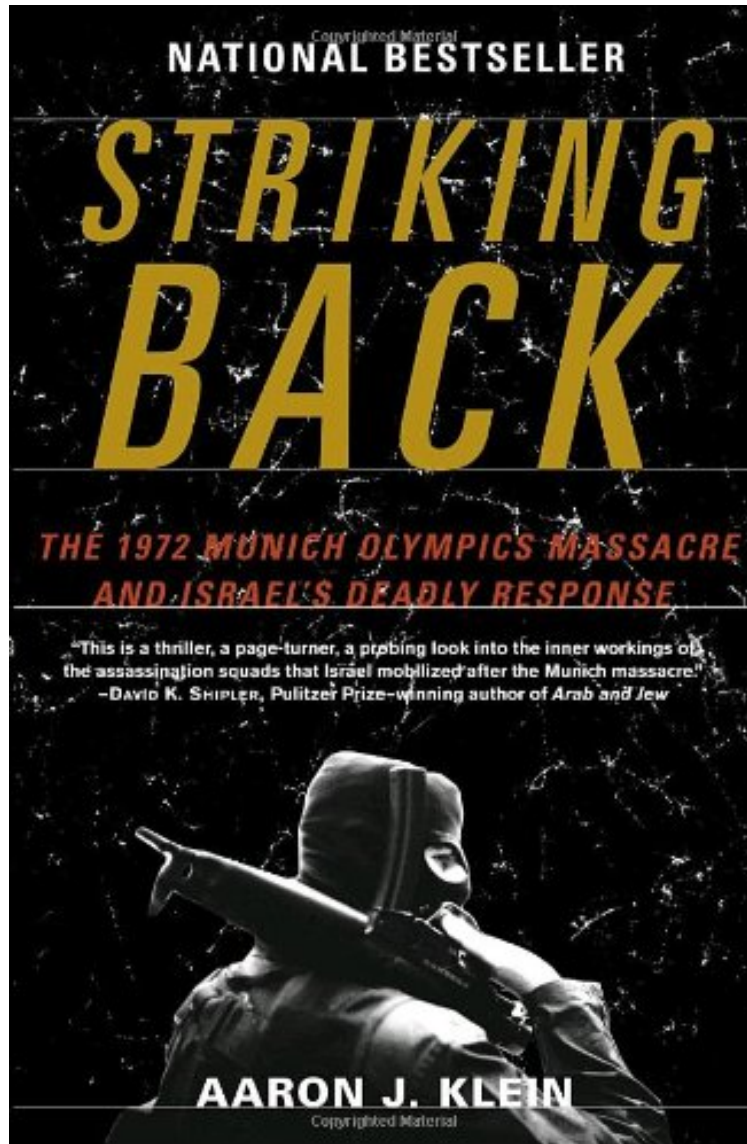


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# Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response

Aaron J. Klein

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#653753 in Books Aaron J Klein 2007-01-09 2007-01-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.20l, .70 #File Name: 0812974638288 pages Striking Back The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response | File size: 34.Mb

