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Power Triangle:
Military, Security, and Politics in the Shaping of the Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish Regimes

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Egyptian, Iranian, and Turkish Regimes

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The dissertation explains why similar coup-installed regimes in Egypt (1952), Iran (1921), and Turkey (1923) developed along different political trajectories (authoritarianism, royal absolutism, and democracy, respectively). While most studies of regime change tend to underline popular forces, I demonstrate that these changes cannot be fully comprehended without a grasp of the shifting power balance within the ruling bloc. I argue that these divergent paths were determined by the ensuing power struggle between the military, security, and political institutions. A thorough comparative and historical examination of the critical junctures that marked the path of this unfolding power relation reveals that the ultimate dominance of the security establishment created an authoritarian police state in Egypt; the dominance of the political apparatus in Iran produced a monarchy vulnerable to overthrow from below; and the dominance of the military allowed enough space for a limited yet expanding democracy to develop in Turkey.

The dissertation of Hazem Khaled Kandil is approved.

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Introduction

Egypt, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire were three longtime pillars of the Muslim world that came increasingly under European imperial hegemony in the nineteenth century. Colonial powers (mostly British, but also French, Russian, and Prussian) were largely responsible for arresting their overall development, either through direct occupation (as in Egypt's case), or through establishing spheres of influence and exploiting valuable resources (as in the case of Persia), or through embroiling them in constant strife with their subjects and neighbors (as with the Ottoman Empire). At the same time, ironically, European powers helped bolster the armed forces of these three countries, either to help them maintain order in and around the colonial zones (Egypt and Persia), or to be able to nurture a loyal class of native officers to further their sway (as in the Ottoman case). But thanks to the Great War, and the devastating depression that ensued, the colonial grip began to loosen. The victors in the Great War were too exhausted militarily and economically to maintain territorial gains in (what soon became) modern-day Turkey, nor could they afford to maintain direct control over the Egyptian and Persian governments. And so instead of continuing to serve their European patrons, political cliques within these relatively developed officer corps seized power in the three countries, sometime around the second quarter of the twentieth century, with the declared aim of achieving national independence and revolutionizing society from above using the standard tools of late modernization: a centralized bureaucracy, state-led industrialization and socioeconomic development, and a secular nationalist ideology. Yet despite the similar origins of these coup-installed regimes, they followed different trajectories: Egypt metamorphosed into a police state; Iran became an absolutist monarchy; and Turkey evolved from a limited to a viable and vibrant democracy. How can we account for this divergence?

The central argument in this study is that these different pathways were determined by the power struggle within the ruling bloc, particularly between the military, security, and political institutions—what I refer to here as the 'power triangle'. This theoretical model is based on the historical observation that in these three coups, just as in countless other cases, power seizure by a group of politicized officers is immediately followed by a division of labor between those who run the government, those who handle security, and those who control the officer corps. The components of this internally differentiated regime oscillate between cooperation and competition because their interests, while sometimes overlapping, remain essentially separate.[1] The political leadership (represented by the ruling party, presidency, court, etc.) needs military and/or security support to preserve its power should it be forced to resort to coercion, but plays them off against each other to safeguard its autonomy and avoid falling hostage to any of them.[2] That is why coup leaders typically charge a group of army confidants with creating an elaborate security apparatus to coup-proof the armed forces and repress the population.[3] At the same time, they try to make sure that rogue security agencies can be reined in using military units if needs be. The security establishment (secret police, anti-riot forces, etc.) understands that its influence is contingent on the persistence of autocracy because only authoritarian regimes are obsessed with the 'enemy within'; transition to democracy would certainly spell its downfall from power. As for those who remain in the military, the adverse effects of politicization on the combat readiness and public image of the

[1] I am indebted to Alfred Stepan's (1988: 30-31) distinction in studying Latin American regimes between the 'military as government' (i.e., politicized officers running the government), the 'security community', and the 'military as institution' (which includes the officer corps and rank-and-file). This division also draws on Theda Skocpol's depiction of the state as "a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations" (1979: 27). At the broadest theoretical level, however, this conceptual scheme is rooted in Michael Mann's analysis of power, which highlights that although "humans enter into cooperative, collective power relations" to achieve their goals, once "social organization and a division of labor are set up," competition over who "overlooks and directs the whole" ensues (1986: 6-7). E. H. Carr (2011 [1946]: 80-85) presents the best realist critique of the liberal notion of a natural "harmony of interests" among social institutions.

[2] I agree with Gianfranco Poggi (2001: 30, 53) that political power is primarily grounded "in the harsh reality of physical coercion," though once in place it "may endure with a less lavish and visible expenditure of violence." See also Carr (2001 [1946]: 96) and Perry Anderson (1974: 42) on the fundamental role of violence in maintaining political power.

[3] Coups usually beget other coups, as was demonstrated in the case of Syria, Iraq, Algeria, the Sudan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Ghana. Syria alone witnessed fifteen coups between 1949 and 1970.

officer corps are usually unsettling. Their preference is to return to the barracks after implementing the needed reforms, and re-intervene only if necessary.[4]

With these observations in mind, this study not only aims to highlight the fundamental interdependence and continuous interaction between the governing and coercive apparatuses, but also underlines the crucial distinction between the political attitudes of the two wings of the coercive apparatus: the military and the police.[5] Historically, military and police power have been intimately linked.[6] Otto Hintze (1975: 201) asserted that the "military state developed into the tutelary police state,"[7] and in fact, many considered police states a symptom of the "*perversion and corruption*" of military politics (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 32). But although both military and security organs could carry out coercive functions, their political mindset differs considerably. First of all, the police force could rarely muster a bargaining power comparable to that of the military once a regime collapses. Contrary to the centralized and hierarchical military, security agencies are usually too divided to be able to articulate and defend unified corporate interests vis-à-vis new rulers. Secondly, security officials are more likely to suffer retaliation should opposition come to power than military officers. Unlike the military, which normally represses citizens through deterrence and intimidation (via communiqués, curfews, or street parades), security personnel directly administer repression (through detention, torture, summary executions), and therefore can scarcely hope for a general

[4] Soldiers also face the dilemma of explaining why they are still in power if their coup was successful, and what makes them think they are competent to rule if it was not (private correspondence with Benedict Anderson on June 5, 2011). Alfred Vagts had mentioned in his magisterial study of militarism that "Even without an express prohibition [on military participation in politics] it would appear doubtful whether officers as a type have the ability, the suppleness, the temperament, or the time for a continuous application to politics" (Vagts 1959: 294; see also Nordlinger 1977).

[5] Middle East experts have employed the term police state derogatively to condemn the draconian methods of postcolonial Arab governments without really explaining what constitutes this type of state, and how is it different from other repressive states (see for instance Salamé 1994; Makiya 1998).

[6] We know that the creation of the first national army in the early 1790s in France went hand-in-hand with the development of the organs of domestic repression under the Reign of Terror. This process was accelerated with the militarization of the polity following Napoleon's coup in 1804. Militarizing the French Revolution thus produced the first police state in modern history (Tilly 1993: 170-76). For differences in mission and historical origins between military and police forces see Poggi (2001: 184-85).

[7] Though at the time Hintze was writing, the concept of a *polizeistaat* had not yet received the negative connotation of today, and was mostly used in reference to well-ordered and highly disciplined polities.

amnesty. Finally, while the officer corps is universally esteemed, receiving special privileges under democratic and authoritarian regimes alike (since both have external enemies), the special status and prerogatives conferred on security agencies under authoritarianism (with its preoccupation with internal enemies) diminishes substantially in a democracy; the extra-legal privileges and immunities that security agents receive are abrogated as soon as the extra-legal services they performed are no longer required. To sum up, security organs are in a far more vulnerable position than the military should democratization succeed, and thus offer a much stronger support to those bent on sustaining authoritarianism.[8] These diverse institutional attitudes underline the fact that although police states could sometimes be regarded as degenerate forms of military states, the two types are qualitatively different. Military states are characterized by direct military governance (such as Latin American juntas) or repeated military interventions in politics (as exemplified by the Turkish case). What defines a police state, on the other hand, is the constant monitoring and security regulation of political life with the aim of suppressing all challenges to the existing order, whether from political opposition groups or the armed forces (such as in communist and fascist regimes).[9] With this variation in mind we can begin to understand why military and security organs are as likely to work against each other, as they are to complement one another in the political field.

Clearly, the premise here is that ruling blocs are not as well integrated as commonly perceived. The military and security are not the 'iron fists' or 'heavy hands' of political authority, or other such metaphors that portray them as mere appendages rather than independent institutions

[8] This is all summarized in Barbara Geddes (1999) succinct formula that for the military "there is life after democracy."

[9] Of course all law-governed societies must be policed, and policing, in general, is a form of coercion that could lead to numerous instances of social repression. But in 'police states' this form of coercion is not only more blatant than in democracies, but it is explicitly designed to preserve the rulers in power through dominating all other institutions, including the military. The security apparatus checks military autonomy and the rise of subversive elements within it through multiple control mechanisms, which include screening recruits, keeping officers under tight surveillance, recommending promotions, purging dissidents, designing economic payoffs, in addition to isolating the officer corps from the 'political street' by reliving it from the responsibility of domestic repression. This control model has been devised during the French Revolution, but it was perfected under communist rule in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc.

with distinct corporate interests. The armed forces and the security establishment are full partners in any country's ruling bloc. They work *with* rather than *for* the political apparatus—no matter what the constitution says. And while the interests of the three partners sometimes coincide (projecting an image of unity) they are never identical, and thus remain separate.

Machiavelli wrote in the early sixteenth century that: "Between the armed and unarmed man no proportion holds, and it is contrary to reason to expect that the armed man should voluntarily submit to him who is unarmed, or that the unarmed man should stand secure among armed retainers" (2004 [1532]: 68-69). This quintessential axiom rings true today as much as it did back then. Yet the conventional approach to analyzing the relation between politicians and the custodians of violence assumes that the military and security in 'healthy' states act just like other pressure groups, bargaining with civilians to promote their interests, and treats military intervention as a temporary deviation from its normal course as a professional and supposedly apolitical institution.[10] But these institutions have more at stake than other pressure groups—their corporate interests are entwined in the minds of their members with the nation's security (maybe even its existence), and they are therefore determined to compel politicians to assign absolute priority to questions of war against foreign and domestic enemies. And because force is their *ultima ratio*, unlike other social organizations, politicians cannot simply check their influence through legal and administrative means, or even by increasing their legitimacy. The only way for civilian leaders to subordinate these mighty partners is through a negotiated power arrangement that demarcates spheres of influence. So whenever officers and security men appear to succumb to politicians, it is because the latter have either successfully balanced them against each other or surrendered enough power to keep them satisfied, not because they have been trained to learn their place in the ladder of authority and defer

[10] See Finer (1962); Huntington (1968); Allison (1971); Perlmutter (1974); Zegart (1999); Cook (2007); and Brooks (2008). For an alternative account that emphasizes the intimate and enduring links between political and military power, rather than viewing military subordination as the normal state of affairs, see Anderson (1974); Hintze (1975); Mann (1986); Downing (1992); and Tilly (1993).

to their political masters. Obedience becomes a matter of ingrained habit, but only as long as nothing occasions a revision of the existing arrangement.

The relationship between soldiers, spies, and statesmen is therefore a power relation rather than a hierarchal one—even if the dynamics of this relationship are subtle in developed societies and crude elsewhere.[11] Driven by varying interests the three institutions of the ruling bloc are inevitably drawn into a power struggle over regime domination, a struggle that unfolds within a turbulent domestic and geopolitical order.[12] The goal of this struggle is surely not for one institution to eliminate the rest, but rather for one partner in the ruling bloc to subordinate the other two. And through a dizzying sequence of alliances, reversals, and confrontations within this triangular ruling complex, the balance of power constantly shifts, and with it the overall character of the regime. The dominance of the security establishment produces an authoritarian police state, such as the one that governed Egypt in 2011, one whose intransigence is such that even after a momentous popular uprising and a soft coup it still resists change. Political hegemony over the organs of coercion creates a toothless regime vulnerable to overthrow from below once it loses popular legitimacy, as was the case in Iran in 1979. Military guardianship imposed by officers with no interest in direct governance creates a relatively autonomous political space, which political actors could then strive to expand gradually under the nose of the military and ultimately at its expense, as we have seen in the case of Turkey, especially after 2002.[13] In other words, the relative weight of each of the three institutions is what renders one regime democratic, another military-dominated, and a third an authoritarian police

[11] What about economic and ideological power? I believe that wealth and ideas are among the 'sources' of social power, but in terms of 'institutions of rule', the modern states knows only three: political, military, and security. Economic and ideological organizations are located in civil society, and their influence usually passes through one of these ruling institutions. This is why both elements, while powerfully present in the ensuing analysis, are accounted for through their relationship with the three main players in the ruling coalition.

[12] As Skocpol noted, state institutions maneuver for power at the intersection of international and domestic pressures (1979: 32, 47). For how geopolitics helps shape internal dynamics, see Anderson (1974: 11-33), Hintze (1975: 180-215), Mann (1986: 27-30), Tilly (1993: 6), and Zegart (1999: 42-43).

[13] This conclusion is consistent with quantitative studies, which demonstrated that among the authoritarian regimes erected between 1945 and 2000, security-sustained single party regimes lasted three times as long as military-dominated ones, while personalist autocracies came somewhere in the middle (Geddes 1999).

state. Hence, analyzing a regime must begin by clarifying (or demystifying) the relationship within this power triangle.

In that sense, the following empirical study does not only hope to contribute to our substantial understanding of the cases at hand, but also to produce a historically grounded explanatory model of how ruling blocs operate, a model that is both generalizable and sensitive to variation, i.e., a model that does not claim that if a particular set of conditions pertain then a specific outcome would invariably follow, but instead identifies the causal mechanisms at work.

How have sociologists identified these mechanisms in the past? The literature on ruling blocs is rich and varied. Class theorists categorize states according to mode of production, and privilege the role of the economically dominant class. The undeniable increase in state power has forced many of them to entertain some notion of state autonomy, though they still hold that the state's main function is to reproduce the existing social order (Miliband 1969; Althusser 1971; Poulantzas 1973; Jessop 1990; Offe and Ronge 1982; Therborn 1982). In other words, they continue to perceive the state as "an institutional chameleon, able to adopt the class character of whatever class holds economic power" (Kimmel 1990: 19). Exceptional cases of state autonomy are recognized as historical contingencies, and maybe added as qualifiers to class-based models, but rarely theorized in their own right. The agents of coercion (especially the military) are either considered instruments of class domination (as in classic Marxian analyses), or treated as part of the 'military-industrial complex'—thus primarily an economic actor (as in contemporary social analysis; see Mills 1956; Johnson 2004). Liberals characteristically confuse reality with aspiration, envisioning a ruling bloc of elected representatives, responsive to popular demands, and beholden to social values and legal regulations (Lipset 1959; Easton 1965; Dahl 1977). As Mann rightly noted (1993: 46), their view of the state simply reflects "liberal democracy's view of itself." And both class theorists and liberals commit the same mistake by essentially conceiving the state as an arena for

social interactions, rather than an independent actor. And both believe that the social order is progressing dialectically towards perfection. In contrast, elitists, adopting a proto-realist philosophy, depict social life as a relentless struggle between organized minorities over state power. States, in their opinion, are institutions colonized by various power elites across time (Mosca 1939; Pareto 1968; Oppenheimer 1975; Domhoff 1990). Elitist therefore "invert" class and liberal theories by visualizing power as radiating "outward from, not inward to, the state" (Mann 1993: 48).

Yet a variant of this elitist school shifts the analytical gaze away from an organized elite that conquers the state (from outside) and strives to delay its inevitable displacement by another power elite, to how state officials (on the inside) identify with and defend the interests of the organizations they belong to (Trimberger 1978; Skocpol 1985; Mann 1986; Tilly 1990). Autonomy, in this case, is located in the state elite themselves, rather than a social elite analytically separate from the state. The idea here is that focusing on concrete organizations with specific members, identifiable interests, and a distinct institutional history and values, brings one as close as possible to understanding how ruling blocs actually operate.

But which state institutions should one focus on, and why? Skocpol (1979: 27) defined the state as "a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed and more or less well-coordinated by an executive authority…an autonomous structure—a structure with a logic and interests of its own." And concluded that: "administrative and coercive organizations are the basis of state power as such" (Skocpol 1979: 29). But why is that so? Historically, there have been two preconditions for declaring sovereign control over a designated territory and population: these were *force* to protect the land and cage its people, and *governance* to administer both. That is why coercion and politics, above all, mark the birth of states and caste a long shadow over their future. Other factors contribute no doubt, but they do so mostly through enhancing these two functions. Economic assets (in the form of land, capital, or natural resources) sustain the populace; coopt the

most ambitious among them; and empower the ruling institutions further. Cultural assets (such as myths, religious doctrines, ideologies, values and norms, which all eventually find expression in the laws and practices) help legitimize the existing order; condition subjects to accept it; and mobilize them when necessary. In the final analysis though, ruling blocs could exist without much economic or cultural power, but never without coercive and political power. A breakdown in either of those two leads to immediate regime breakdown. This is why, for the sake of analytical clarity, it is useful to strip ruling blocs down to the bones, and focus on military, security, and political institutions as the main protagonists.

Moreover, one must keep in mind, as Skocpol mentioned, that these three institutions are "more or less well-coordinated," rather than acting in a coherent and systematic way to defend the interests of some reified 'state'—for as Mann reminded us, "state elites are plural" (1993: 51). Analyzing ruling blocs, in that case, must begin by recognizing how these core ruling institutions act *individually* to defend their interests vis-à-vis other institutions inside and outside the state, rather than *collectively* to defend state interest against domestic and international challenges. So while most state theories are either functional (focusing on what the state, as a whole, does) or descriptive (listing the institutional components of the state), it would be useful to focus on how state institutions function. Here the units of analysis are not classes, which use the state to reproduce or alter class relations, as Marxists claim; nor elected representatives, who work through the state to reconcile the needs of their constituencies, as liberals would have it; nor organized minorities that colonize the state to dominate society, as elitists say. The purposive actors here are the three ruling institutions, acting according to their own logic to enhance their corporate interests. The state is thus viewed primarily as a field of power relations, and the ruling institutions as independent players.[14]

[14] It is important, of course, not confuse institutions with institutional elites. The analysis here underlines how institutions as whole struggle to defend their interests, and whenever actions by institutional members are highlighted, it is because they are acting as representatives of their institutions. This is crucial because while the elitist school tends to

This is the essence of *institutional realism*, which highlights the unrelenting power struggle among self-interested organizations within the state. It conceives the state not as a reified or monolithic body, but an amalgam of institutions, each with its own power maximizing agendas. Sometimes they are in conflict (no matter how muted), and at other times they are in alliance, but their aim is always to maintain and further their interests. The struggle between these power organizations "provides the central drama of social development," as Michael Mann once wrote (1993: 9). This is why, as E. H. Carr concluded, politics is "always power politics;" without power struggle an issue "ceases to be 'political' and becomes a matter of administrative routine" (2001 [1946]: 102). And power politics are naturally volatile and dynamic. Competition results in power configurations that privilege some interest at the expense of others, but changes in domestic or geopolitical circumstances disrupt the existing balance, precipitating a new round of struggle that brings forth new power formations. In this way, we can see that regime types reflect the prevailing balance of power at any given time.

Institutional realism combines political realism and historical institutionalism.[15] Realism, which highlights the centrality of power struggle in interactions between social organizations, has mostly been limited to international relations, and has therefore opened itself to criticism for treating states as coherent and rational organs.[16] Many historical institutionalist studies, on the other hand, have been either applied without a specific theoretical guide, or within the framework of Marxism or

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overlook broader social influences, the present analysis treats institutions as intermediaries between elites and society. Whereas institutions represent the immediate environment of elites, society is the immediate environment of ruling institutions; and whereas elites could remain relatively isolated, ruling institutions cannot—they are too big and too involved in the everyday life of society to be able to ignore it (see Zubaida on the socialization of Egypt's political apparatus, and Caglar (2004) regarding the Turkish police). Nonetheless, changes within institutions usually fall off the analytical radar because (compared to elites and active social forces) they occur slowly, almost unnoticeably.

[15] The best representatives of the historical institutionalist tradition that focuses on the competition of power organizations within and between states, and maintains a healthy appreciation for the role of military power are Perry Anderson (1974), Otto Hintze (1975), Theda Skocpol (1979), Michael Mann (1986), Charles Tilly (1990), and Gianfranco Poggi (2001). The realist tradition is more divided. Here I draw on proto-realists (Thucydides, Ibn Khaldun, and Machiavelli), as well as the modern realists, especially E. H. Carr (1946) and Hans Morgenthau (1948), and to a lesser extent on structural realists, such as Kenneth Waltz (1954), Stephen Walt (1987; 1996), and John Mearsheimer (2003).

[16] These critiques are best captured in the volumes edited by Keohane 1986, and Frankel 1996).

rational choice. By importing realism into domestic politics, I hope to enrich both approaches. On the one hand, I discipline the use of historical institutional analysis using a framework that broadens the range of human motivations for struggle (beyond economic gain), the variety of organizations they work through (beyond social classes), and the strategies they employ (beyond rational bureaucratic politics). On the other hand, I attribute realist power calculations to compact institutions with discernable corporate interests, rather than making claims about a reified state behaving as a single political actor. This is in line with the original impetus of the realist school. Hans Morgenthau (1948: 21) considered domestic and international politics as "two different manifestations of the same phenomenon: the struggle for power," even though the formal hierarchy and cultural homogeneity of the modern state makes the domestic order relatively more stable. This is because, in his view, the tendency to dominate is a fixed element of all human associations (Morgenthau 1948: 31-33). But as R. Harrison Wagner rightly observed, the artificial division of labor among scholars who study domestic and international politics "has interfered with our understanding of both and has left us poorly equipped to understand both" (2007: ix).

My method is historical and comparative—the method of choice for both historical institutionalists and realists. Empirical evidence comes from primary sources (interviews in Cairo, Istanbul, and with the Iranian diaspora in California, in addition to dozens of memoirs, news clips, official documents, and archival materials), supported by an extensive reexamination of secondary literature. In terms of case selection, I was mindful of Skocpol's warning that "comparative historical analysis works best when applied to a set of a few cases that share certain basic features" (1979: 40). Egypt, Iran, and Turkey are largely similar in terms of general properties (size, location, religious affiliation, ethnic homogeneity, and population, to mention just a few), and they are considered roughly within the same time span, from the second quarter of the twentieth century to the turn of

the new century (analysis of Iran stops in the early 1980s with the dismantling of the Pahlavi regime, while the Egyptian and Turkish cases extend to the present).

All three countries were ruled by archaic and inadequate monarchies, undermined internally by liberal constitutional movements (and their elite-controlled parliaments), and externally by European powers. The three experienced modernizing coups that quickly turned into modernizing revolutions from above by nationalist officers: Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1921, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923, and Gamal Abd al-Nasser in 1952. The three leaders had comparable state-building ambitions, and espoused very similar secular nationalist ideologies to legitimize their regimes. They established massive bureaucracies to centralize power, manage economic development, and penetrate the lives of their citizens. And they brutally silenced critics through repression and censorship.

Despite these similarities, there were a few important differences. Atatürk and Nasser were hailed as war heroes, and both capitalized on their status to organize political cliques within the armed forces to help them reach power. Reza Khan, by contrast, was an obscure and apolitical colonel handpicked by the British to bring order to a country they believed was slipping into chaos. Military and political history was also crucial here. Contrary to the Ottoman army that governed a vast empire for six centuries; and contrary to Egypt, which built a formidable army that commanded, by 1840, territories extending from the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula to Sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean isles, and was barely stopped at the gates of Constantinople by an alliance of European powers; Iran in the early twentieth-century did not have a fighting force to speak of. Moreover, while Istanbul and Cairo had sizeable centralized bureaucracies to start with, Tehran barely controlled Persia's provincial towns, let alone the countryside and the vast tribal areas. Finally, unlike the charismatic and popular leaders of Turkey and Egypt, with their fiery speeches and grand popular gestures, the brutish master of Iran seldom communicated with his subjects. This partly explains why the former two felt confident enough to abolish monarchism and establish their

own ruling parties, while the latter continued to rely on a medieval-style court. And in fact, Reza Shah's decision to extend monarchical rule, rather than adopt the radical republicanism of his illustrious counterparts, was a determining factor in Iran's political trajectory—one which ended with a court-dominated polity that was vulnerable to overthrow from below.

One the other hand, despite similarities between Turkey and Egypt there were two vital differences. Whereas Atatürk entrusted the military with domestic security duties, Nasser relied from the beginning on an entrenched security apparatus. Also, while Turkey attached itself to the Western camp, Nasser's Egypt defied the liberal capitalist world, and developed close affinities with the totalitarian countries of the East. And this largely explains while the former developed a military-dominated democracy, while the latter degenerated into an authoritarian police state.

In terms of organization, after an extended literature review section (Part I), each country is dealt with separately due to the complexity of intra-regime interactions and the domestic and geopolitical cross-pressures, though aspects of interdependence between the three cases are duly noted. The origin and structure of the new regimes and the subsequent interaction between the three ruling institutions are all analyzed in great detail in three long parts (Part II, III, IV), each with several chapters of varying lengths.[17] Each chapter, in turn, analyzes a critical juncture: a war, a coup attempt, or some form of political showdown. These critical junctures, which represent high pitches in the ongoing power struggle, are at once cumulative outcomes of past actions and signifiers of

[17] The length of each part varies according to the case at hand. The part on Egypt is by far the longest because—to my knowledge—no other work has yet integrated the whole string of events occurring in the period between the July 1952 coup and the January 2011 revolt in a coherent analytical narrative, whose unfolding is examined through a single theoretical lens. What we have so far in the Egyptian case are either detailed narrations of the ebbs and flows of the country's political history without a clear theoretical argument in sight, or elaborate explanatory models applied to limited segments of that history. The treatment of Egypt in this study, therefore, provides the first systematic account of country's entire post-coup history. The paradigm-shattering Iranian revolution, by contrast, invited a plethora of theoretical studies. Yet the military and security institutions were relatively underrepresented in these studies, which focused overwhelmingly on popular mobilization, ideology, and geopolitics. The part on Iran is accordingly shorter than the one on Egypt, but still fairly long. The part on Turkey is comparatively compact. The Turkish military guardianship model has been elucidated with care in countless studies over the years. Its trajectory is only outlined here to contrast that of the other two countries.

what lies ahead. In other words, each juncture reconstitutes the balance of forces and sets the stage for the next round of struggle. Stringing together these critical episodes one can clearly visualize the path each regime took. For it is through "a number of 'episodes' of major structural transformation" that fundamental social change occurs; episodes that are not necessarily related, nor are they part of a "single immanent process," but it is through their combined impact that societies move in one direction or the other (Mann 1986: 3). This is why Perry Anderson insisted that any society "is at once a *structure* which can be understood in terms of the inter-relationship of its parts, and a *process* which can only be understood in terms of cumulative weight of its past" (quoted in Elliot 1998: 7). And this is why chronology matters: "*when* things happen within a sequence affects *how* they happen…every structure or process constitutes a series of choice points. Outcomes at a given point in time constrain possible outcomes at later points in time" (Tilly 1982: 14).

The way regimes turn out, therefore, is not structurally preordained, but their options narrow down along the way. So while this study is careful not to leave out any of the relevant structural elements (whether domestic or geopolitical), it is essentially concerned with purposeful institutional actors, the interests they represent, the decisions they take, and the outcome of their actions in intra-regime power struggles to achieve overall domination.

PART [I]

Militarism, Repression, and Revolution

> Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship… The object of power is power.
>
> Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949

A military can take power by force and preserve it through repression, but only a few of them do. In this study, I examine the conditions conducive to military intervention in politics, and the various regimes that such an intervention can produce over time. The study is anchored in the intersection of three related literatures: *militarism*, which deals with use of military power in politics;[1] *repression*, which explores the institutions and mechanisms of domestic repression; and *revolution*, which is concerned with overthrowing repressive regimes. The three literatures overlap: the first explains why military officers seize power, how they exercise it, and what forces them to give it up; the second expands on the second point, namely, how regimes use coercive power to preserve their rule; and the third focuses on the last point: how regimes can be overthrown. I do not attempt the impossible here by trying to offer a comprehensive review of all three literatures. My discussion is thus limited to the portions relevant to the purposes of this study.

The part is divided into three chapters. Chapter one draws entirely on works on militarism to conceptualize the relationship between military and political institutions. This chapter is further divided into two sections: one reviews works by class theorists and liberal modernization theorists who regard military intervention in politics as a temporary phenomenon, a symptom of underdevelopment that disappears as society becomes more economically stable and politically established; and the other covers the work of those I label 'institutional realists', who emphasize the constant tension marking the relationship between those who wield arms and those who rule. My objective in this first chapter is to demonstrate that the problems

[1] I adopt Mann's definitions of military power as the "social organization of physical violence," and of political power as one that "derives from control of the state" (Mann 2004: 64, 70). So on the one hand, I advocate an expanded version of military power, which includes, in addition to the officer corps, other coercive institutions, such as security agencies, and on the other hand, I regard political power in a limited way as state rule.

associated with militarism are not a thing of the past, nor are they likely to become so as society develops – thus arguing for the continued significance of studying the military factor in politics.

The second chapter combines works on militarism and repression to describe the type of institutions that military rulers create when they come to power. Again this chapter is divided into two sections, the first presents the 'military guardianship' model, whereby the army withdraws from government shortly after the coup and maintains its separateness from political institutions, influencing rule only indirectly through vetoing policies or soft coups; the second section deals with the 'police state' model, which involves the coup maker's creation of pervasive security agencies that control society through constant surveillance, regulation, and repression. The goal of this chapter is to highlight the different structures of rule that can follow from military intervention in politics. The third chapter turns to the subject of revolutionary change. This chapter integrates insights from the fields of militarism and revolution theory to address the crucial question of how regimes that have been originally installed by coups can be transformed.

Chapter One

TAKING POWER:
THE ORIGINS OF MILITARISM

Mann defined militarism as an attitude that regards war and combat readiness as a "desirable social activity" (1987: 35).[2] Militarism can therefore be seen as a social phenomenon. Romantics might praise the martial spirit it infuses in society (Nietzsche 2006 [1906]: 418), and liberals might condemn its distortion of democratic ideals; but, value judgments notwithstanding, it remains primarily a social attitude that creates a society where dissidents are treated as enemies, and where the use of force is valued and justified (Vagts 1959: 16-17; Gupta 2003: 14-15).

Militarism can be outward-oriented, i.e. concerned mostly with preparation for war, or inward-oriented, i.e. focused on preventing domestic subversion. The two types are, of course, related since war is usually the best justification for repressing opposition. And it is worth mentioning that internal militarism usually outlives the external one because it can be more readily normalized. In this chapter, we are mostly interested in domestic militarism, which typically begins with a coup d'état.

According to Welch: "The first overt seizure of power by the armed forces constitutes the most important shift in civil-military relations. This coup d'état shatters the façade of civilian supremacy and may bring profound politicization of the armed forces. It is a step not readily reversed" (1976: 324). From this point onwards, the military becomes prone to political intervention and civilians come to see the military as a cornerstone of political power (Vagts 1959: 22). Coups are therefore sore reminders that military power, which is supposedly developed for state protection, could also be used to discipline and control society. As such, they are formative events that weigh heavily on the political development of society. But coups are not supposed to happen under 'normal' circumstances. According to Huntington's normative

[2] This should not imply that militarism actually enhances society's preparedness for war. Vagts, in fact, asserted that militarism usually undermines military preparedness and performance in actual combat (1959: 13).

model, the military should occupy itself with professional duties and defer to civilians in all matters political (1957: 81-83). Military intervention in politics should be restricted to interest group lobbying (Kolkowicz 1978: 9-15), or bureaucratic bargaining (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 5-6). In either case, the military's demands must be strictly professional and expressed through the designated legal channels.

This liberal exemplar, however, has been repeatedly violated in postcolonial societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America throughout the better part of the twentieth century. In the postwar period alone, more than two-thirds of the non-Western countries experienced military coups (Nordlinger 1977: 191). In fact, military intervention has often been the rule rather than the exception in the postcolonial world (Hobsbawm 2001: 220-21).[3] So what causes the military to overstep its professional boundaries?

The literature is divided between those who regard coups as temporary transgressions provoked by socioeconomic or political crises, and those who recognize that the military's latent drive for power is a permanent fixture of political life. Contrary to the first group, which perceives coups as irregular disruptions that are eventually eliminated in developed states, members of the second group reject the underlying premise of the civilian control model, namely, the assumption that the military is inherently apolitical. For the latter group, coups are simply episodes in the continuing friction between two fundamentally power-oriented institutions: those who govern and those who control the instruments of coercion. In that sense, both the occurrence of coups or their lack thereof merit explanation, as each case reflects the power configuration between political and coercive organizations in a given setting.

Class-based and Liberal Explanations

[3] "In Latin America…more than half of the 121 men who served as presidents of their countries between 1940 and 1955 were military officers. Between 1945 and 1976, soldiers carried out successful coups in half of the eighteen Asian states. By 1976 the soldiers had made at least one successful or unsuccessful attempt to seize power in two-thirds of the Middle Eastern and North African states… By 1976 coups had occurred in more than half of the African countries, and in that year the military occupied the seat of government in half of them" (Nordlinger 1977: 6).

Marx's analysis of Louis Bonaparte's accession to power inspired a flurry of class-based understandings of coups. Militarism, in Marx's view, was a symptom of an incomplete social revolution, or rather one receding in a "retrogressive motion" (1963 [1852]: 43). The workers' failure to consolidate the gains of the 1848 revolution in Paris summoned military intervention, first on behalf of the bourgeoisie, and then to prop up conservative royalists in December 1851. From then on, "Bonapartism" – a term most Marxists use in lieu of militarism – was regarded as a conservative political move in support of the economically ruling class or the one that aspires to replace it (Hobsbawm 2001: 231). Officers, according to this explanation, identify with members of the economic elite (by virtue of the privileges they receive as military men, and sometimes owing to bonds of kinship and intermarriage), and are therefore inclined to defend the material amenities that characterize an elitist lifestyle (Wolpin 1981: 12).

Several scholars (Nun 1967; O'Donnell 1973; Koonings and Kruijt 2002) described postwar coups as instances of latter-day Bonapartism. Because officers were now recruited from the middle class, it was natural for them to use their power to advance their class interest – in this case, to consolidate capitalism. Brazilian officers, for example, ousted President Goulart in 1964 because he advocated *varguismo* (a populist left-leaning ideology inspired by former President Vargas) and maintained political links with subversive labor unions (Coelho 1988: 149-152). The same applies to General Pinochet's coup against Salvador Allende's socialist ruling coalition in 1973, a coup that was followed by an aggressive neoliberal economic reorganization (Agüero 2002: 117-21). From a class-based perspective, coups in postcolonial societies reflected the arrested development of colonized economies, and the resulting weakness of indigenous capitalists – a situation that forced officers to spearhead bourgeois revolutions. In all cases, class theorists considered military takeovers as short-lived episodes in ongoing class struggles. As society develops, economic elites create their own power base and reestablish military subordination (Wolpin 1981: 20).

This explanation suffers from several theoretical and empirical weaknesses. First, Marx himself allows for the possibility of independent military action in situations "where no single class dominates" (Needler 1975: 69). In Marx's words,

> **[W]ere not barrack and bivouac, saber and musket, moustache and uniform finally bound to hit upon the idea of rather saving society once and for all by proclaiming their own regime as the highest and freeing civil society completely from the trouble of governing itself... Should not the military at last one day play state of siege in their own interest and for their own benefit** (1963 [1852]: 35)?

Marx realized that one of the recurring problems in social revolutions is that the new regime perfects the state machine – above all military and security institutions – instead of smashing it. So for instance, while French state institutions under the *ancien régime*, the Great Revolution, and Napoleon played only a secondary role in bringing about bourgeois rule, under the Restoration, Louis Philippe, and the parliamentary republic, they became crucial to the consolidation of the power of the ruling class, and finally, under Louis Bonaparte, "the state machine has consolidated its position so thoroughly" that it could act independently in support of the class that would best serve its own corporate interests (Marx 1963 [1852]: 122). At this last stage, as Marx made clear, the military could base its social power on a numerous yet irrelevant class, such as the vast mass of smallholding peasants – those "sacks of potatoes" incapable of representing themselves, let alone threatening a military-dominated order (1963 [1852]: 123-24). Engels also envisioned a situation where struggling classes would balance each other in a way that affords state institutions considerable autonomy (1968: 588; see also Poulantzas 1975).

