steeped in Islamic history and the national consciousness of the Arabs.

There are other parallels as well. On the military level, the first battle waged by the Muslims against the polytheists of Quraish was that of Badr in which the Muslims scored a

decisive victory against a formidable army which greatly outnumbered them. While it cannot be claimed that the Palestinians scored a victory against the Israeli forces in their first large scale encounter with them at Karameh (1968), the fact remains that the Palestinian fighters stood up to the invading Israeli army and put up quite a tough resistance that frustrated the invaders' intention of uprooting the military bases of Fatah. Moreover and in some ways far more significant is the fact that the Fatah leaders who were all practicing if not devout Muslims, never ceased to emulate the ways of Prophet Muhammed and the early builders of Islam who always punctuated their discourse with verses from the Quran or quotes from the sayings of Prophet Muhammed.

The main focus of the research will be to investigate how Fatah's intelligence apparatus or apparatuses functioned from the Organization's inception in 1959 until 1993, when the PLO signed the Oslo Accords which were the base for the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians.. The research will also seek to elucidate the conception and approach to intelligence which the Fatah leaders adhered to and attempted to put into practice. This can perhaps be best determined by studying the roots of those leaders and cadres who were tasked to construct and supervise the intelligence apparatuses of the organization at various points in history. The study will also attempt to establish whether Fatah adopts the same intelligence activities and tactics as those employed by specialized national intelligence services. One of the principal functions of such a study is to demonstrate that Fatah's approach to intelligence is rooted in a uniquely Arab and Islamic view of the subject which is rooted in the early history of Arabia.

The thesis is made up of ten chapters the first of which contains an introduction, an examination of the theoretical background to the case study, a literature review and an account of the methodology employed. It also expounds the mechanism and preparatory measures adopted in order to carry out the case study in which the intelligence machinery of Fatah will be shown as analogous and akin to the Arab Islamic intelligence model. This will be done through examining the performance of Fatah's different intelligence organs and investigating the social and political backgrounds of those Palestinians who planned and oversaw Fatah's intelligence work from the creation of its first clandestine apparatus to the Oslo Peace accord of 1993 when all security and intelligence organs were restructured and unified.

In Chapter 2 the early evidence of intelligence activities in the Arabian Peninsula is discussed. The epigraphy of the ancient Qahtani realm in southern Arabia confirms its

capabilities in military intelligence. The employment of spies and secret agents is well attested by documents dating back to pre-Islamic times. By resorting to espionage and spycraft, the Qahtanis were able to survive in the hostile environment of the arid plateaus of the Peninsula. Admittedly, very little is known of the history of ancient southern Arabia,[13] but it is clear from surviving evidence that inhabitants of the central and northern parts of the peninsula practiced primitive intelligence, not only when they found themselves at war with each other but also for economic and survival purposes.

The importance given to intelligence in the Quran will be taken up in Chapter 3 which will also examine the legitimacy of intelligence work in Islam. Since the Quran is considered the primary source of legislation and the ultimate source of legal, spiritual and moral guidance for Muslims, many verses are cited, referred to and explored. It will be seen that a number of Quranic Surahs (chapters) refer to intelligence work and draw clear demarcation lines between admissible and inadmissible practices. The Quran furthermore contains numerous parables and moral lessons given either in a direct didactic way or through narratives such as that which relates the story of King Solomon and the hoopoe in which the intelligence cycle and the elements of the intelligence report can easily be identified.

The next chapter focuses on the clandestine activities of Prophet Muhammed in the light of the modern definition of intelligence activities, which include clandestine collection, counterintelligence, analysis and dissemination, and covert action. Details are given of the Prophet's intelligence practices during the three stages of the Islamic revelation. The chapter begins with what is called in Islamic literature 'the secret stage', when Prophet Muhammed started approaching individuals and inviting them to follow Islam secretly, followed by an account of his second-stage activities, i.e. his peaceful call to Islam, and then the 'Medina stage' when soon after his migration from Mecca he established the nucleus of the Islamic state.

The military intelligence of wars and incursions led by Prophet Muhammed himself or by one of his military commanders will be focused on in Chapter 5. Special attention is paid to the three major battles led by Prophet Muhammed: Badr, Uhud and Khandaq. Of all the battles fought during Prophet Muhammed's lifetime, these three abound with clandestine intelligence activities. Some of these activities were purely military such as scouting in order to identify and make use of the advantages afforded by the topography of battlefield terrain. Other activities included employment of agents to obtain information, execution of

clandestine operations through which Prophet Muhammed succeeded in breaking down alliances against him.

Chapter 6 discusses in some detail the intelligence skills of the early Islamic period. Among the wide range of issues considered are security and counterintelligence, the mechanisms by which the Arabs communicated intelligence (such as coded signals, written and verbal messages) the use of safe houses to provide havens for clandestine gatherings, secrecy and concealment, bribes, intrigue and disinformation techniques, diversion, deception, speed of movement and allies as intelligence sources.

The part played by Islamic jurisprudence and *Ijtihad* (judgement) as a source of legislation is discussed in Chapter 7. The chapter will examine the attitude of some Islamic schools of thought towards intelligence. It will also take up the rules governing intelligence work in Dar Al-Islam (Land of the Muslims) and Dar Al-Harb (Land of the Infidels).The chapter will also touch upon the punishment meted out to Muslims and non-Muslims involved in inadmissible espionage activities

The intellectual and ideological roots of those who set up the intelligence apparatuses in Fatah are traced in Chapter 8. Their links with the Islamist groups operating on the Arab political scene at the time of Fatah's inception will be closely examined. In discussing this issue an attempt will be made to assess any influence the Islamist movement may have had on the intellectual framework within which Fatah's leaders operated.

The security and intelligence apparatuses of Fatah are then examined in the following chapter. It will be seen that the founders of Fatah realized from the time they launched their underground organization on 10th October 1959 that its success depended to a large extent on collecting information not only on Israel but also on the Arab countries. It will also be seen that the intentions of the Arab leaders were of particular interest to Fatah. Those who had lost the 1948 war against Israel were acting as if they were guardians of the Palestinian people. They succeeded neither on the military and political scenes, nor were they able to improve the economic and living conditions of the Palestinians. Fatah continued to operate underground until it went public, when it started to build its first intelligence apparatus, which soon came to rival its Arab counterparts. Within a few years, Fatah's intelligence capabilities had developed to such a degree that some of the great powers sought Fatah's help to safeguard their interests in the region. There were of course many security failings, especially in Fatah's lacklustre inability to protect its own leaders, who were hunted down by Israel one after the other.

The conclusion and recommendations of this study are presented in the last chapter, which sums up the main features of Arab intelligence work from earliest times to the advent of Islam. This chapter stresses the continuity of these intelligence activities to such a degree that they have constituted a distinct Arab Islamic intelligence concept which is emulated and adhered to by present-day Islamist organizations. The chapter also highlights the vital role played by culture and religion in formulating an intelligence concept for the Muslims. The conclusion contained in this chapter which is based on the outcome of examining Fatah as a case study clearly indicates that Fatah closely followed the Islamic model in the field of intelligence and covert action. It also emphasizes that the Muslim Brotherhood to which the Fatah founders had belonged before they broke away to create their own independent Fatah movement, provided them with ample opportunities to acquire intelligence experience and skills. The originators of Fatah's intelligence organs continued to follow the rules and regulations set forth in the Quran and *Sunnah*[14] and made use of the principle of *Ijtihad* to develop and improve their intelligence practices.

It is perhaps appropriate to point out that despite the great importance attached to it by Prophet Muhammed and the early preachers of the new religion, intelligence work was despite its significant part, not the only cause of the rapid spread of Islam. It must also be mentioned that throughout the thesis, in accordance with the requirements of scientific research, I have deliberately disregarded the element of divine intervention, which according to Muslim chroniclers and historians lay behind the success of many intelligence operations. Nor, despite the apparent similarities between Fatah's practices and the Islamic security model, is it suggested here that Fatah was in fact the embodiment of the Islamic model. Whatever failures or successes Fatah may or may not have scored cannot therefore be attributed to the Islamic prototype.

1.2 Theoretical Background:

Despite Sherman Kent's assertion in 1955 that "in most respects the intelligence calling has come of age"[15], the question of what intelligence is, what constitutes intelligence and whether it is a science or a craft has not yet been settled, but continues to be debated by strategists, political scientists and veteran intelligence officers. Part of the difficulty, as Michael Warner points out, stems from the fact that intelligence "means many things to many people," so that "boiling it down to one single definition is difficult." [16] This is why the argument has persisted as to what exactly constitutes intelligence.

Among the various definitions and characterizations of intelligence which have been offered, some stand out as being either too intricate or too short and incomplete. There are those who describe intelligence simply as "the secret collection of someone else's secrets", while others see it as "the product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign countries or areas."[17]

In *The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*, Walter Laqueur contends that intelligence is not a science and that it is bound from time to time to be marked by mistakes, caused by "factors like insufficient knowledge, general incompetence, deception, self deception, or bias".[18] Laqueur further reasons that a major mistake leads to surprise and thus an intelligence failure. He sums up the ultimate objective of any intelligence service by stressing that it seeks "to shield those it serves against surprise".[19] Probing how the intelligence machineries around the world go about doing their job, Laqueur provides a comprehensive assessment of the performance of the US intelligence community over the past few decades. He concentrates on the CIA's intelligence-gathering machinery and how it has been used, misused and on occasion ignored. From the CIA's mistakes, Laqueur derives a number of lessons of particular significance to intelligence producers and consumers alike. His final judgment of the CIA's performance since World War II is mixed "While it pioneered technical means of collection, it has been weak on human intelligence. It has been excellent in ferreting out facts and figures, but it has been less accomplished in putting them into a coherent picture – analyzing trends, assessing situations, and warning of future contingencies."[20]

In attempting to fine-tune his definition of intelligence, Laqueur points out that it is a discipline which "Involves competence not only in current affairs, in history and geography, in psychology and sociology, in economics, science and technology, but it

should include firsthand experience of at least some foreign countries and at least a working knowledge of a foreign language."[21]

Sherman Kent, widely considered the father of modern intelligence scholarship, defines 'intelligence' as denoting, above all else, knowledge; not all knowledge, but "an amazing bulk and assortment of knowledge".[22] He also considers the term to encompass both the type of "organization which produces the knowledge able to give the operating people exactly what they want" and "the activity pursued by the intelligence organization".[23]

Roy Godson and a number of scholars and intelligence specialists discuss the nature of intelligence work in an attempt to determine what steps might be taken to improve US performance in the future. The attention of these contributors is focused mainly on the overall examination of the needs of the USA with respect to the four major elements of intelligence: clandestine collection, analysis and estimates, counterintelligence and covert action. Although they are not of one mind as to what must be done to meet the challenges, there is nevertheless general agreement that the past performance in the evaluation of collected data has been inadequate and that there is a need to improve each major area of intelligence activity.[24] Godson defines collection as "gathering of valued information, much of it by clandestine means"; analysis as "the processing of information, and its end product''; counterintelligence as "the effort to protect their secrets, to prevent themselves from being manipulated, and (sometimes) to exploit the intelligence activities of others for their own benefit. To protect their secrets, states rely, in part, on security procedures and countermeasures''; and covert action is "the attempt by a government or group to influence events in another state or territory without revealing its own involvement''.[25] Godson's schema has been applied in a number of studies on intelligence notably by Angelo Codovilla in his *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* in which he asserts that 'the best way seeing the (form) of intelligence through its various manifestations is to break it down into its four functional components: collection, counterintelligence, analysis, and covert action.''[26]

John Bruce Lockhart used a similar schema in which he defined the five main areas of intelligence as follows:

1. The laying down by governments of their information requirements and priorities
2. The gathering of information, as required by the government, by overt, secret and technological methods.
3. Counterintelligence and security.

4. Covert action: the extension of government policy by secret and non-attributable means.
5. The analysis and evaluation of all the information gathered.[27]

Abram Shulsky and Gary Schmitt also attempt to define intelligence and categorize it within the taxonomy of human knowledge. They discuss at length Sherman Kent's threefold description of intelligence as knowledge, activity and organization. Unlike Kent, however, Shulsky and Schmitt regard the denial of information to others as a major component of intelligence.[28] They explain the concepts, philosophies and procedures of intelligence-gathering, analysis and management, emphasizing the dual nature of intelligence whereby one part is governed by the fact that it deals with information, the other by the fact that it contributes to the conflict among nations or "with other adversaries such as transnational groups or criminal organizations". They contend that the first part, taken to its logical extreme, "gives rise to the notion of intelligence as a universal, predictive social science that completely meets the needs of policy makers for information about other countries, including their futures."[29] Shulsky and Schmitt further point out that the second part, which is concerned with the struggle among nations, leads in another direction.

> Because intelligence is part of a struggle, the obstacles to understanding do not arise simply from the difficulties of the subject matter; the more important of them, and those that are potentially the most dangerous, are put there by one's adversary, in the form of either information denial or deliberate deception.[30]

While the *Silent Warfare* abounds with references to the activities of Western intelligence agencies, especially the CIA's fierce competition with the KGB throughout the Cold War, it hardly shows any interest in the intelligence warfare on the Arab-Israeli front, let alone the paramilitary groups, Palestinian or non-Palestinian. There is, however, a very brief reference in the US press to the claim that King Hussein of Jordan had received subsidies from the CIA.[31]

In discussing whether an intelligence mission relates to theory, or whether there is or ought to be a theory of intelligence, Philip Davies points out that while there is some sort of agreement in the US as to what the term 'intelligence' denotes, it is more difficult to locate a "formally constituted" idea of intelligence in British thinking[32]. He concludes that

> how we define what it is we think we are doing when we are doing intelligence shapes how we do intelligence. And the cornerstone of any theory of intelligence culture has to be the idea of intelligence, or more accurately, the

many different ideas of intelligence and their institutional and operational consequences.[33]

In another work, Davies elaborates on the different ways in which intelligence is conceptualized by the British and American governments and shows that despite the existence of "similar joint bodies for collating similar raw information, and with a common combined assessment as the goal, the two systems can be seen as moving in different directions because of essentially cultural rather than structural or circumstantial reasons".[34]

Michael Herman, a former "professional intelligence practitioner", to use the author's own words, also attempts to probe the intelligence community, not only by drawing upon his own thirty-five-year career with British intelligence, but also by engaging in academic research in the USA, Canada and Britain. Herman's *Intelligence Power In Peace and War*, describes the various components of intelligence, discusses its uses, considers issues of accuracy and efficiency and offers several recommendations intended to improve its performance under the new world order. The picture he draws of the Western intelligence agencies is more positive than that offered by Laqueur. In assessing the systems governing their inner workings, Herman argues that one of the strengths of the UK and US systems is that the specialist collectors of secret intelligence do not normally have the responsibility of assessing the significance of their own material. He further stresses that "the all-source melding of all available evidence provides a much broader concept of intelligence than the Soviet idea that it was essentially the product of secret collection".[35]

Rad Al-Barhawi's *Spies and Agents in the Islamic State* [36] provides a general survey of espionage work in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as in ancient China, Greece Persia, the Byzantine Empire and Islam. This book is useful although its author is not an intelligence specialist. Al-Barhawi attempts to provide a comprehensive review of intelligence work throughout 132 years. The wide scope of the book and the lengthy time framework rendered the study somewhat lacking in analysis. The author nevertheless exerted a great deal of effort on collating and comparing different versions of intelligence events. As Al-Barhawi is not initiated in intelligence studies, whether on the theoretical or practitioner level, he has fallen into a number of pitfalls, especially when attempting to classify intelligence operations or when providing analytical views on this branch of human endeavour. Far from approaching intelligence operations by way of tackling the elements which constitute an intelligence concept, Al-Barhawi adopts statistics-based criteria to assess intelligence operations and judge their success and failure. This approach has obviously negatively impacted the results arrived at in his work.

AL-Daghmi's *Espionage: Its Legal Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence* [37] focuses on the position taken by a number of Islamic Ulemas and schools of thought vis-à-vis intelligence. He also touches upon the desirable qualities of the secret agent and the early methods of training and initiating fresh recruits into the world of espionage. Despite its scholarly value, the study does not adopt a clear-cut methodology. Nor does it follow a chronological order when discussing historical events. Sweep generalizations and exaggerations pervade it's the appraisals and conclusions arrived at.

1.3 Fatah and intelligence

Because of the wide political, financial and even military support it has received from Arab and Muslim countries, as well as from the ex-Eastern bloc, Fatah developed a well organized intelligence apparatus, which it has cloaked in almost total secrecy. Known until the mid nineteen-seventies as *Jihaz al-Rasd* (Observation Apparatus), this agency is the primary intelligence and counterintelligence arm of Fatah. The Jihaz was, according to Israeli intelligence sources, a competent intelligence unit that was both resented and feared within the Fatah structure, partly, as Neil Livingstone and David Halvey point out in *Inside the PLO*, because of the success that characterized some of its performance.[38]

Halvey and Livingstone provide revealing information on the structure of the PLO and its covert units, and fascinating intelligence details of a number of the operations carried out in the Middle East and throughout the world. They point out that PLO's intelligence units have planned and carried out many assassinations and other acts of violence against Yasser Arafat's rivals inside and outside Fatah. However, many of their claims about military activities, intelligence work and terrorism—subjects where confidentiality is paramount—remain unsubstantiated.[39]

Another writer on the organization and activities of the Palestinian intelligence apparatus, Abdullah Issa, asserts that in the Middle Eastern intelligence community, it is common knowledge that Palestinian intelligence officers were trained during the 1970s and 1980s by specialists from the Soviet Union and East European countries, especially Bulgaria and East Germany.[40] Issa further claims that the Unified PLO Intelligence Coordination Section (Maktab Al-Tanseeq) organized a number of visits during which intelligence officers met and coordinated efforts with their counterparts in France, Spain and West Germany, with whom agreements were signed. One outcome of this coordination was that a number of terrorist attacks were uncovered and subsequently foiled.[41]

In his voluminous memoirs, Abu Dawood, a leading Fatah intelligence officer, relates how the *Jihaz al-Rasd* was tasked with gathering intelligence crucial for the personal safety of PLO Chairman Arafat and other leaders. Abu Dawood further states that the intelligence apparatus was directed to seek out and destroy enemy agents who had penetrated the PLO. In his recently published book, *Palestine: from Jerusalem to Munich*, he recounts how as early as 1971, elements of the Fatah counterintelligence unit succeeded in capturing a number of Israeli agents and collaborators, and how they handled their double agents.[42]

Even the relatively small splinter groups which broke with Arafat and Fatah had special intelligence units. In his *Abu Nidhal, A Gun for Hire*, Patrick Seale devotes a whole chapter to the organizational structure of Abu Nidhal's "Revolutionary Brigade". Beside the Secretariat, Political Section, Membership Committee, Technical and Scientific Committee, Revolutionary Justice Committee, etc., there was the Directorate of Intelligence, which was the object of Abu Nidhal's special attention. The Directorate was formed with four subdivisions: Special Missions, the Foreign Intelligence Committee, the Counterespionage Committee and the Lebanon Committee. The Directorate of Intelligence was concerned with undercover agents abroad, establishing secret arms caches, gathering intelligence about potential targets, carrying out assassinations, and monitoring and penetrating hostile services. It is elements of this Directorate who handled the operation to kill Heinz Nittal, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreiski's friend, in Vienna in May 1981.[43]

Organized armed resistance and underground groups normally engage in some sort of intelligence activities. Among other reasons, they do so in order to monitor and target their enemies and to defend their organizations against both enemies and compatriot rivals.[44] Some paramilitary organizations entrust the task of scouting and intelligence to a special branch, devoted entirely to this specific activity. Others may, for lack of human or material resources, combine intelligence-gathering and analysis with the other tasks carried out by the organization's operatives. The fact that "resisting espionage networks, uncovering the enemy's sabotage operations and providing the Revolution with information" was one of the primary aims of establishing such organizations as the PLO attests to the great importance which paramilitaries attach to the question of intelligence, counter-intelligence and security.[45]

Most authors who have addressed the Palestinian question in general and the PLO in particular have commented, with varying degrees of focus, on Fatah's involvement in violence and terrorist activities. One such study is that of Yonah Alexander and Joshua

Sinai who, in *Terrorism: the PLO Connection*, provide a vivid historical background to the Palestinian struggle after the British Mandate of Palestine after World War I. The authors clearly recognize the relationship between the structure of the organization and its mission, detailing the different departments of the PLO, each headed by a member of the Executive Committee. While the book contains valuable information on a variety of aspects related to the PLO's development, growth and performance, there is precious little discussion of its intelligence activities. The authors do, however, shed some light on PLO strategies to encourage "Arab and Muslim radical states to sponsor and support terrorist activities". It further emphasizes the role of Fatah as "the oldest, largest and wealthiest of the Palestinian terrorist groups and organizations", noting that "from the date that Arafat became Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, the history of Fatah has tended to merge with that of the PLO, as Arafat tightened his control of the organization."[46]

Yezid Sayigh's *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993,* provides a wide and very detailed account of the Palestinian struggle for statehood. Tracking the historical development of the Palestinian cause is the main focus of this book, which also pays considerable attention to the military tendency of that struggle. Because Sayigh's emphasis in the research is basically political, intelligence and military details receive little attention, despite their organic relationship with the main theme of the book. Sayigh, a Palestinian who was quite close to the PLO decision makers and to Arafat himself, affords useful insights into the internal workings of the Palestinian movement. He stresses that the 1967 war, which displaced hundreds of thousands of West Bank residents, also forced the centre of gravity in Palestinian nationalism out of Palestine itself, so that until the Oslo agreements, the political elite which led the struggle for Palestinian nationalism was operating in exile. The flight to Jordan and Lebanon allowed remarkable growth and increased popularity for the PLO, which fell under the control of Fatah and Arafat. In commenting on the PLO's attempt to win Arab and Muslim public opinion, Sayigh shows that Arafat was especially obsessed with the necessity of carrying out successful operations against Israeli and Western targets, considering this an important factor in the PLO struggle to achieve political gains. Sayigh's ambitious book provides useful but scattered information about some of Fatah's intelligence apparatus, operations and commanders. He does not, however, devote a specific section or chapter to this aspect of the clandestine Palestinian struggle[47].

In *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization*, Jillian Becker gives an extensive historical account of the Palestinian movement from 1915 to the

aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Although the main focus of the study is to show where the PLO succeeded and where it failed in the political arena, it nevertheless provides glimpses of two important aspects of the Palestinian struggle: the intelligence work carried out by the PLO at different stages and the use of propaganda as a tool in this conflict. Becker also discusses the role of Arab oil money in financing the Arab propaganda machine:

> Money was spent on propaganda against Israel by the Arab states, bypassing the PLO. The Arab perception was that Israel was strong and victorious because of United States support. United States administrations were necessarily sensitive to public opinion. To turn American public sympathy away from Israel and towards the PLO's cause was therefore imperative. [48]

Some information on PLO intelligence activities is contained in an Israeli Foreign Ministry document, *The Threat of PLO Terrorism*[49] by Brigadier-General Amos Gilboa. The document considers "Palestinian terrorism" and refers, if briefly, to the intelligence activities carried out by Fatah. It also describes the PLO's organizational structure and profiles its leadership. It makes specific mention of two of Fatah's intelligence apparatuses, "Force 17" and the "Western Front" (by which it no doubt means "Western Sector"). Reference is also made to Fatah's network in Europe, but the document hardly touches upon the internal processes of either of these intelligence apparatuses.[50]

Despite the large mass of information on the PLO in general and Fatah in particular, there remains a serious gap in the literature concerning the clandestine intelligence activities of the paramilitary organization which dominated the national Palestinian movement from the Six-Day War until the death of its founder, Yasser Arafat, and the subsequent rise to prominence of its rival, *Hamas*. It is hoped that the present full-length investigation will contribute to narrowing this gap in the scholarship on a vital issue which has direct implications for contemporary life. Through the investigation of the intelligence activities of Fatah, it is further hoped that an understanding of how large, well organized, Arab-Islamic paramilitary groups can conceptualize intelligence and become simultaneously both producers and consumers of intelligence.

Researchers have in the past mainly focused on such matters as the military doctrines of the paramilitaries, their organizational structures, financial resources or weapons suppliers.[51] Not enough attention has been paid to these organisations as intelligence producers or consumers. The 9/11 attacks have changed that. The atrocities of September 2001 have led to the widespread realisation that such multiple attacks would not have been

possible without careful planning, target surveillance and the painstaking and detailed collection and analysis of intelligence.

There are a number of factors which have hampered serious attempts to study these paramilitary groups over the past decades. Chief among these is the sensitivity of the subject itself, which has prompted many academics to avoid the risks associated with such research. Another is the fact that most ex-paramilitary cadres and others affiliated with clandestine organizations are loath to provide information, fearing violent or even lethal reprisals at the hands of their former commanders. Paramilitary organizations regard any attempt to divulge secrets as a very serious crime, no less than betrayal of trust or treason, which is punishable by death. Beside the refusal or unwillingness of cadres and operatives in general to provide information on their groups, paramilitary organizations normally act in a very secretive way, whereby each member of a team may not even know what the others are assigned to do. Furthermore, they tend to conceal their movements and contacts so well that it is in most cases quite difficult to infiltrate them.

The first open discussion in the U.S.A of intelligence goes back to the 1940's after the Japanese surprise attack against the American base at Pearl Harbor. Such an attack, left a controversial issue, about whether or not Washington knew that Pearl Harbor was likely going to be attacked and failed to pass the information to the U.S.A Navy commanders at Pearl Harbor.[52] More recently, it was after the September 11 atrocity that the intelligence debate grew in intensity, practically everywhere in the free world but especially in the US and Britain. In general, the shocked world started to speak openly about intelligence and more specifically about the failure of Western intelligence and law enforcement agencies to track and pre-empt the perpetrators. Since 2001 and the subsequent military invasion of two countries, the subject of intelligence collection and analysis has become widely discussed, not only in the US Congress and Britain's Parliament, research centres and national security agencies, but also in the media and among ordinary people. In the UK, the Hutton's and Butler's Enquiries are a case in point.[53] This unprecedented interest, which became even more intense after the Iraq War, Madrid and London bombings, has resulted in the accumulation of a variety of sources of information of value to the present research. Despite the wide interest in the paramilitary organizations, their operations, strategies and intentions, there has been no full-length academic or non-official study of their intelligence work and tactics in term of strategy, tasking, and intelligence cycle. Most works on this subject have not gone far beyond the description or analysis of a terrorist operation here and there, or the publication of details of popular and political reactions towards such

attacks. Investigating the nerve centres of these organizations, especially the apparatuses through which the intelligence process is carried out, will not only lead to a better knowledge of the nature of these groups, but will also ultimately help in the efforts to combat terrorists and thwart their plans. In examining the clandestine methods of the paramilitaries, it is necessary to adopt a comparative approach. We need to know how far the intelligence operations of these organizations are similar to or different from those carried out by the specialized national intelligence services. This knowledge is vital if we are to be better equipped to deal with the devastating threat posed by international terrorism.

1.4 Methodology

The aims of the present research are to examine Fatah as a producer and consumer of intelligence and to elucidate the characteristics of the intelligence doctrine to which it adheres. The first of these is addressed in the light of the intelligence elements which Roy Godson applied to test the intelligence activities and functions of the CIA.

Scarcity of open-source literature on this delicate subject is admittedly a major obstacle confronting any researcher in this area, but a careful and patient search through such open sources as publications, blogs, e-books, websites, etc. would nevertheless produce a few hints, suggestions and indeed some (if scanty) information on paramilitary intelligence and its methods of operation. With regard to Fatah, there are some authors, including ex-Fatah members, who have referred to some of the operations carried out by the organization, but who for understandable reasons have not dwelt on this aspect of Fatah's activities. It was therefore necessary that interviews and questionnaires be carefully designed, in order to cover the aspects of the intelligence work on which Godson focuses. The questionnaire was designed to elicit as much information as possible on how many secret intelligence apparatuses Fatah had and how they operated. Because of the scarcity of information on the subject at hand, it was felt advisable to choose an open-ended questionnaire.[54]

Philip Davies, 2001, argues that "elite interviewing is a central tool in the study of intelligence and security services."[55] He stresses the importance of applying a multi-methodological 'triangulation' in which information gathered through "primary sources (interviews, published first-hand documentary sources), documentary sources (published or archival) and published secondary-source information can be cross-referenced both between and within the data types employed". [56] He also discusses the difficulties involved in applying the triangulation method and points out that the greatest difficulty in this kind of triangulation process is not the process of substantiation and verification through multiple sources but the incorporation of additional information from first-hand accounts.

Because of the high degree of secrecy surrounding the intelligence community in general, the task of arranging interviews with intelligence officers, past or present, can prove quite tasking. The most practical strategy to adopt ,when embarking upon this task however is to ask each interviewee to suggest names or recommend one or more other potential contacts. In adopting this strategy which Davies calls "snowballing", a researcher can then multiply the initial set of interviewees and consequently increase the chances of finding proper answers to their queries. Davies also points out that it is advisable and

sometimes even necessary for respondents to be interviewed on two or more occasions, either in person, by phone or in writing. There are two important reasons for this. The first is to eliminate any "uncertainties and ambiguities" in the information obtained in the first interview. Secondly, as new and unexpected information almost always appeared it becomes necessary for the respondents to be contacted again for clarification, elaboration and of course verification purposes.

Although there are basically two types of interviews, structured and unstructured, it is best in intelligence studies to conduct 'semi-structured' interviews when dealing with former intelligence officers. This type of interviewing is normally composed of three distinct stages. The initial stage is relatively unstructured in which the respondents are invited to talk about their career and experiences. This is followed by two more highly structured stages in which certain questions intended to elicit further information are then put to the interviewee. The questions may be selected from the prepared general purpose or supplementary "shopping list". To ensure secrecy without appearing vague and unnecessarily opaque each informant was assigned a serial number by which s/he is identified.[57] In assessing the validity of information gained through the interviews I conducted, three main criteria were adopted: the level of access the informant had, whether the information provided is reported, hearsay or first-hand and thirdly the reliability and what Philip Davies calls the "track record" of the interviewee. [58] In view of the fact that most of the published literature on intelligence has been written by journalists "with very little in the way of a rigorous methodology for collection, interpretation and evaluation"[59], the triangulation strategy becomes quite necessary if accuracy is sought.

The next step was to define the population sample to whom the questionnaire would be sent. As might be expected when taking up a subject related to clandestine activities, some of the respondents, including strategists, political analysts and academic scholars, were not fully forthcoming or willing to respond to all of the questions put to them. On the other hand, not all Fatah members or ex-members were knowledgeable enough to provide secret and/or accurate information. Indeed, not all Fatah members, regardless of their membership level, knew all the secret dealings of their organization. For security or other reasons, there were of course those who may have had more knowledge than they were prepared to divulge. There were furthermore those who had worked closely with the PLO but who belonged to groups inimical to Fatah and who tended to belittle their rivals, casting doubt on their alleged achievements.

Ten heads of PLO diplomatic missions accredited to various countries in the Middle East, Europe and America were approached. It is well known that the diplomatic staff of the PLO abroad are normally, although not always, chosen from among veteran Fatah members who had rendered acknowledged services to the PLO or to Arafat. Their email and postal addresses and telephone numbers were obtained through friends and contacts among the Palestinian community and also through the PLO mission in London. Much time and effort was spent on following up contacts by telephone and email; weeks elapsed before a few responses began to be received. Many indicated that the information asked for in the questionnaire was beyond their knowledge. Others extricated themselves by referring me to distinguished Fatah members who they said were better equipped to provide answers. Because some of the people contacted were still in government or held diplomatic positions, they were less than enthusiastic or forthcoming in their responses.

Six weeks after I had first sent out the questionnaire, I intensified my efforts to locate ex-Fatah members among the Palestinian community in London. Luckily, I managed to find men who had worked as Fatah security officers, two of whom had excellent access to the required information. I was also introduced to two members of Fatah engaged in academic research in the security field, who provided invaluable assistance but preferred to remain anonymous. For those located in London, personal interviews were arranged; with others, contact was achieved mainly by telephone. When the information gathered from the interviewees was collated and compared it was found that the responses were not identical but complementary. I was of course aware of the problems involved in conducting interviews with individuals whose reliability was for a number of reasons open to question either because of fear, memory failure, the lapse of time or their attempt to " adjust their interpretation of an event in order to avoid being seen in a poor light." [60] In conducting the interviews therefore three main criteria were adopted: the level of access the informant had, whether the information provided is reported, hearsay or first-hand and thirdly the reliability and what Philip Davies calls the "track record" of the interviewee. [61]

Because the research topic is still deemed to be quite sensitive by many Palestinians, Arabs and other informants, stringent procedures and precautions had to be followed in order to ensure credibility while protecting and preserving the trust of the sources who had agreed to contribute to the research. I was quite fortunate to have been able to access a number of very high profile primary sources who are considered to be highly placed policy and decision makers by many of those within the Fatah movement or studying it. There

remain, however, a number of concerns regarding their cooperation and the accuracy or credibility of their accounts, which naturally have a direct bearing on the value of their contribution to the present research. The first is that they were members of what was at one time considered a terrorist organization and as such would be considered by many not to be the most innocent of people and certainly not the most trustworthy. By applying the triangulation method, I endeavoured to check the accuracy of their information by comparing their versions against other testimonies and also by consulting as many relevant secondary sources, reports and historical accounts as possible. In so doing I was guided by the "triangulation" approach to elite interviewing which relies on the triad of: primary, documentary and published secondary sources.[62] In other instances, where it was impossible to corroborate the accuracy of an informant's account, there was felt to be a marked absence of any motive to lie and this is duly pointed out.[63] No effort has been spared to ensure that the confidentiality and trust of the sources is not compromised. Furthermore, I have made sure that the sources are clear about their own involvement in the research and are aware of what is being written and its implications. I also maintain that the use of these sources is vital to any study in this field, particularly one that aims to be objective and analytical.

The present case study relies largely on primary sources which were not hitherto available to researchers and academics. The research will also be based largely on personal interviews and details voluntarily provided by informants who were at one point in their careers active operatives or leaders in one or another paramilitary group, especially Fatah, which dominated the Palestinian political scene for four decades.

Literature on the intelligence services in the Middle East in general and the Arab world in particular is still quite rare and scanty.[64] Some changes have, however, taken place during the past few years and have enhanced research opportunities in this sensitive subject. From the early 1990s onwards, it has become less difficult for researchers and interested specialists to conduct intelligence studies and research projects, as the new international climate has made it possible for information to flow more freely. The past few years have been marked by the gradual lifting of many restrictions on the freedom of information.

A number of important books and papers some of which may be considered significant primary contributions have also been published recently.[65] The memoirs of Abu Dawood, the mastermind and leader of the group which carried out the notorious Munich attack on the Israeli Olympic team in 1972, provide a rare insight into the workings of Fatah's

intelligence and security apparatus. Some Arabs and Palestinians who had worked for one intelligence service or another have begun to talk relatively openly about their roles and experiences, revealing information which had previously been closely and jealously guarded by the operatives, their handlers and the organizations. The material contained in these publications, TV interviews and newspaper articles provides an important source of first-hand data on these organizations and their strategies and operations during the last four decades of the twentieth century. It must be pointed out, however, that some Palestinian activists who have made public such information are not to be entirely trusted, as they have sought to justify past deeds, to aggrandize their own achievements or to serve a specific agenda.

It must also be borne in mind that this research was conducted at a time of great change within the PLO and Fatah itself. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of its satellite Eastern Bloc, the main political and military backers of Fatah, forced the Palestinians to adapt to the demands of the new world order. Among other things, many felt compelled to distance themselves from violence and terrorist operations, engaging instead in a political process to achieve their goals. Furthermore, many governments in the Arab region have, under international and domestic pressure, become less unwilling to capitulate to popular demands for change. This has affected even the PLO, which has come to soften its heretofore brutal attitude towards those who divulged secrets or chose to talk publicly about any aspect of Fatah's activities, especially its involvement in past terrorist operations. Layla Khalid, for example, gave numerous TV interviews about the role played by 'Carlos the Jackal' in planning and executing numerous operations during the 1960s and 1970s, while Abu Dawood has been a frequent guest on Arab satellite channels, speaking freely about his own exploits in Munich, Amman and elsewhere.[66]

In order to address the second aim of the present study, i.e. to examine the nature and characteristics of Fatah's concept of intelligence, an investigation of the religious, intellectual and social background of the founders of each of the intelligence apparatuses was carried out. It will be seen that their religious beliefs played a significant role in shaping their thinking and their ideological frame of reference. In tracing the origin and development of intelligence activities in the Arab world, there is evidence that intelligence activities being were carried out as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries; but no significant activities were recorded during the period immediately preceding the rise of Islam, known to the Arabs in general as *Jahiliya* (Age of Ignorance), which Arab historians normally consider to cover the 5th and 6th centuries. As the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula were

not under any threat of conquest by any foreign invaders during this period, their intelligence activities were largely directed towards each other, since they were continually engaged in inter-tribal fighting because of revenge and vendettas, or warring over water resources, hegemony and pasture. Beside the ancient chronicles and lives of the makers of Arab history, numerous literary works including prose fiction and poetic anthologies proved to good sources of information on ancient intelligence activities besides their value as a literary and intellectual output encapsulating the community's manners, customs, beliefs and practices.

But the most important sources which have been constantly consulted are the Quran and Prophet Muhammed's sayings and practices, known as "Traditions". For the Muslims, the Quran represents the word of God as revealed to Prophet Muhammed through the angel Gabriel. Its most valuable contribution remains as a source of Prophet Muhammed's words and deeds in those instances where they are relevant to intelligence activities.[67] Among the most useful sources of information on Prophet Muhammed's life are the biographies written by Al-Waqidi and Ibn Hisham less than a century after his death. These two biographies are based on oral narratives by individuals who were contemporaneous with Prophet Muhammed and who transmitted what they saw and heard to posterity. From these and other records we learn that the early period of Islam abounded with intelligence activities, especially during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammed. A careful investigation of the many accounts of the battles of Prophet Muhammed has shown that the early Muslims were indeed impressive intelligence actors and that their tactics and strategies were not without sophistication. Fortunately, practically all accounts of these battles and commentaries on Islamic scriptures, as well as most historical and literary texts, are now readily available in digital form.

One of the difficulties encountered was how to translate archaic or highly technical terminologies from Arabic into English. This problem was surmounted by consulting a number of specialized dictionaries, especially those published by the Arab League Translation and Arabization Commission. Unless otherwise stated all Quranic texts in English are from Yusuf Ali's *The Meanings of the Holy Quran*. The historical figures and place names have been spelt as they are often encountered in modern works; 'Mecca' for instance and not 'Makka', 'Saladin' not 'Salah Aldeen'. The more common form 'Muhammed' is preferred to 'Mohammed' or 'Muhammad', while the Arabic definite article which precedes most names has been spelt as 'Al' rather than 'El'. But a more serious difficulty was how to reconcile the many different versions and accounts of some events

uncovered during the research. I tried to resolve any discrepancies or inconsistencies by basing my judgments and preferences on the logic of events, on the reputation of the authorities involved and of course on the scholarly opinions of specialized researchers. In so far as the interpretation of the Islamic scriptures is concerned I have accepted the prevailing weight of evidence as posited by such Quranic commentators as Ibn Kathir, Al-Tabari, and Al-Qurtubi.

Despite the fact that a number of studies have been written on Fatah these however either wholly or partly focused on the rise of the movement, its organizational structure, military activities, its impact on political decisions in the Middle east, and the support it has received from regional and international powers. The intelligence doctrine to which Fatah adhered and its intelligence activities in general have received very little attention. This may be attributed to the scarcity and difficulty of accessing primary sources of information. It is for this reason that considerable efforts were exerted to arrange personal and/or telephone interviews with a number of Fatah's elite and others close to the movement. For those with whom conducting a personal interview proved difficult, a questionnaire was then used. In exploring the intelligence concept followed by Fatah's intelligence workers it was quite necessary to delve into the vast history of Islam and Arab heritage, especially the Quranic studies and Prophet Muhammed's life and practices in this particular field which will be taken up in the following chapters.

Chapter Two

Intelligence terminologies and the early Arab records of intelligence.

2.1 Introduction.

In his epistle "Secret Keeping and Mincing Words" Al-Jahiz says that it is in man's nature "to seek news and intelligence".[68] According to this prolific 9th century writer and philosopher, man's search for news is as old as history. The reason is not difficult to see. Life or rather survival requires constant responses to questions and queries which must be answered if one is to protect oneself and prepare for unforeseen eventualities. Arabs, like other nations of the world, used intelligence and engaged in a variety of espionage activities during peace time as well as war time.

This chapter will review the Arabic terminologies used in the field of intelligence throughout Arab history and will discuss in some detail the use of intelligence actors: guides, scouts, information gatherers, watchmen, sentinels, secret agents and others. Special attention will be paid to intelligence activities in pre-Islamic times.

2.2 Intelligence Terminologies in Arabic

The Arabic equivalent of the English word 'intelligence' is '*mukhabarat*' or '*istikhbarat*', both of which are derived from the same Arabic trilateral root '*khabar*'. As a noun, this word can be used in a wide variety of contexts, meaning, for instance, any of the following: 'news', 'account', 'advice', 'hearsay', 'message', rumour', 'knowledge', 'answer', 'response', 'reply', 'predicate', 'report', 'story'. It can also be used to mean 'having a great deal of news', or 'having great depth of knowledge and expertise'. This noun may also refer to one's final story or news, i.e. death. The subject noun '*mukhbir*', a derivative of '*khabar*', means 'he who transmits news' or 'he who spies on others' for whatever reason, although the term is normally associated with state-sponsored agents.[69] The present-day term '*mukhabarat*' is almost exclusively used to mean 'intelligence', although it was also used during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate (7th-15th century) to mean 'correspondence', 'reports', 'letters', 'writing' and 'contacts'.[70] In the Arab world today, both '*mukhabarat*' and '*istikhbarat*' may be used interchangeably to mean 'intelligence', although the latter is commonly reserved for military intelligence, while the former is used for all types: domestic, foreign, military, non-military and counter-intelligence.[71]

While in English the word 'spy' can variously be used to describe foreign or local agents who observe, investigate or engage in secret observation and espionage for or against their own interests or countries of origin, Arabic makes a clear distinction between those who spy for their own people, state or interests and those who are employed by an enemy, a rival or a foreign power. The Arabic word *'jasous'* is reserved primarily for those employed to act as agents and spies for foreign rivals, adversaries and enemies in general, those of the individual as well as those of the tribe or state. On the social and popular levels, it is used to describe those who seek unflattering, debasing or embarrassing information about others, for the purpose of defamation, embezzlement, blackmail or any such ignoble purpose.[72] In the collective consciousness of the Arabs, the word is therefore laden with negative and derogatory implications. *'Namous'*, on the other hand, is normally, although not exclusively, reserved for those who are especially aware, conscious, knowledgeable and cognizant of the deep and hidden secrets of others. In its broader implications, 'namous' is used to describe men of wisdom, learning and sagacity. The word is sometimes used as a synonym of 'integrity' and 'honour'. In a special sense, in Islam, it is universally used to denote the greatest source of 'news' and 'intelligence': the angel Gabriel, whom Muslims believe to have been sent by *Allah* to the Prophet Muhammed in order to convey Divine commands and reveal the words of the *Quran*.[73] To distinguish spying for a good cause from 'sniffing out' information for evil ends, Arabs use two different words. *'Tajassasa'* is normally used to describe the act of attempting to acquire any secret or covert information. While the noun '*jasous*' (spy) does not appear in any Quranic text, the verb '*tajassasa*' appears in a verse in the *Surah* (chapter) of *Hujurat* (Chambers) where Muslims are enjoined not to engage in this activity; it is normally associated with, but not confined to, the undercover work of anyone who spies for someone else, especially for an enemy or a foreign power[74]. '*Jasous*' is also used to refer to the act of detecting private information for selfish reasons, material gain or any other non-benevolent purpose. '*Tajassasa*' is used in the Quran in this sense:

> Oye who believe!
> Avoid suspicion (as much as possible): for suspicion in some
> cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of
> each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat
> the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But
> fear Allah: For Allah is oft-returning, most merciful.[75]

On the other hand, the verb '*tahassasa*', is used specifically to denote the act of acquiring information for one's own use, for a good cause, or for some generally

benevolent or benign purpose. It is in this sense that Jacob uses the verb in the Quran, when he asks his other sons to search for their brother Joseph.

> O my sons!
> Go ye and *enquire about* Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: Truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith.[76]

Throughout Arab history, a spy, whether a foreign agent or a local operative, has most commonly been referred to as *'ain'* (pl. *uyoun*), which literally means 'eye'. The resemblance, both semantically and figuratively, between the Arabic word and its English counterpart, the verb 'espy' is quite apparent. '*Ain'*, which has been in circulation for the last two millennia in Arabic, is still used extensively in a variety of contexts, chief among which is the intelligence field. It refers, among other things, to a herald, to a person who is dispatched to explore a situation, to one who brings back tidings, to a secret observer and to a collector of information. Arab historians and lexicographers such as Muhammed Murtadha Al-Zabeedi point out that *'ain'* (which also means 'a bird of prey' and by extension 'having very keen vision') was applied to spies and informers because much of their work depended on what they observed, particularly with their eyes.[77]

Other Arabic terms denoting spies or undercover agents include *'dasees', 'daleel', 'talee'ah', 'rabee'ah', 'muharwil', 'hawas', 'fuyouj', 'sheefa',* and *'baghiyah'*. The noun *'dasees'* is derived from the verb 'dasa', which may be used to mean any of the following: 'creep in', 'encroach unnoticed', 'blend in' and 'intervene'. In general, *'dasees'* means 'he who is involved in clandestine reconnaissance', who intervenes' or 'he who enters any territory (literally or figuratively) without the knowledge or consent of others'. The link between this sense and 'espionage' is self-evident.[78] *'Daleel'*, on the other hand, is most commonly used in the sense of 'guide', 'scout', 'lookout' or 'herald', but is quite often used euphemistically to mean 'spy'. As for *'talee'ah',* which is derived from the verb *'tala'*, it may refer to any of the following: 'pioneer', 'he who is at the front', 'pathfinder', 'forerunner', 'explorer', and 'reconnoitrer'. This was extended to include 'the person who knows [secrets] first', i.e. a spy.

'Rabee'ah', which denotes a hilltop or an elevated place, is used figuratively for scouts, whose missions would naturally become easier when they operated from a high vantage point. The term was quite common, appearing frequently in a number of ancient Arabic documents, especially in poetic texts antedating Islam by decades. The pre-Islamic poet

warrior, *Urwa bin Al-Ward* (d. 594) illustrates the vital role played by the *rabee'ah* in the deserts of Arabia, when, in one of his poems, he writes: "Before we stealthily descend upon a watering place, we (normally) despatch a *rabee'ah* (scout), who, like a tall tree, stands erect to keep a proper lookout".[79] In a reference to the terrible conditions under which the *rabee'ah* operated, another poet, *Aws bin Hajar* (530-620), describes a dejected lover as "lurking behind the curtains of nature like a spying *rabee'ah,* parched and frightened".[80] *'Fuyuj'* literally means 'he who walks fast or runs from one place to another'. Because speed is of vital importance in the transmission of intelligence, the term has come to be applied to spies and agents. A related Arabic term is *'muharwil'*, which literally means 'runner', or 'scrambler' but was also used for a spy. '*Sheefa*' is derived from the verb '*shafa*', which originally meant 'yearn for something', but came with the passage of time to refer to lifting one's head in order to see clearly, and to being at the front and in a position to see more clearly than others. The connection between 'yearning to know secrets' and 'spying' is apparent. As the primary duty of the spy is to seek and acquire classified information, the Arabic term '*baghiya*', which means 'the seeker', 'he who is on a special quest', or 'he who demands to know or possess something' was occasionally used to refer to clandestine collectors of information.[81] Another word which was widely associated with spies is '*munafiq*', which is reserved specifically for Arab and/or Muslim spies who operate under the guise of Islam in order to subvert it from within through the dissemination of disparaging rumours and falsehoods. The Quran uses the word in this sense several times.[82]

2.3 Early Arab Records of Espionage

With the weakening position of the Byzantines in Syria and northern Mesopotamia during the mid-second century, early migrants from the Arabian Peninsula gradually built the independent state of *Manathira* or *Lakhmidi*[83] along the Euphrates. They also succeeded in establishing another state known as the *Ghassanid* in Syria, where *Jafnah bin Omar* was the first of a long line of kings who ruled over the north-western corner of Arabia. The Byzantines did not view the emerging state of the *Ghassanids* as a rival power, but as an ally against the Persians, with whom they were for a long time locked in a continual state of warfare. The Persians, on the other hand, considered the *Manathira* state, which stretched along their western and north-western frontiers, as a kind of buffer zone against their Byzantine enemies. For strategic reasons, the Persians nurtured the new state of the *Lakhmids* and ensured that it would not easily fall prey to foreign invaders. In short, both

the Byzantines and Persians saw the strategic benefits of maintaining what Sir John Glubb calls "a system of Arab satellite princedoms guarding the desert flanks of both empires".[84]

It was inevitable that rivalries and conflicts of interest should arise between the two Arab states, supported as they were by the two rival powers in the region. Relations continued to deteriorate and the two sides often found themselves locked in engagements which were in most cases proxy battles fought on behalf of the Persians and Byzantines. The most famous of these confrontations was one in which the Ghassanid, Al-Harith bin Jabalah, scored a decisive victory over Munthir III, who was killed. The Byzantines considered this outcome a victory for their own cause.[85]

Despite the close military links between these two Arab states and their patron empires, there is very little documented evidence of cooperation between them in the field of intelligence. One of the earliest references to intelligence activities carried out by the Arab states appears in the multi-volume anthology and encyclopaedia, *Kitab al-Aghani* (Book of Songs), compiled in the 10th century by Abu Faraj al-Asbahani, who points out that the most important task of the secret agents, the *uyoun*, was to provide personal security for their monarchs and superiors. Al-Asbahani relates the story of a *Manathira* spy who was able to save the life of his king Al-Naman bin Al-Munthir (AD 582-610).[86] The spy, who was based deep inside the *Ghassanid* state in northern Arabia (Syria), wrote to his master, warning that a rival had sent an agent for the purpose of assassinating the king. With this vital intelligence, Al-Naman bin Al-Munthir ordered his men to track down and shadow the newly arrived would-be assassin, who was caught preparing for his deadly mission and killed before he could carry it out.[87]

There is evidence that the Qahtani Arabs of southern Arabia engaged in intelligence activities as early as the second century BC. Extant inscriptions from the time contain references to such activities, which despite the primitive methods and tactics were in many ways quite well organized. A recent study in old south Arabian epigraphy shows that a high proportion of the ancient Qahtani army was charged with intelligence-related duties. Ten percent of all fighting men were assigned to such activities as skirmishing, scouting, and reconnoitring. The study by A. F. Beeston also shows that the Qahtanis recruited nomadic Bedouins and a variety of mercenaries to carry out espionage missions, despite the fact that these sources were not fully trusted or deemed reliable by their handlers.[88]

With the possible exception of those living in Mecca and Medina, who mainly worked as traders, the majority of the population of Arabia comprised nomadic Bedouins, who

moved from one place to another in search of water and pasture. The general system which governed their social relationships was based on total allegiance to the leader of the tribe or clan. These Bedouins, whose main occupation was keeping camels, goats and sheep, lived "in semi-isolation from the rest of the world … in a state of perpetual war".[89] Totally unmindful of the outside world, these nomads produced a culture which responded to the needs and demands of their own environment and circumstances:

> The raid or *ghazwa*… otherwise considered a form of brigandage, is raised by the economic and social conditions of desert life to the rank of a national constitution. It lies at the base of the economic structure of Bedouin pastoral society. In desert land, where the fighting mood is a chronic mental condition, raiding is one of the few manly occupations. An early poet gave expression to the guiding principle of such life in two verses: 'Our business is to make raids on the enemy, on our neighbour and on our own brother, in case we find none to raid but a brother![90]

These raids were prompted either by keen competition for pasturage and water, by attempts by a stronger tribe to plunder a weaker one, or by revenge and score settling.[91] The protracted armed confrontations, however, cannot be described as wars proper, but as forays or clashes, as they involved relatively small numbers of fighting men, normally between twenty and a hundred.[92] Besides these inter-tribal clashes, there were also the frequent attacks on caravan routes and wayfarers. These were so common that a new Arabic term, '*su'louk*', was coined to describe those involved in this specific form of attack, in which numerous Arab poets took part. These poet brigands often boasted about their exploits, which frequently involved scouts and spies. One such poet warrior was *Urwa bin Al-Ward*, who is cited above likening the *rabee'ah* (scout) to a tree.

Despite the fact that the armed confrontations in ancient Arabia were not full-scale wars, but sudden raids, ambushes and speedy retreats, scouting and intelligence gathering were always an organic part of these skirmishes and clashes. The duties of the *rabee'ah* were well defined and were quite independent of those of other fighting men. Before an attack was launched, one or more *rabee'ah* elements would be called upon to scout the area and report any sightings of the targets or any unusual happenings. The work carried out by desert scouts and reconnoitres was considered more critical and perilous than that of the ordinary fighting men. Their worst fear was discovery by enemy tribes or those whom they were targeting. Severe punishments were meted out to those captured. The poet Aws bin Al-Hajar describes the *rabee'ah* as living "in perpetual fear, chronically thirsty. So scared are they of the light, that when the sun shines, they turn their faces the other way".[93]

The literary history of Arabia contains numerous records of battles between various tribes, who boasted of their military exploits in long poems handed down from generation to generation. These eulogistic verses were often recited at special events, traditionally held on certain feasts and market days. Both poets and traders were keen to attend these occasions, which provided each tribe with opportunities to retell its past history in hyperbolic terms. The most important of these literary competitions was the *Ukadh* Market, made famous by the intense competition of the two literary satirists Jareer and Farazdaq, whose intense sense of pride in their own tribes and cutting satirical invective are as popular today as they were fifteen centuries ago.[94] The poems recited at these festivals attest to the ubiquitous presence of the secret agent or spy. Among the battles immortalized in these enthusiastic rallies was that of 'Dahis and Ghabra', which was fought between the tribes of *Ghatfan* and *Fazarah* over the result of a horse race. The two mares, *Dahis* and *Ghabra'*, finished so close together that each tribe claimed that its own horse had won. The dispute could not be resolved peacefully, so the two tribes went to war to settle it. In the first armed confrontation, the leader of the *Ghatfan* tribe was killed, triggering a protracted vendetta in which many lives were lost. These confrontations, which ebbed and flowed for many years, are known in Arab history as the 'Days of *Mudhar*'.[95]

In order to secure victories against their rivals, each tribe engaged in espionage activities in which, in addition to the experienced spies, temporary informers were occasionally recruited. During the Days of *Rabee'ah*, better known as the Basous War (494-534) between the Taghlib and Bakr tribes, the employment of secret information gatherers was quite common. In his mammoth anthology of Arabic prose and poetry from pre-Islamic times until the 10th century, Al-Asbahani writes of the efforts each tribe exerted to trace and uncover the spies working in its midst. He also recounts how the agents of the tribe of Bakr bin Wa'el managed to infiltrate the ranks of the Ka'ab bin Rabee'ah tribe during the Falj War.[96]

A primitive early warning system was often used by the warring tribes of Arabia. These tribes used a variety of methods to communicate amongst themselves and to send warning signals in times of war or crisis. Smoke signals and drums were often used to send specific urgent warnings and messages. Because drums can be heard by all, while smoke and fire signals were visible to both friend and foe, the signals sent through these media had to be codified in such a way as to be understood only by the sender and the recipient. To do this, it was necessary to decide the exact meaning of each signal in advance. An

early example of the use of smoke and fire by an Arab tribe is recounted by the 13th century historian Ibn Al-Atheer (1160-1241) in his narration of the *Khazar* War (AD 450), in which the leader of the Ma'ad tribe, Salamah bin Khalid, dispatched an agent to reconnoitre the movements and preparations of a rival tribe, the Madhaj, which was advancing towards them. The agent was instructed to light fires in two different spots when the enemy arrived at a place called Madhaj. Thus Salamah bin Khalid succeeded in frustrating the enemy plan, which had depended on the element of surprise. When the Madhaj men arrived at the place where the Ma'ads were camped, they were themselves surprised to find their enemy quite prepared and battle-ready. The result of the Madhaj attack was a rapid and humiliating retreat.[97] Similarly, during the Bardan War (AD 600), the chieftains Dhalee'bin Abd Ghananam and Sadous Sheiban dispatched secret agents to spy on the army of their rival, Ziad bin Al-Haboulah.[98]

Despite the fact that most of the intelligence operations carried out during these early times were not recorded or fully documented, historians, as well as some chroniclers and poets, do make a few allusions to such clandestine activities. Where these observations occur, they are normally brief, general and often ambiguous. Such wording as: "it came to the knowledge of so and so that …", "a spy told so and so that …", "he (a ruler, a tribal or military leader, etc.) dispatched a secret agent to …" or "they employed spies in order to learn about…", is quite common. While such statements record the fact, they nevertheless omit vital details related to documentation and substantiation.

Because of the dearth of unambiguous, clear-cut accounts of espionage activities, it is quite difficult to write with any certainty or precision about the covers, recruitment strategies or actual methods employed by the early Arabs when engaging in these undercover operations. But espionage and clandestine collection were not the only methods to which the early Arabs resorted when attempting to unlock the mysteries of the future, the unknown, or the intentions and plans of their adversaries. During pre-Islamic times, the Bedouin communities, whatever their religions and beliefs, practised astrology, augury, divination and sorcery. Many of the early wars would not have been waged without the blessing of the oracles and soothsayers.

Early Arab literature and historical accounts show that the early Arabs had great respect for those tribal leaders who were strong, able-bodied and knowledgeable, and who spared their followers the risks and miseries of wars. Such a status, however, would not be attainable without resort to the use of informers and secret agents and the maintenance of a constant state of preparedness for the unexpected. Victory is rarely achieved through

reliance on power alone, or the prophesies of the soothsayers. Tribal wars, whether waged for pillage, revenge or expansion and hegemony, cannot be won without the element of surprise and accurate intelligence regarding the targets to be attacked. It is therefore no wonder that throughout Arabia, each tribe had its own "intelligence network". A large tribe might have a number of *uyoun,* unknowingly carrying out the same intelligence mission at the same time.

The early war records of the Bedouins of central Arabia contain numerous references to the use of *"ain",*[99] *"rabee'ah"*[100] or *"talee'ah".*[101] This indicates the existence of some sort of tactical intelligence, albeit in an undeveloped and primitive form, which can be seen as a two-pronged concept. The first is based on reconnaissance and surveillance. The task of the *talee'ah,* which may be translated into English as 'advance scout' or 'secret herald', involved infiltrating enemy ranks in order to collect as much tactical information as possible about the targets, their exact location, state of preparedness, terrain, provisions and water resources, the numbers of camels, horses and other livestock, and their strengths or weakness. The talee'ah enjoyed some sort of recognition as an elite group, in that they carried out their duties independently and reported directly to the commander of the army. Their most desired qualities were speed and sharp eyes; they did not have to be master horsemen or swordsmen. The duties of the rabee'ah, on the other hand, involved observing enemy movements and reporting any developments to the army commanders. Such observation was normally carried out from a vantage point such as a hill in a neutral zone or no man's land. The *rabee'ah* would then send reports to his commanders through the use of one of the methods discussed above, such as drums, fire or smoke signals.[102]

An interesting category of *rabee'ah* was the naked scout.[103] This somewhat odd title derives from what such scouts normally did in an emergency when they discovered an imminent danger but had no time to communicate a warning to their fellow tribesmen. They would remove their clothes, then, mounted on their horses, would wave them as improvised warning flags.