**Aaron J. Klein : Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A well written easy to understand account of the first hostage crisis that unfolded in real time and the response to the horror. By panda princess we all watched it ... we were all horrified by the Munich games massacre. we saw it all unfold and could see the flaws in the German/Bavarian governments' mishandling of the event. i must insert here however, that, the event did produce, a later event in Germany by spurring that government to establish an excellent hostage crisis response unit and other countries established similar units based on the German model. while many governments may have thought about establishing specialty response units that particular type of police response was at the very least in its infancy. no one had SWAT teams as such established, hostage responses were not standardized in any jurisdiction. this book does not dwell on the Munich event except to present the event succinctly but it does present both sides of the resulting conflict. if you read any book about this tragedy and how it radically changed police response to hostage situations, high profile or not, this is the one to read as you will learn the underlying tensions and reasons for the entire situation. while watching this tragedy unfold, we all knew that the outcome was not going to be the happy ending that a book of fiction would serve up, we knew this was too serious and too intense to end well and clearly saw the flaws in the response to the crisis. we remarked at the time ... why are the television news crews showing this in real time? don't they understand that while it was a huge news event, they were providing exactly the information needed by the perpetrators and it was easy to see that nothing the police were going to try was going to be kept secret from the men who committed this heinousness. so ... we now have trained hostage negotiators, and rapid highly trained police response teams specifically trained for these situations. how long we will have them given congressional constipation regarding all federal funding is one of the questions we can only hope is well thought out and well handled. this can and has happened elsewhere, even here in the USA, albeit not on such a grand stage, it is happening in other countries on a regular basis (ie, terroristic kidnappings in certain southern border towns). unfortunately, not all nations learned a lesson from this event and we can only hope that the US government insists on retaining these specialized police units as well as other rapid response teams specialized for other crimes. all in all, the book is quite balanced and reads much like a novel which should make it an easy if unpleasant read for some, but it is an important book for anyone interested in not only the world horror of such an event, but also in various nations' response within their own policing or military agencies.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The reality behind the scenes By tleeminniemi I vividly remember the '72 Olympics and the massacre. Once again, what you learned from the TV news isn't even half the story. Well written. The book covers both the triumphs and the blunders made along the way both before and after the massacre. Munich, trying to erase its Nazi image, really tried to "stay out of the whole affair". That made it very difficult for the Israelis to find out the who and what behind the event. Very absorbing read. Highly recommend it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. great read By eschercat Very interesting finding out all the different levels on intelligence groups in Israel and what the purpose of each one is. Fascinating read. Didn't want to put it down. Would definitely recommend this book!

This is a thriller, a page-turner, a probing look into the inner workings of the assassination squads that Israel mobilized after the Munich massacre. David K. Shipler, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Arab and Jew* Gratitude is due to Mr. Klein for his painstaking . . . book, the best one could possibly hope for. Walter Lacquer, *The Wall Street Journal* Award-winning journalist Aaron J. Klein tells, for the first time, the complete story of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre and the Israeli counterterrorism operation it spawned. With unprecedented access to Mossad agents and an unparalleled knowledge of Israeli intelligence, Klein peels back the layers of myth and misinformation that have permeated previous books, films, and magazine articles about the shadow war against Black September and other related terrorist groups. In this riveting account, long-held secrets are finally revealed, including who was killed and who was not, how it was done, which targets were hit and which were missed. In the end, Klein shows that the Israeli response to Munich was not simply about revenge, as is popularly believed. By illuminating the tactical and strategic purposes of the Israeli operation, *Striking Back* allows us to draw profoundly relevant lessons from one of the most important counterterrorism campaigns in history. [Klein] makes it clear why [the Munich attacks were] a pivotal event in the evolution of global terrorism. Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* A drama-filled look at the murders and Israeli reprisals. Billy Heller, *New York Post* (Required Reading) A real thriller that will unnerve as much as it captivates. Laurence Washington, *Rocky Mountain News*

From Publishers Weekly Told in remarkable detail, author Klein (Time's Jerusalem correspondent) chronicles the tragic Israeli hostage massacre at the 1972 Munich Olympics and the secret assassination campaign that followed. The execution of 11 Israeli athletes and coaches by members of Black September is presented as the result of the colossal ineptitude of West German and Bavarian officials. From this horrific event, the author departs on a fascinating examination of the Israeli response—a shadow war in which "Mossad combatants...were charged with carrying out the assassination orders, which had been passed down from Golda Meir to each successive prime minister." The Mossad quickly identified assassination targets for their involvement in the Munich Massacre; as the program evolved, however, the Mossad's goals expanded, creating a systematic counter-terror campaign based on prevention and deterrence. On the heels of Operation Spring of Youth, in which Israeli commandos assassinated three high-level PLO

and Fatah officials in Beirut, "the myth of Israel's military capacity and the long reach of the Mossad was hitting its peak," putting terrorists on the defensive. Klein's account is well researched and highly valuable, and while the episodic structure he employs becomes repetitive, it is nevertheless a necessary read for anyone interested in Israeli history and politics as well as the birth of modern counter-terrorism. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Aaron J. Klein is Time magazine's Military and Intelligence Affairs correspondent in the Jerusalem Bureau. He was the recipient of 2002 Henry Luce Award and has been a consultant for CNN. Klein was the military/security correspondent and analyst for Hadashot and Al-Hamishmar, two of Israel's leading national newspapers. He is a contributor to *Malam*, the journal for former IDF Intelligence, Mossad and Internal Security Agency officers. He teaches at Hebrew University and is a Captain in the IDF's Intelligence. From the Hardcover edition. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