Second, the assumption that officers act according to their class background does not explain why sometimes in modern coups middle class officers jeopardize the interests of the emergent middle class, or why coups continue to occur after the middle class has reached power (Thompson 1975: 469). This is especially the case when coup-makers thwart economic gains in favor of state rulers by redistributing wealth, redirecting resources, and passing laws that undermine the political power of private property and create elaborate patronage networks that

bind economic elites to the state. Third, several upper or middle class officers have carried out coups in the interest of the underprivileged classes. Five decades before Pinochet's coup, for instance, the Chilean military, provoked by the economic elites' control of the booming nitrate-export economy, and the powerlessness of President Alessandri against the elite-dominated parliament, took power to pass social reform laws and empower labor organizations (Agüero 2002: 112-15). Furthermore, Latin American officers were in the habit of shifting alliances between conservative and progressive groups, often carrying out coups to undermine the very group they helped install earlier (Lieuwen 1965: 65-66).

Finally, the claim that officers remain loyal to the social class they came from rather than the caste they have now become part of should not be accepted uncritically. Chorley (1973: 37) and Hobsbawm (2001: 219) maintained that only the rank-and-file and noncommissioned officers act as civilians, and therefore possibly as members of a class. Officers, however, identify with another social group: the military. Needler agreed that the officer corps is regularly "declassed" through continuous socialization (1975: 66-67; see Ricks 1998 for a detailed discussion of military socialization). According to Mills, "social origins and early background" are usually irrelevant to professional military men (1956: 192). In that sense, what appear to be class-motivated coups might be actually triggered, at least partly, by corporate interests. So while the anti-Allende coup, for example, served the purposes of the upper class, it was also triggered by officers' fear that the military might be disintegrated and weakened under a "socialist popular army," and because of their resentment of Allende's interference with military hierarchy and his toleration for radical challenges to military discipline (Needler 1975: 69).

Next, I discuss liberal scholars who can be grouped, with some caution, under the rubric of modernization theorists. The frequency of military intervention in politics in the postcolonial world caught liberal analysts off guard; it violated their civilian control model – the so-called

'normal' theory of civil-military relations[4] – and contradicted their expectation that Westernized intellectuals would carry the burden of modernizing their societies in the decolonized part of the world. Pye confessed that as late as the 1960s liberal writers faced the "awkward fact" that there has been almost "no scholarly research on the role of the military in the political development of new states," and that Western scholarship has been "particularly inattentive to the sociology of armies" (1962: 85-86). Ever true, however, to the belief that liberalism must ultimately prevail, liberal theorists refused to see these military takeovers as setbacks, portraying them instead as preliminary steps towards the development of modern democratic polities.

Liberals argued that because institutions in postcolonial societies were introduced from the outside, "with a minimum concession to the values and behavior of the [indigenous] people," modernization had to be enforced top-down. The military was perfectly suited to play that role because of the "patient care" and generosity that went into developing it under colonial tutelage; it was not only the most modern social institution, but also the "ideal type" for industrialized and secularized enterprises.[5] Moreover, Western-trained military officers were "spiritually in tune" with Westernized intellectuals in the colonies who were anxious to introduce their societies to the modern world. This "acculturation to modern life" would encourage the military to "champion responsible change" and complement the colonial powers' endeavor to "create a semblance of order out of the chaos" (Pye 1962: 87-91) – chaos here presumably being the condition of non-Western societies.[6] Of course, the traditional liberal perception of the military as a professional, impartial, and patriotic institution enhanced those expectations (Shils 1962; Johnson 1964; Welch 1976).

[4] The theory is best exemplified in the works of Huntington (1957, 1968) and Janowtiz (1960).
[5] Welch explained that colonial powers were compelled to build effective indigenous armies to help them maintain public order in the colonies and defend their colonial possessions against competitors (1976: 30).
[6] These expectations also drew on a number of historical experiences in the West. For example, the role Civil War veterans played in training new immigrants, the U.S. Corps of Engineers' effort in developing the western frontier, the German army's participation in running the German steel mills, and the Western-trained Japanese army's role in industrializing Japan (Pye 1962: 94).

This liberal sanctioning of coup leaders as ideal modernizers was fairly dominant during the Cold War period. Hope for rapid modernization and democratization justified the support for political armies in the decolonized regions of Africa, Asia, and before them Latin America (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 16). The Middle East was often invoked as a typical case of colonial-cultivated commitment to modernization finally realized under military direction (Pye 1962: 96; Vatikiotis 1961: 248-50; Halpern 1963: 253-74; Fisher 1963, introduction; Sharabi 1966: 56-66). Although little was achieved on the democratization front, liberals remained optimistic; they believed military governance was provisional, that officers will eventually return to the barracks as soon as their countries were ready for democracy. Liberal encouragement of this self-prescribed role by the military coincided with liberal countries' view of postcolonial military governments as a "political blessing" (Thompson 1975: 466).[7] Pye articulated this view quite eloquently: liberal states preferred officers because they were often "far less suspicious of the West than civilian leaders…[they] accept the fact that their countries are weak and the West is strong without becoming emotionally disturbed or hostile toward the West" (1962: 98-99).

Huntington (1968) formulated a slightly more sophisticated version of this modernization thesis and called it 'praetorianism'.[8] Though the concept behind praetorianism dates back to Finer's (1962) classic work on militarism. According to Finer, military intervention occurs in countries with a low level of political culture, i.e. countries where the authority and legitimacy of political institutions are disputed, and where political participation is limited (1962: 83-89). Huntington argued similarly that coups reflect the underdevelopment of a society's

[7] Academics in leading American universities and think tanks endorsed these military takeovers believing that the officers could "assist in rapid modernization," and "transmit industrial and secular values." Military-led modernization was also "in vogue in the Pentagon." American politicians hailed postcolonial militaries as "champions of progress" that would develop their nations, and also "strongly support American interests and values, in exchange for generous American aid" (Abella 2009: 170-71).

[8] The term's genealogy extends back to ancient times. The Praetorian Guard was an elite unit charged with protecting the Roman imperial order. Gradually, however, it became a major threat: regularly eliminating undesirable politicians, and replacing them with favorites, in complete disregard to military discipline and hierarchy. Similar systems were established in the Muslim world during medieval times, the most famous of which being the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria, and the Janissaries in the Ottoman Caliphate. Modern praetorianism can be defined as "a situation in which military officers are major or predominant political actors by virtue of their actual or threatened use of force" (Nordlinger 1977: 2).

institutional structures. In the absence of developed political institutions, newly politicized social forces divert towards surrogate institutions, most often the army, but also other public institutions. That is why societies which have "political armies also have political clergies, political universities, political bureaucracies, political labor unions, and political corporations" (Huntington 1968: 193-95).[9] In these praetorian societies:

> **[S]ocial forces confront each other nakedly; no political institutions, no corps of professional political leaders are recognized or accepted as the legitimate intermediaries… Each groups employs means which reflect its peculiar nature and capabilities. The wealthy bribe; students riot; workers strike; mobs demonstrate; and the military coups** (Huntington 1968: 196).

Postcolonial societies, especially Middle Eastern ones, were praetorian because colonial rulers destroyed traditional political institutions without creating new ones – save for the armed forces, of course. Because civilian politicians were undermined by colonial powers, they were shortly dislodged by the more effective guardians of the nation – the military – shortly following independence (Huntington 1968: 199-201). The different trajectories observed in India and Japan seemed to vindicate Huntington's thesis. In India, the building of effective political and bureaucratic institutions under British tutelage not only ruled out the possibility of a post-independence coup, but also set the pattern for the "crushing civilian dominance" over the large and powerful Indian army (Cohen 1976: 45-47; see also Rudolph and Rudolph 1967: 149; Maniruzzaman 1987: 6). Japan, though never colonized, suffered from the same symptoms of institutional underdevelopment under the Tokugawa Shogunate. The modernizing hopes of the Meji Restoration therefore rested almost exclusively on the new national army, which replaced the traditional clan-based Samurai (Buck 1976: 149-52).[10]

[9] We should note here that Finer's criticized Huntington for "severely *under*estimat[ing] the problem of civilian control." In his view, the military's "centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, and cohesion" allows it to "resist civilian control effectively" if it wishes to do so (Cohen 2003: 249). In that sense, Finer concedes with Chorley that: "To fit professional fighting forces into the body politic has always been a dangerous and anxious task" (Chorley 1973: 15).

[10] These are good examples of the oversimplifying tendencies and the insufficient attention to social context, which one is likely to encounter in the work of some of the scholars who adopt Huntington's thesis. The central role of traditional caste solidarity (practically, the antithesis of modernity) in controlling the Indian military is nowhere

Lieuwen's account of mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century militarism in Latin American followed the same line of argument. Modern colonial armies, which were built by Charles III of Spain in the 1760s, played a chief role in the wars of independence during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Invoking the need to protect the newly gained independence against reconquest from Spain, army leaders, together with their civilian protégés (the *caudillos*) ushered the first wave of militarism (1965: 17-19).[11] Despite its misgivings, militarism encouraged modernization: political experience was accumulated, foreign capital helped develop state institutions, industrialization transformed the predominantly agricultural economy, and, finally, Western ideas about civilian control were embraced (Lieuwen 1965: 28-31, 39, 45). After the first wave of militarism began to subside, the Great Depression disrupted Latin American modernization, producing a second wave of militarism (Lieuwen 1965: 60). The re-emergence of militarism reflected the fact that socioeconomic and political institutions were not yet sufficiently developed.[12] So again, Lieuwn concluded in a typically functionalist argument, that it was necessary to tolerate the lesser evil of militarism until modernization was complete: "Had the armed forces remained neutral, or had they been unable to exercise effective control, unruly civilian elements would probably have made Latin America even more unstable that it actually became" (Lieuwen 1965: 122-24).

Nordlinger (1977: 45), Perlmutter (1982: 317), and Rapoport (1982: 272-73) also adopted the basic premise of Huntington's praetorianism thesis, namely, that the institutional underdevelopment of postcolonial societies paved the way for a military take over. But Nordlinger and Perlmutter were skeptical about the democratic prospects of praetorianism; they

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mentioned here. Also, exaggerating the modernizing role of the Japanese military ignores how Meji rulers and the ascendant industrial class appropriated many of the traditional Japanese values into their development model.

[11] In Latin America, "Praetorianism and *caudilloismo* were inseparable political phenomena, because the *caudillos* were generally the products and representatives of the armed forces'…'praetorian guard'" (Lieuwen 1965: 22-23).

[12] "By the eve of World War II…more than half of the twenty republics were ruled by conservative military men: Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Venezuela, Paraguay. Traditional civilian regimes, maintained in office by the armed forces, prevailed in Argentina, Panama, and Haiti, and the army-backed Vargas and Batista dictatorship remained entrenched in Brazil and Cuba respectively. Thus the armed forces were playing key political roles in all the Latin American countries at this time except Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Mexico. In the latter two countries, popularly elected military men held sway" (Lieuwen 1965: 62-65).

worried that praetorianism tends to reproduce itself. "The aftermath of military intervention is military intervention," Nordlinger said (1977: 207). Or as Perlmutter put it: "praetorianism begets praetorianism"(1982: 317). In Nordlinger's view, the first military coup changes the rules of the game irreversibly; it makes military interventions "thinkable" (1977: 6, 208). Perlmutter presented an even more compelling explanation for why post-coup civil-military relations remain permanently skewed towards military domination: political alliances formed under praetorianism between military officers, ambitious technocrats, and opportunistic politicians are too rigid to dissolve by time; even if power is transferred back to civilians, ex-praetorian regimes remain continuously "patrolled" by the armed forces (1982: 317-19).

But whether or not praetorianism is curable, the thesis itself can be readily refuted because military intervention in politics is not limited to underdeveloped societies. That is why liberal scholars formulated another version of the modernization thesis, one which invokes 'political breakdown' to explain militarism in advanced societies. Kolkowicz, for one, claimed that military intervention is a sign of political crisis, a situation where intense competition between civilian factions breaks out of control, causing some of them to appeal to the military (1978: 23). Similarly, Janowitz attributed the military's "role expansion" to a breakdown in the political system; the military intervenes at the behest of civilian leaders to save the political order from collapse (1967: 76-77). These takeovers are supposedly temporary. The military resumes its professional duties once the crisis is over because, despite its control of the means of violence, it is perfectly aware that it has no social allies in the developed world; "If anything, the others look upon the military as a consumer of badly needed resources, as a blind instrument of various regimes, as a residue of social and political orthodoxy" (Kolkowicz 1978: 23-24). A good example is when Mao Tse-tung used the People's Liberation Army (PLA), in addition to the enthusiasts of the Cultural Revolution, to regain control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the aftermath of the failure of his Great Leap Forward. The poor results of Mao's ambitious

development plan forced him to orchestrate a partial and short-lived military takeover in 1966 to reestablish his position in the party (Chang 1976: 128; Shichor 2004: 90).

Hobsbawm – uncharacteristically – combined class and liberal paradigms by suggesting that the propensity for military involvement in class struggle is particularly high in pre-modern societies, and diminishes as society develops. Hobsbawm's analysis began with feudal society, where the question of civil-military tension does not arise because "the same people…were both" (2001: 212-13). Belonging to the royal class implied holding both political and military positions. Modernization then divides the officer corps between those who still identify with the *ancien régime* because of their aristocratic background, and those middle class officers who support bourgeois progress (Hobsbawm 2001: 222). Once modern institutions are in place, the nexus of class struggle shifts to the civil sphere (parliament, unions, factories, etc.). In these "developed countries," the military can only influence political decisions by pressuring, rather than dominating, politics. Postcolonial militarism, according to Hobsbawm, is a "symptom of an incomplete or aborted [bourgeois] revolution…[it] fills the vacuum left by the absence of ordinary politics" (2001: 228, 224). Here Hobsbawm echoed Huntington's oft-quoted statement that in postcolonial countries: "The middle class makes its debut on the political scene not in the frock of the merchant but in the epaulettes of the colonel" (Huntington 1968: 199-201). Hobsbawm also agreed with the 'breakdown' theorists that military intervention in modern societies occurs under very rare conditions that not only include a "breakdown of the normal processes of politics," but also "an endemic crisis" that threatens the military as a professional institution (2001: 215-19).

Most area specialists, however, rejected the modernization thesis with all its variants. They refused the proposition that societies develop in the same way, or that underdevelopment spurs militarism, and modernization promotes civilian control. Decalo, who studied sub-Saharan Africa, dismissed these liberal explanations as "simplistic, ethnocentric, and empirically erroneous." In his view, the tribal system that generates coups in Africa simply reflects a *different*

type of institutional arrangement, not necessarily an inferior or underdeveloped one. There is no reason to assume that sub-Saharan African societies will eventually develop Western-styled institutions, or that military hierarchy will one day trump tribal loyalties. African coups are part of tribal politics; a coup indicates the political ascendancy of one tribe over the others, rather than a military-led modernization project.[13] Decalo therefore perceived "quasi-permanent military rule" as a normal facet of African politics (1998: 1-7). Spiro argued similarly that the most significant attribute of national militaries in sub-Saharan Africa is their insignificance. Almost none of the sub-Saharan colonies achieved independence through military struggle, and post-independence militaries failed to engender ultimate loyalties among African tribes. It makes little sense, in Spiro's assessment, to discuss the modernizing role of African armies or to continue to look forward to the development of African societies along the Western model (1967: 264-68). Several case studies from Latin America also refuted Huntington's presumed connection between military professionalism and "political abstention." The Chilean military, for instance, crowned a century of development and professionalization by setting itself up as a fully-fledged political army (Agüero 2002: 114). Nunn also noted how the German- and French-styled professionalism that infused the militaries of Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Peru did not inhibit militarism in these countries between 1964 and 1989. A military takeover, Nunn concluded, was a "contextual phenomenon" that has little to do with the level of professionalism or modernization (1992: 240).

A Middle Eastern country like Lebanon demonstrates that – contrary to Huntington's thesis – political institutionalization and modernization have a better chance at succeeding when the military is weak, unprofessional, and underdeveloped (Baaklini 1976: 279, 255-61). Another Middle Eastern country that challenges Huntington's link between civilian control and modernization is Israel. In Israel, arguably the most institutionally developed state in the region,

[13] The first wave of Latin American militarism (in the late 1800s) displayed similar features. Lieuwen described how a "vicious cycle" of coups developed because victorious *caudillos* seldom had enough resources to please their military supporters. Disgruntled officers hatched a new military conspiracy with a new *caudillo*, and ultimately a new distribution of officers, honors, privileges, and spoils (Lieuwen 1965: 3).

there is "no clear-cut dichotomic distinction between 'civilianism' and 'militarism', nor is the control over the legitimate use of means of violence secured primarily by maintaining the formal demarcation between civil and military institutions" (Horowitz 1982: 79). There, according to Moshe Lissak, the combination of civilian militarization and military civilianization, rather than Huntington's civilian control model, is what prevents soldiers and statesmen from clashing (quoted in Epstein and Uritsky 2004: 170). In fact, the number of exceptions to Huntington's postulate in the Middle East drove Janowitz to conclude that military involvement in Middle East politics follows from a long historic tradition, rather than being "an innovation or exception" produced by underdevelopment (Janowitz 1967: 70).

What class-based and liberal explanations have in common is the perception of military intervention in politics as an exceptional situation brought about by social factors external to the military. Both explanations, as Needler pointed out, do not allow for the fact that the military mostly tries to further its own institutional interests, neither that of a class or the nation-state.[14] That is why an "institutional-interest perspective" provides a more convincing explanation for military intervention; for even when the military is said to be defending the national interest, it turns out that, seen through military eyes, this interest "consists in the first instance of the defense of national security, and thus entails the maintenance of a strong military force;" and when the military presses for economic growth, it is mostly because a prosperous economy permits a sizeable defense budget (Needler 1975: 67-71). Not only did less than eight percent of the military governments formed between 1946 and 1970 adopt reformist policies on either the socioeconomic or political spheres, but also the few who did were primarily concerned with enhancing military power (Thompson 1975: 467). Thompson (1975) made a similar critique, accusing class-oriented and liberal scholars of failing to account for the concrete institutional motivations of coup-makers, and dwelling instead on abstract notions, such as structural

[14] The military's institutional interests include the unity of the armed forces, preserving the chain of command, monopoly of the means of violence, defending military privileges, increasing defense spending, autonomy from political interference in military affairs, enjoying good relations with the population, defense preparedness, and protecting the prestige and dignity of the armed forces (Needler 1975: 69-71).

vacuums. In Thompson's view, military men are not "obediently enacting…roles assigned to them by vague and impersonal systematic forces." This functionalist "vacuum imagery" must be rejected because it "dictates the rather weak conclusion that the military are pulled into the situation to save the teleological day" (Thompson 1975: 459-66).

> **Too rarely is the possibility that military coup-makers are equally worthy of the label *homus politicus* as the incumbents they remove entertained… [Because of] the venerable myth which somehow places the military outside the political system…when they 'intervene', they are perceived as entering (or being pulled into) the political system. But whether the military are minimally perceived as lobbyists for a share of budget allocations or maximally as part of an insidious military-industrial complex, they have always been very much within and a part of the political system** (Thompson 1975: 466-67).

Building on the insights of Needler and Thompson, the alternative explanation, which I review in the following section, perceives the military as an intrinsically power-oriented institution with particularly high stakes in the political order. Civilian-military relations, in this view, are naturally marked by tension and conflict. Sometimes civilians succeed in subordinating the military; sometimes the military takes over; but in most cases the two institutions coexist in a strained and uneasy power relation.

Institutional Realism[15]

Scholars in this group share the view that limiting the study of militarism to instances of flagrant military intervention – particularly, the coup – keeps the ongoing military influence on politics off the scholarly radar. Cohen warned that the notion that "if there is no fear of a coup there can be nothing seriously amiss with civil-military relations is one of the greatest obstacles to serious thinking about the subject" (2003: 242). Scholarly attitude, according to this view, should be guided by the fact that: "In principle, all well-organized militaries could seize power," even if

[15] As mentioned in the introduction, *institutional realism* is an approach that combines the realist appreciation for the power-ridden and conflictual nature of social life, with a focus on institutions as the main power actors.

"only a few actually do so" (Mann 2004: 64). This attitude is best captured by Captain Liddell Hart's aphorism: "A volcano is still a volcano even when it is not in eruption" (from his foreword to Chorley 1973: 10). The focus should therefore be on how the very organization of military power provides those who control it the capacity to intervene in politics in various forms – the coup being only the most obvious one. This approach opens up the scholarly horizon to the reality, well articulated by Nisbet, that the militarization of nations today has become rampant: "Area after area of the earth's surface has fallen under forms of government which are military to the core, no matter what their ideological vestments may be" (1981: 191).

Before discussing this approach, however, we should first attempt to explain academic apathy towards subtler forms militarism? One explanation is that the dominance of Marxist and liberal trends has "repressed [the] militarist tradition in sociology" (Mann quoted in Joas 2003: 161). This Marxist/liberal bias explains why "Military power has been neglected by social science," and consequently, the "curious spectacle of a modern age dominated by wars, conquests, and genocide interpreted by pacific, economistic theories" (Mann 2004: 64).[16] Stepan also noted this "normative disdain for the military as a topic," but placed the whole blame on the longstanding "liberal bias" in social sciences; a bias marked by its optimistic teleologies, and a fascination with civil society, culture, and norms (1988: 9). Finer (1962) and Welch (1976) offered similar critiques of liberalism's formalistic approach towards militarism. In Finer's opinion, despite liberal's insistence on taking them seriously, legal structures and political norms rarely indicate how a regime actually works or which power is dominant (pp. 164-65). Welch warned that taking legally prescribed roles *prima facie* risks "confusing shadow and substance" (p. 9). Hobsbawm complemented the 'scholarly biases' explanation with one centered on personal experience: Western scholars usually dismiss the military factor because in their own countries military officers have rarely seized power (2001: 217).

[16] The same applies to the study of war. Commenting on Mann's call for the need to "start from scratch" in building a sociology of war, Roxborough admitted that as a discipline "sociology has not been successful in producing an integrated corpus of theory about the nature of warfare" (Roxborough 1994: 619-20).

Incorporating militarism into mainstream sociology requires a fundamental reexamination of the nature of military organization. The insights offered by Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz, three classic theorists on political-military relations, furnish some of these fundamentals. Though the nature of politics and the military have changed over time (i.e., they are certainly not ahistorical phenomena), the three authors touch on some of the basic and enduring elements in the relationship between those who govern and those who control the means of violence. According to Rapoport, every discussion of militarism should start at the point where Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century Muslim sociologist, began (1982: 256). Ibn Khaldun's reading of history presented two interrelated conclusions regarding civil-military relations: first, that the weakness of civilian politicians invites military intervention; and second, that this weakness is inevitable. His historical dynamic runs as follows: a rising nation's martial spirit and solidarity form the bases of statehood, but as the nation prospers, luxury and peace erode these bases, paving the way to state collapse. At the twilight stage that immediately precedes collapse, military officers are tempted to intervene against their effeminate and enervated leaders in hopes of rekindling the nation's martial spirit and restoring its glory (Ibn Khaldun (1977 [1377]: 99-101, 108-110, 117-123). Military intervention, in this view, is a potentially recurring phenomenon that applies across time and space; military leaders at some point decide that civilians are not up to the challenges facing the nation and consider it their duty to interfere.[17] The potency of Ibn Khaldun's observation has, in Thompson's assessment, "weathered the centuries" because its basic point is sound and simple: regimes grow vulnerable and lose legitimacy, thus increasing the relative weight of the military and providing it with an opportunity to either control or replace the incumbents (1975: 485). The inevitable weakening of regimes therefore paves the ground for military intervention.

[17] A typical example is a "controversial war, for which the army feels it is not getting sufficient moral support and material resources," thus rendering the temptation to "sweep away the hesitant or traitorous civilians irresistible" (Hobsbawm 2001: 219).

Morris (2009) and Mufti (2009) highlight the strong parallels between Ibn Khaldun's *Realpolitik* conception of the relationship between military and political power and those of two other classical theorists on the subject: Machiavelli and Clausewitz, respectively. Machiavelli advised the state ruler – the Prince – to have "no care or thought but for war," and to apply himself exclusively to this field. Otherwise, Machiavelli warned, he could never guarantee the respect, trust, and more importantly, the subordination of his soldiers. Then, in an oft-quoted remark, Machiavelli concluded: "Between the armed and unarmed man no proportion holds, and it is contrary to reason to expect that the armed man should voluntarily submit to him who is unarmed, or that the unarmed man should stand secure among armed retainers" (2004 [1532]: 68-69). In other words, the expectation that those who wield arms in the state would readily subordinate themselves to civilian rulers was not only alien to this sixteenth century scholar: it was utterly unreasonable.

Unlike Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli, Clausewitz's work clearly influenced modern military sociology (Kestnbaum 2009: 236) – mostly because many liberals perceived him as one of the early champions of civilian control. But a close reading of Clausewitz reveals that contrary to this prevalent image his deep understanding of the nature of military power led him to conclusions quite similar to Machiavelli's. Clausewitz famously declared that war is an instrument of politics, that politics transforms this "fearsome battle-sword…into a light, handy weapon" to serve state goals, and that military judgment, accordingly, should be subordinated to policy objectives. But the policy Clausewitz had in mind was one that "fights battles instead of writing notes." His ideal statesman was one that commands enough military knowledge and skill to be able to direct the military himself. In fact, he preferred that the solider and the statesman be "combined in one person." In that sense, Clausewitz's position on the relationship between political and military institutions, "far from being an argument for the separation of the two," emphasizes the "intimacy of their connection" (1988: 255-67). His model assumed the fusion of the political and the military. As Howard made clear, the legendary Prussian theorist was mindful

that: "War could not be considered as existing distinct from policy, however subordinate it might be to it. It was part of policy, a mode of it, a continuation of political intercourse;" or in Clausewitz's own words "War cannot be divorced from political life" (1983: 50; see Paret 1992). For Clausewitz, the civilian whom the military should subordinate itself to is no different than Machiavelli's Prince; he is the real and active – rather than strictly legal – commander-in-chief.

Cohen supported this interpretation, stressing that the Clausewitzian view is not only "incompatible with the doctrine of professionalism codified by the 'normal' theory of civil-military relations," but it is in truth "far more radical…than is commonly thought:" Clausewitz simply does not allow for an arbitrary separation line between political and military matters (2003: 7-8). This is not simply prescriptive. Clausewitz recognized that without at least a close and active partnership between political and military leaders (such as the one that developed after his death between a student of his work, Helmuth von Moltke, and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck) war preparation and conduct could fragment the ruling bloc, with politicians wary of military hawkishness, and military resentment of civilian hesitance – an all-too-familiar dynamic today. Cohen's own study of civil-military relations in various contexts reveals that the attempt to separate political and military fields is hopeless because they are too "closely and inseparably linked" (2003: 84-85).[18] Roxborough added that even if Clausewitz's model of civilian control was applicable to the nineteenth century, when warmaking was still the business of oligarchs guided by a realist *raison d'état*, it certainly cannot be the case in contemporary democracies, where the shifting moods of public opinion and petty electoral politics would make a rational and consistent management of war impossible (1994: 627). If we add the fact that rapid advances in warfare technology makes it increasing difficult for civilian leaders to master the art of war, it becomes clear why Schmitt and Foucault go as far as inverting the relationship between politics and war as depicted by Clausewitz. Schmitt stated that the politician's main task is to determine

[18] Cohen's (2003) work examined civil-military relations under Abraham Lincoln, George Clemenceau, Winston Churchill, David Ben-Gurion, Lyndon B. Johnson, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush.

the nation's enemy and leave the rest to the officers. In his view, politicians were so dependent on the military that "A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated…would be…a world without politics" (Schmitt 1996 [1932]: 33-35). Foucault, in turn, portrayed modern society as a field of "generalized war that, at particular moments, assumes the forms of peace and the state." The relationship between the military and the political could only be conceived as an ongoing struggle between the two power-oriented organizations that represent them (Foucault 2000: 124).

What we can discern from these classical theorists is that military intervention in politics in one way or the other is in fact the norm. While 'professionalism' is used in the literature to denote the military's eschewing of politics and deference to civilian leaders, in a sense, minding its own business, we can see that if professionalism entails identification with one's institution and its corporate interests, then intervening in politics to secure optimal conditions for combat readiness and conducts is very much part of the military's business.

Gramsci took a different trail but arrived at the same destination. He started by calling the attention of analysts to the fact that many governments acquire a military character "even if the army as such does not take part in it," precisely because many militarized governments do their best "not to 'reveal' the army" to outside observers, when in reality it is the military that "determines the [political] situation and dominates it." Even in the aftermath of coups, Gramsci continued, the new wielders of power don a civilian gown to make it appear as if military government was a temporary "parenthesis between two constitutional governments" (1971: 211-15). Social theorists must therefore scratch under the surface if they wish to unearth the roots of militarism in seemingly civilianized societies. Gramsci then made the strikingly original claim that even the military's non-intervention in politics is a political act *par excellence*.

> **[I]t is not true that armies are constitutionally barred from making politics; the army's duty is precisely to defend the Constitution – in other words the legal form of the State together with its related institutions. Hence so-called neutrality only means support for the [existing order]… The military are the permanent reserves of order and conservation; they *are* a political force** (1971: 211-15, emphasis added).

Drawing on a broad pool of cases, spanning the period from the seventeenth to the twentieth century in England, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, and Germany, Chorley (1973) confirmed Gramsci's insight. Military power is in fact the ultimate sanction of any political order – a fact "kept discretely in the background" during normal times in democratic countries, when day-to-day governance rests on the goodwill of the people (1973: 184). But the "convenient fiction" that officers are politically neutral crumbles in times of turmoil, when the military either identifies with and defends the status quo, or abandons and subverts it (1973: 177). Chorley's historical analysis revealed that the military is never really apart from politics. Officers have always been "politically conscious where their own interests were involved…[and] seldom hesitated to take up a partisan political position in accordance with their own convictions" (1973: 108). Chorley concluded that insisting that officers can be apolitical not only contradicts history, but "puts too great a strain on political human nature" (1973: 242-43).

Vagts (1959), Nordlinger (1977), and Poggi (2001) also contended that the military's political role is much more problematic than the advocates of civilian control would have us believe. They base their arguments, however, on the way in which military power is organized in the modern world. Vagts, for example, highlighted the inherent contradiction in the role ascribed to the military under civilian rule, where on the one hand, the military is allowed to constitute a supremely organized "class or 'estate' with positive professional interests," but on the other hand, its control over the means of violence is used as a pretext to formally prohibit it from participating in the political game. The tension arising from having corporate interests, yet refraining from advancing them despite having the power to do so, provides a fertile ground for continued intervention (Vagts 1959: 295). This possibility is heightened, in Nordlinger's view, because civilians occasionally attempt to politicize military elements for their own purposes. The fact that military hierarchy gives officers control over a large group of armed men makes the officer corps the "single most powerful group in society" (Nordlinger 1977: 13, 46). Naturally,

many of those who want to stay in power, as well as those who attempt to overthrow them, reach out to the military. Poggi added that the cohesiveness of the military and its institutional differentiation is remarkably higher than any other social group. Unlike classes, cultural associations, trade unions, or political parties, the military's chain of command allows the "small group of men who hold the chain's uppermost links" to treat the largest and most diversified army as a single entity whose resources could be deployed in a coherent and unitary fashion, and thus "maneuver the whole enterprise" with relative ease to meet their ends. This is enhanced by the modern military's separateness from society, a separateness that conveys to military men the impression that they are above society and its petty quarrels, and that they might be sometimes obliged to use their exclusive guardianship of violence to save society from civilian rulers who "work for party not country…operate chiefly through words…waste time…have no commitment to authentic, abiding political interests, [and] no taste for the prime political resource, organized violence" (Poggi 2001: 183-88, 197).

Another way to approach the military's inherent political nature is through tracing the genealogy of the state. Ibn Khaldun, Kennedy, and Nisbet demonstrate how military power has been at the core of ancient and medieval polities. Anderson, Tilly, Howard, and Foucault make the same point concerning the modern state. They all share the view that this intrinsic link between military and political powers makes their subsequent separation and subordination highly problematic. Ibn Khaldun's study of world history from the Greeks to the thirteenth century reveals how "Warcraft [was the] model for statecraft…excellence in statesmanship [reflected] excellence in generalship;" in a sense, armies simply "crystallize[d] into states" (Morris 2009: 386, 400). Kennedy, who examined the military role in Muslim politics from the seventh to the tenth centuries, recorded a similar trend, whereby salaried, semi-professional armies played a crucial role in state building (2001: 195-98). In medieval and early modern times, militarism became even more pronounced in most centers of the Islamic Caliphate, notably the Mamluks in thirteenth and fourteenth century Egypt and Syria, and the Janissaries who remained in power

until the nineteenth century in Turkey. In his study of early Western history, Nisbet shed light on how the Roman Empire adopted "incontestably military values…[as] building blocs for an entire political order," and how militarism later shaped society under the militarized princedoms of the Renaissance (Nisbet 1981: 166-67). In the modern worlds, many rulers relied on the military to build modern centralized states (examples include seventeenth and eighteenth century Russia, and nineteenth century Prussia, Japan, and Egypt).

Nisbet concluded that states evolved from the institutionalization of military power; military qualities, such as centralization, hierarchy, discipline, and communalism, represented the blueprint of the modern political order (1981: 154). In Anderson's words, the first centralized states in Europe were "machines built overwhelmingly for the battlefield" (1974: 32). Tilly supported this assertion, elaborating on how modern states developed through attacking and checking challengers within and outside their territories, "War wove the European network of national states, and preparation for war created the internal structures of the states within it" (Tilly 1990: 76). Howard broadened this assertion: "It is hard to think of any nation-state…that came to existence before the middle of the twentieth century which was not created…by wars, by internal violence, or by a combination of both" (1983: 39; see also Paret 1992: 221). Or as Foucault put it: "War obviously presided over the birth of states: right, peace, and laws were born in the blood and mud of battles" (2004: 50-51). This reality also applied to other facets of political and social life. For example, citizens' rights have been "hammered out" through successive bargains between the rulers and the ruled in the course of enhancing the state's war-making capacity (Tilly 1990: 102), and the "age of mass democracies had been, only too clearly, the age of mass wars" (Nisbet 1981: 150). Even industrial production, as Marx noted, carried traces of military organization (Nisbet 1981: 172; the views of late nineteenth- and early

twentieth- century proponents of the militaristic origins of states are summarized in Mann 1986: 53-57[19]).

Clearly, this historical review demonstrates that the military's influence on politics has been the rule rather than the exception—even if this exception is believed to prevail in today's advanced West (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 1). Odom even refused to grant the West that exceptional status, insisting that military interventions were so common in Western history that one must dismiss the notion of an apolitical military establishment as a "mythical convention concocted in the parochial minds of Europeans and later embraced in the United States" (1978: 35). In his view, the military has been and will remain a highly politicized institution because most military purposes are political purposes as well (Odom 1978: 49). When the same group of people carried out political and military functions, the problem of military subordination to civilian leaders did not arise; the fact that political and military affairs were intermingled was taken for granted. With the modern differentiation of the two, keeping the military out of politics proved to be a daunting task. Modernization and development do not automatically fulfill that task, as evidenced in Mann's observation of a "surprising paradoxical trend" within the modern West: namely, that "Despite the formal incorporation of military power into the state…military caste autonomy and segmental power *increased*" (1993: 403).

Postwar militarism in the United States is a crucial case-in-point because, on the one hand, the American political system is perceived as a prototype of civilian control, and on the other hand, it is a perfect instance of the new, more elusive form of militarism that one is likely to encounter today. I will therefore examine this case at some length through the works of Mills ([1956] 2000), Nisbet (1981), Cohen (2003), Johnson (2004), Bacevich (2007), and Abella (2009) who have studied militarism at various points of U.S. postwar history. According to Bacevich, American civil-military relations appear healthy to those who adopt the conventional "no coup,

[19] Although Mann believes that the militarist argument is overstated, he accepts the claim that the organization of military conquest and territorial defense contributed significantly to the development of many – though certainly not all – "early" states. He also agrees that a toned-down version of the militarist theory seems appropriate to explain developments "*after* the initial emergence of state and social stratification" (1986: 57-58).

no problem" mentality. Equating militarism with the army's propensity to overthrow the government conceals the fact that civil-military relations are "far more fractious, combative, and problematic" than the "useful fiction" of civilian control conveys (Bacevich 2007: 207-210) Only if we substitute this conventional approach with a more nuanced analysis of how militarism infiltrates society on the discursive and institutional levels, can we sense the "state of crisis" that, in Cohen's estimation, haunts U.S. civil-military relations at the turn of the new century (2003: 226).