Detailed information which could be obtained only through planning and careful preparation, such as the quality of weapons and military equipment, the number of swords and shields and their origins, the resolve of the tribesmen and degree of their loyalty to their leader, were the domain of the *uyoun*[104], the secret agents, whose duties thus differed from those of the rabee'ah in being more closely related to maintaining the security of the tribe.[105]

In the closely knit tribal societies of ancient Arabia, suspicion always surrounded strangers, newcomers and unexpected arrivals. Obtaining detailed knowledge of who arrived in and who departed from the territory of the tribe was therefore a standard counterintelligence measure. For this reason, a blood relationship with one or more people among the target tribe was among the best deep covers for any penetration agent, as relatives were allowed a wide range of freedoms. Travellers, guests, pilgrims, traders and wayfarers were rarely free to engage in clandestine collection. To ensure that they were fully aware of the arrival of newcomers to their communities, especially under cover of darkness, the ancient Arabs entrusted the task of monitoring arrivals and departures to special night sentinels or watchmen, called '*suh-har*'. This Arabic word is derived from the verb *'sahara'*, which means 'stay wakeful' or 'watchful', especially during the night. The vigilant *suh-har* frequently lurked in the dark, usually at the approaches to a market town, a crossroads, or any location where it was believed that a stranger or suspect would be arriving.[106]   It was customary for the feuding tribes of Arabia to employ *uyoun* in order to spy on competitors or rivals. Before executing a raid or a reprisal attack, a tribe would, as a matter of course, deploy a number of lookouts in order to reconnoitre the situation. However, spying was not limited to gathering military intelligence in times of war; agents would also provide valuable security and economic information in peacetime.

On the domestic front, the *uyoun* or *'ruwwad'* (pioneers)[107] were responsible for inspecting property, looking for and locating pasture and water, especially during droughts. Intelligence relating to the availability or otherwise of water and pastureland suitable for the grazing of livestock has always been of vital importance throughout this arid land. Many wars, across history, have been waged by the tribes of Arabia for no other reason than to control or monopolise wells and water resources. Scouting for water and pastureland was not only customary but necessary before a Bedouin group could fold camp and move on.

Early spies were also entrusted with the vital task of protecting the commercial caravans across the vast deserts of Arabia.[108] Intra-tribal routes, overland arteries between the Bedouin areas and urban centres, as well as the communication lines between the northern parts and the southern frontiers of the Arab Peninsula, were under the close watch of the those early intelligence pioneers.[109] The use of *uyoun* was sometimes dictated by the need to honour the Quraishis' treaty obligations with the many tribes whose commercial caravans bound for *Mecca* or the north normally passed by Yethrib, a market town later renamed Medina. To ensure that caravans and travellers might pass peacefully and without

incident in the vicinity of Medina or indeed across the entire region controlled by them, the Quraishis made extensive use of scouts, spies and watchmen. Chief among their targets were those who violated agreements, conspired against their implementation, or sought to incite other tribes to transgress and breach the accords.

The early spies of Arabia underwent vigorous training in a range of arts and skills. Above all else, they were trained to be patient, resilient, to bear unexpected physical or psychological hardships and to blend in with the target community. Camouflage became an essential part of espionage. Significantly, the chronicler and commentator Muhammed Ibn Al-Tabari speaks of some undercover agents who carried dedication to their profession to great lengths, when they underwent voluntary surgery in order to mask their identities, deceive the enemy and be in a better position to carry out their duties. Tabari explains how primitive surgical or non-invasive procedures were sometimes performed to alter the shape of the nose or ears of such agents.[110]

Prospective agents were also trained in survival and communications skills. To communicate with their base or with each other, the early *uyoun* used fire at night and smoke during the day. They also exchanged coded messages in order to circumvent detection or exposure. An important and regular source of information came from concubines and slaves,[111] who were used to gather general information and to provide valuable and accurate details about their masters' plans, movements, contacts and close associates.[112] For verification purposes, the early Arabs normally dispatched two spies on any particular mission.[113] Spies were also used to entrap rivals as well as in starting disinformation campaigns designed to dispel specific perceptions and rumours and to frustrate enemy efforts. Poison was occasionally used to eliminate enemies or those deemed to pose a grave danger to the community.[114]

Devious methods of dealing with enemies and collecting information about them have been used since records began in the Arab world and have since become more diversified and sophisticated. While primary sources on early intelligence activities in the Peninsula are rare, incomplete and scattered, there is enough evidence to suggest that ancient Arabians were able, as early as the second century, to invent and exercise some form of intelligence. Put into its proper historical perspective, this early intelligence work was not totally crude or undeveloped, although judged by our modern standards it may appear quite primitive. The fact that the early Qahtani Arabs of southern Arabia had devoted a whole regiment to the skirmishing, scouting, and reconnoitring, attests to their awareness of the vital importance of these activities. Nor were the Arabs of central and Northern Arabia far

behind; they too developed intelligence tactics in accordance with their own needs and the requirements of their short bouts of assaults and raids against rival tribes, water resources or passing caravans. These raids, which would sometimes last only an hour, were suited not only to the small numbers in the raiding parties but also to the topography of the theatre. The use of heralds and scouts was especially common in ancient Arabia, ensuring that the routes to or from the battlefields were secure. The installation of observation posts where *rabee'ah* kept close watch on the movements and military preparations of enemies was quite useful in uncovering their intentions and thwarting their designs. Early Arabic poetry contains numerous references to the employment of *rabee'ah* in times of peace and war. Extant Arabic documents indicate that the early Arabs resorted to other intelligence tactics, such as the use of deep cover, dissimulation, disguise and deception, as well as employment of more violent means in eliminating their adversaries.

These activities constitute part of the cultural heritage of the Arabian Peninsula inherited by the Muslims, who in turn developed them to serve their own needs and requirements in accordance with their own topography and circumstances. We shall see in the next chapters how the Muslim Arabs developed and refined these intelligence tactics and how they laid the foundations for the discipline of intelligence, which has for centuries remained a source of inspiration for many movements and groups.

Chapter Three
The Quran and Intelligence

3.1 Elements of intelligence in the Quran

The Quran contains the holy scriptures of Islam and is considered by Muslims, Arab and non-Arab alike, to be the most authoritative and revered document in their history. It is said that no two Muslim believers differ as to the exact text of the 7th century document, which was handed down at first orally then, only a generation after Prophet Muhammed's death, written down. There are no variant editions at all, so today's version of the Quran is identical to that collected during the reign of the 3rd Caliph, Uthman bin Affan in the year 646.[115] To ensure that only the verified version of the Quran, which had been meticulously checked and rechecked, would remain in the hands of the faithful, Uthman ordered all other versions of the manuscript to be burnt. The Quran is divided into 114 chapters (Surahs) and is believed by Muslims to represent the word of Allah to mankind as revealed through an angel (Gabriel) to his messenger, Muhammed, the last of the prophets. These 114 chapters which were revealed to Prophet Muhammed at various stages, from the time he was chosen by Allah to spread Islam until his death, are classed either as Meccan or Medinan, depending on where they were revealed, Although its primary objective is to stress and popularize strict monotheism and the worship of Allah alone, the Quran also contains a multitude of specific rulings as to the duties incumbent upon Muslims as individuals, on one hand, and upon the state and Muslim society at large, on the other.

Far from being just a directory or guidebook of moral and ethical laws, the Quran pays great attention to how individuals should lead their lives on earth. To that end, ample attention is given to the lessons of history, where the lives of the prophets and past events are narrated with a range of criticisms and advice, illustrating their moral value and relevance to human society. To transform individuals' lives, much instruction is provided on various aspects of legal and social issues, economic activities, family law, propriety and good conduct. The Quran also contains numerous commendations and strictures pertaining to such matters as caring for the poor, administering justice, treatment of prisoners of war, health and hygiene issues, and broad guidelines on how best to deal with problems as they arise, as well as the acquisition and use of secret information.

In the field of intelligence, as in all other fields of human endeavour, the Quran is held to constitute the most important source of Islamic law. It has provided an ideological frame of reference for Islamic paramilitary groups, which continue to base the claimed legitimacy

of their activities on the tenets contained in the Quranic text. The adoption of a Quranic frame of reference is not only intended to win the support and sympathy of the Muslims at large but is according to Islam an act of obedience to Allah's teachings and commands. On a close examination of the Quran one can identify references to and a discussion of all major elements of intelligence articulated by Roy Godson, Angelo Codvilla, and John Lockhart. In point of fact there are numerous Quranic verses which elucidate the fundamentals of intelligence to which little attention has been given by scholars or researchers.

First, the Quran contains a number of verses referring to and exemplifying the clandestine collection of information. These are either direct references or indirectly embedded in the narration of contemporaneous events or historical accounts taken from the distant past. While it relates numerous stories about prophets and other biblical figures, the character of Moses, in particular, reappears in a number of Surahs, such as Al-Qassas (Stories), which relates that the Pharaoh, having decided to kill the young male children of the Israelites,

> verily elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief. And We wished to be Gracious to those who were being depressed in the land; to make them leaders (in Faith) and make them heirs; to establish a firm place for them in the land, and to show Pharaoh, Haman, and their hosts, at their hands, the very things against which they were taking precautions. So we sent this inspiration to the mother of Moses: 'Suckle (thy child), but when thou hast fears about him, cast him into the river, but fear not nor grieve: for We shall restore him to thee, and We shall make him one of Our messengers.' Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river): (It was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow: for Pharaoh and Haman and (all) their hosts were men of sin. The wife of Pharaoh said: '(Here is) joy of the eye, for me and for thee: slay him not. It may be that he will be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son.' And they perceived not (what they were doing)! But there came to be a void in the heart of the mother of Moses: She was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer. *And she said to the sister of (Moses), 'Follow him' so she (the sister) watched him in the character of a stranger, while they did not perceive. And we ordained that he refused suck at first, until (His sister came up and) said: 'Shall I point out to you the people of a house that will nourish and bring him up for you and be sincerely attached to him.'* Thus did We restore him to his mother, that her eye might be comforted, that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true: but most of them do not understand.[116]

It is significant that Moses' mother, according to the Quranic narrative, asks her daughter to follow and report on her baby brother, who had been cast adrift in a basket and

left to face his fate alone in the Nile. The choice was especially discerning and informed. Moses' sister was first and foremost reliable and trustworthy. On account of her blood relationship with Moses, whatever information she managed to collect about him would therefore be quite reliable. Furthermore, because of her work connection with the palace, she also had access to information that others did not. The commands given to the sister were quite clear. She was to stealthily 'follow' and 'watch', taking great care that she would not be discovered by Pharaoh's men. Moses' sister carried out the mission very well. She not only kept her eyes on the target, but quite significantly, she also took the initiative to infiltrate the palace community and cleverly convince the queen to send the baby to a certain nurse (Moses' own mother) to suckle him. This Quranic example illustrates how Moses' sister clandestinely collected information on her brother, followed him until he was safely dispatched to Pharaoh's palace and then provided first-hand information to her mother about the infant.

The Surah of Yousuf (Joseph) contains a significant reference to clandestine collection when Joseph's father, Yaqub (Jacob) addresses his sons:

> O my sons!
> Go not in by one gate; go in by different gates. I can naught avail you as against Allah ….Go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith.[117]

The fact that Jacob asks his sons to engage in an elaborate clandestine '*tahasus*' operation, to approach their target separately rather than jointly, and to enter Egypt not from the same entrance but through different gateways, attests to his acute sense of security, which requires utmost discretion and secrecy. In dispersing across the land in search of intelligence on the whereabouts and welfare of their brother, the scouts would also be better equipped to carry out their mission, as they would cover a much greater area and at the same time would also have many more sources of information, or would perhaps find him at one of Egypt's Gates.[118]

It is noteworthy that the Quran refers to information collection either explicitly or—as in the previous example—in the course of a narrative. An example of another type of implicit reference occurs in the Surah of Women where Muslims are enjoined to be alert and cautious at all times: "O you who believe! Take your precaution"[119]. Such a state of preparedness would not be possible without resort to constant collection of information on enemies or any party, internal or external, which might pose a threat to the nation. The Quran occasionally resorts to the use of allegory and imputes human qualities to animals in

the retelling human history. In the Surah of The Ants, for example, where King Solomon and a bird, the hoopoe are the protagonists, much use is made of the literary device known as personification in which animals and inanimate objects are given human qualities. In this Surah Solomon is endowed with the ability to communicate with and have full control over all animals, birds and sprites (jinn). The events narrated in this Surah begin when Solomon notices that one of the birds, the hoopoe, was absent:

> And he [Suleiman or Solomon] took a muster of the Birds; and he said: 'Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he brings me a clear reason (for absence).' But the Hoopoe tarried not far: he (came up and) said: 'I have compassed (territory) which thou hast not compassed, and I have come to thee from Saba' with tidings true.[120]

But the crisis is defused when the hoopoe explains that the absence was unavoidable as it was 'compassing' Solomon's territory, i.e. collecting vital information. The hoopoe starts his address to the King on a dramatic note, stressing that he has come with knowledge of something which even the wise Suleiman does not possess. Continuing his oral report, the hoopoe then establishes the source of the information as being the speaker himself. He then specifies the location of the new developments, the city of 'Saba', in southern Arabia (modern Yemen). In referring to the new information he has acquired, the hoopoe skilfully uses the word 'naba' rather than 'khabar' as the former means 'news of things to come' rather than 'of things past'. In assessing its authenticity and degree of accuracy, the bird confidently describes his report as being absolutely accurate, being based on his own first-hand observations and reconnaissance.

The hoopoe then goes on to talk about Queen Belqis of Saba': "I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne."[121] Referring here to the political system in 'Saba', the hoopoe points out that Belqis is at the head of a thriving monarchy and that her hold over the general affairs in her country is quite firm. There is, however, one specific observation of which the mountain cock strongly disproves: Belqis's subjects were not believers in Allah but pagans deluded by Satan into worship the Sun:

> I found her and her people prostrating before the sun, instead of Allah. The devil has adorned their works in their eyes, and has repulsed them from the path; consequently, they are not guided. They should have been prostrating before Allah, the One who manifests all the mysteries in the heavens and the earth, and the One who knows everything you conceal and everything you declare.[122]

A closer examination of the Quranic version of the story of King Suleiman will show that more than any other Surah, it gives lessons in intelligence reporting. It contains the major fundamental elements of an intelligence report. There is first of all the source of the report, which was given as the hoopoe. The report, which deals with a specific matter, the developments in Saba', is addressed to King Solomon. The degree of credibility of the report is the highest, as it was entirely based on personal observations rather than rumours, hearsay, gossip or any form of anecdotal evidence. The main point contained in the report was the discovery by the source of the existence of an influential woman (Queen Belqis), who was in common with her subjects a sun worshipper. This discovery was quite disturbing to Solomon, as paying homage to any being in the universe directly contradicted his mission as a prophet, sent to preach the worship of Allah alone. The hoopoe's report also contained information on the military, security and economic situation in Queen Belqis's kingdom.

> [Solomon] said: we shall see whether you speak the truth or you are (one) of the liars. Go ye with this letter of mine and deliver it to them then draw back from them and see what answer they return… Then she [Belqis] said: Oh Chiefs! Verily here is delivered to me a noble letter. Verily, it is from [Solomon] and it reads: In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Be you not exalted against me, but come to me as Muslims.[123]

According to the Quran, information collection is not the only element upon which decisions are made: verification is essential. The Quranic story of King Suleiman affords a case in point. When the hoopoe finishes its report, Suleiman declares: "We will see whether you have told the truth or whether you are of the liars"[124]. The King then indicates that he is going to verify the information provided by the hoopoe against that from other sources.

Moreover, we also learn from the story details of the various stages through which the information provided by the hoopoe had passed, i.e. the intelligence cycle. It starts with the collection of raw information and ends with the dissemination of the finished product to the decision maker. In the story of the hoopoe, the intelligence cycle begins with King Solomon debriefing the bird by listening to its answer regarding the cause of his sudden disappearance. The second stage, that of verification, i.e. when the King commands corroboration of the initial reports, is followed by the analysis and decision-making stage at which the king has to weigh two alternatives: either wage an all-out war against Queen Belqis in order to subjugate her kingdom or resort to negotiations and peaceful means. Solomon decides to adopt the second alternative and sends the Queen of Sheba a message

requesting her to believe in Allah and to recognize Solomon as a prophet sent by Allah to mankind. After long deliberations with her wise men, Belqis finally decides to declare her faith in Allah's messenger; thus, Solomon's aim is accomplished.

As pointed out earlier, the verses of the Quran were not revealed to Prophet Muhammed at one and the same time but in instalments and in response to the historical events and the circumstances through which the call to Islam was passing. Some of these events which the Quran singled out for specific attention required utmost attention to the verification of reports before any decision is made.

The question of validation is of course critical to any intelligence system. In the Surah of Al-Hujurat (the Chambers), the faithful are enjoined to ascertain the truth of what they hear, lest they regret the consequences of unjustified haste and heedlessness "O you who believe! If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done."[125]

Most major commentaries on the Quran point out that this verse refers to a specific historical incident involving one of Prophet Muhammed's followers, Al-Walid bin 'Uqba bin Abu Mua'it, whom the Prophet had sent as an envoy to the clan of Al-Mustaliq' in order to ascertain their loyalty and faith in Islam. Abu Mua'it was especially apprehensive as to how he would be received, because there existed an old enmity between him and the clan. When he approached their territory and saw his former enemies coming out to greet him in dozens, he panicked and returned to Prophet Muhammed, claiming that the Al-Mustaliq' clan had refused to give voluntary alms and that they were intent on killing the prophet of Islam. Just as the Muslims were preparing to punish them, the Al-Mustaliq' came to Prophet Muhammed to explain what had happened. Prophet Muhammed later sent Khalid bin Walid to their homeland in order to provide a first-hand report on the actual situation there. Upon his return, Khalid reported having observed nothing but obedience and goodness in these people.[126]

The Quran also attaches great importance to the analysis and dissemination of information. This is evident in a verse in which Muslims are directly instructed to report any security information to those in charge of the security of the state, who, the Quran asserts, are better equipped to understand and deal with its implications:

> When there comes to them some matter touching security or fear, they divulge it. If they had only referred it to the Prophet or to those charged with authority among them, *the proper analysts would have been able to extract (yastanbitoun) it from them. Were it not for the Grace and Mercy of Allah unto you, all but a few of you would have fallen into the clutches of Satan.*[127]

In the Quranic text, then Arabic verb (*yastanbit*) is used. This verb is most commonly translated as 'to extract' or 'draw an inference' and is normally used to refer to any process which seeks that which is hidden or not readily visible. More specifically, the verb is used to describe the action involved in digging up and extracting water from the earth. This is an especially apt metaphor for the work carried out by intelligence agents, investigators and analysts, all of whom strive to extract and infer results from whatever sources available.

According to the verse, Muslims were furthermore encouraged to quietly pass on these reports, whether true or otherwise, to the Prophet himself or to those who were in a position to investigate them. The 'proper authorities' could then sift, verify and analyse the information and recommend an appropriate course of action.

The Quran makes numerous references to counter-intelligence activities. There are several references to 'hypocrites' in the Quran, using the term '*munafiq*', which may also be translated as 'dissembler', 'dissimulator', 'deluder', 'deceiver' or 'sly dealer'. There is indeed a whole chapter entitled *Al-Munafiqoon*, devoted to the discussion of the serious threats posed to Islam by these 'Muslims in name', who also figure in numerous of the Traditions of Prophet Muhammed. The term '*Munafiq*' is still in use in our own time. Iranian and Taliban officials use it to refer to spies.[128] The Quran also expressly forbids the faithful from allying themselves with enemies of the faith or rendering them any form of service whatsoever "O you who believe! You shall not ally yourselves with the disbelievers, instead of the believers. Do you wish to provide Allah with a clear proof against you? The Munafiqoon (hypocrites) will be committed to the lowest pit of Hell, and you will find no one to help them."[129]

It was the *Munafiqoon* who constituted the 'fifth column' of the polytheists, allowing them to infiltrate the Muslim community in order to sow the seeds of dissention and division. The *Munafiqoon* were therefore willing agents of the anti-Muhammed camp who, because of their apparent acceptance of Islam, were in an advantageous position to acquire knowledge unavailable to non-Muslims, let alone the enemies of Islam.[130] Islam therefore treated the *Munafiqoon* as traitors who would not be tolerated "O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites! Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is hell, a hapless journey's end".[131]

The Quran also, stresses the need to take all precautionary measures in order to prevent and uncover agent recruitment:

O ye who believe! Choose not My enemy and your enemy for allies. Do ye give them friendship when they disbelieve in that truth which hath come unto you, driving out the messenger and you because ye believe in Allah, your Lord? If ye have come forth to strive in My way and seeking My good pleasure, (show them not friendship). Do ye show friendship unto them in secret, when I am Best Aware of what ye hide and what ye proclaim? And whosoever doeth it among you, he verily hath strayed from the right way.[132]

The verses quoted above are almost unanimously said by Quranic commentators to refer to a specific incident in which Prophet Muhammed was betrayed by one of his own close followers. One of the few of Prophet Muhammed's associates who were privy to the actual plan was Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah who, no sooner had he learned of the plan to conquer Mecca than he asked a female messenger to carry a secret letter to the Meccans, warning them of the impending attack and dispelling the Khaibar assault rumour. When Prophet Muhammed discovered Balta'ah's treachery, he immediately sent a number of horsemen, led by his cousin Ali, who managed to capture the carrier and retrieve the concealed message.

According to the chronicler Al-Wahidi, Prophet Muhammed personally pursued this serious breach of security and confronted Balta'ah, asking him whether he recognized the letter. When Balta'ah answered in the affirmative, Prophet Muhammed then asked: "What drove you to do it?" Balta'ah responded by swearing that he had

Not disbelieved since I became Muslim, nor did I betray you since I took your side, nor did I love them [the idolaters] since I departed from them. However, there is not a single person among the Emigrants except that he has someone to defend his closest relatives [in Mecca]. And since I am stranger among them, and my family lives amongst them, I feared for them, and so I wanted to have some assistance from them, even though I knew that Allah will send his harm upon them and that my letter will be of no avail to them.[133]

Despite the insistence of Umar bin Khattab, Prophet Muhammed's lieutenant for intelligence to kill Balta'ah because of his betrayal, Prophet Muhammed was quite magnanimous. He forgave Balta'ah and accepted his explanation. Balta'ah it might be pointed out had defended the Muslim cause in the first battle between the Muslims and the Quraishis at Badr. He was among those Muslim warriors who fought well in that historic confrontation. As a reward for their bravery and sacrifice the Quran affirms that Allah has graced all of them with full forgiveness.

The Surah of *Anfal* (Spoils) refers to a significant incident in the early history of Islam, during which Prophet Muhammed and his followers were labouring to build an Islamic state. Their efforts included the dispatch of envoys to the tribes around Mecca and Medina,

asking them to recognize and submit to the authority of Prophet Muhammed. One such envoy was Abu Lubabah bin Abdul Munthir, whom Prophet Muhammed sent to the Jewish community of Banu Quraidha, known to have been very hostile to Prophet Muhammed.[134] Before conversion, Abu Lubabah had close links with the Jewish community and was loyal to them, "for his property, wife and children were with them".[135] During the negotiation of an agreement, the elders of Banu Quraidha were unsure what course of action to take. At one point, they indicated they might accept whatever counsel they received from Saad bin Ma'ath, one of Prophet Muhammed's close companions, who had been close to Banu Quraidha before his conversion. At this juncture Abu Lubabah made a gesture to his throat, indicating that they should not do it, for they would be slaughtered. Al-Wahidi recounts that Abu Lubabah was immediately stricken by a sense of guilt; he quotes the Muslim negotiator as saying: "I straightaway realized that I had betrayed Allah and His Messenger". According to Al-Wahidi, the Quranic verse "*O ye that believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you*" refers to him.[136]

The Quran also enjoins the faithful, on several occasions, to beware of the presence of enemy agents amongst them. The Surah of *Al-Tawbah* (Repentance) draws attention to the evils which enemy agents could inflict on the faithful, since their aim is to subvert Islam and sow the seeds of division, hatred and discord among the believers. Although discerning Muslims would not be deceived by them, some innocent souls might listen to and even obey them. Such heedless and unmindful Muslims would, according to the Quran, go so far as to give preference to their speech and words and ask them for advice, unaware of the true reality of these hypocrites "Had they gone forth among you they had added to you naught save trouble and had hurried to and fro among you, seeking to cause sedition among you; and among you there are some who would have listened to them. Allah is Aware of evil-doers."[137]

It is noticeable that in countering enemy intelligence, the Quran expresses an unambiguously severe attitude towards rumour-mongers and spreaders of falsehoods and alarmist reports. Especially singled out are agents planted by the enemy in order to wage psychological warfare intended to sap the morale of the Muslims. Those whom the Quran calls 'dissemblers' and 'hypocrites' were feared because of their continued attempts to inflict damage on Muslims in many ways, their ultimate aim being seen to be to discourage and dispirit them at a very critical period in the history of Islam, when their state was still a fledgling entity in need of nurturing. The Surah of *Al-Ahzab* (Parties) states "A group of

them said, 'O people of Yathrib, you cannot attain victory; go back.' Others made excuses to the prophet: 'Our homes are vulnerable,' when they were not vulnerable. They just wanted to flee."[138]

It is stated that these agents, who are variously described as 'hinderers', or those 'whose hearts are diseased', will be called to account on the Day of Judgment "Allah will surely recompense the truthful for their truthfulness, and will punish the hypocrites, if He so wills, or redeem them. Allah is Forgiver, Most Merciful."[139] It is also said that they will be punished during their lifetime if they do not desist from spreading malicious rumours and alarmist reports: "If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and the alarmists in the city do not cease", warns the Quran, "we verily shall urge thee on against them, then will they not be able to stay in it as thy neighbours for any length of time:."[140]

Spreading rumours or engaging in irresponsible talk about military secrets, especially in times of war, are dangers against which the Quran constantly warns. Just as in Second World War posters, the British were told to "keep mum" and that "careless talk costs lives", the Muslims were always reminded to "lend a hand on the land"[141], by cooperating with those entrusted with the security of the state. [142]

Most authoritative commentators, including Muhammed Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari and Al-Fakhr Al-Razi, point out that the dissemblers, "Munafiqoon", who falsely embraced Islam for selfish reasons and who harboured deep resentment and hatred of Prophet Muhammed, were quite willing to collaborate with his enemies in order to weaken the fledgling Islamic state and undermine the new religion by targeting its head. They often spread rumours to influence the faint-hearted, collaborated with the anti-Muhammed camp and acted as *uyoun* (spies) for the forces hostile to Prophet Muhammed.[143]

Finally, the oft repeated assertion that intelligence is above all else knowledge and power[144] is well borne out by a Quranic text, which enjoins all believers to be vigilant and prepared for all eventualities in order to thwart the schemes of their enemies:

> Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war to strike terror in the hearts of the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah shall be repaid unto you and ye shall not be treated unjustly.[145]

A number of exegeses of the Quran agree that although the verse does not mention any specific form of power which believers are enjoined to muster, the reference here is to any contribution that may enhance Muslim power in any field of human endeavour. In this context, covert action operations may therefore be rightly considered as part of the power

which the Quran enjoins Muslims to acquire. According Al-Fakhr Al-Razi and Muhammad Al-Fihri commentators, the reference to the enemies "whom ye may not know but whom Allah doth know" is to the "secret machination of dissemblers and miscreants who are not easily recognizable", including enemy spies and covert agents.[146]

3.2 Conclusion

Besides being the main sources of the Islamic law, the Quran and Prophet Muhammed's *Sunnah* constitute major wellsprings to which intelligence workers turn for inspiration and guidance. In Islam, the Quran and *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammed's deeds and hadith) contain not only what is held to be the law given by Allah through Prophet Muhammed, but also numerous stories and parables. While some references to intelligence work are clear and direct, many are somewhat circuitous and indirect. All, however, are considered by the faithful to be part of the ultimate truth.

The major elements of intelligence are in varying degrees present in the holy book of the Muslims. It is hoped that the foregoing pages have provided sufficient examples in illustration of this premise. In so far as clandestine collection is concerned, reference has been made to the Quranic story of Joseph, where Jacob is quoted as saying: "O my sons! Go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother...".[147] Verification of information is no less important; "If an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done"[148]. To analyse reports, hearsay or rumours to establish their immediate and future implications, the Quran enjoins all Muslims to refer whatever they hear to decision makers and those entrusted with the burden of government. In the Surah of Women we read a solemn Quranic warning addressed to all believers, commanding them to be cautious and alert at all times[149], while in the Surah of the Spoils Allah commands the faithful not to "betray the trust of Allah and the Messenger"[150]. Among the forms of betrayal referred to here is spying for the enemies of Islam, attempting to undermine the authority of the Muslim state and passing information, either knowingly or unknowingly, which might aid the enemies of the Muslims. These warnings about serving or befriending non-Muslims or working with them attest to the great importance Islam attaches to preventive security, clandestine operations and the need to do all that is necessary to safeguard the interests of the state.

The Quran therefore sanctions intelligence work and also provides a number of illustrative cases where intelligence activities were carried out. It furthermore provides a number of instances, as in the story of King Solomon, on how to deal with reports, analysis

and decision making. The early period of Islam, especially during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammed, abounds with activities in which the Quranic precepts with regard to intelligence work were closely adhered to. It is these practices in the field of security and intelligence, which many of the present day paramilitary groups attempt to emulate, that will be taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Legacy of Islam: Prophet Muhammed's Sunnah and Intelligence

4.1 Introduction

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, intelligence activities were practised in the Arabian Peninsula long before the advent of Islam. It was customary for the ancient Arabians to resort to intelligence in order to control their frontiers, or when preparing for wars or engaging in raids, intra-Arab vendettas, retaliatory campaigns or revenge attacks. We have discussed a range of these activities and illustrated the importance of intelligence work to the tribes and their leaders. The tactics, methodologies and crafts employed were admittedly quite primitive compared to modern intelligence activities, but they suited the circumstances and needs of the day. With the passage of time, some of these activities were developed and improved, while others gradually disappeared, except for a few references scattered here and there in some chronicles, biographies, epigraphs and other literary works.

Because the early Muslims inherited much information related to intelligence activities as practiced by their predecessors, Islam sought to lay down rules to regulate these activities, which were and remain fraught with many risks. Before Islam, spying was practiced in order to achieve certain goals or interests for an influential individual or a tribe. A tribal leader might resort to intelligence tactics in order to tighten his grip, eliminate a potential rival or, in accordance with the ethics of the time, achieve fame and greatness in the land of his own tribe and beyond. In times of crisis and water shortage, an envious tribe would spy on other tribes before launching a raid aimed at gaining a geographical advantage, such as acquiring pasture or controlling water resources.

The Quranic legislation and rulings governing the practice of espionage and intelligence, handed down from generation to generation constitutes an ideological frame of reference on which Islamist groups can draw freely. Just as the Quran is the most important source of intelligence legislation, Prophet Muhammed's *sayings* (Hadith) and *Sunnah* (way of life), constitute the second most important source. Prophet Muhammed's intelligence operations are viewed by Muslims as the embodiment of Quranic legislation. They also afford a model and practical lessons to new and established Islamist groups on how best to implement the Quranic rules governing intelligence work. Away from attempting to pass judgments on the objectivity of the accounts of early Islamic religious

history, this chapter will discuss the Islamic discourse as recorded and communicated to us through a variety of Islamic and Arabic texts and chronicles.

Besides laying down the general principles and rules which govern the practice of intelligence, the Quran provides numerous examples of intelligence work drawn from history and the lives of the prophets, in which it is not difficult to see the intelligence cycle at work. The Quran makes it clear that intelligence operations carried out against the enemies of Islam and in the interests of the Muslims at large are quite legitimate and admissible. This explains why contemporary Islamic groups, which base their ideology on Islam and which strive to achieve a specific aim in the interest of Muslims, such as liberating occupied lands, expelling colonialists or spreading Islam, view any attempt at undermining the enemy as not only legitimate but also a religious duty. On the other hand, spying on the private lives of individuals is illegal and inadmissible according to the Quran. Islam also accentuates the negative impact of espionage against the Muslim Umma (community), describing those planted amid the Muslims who work for the enemies of Islam as munafiqoon, who are to be detested and severely punished.

The Arabic term *'Sunnah'*, in common everyday usage, literally means 'method', 'course of action', 'clear path' or 'trodden path'. In Islamic jurisprudence, however, it is restricted to Prophet Muhammed's manners, actions, commandments and way of life in general. In Islam Prophet Muhammed is viewed as the supreme guide and teacher in theory and practice. Faithful Muslims believe that he led an exemplary life and laid down the ideal standards of leading a life that would guarantee Allah's approval and blessing. Together, the Quran and the *Sunnah* constitute the most important sources of legislation in Islam.[151]

Throughout Islamic history, Prophet Muhammed's edicts and sayings '*Hadith*' have been carefully collated, studied, indexed and discussed by various Islamic schools of thought. They have also been thematically and chronologically catalogued. While scholars and religious authorities are not unanimous as to the authenticity of some of the sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammed, the bulk of these have as far as the available sources would permit been minutely checked, verified and carefully written down by specially trained scribes. In sanctity, legal and moral force, these sayings are considered to rank second only to the Quran. Some of them, which have permeated Islamic thought and attitudes, touch upon Prophet Muhammed's own personal life, his general activities, battles, negotiations, agreements and all that he did in order to spread Islam beyond Mecca and Medina. Some of the Traditions deal with intelligence work, collection, covert action

and other measures he himself adopted or ordered; they have become an essential part of Islamic life. To the 1.5 billion Muslims around the world,[152] Prophet Muhammed's life and sayings afford an exemplary model which the faithful attempt to follow and emulate wherever possible.

Beside his lofty place in Islamic history as the ultimate spiritual leader and most revered prophet, the military historian Richard Gabriel has also described Prophet Muhammed as

> a tactician, military theorist, organizational reformer, strategic thinker, operational-level combat commander, political-military leader, heroic soldier and revolutionary, inventor of the theory of insurgency and history's first successful practitioner…. He was truly a great general and tactician, fought eight major battles, led eighteen raids, and planed another thirty eight military operations where others were in command but operating under his orders and strategic direction… He proved to be a master of intelligence in war, and his intelligence service eventually came to rival that of Rome and Persia, especially in the area of political intelligence.[153]

The remainder of this chapter will use the modern intelligence perspective to examine Prophet Muhammed's intelligence activities before and after the establishment of the first Muslim state in Medina. These activities will be assessed from a modern intelligence perspective in the light of the criteria introduced by Roy Godson: clandestine collection, counterintelligence, analysis and dissemination, and covert action.

4.1.1 Clandestine Collection

First, more than any other discipline or human activity, intelligence depends almost entirely on the collection of accurate and reliable information about intended targets of interest to leaders and policy makers. What distinguishes the methods of collection is secrecy. The value of the information obtained is therefore directly linked to the credibility of the information-collector and to the methodology employed in the process. These crucial elements constitute the backbone of practically all intelligence reports. In the Islamic world, clandestine collection dates back to the inception of the new religion. Prophet Muhammed started his call to Islam by patiently and silently collecting information on those whom he was hoping to win over to Islam. Chief among the qualities which Prophet Muhammed was seeking in prospective converts were honesty, trustworthiness and the ability to keep a secret. Besides his wife Khadeejah, Prophet Muhammed's young cousin Ali bin Abi Talib and his closest friend and confidant, Abu Bakr, were the first to respond surreptitiously to Prophet Muhammed's call and provide

him with much-needed moral and material support. The first Muslim to carry out clandestine collection was Abdullah, son of Abu Bakr, whose secret reports in the first days of the Hijra to Medina were of paramount significance to the survival of Prophet Muhammed and Abu Bakr. This young man was directed by Prophet Muhammed to mingle with the Quraishis of Mecca during the day and then report to him at night on what he saw and heard in the then hostile land. For three successive nights, this young *'ain'* would slip out quietly from Mecca to the cave where Prophet Muhammed was hiding following the attempt on his life. There, Abdullah would provide his detailed reports about the goings on in Mecca and the intentions of its leaders towards Prophet Muhammed:

> Abdullah … would go to see [Muhammed and Abu Bakr] after dusk, stay the night there, apprise them of the latest situation in Mecca, and then leave in the early morning to mix with the Meccans as usual and not to draw the least attention to his clandestine activities.[154]

Abdullah was assisted in his mission by two people: his sister, Asma bint Abi Bakr, and a trusted shepherd, Amir bin Furaihah. Besides updates on the situation in Mecca, Furaihah, who tended his master Abu Bakr's flock, offered Prophet Muhammed and his master an additional vital service. He would "steal away unobserved, every evening, with a few goats to the cave and furnish its inmates with a plentiful supply of milk".[155] During the day, Furaihah would mix with other shepherds in the area, carefully listening and memorising details of the stories and rumours they related to each other. These details would reach Prophet Muhammed and Abu Bakr by nightfall. Abdullah's sister Asma may be said to be the first female spy in Islamic history, as she too carried out clandestine collection and reported to Prophet Muhammed, when her brother was for one reason or another unable to deliver his reports.

The practice of clandestine collection continued after Prophet Muhammed emigrated to Medina, where he started to preach Islam openly. Reports from inside Mecca continued to reach him even after he had imposed an economic embargo on this important religious and commercial centre. To tighten the grip around the Meccan polytheists, Prophet Muhammed had to rely on the reports of lookouts and agents who were well dispersed in and around Mecca and Medina. The raiding operations which were planned and executed on the strength of their reports brought all Meccan foreign trade to a standstill. Describing the tight blockade on Mecca, Thumamah bin Athal al-Hanafi tells his fellow Meccans: "By Allah, not a single grain of wheat reaches you, unless the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, permits it".[156]

The great importance Prophet Muhammed attached to Humint is amply attested by the directives he normally issued to his lieutenants and field commanders before they set out on their military missions. On one such occasion, he enjoined Zaid bin Haritha, whom he ordered to lead a battalion against the Byzantines, "to go forth in the name of Allah almighty to avenge the death of your father… Make sure to march speedily towards [the Byzantines] and remember to take the guides with you, and let the *uyoun* and the scouts go before you".[157]

The success of Prophet Muhammed's military and intelligence operations shows that the intelligence sources on which he based his strategies were quite credible. These sources were of various origins, backgrounds and ethnicity. They included people from all walks of life: men and women, young and old, rich and poor, close relatives and freed slaves, Muslims, Jews and polytheists, Arabs and non-Arabs. Despite the many differences which existed among these precursors of modern intelligence, what united them all was dedication to the cause, adherence to secrecy and respect for the unity of command.[158]

The Mecca station, for example, headed by Prophet Muhammed's own uncle, Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Abbas, was undoubtedly the most important source of intelligence during the period prior to its conquest by the Muslims. But there were many other intelligence-gathering stations, which were dispersed over most parts of Arabia. There was indeed hardly a tribe or a clan that did not have a secret agent reporting on its general affairs, its alliances and intentions. But Prophet Muhammed had other sources of information: recent converts to Islam, travelling Copts and Syrians, as well as local merchants and traders. These often acted as valuable sources of information, either voluntarily or for some form of material reward, such as cash or weapons. The early Muslims also resorted to envoys and couriers for information on the lands and people to whom they were dispatched. The immunity conferred upon these men afforded them an opportunity to move from one place to another with relative ease and to mingle more freely with their targets.[159]

Prophet Muhammed's secret agents were also important in the economic war that the Muslims launched against hostile Mecca. During the period in which Prophet Muhammed was planning to impose a total economic blockade on his religious adversaries, he did all he could to hinder and intercept caravan routes linking Mecca to the outside world, especially the desert overland routes from Mecca and Syria in the north to Yemen in the South. When he once learnt of the approach of a Mecca-bound caravan belonging to Abu Sufyan, one of the wealthiest and most influential Quraishi chieftains and a bitter enemy of

Prophet Muhammed, he immediately ordered three men to go to Mecca in order to seek details of its exact destination.[160]

In another episode, when news reached Prophet Muhammed that one of Abu Sufyan's caravans, said to consist of a thousand camels, was returning from Syria to Mecca, he dispatched two of his agents. They journeyed until they arrived at a place called Juhaina, not far from the sea, where they discretely gleaned from the locals valuable information about the merchandise, route and destination of this huge caravan. This was relayed to Prophet Muhammed, who took it into account in planning the Battle of Badr. Muhammed's Meccan enemies, however, did not lag behind the Muslims in terms of intelligence. When security-minded Abu Sufyan enquired if anybody had spotted strangers or heard of any spies working for Prophet Muhammed, he soon learnt about the two men who had been sent to spy on him. When Abu Sufyan was shown the spot where the two men had tied their camels, he ordered his men to bring him a sample of their dung, in which he discovered some palm date stones. "This", he declared, "is the fodder of [Medina]. The two men must be Prophet Muhammed's spies". He then ordered the caravan to change course and make haste.[161]

Before the conquest of Mecca, Prophet Muhammed wanted to perform a minor pilgrimage or *Umrah* to Mecca.[162] He set out on the journey accompanied by over 700 followers. When they arrived at a place called Thi Al-Haleefah, he dispatched a spy to head for Mecca and mingle with the Quraishis in order to collect information on their intentions and plans and to concentrate specifically on the Meccan reaction to the Umrah. The spy did so and then reported back to Prophet Muhammed at a place called Al-Ashtat:

> O Prophet of Allah! Your people [the Meccans]… have heard about your march and terror seized them. They are quite apprehensive and fear that you might storm their city and bring them to their knees. They have therefore sought succour from the allies and their friends, who have fortified themselves by putting on the skin of tigers. Their aim is to prevent you from visiting the holy shrine [the Kaaba]…They have also amassed two hundred horsemen, whom they placed under the command of Khalid bin Al-Waleed. Their horses have now reached Al-Ghameem. The Meccans have also positioned their spies on the mountains, where they have erected observation posts.[163]

Military intelligence was Prophet Muhammed's priority during the early stage of Islam. On the eve of the Battle of Hunain in February 630, Prophet Muhammed ordered one of his agents to spy on the enemy, to sound out the people and bring back word as to what their military commander, Malik bin Awf, was saying about the impending encounter. The agent was able to overhear Malik saying to the chiefs of the Hawazin tribe:

Muhammed has never been to a real fight before. All those whom he met in the battlefield before were inexperienced young boys, who knew nothing about war. It was only natural that he would vanquish them. However, at dawn, you have to advance. Consolidate your ranks and keep behind you the arrays of your cattle, women and children. You must attack and fight as one man. Unsheathe your sharp weapons, which are equal to twenty thousand swords. Remember, victory is won by those who attack first.[164]

Malik bin Awf was only one of a large number of chieftains and tribal leaders whom Prophet Muhammed targeted. The assassination of Aseer bin Zarim was another example of the Prophet's determination to eliminate those who stood in his way or attempted to defame him. To that end, he gave orders to one of his agents to infiltrate the Jewish tribe of Ghatfan in order to monitor the activities of Aseer, their chieftain, who was widely reported to have spearheaded a smear campaign against Prophet Muhammed in which the prophet was portrayed as having no other mission but to exterminate the Jews. "But," said Aseer, "I know how to deal with him, and I can do what no other fellow Jew has attempted before". "What," asked his people, "can you do that others could not?" He told them that he would incite the whole tribe of Ghatfan and enjoin them to march against Prophet Muhammed to fight him in his own territory. "It is well proven that the assailants at least gain part of their demands, while those who are attacked are bound to sustain losses".[165]

Not content with just one report, Prophet Muhammed dispatched another agent to spy on the Jewish leader. The second agent verified the information received earlier when he confirmed that as he was leaving the territory of the Jews he did indeed see Aseer, "at the head of the Jewish brigades which were advancing towards you [Muhammed]".[166]

4.1.2 Counterintelligence

In taking up the question of the role played by security and counterintelligence in safeguarding the interests of the first Muslim state, it has to be borne in mind that Prophet Muhammed's call to the new faith was shrouded in secrecy. During the first three years, known in Islamic history as the Secret Stage, all his movements, contacts and meetings with his followers were carried out clandestinely. This difficult period was followed by what Arab historians call the Open Stage, when the Muslims embarked upon a vigorous, open campaign aimed at spreading the word of Allah to their fellow Arabs. Concentrating on pilgrimage seasons, market days, public feasts and other important occasions, Prophet Muhammed and his followers never tired of introducing the new faith, first to the Meccans and then to the rest of the communities populating the Arabian Peninsula.

Going public with the new faith, however, did not mean the end of secrecy as a tactic. Given the savage resistance to Prophet Muhammed's message and the fact that Muslims were in a hostile environment, where they were shadowed everywhere and closely watched by Quraishi agents, it was necessary for Prophet Muhammed to seek ways of responding. Early Islamic records indicate that through implementation of a number of effective countermeasures the Prophet succeeded in uncovering a number of spies and foiling many operations.

A notable example is afforded by an incident which occurred at the Battle of Al-Muraisi', where just before the military engagements, Prophet Muhammed's advance platoons captured an enemy spy, who refused to divulge his mission or the whereabouts of his masters. When the spy was taken to Prophet Muhammed's deputy for security and intelligence, Umar bin Al-Khattab, the latter gave him a grim warning:

> Listen, tell us the truth, or else I will give your neck a fatal blow'. Upon hearing this, the man said: 'I am from Balmustaliq. I left behind me Al-Harith bin Abi Dharar, amassing a multitude of men to fight you. In point of fact, it was he who dispatched me to spy on you and see if you have already left Medina'. Umar then took the man to the Prophet of Allah, Peace be Upon Him, and told him what the secret agent had said. The Prophet…. invited the man to embrace Islam, but the man refused, saying: 'I will not embrace your religion until I see what my people decide. If they accept Islam, so will I. But if they decide not to, I will of course do what they do'. Umar then asked: 'O, Prophet of Allah, shall I give his neck a fatal blow?' Prophet Muhammed agreed and Umar struck him in the neck.[167]

News of the death of the spy soon reached the Balmustaliq territory, the result being exactly as had been intended by the Muslims. According to the daughter of the head of the tribe, whom Prophet Muhammed later married upon her conversion to Islam, "…[Because of the alarming news of the beheading], all our people and their allies were dumbfounded and seized with terror. Those who had earlier come to help my father … deserted him and he was left all alone, with none to offer him any help".[168]

In attempting to ward off threats and consolidate the gains of the Islamic state in Medina, Prophet Muhammed followed the maxim that the internal security of the realm often required a state of continued alertness with regard to what might be schemed against it outside. In concrete terms, this meant that those caught contacting non-Muslim elements, entering the state illegally or attempting to help parties hostile to Prophet Muhammed were arrested, interrogated and penalized. Whoever was found collaborating with anti-Muhammed forces was dealt with severely, and state security and counterintelligence measures would then be implemented against him. While Prophet Muhammed himself was

the overall commander-in-chief of state security in Medina, Umar bin al-Khattab was in charge of running the counterintelligence machinery, implementing day-to-day orders and following up security policies.[169]

An instructive example of the state of counterintelligence tactics employed by the early Muslims, which were by no means backward or inefficient, may be found in the case of Abbad bin Bishr, one of Prophet Muhammed's secret agents. Before giving the final order to assault the Jewish fortified city of Khaibar, Prophet Muhammed had dispatched this experienced agent at the head of a platoon to scout the area and check for snares or ambushes laid for the advancing Muslims. Prophet Muhammed directed this agent to do all he could to infiltrate deep into Khaibar in order assess the general situation and report on the degree of preparedness of the Jews for the defence of their city. In their search for evidence of enemy military or intelligence activities, Abbad's men came across a lone Bedouin outside Khaibar, who told them that he was a camel keeper looking for some of his camels which had strayed. When asked if he knew anything about the Jews of Khaibar, he said that his knowledge was scanty, as he had only recently come to know them,[170] but he was able to report that two of the Jewish leaders had travelled far and wide to assemble fighters against Prophet Muhammed and had also contacted their allies in the Ghatfan tribal area and secured their help in return for a year's supply of palm-tree dates. The camel keeper added that the Ghatfanis had provided the Khaibar Jews with ten thousand fighting men, who were heavily armed and laden with provisions, livestock and foodstuffs, and that they had already arrived in Khaibar and were now ready to resist any attack, pointing out that they could easily withstand any siege, even if it were to last for several years.[171]

> Upon hearing this, Abbad, without uttering a word, lifted his whip and gave the Bedouin a few lashes. He then confronted the camel keeper: 'You are but a spy; tell me the truth or I kill you'. The Bedouin then said: 'Will you promise to save my life, if I say the truth?' When Abbad responded affirmatively, the Bedouin then said: 'The people of Khaibar are truly terrified of you, especially after what you have done to the Jews of Yathrib [Medina].... I was dispatched by Kinanah [one of the two Jewish leaders] to spy on you, but my main aim is to pass on exaggerated stories to you about the number of fighting men, their arms, and preparedness for battle in order to discourage you from launching an assault against Khaibar.[172]

In assigning missions to counterintelligence personnel, it was crucial that operatives, whether ordered to collect information or execute covert operations, would go to great lengths in order to execute their missions without revealing their true identities. To conceal

their movements, those ordered to carry out secret missions always preferred to make use of the cover of darkness. When, for example, Prophet Muhammed dispatched a detachment under the command of Ali bin Abi Talub to execute a pre-emptive strike against the tribe of Ghatfan, who were allies of the Jews of Khaibar and were providing them with fighting men, weapons and provisions, Ali's men advanced to their target, riding at night and hiding during the day. When the detachment reached a place called Hamaj, Ali's men spotted and then captured a Ghatfani tribesman.

The captive was taken to Umar bin Al-Khattab, Prophet Muhammed's lieutenant for security affairs, who started to interrogate him by asking him first to identify himself and say where he came from and what he was after. The man was quite economical in his responses. But after a while he was pressurized[173] into revealing that he was actually a spy. He also told his interrogators that he was carrying a message from the Ghaftanis to the Jews of Khaibar in order to barter military help for palm-tree dates. When asked if there were any fighting men on their way to succour Khaibar, the spy then told them that there were two hundred men under the command of Wabar bin Oleim. To avoid death, the man then cooperated with Ali's men and led them to the area where they had kept their cattle. He led them to the Ghatfan camp, but when Ali's detachment arrived, they discovered that the camp had been totally deserted.[174]

Counterintelligence measures often required executing diversionary or pre-emptive attacks. An example of such an attack may be found in Prophet Muhammed's decision to march against the army of the tribal leader, Da'thour bin Al-Harith bin Muharib Al-Muharibi. Upon learning that tribesmen from Tha'labah and Muharib had planned an assault on Muslim positions, Prophet Muhammed responded by leading an army of four hundred and fifty, which included infantry and cavalry. On their way, they came across a man who said that he was going to Medina for recreational purposes. When asked what he had heard or seen in the area, the man reported that a certain Da'thour bin Al-Harith was travelling with a group of unarmed men. After the interrogation, the man was led to Prophet Muhammed, who called upon him to embrace Islam.

> The man did and spoke thus: 'O Muhammed! They [the Gatfanis] do not have the courage to meet you. If they hear you are marching towards them, they will flee to the mountain tops… I will now be your guide and lead you to their most vulnerable positions…' When the Muslims finally reached the area in which the Gatfanis were supposed to be camping, there was nobody there. All the fighting men who had been amassed by Da'thour had fled the scene, taking refuge in the nearby mountains.[175]

On the eve of the battle of Mecca, immortalized in the Quran as the *Fatah*[176] (opening up) of Mecca, Prophet Muhammed took exceptional measures to deceive enemy intelligence and mask his military plan to march towards the Quraishis. He also introduced very strict precautionary measures, which may be described as a declaration of martial law or a state of emergency. He ordered the closure of all roads leading to Mecca, multiplied the number of patrols and gave the sentinels extraordinary powers to prevent arrivals in and departures from Medina: no one was allowed to enter or leave unless they provided an agreed password. Those who were heading towards Mecca without proper authorization were detained until they were security-checked and cleared.[177]

These precautionary measures also necessitated concealment of the battle plan from all of Prophet Muhammed's companions and military commanders, except Abu Bakr and Prophet Muhammed's lieutenant for intelligence and security Umar bin Al-Khattab.. However, one of Prophet Muhammed's inner circle managed somehow to discover the real aim of these manoeuvres. Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah came to realize that the Muslims were in fact planning to take Mecca by storm and catch the Meccan army unawares. Hatib then approached a woman and handed her a secret note to three prominent Quraishis in Mecca:

> The Messenger of Allah has given his orders to attack. He intends to attack none but you. I wish to cooperate and extend a helping hand. [Hatib] then sent the secret message with a woman, who concealed it in her thick plaited hair. Hatib asked the woman to avoid taking the main road leading to Mecca, as it was closely watched by the guards. Accordingly, she took a different less taken route. But Prophet Muhammed was soon to uncover the secret attempt to provide sensitive intelligence to Quraish and later intercepted the woman messenger before she could reach Mecca.[178]

Although historical sources make no mention of how the woman was discovered, it is no wild conjecture to assume that she was under close surveillance from the moment she requested an audience with Prophet Muhammed until her departure from Medina.

During the days before the conquest of Mecca, not only the Quraishis but also all other tribes felt insecure and feared that they might be targeted by Prophet Muhammed. Besides creating an atmosphere of confusion, anxiety and suspense in and around Mecca, the Prophet's counterintelligence apparatus succeeded in uncovering and capturing a number of spies, who were collecting information about Prophet Muhammed's army and military plans. The Medina intelligence, for example, succeeded in capturing a Quraishi spy, Furat bin Hayyan, who was working for Prophet Muhammed's arch enemy, Abu Sufyan. Furat was condemned to death, but his life was spared when he embraced Islam Through his network of informers, Prophet Muhammed, as pointed out elsewhere in some detail,[179]

succeeded in uncovering the Quraishi plan to kill him just before the clandestine attempt on his life was due to be executed. Had it not been for his well-placed spies, Prophet Muhammed would not have been able to make his exit from Mecca safely.

Foiling the attempt of Omeir bin Wahab Al-Jamhi to murder Prophet Muhammed was another example of the apparent professionalism and thoroughness of the intelligence work carried out by those in charge of Prophet Muhammed's security. The 8th-century chronicler, Al-Waqidi, dwells on a significant incident in which a spy from the hostile tribe of Hawazin was caught by Prophet Muhammed's security men. They led the man to Prophet Muhammed and gave details of the way in which he was captured:

> When we realized that he [the spy] was continuing to evade and prevaricate, we threatened to give a fatal blow to his neck, if he did not tell us the truth. 'Will [the truth] help me?' he asked. We assured him it would. Then he said: 'I come from the clan of Nadhr of the tribe of Hawazin, who dispatched me to spy on Muhammed and his allies. I was specifically ordered to enquire if Muhammed will himself lead the army or delegate others to carry out the attack. I was told: "Check if he is planning to attack us and follow his army until you get to Batn Sarif. If he intends to assault us, he will then veer off the route to march towards us. But if he continues the journey, he will not go off the road".' The Messenger of Allah then asked: 'Where are the Hawazin fighters stationed now?' The spy answered: 'I left them at Baq'a, where they have asked the tribe of Thaqif for help. ... They also asked the tribesmen of Jursh to supply them with Mangonels[180] and armour.' .... The Prophet then asked: 'What has the Hilal tribe decided?' to which he answered: 'Only a few of them were willing to join. The Meccans are quite frightened and alarmed.[181]

Prophet Muhammed's counterintelligence work was not restricted to unveiling and aborting operations planned by his local enemies or the hostile tribes of the Peninsula. His men also succeeded in uncovering foreign plots designed to establish undercover spying stations on the Muslims. In one such operation, Prophet Muhammed's agents in the Islamic stronghold of Medina unmasked an elaborate Byzantine plan to spy on the Muslims. Just nine years after Prophet Muhammed had established his rule in Medina, the Byzantines instructed one of their priests, Abu Amie Al-Khazraji, to declare that he had converted to Islam. He was also directed to build a new mosque in order to provide a secure venue for his agents. The choice of its location was quite significant, in the same neighbourhood and very close to the Qiba' mosque which Prophet Muhammed's men had constructed earlier. The 'Muslim' monk asked Prophet Muhammed to inaugurate the place of worship and bless it with his presence. Prophet Muhammed responded by saying he was quite busy and requested postponement of the ceremony until he had accomplished a mission with which

he was preoccupied at the time. Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammed's men, whose suspicions had been raised, watched closely what happened in and around the newly built mosque. When sufficient evidence was obtained, Prophet Muhammed ordered the mosque to be demolished.[182]

The Quraishis were not to be outdone by the Muslim intelligence agents. Just as Prophet Muhammed continually attempted to collect information and foil clandestine operations, the Quraishis carried out their own counterintelligence work. In one of their successful operations, mentioned above, they were able to uncover two secret agents whom Prophet Muhammed had dispatched to spy on the movements of their caravans across the desert, by examining the dung left by the spies' camels. This attempt at obtaining intelligence information by quantitative and qualitative analysis of substances represents an early form of measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT).[183]

4.1.3 Analysis

Policy makers cannot take optimal decisions unless they are in possession of a clear analysis of the intelligence collected. In times of war or crisis, acquisition of relevant data becomes crucial, as any intelligence failure or lack of cogent assessment might indeed put the whole security of the state at risk. Prophet Muhammed appears to have fully understood this fundamental and generally accepted truth, being particularly careful not to embark upon any project or initiate any campaign until he had verified and analysed the information provided by his intelligence network. Admittedly, the analysis process, during times of war, did not require a great effort, in that practically all that was needed was the verification of reports with regard to ascertainable facts and events. These might include monitoring such activities as troop deployment, the hoarding of provisions, the making of weapons, the rerouting of caravans and any other activity related to war preparations. There are many examples of operations in which Prophet Muhammed needed debriefing and verification techniques, analysis and the ability to draw the right conclusions.

One such example occurred on the eve of the Battle of Badr. Prophet Muhammed dispatched three of his close confidants and eminent companions, Ali bin Abi Talib[184], Al-Zubair bin Al-Awwam[185] and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas,[186] to reconnoitre the area that was to witness the first major armed confrontation with his Quraishi enemies. The three men headed towards a place known to be water-rich and frequented by caravans as well as inhabitants of nearby lands. The scouts spotted two young boys drawing water from a well, captured them and led them to Prophet Muhammed's headquarters, where it was hoped that Prophet Muhammed would extract useful information from them. Finding that Prophet

Muhammed was busy performing his prayers, the three men began interrogating the captives themselves. When asked for whom they were carrying the water, the boys gave what sounded like an evasive answer, that they were working for the Quraishi army advancing towards Medina. This answer was not to the liking of Prophet Muhammed's companions, who had been under the impression that the boys belonged to Abu Sufayan's caravan, which had suddenly changed course and vanished in the desert. To force the boys to tell the truth they started to beat them severely.[187]

The beatings compelled the young boys to say that they were in fact working for Abu Sufyan[188], leader of the richly laden Quraishi caravan which was on its way from Syria to Mecca. Upon this admission, they were then left alone. When Prophet Muhammed finished his prayers, he was advised of what had happened and how the boys had changed their story. Examining the details carefully, Prophet Muhammed disapproved of what the three scouts had done to the boys and felt that something was amiss. Censuring his companions, Prophet Muhammed said: "When the boys utter the truth, you beat them, and when they tell a lie, you release them!" He then decided to conduct the interrogation of the water carriers himself. Without resorting to violence or the threat of force, Prophet Muhammed managed to extract crucial information about three areas of interest to the Muslim army: the whereabouts of the Quraishi army, the number of fighting men deployed by Quraish and the names of their commanding officers.[189]

Prophet Muhammed started by asking the boys where the Quraishis had camped. He was told that they were behind the sand dunes at Adwa Quswa. When he asked them how many fighting men there were, they said that they did not know. To extract this vital information, Prophet Muhammed then asked the young boys how many camels were slaughtered each day. They said "9 on one day and 10 on another". As camels were the main source of sustenance for tribesmen during raids and battles, and as it was common knowledge to all desert dwellers that a camel can feed between 90 and 100 people, Prophet Muhammed indirectly learnt that the advancing army numbered between 900 and 1000 men. He then enquired about the leaders of the Quraishi army. He was told that among the commanding officers were Utbah bin Rabee'ah, Sheebah Akhah, Umayya bin Khalaf, Al-Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib and Sahl bin Amru. These names gave Prophet Muhammed a relatively clear picture of what to expect, as he knew these men, their backgrounds, their points of strength and their tribal connections. Prophet Muhammed also realised that the opposing army was three times larger than his own. When he finished the interrogation, Prophet Muhammed turned to his companions and said: "Mecca has deployed the cream of

Quraishi fighters against you". He then made his battle plans in the light of the information obtained from the water carriers.[190]

The early Muslims made good and sometimes crucial use of the age-old, primitive method of collection and spying through eavesdropping. On the eve of the battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammed needed as much intelligence as he could muster about the movements of his enemies' commercial caravans, which he had been planning to ambush. From a casual conversation between two women who were drawing water from a well near Badr, where a battle would soon rage between Prophet Muhammed and the Quraishis, a Muslim agent was able to learn the location and the expected time of arrival of a large commercial Mecca-bound caravan returning from Syria. One of the women had apparently lent some money to her companion, who promised that she would be paid up as soon as the approaching caravan arrived, which would be either the next day or the day after. This information, from ordinary women who were unmindful of the Muslim spy, proved invaluable to the plan to attack the caravan.[191]

The value which Prophet Muhammed appears to have placed on intelligence can best be seen following the Battle of Uhud: he continued his intelligence activities even after hostilities had ceased, when he ordered that the Quraishi retreat be closely followed and watched. Prophet Muhammed specifically wanted details of the means of transportation used by the Quraishis, especially the numbers and types of draft animals they employed. His orders to his secret agent, Saad bin Abi Waqqas, were quite clear:

> Bring us news of their movements. If they have mounted the camels rather than the horses, then this signifies that they have decided to depart. But if they have mounted their horses rather than their camels, then most likely they are bent on attacking Medina. By Him, in whose hands is my soul, if they march towards Medina, I shall advance towards them and give them battle.[192]

Through analysis of secondary or collateral reports on the general activities of the Quraishis, Prophet Muhammed was able to arrive at important conclusions, with regard to the actual capabilities of his foes. On the eve of the Battle of Uhud, he sent two agents to scout the area around Medina and Mount Uhud and to collect as much information as they could on the Quraishis, especially the number of fighting men deployed against him and the areas in which they were concentrated. They reported that the enemy had arrived at a place called Al-Aridh, north east of Medina, famous for its wide expanse of rich agricultural soil, but that its fields and orchards had almost vanished and that the green areas had turned into a wasteland. The sudden disappearance of the rich foliage, which was devoured by the livestock and draft animals of the Quraishis, provided a clear indication as

to the size of the Quraishi battalions. As the number of beasts of burden and other animals was in direct proportional to that of the advancing armies, Prophet Muhammed and his men concluded that they were facing a very large army.