1 TWENTY YEARS LATER PARIS, LE MERIDIEN MONTPARNASSE HOTEL MONDAY, JUNE 8, 1992, 1545H The white Jeep Renegade hurtled down A-22 on its way to Paris. The driver was alone in the vehicle. He stopped twice, to buy food from a vending machine and gas from a pump. Five hours later, his surveillance tail almost lost him in the swirling rush-hour traffic of a Paris afternoon. On Rue du Commandant Mouchotte the trackers watched the new Renegade with the German plates, B-585X, make a sudden right turn. The driver of the surveillance car floored the accelerator and caught a glimpse of the Jeep as it dropped into the shadows of an underground parking garage. A quick look at the building explained the unexpected move: the garage belonged to the Le Mridien Montparnasse Hotel, an old, quality establishment in the heart of the upscale Montparnasse district, with over nine hundred rooms and suites, and a reputation for discretion. The visitor took the elevator to reception on the first floor. He registered under a pseudonym, paid cash, and went straight up to Room 2541 with a small suitcase in his hand. The hotel guest was Atef Bseiso, a round-faced, elegantly dressed forty-four-year-old Palestinian who had been living in Tunis for the last ten years. He was the Palestine Liberation Organization-the PLO-liaison officer, working with, among others, the French internal security service, the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST). He was considered a rising star in his organization. His good relations with European intelligence agencies were, in large part, a product of his personal charm and charisma. Bseiso was drained from the drive-he had covered the six-hundred-mile journey in nine hours flat. Despite his fatigue and the alluring pull of the room's king-size bed, he went to the phone. Bseiso did not want to pass his only night in Paris with a remote control in his hand. He took out an address book and dialed the number of a PLO bodyguard. In Tunis, Bseiso felt safe; in Europe, he feared the Israelis. He had a list of names and numbers of men, frequently unarmed, who would accompany senior PLO officials in Europe to give them a sense of security. He told the man he'd be going out to dinner. The bodyguard offered to pick Bseiso up at the hotel. "I've driven enough for today," Bseiso said. "Let's say nine at the entrance to the hotel. A tout l'heure." He showered and got dressed. Shabtai Shavit, the head of Israel's Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, the Mossad, received a brief message in the operation's war room, located in a safe house in the 11th Arrondissement: "He's in the Mridien Montparnasse. We're getting ready." Shavit leaned back in his chair. The operation was in high gear. Shavit, in his early fifties, had run the Mossad for the past three years, and was well acquainted with undercover operations. He had served for six years as commander of the Mossad's Caesarea unit, which was charged with special operations and with running undercover Mossad combatants in enemy territory. He was in Paris on a borrowed identity: a different name was on the passport in the pocket of his blazer. None of his peers in the French secret service, or any other branch of the French intelligence services, knew he was in the country. His gut told him the mission would go well. He had complete confidence in the professionalism of Caesarea's combatants. Ilan C, Caesarea's intelligence collection officer, placed the thirty-by-forty-centimeter pictures of the facade of the Mridien Montparnasse Hotel on a table in another room in the Mossad safe house. The new pictures had been shot from a variety of angles and included the streets surrounding the hotel. The surveillance team had taken them as soon as Bseiso checked in. The operational plans, drawn up in advance by Caesarea officers, took a number of hotels into consideration, primarily the Mridien Etoile, an elegant hotel situated a few steps from the Champs-Élysées-but not the Mridien Montparnasse. Bseiso's unexpected choice forced them to revise their plans accordingly. The work was done quickly and efficiently. In less than an hour a new plan was brought before Shavit. Time was tight, and Shavit, never garrulous under even the most relaxed circumstances, kept it brief. He asked Caesarea's commander and the head of the assassination squad a few questions about the operation. He honed a few key points, and then, satisfied, approved the mission. The surveillance team had followed Bseiso for three days. They tracked him from the moment he arrived in Berlin; his meetings with German intelligence officers of the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV); the purchase of the Jeep; his sprint to Paris. A half-dozen combatants, two cars, and two motorcycles comprised the surveillance team. Throughout, none of the operation's planners at Caesarea had any idea where Bseiso would stay. Would he choose the apartment of a friend, a flat set up by the DST, or a plush hotel room, courtesy of the kingly budget of Fatah, the largest faction of the PLO? Now they knew where they had to act. The operation needed to go into full swing immediately, as Bseiso, a notoriously reluctant traveler, might well spend only one night in Paris. Perhaps the following day, after meeting a colleague from the DST, he would return home, and the opportunity that had presented itself would be gone, possibly forever. Intelligence reports showed that Bseiso, whose job demanded frequent travel, tried to stay in Tunis as much as possible. When he did leave, he flew, a mode of travel

