

Plan Dalet (Plan D)

March 10, 1948

(General Section)

1. Introduction

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

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

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

(c) Since these plans were designed to deal with the situation inside the country (the first two plans deal with the first phase of incidents, while the third plan deals with the possibility of invasion by regular armies from the neighboring countries), the aim of Plan D is to fill the gaps in the previous three plans and to make them more suitable for the situation expected to obtain at the end of British rule in the country.

2. Basic Assumptions

This plan is based on the following basic assumptions:

(a) The Enemy

1. Expected composition of forces:

- * The semi-regular forces of the Liberation Army affiliated with the Arab League, which operate from already occupied bases or bases to be occupied in the future.
- * The regular forces of neighboring countries, which will launch an invasion across the borders, or will operate from bases inside the country (the Arab Legion).(3)
- * Small local forces which operate, or will operate, from bases inside the country and within the borders of the Hebrew state.

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

2. Actual operations expected from the enemy.

- * Isolation and, if possible, occupation of the eastern Galilee, western Galilee, and the Negev.
- * Infiltration into the heart of the area of Sharon (4) and Emek Hefer', in the direction of Qalqilyah-Herzliya and Tulkarm-Netanya, roughly.
- * Isolation of the three major cities (especially Tel Aviv).(5)

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

3. Expected tactical methods:

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

- * Air strikes against centers within our cities (especially Tel Aviv)

- * Harassment operations carried out by small forces against transportation arteries and settlements to give the operations mentioned above direct or tactical support. These forces will also carry out sabotage operations against vital economic facilities and terrorist raids within cities.

(b) The Authorities

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

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

(c) International Forces

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

(d) Operational Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Assignment of Duties

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

- (1) Strengthening the fixed defensive system designed to defend the zones, and coordinating its deployment on the regional level. In addition, the main enemy access routes to the lands of the state must be blocked through appropriate operations and measures.
- (2) Consolidation of the defensive apparatus.
- (3) Deployment in major cities.
- (4) Control of the main transportation arteries country-wide.
- (5) Encirclement of enemy cities.
- (6) Occupation and control of frontline enemy positions.
- (7) Counterattacks inside and outside the borders of the country.

(a) The Fixed Defensive System

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Blocking the main enemy transportation routes.

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

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

(b) Consolidation of Defense Systems and Fortifications

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

1. Occupation of police stations.(6)
2. Control of government installations and provision of services in each and every region.
3. Protection of secondary transportation arteries.
4. Mounting operations against enemy population centers located inside or near our defensive system in order to prevent them from being used as bases by an active armed force. These operations can be divided into the following categories:

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

Mounting search and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village and conducting a search (7) inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be destroyed and the population must be expelled outside the borders of the state.

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

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

(c) Deployment in Major Cities

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

1. Occupation and control of government facilities and property (post offices, telephone exchanges, railroad stations, police stations, harbors, etc.)
2. Protection of all vital public services and installations.
3. Occupation and control of all isolated Arab neighborhoods located between our municipal center and the Arab municipal center, especially those neighborhoods which control the city's exit and entry roads. These neighborhoods will be controlled according to the guidelines set for searching villages. In case of resistance, the population will be expelled to the area of the Arab municipal center.
4. Encirclement of the central Arab municipal area and its isolation from external transportation routes, as well as the termination of its vital services (water, electricity, fuel, etc.), as far as possible.

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

1. Occupation and control of locations which overlook main regional transportation arteries, such as police stations, water pumps, etc. These elevated locations will be transformed into fortified surveillance posts to be used, when the need arises, as bases for a mobile defensive force. (In many cases, this operation will be coordinated with the occupation of police stations, which aims at consolidating the fixed defensive system.)
2. Occupation and control of Arab villages which constitute a serious obstruction on any of the main transportation arteries. Operations against these villages will be carried out according to the specifications given under the item pertaining to the searching of villages.