4.1.4 Covert Action

As for Godson's fourth element, the early Muslims resorted to covert operations in order to protect the fledgling Muslim state in Medina, by eliminating those who were perceived to threaten the security of the nascent state. Not all clandestine operations were initiated by the Muslims, however; many were carried out as a retaliatory response to operations executed by the polytheist Quraishis or the Christian Byzantines. During the early period of Islam, the theatre of covert operations extended far beyond Mecca and Medina to include areas as far as Yemen to the south and Abyssinia to the west. In advancing his cause, Muhammed, as Richard Gabriel points out,

> Used political alliances to deprive his enemy of a source of military manpower and erode the enemy's popular base of support. Political manoeuvre and negotiation, intelligence, propaganda, and the judicious use of terror and assassination were employed to wage a psychological warfare campaign against those potential sources of opposition that could not yet be won by calculation of self interest or ideology.[193]

It was of course only natural that in the beginning these covert operations suffered from a lack of tactical intelligence. Prophet Muhammed's followers were "mostly townspeople with no experience in desert travel",[194] so that on some of the early operations Prophet Muhammed had to rely on desert dwellers and Bedouin guides. Then, as his foothold in Medina grew firmer,

> His intelligence service became more organized and sophisticated, using agents-in-place, commercial spies, debriefing of prisoners, combat patrols, and reconnaissance in force as methods of intelligence collection. Muhammad himself seems to have possessed a detailed knowledge of clan loyalties and politics within the insurgency's area of operations and used this knowledge to good effect when negotiating alliances with the Bedouins.[195]

A close look at some of these operations will show that neither Prophet Muhammed nor his adversaries in Arabia embarked upon covert operations until they had carefully collected intelligence, defined their targets, scouted the theatre of operations and chosen the right operatives for the mission. To silence detractors and eliminate instigators and those whom Prophet Muhammed considered enemies to Islam, he launched many covert

operations, which were also intended to boost the morale of the Muslims, influence the military decision of their enemies and deceive his enemy's intelligence.

Among the first to be targeted by the early Muslims were the poets, whose role was equivalent to that of journalists today and who were greatly venerated by their fellow Arab tribesmen and townsfolk alike, as great men of eloquence and sagacity. Islam, however, at least during the early stages, placed certain constraints on them and ultimately denigrated their status. In pre-Islamic Arabia, each tribe had at least one poet, who, more than the national bards or poets laureate of the West, acted as a general spokesman of his tribe. The role of the ancient Arab poet was quite complex. Besides promoting and defending the tribe's image, the poet was also a military spokesman. His judgments would sometimes "assume the strength and authority of the judiciary"[196] and his influence might occasionally exceed that of the tribal leader himself. On account of the rhyme, rhythm and other musical and linguistic devices used, a poet's utterances were strongly etched on the collective memory of the tribe.

Poets played an important role in times of public calamity, crisis or war. They were the providers of verbal tools which could be used to soothe the pains of the public and calm their anxieties, commemorate the fallen, heap scorn on the enemy and extol the virtues, honour and bravery of fellow tribesmen. The Quraishi leaders, who were intent on wiping out the new faith and countering Prophet Muhammed's increasing popularity, naturally enlisted the help of their tribal poets, who obliged by writing various poems attacking Prophet Muhammed and fuelling hatred against Islam. At first, the Muslims tried to win those eloquent men and women over to their side, or at least to avoid being the object of their attacks. When these efforts failed to produce the desired results, and when the damage inflicted upon the Muslims was too great to tolerate, Prophet Muhammed had to respond violently. He decided that those who attacked Islam and sought to undermine it should be physically eliminated.

The poetess Asma' bint Marwan was among the first to be silenced. This woman, who belonged to the Aws tribe in Medina, was especially outspoken in her tirades against Prophet Muhammed and the Muslims. Her razor-sharp jibes against the new religion gained wide popularity amongst the tribes. In one of her poems, Asma' attacks Muslims and those tribes which embraced Islam, ridicules the character of the "stranger', Prophet Muhammed, and calls upon her fellow tribesmen to end the Muslim question by murdering Prophet Muhammed:

> I despise Banu Malik and al-Nabit

> And Auf and Banu al-Khazraj.
> You obey a stranger who is none of yours,
> One not of Murad or Madhhij.
> Do you expect good from him
> After the killing of your chiefs
> Like a hungry man waiting for a cook's broth?
> Is there no man of pride who would attack him by surprise?
> And cut off the hopes of those who expect aught from him?[197]

The man who eliminated this sharp-tongued satirist was Omeir bin Wahab Al-Awsi, who managed to enter her home and stab her while she slept.[198] When Al-Awsi met Prophet Muhammed and asked if he would be taken to task for what he did to the poetess, he was assured that "no two goats would butt over her death".[199]

Another poet who met the same fate was Abu Afak, who had attained the age of 120 years and was notorious for incitement against the person of Prophet Muhammed, for his venomous denunciations and for his denigration of Islam and the Muslims. A very intricate plan was prepared to silence him in the courtyard of his own house.[200] The man assigned to carry out the operation was one of the poet's own tribesmen, so that when the murder was uncovered, it would not lead to any tribal repercussions or start an endless cycle of revenge.

A number of assassinations and covert operations were aimed at influential figures. The early Muslims singled out such important elements as tribal leaders, men of military prowess or those of great affluence or social status, who wielded great influence among their followers and shaped their attitudes, not only to Islam and the Muslims but also to life in general. Foremost among those who were targeted were the men who incited the Quraishis against Prophet Muhammed and those who financed efforts to resist the Muslims and fanned the flames of hatred towards the new religion. They were in the main polytheists, but there were also a number of Jews and Christians among them, including Abu Rafi', one of the most influential Jews of Khaiber, who played a significant role in financing those who were plotting against Prophet Muhammed, especially the Ghatfan tribesmen, whom he encouraged to attack the newly established Islamic state in Medina. Abu Rafi' also played a vital role in what is known in Islamic history the Battle of the Trench. He spent much time and resources to inciting the tribes against Prophet Muhammed and mustering support for the anti-Islamic camp.[201]

The squad which carried out the operation was led by Abdullah bin A'teek Al-Khazraji, who had recently embraced Islam.[202] Abdullah, whose mother was Jewish, knew Hebrew, which stood him in good stead in the execution of the clandestine operation.[203]

With him were Al-Harith bin Raba'í (Abu Qutada), Khuzai bin Al-Aswad, Masoud bin Sinan and Abdullah bin Anas.[204] The plan depended to a large extent on the information provided by Abdullah's mother as to the whereabouts of the target. She also suggested that the best time to launch the attack was at night and that the squad should pretend to be visitors who had come to present Abu Rafi' with a gift. Taking advantage of darkness, the team disguised themselves and headed for the Jewish fortress, which they managed to enter with relative ease. When they reached the target's mansion, Abdullah said in Hebrew that he had come to offer Abu Rafi' a present. As soon as the gate was opened, the team forced their way in, put him to the sword and left hurriedly. What helped the attackers escape the scene of the assassination was the fact that the gates and entrances of the fortress were all fitted with locks and bolts. This provided the assailants with valuable time to make their getaway, while the victim's family raised the alarm and while the gatekeeper or watchman was located and waken up. The killers first lurked in a small shrub-covered ravine outside the fortress, then managed to sneak out and start their 190-kilometre journey back to Medina.[205]

Another example of covert operations is afforded by the elimination of the tribal leader Sufiyan bin Khalid al-Hathli. When confirmed reports reached Medina that he was actively involved in preparing an attack on the Muslims and instigating other tribes to muster support for the imminent assault, Prophet Muhammed turned to one of his most trusted followers, Abdullah bin Unais, whom he instructed to eliminate Al-Hathli. When Unais asked Prophet Muhammed to describe the target to facilitate identification, he was given minute details of his looks and physical features. Then he was assured that "the moment you set eyes on this horrible looking man, you will shudder at the sight".[206] As a cover, Unais was instructed to claim to be a member of the Khuzaai tribe. Armed only with a sword, he began searching for Al-Hathli, telling everybody he met that he hated the Muslims and that he wished to join Al-Hathli's campaign against Prophet Muhammed. When finally he reached his target, Unais did all he could to win his trust. He was so successful and convincing that Al-Hathli invited him to his own residence, where Unais stabbed him fatally. He then hid until the hot pursuit died down, before returning to Medina.[207]

A further example is the assassination of Rifa'ah bin Rafi' Al-jashmi, which was planned when reports reached Medina that he was planning to attack some Muslims. These reports were confirmed by the *uyoun*, who spotted Rifa'ah and a number of his followers north of Medina. Prophet Muhammed then ordered three of his men to "Go for this man.

Don't come back until you have either captured him or brought back news of his death".[208] The three men then went out, laid a night ambush for the target and eliminated him.[209]

The assassination of Kaab bin Al-Ashraf provides yet another example of the early covert operations of the Medina Muslims, who were intent on defending their faith at any cost. Al-Ashraf, an eminent Jewish merchant and poet who was extremely wealthy and influential, not only among the Jewish community but also among the tribes in the Medina region, played a very active role in resisting the new religion and inciting the Quraishis to rise up in arms against Prophet Muhammed. He also wrote many satires against Islam and the Prophet. Just as his criticism of Prophet Muhammed was seen by the Muslims as destructive and toxic, his resounding eulogies of the Quraishis were honeyed and laudatory. To make matters worse, he also wrote love poems laden with insinuations about Muslim women.[210]

Al-Ashraf once met Abu Sufyan, the most eminent Quraishi tribal leader and arch-enemy of Prophet Muhammed before the conquest of Mecca. At that meeting, Abu Sufyan asked the Jewish merchant if Islam or the religion of Quraish was more humane and closer to his faith (Judaism). Al-Ashraf was in no doubt that the Quraishis were truly enlightened, better guided and were following the right path. On account of his vociferous antagonism to Islam, Prophet Muhammed felt it necessary to eliminate him at once. To that end, he summoned some of his followers and asked: "Who could silence Kaab bin Al-Ashraf, who is avowedly declaring enmity towards us and has joined forces with the Quraishis against us?" Prophet Muhammed then recited the following verse from the Quran: "Have you not seen those unto whom a portion of the Scripture has been given, how they believe in idols and false deities, and how they say of those (idolaters) who disbelieve: 'These are more rightly guided than those who believe'?"[211]

One of those present, Salakan bin Salameh, rose and asked: "Is the Messenger of Allah ordering the assassination of Kaab bin Al-Ashraf?" Upon receiving the answer in the affirmative, Salakan then said: "Would the Messenger of Allah give me leave to say what I choose to Kaab in order to carry out this mission?" Prophet Muhammed agreed. Salakan then hid his squad close to Kaab's fortress and shouted: "Oh Kaab… Will you open the gate?" When asked who it was, he replied that it was Salakan, Kaab's foster brother. Kaab's wife sensed danger and forbade her husband to open the gate, but Kaab overruled her, insisting that "nothing but good can come out of my brother". Explaining why he had come to Kaab at that hour, Salakan said that he and his people had grown tired of Prophet Muhammed and his demand for 'Zakat' (alms). Salakan then asked if he could borrow a

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"camel-load or two" of foodstuffs from Kaab in order to give to that "troublesome Muhammed". He also assured Salakan that Muhammed's followers would soon grow tired and rebel against him. Kaab agreed to the loan provided that it was made against some sort of surety or mortgage. Asked what he wanted as surety, Kaab replied "your women", to which Salakan jokingly responded: "What! Mortgage our women to the most handsome of men?" Kaab then demanded that Salakan and the other borrowers should mortgage their sons instead. But that was not acceptable either: "If we mortgage our sons to you, they will be a laughing stock of all and will always be taunted as the men who were mortgaged against a load of foodstuffs". Kaab finally agreed to accept weapons as the required mortgage.

To implement the assassination plan, Salakan had agreed with his hidden companions that they should emerge to attack Kaab as soon as they saw his hands firmly locked round Kaab's head. Salakan's stratagem began by flattering the vain Kaab profusely: "What a glorious perfume you are wearing! I have never smelt anything like it in my whole life!" Taking the bait, Kaab boasted that the perfume he used was far superior to those used by women. Salakan then asked if he could smell Kaab's hair, grabbed his head and shouted for his men to advance. In the confusion that followed, Salakan was wounded, but the group did not leave until they had severed Kaab's head.[212]

Among the most daring operations executed during the Medina period was the attempt on the life of Abu Sufyan bin Harb, one of the most respected tribal leaders in Quraish. Renowned for his courage and calculating mind, he was behind many attempts at subverting Islam and oppressing the Muslims. As leader of the anti-Muhammed camp, he posed the most serious threat to Islam from the dawn of the new faith to the conquest of Mecca. To liquidate him, Prophet Muhammed used two men, a Muslim called Amru bin Ummaya Al-Dhamri[213] and a non-Muslim, Salama bin Aslam.[214] The former was chosen to carry out the mission because he was renowned for his courage and physical prowess, and was also an extremely fast sprinter. Another advantage was the fact that he knew all about the byways and shortcuts of the desert. It was decided that the best weapon to use against Abu Sufyan was a small poniard, which could easily be concealed by its bearer. It was also decided that the two men should travel by camel and head for a place called Wadi Bajaj, 16 kilometres from Mecca.[215] The plan also demanded that the two should tie down their camels there and head for their target in Mecca. In the event of discovery or unforeseen developments, Salama would then hurry back to his camel, while the fast-footed Amru would take whatever measures he deemed appropriate to escape. The two men spent a

week in Mecca, moving from one place to another in pursuit of their target, but their plot was discovered. When the retreat plan was implemented, Amru was chased by the Meccans but managed to reach his base in Medina safely.[216]

Covert operations were not limited to those against poets and influential figures, but were also conducted against leaders of rival religious movements. Among those who were assassinated for propagating what the Muslims considered a revisionist brand of Islam was Al-Aswad al-Ansi, who claimed to be a prophet sent by Allah.[217] Prophet Muhammed's followers, however, considered him to be nothing more than a magician or a fortune-teller:

> But he was no minor magician or fortune-teller…. He was powerful and influential and possessed a strange power of speech that mesmerized the hearts of his listeners and captivated the minds of the masses with his false claims. With his wealth and power he managed to attract not just the masses but people of status as well. … Al-Aswad's tribe were the first to respond positively to his claims to prophethood. With this tribal force he mounted a raid on San'a. He killed the governor, Shahr and took his wife to himself. From San'a he raided other regions. Through his swift and startling strikes, a vast region from Hadramawt to At-Taif and from al-Ahsa to Aden came under his influence.[218]

To silence Al-Aswad al-Ansi and stop his movement before any further damage occurred, Prophet Muhammed ordered his execution.[219] He commanded Wabrah bin Yahnus to head for Yemen secretly in order to prepare an assassination plan. Wabrah devised an intricate plan in which a number of Muslims of Persian origin were to take part. Most crucial was the role played by al-Ansi's wife Mirzabanah, who was known to harbour nothing but disdain and hatred for Al-Ansi, who had killed her first husband and forced her to marry him. Mirzabanah provided vital intelligence on Al-Ansi's movements and facilitated the killers' entrance to her castle, where the operation was successfully carried out.[220]

The assassination of Tulaiha bin Khuwailid Al-Asadi illustrates the length to which the early Muslims went in order to carry out their covert operations. Tulaiha was an outstanding tribal leader and brave warrior, who was most revered among his tribe. Because of his eloquence and leadership qualities his authority grew at such a pace that he was soon deemed to be a serious threat to the security of the state of Medina.[221] The plot to assassinate Al-Asadi was carefully designed to take two important points into consideration. The first was the fact that it was customary for him and his tribe to be armed with swords at all times. The second was the physical qualities and military prowess of Al-Asadi himself. To ensure success of the assassination attempt it was decided that whoever was tasked with that dangerous mission should have some sort of cover under which he

could carry out the attempt. The man chosen was Mukhnif bin Al-Saleel Al-Haliki, a master bladesmith who travelled the desert forging, mending or sharpening swords and other utensils. The choice was considered most appropriate, as it ensured that Al-Asadi would surrender his sword to the agent if he were to have any dealing with him. The undercover agent managed to establish contact with the target, who did indeed ask him to sharpen his sword. When the bladesmith had hold of the sword, he lifted it and struck his target on the head, but failed to kill him and was himself captured and killed. Instead of silencing Al-Asadi, the news of the failed attempt only gave his movement wider popularity. His followers seized this opportunity to present him as an invincible prophet, able to withstand direct sword blows.[222] Al-Asadi was soon to recant, however, and abandon his claim to prophethood. He re-embraced Islam and played an active role in the military campaign to wrest Iraq from the Persians.[223]

Prophet Muhammed used also tactical deception to beguile his enemy's intelligence. On the eve of marching to Mecca he masked his military plans by ordering three battalions to march in different directions in order to keep the Quraishis guessing as to what his next target was. The first of the three diversionary battalions, of three hundred men, was ordered to head towards Najd, the second towards Ghatfan and a third smaller detachment in another direction. As conflicting reports of Prophet Muhammed's intentions spread, the Meccan leaders did not know which of them to believe. Prohet Muhammed achieved his plan by surprising the Quraishis in Mecca.

Some covert action was intended to boost the morale of the Muslims. An illustrative example of this may be seen in the operations aimed at retrieving the body of Khabeeb bin Uday. Khabeeb was among the early Muslims who vigorously supported Prophet Muhammed and fought under his banner in the decisive Battle of Badr, where he was reported to have killed a number of Meccan polytheists. Soon after this Battle, Prophet Muhammed sent him on a reconnaissance mission to observe the movements of the Quraishis and check whether they were, as reported, engaged in any military preparations. But Khabeeb and his nine fellow scouts were discovered, tracked and surrounded. Seven of them died in the engagement that followed, while Khabeeb and two other men were tricked into surrendering in the hope that they would be set free. Instead, they were sold to the Meccans, who in order to exact revenge on Khabeeb for killing so many of their men at Badr, crucified him and left his corpse to rot in the desert.

Khabeeb's fate grieved Prophet Muhammed, who immediately ordered one of his *uyoun*, Amru bin Ummaya Al-Dhamiri, to head for Mecca and retrieve his body. As long

as the decomposing corpse of the renowned fighter remained on the cross, the morale of the Muslims was low, while that of the Quraishis was boosted. Amru stealthily went to the spot where Khabeeb's cross was erected, scaled it and hastily detached the crucified corpse. He then sped back to Medina, stopping only briefly to provide a proper burial for his fallen comrade. When the Quraishis later discovered that the corpse had vanished, they were at a loss as to what had happened. The operation impacted negatively on their morale, while boosting that of the Muslims.[224]

Freeing captured Muslims in Mecca is another example of morale-boosting operations. In one such action, Prophet Muhammed tasked Khalid bin Al-Waleed[225] to prepare a plan to rescue two of the earliest Meccans to embrace Islam: Ayyash bin Abi Rabi'a and Salameh bin Hashim. As a punishment for abandoning the faith of their forefathers, these two men were imprisoned by the Quraishis. To help Khalid prepare a proper plan, Prophet Muhammed provided him with other vital details of the location where these two companions were imprisoned. He also asked him to contact one of the Muslim agents stationed in Mecca, whose name was Al-Qain and whose residence would be used as a safe house from which Khalid would launch the operation.[226] With the help of the agent, Khalid managed to rescue the two men and despite the hot pursuit that ensued he was able to ensure their safe arrival in Medina.[227]

Another goal of covert action was to influence the military decisions of Prophet Muhammed's enemies. This may clearly be seen in what is now known as the Hamra' Al-Asad operation. One result of the Battle of Badr was the growing awareness amongst the Quraishis that their commerce and caravan routes were under constant threat as long as Medina remained in Muslim hands. Despite successes scored by the Quraishis against Prophet Muhammed's army, the Battle of Uhud was far from decisive. Both sides suffered heavy losses and retreated from the battlefield, the Muslims towards their base in Medina and the Quraishis towards Mecca. But each side kept a watchful eye on the other; just as the Muslims had numerous *uyoun* in Mecca, the Quraishis had their own amongst the Muslims.

When the leader of the Quraishis, Abu Sufyan, ordered his troops to camp at a place called Al-Rawha', 14 kilometres from Medina, his military commanders met to discuss and review the events at Uhud.[228] On their performance appraisal, they were quite divided:

> One group said to another: 'You did nothing. Although you broke down their [the Muslims'] force, you made no use of your achievement. …. There are still some distinguished men among them who will probably gather people up to fight you again. So let us go back and annihilate them and crush their forces.' It

was in fact a hasty decision taken by shallow-minded people who misjudged the potential power and morale of both parties, which is why an eminent leader of Quraish, Safwan bin Omaiyah, tried to dissuade his people from pursuing that venture, saying: 'O people. Do not do such a thing! For I fear that he [Muhammed] will gather up those who had stayed behind and did not fight in Uhud. Go back home as victorious. I am not certain about the outcome or about the turn events might take if we return to re-engage the Muslims in the battlefield.[229]

Through his own network of *uyoun*, details of these deliberations reached Prophet Muhammed. Fearful that a second Quraishi assault might have an undesired result, he decided to launch a campaign aimed at shaking the morale of the Quraishis and deterring them from attacking. To that end, he summoned all his troops and, following on the heels of the Quraishi army, he led them to a place called Hamra' Al-Asad, where he met one of his *uyoun*, Ma'bad Al-Khuzai. Ma'bad, who was not a Muslim, was commanded to catch up with Abu Sufyan's army in order to pass on some disinformation and propaganda reports about Prophet Muhammed's preparedness for war, the condition of his troops, their psychological state and their impatience to avenge themselves. When he found the opportunity to speak to Abu Sufyan, he reported that

> Muhammad … is marching to meet you with a large host of fighters; I have never seen anything similar before. He has mustered all the troops who have tarried and did not join in [the Battle of] Uhud. They surely regret what they have missed and want to compensate for it now. Their hearts are filled with hate and resentment.' Abu Sufyan said: 'Woe to you! What do you suggest?' He said: 'By Allâh, I see that you would not leave till he comes and you see the heads of their horses; or till the vanguard of his army appears from behind that hill.' Abu Sufyan said: 'By Allâh, we have reached a common consent to crush the Muslims and their power.' The man, once more with an implied warning, advised to the contrary. In the light of this news, the resolution and determination of the Meccan army failed. Panic and terror took firm hold of them. They consequently deemed it safest to complete their withdrawal to Mecca.[230]

Prophet Muhammed's choice of the agent was quite appropriate. First, Ma'bad was from a very large tribe which occupied much of the land between Mecca and Medina. His presence in the area was therefore quite normal and did not raise any suspicion. The fact that Prophet Muhammed arranged for the meeting with his agent, not in Medina, but in an out-of-the-way location, Hamra'al-Asad, was a precautionary measure. Meeting the agent at his headquarters in Medina in full view of his troops would most likely have destroyed Ma'bad's cover. Furthermore, as an ordinary non-Muslim tribesman, unrelated to Prophet Muhammed or his tribe, Ma'bad was likely to be believed. In taking the initiative and

launching a psychological operation through the clever use of the agent, Prophet Muhammed was able not only to influence his targets' emotions and state of mind, but also to manipulate their behaviour. Prophet Muhammed thus succeeded in averting a disaster by frustrating his enemies' battle plans and discouraging them from launching a second assault against him. The disinformation relayed by Prophet Muhammed's agent to Abu Sufyan was carefully calculated to have maximum impact on the Quraishis. Another element which contributed to the success of this psychological operation was the fact that the agent's message was delivered within a framework of urgency, which left Quraishi leaders no time to double-check or verify the highly sensitive information from a second source. The agent's exclamation, "By Allâh, I see that you would not leave till Prophet Muhammed's cavalry has arrived" and his assertion that it would be too late to manoeuvre or redeploy once "the vanguard of Muhammed's army appears from behind that hill", was quite dramatic and effective, in that it left Abu Sufyan no time to make an alternative plan to retreat.

On the other hand, the covert operations of the Quraishis against the life of Prophet Muhammed increased as they adopted a variety of strategies to resist his new religion. At first, they tried to win him over by tempting him with money and tribal power, but Prophet Muhammed spurned these attempts. He famously declared to his paternal uncle, through whom the Quraishis made their offers: "O my uncle! By Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on condition that I abandon this course, until Allah has made me victorious, or I perish therein, I would not abandon it." The Quraishis then escalated their resistance by launching a severe psychological campaign aimed at undermining his call and frustrating his efforts to spread the new faith. Among other things, the campaign involved the dissemination of a variety of rumours and calumnies about him. It also included the composition of satires and lampoons which ridiculed and belittled Prophet Muhammed, insulting all that he held sacred. This campaign of hatred included accusations that the propagator of Islam was nothing but an impostor, a charlatan, a crazed poet and a magician. With the verbal and psychological campaign went physical abuse: Prophet Muhammed was several times beaten and trampled by the gangsters and thugs of Mecca.[231] When these and other measures failed to stop his preaching, the Quraishis started thinking seriously of physically eliminating one whom they saw as an exponent of dissent and rebellion, but this proposition was fraught with risks. To decide the fate of Prophet Muhammed, a meeting was held at Dar al-Nadwa, the Council or Parliament House of Mecca, during which, after careful deliberations, the archenemy of

Islam, Abu Jahl[232], who had earlier attempted to kill Prophet Muhammed by throwing a heavy rock at him while he was in prostration to Allah, put forward a plan to assassinate him. He suggested that a band of young men, one from each tribe, should strike Prophet Muhammed simultaneously with their swords so that the blood-money would be spread over them all and therefore could not be exacted, and his people would seek a mind-based recourse for settlement. [233]

To that end, eleven able-bodied men representing most of the tribes in Mecca were duly chosen, but despite the tight siege which the would-be assassins laid on Prophet Muhammed's house, the operation proved a total disaster. Prophet Muhammed had learned of the plot against him and left Mecca for Medina, avoiding detection by taking an unconventional route. In a desperate attempt to seize the prophet, the Quraishis "blocked all avenues leading out of Mecca and imposed heavy armed surveillance over all potential exits".[234] Despite these drastic measures, Prophet Muhammed managed to break out of the siege and march towards Medina, where many enthusiastic new converts to Islam had pledged to provide him with a safe haven and welcome his followers.

Attempts at a military solution were also unsuccessful. Despite the vast numerical superiority of the Meccans, they were routed by the zealous followers of Prophet Muhammed on the battlefield of Badr. During the weeks of soul-searching which followed this humiliation, a Meccan, Omeir bin Wahab bin Omeir, whose son was captured by the Muslims at Badr, expressed a strong desire to avenge himself on Prophet Muhammed. He told his best friend and confidant, Safwan bin Omaiyah, a secret: had it not been for the debts he had to pay back and the large family he had to support, he would have rushed to Medina and shed Prophet Muhammed's blood. Safwan, who was quite wealthy, shared a resentment and hatred of Prophet Muhammed. He readily agreed not only to look after Omeir's family if anything should happen to him, but also to pay off his debts. The two men took a solemn oath not to divulge the plan to anyone. Having applied a lethal poison to his sword, Omeir departed for Medina, but, thanks to Prophet Muhammed's dedicated network of Muslim agents, his intentions were discovered and he was immediately taken to Prophet Muhammed, who asked on what errand he had come to Medina. He said that he was worried about his son and wanted to be reassured that he was well treated in captivity. When Prophet Muhammed asked him about the sword, Omeir gave a vague response, saying that swords brought men nothing but misery. Pressed further about the real reason for bearing the sword, he again said nothing about his true intention. Exasperated by the continued denials, Prophet Muhammed finally confronted him with details of his

clandestine rendezvous with his friend Safwan and of his real reason for travelling to Medina. Astonished by Prophet Muhammed's accurate knowledge of his mission, Omeir immediately indicated his willingness to embrace Islam and to be one of Prophet Muhammed's followers. Prophet Muhammed then ordered that Omeir be taught the Quran. As a result of his conversion, his son was released from captivity.[235]

Covert action was sometimes resorted to in order to deal with a grave social or tribal crisis or settle problems arising from long-standing feuds and vendettas. An example of this is afforded by the incident in which a Muslim killed two men by mistake. To settle the matter, their tribe demanded blood money. Unable to raise the sum required, Prophet Muhammed, in accordance with a treaty signed with the Jewish tribe of Banu An-Nadheer, sought their help to raise the money. The Jews invited Prophet Muhammed to pay them a visit, ostensibly to discuss the matter further, but he learned through one of his covert agents that they were planning to assassinate him upon arrival. Details of the assassination plot were leaked by a Banu An-Nadheer woman to her sister, who had converted to Islam.[236]

Finally, the tribal leader Abu Sufiyan recruited an anti-Muslim zealot to kill Prophet Muhammed in Medina, providing him with a sum of money and a good horse. Because of the sensitive nature of the mission, the agent was especially warned to keep all his movements and contacts secret, but as soon as he entered Medina, the Muslims' suspicions were raised. Upon his capture he confessed and when he was offered the chance to embrace Islam, he did so readily and was forgiven.[237]

4.2 Conclusion

It is clear that from the start of his mission Prophet Muhammed was fully aware of the vital role of intelligence in securing success for his operations and in achieving tactical and strategic goals. Throughout the various stages of his call to Islam, Prophet Muhammed carried out all sorts of intelligence activities. During the early Secret Stage of his mission, which lasted three years, Prophet Muhammed felt it necessary to keep his movements and contacts confidential. To that end, he approached only those whom he knew well and trusted. Certain strict criteria had to be met before a person was invited to embrace the new faith. Once he had secured their allegiance, Prophet Muhammed would embark on training and educating new recruits in the ways of Islam without fearing that he would be betrayed. This period was characterized by extreme secrecy, alertness and caution so that the new religion was not crushed before it could grow.

During the following Open Stage, the tactic of secrecy was abandoned. Having established a small but firm base in Meccan society, Prophet Muhammed took fewer precautions and openly advocated his new faith, not only to his fellow Meccans but also to those who came to Mecca for business, religious or personal reasons. The third stage began with Prophet Muhammed's emigration to Medina, where he succeeded in establishing the first Muslim state. This last stage witnessed intense and bloody confrontations between the converts to the new faith and those who adhered to their ancestral religions and sets of values. It was during this stage that Islamic intelligence work may be said to have come of age. New tactics and methodologies were employed to protect the fledgling state and spread the new faith outside the confines of Medina.

These intelligence activities, categorised in this chapter as clandestine collection, analysis, counterintelligence and covert operations, strongly affected the course of Islamic history, especially in the struggle between Prophet Muhammed and his followers on one hand and the enemies of Islam on the other. Prophet Muhammed appears to have managed within a relatively short time to rejuvenate Bedouin society and to create a new state based on a new faith. If we exclude the spiritual dimension and divine intervention, to which the Muslim faithful attribute Prophet Muhammed's successes, Muslim intelligence activities may be seen as having played a decisive role in instilling, nurturing and spreading Islam in the deserts of Arabia. The activities, operations and tactics employed during the three stages of Islam have firmly established themselves in Islamic history as part of the *Sunnah* and the heritage of Islam, which all Muslims continue to seek to emulate.

Chapter Five

Early Islamic Military and Operational Intelligence

5.1. Introduction

The essential activities of military intelligence such as procuring the data necessary for evaluating and analyzing threats, assessing intentions and keeping a close watch on the enemy were all, with varying degrees of professionalism and sophistication, carried out during the first few years of the new Islamic state which Prophet Muhammed founded in Medina in AD 623. Details of battles recorded in Ibn Is-haq's *Al-Seerah wa Al-Maghazi* (The Biography and the Battles of Prophet Muhammed) show that before each battle, Prophet Muhammed and the military commanders of the new state consciously and consistently sought to acquire strategic and tactical information about their enemies in order that appropriate plans might be laid. This chapter will discuss the intelligence activities practiced by the Muslims in the most important battles led by Muhammed himself: Badr, Uhud and Khandaq.

As soon as the Islamic state was established, Prophet Muhammed and his military council embarked upon the first steps of a long-term strategic plan to strangle Mecca economically. They sought to sap Meccan strength and force the Quraishis to succumb to pressure through the imposition of a tight embargo and a total blockade of Mecca's lines of communication with the outside world. For this they needed reliable intelligence. The first clandestine mission to gather information on the commercial activities of the Meccans was entrusted to one of Prophet Muhammed's cousins, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, who was among the first Meccans to embrace Islam. Ibn Jahsh, the first Muslim to be called an emir in the original sense of the term (leader), was instructed to lead a group of eight men and scout a specific area between Mecca and Medina. They were instructed to target the commercial activities along the caravan route that leads to Mecca. The mission was quite successful, resulting in the seizure of a whole Mecca-bound caravan and the capture of some of the men guarding it.[238]

Later in the same year, a second clandestine mission was carried out and resulted in a resounding victory in the first battle between the Muslims and the polytheists of Quraish. The secret Muslim network in Mecca played a crucial part in making this victory possible. Those who clandestinely dispatched intelligence reports to Prophet Muhammed in Medina

were, as Al-Barhawi points out, a mixed medley of people. Some were 'Mustadháfoon' (the oppressed) who had no tribal connections, others were non-Arabs who had secretly embraced Islam. These had the advantage of moving about freely and thus were better placed to collect and relay information. Another group of collaborators were non-Muslim Arabs who have blood or tribal relations with some Muslims who had emigrated to Medina.[239] Those assigned by Prophet Muhammed to reconnoitre the overland routes around Mecca and Medina brought news that a large commercial caravan was coming from Sham (Damascus) to Mecca, headed by the wealthiest and most influential Quraishi merchant, Abu Sufyan. With the loss of the first Quraishi caravan still fresh in his mind, Abu Sufyan and his fellow merchants were also seeking information about the intentions of the Muslims and their preparedness to ambush or intercept his caravan and seize it. The highly charged atmosphere and the tense relations between the Muslims and the Quraishis required both sides to exert intensive efforts in the fields of reconnaissance, clandestine collection, elicitation techniques and acquisition of tactical information. The subsequent battle, at a place called Badr, was indeed of far-reaching consequences. This first serious encounter between Prophet Muhammed's followers and the Meccans was as significant as Lepanto was to Christian Europe of the 16th century in that it ended the myth of Meccan superior might and established Islam as a power to reckon with. [240] The successes scored in the engagements, which lasted only one day, were a great boost to the Muslims' morale. The battle, soon to be known in Arab history as 'the battle of destiny' also provided a practical test of the military strength of the Muslim fighting men and consolidated the ranks of the zealous worshippers of Allah. But above all else, it inspired confidence that the fruits of a long-term commercial embargo on Quraish would soon be reaped. The following sections examine in detail this battle and those of Uhud and Khandaq (the Ditch).

5.2 The Battle of Badr (16 March 624)

The battle of Badr, which took place on 15th March 624, was named after an important well where desert travellers and caravans would stop for water supplies. Details of this first major military encounter between Prophet Muhammed and the Quraishi polytheists have been amply narrated by Arab and Muslim biographers, historians and commentators. Among the main reasons for the outbreak of hostilities was the Meccans' increased anxiety over the rise of the Muslims and the fear that their new entity in Medina would grow bellicose and aggressive. The Meccans' greatest fear was that the Muslims might one day

disrupt the overland caravan routes linking Mecca with the rest of the Arabian Desert, or indeed strangle Mecca economically. Another reason for the confrontation was a Quraishi attempt to avenge themselves for the murder of one of their chiefs, Umar bin Al-Hadhrami,[241] who was killed while leading a commercial caravan outside Medina. The Muslims, for their part, were waiting for an opportunity to hit back at the Quraishis, who had grossly ill-treated them, tortured them and forced them to flee their homes, for no reason other than embracing a new faith.

Prophet Muhammed's attempts at persuading his fellow Quraishis peacefully to accept his new faith were constantly frustrated by the Meccans, who continued to ignore his calls and inflict grievous psychological and physical torture upon them. Having realized that danger could not be fended off peacefully, he resorted to the imposition of an economic blockade on Mecca, by intercepting and banning any commercial caravan movement to and from the city.[242] In order that the blockade might succeed and produce the desired effect, it was imperative that detailed information should be collected about these caravans: their size, merchandise and itinerary, as well as the protection squad accompanying them. To that end, Prophet Muhammed routinely dispatched scouts and information gatherers, who roamed the desert looking for any caravans or traders traversing it. On the eve of the Battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammed ordered some of his agents to carry out a clandestine mission: collecting as much information as possible on a commercial caravan led by Omar bin Hadhrami. The eight-man group, known as the Nakhla Platoon, was headed by Abdullah Ibn Jahsh Ibn Ri'ab Al-Asdi.

One of the most authoritative and popular accounts of this mission and the famed battle in general is *Al-Raheeq al-Makhtoom* (Sealed Nectar), compiled and edited by the contemporary scholar Shaikh Safiur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri. This important work, which draws only on original texts and primary sources, is widely accepted as one of the more reliable biographies of Prophet Muhammed. Much of Al-Mubarakpouri's material is based on details provided by an early Arab chronicler, Ibn Is-haq, the first scholar to write a full-length biography of Prophet Muhammed. Al-Mubarakpouri relates that the prophet once commanded Ibn Jahsh to go to a place called Al-Nakhla and handed him a sealed note which he was not to read until he had journeyed for two days. Ibn Jahsh was then instructed to follow the written orders. Having journeyed for two days, Muhammed's agent opened the mission order. The note commanded Ibn Jahsh to lie in wait at Nakhla for a Quraishi caravan. He was also commanded to collect information about the movements of this and other Quraishi caravans in the area. He did as commanded and after a short while,

he spotted a Quraishi caravan. Ibn Jahsh who had shaved his head before he set out on this secret mission moved forward towards the caravan. Because of his appearance, the Quraishis felt safe as they thought that he and his companions were pilgrims intending to visit Mecca. But it did not take long before Ibn Jahsh and his companions made a surprise and bloody assault. They killed a few of the caravan men, put to flight the rest of them, then took over the caravan and returned to Medina with the spoils and two Quraishi prisoners.[243]

Although the team leader had exceeded his powers by killing some members of the caravan and despite the bloody outcome of the mission, which angered Prophet Muhammed,[244] the fact remains that his information-gathering tactics produced accurate intelligence which was of immense significance to the Muslims. The details supplied by the agents about the caravan's leader, its merchandise and its itinerary, as well as the places at which it was scheduled to stop, were vital to Prophet Muhammed. For his part, Abu Sufyan, the caravan leader and Prophet Muhammed's arch-enemy, was also on the utmost alert and most anxious to know about the movements of Prophet Muhammed and the strength of his followers. He was regularly provided with reports detailing Prophet Muhammed's activities by his own scouts. When he learnt of the assault on the caravan outside Medina and the fact that the Muslims were lying in ambush, he dispatched a messenger to the Meccans. To draw attention to his urgent message and incite as much excitement and curiosity as possible amongst the crowd around the Kaaba, he, according to Al-Mubarakpouri,

> cut off the nose and the ears of his camel, turned its saddle upside down, tore off his own shirt from front and behind, and cried: 'O Quraish! Your merchandise! It is with Abu Sufyan. The caravan is being intercepted by Muhammad and his companions. I cannot describe what has happened to them. Help! Help!' The effect of this hue and cry was instantaneous: the news stunned Quraish and they immediately remembered how their pride had been wounded when the Muslims had intercepted an earlier caravan. They therefore swiftly mustered almost all of their forces and mobilized some Arab tribes to contribute to the war against Muhammed. Soon, an excited throng of 1300 soldiers, including 100 horsemen and 600 mailed soldiers with a large number of camels, was clamouring to proceed to fight the Muslims.[245]

Al-Mubarakpouri's account continues:

> They set out, burning with indignation, motivated by a horrible desire for revenge and exterminating anyone that might jeopardize the routes of their caravans. They moved swiftly northward towards Badr and while on the way they received another message from Abu Sufyan asking them to go back home because the caravan had escaped the Muslims. Incidentally, Abu

Sufyan, on learning the intention of the Muslims, led his caravan off the main route, and inclined it towards the Red Sea. By this manoeuvre, he was able to slip past the Muslims' ambush and was out of their reach. On receiving Abu Sufyan's message, the Meccan army showed a desire to return home. The tyrant Abu Jahl, however, haughtily and arrogantly insisted that they proceed to Badr and stay three nights there to make festivities. Now they wanted to punish the Muslims, prevent them from intercepting their caravans, and impress on the Arabs that Quraish still had the upper hand and enjoyed supremacy in that area.[246]

Those who were dispatched to reconnoitre the Quraishis reported that a bloody encounter with the Meccans was inescapable and that a daring step in this context had to be taken, or else they would most likely lose the impending battle. The Muslims were afraid that the Meccans would march on and start military activities deep inside Medina, the centre of Islam, which would certainly have inflicted irreparable damage. On account of these grave developments, Prophet Muhammed held an emergency meeting to review the situation and exchange views with the army leaders. He apprised his men of the gravity of the situation and asked for their advice. Sa'd bin Mu'adh stood up and said:

O Prophet of Allah! we declare in unequivocal terms that what you have brought is the Truth. We give you our firm pledge of obedience and sacrifice. We will obey you most willingly in whatever you command us.' ... The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was impressed with the fidelity and the spirit of sacrifice which his companions showed at this critical juncture. Then he said to them: 'Forward and be of cheer. … I feel as if I now see the enemy lying prostrate.' In the immediate vicinity of Badr, the Prophet and his confidant and cave-mate, Abu Bakr, conducted a scouting operation, during which they managed to locate the camp of the Quraishis. They came across an old Bedouin nearby, from whom they managed to extract the exact location of the army of the Meccans.[247]

Prophet Muhammed's men realized the importance of protecting the life of their leader, as any mishap could have unforeseeable consequences for Islam as a religion and for the newly established state in Medina. To that end, "a squad of guards was chosen from amongst the Helpers, under the leadership of Sa'd bin Mu'adh, in order to defend the Prophet (Peace be upon him) in his headquarters".[248] Among other security measures, a contingency plan was devised to enable Prophet Muhammed, if the tide turned against the Muslims, to return to Medina to seek assistance from those he had left behind. But the early reconnaissance missions carried out by Prophet Muhammed's army gave the Muslims an advantage over their Quraishi adversaries in that these operations enabled them to acquire accurate knowledge of the topography of the terrain and to place the vital water resources under their tight control. No one was allowed to approach the wells

without permission. Thus, the Muslims were able to deprive their enemies of water, the most vital commodity in the desert, without which neither man nor beast could survive for long in the burning sands. As a result of this, "a few [Quraishis] approached, in a provocative manner, to draw water from the wells of Badr, but were all killed except one, Hakeem bin Hizam".[249] Hakeem was most likely one of Prophet Muhammed's agents in Mecca. Chroniclers point out that because he had provided intelligence, Prophet Muhammed had warned his army against killing him,[250] especially as he had secretly smuggled foodstuffs to the Muslims when they were besieged in Mecca.

The hostilities between the Quraishis and the Muslims were always preceded by reconnaissance and scouting missions. The Quraishi military chief, Abu Jahl, who led the campaign against Prophet Muhammed at Badr, dispatched a group of scouts led by Umair bin Wahab Al-Jumahi in order to assess the power of the Muslims. Upon his return from the mission, Al-Jumahi reported to his commander that "the Muslim army numbered as many as 300 men, who were all keen on fighting to the last man".[251] As the Quraishis were more than three times as numerous, their leaders suspected that Prophet Muhammed had not deployed all his forces to the battlefield and that he had either laid ambushes elsewhere or was keeping more troops behind the lines to fall back on when he needed support. But these suspicions were put to rest when a second reconnaissance mission was dispatched to scout the areas lying deep behind enemy lines and reported that "neither were reinforcements coming to the Muslims, nor were any ambushes laid by them".[252]

Realizing that the Quraishis were numerically far superior to the Muslims, Prophet Muhammed spared no effort to uplift the spirit of his fighting men, inspire confidence among them and assure them of divine rewards if they were to fall in battle. The psychological impact of Prophet Muhammed's exhortation on his fighting men was immense. As a result, the Muslims started to fight with great vigour and resolve so much so that "a large number of the polytheists were killed and the others began to waver."[253] The humiliating defeat suffered by Prophet Muhammed's enemies incensed the Quraishi leaders and pushed them to seek immediate revenge. This attempt to avenge the death of so many Quraishi's was the root cause of the Battle of Uhud, which will be taken up next.

5.3 The Battle of Uhud (23 March 625)

One outcome of the defeat suffered by the Meccan military leaders at Badr was loss of their prestige and standing with their own community as well as with non-Quraishis. Despite the great numerical advantage Quraish had over Prophet Muhammed's army, the

Muslims were able to achieve a resounding victory. The result was the loss of 50-70 Quraishis killed and a similar number of Quraishis taken prisoner. These figures represent 20% of the total force of the Quraishis. The Muslims on the other hand lost only 14 men or 10% of their fighting force. Historical sources make no mention of the number of those wounded in battle. The new-found confidence of the Muslims after Badr led them to adopt a more vigorous stand and to tighten even further the economic blockade imposed on Mecca. In targeting Quraishi trade with the outside world, especially with Byzantine Syria, Prophet Muhammed proved himself an effective strategist, especially as the process of weakening the economic position of the Meccans would, in a matter of just a few years, bring them to their knees. But the embattled Quraishis would not accept defeat easily. They were determined to wipe out the stigma of the Badr defeat, resume normal economic activity and reopen all overland caravan routes linking Mecca with Yemen and Syria.[254]

After a period of soul-searching and finger-pointing, the Quraishis decided that they had to do some self-examination to establish what went wrong. They also had to discover the factors which caused the Muslims to score such an impressive victory over an army that was so greatly superior in numbers, in arms and in provisions. They therefore embarked upon a campaign to collect information about the Muslim army in order to see if there were any weaknesses or loopholes which they could exploit in their next encounter with them. The Muslims, on the other hand, were no less anxious. They wanted to keep abreast of the Meccans' plans, their intentions and their preparedness for possible retaliatory action.

It was only natural, during a time of such tension and anxiety, that clandestine collection should increase markedly. Reports by *uyoun* and other covert agents such as travellers and merchants were not sufficient to provide an accurate assessment of each other's capabilities, intentions or plans; reliable and verified military intelligence required deeper knowledge and greater detail. Special operations aimed at collecting military information were not new to the warring parties, however, as both Muslims and Quraishis had practiced clandestine collection even before the battle of Badr. To ensure the success of raids against Mecca-bound caravans, the Muslims had developed their own system of permanent surveillance. Through their disguised and well-dispersed spies, they succeeded in obtaining accurate information on the alternative trade routes which the Quraishis had to take to escape the difficulties of the economic blockade. Prophet Muhammed took advantage of the intelligence obtained to launch a series of successful raids. Despite precautionary measures such as employment of experienced desert guides and frequent

changes of itineraries and trade routes, Quraishi caravans were frequently intercepted and looted.[255]

With violent confrontations between Prophet Muhammed and the Meccans becoming inevitable, Abu Sufyan and his fellow tribal chiefs planned a surprise all-out war on the Muslims. Just before the secret battle plan was to be implemented, one of Prophet Muhammed's spies in Mecca smuggled details of the impending assault to Prophet Muhammed. The agent, Abu Al-Fadhl,[256] was in fact one of Prophet Muhammed's uncles who had been recruited earlier and was directed to remain in Mecca as a kind of 'sleeper agent'. Abu Al-Fadhl dispatched an urgent message to Medina, reading "Quraish have unanimously decided to march towards you. Now that they are about to reach you, you must do whatever has to be done. The Quraishi army numbers 3000 men. They have 300 camels and 200 horses. 700 of the men are clad in mail. They have ample arms and equipment."[257] This timely intelligence provided Prophet Muhammed with extremely valuable time to raise the level of preparedness and to consult with his chiefs of staff on how best to resist the assault.

Abu Al-Fadhl was not the only secret agent in Mecca to provide Prophet Muhammed with much needed information on Meccan mobilization; another was Amru bin Salim Al-Khuza'i. By way of cover, Amru joined a number of his fellow tribesmen who were travelling from Mecca to Medina, in order to apprise Prophet Muhammed of the impending attack.[258] As soon as he had delivered his message he returned to Mecca, but news of his speedy journey to Medina reached the military intelligence of Quraish, whose agents had spotted him at a place called Al-Abwa. The commander-in-chief of the Quraishi forces, Abu Sufyan, was immediately informed of Amru's secret mission. He was also told that the Quraishis no longer had the advantage of surprise, as the Muslims knew of their numbers, movements and intentions.[259]

Having received and verified reports of Quraishi mobilization against them, the Muslims now began shadowing the enemy and carrying out such necessary routines in military intelligence as collecting tactical and field information about them and raising the level of preparedness for any unexpected turn of events. Omar bin Al-Khattab increased night security guards, while patrols blocked all points of entrance and exit to and from Medina. Prophet Muhammed meanwhile ordered two of his agents, Anas and his brother Mu'nis ibn Fadhala, to head for the place where the Quraishis had set up camp in order to scout the area and keep watch for the anticipated assault.

Having succeeded in infiltrating enemy ranks, the brothers ibn Fadhala returned to Medina without raising the suspicions of their target. From the information they provided about the devastation of the vegetation in the Al-Areedh area, the Muslims were able to deduce the approximate number of the horses, camels and other beasts of burden which the enemy was deploying.[260] To verify the information already received, Prophet Muhammed sent another scout:

> The Prophet secretly dispatched Al-Habab bin Al-Munthir bin Al-Jamouh to the Quraishis. He advised him to be discreet and not to report the results to the Prophet in the presence of other men. Upon completion of his secret operation, Al-Habab waited until he saw the Prophet was alone. The Prophet asked: 'What did you see?' He answered: 'O Prophet of Allah, I saw approximately 3000 men, perhaps a little more or a little less. I also saw 200 horses, and seven hundred men clad in mail'. The Prophet then asked: 'Have you seen women on camel-back?' 'Yes', came the answer. 'They had drums and tambouines.' Then the Prophet said: 'The women seek to incite their men and remind them of those who fell at Badr. This is what I have heard. Now, remember: Never mention any of all this to anyone.[261]

Al-Habab's report contained more details than that of the two brothers, especially as it provided facts and figures about the Quraishi army. The report also included information on the psychological condition of the advancing warriors and the attempt of their leaders to boost morale by reminding the fighters of those who had been killed in the first confrontation with the Muslims. There were several reasons for embedding war widows and other women in the Quraishi army. It was intended as a stark reminder of the necessity to avenge the bereaved women, by cleansing Quraishi honour and reputation of the stigma of the Badr defeat. But the female presence on the battlefield was also an incentive for Arab tribesmen to fight bravely before their women, who, with their drums and tambours, acted both as spectators and cheerleaders.

Prophet Muhammed continued reconnaissance operations and on the night before the two armies met he directed a Medina intelligence operative, Salameh bin Salamah bin Waqash, to infiltrate the Quraishis and report on their final preparations:

> When Salameh approached the enemy camp, he was discovered by the Quraishi intelligence, who immediately dispatched ten horsemen to chase him. They followed him for some distance, until he reached a place not far from his farm. He dismounted and exchanged darts and stones with his chasers. He then sped to his farm, where he soon got hold of a sword and an iron shield, which he had buried underground, and came back armed with them to fight on.[262]

In his protracted engagements with the Quraishis, Prophet Muhammed relied not only on secret agents, dedicated swordsmen and others experienced in psychological warfare

who deliberately leaked disinformation aimed at undermining the morale of his enemies, but also on highly experienced desert guides. These men, who possessed accurate knowledge of alternative routes and safe shortcuts, were crucial to the success of any military operation. Having readied his one-thousand-strong army for the imminent battle, Prophet Muhammed, with the help of one such guide, Abu Hathama al-Harithi, gave the order to advance in the direction of the Quraishi army. The Muslims moved under cover of darkness and choosing a little known route not under the surveillance of the Quraishis, they managed to reach Uhud undetected. But no sooner had they started to set up camp than one of Prophet Muhammed's field commanders, the Khazraj tribal leader Abdullah bin Abi Masloul, withdrew from the battlefield, taking with him three hundred fighters. Masloul, known in Islamic history as the 'master of all dissemblers', had objected to Prophet Muhammed's battle plans, arguing that leaving Medina was to court disaster. He told Prophet Muhammed:

> [In pre-Islamic days], we always defended Medina without having to leave the confines of the city. Our women and children would help us by amassing huge heaps of stones, which they would then throw at the enemy when they tried to storm Medina, while we fought with our swords in the open. O Messenger of Allah, Our city is still virgin, untouched by invaders. Whenever we stay inside to ward off and fight the attackers we always win. But when we go out to meet the assailants, we always suffer losses. So, Messenger of Allah, let them come forward and they will be met with an evil fate. If, on the other hand, they decide to retreat, they would then retreat dishonoured and defeated. O Messenger of Allah, please listen to me and abide by what I say. Know that I have inherited this experience from the elders and most dignified of my people, who possessed great wisdom and experience.[263]

It is not unlikely that Masloul, the 'master of all dissemblers', was a Quraishi agent, planted amongst the Muslims in order to undermine Prophet Muhammed's authority from within. There must have been a good reason why he was consistently called 'Munafiq'.[264] According to chroniclers' accounts, this term fits Masloul's description perfectly, as the damage he inflicted was immense. Besides the negative impact on the morale of the fighting men, he also undermined the military capabilities of the Muslims by reducing the number of fighting men from one thousand to only seven hundred, which ultimately led, at least in the first part of the battle, to a military defeat.

Upon arrival on the battlefield, Prophet Muhammed immediately went on a reconnaissance mission to acquaint himself and his commanders with the topography and special features of the terrain which was soon to be the main theatre of the confrontation. He decided to take full advantage of the 'Ainain Hill, on the slopes of which the Muslim

army was camped. The high ground was especially advantageous for the spear throwers and provided a good rear defence. Prophet Muhammed deployed a batch of fifty archers to the Hill, with specific orders not to pull out under any circumstances. Their duty was to protect the rear of the Muslim army. In the first round the Muslims managed to force the enemy to retreat and flee the battlefield. Muslims sensed victory and started collecting the war booty. At this point, most of the archers started leaving their posts in order to wrest their share of the war booty. In the event, lack of military discipline and disregard of strict orders had catastrophic consequences for the Muslims. The right flank officer of the Qurishi's army, Khalid bin Alwalid, spotted the 'Ainain Hill vacated posts. He immediately pushed forward with his two hundreds cavalrymen and occupied them. He then took the Muslim army rear by surprise and inflicted heavy losses upon them. Panic and bewilderment seized the Muslim army. Prophet Muhammed was badly injured in his face and many of his bodyguards and fighting men fell. A rumour quickly spread in the battlefield that Prophet Muhammed had been killed. But the tide of battle turned against the Quraishis when the serious shortcomings and failings were remedied in the second round of hostilities especially as more use was made of scouts, guides and advance reconnaissance teams. In all, the Muslims suffered the loss of 70 men while the Quraishi**s** lost only 22. Despite the increase in intelligence activities in Uhud, the battle which followed it, Khandaq, witnessed a qualitative leap in intelligence operations.