not so susceptible to Israeli attack. Planes go directly from point A to point B. The traveler is never alone. People in cars meander, stop for gas, and spend the night at hotels. Bseiso, it turned out, was in fact planning to leave the following evening. He would drive to Marseilles, put the Jeep on a ferry to Tunis, and surprise his wife, Dima, and their three children with the new car. The Israelis waited in ambush outside the hotel. They assumed Bseiso would go out for dinner. When he returned, tired and contented, they would act. The late hours of the night, when the streets are quiet and empty, were always best for covert operations. The final decision would be in the hands of the two assassins, "Tom" and "Frank." The point man, Tom, would pull the trigger. Up until the last instant, he would have the authority to call off the operation: he would raise his weapon only when certain that his team would emerge unscathed. Atef Bseiso was a target because of the role he played in the slaughter of eleven Israeli Olympians in Munich, in 1972, almost twenty years prior. Shabtai Shavit wanted him to pay the price for participating in the killings. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir authorized the mission and gave it his blessing. The state of Israel was on the verge of closing its case against another one of the "bastards," as they were known in the Mossad, who took part in the Munich Massacre. Bseiso did go out to dinner. The Caesarea surveillance team shadowed him, undetected, the whole time. They checked that he wasn't being guarded by his DST hosts. Bseiso, his bodyguard, and an unidentified Lebanese woman spent a pleasant night at a Hippopotamus Grill chain restaurant. It was after midnight when Bseiso picked up the tab and went back to the Jeep. He sat in the back, his bodyguard drove, and his friend sat in the front seat. They had a very loud, animated conversation in Arabic. A short drive brought them to the entrance of the Mridien Montparnasse. The Rue du Commandant Mouchotte was quiet; few cars passed by. Bseiso got out and said goodbye to his friends. He took one step back, preparing to move in the direction of the hotel. A few seconds later, two young men approached him. Their walk was loose, casual. Tom, the point man, raised his hand and pulled the trigger. The Beretta 0.22 issued its shots in silence, the retorts muzzled by a silencer. The three bullets hit Bseiso in the head. He fell on the spot, next to his friend's car, his final inhalation a gurgle. The hot cartridges were caught, along with the clues they held, in a sturdy cloth bag attached to the pistol. Within seconds, the assassin and his backup were rapidly retreating down the street. "Abie," the commander of the squad, waited for them near the corner, 150 yards away. He watched them cross to the other side of Avenue du Maine and, from the other side of the street, at a more casual pace, watched their backs. This standard procedure was meant to thwart a mishap during the escape phase of a mission—a highly unlikely scenario, since it takes bystanders many long seconds, if not minutes, to realize that an assassination has just taken place. Nonetheless, the possibility couldn't be ignored. Within twenty seconds the point man and his number two were at the corner of a one-way street. According to Mossad procedure, the getaway car always waits two 90-degree turns from the scene of an operation. The pair made a left onto Rue Vandamme, where the waiting car had kept its motor running. Abie suddenly noticed two figures coming after his men. They were breathing heavily and speaking animatedly. This was a fast-approaching threat; they needed to be stopped. They could not be allowed to turn the corner and see the escape vehicle, or, even worse, commit the license plate to memory. Abie started toward them, his quick pace authoritative and threatening. When he was within fifteen feet of the pair he pulled out his Beretta. Holding it in front of their faces, he shouted: "Stop!" The weapon froze them in their tracks. They put their hands in the air, stumbled backward, turned around, and broke into a run in the direction of the hotel. Abie pocketed his gun and walked down Avenue du Maine. He watched his men turn left onto the narrow street and got into a second car waiting for him on his side of the avenue. He checked his watch: fifty-five seconds had elapsed since the first shot was fired. He smiled to himself. The account was squared; the mission, a success. He pushed a button, sending confirmation to the commander of Caesarea. In less than two hours, the point man, his number two, the squad leader, the commander of Caesarea, his staff officers, and Shabtai Shavit, had all left French soil. Brigadier General Azriel Nevo, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's military aide, lay awake in bed waiting for the red, top secret telephone to ring. He picked it up quickly and heard a familiar voice say, "Azriel, it went according to plan." He recognized "Amir," Shabtai Shavit's chief of staff, on the other end of the line. "Thanks, I'll pass it on." Nevo sat up in bed and dialed Shamir's number. The prime minister picked up on the first ring. "Mr. Prime Minister, I just got word from Shavit's office, the Paris affair went smoothly." "Thank you," Shamir said, and hung up. Nevo put down the phone. Shamir, he thought, had nerves of steel. He and Shavit were two of a kind. Nevo went back to sleep thinking about how Le Figaro's headline might read the next morning. News of the assassination traveled fast. Some Western media outlets automatically attributed the hit to the Mossad, even pointing to the possibility of revenge for the Munich murders of 1972. The Bseiso family, one of the largest and most respected clans in Gaza City, set up a traditional mourning tent, where they received hundreds of visitors. Bseiso was hailed as a "victim of the Intifada." Yasser Arafat, the founder of Fatah, was in Amman, Jordan, recovering from head injuries sustained when his plane was forced to crash-land in the Libyan desert during a sandstorm earlier that year. Arafat told dozens of reporters that the Israeli Mossad was responsible for the assassination. "I warned them," he said, "dir balkum, be careful, the Mossad will hunt us down one by one, officer by officer. . . . Unfortunately, we have lost a national hero." Israeli authorities never issued an official response. One of Prime Minister Shamir's spokespersons told The New York Times that the accusation was "totally and completely ridiculous." The head of Military Intelligence, Major General Uri Saguy, responded to Arafat's claims with an unperturbed: "Nu, so Arafat says we did it, hat ehr gezukt" (Yiddish for: He says so, so what?). Officers at the