Since the beginning of the Cold War, Mills noted, the prevailing discourse in America has been one of "'emergency' without a foreseeable end" (2000 [1956]: 184). Johnson traced this open-ended state of emergency back to the Wilsonian doctrine, which stipulated an exceptional role for America in democratizing the world and vanquishing the enemies of freedom – an idea still in currency today (2004: 48).[20] This enormous task has marked American politics with the characteristic "hallmark of militarism," namely, that military preparedness should become society's highest social priority (Johnson 2004: 63). The continued dominance of this militaristic discourse becomes evident if we compare Nisbet's comment in the late 1970s that everything in American society points to the rising influence of military values, roles, and symbols (1981: 146) with Bacevich's observation three decades later that Americans are still captivated with the spirit of militarism, manifesting itself in the "tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness" (quoted in Johnson 2008: 39).

The pervasiveness of this endless national security crisis discourse laid the foundation for the military's political ascendancy. The fact that most citizens adopted the "military definition of reality," gave military elites the right to intervene in policy making. Not only that, but military ends have also become "identified with the ends as well as the honor of the nation" (Mills [1956]

[20] This doctrine was nicely summarized almost four decades after Wilson in Kennedy's 1961 inaugural speech, in which he pledged that the U.S. would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship...oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty" (quoted in Abella 2009: 171).

2000: 185-86, 222-23). As Nisbet observed, the military elite[21] in America have come to possess more public confidence and credibility than any other group – political, economic, or intellectual (1981: 146-49). Moreover, the "coincidence of interests between military and corporate needs" has rendered American capitalism a "military capitalism" and further weakened politicians (Mills [1956] 2000: 276-77).[22]

The institutional trends of postwar militarism were consolidated in the 'national security state' (Bacevich 2007: 216), a state where guaranteeing security against the nation's enemies shapes every aspect of social life. Because the definition of victory in the Cold War was so elusive, the military elite established an enduring "national security system…part military and part foreign policy, leavened with an intrusive intelligence agency and internal domestic surveillance." From the 1947 National Security Act onward, this structure became the most powerful element in American politics (Nelson in Bacevich 2007: 265-67).[23] This overgrown Cold War creature flourished in the ensuing open-ended global War on Terrorism. Even more so than the American-Soviet conflict, this was a war with no "clearly defined enemy or territory to conquer – nothing less than the whole world itself;" it was a war that can virtually go on forever (Abella 2009: 266). This is why Cohen warned that although the military accumulated enormous political power and social influence during the Cold War, the new war has produced the more "deeply disturbing" tendency of officers openly taking sides in partisan politics. In the post-Cold War world, Cohen asserted, the interplay of force and politics has become much more difficult to disentangle (2003: 204-205).

[21] Cohen (2003: 253), Johnson (2004: 60-61), and Bacevich (2007: 254) expand the military elite to include 'civilian militarist' as well as military leaders. In their view, both wings of this national security coterie are responsible for the militarization of American politics (for a detailed history of the relationship between the military and 'defense intellectuals' and enthusiasts, see Abella 2009).

[22] Between 1950 and 2003, U.S. military spending (measured in 2002 dollars) experienced four significant upsurges from the postwar $150 billion level, jumping to $500 billion in 1953, $400 billion in 1968, $450 billion in 1989, and $393.8 billion in 2002. Equally significant though is the fact that between these peaks, the average annual spending ($281 billion) never declined to pre-Cold War levels. Most of the money of course went to private defense contractors and other related industries (Johnson 2004: 56). In 2011, U.S. defense budget exceeded $710 billion, which is approximately higher than the following fourteen highest military spenders combined.

[23] The components of the national security state include not only the military, but also a host of military-security agencies and committees, notably the CIA, DIA, FBI, NSA, NSC, JCS, and Homeland Security – all-in-all fifteen organization in 2004 (Nelson in Bacevich 2007: 269; Nisbet 1981: 148).

The discourse and institutions of national security allowed military elites, through a series of challenges to civilian rule, to effectively renegotiate the terms of civil-military relations toward enhancing military leverage vis-à-vis political leaders. Gradually, civilian politicians realized that senior military officers are not simply their subordinates, and that even the supposed commander-in-chief has to resort to "horse-trading and compromise" with his commanders to get his policies approved. When challenged on an issue that they considered vital to military interests, officers exploited public paranoia with national security to court popular support, and discredit civilian authority. This type of clout gave military leaders something like a veto power over anything they claimed to be related to national security (Bacevich 2007: 217-19, 249; for more on how the military uses press leaks to blackmail politicians, see Cohen 200).[24] This trend is likely to continue with a public now accustomed to a state of perpetual crisis (Nelson in Bacevich 2007: 297).[25] In short, the Cold War, dovetailed by the War on Terror, "ultimately transformed the defense establishment into a militarist establishment and vastly enlarged the size and scope of the role played by the military" in American political life (Johnson 2004: 65).

Regardless of the negative undertones that characterize the literature on postwar U.S. militarism, the American case demonstrates that even in modern democracies civil-military relations are far more vigorous and problematic than the advocates of the civilian control model

[24] Civilians tried to protect their authority but with limited success. Examples include Truman's creation of the Department of Defense in 1949 in hopes of checking the growing autonomy of the heads of services; Eisenhower warning of the "militarization of national policy" in his farewell address – a clear indicator that he failed to stop it; and the Kennedy-McNamara Whiz Kids' attempt to circumscribe the influence of senior officers. This last attempt backlashed when the military successfully blamed the loss in the Bay of Pigs and, more importantly, Vietnam on civilian interference (Bacevich 2007: 225, 229, 233, 239). That is why Johnson held that "Vietnam contributed to the advance of militarism, counter-intuitively, exactly because the United States lost the war." For militarists, Vietnam was winnable if civilians had not forced the army to fight it with one hand tied behind its back (Johnson 2004: 60). Although Cohen referred to this purported 'Vietnam lesson' as "radically incomplete at best and downright false at worst," he agreed that its legacy still shapes American civil-military relations today, simultaneously weakening the principle of civilian control, and politicizing the officers corps (Cohen 2003: 175, 199-200). Civilian supremacy was further undermined during the Regan and George W. Bush eras, as their financial generosity towards the military drove many of its leaders to "identify their fortunes with those of the Republican Party" (Bacevich 2007: 242).

[25] Ironically, as Prados pointed out, the successive "large scale intelligence failures" of the military-security community led to its expansion rather than the reverse; the list of failures began with failing to anticipate Chinese involvement in the Korean War or the Soviet launching of Sputnik and the first intercontinental ballistic missiles in the 1950s, the Bay of Pig debacle and the smuggling of Soviet nuclear missiles into Cuba in the 1960s, the fall of Saigon and the pro-U.S. Iranian regime in the 1970s, the surprise collapse of the USSR and the Communist bloc in the late 1980s, the development of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan in the late 1990s, and of course the 9/11 attacks in 2001 (Prados in Bacevich 2007: 312, 305-308).

suggest. Granted, militarism takes more flagrant forms in authoritarian settings, but the claim that it disappears in modern democracies remains unsubstantiated. Nisbet was certainly right in dismissing the assumption that an institution with such immensity in "size, reach, and sheer functional importance" can permanently abstain from politics, as "sheer fantasy" (1981: 146-49). Cohen supported this assertion, adding that the fact that the military almost invariably constitutes the "largest single element of national government," whether in terms of government spending, or the physical resources available to its leaders, means that there is nothing "obvious or inevitable about the subordination of the armed forces to the wishes and purposes of the political leadership" (2003: 202, 242). In Nietzsche's lucid prose: "To demand of strength that it *not* express itself as strength, that it *not* be a desire to overwhelm, a desire to cast down, a desire to become lord…is just as nonsensical as to demand of weakness that it express itself as strength" (1998 [1887]: 25)

A more promising approach toward civil-military relations builds on Mann's notion of 'crystallizations'. According to Mann, the state is a "polymorphous power network" that can assume one of four "higher level crystallizations" depending on the interplay between the four sources of social power (ideological, economic, military, and political), with each crystallization producing its own head-on dialectical conflict (1993: 82). The predominance of a particular power at a certain historical episode is therefore relative, contingent, and rarely permanent (Mann 1986: 18-20). One can therefore assume that state militarization would be countered by attempts at civilianization, and vice versa. Political-military power relations could be fluid, leading to successive shifts in the configuration of power (for example, Spain and Italy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and postcolonial Africa), or stable, allowing one organization to consolidate power for a considerable time (examples include the militarization of Japan from the Meji Restoration to World War II, and the formal subordination of military power to politics in postwar Europe, and Communist Russia and China). In either case, the premise at the heart of the concept of crystallizations is that civil-military relations, like

other power relations, are dynamic and evolving, sometimes stable, but always promiscuous and revocable under changed conditions.[26]

Koonings and Kruijt praised this "intra-institutional analysis" for its sensitivity to subtle changes in civil-military relations (2002: 16-18). Similarly, Stepan advocated this approach because it captures all the social context variables (ideas, classes, geopolitics, etc.) that structure the military's field of action. In his view, intra-institutional analysis not only emphasizes that the military has its own corporate interests, but, more importantly, it fulfills the theoretical and empirical imperative of grounding civil-military relations within the larger field of power (Stepan 1988: 10-12). Danopoulos (1988: 19-20), Decalo (1998: 34), and Segell (2004: 52-53) also believed that this approach brings out the true nature of civil-military relations, as an array of interest-driven interactions between different institutions. These interactions might produce "outright usurpation" of power by one institution, but they most likely manifest themselves in the form of less obvious power strategies, such as pressuring, blackmailing, or threatening (Poggi 2001: 186). Paying attention to those strategies requires one not to get caught up in coups or other singular events at the expense of the larger pattern of shifting power balances between civilian and military institutions (Welch 1976: 1-2). It also means that one has to keep in mind the relativism of either civilian or military domination, a fact that led Welch (1976: 3-5), Finer (1962: 282-83), and Colton (1978: 63-64, 71-72) to map civil-military relations on a continuum

[26] The frequency of war, for example, is an important condition. Because European armies were almost constantly engaged in war from 1495 to 1815, the military was less interested in meddling in politics than Third World armies that were basically engaged in "barrack sitting," and thus eager to play a meaningful role in their society (Maniruzzaman 1987: 114). Similarly, the Chilean military did not intervene in politics throughout the nineteenth century because its hands were full: confronting the Peru-Bolivian Confederation in 1836-39, pacifying the southern and northern regions in 1851 and 1859, respectively, fighting Spain in 1865-66, and finally fighting the relatively long War of the Pacific against Peru and Bolivia in 1879-83. It was after a few decades of peace that the Chilean military carried out its first coup in 1924 (Agüero 2002: 112-15). However, too many wars – whether won or lost – can also trigger military intervention; a weary army is usually susceptible to demands for political change from the Left or the Right (Chorley 1973: 126). Another relevant condition is the occurrence of a first coup, which usually creates "a vicious circle that perpetuates the conditions of political underdevelopment that initially brought about military rule" (Maniruzzaman 1987: 6). A good example is the "capital sin" – the coup – that inaugurated the Brazilian republic in 1889, rendering the country vulnerable to military interventions, as those that took place in 1930, 1945, 1954, 1955, and 1964 (Castro 2002: 90; Coelho 1988: 147).

whose ends – complete civilian control and pure military dictatorship – represent ideal types that never transpire in reality.[27] All that being said, Mann concluded that in the modern world:

> **The combination of bureaucratization, professionalization, military-industrial technocracy, old regime domination of high command and diplomacy, and insulation of military and diplomatic decision making had re-created an autonomy of military power that its formal incorporation into the state merely masked. This crystallization as militarism was significantly independent of, and powerful over, all other state crystallizations** (Mann 1993: 439-40).

The institutionalist realist approach presented in this section points to a new, more expanded definition of militarism: a definition based on the concept of the 'police state' rather than outright military governance. This new definition problematizes civil-military relations by highlighting its complex and variable nature, something the advocates of the functional differentiation paradigm did not sufficiently account for. The concept of 'national security' gained prominence during the postwar period, when state rulers began to justify their policies by invoking the security of the nation's citizens (present and future) rather than that of the monarchy or the church. This new development prompted Pye to advise scholars to sensitize themselves to the entire range of possibilities that the concept of national security has opened up to politically ambitious officers (1962: 86).

[27] Colton measured military influence on political life according to the scope of issues concerned and means employed to achieve them. The scope is narrowest when confined to direct military interests and broadens all the way to the interests of the nation as a whole. Also, the means employed range from providing expert advice and political bargaining to resorting to the military's "unique political resource, *force*" (Colton 1978: 63-64). Based on these two dimensions – scope and means – Colton charted two "paths of expansion" of the political role of the military: in the path *intervention*, the military first escalates its means and then as it comes to realize the political power it enjoys decides to take on broader social issues; while in the path of *involvement*, the military broadens its scope to adopt social causes that it then feels compelled to escalate its means to achieve them. In sum: "In the intervention pattern, the expansion of scope follows the escalation of means; in the involvement pattern, the expansion of scope precedes the escalation of means" (Colton 1978: 71-72). Welch offered another continuum of relationships between civilian and military powers: *Military Influence* is characterized by clear boundaries between military and political institutions, with contacts taking place between top leaders through designated channels; *Military Participation* occurs when civilian partisans turn to the military "as propos for their power;" *Military Control* is the extreme case where the military rulers either directly or from behind the scenes through trusted civilian allies (Welch 1976: 3-5). Finer morphology was based on the degree of the military's political leverage: in *Military-Supportive Regimes*, civilian rulers are "exquisitely reliant on the active support of the military;" in *Intermittently Indirect-Military Regimes*, the military intervenes from time to time to correct what it perceives as civilian flaws; in *Indirect-Military Regimes*, the military exercises power behind the veneer of civilians; finally, in *Military Regimes* proper, political executives are "openly and flagrantly military men" installed initially by coups (Finer 1982: 282-83).

As Wolfers indicated, this fairly vague concept, which stresses the need to subordinate all other national priorities to that of security brought about the transformation form a welfare- to a security-oriented interpretation of the national interest. From that point on, citizens internalized the necessity to prioritize security measures above all, and therefore the legitimacy of sacrificing national values to guarantee additional increments of security (Wolfers 1962: 147-48, 156). Moreover, those who endorsed national security policies took it for granted that they will be understood to mean policies based on coercive power; since "security is being sought against external violence – coupled perhaps with internal subversive violence – it seems plausible at first sight that the response should consists in an accumulation of the same kind of force for the purpose of resisting an attack or of deterring a would-be attacker" (Wolfers 1962: 155). The responsibility for national security also justifies overestimating the power of the nation's enemies, and treating potential threats as real (Nordlinger 1977: 54-55). That is why the custodians of coercive power promoted the view that "all of politics" must prioritize security considerations (Poggi 2001: 196). This prioritization represents a new and more enduring form of militarism; one where the "guardians and practitioners" of organized violence are constantly influencing the whole political system, which they were supposed to constitute a part of. In short, organized violence has come to represent "the bottom line of the whole political process" in many states (Poggi 2001: 183-84).

The rise of police states also means that our understanding of the institutions that represent military power must extend beyond the officers corps to domestic security agencies. Of course the state's shift from "reactive to proactive repression," through establishing complex systems of surveillance to monitor and preempt domestic threats, is hardly new (Tilly 1990: 115-16). But postwar international developments have reinforced these measures substantially. The 'security trumps all' type of state, which was essentially a Cold War phenomenon, now flourishes in the fertile ground of counterterrorism. According to Nisbet, one of the major reasons accelerating the militarization of democracies is terrorism. "If terror increases…it is impossible

to conceive of liberal, representative democracy continuing, with its crippling [legal] processes" (1981: 147). Beck agreed: the individualization of war inherent in terrorism makes all citizens suspected militants, and thus justifies the creation of military-dominated "fortress-like states" where security reigns supreme (2003: 261-66). Just as communism justified exclusionary and repressive measures against subversive elements within the country, terrorism sanctioned discrimination and persecution of residents for their religious affiliation. Unsurprisingly, the spread of international terrorism from the 1980s onwards has undermined all constitutional checks on the rise of the security-oriented state. Students of militarism should accordingly re-examine their belief in the old professionalism paradigm, which depicts a politically neutral military focusing on external defense, to the "new professionalism of internal security," which intrudes on politics as a matter of course (Stepan 1988: 15).

To conclude, the works reviewed in this section underline the inherently power-oriented nature of the military, as opposed to those who depict the military as a neutral organization that inadvertently gets pulled into politics as a result of class struggles, institutional underdevelopment, or political breakdown – although these contributing factors naturally affect the military's position in relations of power. Furthermore, a new definition of militarism, centering on the rise of police states, has become essential in a world where the "state of exception has gradually been replaced by an unprecedented generalization of the paradigm of security as the normal technique of government," an age when this security paradigm has "reached its maximum worldwide deployment" (Agamben 2005: 14, 87). So instead of the civilian-military dichotomies we should map militarism on an continuum, with outright military rule (Chile under Pinochet) at one end, followed by civilian rule under military guardianship (Turkey after Ataturk), then police states created in the aftermath of military intervention (coup-installed postcolonial regimes), where politics is overwhelming influenced by security, and finally almost complete military subordination (postwar Germany and Japan).

Chapter Two

MILITARISM IN POWER: GUARDIANS AND RULERS

As significant as the coup is as a transformative event that alters the existing power configuration, we must bear in mind, as Nordlinger reminded us, that what the military does after taking power is of much greater importance than the takeover itself (1977: 109-10). A coup might be one of those 'episodes', which according to Mann, trigger fundamental structural transformations through reorganizing the power networks. But to appreciate the institutional impact of any episode, we must examine how it enabled new institutional arrangements (Mann 2004: 64). That is why I consider in this section the types of institutions coup makers develop to consolidate their newly won position, and how those institutions structure the field of action of other social actors, especially those bent on challenging the new regime. I focus on the two models that prevailed throughout much of the postcolonial world: military guardianship and police states.[28]

Once in power, the military has two alternatives. The first, and most common alternative is to set the political guidelines that satisfy its view of how the state should be governed, and then step back, allowing a civilian regime to run the state under military supervision. In this type of regime, which militarism scholars label the 'guardian model', the military does not govern directly, nor does it interfere with every aspect of society; it only intervenes when the guidelines it has laid down are violated. Their general hope of guardians, as succinctly described in a recent book on militarism, is to 'rule without governing' (Cook 2007). Guardian regimes are usually managed through joint civilian-military decision-making institutions (typically, a national security council), which allow military leaders to voice their views on various policies, and veto undesirable ones. Moreover, when the agreed upon guidelines (usually enshrined in a

[28] I do not examine direct military rule because it is irrelevant to my case studies. That is why I adopt Nordlinger's broad definition of a military regime as one that has been established through a coup; whose highest officials are active or ex-officers; and whose rulers are dependent upon coercive power to preserve their position (1977: 3).

constitution) are violated, the military threatens to or carries out 'corrective' coups to oust uncooperative politicians, and put the state back on track.

At the other end of the spectrum, the military can pursue the radical route of transforming the entire social body to correspond to what Foucault described as the "military dream of society," a society whose citizens become "meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine" laboring under the gaze of "technicians of discipline" in an elaborate system of "permanent coercions" (1979: 169). Here the coup makers establish themselves as authoritarian rulers (with one man emerging as supreme leader), and consolidate their power through two main organs: a political institution for managing the population (either a mass mobilizing party, or an elaborate bureaucracy), and – above all – an entrenched security establishment (secret police, intelligence, anti-riot forces, etc.) that penetrates and controls all parts of society, including the military (to make sure it would not attempt to undo the very regime it helped install to further its own corporate interests). This type of regime, which militarism theorists dub the 'ruler model', borrows heavily from totalitarian regimes (whether fascist or communist), especially in terms of political organization and the mechanisms of control and repression.

These two types of military regimes will be compared and contrasted more closely below, but there is one characteristic difference worth mentioning right away, namely, how power is distributed in each. In the guardian type, the military as an institution (normally represented by the high command) retains effective power (even if exercised from behind the scenes), whereas the ruler type allocates an increasing share of power to the internal security agencies (usually established by army confidants close to the coup leaders) charged with maintaining an authoritarian order. In the latter case, the military as an institution might be showered with privileges because of its potential role as a protector of the last resort, but it is generally subject to the same kind of security controls as everyone else. In effect, militarism under the ruler model gives way to authoritarian security-domination; militarism produces a police state.

Soldiers are incompetent at any other activity except soldiering, and as Hobsbawm told us, they know it. So if militarism proceeds along a "normal course," officers are content with setting general patterns for government before turning it over to civilians, while of course "reserving the right to throw them out when they cease to give satisfaction" (Hobsbawm 2001: 212). Finer (1962: 165) labeled this form of government "indirect military rule," while Danopoulos (1988: 21) preferred the term "military-civilian coalition," since it allows civilians to man institutions of government, or even compete for office through fair elections, while maintaining the military's ultimate influence over political life. But the "guardian model," the term used by Nordlinger (1977) and Maniruzzaman (1987), captures the assumptions underlying this form of government more accurately. Here the military sees itself above politics, but also duty-bound as the "guardian of the nation's founding principles" to intervene in politics – only temporarily – to prevent the violation of those principles (Maniruzzaman 1987: 70-71).

Two historic-based "foundational myths" typically furnish the military's self-image as the guardian of the "destiny of the nation and the interests of its people." First, the 'birthright myth', namely, the military's claim to have played a decisive role in the nation's moment of birth, that without the sacrifices it offered, the "the nation would not have been formed or survived," and that this gives the military an eternal right to define and defend the "essence of the nation" (Kolkowicz 1978: 10-11).[29] Second, the 'unique competence myth', which leads the military to believe that its unity, coherence, strict hierarchy, command over means of violence, and other organizational resources render it exceptionally capable of managing the nation in times of uncertainty, or whenever civilians waver or become embroiled in petty politics (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 19-21). In short, military officers consider themselves "final arbiters of the political

[29] The birthright myth can derive from real historical situations, such is the case with armies of successor states to territorial empires (Turkey, Iran, Japan, and Germany), armies formed out of national liberation movements (Algeria and Indonesia), armies that evolved from revolutionary movements (China and Cuba), armies established as the first post-independence national institutions (Pakistan and Bangladesh), and so on.

process, final judges as to whether a particular turn of events is acceptable from their standpoint as the guardians of national integrity" (De Kadt 2002: 315). This, of course, entails an expansion of the concept of national security to mean political as well as territorial security. Military guardians jealously protect state institutions from domestic enemies, just as they protect its borders from foreign aggressors (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 20).

In terms of political goals, military guardians aim at staving off undesirable change to the existing order. Following the coup, they retain government long enough to prepare the ground for the kind of civilian regime they have in mind. During that time, they set the constitutional ground rulers, as well as the standards for acceptable political parties, trade unions, civil associations, newspapers, etc. More importantly, before handing over the reigns of government to civilians, the coup makers create supervisory institutions that grant top military leaders the right to check major government policies, and rule out objectionable ones, without having to seize power once more. Finally, guardians are prepared, when necessary, to carry out "displacement" coups, to overthrow (or prevent the election of) unwanted elements, and replace them with "more malleable" ones (Nordlinger 1977: 22-25).

Police States

Coups can also produce what Finer (1962) called "dual regimes," which rest on two main institutions: a military-security apparatus and a political organization, with an authoritarian ruler (usually the coup leader) at the head of both (p. 164). "Corporate praetorianism," as Perlmutter described this type of regime, is thus characterized by a "military-civilian fusionist rule." Although military-security power remains the bedrock of the new regime, it also incorporates the bureaucracy, religious institutions, labor unions, civil associations, and all other types of social organizations into one gigantic corporative body (1982: 319-20). This combination of brute military-security repression and entrenched corporative organizations that penetrate every aspect

of social life makes this unquestionably the most stable type of military regimes (Perlmutter 1982: 327-29). Nordlinger (1977: 26) and Maniruzzaman (1987: 80) use the simpler term "ruler model" to describe regimes hoisted to power through a military takeover, and then establishing permanent authoritarian orders.

Ruler types dominate political, economic, and cultural life in order to carry out their exceptionally ambitious programs for transforming state and society. These far-reaching goals warrant fundamental changes in the distribution of power. Ruler types therefore eliminate preexisting power centers: the economic ruling class is subdued or undermined; independent social associations are either dismantled or heavily regulated; the media is censored; and political repression traverses the entire social body (Nordlinger 1977: 26-27). So while guardians (with their limited ambitions and impatience with governance) permit political competition and a moderately vibrant civil society, ruler types opt for total regime closure, restricting political participation to "virtually meaningless 'rubber stamp' affairs." Simply put, "Guardian types control the government; praetorian rulers dominate the regime" (Nordlinger 1977: 113-14).

Needless to say, most scholars have expressed little sympathy for this type of regime. Ruler types have been described as "predatory military governments" that terrorize society, throttle freedom, and place their citizens under a constant "state of siege" (Lieuwen 1965: 142-43). The leader of this type of regime is usually accused of usurping all social resources to consolidate his power, and treating that state as his personal fief (Decalo 1998: 48-49). Lieuwen drew a bleak picture of the natural progression of a ruler type regime that begins with the coup leader declaring the dawn of a new age.

> **If the people responded to his vilification of the old regime and his Messianic policies, he was well on the way to the establishment of a kind of plebian dictatorship, whether or not he had the majority of the people behind him. Opposition leaders could be effectively handled by simply condemning them as enemies of the people. Particularly troublesome elements, such as the conservative press, could be suppressed by organized violence, generally by police or security forces acting in 'the people's' interest… The people supposedly would rule; they were the state; their new leader was its representative. He proposed to rebuild the national economy along modern lines, gave lip service to demands for agrarian**

> **reform, promised to curb the power of the landlords and the foreign capitalists, and pledged greater benefits to workers and peasants in the form of high wages, better housing, and extended social security…[But all the people really get is] enjoyment of political power through identification with [their] military dictator** (1965: 128).

There were, however, more sympathetic assessments. Trimberger (1978), for one, regarded ruler types in a more positive fashion. In her opinion, they are not all sly populist demagogues; many of them are patriotic and ideologically committed "revolutionaries from above." Underdevelopment forces nationalistic officers and bureaucrats to seize state power, expand it, and initiate top-down modernization. Revolutions from above are sometimes even preferable to popular revolutions because the extralegal takeover of power is accompanied by very little violence, sweeping social changes are undertaken in a pragmatic and gradual manner with little appeal to radical doctrines, and the coup makers do not establish a military dictatorship, but rather build civilian state institutions and remove the officer corps from politics (Trimberger 1978: 3, 105-107).

Thomas also grasped the fact that the situation of recently independent nations, who have no developed ruling classes, propels military officers to capture and strengthen the state and "exercise sovereignty on behalf of the community" for as long as needed to spur development. The problem of course, as Thomas fairly admitted, is that there is no incentive for ruler type leaders to grant their subjects political freedom after they achieve these developmental goals. Economic development is promoted as the "*the* principle objective" of all social activity; it is almost completely divorced from issues of justice and democracy, and instead "measured in terms of new construction, the growth of the gross national product, the degree of literacy, and in some cases the extent to which the security forces carry modern equipment." Any attempt to challenge the ruler's self-serving definition of development is "treated as 'subversive' and 'antinational', and thus is a legitimate reason for the exercise of state violence against its proponents" (1984: 120-21).

Let us now turn to the three distinctive features of this regime type: an authoritarian political organization; omnipotent police power; and an eventually subdued military.

(a) Political Organization

A coup-installed authoritarian regime must reduce its dependence on military officers or else it will remain hostage to the changing political currents within the military; it must – in the language of investment bankers – diversify its assets to minimize risk. One option is to appeal to the people for legitimacy (Lieuwen 1965: 128). For popular backing to be effective, however, the masses must be mobilized and organized. That is why coup leaders devote themselves to building reliable political institutions (Finer 1962: 164-65). The most significant feature of these institutions is that they "seize" supporters through a mixture of "patronage, clientelistic alliances, [and] systematic intimidation" (Decalo 1998: 48-49).

To begin with, coup leaders destroy or modify the social structural associated with the previous regime. Then they create loyal institutions: state-sponsored organizations (trade unions, professional associations, religious groups, etc.) that first parallel, and then – by virtue of state patronage – manage to replace preexisting social organizations (Thomas 1984: 89-92). The next step is to install an "elaborately constructed apparatus of control" to eliminate any threats to the rulers' power (Puddington 1988: 1). This could either be achieved by a mass movement, or highly structured state institutions. The first option involves creating a single-party system, where the locus of power rests with a mass mobilizing ruling party that is charged with directing all aspects of social life. Once implemented this "penetration model is exceptionally effective" and enduring (Nordlinger 1977: 18). Members of the ruling party then infiltrate all important government offices to achieve "a complete amalgamation of state and party," and block the rise

of any other political force (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 419-20).[30] Under that institutional arrangement, the military is transformed into "an administrative arm of the Party, not something separate from and competing with it" (Odom 1978: 41-44).

The inherent risk here is that the state bureaucracy could overwhelm the party. Communist regimes, which have been the most common exponents of this institutional arrangement, have suffered just that. Trotsky famously complained that the Soviet bureaucracy that had first arisen as an agent of the Bolshevik party, gradually assumed an independent political role (2004 [1937]: 69). The bureaucracy, Trotsky continued, then "conquered" the party; "It defeated the program of Lenin, who had seen the chief danger in the conversion of the organs of the State 'from servants of the society to lords over society'." The degeneration of the Bolshevik party, Trotsky concluded, was brought about by the "bureaucratization of the state" (2004 [1937]: 71-72). What Trotsky was referring to here, namely, how bureaucratization transforms a political party into an administrative one, was echoed in Gramsci's depiction of post-Risorgimento Italian dictatorships where "The bureaucracy became precisely the State/Bonapartist party" (1971: 228).

Risk-averse authoritarians prefer a shorter route; they throw their weight behind the bureaucracy from the start. This alternative of course matches their "anti-political attitudes, managerial-technical assumptions, and political inexperience." Ruler types usually assume that their control of state institutions is sufficient to accomplish their goals (Nordlinger 1977: 114).[31] To secure their power, however, authoritarians couple the "gigantic increase of the bureaucratic apparatus" with a "multiplication of offices" to foster continuous competition between the

[30] One of the essential differences between authoritarian regimes, on the one hand, and totalitarian regimes (whether communist or fascist), on the other hand, is that while they both seek to monopolize the state, totalitarians "consciously strive to maintain the essential difference between state and movement" (Arendt [1951] 1994: 420).

[31] Nordlinger is skeptical about the prospects of this second alternative: "The realization of [the rulers'] far-reaching objectives requires high levels of control and penetration, which in turn depend upon the creation of a mass political organization capable of mobilizing the population. Only through a well-organized mass party (or movement) that is securely rooted in the population can the governors uproot existing attachments, neutralize local power brokers, break down 'traditional' attitudes, elicit widespread support for their formidable goals, and shape political and economic activity at the grass-roots level. Yet some ruler-type praetorians fail to recognize the validity of these assertions" (1977: 113-14).

different branches. They deliberately charge different offices with overlapping, and sometimes identical, tasks, to facilitate the constant shifting of power between them. By constantly liquidating some government agencies, relegating others to the shadows, and creating new offices or elevating existing ones, rulers prevent bureaucrats from building stable power bases (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 401-404). Nazi Germany provides a good example. At the beginning of Hitler's rule the SA was the center of authority, then power shifted to the SS, and finally, towards the end of the war, to the newly established Security Service. Notably, none of them was abolished, nor deprived from believing that it embodied the will of the ruler (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 400).

But whether they develop one-party regimes, or rely on new, enlarged state institutions, there is one thing no authoritarian (or for that matter totalitarian) regime fails to do, namely, shifting the center of power from the military to the police. As Arendt recognized, "Above the state and behind the façades of ostensible power, in a maze of multiple offices, underlying all shifts of authority and in a chaos of inefficiency, lays the power nucleus of the country, the superefficient and supercompetent services of the secret police" (1994 [1951]: 420). The security apparatus represents the center of gravity, the ultimate powerhouse of authoritarianism.

(b) Police Power[32]

After relying on the military to reach power, coup leaders bent on establishing authoritarian orders invariably turn to the other "much less frequently discussed, aggregation of organized violence – the police." There are several reasons why rulers decide against using the military for domestic repression. For one thing, the military is not designed for this task; its training, weaponry, and corporate mission are geared toward defense against the armies of other states, maybe domestic guerillas, but certainly not civilian activists. Police forces, on the other hand, are

[32] The term 'police' here of course does not indicate the normal and "relatively modest apparatus of public order" found in most states, but the phenomenally large and powerful organs of repression that ensure the survival of authoritarian regimes (Hobsbawm 2001: 214).

chiefly intended to operate within the state's inner slope (Poggi 2001: 183-85). Police power is also "coextensive with the entire social body…[it] must bear 'over everything'…the dust of events, actions, behavior, opinions—'everything that happens'" (Foucault 1979: 213-14). If power is ultimately that which represses, Foucault said, then this organ of state repression could be considered "power's Homeric epithet" (2004: 15). That is why Schmitt linked the rise of the modern state to that of the modern police (2008 [1938]: 31). Security agencies, when sufficiently expanded and equipped, are better suited than the army to "terrorize—that is, to atomize—the population" (Johnson 1982: 100). The military's great power arsenal is only good for fighting foreign aggressors. In authoritarian states, however, "'enemies' are within the gates" (Chase 2001: 406). Because authoritarians "feel more threatened by their own than by any foreign people," the police force is their weapon of choice (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 420-21).

Also, despite the fact that both military and police forces are disciplined, hierarchically organized, and designed to unquestionably execute orders, there appears to be limits to the army's loyalty. Historically, military officers—unlike the police—have had trouble regarding their people "with the eyes of a foreign conqueror" (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 420; see Mann 1986: 54-57 for a summary of this militarist historical argument; military disloyalty to authoritarian regimes is discussed in the final chapter of this part). Domestic repression under authoritarianism is particularly taxing to the military because of its permanence. Where social antagonisms persist, repression becomes the sole means of weighing down opponents (Trotsky 1961 [1920]: 54). As Gramsci later explained, under "Caesarist forms" of rule stability needs to be maintained between forces whose opposition is essentially "incurable." That is why "Caesarism is more a police than a military system" (1971: 222). Foucault (2004: 17) adopted a similar position: If repression is meant to impose "a perpetual relationship of force," then the regime must be constantly diligent; it must preempt resistance by neutralizing the counter-power of all organized multiplicities. Whereas the military could be called upon to put down revolts, or fight

insurrectionists, it cannot be expected to sustain a system of permanent repression (Johnson 1982: 104).

It is generally understood, however, that security services—no matter how diligent and capable—do not have the organizational means to regulate every aspect of social life. We should also remember that a population lives by force of habit; citizens are not always plotting to overthrow their rulers, they have other, more mundane things to take care of; there is no practical need for assigning an officer to every citizen. So while authoritarian regimes display their ruthlessness every so often by punishing their enemies, what really sustains them on an everyday basis is the climate of fear that security organs provide. "*Intimidation* is a powerful weapon of policy," as Trotsky understood. Ambitious regimes consolidate their position in the same way as armies in the battlefield, "it kills [a few] individuals, and intimidates thousands" (1961 [1920]: 58). The effectiveness of punishment results from its perceived inevitability, the certainty that violators will be punished. The punishment of those who challenge authority leaves "a memory" in the minds of the spectators, it instills fear of those who determine and execute it; "punishment *tames* man" (Nietzsche 1998 [1887]: 53-56).

But even though fear is authoritarianism's "principle of action" (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 461), it would be clearly insufficient without another vital control mechanism, a mechanism that "coerces by means of observation," namely, surveillance. Appreciating the value of surveillance comes naturally to military men. After all, the ideal type of modern surveillance was the military camp—an "artificial city" designed to make all its residents permanently visible. "In the perfect camp, all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power." Although authoritarian military rulers do not systematically call on the army to counter opposition, they still draw on their past experience in military techniques and knowledge (Foucault 1979: 168-71). With police forces applying this type of military know-how, we have, in Foucault's vivid description:

> **The [perfect] instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible…a faceless gaze that transforms the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere, mobile attentions ever on the alert…[an] indefinite world of a supervision that seeks ideally to reach the most elementary particle, the most passing phenomenon of the social body** (1979: 213-14).