5.4 The Battle of Khandaq (March 627)

The roots of the Battle of Khandaq (The Trench or Ditch) date back to an earlier confrontation between the Muslims and the Jews of Banu Nadhir, who had been exiled by Prophet Muhammed from Medina to Khaibar. According to Muslim chroniclers, Banu Nadhir did not forget their eviction and waited for an opportune moment to exact revenge. Their plan was to launch an all-out assault on Prophet Muhammed's stronghold, Medina, in order to end the Muslim threat once and for all. As they could not embark on such an ambitious expedition on their own, they had to involve as many of Prophet Muhammed's enemies and rivals as possible, in order to muster a force strong enough to redraw the newly created map on the ground. Banu Nadhir's strategy, which required the launch of a well-orchestrated smear campaign against Prophet Muhammed, also included an active drive to enter into new pacts and alliances. To lure Arab tribes to their side, they promised rewards, in cash and provisions, for those who would join the military effort against

Prophet Muhammed. To that end, a group of Jewish dignitaries, assisted by a number of chieftains from other tribes, led a large delegation on a flurry of contacts and a tour that took them to many parts of Arabia.[265]

The first port of call was Mecca, where great effort was made to solicit Quraishi help against the Muslims, who after the Battle of Badr had become too assertive and ambitious for the non-Muslims and polytheists to accept. Basing his account of the battle on that of the 8th century chronicler, Ibn Ishaq, Al-Mubarakpouri says that twenty chiefs and celebrities of Banu Nadhir went to Mecca to negotiate an alliance with Quraish:

> They began to goad the people there to attack [Prophet Muhammed], promising them full support and backing. The people of Quraish, who had been languid and proved too weak to challenge the Muslims at Badr, seized this opportunity to redeem their stained honour and blemished reputation. The same delegation set out for Ghatfan, called them to do the same, and they responded positively. The Jewish delegation then started a fresh effort and toured some parts of Arabia and managed to incite the confederates of disbelief against the Prophet, his Message and the believers in Allah. Quraish, Kinanah and other allies from Tihama, in the south, rallied, ranked and recruited four thousand men under the leadership of Abu Sufyan. From the east there came tribes of Banu Saleem, Ghatfan, Bani Murrah, etc. They all headed for Medina and gathered in its vicinity at a time already agreed upon.[266]

Greatly outnumbered by the Quraishi army, which was ten thousand strong, the Muslims had to devise a defence strategy which would neutralise this numerical superiority. One of Prophet Muhammed's companions made an inventive proposal: "O Messenger of Allah! When siege was laid to us in Persia, we used to dig trenches to defend ourselves".[267] Then the Muslims, with Prophet Muhammed at their head, encouraging, helping and reminding them of their reward in the Hereafter, started to build a trench around Medina. "Severe hunger, bordering on starvation, could not dissuade or discourage them from achieving their desperately sought objective".[268]

The land to the north of Medina was a flat desert plateau, making it quite vulnerable, so the Muslim leaders expected their enemies to concentrate their assault from that direction. To thwart the impending attack, they decided to dig a defensive trench or dry moat on that side. The trench was dug with such speed that the Quraishis were unpleasantly surprised at

> a new stratagem unknown in Arabia before, standing as an obstinate obstruction. Consequently they decided to lay siege to Medina and began to manoeuvre around the trench, trying hard to find a vulnerable spot through which they could infiltrate into the beleaguered city. To deter their enemies, the Muslims hurled arrows and engaged in skirmishes with them. The veteran fighters of Quraish were averse to this situation, waiting in vain in anticipation

of what the siege might reveal. Therefore they decided that a group of fighters led by 'Amr bin 'Abd-e-Wudd, 'Ikrima bin Abi Jahl and Dirar bin Al-Khattab, should work its way through the trench. They ... managed to do that and their horsemen captured a marshy area between the trench and Sila' Mountain. 'Amr challenged the Muslims to a duel, and 'Ali bin Abi Talib was deputed. After a short but fierce engagement, 'Ali killed 'Amr and obliged the others to evacuate.[269]

Prophet Muhammed's use of intelligence was instrumental in aborting the assault on Medina. Reports began to flow in as soon as the Quraishi army started its advance. The Muslim sources, who were mainly from the tribe of Khuza'h, kept Prophet Muhammed's headquarters in Medina informed of all that they managed to see or hear. Over a period of several days, the Quraishis were closely shadowed and monitored, all along the route to Medina.[270] The agents confirmed earlier reports about the magnitude of the force assembled by the Quraishis, who were far superior on every count: numbers, provisions and weapons. From these reports, Prophet Muhammed learnt that the Quraishis had recruited ten thousand fighting men and three hundred cavalrymen against his own army of three thousand. To lessen the impact of this imbalance, Prophet Muhammed, who had carefully studied the topography of the area surrounding Medina, decided to make full use of the natural characteristics of the terrain. In his consultations with his commanders, it became clear that the best option for the Muslims was to avoid a head-on clash with the Quraishis and to engage them instead in a long-term war of attrition. It was thought that this would wear out the besieging armies and exhaust Quraishi resources, especially as the confrontation coincided with the arrival of the short but cold season of winter, during which animal fodder was normally hard to come by, while grazing land for the horses, camels and other livestock was depleted. The decision to favour a war of attrition, which may be seen as strategically sound, was mainly dictated by the prevailing circumstances. It also took into account that vendettas and revenge-based wars might last for generations, that desert Arabs were not accustomed to long-term active hostilities and that few of their military confrontations in the past had been protracted.[271]

Direct reconnaissance of Medina and the vicinity around it provided Prophet Muhammed with detailed knowledge of the topography and natural barriers which could be exploited for defence purposes. The Muslims decided to take full advantage of Mount Sala' and the rocky highlands adjacent to it, which provided an excellent defence against any army approaching from the south. Other impenetrable mountains were also counted upon to provide a natural bulwark for the army's back. But the open rolling plains of the

northern approaches to Medina presented a serious challenge to Prophet Muhammed's defence strategy; hence the decision to dig a trench across it so as to impede any advance from that direction. The trench, which took twenty days to complete, was over 5 kilometres long, 4 metres wide and 3 metres deep. Sentinels and regular patrols were soon put in place to monitor any movement close by. To make the best use of his forces, Prophet Muhammed's major battalions were deployed to defend this soft underbelly, whereas smaller units were stationed in and around Mount Sala', where no direct engagements were expected and the only weapons which could be used effectively were arrows and stones thrown by catapults and mangonels.[272]

When the commander of the advancing Quraishi army discovered that Prophet Muhammed had dug a deep ditch across the northern approach, he was dumbfounded, declaring it to be "a trap which the Arabs had never known or resorted to before".[273] The Quraishis, who had not taken the existence of the trench into consideration, had no other choice but to camp outside Medina and lay siege to the city, having been practically entrapped by this stratagem. They neither had enough provisions to outlast the defenders of Medina, nor had they equipped themselves to negotiate their way through the ditch.

The Quraishis realized that the best option was to find a gap through which they could infiltrate the defences and reach Prophet Muhammed's stronghold in Medina. To that end, they contacted the Jews of Banu Quraidha. Muslim chroniclers relate that the Jews were persuaded to break a covenant which they had signed earlier with the Muslims. When reports reached Prophet Muhammed of Banu Quraidha's defection to the Quraishis, he directed Umar bin Al-Khattab, the second in command for intelligence and security affairs, to verify this disturbing development. Umar dispatched an agent who was able to confirm these reports, adding that they were in fact preparing for war, as he had seen them "mending their castles, paving their roads and gathering their livestock".[274] Prophet Muhammed also learnt that Quraidha had suggested that one thousand cavalrymen should launch an attack on Medina from their own territory. Against this background of heightened suspicion and intrigue, Prophet Muhammed decided to intensify foot and cavalry patrols through Medina, assigning 500 men to the task. To inspire confidence and infuse a sense of security among the inhabitants of Medina, the patrols roamed the streets day and night, shouting "Allah Akbar" (Allah is Greatest).[275]

Quraidha's default on its covenant was, among other things, an immense psychological blow to the Muslims. Abu Bakr is reported to have said: "When it came to the safety and security of our children, whom we had left behind, we feared Banu Quraidha

more than we did the Quraishis. But when we saw that the city was being defended by the guards, I thank Allah that Quraidha's designs were all thwarted".[276]

Realizing that the odds weighed even more heavily against the Muslims, Prophet Muhammed had to conceive a stratagem by which he could break up the broad alliance forged against him by the Jews, Quraishis and other Arab tribes. Therefore, he sent for one of his agents in the Ghatfan tribe, Na'im bin Mas'ud, and asked him to execute a very delicate mission. Mas'ud was ordered to go on an extended tour whose purpose was to weaken and ultimately destroy the tribal coalition against the Muslims. Mas'ud was chosen for a number of reasons. He had kept his conversion to Islam secret, so he was trusted not only by his tribesmen but by the other tribes of the anti-Prophet Muhammed camp. He also had many strong personal relationships with the Jews of Banu Quraidha, making his mission much easier and his words more credible. Empowered by Prophet Muhammed to do or say anything that might facilitate his shuttle mission between the different coalition parties, Mas'ud incited each party to betray the other. He whispered in the ears of Banu Quraidha not to trust Quraish, nor fight with them unless the latter pledged some hostages. He then headed for the camp of Quraish and told them that the Jews had reneged on their pledge and that they were maintaining regular correspondence with the Muslims. He further exhorted the Quraishis not to send hostages to Banu Quraidha. Mas'ud's scheme proved effective, and "a state of distrust and suspicion prevailed among the disbelieving allies, reducing their morale to a great degree".[277]

Masu'd's success in fragmenting the alliance against Prophet Muhammed was greeted with immense joy by the Muslims, but Prophet Muhammed did not drop his guard. He ordered one of his intelligence officers, Huthaifah bin Al-Yaman, to go on a secret mission to infiltrate Quraishi ranks, attempt to discover their plans and assess their psychological condition, now that the besieging armies had lost their allies and helpers. Huthaifah was specifically directed to guard against discovery by the enemy and was ordered never to engage in any fighting or draw his weapon throughout the mission. He did as directed and reported to Prophet Muhammed that the Quraishis were in a sorry state as they faced the unexpected inclemency of the weather: an extremely strong and cold wind was blowing. Huthaifah told Prophet Muhammed how he managed to join a group of Quraishis who were sitting around a campfire. He then saw Abu Sufyan rise to address his followers: "Beware of spies and agents. Let each man amongst you look around you and check who is sitting next to you". He then said:

> We are really in a terrible state now. Our food and provisions have almost completely disappeared, our livestock is gone, and we have now been reduced to living in a total wasteland. Banu Quraidha have betrayed us. The wind has been so terrible that it has obliterated all that we have built. I strongly believe it will never be safe for us to remain here. I therefore urge departure.[278]

Upon collapse of the month-long total blockade of Medina, the fighting men of Quraish began to leave in droves, giving Prophet Muhammed's men who had worked night and day to dig up the trenches around their besieged city cause for celebration.

5.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, it is important to point out that the Quran allows Muslims to fight their enemies and use force against them. According to the Surah of Pilgrimage, Allah asserts: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid."[279] In light of this divine legislation, Prophet Muhammed's employment of intelligence was naturally seen as a means to spread the word of Allah and defeat those who bore enmity to the Prophet and Islam. Without the effective use of clandestine collection, secret agents, scouts and all other intelligence and covert action tactics, the history of the early battles of Islam would have been different.

What greatly contributed to the successes of Prophet Muhammed was the fact that he kept all intelligence activities under tight control, with Umar Bin Al-Khatab, his trusted companion as second in command. The effective use of agents and informers ensured that not only was Prophet Muhammed warned of the intentions, location and capabilities of his adversaries, but he was always one step ahead of the Quraishi and his other enemies. As for counterintelligence, his countermeasures were so effective that his enemies were often shocked by his moves. The best illustrative example of this is the conquest of Mecca, which took the Meccans by surprise. It may thus be said that Prophet Muhammed practiced what Sun Tzu had preached a full millennium earlier, that all war is based on deception and that one's plans should be as impenetrable as night.[280] The next chapter concludes this account of the historical and religious background to the topic by examining Arab intelligence tradecraft.

Chapter Six

Arab Intelligence Tradecraft

6.1 Intelligence Skills in the Early Islamic Period

When Prophet Muhammed first set out to preach the new religion among the Quraishi idol worshippers in present-day Mecca, he was extremely cautious as to whom he approached where and when; indeed, total secrecy marked his early efforts to preach the word of Allah. But once a few followers and supporters had been secured, he changed tactics and gradually started to lift the thick veil of secrecy behind which he moved. Alarmed by the audacity of the Muslims and their initial successes at the popular level, and having failed to silence them through negotiation with the elders of Prophet Muhammed's Banu Hashim clan, the powerful Quraishi establishment now resorted to all sorts of warfare in order to uproot what they considered a malignant scourge. The Quraishis appeared to believe that launching constant and unrelenting propaganda campaigns against everything Prophet Muhammed and his new faith stood for might silence this new voice. They were particularly active during the annual pilgrimage season, when people from all over Arabia descended upon Mecca as pilgrims and to do business at the same time; but pilgrims, visitors and traders were not the only people the Quraishis targeted. The local residents and urban dwellers, as well as the Bedouin tribes around Mecca, were all cautioned against the 'subversive' preaching of Prophet Muhammed, on whom a multitude of accusations were heaped. Among other things, he was accused of being a magician, a madman, a charlatan and a liar.[281] The hate-Prophet Muhammed campaign was even joined and fuelled by some of Prophet Muhammed's own family members, including Abu Lahab, his paternal uncle, who is still cursed by Muslim believers when they recite the following verses from the Quran: "Perish be the two hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he. His wealth and his children will not benefit him. He will be burnt in a fire of blazing flames. And his wife too, who carries wood and thorns. In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad (palm fibre).[282]

The psychological war against Prophet Muhammed produced no tangible results, however; the Muslims increased in numbers as they carried on spreading the message, countering Quraishi propaganda by resisting the campaign of vilification and humiliation to which they were subjected.[283] When the Quraishi attempts to suppress and eradicate the new movement were entirely frustrated, the Meccan establishment grew more ferocious and bloodthirsty. Nothing less than Prophet Muhammed's head would now satisfy them.[284]

In the face of this turn of events, Prophet Muhammed had to devise a new strategy that would ensure his survival and the continuity of the call for Islam. He saw that the only option was to leave Mecca and head for Yethrib (Medina), which, as a thriving commercial centre with a mixed population of idol worshippers and Jews living side by side. It was deemed to provide a realistic prospect of affording a safe haven for the Muslims, especially as Prophet Muhammed had, in previous pilgrimage seasons, won a number of converts to Islam from that city. These new converts paid allegiance to Prophet Muhammed and promised that if he chose to come to their city, Medina, he would be warmly welcomed, well treated and protected as one of them. In planning his escape from Mecca, Prophet Muhammed showed a very keen sense of security. Having learnt through his highly secretive and intricate web of followers that his head was wanted, he thought out an elaborate and meticulous escape plan.

To mask his preparations for the escape, Prophet Muhammed went about his business as usual, but quietly and secretly enlisted the help of a guide to lead him across the desert.[285] He then chose two sturdy camels, one for himself, the other for his closest confidant, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, who was later to succeeded Prophet Muhammed as caliph of the Islamic state. To prepare for a journey across the desert, Prophet Muhammed had to stock up on water and food, as he did not know how long the journey might take him. In order not to arouse the suspicions of Quraishi spies by purchasing large quantities of foodstuffs or leaving home with bales and sacks, he asked Abu Bakr to deal with provisions. As night fell, Prophet Muhammed slipped out of his house before the squad charged with murdering him could lay their hands on him.[286] In planning and executing the move from Mecca to Medina, Prophet Muhammed was secretly assisted by one of his paternal uncles, Al-Abbas, who had embraced Islam but had kept his conversion a secret in compliance with Prophet Muhammed's directions. Al-Abbas, who may be said to be one of the earliest 'influence agents', proved to be an excellent and crucial source of intelligence for his nephew.[287]

The following chapter will discuss the intelligence tradecraft of the Muslims and their Meccan adversaries. It will focus in some detail on the use of safe houses, means of communications and transport, and the employment of deep cover agents.

6.2 The First Safe House: Dar Al-Arqam

As indicated earlier, the first three years of the history of Prophet Muhammed's call to Islam were marked by extreme caution and secrecy, on the part not only of Prophet

Muhammed himself but also of all those early converts who had been handpicked first by Prophet Muhammed then by his close associates and ardent followers. Threatened by death, torture and persecution, the early Muslim converts were continually reminded to ensure that their conversion remained totally concealed, even from their own immediate family[288]. The decision to go underground was undoubtedly taken in consideration of Islam's long-term strategic interests. But the thick cover of secrecy was abandoned when the Muslims succeeded in establishing what might be called a popular foothold amongst the Meccans.

It must be borne in mind that fear of Quraishi persecution and revenge was such that, even after the call to Islam had become public, many Muslims continued to conceal their adoption of the new faith, going discreetly to remote areas or to the hills and valleys surrounding Mecca in order to pray to Allah and practise their religious rites.[289] During that period, it was a matter of course that when discovered, Muslims, especially slaves or those of humble origin, were assaulted, tortured or even lynched. It was necessary, therefore, to confide only in those who were truthful, honest and trustworthy. Physical and psychological strength and the ability to keep a secret were foremost among the qualities valued in the men Prophet Muhammed entrusted with the task of preaching the new faith and winning over friends and supporters.

Prophet Muhammed's adherence to strict secrecy, diversionary tactics and concealment may be said to be the first building block of an Islamic intelligence doctrine. Soon after the start of his call to Islam, while the Muslims were battling for survival, the Prophet felt an urgent need to set up a 'safe house' for his followers. In order to evade detection and persecution, Prophet Muhammed was compelled to meet his followers at different times and places, and in small units or cells.[290] He carefully chose as the headquarters of the new faith a house which belonged to a new convert and enjoyed all the distinctive qualities of a model safe house. The house, to which the Muslims sometimes went disguised, was quite spacious and belonged to young man called Al-Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam Al-Makhzumi.

Few details have come down to us about this remarkable Muslim, who was among the very first men to respond to Prophet Muhammed's call.[291] Most historical documents estimate that he was very young—between sixteen and twenty five years old—when he joined Prophet Muhammed's first Muslim underground cell. He is thought to have been the seventh person to convert to Islam and was a member of the powerful and influential Makhzum tribe. Judging by the large property he owned when he was still in his teens, Al-

Arqam must have been quite wealthy himself. This now famous dwelling was situated in a prime location in Mecca, on the slopes of the Safa Mountain, overlooking the holiest shrine in Islam, the Kaaba, towards which practicing Muslims face in prayer five times a day. The spacious property in what might be described today as an exclusive area must have distinguished Al-Arqam among his fellow Meccans as a man of eminence and of independent means, which, at that stage, stood Prophet Muhammed and his companions in good stead.[292]

Dar Al-Arqam (the House of Arqam) is known in Islamic history by the eulogistic name 'Dar Al-Islam' (the House of Islam), in recognition of the significant part it played in housing the founding fathers of Islam during a most critical period in the history of the new religion. Throughout the three years of secret propagation of the faith, Prophet Muhammed spent most of the day there, although he did not take up residence in the house:

> His followers came to him in it, and were taught the Quran and otherwise instructed. Together the Muslims performed their distinctive act of worship, which culminated in the prostration, the touching of the ground with one's forehead in acknowledgement of the might and majesty of God. It was also possible for enquirers to come to Muhammed in this house and talk about their difficulties and about all the troubles of the people of Mecca.[293]

The choice of Al-Arqam's house as a meeting place for the Muslims indicates that Prophet Muhammed was a good tactician and strategist with an acute sense of security. The reasons for this choice may be outlined as follows:

Firstly, the property owner was not at that time a known Muslim. It was therefore unlikely that the Quraishis would suspect that the preacher of the new faith, Prophet Muhammed, would spend time there for any reason, let alone use it as an underground pulpit to spread Islam through sermons, discussions and debates. Secondly, Al-Arqam, as pointed out earlier, was quite young and as such would not be suspected of leading or hosting as serious a movement as the call initiated by Prophet Muhammed. Thirdly, there had been open rivalry and enmity between Al-Arqam's clan, the Makhzumis, and that of Prophet Muhammed, the Banu Hashim, for decades, as each strove to have the upper hand in business and in running the affairs of the Quraishi community. Because of this inherited tribal antagonism, Quraishi suspicions were normally directed towards the residence and family of Prophet Muhammed himself and of Abu Bakr, towards those who were perceived to be sympathetic with and close to Prophet Muhammed, or at least towards those whose conversion was suspected. Fourthly, the house was quite close to Al-Kaaba. This geographic proximity was quite important from the logistical point of view, as it

facilitated contact and afforded ease of communication and dissemination of directives and instructions by Prophet Muhammed to his followers.

Furthermore, anyone going to the Kaaba or taking part in the pilgrimage to Mecca had to pass by the house. This enabled Prophet Muhammed and his followers not only to blend in with the crowd with ease, but also to enter and leave the house without raising the suspicions of the wary Meccans. Indeed, throughout the whole period during which Al-Arqam's property was used as a safe house, the Quraishis appear to have had no inkling of what took place there. Furthermore, the area was inhabited almost exclusively by Makhzumis. If, for any reason, the house were to be attacked by Quraishis, the whole Makhzumi clan would then rise in arms against the attackers. By tribal tradition, which is still adhered to in most parts of the Arab world, an attack on a member of tribe or any of their guests would be considered an attack on the whole tribe.

6.3 Time and Communication

The peculiarities of the climate and topography of the Arabian Peninsula greatly affected the performance of early Arab spies (*uyoun*) as well as the methods of communication and means of transport which they adopted to carry out their missions. With the exception of the Sarwat mountain range, which extends from the neck of the peninsula in the north to Yemen in the south, the terrain is a vast expanse of desert and sand dunes. In the elevated and rugged Sarwat, consisting of steep chasms and deep ravines, rain falls almost all year round, but throughout the vast plateau, especially the Empty Quarter, the climate is extremely arid, with only 7 inches of rain a year, and the temperature may reach 55 °C (139 °F) in the long summer days. The narrow, winding and dangerous footpaths of the mountainous areas present great communication and transport challenges to armies, commercial caravans, wayfarers and message carriers, and especially to the *uyoun*, for whom racing against time was and remains essential to their primary duty. In short, scarcity of water, inclement heat and lack of any visible landmarks are among the major challenges facing all those who traverse the sands of the Arabian Plateau.

Medina is strategically situated on a slope, making it possible to draw water from springs and wells in the vicinity. The city is dominated by Mount Uhud, the scene of one of the most crucial confrontations between Prophet Muhammed and his polytheist enemies. One of the advantages Medina had in those days was that it stood at a crossroads linking the north, south and west of the Peninsula and was very close to the caravan routes linking Mecca with Syria. This meant that whoever sought to reach Mecca had either to take the

long Red Sea coastline route, passing through the dangerously labyrinthine mountains and valleys of the west, or simply to choose the desert caravan route passing Medina.

The use of animals for communication purposes dates back centuries before Islam. The Assyrians and the ancient Egyptians are thought to have been the first to use animals, especially horses and camels, as mail carriers in the primitive postal services of the time. In the seventh century, other animals and methods of transportation were introduced. Besides these two beasts of burdens, donkeys, mules and oxen were also used in the Arab Peninsula, while carrier pigeons were also employed, especially in times of war.[294] As a precautionary measure, when for example the terrain was too rugged for beasts of burden, or when message carriers feared discovery in the wide, desolate and often hostile deserts of Arabia, messages were carried on foot, either by a single man or by several in relay.

For the early *uyoun*, travelling on foot rather than animal riding was the favoured method of moving about from one place to another. Traversing the arid regions demanded that wayfarers must move at night and rest or sleep during the daytime in order to ward off the fierce heat of the sun. Besides the fact that those precursors of the present-day intelligence operatives had to avoid dehydration, it was also more convenient for them to be on the move at night. Finding their destination was easier, as they were guided by the stars, which are readily visible in the clear night skies of the desert.

The use of the stars as a guide in the open deserts was necessitated not only by the fact that there were no maps or landmarks to go by, but also to maintain the secrecy of the missions. One of the social characteristics of the Bedouins was that they did not take kindly to strangers amongst them. Too many requests for directions would naturally lead to suspicion, especially when made in a different dialect to that prevalent in the area. Discovery of the true identity of spies by the nomadic Bedouins often led to plunder and sometimes to death.[295]

It normally took 10 days to carry a message on foot from Medina to Mecca. A commercial caravan would take twice as long as a lone wayfarer, because they required wider roads to transport their loads of merchandise, water and forage. Armies took even longer, as troops were normally given longer periods of rest. Commanders took every care not to exhaust their fighting men, as they were keen to preserve their strength for the impending battles. Armies were also required to await the reports of scouts and advance units before venturing forward.[296]

In the deserts of Arabia, the most popular form of transport used in caravans was the camel. Camels are the best pack animal for desert travel because they are strong, "have

natural protection from the environment, and can travel long distances without needing to stop for water."[297] They are furthermore quite easy to look after during long journeys through barren land and, quite importantly, can withstand the hardships of travelling through sandstorms, as they have very long eyelashes to shield their eyes, and can also close their nostrils to protect themselves from flying dust and sand. But it is their unique ability to store water in their bodies that endeared them to the desert dwellers, as this made it possible for armies and commercial caravans alike to cover long distances without worrying about providing their pack animals with any water for many days.[298]

In times of war, however, the Arabian horse was the preferred method of transport, being bred for its compact size, light weight and excellent speed, qualities of great value to warriors as well as those involved in communication. A horse would take only one third of the time normally required to deliver a message, provided that it was ridden by an experienced horseman with good knowledge of the appropriate desert paths and shortcuts.

An example of the impressive speed with which urgent messages were dispatched may be found in the intelligence which one of Prophet Muhammed's undercover agents secretly sent from Mecca to Prophet Muhammed in Medina. The message, carried by a skilled horseman who knew the shortcuts in the area and was trained in the use of the stars for navigation in the desert, was of immense importance. It warned the Muslims that a 10,000 strong Quraishi army had been mobilized to begin a massive assault on Medina. Instead of the customary ten-day journey, it took the messenger only three days to reach Medina. This advance warning provided the Muslims with valuable and much needed time. It enabled them to strengthen their defences, build a trench around the northern part of Medina and ultimately repel the attack.[299]

A pressing need was felt to improve methods of communication between the Muslim leadership and its clandestine network operating in Mecca and among the various tribes in the region, especially following the imposition of an embargo on Mecca. To gain time, couriers were recruited from the tribes who lived along the routes. The message would then change hands several times before it reached its destination. Despite its efficiency, it was deemed unsafe to rely on this method of communication alone, for fear that the secret contents of messages might be exposed. As a result, both systems—the single horseman and the relay of runners—continued to be employed.[300]

Most message carriers had no knowledge of the content of the messages they carried, which were indirect, concealed, encrypted, or written in a coded language. But the Arabs excelled in the use of coded messages through the composition of versified texts. In such

cases, the veiled intention within the text would normally be understood by the intended recipient only. This was thought to be a safe way of communicating and exchanging sensitive information, whether personal or state secrets. The use of arcane language in messages would ensure that the content would not be revealed to unauthorized parties, even if the courier changed his allegiance or ran into unexpected difficulties, such as torture, capture or entrapment.[301]

Besides coded and versified documents, the early Arabs also used oral messages, which were carried by people endowed with exceptional memory, excellent physical qualities and a thorough knowledge of the dialects of the Peninsula. Oral messages were normally composed when writing materials were not readily available or when the recipient was illiterate. An example of this method of oral communication may be seen in the message carried by one of Prophet Muhammed's agents, who was sent to the Jews of Banu Quraidha to enquire whether they were still bound by the agreement concluded earlier to defend Medina, or had reneged on it. When the messenger returned, Prophet Muhammed asked him to announce the response before all the troops who were present, but it was rendered in coded words, the meaning of which had been agreed by Prophet Muhammed and the agent. This precautionary measure was felt necessary to spare the troops the psychological impact of bad news if the Jewish response had been negative.[302]

Another method of transmitting urgent oral messages was the employment of a number of agents or sentinels, who executed their missions in much the same way as did town criers in ancient times. These agents would shout out a coded message, relaying it from one to the other until it reached the decision makers. This method, which was used in times of crisis, was especially useful in areas where the terrain was difficult to traverse. In order to overcome topographical challenges, the Quraishis resorted to placing scouts on the mountain tops around Mecca and along the mountainous route leading to it, in order to observe enemy movements. When, six years after he had emigrated to Medina, Prophet Muhammed decided to return to his birthplace in order to perform the Umra (minor pilgrimage), he expected the Quraishis to prevent him from entering Mecca. He therefore dispatched one of his agents to collect information on the general conditions there and report especially on the preparations and intentions of Quraish. The agent returned with news of the relay crier method which the Meccans had put in place in order to monitor Prophet Muhammed's every move as he approached Mecca. To ensure that they never lost sight of their target as he approached, ten informers under the command of Al-Hakam bin Abd Manaf were placed at vantage points along the road to Mecca. They were able to

transmit details of the advance of Prophet Muhammed's convoy, starting from as far afield as Mount Wizr, to their intelligence headquarters in a place called Baldeh in Mecca.[303]

With the possible exception of the face and hands, the rest of a woman's body was considered 'awrah' (sexual, private) and so had to be properly veiled and concealed from all except the spouse and children. The accepted social attitude which expected women to be mostly covered and segregated from men in public was sometimes exploited in order to dispatch secret messages. The most notorious instance of this may be found in the story of Sarah, the singing girl. In the Sealed Nectar we read:

> Despite the improved relations between Mecca and Medina after the signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, the ten-year peace was broken by the Quraishis, who launched several raids against one of the allies of the Muslims, the tribe of Khuza. When Muhammed heard of these attacks, he immediately ordered his men to prepare for war. He then prayed to Allah and said: 'Oh Allah, take the eyes and ears from Quraish, so that we may take them by surprise in their land.[304]

Just as the Muslims were finalising their general assault plan against the Quraishis, a woman called Sarah came to Prophet Muhammed and begged him to help her, saying that she had fallen on hard times and desperately needed food and clothing. Prophet Muhammed then urged some of his followers to see to it that she was well looked after and given enough help to facilitate her journey back to her home in Mecca. No sooner had she left Prophet Muhammed than she was approached by one of the Muslims, Hatib Ibn Abi Baalta'ah, who gave her some money and asked her to deliver a written note to Mecca. He advised her to take an unusual route and warned her not to tell anyone about the letter. In the concealed note Hatib had written a brief warning to the Meccans: "Prophet Muhammed is out to get you. Take care".[305] When Prophet Muhammed later heard about the woman's secret message he sent three men to prevent her from delivering it. They managed to find her and demanded to see the note, but Sarah insisted she did not know what they were talking about. The men then said threateningly: "Take out the letter; otherwise we will strip you naked". When Sarah saw that they were determined, she took out the letter, which she was hiding in her underwear.[306]

Hatib was later confronted with the evidence and was accused by Umar bin Al-Khattab of betraying not only Allah but His messenger and the faithful. As a fit punishment, Umar demanded to cut off his head, but Prophet Muhammed forgave him, because of his previous services and sacrifices for the cause of Islam. Responding to Umar's call for Hatib's execution, Prophet Muhammed exclaimed "Is he not one of the

Badr warriors? Maybe Allah looked at the Badr warriors and said: "Do whatever you like; as I have granted Paradise to you", or said, "I have forgiven you".' On hearing this, tears fell from Umar's eyes and he said, 'Allah and his Messenger know best'."[307]

In their correspondence, the early Arabs used a variety of writing instruments and materials, including quills, bamboo stems and wooden pens crafted from a variety of hardwoods, especially from olive and mulberry. While paper was known and used during the early stages of Islam, the early Arabs also used parchment of all types, wood panels and bones, especially the broad shoulder blades of camels, date leaves and tablets of white stone.[308] The utensil most widely used was the writing pen, the 'qalam', which is mentioned several times in the Quran. The qalam was made of a small piece of wood, approximately 10 to 15 centimetres in length, smoothed over, with one extremity forming a fine, sharp point. This primitive pen was easy to use and consumed very little ink, a costly commodity which was normally kept in glass or ceramic jars.[309]

Spies and secret agents made use of these resources when writing secret notes. Paper documents were written with concealment in mind. Most carriers and secret messengers would go to great lengths to hide a written document inside a scabbard, a poniard casing, a walking cane or some other item which a desert traveller would be likely to carry. In order to evade exposure, an agent might slide a secret note inside a horse's saddle, or fold it and tuck it inside a lock of hair or his underwear.

With the passage of time and the expansion of the Islamic empire, the means of communication witnessed steady growth and progress. To ensure rapid responses and communication between the seat of the central government, whether in Damascus during the Umayyad rule, Baghdad during the Abbasid period or Istanbul under the Ottoman supremacy, it was felt necessary, especially for military commanders and administrators, to pay more attention to transport, communication in general and postal services in particular. This was important not just for reasons of conquest, security, enforcing law and order, and monitoring the vast territories; with improved communication, inspection of agricultural produce, imports, exports and the business world in general would be more efficient. Taxes would then begin to flow faster and in larger sums into the state coffers. Faster breeds of horses and mules were in greater demand than before. A special breed of dromedary, lighter and speedier than that of Arabia, was imported from Persia and Asia Minor. This beast later became the main carrier for those in the old Arab intelligence community. On the other hand, with the improvement in road-building techniques, horse-drawn carriages were increasingly used to transport people, goods and mail. Homing pigeons were also

used to deliver secret messages. Special towers were built for the pigeons to perch on, in order to collect or deliver messages, concealed with great care under their wings.

6.4 Cryptography

Cryptography, the practice of preparing and reading texts in a form designed to prevent them being read or understood by those not privy to the secret of that form, was born, according to a recent study, among the Arabs shortly after the rise of the Arab-Islamic civilization (650-1400). Many Arab scholars who excelled in cryptology have written on this art.[310] Chief among the reasons which made it possible for the early Arabs to master cryptology was the need of the emerging Islamic state for administrative organization and services, which led them to

> concentrate on developing secretarial and management skills, especially in the fields of composition and correspondence. The practical need to protect sensitive state affairs, particularly in the mails, was one of the main driving forces behind using, and therefore writing about, cryptography and cryptanalysis. The hands-on experience of practicing message concealment and code breaking is evident in the available biographies of many Arab writers and secretaries, who were considered among the most important personnel in government offices, especially in the Caliph's court.[311]

The practice of using poetry to communicate a coded message has been known for centuries. Even today, poetry is perceived as a dangerous tool, able to provide a subtle means of communication between ordinary individuals, dissident groups and resistance or terrorist organizations. As recently as mid-February 2008, a Burmese poet, Saw Wai, exploited Valentine's Day in order to write a coded attack on the leader of the military junta in Burma. In his carefully worded poem, Wai appealed to the Burmese people to unite against the 74-year-old dictator, Than Shwe. When the coded message was broken the day after the 'love poem' was published, the poet was immediately arrested and detained.[312]

A notable example of the fear that coded messages might be exchanged through poetry is afforded by the stringent attitude of those in charge of the Guantanamo Bay prison camp towards any form of written material passed to or received from the detainees. The tight censorship imposed on the written word in Guantanamo Bay followed the discovery that poems were scratched on Styrofoam cups with a stone and secretly passed from cell to cell. The guards, as pointed out by *The Independent*, confiscated these, fearing that the scratched verses were coded messages:

As far as the US military is concerned, 'poetry ... presents a special risk, and DoD [Department of Defense] standards are not to approve the release of any poetry in its original form or language'. The fear, officers say, is that allegorical imagery in poetry may be used to convey coded messages to militants outside.[313]

Arab history affords numerous examples where, through poetry, secret messages were exchanged between parties who may not even have agreed on a specific code. A prominent example of that is the folk tale of Muhalhal Al-Zair Salim, which has come down to us in several literary forms and versions.[314] Besides the popular poetic forms of the short ballads and the longer metrical romances, the folk tale has also survived in numerous versions of prose romances. The most popular metrical version speaks of an elderly man who, after a long life of quiet and solitude, asks his nephew to help him arrange some sort of excursion across the desert so that he might enjoy the change of scenery and regale himself with the pleasant sight of the open space and the fresh scent of the desert air. His nephew readily obliges and in order that his uncle should lack nothing whilst on the journey, he orders two of his slaves to attend to the old man's every wish. The three then set out on their journey across the desert, stopping by this oasis or that until the two slaves become physically exhausted and decide that they can bear no further hardships, so they agree to kill their elderly charge.

Realising that the slaves have grown weary of him and are conspiring to kill him, the man asks them if they will oblige him with one last favour, to deliver his last will to his sister and nephew, as he feels certain that he will soon perish in the desert. He also tells them to make sure that his message is reproduced verbatim in order that it may not be misconstrued by anyone. He spends the whole day reciting and repeating a one-line message until the two illiterate slaves have learnt it by rote. They take a solemn oath to deliver the message exactly as he has dictated it:

Oh ye message-carrier alas! / Woe betide you and your father!

That night, the slaves kill him, bury him in the sand and return to their master with news of his uncle's death. They also recite the message entrusted to them. As the nephew cannot make sense of it, he calls his sister, Yamama, one of the most brilliant minds among the Arabs. As soon as she hears the one-line verse, which is taken from a well-known ancient poem, she picks up the secret message. The grief-stricken Yamama gasps and starts to wail loudly, beating her cheeks and thighs, saying "my uncle has always had a good ear for poetry. He never recites incomplete verses". She realises that the missing words of the quotation, contain an unambiguous clue to the uncle's murder. She then recites the correct

version with its clear reference to the kind of punishment, which should be meted out to the two killers:

> Oh ye message-bearer alas! / *Muhalhal lies murdered in the desert*
>
> Woe betide you and your father! / *Let not the two slaves depart alive*.

The two slaves are immediately arrested and interrogated. They eventually confess and pay with their lives. Thanks to his cunning and erudition, the old man was able to establish the identities of his murderers and to arrange for revenge even before his death.[315]

6.5 Security and Counterintelligence

Prophet Muhammed is repeatedly quoted as cautioning the Muslims against acting on suspicion, hearsay or rumour: "Beware of suspicion, for it is most deceptive; Do not envy, hate, abandon or spy on each other, and be as brothers to each other at all times".[316] But it was a quite different matter when it came to questions relating to the security of the state or the public good. In order that he might keep abreast of developments outside Medina, spread Islam and strengthen his position in Arabia and beyond, Prophet Muhammed created a network of *uyoun*. Besides those especially charged with surveillance and observation duties, there were zealous volunteers who were quite helpful, especially during the early development of Islam, as informers and agents stationed in different regions of the Peninsula. The *uyoun* constituted first-hand sources of intelligence, not only on military matters, but also concerning caravan movements, trade activities, water resources, the general attitude of the communities towards their chiefs and rulers, and the extent to which these communities were prepared to embrace Islam. The most important station Prophet Muhammed had outside Medina was that of Mecca. This was headed by Prophet Muhammed's uncle, Al-Abbas, the influence agent who is said to have showed exceptional skill in conveying messages to Prophet Muhammed in record time.[317]

Besides agents in different parts of Arabia, there were also many *uyoun* dispersed among the different tribes of the desert, especially among the influential and powerful tribe of Khuzaá.[318] Chief among those early Muslims who went on spying missions for Prophet Muhammed was Hussail bin Nuwairah, who roamed the Arabian Desert, gathering information from a variety of sources on different tribes.[319] Long before the conquest of Persian and Byzantine lands, Prophet Muhammed had agents deep inside their territories.[320]

The first few months in Medina were especially difficult for Prophet Muhammed and those who had emigrated with him from Mecca. Prophet Muhammed was quite

apprehensive of the Quraishis, who never gave up hope of delivering him and his followers a fatal blow. It was inevitable that he would keep a very close watch on the situation in Mecca so as to be prepared for any moves against him. To that end, he directed that a special platoon, called the Palm Tree Platoon, be commissioned to carry out constant surveillance of the Quraishis.[321]

It is a commonplace to say that intelligence and counter-intelligence often involve the employment of stratagems, manoeuvres and tactics specifically designed to mislead the enemy in order to safeguard public security and undermine any subversive designs of the foe. The most important saying of Prophet Muhammed in this context is that in which he declares that "war is deception". Most commentators cite this hadith to show the great importance attached to the role played by spies in advancing the cause of the Islamic state. Al-Asqalani, for example, affirms that "a good war is that in which there is more need for deception than fighting. While confrontation is always fraught with danger, victory may be achieved through deception without exposure to danger".[322] Similarly, for Al-Aini, the significance of this hadith is that it advises the "use of deception in war whenever possible, or failing that then fight". In other words, the use of arms "should be the last resort".[323]

6.6 Secrecy and Concealment

Secrecy was, from the inception of Islam, the hallmark of Prophet Muhammed's long-term strategy. This is especially true of the first three years of his mission, known in Islamic history as the Stage of the Secret Call. During these critical years, Prophet Muhammed's movements, performance of religious rites and contacts with his followers remained covert. Even during the Stage of the Proclamation of the Call (from the fourth to the tenth year), when Prophet Muhammed started openly to call people to embrace Islam, discretion was not abandoned with regard to transactions and operations which required adherence to secrecy and concealment.

To pre-empt any attempt at leaking information to Quraish, and in order to be fully apprised of the designs of enemy agents, Prophet Muhammed had spies and scouts everywhere in Medina. With the possible exception of his call for the necessity to worship only one God, Allah, and inviting fellow Arabs to come to the fold of Islam, most of his movements and activities, on the personal and public levels, were couched in secrecy. It is reported that he often encouraged Muslims to adhere to secrecy. His sayings, such as (He who keeps his secret keeps his choices)[324] and (Get your chores done with secrecy)[325]

testify to his predilection for concealment. As for security issues, Prophet Muhammed considered adherence to secrecy a prerequisite.

An early example of Prophet Muhammed's insistence on secrecy may be found in the attitude he adopted following the arrival of a delegation from his allies, the Banu Khuza'h tribe, to complain that Quraish had breached the terms of the Hudaybiya Treaty. The Quraishis, Prophet Muhammed was told, were supporting the Banu Bakr tribe against Banu Khuza'h, who suffered great losses. When the meeting with the Khuza'h delegation was over, Prophet Muhammed told the men to disperse discreetly, without attracting any attention. He was careful not to let the Quraishis know that the Muslims were aware of their violations. He reasoned that keeping them in the dark would deprive them of the opportunity to prepare for a possible confrontation with the Muslims.[326]

In order that the movements and manoeuvres of his army might be concealed from those who did not need to be informed, Prophet Muhammed invariably ordered it to march at night and retire during the day, declaring that his men should take advantage of the cover of darkness and should always move between midnight and dawn.[327] As for his secret agents, they were constantly reminded never to talk carelessly about the nature of their missions or their destinations. Secrecy, in other words, became a doctrine in its own right.

In enforcing strict military discipline, Prophet Muhammed was assisted by a highly trained group of enforcers called Al-Safwah, which literally means 'the elite':

> Like other leaders, Muhammad surrounded himself with a loyal group of followers who acted as his bodyguard and carried out his orders without question. For this purpose he created the *Al-Safwah*, a small cadre of loyal followers who lived in the mosque next to Muhammad's house. Recruited from among the most pious, enthusiastic, and fanatical followers, they came from impoverished backgrounds. The *Al-Safwah* members spent much of their time studying Islam. They were devoted to Muhammad and served not only as his life guard but also as a secret police that could be called upon at a moment's notice... .[328]

It was inevitable that in almost all his dealings, Prophet Muhammed should place much emphasis on secrecy. The odds against him were so great that any uncalculated move would jeopardise his own destiny and that of his followers. He carefully guarded the minutest detail of information lest it be taken advantage of and used against him. It is related that on the eve of the Battle of Badr, while Prophet Muhammed and one of his companions were on their way to confront the Quraishis, they came across a very old man. Prophet Muhammed stopped him and asked him who he was.

–You tell me first, who are you?

–No, You tell us first, and then we'll tell you who we are.

–Fine. What is it you are after?

–Tell us about Quraish.

–I am told they left Mecca on such and such a date; if what I heard was true, they should be very close to this valley.

–Now tell us about Muhammed and his companions.

–I have been told they left Yethrib [Medina] on such and such a date; if what I heard was true, they too should be very close to this valley. Now tell me who are you?

–"We are from water."

[The evasive answer apparently produced a desired result, for the old man waved his hand in the direction of Iraq and retorted:]

–So, you are from Iraq then. [329]

To ensure secrecy at all times, Prophet Muhammed would sometimes order his army to meet at a certain location in order to prepare for a specific operation or assault. At the specified place, he would then issue his orders and inform only the field commanders and team leaders of the exact destination and nature of their mission. When, in preparation for the Battle of Mu'tah, Prophet Muhammed ordered his army to meet at a place called Al-Jurf, the whole army headed there and waited for the orders to be issued. When Prophet Muhammed spoke to the waiting troops he only told them:

> Zaid bin Haritha is hereby declared commander in chief of the force; if he is killed or wounded he is to be succeeded by Ja'far bin Abi Talib; If Ja'far is wounded then Abdullah bin Rawaha should succeed him. If bin Rawaha is wounded then you should elect someone from amongst you to lead the campaign.[330]

Aside from secrecy, Prophet Muhammed would also resort to diversionary tactics and cunning in order to defeat his enemies. As well as agreeing with Sun Tzu that "all warfare is based on deception"[331], Prophet Muhammed once remarked that "all war is cunning".[332] To deceive the enemy and take them by surprise, Prophet Muhammed would order his army to zigzag their way to their destination. One example of this tactic may be seen in his campaign against Banu Lahyan. He let it be known that his destination was Syria, and indeed he did order the troops to march towards Syria, but they were soon ordered to return to Mecca for the real target, which was the territory of the Banu Lahyan, who, taken by surprise, fled to the mountains.[333] Another example of this diversionary tactic occurs when on the eve of the final assault on Mecca, Prophet Muhammed despatched an eight-men platoon under the leadership of Qatadah bin Rab'i in the direction of Edam, a short distance from Medina, in order to divert attention and screen off the main target with which he was preoccupied.

Again, when the ten-thousand-strong Muslim army was making final preparations for the assault on Mecca, Prophet Muhammed took every precaution against news of the imminent attack reaching the Quraishis, so that he could storm Mecca by surprise. The field commanders were all summoned at zero hour and issued with their orders. They were told to be extremely cautious and warned to adhere to utmost secrecy. To ensure that Quraish would have no notion of Prophet Muhammed's military plans, a tight security belt was thrown all around Medina and a total news blackout was imposed. The night before the orders were issued for the army to mobilise, no one was allowed to leave or enter Medina. When, just before the march, Prophet Muhammed asked his wife Aishah to pack some food for the intended journey, he was quite careful not to reveal his destination to her. He furthermore asked her not to tell anyone about the matter. Only Abu Bakr, Prophet Muhammed's confidant, advisor and father-in-law, knew of the planned assault on Mecca, having had to extract it for himself the day before the march was ordered:

> Abu Bakr: O Prophet of Allah, are you planning to travel?
> Muhammed: Yes.
> AB: Have you made arrangements for sustenance?
> Muh: Yes.
> AB: What is your destination?
> Muh: Quraish. There are some who think I'm heading towards Syria. Others think I'll be going to Thaqeef. Still others suspect I'll be marching towards the land of Hawazin.[334]

Another aspect of the employment of secrecy was Prophet Muhammed's frequent use of passwords and secret authentication methods for each regiment of his army. To maximise security, these predetermined words, phrases or sounds, which were kept from those not allowed access and known only to members of the regiment, were frequently changed. Among the passwords adopted by Khalid bin Al-Waleed, the famed military leader and hero of the Ridda battles, was 'amut', meaning 'kill'.[335] Some of the passwords used by Muhammed's army in the Battle of Hunain were 'people of the Surah of the Cow' and 'total goodness'.[336] At Badr, the password, which has now attained an almost sanctified status as a battle cry, was 'the One, the One'[337] Two passwords which have come down in history are 'Abdullah' 'Slave of Allah', which was used by the Ansar (Helpers) regiment and 'Abdul-Rahman' 'Slave of the merciful' by the Muhajiroon (Emigrants) regiment.[338] Another famed password used by the early Muslim armies was 'Allah Akbar' (Allah is Greatest). This now familiar exclamation, which is recited from the tops of minarets to call the Muslims to perform the obligatory prayers five times a day, is recited in a variety of situations in the daily life of the Muslim.[339] This password was also used when the second

Rashidi caliph, Umar bin Al-Khatab, sent more troops to support the army of Ubaidullah bin Al-Jarrah, who was leading the Muslim campaign against Byzantine Syria. The two allied armies identified each other when shouts of 'Allah Akbar' were heard on both sides.[340]

Most caliphs who followed Prophet Muhammed counselled secrecy. Military leaders and governors were especially reminded to observe secrecy in their dealings and contacts in order to gain a military advantage, mask a specific weakness or seize an opportune moment to act. When Umar bin Al-Khattab ordered Abu Ubaidah bin Masoud Al-Thaqfi to lead a campaign against the Persians in Iraq, his advice was to "watch over your tongue and never reveal your secret. Those who keep their secrets are always fortified and are never taken by surprise or confronted by that which is odious to them".[341] The first Omayyad caliph, Muáwiya bin abi Sufiyan (r. 661-680), made extensive use of secrecy in his administration of the affairs of the state. Among his often quoted words are: "Every time I reveal a secret to someone, sorrow and penitence soon follow. But whenever I deposit a secret and seal it inside my heart, I feel more secure, confident and elevated".[342] A better known saying in this connection is his advice to all: "That which you conceal from your enemy, do not show to your friend".[343]

6.7 Bribery, Intrigue, and Disinformation Techniques

Bribes, perks and kickbacks have throughout history been used to gain favours and facilitate transactions, lawful or illicit. In Arabia, as in other cultures, desert dwellers and townspeople alike have used such highly effective devices to achieve specific purposes and as means to influence decisions or the conduct of an official or a person in a position of trust. Bribes may comprise immediate cash payments, presents and gifts, or promised favours, often in order to facilitate clandestine activities. Indeed, it may be said that most covert operations involve bribery in one form or other.[344]

When the Quraishis realized that the Muslim fugitives who had made it to Ethiopia were afforded a secure haven and were free to practise their religious duties without any molestation or interference on the part of their benevolent hosts,[345] they feared what the future might hold for them if the Muslims were allowed to prosper and gain strength. They therefore decided to approach King Negus of Ethiopia and convince him to extradite the Muslims and hand them over to Mecca. To that end, the Quraishis sent a high-powered delegation consisting of Amru bin Al-Aas and Abdullah bin Abi Rabia.[346] Before their departure to Abyssinia, the Quraishis had amassed an impressive array of presents to be

given to the King and each of his counsellors. The delegation was instructed to present the valuable gifts to the King's courtiers before they approached the King himself. In their meetings with the King's advisors, the two men explained to them the nature of their mission. They also told them that the newly arrived people from Mecca had betrayed the religion of their ancestors and were preaching a strange religion, unknown to anyone, adding that the new religion ran counter to all that the Christian Abyssinians believed in. They also claimed that they were delegated by the tribal leaders of those miscreants in order that they may be returned to them. The two men also requested the courtiers to give a helping hand by suggesting to the King that he should agree to the Quraishi request. When the two emissaries met the King, they gave him the presents from Mecca and told him that a group of ignorant and uncouth boys had descended upon his land. They also reiterated that they were carrying out the mission on behalf of the dignitaries and elders of Mecca, their own parents, kinsmen and tribesmen. The King was also told that those who delegated them knew full well how mischievous these scoundrels were. The courtiers all agreed that it would be best if the newcomers were to be returned to Arabia. The King refused to grant this request, however, saying that he would never expel those who came to seek his protection. But he assured the two envoys that if they were indeed as evil as they were said to be, then they would be handed over to Quraish. If, on the other hand, the emigrants proved to be other than what was alleged, then they would be more than welcome to stay on.

Having failed to achieve their goal, despite the presentation of extravagant gifts to King Negus and his courtiers, the two delegates resorted to their contingency plan. Before they arrived in Abyssinia, the Meccans had studied the character of Negus and identified his weaknesses and points of strength. They therefore knew him to be above all else a pious man and a practising Christian. If the two men could convince him that the emigrants spoke ill of the Christian faith, he would certainly order their deportation. To that end, they requested an audience with the King and told him that the Muslims said grave things about Isa bin Meriem (Jesus son of Mary) and that if he did not believe them, he could send for the Muslims and enquire about the matter from them directly. The King then summoned the Muslims to the court and asked them to explain the teachings of their religion. Ja'far bin Abi Talib [Muhammed's cousin] stood up and addressed the King in the following words:

> O King! we were plunged in the depths of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate dead bodies, we spoke

abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourliness were neglected. We knew no law but that of the strong; when Allah raised among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of Allah, and taught us not to associate anything with Him. [347]

Curious to know more about the teachings of the new religion, the King asked Ja'far to recite some of the verses of the Quran to which Ja'far readily responded. Ja'far read a few verses of the Surah of Mary in which reference is made to Jesus Christ and the immaculate conception. Thereupon the King said:

It seems as if these words and those which were revealed to Jesus are rays of light which have radiated from the same source.' Turning to the crestfallen envoys of Quraish, he said, 'I am afraid that I cannot give you back these refugees. They are free to live and worship in my realm as they please.[348]

Amru bin Al-Aas, who was sent on this delicate mission, is famous for being a crafty warrior and an experienced negotiator and politician. Despite his credentials and experience, however, his mission was a failure. Determined by nature, he devised a Machiavellian plan to ensure the return of the emigrants from Abyssinia. As soon as he arrived in Mecca, he orchestrated a disinformation campaign, leaking reports to the effect that the whole people of Mecca had embraced Islam and that life had at last blossomed for Muhammed. When, through the machination of the Quraishis, this rumour reached Abyssinia, there was jubilation among the Muslims, who immediately folded camp and headed back to Mecca. When they reached home and discovered the truth of the situation, it was too late for most of them. Those who could make it back to Africa did so, but those who were caught unawares had to pay heavily for their religious zeal and credulity.[349]

6.8 Conclusion

Intelligence tradecraft reflects the historical and cultural heritage of the society in which it is exercised. The previous pages have demonstrated how the Arabs first then the Muslim Arabs later developed and reconciled the arts and practices of intelligence with their own culture and norms of social behaviour. We have also seen how the peculiarities of the topography of the Arabian Peninsula, especially the challenges posed by the vast deserts and scorching heat greatly affected the performance of early Arab (*uyoun*) as well as the methods of communication and means of transport. In resorting to secrecy and the practice of concealment the early Muslims were simply guided by one of Prophet Muhammed's

Traditions who reportedly enjoined the faithful to "get your chores done with secrecy". To achieve a specific aim, the Arabs thought nothing of practicing bribery, intrigue and disinformation.

Despite the fact that most if not all of the methods adopted by the early Arabs and Muslims were crude and undeveloped, compared with the advanced present-day technology-based methods and tactics, these coarse and imperfect methods remain a guide and fundamental source of inspiration for those who have no way of acquiring modern advanced technologies. Just as the early Muslims had made much use of the age-old intelligence arts and traditions in building their first state in Medina, much of the inherited Muslim intelligence tradecraft can still be drawn upon, a long time after it had originated.The following pages will take up the attitude of Islamic jurisprudence towards espionage and intelligence gathering.

Chapter Seven

Islamic Jurisprudence (*Ijtihad)*

7.1 Introduction

The term '*Ijtihad*' is derived from the Arabic verb '*jahada'*, which means 'to exert an effort'. In jurisprudence, it came to acquire the meaning of 'to seek a judgement through deduction' and *'the derivation of Shar`i law through personal judgement'* for an issue for which Muslims do not find any express text either in the Quran or the *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammed's practices and sayings). The fundamental activity of the Mujtahids (*scholars practicing ijtihad)* involves deduction of the laws of the Shari'ah for emergent issues and new phenomena of life by employing general principles and rules.[350]

We have in the previous chapters taken up the attitude of the Quran and the *Sunnah* towards intelligence and demonstrated that the Quran lays down the demarcation lines in espionage between what is and what is not admissible. We have also discussed the significance of Prophet Muhammed's *Sunnah* as the second most important source of Islamic legislation, in intelligence as in all matters touching the Muslim's life. Muslim jurists and scholars in general have since Prophet Muhammed's death in the seventh century looked to these two important sources for general guidance and clues especially in cases where there are no precedents or opinions expressed vis-à-vis specific emergent issues or new developments. In providing legal judgement on a range of issues including the types and requirements of intelligence work and the punishments meted out to those involved in inadmissible espionage *Ijtihad* has therefore filled in a wide gap in Islamic legislation.

7.2 Admissible and Inadmissible Espionage

The question of collecting information, espionage and the employment of agents during a crisis, in wartime or in ordinary life is admittedly not a major theme in the Muslim Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, the Quranic relevance in this field is quite noticeable. This is evidenced by the recurrent use of the Arabic equivalent of such words as 'intelligence', 'spy', 'agent', 'scouting', 'verification', 'suspicion', 'rumour', 'deception', 'dissembling' and 'reconnoitre'.[351]

Generally speaking, the Quran does not readily approve of espionage. There are, as will be pointed out later, many demarcation lines separating legal or admissible spying

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operations from illegal or inadmissible ones. Foremost among those sanctioned and approved by the Quran are espionage activities directed towards those who attempt to undermine Islam or weaken the authority of the Islamic state. The Quran expressly and unambiguously targets all those who conspire against Islam and its Messenger. The following verse was recited by Muhammed with the schemes and machinations of the enemies of Islam in mind: "Do they think that we do not hear their secrets and conspiracies? Yes indeed; our messengers are with them, recording".[352] Encouraging all Muslims to do good and admonishing them to distance themselves from all that which is evil, in word and deed, the Quran warns the children of Adam that "not an utterance does he [or she] utter but there is a watcher by him, ready [to record it]".[353] In so far as admissible espionage is concerned, Islam makes it clear that it is quite acceptable to discretely screen prospective public officers in order to safeguard the public good and protect the rights of Muslims. Islam also sanctions spying for the purpose of uncovering enemy plots or infiltrating the criminal world.[354]

Although Islam prohibits a range of intelligence activities, [355] especially spying on the private lives of Muslims, most commentators on the Quran agree that collecting information clandestinely was legitimate and indeed sanctioned by a number of Quranic verses. In his *Splendid Pearls of the Holy Quran*, Abdul-Rahman Al-Thaa'libi (d. 1474), cites a number of Quranic references in support of the legitimacy of the intelligence profession. One such example is taken from the Surah of Al-Zukhruf (the Ornaments), which declares "What! Have they settled some plan (among themselves)? But it is We Who settle things. Or deem they that We cannot hear their secret thoughts and private confidences? Nay, but Our envoys, present with them, do record."[356]

Islam attaches great importance to the question of choosing the right person to administer justice or occupy a public office. In order that new appointees may carry out their work efficiently and treat people fairly and ethically, they have to be very carefully screened before they are finally offered a public post.[357] The most sought-after quality in an administrator, team leader or public figure is trustworthiness. The Quran stresses this in various chapters,[358] but especially in the Surah of Qassas (History), which relates the story of an old man who offers his daughter as a wife to Moses simply because Moses combines the qualities of trustworthiness and strength.[359] But to identify such worthy, strong and upright people is no easy task. Hence the necessity of checking on and indeed spying on the character, reputation, dealings and track record of those nominated to fill public offices. In fact, it is the rulers and others in positions of power who are obligated to ensure that

those chosen to administer public affairs should first be investigated in order that the interests of the ruled may be safeguarded.[360] Commenting on the necessity for the rulers to carry out security and character clearance of prospective and incumbent public officers, the great 9th century prolific writer and scholar Al-Jahiz (781-869) stresses that "a prince is obliged to pry into the secrets of those close to him as well as those of the general public. [The prince] should always set his spies on them. Nothing is more important than this for the stability and steadfastness of his rule."[361]

The general view of commentators and chroniclers is that surveillance of administrators and high officials is not only condonable but a lawful action in Islam, for obvious reasons. Choosing the right person for the right position is no guarantee that appointees will not misuse or abuse the powers invested in them or that they will acquit themselves of their moral duties towards the general public. Even when the holders of public office are devout, faithful, honest and above suspicion, they might still err and make wrong decisions, or pass unwise judgments[362]. Muslim commentators and historians have always held the view that "it is in fact the duty of the ruler to keep a watchful eye over those who are entrusted with public offices; the trustworthy might fall into the pit of treason and the trusted advisor might resort to deception".[363]

Islamic history abounds with evidence that keeping a permanent watch on public officers was considered one of the most vital responsibilities of a ruler. Such evidence is afforded by a military commander during the reign of the famed Abbasid caliph, Al-Ma'moun. The commander, Tahir Bin Al-Hussein, in a letter to the caliph's son, advises the young man on how best to keep things under tight control in his princedom of Egypt "You must appoint in each hamlet a trusted agent who will keep you informed of how your representatives work and how they carry out their duties. Their letters to you will keep you abreast of developments and make you see things as though you were present with each of your rulers or representatives"[364].