Mossad's Brussels station were shocked. "Eyal," a high-ranking officer in Caesarea, hurried up the stairs to see "Haggai," his superior. "Didn't we take this guy off the list?" Eyal asked. "We took him off. I don't know what's going on." Haggai shrugged. Both of them knew the deceased. Back in 1988, the two of them, in previous posts as officers at Mossad headquarters in Tel Aviv, had erased his name from the Mossad hit list. The removal had gone through all the proper channels. Nahum Admoni, the head of the Mossad at the time, had approved the move. Yet someone had put Bseiso back on the list and then led a covert operation to kill him on French soil. That someone was none other than Shabtai Shavit-a brilliant tactician and professional, who had excelled at every post he held along the chain of command, and who had the ear and the confidence of every prime minister he worked under. Early in 1992, Shavit called a former protégé, the current head of Caesarea, to a short meeting. He asked him to check which of the terrorists involved in the Munich attack were still alive. Shavit was old-school, one of those who refused to close the book on Munich. As far as he was concerned, the state of Israel had painted a well-deserved target on the faces of everyone involved in the planning or the execution of the massacre. They would all pay with their lives; when and where was of no consequence. Mossad combatants were charged with carrying out the assassination orders, which had been passed down from Golda Meir to each successive prime minister. Shavit believed in Israel's responsibility to its citizens, at home and abroad-he believed in the necessity of fulfilling this executive order not just because he saw it as moral and just, but because he knew that no one else would carry it out in his place. He would do all in his power to see the mission through. A few months after the assassination, Shavit was officially invited to meet the newly appointed head of the DST. Forgoing pleasantries, the French intelligence officer fired his opening volley: "We know you killed Bseiso. We're still working on the proof. When it comes through, you'll get what's coming to you. In no way am I willing to allow you to turn Paris into your stage for acts of war and assassinations. We're not going back to the early seventies, when you did whatever the hell you wanted here. I will not allow it to happen," he said, pounding his fist on the table. From the Hardcover edition.