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

1. By isolating them from transportation arteries by laying mines, blowing up bridges, and a system of fixed ambushes.
2. If necessary, by occupying high points which overlook transportation arteries leading to enemy cities, and the fortification of our units in these positions.
3. By disrupting vital services, such as electricity, water, and fuel, or by using economic resources available to us, or by sabotage.
4. By launching a naval operation against the cities that can receive supplies by sea, in order to destroy the vessels carrying the provisions, as well as by carrying out acts of sabotage against harbor facilities.

(f) Occupation and Control of Front line Enemy Positions

Generally, the aim of this plan is not an operation of occupation outside the borders of the Hebrew state. However, concerning enemy bases lying directly close to the borders which may be used as springboards for infiltration into the territory of the state, these must be temporarily occupied and searched for hostiles according to the above guidelines, and they must then be incorporated into our defensive system until operations cease.

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

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

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

Counterattacks will be launched according to the following guidelines:

1. Diversionary attacks; i.e. while the enemy is launching an attack against one of our areas, [our forces will launch] a counterattack deep inside another area controlled by the enemy with the aim of diverting his forces in the direction of the counterattack.
2. Striking at transportation and supply routes deep inside enemy territory, especially against a regular enemy force which is invading from across the border.
3. Attacking enemy bases in his rear, both inside the country [Palestine] and across its borders.
4. Counterattacks will generally proceed as follows: a force the size of a battalion, on average, will carry out a deep infiltration and will launch concentrated attacks against population centers and enemy bases with the aim of destroying them along with the enemy force positioned there; alternatively, this force may split up to carry out secondary operations, such as acts of sabotage and diversion on the enemy's military transportation routes and arteries.

5. A detailed list of counterattacks will be included in the [list of](8) operational targets of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH].

4. Duties of the Armed Services

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

1. The following duties are the responsibility of the Garrison Force [KHIM](9), defense of the zones and of isolated and fortified posts and formation of the regional reserves.

2. Within the framework of the fixed defensive system, the Field Force [KHISH](10), are responsible for the following duties:

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

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

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

4. In addition to the duties detailed above, the Field Force's responsibilities within the fixed defensive system generally consist in mounting local counterattacks involving units no smaller than company (larger units should be used if possible) against enemy units while they are attacking the fixed defensive system in order to block their lines of retreat and destroy them. These counterattacks will usually be launched from fixed operational bases which will be specified for the Field Force in the context of the duties for which it is responsible in the region as a whole. These instructions require that the Field Force units be concentrated as much as possible, and not be divided up into secondary units.

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

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

(b) In addition to the duties assigned to the Field Force brigade in question concerning the consolidation of the fixed defensive system, the brigade will also carry out the following duties:

- * Consolidation of positions in the cities.
- * Control of main transportation arteries country-wide.
- * Encirclement of enemy cities.
- * Occupation and control of enemy frontline positions.

This will be effected in accordance with the operational duties assigned to the various Field Force brigades.(11)

In order to carry out any or all of these duties, the supreme command can assign units of the Strategic Mobile Force [PALMACH](12), which constitute the country-wide reserves, to the Field Force.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES (Walid Khalidi)

1 This is Plan Gimmel or Plan C.

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

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

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

5 The two others are Jerusalem and Haifa.

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

7 In the original translation, the word srika was translated as 'combing'. The reference is to a search for hostile forces.

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

9 KHIM is short for Khayl Matzav, the second line troops. By fall 1947, they numbered about 32,000. See Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*; Washington, D.C., Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987; 914 pp.; p. 862.

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

11 See Appendix C [not included here]

12 PALMACH is short for Plugot Machats, i.e. crushing battalions. By spring 1948, this force was made up of three brigades (Yiftach, Harel, and HaNegev), numbering just above 8,000 men. See Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*; p. 861.

Source: Khalidi, W., 'Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine'; *Journal of Palestine Studies*; Volume 18, Number 1 (Autumn 1988); pp. 4-33 (fragment).