In order to secure a safe and free environment for the people, Islam allows espionage on and infiltration of the criminal world. People in Dar-al-Islam (home of Islam) need to be protected from the evils of lawbreakers and wrongdoers of all kinds.[365] Commenting on the need to spy on ex-convicts and others posing a danger to society, Al-Juaini points out that it is the duty of the sultan to keep close watch on those who attempt to spread vice and to corrupt innocent, Allah-fearing citizens. To combat the perpetrators of crime, Al-Juaini advocates the use of what might today be called infiltration or entrapment:

If someone amongst the citizenry ... persists in [wrongdoing], it will then be the duty of the ruler to admonish, stop and threaten him. Such a person has to be very closely watched. But it is vital that he is always totally unmindful of those who are watching him. … Those assigned to watch … [a criminal, an ex-convict, a suspect, etc.] must first of all be unknown to him. They must sit with him in different groups and at different times. They must show signs of interest in his disposition and inclinations. They must also attempt to contact him directly, enquire of him and pretend to seek knowledge and guidance from him. Once something is learnt about his intentions, they must then hasten to inform the Sultan, whose duty will be to stop him in his tracks and severely punish him.[366]

Finally, spying on the enemy is quite permissible in Islam. Islam always stresses the fact that the rulers' primary responsibilities are to ensure the safety and security of their nation against any act of aggression by an enemy. Gathering information on those who seek to undermine the state or those who are classified as potential aggressors, whether during times of war or peace is therefore considered a duty which rulers must shoulder painstakingly and effectively.[367] In this sense, spying on the enemy becomes not just legally permissible but "a need which has to be met" in the preparations for war.[368]

Spies and informers do not necessarily have to be Muslims. The founder of the Islamic state, Prophet Muhammed, employed a variety of spies ranging from close relatives to men recruited from the enemy camp. Safiur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, in *Al-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom* (Sealed Nectar), tells the story of a Jewish spy, who provided Prophet Muhammed's army with highly sensitive intelligence on his own people. This came at a critical time, when the Muslim army was poised to storm the Jewish stronghold of Khaiber in 629:

The Muslims besieged it for three days, but in vain. A Jewish spy told the Prophet about a subterranean water source, and advised that it be cut off in order to undermine their resistance. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) did that so the Jews came out to engage with the Muslims in fierce fighting, during which some Muslims and ten Jews were killed, but the fort was eventually conquered.[369]

The prohibition against spying on the private affairs or family life of people is quite universal and applies to both individuals and the state, although there are a few exceptions. In certain cases, when there are strong and credible indications that the life of an individual is in imminent danger, that a woman is about to be raped, or that an extreme situation requires urgent intervention, then spying would be permissible, as the intention in these instances is to act before it is too late, in order to prevent an imminent evil or save a life.[370] In the Quranic Surah of Joseph, Jacob asks his sons to keep looking for their brother as he sends them on

a 'spying mission' in the hope that they will be able to obtain some information about his son.[371]

A very significant reference to espionage occurs in the Surah of the Feast. When Moses approached the "land of the infidels", according to Al-Tabari, he asked twelve dignitaries to scout the battlefield, spy on the enemy. The twelve men however were captured before accomplishing their mission. [372] They were then released after they had been thoroughly terrorized. The enemy on whom the twelve men had hoped to spy went to great lengths in order to strike fear into their hearts. They were naturally expected to relay the grim message to their leader. It was further hoped that the message would demoralize the Prophet's army, cow his men and sap their courage. When Moses was finally informed of the situation, as they had experienced it, he asked the twelve men to keep the matter to themselves and never to divulge it to anyone. What is quite significant in this reference is the fact that the task of spying was entrusted not to a group of ordinary individuals, but to distinguished men, referred to as "Nuqaba'". The root of this Arabic word is 'naqqaba', which means 'search', 'pursue', 'hunt' or 'dig deep'. Among other things, it is used to refer to patriarchs, elders, dignitaries, representatives or 'those who have deep knowledge (of secrets)'[373].

The Quran abounds with references to Allah's omnipotence, omniscience and accurate knowledge of the schemes and machinations of the hypocrites and enemies of Islam. There are numerous verses which stress that Allah knows not only every move or manoeuvre of Prophet Muhammed's enemies, but also every word they utter and every thought that crosses their minds. Muslims are constantly reminded of the presence of 'watchers', 'sentinels' or 'observers', specially commissioned by Allah to record their every move, word or thought. The Surah of Qaf declares that "He (man) utters not a word but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to record it)",[374] while the Surah of Tawbah (Repentance) rhetorically asks:

> Know they not that Allah knows their secret ideas, and their secret counsels), and that Allah is the All-Knower of things unseen? Those who defame such of the believers who give charity (in Allah's Cause) voluntarily, and such who could not find to give charity (in Allah's Cause) except what is available to them – so they mock at them (believers); Allah will throw back their mockery on them, and they shall have a painful torment.[375]

The Quran does not condone prying into private lives. The most quoted verse in the Quran in which the word 'spying' (tajassus) is mentioned occurs in the Surah of the Hujurat (Chambers). The verse expressly prohibits the Muslims from spying on each other,

especially with regard to their private lives: "O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion (as much as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs."[376]

In this verse, Muslims are admonished against spying, harbouring malicious suspicions or acting on doubts and unfounded reports of other people's affairs, which is either idle curiosity, and therefore futile, or excessive suspicion, which is tantamount to a sin.[377] In the "land of peace" (the Islamic state), individuals are held accountable only for the apparent crimes and indiscretions in which they are known or appear to have been involved.[378]

The prohibition of spying is not universal, however. It is primarily confined to unlawful invasion of privacy particularly on their weaknesses, shortcomings and sexual relations or activities (al-awrat). This type of spying is considered especially abhorrent and is absolutely prohibited by the Quran.[379] In Islam, privacy, details of personal life and interpersonal relationships are considered sacred and inviolable. The Muslim faithful are consistently reminded to live in harmonious co-existence, without infringing on personal details.[380] "O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs".[381]

Commenting on this verse, Al-Qurtubi interprets the Quranic reference as being a commandment to "judge people only by their apparent and visible acts, not by following up their 'awrat'[382] (private lives, sexual relations).[383] Other commentators also stress the fact that Allah forbids prying into the secrets of Muslims or into anything Muslims may wish to veil and hide from the public eye, even if what they strive to hide is evil and prohibited by divine or human laws. Abu Al-Saud Al-Imadi explains that the Quranic commandment "spy not" means "do not look for other Muslims' *awrat* or their weaknesses and foibles. The justification for this ban in Al-Imadi's view is that "acquainting oneself (with other people's evil deeds) will cause great (ethical and moral) damage".[384]

In Islam, domestic privacy is of special sensitivity; it has always been treated as sacrosanct, never to be violated or compromised in any way. A man's or woman's home in Islam is not just their 'castle', but also their 'temple', which should always be respected and revered. Severe punishment is promised to those who violate the sanctity of private life. In one of the Traditions, Prophet Muhammed says: "It would be permissible for those who catch someone prying into their home without their consent to put out his eyes". Furthermore, eavesdropping is prohibited in Islam: "He who listens to other people's speech without their permission or knowledge," says Prophet Muhammed "will have his ears filled with boiling lead in the Day of Judgment".[385]

Just as the Quran forbids spying on and prying into other people's private affairs, Prophet Muhammed's Traditions also make it clear that the individual's right to privacy should at all times be respected. On numerous occasions, the Prophet stressed that spying on ordinary citizens would have a very serious negative impact, not only on the targeted individuals, but also on society at large. Prophet Muhammed appears to have been fully aware that constant spying and surveillance of the people would create an oppressive atmosphere of fear and mutual suspicion, which would undermine the very moral basis on which he was hoping to build the new society of believers. "If you pry into the privacy or sexual relations of people", says Prophet Muhammed, "you will (practically) deprave them or drive them to depravity".[386] What is meant here, according to Al-Qaradhawi, is that the domestic front will be shattered and undermined if suspicion is allowed to dictate actions and attitudes, especially when people realise that their private shortcomings or the extent of their preparedness to commit acts of indecency are being investigated or spied on. This oppressive sense of alarm and distrust will drive not only the targeted individual but many others in society as well to lose their modesty and sense of decency, which will ultimately encourage them to engage in indecencies.[387]

The prohibition of spying on the private lives of Muslims is based on a number of Quranic verses as well as the sayings of Prophet Muhammed. Islam views all Muslims as brothers, who should lead peaceful and happy lives blessed by the mercy of Allah: "The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy."[388] Among the many Traditions of Prophet Muhammed on this specific point is the 'hadith' (saying) in which the same concept is echoed:

> A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfil his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection.[389]

Another inadmissible intelligence activity in Islam is spying for the enemy. Islam quite categorically and unambiguously prohibits spying for those who oppose the message of Prophet Muhammed as revealed to him by Allah.[390] The Quran considers such an act to be one of utter betrayal and treason, rendering those who engage in this crime against the faith apostates "O you who believe, do not betray Allah and the messenger, and do not betray those who trust you, now that you know."[391]

Muslims who support non-Muslims, whether Jews, Christians or polytheists, and collaborate with them against the interests of the Muslims, are no better than the disbelievers themselves and will be dealt with accordingly "O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your allies and protectors: They are but allies and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them for friendship and protection is surely one of them. Verily Allah guides not the wrongdoing folk."[392]

Another Quranic verse states that extending love and friendship to the "enemies of Allah" is a quite serious crime, which would entail the gravest of punishments[393]:

> O you who believe, you shall not befriend My enemies and your enemies, extending love and friendship to them, even though they have disbelieved in the truth that has come to you. They persecute the messenger, and you, just because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you mobilize to struggle in My cause, seeking My blessings, how can you secretly love them? I am fully aware of everything you conceal, and everything you declare. Those among you who do this have indeed strayed off the right path.[394]

Spying for the enemies of Islam, as pointed out earlier, is considered a capital sin, which the Quran describes as 'khiyanah' (betrayal). The Surah of *Anfal* admonishes Muslims: "Oh ye who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amanat (things entrusted to you) and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you".[395]

There are admittedly few references to the existence of enemy spies amidst the Muslims. In one such reference, followers of Prophet Muhammed are warned to take every precaution, especially in times of war, lest their secrets be exposed to the enemy[396]. In another, the scripture warns believers not to be taken in by the charm or smooth talking of those who harbour evil against Islam and who might today be called fifth columnists or undercover agents: "And when you look at them, their bodies please you, and when they speak, you listen to their words… They are the enemies, so beware of them! May Allah curse them".[397]

The Surah of Tawbah (Repentance) comments on those who have infiltrated the ranks of the Muslims in order to destroy Islam from within. The verses clearly indicate that there were some amongst the Muslims who paid only lip service to Islam and who were intent on subverting the new faith through the spread of rumours and divisive stories in the hope of stirring up sedition among the believers. Significantly, the verses refer to the fact that there were those among Prophet Muhammed's followers who were prone to lend ears to them:

> Those who truly believe in Allah and the Last Day do not ask your permission to evade the opportunity to strive with their money and their

lives. Allah is fully aware of the righteous. The only people who wish to be excused are those who do not really believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their hearts are full of doubt, and their doubts cause them to waver. *Had they mobilized with you, they would have created confusion, and would have caused disputes and divisions among you. Some of you were apt to listen to them. Allah is fully aware of the transgressors.*[398]

Another reference occurs in the same Surah, where Allah informs Prophet Muhammed not to take the question of the presence of a few false believers, spies or perpetrators of lies to heart. Ibn Kathir notes that the Arabic "Sammaóun" which literally means 'listeners' here means 'listeners for others', i.e. 'spies':

> O you messenger, do not be saddened by those who hasten to disbelieve among those who say, 'We believe,' with their mouths, while their hearts do not believe. Among the Jews, some listened to lies. They listened to people who never met you, and who distorted the words out of context… Whomever Allah wills to divert, you can do nothing to help him against Allah. Allah does not wish to cleanse their hearts. They have incurred humiliation in this world, and in the Hereafter, they will suffer a terrible retribution. They are listeners to lies and rumours (for others), and eaters of illicit earnings. If they come to you to judge among them, you may judge among them, or you may disregard them. If you choose to disregard them, they cannot harm you in the least. But if you judge among them, you shall judge equitably. Allah loves those who are equitable."[399]

7.3 Spying in the Land of Islam and the Land of Infidels

The Quran contains numerous references to the necessity of spreading the word of Allah amongst all peoples. In the Surah of the Bee, we read: "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way".[400] Islam furthermore enjoins all believers to prefer peaceful resolution of conflict: "And if they [the enemy] incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing".[401] Muslim clerics have nevertheless divided the world into two parts: the Land of Peace or Islam in which Muslims live, and the Land of Disbelief or War in which infidels live.

According to most clerics, the Land of Islam is that which is governed by Muslims and in which the Islamic (Shari'a) Law prevails.[402] In this land, people are either Muslims,[403] Dhimmis (people of the book, i.e. Jews, Magi and Christians), apostates or those granted safe conduct. Muslims are expected to be true to their faith by, among other things, praying, fasting and giving alms. The Dhimmis are those who are permitted to practice

their own religion in the Land of Islam but have to pay a kind of poll tax (Jizya), in return for state protection of their lives, property and freedom of religion and worship.[404] All other non-Muslim individuals who happen to be in the Land of Islam for a legitimate reason are granted safe conduct[405] to live and move amongst the Muslims for a specified length of time: "And if one of the idolaters seek protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make him attain his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know".[406]

The 'Land of War', on the other hand, refers to the territories populated by a majority of disbelievers, who are not ruled by Muslims and where Shari'a law is not observed.[407] Muslims can enter into peace covenants with either the whole people of the Land of Disbelief or with only some of them.[408] Residents of the Land of Islam, whether Muslims or Dhimmis, provided they have legitimate reasons such as conducting business, may apply for a special permit to travel to the Land of Disbelief. Muslim scholars are still in disagreement as to whether Shari'a should be applied to those who travel to or sojourn in the Land of Disbelief, upon their return to the Land of Islam.

Punishment for Muslims who spy for non-Muslims is quite severe. According to the Maliki school of thought, he who spies for disbelievers becomes a disbeliever himself and has to be dealt with as such. The Malikis base this unforgiving attitude on the case of Hatib Ibn Abi Balta'a, who was caught spying for the Meccan idolaters. He would have been killed by Omar bin Al-Khattab for collaboration with the enemy, had it not been for Prophet Muhammed's intercession and recognition of Hatib's services to Islam in the Battle of Badr.[409] Besides the Malikis, most Islamic schools of thought specify the death penalty for those convicted of spying.[410]

There is admittedly no unambiguous judgment on those involved in spying,[411] but when convicted of spying for the enemy, non-Muslims living as Dhimmis in Muslim societies receive no less severe punishments than their Muslim counterparts. Most Islamic scholars consider that Dhimmis forfeit their right to state protection and are deemed in contravention of the covenant between them and the Islamic state they live in when caught spying for non-Muslims. A notable example is afforded by the case of Furat Bin Hayyan who was condemned to death but was spared the punishment upon his conversion to Islam.[412]

Non-Muslims who entered the Land of Peace on a safe conduct were expected to abide by the laws of the land and to refrain from engaging in activities detrimental to the security of the state. Those caught spying on their Muslim hosts would be considered to have

reneged on the terms upon which they were permitted to move and operate in the land of Islam. Punishment for such an action was death. Some schools of thought, however, do not insist on capital punishment but advise imprisonment.[413] Punishment for war spies is another issue on which there is no agreement. Some clerics stipulate the death penalty. This judgment is based on a precedent in the Battle of Hanin in which Prophet Muhammed approved this specific punishment for a man who was caught spying on the Muslim military camp.[414] Other clerics have waived the death penalty and treated those spying in times of war as prisoners of war. In return for his life, a war spy was expected to provide whatever information he might possess.[415]

It is significant that many fatwas have recently been issued with regard to the suitability and relevance of the expressions 'Land of War' and 'Land of Peace' to our contemporary lives. Many Muslims consider this outright division between war and peace to be irrelevant at present. As peoples of the world have pledged to live under the canopy of the United Nations and honour its conventions and resolutions, this terminology appears obsolete. According to many clerics, the world now is made up of a great number of communities and cultures all sharing one Land of Peace.[416]

7.4 Conclusion

Through the process of deduction, *Ijtihad* plays an important role in providing answers to many questions which had no precedents or parallels in Islamic history. Another important aspect of *Ijtihad* lies in the fact that it allows jurists and scholars not only to introduce new legislations but also to ignore, modify or enhance rulings which no longer respond adequately to the demands of the age. In the field of intelligence, espionage was divided into admissible and inadmissible activities. Admissible espionage 'Tahassus' was sanctioned by the Quran in the Surah of Joseph, when Jacob despatches his sons

> Go and enquire about Joseph and his brother, seek news of them, and do not despair of God's [gracious] Spirit, His mercy. Indeed none despairs of the [gracious] Spirit of God save the disbelieving folk': and so they departed to Egypt [to look] for Joseph.[417]

In his commentary on this verse, Ibn Katheer points out that Jacob's sons did not practice 'Tajasus' a term which normally describes espionage for evil purposes but 'Tahasus', which is reserved for benign causes and the public good of the Muslim nation. Jurists on the other hand have condemned espionage as a crime if it violates privacy or is

carried out for personal purposes. Prohibition of this type of espionage is based on the following verse "O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion (as much as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs." [418] *Ijtihad* has furthermore provided the Muslim intelligence community with the required flexibility to carry out their duties as long as their work does not run counter to the Quran and the *Sunnah.*

Chapter Eight

Fatah and the Concept of Intelligence

8.1 Introduction

In order that we may be able to assess the intelligence capabilities and practices of Fatah, it is imperative to start with an investigation of some aspects of the social and religious culture within which this major faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) came into being. Intelligence work, as a specialized human endeavour, is not an autonomous universal given, but, as Adda Boseman points out, a "derivative and expression of the particular society, culture, or ideology" in terms of which it is being activated.[419] Examining non-Western intelligence through Western lenses is neither appropriate nor adequate, so this thesis will take note of the impact and influence on intelligence of the 'layered mosaic' of Islam, tribal affiliation, family identities and history.[420] Culture, as Philip Davies elaborates, plays an important role in defining the frame of mind and general concepts of intelligence in any given community.[421] Indeed, Bruce Berkowitz and Allan Goodman are correct in stating that culture, as a concept related to intelligence, contributes to our understanding of how related elements such as shared values, beliefs, practices and assumptions about how the world works and how insiders are distinguished from outsiders encourage "predictability and stability" within a delineated community.[422] Understanding the religious and ideological basis of any insurgency or paramilitary group is therefore a prerequisite if tragic failures, such as what happened in Iraq, are to be avoided. This is particularly true in the present context, given that while religion underlies basic beliefs in most parts of the world, "it is not normally toxically linked with politics in the same way as it is in the Middle East".[423]

The previous chapters have demonstrated that the origins of the Arab concept of intelligence date back, long before the rise of Islam in the first half of the 7th century, to the pre-Islamic ages, more specifically to the 2nd and 3rd centuries. At that time, the Qahtani tribes of Southern Arabia, like all inhabitants of the northern and central parts of the peninsula, had their own networks of spies and secret agents, who were quite active, not only during wars and crises, but also in peacetime. In the early stages of Islam, Prophet Muhammed and his followers, who took it upon themselves to spread the new religion, first made use of and later enriched and developed what intelligence notions and practices they had inherited from their Arab predecessors.

To the founders of Islam, intelligence gathering and the employment of secret agents, whether to proselytise or for purely military purposes, were of utmost importance. The methodologies and tactics which the builders of the Islamic state improvised and perfected gave shape to and crystallized what can be called an Arab Islamic concept of intelligence. Although it may at first seem that this concept does not differ from any of its contemporary intelligence counterparts, it does so in fact, as their cultural bases are widely different. The rich Islamic cultural heritage, based as it was on the teachings of the Quran and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammed, provided a rich source from which the Arab Islamic intelligence community, across successive generations, never ceased to draw inspiration and guidance. Bernard Lewis was among the first Western Arabists to acknowledge that interaction between Arab Islamic culture and intelligence has been notably consistent since the seventh century.[424]

It must be stressed that the Islamic religion has permeated Arab culture so deeply that it has become difficult to distinguish between what is Arabic and what is Islamic. For Islam constitutes the spiritual and moral foundation upon which Arab values, customs and aspirations are based. The early history of the Arabs (AD 700-1000) is so intertwined with that of Islam, that the terms Islam and Arabism become almost synonymous, especially during the period of Islamic expansion outside the Arabian Peninsula into Asia, North Africa and beyond. All states, kingdoms and empires which embraced Islam adopted Arabic not only as a lingua franca but as a medium of communication among their own citizens. The expansion of Islam has thus greatly impacted Arabic culture and language. Just as Arabic came into a wide range of terminological riches, other languages borrowed extensively from Arabic, the language of the Quran. With the advent of the modern Arab renaissance which began towards the end of the 18th century, the question of the Arab Muslim identity re-emerged as a reaction to the European renaissance whose values and ideals were rejected. This tendency is evidenced by the emergence of a number of anti-Western movements which opposed all attempts at what was seen as a cultural invasion of the Muslims.[425]

It is clear that in the Arab world, especially in the Middle Eastern countries, an increasing amount of hatred has, since the end of World War II and the creation of the state of Israel, been transformed into Islamic and Arab radicalism. Many radical movements and paramilitary groups espousing armed resistance or terrorism to varying degrees have emerged since then, beginning with the Muslim Brotherhood, including dozens of Palestinian organizations of every political shade and ending with the notorious groups,

Taliban and Al-Qaeda.[426] Most of these movements, radical or not, have sought to draw on this rich inheritance when launching political projects or building military and security apparatuses.

Almost all the nationalist and Islamist paramilitary groups which emerged during the interwar period shared a common denominator: hostility towards the presumably imperialist West. Western invasion of Arab and Islamic lands was viewed by Islamists and nationalists alike as a flagrant aggression against the peoples of the region and an attempt to control and plunder their natural resources. Resisting the Western invasion was further viewed as a defence mechanism to protect their culture and identity. The emergence of nationalist and leftist parties deepened the struggle and intensified even further the clash of interests, especially after the discovery of yet more oil fields and the entry of the Soviet Union as a serious contender. Among the Palestinians there emerged a number of political groupings and parties. Among the most important parties with nationalist tendencies were: the Baath (Renaissance) and the Harakat Al-Qawmiyeen Al-Arab (Arab Nationalist Movement). On the left of the political spectrum were the Marxists and socialists. Although the vast majority of the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fatah) members were Muslims, Christian Palestinians too joined Fatah. These include Kemal Nassir, Fatah's Central Committee member, George Habash and Naief Hawatma both of whom played a significant part in the Palestinian resistance and formed their own revolutionary brigades.[427]

The early experience of Islam, especially during its initial secret phase, which focused on providing a safe environment for spreading the new faith among various tribes and towns in and around Mecca and Medina, has been of special significance to these modern movements. Modern and contemporary paramilitary leaders, especially in areas where they are confronted with heavy and punitive state reprisals, almost invariably identify themselves with the early followers of Prophet Muhammed. The circumstances under which they operate are also seen as similar to those of the early days of Islam. These largely faith-driven movements see in Prophet Muhammed's life and practice an exemplary role model, worthy of emulation in every detail. This tendency can easily be seen not only in the political and military discourse of these groups, but also in the suggestive names they adopt for themselves, for their organizational structures and for the operations they implement.[428] The founders of such resistance movements as Fatah were extremely cautious, selective and secretive about identifying prospective recruits. To avoid reprisals and in order to protect the newly formed underground organization from

infiltration and sabotage, they resorted to all sorts of dissimulation and deceptive tactics. In so doing they were following in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammed who excelled in the use of secrecy and concealment, especially during the early years of his call to Islam.

These precautionary measures and tactics were standard procedures in the Muslim Brotherhood which carried special appeal to many of the Palestinian youths who later came to found Fatah. The Muslim Brotherhood's motto was ''Muhammed Qudwatuna'' (Muhammed is our Role Model). In attempting to win new recruits to their movement, the Brotherhood operated under numerous front organizations such as boy scouts, sports and youth clubs, students unions and a variety of literary and cultural groupings. The Fatah leaders who had joined the Brotherhood in Egypt learned these tactics and mastered them. When they set out to form their first nucleus cell, they chose the state of Kuwait, away from Palestine and its Arab neighbouring countries. Just as Prophet Muhammed used the Dar Al-Arqam safe house to educate his followers and teach them in the ways of spreading Islam, the Fatah founders, as one of its members Khalil Al-Wazir points out, used to meet and lay down their strategies and plans of action in an out of the way safe house in Kuwait. To protect the fledgling group against infiltration no one cadre knew all the other members of the underground group.[429]

Despite the emergence during the past century of numerous nationalist and Islamist movements in the Arab and Muslim worlds, the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fatah) remains a remarkable and unique group, which has distinguished itself as a competent organization, capable of dealing flexibly with other Palestinian factions, grouping them all under a unified umbrella structure and providing efficient leadership, through its control of the PLO.

Chief among the factors which enabled Fatah to lead the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was its effective leadership which was experienced and hardened by years of resistance and underground political and military action. The fact that, apart from Islam, there were practically no ideological or dogmatic restrictions governing its operation and methodologies made Fatah quite free to choose, adopt or modify any mode of action which suits its strategy. Like the early builders of the Muslim state in Medina who were in the main émigrés from Mecca, most of the founders of Fatah were refugees who had fled their towns and cities following the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948. They had spent their formative years in refugee camps amidst the misery and suffering of their own people. They were quite different from the traditional leaders of the Palestinian national movement

who had mainly been businessmen, middle class dignitaries, religious or feudal leaders or descendants of rich and well connected families. But these 'lowly' youths were soon to win credibility and wide popular support. Hardly ten years had passed before Fatah imposed its full control over the PLO, which was transformed into a more dynamic entity, capable of establishing international relations with all parts of the world and building competent social, military, security and intelligence agencies which in some cases surpassed their counterparts in the region.[430]

The efforts exerted by the Fatah-led PLO in Jordan first and later on in the Lebanon during the period extending from 1970 to the Israeli invasion of 1982 resulted not only in the building of an efficient and disciplined security infrastructure capable of functioning in hostile or semi-hostile environments but also in consolidating and expanding a number of social, financial, health and educational institutions. In order to improve its performance on the military as well as the diplomatic and political fronts, the PLO launched an ambitious training programme through which many young men and women were offered grants or scholarships to study abroad.

The growth and expansion of the PLO led many observers and analysts to call it the "Fakahani Republic", in a reference to the part of Beirut in which the PLO headquarters and other offices were situated. A special Palestinian force directly responsible to Chairman Yassir Arafat's own office was set up in this part of the Lebanese capital. Its duties were to provide security for Arafat who was gradually becoming more like a "ruler'' or "head of state" than a military leader. Through this carefully planned transformation, Arafat managed to accomplish what his predecessors had failed to accomplish. He succeeded in imposing himself as leader of the Palestinians everywhere, in the Diaspora as well as those in the Israeli occupied territories. No sooner had Yassir Arafat and the vast majority of the PLO declared their adherence to the path of peace, under American patronage, than the "leader president" despite all defamation campaigns, blockade and rejection by a number of influential Arab powers, became a diligent and patient negotiator in the labyrinth of international manoeuvres and politics. After a lengthy series of clandestine meetings with the Israelis Arafat succeeded in concluding the Oslo Agreement of 1993, which placed him and the Israelis on the road towards the establishment of a Palestinian state. It was in accordance with this agreement that the Palestinian Authority was created in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Most of the institutions and infrastructure elements of the newly created Palestinian Authority were drawn from Fatah.[431]

Fatah went a long way towards implementing its political programme, which, through a combination of armed struggle and diplomacy, sought and still seeks to establish an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. Fatah's consistency, and successes as a non-state intelligence actor are behind the choice of this paramilitary organization as a case study, through which its strategies, tactics and behaviour will be examined in some detail. It is only after we have attained a degree of understanding of the mind-set of 'the other' in this case, Fatah on its own terms, that we can proceed to comparisons and assessments of its intelligence record.[432]

The ideological point of departure of the founders of Fatah, especially those who took charge of its security and intelligence apparatuses, was in essence an extension of (if not identical with) that of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which looks to the Quran and the life of Prophet Muhammed for inspiration and guidance. While total adherence to the teachings of the Quran and the sayings and practices of its prophet lie at the core of the Muslim Brotherhood's message, the ascendancy of Fatah was in many ways a reinvigorated and more developed version of the Brotherhood's experience. It is hoped that the following pages will demonstrate how, in setting up Fatah's security and intelligence apparatuses, the originators were inspired and stimulated by the same ideals and visions which had driven the Muslim Brotherhood movement.[433]

8.2 Creation of Fatah

 Most historical accounts of the foundation of Fatah indicate that this paramilitary group was the outcome of deliberations held in Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Gaza and lasting almost a decade, roughly from 1951 to 1959. These accounts come mostly from people who took part in the clandestine deliberations or from those who joined the first secret cell founded by Khalil al-Wazir, Salah Khalaf and a few others.[434] The ambitious aim of the young Palestinian founders was to create an independent organization that is to be different from those which had dominated the Palestinian scene.

In the years following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the most influential political parties, which enjoyed wide popularity among Palestinians, were the Muslim Brotherhood and the nationalist and communist parties. The bitter sense of disappointment felt by the Palestinians following the Arab defeat in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 was behind the emergence and flourishment of such ideologies and tendencies. This sense of indignation and frustration led many Palestinians to reject the guardianship which the Arabs were trying to impose on them. It also pushed them to vent their anger on the traditional

Palestinian leaderships which were blamed for the loss of their homeland. Many of the disillusioned, angry Palestinians joined the Muslim Brotherhood in droves. Some of those who espouse the Islamist cause such as Khalil al-Wazir, Salah Khalaf, Muhammad Yousuf al-Najjar, Kemal Adwan and others were later to become among the founding members of Fatah. Most of those came from among the Palestinian refugees who had fled their newly occupied land in 1948 and settled in Gaza.[435] Some of those young men had taken part in the demonstrations, political activities and even military operations of the Brotherhood or had least been sympathetic to the ideals of the Islamist movement.[436]

According to Khalil Al-Wazir, one of the Fatah founders the serious push for creating the organization started in earnest after the Suez invasion known in the Arab world as (the Tripartite Aggression) of 1956:

> When the tripartite invasion took place and the Gaza Strip fell under enemy [Israeli] occupation, all that preoccupied us and seized our minds was: how to involve greater numbers of the [Gaza] Strip Palestinians in our armed operations? And how to establish support cells for our popular resistance groups in Gaza?.[437]

Following the Suez War, which had inflamed the nationalist zeal amongst Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular, a new realization dawned upon those who were later to become the founders of Fatah and who included Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin), Farouq Qaddoumi (Abu Al-Lutf), Muhammed Yousuf Al-Najjar (Abu Yousuf), Kamal Adwan and Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad). After a long period of collective searching and lengthy debates, these Palestinians came to the conclusion that the real challenge facing the Palestinian cause was not how to elicit support for armed action, but how to fill the vacuum created by the absence of an independent Palestinian political structure. The Israeli occupation of Gaza smashed what was left of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and undermined what little credibility the other political parties had enjoyed. In these bleak circumstances and a general atmosphere of distress and frustration among Palestinians, the Egyptian leader Jamal Abdul Nasser emerged as a great nationalist hero, a new Saladin, on the promise of whose charismatic rhetoric and fiery speeches many Palestinians pinned high hopes.[438]

During that period however, the future founders of Fatah were incensed at the Egyptian authority's prohibition of all Fedayeen operations against Israel, after the latter had withdrawn its forces from the Gaza Strip in March 1957. As a result, the young Palestinian activists became even more convinced that no country, political party or

individual, however just or powerful, could settle the problems of the Palestinians on their behalf, so that an independent course of action should henceforth be their priority.[439]

Other accounts of this event such as that of Farid Al-Falouji indicate that, the idea of creating a new independent Palestinian organization was discussed as early as 1952. It was always on the mind of Yassir Arafat and several of his close associates, who were then still pursuing their studies at Cairo University. Al-Falouji points out that from 1952 onwards, Arafat promoted the idea of creating an independent national movement specifically dedicated to the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Such an organization should, in Arafat's vision, be as far removed as possible from intra-Arab and regional conflicts and interests. Working diligently along with Salah Khalaf (aka Abu Iyad), Arafat was able to attract a number of young Palestinians, especially those who were students at Egyptian universities. Those who responded positively to Arafat's call were, like him and Abu Iyad, quite enthusiastic about armed struggle as a means to achieve self-determination and regaining Palestinian lands lost in battle. Amongst the first who were willing to join Arafat were Abu Mazin, who was later to succeed Arafat as president of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Al-Lutf, Abu Yousuf, Kamal Adwan and Abu Jihad. These five men, together with Arafat and Abu Iyad, formed a close personal alliance amongst themselves and succeeded not only in creating the most effective Palestinian grouping of like-minded people, but also in staying at the helm of the umbrella Palestinian organization, the PLO. Despite the assassination of four of his comrades (Abu Jihad, Abu Yousuf, Kamal Adwan and Abu Iyad), Yassir Arafat continued, until his death in 2004, to lead both the PLO and subsequently the fledgling Palestinian Authority.[440]

According to Abu Iyad, the story of Fatah begins in 1959, when Yassir Arafat and a number of associates and friends founded an engineering contracting company in Kuwait. Abu Iyad dates the birth of Fatah with the launch of this engineering company:

> On October 10, 1959, a small group of us met in a discreet house in Kuwait to hammer out the organizational structures of Fatah. More meetings with other participants took place over the following days, always in the greatest secrecy. There were fewer than twenty of us in all, representatives of underground groups from various Arab countries and beyond, coming together to centralize our activities for the first time. This limited congress marked the formal creation of what was to become the most powerful national liberation movement Palestine had ever known.[441]

Besides Yassir Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir, the cell also included two Palestinian activists from Syria: Adil Abdul Kerim and Abdullah Al-Dannan, and two from Gaza: Khalid Umeirah and Tawfeeq Shadid.[442] By the end of the year, the founders of Fatah had written

two important documents: *Haikal Al-Bina' al-Thawri* (The Route Map for Revolutionary Action) and *Bayan Al-Harakah* (The Movement's Manifesto). These two documents set forth, in unambiguous terms, the vision, strategies and ultimate aims of Fatah. They also elucidated, amongst other things, the roots of its organizational infrastructure as well as the political philosophy behind the launch of the new movement. The founders of Fatah outlined their philosophy by adopting the old adage "Freedom is not something which is given to people but wrested by them".[443]

The Arabic word 'fatah', which is laden with positive Quranic connotations, means, among other things, 'to open up', 'to start afresh' and 'to achieve success or a breakthrough'. This word appears in the Surah of the Ranks in the sense of 'victory', where the faithful are promised "yet another (blessing) that you love: help from Allah and a victory near at hand".[444] In Islamic history, the word is frequently used to denote the successful conquest of new territories, especially the conquest of Mecca by the Prophet Muhammed in AD 630. Adopting this name for the newly formed paramilitary group was therefore intended, above all else, to exploit the immense religious connotations associated with the successful re-entry of Prophet Muhammed to his birthplace, giving the idea of fighting for the liberation of Palestine a religious dimension. This is quite evident in the speeches given by Fatah's chairman, Yassir Arafat, who continually referred to the liberation of Palestine as a holy patriotic duty.[445] But the word 'Fatah' is also a reverse acronym of Fatah's full name in Arabic: Harakat Al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini.

In *The Route Map for Revolutionary Action*, Fatah incites all Palestinians to rise up in arms and resist their enemies who have usurped their rights and freedoms:

> Our stateless people have been leading an abject life characterized by misery and humiliation in every country throughout the diaspora. Palestinians are now living without a homeland, without dignity, without leadership, without hope, without arms, without guidance, without help, without respect, without existence. For far too long, we have held and sustained our hopes, patiently waiting … until all hopes have vanished and melted away.[446]

Once the organizational structure of the new movement was thought out, the zealous young men of Fatah laid out a detailed plan aimed at contacting several individuals (Palestinian) in Gaza and Syria, who shared the same vision or ideal. Amongst the first to be approached was Salah Khalf, who joined the group in 1959. Another newcomer was Khalid Al-Hasan, who proved a valuable asset to the founders and their supporters. Exploiting his official position in the Kuwaiti Public Works Department, Al-Hasan was able to have entry visas and work permits issued to many Fatah members and

sympathisers. A big boost for Fatah came in November 1959, when representatives of a number of Palestinian groups, comprising 500 members across the Gulf states, agreed to join the new organization. Like Mecca during the early (secret) stage of Islam, Kuwait thus became the most important base from which Fatah launched its diplomatic and political moves.[447]

In an attempt to broaden popular support amongst fellow Palestinians and Arabs in general, the founders of Fatah sought from the beginning to secure a forum through which they could address the public and heighten awareness of the Palestinian cause. To that end, they contacted their fellow Beirut-based Palestinian, Tawfiq Houri, a writer who, like Salah Al-Hasan before him, proved quite helpful. Houri held a licence to publish a monthly magazine entitled *Al-Nida'* (The Call). To accommodate the new mission, it was agreed that the magazine should be re-launched, with a new title that was to be easily identifiable, more emotive and suggestive. The name chosen for Fatah's first official regular publication was *Nida' Al-Hayat: Filistinuna* (The Call of Life: Our Palestine), which continued to be the organ of Fatah from its first issue in November 1959 until 1964. The 40 volumes published during this period included numerous contributions by Yassir Arafat, Khalil Al-Wazir, Tawfiq Houri and other founding members. The magazine played a significant part in raising the profile of Fatah in the Arab world and heightening political awareness among Palestinians. It also served as a mailbox for the new movement and a channel through which the Fatah leadership could be contacted. Besides articles and comments, the magazine received a huge volume of letters from Palestinians and Arabs indicating their support for the organisation. Many of these letters contained applications from ardent youths asking to join the ranks of Fatah.[448] Just as the early Muslims employed poets and public orators to popularise their cause, *Nida' Al-Hayat* was an important organ through which the Fatah founders eulogized their ideals and attacked their adversaries.

One of oldest members of Fatah, Khalil al-Wazir, explains that those who founded the organization had deliberately and consciously used the term 'movement' rather than 'political party'. In referring to themselves as founders of a movement, they were emulating the Muslim Brotherhood.[449] In point of fact, the Arabic word 'hizb', which is commonly used now to denote a political party, is not devoid of negative implications. To the founders the term 'party' did not sound as inclusive or as free as 'movement' since it only refers to a part rather than the whole. The term 'party' was also seen to denote commitment to a rigid and restraining discipline which impedes movement. It was quite common on the political scene in the post World War II period when a host of radical and

revolutionary parties mushroomed in the region. To distinguish themselves from these parties they decided to call themselves a 'movement' rather than a 'party'.[450] The word 'hizb' furthermore is closely associated with one of the most difficult periods in the life of Prophet Muhammed when the 'ahzab' (plural of 'hizb') imposed a total blockade on the newly established Islamic state in Medina. In one of his sayings, Prophet Muhammed invoked the help of Allah, in the hope that the ahzab be defeated and convulsed to pieces.[451] Besides, the Arabic term 'harakah' (movement) is more vivid and positive, in that it connotes "continued activity, away from the rigidity of any specific formula, especially as Fatah was not intended to be just another organization, but as a movement for the whole people".[452] The movement projected itself not as merely another political entity on the Palestinian scene, but as a national front, comprising a wide spectrum of political entities. It therefore called upon all Palestinians, of whatever school of thought or tendency, to "rise above their ideological and partisan allegiances and join the armed revolutionary vanguards".[453]

Despite the Islamist bent of mind of many members of the Fatah founders, the newly created movement did not seek to exclude any religious, sectarian or ethnic group. On the contrary, they embraced all talents wherever these are found among Muslims, Christians or other faiths. In their political discourse, the Fatah leaders were from the start quite keen to stress the national Palestinian identity away from the constraints of sect, faith or ethnicity. The National Charter of the PLO stresses the equal rights of all Palestinians, regardless of their faith or ideologies. Unlike most parties and groupings, Fatah distanced itself from all sectarian or religious conflicts and established good relations with the clerical establishment in Palestinian towns and cities. The excellent relations which Yassir Arafat cultivated with the Palestinian church leaders were reflected in the fact that there were a number of prominent Christians in the upper echelons PLO hierarchy.[454]

In order to mobilize the Palestinian people into armed struggle, Fatah, unlike many of the Palestinian resistance organizations, placed considerable emphasis on the national Palestinian identity. Its political project was challenged by the atmosphere of failure and frustration which pervaded the Palestinian scene as a result of the multiplicity and diversity of philosophies and ideologies adopted by both traditionalist and revolutionary parties. The absence, or at least the deficiencies, of a national Palestinian project had prompted such famed leaders as Izz Uddin Al-Qassam and Amin Al-Husaini first to adopt Islamic slogans, then to turn away from them towards nationalist (pan-Arabist) ones. They did this without realizing that the absence of national identity was quite often behind the setbacks which

had befallen the Palestinians and behind their failure to form their own political frame of reference. The expulsion and displacement of the Palestinians, which led to the disintegration of Palestinian society, transformed the Palestinians, as it were, into a gambling card in the hands of Arab states.[455]

A memorandum sent in July 1957 by Khalil Al-Wazir to the Muslim Brotherhood is a clear indication of the vision and thoughts with which al-Wazir's mind and those of his compatriots were preoccupied. The memo which detailed a new project did not elicit any serious interest or scrutiny; nor did Al-Wazir expect it to. Despite the fact that Fatah's initiators received no response from the Muslim Brotherhood or from any other political force to which the draft project was sent, they nevertheless held their constitutional assembly in 1958, a year after the memorandum had been distributed. As it turned out, the Muslim Brotherhood rejected the project, but this rejection was not conveyed until 1960, after the Brotherhood had lost increasing numbers of its followers to the new movement, Fatah.[456]

Writing in one of the earliest issues of *Filistinuna* (1959), Khalil Al-Wazir says:

> We have to wage an unmitigated war against Israel. We also have to reject any political bargains through which Israel would be permitted to continue its existence. Nor should we trust Arab governments. We should resist their attempts to impose their hegemony and guardianship. It is incumbent upon the Palestinians, above all else, to take their own destiny into their own hands, and to devote all resources to our armed struggle.[457]

As soon as it was launched, Fatah set out to develop its own national project on the basis of "Palestine First". This slogan proved quite popular and soon came to attract wide segments of Palestinian society. From the start, Fatah had stated its ultimate aim quite unambiguously as "the liberation of the whole of Palestine, and the destruction of all foundations upon which Israel and the society of the Zionist colonialist occupation are built".[458] When setting forth these two aims, Fatah insisted that its strategy was based upon two fundamental principles: first, total independence of the movement and the Palestinian decision-making; and second, recognition of the priority of armed struggle as the only way to liberate Palestine. Fatah condemned Arab politics, charging it with "usurping the Palestinian masses of their initiatives and their will to act, through use of force and application of all sorts of pressures". Fatah also criticised Arab politics for seeking to "dismember the Palestinian national movement as a prerequisite for deploying Arab armies".[459] It further accused some Arab leaders of "exploiting the Palestinian cause for

their own benefit" and called for "the establishment of an independent Palestinian political entity, with its own organizational structures".[460]

Until 1963, Fatah focused on widening its popularity and increasing its membership. It also actively sought to enlist as much support as possible from both Arab and non-Arab quarters. The circumstances prevailing during the period (1959-1963) were in a way similar to those of the second phase of the Islamic call during which Prophet Muhammed and his followers went public. But the need for Arab recognition of the PLO and the Palestine Liberation Army in 1964, constituted an immense pressure on the Palestinians to start their 'armed struggle' much earlier than planned. The Fatah leaders concluded that "bolstering their military bases and making them battle-ready… in order that operations may be launched within a short span of time would save the Palestinian arena from the sophistries which had dominated it, and would furthermore enable the national movement to regain the initiative which it had almost lost".[461]

In order to gain experience and speed up preparedness for covert operations against the Zionist state and its interests, inside and outside Israel, the Fatah leaders sought to learn from the experiences of fellow fighters across the world. Algeria was of great significance to the Fatah fighters, as they drew many lessons from the Algerian war of independence. Algeria, furthermore, served as a promising model to be emulated, especially as the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) had succeeded, through armed struggle, in seizing independence from the French colonialists. To most Palestinians, therefore, the Algerian experience was an inspiration and a concrete proof that only armed struggle can "transform the popular masses into an effective force of revolutionary cadres, fully aware of its mission in life".[462] Commenting on the challenges facing Fatah during the formative years, Khalil Al-Wazir sums up the situation by saying that Fatah decided to "learn how to swim by plunging into the water and to learn about war through doing battle".[463] In short, Fatah had blind faith in what it considered a strategic universal certainty: "The only way to press ahead with the historic process of struggle was to start an armed revolution within the usurped part of our homeland".[464]

> This assertion came in the first official communiqué issued by the movement on 1st January 1965, which called for national unity in the face of the grave challenges facing the Palestinians and emphasized at the same time the urgent necessity of setting up a Palestinian political entity. There was a common belief among the leaders of Fatah that the Arab governments were seeking to obliterate the Palestinian identity. This belief was expressed by Khalil Al-Wazir when he said that

> "the whole purpose of deploying the [Arab Salvation] army to Palestine [in 1948] was to confiscate Palestinian decisions and strangle the independent Palestinian willpower".[465]

From the time it was launched in the late fifties, Fatah laid great emphasis on learning from the past struggle of the Palestinian people and attached great importance to the creation of an independent Palestinian entity that would express and embody the expectations of the Palestinians. This was achieved through the creation of the PLO, which soon became "the sole legitimate representative of all Palestinians".[466] Fatah also strove to protect the right of the Palestinians to take their own decisions, to stay away from intra-Arab conflicts and rivalries and never to lose sight of their strategic aims. Fatah's embracing of all Palestinians, regardless of their social or intellectual links, and the fact that it did not adopt any specific ideology, political trend or school of thought, enabled it to attract a variety of people belonging to a wide range of political and intellectual backgrounds and to mobilise wider segments of Palestinian society. It was through its openness and sense of determination that Fatah was able to lead the PLO and transform it into an entity similar in its components, functions and the nature of its activities to a state. [467]

8.3 Fatah's Rapid Rise

Through its adherence to the option of armed conflict and its execution of numerous operations deep inside Israeli territory and the occupied lands, Fatah gained credibility amongst Palestinians. Within a very short time, Fatah was able to strengthen its position within the Palestinian liberation movement and raise the hopes of the Palestinian people, deepening their sense of pride and self-reliance, especially as, since its launch, Palestine had become a much larger question than just that of refugees and UN humanitarian aid. On the Arab and Islamic fronts, Fatah succeeded in securing generous financial assistance as well as valuable technical and military help. This enabled it to build its own security apparatus and set up special training camps for its military and security personnel in a number of Arab countries.[468]

The declaration by Fatah on 1st January 1965 that it had carried out its first operation inside Israel was adopted as the official date of the beginning of the 'Palestinian Revolution'. This declaration emphasized that there was no option for the Palestinians except armed struggle if they were to "liberate Palestine and regain their usurped rights".[469] But the actual date of the adoption of a policy of armed struggle came in the aftermath of

the defeat of three Arab states—Egypt, Jordan and Syria—in the June 1967 War. This humiliating defeat led to the collapse of the revolutionary ideologies which had prevailed throughout the fifties and sixties. It also led to the rise of Fatah as a strong, popularly empowered representative of the Palestinians and their adherence to armed struggle.[470]

Fatah's armed struggle option soon developed into a national liberation project with new features, a sophisticated organizational structure and an elite military force, which pushed the Palestinian liberation movement forward and prompted the PLO to effect significant root-and-branch reforms. It was during this period of Fatah's ascendancy that the need to create security and intelligence apparatuses was felt, especially as Fatah was now in possession of trained and dedicated cadres, a philosophy to guide it and a position of authority. Having secured enough human and financial resources as well as technical know-how, Fatah pushed ahead with its security plans and set up *Jihaz Al-Rasd Al- Thawri* (the Revolutionary Surveillance Apparatus) in Jordan in 1969.[471]

For the Palestinians, the Arab defeat in the June 1967 War resulted, among other things, in a loss of confidence in the Arab establishment, especially in the so-called 'progressive' regimes. The emergence following the 1967 defeat of the "fedayeen" phenomenon reflects the growing conviction that the then existing Arab regimes, pro-western or revolutionary, were incapable of confronting Israel or wresting back the occupied Arab lands. More and more Palestinians felt that there was only one option: armed struggle. The then raging Vietnam War provided a live example and a role model to follow. These notions were strongly advocated by Marxist-Leninist groups as well as revolutionary nationalist parties. To the founders of Fatah who were well-versed in the history of Islam and the strategies Prophet Muhammed had adopted to spread the new faith, armed struggle was a proven and tested strategy.[472] "During the period 1967-1970 a multitude of fedayeen groups surfaced in Jordan and Syria first, then in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait and Algeria later on. During this period operations against Israeli targets escalated to such an extant that sometimes there were dozens of attacks reported each week. While this grave development raised Israeli concerns that it would be dragged into an endless war with the armed groups, the Arab regimes felt threatened and sought to contain this phenomenon and then to eliminate it.[473]

The 1967 defeat also led to the enhancement of the status of the Fedayeen (self-sacrificers) movement in the Arab world, which now became more sympathetic towards the Palestinian resistance on one hand and quite sceptical about the governments of the day on the other. During the last six months of 1967, an attempt by Fatah and other Palestinian

groups to incite the Arab masses to rise up spontaneously in arms against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza failed to produce the desired results. Fatah's status nevertheless became firmly entrenched as a serious resistance group in the national conscience of the Arabs. In an attempt to contain the Arab frustration and enthusiasm for the Palestinian cause, the Arab governments softened the restrictions and limitations which had been imposed on the Palestinian resistance. This new situation enabled Fatah to build safe bases in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon in the two years following the 1967 War.[474]

Even at an early stage when it was still a relatively small entity, both politically and militarily, Fatah was the only group capable of taking the initiative in the new conditions which the 1967 defeat had created across the Arab world. The resilience and spirit of defiance which characterized its discourse at the time transformed it into a formidable political force within a very short period of time. Just a few months after the June defeat, Fatah resumed its military operations against Israel. Its performance in the Battle of Karameh, 21 March 1968,[475] confirmed its status not only as a military force but also as a revolutionary base enjoying immense popularity among both Palestinians and Arab masses. The Karameh battle was hailed throughout the Arab world as a latter day Badr, in reference to the first important victory Prophet Muhammed scored against the Meccans who hugely outnumbered the forces under Prophet Muhammed's command. Thereafter, Fatah became the major organizer and motivator of the Palestinian masses and a role model for young Arabs. Besides its military operations, which dramatically increased in scope after Karameh, Fatah also set out to intensify its political and diplomatic activities on the international scene, especially in the Arab and Muslim worlds.[476]

The Karameh victory which rendered the Palestinian quest for independence as a legitimate political movement [477] prompted some Arab leaders, especially those anxious to appease the angry masses, to befriend Fatah and offer political and financial support. King Hussein of Jordan's declaration following Karameh that "we are all *fedayeen*!" is a case in point.[478] In so doing he was simply bowing to the wind of the revolutionary storm that was blowing across the Arab region. Karameh transformed the Palestinian question into a people's revolution against an occupation force. Commenting on the outcome of this confrontation, Arafat stressed "what we have done is to make the world...realize that the Palestinian is no longer refugee number so and so, but the member of a people who hold the reins of their own destiny and are in a position to determine their own future."[479] One of the architects of Israeli diplomacy, Gideon Rafael, voices a similar opinion "The operation gave an enormous lift to Yasser Arafat's Fatah organization and irrevocably

implanted the Palestine problem onto the international agenda, no longer as a humanitarian issue of homeless refugees, but as a claim to Palestinian statehood."[480]

The new found pride and confidence felt by the Fatah leaders can be seen in the fact that they opened an office in the Jordanian capital and started going about their business in the open. Palestinians of different political leanings and ideological convictions thronged these centres to either volunteer or offer donations. The surge in Fatah's popularity after Karameh was such that one of its recruitment centres in Amman received 5000 applications within 48 hours. In short, Karameh established Fatah not only as a legitimate and hugely popular force in Palestinian and Arab politics but also entrenched it as an undisputed and capable leadership of the PLO. [481] On the international scene, the Soviet Union which had until then been hesitant to open up to the Palestinians, became quite supportive and sympathetic with Fatah after Karameh. [482]

The period immediately following the June 1967 War was characterized by the heavy presence of numerous Palestinian groups and Fedayeen in what were then known as the 'confrontation states': Egypt, Jordan and Syria. By 1969 these armed groups had become a strike force capable of launching dozens of attacks each month against Israeli targets. The 'Asifeh' (storm troopers) carried out most of these attacks. Syria and Egypt, which were seeking to turn Israel's eyes away from them while they were still in the process of rebuilding their armed forces, provided vital military assistance to the Fedayeen movement and helped them set up official safe bases in Lebanon between April and November 1969. This was done while these two countries were preparing to wage a war of attrition against Israel. Iraq, for its part, provided significant support for the Palestinian resistance. The Iraqi attitude was prompted by a desire to legitimize its new Baathist regime, which had come to power following a coup in July 1968, and was an attempt to outshine the rival Baathist regime in Syria. When Iraq formed its own protégé Fedayeen group, the Syrians did the same, which complicated Palestinian politics even further. However, all Palestinian resistance groups received financial and technical help from Arab and Muslim states. Fatah, which was now controlling the PLO, was the largest beneficiary. Unlike the Western powers, many third world and Eastern Bloc countries showed sympathy towards the Palestinians. The PLO would soon be recognized by the People's Republic of China, North Korea and what was known then as North Vietnam. After a period of some hesitation, the Soviet Union extended its recognition to the PLO. Cuba, however, did not recognize the PLO until much later.[483]

The 5th Session of the Palestinian National Council, which was held in Cairo on 1st February 1969, marked a new epoch in the history of the PLO, when a new Executive Committee chaired by Yassir Arafat was elected. Arafat also presided over the PLO's Military Office. His first activity as PLO chairman was to visit the fledgling Palestinian military units hosted and trained by Arab countries: *Ain Jalut* which was stationed next to the Egyptian troops along the Suez Canal, the *Qadisiya* units in Iraq and the *Hattin* force in Syria. These moves were evidently intended to demonstrate the great attention Arafat paid to the troops of the Palestine Liberation Forces. These military formations were all named after important battles in which the Muslims had scored decisive victories against their enemies. [484]

Three factors combined to make it possible for Fatah to dominate the PLO. The first was the inefficiency of the old PLO leadership and its inability to deal with the developments and new challenges facing the Palestinians during that dire period of their struggle. Then there was the outbreak of the June 1967 War, which, among other things, exposed the deficiencies and inadequacies of the Palestinian course of action and refuted the frequent assertion that the liberation of Palestine and Arab unity were organically interrelated. There was, thirdly, the eruption of the armed Palestinian revolution under the leadership of Fatah and the accelerating and widening impact of the Palestinian Fedayeen movement as a fighting force against Israel. Just as faith in the Arab armies receded following the June War, the national Palestinian project was gaining wider popularity and impact within the Arab world.[485]

Fatah's control of the PLO was the result of a carefully thought-out plan, which aimed at seizing the organization and revolutionizing it from within. This was made possible when Fatah gradually and assiduously encouraged its members to join as many PLO committees and work groups as they could. Fatah members and sympathizers were also urged to participate in all activities: rallies, donation campaigns, conferences and other functions sponsored or organized by the PLO. In carrying out its strategy to enhance its influence and control the PLO, Fatah also resorted to a policy of coordination and political alliances with other Palestinian groups, in order that a broader Arab alliance might then be built.[486]

8.4 *Jihaz Al-Istikhbarat Al-Askaria* (PLO's Military Intelligence)

For all his shortcomings, the first chairman of the PLO, Ahmed Al-Shuqairi, was instrumental in setting up the umbrella organization as an independent Palestinian entity.

Despite the harsh criticism meted out to him by the Palestinians themselves, Al-Shuqairi was behind the creation of the Palestine Liberation Army and his name will always be linked to the call for armed struggle against Israel. Expounding his views on the creation of a national Palestinian homeland, he addressed the Palestinians in a broadcast from Radio Cairo in mid-February 1964, emphasizing the need to build a solid political entity as a first step towards creating a free and independent Palestine. "We are a people without a homeland", he said, "a cause without a leadership. It is for these and other reasons that we have to hasten towards the establishment of a wide open, all-embracing entity, which will guide us through. The Kings' and Presidents' summit has opened the way for such an entity that would encompass the whole Palestinian people". By 'entity', he meant a "national collective leadership, training camps, regular forces and equipment".[487]

These developments, as well as the wide exposure given by the media throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds, brought the Palestinian question to the fore and contributed to the elucidation and enhancement of the national identity of the Palestinians. Recognition by the Arab states of the PLO under the leadership of Al-Shuqairi came as a significant boost to the Palestinian cause, especially as the 2nd Arab summit endorsed the PLO decision to establish the Palestine Liberation Army.