Surveillance primarily involves social organization. Ferreting out potential enemies requires "drafting the entire population…[for] voluntary espionage services." This is the kind of society where, as Arendt observed, a "neighbor gradually becomes a more dangerous enemy to one who happens to harbor 'dangerous thoughts' than are the officially appointed police agents" (1994 [1951]: 422). The fact that anybody may act as an informer paralyzes opposition, whose members feel they are constantly watched. This ubiquitous social control system was first devised in revolutionary France, when Jacobins set up loosely structured popular surveillance committees to look out for counterrevolutionaries. The idea of revolutionary defense committees then spread to nearly every communist society in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and to non-communist authoritarians as well (Puddington 1988: 87). Chase asserted that even the most notorious dictator could not repress his subjects without the active participation of hordes of ordinary citizens (2001: 420). It is true that Stalin, for instance, unleashed the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) on society, but he could not have succeeded without the help of Politburo members, Comintern staff, rank-and-file activists, and more importantly, ordinary citizens (Chase 2001: 405).

The "complete absence of successful or unsuccessful palace revolutions" in the totalitarian regimes of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bore testament to the efficiency of this security-oriented method of rule (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 407), a fact that encouraged its adoption by postcolonial authoritarians.[33] Despite the poverty and deficiency of most state institutions in that part of world, authoritarian regimes developed entrenched and

[33] In the last few decades of the twentieth century, spying agencies, such as the SNI (Serviço Nacional de Informações) in Brazil, and the CNI (Central Nacional de Informaciones) in Chile, and to a lesser extent their counterparts in Uruguay and Argentina, played a central role in consolidating authoritarian rule (Michaels 1976: 286; Stepan 1988: 13; Agüero 2002: 119).

highly sophisticated organs of repression. This was partly because they directed a large portion of state revenue to security institutions, but it was also aided by the generosity and expertise of foreign powers that sponsored authoritarianism (Thomas 1984: 89-92).[34] Hydra-headed security agencies launched continuous and pervasive "low-intensity counterinsurgency campaigns" against a growing list of internal enemies (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 23-27): arbitrary detentions, torture, summary trials, extralegal executions, confiscation of property, curtailment of political rights, censorship, attacks against public meetings, electoral rigging, all administered by a large sector of security officials, civilian informers, and hired thugs. In this field alone, the authoritarian state was manifestly successful.

Security reach extended to government officials as well. Complete surveillance cannot only function from top to bottom, but also from bottom to top and laterally; this network, which "'holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety…leaves no zone of shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising" (Foucault 1979: 176-77). The Brazilian SNI, for one, maintained an office in every government institution to screen all personnel, and examine the security implications of every word or action (Stepan 1988: 19). This applied to the security apparatus itself: the "extremely complicated, widely ramified network of agents, in which one department is always assigned to supervising and spying on another" (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 403). What is important to us here is the role security organs played vis-à-vis one particular state institution, namely, the military.

(c) Controlling the Military

Coup-installed rulers owe their power to the military. But their firsthand experience with what the military is capable of makes them particularly wary that ambitious officers like themselves

[34] The building of these elaborate security institutions went hand-in-hand with the corruption and "deprofessionalization" of its personnel, so that they would link their fortunes to those of their rulers (Thomas 1984: 89-92).

might attempt to replace them. Their fears are augmented by the fact that they usually have to rely on the military of the old regime.[35] Their hypersensitivity to the possible "dangers of 'Bonapartism'" leads to "a *de facto* takeover by the police" (Hobsbawm 2001: 214). Security agencies serve as the regime's "'eyes and ears' within the military, and as an 'equalizer' vis-à-vis the military's inherent institutional power." Following the initial coup, therefore, the political marginalization of the military corresponds with the increased prominence of the security sector. The "built-in hostility and competition" between the two – the military with its self-image as the nation's noble guardian, and security officers, whose sense of self-importance is nourished by their everyday practice of coercion – is deliberately enhanced (Kolkowicz 1982: 239; also Nordlinger 1977: 201).

But playing off the security and military institutions against each other does not give authoritarian regimes the kind of hands-on control they need over military officers. As a matter of course, successful authoritarians turn to a multifaceted security-based network of control mechanisms designed to ensure military loyalty. These mechanisms serve three primary functions: to scrutinize the political opinions and activities within the military; to indoctrinate and socialize the officers; and to recommend promotion, demotion, or discharge on political grounds (Kolkowicz 1978: 9-14). This 'penetration model', Nordlinger's holistic term for the above mechanisms, not only preempts threats from the military, but it also transforms the latter into an obedient partner in the authoritarian ruling bloc (1977: 17).

Of course the first function—surveillance—is the most irksome from the military viewpoint. Security personnel secretly monitor army meetings, inspect officers' files, tap phone lines, and search properties without prior authorization from the high command. Moreover, they operate a network of informers among the military staff (Nordlinger 1977: 15; Wolpin 1981: 80-82). "Ranks and prestige mean nothing to the security police. Every solider and officer is a potential enemy," and is therefore considered fair game (Brzeziniski 1954: 76). Officers are also

[35] Fascists sidestepped this problem by relying on their own paramilitaries (Mann 2004: 43).

subjected to incessant political indoctrination in the academy, training centers, and ceremonial gatherings. Being "intensively imbued" with the rulers' political values violates military professionalism and its sense of belonging to the nation as a whole, but objection can send an officer packing (Nordlinger 1977: 15; also see Wolpin 1981: 72). Rulers finally draw on the more practical device of rewarding political conformity with material gains. Security reports become a major criterion in promotion/demotion, rotation, bonuses and perks, retirement packages, as well as purges (Nordlinger 1977: 15; Rapoport 1982: 258-59; Lawson 2007: 109-10).

Some of the features of this control mechanism were present in Jacobin France during the Reign of Terror. The National Assembly, and later the Committee of Public Safety, was in the habit of attaching official "representatives on mission," as well as undercover agents, to every military unit to make sure that officers (many of whom were originally employed by the *ancien régime*) remained loyal to the Revolution. One version or another of this "brilliant invention" has been copied in most revolutionary regimes (Chorley 1973: 149-48; see also Hobsbawm 2001: 214; for a detailed treatment see Palmer 1941). It has also been applied in democracies, but on a much less extensive scale—Lincoln's employment of Charles Dana as a "personal observer" within the Union Army, with rights to investigate and arrest officers suspected of disloyalty is a good example (Cohen 2003: 42-44). It is commonly held, however, that the control model was perfected under communist regimes in Russia and China. Bolsheviks were pitted against the Central Powers, and later the White armies before they had a chance to develop their own military. The ever resourceful Trotsky had to rely on the old Imperial and Provisional Government armies, as well as the worker-based Red Guards to create the Red Army, and keep all its constituent elements under the Party's control (Welch 1976: 19-20; Wolpin 1981: 10). He created a body of "political officers" who spread through the military to indoctrinate soldiers and identify potential sources of threat (Wolpin 1981: 74-75). Under Stalin, the complex control system that Trotsky had designed was expanded and enhanced transforming the military into "an adjunct to the Party's ruling elite" (Kolkowicz 1978: 12-13). In China, Mao Tse-tung readily

understood that "political power comes out of the barrel of a loaded gun," and was determined "to have the Party control the gun and never allow the gun to control the Party" (Kolkowicz 1982: 233). Although the PLA was the striking arm of the Party during its popular war against the old regime, Mao prevented it from becoming autonomous through periodic purges (in 1959, 1966, 1971), and an elaborate network of political commissars that permeated the PLA to report suspicious activities (Welch 1976: 1-2; Wolpin 1981: 10; Shichor 2004: 89).[36] Similar control mechanisms were adopted in Cuba. The challenge there was that unlike the Soviet case, where the Party predated the Red Army, and the Chinese case, where both developed in parallel, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR) evolved almost two decades before the Partido Communista de Cuba (PCC). The military successfully kept Castro's "revolutionary instructors" at bay, and resisted the creation of a Party apparatus within the army. To assure the military's loyalty, Fidel and Raùl had to throw their weight behind a promotion/demotion system that was "decisively influenced by the Party's evaluation of the officers' political attitudes" (LeoGrande 1978: 203-209).

As important as security-based control is, authoritarian rulers resort to several other complementary mechanisms to ensure military compliance. Most prominent among these is traditional divide-and-rule practices. Autocrats, Mao being a prime example in that field, foster competition, sometimes even rivalry, among the different services, or among divisions within each service (Chang 1976: 139-41). Some go a step further, creating "a personally loyal military elite, whose careers depend on his fortunes" (a sort of Waffen-SS). This step not only injects divisiveness within the ranks, but also provides a reliable striking force to employ in times of trouble (Kolkowicz 1978: 19; Nordlinger 1977: 201). Middle East authoritarians embraced both options, but especially the second one. From the 1970s, they expanded elite military units in

[36] When Mao drew on the military to support his political position in the Party in the late 1960s, Lin Piao, who was the army leader then, tried to build on his new-gained power to play an autonomous political role. Mao immediately transferred troops loyal to Lin out of Beijing, and got rid of Lin (through an 'accidental' plane crash). This was followed by a "dramatic wholesale transfer of virtually all top regional PLA leaders in December 1973," bringing the army back under the Party's control (Chang 1976: 136-38).

order to "closely monitor potentially disruptive groups and counterbalance the regular military." Notable examples include, the Royal Guard in Jordan, the Republican Guard in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, the National Guard in Saudi Arabia, and the tribal militia in Kuwait. These highly politicized units were usually better equipped than the regular forces, and always headed by regime loyalists (Droz-Vincent 2007: 198).

Another complementary control mechanism is securing military loyalty through economic enticements. Under feudalism, military commanders who defended the status quo were also the people who occupied positions of wealth and authority.[37] As military and social statuses became separated, rulers had to ensure that officers would not be driven by "status insecurities" to augment their power by force.[38] Rulers certainly promoted the value of unquestionable military devotion to the existing political order. But most rulers tried to show their officers how their corporate interests were well served by the regime, that the militarization of politics means "new and important jobs for them, as well as expansion and enrichment of the state apparatus upon which the military [depends] for its income" (Lieuwen 1965: 127). That is why an authoritarian regime's first step is to increase military spending soon after the coup, though it can reduce after it secures control over the officer corps (Maniruzzaman 1987: 3). Politically loyal officers also become eligible for traveling abroad (with lavish travel allowances) to receive advanced training and learn about the latest in military technology. This mechanism was again quite popular in the Middle East, where military expenditures were "higher than in all other world regions, both in absolute terms and in relation to other expenditures." The military was also allowed to run major economic projects in the fields of real estate development, tourism, and industry. The accrued profit was tax-exempt, and defense budgets remained untouched. Gradually, a "closed-off military society" evolved; through the material and

[37] They were more likely the sons and brothers of those who controlled the family estate. For the long-established feudal tradition ordained giving the eldest son control of the land, sending the second to the army, and the third to the church.

[38] One way of resolving this problem is to have military officers purchase their commission – to the detriment of military competence, no doubt. This was what the British Parliament (haunted by memories of Oliver Cromwell) decided following the Restoration. The purchase system lasted from 1683 to 1870 (Johnson 1982: 103-104).

corporate privileges it received, and the economic role it was allowed to play, the military became "an integral part of the regime's power network" (Droz-Vincent 2007: 200-11).

Before concluding this section, we should consider how military-installed authoritarians compare to totalitarian regimes. Clearly, postcolonial authoritarians copied some of the power techniques of totalitarian regimes, both communist and fascist. Communist governments devised the best organizational tools to implement Trotsky's Red Terror doctrine, namely, that a regime which has "conquered power with arms in its hands is bound to, and will, suppress, rifle in hand, all attempts to tear the power out of its hands" (1961 [1920]: 58). Authoritarian regimes adopted most of these tools; above all, the development of entrenched, multi-layered security apparatuses, and using them to coerce the population and keep an ironclad control over the military (Puddington 1988: 11, 122).[39] But postcolonial authoritarians had more in common with fascists. Not only did several fascist movements appear throughout the Third World in the 1930s and 1940s, but European fascism also encouraged the nation-statist model adopted by most postcolonial militarists (Lieuwen 1965: 55, 125). Fascists, Mann reminded us, "only embraced more fervently than anyone else the central political icon of our time, the nation-state, together with its ideologies and pathologies" (2004: 1). "Fascism was just one variant of a broader political ideal: 'authoritarian nation-statism'" (Mann 2004: 31). In that sense, some postcolonial authoritarians could be categorized as 'corporatist regimes', to use Mann's terminology.[40] The latter borrowed "substantially from fascist organization and ideology" (Mann 2004: 46). Like fascists, this type of regime embraces organic nationalism, represented by an integrated, hierarchically organized, syndicalist state, and a "statist 'third way'" economic policy that transcends the "moral decay and class conflict" of modern society (Mann 2004: 6-7).[41]

[39] "Contrary to what is sometimes suggested, the great armies of Europe's most authoritarian twentieth-century states, Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, did not become transformed into political armies." In both cases, the ruling elite – under the guidance of a personal dictator – kept the army under strict party supervision (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 14-15).

[40] Other postcolonial authoritarians were simply semi-reactionary capitalists.

[41] There are a few crucial differences though between authoritarianism and fascism. Authoritarians adopted "'top-down' statism than 'bottom-up' paramilitarism," their nationalism was not as aggressive, and they sought to

Before pushing the comparison too far, however, we should note that the brutalities committed by communists and fascists against their citizens are exceedingly rare today. Yet the scaling down of coercion should not lead us to believe that the role of coercive power as such has been reduced in politics. New coercive technologies, especially in the realm of surveillance, have augmented the despotic capacities of authoritarian states beyond measure (Nisbet 1981: 223-25, 251).[42] In fact if we consider Mann's two dimensions of state strength – infrastructural and despotic – we could see how twentieth century authoritarian states distinguished themselves by combining "a substantial amount of both powers" (Mann 2004: 31).[43] The most important institution to this power combination, as we have seen, is the security establishment. In authoritarian settings, as Arendt pointed out, security services are a "state within the state." They not only enjoy a "decisive superiority" over all other state institutions, but they also constitute an overt threat to all those who might oppose the regime, even from within the government. The security apparatus, in short, "constitutes the true executive branch" of the authoritarian state, the "only openly ruling class" (Arendt 1994 [1951]: 425-30). The security sector acquires this kind of power because authoritarian states function through interminable emergency laws. Agamben actually defined authoritarianism as the "establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a

"incorporate and pacify the masses, not mobilize them" (Mann 2004: 46, 371). Thomas added other reasons why the authoritarian state should be considered "a new sociopolitical category and not simply a variant of the classic fascist state." While the fascist state emerged in advanced capitalist settings, the authoritarian state emerged in an "underdeveloped capitalist formation with no clear hegemonic class, and with the ruling class's influence over the state highly conjectural and fluid." In fascism, therefore, capitalists surrendered their influence over the state, while in postcolonial authoritarianism the bourgeoisie was created by the state and remains dependent on both state rulers and international capitalists. Also, fascist movements enjoyed the support of wide sectors of the population (the petty bourgeoisie, the unemployed, demobilized soldiers, etc.), and they molded those supporters into mass organizations. In the case of the authoritarian state, however, the rulers had no mass base, even though some tried to create one in a corporatist fashion. And when this failed – as it usually does – power was maintained through "open use of force" (Thomas 1984: 105-08). Finally, fascist regimes were bent on achieving ethnic purity within the state, and leading their citizens to world domination; they therefore produced over-confident, supremacist, and mobilized citizen-soldiers. Authoritarians, on the other hand, were only interested in staying in power, and therefore produced dominated, diminished subjects. That is to say, fascists prepared their ethnically pure citizens to go to war with others, while authoritarians waged war against their own.

[42] It must be pointed out here that postcolonial authoritarians could only acquire these new repressive technologies from their scientifically advanced foreign allies.

[43] "Infrastructural power indicates the capacity of the state to enforce rules and laws by effective infrastructures concerning its territories and peoples… This type of power is power 'through' people, not power 'over' them. But despotic power refers to the ability of state elites to take their own decisions 'over' their subjects/citizens" (Mann 2004: 31).

legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination…of political adversaries," and the gradual transformation of this state of exception into a "permanent state of emergency" (2005: 2).

The study of authoritarianism and repression are essential to understanding the long-term effects of militarism. As many cases in the Middle East demonstrate, "Well-intended nationalist, developmentalist or social-reformist military regimes [usually] degenerate into repressive, closed and corrupt autocracies." In other words, authoritarian regimes often represent the "final stage in the 'natural history' of [military] interventions and coups" (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 1-2, 25). This "*perversion and corruption scenario* of military politics" marginalizes the military institution, and bases its "infrastructure of state terror" on the "intelligence-cum-security apparatus" (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 32). This perverted form of military rule has transformed many Middle East states into security-oriented "leviathans," operating through "networks of trusted individuals" in the bureaucratic, political, economic, and, of course, military-security sectors, with the military as institution "too weak or ineffective to control the state apparatus" (Droz-Vincent 2007: 207). This, of course, bids the question: how could these resilient police states unravel? The answer constitutes the subject matter of the final chapter of this literature review. It highlights that the key to avert the authoritarian path altogether, or to undo authoritarianism once it has been consolidated, lies with intra-regime dynamics. It is the power balance within the triangular ruling bloc (military, security, and political institutions) that determines the nature and prospects of coup-installed regimes.

Chapter Three

BACK TO THE BARRACKS: MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM POWER[44]

Although the military is inherently a power-oriented institution that occasionally gravitates toward politics, it is not suited for day-to-day governance, nor does it welcome the responsibilities associated with it. Direct military rule is therefore invariably temporary because it creates tensions within the military, and invites pressures from without. In Nordlinger's words: military rule is "inherently unstable" (1977: 139). Inverting Weber's depiction of politics as a vocation, he pointed out that politics for military officers is usually a part-time 'avocation'; very few officers take the reins of government with any sort of enthusiasm (Nordlinger 1977: 142). Surprisingly, the factors that cause the military to disengage from governance, or to withdraw its support from a regime it had helped install have been the least studied aspects of militarism (Maniruzzaman 1987: 18).[45] Danapolous attributed this "neglect" to the closed and secretive character of coup-installed regimes, which makes it difficult for scholars to determine the extent to which the military still wields power from behind the scenes after it officially renounces it (1988: 1).

> **The frequent penchant of [military] rulers to substitute khaki for civilian garb, stage-manage the formation of political parties, hold some sort of restricted elections and have themselves 'elected' as 'legitimate' political rulers, further blurs the distinction between civilian and military-dominated regimes… Moreover, unlike a coup which tends to be a swift, clear, sharp, and easily recognizable phenomenon, return to the barracks often seems to be slow, shy and not always discernible, often characterized by two steps forward one step backward** (Danopoulos 1988: 1-2).

[44] Withdrawal or disengagement is defined as the substitution of military-dominated policies and personnel with those advocated by civilian politicians. This should not be confused with "civilianization," which refers to a "limited or partial disengagement and denotes a situation in which the military co-opts and/or forms coalitions with a selected number of civilians" (Danopoulos 1988: 3).

[45] Only eleven articles dealt with this topic until the late 1980s: six of these were on Thailand and South Korea, two on Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and only one on the Arab world (Maniruzzaman 1987: 18).

Revolution theorists have contributed most to this field, by virtue of their study of the preconditions for overthrowing regimes. They highlight three pertinent factors: intra-regime divisions, popular mobilization, and external pressures (Skocpol 1979: 47; Tilly 1990; Goodwin 2001; Goldstone 2003; militarism scholars have reached similar conclusions, see Chorley 1973: 12; Nordlinger 1977: 139-141; Maniruzzaman 1987: 21; and so did democratic transition theorists, see Huntington 1968: 276; O'Donnell et al. 1986; Przeworski 1995: 50). Among these factors, the first – intra-regime tensions – is "by far the most often trod path back to the barracks" (Nordlinger 1977: 139-41). Even when popular and geopolitical pressures play a role, they usually do so by slipping through the cracks of ruling bloc divisions

Intra-regime Struggles

As long as the political and coercive wings of a regime remain united, no opposition movement could hope to take power (Chorley 1973: 20). That is why Skocpol (1994: 7) asserted that no revolution could happen without fractions in the state's coercive power. Divisions within the ruling bloc could produce these cracks. The rulers could disagree, for instance, on how to diffuse a revolutionary situation. Some ruling factions begin to anticipate the regime's collapse (because of the leniency, harshness, or indecision in dealing with opposition), and those who think they could secure their position under the new order shift their loyalty to the proponents of change (Skocpol 1979: 47). A situation thus emerges where the ruling coalition becomes "divided and polarized, disagreeing sharply on whether the current government should be saved or radically changed" (Goldstone 2003: 13).

Typically complex military regimes (unlike crude military dictatorships) are particularly susceptible to this situation. Analytically, the most significant feature of those regimes is that, soon after the coup, they break down into three institutional components: first, a governing institution that carries out the coup-makers policies and directs everyday government through its

control of the state (with the help of loyal civilian technocrats and politicians); second, a security institution that thwarts hostile elements, and provides continued protection to the new regime; and third, the military institution proper, which represents the cornerstone of the new regime, though it is scarcely involved in direct government or repression.

Both interdependence and possible tension result from the fact that partners in the new regime are not equally invested in regime survival; nor are they equal in power. The governing component is naturally the most reluctant to give up its position, but it is forced to rely on the other two components for protection against domestic and foreign threats. The military is, of course, the most powerful by virtue of its control of the most devastating means of violence, but it soon gets weary of the adverse effects of governance on its corporate interests. Lastly, the security institution, which does not have the same destructive power as the military, is the one that sustains the regime through active, day-to-day protection. Compared to the other two, its position is particularly vulnerable. Although it does not enjoy the same prestige as the occupants of government, it has the most to fear if the regime collapses; its management of direct repression (illegal surveillance, detentions, confiscations, torture, extra-judicial executions, and so on) rarely goes unpunished if opposition forces come to power. Besides fear of retaliation, the security community is also resistant to change because its privileges are deflated under a democratic regime. Unlike the universally esteemed officer corps, security men only flourish in authoritarian settings.

The interplay of these three components – asymmetrical in power and desire to rule – determines the character and robustness of the new regime. One possible outcome is that the military turns against the regime, whether through an extrication coup, or by supporting (or not resisting) opposition forces. Against sustained political opposition, some officers begin to question the wisdom of transforming part of the military into an instrument of repression; they worry not only about their institution's public image and organizational cohesiveness and hierarchy, but also that factionalism and preoccupation with domestic affairs jeopardizes military

preparedness to carry out its primacy function: external defense. Gradually, the "incentive structure" of those who supported the seizure of power to enhance the military's corporate interests "changes dramatically" as they see their social standing eroding, and realize that they could better secure the military's well-being, as well as their own professional careers, by withdrawing from politics (Lawson 2007: 112). Even those who were prompted to support the coup out of a genuine desire for political reform begin to see themselves "becoming more and more like the politicians they overthrew," and the purity of the barracks becomes increasingly attractive. What makes it even more attractive is that, unlike civilian incumbents, officers who exist in the political arena could still derive "power, prestige, and material rewards" by virtue of their status as "'managers of force', 'experts in violence', and 'armed bureaucrats'" (Nordlinger 1977: 60, 142). Unless the regime relies primarily on a forbidding security apparatus for protection, military officers' disaffection could paralyze, or at least cripple, its coercive capacity, opening the way for political change (Chorley 1973: 12).

According to Lieuwen, this was the case in several Latin American military regimes, where the growing professionalism of the armed forces became the main counterforce against militarism. Lieuwen explained that militaristic governments promoted professionalism out of fear that the "militarism that had given them power might take it away;" not realizing that as officers recognized how professional soldiering was "a full-time job that left no room for doubling in politics," they were less likely to support them (1965: 151-53). In other instances, it was inter-service splits along different political lines that destabilized the regime, as was the case in Argentina under Perón, where the ground forces were divided between a nationalistic, left-leaning, and politically minded group, and an apolitical group, while the navy and air forces were split about evenly between conservative and progressive democrats. Only the security forces remained united and loyal to Perón (Lieuwen 1965: 131).

Another example is the success of the *abertura* in Brazil in 1985 as a result of intra-regime struggle; a success that Stepan (1988: 32) and Coelho (1988: 166) insisted had little to do with

popular pressure as most observers believe. In Stepan's interpretation, political mobilization could not have achieved its goal if the military, as government and as institution (represented by President Geisel and General Golbery, respectively) had not decided to undercut the dominance of the security community,[46] which they regarded as a threat to the military and the country at large (1988: 40, 58). Coelho added that security dominance in Brazil had been quite taxing on the military, in terms of discipline and popular image (1988: 164-65). It was therefore the military's corporate interests, and not organized pressures from below that paved the road to democracy; "the regime did not fall nor were there forces in society capable of overthrowing it" (Coelho 1988: 166).

Indonesia offers another instance of intra-regime rivalry leading to the collapse of a long-standing coup-installed regime. The army had dominated Indonesian politics by virtue of its leading role in the war of independence (1945-1950), the pacification and administration of seditious regions, and its vicious campaign against communists (1965-68), in which a million suspected communists perished (Nordholt 2002: 136-39). The military first empowered several Islamist movements (notably, Darul Islam and ANSOR – the youth organization of Nahdlatul Ulama) to counter communism in the late 1960s. Islamists were again drawn into intra-regime feuds in the 1990s over the succession of President Suharto. The 'green wing' within the military, pro-Suharto officers led by his confident Habibi, founded the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI) in December 1990, and began "Islamizing the peaks of the military." In reaction, Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, in alliance with anti-Suharto officers—the 'red-white wing'—founded the Forum Demokrasi in 1992. Both wings of the military helped trigger pro- and anti-Suharto

[46] Stepan described security community dominance as "a situation where the security community becomes relatively autonomous, uses its power and autonomy to gain strategic influence within the military as an institution, eventually captures the military as government, and then uses these augmented resources to control the military as institution" (1988, pp. 30-31).

demonstrations in 1998, leading to the election of Habibie for a brief interim, followed by Wahid in 1999 (Nordholt 2002: 141, 148-52).

The military's decision to help change the regime is not, however, irreversible. If the emerging alternative seems worse, it might backtrack. Algeria is a case-in-point. After installing one of its own, Houari Boumediene, in the anti-Bin Bella coup of 1965, the military saw Boumediene's uncompromising dictatorship as a threat to its interests, especially after his refusal to appoint a chief of staff; his insistence on retaining the position of Defense Minister; and the free reign he gave to security forces. After he passed away in 1978, the military pushed for change, first by appointing a weak president, Colonel Chadli Bendjedid, and then by marginalizing the security institution, and finally through supporting multiparty elections in 1988. But the military's hope that a reformist wing within the ruling nationalist party (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN) would seize power faltered. Instead, the Islamist (Front Islamique de Salut, FIS) won the first round of the 1991 elections, threatening the political hegemony of the army. The military responded with a preemptive coup in January 1992, which cancelled the elections, revitalized the security organs, and empowered FLN strongman, Abdelaziz Bouteflika to reestablish military-backed authoritarianism in Algeria (Addi 2002: 183-90).

All these cases suggest that coup-installed regimes are not monolithic, but rather complex institutions composed of at least three parts: government, security agencies, and the officer corps. Also that among those three, the military is the most likely to withdraw its support as government dictatorship and/or the corruption and brutality of the security community threaten its corporate interests. Finally, that the security component is the most loyal regime supporter because it is driven by institutional interests to block political change.

Popular mobilization

The captivating images associated with general strikes, mass upheavals, sit-ins and large-scale demonstrations lead many to believe that when 'the people' have finally had enough, they could rise collectively and force political change. Social disparities and repression are thought to provoke vast sections of the population to "spontaneously rise *en masse* against the military government and do not leave the streets until the government falls." Popular upheaval could supposedly become too massive to repress, and the regime collapses (Maniruzzaman 1987: 164-65). The Arab Spring uprisings are only the latest episode in this romantic imagery. But perhaps the most evocative exposé we have of mass revolts comes from Trotsky:

> **The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times the state…elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by the specialists in that line of business… But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime… The history of revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny** (1980 [1930]: 17-18).

Most revolution theorists, however, are skeptical about the spontaneous uprising thesis, preferring instead to focus on how some sections of the population get mobilized, by whom, and to what effect. "A revolution will not occur," as Johnson stated, "so long as the leaders can still use the army successfully to coerce" (1982: 94). A popular uprising will achieve very little without the "breakdown, abstention or partial support" of the military (Hobsbawm 2001: 226-27). Militarism scholars are even more skeptical about the prospects of brining down a military-supported regime through popular protests. History shows, Chorley wrote, that the prospects of political change hinges upon the attitude of the military towards the status quo (1973: 11) – stated more plainly: "There has not been a single instance in which civilians alone demonstrated the strength to overthrow a military regime backed by a unified officer corps intent upon retaining power. They simply do not have sufficient numbers, organization, and weapons to

defeat the military" (Nordlinger 1977: 139). At best, both groups of scholars agree, popular mobilization could play a catalyst role, accelerating, rather than forcing, military withdrawal.

Huntington stated that closed regimes are not likely to expand political participation in the absence of social groups that demand it (1968: 276). Huntington was thinking less though of mass rebellions than aspiring middle class elites. That is why a Huntingtonian approach to demilitarization rests upon the hope that socioeconomic development will produce a strong middle class capable of pressuring the military to withdraw (Danopoulos 1988: 4). As Maniruzzaman argued, a society must reach a sufficient level of development, "a threshold of modernization," before it could push for a demilitarization of politics; postcolonial societies, in his view, remain militarized because they are still "below the 'take off' level" (1987: 202). It is not clear, however, how the middle class could practically send the military back to the barracks; it is still less clear why a military-dominated regime, which controls the pace of socioeconomic development, would produce a disloyal middle class, instead of one tied to the state.

But there is something else that the regimes could do to incite rebellion: overreliance on repression. Goodwin believed that revolutionary movements are particularly successful in mobilizing supporters when the regime's authority rests exclusively on violence (2001: 3). Johnson made the same claim, describing "power deflation" – that is a regime that depends increasingly on the deployment of force – as the greatest incentive for revolution (1982: 93). Even Lenin, who champions the Marxist orthodoxy centering on economic exploitation, conceded that "manifestations of police tyranny and autocratic outrage…are equally 'widely applicable' as means of 'drawing in' the masses" (1987: 97).[47] But again Tilly reminded us that regime repression cannot serve as a rallying point for potential rebellion unless the rebels had "powerful allies inside or outside the state," and unless "the state's recent actions…revealed that it was vulnerable to attack" (1990: 100-01).

[47] His list of repressive actions includes: "flogging of the peasantry, the corruption of the officials, the conduct of the police towards the 'common people' in the cities…and the suppression of the popular striving towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes, the persecution of the religious sects, the harsh discipline in the army, the militarist conduct towards the students and the liberal intelligentsia" (Lenin 1987: 97).

So what strategies could the mobilized masses adopt? For one thing, they could organize a general strike (see Luxemburg 1925). The problem with strikes, as Chorley made clear, is that they have a very short life span; they cannot be sustained for more than a few days before disintegrating on their own. Also, strikes cannot hamper the fighting capacity of the military (Chorley 1973: 83-86). One possible use of strikes and other types of popular protests (sit-ins, worker stoppages, civil disobedience, student demonstrations, and so on) is that they could provoke the regime to overact violently, pitting the military against the people to the point of generating opposition within the army itself. So in Chile, for example, Pinochet was not allowed by the other members of the junta to invalidate the 1988 referendum that purged him from power because they believed that the "massive human rights violations and state terrorism" that characterized his rule was undermining the military as an institution, and bringing the country to the brink of civil war (Agüero 2002: 122-23). Danapoulous (1988: 14-17) believed this was the case in Greece (1973) and Brazil (1985). Lieuwen added Mexico (1914), Chile (1932), Cost Rica (1948), Bolivia (1952), and Colombia (1957) to the list (1965: 151-53).

Another conceivable strategy is to establish "a close tie-up between the armed forces and the civil population" by incorporating military grievances into revolutionary propaganda (Chorley 1973: 137). Chorley suggested that widespread dissatisfaction in the officer corps with conditions of service weakens the military's loyalty to the regime, and could push some officers to sympathize with the rebels (1973: 128). She highlighted, for example, the importance of navy dissatisfaction to the success of both the Great Rebellion and the Glorious Revolution in England; similarly, it was the frustration of the French Army with the *ancien régime* that made the Great Revolution possible (1973: 19, 86, 129). A closely related strategy is popular fraternization with enlisted troops, as in Russia (1917) and Hungary (1956), to the point where the regime could no longer rely on the military for repression (Johnson 1982: 105). But because the rank-and-file is usually isolated from the populace, extensive fraternization is quite rare. Lieuwen could not identify a single case in Latin America (1965: 136). Outside Latin America, the

historical record still pointed to the fact that regular soldiers are for the most part obedient and docile instruments of coercion (Chorley 1973: 181). The big exception here, of course, is fraternization set against the background of military defeat; examples range from France (1871), Russia (1905 and 1917), Germany, Hungary, and Turkey (1918), and the overthrow (in 1943) of the fascist regime in Italy (Johnson 1982: 107). In Chorley's words: "The supreme solvent for the disintegration of the rank and file is an unsuccessful war" (1973: 38; see also McWilliams 1967; Skocpol 1979).

Of course civilian opposition could resort to guerilla warfare if the topographic, demographic, and other practical conditions allow, as for example in Cuba (1959) and Nicaragua (1979). This alternative, however, is becoming less applicable because advancement in weapons' technologies is making the military quite "invincible" (Chorley 1973: 243). Referring to these modern advances in the state's command of weaponry and surveillance technology, Schmitt compares the power of the modern state and its challengers to the "range and piercing power of modern artillery in comparison with the effectiveness of a crossbow" (2008 [1938]: 42). That explains why armed opposition against state rulers has been fairly limited. With rare exceptions, Lieuwen reported, Lenin's dictum that 'no revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces' applied to Latin America throughout the twentieth century (1965: 134).

Finally, popular unrest may push the regime off balance, cause it to lose control, and, as Mann put it, such "mistakes are *essential* to revolutions" (1993: 167, 170). Mosca similarly emphasized the importance of "involuntary mistakes" to revolutionary outbreaks. He added, however, that because mistakes are unforeseeable, revolutionary strategists could not rely on them to happen (1939: 319). The most valuable mistake – from a revolutionary standpoint – is for the head of government to lose nerve and flee; examples include the voluntary abdication of Charles X (1830) and Louis-Philippe (1848) in France, and Alphonso XIII (1931) in Spain, who all left without testing their strength against opposition. This mistake has a profound effect on

the military because the fleeing of the head of state leaves "no focal point at which the officers' corps could rally for a positive defense of the old regime" (Chorley 1973: 225). A closely related mistake is "indecisiveness" on the part of the rulers, who oscillate (without strategic purpose) between ordering ruthless military clamp downs against opposition, and accommodating some of the opposition's demands; this inconsistency not only disillusions army officers, but it also make them hesitant in carrying out their orders (Johnson 1982: 106).

What is clear, to conclude, is that popular mobilization could play a role in pressuring, rather than forcing, the military to withdraw, and it does so only if it causes or coincides with intra-regime divisions. But as long as the agents of coercion remain active partners in the dominant coalition, attempts to supplant the regime will likely fail (McWilliams 1967: 14; Lawson 2007: 113).[48] Or as Schmitt grimly stated: "The endeavor to resist the leviathan, the all powerful, resistance-destroying, and technically perfect mechanism of command, is practically impossible… It has no place whatsoever in the space governed by the irresistible and overpowering huge machine of the state… It is 'utopian' in the true sense of the word" (2008 [1938]: 46).

External pressures

Foreign powers could help overthrow a regime by either aiding opposition forces, or, more typically, weakening the state (Skocpol 1979: 47). The latter is highly pertinent in the case of coup-installed regimes, where international pressure could target the military with the aim of depriving the status quo government of its striking power, and bringing about its downfall (Gupta 2003: 7). Defeating the army is the most effective way to achieve this goal. The collapse of military regimes in Pakistan (1971), Greece (1973), and Argentina (1982), could be partly

[48] Out of a total of 229 cases of military withdrawal (before 1985), 36 percent took place through planned elections held under the auspices of the outgoing military regime, 27 percent through the military transferring power to an appointed civilian authority, 18 percent were the result of revolution that combined with elite divisions or war, and only 7 percent were – ostensibly – the result of spontaneous mass uprisings (Maniruzzaman 1987: 21).

attributed to their defeat in war against India, Turkey, and Britain, respectively (Danopoulos 1988: 14-17). Likewise, the substandard performance of the Israeli Defense Force in the 1973 war halted its political "role expansion" for years (Epstein and Uritsky 2004: 171). The opposite is also true, geopolitical pressures could provoke the military to push the regime to the limits, involving it in a series of wars that could ultimately wear it down.