The first Palestinian military camp was inaugurated in the Gaza Strip in May 1964. This was immediately followed by the Algerian government's declaration that it had set up training camps for the Palestinians on Algerian soil. The first official appearance of the regular Palestinian army was in Cairo in July 1964, in the course of the celebrations marking the anniversary of Nasser's 1952 Revolution in Egypt. Soon after, the PLO laid plans to form more Palestinian units in Jordan, Syria and Iraq. In Syria, the newly formed *Hattin* Troops comprised three elite battalions and a number of support units, while Iraq hosted the *Qadissiya* Troops, made up of one battalion and a few companies, and Egypt trained the *Ain Jalout* force: three battalions and a number of support units. One commando battalion was also set up in Jordan and Lebanon. According to Al-Shuqairi's vision, the Palestinian entity should be founded upon four columns: the financial apparatus, the political, the executive and the military, whose prime duty was to train all able-bodied Palestinians to carry arms and serve their homeland.[488]

PLO's first chairman Al-Shuqairi then embarked upon setting up a PLO military intelligence apparatus *Jihaz Al-Istikhbarat Al-Askaria* in 1967, which he modelled on those then operating in the Arab armed forces. The first Palestinian to head this apparatus was Faiz Al-Turk, who had completed his military studies in Egypt and was a close friend of

the commander-in-chief, Wajih Al-Madani, who himself enjoyed good relations with Al-Shuqairi. The main duty of the newly formed apparatus was, as was the case in the Arab countries, to monitor the Palestinian military units in the Arab states. Al-Turk reported directly to the commander of the army, and the two men collaborated closely. There were no significant changes as to the tasks of the apparatus or its position within the organizational structure of the PLO until Yassir Arafat became head of the latter in 1969. From then onwards, the head of Military Intelligence no longer reported to the military commander but to Arafat's own Bureau, as Arafat was the overall commander-in-chief. The headquarters of military intelligence also moved from Cairo to Beirut, where a high ranking officer, Attallah Attallah (Abu Al-Zaéem), assumed office upon Al-Turk's departure. Attallah, who had earlier fled to Jordan following a rift with Arafat, rejoined the PLO and worked closely with his old master, Arafat, then relocated to Tunis in 1982 following the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon.[489] The activities and size of the apparatus remained modest and nothing much is known about its functions and activities.[490]

From the beginning, the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization caused a number of rifts and divisions within the Palestinian body politic, whether in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip or the diaspora. Some Palestinians supported its creation and considered it an important and necessary step for the restoration of their rights and repossession of their lands, while others saw nothing in the PLO but a propaganda trumpet for the Egyptian president, Nasser. As a result, Ahmed Al-Shuqairi felt compelled, on numerous occasions, to justify its structure and explain the circumstances which had compelled him to create the Organization in the manner he did. Six years after his departure from the leadership, he explained why the first communiqué came devoid of any reference to a 'Palestinian entity': "the Arab kings and presidents, who did not bless [its] establishment, were not of one mind as to the meaning of the term 'entity' and were apprehensive of the political challenges it might present". While King Hussein insisted that the summit's communiqué should never include a reference to a Palestinian entity, President Amin Al-Hafiz of Syria demanded that the West Bank and Gaza be given to the entity. Furthermore, while King Saud of Saudi Arabia proposed the formation of a Palestinian government, the presidents of Algeria and Tunisia, Ahmed ben Bella and Al-Habeeb bu Rqaiba, proposed setting up a National Liberation Front.[491]

In order to consolidate their power and establish a firm presence on the Palestinian and Arab scenes, the Fatah leaders did all they could to avoid the pitfalls and snares of Arab politics, distancing themselves at the same time from the intra-Arab and intra-Palestinian

competition and rivalries. They assiduously sought to make the PLO the main vehicle through which national policies were made and decisions taken. This position was in stark contrast to that adopted by many Palestinian organizations, movements and fronts, which espoused a range of policy positions, ranging from class struggle and Marxist-Leninism to anti-establishment Pan-Arab nationalism. Some were involved in international terrorism and went so far as to be involved in attempts to topple Arab governments. But this complex and volatile situation was stabilized between September 1970 and July 1971, during which time Jordan succeeded in putting an end to the Fedayeen excesses and turning the tide of their revolutionary ascent. King Hussein exploited the blunders and excesses the Fedayeen committed against ordinary citizens who were sometimes searched, questioned or even detained without recourse to any legal system. Nor was the Jordanian military establishment spared these excesses. The military police was quite often sidestepped and ignored especially when unauthorized check points were installed on highways and on approaches to towns and cities. These excesses played into the hands of King Hussein who channelled the anger of his military officers into a massive and relentless onslaught against the Palestinian military presence in Jordan. King Hussein's victory was quite costly, not only in terms of blood and loss of life but also in terms of political isolation from which he was to suffer for a number of years.[492] His firm stand against the extremists propelled the Palestinians into a period of soul-searching and an ideological and organizational upheaval which led them to lay the foundation stone for the 'post-revolution' stage, when they started to focus more on building their own state in exile.[493]

In late May 1970, the United States and the Soviet Union announced a number of proposals with regard to their stance vis-à-vis the Middle East and what they considered was essential to move towards peace in the region. These were on the whole received with discomfort across the Arab world because the Arab states did not see in this initiative any guarantees for peace or for an Israeli withdrawal from their occupied lands. The PLO expressed grave concern because there was absolutely no mention of the Palestinians in the US-USSR peace plan. Later in the year, Joseph Sisco, US Assistant Secretary of State, said in a speech that peace would also include "giving the Palestinians some sort of expression, quite likely in the form of an entity". But such statements could not satisfy the ambitions of the PLO.[494]

Against this background, the PLO leaders felt increasingly beleaguered, especially as Israel launched a successful campaign against the Fedayeen in Gaza, where hundreds of

Palestinians suspected of involvement in armed operations against Israel were detained. Furthermore, both Israel and Jordan were in search of an alternative to the Palestinian leadership in the now Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Syria, intent on imposing its hegemony on the PLO, continued to apply all sorts of pressures on the Organization. Lebanon also insisted that no Fedayeen attacks were launched from its territory against Israel. These factors combined to thrust Fatah into international terrorism; between 1971 and 1973, it launched a series of bloody terrorist operations against Israeli and Western targets in Israel and in other parts of the world.[495]

8.5 The Muslim Brotherhood

The Islamist movements, first in Egypt and Syria, then in Jordan and Palestine, did not emerge until the end of World War I, as a result of the setbacks and failures which came to frustrate the ambitions and expectations of the Arab masses, who had cherished the hope of reliving their glorious past and rebuilding a united nation-state. In Palestine the Brotherhood presence was at first felt through the activities of individuals or small groups who were managed and handled from abroad, especially from Jordan and Egypt because these were the only two Arab countries to which Palestinian territory was annexed following the 1948 War. These two countries had furthermore been quite active since the 1930's in resisting Zionist immigration into Palestine. They frequently sent representatives to Palestine:

> not only to spread the da'wa [call to Islam] and invite opposition to Zionism, but also to assist in the training of Palestinian scouts. The most prominent of these representatives was a retired officer named Mahmud Labib who supervised the Brotherhood's volunteer movement, led its military units….and to assisted in the military training of civilian groups to help Palestinian paramilitary organization.[496]

Under the direction of Hasan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood opened its first branch in Palestine in 1946. Following the Egyptian example, the Palestinian founders concentrated on winning over dignitaries, scholars and those enjoying a respected social status. In time, these formed the majority of the Brotherhood's leadership, while most rank-and-file members were either middle class or the children of refugees.[497]

In Palestine, the Islamist movement first emerged in the form of youth clubs, where young men were taught the general principles of Islam and offered training in fitness and physical education. There was at first no specific political vision behind these sporting and

scouting activities, which attracted many of the nationalist youths and those fighting against the then British mandate, such as the followers of Izz Aldin al-Qassam.[498] In other words, the Muslim Brotherhood did not compete with the Palestinian nationalist movement, which was at the time led by Amin Al-Huseini, a close personal friend of the Brotherhood's founder Hasan al-Banna. Indeed, the leaders of the Brotherhood in Cairo encouraged their followers to work alongside those of Al-Mufti within the structure he led. Furthermore, Amin Al-Huseini warmly welcomed the Brotherhood's active participation in the 1948 Palestine War.[499]

During the 1940's, the most important Islamist movement that dominated the scene in Palestine, Egypt and Jordan was the Muslim Brotherhood (*Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimoun*) to which the Fatah founders were drawn. As a political and military movement, it was very secretive and highly organized. This, as will be demonstrated, stood the aspiring young Palestinians in good stead when they left the Brotherhood in order to establish a new, ideologically independent movement, with its own declared aims and political discourse.[500] The Brotherhood afforded these young men a framework within which they were able to express themselves and vent their anger at the Zionist occupation of their country. The young men's interest was not confined only to such practical aspects as military training and physical education, but included a curiosity about Islam and its intellectual heritage. Through their links with the Islamists, they became better acquainted with the thoughts of the Brotherhood, which were derived from and based upon the Quran and Prophet Muhammed's Traditions. They also learnt a good deal about the tactics and methods employed by Prophet Muhammed to spread his message amongst the people. Most followers of the Muslim Brotherhood were young secondary school pupils who were attracted to a movement, which offered them a wide range of social and sport activities. The Brotherhood also organized short courses covering some aspects of basic military training and physical education.[501]

The youths of Palestine saw their 'salvation' in the slogans and activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, which were aimed at challenging and resisting the Zionist occupation of their land. The Islamists were widely perceived to be indefatigably striving to wipe out the humiliating outcome of the first armed confrontation with Israel, and seriously attempting to liberate the territories occupied by the newly created Jewish state, after the defeat of the regular Arab armies. The Palestinian Chapter of the Brotherhood operated in three major areas, the first being the Gaza Strip, which was then under Egyptian administration. The leadership there reported to Egypt's central office of the

Brotherhood. The second was in the West Bank, which after 1948 came to be administered by Jordan; the leadership reported to the Jordanian chapter. The third was in Syria and Lebanon, falling within the structural organization of the Syrian Brotherhood.[502]

The lure of the Muslim Brotherhood after the 1948 War was enhanced even further when it was associated with the Mujahideen Movement of the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Amin Al-Huseini. The secrecy, strict discipline and paramilitary organization of the Brotherhood appealed to young Palestinians, especially those displaced by the war. What helped the Brotherhood disseminate its ideology among the Palestinian refugees was also the religious sentiments of most Palestinians, especially among the poor, who were socially austere and traditionalist in their attitudes and values.[503]

According to Shafiq Shoqayer, the Muslim Brotherhood was ideologically "perhaps the most focused Islamist movement, which is both vivid and moderate. Despite these qualities however, its track record appears controversial and researchers differ as to the nature of its system of thought. Some go so far as to describe it as extremist, while others accuse it of declaring one thing while concealing another."[504]

Shoqayer points out that the essays of the Brotherhood's founder and spiritual leader, Hasan Al-Banna, provided the main ideological foundation upon which the movement's rules and procedures are built. These essays, more than twenty in number, deal with a range of religious, political, economic, organizational and other issues. They are, even today, on the required reading list of the Brotherhood. The main thrust of Al-Banna's essays is that patriotism and nationalism should forever be linked to and informed by the teachings and tenets of Islam. He strove to project the Brotherhood as an all-encompassing cosmic movement, "reflecting the nature of Islam which is simultaneously a religion, a state, a sword and a Quran".[505] As Ziyad Abu Amr, asserts ''despite their different methods, the goal of the Islamic groups is to transform society into an Islamic one, modelled after the first Islamic society, established by the Prophet Muhammed and his companions...and consider the Koran and the *Sunnah* as the basis for all aspects of life.''[506]

Explaining the Brotherhood's ideology and the nature of its message, al-Banna emphasizes that his movement "calls for a return to the crystal clear fountain of Islam, exemplified in the Quran and the Traditions of Allah's Messenger".[507] He also asserts that the only way to achieve this is by "emulating the most noble practices of the Prophet in everything, especially in matters of doctrine and worship, taking them as our only model in life".[508] Special attention is given to precision, perseverance, loyalty and total secrecy as the only proper means of surmounting the impediments obstructing the Muslims' yearning

for a just and equitable society. Al-Banna's teachings also enjoin all members of the Brotherhood to look after their health, enhance their physical fitness and to exert as much effort as they can to study and enquire, in accordance with the Islamic principles which stress that "a strong believer is better than a weak believer" and "every Muslim, male or female, is obliged to seek knowledge".[509]

The Brotherhood's social and political project was to create an Islamic state, based on the two essential columns, the Quran and Prophet Muhammed's Traditions, which constitute the Islamic principle upon which all Shari'a laws must be based. In so far as the question of Palestine was concerned, the Brotherhood saw it as part of a greater and more important cause: to achieve victory for Islam and to attain the blessing of Allah and His Prophet.[510]

8.6 Fatah's Islamic Roots

From its inception in the late 1950s, Fatah faced a series of criticisms because of the Islamic background of most of its founding members. Rival Palestinian groups accused it of being reactionary and fundamentalist, with some going so far as to claim that it was part of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose popularity was on the wane. Fatah's founders realized this fact, especially when they attempted to build bridges between their movement and the Syrian regime in 1961-63. They found it extremely difficult to accomplish this mission, because both the civilian and military leaders of the new regime in Damascus were aware of the Muslim Brotherhood background of Fatah's leaders, who were also thought to have been connected to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi-Fatah relationship, however, was indirect; it ran through Amin Al-Huseini and the Egyptian members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who were at the helm of Al-Rabita Al-Islamiya (the Islamic League), which operated under the auspices of Saudi Arabia.[511]

The Baath Party (Palestine branch) supported the Syrian leaders' move to distance themselves from Fatah, as the latter's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood rendered it suspicious. What made Fatah's leadership open to question was its conspicuous relationship with Egypt, especially as Yassir Arafat himself spoke the Egyptian dialect and many of Fatah's cadres came from Gaza, which had been under Egyptian administration for almost 20 years (1948-1967).[512] In his *Unknown Facts about Salah Khalaf*, the Palestinian writer Hasan Khalil Husein quotes the Fatah leader Abu Iyad as saying:

> his friends in the Muslim Brotherhood leadership began to launch severe attacks in Kuwait, Qatar and the Gaza strip, against Fatah because they thought

that the Fatah movement was hostile to the ideology of the Brotherhood, although the truth is quite different… The fact is that Fatah was nothing but a melting pot and a crossroads, where all elements, regardless of their religious or political orientations meet. The only condition [to join Fatah] was commitment to work for the liberation of Palestine.[513]

Husein also recounts how a well-known Palestinian personality, Asa'd Al-Saftawi, refused to join Fatah at the time because of the severity of the attacks:

Mr Asa'd Al-Saftawi was until that time refusing to join the Fatah movement, despite the fact that all their founders were the best among the youths of the Muslim Brotherhood, although many assert that its leader Yassir Arafat was only a supporter of the Brotherhood and well-liked by its leaders. He [Arafat] was always counting on their help in the election campaigns of the Palestine Students League in Cairo.[514]

In order to broaden their popular base and widen their appeal to as many Palestinians as possible, the Fatah leaders avoided in their first communiqué any reference whatsoever to their Islamic background or to the fact that they were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. They did however exploit the undefined common ground between them and the Brotherhood and sought to present their nationalist approach in an unsophisticated and comprehensible manner making full use of the spiritual and religious place Jerusalem and Palestine in general occupies in Islam.

Fatah's impressive showing impacted the political powers which had been dominating the Palestinian scene. The major political players such as the Islamists led by the Muslim Brotherhood, Nationalists led by the Arab Nationalist Movement and the leftists and socialists led by the Communist Party all felt threatened by Fatah's rising star. Many Muslim Brotherhood members rushed to join the ranks of Fatah, deserting the Brotherhood. This development prompted some in the Brotherhood leadership to declare Fatah a breakaway faction, while others called for dialogue with Fatah in order to ascertain its political identity, programmes and the nature of its aims.[515]

The new situation created by Fatah led the Muslim Brotherhood to hold a meeting in Cairo during the summer of 1960, attended by representatives of Palestinian Brotherhood formations in the Gaza strip, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and other countries. The outcome was the creation of an umbrella organization comprising all Palestinian branches of the Brotherhood. Significantly, the first task undertaken by the new structure was to "take a clear stand vis-à-vis Fatah and [to set] up a barrier between Fatah and the Brotherhood", which it managed to do in the following few months.[516]

Because of its fast growing popularity especially among youths with Islamic tendencies, Fatah represented the most serious challenge faced by the Muslim Brotherhood since its creation in 1946. This challenge was far greater than that posed by the Egyptian government crackdown on the Islamists, by the Arab Renaissance (Baath) Party, or by the Pan-Arab nationalists. This state of affairs, the close entanglement between Fatah and the Islamists, prompted Abdullah Abu Izza and other researchers to conclude that Fatah was in reality an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and that it offered a settlement to the Palestinian question outside the framework of the Arab order. The Fatah-Brotherhood interrelationship cannot be dismissed if we take into consideration the intimacy and affinity between their ideologies, practices, and political programmes.[517]

The declared aims of the Muslim Brotherhood appeared quite attractive to many Palestinians living in Gaza, Syria, Egypt and Jordan. Perceiving the Islamic movement as a promising vehicle through which their expectations and hopes for a free independent Palestine might be achieved, many of these enthusiastic young men, who were later to create Fatah, almost at the same time hurried to join the Brotherhood. They saw in such activities as ideological education, organizing and participating in strikes, protests and mass demonstrations a proper arena for releasing their energy and an appropriate forum within which they could express their yearning for national independence.[518] Yassir Arafat was one of those young men. In 1948 he was attracted by the slogans of the Muslim Brotherhood as a student at the College of Engineering, Cairo University. On campus, Arafat was quite active and played a major role in the League of Palestinian Students in Egypt, of which he was elected president in 1952. It was during the League years that Arafat came to be acquainted with many of those who were collectively to lay the foundations of Fatah.[519]

A recent Israeli study[520] confirms Arafat's religiosity, his observance of all Islamic rites and his quite religious bent of mind. The study shows him as a confirmed believer who frequently reiterated that his fate was controlled only by Allah, not by human beings. It also depicts him as a devout practicing Muslim, who never smoked or touched alcohol in his whole life and whose discourse was often punctuated by quotations from the Quran or Prophet Muhammed's Traditions. In an attempt to present Arafat as a "true blue" Islamist, the study points out that Arafat saw himself not only as a latter day Saladin, who wrested Palestine from the Latins in 1187, but also a modern version of the Prophet's companions,

especially Omar bin Al-Khattab, the second caliph to succeed Prophet Muhammed and the Arab leader whose troops conquered or 'opened up' Jerusalem.[521]

Arafat's interest in politics, according to many of his childhood friends, had been quite noticeable since the days of his primary education, when he took part in

> numerous protests and demonstrations against British occupation in Egypt. With the outbreak of World War II, he was frequently seen rounding up the neighbourhood's children, then dividing them into small groups and demanding that all march in a military style. He was also seen carrying a 'cane', with which he would beat those who did not obey his orders.[522]

Then in 1946 Arafat met two men who were to play a significant part in the Palestinian struggle for independence: the first was the Palestinian Arab nationalist, Amin Al-Huseini, who led the Palestinian opposition to the British following their military control of Palestine at the end of World War I; the second was Amin's cousin, the legendary soldier, Abdul-Qadir Al-Huseini, who later became commander in chief of the Mujahideen. Shortly after the meeting in Cairo, young Arafat joined Abdul-Qadir's staff as a personal assistant.[523]

Arafat claims that in 1947-48 he interrupted his studies in Egypt and crossed the border into Palestine in order to take part in some of the operations led by Abdul-Qadir Al-Huseini and Hasan Salameh in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The 8th of April 1948, says Arafat, marked a decisive turning point in his life, as, when Abdul Qadir, was killed in battle and Sheikh Hasan Salameh took over command of the Mujahideen. Sheikh Hasan's son, Ali Salameh, was to be linked forever with Yassir Arafat, when the latter appointed him as chief of Force 17, which was in charge of security for Arafat and the PLO. Ali Salameh remained in this position until his assassination at the hands of the Mossad in Beirut in 1979.[524]

Upon Arafat's return to resume his studies in Cairo, his mind was fully preoccupied with the Palestinian question. His overriding concern was to find ways of wiping out the shameful consequences of the Arab defeat against the newly created state of Israel. In cooperation with his friend, Fathi Abu Sitta, who was on Abdul Qadir Al-Huseini's staff, Arafat called a general meeting of Palestinian students in the Muslim Brotherhood's auditorium at Cairo University, during which he gave a fiery speech "This is no time for the pursuit of study. Our homeland is being looted. What is the use of continuing our studies if we have no homeland? We all ought to head for Palestine and fight."[525]

Amid cheers and loud shouts of approval, Arafat took a match and set his books aflame. Abu Sitta then followed suit. Soon after, Arafat called upon those of his fellow students who wished to receive military training to join him and Abu Sitta. Besides his fighting experience in Palestine, Arafat had earlier been trained by a German officer in Cairo.[526]

According to Farid al-Falouji, "in mid-April 1948, Yassir Arafat, Abu Sitta and an Egyptian officer left for Palestine, where Arafat joined one of the Muslim Brotherhood military unit, which was laying siege to a Jewish settlement, Kiffar Drum". Al-Falouji then describes how Arafat's fighting skills were put to the test, when a Jewish military unit of 24 Israeli tanks attempted to break through the siege. But the Muslim Brotherhood fighters had laid an ambush, where they initially targeted the leading tank and the last in line, thus paralysing the whole Israeli column, which was then destroyed. The Israeli soldiers who did not fall in the trap had to retreat. It was reportedly Yassir Arafat who fired the first mortar shot that destroyed the leading tank.[527]

Significantly, adds Al-Falouji, Arafat refused to comply with the order issued by the Joint Command of the Arab Forces, which demanded that all weapons possessed by the Palestinians be handed over to the Arab Forces. Rather than giving up his weapons, Arafat left for Jerusalem, where he spent months fighting alongside the Mujahideen led by Sheikh Hasan Salameh. This explains the very strong bond between Arafat and Sheikh Hasan's son, Ali, whom Arafat was grooming to succeed him as PLO chairman. Ali's assassination in Beirut in 1979, however, put an end to this plan.[528]

It was through the Muslim Brotherhood that Arafat came to know Jamal Abdul Nasser. The Brotherhood often wondered why, in the words of Al-Falouji, "such a genius" as Arafat had refused to join their ranks, especially as he was one of the relatives of a distinguished Palestinian religious and political reader, Amin Al-Huseini, the Grand Mufti of Palestine from 1921 to 1936.[529] The Brotherhood was somewhat suspicious of Arafat, and feared that he might have been recruited to work for Nasser. It is for this reason that they wanted to know as much as they could about his background and past affiliations, when he declared his nomination for presidency of the Palestinian Students Union. To obtain such information about Arafat, the Brotherhood contacted another reliable youth, who was none other than Salah Khalaf (Abu Ayad), who became later the head of Fatah's first intelligence apparatus.[530]

Arafat had consolidated his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood through participation in a number of attacks organized and launched by the Brotherhood against the

British troops along the Suez Canal, especially during the period extending between 1950 and 1954.[531] Upon his graduation from the College of Engineering in 1956, Arafat worked for a contracting company, but he abandoned this job immediately after France, Britain and Israel launched their tripartite attack on Egypt. He enlisted in a military training course on explosives and mines, organized by the Egyptian army, which he completed with distinction. He was then offered the rank of 2nd lieutenant in the Egyptian army, where he was seconded to one of the formations of the Storm Troopers.[532] Only a few months after the end of the Suez war, Arafat was arrested by the Egyptian police for "sedition, and because of his connection with the Muslim Brotherhood". But the real reason behind his arrest was the Egyptian authorities' fear that he might plan armed operations against Israel, at a time when Egypt was trying to appease the inflamed situation along its borders with Israel. Arafat was released a few months later, leaving immediately for Kuwait with two of his close associates, Abu Jihad and Farouq Qadoumi.[533]

Said K Aburish, confirms the account of Arafat's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood and adds that although there is no categorical evidence that Arafat was indeed a member, he nevertheless took part in numerous activities organized by it. Aburish also asserts that the Brotherhood was behind not only Arafat's election as president of the Palestinian Students Union but also his later successful bid to take control of the PLO. All of this indicates that there was indeed some sort of bond between Arafat and the Brotherhood.[534] One of the founders of Fatah, Saleem Al-Zanoon, points out that "Arafat and Wazir visited Jordan repeatedly after mid-1963, and were followed in 1964 by Abbas, and Rafiq al-Natsha. In one such visit, Arafat met Kamil Al-Shareef, a leader of the local of the Muslim Brotherhood and cabinet minister."[535]

The second Fatah leader who had close links to the Muslim Brotherhood was Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), who, according to an interview with him, had joined the Islamist group in 1951. At the age of 16, Al-Wazir was leading a group of some 200 youths, who were only a year or two younger than himself.[536] He was a member of the so-called Brigade of Truth, a clandestine Muslim Brotherhood military organization. But when later he realized that the Brotherhood was not as enthusiastic about espousing armed struggle as he had hoped, he took it upon himself to form secret cells independently with a view to launching attacks inside Israel, without informing or coordinating with the Brotherhood. He clarified his position by saying that "they [the Brotherhood] wanted us to focus on a number of issues, among them Palestine… Others wanted us to concentrate our efforts on Islamic issues in general".[537]

Explaining the reasons which prompted him and his fellow young Palestinians to join the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Wazir says:

> We were still young in the aftermath of [the War of] 1948. We were quite eager to meet those *mujahideen* who had participated in the Palestine war in order that we might learn from their individual fighting experiences. The majority of them told us that they had fought in the Muslim Brotherhood ranks. This was what solidified the relationship between the youths in the [Gaza] sector and the *mujahideen*. We were drawn to the experience of the Brotherhood, especially as there was *no political power in the [Gaza] sector, except the Communists and the Brotherhood*. The communists were quite few and their special world view did not appeal to the sentiments of the people. They were at the time calling for peaceful co-existence with [Israel]. This is why their presence was limited and to a certain extent confined to clandestine work. As for the vast majority, they were mostly coordinating with the youths of the Muslim Brotherhood, who were being educated and prepared for armed military struggle.[538]

As a young man, Khalil Al-Wazir was more experienced and tough-minded than his peers. He comprehended from the start the complexities of the regional and international circumstances surrounding the Palestinian question. This is quite apparent in the courageous way in which he presented his ideas when he returned to Gaza in 1957. Al-Wazir presented a bold plan according to which the Muslim Brotherhood should create a new political entity that would operate under a different name. It should adopt the liberation of Palestine as its central aim and should espouse Fedayeen tactics.

In a memorandum addressed to the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Wazir referred to the state of siege from which it was suffering in the Gaza strip, and suggested that such a plan was bound to break the siege, attract a wide segment of Palestinian youth and contribute to the concerted effort to liberate Palestine. Al-Wazir did not mince his words, when he proposed that the new front organization for the Brotherhood should be ideologically flexible and should, in order to produce the desired results, abandon the ideological framework of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Wazir's proposals reflect the intensity of the crackdown on the Islamists during the early years of the second half of the twentieth century, when Nasserism was gaining dominance. His memorandum also reflected the extent to which the young Palestinians had been influenced by the experience of the Algerian National Liberation Front, which was not based on ideology but on a general political consensus amongst Algerians for the higher good of liberating Algeria from the clutches of the French.[539]

Salah Khalaf joined the Muslim Brotherhood at about the same time as Al-Wazir and soon became a member of the clandestine military unit called The Youths' Vengeance.[540]

After some time these three young men, Arafat, Khalaf and Al-Wazir, left the Muslim Brotherhood for a variety of reasons and became the founders and most prominent leaders of Fatah. It is they who laid the foundation of the security and military apparatuses of Fatah and supervised its policies and operations, from humble beginnings in the 1960s to the early 1990s.

Besides Arafat, Al-Wazir and Khalaf, a number of Fatah founders were also members of the Egyptian's Muslim Brotherhood, which had opened a branch in Palestine in 1946. Among them were Muhammed Yousuf Al-Najjar, Salim Al-Zanoon and Fathi Al-Baláwi, who were all in their twenties, while Al-Wazir, Khalaf, Kemal Adwan and Yehya Ashur were a little younger. These young men, who were all refugees in Gaza from their occupied lands, met while pursuing their studies. Their link to the Muslim Brotherhood was the bond that tied them together.

These young men later become the theoreticians of Fatah's intelligence, and in the tradition of the Brotherhood, adopted the Quran and the *Sunnah* as their main source of inspiration and guidance. Four of these men headed the Intelligence work, having learnt and experienced it while involved in the clandestine activities of the Brotherhood. At the time the young refugees met, the Muslim Brotherhood was a power to reckon with in the Gaza Strip. What enhanced its reputation and influence was not only their record in the War, but also the fact that the Islamist Egyptian officers in Gaza were quite active and succeeded in recruiting many of the Palestinians who were working in their barracks.[541] In the West bank, three ex-Muslim Brotherhood members reached the top rung of the Fatah leadership ladder to become Central Committee members. These were Abdul-Fattah Hamoud, Majid Abu Sharareh and Ahmed Qurai'. In Jordan, a successful businessman and high official in the Jordanian Trade union joined the Muslim Brotherhood, but withdrew from the Islamist movement in 1957-58, only to align himself with those operating within the framework of the nationalist Palestinian organizations.[542] Among the Palestinian refugees in Syria who joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s was Hani Al-Hasan, who later formed the Aqsa Youth. Soon after joining the Brotherhood, he was attached to the elite force known as the Fursan Badr (Badr Knights). This clandestine force controlled the 'Special Missions" unit. Members of this unit were given vigorous training programme in ideology, sociology, political science and the military arts. Al-Hasan, along with Abu Mazin, founded a youth group called Palestine's Sons. Another Palestinian who joined the Brotherhood in Syria was Haiyl Abdul Hamid, who was then a student at Damascus University.[543] In 1949, Khalid Al-Hasan, who was quite close to the Muslim Brotherhood,

formed a group which called itself Palestine Liberation. He then co-founded the Islamic Liberation Party in 1952. But the Syrian regime launched an oppressive campaign against this party, which led Al-Hasan to take refuge in Kuwait.[544] Abdul Hamid and Al-Hasan were among the elite group who participated and supervised the intelligence work in Fatah movement, as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter.

8.7 The Fatah-Brotherhood Divergence over Palestine

Differences over how best to approach the question of liberating Palestine were at the core of the divergence between the Muslim Brotherhood on one hand, and the Fatah founders and a wide segment of the Palestinian members of the Brotherhood on the other. The Brotherhood's grand design of linking the question of Palestine to their greatly ambitious political project of rebuilding the Islamic caliphate did not appeal to the young Palestinians, who had not yet fully recovered from the shock of the 1948 War. The young refugees felt that the Brotherhood's plan would distract them from their immediate preoccupation: regaining their lost lands through armed conflict. The positive perception of the Brotherhood started to undergo a slow but fundamental change among Palestinians, who increasingly came to view its declared adoption of armed struggle as a slogan rather than an actual statement of fact.

In an attempt to reorder the priorities of the Brotherhood and convince it to pay more attention to the question at hand, the Palestinians had lengthy and heated discussions with its leaders. When these attempts failed to produce the desired result, the Palestinians seriously considered embarking upon an independent political project of their own. This was later embodied in the launch of Fatah, which carried with it many of the ideas of the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups then operating. Inspired by the assertion of the Muslim Prophet that whoever testifies that 'there is no God but Allah' becomes a Muslim, the Fatah leaders stressed that their new movement was open to all those who believed in the notion that liberating Palestine can only be achieved through armed struggle. Small wonder, then, that all shades of the political spectrum and a wide range of currents and ideologies were present within the new structure.

Because the Palestinian members of the Brotherhood followed different regional leaderships, the young men who later founded Fatah had accumulated different experiences and established relations with many personalities, parties and institutions in the Arab countries and the Islamic world in general. Relations with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other

Gulf states were exceptionally strong, which explains why they launched their future project from that part of the world.

There are many direct and indirect factors which triggered the divergence between the Brotherhood and the young Palestinians, whose family backgrounds were quite religious, who had all been well acquainted with the Quran, Traditions and the Islamic heritage in general, and who had shown great admiration for the Brotherhood's ideology and track record. Chief among the direct causes was the confrontation between the Brotherhood and the regime of Jamal Abdul Nasser. When in October 1954 the Egyptian government decided to outlaw the Brotherhood, Khalil Al-Wazir and a number of Palestinian associates adopted a neutral stand, refusing to support one side against the other. Then, in early 1955, most of the Palestinian activists within the Brotherhood decided to leave the Islamist movement. The few who remained within the ranks of the Brotherhood considered Khalil Al-Wazir and his associates as "saboteurs" and "upstarts". But it was the Muslim Brotherhood's alleged assassination attempt against Nasser's life that drove most Palestinians and many non-Palestinians away from the Brotherhood in the direction of the Arab nationalist parties.[545]

The other direct cause was the widening differences which appeared between these young men and the leadership of the Brotherhood, especially after it had rebuffed Khalil Al-Wazir's proposals for a collateral military structure to be set up within the Brotherhood. When this initiative was rejected, a number of Palestinian youths including Al-Wazir took it upon themselves to create an independent paramilitary organization dedicated to providing military training to Palestinians and fellow Arabs. They felt that they had to go through with their ambitious project after the Palestinians of Gaza demonstrated in the streets in early 1954, demanding weapons, conscription and the creation of a Palestinian army.[546]

Al-Wazir and his fellow Palestinian activists within the Brotherhood gradually came to the realization that it was incapable of responding to their nationalist ambitions. In a memorandum addressed to its leadership in July 1957, Al-Wazir as pointed out earlier proposed setting up an independent structure alongside the Brotherhood. He further proposed that the new structure should conceal its Islamist nature and concentrate on the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle. But the leadership ignored this project and paid a high price for doing so, as many Palestinian youths felt dismayed and decided to follow Khalil Al-Wazir by withdrawing from the Brotherhood. These young men included some who were to prove formidable intelligence officers and leaders within Fatah: Kamal

Adwan, Salah Khalaf, Muhammed Yousuf al-Najjar, Salim Al-Za'noun, Asád al-Saftawi, Sa'eed Al-Mazeen and Ghalib al-Wazir.[547]

The third direct reason for the mass departure of the Palestinians from the Brotherhood was the Israeli occupation of the Gaza strip during the Suez War in 1956. The six-month occupation weakened and indeed fragmented the Islamists, who had been blamed for numerous attacks against Israeli targets. Israel targeted the Brotherhood, despite the fact that the latter, which had been outlawed in Egypt, did not take a firm stand against the Israeli invasion. This naturally undermined its credibility and popularity among the Palestinians.[548]

Among the indirect factors which drove the young Palestinians to leave the Brotherhood in droves was the emergence, following the Suez fiasco, of Jamal Abdul Nasser as a national hero whose charisma and oratorical prowess inflamed the masses across the Arab world, especially in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands. After Suez, many Palestinians came to pin their hopes of salvation and liberation on Nasser's policies.[549] The second reason was the regression of the Islamist movement in the Arab world in general and the oppressive measures meted out to the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria. In Jordan, the Islamists had to adopt a policy of non-resistance to and co-existence with the Hashemite regime of King Hussein. This led to the disillusionment of many Palestinian youths, who rejected such pacifist attitudes towards Israel as that of King Hussein and preferred to enlist in such new nationalist revolutionary movements as Fatah. Thirdly, the period immediately after the Suez War witnessed a steadily rising tide of pan-Arabist movements, such as the Arab Nationalists and the Arab Baath (Renaissance) Party. The adoption by these movements of the strategy of armed struggle encouraged many Palestinians to abandon the Brotherhood in favour of these revolutionary entities. A fourth factor may be found in the emergence of the Soviet Union as an active power in the Middle East. The USSR's arms deals with the nationalist regimes in Syria and Egypt provided the Palestinians with a ray of hope, especially as Moscow, eager to establish its presence in the region, provided much political support for the revolutionary powers in the region, including, later, the Palestinian organizations.

Chapter Nine

Case Study: Fatah's Intelligence and Security Apparatus

9.1 Introduction

The traumatic defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war marked a new phase in the Palestinian struggle against Israel. The dynamics governing the political and military scene in the Middle East underwent an immense change overnight. Responding to the changing circumstances, Fatah now placed the task of building an efficient security apparatus at the top of its priorities. There was an acute need for accurate intelligence on the areas and locations in which Fatah planned to carry out operations deep inside Israel. It also felt compelled to protect itself and confront the formidable Israeli effort aimed at wiping out Palestinian resistance, armed and civil alike.[550] But this undertaking was extremely challenging, especially as Fatah had neither the expertise nor the human and technical resources needed.

It is indeed ironic that the defeat of the regular Arab armies at the hands of the Israelis should have a positive impact on the Palestinian resistance. The Arab masses, feeling betrayed by their regular armed forces, which had done so poorly in the war, now pinned their hopes on the Palestinian resistance, which, especially after battle of Karameh of March 1968, emerged as a worthy force, capable of resisting the Israelis, making sacrifices and fighting for their cause. More importantly, this admiration was often translated into generous financial help for Fatah and practically all the other Palestinian groups, as donations flooded in from all parts of the Arab world and beyond.[551]

Relying mainly on the experience of clandestine work they had gained as members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Fatah founders embarked upon the task of building security and intelligence structures immediately after the 1967 Arab defeat. Although they had abandoned the Brotherhood for political reasons, Fatah leaders nevertheless clung to its substantive teaching of Quran and *Sunnah*, which is deeply rooted in Arab Islamic history. Their close knowledge of the strategies and tactics employed by the early Muslims in spreading the new faith and building the first Muslim state provided them with a model which they readily emulated.[552] As suggested earlier on, the very choice of the religiously charged word 'Fatah' as the official name of the paramilitary group can be seen as indicative of the Islamic orientation of its leaders.[553]

The fact that Fatah was at first associated with the Islamic current in general contributed not only to its rapid expansion and growth, but also to its quickly becoming the leading Palestinian group. On the other hand, this association exposed Fatah to severe attacks and criticisms from a variety of political circles: Nasser's regime, nationalists and the Arab left, which was quite influential at the time. Among other things, Fatah was accused of being a 'backward movement' and an 'Islamic gathering', backed by 'reactionary regimes' in the Arab world. The reality, however, was quite different. Unperturbed by and unmindful of the accusations and charges against it, Fatah took the objective of liberation as its priority and considered achieving that goal as sacrosanct.[554]

In his Preface to the Arabic version of Patrick Seale's *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire*, Ahmed Raef refers to a visit a Palestinian activist to the Amin Al-Husseini[555] in Beirut. Raef quotes Al-Husseini as saying he had heard that the Palestinians were in the process of creating an organization to be called the Palestine Liberation Organization. According to Raef, Al-Husseini then asked this activist to fetch Yassir Arafat, chairman of Fatah, "which was then Islamic in both substance and orientation".[556]

Because Fatah had from the start espoused the strategy of armed struggle to liberate the Palestinian lands from Israeli occupation, it was inevitable that it should resort to the use of intelligence in order to carry out its operations. This was indeed an important development in the fight against the state of Israel. The early successes of Fatah appealed to the Arab public, which felt quite disillusioned and frustrated by the miserable performance of the regular Arab armies against Israel's might. Fatah's security apparatus was, from its inception until its dissolution following the Oslo accords and the establishment of the autonomous Palestinian Authority, under the direct command and supervision of Yassir Arafat (Abu Ammar)[557], Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad). These three men were like minded, especially in their strong faith in Islam as a guiding ideology and in their determination to distance their newly created movement from the then prevalent ideological struggle. They also laid the foundations of the independent project and steered the Palestinian cause away from regional and intra-Arab conflicts and rivalries.[558] Within a short time, Fatah managed to build efficient intelligence and security apparatuses, which as will be seen in the following pages, played an important role in the struggle against Israel, developed resistance capabilities and extracted international recognition of the national rights of the Palestinians.

9.2 *Jihaz Al-Rasd Al-Markazi* (Central Surveillance Apparatus)

The Central Surveillance Apparatus, which was first known as *Muffawadhiyat Al Rasd Al-Markazi* (Central Surveillance Commission), was established towards the end of 1967. According to one of Al-Rasd's ex-operatives, its organizational structure and ideological orientations reflect, to a large extent, the underground personal experiences of its creators as well as the skills and expertise of those Palestinians who were ex-members of Muslim Brotherhood. Nevertheless large numbers of its operatives attended training courses organized by Arab Intelligence Services, especially in Egypt. Besides military training, the courses taught included signals intelligence, explosives and intelligence administrative work. Egypt was in point of fact more than willing to provide training to the fedayeen, as Palestinian armed resistance would contribute to Nasser's War of Attrition launched to exhaust Israeli military resources. Help was also sought from Palestinian officers who had served in the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armed forces.[559] In its early stages, the Al-Rasd, which started by setting up small security units and stations, concentrated on collecting intelligence on Israel proper, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This intelligence was needed for Fedayeen operations against Israeli targets and interests. At first, the communication network was quite modest and depended primarily on human intelligence.[560]

Farouq Qaddoumi,[561] *Rasd*'s first chief officer, was a close friend of Yassir Arafat and had been a member of the Central Committee[562] since early 1964.[563] A few months later, it became apparent that he was not well equipped to lead such an important and sensitive security agency; he simply lacked the necessary qualities of a leader and was not attuned to the demands and needs of security and clandestine work. He was soon succeeded by Abu Iyad,[564] who took over at the beginning of 1968 and was assisted by Hani Al-Hasan,[565] who had just been promoted to the Central Committee.[566]

The Surveillance Commission was directly linked to 'Fatah's Operations Centre'[567] an arrangement which practically brought it under the personal supervision of Yassir Arafat. Because the early recruits and operatives lacked the necessary training and experience, their results were poor. The commission also suffered from personal rivalries and lack of coordination. Walid Nimr, for example, established his security headquarters in the Jordanian town of Daraa, while Zakaria Abdul Rahim set up his security unit in the town of Salt. The existence of these two and other security units made it inevitable that each would view the others as a rival, rendering their intelligence unreliable.[568]

Abu Iyad distinguished himself as a quite competent organizer in comparison to his competitors. Because his deputy, Al-Hasan, was a close confidant of Arafat, Abu Iyad did not feel comfortable. He therefore actively sought to marginalize Al-Hasan's role in order to assert his authority within the intelligence community and within Fatah in general.[569]

In 1969, Abu Iyad adopted the new name, the Surveillance Apparatus, dropping the old name of the Surveillance Commission. In time, he managed to transform the Apparatus into an important Palestinian force with which both Israelis and Palestinians had to reckon. He set up a 'strike force' of 500-600 guerrillas,[570] a wide network of 400 informers and recruited many Palestinian activists, such as Ali Hassan Salameh (The Red Prince),[571] as well as a number of serving officers in the Jordanian armed forces.[572] According to a senior Israeli counterintelligence official ''Jihaz al-Razd was a competent intelligence unit that was both resented and feared within the PLO structure, at least in part because it was so successful; 'they were doing a good job.'' [573]

The organizational structure of the Surveillance Apparatus included several sections devoted to recruitment, information collection, security and counterintelligence. The information collected was normally verified, analyzed and then forwarded to the head of the agency,[574] who would then refer the final product to the Fatah leadership through the Operations Centre, where decisions were made.[575]

In his recently published memoirs, Fatah Central Committee member Abu Dawoud says that upon completion of the training course organized by the Egyptian Military Intelligence, Ali Hassan Salameh, Sufian Agha and Abu Dawoud himself went back to Amman. In the Jordanian capital, each of the three Palestinian cadres who were entrusted with the task of administering and supervising Palestinian intelligence activities assumed a *nom de guerre*. Ali Hassan Salameh adopted the fictitious name of Abul Hassan, Sufian Agha became known as Majeed and Abu Dawoud chose the name of Abul Waleed.[576]

The three men's intelligence work involved classifying, verifying and analyzing reports and briefing the Fatah leadership, which they regularly supplied with abstracts on a variety of issues relevant to the Palestinian question. Salameh, whose participation was intermittent, was more focused on international relations and the analysis of strategic reports.

Abu Dawoud and Sufian Agha, for their part in counterintelligence, concentrated on identifying those Palestinians who might have been recruited by Israeli intelligence to infiltrate Fatah or the PLO. They paid great attention to Palestinians who were subjected to Israeli threats, intimidation or allurement. Those arrested and then released by the Israelis

were of particular interest, especially as the Israeli security forces often recruited Palestinians as double agents after their detention or imprisonment. From Amman, orders were often given to Palestinian intelligence operatives in the West Bank to investigate Palestinian families who had been visited or interrogated by the Israeli police.[577]

Abu Dawoud also relates that the Israelis adopted a new and complex strategy which at first baffled Palestinian intelligence. They started to send a number of Palestinians across General Allenby's Bridge to Jordan, where they would approach the Palestinian intelligence to volunteer their services and at the same time to declare that they had been recruited by the Israelis to work as double agents to spy on Fatah and the Palestinians. It was noticed that the numbers of such self-confessed double-agents was on the increase and that dealing with them exhausted the Palestinian interrogators and consumed considerable time and effort. The Palestinians soon unravelled the secret of this wave of 'Israeli spies', who were in fact deception agents sent by the Israelis to cover up the real agents and allow the latter to move freely among the Palestinians. Through the adoption of new interrogation techniques where numerous short pointed questions were put to suspects in the course of lengthy interrogation sessions, and through coordination with some elements, who might now be called "sleeping sells" inside Israeli occupied territories, the Palestinian intelligence service was able not only to track the real spies but also to use the 'double agents' to pass on false intelligence to their Israeli handlers.[578]

In September 1971, following the expulsion of Palestinian groups from Jordan, the Fatah Central Committee held a general conference in Lebanon in order to assess the Palestinian and regional situation and also to absorb the anger of the Palestinian opposition. Severe criticism was directed towards Abu Iyad, who was accused of heading a failed intelligence apparatus, which neither predicted future developments nor offered the right advice in times of war. In defending the performance of his subordinates, Abu Iyad stressed that they had provided accurate information, but that the Fatah leadership chose to ignore it.[579] The main aim of the conference as it turned out was to find a scapegoat or a "fall guy" on whom all Palestinian misfortunes and setbacks would be blamed. That fall guy was identified as Abu Iyad. Arafat had an excellent opportunity to rid himself of Abu Iyad, whom he had since 1967 regarded as a potential threat. He therefore allied himself with Khalil al-Wazeer,[580] Yousuf al-Najjar[581] and Kamal Adwan[582] to oust Abu Iyad, then proceeded to dismantle the Surveillance Apparatus, dispersing its employees among a number of Palestinian organizations and sending some of them to train in Syria and other countries. There were also those who were hastily arrested on a variety of charges.[583]

The political environment which prevailed in the Arab world after the military humiliation of 1967, into which the Rasd was born, was quite conducive to Palestinian action against Israel. The shamed Arab governments of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, which were preoccupied with "wiping out the consequences of aggression", found it difficult to interfere in Palestinian affairs, especially as the Palestinians were, on the human level, the main victims of the military losses. Thousands of Palestinian refugees had to flee their land, augmenting and further complicating the already thorny 1948 refugee question. The official Arab response to what was described as 'al-naksa' (the setback), was a unanimous refusal to recognize the de facto situation. In its Khartoum summit of August 1967, the Arab League adopted what came to be known as the Three No's Resolution: no peace, no negotiations and no recognition of Israel.[584]

Despite this seemingly intransigent position, both Egypt and Jordan were soon to accept UN Resolution 242 of November 1967, which called upon Israel to withdraw from Arab lands in return for the right of each state in the region, including Israel, to live in peace and security. Israel, on the other hand, did not accept the Resolution until May 1968, when it could no longer resist mounting international pressure demanding withdrawal from lands occupied in 1967.[585]

Hardly a year had elapsed since the end of hostilities between Israel and the Arabs when Egypt and Syria started to plan a new strategy aimed at regaining the lands they lost in June 1967 by wearing down the Israeli military capabilities through the launch of what came to be known as the War of Attrition. During this war, the borders with Israel witnessed numerous artillery and aerial engagements. The situation was deemed sufficiently serious by the superpowers, especially the USA, for there to be a period of intense diplomatic activity, as part of which US Secretary of State William Rogers launched on 9 December 1969 a new peace initiative: the Rogers Plan. Among other things, the plan called for Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, a return to pre-5th June 1967 borders in the West Bank and postponement of the status of the Gaza Strip.[586] The plan, which at first received a lukewarm reception from Egypt and the USSR, was finally accepted by Egypt on 22nd July 1970. Israel at first rejected the initiative, but declared its acceptance after it had received American assurances that US weapons would continue to flow.

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed dramatic developments in the Arab world: military coups in Iraq (1968), Libya (1969) and the Sudan (1969), the sudden death of Nasser (1970) and the end of Nasserism in Egypt, political upheaval in Syria and the Battle

of Karameh in Jordan (1968). But most significant of all was the rapid growth and strengthening of Palestinian paramilitary groups, which were able to set up their own safe bases in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.[587] The growing popularity and influence of the Palestinian paramilitaries prompted thousands of young men to join these groups in such overwhelmingly great numbers that they were compelled to turn down thousands of applicants. Meanwhile, competition between rival Palestinian groups led to a dramatic increase in the number of Fedayeen operations against Israel. The resultant atmosphere was one of anxiety and terror. In order not to be overtaken by the rapid developments on the Palestinian scene and to appear to adhere to their nationalist and pan-Arabist slogans, some Arab states like Syria and Iraq sponsored, trained and financed their own Palestinian Fedayeen groups.[588]

Fatah saw in these developments a real opportunity to enhance Palestinian capabilities, especially as the outcome of the June 1967 war had humiliated and weakened the Arab regimes, strengthened and bolstered the Palestinian cause and focused attention on the necessity to stand up to Israel's expansionist designs. Many Fatah leaders, such as Khalid Al-Hasan, Farouq Qaddoumi and Kemal Adwan, felt that a window of opportunity for creating an independent Palestinian entity had at long last opened.[589] It was against this background that Fatah and more broadly the PLO laid the first building blocks of the Palestinian military and security apparatus, as well as other institutions dedicated to advancing the Palestinian cause.

9.3 *Jihaz Al-Rasd Al-Markazi – Fari' Lubnan* (Central Surveillance Apparatus – Lebanon Branch)

The Central Surveillance Apparatus - Lebanon Branch was established in Beirut in 1968. Despite the fact that the Lebanon was the domain of its activities and operations, this branch constituted an important and vital component of the Central Surveillance office. Unlike the situation in the other Arab countries, the relatively liberal atmosphere of Lebanon made it possible for this branch to act and move with few if any restrictions. Another factor behind the great importance and weight of this branch was that with the exception of Jordan, Lebanon hosted more Palestinians than any other Arab country. Besides the one million Palestinians living on Lebanese soil, there were numerous Palestinian political, humanitarian and Fedayeen organizations. After the eviction of Palestinian paramilitary groups from Jordan in 1970, Lebanon became the military and political hub of the PLO, hosting its central offices in Beirut.[590]

The first of the *Fari' Lubnan* (Lebanese branch) 'deniable units' was *Munadhamat Ailoul Al-Aswad* or the Black September Organization (BSO), which took its name, as Livingstone and Halevy point out, from the "bloody military defeat suffered by the Palestinians in September 1970, when King Hussein of Jordan drove the PLO, which had openly challenged his rule, from Jordan."[591] In reality, BSO was the covert operations instrument of Rasd, the intelligence and surveillance arm of Fatah. The commander-in-chief of Black September was Abu Iyad, one of the founding triumvirate of Fatah's security apparatus, who, while remaining the overseer and nominal head of BSO, delegated operational control to Mohammed Yussef al-Najjar.[592] Among the high-ranking staff officers of BSO were Ali Hasan Salameh, who became in charge of operations and commander of Force 17, Abu Dawoud, Fakhri Al-Omeri and Kemal Adwan.

Following the disbandment of the Jordan Branch of the Surveillance Apparatus, Ali Hassan Salameh, supported by Salah Khalaf, recruited some of its ex-employees who were absolutely loyal to Khalaf personally. One of the main objectives behind the creation of BSO was to eliminate all those deemed to be enemies of the Palestinians, inside the Arab world and beyond. The veteran BSO officer Abu Dawoud adds:

> Morale [among Palestinians] almost totally collapsed after we left Jordan. It was imperative that we should create an atmosphere in which the young could regain their self-confidence… Then the idea of carrying out external operations came up. Abu Iyad, myself and other young men were behind this new idea. In order that Fatah might not be blamed for operations the success of which was not guaranteed, we decided to use the name Black September. Our targets were clearly defined: Israeli intelligence and interests everywhere in the world.[593]

Farouq Qaddoumi, who does not consider the operations carried out by BSO as terrorist acts, provides his own explanation:

> When a baby is born, it does not speak its mother tongue. When it needs to be fed, it resorts to crying, which is the only means available. But when the baby grows and learns the language, it does not cry to communicate with its mother but uses language. And so, when no one listened to us when we said our land was occupied, we had to carry out the kind of operations we implemented … in order to draw the attention of the world to our cause.[594]

Through the BSO, the PLO also sought to create an atmosphere of terror and alarm and to draw the attention of the world community to the Palestinian question. Indeed, some analysts claim that it was the BSO that paved the way for Yassir Arafat to be admitted to the United Nations, carrying an olive branch in one hand and a gun in the other.[595]Many factors contributed to the success of Fatah on the international scene. The strategy of political dissembling brought this leading Palestinian paramilitary group wide international

recognition, culminating in the awarding to it by the United Nations of observer status. Arab financial support made it possible for Fatah leader Yassir Arafat to concentrate on functions other than the vital task of fundraising. Fatah also exploited to the full the strained relations between East and West. By siding with the Soviet Bloc and with socialist and radical regimes throughout the world, Arafat ensured that technical and material support would continue to flow, from Saddam's Baghdad in the East to Berlin in the West.

It was natural that BSO should start its programme of ruthless retaliation by targeting those whom Fatah considered responsible for the 'massacre' of the Palestinians in Jordan. The first major operation was the revenge assassination of the Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfi Al-Tell, on 28th November 1971,[596] an operation executed by a special death squad and organized by Fakhri Al-Omeri, who had drawn up a list of targets for elimination, at the head of which was Wasfi Al-Tell. The plans were cleared by Arafat himself. Four Palestinian Fedayeen left for Egypt, travelling on forged passports. From Cairo airport they headed straight for the Sheraton Hotel, where the Jordanian delegation to the Arab League was staying and from where the BSO agents were able to closely monitor and shadow the movements of the targeted delegation. On 28th November 1971 Al-Tell was gunned down outside the hotel.[597]

BSO's second operation was also directed against Jordanian officials. On 6th February 1972, the Jordanian ambassador to the UK, Zeid Al-Rifa'ee, was attacked in the streets of London, where he was shot and seriously wounded. In Europe, the BSO carried out a number of operations including the bombing of a Dutch gas plant and a German electronic company. BSO claimed that the attacks were carried out to punish these companies for their dealings with Israel.[598]

The bloodiest operation which drew world attention to BSO took place at the Munich Olympic Games.[599] On 5th September 1972, eight armed Palestinians infiltrated the Olympic village where they seized 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and a referee murdered those who fought back and held the rest hostage. Hours later, during a failed rescue operation by the West German police, the terrorists killed every Israeli. The guerrillas had previously threatened to kill all the hostages if 200 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel were not released. According to one BSO member, Yassir Arafat planned the operation. Among the others killed were five of the armed Palestinians and a German policeman. The rest of the armed Palestinians were then captured whilst attempting to flee German soil. Although the Palestinian perpetrators were operating under the guise of BSO, most of them were, in

point of fact, members of the 'Strike force' which was directly linked to the Central Surveillance Apparatus.[600]

Just after the Munich operation, an attempt was made on the life of Zaduk Ofeer, Mossad's station officer in Brussels. Abu Iyad laid down the plan to eliminate Ofeer, whose main task at the time was to recruit Arab agents. One of BSO's operatives, Muhammed Ahmed, was instructed to head for the Belgian capital to carry out the plan. Ahmed was specifically instructed to do nothing but loiter there in order to attract the attention of Mossad's local station head. The bait was taken sooner than had been anticipated: two days after the start of the Israeli retaliatory operation, Ahmed asked his new handler to meet him at a certain café for an important matter. At the appointed time Ahmed drew his gun, shot Ofeer and in the ensuing commotion managed to escape the scene. Despite serious injury, Ofeer survived the attempt.[601]

On orders from Abu Iyad, BSO launched an attack on the Israeli embassy in Bangkok on 28th December 1972. Two armed BSO men broke into the embassy function room and managed to take hostage two high-ranking Israeli diplomats and four others. The intruders then demanded the release of 36 Palestinians from Israeli prisons in return for freeing the hostages, but the two terrorists left for Cairo 19 hours after the start of the operation, under mysterious circumstances.[602]

In January 1973, many letter bombs were sent to Israeli and Jordanian officials. Khalaf also dispatched a 17-man team in February 1973 in order to kidnap the Jordanian Prime Minister and the American ambassador. The far-reaching plot was discovered in time and all those involved were captured and later sentenced to death.[603]

Another notorious BSO operation was the attack in March 1973 on the Saudi embassy in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, sanctioned by the Central Committee of Fatah, which began when a juggernaut carrying nine armed BSO members crashed through the gates of the embassy. Twenty-six hours after the forced entry they killed the US Chargé d'Affaires and the Belgian ambassador to Khartoum.[604] Abu Iyad later attempted to justify this operation by claiming it was intended to force King Hussein to secure the release of the convicted 16-man Fatah team by exerting pressure through President Richard Nixon on him.[605]

In Madrid, someone believed to be an Israeli businessman, Hanan Beisha, was killed by BSO; the victim, however, was not a businessman but the ex-military commander of the city of Nablus in the West Bank, named Barus Cohen, who was chasing Yassir Arafat and at one point almost succeeded in capturing the PLO chairman.[606]

In an attempt to revive the activities of the Central Security Apparatus in Jordan, Abu Iyad sought to exploit the negative political atmosphere created by Jordan's negotiations with Israel regarding the creation of a so-called "United Arab Kingdom". The negotiations aimed at undermining the PLO by creating a new state, which was to include Arab territories on both sides of the River Jordan. As the Palestinian officer in charge of the Jordan Desk, Abu Iyad recruited many ex-members of the Surveillance Apparatus in order to carry out acts of sabotage in Jordan. The Jordanian security forces soon found out about the clandestine plots and foiled the attempts of the new bureau.[607]

It was inevitable that Israel would vigorously retaliate against these bloody operations. Immediately after the Munich massacre, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir ordered the security agencies to prepare a hit list of all those who planned or participated in the Munich attack. The Israeli Intelligence succeeded in eliminating many of Yassir Arafat's comrades, including the head of BSO.

Upon the assassination of Muhammad Yousuf al-Najjar and Kamal Adwan at the hands of Israeli agents and following the reconciliation of Abu Iyad with Yassir Arafat, Abu Iyad was asked to take charge of coordinating and unifying all security and intelligence activities. He exploited this opportunity to the full, working hard to build a strong personal power base through which he was later able to influence Arafat's decisions, especially in filling leading political, diplomatic and military posts.[608]

The role played by BSO had an immense impact not only on the Palestinian standing in the world but on the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. Despite the ruthless methods and bloody tactics employed by BSO and other Palestinian paramilitary groups, the world, which the Palestinians felt had totally ignored them, now began to listen to their voice and take them more seriously.

9.4 *Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Reasi / Al-Quwa 17* (**Presidential Security Apparatus / Force 17**)

The Central Surveillance Apparatus played an active role in the battles between the Palestinians and the Jordanian Armed Forces of September 1970, but its work produced no tangible results, as the Palestinians were simply outnumbered and outgunned by their Jordanian adversaries. Of the 169 Central Surveillance men who took part in the fighting alongside the armed Palestinian militias, 152 perished and only 17 survived, including the chief of the Apparatus, Abu Al-Tayyib.[609] Many of those who fell in action either belonged to the "Strike Force" of Central Surveillance or simply joined their comrades in what they considered the battle of destiny. Despite the lack of any documentary evidence, the idea of

forming Force 17 as a replacement appears to have been the brainchild of Yassir Arafat himself. All those who served in it stress that Arafat personally supervised every stage in the development and growth of this elite force, which came into being immediately after the PLO relocated to Lebanon.