A foreign power could also influence the target country's armed forces through providing military aid. "The term 'military aid'," wrote Wolpin, "generally evokes images of tanks, aircraft, or ammunition… Less widely known is the fact that Western nations, and particularly the United States, have gradually incorporated political indoctrination into the technical training programs for the officers of the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America" (1981: 27). American military advisers not only provide extensive political indoctrination to the soldiers they train, but they also "bribe them with supplies of the kind of modern equipment and know-how which satisfies their self-esteem" (Hobsbawn 1973: 188-89). Training and assistance are therefore meant to secure political cooperation between the foreign power and the military of the receiving country – "to keep the armed forces friendly," as Leiuwen put it. Leiuwen then underlined the high coincidence between the U.S. military assistance programs and rise of militarism in postwar Latin America, suggesting that most Latin American coups were U.S.-backed (1965: 7-9). Similarly, Maniruzzaman reported that the extensive militarization of Latin American politics, which followed the Brazilian (1964), Argentinean (1966), Peruvian (1968), and Chilean (1973) coups, could be attributed to American indoctrination, since the officers of these countries gradated from war colleges "heavily patronized" by U.S. Military Assistance Missions (1987: 10; also see Nunn 1992: 211).[49] Another case is Pakistan, one of the biggest recipients of postwar U.S. military support, which spent half of its first fifty years of independence under

[49] The signing of the 1947 Inter-American (Rio) Treaty and the Mutual Aids Pacts with the U.S. meant to bolster the role of Latin American armies in countering communism in their countries (Agüero 2002: 118).

intermittent military rule (Maniruzzaman 1987: 58; Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 9).[50] One can detect a similar trend in the Arab world (Schlumberger 2007: 17).[51]

By the same token, a foreign power could reverse the trend if it believes that demilitarization is in its best interest. This happens when military regimes become too corrupt, brutal, or incompetent, but more typically, when their policies no longer serve the interests of their foreign patrons. Here professional military ties present an venue through which the foreign power could influence its client through measures that range from threatening to cut off military support (as was the case when Carter pushed for demilitarization in Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador, and Guatemala), to abandoning the military regime at a crucial time (as the U.S. did with Greece during the Cyprus war, and Argentina during the Falklands war) (Danopoulos 1988: 14-17; Gupta 2003: 9). Another – though not necessarily effective – tool is to promote military professionalism in the training manuals used by the patron state (Lieuwen 1965: 151-53). Following the Cold War, for instance, U.S. training courses for Latin American officers inculcated the value of civilian control as one of the cornerstones of democracy – something that was never brought up before when there was still fear of communist takeovers (Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 27).

But Thomas located a stronger structural dependency between authoritarian states and their foreign patrons. In his view, the fact that postwar authoritarianism has appeared almost exclusively on the peripheries of the world capitalist order suggests it is not "exclusively the product of internal, autonomous, national development." If we add that authoritarian regimes usually serve the interests of core capitalist actors, we could begin to see how they are fundamentally linked to the "international bourgeoisie for investment funds, markets, technology, finance, goods, etc." The alliance between rulers in the periphery and capitalist

[50] Having seen how the intimacy between the Pakistani and American militaries encouraged Pakistani officers to seize power, the Indian government made it a point to shield its officers from contact with the U.S., and indeed it never suffered a coup (Cohen 1976: 51).

[51] That explains why Thomas found "a direct correlation" between U.S. aid and military-perpetrated human rights violations (1984: 93-94).

centers reveals itself in the role of the latter "in arming these regimes, in providing them with sophisticated methods of internal surveillance, and in training personnel to work in the coercive structures of the state." From this, Thomas concluded, that authoritarian regimes not only need the support of international powers, they practically "*cannot exist without them*" (1984: 93-94).

Reviewing the literature on militarism, repression, and revolution reveals the following: First, *militarism* is a more elusive subject of study than commonly thought. Outright military dictatorships are rare. Coups usually produce indirect military guardianship over the political sphere, or authoritarian police states, or revert back to civilian government. Yet – as I observed during this literature review – works on the coercive factor in politics, which surged during the de-colonialization era, roughly between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, have subsided. Social scientists have settled into the habit of overlooking military and security influences on politics in favor of economic, cultural, or purely political factors. This is certainly the case in the Middle East, where scholars have offered important insights into the takeoff stages of coup-installed regimes but not enough attention to the subsequent taming of both the military and society through extensive security controls, nor to the military's subtle withdrawal from politics. Second, *repression* has become highly advanced in methods and reach, and much more sustained than before, at the same time that it has become less dependent on the military than on security organs. Third, *revolution* is still highly contingent on ruling bloc fractures, which underlines again the necessity of fixing our analytical lens on intra-regime dynamics.

This dissertation not only conceives the ruling bloc as a tripartite institutional complex (a more concrete way to define its interests and capture its interactions than conceiving it as a power elite or a ruling class), but it also brings coercive power to the forefront to remedy its aforementioned disregard. In what follows, three empirical cases will be analyzed to demonstrate the pathways that coup-installed regimes could follow depending on how the power struggle between the military, security, and political institutions plays out.

PART [II]

The Dark Side of Militarism: The Rise of Egypt's Police State

We would see the defenders of the homeland sooner or later become its enemies, constantly holding a dagger over their fellow citizens, and there would come a time when we would hear them say to the oppressor of their country: 'If you order me to plunge my sword into my brother's breast or my father's throat, and into my pregnant wife's entrails, I will do so, even though my right hand is unwilling'.

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 1755

Very few of us foresaw the revolt that erupted in Egypt on January 25, 2011. And it is certainly too early to uncover the root causes of the revolt, why millions who have been repressed for so long took to the streets on that particular day and vowed not to return home. Political failure, economic crises, ideological agitation, and new forms of organization all appear to have been hopelessly intertwined during those last fatal moments in the life of the regime. That is why our job here is much more modest, and concrete. Steering away from guesswork and speculation (to the extent that one could), the aim is to discover what made the revolt possible once its preconditions have arrived. We ask not what triggered the uprising, but rather how its path was cleared. And the answer in this case, as well as in countless other cases, is the position of the armed forces.

The key to explaining the success of the January 25 revolt (to the extent that it was successful) is to understand that on the day the people rose in rage the military was no longer invested in the regime; it has been marginalized and undermined for six decades by its partners in the ruling bloc that emerged out of the 1952 coup, those partners being the security establishment (embodied in the police and intelligence agencies) and the political apparatus (represented by the presidency and the ruling party). Politically, the military's leverage has diminished to a level lower than that of its counterparts, even in democratic countries; socially, its influence has depreciated compared to that of security officers; economically, its ability to remain self-sufficient has been dwarfed by the gains reaped by security officials and ruling party members; and militarily, the regular flow of state-of-the-art weapons and training from the U.S. did not conceal the fact that these were

for display only, since the army was effectively banned from carrying out its chief mission in defending (let alone furthering) the state's national interests, or projecting regional power (as its counterparts in Israel, Iran, and Turkey did). The regime's effort to isolate the military ultimately backfired because passing the responsibility of domestic repression from the military to the police weakened its coercive power, and the substitution of officers with crony capitalists in leading government posts imposed unbearable austerity measures on the population. The conjunction of these two processes provoked the uprising that was welcomed, rather than repressed by the armed forces.

Why then did the success of the revolt catch many by surprise? The primary reason is that scholars who studied Egypt have almost unanimously treated army support for the regime as a constant not a variable. According to what turned out to be a blinding dogma, writers insisted that the Egyptian political order has maintained its military character from the time it had been installed in July 1952 until the last days of Hosni Mubarak. Examples of this unshakable consensus abound. Writing in the 1970s, Amos Perlmutter (1974) predicted that Egypt would remain indefinitely a praetorian state. Eric Nordlinger (1977: 4) insisted that despite signs of civilianizing rule, the Egyptian regime is still "completely dependent on the military." During the first decade of Mubarak's rule, Samuel Finer (1982: 301) believed that although "the regime's style has shifted markedly," it still drew mainly on military support. Robert Springborg (1989: 98) professed in his authoritative study on Egypt that Mubarak was losing ground to the military, and that officers were regaining whatever political leverage they might have lost under Sadat. Even a study of military disengagement in Egypt, written barely a decade ago, concluded that the top brass still exerts "inordinate powers" over politics; "government decisions are made with an eye to military privileges and wishes, and the military continues to be a center of power" (Harb 2003: 2).

In 2007 alone, three new contributions refurbished the same old claim. Thomas Richter (2007: 183-84) stated that the regime's military remains "the ultima ratio of its internal stability…the sole institution willing and able to suppress any destabilizing societal action." Philippe Droz-Vincent (2007: 208) described Mubarak's regime as a network of military officers that blurs any difference between military and civilian channels, and months after the revolt he still insisted that the military 'leaned toward the incumbent regime, as long as it could avoid being driven into repression" (2011: 7). And this all paved the ground for Steven Cook's now famous thesis that the Egyptian military 'rules without governing'. For Cook (2007), the President was no more than a "leading member of Egypt's military enclave" (26); that he and his officers "share interests and worldviews linking their fortunes in a more significant way than a mere bargain" (73); that his uniformed colleagues appointed him "steward of the state" to relieve themselves from "day-to-day governance," though they continue to "influence political events through the President" (73). In short, Cook concluded, "The officers have grown comfortable with arrangements in which one of their own remains the head of state and a range of pseudodemocratic institutions and representative structures insulate them from politics" (77). Incidentally, native observers repeated the same argument. Ahmed Abdalla (1987) saw the military as the continued guarantor of the regime. Shaker al-Nabulsi (2003: 78) confidently stated that: "it is no longer the army of the people or the country, but the security shield of the regime." And Wahid (2009: 142) went on a tirade against the officer corps for standing "behind political power…[and] presiding with impunity over a period of economic underdevelopment…and political misadventures." As strange as it may seem, the earthquake that shook the Egyptian regime left this scholarly orthodoxy untouched. Even though the army sided with the popular revolt, Cook (2011) still contended that at bottom the regime was "a creature of the military," that officers forsake Mubarak because he became a liability. Analysts at the *Financial Times* insisted that: "Egypt' military has been the invisible power behind the throne since the officers' coup

of 1952" (Khalaf and Dombey 2011: 3). Winding up more nuanced analyses, Joel Benin (2011) and Springborg (2011) used strikingly similar language: Egypt's political system remained essentially military even though officers had to shed off a few liabilities.

As strange as it may seem, the earthquake that shook the Egyptian regime left this scholarly orthodoxy untouched. Even though the army sided with the popular demand to remove the President, many still contended that it held no grievances against the regime, that it was forced forsake Mubarak and his cronies when they became a liability. Cleary, no one wanted to believe there was a serious rupture within the ruling bloc. That is because very few took the military seriously as an independent institution with distinctive corporate interests; they portrayed it as an appendage to the regime, and conflated the officer corps with any political actor with a military background (whether he be President, intelligence chief, or cabinet minister).

To discover what really happened in Egypt, we need to go back and analyze how civil-military relations developed in this country. Such an analysis reveals that the overall trajectory was one where the political and security components of the regime gradually sidelined their third partner. The military-dominated order of the 1950s began to founder by the 1970s. The day Mubarak took office Egypt had already metamorphosed from a military to a police state. The day he was deposed was brought forth not only by civilian victims of this police state, but, more important, by a military that saw in the popular uprising an opportunity for retribution.

Chapter four provides a brief prelude on the military grievances that triggered the 1952 coup. The narrative begins with chapter five with Gamal Abd al-Nasser's attempt to consolidate power in the 1950s through a military-backed revolution from above. Nasser appointed officers as ministers, provincial governors, ambassadors, chief-editors, university chairs, factory managers, land reform and industry directors, in short, as heads of the new bureaucracy he built to enhance what

Mann (1987) describes as the state's infrastructural and despotic powers.[1] But the President's fear that his grand transformative vision might be subverted either from below or by the military itself prompted him to entrust a handful of his military confidents with the responsibility of building political and security organizations for counterbalancing the military and achieving social control. After experimenting with a few political forms, he settled on the one party system, though in terms of security, he preferred a hydra-headed apparatus to one omnipotent organ. Nasser's fears proved justified, as the greatest challenge he faced came from none other than the military. While Nasser maintained the support of the infantry and the air force, the strongest and best-equipped services (cavalry and artillery) sided with the nominal leader of the coup Muhammad Naguib in his call to return to the barracks and reestablish democracy. It was through a series of confrontations and power tactics, in which Nasser's nascent security community played a crucial role, that the mutinous services were reined in, paving the path towards autocracy.

Chapter six examines how the politicized leadership of the military tightened its grip over society, playing a dominant role not only in state administration, but also in domestic repression: the Military Intelligence Department (MID) handled surveillance and investigations, the Military Police did most of the legwork, and the Military Prison became one of the country's most notorious detention centers. Once more, however, the military proved to be a problematic partner. Under the powerful and charismatic Field Marshal Abd al-Hakim Amer, the military now vied for absolute power, inviting fierce resistance from Nasser and his security and political organs. It was the defeat of June 1967 that brought the clashes and maneuvers that had consumed the country for over a decade to an end, opening the way for the political marginalization of the military, and the parallel rise of the political-security axis.

[1] That is the state's capacity to enforce its rules through an effective infrastructure covering its territory and population, and the state rulers' ability to impose their decisions despotically over the ruled.

The sidelining of the military, however, was almost reversed twice in the 1970s. First, during the succession crisis that followed Nasser's sudden death and drove a wedge within each of the three ruling institutions. The fractures and subsequent realignment of forces leading up to President Anwar Sadat's Corrective Revolution in May 1971 constitute the subject matter of chapter seven. But the new President's success in eliminating his rivals immediately confronted him with another daunting task: how to wage a war to recover the Sinai Peninsula, which was occupied by Israel in 1967, without bringing the army back to political life. Chapter eight reconstructs Sadat's shrewd attempt to empower and undermine the military simultaneously, a strategy based on the employment of competent generals in the war effort, followed by their quick dismissal before they could convert their military feats into political leverage. The effectiveness of this strategy in liberating the regime from the convulsions and mood swings of the armed forces once and for all required three complementary steps: enlisting U.S. support for overall regime protection, transferring the responsibility of internal repression from the military to civilian security, and prohibiting officers from joining the ruling party, which increasingly became a capitalist-controlled political powerhouse. The chapter thus concludes by drawing the essential features of the police state that finally took shape by the end of the Sadat's reign.

Chapter nine starts duly by considering the final (and ultimately futile) act of resistance by the armed forces under Field Marshall Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazala in the 1980s. With the military effectively sterilized during Mubarak's first decade in power, the stage was set for the political-security alliance to rule with impunity. The two developments that ultimately drove the country to the brink of disaster in January 2011 were the deterioration in the quality of repression, coupled with unchecked economic exploitation by the ruling party. To being with, the security establishment experienced a serious corrosion in manpower. During the first two decades following the coup, police and intelligence organs were charged (alongside the military) with considerable tasks:

destroying traditional centers of power (monarchical, feudal, and religious), dismantling domestic opposition (Islamist, communist, and liberal), infiltrating civil associations (labor unions, student bodies, and professional syndicates), foiling foreign plots (hatched by conservative Arab monarchies, Israel, and Western powers), and supporting Arab nationalist causes (training and arming Palestinians and Algerian guerillas, undermining conservative forces in Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and the Gulf, and supporting nationalist movements in Iraq, Libya, the Sudan, Yemen, and Syria).

By the time Mubarak was sworn in, the security apparatus had astoundingly succeeded in subduing all organized opposition: Islamists have been reined in, communists domesticated, liberals scattered and intimidated, and the military coup-proofed. Security officials now basked in a world devoid of serious contenders, and the function of the chief security organization, the Interior Ministry, shifted to the trivial burden of policing fragmented subjects, while preempting the emergence of new forces. Repression was reduced to manhandling vocal critics, harassing human rights activists, rigging elections, and other menial tasks. As typical with any major corporation that masters its environment, the Interior Ministry turned to a cheaper and less qualified workforce. The foot soldiers of repression now became poor peasant conscripts, who serve three-year stints under miserable working conditions, supplemented by seasonally employed thugs who lack training and discipline. So while the burden of repression was first shouldered by the (relatively responsible) military, it was passed on to police officers by the 1970s, before sliding into the hands of ignorant peasants and reckless hooligans.

The political apparatus fell prey to the same temptation. With the military politically frozen for all intents and purposes, and the contending political forces thought to be dead and buried, Egypt's ruling politicians believed the country was now ready for plunder. The ruling party, which had relied on military officers in the 1950s, and technocrats and political cadres in the 1960s, now surrendered to an emerging group of state-nurtured monopoly capitalists with strong links to global

investors, a process that was accelerated abruptly by the turn of the century under the stewardship of the President's son. The uprising of January 2011 was thus provoked by the 'dual deregulation' of repression and the economy. When apolitical citizens became subject not only to random police brutality, but also to the whims of unleashed thugs, members of all social classes found it impossible to carry on; and when the overwhelming majority of Egyptians descended from poverty to desperation, their choices became limited to revolution or ruin. That being said, we must remember that the presence of the preconditions for revolt does not dictate its success. Chapter ten thus analyzes how the revolt presented a golden opportunity for the military to end its own subordination, and evaluates its prospects for success.

Chapter Four

COUNTDOWN TO THE JULY 1952 COUP

The outcome of revolution rarely corresponds with the intentions of those who carry it out. One glance at the consequences of the 1952 coup and the 2011 uprising in Egypt provides ample evidence. Yet exploring the background and intentions of those who attempt to overthrow their rulers helps unlock the logic of the regimes they unintentionally produce. So what exactly inspired the July 23, 1952 coup, which was carried out by a secret cabal of junior officers, calling themselves the Free Officers Movement, and set the stage for Egypt's new regime?

These young men (most in their early thirties) grew up in a country that had been occupied by the British in 1882 under the pretext of protecting the Egyptian sovereign from his own army. In other words, when their ancestors in the military intervened in politics to demand more rights for officers and citizens, they brought nothing but disaster. Egypt lay at the mercy of a stifling colonial mandate that not only exploited its resources, and dismissed monarchs and cabinets that defied its will, but also kept the army understaffed, unequipped, and trained for little more than parade ground marches. Even when Egyptians won nominal independence and a constitution in 1923, it was through a massive revolt that civilians –spearheaded by the liberal al-Wafd Party – had ignited four years earlier without any military participation. Worse, three decades after this glorious upheaval the British still had the upper hand. The young and promising King Farouk, who ascended the throne in 1936 (at the age of sixteen), could scarcely rule freely with the British army stationed a few miles away from his capital, and his frustration was redirected toward the country's shaky parliamentary system. To assert royal prerogative in the face of the Wafd majority party he got into the habit of fabricating reasons (sometimes in agreement with the British) to dissolve parliament and dismiss elected cabinets and place royalist on the political saddle. He even went so far as to form a secret

assassination squad, known as the Iron Guards, to get rid of his political enemies. Al-Wafd, in turn, felt morally justified to ally with anyone (including the British) to guarantee their democratic right to lead parliament and the executive. This cat-and-mouse game between the crown and the majority party not only poisoned domestic politics, but it empowered the British even further. Exasperation with formal politics diverted popular energy toward a rising religious movement that claimed that national independence could only be achieved through moral reform and strict adherence to Islam. The Muslim Brothers, a movement established in the port-city of Ismailia on the Suez Canal in 1928, was gaining new followers by the day. Its ranks have swelled by the late 1940s to an alleged 2 million supporters, which represented ten percent of the population.

But politics was not the only thing on the mind of those patriotic members of the Free Officers; social disparities and stagnation were equally alarming. Although over half of Egypt's 21 million inhabitants were employed in agriculture, 12,000 large and middling landowners (crowned by 147 elite families) controlled a third of arable land, while close to 11 million peasants remained landless. Observers at the time hoped that the budding capitalist class, emboldened by a sudden influx of wealth, would level the social field by breaking the economic monopoly of this archaic landed class. Egyptian merchants amassed great fortunes by selling cotton, the country's main export product, at prices inflated by the American Civil War in the 1860s, and again by making the best out of the demand created by the two world wars. However, merchants were slow in making the transition to industrialism. In the 1950s, manufacturing contributed a mere 8 percent to the national income, and most of Egypt's 1.3 million workers were little more than glorified artisans.[2] More

[2] Landowners were divided into 2.8 million owners farming 6 million feddans (1 feddan = 1.038 acres) and 11 million landless peasants. 12,000 landlords controlled a third of the land; among these, 9,500 were considered middling owners (farming between 50 and 200 feddans), and the rest relatively large owners. This latter group was crowned by an elite 134 families owning between 1,000 and 5,000 feddans each; a select 12 families owning between 5,000 and 10,000 feddans; and the royal family which owned 48,000 feddans and controlled an additional 45,000 classified as religious endowments (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 61-63; Al-Bishri 2002: 79-80). In terms of the rising capitalist class, it was reported that in the late 1940s, the total amount of investment in industrial and commercial enterprises rose from L.E. 86 million to L.E. 106 million (Abdel-Malek 1968: 14).

importantly, the country's nascent industrialists did not seem determined to transform the regime politically. In other developing countries, especially those laboring under the colonial yoke like Egypt, capitalists usually encouraged coups. Failing to dismantle (or share power with) the landed elite, fearful of radical popular forces, and eager to industrialize the country as rapidly as possible, capitalists elect to hand over political power to a strong executive capable of protecting and furthering their economic interests. That is to say: in order to save its purse, the bourgeoisie surrenders the sword to a military dictatorship.

And Egypt had all the ingredients that favored such a scenario during the period preceding the coup. The mostly absentee landed class remained set in its ways, refusing calls for land reform and resisting commercialization and capitalization of agriculture, preferring to squander its wealth on the conspicuous consumption of imported luxuries. More dangerously, it undercut local demand in the countryside by reducing wages and increasing rents.[3] To top it all, capitalists felt politically helpless vis-à-vis this landed class, as indicated by the fact that in the last parliament before the coup (elected in 1950), landowners occupied 63 percent of the seats, while capitalists secured a humble 14 percent (Helal et al. 1986: 243). At the same time, continued British occupation and the perceived corruption of political life fueled radical and fascist tendencies among students, professionals, and workers. The demonstrations, strikes, and political assassinations of the postwar years were hardly conducive to business. Over and above, the officer corps itself was becoming larger and middle class in composition. Although the British had for long made sure the army remained limited in size and staffed by meek aristocrats, the gathering storms of Nazism forced it to revise its position and prepare a somewhat reliable force for the dark days ahead. This implied infusing the military with middle class members (the sons of middling landowners, professionals, and merchants) – those who

[3] The Yearbook of the National Federation of Industries for 1951-1952 warned that Egypt's capacity for industrial growth is bellied by the fact that agricultural incomes continue to flow towards real estate and imported luxuries (Abdel-Malek 1968: 39).

could actually fight. As part of the preparation for a possible war, the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty reallocated British officers to the strategic Suez Canal zone and sanctioned an enlarged Egyptian military that could defend the cities and provide logistical support. In the following decade, the army expanded from 3000 to 100,000 men, and dropped back after the Second World War to the still high figure of 36,000 men. The founders of the Free Officers Movement belonged to the first batch of middle class youth that joined the Military Academy in the late 1930s (eight of the eleven ringleaders came from landless families), and they naturally resented the privileges of the landed elite (Al-Bishri 2002: 539-41). It is also conceivable that by virtue of their links with the British army, Egyptian officers learned to appreciate the importance of modern democratic statehood and realized that because they controlled the means of violence they were best placed to transform their societies accordingly.

All the above notwithstanding, Egyptian capitalists remained wedded to the old aristocracy until the very end. Despite their eagerness to do away with this spendthrift and thoughtless class, they favored compromise over revolution. Egypt's still limited industrialization meant that its proletariat was too small and dispersed to make a bid for power. Increasing radicalization in the cities was perhaps unsettling, but it was certainly far from threatening. There was still time for reform, capitalists thought. Also, massive peasant revolts were equally unlikely because, even at this early stage, the Egyptian state (comparable to Russia in 1905, and unlike France in 1789) had strong control mechanisms in place in the countryside. Like their Russian counterparts in 1917, Egyptian capitalists worried that spearheading a revolt against the landowning class might ultimately derail them, that the ensuing turmoil might sweep all economic elites, landlords and industrialists alike. While the bourgeoisie was still weighing its options, the 1952 coup seemed to present a reasonable way out: it promised to undermine large landowners, encourage industry, and keep social unrest in check. Capitalists, therefore, welcomed the coup at first, though they certainly had no role in brining

it forth, nor did they manage to control the forces it unleashed. Nor were the Free Officers themselves committed liberals, who sought to modernize Egypt to better serve the interests of capitalism. If anything, the movement was notorious for its ideological eclecticism: a few of its members were Islamists; some were socialists, communists, or fascists; many were pragmatists; and the majority did not think beyond removing the corrupt political elite and returning to the barracks.

So if the coup was not designed to save a distressed capitalist class, nor was it an effort by likeminded state builders to modernize and democratize their polities, what really motivated it? A brief survey of the decade leading to the coup reveals three factors that impinged directly on the military's image and corporate interests: first, humiliation at home and abroad; second, the increased reliance on the military for domestic repression; and third, transferring control over military affairs from elected government to the monarch.

Few historians fail to note the demoralizing effect of the so-called February 4, 1942 incident, when officers stationed around the royal palace stood powerless as British tanks surrounded them and forced King Farouk, almost at gunpoint, to replace the existing government (suspected of Nazi sympathies) with one under the liberal al-Wafd. Although the king did not call on the army to interfere, the officer's pride was irrevocably bruised as they watched impotently their sovereign being humiliated by the British ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson (Lord Killearn). Four hundred officers, including the founder and leader of the Free Officers Movement, infantry lieutenant colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser, met three days later at the Officers Club and decided to organize resistance against British troops. They sent a delegation led by another Free Officer, artillery major Salah Salem, to inform the monarch of their decision, only to be warned by his chamberlain that such a provocation could only push Britain to further escalate (Aly 1994: 50). The whole incident left the officers with a sense of bitterness towards the whole political elite: the cowardly king who obeyed foreign dictates, the opportunist majority party that formed a government under foreign

tutelage, and of course the bullying British. In a letter to a school friend, a devastated Nasser bemoaned: "I am ashamed of our army's powerlessness" (Aburish 2004: 18-19). Major General Muhammad Naguib of the Border Guards, who Nasser later enlisted as a figurehead for the movement (believing that his seniority will lend the coup credibility), tendered his resignation after the army failed to uphold the country's honor, and described the incident in his memoirs as the turning point that convinced him that a regime change was needed (Naguib 1984: 66-67). This distressing episode was also highlighted in the memoirs of other leading Free Officers, such as cavalry lieutenant colonel Khaled Muhi al-Din, who together with Nasser devoured piles of history and philosophy books and explored various political movements in search of a way out for Egypt, as well as signal corps major Anwar al-Sadat, who was imprisoned by the British during the war because of his pro-German activities and was only readmitted to the ranks after secretly joining the king's Iron Guards (while doubling as member of the anti-royalist Free Officers).

But as disheartening as this episode was, the real military disaster took place six years later, in Palestine. The establishment of the State of Israel on Egypt's eastern border prompted an impromptu military intervention against this new unwelcomed entity. The operation was framed as a defense of Palestinian rights, but it was also an attempt by the crown to regain some of its lost prestige through playing a leading role in the Arab world. Dozens of Egyptian officers volunteered to help prevent the wholesale dispossession of their Palestinian neighbors, but they were worried about embroiling the military in a formal war since the last time it had seen combat was in 1882, when it tried fruitlessly to prevent the British invasion of Egypt. The Palestine War of 1948 would therefore be the first military engagement in over half a century. Furthermore, the army was utterly unprepared in terms of training and equipment, for even though the British employed other colonial armies in their war effort (notably, the Indian), they reserved the Egyptian forces logistical support. The military's reluctance to fight was voiced by the general staff, and supported by the elected

government. King Farouk, however, vetoed both generals and ministers and sent his men to their doom. Defeat inevitably followed. Military disgruntlement was so rampant that between September and December 1948, 28 officers and 2,100 soldiers were arrested on the battlefield and deported to Egypt for mutiny (Heikal 2003: 407). The tragedy turned to scandal when Egyptian Senate hearings in 1949 revealed that European governments, eager to get rid of their defunct weapons from both world wars, offered the king's courtiers substantial commissions to help them unload their stockpiles (Al-Bishri 2002: 395). To add insult to injury, Nasser was included in the delegation sent to Rhodes in February 1949 to negotiate the first Arab-Israeli truce, a political defeat no less humiliating than the military one. And it was these devastating defeats that unquestionably politicized the officer corps. It is no coincidence that the first leaflet distributed by the Free Officers, in November 1949, was devoted to condemning those responsible for the Palestine catastrophe, and the first communiqué they issued after the coup denounced the treacherous politicians responsible for the army's defeat in 1948 (Ahmed 1993: 73). Again in a letter to his school friend, Nasser recorded the evocative image of how "our soldiers were dashed against fortifications…using defective arms which had been purchased by the king's cronies, a collection of petty crooks who profited from the war by realizing huge commissions from arms deals" (Aburish 2004: 24). The leader of the Free Officers went on to describe how the battalion he led had no maps or tents, how he and his men were left strapped without logistic support, subject to contradictory orders from incompetent palace officers. Nasser spent weeks under siege in the Palestinian village of Fallujah discussing with fellow officers the liability of the civilian leadership for their ordeal. Naguib, who was injured twice during the war, reached the same conclusion: that the real enemy was in Cairo (Naguib 1984: 72).

The situation became worse when infuriated soldiers came back to find thousands of their countrymen locked up in detention centers because the king saw the Palestine War as a good opportunity to declare martial law and silence the opposition. The monarch expected the army to

finish the job and repress civilian demonstrators, especially after the police proved unreliable – in October 1947 seven thousand police officers organized anti-government strikes, which continued intermittingly until 1952 (Al-Bishri 2002: 292-95). Things became more complicated when the government unilaterally abrogated the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in October 1951 to protest Britain's retraction of its promise to evacuate Egypt following the war. The Egyptian military was caught in an awkward position. The treaty had legitimatized British presence in the Suez Canal zone, but now Britain went back to being officially an occupying force. In its rhetoric, the government encouraged citizens to carry out armed attacks against British installations, but then required the army to prevent them. The situation exploded two months later when British forces began scourging villages for sheltering Egyptian 'terrorists'. Following a particularly nasty incident, when the British demolished the village of Kafr Abdu, officers sent a petition to the king and government asking permission to defend Egyptian sovereignty; the petition was ignored. A month later, seven thousand British troops occupied the Suez Canal city of Ismailia. The government ordered the police to resist. In the bloody battle 50 police officers were killed and 80 injured. The occasion was marked as Police Day, and from then on January 25 was celebrated annually in honor of the police martyrs (the revolt of 2011 started on that day to underline the disparity between the heroic police of yesterday and the brutal one of today) The following morning, rioters set downtown Cairo on fire. The army was ordered in to restore order; officers now felt they were becoming the henchmen of a regime that has lost all legitimacy – as evidenced by the fact that four cabinets ruled in quick succession between January and July 1952 (Aly 1994: 63). It became clear that there was a power vacuum in Egypt and that none of the political forces seemed ready to capture the moment because they mostly thought of power in terms of "the force of numbers, the force of the masses, and never the force of arms" (Botman 1988: 116).

A final, though less spectacular factor, which had an enormous impact on officers was the expansion of the monarch's jurisdiction over military affairs. Throughout his reign, the king strove to wrest effective control of the army from elected governments. As a mark of symbolic power, he changed the army emblem in October 1944 from 'God, Country, and King' to 'God, King, and Country'. King Farouk not only refused to be held accountable for his ill-fated decision to send the military to the Palestine War, he now demanded the right to appoint the War Minister, the Chief of Staff, and to create the new position of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to be occupied by someone beholden to him alone and responsible for all military appointments and promotions. In order to appease the king, the Wafd government agreed in 1950 to relinquish its constitutional right to control the military. Immediately, the king set to work. The list of incompetents he appointed to leading army positions included his diplomat brother-in-law, and his corrupt prison warden, who forced prisoners to till the king's land for free. His intention to install a malicious border patrol officer (who had barely survived assassination at the hands of Nasser) to the top military post days before the coup was one of its immediate causes. Naguib reflected the general dismay within the ranks when he complained to confidants that the army could not obey a high command composed of arms dealers, land speculators, and other criminal elements (Naguib 1984: 67). When the old general was elected Chairman of the Officers Club against the royalist candidate in January 1952, it became clear that palace was losing the loyalty of the corps.

Institutional grievances of this magnitude certainly explain why the coup was endorsed (or at least allowed) by the armed forces as a whole. Regardless of the social, political, or ideological motives of the ringleaders, the coup succeeded because it was perceived by scores of officers and soldiers as strictly for the benefit of their esteemed institution. In their view, the coup was not a matter of disrupting military discipline, but rather of reestablishing it. Their aim was to liberate Egypt from foreign occupation and install a reformed civilian regime that would enhance military

power and restore its credibility. They were neither set on assuming political power, nor on administering a transformative socioeconomic modernization program, and the quick turnover of military governments in Iraq (between 1936 and 1941) and Syria (between 1949 and 1951) alerted them to the inherent instability of military rule. Nasser and his close allies in the movement, however, thought otherwise. Captivated by the Turkish experience in the 1920s and 1930s under Mostafa Kemal Atatürk, they saw the coup as only a first step in the long-term and far-reaching 'revolution from above' that would build a strong centralized state with a modern industrial economy. Herein lies the root of the struggle that would consume the country for the next six decades.

Chapter Five

THE DARK SIDE OF MILITARISM: THE MARCH 1954 CRISIS

In a single stroke, on the night of July 23, 1952, eighty middle ranking officers seized the leadership of the armed forces, arrested all generals (except for the two who endorsed the coup), and cashiered all brigadiers and lieutenant colonels that did not participate. The king facilitated their job in two ways: despite the fact that military discontent pointed toward an impending coup, he left the capital for the summer palace in Alexandria as usual; and once he received news about irregular army movements, he ordered an emergency meeting of the high command at the army headquarters in Cairo, making it easier for the Free Officers to capture the entire top brass and therefore paralyze the military hierarchy. Without his army, King Farouk was powerless. He pleaded for U.S. support, considering that his relations with the British have been strained after their 1942 showdown. But the Americans had decided it was high time for a modernizing coup in Egypt to put an end to political chaos and economic stagnation lest the country drifts to communism (the same policy they adopted in Latin America). Besides, the Free Officers had shared their intentions with the U.S. embassy shortly before the coup and pledged to protect American interests. The United States in turn weighed in on the British not to intervene on behalf of a king they already disliked. The king was forced to abdicate and, on August 2, 1952, departed Egypt for the last time.

The ringleaders then organized themselves in a fourteen-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) to assume executive authority until a new government is elected. These were roughly the same members of the Executive Committee of the Free Officers Movement. Demand for secrecy had forced the movement to assume a cellular shape with no hierarchy, branches, or committees. A freshly recruited Free Officer (usually through Nasser's recommendation, and always with his approval) would only know those in his own cell and a couple of names on the Executive

Committee. Only Nasser had the full list of members. To ensure the military's loyalty, both the Executive Committee and the RCC, which replaced it right after the coup, included all service branches: four from infantry; three from cavalry (armored corps); three from the air force; two representatives from artillery; and one from the signal corps (military communications) and the border guards. In fact, real power lay with the infantry. On the council, the three men who would later control Egypt's political, military, and security institutions belonged to this service. Future president Gamal Abd al-Nasser was the effective leader of the Free Officers; Abd al-Hakim Amer, soon-to-be General Commander of the Armed Forces, was his kind-hearted and overgenerous 'soul mate' since the day he joined the army; and Zakaria Muhi al-Din, the architect of Egypt's new security apparatus, was the cousin of Nasser's intellectual companion Khaled Muhi al-Din (who represented cavalry on the RCC), but was distinguished from both by his solid, practical, and cool-minded temperament, as well as by his piercing glance and long silences. It was the meticulous and security-oriented Zakaria (referred to usually by his first name to separate him from his cousin and because it rhymed with Beria, Stalin's security henchman) who was in charge of planning the coup and leading the units that surrounded the king in Alexandria, and it was second-tier Free Officer Captain Salah Nasr of the 13th Infantry Battalion (later to become Egypt's intelligence czar) who played a key role in protecting the new regime during its first days in power. Infantryman Youssef Sediq, who did belong to this troika, was pressured to resign and leave the country in March 1953. RCC members who did not have troops on the ground to fall back on, such as Anwar al-Sadat of the signal corps and the two air force representatives, gave a carte blanche to Nasser, who had recruited them to the movement. In effect, therefore, Nasser always had the majority of RCC vote in his pocket, and was only challenged by the figurehead he had handpicked, Major General Muhammad Naguib of the border guards, and the free-spirited and increasingly left-leaning Khaled.