The Palestinian-Jordanian negotiations which followed the Arab League-sponsored cease-fire resulted in the departure of all armed Palestinian groups from Jordan to Lebanon. Among those who left were the 17 survivors, who headed for the Hay al-Na'ama quarter in Beirut, which they adopted as their base. A list containing the names of these men was then submitted to PLO chairman Yassir Arafat, who ordered that payment of their salaries be expedited. From then on, the epithet '17' became attached to these men, who were now charged with the task of providing personal protection to Yassir Arafat.[610]

There are, however, other accounts of the creation of this elite force, which came to wield great power in the years to come. Some, for example, attribute the name to Arafat's telephone extension number in Beirut, while others claim that the Palestinians adopted it to distinguish the Palestinian Force from the Lebanese military units known as Force 16.[611]

Following dismantlement of the Revolutionary Surveillance Apparatus, one of its active officers, Black September chief Ali Hassan Salameh, who was later to be known as the Red Prince, headed for Kuwait in search of employment. He had not settled in this oil-rich state before Yassir Arafat called him back to Beirut.[612] Arafat had great admiration for Salameh's father, who had fought valiantly against both British and Zionists during the nineteen-thirties and forties. The chairman also valued the experience gained by Salameh when he was at the head of Black September, so he asked the flamboyant young militant to set up an elite force dedicated to his personal protection.[613]

Elated at the prospect of joining the inner circle of the PLO chief, Salameh spared no effort in establishing a loyal Praetorian guard. To help him build a reliable force, capable of providing effective personal protection to Arafat, Salameh chose Mahmoud Al-Natour, (Abu Al-Tayyeb), a close friend and confidant, to be his assistant and deputy. Members of the new covert force, known variously as Force 17 or the Presidential Security Force,[614] not only served as Arafat's personal bodyguards, but were also the enforcers of his will. Force 17's mission later expanded to include the protection of foreign visitors and senior PLO officials, as well as the collection of intelligence data. 'Protection', however, also meant the elimination of Arafat's rivals and those who plotted against him. Recruits were very carefully chosen and only after proving that they were as Livingstone and Halevy Point unswervingly loyal to both Salameh and Arafat:

The initial recruits were all Palestinians; in time however, Salameh reached out to draw into the unit many non-Palestinians, including Lebanese Christians, Lebanese Shiites, and even a number of Western Europeans. Although the recruitment of non-Palestinians meant that most of Force 17's members were not interested or involved in the internal disputes and bickering that characterized the PLO, it also meant that the unit was more vulnerable to penetration by foreign intelligence organizations. In time the United States, the Israelis, and even the Lebanese Christian Phalange had agents within Force17.[615]

Some of the difficulties encountered by Force 17 were caused by the fact that lists of PLO enemies were compiled and vetted not by the Force itself but by other PLO security branches. It was therefore only natural that some overlapping should occur in the course of preparing for or executing an attack or clandestine operation.[616]

Force 17 located its headquarters in eastern the part of Beirut, where Ali Hassan Salameh was able to draw upon his experience in the field of covert action to develop its capabilities. While he and his staff were quite competent in collecting, verifying and analyzing information, he lacked knowledge of the other aspects of the duties assigned to the Force, especially in providing executive protection to the PLO chairman and his cohorts. To surmount this difficulty, Salameh turned to the intelligence services of the Eastern Bloc governments, especially the East Germans and the Romanians. Through vigorous training programmes for VIP protection, fresh recruits were turned into ruthless and highly disciplined units.[617]

In order that new recruits might be better equipped to carry out security and intelligence tasks, Salameh set up a training centre at one of the Palestinian camps, Beer Hassan, in the Lebanese capital. An old friend of Salameh's, Saad Sayel, was put in charge. Sayel adopted the Egyptian style of instruction and training. He also relied on a number of experts and lecturers from a variety of PLO departments. These veteran fighters often spoke of their experiences in clandestine work and pointed out lessons learnt from their past successes or failures. Salameh's goal was to build a force capable of carrying out the duties of ordinary soldiers as well as executing highly sensitive security and intelligence tasks.[618]

Throughout the period 1970 to 1975, when the Lebanese central government was disintegrating and increasing numbers of foreign nationals were being kidnapped, the PLO exploited the prevalent conditions in a number of ways. Through Salameh, it succeeded in infiltrating most of the weak government's agencies, which were deeply divided along religious and ethnic lines, had different loyalties and worked for a number of foreign

powers. Salameh also wrote to a number of foreign intelligence agencies asking for donations in return for information on the whereabouts of their kidnapped subjects, their captors and the powers which lay behind the perpetrators. Salameh, now known as the Red Prince, scored a resounding success in this field, especially in the case of opening a channel of dialogue with the US government. Although Washington's declared policy was the rejection of any negotiations with the PLO, it was in fact an open secret that the CIA had always dealt with Salameh, who had cultivated close links with the Americans.[619]

While Washington had always depended on its own operatives and those of Mossad when it came to intelligence related to the Arab world, Salameh managed to carve out a niche for himself and convinced the USA that through Force 17, the Palestinians were capable of protecting US interests in Lebanon and beyond. The Americans seemed to have accepted some of the new realities in Lebanon and intensified their contacts with the Red Prince, whose cooperation with them grew in scope until relations with the Central Intelligence Agency station head became direct:

> Salameh worked closely with former CIA official Robert Ames, who died in 1983 in the bomb blast that destroyed the U.S. embassy in Beirut. Whether Salameh was actually 'run' by Ames or regarded as a CIA asset is still open to question, but it is clear that Ames established a discreet back channel to Salameh that was cloaked in secrecy because of secretary of state Henry Kissinger's agreement with the Israelis not to deal directly with the PLO. [620]

Salameh's clandestine relationship with the Americans, behind the back of Tel Aviv, greatly embittered the Israelis. It is now thought that Israel's decision to eliminate Salameh was taken not so much for his pivotal role in the Munich massacre, but because of his growing influence with the Americans.[621] Following a number of unsuccessful attempts on his life in which an innocent Moroccan was mistakenly killed, Salameh was finally assassinated in a daring operation in Beirut on 21 January 1979 at the hands of a UK national working as an agent for the Mossad.[622]

Following Salameh's assassination, Brigadier Mahmoud Al-Natour, known as Abu Al-Tayeb, became Force 17's commanding officer. His term, which continued until 1993, was characterized by a sharp increase in the number of the Force's operatives, who numbered 800 by the end of the eighties. Abu Al-Tayeb tried very hard and succeeded in turning the organization into a military strike force which could be depended upon to deal with any insurgency or domestic crisis. He managed to obtain a variety of heavy machine-guns, howitzers, armoured vehicles and even some tanks. Force 17's recruits were trained by professional staff officers who concentrated on the arts of conventional warfare. Al-

Tayeb's armament efforts intensified when it became evident that Israel was about to invade Lebanon in the summer of 1982.[623]

As part of the preparation to resist the imminent Israeli invasion and in order that the Israelis might not take the Palestinians by surprise, the PLO divided Lebanon into a number of zones and sectors. Force 17 was charged with the defence of Sector 3, which extended from the Bakneek through Al-Awzaee, where the Force put up tough resistance.[624] The war ended with a cease-fire, which was soon followed by the withdrawal of all Palestinian armed groups from the Lebanese territory and their dispersion in a number of Arab countries, especially Tunisia, Jordan and Syria.[625]

The post-invasion period was quite difficult for the PLO. The retreat from Lebanon sowed the seeds of dissention and rebellion among many Palestinians, who started pointing the finger of blame towards this Palestinian party or that. Force 17, however, remained quite faithful to Yassir Arafat, who used it to quell any nascent rebellion.[626] It was during this stormy period that the Force's chief convinced Arafat to set up offices for it abroad. Abu Al-Tayeb, realizing that the spirit of rebellion against Yassir Arafat was spreading among Palestinian expatriates in many Middle Eastern and European countries, feared that Arafat might lose his grip on PLO affairs. He considered it in the best interests of the PLO not only to keep a close eye on the movements and activities of those who opposed, but also to deal with those dissidents directly and on the spot.[627]

Force 17's foreign-based operatives who were introduced to the host countries as attachés or liaison officers were responsible, among other things, for protecting the Palestinian missions abroad and with carrying out a number of operations against dissidents. On some occasions they physically eliminated high ranking Palestinian cadres and official representatives who dared to oppose the policies of the PLO chairman.[628]

Following its settlement in Tunis, the PLO tried several times to operate in the Lebanese theatre. To that end, it tried to smuggle into the country a number of Force 17 operatives, along with arms and equipment. But all such attempts were destined to fail, especially as relations between Arafat and Damascus were soured by, among other things, their conflicting attitudes towards the Iraq-Iran War. While the Palestinians expressed full and unequivocal support for Saddam Hussein, whom they provided with intelligence and volunteers, Syria's Hafiz Al-Assad sided with Khomeini's Iran, practically defying the rest of the Arab and Sunni Muslim world.[629]

Besides the Syrians, who were adamant about obliterating any Palestinian influence in Lebanon, there were of course the Israelis, who watched the Lebanese scene very closely

and frequently intercepted boats which were being used to smuggle men or weapons. The few officers who managed to reach Lebanese soil were later tracked down and eliminated by Mossad agents.[630]

In 1984, Abu Al-Tayeb set up a military wing within Force 17, whose duties were to carry out operations deep inside Israeli territory. Unlike the Western Sector Apparatus, these units were at first only involved in executing military orders rather than in collecting intelligence. The backbone of the force consisted of new recruits from the Palestinian camps. The military wing was also directed to lend support and participate actively in the First Intifada against the Israelis, which erupted in 1987.[631]

The new military wing was later placed under the direct supervision of Yassir Arafat, who gave his full support to its members, providing them with all they needed to carry out their operations. Upon his directives, moral support and financial rewards were generously given to all members of these units. In return for Arafat's unlimited support, the military wing became staunchly supportive of whatever course he might decide to take. This wing in time became a ruthless tool in the hands of the PLO chairman, who used it to eliminate any potential rival within the Palestinian movement.[632]

With the expansion of the military wing of Force 17, a need was felt for an intelligence unit dedicated to the collection of intelligence on Israeli targets and also to the recruitment of sympathetic foreigners in Europe and elsewhere. The foreign elements were used to collect information on visiting Israelis as well as on others inside Israel itself. They were also used to smuggle arms into Israel and as front proprietors who bought, sold and rented property in a number of countries.[633] The unit followed the accepted methods used by intelligence services almost everywhere. There were those who collected the data, while others evaluated and verified the information. Before reports were disseminated, intelligence experts within the unit made sure that the analysis contained a realistic appraisal of any specific issue.[634]

Following the second Oslo accord of 1994, Force 17, with all its units and personnel, was incorporated into the Palestinian Authority, which was offered a degree of autonomy over the domestic Palestinian scene.

Among the operations carried out by Force 17 was an attack in 1985 on an Israeli yacht in the harbour of Nicosia, Cyprus, which left three dead. A British national, who was later captured and tried, was one of the gunmen. Similarly, in a series of attacks on the British airbase in Akrotiri, Cyprus, Force 17 employed both Cypriot and French nationals.[635] It was also implicated in the assassination on 22 July 1987 of Palestinian

caricaturist Nagy El-Ali, who was shot on the steps of the Kuwaiti newspaper *El-Kabas* in Chelsea in London. As El-Ali, who was known for his political cartoons against the Palestinian leadership and against Arafat in particular, was a British citizen, the authorities in London invested great efforts in solving the murder. The investigation eventually led to the arrest of members of Force 17. A search of an apartment belonging to one of them uncovered weapons, hand grenades and 145 kg of Semtex plastic explosives.[636]

The late 1980's witnessed the creation of yet another elite unit, which came to be known as the Special Operations Group, or more commonly the Hawari Group. Its founder and leader was Colonel Abdallah Abd El Labib, more widely known as Colonel Hawari. The mission of the group was to serve as yet another clandestine operational wing of Fatah, dealing with terrorist activities in Europe.[637] It was established to support the activities of the Jihaz Al-Rasd and was initially charged with operating covertly against the Syrian intelligence services and their forces stationed in Lebanon. By 1983, it had also been ordered to conduct operations against dissident Fatah rebels like Abu Musa. During 1983-84 the unit carried out successful carbomb attacks in Beirut and Damascus and against Abu Musa's headquarters in Chatura in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Elements of the Special Operations Group were based in Arab countries and Western Europe, where its operatives carried out attacks in Rome, Madrid, Geneva and other locations, often against Syrian targets.[638]

Among the European operations of the Hawari Group, which was meant to be totally deniable, was the smuggling of 16 kg of explosives and a variety of light arms into France. The perpetrator was caught and sentenced to 5 years in prison, while his commander, Colonel Hawari, was sentenced *in absentia* to ten years. The group was also responsible for a blast on board a TWA aircraft in April 1986, which killed four passengers and wounded ten.[639] The group has not been heard of since the death of its leader in a car crash in May 1991, while travelling from Baghdad to Jordan.[640]

9.5 *Jihaz Al-Amn al-Markazi* (Central Security Apparatus)

The outcome of the Palestinian-Jordanian confrontations of 1970 was disastrous for the PLO, especially as it lost practically all the infrastructure, military bases and training centres it had so diligently built on Jordanian soil. Before September 1970, the PLO had wielded immense influence in Jordan. It was in effect a state within a state. During that period, some Palestinian groups were openly demanding a share in the Jordanian

government, while the more extremist among them unashamedly called for the toppling of the regime in Amman.

In Lebanon, Fatah concentrated on rebuilding its bases and enhancing its military capabilities. It further aimed to absorb as many youths as it could into its ranks. But there were dozens of Palestinian groups and political parties who were actively seeking to build bases in Lebanon, especially near its southern frontier with Israel. As it turned out, Lebanon afforded the growing Palestinian resistance not only a safe haven but fertile ground for political action as well.[641]

The new political and social environment was quite different from that of Jordan. In Lebanon there were a great number of parties, political organizations, religious movements, radical and ultra-conservative ideologies, most of which had links with regional or international powers. Unlike the rest of the Arab states, Lebanon provided a wide margin of liberty and freedom of movement for all organizations based on its soil. This open atmosphere encouraged competition among the Palestinians, who began to speak of their suspicions or show their support for this organization or that, without fear of persecution or reprisal. On the other hand, the new atmosphere made it easier to infiltrate Palestinian resistance.

Soon after the mass exodus to Lebanon, Fatah intensified its efforts to regain its leading role within the Palestinian community. This vigorous drive resulted in a rapid increase in recruitment. During this period too, many other Palestinian groups descended upon the Lebanese arena, especially in the southern region of the country.[642] The concentration of so many different groups created an atmosphere of rivalry and suspicion among the Palestinians. There was also the fear of Israeli and regional infiltration of Palestinian ranks. It was at this point that Fatah seriously considered the creation of a strong security apparatus, capable of defending the organization, influencing developments on the Palestinian scene and resisting Israeli attempts to undermine the Palestinian resistance.[643]

In order that Fatah might be better equipped to face the rapid and dramatic developments not only on the Lebanese front but also in the Arab world as a whole, a new security apparatus was created, under the name of Jihaz al-Amn al-Markazi (Central Security Apparatus). Al-Markazi was first headed by Fatah Central Committee member Muhammad Al-Najjar, assisted by Abu Ramzi (Muhammad al-Aiydi). When Al-Najjar was assassinated by the Israelis in the Fardan quarter of Beirut in 1973,[644] Hayel Abdul-Hameed (Abu al-Hawl or the Sphinx) took over and remained at the head of al-Markazi

until 1991, when he was killed by a militant splinter group of Fatah, known as 'Fatah: the Revolutionary Council[645] and led by Abu Nidhal. Among those who helped Abu Al-Hawl were his deputy, Hani al-Hasan, and Tariq Ahmad Shnaiwrah (Abu Rajab), who was the chief of Palestinian Intelligence in 2006.[646]

When the Central Security Apparatus (CSA) was first created, it was feeble and lacking in professional training and practical experience. Its commanders did not have the prerequisite leadership qualities and political will. But when Abu al-Hawl took over, he did his best to capitalize on his close association with the Egyptian security organizations, especially the Egyptian General Intelligence. He managed to secure professional training for his men, especially in the field of military intelligence. What helped Abu al-Hawl in improving the performance of the CSA was the unlimited support he had from his long-time friend, Yassir Arafat.[647]

Egypt was not the only provider of training to CSA staff. Fatah's security and intelligence cadres were, with the passage of time, sent for training purposes to a number of countries, including East Germany, Syria, Algeria and Iraq. When relations with King Hussein improved, Fatah also sent a number of its security and intelligence staff to receive training in Jordan. While pursuing training courses in these countries, Fatah intelligence officers spared no effort to identify useful elements among the Palestinian expatriates and to recruit them in order to advance the strategies of the Palestinian resistance.[648] Fatah managed to patch up differences with many of the regional powers, such as Jordan and Iraq. Furthermore, Arafat succeeded in solidifying the cordial relations he had initiated with such European countries as Rumania, East and West Germany, and Italy. In short, the Central Security Apparatus grew in size to such an extent that in 1982, there were 900 official staff members on its monthly payroll.[649].

The training courses attended by Fatah intelligence and security officers included sessions on the use of arms, detection, electronic espionage, cryptography.[650] Courses on personnel and VIP protection were provided by the East German government. Egypt, Algeria, Rumania while Yugoslavia provided Fatah with a variety of equipment and electronic devices.[651]

In 1975 the CSA created a specialized institute for intelligence studies called the Security School, which was based in the Fakahani quarter of Beirut and offered training courses for new recruits. Besides modules on intelligence and security, such as counter-intelligence, topography, recruitment, surveillance and data analysis, the syllabus also included courses on languages, political science and international relations. It was hoped

that following the three-month intensive courses, trainees would be better equipped to carry out their intelligence and security duties. Lecturers and specialists from higher educational institutes in Lebanon were contracted to offer their expertise.[652]

Throughout the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), the CSA succeeded in attracting a number of highly qualified experts in intelligence belonging to a variety of Lebanese political and paramilitary groups, such as the Independent Nasserites[653], the Baath Party[654], the Communists[655] and the Progressive Socialist Party.[656] It is to be remembered that during those turbulent years, the PLO was offering some sort of support to more than 36 groups in Lebanon. The CSA exchanged intelligence with those groups and often played the part of mediator when differences or clashes occurred among them.[657]

The Lebanese civil war, with its resultant polarization, division, animosity and armed rivalries, helped the CSA to acquire a wealth of experience in intelligence work. Soon after the outbreak of the war, the CSA created a special intelligence unit dedicated entirely to shadowing hostile Lebanese groups and movements, especially the Christian Lebanese Forces Party led by Sheikh Basheer Al-Jumaiyel and viewed by the PLO as on the side of the Israelis.[658]

By 1977, the CSA had expanded to such an extent that it had started to operate outside Lebanese territory: it now had stations and representatives in Algeria, Tunisia, Qatar, Libya and Egypt. Relations with Egypt were severed, however, following President Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel. The CSA also operated in some European countries, especially in Yugoslavia, Rumania, East and West Germany, Italy, France and Britain. In some countries, CSA operatives carried out their activities under the guise of business or the pursuit of higher education;[659] in others, they worked under diplomatic cover, as functionaries attached to the PLO missions:

> Where there is Israeli political or economic activity, or involvement in security, the PLO representative undertakes surveillance of their activities in order to undermine them. In Kenya, for example, the PLO works through Muslim members of Parliament and through the press to try and convince the government of Kenya to cancel the permission granted to El-Al, the Israeli national airline, for transit landing in Nairobi, en route to Johannesburg.[660]

The strategy behind this expansion was to collect as much intelligence as possible about Israeli affairs, particularly Israeli influence in these countries. The PLO also aimed to strengthen relations with these countries through intelligence cooperation and the exchange of information. The CSA was concerned that Israel was providing them with biased and inaccurate information about a number of ordinary Palestinians whom Israel

pictured as terrorists intent on carrying out operations in Europe. It was therefore the duty of the CSA liaison officers to coordinate work with their hosts, correct the misinformation supplied by the Israeli intelligence and refute any allegation of those individuals' involvement in terrorist activities. By 1979, the CSA had cemented relations with a number of European states and carried out its usual duties with the full knowledge of the host states. These countries included France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and a number of East European countries, notably East Germany.[661]

The CSA received financial support from a number of sources. Thanks to Fatah chairman Arafat's mastery of the art of rhetoric and public relations, the CSA received generous donations from the Arab world. Fatah's extensive and lucrative investments also ensured that CSA staff were well paid and looked after.[662]

Despite the diversity of the functions carried out by the CSA and the fact that it had its own organizational structure, everything was under the tight control of one man, the CSA chief, who could practically do as he liked. The apparatus had its own sections and specialized units, dealing with matters such as data collection, espionage on the Lebanese forces allied to the Israelis, liaison between the PLO and Palestinian prisoners, as well as electronic, financial and administrative departments. There were often no clear-cut lines of demarcation between sections, so that a good deal of time was wasted and some work was unnecessarily duplicated. There were furthermore some sections within the CSA which were involved in a variety of security and intelligence activities, including spying on friendly as well as hostile political groups in Lebanon and elsewhere.[663]

The CSA exploited its relationships with Lebanese intellectuals, especially professionals and those with an academic background, enhancing its influence through the recruitment of Palestinian and Lebanese students, to whom it offered scholarships or work opportunities in Lebanon and abroad. Despite its rapid and sustained expansion, the CSA had no activities inside Israel or the occupied territories.[664]

A turning point in the history of the CSA came in 1979, when the Arab League, through the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, assigned to it the task of representing the PLO abroad. This particular assignment enabled the apparatus to carry out its functions and also to strengthen relations with its counterpart Arab security departments. In addition to its primary security and intelligence duties, the CSA started playing an increasingly significant political role. This did not escape the attention of foreign governments, which started using it as a channel through which messages could be delivered and received.[665]

In 1982, when the Palestinian groups were forced to leave Lebanon following the Israeli invasion of the country, the CSA moved its headquarters to Tunis, but it dispersed many of its sections across the Arab world, especially where the PLO had a military presence, such as Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Iraq and Syria. The CSA offices in Syria closed down in 1983, however, following an internal rift within the Palestinian movement.[666] The CSA continued to function until the Oslo agreement of 1993 between the PLO and Israel, when it was disbanded and most of its operatives, like those of other security and intelligence organs, were attached to the Palestinian General Intelligence.[667]

Among its counter-intelligence activities, the CSA was able to expose and capture an Israeli female agent, who had arrived in Beirut in 1979 on a foreign passport. CSA operatives shadowed this 40-year old spy, Amina Al-Mufti, who was in fact the wife of an Israeli pilot and had come to Lebanon to spy on Palestinian groups.[668] Al-Mufti was released from prison in a Red Cross-sponsored deal between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: General Command, in exchange for two top Fatah men and more than 500 Palestinian prisoners.[669]

9.6 *Jihaz Al-Amn al-Muwahhad* (Unified Intelligence Apparatus)

In 1974, all member states of the Arab League recognized the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people". This diplomatic coup was soon followed by a flurry of activity, especially on the security and intelligence fronts, in which the PLO tried and to a large extent succeeded in establishing itself as a player not only in the Arab world but also in the region as a whole. To that end, a complete restructuring of the security and intelligence organs was launched. This resulted in the creation of Jihaz Al-Amn al-Muwahhad (Unified Intelligence Apparatus), with Abu Iyad as its chief, Amin Al-Hindi as his deputy and Atif Bassiso as third in command. One of its prime duties was to ''coordinate and unite the intelligence efforts of all the guerrilla groups.''[670] The organizational structure of the Amn Al-Muwahhad clearly defined the responsibilities and duties of each of these men, who collectively led this highly secretive and sensitive organisation.[671]

Abu Iyad's diligence and total dedication to security and intelligence work were soon to bear fruit. In 1975, he succeeded in establishing close links with the intelligence community of the Soviet Union as well as most Eastern European countries.[672] A number of agreements were concluded between PLO and these states in the field of coordinating activities and exchanging intelligence, particularly in countering the work of Israeli agents

in the European theatre. The Soviet Union and its European satellites offered the PLO considerable technical assistance in the form of highly developed technological equipment and.[673] ''They were taught how CIA and other services were recruiting among them''.[674] Atif Bassiso was in charge of supervising cooperation with the Eastern Bloc countries to which PLO turned for assistance especially in acquiring some badly needed sophisticated equipment and also to scrape whatever intelligence about Israel as it could get from them.[675]

The security of Amn al-Muwahhad was also the responsibility of Bassiso, who assiduously sought fresh recruits to bolster and reinforce the newly-created force. This was no easy task, as most foreign intelligence services were keen to infiltrate the Palestinian movement, but Bassiso's wide experience foiled most if not all such attempts. He worked closely with the intelligence agencies of the Eastern Bloc, which readily agreed to organize training courses for the new recruits and to set up special camps for the purpose. Bassiso also managed to win numerous scholarships and grants from Eastern European academic institutions. Most scholarships were given to Palestinian students specializing in legal and security studies, who had signed contracts binding them to the Jihaz.[676]

The use of 'sleepers' was one of the methods adopted by the Palestinian Unified Intelligence Apparatus (UIA), which would clandestinely sponsor prospective agents to travel abroad and settle in a specific country or area, where they would be encouraged to learn the local languages and social customs. Such agents, who would remain 'sleeping' until needed, were also encouraged to blend into the communities they lived amongst and to weave a wide net of social contacts from all walks of life.[677]

The UIA had a unit specially dedicated to counter-espionage, which was directly linked to the office of Atif Bassiso. Despite the fact that the counterespionage unit was created during the early months of the Lebanese civil war, when Lebanon was awash with foreign intelligence agents, especially the Israeli Mossad, Bassiso was able to score a number of successes when his agents allegedly uncovered a number of Israeli spy rings. For example, the UIA captured some Israeli agents who had facilitated the assassination of Zuhair Muhsin, a leading PLO activist. A number of Israeli agents equipped with highly sophisticated telecommunications systems were also captured. The seized codification systems and communications equipment were carefully studied by Egyptian intelligence experts, from whom Bassiso received constant technical assistance and training,[678] allowing Palestinian intelligence to learn a good deal about the technical methods adopted by their Israeli adversaries when contacting their agents in the Arab world and beyond.[679]

The UIA had close links with its counterparts in Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Arab countries, especially Tunisia. The footprint of the Palestinian intelligence apparatus soon after 1975 expanded in such a way that it started to shadow Israeli agents everywhere possible, while security coordination with East European intelligence services resulted in the uncovering of a number of Mossad agents in Europe.[680]

Besides the Eastern Bloc, the UIA also established reasonably good working relationships with Western intelligence services, particularly during the 1980s, coordinating some of its activities with Western powers including France, Italy, West Germany and the United States. Indeed, the UIA developed good relations with the CIA, especially during the period before the assassination of Abu Iyad in Tunis in the early nineties.[681]

One of the difficulties which confronted Palestinian intelligence officers working abroad was the diplomatic status of most Israeli agents attached to the accredited Israeli missions. The diplomatic immunity and cover under which the Israelis operated stood in the way of identifying them and made the task of uncovering them quite difficult. But the Palestinians surmounted this difficulty by working closely with the governments of the host states, thus managing to keep track of many Israeli agents abroad.[682]

Cooperation between Palestinian intelligence and the ex-Communist regimes in Eastern Europe helped Fatah to counter-propaganda diffused by Israeli agents about Palestinians and Arabs. All of these attacks and counterattacks were carried out within the framework of the intelligence 'warfare' raging between Israelis and Palestinians.[683]

The Unified Intelligence Apparatus had a small 'hit team' which took part in some of the attacks directed against Jewish or western targets. Among other operations, the UIA attacked a synagogue and a train carrying Jewish immigrants in Germany in the early seventies. It also participated in some of the attacks launched by Black September, especially in the hijacking of Israeli, European and US aircraft.[684] Abu Dawoud was among the highest-ranking officers in charge of directing the UIA operations abroad. His recently published memoirs contain ample information on the inner workings of the Apparatus and the activities in which he was involved.[685]

Other ranking officers included Abu Muhammad Fakhri al-Omari, who was assassinated in Tunis along with Abu Iyad and Abu al-Hawl at the hands of Abu Nidhal. General Amin Al-Hindi, the ex-Director of General Intelligence in the Palestinian Authority was in charge of the UIA's relations with (West) Germany, France and Italy. Brigadier Tawfeeq Al-Tearawi, served as the chief of General Intelligence in the West

Bank before he was sacked by President Mahmoud Abbas in February 2008, Muhammad Mansour appointed by Abbas to head the G. I. and Abu Hisham Sameeh Abdul Fattah, who had served as ambassador to Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia and was a cabinet member in the government of President Mahmoud Abbas (2007), were among the UIA officers who held leading positions within the UIA.[686]

The UIA was charged with identifying people with special skills, especially in forging documents, passports, driving licences, banknotes and coins, particularly the US currency. Thanks to the UIA's large-scale forgeries, it was quite easy for any Palestinian wishing to travel to an Arab or foreign country to obtain the necessary documents. UIA operatives were of course supplied with all kinds of forged documents before beginning to carry out any operation.[687]

The UIA received substantial support from the PLO as well as from the Gulf states and other Arab countries. Financial contributions came in the form of cheques, normally handed to Yassir Arafat himself, although some funds were directly given to Abu Iyad, especially in the case of Libya. Abu Iyad managed to establish a very close relationship with Colonel Gaddafi after helping him to capture and then execute one of the Libyan regime's bitter enemies, Omar al-Muhaishi, who was once a member of the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council.[688] Abu Iyad also managed to establish an excellent working relationship with Tunisia's foreign minister, Muhammad al-Masmoudi, who offered the UIA considerable help during the period in which the PLO operated from its headquarters in Tunis.[689]

On the international scene, Abu Iyad forged close relations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front[690] in the Philippines. Several of its activists were given military training in various sites in Lebanon. This relationship did not last long, however, ending almost abruptly following the exodus of the Palestinian groups from Lebanon to Tunisia in the summer of 1982.[691]

The UIA, which was originally set up to protect the Palestinian revolution, soon developed into a terrorist organization which became deeply involved in acts of embezzlement and blackmail and whose designs knew no boundaries. At one point, some UIA elements were directed to assassinate King Hussein of Jordan during the 1974 Summit in Rabat. High ranking UIA officers, including Amin Al-Hindi, Sameeh Abdul Fattah and Abu Hisham, were among the perpetrators. The Moroccan security forces uncovered the plot however and arrested all those involved before the zero hour. In justifying the planned assassination, Fatah said that it was intended to force Jordan to

recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It appears to have been planned without the knowledge or approval of Chairman Arafat, who strongly condemned it when it was later revealed to the outside world.[692]

During the early 1970s, the UIA launched a failed attack against the offices of the Israeli airline El-Al in Rome. The UIA operative who was arrested during the attack spent many years in an Italian prison, because his attempt caused the death of an Italian policeman who was guarding the building.[693]

The UIA had a specialized unit devoted to the collection and analysis of information, which would then be referred to the Apparatus chief. It also had a special section for planning and research, headed by General Nizar Ammar. Ammar succeeded Abul-Waleed Al-Iraqi, who is now serving a long term in a US prison for his direct involvement in a number of criminal attempts and cases of forgery.[694]

9.7 *Al-Qita Al-Garbi* (Western Sector Command)

The Western Sector Command (WSC), which as the name suggests was responsible for Fatah's intelligence activities in the West Bank, was set up in 1971 under Kamal Adwan, Fatah Central Committee member and one of the leading officers of the Asifa (Storm) organization. Like many other Palestinian groups and organizations, the Command chose Beirut as its headquarters. Adwan had hardly spent two years as chief when he was assassinated in April 1973 by an Israeli commando unit headed by Ehud Barak, who later rose to become Israel's prime minister and secretary general of the Labour Party. Upon Adwan's assassination, Abu Jihad, Yassir Arafat's close associate and deputy in Fatah, became the Command's new chief.[695]

With the appointment of Abu Jihad, the WSC entered a new era of restructuring and orientation. Its operatives were at first given only military training, but Abu Jihad embarked upon an ambitious project through which it started to send its employees to receive training in intelligence and data analysis.[696]

As soon as Abu Jihad took over, the Command's footprint grew larger and larger; it was no longer restricted to Israel proper and the occupied territories, but expanded to include Israeli targets in Europe and elsewhere. To this end, Abu Jihad set up a specialized unit within the Command, dedicated to contacting and coordinating with international revolutionary groups as well as with non-governmental organizations. Its activities also included the collection of intelligence on Israel's armament programmes in Europe.

Special attention was given to Israel's activities and procurements in Greece, Italy, and the Soviet Union.[697]

In shadowing Israelis abroad, the WSC, like the CSA, often resorted to employing the cover of business or study to mask the activities of its agents. This was especially the case wherever the Command's operatives abroad were not granted diplomatic immunity or diplomatic representation.

Although the Command was, by and large, military in many ways, especially in its duties, organizational structure and chain of command, it was heavily engaged in espionage activities, sabotage, armed operations, suicide mission, both inside Israel proper and throughout the West Bank. Its operatives gathered information on Israeli military and security targets, which was then analyzed and passed on to Command headquarters, which would take its decisions in the light of the intelligence. Although the WSC managed to carry out a number of successful operations against the Israelis, there were also many planned attacks which were uncovered and frustrated by the Israelis before they could be executed.[698]

The WSC was quite adept in the art of camouflage and deception. This is especially true in the field of telecommunications and cryptography. Contacts between the Command's HQ and its outstations were always carried out indirectly and through a maze of routes, designed to mislead the Israelis. A message from Beirut, for example, or from inside Israel to Athens, would normally be rerouted along a zigzag path, which could take it to any European or Asian city, before it was delivered to its final destination.[699]

To achieve its purposes, the Western Sector Command often resorted to the recruitment of non-Palestinians, whom it would direct to go to Israel in order to collect first-hand information on this facility or that, take photographs or provide accurate topographical descriptions of designated targets. Special attention was given to collecting information on Israeli troops and their movements, which would then be delivered to the leadership either directly by hand, through coded messages sent via travellers or through other means.[700]

The Command did not confine itself to gathering intelligence and military activities, but played a significant part in practically all aspects of Palestinian life. It was deeply involved in covert operations, clandestine political action, and secretly funded a number of economic, media and social projects. As might be expected, the media was of particular interest to the Command, which supported a number of local as well as Arab dailies and other publications. Slush funds were set up, intended to influence these publications and

use them as channels through which Palestinians were directly or indirectly urged to join the resistance to Israeli occupation and to work for the liberation of Palestinian lands.[701]

The WSC spared no effort in adopting and supporting gifted Palestinians. Young artists, writers, orators or any other outstanding and influential persons, regardless of their speciality, were quite often rewarded and used as indirect organs of the PLO. Such people would be paid generously to travel the world in order to present the Palestinian cause to the international community.[702]

Inside the West Bank, the covert action activities continued and the Command operated like a government in exile, controlling practically all the major events and developments on the ground. It organized political rallies and demonstrations, which were later to culminate in the Intifada. It also coordinated the activities of the trade unions within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The Command sought to exploit all means of exerting an influence on the Israeli political scene. To that end, it established contacts with a number of Israeli peace groups which were calling for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Chief among these was the Peace Now movement, which sought to apply political and moral pressure on successive Israeli governments.[703]

To modernize its communications systems, great effort was expended on the procurement of highly developed equipment. So much importance was attached to monitoring Israeli communications that the WSC set up a special unit exclusively dedicated to the surveillance of the contacts between Israeli military commands and their regiments. In the SIGINT side, human and electronic resources were used to obtain information. In time, this unit grew in size and responsibilities, which came to include the collection of intelligence on all aspects of the military in Israel. The Command also started to commission specialized strategic studies, the results of which were then passed on to Abu Jihad and Yassir Arafat.[704]

The organizational structure of the WSC was expanded to include a branch called the Western Security Apparatus, whose main duty was to protect the Command's personnel against infiltration and against Israeli assassination attempts and sabotage, and whose greatest asset was the abundant human resources inside the Palestinian territories. Security Apparatus operatives were able to provide the PLO leadership with valuable information on all aspects of life under Israeli occupation.[705]

The fact that the Arab states bordering Israel (Jordan, Syria and Egypt) did not cooperate with the WSC was a source of great disappointment to the PLO. These countries categorically refused all attempts by the Command to use their territory as launching pads

for attacks against the Jewish state. Despite this serious constraint, the Command managed to carry out a number of operations against Israel by resorting to the Mediterranean, where its operatives used small boats and dinghies, which allowed infiltrators to evade Israeli radar and naval guards.[706] WSC also mastermind suicidal missions which were carried out inside Israel by units of the intelligence apparatus called (*alkhidma alkhassa)* Special Service[707].

The WSC was involved in training a wide range of liberation groups across the world and in providing them with arms and finance. It enjoyed good relations with a large number of the political organizations, including atheist and Islamic movements. The Iranian Islamic movement led by Khomeini depended at one time on the WSC for military training, supply of arms and partial funding. The Command was also engaged in training and supporting paramilitary groups in Asia, chief among which were the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. It had an active office in Syria, which operated under the name Bureau 23 and was headed by Abu Ziad, who in 1996 became Governor of the town of Tulkarem. Bureau 23 was involved in the military training of students from the occupied West Bank and Gaza.[708]

The growing strength of the WSC, derived from the wealth of intelligence it disseminated to PLO leaders, won Abu Jihad a distinguished position not only within the PLO but also among most Palestinians. However, his popularity, strong influence and solid stature made him a thorn in the side of Arafat, who never looked too kindly on any potential rival and who came to view his comrade in arms with an increasing sense of resentment and jealousy.[709]

Following the assassination of Abu Jihad, the WSC passed through its most difficult period, from which it never recovered. Arafat quickly seized the opportunity afforded by the sudden disappearance of the Command's leader and set his men to obliterate all traces of it from the national consciousness of the Palestinians. Lest the Command continue to be a centre of gravity within the Palestinian movement, Arafat gradually undermined its organizational structure, originally set up to revolve around Abu Jihad, who had enjoyed total supremacy over all its offices and bureaux. The effort to dismantle the Command did not spare the military wing, which was also gradually supplanted by Force 17, to which the Command's personnel and operatives were then attached. With the signing of the second Oslo Agreement in 1993, the Western Sector Command ceased to exist.[710]

9.8 Case Study Conclusion

This case study has shown that within the PLO, Fatah, until recently the largest and best-organized Palestinian paramilitary group, has invested heavily in the employment of intelligence as an effective tool to further its objectives. Despite all denials and impassioned attestations, Fatah has on numerous occasions been proved to have been involved in violent attacks on Israeli targets, both military and civilian. From the creation of its first security apparatus until the Oslo peace accord of 1993 Fatah had entrusted its intelligence and security responsibilities to a number of organizational structures. In terms of their duties and the nature of their work these intelligence organs passed through four distinct stages.

9.8.1 The Jordan stage 1967-1970.

Fatah established its first intelligence organ (Jihaz Al-Rasd al-Markazi) in 1967. The purpose was to protect the movement and its cadres and fulfil the aims which Fatah sought to achieve. The head of the Rasd was directly responsible to Fatah's leadership through the "Operations Centre". The founders of Rasd were in the main ex-Muslim Brotherhood members who had been involved in clandestine operations over a long period of collective time dating back to the early fifties. Fatah's performance in the battle of Karameh was such that it raised its profile to new heights and attracted multitudes of young men and women who were eager to join this paramilitary group which was able to stand up to the Israeli war machine and achieve what the Arab regular armies could not achieve in their previous engagement with the Israelis. The great influx in the number of volunteers afforded the Fatah leaders an excellent opportunity to choose those best suited to intelligence work. Salah Khalaf who had been engaged in clandestine work since his student days devoted his time and expertise to build an efficient intelligence apparatus which was made up of two divisions. The first was the "Information Wing" which at one point was 600 strong: 400 informers and 200 military agents of different ranks within the Jordanian Armed Forces. The other wing was the "Strike Force" which at one point numbered 500 men under arms.

The Rasd was especially active in intelligence gathering, counterintelligence and covert action. While Palestinians came to dread the Rasd, some Arab countries such as Egypt sought its assistance in providing intelligence on Israel and Jordan. The Rasd -Egypt relationship was based on mutual benefit. In return for intelligence on the goings on inside Israel, Fatah would receive training and, arms and ammunition as well as technical assistance from Egypt. This intelligence cooperation was the fruit of the first meeting

between Salah Khalaf, the spiritual father of Palestinian intelligence and Farouq Qaddoumi on the Palestinian side, and Salah Nasr, Chief of Intelligence and Shams Badran, the Defence Minister on the Egyptian side.[711] In helping the Palestinians launch attacks against Israeli targets, Egypt was hoping to distract Israel and keep it preoccupied with skirmishes and retaliations, so that the Egyptians could rebuild their armed forces.

A number of factors contributed to the success of the Jihaz during this period. There was above all else, an intelligence concept to which it closely adhered. The intelligence leadership was made up of cadres, experienced and hardened by long years of clandestine work. The growing numbers of recruits and sympathisers, inside Jordan and elsewhere, afforded the Fatah leadership a wide choice to select the most suitable operatives. A crucial factor was of course the military and financial support which poured into Fatah from most Arab regimes, especially from the oil-rich countries. But the efforts of the Rasd were cut short by the events of September 1970 in Jordan which meted out a devastating blow to the Palestinian intelligence project and evicted the Palestinian military presence from Jordanian soil.

9.8.2 The Lebanon Stage 1971-1973

Following the events of what the Palestinians call Black September, Fatah's Central Committee held a general conference to assess the situation and draw lessons from the Palestinian defeat in Jordan. Instead of carrying out a realistic and objective investigation into what went wrong, the Fatah leaders found in the conference a golden opportunity to get rid of the Rasd's head, Abu Iyad who had grown in stature to the extent that Arafat and others felt threatened by him. The conferees accused him of total failure in forecasting developments in Jordan and decided to disband the Rasd and re-assign what is left of its personnel to other Fatah or PLO offices. Despite Abu Iyad's protestations to the contrary, the Fatah leadership was simply intent on disregarding whatever argument he posited.

In place of the Rasd, a new apparatus called Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Markazi (Central Security) was created. The Markazi was to be headed by Muhammad Yousif Al-Najjar. It was during this period that the leader of the disbanded Rasd attempted to take the initiative and bring the Palestinian question to the attention of world public opinion. In order to mislead world public opinion and protect its leaders and operatives, Fatah ex-intelligence chief (Abu Iyad) created deniable units which Fatah could conveniently disavow. The establishment of such a fictitious organization as Black September was a case in point. After the Munich massacre of the Israeli Olympic team in 1972, Fatah confronted the whole outraged world

with assertion after assertion that it had nothing to do with the perpetrators, who insisted that they belonged to a group which calls itself Black September.

To launch so many bloody attacks on Israeli and Western targets, which included among other outrages attacks on civilian aircraft, embassies, businesses, military and dual-use installations, Fatah depended on its own intelligence cadres, who regularly supplied Arafat and the Palestinian leadership with reports and recommendations as to the best course of action to take. In this respect, Fatah, like many other paramilitary groups in the Middle East and elsewhere, was simultaneously a producer and a consumer of intelligence. Drawing upon its massive human resources inside the occupied territories and elsewhere, Fatah was able to produce a mass of information carefully gleaned by its operatives and agents. The collected data was processed through the intelligence cycle which carefully sifted and analysed by specialists before passing it on as a final product to decision makers. Following the Munich and other operations Israel assassinated two of Fatah's central committee: Muhammad Yousif al-Najjar, head of Markazi and Kemal Adwan in April 1973. The assassinations were a big blow to Palestinian intelligence community. What exacerbated the situation was the fact that the intelligence community was practically left without a leadership which enjoys the full trust of Chairman Arafat, who fearing the emergence of rivals, continued to seek full control of the Markazi despite his growing political responsibilities.

9.8.3 The Third Stage 1974-1988

In 1974 following Arab and international recognition of the PLO as a sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO decided to restructure its intelligence apparatus and clearly define the responsibilities and duties of each department within the security and intelligence sector. Among the decisions taken: creation of Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Muwahhed (Unified Security) and the expansion of "Force 17" and the "Western Sector". In so doing Fatah was hoping to revitalize intelligence work and make it more effective. The aim was to create semi-autonomous intelligence organs working independently of each other but unified at the top and directed by only one chief: Yassir Arafat. It was hoped that the new restructuring would render the intelligence effort more efficient especially as the new formations were given more powers and were envisaged to complement each other. (CIA) headed by Hayel Abdul-Hamid, was in charge of clandestine collection. Counter-intelligence and Presidential security were the domain of Yassir Arafat who empowered Ali Hassan Salameh to create Force 17. Abu Jihad was appointed in charge of

Covert Action in the Western Sector. In order to coordinate intelligence activities a new office was created. This was to be called ''Central Operations Room'' headed by Sayil and kept under the direct command of the 'Central Committee' chaired by Arafat.

In an attempt to control the intelligence organs of the other Palestinian organizations, Yassir Arafat created the Unified Security Apparatus. The new structure was headed by Abu Iyad. Abu Iyad however exploited his new position to entrench his status within the PLO. Arafat who would not tolerate any competition or rivalry used the great financial resources at his disposal to contain and undermine any would be contender. What enabled Arafat to use the financial weapon was the fact that all remittances from the oil rich countries were in his own personal name. This allowed him not only to have full control of Fatah's finances but also to use these immense resources to eradicate any opposition or potential rivalry and to support and expand the powers of Force 17 which he transformed into a powerful intelligence and military organ.

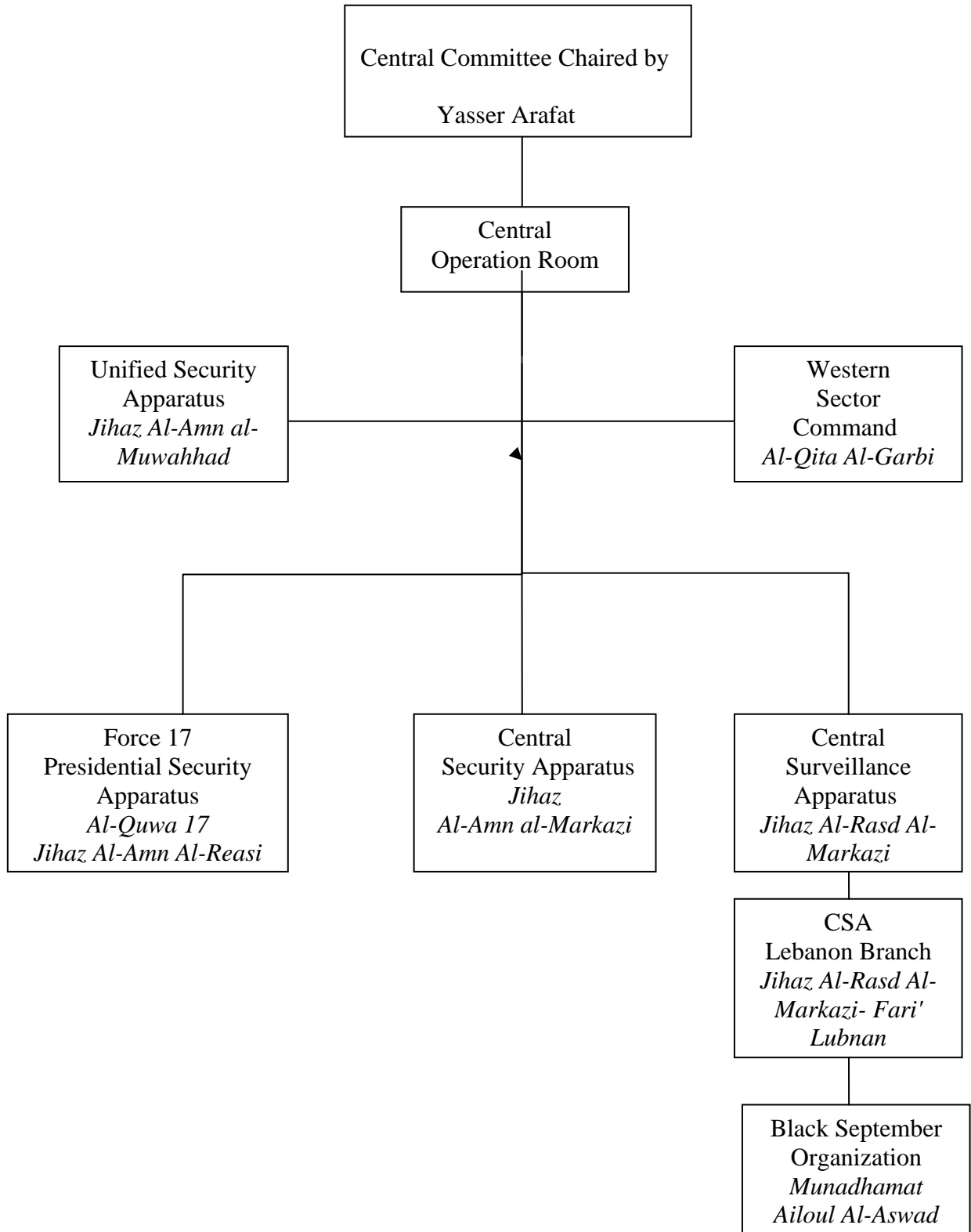### 9.8.4 The Final Stage 1989-1992

Following the assassination of Khalil Al-Wazir in April 1988, the Palestinian intelligence organs entered a new phase. The Western Sector was disbanded and a new three-man Security Committee was created. The committee was headed by Arafat. The other two members were the heads of the two other apparatuses: Abu Iyad and Abu Al-Hawl. The committee continued to work until these two members were assassinated in Tunis in 1991. Of all the founders of Palestinian intelligence work, only Yassir Arafat now remained. This enabled Arafat to engage in secret negotiations with the Israelis and the signing of the Oslo agreement. Following that significant development which resulted in the creation of the Palestinian Authority in the West bank and Gaza all security and intelligence organs were banded together and restructured.

To conclude, it can be argued that the initial success of the Palestinian intelligence work in Jordan can be attributed to a number of factors. Chief among these is the fact that Fatah adhered to a single intelligence school of thought. The expertise and leadership of the intelligence chief was another factor. The unity of command as well as the well-defined duties and responsibilities also made the success possible. Unlike the first or third stage, the second stage in the development of intelligence work however was characterized by failure and inefficiency. The lack of a clearly defined organizational structure as well as employment to terrorist tactics in intelligence work led to serious failures. What confounded the situation was the fact that Palestinian intelligence community did not

follow one specific intelligence school. While Rasd, Muwahhad and Western Sector followed the Arab/Islamist Brotherhood intelligence concept, Markezi adhered to the Egyptian intelligence school. Force 17 on the other hand followed a combination of Egyptian and East European schools of intelligence concepts.

The common denominator behind the failure of Fatah's intelligence organs was the inability to separate between intelligence work and armed struggle. This exposed its leaders and operatives alike to an unending cycle of murder and assassination. The founders of Palestinian intelligence work did not seem to have learnt their lesson and kept falling one after the other. The second generation followed different intelligence schools of thought. Rivalry, internal infighting, and an atmosphere of mutual suspicions interrupted the flow of intelligence to Fatah's chief. This explains Arafat's decision to expand, strengthen and empower Force 17 to the extent that it was soon to become a significant player in Palestinian intelligence.

Fatah's
Intelligence and Security Apparatuses

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            ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            │ Central Committee Chaired by │
            │                              │
            │        Yasser Arafat         │
            └──────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                 ┌─────────────────┐
                 │     Central     │
                 │ Operation Room  │
                 └─────────────────┘
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Unified Security Apparatus *Jihaz Al-Amn al-Muwahhad*		Western Sector Command *Al-Qita Al-Garbi*

Force 17 Presidential Security Apparatus *Al-Quwa 17* *Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Reasi*	Central Security Apparatus *Jihaz* *Al-Amn al-Markazi*	Central Surveillance Apparatus *Jihaz Al-Rasd Al-Markazi*

		CSA Lebanon Branch *Jihaz Al-Rasd Al-Markazi- Fari' Lubnan*

		Black September Organization *Munadhamat Ailoul Al-Aswad*

Chapter Ten
Conclusion

Intelligence activities are not a new development in the history of the Arabs. Despite assertions to the contrary, it has been practiced since long before the advent of Islam.[712] Ample evidence is afforded by Arabic classical literature, folklore, inherited oral tales and metrical romances. In its earliest stages, the craft of espionage was admittedly practiced in a primitive and rudimentary form. With the passage of time, however, it was developed to meet the ancient Arabs' need to resist the changing military and intelligence challenges posed by their enemies. This research has shown that Arab and Islamic paramilitary organizations have since the sixth century resorted to intelligence operations in order to protect themselves, score victories over rivals and adversaries and implement their own agendas. The study has also shown that in order to force their agendas, present-day organizations, like their predecessors, continue to carry out such intelligence activities as clandestine collection, analysis and dissemination, counterintelligence and covert action. To enable leaders to make the right decisions, these paramilitary groups test collected information by subjecting it to the intelligence cycle. As intelligence actors, they have shown themselves to be as professional as their counterparts in any national intelligence agency and perhaps even more dedicated in the execution of their work.

Before the tragic events of 11th September 2001, the international community was focusing most of its attention on preventing and pre-empting terrorist operations. The primary aim was to protect the lives of innocent citizens, especially in the Western world, which was and remains the main target of terrorist attacks. Very little attention was paid to the way in which clandestine terrorist organizations administered intelligence work.

The atrocities of 9/11, 7/7, Madrid and more recently Mumbai underscore the importance of understanding the intelligence concept of terrorist organizations and the necessity of investigating the way in which terrorists go about their intelligence business. These events, which have exposed the failures and shortcomings of the intelligence communities in most Western countries and in India, but especially in the USA, have also shown the magnitude of the dangers posed by these military groups and their capability to carry out intelligence operations in much the same way as national intelligence agencies with immensely greater human, technical and financial resources.

The 9/11 events and those which followed have proved that the perpetrators are tough challengers and a power with which the international community has had to reckon. These events would not have been possible without the existence of an intelligence concept and a well defined strategy. It is through the study of the historical background and cultural and social roots of those planning or executing terrorist attacks that one can grasp the fundamentals upon which the intelligence concepts of these paramilitary groups are based.

The present investigation into the strategies of paramilitary organizations, the intellectual framework within which they operate and the models which they have attempted to emulate has clearly shown that these revolutionary groups have always espoused Islam as their main ideological wellspring and source of inspiration. These organizations have furthermore adopted the Islamic concept of intelligence, which is based on three elements: the Quran, Prophet Muhammed's Traditions and *Ijtihad* (the reasoned interpretation of theological texts).

Long before the creation of such faith-driven paramilitary groups as Hezbullah and Hamas, Fatah had been quick to realize the impact of religion in the conflict with Israel. It was the first paramilitary organization in the Middle East which turned to Islam for inspiration and guidance. Indeed, no other group comes closer to Islam than Fatah, all of whose leaders had connection with the Muslim Brotherhood. The founding members who came to command and oversee the intelligence units within Fatah and indeed the PLO in general succeeded in scoring a number of intelligence successes and managed to wrest recognition from their Israeli adversaries as well as the whole international community. The intelligence concept to which Fatah subscribes is an organic part of a whole system of thought which is deeply rooted in the Islamic cultural heritage of the Arabs.

The establishment of Fatah in the late 1950's was declared, after extensive debates, which took place with several Palestinian groups at that time. The most notable group was the Muslim Brotherhood where most of the Fatah founders originally came from. Despite the common grounds which Fatah shared with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Fatah founders had their distinctive political approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. While the Muslim Brotherhood's political agenda seeks to establish the Islamic caliphate first, then liberate the occupied land in Palestine, to Fatah founders, the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle comes at the top of their agenda.

The Muslim Brotherhood is dedicated to the credo "Allah is our objective, the Prophet is our leader, The Qur'an is our law, jihad is our way and dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."[713] To the Brotherhood members, implementation of the Islamic law

takes precedence over all other aims. The Islamization of society should be total and should cover all aspects of human endeavour including of course political life, security and intelligence projects. The founders of Fatah had greatly benefited from their long association with the Muslim's Brotherhood. Not only had they become knowledgeable of those aspects of belief and the rich Islamic heritage, but also the means, methods and techniques that were applied by the Muslim Brotherhood in their networking. In applying the Islamic intelligence concept, the Fatah founders followed Prophet Muhammed's intelligence practices which called for discipline, secrecy, and total obedience to the leadership. This was quite evident in the formation of their intelligence arm.

Since its inception, Fatah, adopted the Islamic intelligence concept of the Muslim Brotherhood, and their methods of deniability which was implemented as a result of the dissolution of the Brotherhood by the Egyptian authority in 1956. Responding to the grave dangers with which the Brotherhood was confronted following the attempt on Nasser's life in 1954 the Muslim Brotherhood introduced to its political body 'the secret apparatus' (*Al-Jihaz Al-Sirri*)[714] an intelligence unit devoted to clandestine activities. Fatah tracked the steps of the mother movement by establishing its first intelligence arm (Central Surveillance Apparatus) and attached it to its Central Committee. In intelligence practices, the Quran and emulation of Prophet Muhammed's *Sunnah* guided them. Not only that, but also they benefited from the Islamic Jurisprudence (*Ijtihad*) which allowed them to become acquainted with modern-day techniques and sophisticated technology used in intelligence work. That was achieved by coordinating and seeking help from allies in the Arab States and the Eastern bloc intelligence agencies. As a result of cooperating with the Intelligence agencies of what was known as the Socialist or Communist bloc, Fatah also became familiar with the 'modus operandi' of the Israeli's intelligence service.

In spite of Fatah's adoption of patriotic slogans which sought to appeal to the Palestinian and Arab masses and win new recruits and supporters from all ideological and religious groups, the majority of its leaders remained practically islamist in inclination and worked under deep cover. The Quran, Sunnah, and the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic intelligence 'modus operandi' inspired Fatah's Intelligence machinery. The two pioneers of the Palestinian intelligence community, Abu Iyad and Abu Jihad, understood fully the Islamic intelligence concept and later seriously and professionally attempted to implement it. The successes achieved by some of Fatah's intelligence apparatuses could be attributed to the successful understanding and implementation of such a concept.

The evolution and transformation of Fatah's intelligence activities and tradecraft, from an underground movement to a government in exile echoes the first Islamic intelligence experience. The Islamic state in Medina (June 622) went through three distinctive stages; secret, open, and state formation. Fatah, too, passed through three similar stages, the first of which was the clandestine phase, which was marked with "absolute secrecy". The thick cover of secretiveness was necessary to achieve essential duties such as clandestine collection, successful recruitment, clandestine communications, and use of safe houses. In the second 'Jordan' stage the movement went public, declared its political agenda, and resorted to intensive intelligence activities in order to protect its leaders, members of the movement, influence events and achieve some political goals. The third 'state building stage' began in Lebanon, where the Palestinian government in exile was formed and intelligence institutions proliferated.

Historically, the Arabs were no exception to the civilizations that preceded them in employing intelligence activities in their conflicts. Recently discovered archaeological friezes indicate that they used a relatively advanced form of intelligence activities in the third century AD. Literary and historical sources indicate that these activities were quite diversified and reflect the prevalent culture and customs of those ancient times. The level of these activities during the periods that preceded Islam varied from the primitive such as attempting to deduce the future through palm-reading, astrology, magicians and quacks, to the more advanced level of deploying special units attached to their armies, which were entirely devoted to intelligence activities. Intelligence gathering depended on specialists called *uyoun, rabee'ah, talee'ah and daleel*. The activities of these operatives were carried out in secrecy and their intelligence reports were instrumental in making appropriate recommendations and decisions, especially in time of war.

The Arabs, particularly those dwelling the central parts of the Arabian Peninsula, developed their intelligence activities spontaneously through experience gained from raids and inter-tribal wars. External powers hardly presented any threat against the Arabs of this part of the Peninsula, as the desert formed a natural and protective barrier against any invasion. The desert also had a negative impact on the development of intelligence techniques and strategies. The sands constituted a barrier which prevented communication with the surrounding civilizations and which prevented the Arabs from benefiting from or simply copying their neighbours' intelligence models.

With the advent of Islam in the sixth century, the Muslims succeeded in developing and applying numerous intelligence tactics and methodologies, which played an important

role in the establishment of the first Islamic state in Medina. At first, the early Muslims, particularly during the time of Prophet Muhammed, did not have specialized intelligence units. As in other affairs of state, this specific activity was directly overseen by the leadership, which used as its headquarters the mosque, where all such affairs were administered. Specialized institutions did not emerge and develop until a few years after the death of Prophet Muhammed, when the rapidly expanding empire of the Muslims required an effective intelligence network.

As supreme commander, all Prophet Muhammed needed to do was to personally direct one or other of his followers to monitor, investigate or collect intelligence, when he met them before or after one of the five prayers which Muslims performed in congregation at the mosque. Upon completion of the mission, the operative could either return to the headquarters at the mosque at any of the appointed times of prayer, or head to the commander's residence, annexed to the mosque. The mosque thus played a key part as a centre for worship, religious education and administration of state affairs. As for decision making, the leader was helped by his aides and counsellors in deciding on a specific course of action in the light of available information.

Decision making in Islam is taken in accordance with the principle of *Shura* (consultation) as stipulated in the Quran.[715] Prophet Muhammed set an example for Muslims to follow by applying this principle in his own daily life and practice. In all matters relating to the affairs of the Umma (nation), he used to seek counsel from his companions, known for their wisdom and sound judgement. He listened to them and accepted their proposals and counsel on a variety of issues concerning state affairs, especially political and military matters.

In Islam, Prophet Muhammed represents the leader chosen by Allah to lead mankind to the true path. His companions believed in him and in his message, for they too were chosen by Allah, in order to implement Allah's teachings and commandments. The central decisions were taken by Prophet Muhammed alone, while counsellors offered advice and recommendations. Several verses in the Quran show the Prophet's agreement with the proposals of his companions. This principle of *Shura* was adopted as a mechanism through which decisions were made on the basis of intelligence reports.

The Muslims rapidly developed the methods of intelligence-gathering and dissemination. During the ten years between the emigration to Medina and the establishment of the Islamic state, intelligence developed from a rudimentary basic level to a relatively advanced stage by the standards of that time. From the siege of Mecca and the

imposition of economic blockade when trade caravans were prevented access to it, the Muslims learned how to obtain and disseminate the intelligence needed to make their blockade a success.

The network that remained in Mecca after the Prophet's Hijra to Medina constituted the main source of information regarding such matters as the plots schemed against Prophet Muhammed or the departure and arrival of trade caravans from Syria or the Yemen. The Muslims did not succeed in preventing these caravans from going to or departing from Mecca during the early stages of the economic blockade. In point of fact, a number of caravans succeeded in reaching their destination and returning without being intercepted by Muslims. But the Medina intelligence community learnt from their mistakes and in due course managed to fill in the gaps and remedy the shortcomings.

From the time the Muslims waged their first major battle, they proved their reconnaissance capabilities and made the best use of the information gathered. Guides (daleel) were used in military operations to map out the best routes across the deserts or mountains. Traversing the Peninsula also required a thorough knowledge of the tribes through which these routes passed. The daleels were of great importance to the army, as they were the prime intelligence specialists to guide the commander to the best and most secure overland route. The mission of the uyoun, on the other hand, was to gather information about friends and foes and all that concerned military campaigns. On the reports of the uyoun depended decisions on whether to attack and engage in battle or not. The talee'ah played an important role in providing early warning of the dangers confronting army movements. Moreover, reconnaissance of the battlefield was entrusted to specialized groups to advise the commander or his lieutenants on whether to concentrate troops in a specific strategic position or make use of certain natural barriers. The clever use of talee'ah enabled the Muslims to achieve impressive victories despite their small numbers and inadequate equipment.

One of the important factors which contributed to the early military successes of the Muslims was the employment of specialists in reconnaissance and military planning. The early victories had a great psychological impact in that droves of Quraishis and others came to embrace the new religion. As the number of those who accepted Islam increased and as Muslim forces expanded both in number and capabilities, the need increased for strategic information about opponents other than Quraishis, especially neighbouring powers such as the Byzantines, Persians and Copts. With the expansion of the Islamic faith, Muslims did not fail to spread their intelligence network for the purpose of gathering

information, be it military or non-military. Prophet Muhammed conscripted a large number of tribesmen, and made use of merchants and messengers to obtain information about the movement of military forces in the areas adjacent to the Arabian Peninsula as well as to observe enemies outside Medina. The strategic intelligence obtained greatly helped in making preparations for the defence of Medina, in the deployment of troops and in carrying out pre-emptive strikes. These networks of uyoun constituted the backbone of the special units tasked with monitoring tribal and other influential leaders.

The Muslims were able, within ten years, to bring the whole Arabian Peninsula to embrace Islam, and to create an army of ten thousand fighting men. No efforts were wasted on obtaining information on personal lives, which helped the Islamic state to concentrate on important issues relating to what constituted a danger to the nation.

No wonder, then, that the Arabs were able to undertake operations aimed at eliminating the dangers posed by their enemies and opponents. Prophet Muhammed scored many intelligence successes on the domestic scene. His intelligence operatives were able to uncover a number of clandestine assassination plots. His source in Mecca provided him with adequate information on these planned assassinations, while his uyoun in other parts of the Peninsula provided accurate information on other attempts. Those uyoun, particularly in Medina, helped in uncovering hostile movements by the Hypocrites against Muslims. The Safa contingent, created originally as bodyguards of the prophet, was also charged with enforce security and counterintelligence.

Covert action was of particular interest to the Muslims, especially operations intended for purely political, psychological or information purposes. Under direct guidance from Prophet Muhammed, the Muslims started to implement a number of operations aimed at disposing of agitators, leaders or poets hostile to Islam. The Muslims carefully selected the right operatives and chose the most suitable time for the execution of such operations. Special attention was also paid to the choice of a credible cover.

In attempting to provide a composite picture of the Islamic concept of intelligence adopted by Muslim paramilitary groups, it is essential to examine closely the Muslims' Holy Book. The Quran provides a number of references to and examples of intelligence work. Some of its verses clearly set demarcation lines between what is admissible and that which is inadmissible in intelligence activities. Significantly, the Quran cites illustrative examples of the intelligence cycle at work, starting from information collection and ending with decision making.

The Quranic intelligence cycle is characterized by the great emphasis laid on verification before any analysis is adopted or decision made. The Quran also places a number of restraints on those involved in intelligence work. Islam, for example, prohibits any tactics which deviate from or run counter to the Shari'a as a means of deception, seduction or entrapment in order to obtain information. This includes the use of women, sex and wine. Islam's prohibition of spying on the personal lives of the citizenry is aimed at safeguarding privacy and personal freedoms. On the other hand, the Quran sanctions covert action and all that which ultimately contributes to the good of Islam. Scholars and those well versed in Islamic jurisprudence have developed a penal code for those who spy on Muslims, whether in the "House of War" or the "House of Peace".

The Islamic concept of intelligence is governed by a number of rules and regulations, designed to guide those involved in the execution of intelligence work and prevent them from abusing their powers. Operating in an environment where there are well-defined and clear-cut rules and codes of behaviour facilitates intelligence work and makes the intelligence community more proactive and dedicated, especially if these codes and rulings are thought by the Muslims to have emanated from the Quran. Chief among the distinguishing features of the Islamic concept of intelligence are:

1. The existence of a long-term holy strategic aim, which stems from Islam. All members of the Islamic paramilitary groups, from the top leadership through policy makers and down to the lowest operative ranks, are expected to be wholly dedicated to achieving this holy aim such as liberating an occupied land or spreading Islam.

2. Exercising intelligence activities sanctioned by the Quran and refraining from those prohibited by the Islamic Holy Book.

3. Emulating the intelligence tactics and methodologies practiced by the Prophet Muhammed, in all stages of the Islamic call.

4. Exercising the method of *Ijtihad* in intelligence aspects where the Islamic intelligence doctrine is inapplicable.

The Islamic concept of intelligence reflects the impact of culture and religion on intelligence theory in the Arab and Islamic worlds. Because intelligence is linked to politics and is in point of fact a complementary part of it, it is imperative that in order to understand the policies of some Arab or Islamic states one should, as Adda Bozeman consistently argues, concentrate on understanding the impact of culture and religion on the political events in these countries. Such an approach will help to unlock and solve many of

the complexities associated with the Middle Eastern Arabs, who strongly believe in and profess two identities: one religious (Muslim) and the other national (Arab). This double-barrelled identity has greatly influenced the cultural, ethical and social values of the region's peoples and has furthermore coloured the attitudes and worldviews of these communities, politically and intellectually.

The region has witnessed the emergence of numerous political movements and schools of thought. Some of these groupings are extremist, engage in armed resistance and violent activities and can be classified as paramilitary organizations. Unless the intellectual frame of reference, ideologies and intelligence doctrines which drive them are carefully studied, it would be extremely difficult to understand the nature of these militant groups or identify their strategies and long-term aims. The Islamic concept of intelligence provides a helping hand in the search for such an understanding. Of all the intelligence concepts prevalent today, the Islamic concept alone offers a rational explanation of the conduct of those who join extremist religious groups or nationalist political movements in the Arab and Islamic worlds. The conduct of these radical groupings is always associated with a strong willpower and a conscious determination to sacrifice. Dying for one's country or in the service of Islam is considered a sacred duty which both Islam and the homeland demand.

This mental attitude towards sacrifice is what drives both nationalist and religious movements in the Middle East. In order to embody their dream of establishing a Palestinian state or achieve tangible successes on the ground, many young Fatah members are eager to sacrifice themselves for their national cause. On the other hand, members of religious movements are even more eager to sacrifice themselves in return for eternal bliss in the next world. The glamour surrounding martyrdom in the Islamic world and especially in Palestine has caused many young men and women to join radical movements which offer fresh recruits an opportunity to practice Jihad, die for a worthy cause and win the ultimate accolade, which surpasses and outweighs all worldly gains.

Misunderstanding the forces at work in Middle Eastern communities has led many scholars and strategists to look upon Islamic paramilitary groups as small and isolated terrorist organizations which must in the interest of peace and stability be completely wiped out. Such an attitude betrays a lack of understanding and a failure to grasp the nature of the formidable force of faith which never ceases to drive many young men and women towards these extremist organizations. According to the Islamic concept of intelligence, total faith in the justice of one's cause becomes a prodigious material force, capable of destroying the world. The Islamic perspective may therefore provide an explanation for

this cosmic phenomenon and may also help in the search for an appropriate response to this highly dangerous and grave threat.

What characterizes the strategies and thought patterns of these paramilitary groups is the fact that they recognize no limits or limitations except those delineated and imposed by their own ideologies. They have no regard whatsoever for the authority of international law, the principle of national sovereignty or the legal systems adopted by any of the world's communities. Members of these groups are furthermore characterized by toughness, patience, perseverance and blind faith in destiny. This was quite evident in Fatah's activities on the world scene when it resorted to violence and espoused armed struggle as a means to liberate Palestine and the Aqsa Mosque. In bringing in the Aqsa Mosque, Fatah added a religious and highly emotive dimension to its national struggle. The result became evident within a very short time. Fatah succeeded in acquiring a special status in the hearts of the Muslims all over the world, transforming it into a fierce striking force which shocked the international community with the ferocity of its operations, especially Israel, the USA and some Arab and European countries.

Finally, on account of the immense threat posed by highly secretive organizations which have over and over again proved capable of causing mass human catastrophes, it is vital that more studies should be carried out in order to comprehend the way these organizations go about their business, unravel the methods they employ to recruit new operatives, and bring to light the way they spread and manage their networks.

This research has attempted to address the gap in the intelligence literature on the Middle East, especially in delineating and understanding the concept of intelligence in the Islamic world. The case study has illustrated that the intellectual framework of the leaders of Fatah, based as it was on the Arab and Islamic heritage, played a vital role in crystallizing their concept as well as practices of intelligence. Understanding the close interrelationship between the socio-religious framework and intelligence work may therefore lead to a better understanding of Islamist paramilitary groups. For academics and intelligence practitioners alike, the need to explore the Islamic concept of intelligence is quite essential if we are to understand the use of violence and terror by many Middle Eastern paramilitary organizations. It is hoped that the present research can provide a generic framework to develop an understanding of the inner workings of paramilitary organizations as Hamas and Hezbullah, and ultimately assist politicians and security personnel to better understand the politics and forces at work in the volatile parts of the world, wherever religion holds sway in society.

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Notes

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136 Italics mine, verse 27.

137 Verse 47. See Ibn Katheer, Tafsir Ibn Katheer, interpretation of the verse in IV: 140.

138 Al-Ahzab (Parties), verse 13.

139 Al-Ahzab (Parties), verse 12.

140 Ibid., verse 60.

141 See "Second World War Posters", http://www.ww2poster.co.uk/ (accessed April 14, 2008).

142 The Surah of "Women", verse 83.

143 Ja'far Muhammed Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari, *Jami□ al-bayan □ fi Tafsir al-Qur□ an*(A Comprehensive Commentary on the Glorious Quran) (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1978), 15: 114 ff; Al-Fakhr Al-Razi, *Mafateeh Al-Ghaib* (Unlocking the Unknown) (Egypt, n. d.) 10: 199.

144 Sherman Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1951), 3.

145 The Surah of the "Spoils" of War, verse 60.

146 See commentary on verse 60 of Al-Anfal in Al-Fakhr Al-Razi, Mafateeh Al-Ghaib (Unlocking the Unknown).

http://www.daraleman.org/forum/uploads/Quraan/MafathRazi.rar (accessed April 30, 2008). See also Muhammed bin Al-Waleed Al-Fihri Ṭ urṭ ushi, *Siraj Al-Muluk* (The Kings' Lantern) (Cairo: Al-Maktabah Al-Mahmoudiya Al-Tijariya, 1935), 326-8.

147 The Surah of "Joseph", verse 87.

148 The Surah of the "Chambers", verse 6.

149 Verse 74.

150 Verse 27.

151 Lisan Al-□ Arab,

152 "Major Religions of the World Ranked by Number of Adherents,".

http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html. (accessed April 01, 2008).

153 Gabriel. *Islam's First Great General*, xviii-xix.

154 Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom* (The Sealed Nectar) (Al-Riyadh: Darussalam, 1979), 80.

155 Ibid., 80.

156 Ibn Hisham, 1: 420.

157 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 1117.

158 Al-Barhawi, *Al-Uyoun wa Al-Jawasees*, 82.

159 Ibid., 59.

160 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh* (History), 2: 296.

161 Battle of Badr at http://www.johina.net/vb/t13799.html (accessed April 01, 2008).

162 Al Umrah is a shortened version of the Haj. Unlike Haj, there is no specific season for the Umra, which can be performed practically any time during the year. It consists mainly of tawaf or circling the Kaaba seven times, and Saí', or going back and forth seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah.

163 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 580.

164 Ibid., 3: 893.

165 Ibid., 2: 566.

166 Ibid., 2: 566-7.

167 Ibid., 1: 406.

168 Ibid., 1: 407.

169 Al-Barhawi, *Al-Uyoun wa Al-Jawasees*, 99-102.

170 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 639.

171 Ibid., 2: 640.

172 Ibid., 2: 641.

173 The Arabic word used in the original text is شدّوا عليه . This can also be translated as meaning that they were rough or severe with him.

174 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 562.

175 Ibid., 1: 194.

176 This name was take by a PLO group which, under chairman Yassir Arafat, dominated the Palestinian scene for almost 40 years.

177 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 796; Ali bin Borhan Al-Halabi, *Al-Seera Al-Halabiya* (Halabi's Biography) (Cairo: n.p., 1964), 3: 74.

178 Ibid., 2: 798-9.

179 See below p. 126.

180 A mangonel is a military engine for casting stones and other missiles against an enemy's position. See entry in New Oxford English Dictionary.

181 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 805-6

182 Ibid., 3: 1047.

183 See above, p. 56.

184 Ali bin abi Talib, the first of the fedayeen in Islam, was Muhammed's paternal cousin and confidant. He took part in all the battles during the lifetime of Muhammed. Ali was the fourth and last of the Rashidi caliphs, who ruled the state of Islam after Muhammed. His caliphate lasted 4 years, 8 months and 22 days.

185 Al-Zubair bin Al-Awwam was the son of Muhammed's aunt Safiya. He embraced Islam at the age of 17 and was one of the six-member Shura Council, who elected Omar bin Khattab to be the second Rashidi caliph after Abu Bakr.

186 Saad bin Abbi Waqas was also one of Muhammed's relatives on his mother's side. He too was one of the earliest converts to Islam and known in Islamic history as the first warrior who used his arrows and spears to further the cause of Islam.

187 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 52.

188 Abu Sufyan was one of the most cunning minds in Arab history. He was ten years older than Muhammed and died aged ninety, almost twenty years after Muhammed's death. He had fought against Muhammed until the conquest of Mecca, when he embraced Islam.

189 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 52.

190 Ibid., 1: 53.

191 Ibn Hisham, *Al-Seera Al-Nabawiya* (The Prophet's Biography), 4: 1624.

192 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 298.

193 Gabriel. *Islam's First Great General*, xxi.

194 Ibid., xxv.

195 Gabriel, "Muhammad: The Warrior Prophet", 4.

196 Hanna Al-Farkhouri, *Tarikh Al-Al-Adab al-Arabi* (History of Arabic Literature), 8th ed. (Beirut: Al-Matba'a Al-Bulsiya, 1961), 59. Commenting on the impact of the poets on ordinary people, a Muslem schoolre, Ibn Taimiya points out that poetry, unlike prose, can popularize anti-Islamic feelings and drive people away from the path of Allah. See abu Al-Fath Al-Shahristani, *Mosuat Almell wa Madaheb* (Encyclopaedia of Peoples and Sects) 1st ed. (Beirut: n. p., n. d), 84.

197 Ibn Ishaq: Sirat Rasul Allah (A. Guillaume's translation The Life of Muhammad), 675-6, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asma_bint_Marwan.

198 Al-Wagidi, 1: 173. See also Sirat Ibn Hisham ([Muhammed's] Biography by Ibn Hisham, *Al-Marji'Al-Akbar Lil-Turath al-Islami* (Greatest Primary Sources of Islamic Heritage), I: 414ff.

199 Sirat Ibn Hisham ([Muhammed's] Biography by Ibn Hisham, *Al-Marji'Al-Akbar Lil-Turath al-Islami* (Greatest Primary Sources of Islamic Heritage), I: 418.

200 Yusuf ibn □ Abd Allah Ibn Abdul Barr,*Al-Isti□ ab fi ma□ rifat Al-Aṣ ḥ ab* (Comprehension in Knowing Freinds) (al-Qahirah: Dar Al-Maarifah, 2006), 3: 1218; Aḥ mad ibn Yaḥ yá and Muhammad Hamidullah Baladhuri, Ansab Al-Ashraf (Ancestry) (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Ma□ arif, 1987), 1: 373.

201 Ibn Hisham, *Al-Seera Al-Nabawiya*, 3: 170.

202 Ibn Abdul Barr, *Al-Isti□ab fi ma□rifat Al-A*ṣ*ḥab* (Comprehension), 3: 947.

203 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 391.

204 Ibn Hisham, *Al-Seera Al-Nabawiya,* 3: 171.

205 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 391-5.

206 Al-Tabari, *Taiekh* (History), 3: 156.

207 Ibid.; Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 468-9.

208 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh* (History) 3: 3.

209 Ibid., 3: 35.

210 Al-lajna Al-Ilmiya Li-Nusrat Khatem Al-Anbia' (Committee for the Defence of the Seal of Prophets). http://www.nusrah.tv/showthread.php?t=432, (accessed May10, 2008).

211 The Surah of "Women", verse 51.

212 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1:189-99.

213 Abu Ja'far Muhammed Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari, *Kitab Ikhtilaf Fugaha* (The Book of the Disagreement Among Muslim Jurists) (Leiden: n, p., 1938), 41.

214 Muhammad Ibn Saad, *Al-Ṭabaqat Al-Kubra* (The Greatest Companions) (Cairo: Dar Al-Tahreer, 1388 AH), 2: Sec. 1: 69.

215 Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mujam al-buldan* (Encyclopaedia of Place Names) (Bairut: Dar Sader, 1979), 5: 424.

216 Ibn Saad, *Al-Ṭabaqat Al-Kubra*, 2: Sec. 1: 68

217 Ali Muhammed Al-Sallabi, *Sirat Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq: Shakhsiyatuhu wa Asruhu* (A Biography of the Life and times of abu Bakr al-Siddiq) (Cairo: Muasasat Iqra, 2006), 162ff.

218 See "Fayruz Ad-Daylami" in Government of Dubai, Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities website at http://www.dicd.gov.ae/vEnglish/detailnewspage.jsp?articleID=3627&pageFlag=1 (accessed April 12, 2008).

219 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh* (History), 3: 185.

220 Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá Baladhuri, *Futūḥ Al-Buldan* (Conquests of Countries) (Bayrūt: Dar al-Nashr lil-Jami□iyin, 1958), 125-6.

221 Ali Ibn Asakir, *Tahtheeb Tarikh Dimashq Li-Ibn □Asakir*[Tarikh madinat Dimashq] (Beirut: Dar al-Masseerah, 1979), 7: 97.

222 Ibid.

223 Ibn Abdul Barr, *Al-Isti☐ ab fi ma☐ rifat Al-Aṣ ḥab* (Comprehension), 1: 773.

224 Ibid., 3: 1383-1385.

225 Also known as "The Sword of Allah". Al-Waleed, who wrested Syria and Palestine from the Byzantines (AD 632), is the most celebrated Islamic general and among the very few military leaders in history who never lost a battle throughout an entire career. For a comprehensive and detailed biography see A.I. Akram, *The Sword of Allah: Khalid Bin Al-Waleed, His Life and Campaigns* (Delhi: Adam, 2007).

226 None of Muhammed's companion is known by this name. Most likely Al-Qain was a nom de guerre, which Muhammed revealed only to the person commissioned to execute the operation.

227 Muhammad ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* (The Greatest Companions) (Cairo: Dar Al-Tahreer, 1388 AH), 4: part 1: 94.

228 Al-Tabari, *Tafsir Al-tabari* (Al-Tabari's Commentaries) (Dar al-Maarifa, 1990), 4: 68.

229 al--Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 129-30.

230 Ibid., 130.

231 In his *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum* (Sealed Nectar), Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri relates that "'Utaibah bin Abi Lahab once approached the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and most defiantly and brazenly shouted at him …and laid violent hand on him, tore his shirt and spat into his face but his saliva missed the Holy face of the Prophet (Peace be upon him)". In another incident, "'Uqbah bin 'Abi Mu'ait once trod on the Prophet's neck while he was prostrating himself in prayer until his eyes protruded.", 45ff.

232 One of the most vociferous and bitter enemies of Muhammed, who was a tribal leader in pre-Islamic Mecca. His name literally means "father of ignorance", an epithet given to him by the Muslims, who also refer to him as "the Pharaoh of the Arabs". The Arabic word 'Fira'awn' (Pharaoh) carries very negative connotations as a brutal despot. It is used in this sense in the Quran and Traditions of Muhammed.

233 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 78.

234 Ibid., 80.

235 Al-Jalal al-Syuouti Jami', *Al-Masaneed wa Al-Maraseel* (A Compendium of Validated Traditions) (Dar Al-Fikr, 1994), 125; Ibn Hisham, 1: 661-663.

236 Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Kitab Al-Muṣ annaf* (Classifications), 5: 359.

237 Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab Al-Ashraf* (Ancestry), 2: Sec. 1: 68.

238 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 13.

239 Al-Barhawi, *Al-Uyoun wa Al-Jawasees*, 60-64.

240 G. K. Chesterton and Dale Ahlquist, *Lepanto* 1st ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 7.

241 Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani, *Fath Al-Bari* (God's Glorious Conquests) (Lebanon: Dar Al-Fikr, n.d,), 7: 218.

242 Sattar Jabbar Al-Zuhairi, *Jihad Al-Rasool Al-Mustafa wa Al-Salam Al-Alami* (The Prophet's Jihad and World Peace) (Beirut: Dar Al-Athar, 2002), 1: 237.

243 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 93.

244 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 200

245 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 96.

246 Ibid., 97.

247 Ibid., 98.

248 Ibid., 99.

249 Ibid., 99.

250 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 61.

251 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom,* 99.

252 Ibid., 100.

253 Ibid., 101.

254 Al-Zuhairi, *Jihad Al-Rasool Al-Mustafa wa Al-Salam Al-Alami*, 1: .290

255 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 198.

256 Ali 'izz al-Din Ibn al- Athir, *Usud al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifah al-Sahabah* (The Lions of the Forest and the knowledge about the Companions) (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub Al-Ilmiya, n. d.), 3: 165.

257 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 282.

258 Ibid., 1: 204.

259 Ibid., 1: 205.

260 Ibn Saad, *Al-Ṭabaqat Al-Kubra*, 1: 17.

261 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 207.

262 Ibid., 1: 208.

263 Ibid., 1: 210.

264 This Arabic word, which means 'dissembler', as pointed out earlier, was often used, among other things, to describe either a spy, an agent or someone seeking to inflict damage on the Muslims, especially in times of crisis. See above, pp.43-5.

265 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 441-3.

266 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 140.

267 Ibid., 140.

268 Ibid., 141.

269 Ibid., 141.

270 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 444-45.

271 Abdul Qadir Al-Tuhafi, *Ayam Al-Islam Al-Hasima fi Al-Quran* (Islam's Decisive Days in the Quran) 1 ed. (London: Dar Al-Hikma, 2001), 157.

272 Ibid., 157.

273 Ibn Hisham, *Al-Seera Al-Nabawiya*, 2: 224.

274 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 57.

275 Ibid., 2: 460.

276 Ibid., 2: 406.

277 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 143.

278 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 490.

279 The Surah of "Pilgrimage", verse 39.

280 Quotations from Sun Tzu at http://thinkexist.com/quotation/all_war_is_deception/149682.html (accessed October 27, 2008).

281 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 158.

282 The Surah of "Al-Masad", verses 1-5. Abu Lahab was a wealthy Quraishi tribal leader. He rejected Islam as the new religion which preached equality was seen as a serious threat which would undermine his social and financial position.

283 A full discussion of the psychological war waged against the early Muslims is found in Ali Hussein al-Kharbouti, *Al-Rasoul wa Al-Harb al-Nafsiyah* (The Messenger and the Psychological Warfare) (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Anglo, n.d.).

284 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 86.

285 Muhammed Al-Sayed Abu Yabis, *Al-Hijrah: Marhalah min Marahil Al-Taghyeer Al-Insani* (The Migration: A Stage in the Process of Human Change) (Cairo: Dar Al-Sahwah, 1985), 123.

286 Ibid., 127.

287 Ibid., 189, 211.

288 Abu Sufyan's daughter, who was later to be one of Muhammed's wives, never told her father about her conversion to Islam. Another outstanding example of this may be found in the conversion of the sister and son of Umar bin Al-Khattab, the second caliph in Islam. It was by sheer accident that the future caliph discovered their conversion, which prompted him to embrace Islam himself. al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 49.

289 Mohammed Al-Tahar Bin Ashour, *Al-Tahreer wa Al-Tanweer* (Liberation and Enlightenment) (Tunisia: Al-Dar Al-tunisia Llnsher, n. d) 14: 87.

290 Husayn ibn Muhsin ibn Ali Jabir, *Al-Ṭariq Ilá jama at Al-Muslimin* (The Right Path of the Muslims) (Al-Mansoura, Egypt: Al-Matbaa al-Azhariya, 1320 A.H.), 358.

291 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammed: The Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: OUP, 1961), 57.

292 Muhammed later repaid Al-Arqam in kind and offered him a house when he (Al-Arqam) emigrated to Medina.

293 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammed: The Prophet and Statesman*, 58.

294 For a full discussion of the history of the early postal services in Arabia, see: Adam Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Oxford, OUP: 2007).

295 Immanuel Kant and Hans Siegbert Reiss, *Kant's Political Writings*. Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics. [Selections.] (Cambridge Eng.: University Press, 1970), 105-6.

296 William Curry ''Captivity and Adventures of Joesph Pills,'' *The Dublin University Magazine* Fab 1846 No CLVIII. Vlo. XXVII, 223.

297 See "Methods of Travel" in the American Bible Society website http://www.bibles.com/brcpages/MethodsofTravel.

298 Ibid.

299 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 203-5.

300 Rad al-Barhawi, *Al- Uyūn Wa Al-Jawasis*, 64-67.

301 This and subsequent references are to Qissat Al-Zair Salim Kamilatan (The Full Text of the Romance of Al-Zair Salim) http://www.alhandasa.net/forum/showthread.php?t=54815. (accessed January 24, 2008).

302 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2:459.

303 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 579.

304 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 177.

305 Ibid., 177.

306 USC, Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, "Military Expeedtions led by Prophet (pbuh) (Al-Maqhaazi), http://www.globalwebpost.com/farooqm/study_res/islam/hadith/akramkhan_hadith.htm. (accessed March 18, 2008).

307 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 178.

308 M. H. Haykal, *The life of Muhammad* (London: Shorouk International, 1983), ivi.

309 Hasan Muhammed Nour al-Din, *Adawat al-Kitabeh* (Writing Tools) (Beirut: Al-Muasasa Al-Arabiya lil-Dirasat, 2008), 25. See also Alwakeel Bassuani, "Alwaragoon," http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1182170319033&pagename=Zone-Arabic-ArtCulture%2FACALayout (accessed February 24, 2008).

310 Ibrahim A. Al-Kadi, The origins of cryptology: The Arab contribution, *Cryptologia* 16, no 2 (April 1992): 10.

311 Ibid., 5.

312 Matthew Weaver, "Burmese poet arrested over cryptic verse attacking general," *The Guardian*, 24 February 2008. http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:i4rMWL6S9C0J:www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jan/24/burma (accessed February 24, 2008).

313 "Inmates' words: The poems of Guantanamo," *The Independent*, Thursday, 21 June 2007. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/inmates-words-the-poems-of-guantanamo-454005.html. (accessed February 22, 2008).

314 This and subsequent references are to Qissat Al-Zair Salim Kamilatan (The Full Text of the Romance of Al-Zair Salim). http://www.alhandasa.net/forum/showthread.php?t=54815. (accessed January 24, 2008).

315 Ibid.

316 Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj Al-Qushairi, *Al-Jami'al-Saheeh* (The Authorized Traditions) (Beirut, Dar Al-Afaq Al-Jadeedah, 1988), 4: 273-4.

317 Muhammad Ibin Saad, *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* (The Greatest Companions) (Cairo: Dar Al-Tahreer, 1388 AH), 2: sec. 1: 25.

318 Mahmoud Sheet Khattab, Muḥ ammad Jamal al-Din Maḥ fūẓ , and □ Abd al-Laṭ if Zayid, *Iqtibas Al-Niẓ am Al-□ askari fi □ ahd A-Nabi Salla Allahu □ alayhi Wa-Sallam* (Borrowing from the Military System during the Age of the Prophet) (ADoha: Al-Shuóon Al-Diniya, 1981), 196.

319 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 2: 728.

320 Khattab, *Military System*, 169.

321 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 92.

322 Aḥ mad ibn Ali Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fatòh Al-Båaråi Bi-Sharòh Al-Bukhåaråi* (The Divine Revelations: Commentaries on Bukhari's Collection) (Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭ ba⃞ at Muṣ ṭ afa al-Babi al-Ḥalabi, 1959), 6: 499.

323 Mahmoud bin Ahmed bin Mousa, *Umdat Al-Qari Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhari* (Commentaries on Bukhari's Collection: A Reader's Companion) (Cairo: Idarat al-Tibaa Al-Muneeriya, n.d.), 14: 275.

324 Nur al-Din ⃞ Ali ibn Abi Bakr Haythami,*Majma⃞ Al-zawa⃞ id Wa-Manba⃞ Al-fawa⃞ id*(Food for Thought and a Source of Wisdom) (al-Qahirah: Maktabat al-Qudsi, 1933), 8: 195.

325 Ibid., 357.

326 Al-Halabi, *Al-Seera Al-Halabiya* (Halabi's Biography), 3: 11.

327 Abd Allah ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitab ⃞ uyūn Al-Akhbar* (The most Important News) al-Ṭ ab⃞ ah 1 ed. (al-Qahirah: Dar al-Kutub al-Miṣ riyah, n.d), 1: 140.

328 Gabriel, "The Warrior Prophet", 1-10.

329 In the Surah of "Al-Mursalat" (Emissaries), verse 20, Allah cites a rhetorical question: Did We not create you [man] from contemptible water? Another reference occurs in the Sura of As-Sajdah (Prostration) where the Quran asserts "And [Allah] made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised", verse 8. See also Abd Allah Ibn Qutaybah, 1: 149. Al-Waqidi, Kitab Al-Maghazi, 1: 50. The Quran points out that human life is created out of "lowly water" (The Surah of the "Dispatched", verse 20) and again "… We have made of water everything living" (The Surah of "the Prophets", verse 30). Therefore, Muhammed simply meant "we are ordinary humans". But the desert Arab understood Muhammed's words to mean "we are from the land of the water, or the land of the twin rivers", as Mesopotamia (Iraq) was then known.

330 Al-Waqidi, Kitab *Al-Maghazi*, 2: 756.

331 Sun Tzu on the Art of War, Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles, at http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html; See also Gabriel, "The Warrior Prophet", 5-9.

332 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, 1: 299.

333 Ibid., 1: 536.

334 Ibid., 2: 796

335 Muḥammad ibn ☐ Umar al-Waqidi, *Futūḥ Al-Sham* (Conquest of Syria) (Bayrūt: Dar al-Jil, n.d), 1, 122-3.

336 Ibn Sa☐ d,*Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* (The Greatest of Authors), 2: 109.

337 Ibn Hisham, 2: 287.

338 Abi Dawood, *Sunan Abi Dawood*, 7: 257.

339 'Allah Akbar' appears in Iraq national flag.

340 Al-Waqati, *Futuh Al-Sham* (Conquest of Syria), 4ᵗʰ ed., 1: 122-3.

341 ☐ Abbas Mḥmud ☐ Aqqad,☐ *Abqariyat ☐Umar* (The Genius of Umar) (n.p., n. d.), 84.

342 Ibrahim ibn Muḥammad Al-Bayhaqi, *Al-Maḥasin Wa-Al-Masawi* (The Good and the Bad) (Beirut: 1960), 376.

343 Ibid.

344 Ralph Sawyer and Mei-chün Sawyer. *The TAO of Spycraft* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2004), 274.

345 Muhammad Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziya, *Zad Al-ma☐ ad fi Hady Khayr Al-☐ ibad*(The Great Sustenance: Guidance of the Best of All Humans) (Bayrūt; Muassasat Al-Risala, 1996), 1: 95.

346 The first was later to conquer and become the first Muslim ruler of Egypt; the second was the father of the renowned poet Umar bin Abi Rabia.

347 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 43.

348 Ibid., 44.

349 Muhammad Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziya, *Zad Al-maad*, 1: 95.

350 Muhammed Ali Al-Shawkani, *Irshad Al-Fuhul Ila Tahqeeq Al-Haq Min Ilm Al-Usul* (Islamic Principles: Men's Guidance Towards Truth) (Riyadh: dar al-fadheelah, 2000), 1: 1026. Muhammad Ibrahim Jannati. "Ijtihad: Its Meaning, Sources, Beginnings and the Practice of Ra'y Al Tawhid" *Islamic Journal* 5, no. 2 &3; 6 no. 1; 7 no. 3. http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/ijtihad/ (accessed January 24, 2009).

351 For a complete listing of these and other terms related to espionage and intelligence in the Quran, see: Muhammed Fuad Abdul-Baqi, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras Li-Alfadh Al-Quran Al-Kerim* (A Concordance of the Glorious Quran) (Beirut: Dar Ihiya'Al-Turath Al-Arabi, 1945).

352 The Surah of "The Ornament", verse 80.

353 The Surah of "Q", verse 18.

354 Ibrahem Ahmed, *Jurespodence of security* (Riyadh: Naif University Press, 2006), 60-4.

355 Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya* (The Sultan's Rules), 253.

356 The Surah of "Al-Zukhruf" (the Ornaments), verses 79-80. See Al-Thaalibi's commentary in *Àdab Al-Muluk*, 107.

357 Muhammed Rakan Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajasus wa Ahkamuhu fi Al-Sharee'a al-Islamiya* (Espionage: Its Legal Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence) (Cairo: Dar Al-Salam, 2006), 117.

358 See for example verse 34 of the Surah of "The Journey by Night", which stresses the sanctity of covenants: "… And fulfil every covenant. Verily, every covenant will be questioned about".

359 The Surah of "History", verse 26.

360 Abdul Karim Zaidan, *Usul al-Da'wah* (Principles of the [Islamic] Call) (Beirut: Mu'asasat Al-Risalh, 1978), 234.

361 Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Al-Azraq, *Bada' Al-Sulk fi Taba' Al-Mulk* (The Most Splendid Method of Governance) ed. Muhammed bin Abdul Karim (Bengazi: Al-Gar al-Arabiya Lilkitab, n.d.), 2: 561.

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363 Ali ibn Muḥammad Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya* (The Sultan's Rules) (Cairo: Maktabt Mustafa al-Halabi, 1966), 27-8.

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365 Ahmed, *Fiqh al-amn wa Al-Mukhabarat*, 63.

366 Abul Ma'ali Abdul Melik bin Abdullah Al-Juaini, *Ghiath Al-Umam fi Iltibas Al-Dhulam* (Rescuing Nations from Chaos and Injustice), ed. Abdul Adhim al-Deeb, (Doha: Al-Shu'oon Al-Diniya, 1981), 227.

367 Muhammed bin Al-Hussein Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya*, 27.

368 Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajassus wa Ahkamuhu*, 136.

369 al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 166.

370 Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajassus wa Ahkamuhu*, 129.

371 The Surah of "Joseph", verse 87.

372 "Allah had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and we raised among them twelve patriarchs. And Allah said, "I am with you, so long as you observe the Contact Prayers, give the obligatory charity, and believe in my messengers and respect them, and continue to lend GOD a loan of righteousness", The Surah of the "Feast", verse 12. See Abu Ja'far Muhammed Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari, Jami□ al-bayan □ fi Tafsir al-Qur□ an (A Comprehensive Commentary on the Glorious Quran) (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1978), 1: 429.

373 See Lisan Al-□ Araband Taj Al-□ arūs, under "naqqaba".

374 The Surah of "Qaf" (the letter Q), verse 18.

375 The Sura of "At'Tawbah", verses, 78-79.

376 The Surah of "Chambers", verse 12.

377 See commentary on verse 12 by Tafsir Ibn Katheer and Tafsir Al-Jalalayn.

378 Ahmed, Fiqh al-amn wa Al-Mukhabarat, 42.

379 Muḥ ammad ibn Muḥ ammad al-□ Imad□ u Abū al-Su□ ūd, *Tafsir Abi Al-Su□ ūd Al-Musammá Irshad Al-□ aql Al-Salim Ilá Mazayá Al Qur□ an Al-Karim* (Beirut: Dar Ihiya' Al-Turath Al-Arabi, n.d), 8: 122.

380 Ahmed, *Fiqh al-amn wa Al-Mukhabarat*, 43.

381 The Surah of "Hujurat" (Chambers), verse 12.

382 'Awrat' is one of the most difficult words to translate from Arabic. It could mean any or all of the following: 'privacy', private affairs', 'sexual relations', 'loophole', 'an opening through which an enemy might enter', 'all that which people strive to hide', 'all that which is between the navel and the knees in a man' and 'all the body of the woman except her face and hands' or simply 'the genitals of both males and females'. 'Awrat' is a derivative of the same root from which the Arabic 'aar'(shame) is derived. See entry (عور) in Taj Al-□ arūs, Lisan Al-□ Arab , Al-Qamūs Al-Muḥ iṭ , Al-Ghani.

383 Muḥ ammad ibn Aḥ mad Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurṭ ubi* (n. p., 1961), Surah of "Chambers", verse 12. But this express prohibition does not include following specific criminal targets such as dangerous convicted offenders, gang members, the depraved and those involved in immoral and destructive lifestyles. These, according to Mahmoud Al-Zamakhsari, may be spied on and their secrets may be uncovered and exposed. See Mahmoud Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashaf fi Haqaig Al-Tanzeel wa Uyoun Al-Aqaweel fi Wujuh Al-Ta'weel* (Commentary on the Divine Revelation: The Most Reliable Sayings and Interpretations) (Beirut: Dar Al-Marifa, n. d.), 3: 565-6.

383 The Surah of "Joseph", verse 87.

384 Abu al-Su☐ ud,*Tafsir Abi Al-Su☐ ud Al-Musammá Irshad Al-☐ aql Al-Salim Ilá Mazayá Al Qur☐ an Al-Karim*, 8: 122.

385 Quoted in Yousuf al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Halal and Al-Haram in Islam* (What is Permissible and What is Taboo in Islam) (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1994), 306-7.

386 Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj Al-Qushairi, *Al-Jami'al-Saheeh* (The Authorized Traditions) (Beirut, Dar Al-Afaq Al-Jadeedah, 1988), 4: 281.

387 Yousuf al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Halal and Al-Haram in Islam*, 308.

388 The Surah of "Chambers", verse 10. See also the Surah of "Victory", which stresses that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration", verse 29.

389 See Al-Bukhari.
http://www.sahihalbukhari.com/sps/sbk/sahihalbukhari.cfm?scn=searchresults (accessed April 25, 2008).

390 Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajassus wa Ahkamuhu*, 150.

391 The Spoils of War, 37.

392 The Surah of "The Table", verse 51. The same notion is reiterated in verse 28 of the Surah of "Imran", which states "Let not the believers Take for friends or helpers Unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah."

393 Among the men killed for spying for the enemies of Muhammed was Mu'awiyah bin Al-Mugheerah bin Abi Al-'As, who was a nephew of the 4th Caliph in Islam, Uthman Bin Affan. See al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtoom*, 130.

394 The Surah of "The Test", verse 1.

395 The Surah of "Anfal", verse 27.

396 "Oh you who believe! Take your precautions and either go forth (on an expedition) in parties or go forth together. The Surah of "Women", verse 71.

397 The Surah of "The Hypocrites", verse 4. In their commentary on this verse, the two authors of Tafsir Al-Jalalayn (The two Jalals' Commentary), specifically identify those 'Munafiqeen' as "spies or transmitters of Muslims' secret to the nonbelievers". See

notes on the verse in Jalal al-Din Muḥ ammad ibn Aḥ mad Maḥ alli, and Suyūṭ i. *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, (Cairo: Dar Ibn Katheer, n.d.).

398 Verses 44-6. Italics mine

399 The Surah of "Tawbah" (Ultimatum), verses 41ff. Ibn Katheer, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Adheem* (Interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an), 2: 361.

400 The Bees, 125.

401 The Spoils, 65.

402 Muḥ ammad ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Al-Bada'ee* (The marvelous) (n. p., n.d), 7: 134.

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405 Muḥ ammad ibn Aḥ mad Sarakhsi, Abdulaziz Ahmad, and Ṣ alaḥ al-Din Munajjid, *Sharḥ Al-Siyar Al-Kabir* (Great Commentaries on Biographies) (Cairo: Sharekat Alalanat al-shargeeh, 1972), 1: 242.

406 "Al-Tawba" (Repentance), verse 6.

407 al-Jawziyah, *Al-Bada'ee* (The marvellous), 7: 11.

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411 Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajassus wa Ahkamuhu*, 170.

412 Haythami, *Majma□ Al-zawa□ id Wa Manba□ Al-fawa□ id*(Food for Thought and a Source of Wisdom), 9: 381; See above p. 68.

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414 Sarakhsi, *Sharḥ Al-Siyar Al-Kabeer* (Great Commentaries on Biographies), 5: 2042

415 Al-Daghmi, *Al-Tajassus wa Ahkamuhu*, 176.

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417 The Surah of "Joseph", verse 87.

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439 Ziyad Abu □ Amr,*Uṣ ul Al-Ḥarakat Al-Siyasiyah fi Qiṭ aʼ Ghazzah*, 101.

440 Farid Al-Falouji, Aasha Mahmouman, Mat Masmouman: Abu Ammar, *Thaír Ustouri Am Amil Li-Israel* (He Lived in Agony and Died Poisoned: Abu Ammar, Legendary Rebel Or an Israeli Agent) (Damascus, Dar Al Fikr al-Arabi, 2005), 28-29.

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550 Interview with i-1. See also, Rabinovich and Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East*, 392.

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556 Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire* (Arabic) (Cairo:n. p., 1992), 12.

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a cousin of Haj Amin Al-Husseini. His father, Abd Al-Rauf Al-Qudwa, was a wealthy businessman of Gaza and member of the Muslim Brotherhood. His family moved back to Gaza from Cairo 1939 and lived there during the Second World War. He was one of the founders of Fatah then the leader of the organization. He later became Chairman of the PLO and General Commander of the Palestinian Army. He was the President of the Palestinian people even before the Oslo accords and the elections in Gaza and the West Bank in later years.

558 Mohssin Ibrahim, *Political Theoretical Issues* (Beirut: n. p., 1984), 257.

559 Ibid; Interview with i-7.

560 Ibid.

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562 The members of Fatah were Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf, Khalil Al-Wazir, Khalid Al-Hassan, Farouq Qaddoumi, Zuhayr Al-Alami, Kamal Adwan and Muhammad Yousif Al-Najjar.

563 Interview with i-1. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 87.

564 Salah Khalaf, known as Abu Iyad, a prominent Palestinian figure in the movement and the Palestinian struggle for freedom and the right of return of the Palestinian people, was born in Jaffa in 1933. He studied in Cairo then began his activities in Gaza in 1957. He moved to Kuwait in 1959, where he and his friends established the Fatah Movement and created two branches, one for political purposes and the other a military wing. He soon became a member of the Central Committee of the movement and took charge of the security apparatus within the PLO structure. He was assassinated in Tunis in 1991.

565 Interview with i-1. See also Hani Al-Hassan, joined the Muslim Brotherhood in early 1950s, a member of PLO leadership with close relations with Arafat and member of the Central Committee of Fatah.

566 Interview with i-1. See Also Ian Black & Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 256-7.

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568 Interview with i-1.

569 Interview with i-1.

570 Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 226.

571 Ali Hassan Salama, an activist and the son of the well known Palestinian Leader Hassan Salama, the commander of the Palestinian Holy War Army in 1948. After completing his studies in Cairo (1963) he joined Fatah and worked for the PLO in Kuwait then in Egypt. In the 1970s, he moved to work for the Special Operations Section against Israel abroad.

572 Interview with i-1. See also Abbas Murad, *The Political role of the Jordanian Army, 1921-1973* (Beirut: PLO Research Centre, 1973), 130.

573 Neil C. Livingstone & David Halevy, *Inside the PLO* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), 106.

574 Interview with i-1.

575 Interview with i-1. See also Ziyad Abu □ Amr,*Usul Al-Harakat Al-Siyasiyah fi Qita□ Ghazza*, 66-7; and Wallach & Wallach, *Arafat in the Eye of the Beholder*, 100.

576 Interview with i-1. See also Abu Dawood, *Filistin: Min Al-Quds Ila Monich* (Palestine: From Jerusalem to Munich) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1999) 171-73; and Mustafa al-Zabri, *Hazimat Huzayran wa Intilaq al-muqawama* (The Jun Defeat and the Launch of the Resistance) (Beirut: al-Hadaf Books, 1970), 69.

577 Ibid., 180.

578 Ibid., 182-184.

579 Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 292-293.

580 Khalil Al-Wazeer (Abu Jihad), a prominant figure in the Palestinian national struggle, born on October 10, 1935, founder (with Arafat) of the first Fatah cell in 1957, member of Fatah Central Committee and member of Executive Committee of the PLO, assassinated in his house in Tunis by Israelis on 16 April 1988.

581 Mohammed Yousif Al-Najar, a well known Palestinian activist, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO and the Chairman of the Political Committee for the Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon. He was also a member of the Central Committee of Fatah. He was born in Palestine in 1930 and assassinated in Beirut in April 1973 by a special Israeli unit.

582 Kemal Adwan, a founding member of the Central Committee of Fatah. He was also member of the First Palestinian National Council in 1964 and worked for the Palestinian Media. He was assassinated in 1973 by a special Israeli unit in Beirut.

583 Interview with i-1. See also Nazih Abu Nidal, *Tarikhiyat Al-Azmah fi Fatḥ : Min Al-taͻsis Ila Al-Intifaḍah* (The History of the Crisis in Fatah) (Bayrut: Dar al-Ṣumud al-ͻArabi, 1984), 45.

584 Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal ͻAbd Al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970* (London, Oxford University Press, 1971), 139.

585 Abd al-Majeed Fareed, *Nasir Political Documents* (Beirut:n.p., 1979), 176-178.

586 Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969-1970*: A Case-Study of Limited Local War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 46.

587 See *Palestinian Arab Documents for Year 1968* (Beirut:n. p., 1970), 54-56.

588 Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz*, Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, 1948-Present* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 206.

589 Fatah, *The Palestinian Revolution and the Israeli-Arab* C*onflict* (n. P. n.d.), 85.

590 Interview with i-2.

591 Livingstone & Halevy, *Inside the PLO*, 103.

592 Interview with i-2. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 306- 307.

593 Abu Iyad interview, *Al-Wasat Magazine* (London) no. 386, 21 June 1999.

594 Farouq Qaddoumi interview, *Al-Wasat Magazine* no. 386,12 June 1999.

595 Interview with i-2. See also Salah Khalaf interview, *al-Wihda*, 01 June 1972.

596 Interview with i-2. See also Abu Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 98.

597 Interview with i-2.

598 Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?*, 337-338. See also Riad Al-Rayyis & Dunia Nahas, *Guerrillas for Palestine* (London: Batsford, 1979), 58-63.

599 This notorious operation, which ended with the slaughter of a number of Israeli athletes, is detailed in From Jerusalem to Munich (Abu, Dawood, 1999), written by the very man who planned the operation and led the assailants into the apartments occupied by the Israeli team.

600 Khalid Al-Hassan, Interview by WAFA News Agency, 15 October 1972, from *Watheiq al-Filastiniyya al-Arabiyya* (Palestinian Arab Documents) (Beirut: Institute for

Palestine Studies, 1972) 445. See also John K Cooly, *Green March*, *Black September* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 125-129.

601 Interview with i-2. See also Palestine Information Centre. http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/books/moosad/mosad7.htm. (accessed Nov 08, 2008).

602R. Reuben Miller, "Negotiating with terrorists: A comparative analysis of three cases," Terrorism and Political Violence 5, no. 3 (1993): 78-105. http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/09546559308427221 (accessed Nov. 21, 2008).

603 The team was led by Muhammad Awad, former intelligence officer and militia commander in Jordan (1969-1971). Details of the plan are given by Abu Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home*, 99-101. See also John K Cooly, *Green March*, *Black September*, 130 .

604 "1973: Palestinian gunmen hold diplomats in Sudan,". http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/1/newsid_4209000/4209239.stm (accessed Nov. 21, 2008).

605 Interview with i-2. See also Abu Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home*, 102.

606 Interview with i-2.

607 Muhammad Yousif Al-Najjar speaking to Arab defence ministers in Cairo, WAFA News Agency, 28 January 1973. *Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyya* (Palestinian Chronology; Beirut: PLO Research Centre, 1964-76, xvii. 73).

608 Interview with i-2. See also *Shu'un Filastiniyya* no. 92/93 (July/August 1979): 204; and Livingstone & Halevy, *Inside the PLO*, 43-75.

609 Interview with i-5.

610 Ibid.

611 Ibid.

612 Interview with i-5. See also Palestinian Revolutionary Violence as a Factor in US Middle East Policy, *Su'un Filastiniyya* (Palestinian Affairs) no. 92/93 (July/August 1979): 204.

613 Interview with i-5. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle,* 311.

614 Interview with i-5. See also Alexander & Sinai, *Terrorism: The PLO Connection*, 38.

615 Interview with i-5. See also Livingstone & Halevy, *Inside the PLO* , 108-9.

616 Interview with i-5. See also *Al-Nahar* (Daily Lebanese Newspaper) 21October 1988.

617 Interview with i-5. See also *Middle East Record*, Tel Aviv University (cited in MER) 3 (1967); *Al-Hur'raya* (Palestinian Magazine) reported these details and others concerned with Fatah connections and relations, 26 November 1988.

618 Interview with i-5.

619 Interview with i-5. See, also Livingstone & Halevy, *Inside the PLO*, 110-11; and *Al-Hawadith Magazine*, 14 October 1988; See also. Bob Woodward, Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 288.

620 Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: London: Doubleday, 2007), 388-89.

621 Interview with i-5. See also Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 288-9. See also David Ignatius, "Lessons From the Middle East on Penetrating Terror Networks," *International Herald Tribune* Monday, 17 September 2001. http://www.iht.com/articles/2001/09/17/eddavid.php (accessd September 30, 2006).

622 Interview with i-5. See also Michael Bar-Zohar & Eitan Haber, *The Quest for the Red Prince* (New York: Quill/William Morrow, 1983), 219ff.

623 Interview with i-5. See also Alexander & Sinai, *Terrorism: The PLO Connection*, 39.

624 Interview with i-5. See also *Al-Hurriyya* (Palestinian Weekly Magazine) 21 December 1974 and 6 January 1975; and M. A. Abu al-Ṭayyib, Zilzal Bayrut: Al-Qaṭ i□ Al-Thalith (*The Beirut Earthquake: The Third Sector*) (Amman: n.p., 1984), 55.

625 Interview with i-5. See also Andrew Gowers and Tony Walker, *Behind the Myth: Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Revolution* (London: WH Allen, 1990).

626 Interview with i-5. See also Nayif Hawatma, The Tasks of the Revolution after the Invasion of Lebanon and the Heroic Battle of Beirut (Arab), *Shu'un Filastiniyya,* no. 135 (February 1983): 15-17.

627 Interview with i-5. See also Khalid al-Hasan, *Lest Leadership Become Autocracy: From the Harvest of My Experience* (n. p., 1995), 12.

628 Interview with i-5. See also Ze'ev Klein (Ed), *The War on Terrorism and Israeli National Security Policies During the Years 1979-1988* (Israel: Revivim, 1988), 163.

629 Interview with i-5. See also *Al-Ssafir* (Daily Lebanese Newspaper) 4 September 1982.

630 Interview with i-5.

631 Interview with i-5. The new I*ntifada* which erupted on 8 December 1987 has been seen as a serious development to rescue the PLO and pave the way for a peaceful

solution. It took the PLO as well as Israel by surprise and it made peace negotiations possible.

632 Interview with i-5. See also al-Hasan, *Lest Leadership Become Autocracy*, 87.

633 Interview with i-4.

634 Ibid.

635 Interview with i-5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* 1987 (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: MIPT, 2005), 26; *Al-Safir* (Lebanese Daily Newspaper), 23 June 1985.

636 *Alqabs* (Kuwaiti Daily Newspaper) 25July 1987. Bruce Hoffman, *The Contrasting Ethical Foundations of Terrorism in the 1980s* (The Rand Corporation, January 1988), 7-9.

637 Interview with i-5. See also Levran, *Middle East Military Balance*, 1986, 322, 327-328; and *The Threat of PLO Terrorism* (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1985), 7.

638 Interview with i-5. See also Livingstone & Halevy, *Inside the PLO*, 125.

639 Ibid., 125.

640 Interview with i-5. See also Intelligence Resource Program. http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/hawari.htm. (accessed September 15, 2006).

641 Bilal Al-Hassan, The Palestinian Resistance, Monthly Report, *Shu'un Filastiniyya* no 5 (November 1971): 201.

642 Interview with i-3. See also Al-Hasan, *The Palestinian Resistance*, 201.

643 Interview with 3. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 311.

644 Interview with i-3. See also *Filastin Al-Thawra* (Palestinian Revolution) no. 553 (Weekly newspaper published in Nicosia) (April 13, 1985).

645 Fatah – the Revolutionary Council (Abu Nidal Organization, ANO) was founded in 1974 by Sabri Al-Banna, a high-ranking official in the PLO who served as PLO representative to Iraq and other Arab countries. He bitterly opposed the leadership of Arafat and rejected PLO policy when it began leaning towards reconciliation with Israel. He split with a group loyal to him and formed his own organization, which was responsible for several violent attacks, including some on the PLO.

646 Interview with i-3. Alexander & Sinai, *Terrorism: The PLO Connection*, 38. See also *Al-Sabah* (weekly Palestinian magazine published in Gaza), no.286, March 2002.

647 Interview with i-3.See also Khalil al-Wazir, *Harakat Fatah: al-Nushu', al-irtiqa', al-Tatawwur, al-Mumathil al-Shari' al-bidayat* (Fatah Movement: Genesis, Rise,

Evolution, Legitimate Representative) (n.p., reesearch and Mobilization Centre, 1986), 82.

648 Interview with i-3 See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 604.

649 Interview with i-3. See also Sa'd Sayil, The military Action of the Palestinian Revolution and the Prospects for its Development, *Shu'un Filastiniyya* no. 105 (August 1980): 35-39.

650 Interview with i-3. See also Elezer Ben-Rafael, *Israel-Palestine: A Guerrilla Conflict in International Politics* (New York, 1987), 134.

651 Interview with i-3. See also *Al-Watan Al-Arabi* (The Arab Homeland, a weekly magazine published in Paris), 3 August 1978).

652 Interview with i-3. See also *Al-Nahar*, 13 June 1985.

653 Independent Nassiriets Movement (Al-Murabitun) is a Lebanese Arab National group loyal to Jamal Abdu Al-Nasir and his beliefs. It strongly supported the PLO and its presence in Lebanon.

654 The Lebanese Baath Party has always considered itself a branch of a larger Arab movement. In Lebanon, it is divided into two parties, one backed by the Baath in Iraq and the other is by the Baath in Syria. Both of these parties have played an active role within the Lebanese National Movement and the PLO, especially during the Lebanese civil war and in supporting the Palestinian cause, but with different agendas and goals. The two even participated in some Palestinian militant groups.

655 The Lebanese Communist Party is one of oldest political organizations in Lebanon with an active role in supporting the Palestinian cause. The party even participated in some military operations in South Lebanon and became an important member of the Lebanese National Movement. It established strong relations with the PLO, especially during the 1970s.

656 The Socialist Progressive Party was led at that time by Kamal Junbulat. He was a much respected figure on the Lebanese political scene, especially during the civil war, and his rejection of Syrian interference in his country cost him his life.

657 Interview with i-3. See als   *Al-Safir*, 5 December 1975.

658 Interview with i-3. See also Abu Iyad, *My home, My land*, 146.

659 Interview with i-3. See also Salah Khalaf's role first alluded to by Sa'iqa, *Al-Tala'*i, 7 January 1986, 12.

660 Arye Odes, *Africa, the PLO and Israel* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1990), 20.

661 Interview with i-3. See also *Al-Hawadith* (Beirut), 29 August 1980.

662 Interview with i-3.

663 Ibid.

664 Interview with i-3. See also Abu al-Tayyib, *Zilzal Bayrut*, 385.

665 Interview with i-3. See also Georg Habash in speech in October 1978, *Speeches and Articles*, 1977-1979 (Arab.) (Red Papers series 36; nd [1979]), 205-206.

666 Interview with i-3. See also *Al-Kifa Al-Arabi* (Arab Struggle; Lebanese Weekly magazine, published in Beirut) 30 May 1983.

667 Interview with i-3. See also *Al-Sabah* (Palestinian Weekly Magazine published in Gaza) Issue no.286, March 2002.

668 Steve Posmer, *Israel Undercover: Secret Warfare and Hidden Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 40.

669 Interview with i-3. See also Amina Al-Mufti, *Donia-AlWatan*. http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news.php?go=show&id=18836 (accessed Nov, 15, 2006).

670 Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 311.

671 Interview with i-4.

672 Interview with i-4. See also Abu Iyad reported in *Jum Huriyya*, 26 April 1968, quoted in *MER*, vol. 4 (1968) 26.

673 Interview with i-4. See also Roberta C. Goren, "The Soviet Attitude and Policy to International Terrorism since 1917" (MA thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London, 1982).

674 Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, 93.

675 Interview with i-4. See also Rajel Aldethal (The Shadow Man), *Donia-AlWatan*, http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news.php?go=show&id=18836 (accessed Nov 15, 2006).

676 Interview with i-4. See also *MER*, vol. 3 (1967), 319.

677 Interview with i-4. See also Sa'd Sayil, The Military Action of the Palestinian Revolution and Prospects for its Development, *Shu'un Filastiniyya* no. 105 (August 1980): 35.

678 Interview with i-4. See also Mustafa al-Zabri, *The Jun Defeat and the Launch of the Resistance* (Arab.) (Beirut:n.p., 1970), 68-69.

679 Interview with i-4. See also Bassiso, *Donia-AlWatan*,http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news.php?go=show&id=18836 (accessed Nov. 15, 2006).

680 Ibid.

681 Interview with i-4. See also Nabeel A. Khoury, "The Arab Lobby: Problems and Prospects," *Middle East Journal*, no 3 (1987); and Kemal Kirisci, *The PLO and World Politics: A study of the Mobilization of Support for the Palestinian Cause* (London: Frances Pinter, 1986),106.

682 Interview with i-4. See also The shadow Man, *Donia-AlWatan.* http://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/content-33784.html. (accessed Nov. 15, 2006).

683 Interview with i-4. See also Salah Khalaf, "Clear Thoughts in an Obscure Phase" (Arab.) *Shuun Filastiniyyah* no. 29 (January 1974), 10.

684 Interview with i-4. See also Naji Allush, "Min Marakat Huzayran ila Marakat Tishrin" (From the Battle of June to the battle of October) *Dirasat Arabiyya* vol. 10 no. 2 (December 1973) 137-139.

685 Interview with i-4. See also Abu Dawood, *Filistin: Min Al-Quds Ila Monich* ; and *Al-Wihda* (Lebanon) 1 June 1972. Text in *Palestinian Arab Documents 1972*, 273.

686 Interview with i-4.See also Kemal Kirisci, *The PLO and World Politics: A Study of the Mobilization of Support for the Palestinian Cause* (London, 1986), 181-183.

687 Interview with i-4. See also Abu al-Ṭ ayyib, *Zilzal Bayrut*, 385.

688 Estimates of the total reserves and income for Fatah and PLO range from $1.5 billion to $14 billion. Adam Zagorin, 'Auditing the PLO', in Augustus Norton and Martin Greenbery, *The International Relations of the PLO* (Carbondale, Ill, 1989), 196-199.

689 Interview with i-4.

690 Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is a militant Islamic group in the Philippines which has enjoyed wide support among Muslims there. In 2002 the intensive attacks by the government forces broke the ceasefire talks, which were successfully resumed in July 2003.

691 Interview with i-4.

692 *Al-diyar* (Lebanese Daily, 23 September 1974; Abu Iyad and Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 144-147.

693 Interview with i-4. See also *Al-Hurriyya* (Freedom; Palestinian Weekly Magazine, July 29, 1974), 27-31.

694 Interview with i-4.

695 Interview with i-6. See also Filastin al-Tawra, "Atoine Shalhat, The Secret of the Two Missing Briefcases" (Arabic), *Filastin al-Tawra*, no. 553 (13 April 1985) 26-27.

696 Interview with i-6. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggl*e, 349.

697 Interview with i-6. See also Ariel Merari, *The Internationalisation of Political Terrorism: Causes, Scope and Treatment*, paper presented to Council of Europe, November 1980.

698 Interview with i-6. See also Ian Black & Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Se*r*vices* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 254.

699 Interview with i-6.

700 Interview with i-6.

701 Interview with i-6. See also Geoffrey Aronson, *Creating Facts: Israel, Palestinians and the West Bank* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987), 215-218; and *Al-Nahar*, 26 September 1989.

702 Interview with i-6. See also Khawaja, "Amman responsible for the occupied territories," *Al-Hadaf* , 14 December 1974.

703 Interview with i-6.

704 Ibid.

705 Interview with i-6. See also Zuhayer Muhsinin, *The Palestinian Resistance Faces the New Challenges* (Beirut: n. p., 1998).

706 Interview with i-6. See also Hani Al-Hassan, *Pause on the Fourth Anniversary*, 44; And idem, The Secure Base of Martyrdom," *Al-Thawra Al-Filastinyya* (The Palestinian Revolution) no. 25 (April 1970).

707 Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 350.

708 Interview with i-6. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle,* 349-350.

709 Interview with i-6. Interview with i-2.

710 Interview with i-6. See also Oslo Accord, signed by the PLO and Israel in 1993, which determined the formation and the functions of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza.

711 Abu Iyad and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 47-8. See also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 129.

712 See for example Francis Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services: The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1893), 188-261.

713 FAS intelligence Resource Program. http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/mb.htm (accessed January 02, 2009).

714 Richard P. Michell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30.

715 "Conduct their affairs by mutual Consultation" (Consuil, verse 38).