Once the RCC was established, Nasser directed his infantry aide Salah Nasr to prepare two lists: a list of independent thinking officers that might compromise the security of the emerging regime, and another of those who belonged to the Free Officers movement and might therefore harbor political ambitions. According to Nasr's memoirs, out of the 3,500 officers on the first list, 800 were asked to retire, 2,300 were reassigned to administrative duties within the army, and the rest were appointed to civilian positions. The 329 officers on the second list were placed under strict surveillance before almost all of them were let go in a couple of years. Curiously, another 71 officers were killed in 'random accidents' between March and December 1953. In order to preserve the loyalty of the purged officers they were told that their role as 'leadership representatives' to civilian posts was necessary to revolutionize the bureaucracy (Nasr 1999: 156, 186). These sugarcoated purges killed two birds with one stone: it destroyed the Free Officers power base in the army, while creating a loyal network of commissars within the state bureaucracy. The RCC then created the Republican Guard in June 1953, which in the words of its first chief Abd al-Muhsen Abu al-Nur, was meant to defend the new regime against the rest of the military, and in October of the same year, a National Guard to train citizens loyal to the revolution (Abu al-Nur 2001: 34). Finally, Law 505 of 1955 introduced mandatory conscription and expanded the promotion of NCOs to officers, since big armies are more difficult to enlist in a coup. The now secure military was used to neutralize political threats from monarchists, landlords, as well as intransigent workers and peasants. Firmly in control, the coup makers began to debate the future.

As in most cases, the success of the coup caused an immediate split within the ranks between those who wanted to return to the barracks and resume their professional duty, and those who aspired to create a military regime to revolutionize society from above. The division ran from the RCC downwards. Those in favor of withdrawing found support in Naguib, the council's nominal leader, and Khaled Muhi al-Din, the most intellectually mature member of the group, in

addition to the critical mass within artillery and cavalry, the army's democratic-leaning and professional-minded elite services. Advocates of revolution from above organized around Nasser, the RCC's effective leader, and those second-tier Free Officers (lieutenants and captains who had no significant role before the coup) whose loyalty he shrewdly cultivated in his own service (the infantry) and in small branches, such as the air force, and the still miniscule military police and intelligence. The confrontation between the two camps thrust the country onto a turbulent path between 1952 and 1954, and its outcome shaped of the new regime – an outcome determined largely by their very different strategies.

Nasser's Power Bloc

The position of officers adamant to stay in power was well articulated in a speech that Nasser delivered to weavers in Shubra al-Khima factory, on December 20, 1953, in which he warned that the military "did not carry out this revolution to govern or lead…one of our first goals was to restore genuine representative life…but we were appalled by the bargains, demands, maneuvers, and deceit…we decided that this country should not be ruled by a class of political mercenaries" (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 53-54). Or as he later wrote in his *Philosophy of the Revolution* that while the Free Officers had considered themselves the vanguard of the nation, and that they only needed to take the first step to encourage the masses to follow. Instead, those who flocked to benefit from the coup were none other than the petty stranglers of the old elite (Abd al-Nasser [1954] 1991: 5-6). It is true that it was Nasser who invited Naguib to join the coup at the last moment because he thought that a popular and highly decorated general would add credibility to a movement led by colonels and majors in their early thirties, and guarantee the support of many politically unaffiliated officers. But he kept a close eye on the old general from the beginning because he knew that figureheads usually

develop an appetite for command once they get a taste of it. That is why he surrounded Naguib with members of his own entourage. When Naguib became the first president of the new republic, Nasser acted as his *chef de cabinet*, and appointed his good friend Captain Abd al-Muhsen Abu al-Nur head of the Republican Guard, the elite unit charged with protecting the President. Nasser also held (informal) weekly meetings with RCC members to coordinate their stances before convening under Naguib, who chaired the council (Nasr 1999: 226). These containment tactics, however, represented a modest part of Nasser's overall plan to consolidate power. His grand strategy stood on three pillars: building an entrenched security force; replacing the existing power centers with a new political apparatus; and garnering geopolitical support.

(i) The Security Community

In most authoritarian regimes, the multiplication of offices is believed to provide an extra security measure. It keeps the central decision maker more informed than any single actor, and allows him to divide-and-conquer when necessary. Instinctively paranoid, Nasser adopted this doctrine faithfully. He assigned similar tasks to civilian and military security organs, and created within each sector several competing bodies. What emerged was a hydra-headed security community, which was quite successful in terms of domestic repression.

Nasser's first official post after the coup was that of Interior Minister. There he found an adequate infrastructure to build on. For seven decades, the British had been improving on the secret police apparatus they found in Egypt in 1882. They created the Ministry of Interior in March 1895, followed by the Special Section in 1911 for domestic surveillance. They also sent officers for training in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg (Khalili and Schwedler 2010: 13). Although the Free Officers promised to abolish the notorious secret police, it soon became clear that Nasser intended to expand

the agency and bend it to his purposes. Already in the 1940s, political detention had become a standard practice against dissidents, especially after political crimes were redefined in a 1937 stature to include any expression of contempt of government. But the wide use of detention was not only a result of increased British intolerance in the years leading up to the Second World War, but also a product of the enhanced state capacity for coercion. Prisons, for example, were expanded in the late 1930s to include detention camps built either in the desert (such as the Huckstepp, al-Tur, and al-Wahat), or on the outskirts of cities (such as Tura, Abu-Za'bal, and al-Qanater). During the war years, these camps held a total of 4000 political detainees, and by the early 1950s, the number swelled to 25,000, and it is estimated that during Nasser's tenure, some 100,000 citizens passed through them (Gorman 2010: 158-69). Another example of enhanced state capacity was surveillance. Nasser inherited the system the British called: the City Eye – a modern version of the *basaseen* (onlookers) structure, which had existed in Egypt for centuries. This was basically an expansive network of informers, or more accurately, common folk reporting any suspicious activities in return for modest rewards; these included beggars, porters, vendors, cab drivers, telephone operators, and scores of other people.

Increased detention and surveillance capabilities notwithstanding, the system was evidently inefficient – or else how did the Free Officers manage to circumvent it. Nasser's initial concern therefore was how to close the gaps. After investigating the system for four months, Nasser passed his ministerial responsibilities in October 1953 to his security wizard, fellow RCC member Zakaria Muhi al-Din. The methodical Zakaria was a man of few words and remarkable deeds,[4] and now he was in charge of restructuring Egypt's entire security apparatus.

[4] Egyptian journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal recounts that during his first meeting with Zakaria, in October 1951, he was struck by the fact that the latter – an infantry officer – was voluntarily submitting counter-intelligence reports to the political leadership (Heikal 2003: 507).

Although police officers took no part in the coup, the Free Officers Movement had directed Zakaria before the coup to cultivate relations with the few who resented the regime. We do not have a list of his police contacts, but we know that relying on a handful of policemen, supplemented by several of his own military lieutenants, Zakaria refashioned the police corps, after purging 400 of its 3,000 officers (Sirrs 2010: 37). Next, the old Special Section, under the supervision of military intelligence officers, was transformed into a new intelligence organ with expanded capabilities and jurisdiction: the General Investigations Department (GID) – renamed in 1971: the State Security Investigations Sector (SSIS). Combining his ministerial position with that of Director of the Military Intelligence Department (MID), Zakaria reoriented this agency as well towards internal political security, i.e. monitoring Egyptian dissidents rather than spying on the armies of other countries as it was supposed to (Abu al-Fadl 2008: 87). He then selected a handful of MID officers to help him create Egypt's first civilian intelligence agency: the General Intelligence Service (GIS) in December 1953, which he headed for a couple of years. Zakaria was also asked to recruit a group of loyal military captains, train them as security agents, and assign them to Nasser's home-run intelligence unit – soon to be known as the President's Bureau of Information (PBI). So in a few short years, Zakaria had built a "veritable pyramid of intelligence and security services…[whose] labyrinthine complexity and venality" became the mainstay of Egypt new political order (Vatikiotis 1978: 164-65).[5]And although he later assumed several non-security posts (including the premiership and vice-presidency), Zakaria maintained his hegemony over the country's sprawling and intrusive security apparatus throughout – an apparatus directed solely to the protection of the regime.

But apart from the ingenious founder, foreign expertise was crucial to the construction of this security community – after all it was foreign powers that had originally designed modern

[5] It is important to note here that although all these agencies dealt with security, they cannot be considered similar. Amy Zegart, who studies the evolution of security agencies, reminds us that: "Reality is not nearly so neat. National security agencies vary. They do not look alike at birth. Nor do they develop along the same path" (1999: 40). This was certainly the case in Egypt, as we will see in the following chapters.

security systems within the colonies. The American embassy provided a million dollar worth of surveillance and anti-riot equipment immediately following the coup. Americans also helped Zakaria reinforce the unobtrusive City Eye system through a whole range of electronic equipment and techniques for installing bugs and hidden cameras in hotel rooms, army mess halls, private residences, and automobiles (Copeland 1970: 82). Even in terms of how to prepare timely intelligence estimates, Egypt turned to an American: Charles Cremeans, future head of CIA's Office of National Intelligence Estimates. But Nasser expected more. In October 1952, he requested CIA assistance in overhauling the entire security system, and Kermit Roosevelt, director of CIA operations in the Middle East, was more than willing. A few months later, a troika of intelligence operatives set camp in Cairo; James Eichelberger, Miles Copeland, and Frank Kearn had all served in the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps, and later witnessed the transformation of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) into the CIA. In other words, they combined civilian and military intelligence expertise. Their designated contact in Egypt was another Nasser loyalist, Captain Hassan al-Tuhami, who administered an intensive training program that involved inviting several CIA experts for short visits, as well as sending Egyptian operatives for instruction abroad (Sirrs 2010: 32-34). Captain Abd al-Fattah Abu al-Fadl, who was a vital part of that program, recalls how former German intelligence officers provided another important source of expertise; and it was the CIA that initiated this Nazi-connection, putting Nasser in contact with prominent SS and Gestapo officers in hiding.[6] Later, in April 1958, Egypt signed a training and intelligence sharing agreement with the KGB, which provided the latest surveillance technologies and interrogation techniques. A similar agreement was signed a decade later with the Eastern German intelligence, Stasi (Nasr 1999: 158).

[6] These included Lieutenant General Wilhelm Farmbacher of the German Wermacht; two SS operatives, Otto Skorzeny (SS Mussolini contact), and Oskar Direwanger (of the SS Warsaw branch); and four Gestapo officers, Leopold Gleim (head of the Gestapo in Warsaw), Franz Buensch, Joachim Deumling, and Alois Anton Brunner (Copeland 1970: 87; Sirrs 2010: 33).

If Zakaria did Nasser's bidding in the domestic security sector, he expected the same of his delegate in the army: Abd al-Hakim Amer. When the republic was declared on June 18, 1953, Nasser insisted that Naguib's first presidential decree would be to promote Amer from major to major general, and appoint him Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. This meteoric rise in ranks (perhaps the most meteoric in history) placed Amer officially on the top of the military chain of command. This is because Nasser did not believe in the communist measure (adopted in Russia and China) of attaching political commissars to army units to report on officers; he preferred direct control from above. Amer was, of course, a perfect candidate. He was not only Nasser's most intimate friend since college and his right-hand man in the Free Officers Movement, but he was also the only RCC member that Naguib trusted, since he served as his chief of staff during the 1948 war in Palestine, and because his amiable, cheerful, and appeasing personality made him seem harmless. The President's press secretary, Riyad Samy, says Naguib would not have surrendered control of the army to anyone else. (Samy 2004: 21).

Amer's main task was to coup-proof the military. This he accomplished through an office that Nasser's had created while serving as Naguib's *chef de cabinet*, the conspicuously called Office of the Commander-in-Chief for Political Guidance (OCC), an office nominally responsible for issuing political directives to the corps, while in reality charged with monitoring suspicious activities. To staff the office, Amer turned to 'Zakaria's boys', the second-tier Free Officers selected and trained by Zakaria to serve as the country's new security stratum. Salah Nasr served as the first OCC head in June 1953, followed by Abbas Radwan in 1956, and Shams Badran from 1958 until the office was abolished in 1967. OCC functioned as a political watchdog, ferreting troublemaking officers and ensuring the loyalty of the rest through dispensing patronage. It accomplished this through three main mechanisms: severing relations between RCC members (except for Nasser) and the rest of the military under the pretext of allowing Amer to perform his duties without outside interference;

isolating the officer corps from all political and ideological forces; and most importantly, creating a secret network of politically ambitious officers, who did not participate in the coup itself, but were eager to prove their worth by helping secure the revolution. Nasser, the first OCC chief, began to organize this cell-based network immediately after the coup. By 1967, its members exceeded 65,000 officers (McDermott 1988: 16). It is through this embedded organization that the OCC monitored political views and activities within the army, administered political indoctrination, and decided on promotions and assignments. This new security community would come to play a significant role in Egypt's political fortunes; its *dramatis personae* would tip the balance in Nasser's favor in 1954; create the *mukhabarat* (intelligence) state of the 1960s; constitute the formidable 'centers of power' between 1967 and 1971; and ultimately pave the ground for Egypt's ostentatious police state by the end of 1970s.

(ii) The Political Apparatus

While Naguib rested confidently on his popularity on 'the street', Nasser was busy building concrete political organizations to mobilize popular support. This was certainly a more effective strategy. As an avid reader of Machiavelli, Nasser certainly knew that "People are by nature inconstant. It is easy to persuade them of something, but it is difficult to stop them from changing their minds. So you have to be prepared for the moment when they no longer believe. Then you have to force them to believe" (Machiavelli [1532] 1995: 20). To start with, he created a new Ministry for National Guidance for censorship and propaganda in November 1952. The minister, RCC member Salah Salem, did his best to keep Naguib away from the limelight, and later to tarnish his reputation and boost Nasser's image instead. Here too Nasser relied on foreign expertise, notably Office of Strategic Services (OSS) operative Paul Linebarger, America's leading black propagandist; Leopold

von Mildenstein, Joseph Goebbels's Middle East information director; and SS black propaganda expert Johannes von Leers (Sirrs 2010: 45).

To further cultivate his popular base, Nasser dissolved all existing political parties (via Law 179 of 1953), and replaced them with the loosely organized mass-based Liberation Rally in January 1953, which was basically a platform for arranging pro-regime rallies and public lectures. It had no clear hierarchy, and its work depended on 1,200 district offices open for all those willing to offer their support to the new regime. These were mostly corrupt officers and political opportunist eager to get on the bandwagon, as well as rural notables and capitalists, willing to send their peasants and workers to demonstrate under Nasser's banner, to protect their financial interests in these uncertain times. Nasser appointed himself secretary-general of this new organization, though he delegated its everyday management to two junior associates, majors Ibrahim al-Tahawi and Ahmed Te'ima, whose job was primarily to monitor the public mood and political trends, and foil mobilization efforts by other political forces (particularly Islamists and communists) through organizing counter-rallies. In addition, as recounted by Suleiman Hafez, who served briefly as interior minister in 1953, the two majors submitted regular reports to the ministry against suspect activists (Hafez 2010: 108-11).

(iii) Geopolitical Support

The final component of Nasser's strategy was to secure geopolitical support for his faction. At this point, the only candidate was the United States. America's Middle East policy in the 1950s was to encourage national independence movements to curtail British and French hegemony, and then draw the newly independent nations to its orbit through strategic alliances and economic aid. After two world wars convinced the Americans to cast aside their isolationism and engage with the 'old

world' across the Atlantic, they figured that although they lacked the experience of Europeans in dealing with Africa and Asia, their comparative advantage lay in the fact that they had never acted as an imperialist power (outside Latin America and the Pacific). The key to promoting U.S. influence therefore was to lend a helping hand to those eager to liberate themselves from European imperialism, and to pose as a true partner in helping develop the postcolonial world. Toward the end of 1951, Secretary of State Dean Acheson formed a special committee on the Arab world under the chairmanship of Kermit Roosevelt, from the newly established CIA. The committee suggested the need for "an Arab leader who would have more power in his hands than any other Arab leader ever had before, 'power to make an unpopular decision'…one who deeply desires to have power, and who desires to have it primarily for the mere sake of power" (Copeland 1970: 48-49). This recommendation was made more explicit in a British Foreign Office minute on December 3, 1951, which described the joint American-British view as follows: "the only sort of Government with which we can hope to get an accommodation is a frankly authoritarian government…both ruthless and efficient… We need another Mustafa Kemal [the Turkish officer who led a modernizing coup in 1921, and assumed the title Atatürk, the father of the Turks], to secularize and Westernize his country… Even though Egyptians are not Turks, and men like Mustafa Kemal cannot be ordered *à la carte*!" (Turner 2006: 96).

In February 1952, Kermit Roosevelt traveled to Cairo to find an Egyptian Atatürk. He had been to Egypt twice before: first in 1944 to help establish the Cairo branch of the OSS (CIA's predecessor), and then in 1950 to instruct the Egyptian Interior Ministry on how to counter communism. During both visits, he developed a list of contacts in the military, and set up a CIA-run military training program for young Egyptian officers. Curiously, six among the fifty officers that received American intelligence and military training played a crucial role in the 1952 coup, and two actually became members of the RCC. Air force officer Ali Sabri, the first official liaison between

the RCC and the U.S., admitted – without much elaboration – that "the attendance of many Egyptian officers at US service schools during the past two years had a very definite influence on the coup d'état in Egypt" (Turner 2006: 90). Apparently, Roosevelt's mission was to set the stage for a peaceful replacement of Egypt's archaic and corrupt monarchy before the increasing radicalization of Egyptian workers and peasants drove the country into the arms of communism. Only the military, thought Roosevelt, could modernize the state along lines agreeable to the West without causing too much turmoil. Through ambassador Jefferson Caffery's good offices, the CIA representative held three meetings in March 1952 with members of the Free Officers, including Nasser (Copeland 1970: 51-53). According to one participant in those early meetings (Hussein Hammudah), discussions focused on how the Americans can convince their Anglo-Saxon partners not to resist the coup, to prevent a repeat of 1882 when the British aborted a similar move by the army, in return for guarantees from the Free Officers to implement the needed reforms to modernize the Egyptian economy and keep the communists in check (Hammudah 1985: 88-89). Three nights before the Free Officers seized power, on July 19, 1952, Nasser asked Sabri to inform the U.S. assistant military attaché (David Evans) that the coup was now impending, and to stress once more that it would not harm American interests. The U.S. carried out its part of the deal, refusing to extend support to a pleading king, and advising him instead to submit to the officers' demands. President F. D. Roosevelt immediately welcomed the coup, warned the British not to intervene, and directed his ambassador in Cairo – who infamously referred to the Free Officers as 'my boys' – to support the new rulers (Aburish 2004: 43).

The day following the coup, Nasser relayed an even more important message to the Americans, this time asking for CIA help in reorganizing Egypt's internal security apparatus. To add a sense of urgency to his demand, Nasser warned of communist-led disturbances throughout the country. The message resonated with a hastily prepared report by the Agency on 'The Expected

Consequences of a Reoccupation of Cairo and Alexandria by British Forces', which concluded that violent confrontations would pave the road to a communist takeover. This is why, according to Cairo CIA station chief, Colonel William Lakeland, the agency responded favorably. Kermit Roosevelt met Nasser's delegates shortly after the coup to draw the general guidelines for future cooperation. This was followed by a series of private meetings between CIA representatives James Eichelberger and Miles Copeland with Nasser and his associates at Lakeland's apartment (Copeland 1970: 63).

Parallel to this security track, other meetings were held between Nasser and the Americans to discuss political and socioeconomic reform. RCC member Khaled Muhi al-Din, who attended a couple of those meetings at the house of Abd al-Moun'em Amin (another officer Nasser charged with contacting the U.S.), noted that the Americans adamantly requested the quick adoption of land reform (Muhi al-Din 1992: 188). Back in March 1952, a U.S. advisory committee, convinced that the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions relied mainly on deprived peasants, suggested that land redistribution was an indispensable buffer to communism. This was reinforced, in February 1952, by a State Department brochure entitled *Land Reform, A World Challenge*, calling for swift action in that direction to channel agrarian capital towards rapid industrialization. On August 20, 1952, Washington sent a telegram to its ambassador in Cairo stating that: "The Government of the United States will give encouragement and assistance to land reform…to lessen the causes of agrarian unrest and political instability," and then went on to detail what this law should include (telegram photocopied in Ahmed 2007: 131). Barely three weeks later, on September 9, the RCC issued a hastily prepared agricultural reform law.

In return, Nasser sought the U.S. President's support to convince the British to evacuate the country. Dwight Eisenhower first sent Steve Meade from the U.S. military to evaluate the power balance within the RCC. Meade reported back in May 1953 that Nasser held a tight grip over the

council and that the new regime is fairly stable. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the first high-ranking official to visit the new republic, seconded the report the following month (Copeland 1970: 64-65). Afterwards, the U.S. exerted so much pressure on the British to negotiate their way out of Egypt that Churchill protested in a lengthy letter to Eisenhower, on June 12, 1953, that America's bias to Nasser "in spite of the numerous far-reaching concessions which we made" is surprising and frustrating – concluding dramatically, "we should not think we had been treated fairly by our great Ally" (Turner 2006: 116).

But while the U.S. understood from day one that Naguib was merely a front man and acted accordingly, there were other reasons why the CIA in particular was enthusiastic about supporting Nasser. True to its Cold War conviction that military strongmen are more reliable than erratic civilians, the agency was worried about Naguib's promise to reinstate civilian democratic rule. As early as July 30, 1952, Dean Acheson had noted in a cable to the U.S. ambassador in Cairo that a return to democracy would have unexpected consequences, and that a small group of officers would be easier to handle than a multi-party system (Ahmed 2007: 19-20). Historian and special assistant to President Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger, explains the logic behind this doctrine, citing support for Nasser as one its prominent instances:

> **[Pre-mature civilianization of coup-installed regimes] would only alienate those who held the real power – the military – and open the door to incompetent liberals who would bring about inflation, disinvestment, capital flight, and social indiscipline and would finally be shoved aside by the communists…the process of development was so inherently disruptive that the first requirement had to be the maintenance of order. The basic issue is not whether the government is dictatorial or is representative and constitutional. The issue is whether the government, whatever its character, can hold the society together…civilian government tended to be unstable and soft; military governments were comparably stable and could provide the security necessary for economic growth** (Schlesinger 1965: 186-87).

But what sealed the deal for the Americans was Nasser's demonstration that Naguib was soft on communism. Nasser had brandished his anti-communist credentials in clamping down on the Kafr

al-Dawar strike. Kafr al-Dawar was a small textile industrial city on the outskirts of Alexandria. Labor activist Helmi Yassin, who helped organize the strike, explains that workers heard the revolutionary communiqués promising to restore the people's rights, and so decided the time was perfect to press forward their right to control the organization of production instead of the anti-revolutionary factory owners. None of them suspected that on the morning of August 13, 1952, Nasser would dispatch 500 troops to shoot them, killing a handful of workers, and executing two others after a summary trial five days later. For the workers, the military's shocking behavior was totally unjustified, especially that they were demonstrating in support of the revolution (interviewed in Botman 1988: 125-30). In his meetings with CIA officials, Nasser exposed how Naguib was reluctant to sign the execution orders of the agitators; that he openly criticized the land reform law; that he nominated a constitutional lawyer with leftist sympathies (Abd al-Razeq al-Sanhouri) to the premiership. Naguib tried to explain to the Americans that executing workers would fuel further radicalism; that progressive taxation on agricultural land was better for the economy than its random parceling; and that Sanhouri was not a communist. But his justifications fell on deaf ears. The communication channels that Nasser established with the Americans before and after the coup secured their trust and gave him more access to Washington (Nasr 1999: 198-204). At the end, not only the U.S., but the capitalist West in general, leaned towards the strong leader they all believed would be tough on communism: Nasser.

Naguib's Not-So-Powerful Bloc

While Nasser set himself the task of creating a new order, Naguib continued to invest in the old; while the former was pushing forward the latter insisted on swimming against the current. Naguib still believed in the binding power of the law, the legitimacy of the old political groups, the need for

democracy, and the importance of popularity in general. Instead of the security coterie Nasser surrounded himself with, Naguib attracted constitutional lawyers who carried great weight in the old regime, notably, Abd al-Razeq al-Sanhouri, head of the State Council (Egypt's highest administrative court), who was charged with issuing a new constitution following the coup, and Suleiman Hafez, another legal heavyweight, who had drafted the monarch's abdication letter. But while Egypt's first president busied himself with the process of drafting a new constitution, his rival promoted the view that revolutionary legitimacy trumps any constitution. Perhaps more importantly, Naguib's fatal mistake of appointing lawyer Suleiman Hafez as Interior Minister in September 1952 to signal his respect for the law, made it easy for Nasser to take over the ministry in June 1953 with the reasonable argument that the country needed a firmer grip than that of a constitutional lawyer at this critical juncture.

Naguib also tried to make himself popular with the old political elites, portraying himself in speeches and personal interviews as pro-democracy and free enterprise, and distancing himself from RCC decrees against political parties and large landowners (Aburish 2004: 49-51). The problem was, of course, that Egypt's sociopolitical structure was designed to weaken the hand of those elites vis-à-vis the state. Muhammad Ali, the founder of the modern Egyptian state in the first half of the nineteenth-century – following the example of Hohenzollern Prussia, Tsarist Russia, and Japan's soon-to-come Meji Restoration – had dismantled the Mamluks' military aristocracy, established in the thirteenth-century, and tied the landed class to his expansive state. So instead of parceling sovereignty over the land and dividing it among loyal warlords, each autonomously managing his own plot, governing the population that lived on it, collecting taxes, and raising militias at time of war, Muhammad Ali declared himself the sole proprietor of land and treated Egyptian landlords as his subjects. He also established a central tax-collecting authority, a modern judicial system, and a standing army with a professional officer corps and nationally-recruited conscripts. Egypt's mostly

absentee landlords remained in this position ever since; they had no independent source of power to confront whoever controlled the state – as Nasser diligently strove to.

Another mistake: Naguib rested too confidently on the fact that he had become an immediate sensation following the coup, and tried to preserve his folk hero image by spending most of the period between 1952 and 1954 traveling around the country in a train (Truman style), galvanizing the masses through inspirational speeches. He was enormously successful in that field: "People lost control when they saw him, applauding, chanting, and throwing themselves on his car" (Younan 2008: 25). Considering popularity his main asset, the President wasted the efforts of his closest military associates on a trivial popularity-boosting campaign instead of planting them in the emerging security sector: Riyad Samy was hired as press secretary, and Muhammad Riyad was put in charge of protocol. He also flirted with the leaders of the Muslim Brothers, beginning from 1954, with the hope that garnering the support of the most popular force on the street would eventually help him send the officers back to the barracks and remain President under a liberal constitution (Abu al-Nur 2001: 41-43). What the President failed to understand, in contrast to his sober rival, was that popularity was a mercurial asset that can evaporate as easily as it can be gained.

One of Naguib's worst flaws, however, related to how he went about securing foreign support. As opposed to Nasser's direct and aggressive campaign to build a security alliance with the U.S., Naguib – too worried about tarnishing his reputation – preferred a more roundabout approach. Instead of relying on loyal officers, he encouraged the Muslim Brothers to endorse him in their discussions with the British and the Americans. Between May 1953 and January 1954, Muslim Brothers' representatives, Munir Delah and Saleh Abu-Raqiq, conducted two rounds of talks with Mr. Evans and Mr. Creswell of the British Embassy, in which they mentioned that Naguib would be a better guardian of democracy (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 130-34). Those talks overlapped with another seven rounds with the Americans, between May and August 1953, in which the General Guide Hassan al-

Hudaybi himself participated. In one meeting, on June 4, Brotherhood envoy Mahmoud Makhlouf tried to promote the President by claiming that: "Naguib would be willing to sign a secret understanding with the US. The Moslem Brotherhood would support such a move. [But] Opposition might be encountered from Abdel Nasser." On their July 17 meeting, the General Guide relayed that he and Naguib supported the "withdrawal of the military from the government and their replacement by a coalition of 'good men' from the various political parties" (memoranda photocopied in Allam 1996: 548, 556).

There were several problems with this approach. For one thing, Western powers, as we have seen, were not particularity enthusiastic about democracy. The fact that Naguib was negotiating through an Islamist movement was an additional turn-off. But the biggest problem was that the President was quite reserved with his own representatives. Naguib recounted several unsolved difficulties during his secret talks with the Muslim Brothers between December 1953 and March 1954 through his secretaries Samy and Riyad and Brotherhood dignitaries Hassan Ashmawi and Munir Delah. While he wanted to restablish democracy, they wanted a package deal in which Naguib would remain president, provided he appointed a pro-Brotherhood Chief-of-Staff, Major General Rashad Mehanna from artillery. Naguib confessed to his press secretary Samy that he was non-committal because he never imagined the Brothers would turn against him; he neglected the fact that a return to democracy would mostly benefit the liberal al-Wafd party not Islamists (Samy 2004: 51).

Naguib's main shortcoming though was that he developed no organization within the army, let alone the new security regime being assembled under his nose. It is true that his pro-democratic stance had the support of the bulk of the officer corps, but he did not try to coordinate their action, preferring to pass down orders through official channels rather than create a network of loyal officers. Even when artillery and cavalry officers begged him in August 1952 to do just that, he turned them down, fearing that fractures within the military would push the country to the brink of

civil war. Naguib's viewpoint, as he later confided to the head of the Republican Guard Abd al-Muhsin Abu al-Nur, was that he had no need to weave conspiracies; he was the highest-ranking officer in the realm, let alone the President of the republic, and chair of the RCC; he thus expected officers to obey him unconditionally (Abu al-Nur 2001: 41-43). Despite Samy's repeated pleas that his boss build a political power base within the corps, a Naguib dazzled with the aura of authority insisted that it was beneath him as a major general to reach out to junior officers; he also held that it would serve him better to professionalize rather than further politicize the corps (Samy 2004: 33-5). He also underestimated his rival's influence among officers, refusing to acknowledge that a colonel with an "undistinguished public presence" – as he referred to Nasser in his memoirs – can threaten him (Naguib 1984: 211). In his heart, Naguib counted on the support of the people, rather than the military. But even that was difficult to preserve despite the energy he devoted towards building his popular charisma, simply because Egyptians were tired of the old system and wanted a strong leader to reform the country. As Naguib himself later confessed, the people wanted "an Egyptian Ataturk," a role he was unwilling to play (Naguib 1984: 181). Nasser, on the other hand, did not waver.

Between Two Mutinies

One is tempted after comparing Nasser and Naguib's power strategies to conclude that the latter was clearly outmaneuvered from the start, that the result of their power struggle was decided before it had even begun. Not only was Nasser in control of the new security organs and the country's only mass party, but he also succeeded at winning the favor of a major world power, the United States. Nasser's problem, however, was time: he had scarcely enough of it to bring the military in line and subdue the old political forces. Thus, mutiny spread among officers, first in artillery (in January 1953) and then in the cavalry service (in March 1954). Army dissidents cared little about Nasser or

Naguib as such; their aim was to establish democratic rule, and they rallied around Naguib because he sympathized with their position. Nasser's victory seemed impossible considering that by virtue of their equipment and firepower artillery and cavalry were the most formidable services in the Egyptian army. Also, the second munity was backed up by vast popular demonstrations orchestrated by the Muslim Brothers, and including scores of liberals and communists. How could the budding security establishment keep such a massive force in check?

(i) The Artillery Mutiny

The first episode in this rapidly unfolding power struggle began with the artillery mutiny. A major bloc within the artillery corps longed for the resumption of parliamentary life, which required withdrawing the military to the barracks and the handing over of power to an elected civilian government. They believed that the coup was only meant to purge political parties of corrupt elements, remove the obstinate king, and force the British to evacuate Egypt. Once these tasks were established, full-fledged democracy should ensue. Also as a privileged service working with advanced equipment, artillery officers (like their counterparts in cavalry, and unlike those of the most rudimentary service, the infantry) were professional-minded and eager to turn their attention back to military duties. The ongoing purges and the undermining of military discipline in the name of political loyalty doubtlessly offended their professional temperament. They also held a grudge against Nasser after discovering that his appointment of admired artillery colonel Rashad Mehanna to the three-member Regency Council, established after the king's exile to run the country until the crown prince reached the proper age, was meant to sidetrack rather than promote him. In June 1953, Egypt became a republic and all the vestiges of monarchism, including the Regency Council, were abolished. To add insult to injury, Mehanna was discharged that October and placed under

house arrest for allegedly conspiring with the Muslim Brothers. Nasr admits that Nasser feared the charismatic Mehanna, the first officer to form secret cells within the army back in the 1940s, and plotted his removal from power (Nasr 1999: 167).

On December 14, 1952, artillery captains Muhsen Abd al-Khaleq and Fathallah Ref'at submitted a petition to Nasser on behalf of their colleagues demanding that the RCC be reconstituted to allow each service equal representation, and that each branch should elect its own representatives to the council. The petitioners added threateningly that they could not accept overthrowing one king only to be ruled by fourteen (alluding to the RCC members). To explore the depth of their dissent, Nasser asked them to sketch a blueprint of the political system they envisaged, advising them to print it at Military Intelligence headquarters for discretion. The artillery officers did not swallow the bait. Instead, these suspicious requests convinced them that Nasser and his collaborators were beyond reform and must be removed at once. Between December 30 and January 7, they held four secret meetings with fifteen other colleagues from artillery, in addition to a handful of cavalry officers, to plan a countercoup. They also met the Muslim Brothers' General Guide twice to assure his organization's support. Their plan was to arrest all RCC members (except Naguib) during one of their weekly meetings using units from the 1st Artillery Brigade, which was stationed a couple of blocks away from RCC headquarters, then seize control of the capital using the 2nd Artillery Division and Artillery School companies, before declaring a short transitional period, under Naguib, to draft a new constitution and prepare for elections.

Samy Sharaf, an artillery lieutenant whose brother was one of the participants, tipped the Military Intelligence Department, and was rewarded by joining the agency. On January 16, Zakaria Muhi al-Din apprehended 35 culprits, tried them summarily, and sentenced twelve of them to prison, including Mehanna, by March 19 (Muhi al-Din 1992: 222). As soon as the ringleaders were detained, 500 artillery officers met at their service headquarters and threatened to use force to free

their colleagues. To deescalate the situation, Zakaria promised to release them after spending a mere three years in prison. In a letter from prison, Captain Abd al-Khaleq maintains that the failure of artillery's countercoup paved the way for dictatorship under Nasser and his 'Beria', referring to Zakaria (Hammad 2010: 714). This might have been true for the moment, but the army still had not lost its resolve; a much bigger munity was in the works.

(ii) The Cavalry Mutiny

After subduing artillery, the stage was set for an even greater challenge to Nasser's plan to stay in power. For one thing, tensions began rising between an increasingly distrustful Naguib and Nasser's faction. After complaining, during an RCC meeting on December 20, that the media was deliberately ignoring his speeches, council members hurled insults at him, accusing him of trying to hijack the revolution. Then on February 23, 1954 RCC members decided to hold their weekly meeting at Nasser's office without inviting the President. When Naguib, who was actually present in the building, objected he was asked him to go home. The aim was to convince him to accept his figurehead role. But the attempt backfired two days later when Naguib raised the stakes and resigned, declaring that his military honor forbade him from presiding over "a state of informants" run by a security coterie trained by CIA and ex-Gestapo operatives (Naguib 1997: 186-87). Naguib confessed to his legal counselor that his resignation aimed at arousing the people and the soldiers, which it eventually did (Hafez 2010: 117). Feeling threatened, the security branch began to roll. Acting on their own initiative, OCC director Nasr, and head of the Republican Guard Abu al-Nur replaced the guard unit stationed outside the President's house with soldiers from Nasr's 13th Infantry Battalion, and detained guard officers loyal to Naguib. With Naguib unarmed, Nasser called his bluff, not only accepting his resignation on February 26, but also placing him under house arrest

after claiming to the press that he was becoming unbearably dictatorial and corrupt (Nasr 1999: 228-32; Abu al-Nur 2001: 58-64).

What Nasser did not expect, however, was that Naguib's resignation would trigger a cavalry mutiny, followed by a vast popular revolt. Like their colleagues in artillery, cavalry officers felt that the RCC was driving the country toward dictatorship rather than reformed democracy, and was going to entangle the military in politics irrevocably. When Naguib announced his intention leave, cavalrymen formed an eight-member delegation, led by captains Ahmed al-Masri and Farouk al-Ansari, to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the RCC on February 26 before the President's resignation was declared, whereby Naguib would head an interim civilian government that would write a new constitution and supervise elections before the end of the year. Nasser and his associates expressed their concern that implementing democracy prematurely would bring back reactionary forces. At which point, the delegation withdrew from the talks and called for a sit-in at the cavalry mess hall, the so-called Green Mess Hall. Three hundred officers heeded the call, and units from the 4th Armored Division, the army's strategic reserve force, began surrounding the military general headquarters (GHQ), which was right across from the Green Mess Hall. The dissidents demanded Naguib's reinstatement, Amer's dismissal, the dissolution of the RCC, and the immediate transition to democracy. Nasser rushed to the hall to convince the officers to call off the strike. He was accompanied by Hassan al-Tuhami and his security men to secretly record the names of the agitators. But his attempt was foiled when the strikers refused to admit any of the operatives to the hall, and asked that Nasser come alone. Following a heated debate during which the mutinous officers accused RCC and security officers of corruption and abuse of power, the encircled Nasser exclaimed: "Who gave you the right to speak for the people," to which one of the cavalrymen responded: "We are the parliament of the people until a parliament is formed." Thoroughly intimidated, especially after hearing tank movements outside the hall, Nasser pledged to fulfill all

their demands, including the dissolution of the RCC, and the creation of a new government under Naguib and cavalry's RCC representative Khaled Muhi al-Din. He then headed back to RCC headquarters, informed the council of his decisions, and dispatched Khaled to Naguib's house in the early hours of February 27 so that the pair could take charge (Muhi al-Din 1992: 270-73). Nasser was so disturbed that he asked his family to evacuate the house immediately. His wife Tahiya remembered how he frantically told her that cavalry units might be on their way to bomb the house (Abd al-Nasser 2011: 80).

It seemed for a moment that it was all over, that the power struggle had ended with Nasser's defeat. But the tide soon turned. "It took only one hour," as Khaled bitterly reported, "for the situation to reverse completely. It was during the sixty minutes that passed between my trip to Naguib's house and back that everything turned upside down" (Muhi al-Din 1992: 277). Scholars who examined this critical juncture usually interpreted what followed as a Nasser-orchestrated maneuver. But a close examination of the memoirs of some of those involved reveals that it was the nascent security group that took the lead, and Nasser simply went along. In fact we know from a future conversation between Nasser and Khaled that the former's thinking at that stage was set on the impractical plan of returning to the army, laying low for a while, and then plotting another coup (Muhi al-Din 1992: 253). It was the security men, who realized that democracy would cut their promising new careers short, who pulled the strings that night and tilted the balance in Nasser's favor. Infantry officer Gamal Hammad, who drafted the Free Officers' first communiqué after coming to power, was present at GHQ as the events unfolded and described how Nasser was a mere spectator during that bold counterattack (Hammad 2010: 886-88). This was also the view of the three officers who were at the receiving end of this security-coordinated strike: Naguib, Khaled, and cavalry mutiny leader Ahmed al-Ansari. Naguib noted how the press was already documenting human rights violations and asking for reprisal. It was only natural for security officers, he said, to

understand that the resumption of democratic life "would mean their end, that they will be held accountable for what they did" (Naguib 1984: 240). Khaled recalled warning Nasser that an intra-military confrontation could escalate into a bloodbath, but the latter responded submissively: "I no longer understand what is going on" (Muhi al-Din 1992: 277-79). Ansari, in a letter from prison to Hammad, blamed himself for taking Nasser's word instead of arresting him and his associates. Nasser's integrity, Ansari continued, was beyond reproach, but cavalrymen underestimated the ferocity of the new security elite who stood to lose from democracy; they were the ones who paved the road to authoritarianism; they were the real conspirators (Hammad 2010: 938-39). This last sentence acquires greater significance in light of Sadat' claim that Nasser had initially defended democracy during the first RCC meeting on July 27, 1952, but it was the power-hungry security coterie he thought would protect the revolution that ended up controlling it (Sadat 1978: 157).

So if it was not Nasser who called the shots, then who did and how? Emphasizing how desperate times call for desperate measures, two of these officers-turned-security men Shams Badran and Abbas Radwan convinced a reluctant Nasser to allow them to offer the imprisoned artillery officers their freedom in return for helping to put down the cavalry uprising. The two then quickly sealed the deal and informed their boss, OCC director Salah Nasr that artillery was at his service. Nasr, who got wind of the impending cavalry mutiny from one of his informers hours before it took place, wasted no time: he advised Nasser to meet with the dissidents at the Green Mess Hall to try to diffuse the situation, meanwhile he sent out agitators to other services to portray cavalry's call for democracy as a ploy aimed at delivering the country to Khaled's communists (Nasr 1999: 236-39). As soon as Khaled left GHQ, Nasr made his move:

> **I ordered my old 13th Infantry Battalion to surround cavalry headquarters, and the freshly released artillery officers to block tank outlets. I then asked [Ali] Sabri [the air force captain who joined the new security elite] to send jets roaring at low altitudes over the besieged officers for intimidation. Meanwhile, I dispatched Tuhami and five intelligence officers to detain Naguib at artillery headquarters. When Amer discovered I**

> **had ordered troop movements without his approval, he called me into his office, grabbed my shirt, and screamed hysterically, with his gun pointed at me: 'I will kill you! I will not allow the country to descend to chaos! I am the Commander-in-Chief not you!' But as soon as I assured him that everything was under control, and that the revolution was now safe, he calmed down. At this point, Khaled dashed into the office, asking who ordered the siege against cavalry. I asked him to warn his colleagues that if they did not disperse they will be bombed to the last man. Finally, I ordered Military Police to storm in and detain the leaders of the mutiny. By the end of the day, the situation was resolved. I ordered Radwan, my assistant, to keep an eye out and went home to get some sleep** (Nasr 1999: 240-43).

To everyone's surprise, however, the pendulum swung back again in the other direction. Few people were aware of the overnight confrontation that was taking place around cavalry headquarters, but what everyone woke up to on the morning of February 27 was a communiqué by the Minister of National Guidance RCC member Salah Salem declaring Naguib's removal. The minister claimed that the former President was never part of the Free Officers Movement, but was placed in charge out of respect for his age, and that lately, driven by a clear inferiority complex, he demanded dictatorial powers. Immediately, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Cairo chanting: 'To prison with Nasser! No revolution without Naguib!' The size of the uprising was so overwhelming that even Nasser's security associates admitted that repressing it might result in a bloodbath. Salah Salem rushed back to GHQ screaming that the mob almost turned his car upside down and that they must be appeased before they set the country on fire. The Muslim Brothers, Naguib's allies, were the main force behind the demonstrations, as Brotherhood member and one of the junior organizers of the uprising Mahmoud Game' confessed (Game' 2004: 51). A cornered Nasser was forced to reinstate Naguib to the presidency, as well as the chairmanship of the RCC. But the situation was not exactly back to square one: empowered by the people's revolt, cavalry called for another meeting on March 4, 1954, insisting that the military withdraws from politics. Naguib's triumphant return to office on the crest of popular support and with the backing of the army's strongest service provided him with a golden opportunity to strike against his rivals. Yet he

preferred reconciliation, and to demonstrate his goodwill, he appointed Nasser as prime minister. This proved to be his undoing.

The New Regime Consolidates Power

Nasser's spies immediately set to work. In three days, the security organs rounded up thousands of those who participated in the uprising. Before the week was over, the RCC carried out its greatest bluff in the form of the March 5 Decrees, which called for the election of a Constitutive Assembly in three months to draft a new democratic constitution, and lifted the ban on political activity and censorship of the press. Naturally, the RCC's sudden change of heart aroused Naguib's suspicions, but he had no choice but to go along, otherwise the council would have accused him of opposing democracy. By way of securing himself against a possible plot though he demanded on March 8 the right to appoint senior officers down to brigade commanders (to undercut Amer); the right to veto cabinet decisions (to keep Nasser in check); and a popular referendum on his presidency (to legitimize his post). When the RCC accepted without discussion, Naguib became even more disconcerted. But again he did nothing, giving Nasser the benefit of the doubt and convincing himself that maybe the latter believed his Liberation Rally could be quickly reorganized into a political party capable of winning the coming elections (Naguib 1984: 247-50). Soon, however, the subsequent March 25 Decrees made it clear that a plot was simmering. The new decrees revoked all restrictions on old regime parties, and prohibited Free Officers from partaking in elections. Formally, the decrees spelled the end of the revolution. In reality though they were a veiled call to action by all those who stood to lose by the restoration of the old order: officers who participated in the coup and feared punishment; peasants who benefited from land redistribution; workers who preferred dictatorship to the domination of liberal capitalist parties; the petty bourgeois that had

barely begun to enjoy the breakdown of the rigid social hierarchy; and the Muslim Brothers who feared the return of the powerful al-Wafd Party. Again, the most vulnerable stratum was the security elite, for as soon as censorship was lifted, the press launched a concerted campaign against their abuse of power and demanded their trial. According to one artillery officer, these decisions were widely understood within the corps as an invitation to carry out another coup (Hammad 2010: 1028). Pro-democracy officers and popular forces felt outmaneuvered: their goal was to move forward not backwards; they aspired for a new and reformed democracy, but the March decrees promised the return of the old corrupt one. Forced to choose, they found themselves unwittingly coalescing against the return to democracy.

We know from Nasr's memoirs that he was the mastermind behind the March decrees. His aim was to provoke "a revolution against the [pro-democracy] revolution" (Nasr 1999: 262). To neutralize popular opposition, he advised Nasser to cut a deal with the Muslim Brothers. After a short negotiation with the imprisoned General Guide, the organization agreed to abandon Naguib in return for releasing its detainees and the renewing its pre-coup alliance with Nasser. On March 26, Nasser followed the release of 500 Brotherhood detainees with a highly publicized visit to the General Guide to show respect. Four days later, the Guide denounced in a press conference the old party system, and thereafter ignored Naguib's pleas for support, refusing to return his calls or receive his envoys. Naguib bitterly complained that for days every time he called the Guide he found him in the bathroom (Naguib 1984: 252). The movement was clearly led to believe that Nasser was finally ready to give it its due.

In believing so, the Islamist movement was not entirely naïve. Nasser, who had joined several political groups in the 1940s to explore them from within, became a member of the Brotherhood shortly before the 1948 war – out of political expediency rather than ideological affinity. We know that the first five-member cell of the Free Officers, formed in September 1949,

was entirely composed of Brotherhood members (Nasser, Khaled, Abd al-Mon'iem Abd al-Ra'ouf, Kamal al-Din Hussein, Hassan Ibrahim), and that those who joined later were Brotherhood collaborators (notably, Amer, Sadat, and 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi). We also know that Nasser and Khaled went even further and joined Brothers' Special Order – the movement's secret militant arm (Sadat 1978: 38; Muhi al-Din 1992: 43-47). In addition, Nasser's involvement in training Brotherhood militants was well-documented by the famous incident on May 25, 1949, when he was interrogated for seven hours by Prime Minister Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hady, Chief of Staff Osman al-Mahdy, and Director of the Political Police Ahmed Tal'at regarding an army training manual that was found with the Brotherhood militia in Palestine with his name on it. Nasser got off the hook with great difficulty by alleging that he lent it to an officer who was later killed in action and maybe they found it on him. The Brothers adhere to an even more enticing story, which traces their relationship with Nasser back to 1941 when Major Mahmoud Labib was charged with creating an Islamist base in the army. On his deathbed, Labib entrusted the list of members of the Brotherhood's Committee of Free Soldiers in the Army to Nasser. After he passed away in December 1951, Nasser ran the committee for his own purposes (Hammad 2010: 524-27). This was confirmed by Naguib's claim that the Brothers helped Nasser directly in creating the Free Officers (Naguib 1984: 167). This story was also corroborated Free Officer Hussein Hammudah, who participated with Nasser and five others in weekly Brotherhood meetings between 1944 and 1948, before being suspended because of the Palestine War. Nasser then asked Hammudah in November 1950 to form a new organization within the army based on the members of the old Brotherhood organization in the military. Hammudah added that during this period Nasser was solely responsible for the military training of the movement's youth (Hammudah 1985: 33-37, 74). Nasser's wife Tahiya wrote in her memoirs that around those years her husband used to receive guests at the

house and introduce them to firearms (Abd al-Nasser 2011: 24). Clearly, these were not military cadets.

On the eve of the coup, Nasser realized that in light of the movement's vast organizational resources and manpower, it was prudent to enlist their support. During a meeting on July 18, 1952, he asked Brotherhood cadres Hassan Ashmawi, Saleh Abu-Raqiq, and Salah Shadi to order movement sympathizers in the army and police not to resist the coup; to use their militant organ if needed to help the army intercept any British attempt to reoccupy Cairo; and to organize demonstrations in support of the new regime. In fact, the coup did not proceed before the General Guide gave the green light on July 21 (Hammad 2010: 319-22). To confirm the story, young Brotherhood member Mahmoud Game' says he was instructed by his leadership the night before the coup to secure key installations (Game' 2004: 32). The honeymoon between Nasser and the Muslim Brothers continued during the first months following the coup. In 1953, he instructed Interior Minister Suleiman Hafez to exclude the Brotherhood from the ban on political parties, referring to them as "our greatest supporters" (Hafez 2010: 78). But when movement leaders sought to control the government and name its ministers, and when Nasser learned that they supported the artillery mutiny to put him under pressure, the two sides inevitably clashed. But even after the ruthless Nasser disbanded the movement and detained 540 of its members (including the General Guide) on January 14, 1954, he continued to appeal to its popular base by, for example, attending the annual ceremony commemorating the birth of movement's founder on February 12, 1954 (while preventing Naguib from coming along), and declaring on that occasion that: "I am struggling to fulfill the principles he died for and God is my witness" (Ahmed 1993: 201-203). This long and convoluted relationship made the Muslim Brothers assume they could trust Nasser – as it turned out, they were wrong.

Following his fake *rapprochement* with the Brotherhood, Nasser received a visit from Ibrahim al-Tahawi and Ahmed Te'ima, his security lieutenants at the Liberation Rally. They offered to organize a general strike, spearheaded by public transport workers, to bring the country to a standstill, and asked for Nasser's permission to bribe Sawi Ahmed Sawi, head of the transport union. On March 27, one million workers went on strike in support of Nasser. That same day, the Liberation Rally, with the help of Military Police, brought truckloads of peasants to Cairo, chanting anti-democracy slogans: 'No parties! No parliament! No elections!' The strike and accompanying demonstrations lasted for three days (Vatikiotis 1978: 142-45).

Meanwhile, the security-trio Nasr, Badran, and Radwan launched a petition-signing campaign within the armed services, demanding Naguib's resignation and the retraction of the March decrees. Officers were reminded that they might lose their jobs, possibly their lives, should the old regime be reinstated. Those who objected were bullied by their colleagues in order to sign, and those who persisted were either relieved from their duties (34 officers) or detained (26 officers). The content of this military petition was broadcast through public radio, followed by similar petitions from the police and labor unions. This was followed by a comprehensive military and police strike, organized by security agents within both. People were made to understand that the state's coercive organs now stood united behind Nasser, and that pro-Naguib demonstrations would be mercilessly quelled – as exemplified by the brutal clampdown against Shubra al-Khima workers on March 26. On March 29, Nasser announced that – having heard the 'impulse of the street' – the March decrees would be revoked, but to maintain order all strikes and demonstrations were now banned (Hammad 2010: 1069-79, 1167). It was yet another of those Napoleonic moments when a revolution initially espousing democracy gives way to a military dictatorship through mobilizing the support of its peasant and urban poor beneficiaries, then dismissing them.

Naguib tried to fight back. He called the Interior Minister and asked him to crack down on the anti-democracy demonstrations, but Zakaria said he would not do so unless Naguib sent him a signed order authorizing him to shoot unarmed civilians if necessary. Of course, Naguib refused. He then considered deploying his supporters among cavalry, but Khaled warned him that this would lead to a massacre. He appealed to the head of the Cairo Police division, former army general Ahmed Shawky, for help. But although Shawky supported him, he was on the minority within the Interior Ministry. To make things worse, Naguib learned through French sources that the U.S firmly supports Nasser, and that they asked the British to intervene on his behalf if necessary. Naguib was left with no other option than to accept – stoically – that the coup was a mistake, and that if he is not willing to drive the country into a civil war, he must retire; "I was as exhausted as a boxer in the final round; I was not yet knocked out, but had lost too many points throughout this long game" (Naguib 1984: 257-63).

Naguib's associates also realized they were on the losing side; some jumped ship, others were pushed over. His legal advisor (former interior minister Suleiman Hafez) resigned on March 26; his aide-de-camp (Muhammad Riyad) escaped to Saudi Arabia on March 27 – after begging him to come along; his ally at the State Council (Abd al-Razeq al-Sanhouri), who was trying to mend relations between him and the Brotherhood was assaulted at his office on March 29 by Military Police officers, spent a few days at a military hospital, before being discharged from office; and his main cavalry contact (Khaled Muhi al-Din) was exiled to Switzerland. In April alone, 37 pro-Naguib cavalry officers were imprisoned and dozens were purged. This was followed in June by a more systematic purge, which included another 140 officers. Nasser then followed the stick with a carrot, raising military expenditure from 17 to 25 percent, a conciliatory gesture designed to win the rank-and-file. (Vatikiotis 1978: 142-45).

The security then turned to public institutions, detaining 252 pro-democracy civil servants in what proved to be the opening act in a long series of measures designed to 'cleanse' the bureaucracy and the media from 'reactionary elements'. On April 15, RCC stripped anyone who held public office before the coup from all political rights, and later dissolved syndicates and student unions. Police trucks surrounded universities, and professors and students were recruited by the security to spy on their colleagues (Abdallah 1985: 122). After the March 1954 Crisis, the revolutionary government showed its teeth, considering all those not entirely supportive of it to be enemies of the state and agents of foreign powers. Nasser now assumed full control as prime minister, while Naguib though still officially the president rarely left his house, confiding to his journal that: "Egypt has now entered a dark age of injustice and terror" (Naguib 1984: 266). Within a few months Nasser's camp succeed in securing "total control of the armed forces…the neutralization and eventual destruction of other existing loci of political power…the control of education, the media, professional syndicates, trade unions, the rural structures in the countryside, the religious institutions and orders, the administration and bureaucracy, eventually, the whole society" (Vatikiotis 1978: 127).

Nasser then proceeded to tie his loose ends with the Muslim Brothers. After a highly suspicious attempt on his life, on October 26, 1954, when he was giving a speech in Alexandria and nine bullets were shot at him at close range from a lone shooter (Brotherhood member Mahmoud Abd al-Latif) but all missed, the greatest crackdown in the history of the Brotherhood Egypt began, with perhaps 20,000 detained in newly built concentration camps in the desert, and only 1050 officially tried, and of those, six leaders were executed, and the rest, including the General Guide, received long prison sentences. Expectedly, the movement was disbanded, its property confiscated, and the slightest expression of sympathy with it outlawed. On November 14, it was declared that security investigations uncovered that the Brotherhood was doing Naguib's bidding, and the latter was placed under house arrest in a secluded, heavily guarded villa on the outskirts of Cairo, where he

would remain for the next 18 years. Though Naguib insisted he had nothing to do with the unimpressive assassination attempt, he expressed no sympathy for the Brothers who walked into the trap with eyes-wide-open. In his view, their greed –rather than gullibility – blinded them from seeing the obvious fact that Nasser was only using them to consolidate power (Naguib 1984: 253). This same greed and disposition toward backdoor deals can be observed throughout the movement's history, and has made it highly susceptible to manipulation by kings, prime minister, or whoever was in charge; and this same tendency was in play in 2011 in the Brotherhood's relationship with the officers who held power after the popular uprising of January 25.

On June 23, 1956 a referendum approved Nasser's presidency (by 99.9 percent) and the new constitution. The RCC was dissolved, and Nasser became sole ruler. Still, Naguib's story had a postscript. During the Tripartite Attack on Egypt in 1956 (also known as the Suez Crisis), Nasser's intelligence claimed that the British were planning to drop paratroopers outside the capital to free Naguib and reinstall him. We now know, of course, that no such adventure was ever planned, but two incidents forced Nasser to take this report seriously: first, Naguib sent Nasser a letter pleading for his release to allow him to join the battle as an ordinary soldier; second, Naguib's legal advisor Hafez met General Commander of the Armed Forces Amer on November 2 to persuade him that Nasser must choose the interest of the nation over his own and reinstate Naguib to appease the British. Within days of this meeting, Hafez was detained, and Naguib reallocated by the Military Police to a remote desert location on the borders of Sudan for two months (Hafez 2010: 148-51).

The March 1954 crisis was certainly a defining moment, which set the new regime on its authoritarian trajectory. How can we evaluate the triumph of Nasser's faction during this first intra-regime confrontation? Naguib had greater legitimacy as the acknowledged leader of the revolution and the first president of the republic. His class supporters were key players in the old regime: the landed aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie. The declared aim of the coup was to build a proper

democracy after driving out the occupation and purging corrupt political elements and royalists, an ideology adhered to not only by most of the educated classes, but also by a significant portion of the military itself. In short, one could consider Naguib a perfect representative of the dominant classes and ideology of the time. And if Naguib had won, Egypt would have probably followed the Turkish path, with the military overseeing the birth of a limited democracy.

Nasser, on the other hand, faced the uphill struggle that comes with trying to instate a new regime. For the founder of a new regime, as Machiavelli reminded us, "makes enemies of all those who are doing well under the old system, and has only lukewarm support from those who hope to do well under the new one" (Machiavelli [1532] 1995: 19). So how did his faction end up on top? The answer is that Nasser immediately created a security coterie out of his most loyal lieutenants, and by 1954 it had developed far enough to realize that: its interests was not the same as that of the military, and that democracy will bring their new careers to an abrupt end. It was this early division of labor that made all the difference. While the military was still dragging its feet – which is only normal in large and internally differentiated institutions – the sharp-minded security operatives moved quickly and unfalteringly, and as it turned out, quite effectively. The end result was that the military-fostered democracy option was ruled out, at least temporarily.

In Khaled Muhi al-Din's judgment, Nasser's success closed the path to democracy (Muhi al-Din 1992: 215). This is probably an exaggeration. It is true that this early battle was decisive, but it was only one among many more to come. Its outcome planted the seeds of another grander confrontation, this time between the factions that crystallized around Nasser and Amer. Nasser did not intend to form a military dictatorship, but rather a military-backed populist regime that allows him to rule in the name of the people. He never conceived of the military as a future partner – but Amer did. The root of the problem was that, unlike the Russian, Chinese, or even Cuban case, Nasser had no political revolutionary party to keep the military in check. His chief revolutionary

organization was no other than the military itself. Now that he had consolidated power, he discovered that the only political control instrument available was the security apparatus. Over the next decade, Nasser (the chief politician) and Amer (the chief general) would scramble frantically to enlist the support of the various security agencies that would eventually arbitrate the political-military race to the top.

Chapter Six

TWO STATES WITHIN A STATE:
THE ROAD TO JUNE 1967

Too much ink has been spilled on the intimate relationship between Nasser and Amer. Those closest to them spoke of them as 'soul brothers' until the very last day of their struggle. In fact, their

special bond has been the standard explanation for why Nasser hesitated to move decisively against Amer from 1956 to 1967, despite the latter's apparent military inaptitude: he did not want to hurt his best friend's feelings. While such an explanation is obviously unsatisfactory, it rules out the possibility that what sparked the decade-long struggle between the too was personal enmity. In reality, the struggle was fueled by those who stood at the true locus of power: that is the security elite that stood united against Naguib's faction, but was now divided into two competing camps: those who attached themselves to the political apparatus, namely, the Ministry of Interior with its General Investigations Department (GID), and the President's Bureau of Information (PBI); and those who attached themselves to the military, that is the Office of the Commander-in-Chief for Political Guidance (OCC), the Military Intelligence Department (MID), and the General Intelligence Service (GIS). It was a struggle for supremacy between two sets of security institutions, masked as a personal rivalry between the President and the Field Marshal, a struggle that unfolded rapidly, with dizzying shifts in cleavages and alliances, only to end with disaster on the morning of June 5, 1967.

It is little wonder why, in a speech delivered after his final showdown with Amer in 1967, Nasser regretted the way security officers had transformed Egypt into a '*mukhabarat* (intelligence) state', and pledged to dismantle this state, which he partly blamed for the June defeat. The President's description was quite accurate. Many observers agree that: "By any historical yardstick, what existed in Egypt was something unique, a dictatorship without a dictator" (Aburish 2004: 56). That was because power was vested in the security complex, whether civilian or military, while the political apparatus had little influence. It was the security aristocracy that now ruled the country after the coup had beheaded the traditional nobility; this new aristocracy occupied the position of the old not just figuratively but in a very material sense: they inhabited royal households, married into noble families, joined exclusive social clubs, and so on. They differed from the old elite only in their draconian method of rule. The formidable security system now in place rounded up suspected

dissidents on an unprecedented scale – prisons contained an average of 20,000 political detainees throughout the sixties. To live in Egypt during this period was to be constantly under the purview of a pervasive surveillance structure: phones, offices, and homes were bugged; mail was regularly checked; neighbors, colleagues, even siblings could not be trusted. Politically suspect individuals would typically be arrested at dawn, when they were too disoriented to resist, and with no one around to help. The unwelcome 'dawn visitors' would then detain suspects for indefinite periods, torture them systematically, and force them to sign confessions that would land them hefty prison sentences.

How did things get so bad? After the mutinies of January and March 1954, Nasser's suspicions of the military grew. He sidelined its influential leaders, including his RCC colleagues (safe for Amer), and entrusted officers-turned-security officials with safeguarding the regime. Yet regime stability was still threatened by the fact that security agencies were divided along a two-tiered command structure: the presidency, with Nasser at its helm, and the military leadership under Amer. Nasser of course controlled Interior Ministry organs, which he himself had set up and entrusted his loyal lieutenant Zakaria Muhi al-Din to run. Driven, however, by his innately conspiratorial nature, Nasser developed a veritable intelligence unit within the presidency, which was devoted, according to its director Samy Sharaf, to gathering information about the private lives of officers and state officials through a network of informants and an elaborate tapping system (Sharaf 1996: 89-93). In truth, this unit thrived not only on Nasser's "pathologically suspicious" character, but also on Sharaf's skill in playing "Iago to the President's paranoid Othello" (Sirrs 2010: 63-64). The PBI kept army officers and ministers under strict surveillance: recording their conversations, videotaping their private meetings, recruiting their underlings, and meticulously filing every trivial rumor regarding any of them. Through it Nasser also reached out to former officers and asked them to gather as much information as they could from colleagues still serving in the ranks. Amer, on the other hand,

controlled military-based security organs (MID, and Military Police) orchestrated by the OCC, first under Salah Nasr and Abbass Radwan, and then under the aggressive leadership of Shams Badran. Amer substantially increased his power when in 1957 his protégé Nasr took charge of the civilian GIS. More importantly, through dispersing benefits and promotions, Amer swayed dozens of officers to his side – only those strictly committed to professional military service resented his corruption of the crops. This alignment of forces set the stage for an epic battle for power between those competing organs, with the first round commencing in October 1956, during the Suez Crisis.

Suez 1956: Military Defeat, Political Triumph

The road toward the Suez War did not begin with the nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956, but almost two years earlier over a military-related dispute. Many officers supported the coup because of their resentment of the army's inadequacy as a fighting force, as was first demonstrated by its failure to prevent British occupation in 1882, then its powerlessness as the country's monarch was humiliated by Britain in February 1942, and finally by defeat in the 1948 Palestine war. It was thus only natural that procuring advanced weapons was at the top of Nasser's agenda. Capitalizing on his CIA links, he first turned to the United States. In October 1954, a meeting was held at security operative Hassan al-Tuhami's apartment between Nasser and Amer, on the Egyptian side, and CIA's Miles Copeland, and U.S. generals Albert Gerhardt and Wilbur Eveland, representing the Americans. According to Copeland, an agreement was reached to sell Egypt $20 million worth of weapons on easy credit terms. But the following month, Washington only announced an economic aid package of $40 million; Nasser also received $3 million under the table from the U.S. President's executive budget, which was normally earmarked for CIA operations. Copeland returned to Washington in July 1955 to consult with George Allen, Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle

East, regarding the delayed arms deal. A desperate Nasser followed this with a warning message to Kermit Roosevelt, director of the CIA's Middle East operations, in mid-September that if the deal does not go through, he might consider requesting military aid from the Eastern bloc, but the latter did not take him seriously (Copeland 1970: 123-33, 148).

Clearly, America's intention was to coax Egypt into joining the Western-oriented regional defense alliance known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), or simply, the Baghdad Pact. The pact allowed U.S. and British forces to use the territories and facilities of member countries (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan) to block communist incursions into the region. When Egypt refused to join, the Americans, according to future foreign minister Ismail Fahmy, encouraged Israeli raids against the Egyptian controlled Gaza Strip between February and September 1955 under the pretext of checking the activities of Palestinian guerrillas. The raids exposed Egypt's military vulnerability even further, forcing Nasser to conclude the famous Czech Arms Deal with the Soviet Union in September 1955 – a substantial deal that included 200 fighter jets and bombers, 230 tanks, 500 artillery pieces, 530 armored vehicles, 200 troop carriers, and a naval force of 3 submarines and a handful of destroyers and minesweepers (Ismail 1983: 47). Nasser made it clear that the West had only itself to blame. In a speech delivered on September 27, 1955 at a military fare, he said: "When we carried out the revolution we turned to every country…to arm our forces, we turned to England, we turned to France, we turned to America…[but] we only heard demands [that undermine] Egypt's dignity" (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 199). American strategists were stunned. They had placed too much store in Khrushchev public pledge to the Central Committee of the Communist Party to adhere to Joseph Stalin's policy of never staking Soviet credibility on non-communist developing countries, especially ones that were too far away and too unstable. Stalin, as is well know, was an advocate of 'socialism in one country' (meaning the USSR), and only intervened outside Russian borders when success was guaranteed at the hands of a communist party loyal to Moscow. Washington believed the Soviets

eyed Third World nationalists with suspicion, if not distain, and would never ally with them. Obviously, however, the success of the U.S. Containment Doctrine, which prevented the spread of communism outside the USSR and Eastern Europe, forced Moscow to treat postcolonial nationalists as 'good enough communists' in order to break its isolation. Now, before the Americans knew what hit them, Nasser strained the situation even further by recognizing Red China in May 1956. Enraged, the U.S. not only cancelled military aid talks, but also withdrew its offer to help build the High Dam, a massive hydroelectric project that was supposed to double Egypt's industrial capacity. By doing so, America's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles played unwittingly into Nasser's hand. For months the President was looking for a pretext to reclaim Egypt's rights over the Suez Canal. Now, citing the need to channel the canal's revenue towards financing the dam, a defiant Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in front of an ecstatic crowd on July 26, 1956.

Instead of just aggravating the United States, Nasser's decision convinced three odd partners to carry out a joint military strike against Egypt, what became known as the Tripartite Aggression. Britain, France, and Israel came to this decision through very different routes, though it was the conjunction of their interests to depose Egypt's new regime that made their cooperation possible. For Britain, as Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd later revealed, Nasser's obvious ambition to project power in the eastern flank of the Arab world (Jordan, Iraq, Aden, and the sheikhdoms of the Gulf) undermined its strategic allies and threatened its control of the region's oilfields. Egypt's control of the Suez Canal itself represented another problem: not only did a quarter of all British imports come through the canal, but also three-quarters of its oil needs. Of the 14,666 ships that passed through the canal in 1955, for instance, 4,358 were British. If Nasser blocked the canal, Britain might suffer "the worst industrial crisis in her history" (Johnson 1957: 11-14).

France's grievances had to do with Nasser's actions in the North African side of the Arab world, particularly in Algeria. The French military establishment blamed Nasser for the Algerian

Revolt. Hard-pressed to justify their failure to end the insurgency, French generals needed an excuse, and the most sensible one was Nasser. In the French army's propaganda, Egypt's role in Algeria was the same as the Chinese role in Vietnam, the difference being that Egypt, unlike China, could be defeated. So if France had been humbled by China in South East Asia, there was no need for it to suffer the same fate in the Middle East at the hands of a lesser power. If only Nasser was deposed, Algeria's Front de Liberation National (FLN) would lose their capacity to evict the French by force. As with Britain, the Suez Canal also had an influence over France's decision: "In the Gallic imagination the canal was not just a masterpiece of engineering but a tribute to the Napoleonic mission… On a less elevated level, the Canal Company was the 'last great international stronghold of French capital'. Its board was controlled by French directors, it was staffed largely by French technicians, and it provided a modest income to tens of thousands of French shareholders" (Turner 2006: 187-93).

Soon after resolving to launch war against Nasser, France approached Israel. Egypt's new neighbor was alarmed by the Chez Arms Deal, and believed it had only a narrow window of opportunity to cripple Cairo's drive for military parity. Israel and France developed intimate military links in the 1950s as French armaments and aviation industries sought clients with long shopping lists and generous funds to help them achieve economies of scale. Transactions increased in value from a few Mirages and Mystères to a deal to help Israel establish its first atomic reactor in Dimona. Moreover, the Mossad shared intelligence with the Service de Documentation et Centre de Espionnage (SCCE) regarding FLN activities. Now France offered Israel a full military partnership in a joint assault against a common enemy, an offer it could hardly refuse. On September 21, Shimon Peres, the man responsible for French-Israeli military cooperation, was invited to France to plan the operation (Turner 2006: 260-64).

The aim of the tripartite plot, as set in the Sèvres Protocol on October 24, 1956, was simple: toppling Nasser and establishing control over the Suez Canal. However, the military plan and the logistics required to pull it off were anything but simple. Israel was assigned a diversionary role. Its forces would roll into Sinai to draw in Egypt's army. The two Western powers would then demand an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of each force to equal distances away from the Suez Canal. Egypt would certainly refuse because such a withdrawal would mean surrendering Sinai to the Israelis. Citing the need to safeguard the international waterway, Britain and France would occupy the Suez Canal Zone. First, Egyptian airfields would be bombed to neutralize the air force and unnerve the population; then a naval barrage would smother canal defenses to allow paratroopers to be parachuted in; and finally, a full-fledged airborne and seaborne invasion would wrest the canal cities away from Egypt and advance to Cairo to install a friendly government.

As agreed, Israel's elite striking force, the 7th Armored Brigade, stormed into Egyptian territories on October 29, 1956. Nasser issued his orders for the six battalions stationed there to block the Israeli advance until the 4th Armored Division could cross the canal to join the battle. The next day, Egypt received warnings through its ambassadors to London and Paris to withdraw ten miles away from the canal within 12 hours to avert international intervention. Nasser's suspicions that a plot had been hatched were soon confirmed when Britain and France raided Egyptian airports, ravaging the country's air force. By the end of October, Egypt was confronting a force four times as big as its own, with 1000 jets, 700 tanks, and two naval fleets with 130 warships. This was "the largest amphibious fighting force since the end of the Second World War" (Turner 2006: 1).

Naturally, Egypt's military command was startled. When Nasser got to GHQ on October 31, he was advised to surrender himself to the British to spare the country from total destruction. Amer, who was apparently suffering from a nervous breakdown, cried: "The air strikes will send the country back a thousand years. I cannot expose my countrymen to such a massacre" (Imam 1996:

53). Ahmed Hamroush, who was present at the meeting, describes how Nasser harshly responded to Amer's pleas for submission: "Nobody is going to surrender; everybody is going to fight… Your behavior is unmanly; the first shots have hardly been fired. Not only must I take direct command of the army, but I also don't want you issuing any orders… If you can't do better than mope like an old hag then you will be court marshaled" (Aburish 2004: 119). Unshaken by the defeatism of his chief military commander, Nasser offered to lead the battle personally, a suggestion Amer quickly conceded to. The President gathered that if the army was dispatched to face off the Israelis in Sinai it would be caught between the rock and the hard place as soon as the Franco-British forces landed in the Canal Zone, and the road to the capital would be virtually undefended. He thus ordered all forces to pull out of Sinai in 48 hours (by November 2) and dig-in around the banks of the canal. Despite the pressure, Nasser planned the withdrawal meticulously; his successful delaying tactics saved two thirds of the men and equipment. He also prevented the pilots from joining the battle because he felt they were not yet equipped to take on Western aces. After effectively benching Amer, the President authorized the sinking of fifty cement tanks at the canal's northern entrance to block an invasion from the Mediterranean, even though he knew this would obstruct navigation in the entire canal. On November 2, Nasser gave a resounding speech at al-Azhar mosque, rallying Egyptians for an all-out popular resistance. He put Zakaria in charge of coordinating popular resistance throughout the country, and dispatched three former RCC colleagues to organize resistance in the canal cities, especially around Port Said, before visiting the battlefront himself days later (Gamasy 1993: 13).

In a few days, the attack came to a halt. British and French troops evacuated on December 22 with no gains to speak of, followed by the Israelis in March 1957. Why did the tripartite campaign falter so soon? Nasser's swift measures certainly had some effect. In addition, the British part of the military operation faced several logistical complications. British troops had evacuated the canal in

June 1956 and were already too far; the closest detachment was in Malta, six days' sailing from Egyptian shores. Assembling the troops once more proved to be one of the most "laborious, elaborate, and time-consuming" mobilization processes in military history (Kedourie 1980: 172). Part of the reason for that was that Britain, as Harold McMillan confessed in his memoirs, wanted to prepare for all eventualities. This is a better way of saying that his government "lacked the imagination and initiative to move on from the Second World War…launching a Normandy-style armada by the sure knowledge that in the time it took to cross the Mediterranean world opinion, already sympathetic to Egypt, would have moved much farther in that direction" (Turner 2007: 468). Ultimately, however, it was the actions of two countries that really mattered: the United States, and the Soviet Union. The United States was not willing to accept a reverse to the retrenching of European imperialism after it had finally began to replace its British and French hegemony in the Middle East, and the Soviet Union considered an assault on a country Moscow had just established military cooperation with an unforgivable insult. It was their fierce rejection of the attack – one of the very few things they agreed on during the Cold War – that brought it to nothing.

Although the Egyptian military was officially defeated (it was forced to withdraw from Sinai, and could not prevent allied air attacks or occupation), the Suez War was hailed as a 'political triumph'. Of course, Nasser's calculations turned out to be flawed: he ruled out an Israeli intervention; he thought Franco-British competition in the Middle East would preclude their cooperation; he believed France was totally consumed in Algeria and could not afford to open another front; and he estimated that the time and cost needed to assemble a substantial British force was too prohibitive (Nasr 1999: 405). Still, the President displayed great political agility in mobilizing popular resistance and securing diplomatic support out of all proportion to his country's strength. His arousing speeches and confident-attitude inspired Egyptians to resist fiercely, and the stories of their heroic defiance are still part of the folklore of the citizens of the canal cities. Also, the way he

presented Egypt's case to world opinion, and his willingness to compensate Britain and France for their lost shares in the Suez Canal, turned the table on the aggressors. He also proved to be a successful tactician, delaying the aggressors' success and managing to bring home two thirds of the army intact.

But at the same time that Nasser's political leadership was being celebrated in Egypt and throughout the developing world, Amer's mediocre military abilities were exposed. Analyzing the military balance sheet, Egypt's future war minister Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy explains:

> **The political victory might have overshadowed our dismal military performance, but there was no escaping the fact that we failed to secure the country from the east or the north; that the belligerents only yielded to international pressure; and that Israel managed to secure at least one considerable gain in exchange for its withdrawal: an international peacekeeping force stationed in Sharm al-Sheikh to guarantee freedom of Israeli navigation through the Straits of Tiran into the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea. Amer was supposed to reshuffle the general staff and service heads, upgrade the air force and air defenses, and establish a strong presence in Sinai to deter future Israeli aggression; none of this was done** (Gamasy 1993: 13-15).

Keen on preserving the patronage network they had established, Amer's security associates convinced him that the war was the President's fault; after all, it was his reckless decision to nationalize the canal that brought it on. They also warned him that purging his loyal subordinates under pressure from Nasser would irrevocably tarnish his reputation. Personally, Amer became apprehensive of the military prowess his friend displayed during the war. His method to win back the respect of his men was to shower them with favors, to spoil them even further than he had already done. So while Nasser demanded far-reaching changes in military leadership and organization, an embittered Amer remained unyielding, refusing during a stormy meeting on November 15 to even transfer the scandalously incompetent air force commander, Major General Sedqi Mahmoud, because he was 'his man'. Not only that, but Amer also lashed out at Nasser, accusing him of provoking an unnecessary war and then blaming the military for the result (Abu

Zikri 1988: 71). Amer's audacity shocked the President, who began to suspect that the military might be slipping out of his control, that his trusted lieutenant might have built his own power base in the corps. For the first time, a wedge was driven between the two long-time comrades. It could not have come at a worse time. Eisenhower expected a grateful Egypt to embrace his January 1957 offer of U.S. support for countries threatened by communism. Instead, Nasser attacked the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine vehemently as an imperialist ruse that justified U.S. military intervention in the Middle East instead of arming newly independent states to defend their own borders. On March 22, 1957, the U.S. President met with CIA chief Allen Dulles and Middle East veteran operative Kermit Roosevelt to consider means of ousting Nasser (Sirrs 2010: 59) – plans that would finally take shape a decade later, shaking the Egyptian regime to the core.

The Dark Years

The Suez War debacle and the confrontation that followed it made the President determined to remove his friend from military command. This was easier said than done. Building on his amicable and lavish personality, Amer's security aides had placed him at the center of an elaborate patronage network within the officer corps. They talked him into promoting himself to the rank of Field Marshal in 1957 (a rank unbeknown in the Arabic lexicon), and helped him transform the army into a tribe with him as tribal chief: allocating gifts and honors, granting personal favors, solving family disputes, inviting his men to all-night parties at his house, and making sure that the 'Field Marshal's men' remained untouchable. During his tenure, promotions accelerated to the point where one could become a brigadier general at the age of forty (compared to colonel in the early 1950s). All officers benefited from his doubling of salaries; his raising of the retirement age; his allocation of summerhouses, automobiles, travel grants, and interest-free loans; his order to have officers'

children accepted at universities regardless of their academic scores; and various other privileges (Hammad 2010: 1330-40). For the army, the Field Marshal had become something of a Santa Clause. Colonel Muhammad Selim recounted one indicative incident: "A junior officer once walked up to Amer as he was about to leave GHQ and complained that he was forced to use public transportation to commute to work everyday. Amer tore the top part of his cigarette packet and wrote on its back: 'Dear Fiat manager, dispense a car immediately to the bearer of this message.' The Field Marshal did not even ask for his name; the fact that he donned the uniform and came to him for help was enough" (Interview 2009).

Amer did not want to replace the President, but aspired towards having equal power. So instead of enhancing the army's fighting capacity, Amer devoted himself to transforming it into 'a state within a state' through the help of his security aides. He treated the military as a personal fief, promoting officers based on their loyalty to him, rather than to Nasser or the state. To keep the President on his feet, Amer's security men provided him with a regular stream of attempted plots they claim to have foiled (such as an alleged plot in April 1957 involving British operatives and eight army officers). The aim was to make Nasser too anxious to carry out a military shake-up against their will (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 269). So what had originally begun as an attempt to secure the revolution in 1954 had been gradually transformed into securing the dominance of the present military leadership. Nasser's only hope now was to persuade Amer to leave the military on his own accord, an impossible task by any measure.

The President's thus turned to the next best option: acting on the advice of PBI director Samy Sharaf, he tried to create his own secret network within the army. Quickly realizing that the officer corps was effectively sealed-off by Amer's security apparatus, Sharaf shifted his effort to the Military Academy, which was headed by a relative of his, future war minister Muhammad Fawzy. By the end of 1956, Sharaf had recruited six cadets. Their mission was to lie low until they graduated,

then actively build a network loyal to the President once they joined the service. After a few meetings, however, the Field Marshal's security men picked them up, and after a fiery confrontation with Nasser, the organization was disbanded. Another PBI operative, Hassan al-Tuhami, decided to bug Amer's phones on his own initiative. Again, Amer's alert security apparatus found out, and Tuhami was not only dismissed, but also exiled to Vienna for an entire decade (Sharaf 1996: 456).

Exposed and increasingly on the defensive, Nasser now became entrapped in a cat-and-mouse game with his Field Marshal. To ease Amer's suspicions, Nasser surrendered a bit of ground by appointing OCC director Salah Nasr – the Filed Marshal's right-hand security man – as head of the General Intelligence Service (GIS) in May 1957, and Nasr's OCC deputy Abbas Radwan as Interior Minister in October 1958. But in order to protect himself, Nasser employed former GIS director Aly Sabri at PBI to capitalize on his contacts at the agency to neutralize Nasr. The President also anticipated Nasr's official takeover in May by appointing two confidants (Amin Huwaidi, and Sha'rawi Gomaa) to senior positions at GIS in February. He then convinced Amer to appoint second-tier Free Officer Colonel Shams Badran as new OCC director, replacing Nasr. Badran had been acting as liaison between the presidency and the military, and Nasser hoped he would deliver the military back to him. And in addition to all these tactical precautions, Nasser was ultimately reassured by the fact that Zakaria Muhi al-Din, the architect of the entire security apparatus, was unofficially supervising all civilian security agencies, regardless of who was in charge at GIS or the Interior Ministry. The President's safeguards, however, soon came to nothing. Sabri clashed with PBI director Sharaf and had to be reallocated, and the shrewd Nasr not only refused to begin his tenure unless GIS became independent from Zakaria's hegemony, he also isolated Nasser's men, Huwaidi and Gomaa, forcing them to move to the PBI in a few months, before proceeding to ally GIS with the military-based security group (Huwaidi 2002: 195). Now, all military and civilian security organs (except for the President's own PBI) came under Amer's control. Worse still, the

Field Marshal won over Badran, Nasser's supposed spy. Badran relished the fact that his new boss's *laissez-faire* management style, which sharply contrasted with Nasser's tight-leash supervision, would grant him virtual control of the entire military.

By 1958, Nasser's position within the security community had considerably deteriorated. That same year, however, presented Nasser with a golden opportunity to sway Amer away from command. The centerpiece of Nasserist foreign policy was Arab nationalism, a policy aimed at uniting all Arab countries under one body (like his European neighbors to the north were striving to do themselves). The first step of this long-term plan was to merge Egypt and Syria, the closet two Arab countries (in institutions and temperament) into one state: the United Arab Republic. To kill two birds with one stone, Nasser decided to combine the expansion of Egyptian influence abroad with the consolidation of his power at home, and so he kicked his friend-turned-rival upstairs by appointing him governor of Syria, now renamed the Northern Sector. The Field Marshal agreed, believing he would now have his own country to run. But the union lasted for only three short years. This was a disaster for Amer on many levels: first, it was his trusted Syrian *aide-de-camp* (Abd al-Karim al-Nahlawy) who organized the anti-Egyptian coup which dissolved the union; second, Syria's new leaders shipped Amer back to Cairo on September 28, 1961 in a humiliating fashion (rumor has it, in his undergarments); third, his military commanders again failed to fly troops to Syria fast enough to avert the coup; and finally, one of the factors that fueled the secession was that he allowed his men to run rampant all over the Syrian corps. Shaken by this spectacular blunder, Amer tendered his resignation, which Nasser accepted with great relief. Three days later, the President reappointed Zakaria Minister of Interior, demoting Radwan to minister without portfolio, and was preparing for a similar move against Nasr at GIS. But in January 1962, before Nasser could catch his breath, Zakaria and Sharaf uncovered a military plot to reinstate Amer and dismiss the President if

he attempts to resist (Fawzy 1990: 33). It was clear that the Field Marshal's men were not ready to surrender their boss. Amer's ejection from the military had to wait.

This time Nasser had to improvise. In September 1962, he told Amer he indented to rule Egypt collectively through a twelve-member Presidential Council, which would include both of them, in addition to some old RCC colleagues and a few civilian ministers. To join the council, however, Amer had to resign, and accept the appointment of Muhammad Fawzy, director of the Military Academy, as new Commander-in-Chief. Nasser's real intention, as he later confessed to Fawzy, was to isolate his unruly Field Marshal with a slight of hand from the corps (Fawzy 1990: 33). Amer reluctantly agreed, not knowing exactly what he was getting into. During the council's first meeting, on September 18, Nasser announced the appointed of Aly Sabri (his close security associate) prime minister, and reminded Amer to submit his resignation as agreed. Instead, OCC director Shams Badran came to see Nasser the next day to inform him that after consulting with his men, the Field Marshal decided to stay on. A furious Nasser insisted that Amer carry out his part of the deal, and all Badran managed to secure from him was an extension. After a couple of months, Badran turned up with a letter of resignation. As the President skimmed through the lines, he quickly realized it was a ploy – and a quite dangerous one. In the letter, which Badran claimed had 'somehow leaked' to the officer corps and the press, Amer said he was stepping down because Nasser adamantly pursued the path of dictatorship: 'What you should be working for now is democracy… I cannot imagine that after all this time, after eradicating feudalism and manipulative capitalism, after the masses have placed their trust in you unreservedly you still fear democracy'. On that same day, before Nasser could recover from the shock, paratroopers demonstrated outside his house with their machine guns pointed towards the presidential residence. PBI also informed him that Nasr at GIS was plotting something big with the general staff. A few days later, Badran carried to the President a new message from the Field Marshal: Amer would not resign unless Nasser

pledged in writing to establish democracy. The President had no choice but to negotiate with Amer. A meeting was set on December 11. The Field Marshal began by stressing that the political security of the armed forces depended on him personally, and that any attempt to remove him from office would lead to disaster. Amer followed his not-so-subtle threat by a list of demands that included promoting him from Commander-in-Chief to First Vice President and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (Nasser holding nominally the title of Supreme Commander), in addition to undivided control over the military's financial and administrative affairs. Realizing at this point that challenging Amer would certainly provoke a coup, the President retreated (Sadat 1978: 208).

So basically the Presidential Council gambit backfired. The Field Marshal not only emerged unscathed, but also his position improved considerably, in effect being promoted from the number two man to sharing the number one position. The confrontation confirmed Nasser's worst fear; he complained to Zakaria, after what he considered Amer's 'silent coup', that there were now two states in Egypt, an official one, which he presided over, and a shadowy one led by Amer (Imam 1996: 87). In a less guarded moment, he bluntly confessed to Sadat that the country was currently "run by a gang… I am responsible as President, but it is Amer that rules" (Sadat 1978: 220). The type of regime emerging in Egypt in the 1960s was therefore one of dual power, an unstable and alarming situation.

The previously lurking power struggle now came to the open. Nasser's goal was to infiltrate the military, while Amer's goal was to extend his influence over the political sphere. The President pushed Amer in March 1964 to hire Muhammad Fawzy as Chief of Staff, after he had refused to surrender general command to him two years earlier. The Field Marshal acquiesced in order to appease Nasser, but then restricted Fawzy's duties to trivial administrative tasks, and created a new position in the chain of command – the so-called Ground Forces Command (GFC) – to carry out

the duties of the Chief of Staff (Fawzy 1990: 54). Amer and his entourage, on the other hand, tightened their grip over the military and security, and began to extend their influence over civilian sectors as well, from overseeing land reform, to supervising public sector companies, to running sporting clubs. In truth though, the real players in this struggle were neither Nasser nor Amer, but rather their security associates. For example, hiring Fawzy as Chief of Staff was proposed by his relative, PBI director Samy Sharaf; at the same time, OCC head Shams Badran had an infinitely stronger control over the military and military-based security organs than Amer himself (Hosni 2008: 8).

At this point, Nasser began to regret his disregard for political organization. If he had formed a strong ruling party, he would have kept the military in line via political commissars, as was the case in Russia and China. Instead, he resolved to control the military through secret cells loyal to his regime. Now that their loyalty had shifted to Amer, he had no way of purging them – he simply did not know who the members of these cells were.[7] But perhaps it was not too late. If the military had become his rival's power base, and if the security apparatuses he controlled (PBI, and the Interior Ministry's investigative organ GID and the police force) were no match to Amer's ensemble (OCC, the military and civilian intelligence agencies, and the military police), then maybe he could turn his attention to the political apparatus, maybe he could shore up his social support, and transform the rudimentary organs that existed so far into an all-powerful ruling party. If he succeeded in expanding and organizing his social base, then maybe he could reduce the relative weight of the military in the ruling coalition. The idea of an Arab Socialist Union (ASU) was thus born – conceived from the beginning as a political counter to the military.

Counterweighing the Military

[7] It was only the trials that followed the 1967 defeat that revealed how OCC director Shams Badran had charged members of his own class (Class of 1948) with managing these cells (Sharaf 1996: 359-60).

Nasser deeply mistrusted political parties because they could be easily infiltrated and subverted. He preferred to mobilize support through direct appeal to the masses via speeches and state-controlled media. But by 1962, he realized how he inadvertently cornered himself; because of his reluctance to build a powerful ruling party, the political arena became entirely dominated by the military and the security apparatus. Nasser was now determined to remedy this deficiency. He began to build on what he had. The chaotic array of political currents that constituted the Liberation Rally gave way by 1958 to a more pyramid-shaped district-based structure called the National Union (NU). But despite its more solid structure, the NU was a non-ideological control instrument open to all citizens and concerned mostly with providing crowds to welcome state dignitaries, shepherding them to root for the President during national celebrations, and vote for whatever the government ordained in referendums. Neither the Liberation Rally nor the NU had any capacity for popular mobilization. They were more like fluid social networks of all those who supported – or more accurately, sought to benefit from – the regime. They included students, workers, peasants, professionals, merchants, as well as rural notables and capitalists, coming together occasionally to express approval of whatever the regime did.

The passing of the socialist laws of 1961, which Nasser used to broaden his mass base and tighten his grip over the bureaucracy, provided the occasion to reorganize and empower the NU. Through the National Charter of 1962, Nasser announced the creation of new body: the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), which was supposed to represent the will of what he called 'the alliance of the people's productive forces' in achieving freedom (from imperialism), socialism (which meant state-planned economy), and (Arab) unity. It was methodically structured along two axes: one based on profession, with committees for workers, peasants, intellectuals, soldiers, and 'patriotic' capitalists, as well as a Socialist Youth Organization for students; and another on residence, with

district branches in the cities and basic units in the villages (7,500 chapters in all). In theory, the ASU was supposed to provide candidates for parliament and cabinet, as well as other leadership positions, such as mayors and university deans, and 'inspire' legislation and policies on all state levels. In short, it was supposed to represent the seat of political power.

GIS deputy director and leading ASU cadre Abd al-Fattah Abu al-Fadl published an exposition of the origins and goals of this new organization in the regime's mouthpiece *Al-Tali'ah* (the Vanguard). Abu al-Fadl first explained that the ASU is a mass organization that brings together members of all social groups to allow them to resolve their conflicts and contradictions peacefully and find a common ground under the supervision of a political apparatus composed of "politically trained elements committed to the revolution's principles." Abu al-Fadl denied that the ASU was a ruling party, dismissing single party rule as either fascist (representing the interests of the economically dominant class), or communist (representing the dictatorship of the workers), and thus inherently prejudiced to other social groups. The ASU, in contrast, is an alliance of the people as a whole and allows them all to express their interests and negotiate a means for coexistence. He then explained that the regime rejected political pluralism because in multi-party systems party struggles are proxies for class struggles, which the ASU aims to eliminate; "in the absence of a basic contradiction between the interests of the people's productive forces, there is no need for each of them to form an independent political organization" (Abu al-Fadl 1967: 90-91).

All this rhetoric notwithstanding, it was clear that Nasser aspired for a Leninist-styled organization modeled on Soviet and East European (especially Yugoslavian) experiences. In a meeting with the members of the ASU's provincial executive offices, on January 12, 1966, he stressed the 'vanguard' role of the party: "We cannot succeed unless we understand the masses. We must take their ideas and opinions, study them, organize them, give them back to them, and then point them in the right direction." His language then turned militaristic: "you must engage with

people, recruit them, invite them…to expand the ASU army" (Abd al-Nasser 1966: 14-16). But regardless of what Nasser desired, the ASU was not equipped to perform this vanguard role. In his enthusiasm to replicate the superb organization of communist parties, the President seemed to have overlooked one missing ingredient: communism. Nasser was not a communist, and did not adhere consistently to any strict ideology. He was a pragmatic man, though imbued with lofty ideas about modernity and social justice. Needless to say, without ideology there can be no ideological indoctrination.

So all the ASU was capable of was to bond key social groups to the regime through material temptations rather than ideological commitment. This was good enough to achieve Nasser's immediate goal: to revamp the political apparatus and place it on par with the military. Sharaf admits that much, "We suffered an imbalance; the weight of the military was growing beyond control. Nasser created the ASU as a political counter to the army" (Sharaf 1996: 228-29). And because Amer was aware of this, he fought the new organization fiercely A good example is the Alexandria summer camp incident of 1964, when the organization's youth branch (the Socialist Youth Organization) chose the following topic for its cadres to research during their stay: "How should ASU youth resist a possible coup?" When MID reported the episode to Amer, he was naturally furious (Imam 1996: 90).

The absence of ideology and the hidden goal of neutralizing the army condemned the ASU from the beginning to the fate of a highly centralized totalitarian body that issued directives from the top downwards to keep citizens in line with regime policies and curb any opposition, rather than a mass mobilizing organ. Future ASU secretary-general Abd al-Muhsin Abu al-Nur describes how he presided over nine organs, one for indoctrination, another for propaganda, a third for monitoring religious affairs, and the rest for 'managing' students, workers, and peasants, and none of them tried to go beyond exerting regime control over all aspects of life (Abu al-Nur 2001: 231-33). The

organization regulated rather than inspired society. And it did so through presenting ASU membership as a *sine qua non*, the fastest road to upward social mobility and the safest way to alleviate suspicions of dissent. Instead of instilling belief in the virtue and justice of the regime in the hearts and minds of its six million members, it became a magnate for opportunists from all walks of life. Those who flocked to swell its ranks did so because they realized that you no longer had to be a military or security officer to 'benefit' from the revolution; another, civilian route just opened up, and all you needed to do to join was fill an application.

That was not the biggest problem with the ASU. Because of the deeply embedded security character of the regime, the new organization was quickly drawn into the security orbit. To begin with, the Interior Ministry screened recruits, nominated candidates for senior posts, and kept the entire body under tight surveillance through informants and bugging devices. Next, intelligence officers, such as Abu al-Fadl, were planted at ASU to closely monitor its members and overall performance (Abu al-Fadl 2008: 223) In addition, the organization itself incorporated security functions in addition to its political control duties; its members were not only expected to preach obedience to the rulers, but also submit secret reports of any dissident views, even if expressed in the form of a joke or a side comment. By 1966, its secret archives held more than 30,000 files on military officers alone (Sirrs 2010: 88). Nasser himself encouraged this role. During the same January 1996 meeting, he openly invited ASU members to act as informers: "You must be courageous enough that when you notice the deviation of another member to bring it to the attention of the [provincial] office, and if it was not remedied, to contact the [ASU] Secretary-General" (Abd al-Nasser 1966: 13). The organization became so proficient in collecting information that Salah Nasr at GIS complained to Nasser that the ASU (aided by Sharaf's PBI) was spying on his own intelligence operatives (Heikal 1990: 401).

Obsession with security reached its zenith with the creation of the Vanguard Organization (*al-Tanzim al-Tali'ie*), a secret body within the ASU originally designed to help with indoctrination, but rapidly degenerating into a full-fledged intelligence organ. The idea behind the Vanguard Organization (VO), as Nasser explained during the founding meeting in June 1963, was to form secret ten-member cells of carefully selected ideological cadres to infiltrate public institutions and indoctrinate its members (Sharaf 1996: 183-191). To help set it off, the President convinced the scores of communists that were completing their prison terms in the mid-1960s to join the new movement. In 1965, the underground communist parties dissolved themselves and joined the new organization. Their rationale was that working with the regime would help them proliferate their ideas, and – more practically – keep up out of prison. Nasser shrewdly incorporated the talented intellectual cadres and discarded the rank-and-file, even imprisoned many of them, so that communist leaders would not have their own mass base within the VO. For Nasser, the VO would serve as an ideological nucleus for the regime itself, a civilian equivalent of the Free Officers cabal that he created in the military two decades before. By 1967, its membership had swelled to over 250,000. Of course Amer's diligent security apparatus could not have overlooked something that big. By October 1964, the Field Marshal had learned about the VO, and instructed Badran to keep it away from the army.

Despite its alleged indoctrinating mission, the security component of the VO was dominant from the beginning. First, its four founding members had little to do with ideology. It is true that one of the four was a socialist doctrinaire (Ahmed Fouad, who innocently thought he could influence the rest), but the other (Al-Ahram Chief Editor Mohamed Hassanien Heikal) was no more than a Nasser confidant, and the last two (Samy Sharaf and Aly Sabri) were essentially security men. Second, there was the emphasis on secrecy (its existence only came to the open in August 1966) in this supposedly programmatic organization. Why would a President who openly advocated socialism

need a secret body to spread his ideology? Even if Nasser wanted to model his new organization on underground communist parties, these were underground *before* not *after* their leaders came to power. Also, for ideological indoctrination the President had encouraged freelance socialist intellectuals, led by Lutfi al-Khuli, to issue a monthly magazine – *Al-Tali'ah* (The Vanguard) – in 1964, so again, why the need for secrecy?

This emphasis only makes sense when we consider the security role that the VO started playing, especially after 1965, when Interior Minister Sha'rawi Gomaa became its head. Instead of preaching socialism and winning new recruits, VO members were fully devoted towards infiltrating social associations (universities, factories, trade unions, syndicates, the media, state bureaucracy, and the ASU itself, which they were all members of) to uncover and report on suspicious activities. As interviews with a sample of the VO's 30,000 members later revealed, these members were told that their primary function was not to win people over to socialism, but rather to submit regular reports on subversive elements in their respective institutions. This was not a simple misunderstanding; the organization's charter explicitly mentioned that: "each member is obliged to present [security] reports…to his superiors," which turned it in the words of one member, Hesham al-Salamuni, into a political Gestapo (Hosni 2007: 20-22). Worse still, instead of performing the role of ideological spearhead, the VO dragged its mother organization (the ASU) down the same road, converting it from a potentially mass-mobilizing party to a giant security edifice centered on surveillance and political control.

But was Nasser's real aim to create a programmatic organization to infuse political consciousness in the masses? Several reasons suggest otherwise. To begin with, it seems that Nasser understood socialist doctrines as means of achieving managerial control of politics and economics, rather than a revolutionary doctrine. Reviewing the minutes of a secret meeting he held on March 7, 1966 at the VO's Cairo branch provides a first hand view of what the President aspired for. He

began by proclaiming that: "We can achieve a lot…not through punishment and the military police… We can change people through the [new] political organization," but then he quickly added: "Sabri [his security aide, VO founder, and now acting as prime minister] has a point, we need believers within the executive branches and administration…these can actively and effectively supervise employees…they can also recruit more members to help them in surveillance and oversight" (Ahmed 1993: 764-71). With this stress on surveillance, it is hardly surprising that Nasser entrusted the VO not to leftist intellectuals, but to intelligence officers, who by disposition and training prioritized security over ideology. It would have been very naïve of the President to believe that the VO can transform his security associates into ideological cadres, rather than the other way around. In the end, the variance between the intentions he professed and the actions he carried out could only be explained by the fact that Nasser's real goal was to create a civilian network of vested interests to enhance his power vis-à-vis the military. This was natural considering not only his struggle with Amer, but the fact that there had been 18 attempted coups against Nasser so far. "There has been continuous intrigue over the last 14 years and it is likely to continue," he said in that same meeting in March. "But I believe that it would be impossible for the army to prepare for a coup [without political support]" (Ahmed 1993: 786). In the opinion of one VO veteran, Nasser's motives were not to create a real popular (let alone socialist) organization, but rather to counter the power of the Field Marshal (Hosni 2007: 12). And the ASU, and its secret VO, did become a power to be reckoned with indeed. But rather than deriving their power from a broad mass base, they relied on an insular class of political opportunists, thriving on state patronage, and closely supervised by an expanding security elite. Nasser's failure at building a mass mobilizing party was particularly significant to military sociologist Eric Nordlinger, who concluded quite emphatically:

> **Egypt constitutes an especially telling example of the inability of praetorian rulers to build a mass party capable of monopolizing the population. For this particular failure occurred under exceptionally favorable conditions. The officers who took power in 1952…have had**

> **ample time to create one…the government was headed by one of the few truly charismatic figures capable of eliciting emotion-charged support, loyalty, and energy at the mass level. Egyptian society is not divided along ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, or regional line that would have made the building of a nationwide party a highly problematic undertaking. And the presence of a powerful and much hated neighboring state has given rise to a nationalist fervor that could readily be used to recruit and energize a mass party… The people needed only to be offered an organizational framework… [Yet the ruler still assumed] that what applies within the military sphere also applies within the political realm… [he] visualized Egypt in managerial terms, as an organization instead of a polity** (1977: 115-17).

To the extent that the ASU and VO had a social power base at all, it was the aspiring rural middle class and its urban offshoot in the state bureaucracy. This distinctive social composition characterized Egypt's ruling parties during the crucial decades of the 1960s and 1970s, and remained well in play until the final years of Mubarak's rule; these middling landowners and their offspring in the bureaucracy wound up constituting the backbone of the ruling party.

Recall that one of the first things the new regime did in 1952 was initiate land reform. The coup took place in a semi-feudal society where 2,500 large landowners (with 147 elite families) and 9,500 middling owners controlled a third of arable land and half of parliament's seats. There were also more than two-and-a-half million small holders, and 11 million tenant farmers and landless peasants.[8] Aside from the rich absentee landlords, all the rest coexisted in the countryside, running their affairs with the aid of traditional social mores and hierarchy. The land reforms placed progressively lower limits on land ownership: 200 feddans in 1952, reduced to 100 in 1962, and finally 50 in 1965 (though the ceiling for family ownership was always higher). This was more than enough to run profitable agricultural projects. On the other hand, land redistribution granted each poor peasant 5 feddans or less – barely enough land to subsist enough. But while economically, the peasants could not achieve independence, they were politically grateful to the revolution for

[8] Around 12,000 owners controlled 2 million feddans (1 feddan = 1.038 acres), representing a third of the arable land: 9,500 of those were middling owners possessing between 50 and 200 feddans, while the rest were considered large owners, with an elite 134 families controlling between 1,000 and 5,000 feddans, then a select 12 families owning between 5,000 and 10,000 feddans, and finally, the royal family which owned 48,000 feddans and controlled an additional 45,000 classified as religious endowments (Al-Rafe'i 1989: 61-63; Al-Bishri 2002: 79-80).

providing them with a plot of land they could call their own. And therefore peasants could have offered a solid base for popular mobilization. But the insecure Nasser chose to blunt the revolutionary potential of the peasants lest they get out of control. Instead, he kept them tied down through reproducing traditional authority structures. And he achieved by allowing a prosperous rural middle class to occupy the apex of the patronage networks that were already set in place by large landlords, and thus perform the same political control function of their predecessors. So instead of redistributing all the surplus land among the peasants, or providing them with loans to buy it from the government, large owners were allowed to sell whatever exceeded their ownership limit on the open market where only financially solvent peasants could afford to buy. The relatively cheap divested land allowed small owners (controlling between 10 and 50 feddans) to become middling landowners (possessing between 50 and 200 feddans), and middle owners to become even wealthier. And so the agricultural reform laws enabled the rural middle class, which had expanded modestly in number from 22,000 after the first installment of the land reform law in 1952 to 29,000 in 1965, to increase its land ownership by 29 percent, its annual income by 24 percent, and its share of state loans and subsidies by 80 percent during the same period (Binder 1978: 344; Yunis 2005: 69). By enhancing the economic power of the middling landowners, land reform shifted the balance of political power from large landlords to these new *Kulaks* who now enjoyed an undisputed hegemony in the countryside. Security and stability were thus prioritized over the potential for mobilization, a potential that might have served the regime today, but could have been used against it tomorrow. Conservative village notables were considered a safer bet.

The arbitrarily passed July 1961 Socialist Laws, which crowned Nasser's drive to bring the economy under state control, further enhanced the position of the rural middle class by undermining the economic power of the wealthy urban stratum. Though one could scarcely argue that Nasser's version of state socialism was detrimental to the interests of private enterprise, yet capitalists and

former large landlords (with a lot of cash on their hands after forcibly selling their land) were reluctant to subject themselves to the whims of what they considered a totalitarian regime and so they held back on investment, preferring to make profit in non-productive fields, such as real estate speculation. Nasser tried his best to lure them back to productive investments thorough various tax exemptions, but this could not substitute for the lack of trust.[9] Following the Suez Crisis, it was estimated that out of L.E 45 million redirected away from agriculture, only L.E. 6 million was invested in industry, while the rest went to real estate. In 1956 alone, real estate investment constituted 75.8 percent of all private investments. Nasser first responded in January 1957 by nationalizing foreign companies, and forming the Economic Agency and the High Committee for National Planning to manage economic development. He then brought Egypt's largest banks under state control in February 1960, and formulated the first Five-Year Plan for 1960-1965 (Abdel-Malek 1968: 81, 108).

Although the upper bourgeoisie was forced to work for the state as executive managers after the nationalization laws, it remained obstinate. In 1961 Zakaria reported that a group of thirty high-ranking officers had been meeting regularly with Egyptian capitalists, and that together they were pushing Amer to help them end the dictatorship and restore private liberties. Zakaria's report also highlighted that two-thirds of the economy was still in the hands of the private sector (that included 80 percent of commerce, and 70 percent of construction and industrial projects), and that half of Egypt's workers were employed by private businesses. A swift move against capitalists was necessary. In October 1961, Zakaria detained 40 prominent investors, and in mid-November sequestrated the financial assets of another 767. The government then took over 80 banks and insurance companies, and 367 commercial companies (Abdel-Malek 1968: 160). The Socialist Laws

[9] Law 306 of 1952 exempted foreign companies from taxes on commercial and industrial profits; Law 424 of 1953 exempted foreign industrial exports from income taxes; Law 430 of 1953 exempted joint stock agricultural and industrial ventures from taxes on profits; Law 277 of 1956 increased direct taxes to substitute for the lost tax revenue on commercial, agricultural, and industrial activities (Barnet 1992: 88).

of 1961 were a logical next step. They eliminated the private sector in banking, insurance, international trade, heavy industry, transportation, large hotels, and the media. Even in light and medium industries and commercial companies – the last domain of private enterprise – the public sector became a partner with no less than 50 percent control. By 1967, the Supreme Council for Public Organizations supervised 48 public organizations, which in turn ran 382 affiliated companies (McDermott 1988: 121-122).

The bureaucracy and public sector swelled further by state welfare laws passed during the same period. In 1962, Nasser's cabinet decided to admit all secondary school graduates to university, and secure a job for every college graduate. As a result, state employment in the civilian sectors alone jumped from 770,000 in 1962 to about 1.1 million by 1967. At the same time as state employment rates were as high as 70 percent between 1962 and 1969 (employing over 60 percent of university graduates), increase in state salaries increased by 102 percent (Brooks 2008: 72-73). Needless to say, that expansion reflected neither population nor economic growth. It was part of Nasser's attempt to expand and consolidate his civilian social base.

The expansion of the urban managerial class offered the middling landowners a golden opportunity to extend their influence to the city. They now pushed their offspring to find employment in the bureaucracy and public sector companies. That is why the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which doubled in size between 1962 and 1965, was overwhelmingly constituted of the sons of rural notables. Soon these young bureaucrats transformed the public sector into a labyrinth of commercial and financial fiefdoms, which supplemented the agricultural fiefdoms their families had established in the countryside. Strategically placed in the city and the countryside, this new elite now represented the bulwark of the ruling party, the ASU. This leads us to conclude that the guiding

rational for both the land reform and socialist laws was political not economic.[10] Because in effect this alliance between a class of wealthy landowners and the state bourgeoisie that sprang out of it thwarted the economy towards commercial and real estate investment rather than industry. Even agriculture suffered as middling landowners passed a considerable part of their returns to their urban offshoots to double it through short-term economic ventures instead of reinvesting it in the land. Land was treated as a source of prestige not a productive asset.

But the regime had only itself to blame. The poverty of its economic policy really stemmed from the poverty of its politics. Rather than focusing on development, the regime was motivated by the need to curtail capitalist interests, on the one hand, and the need to 'bribe' society to excuse its dictatorial methods, on the other. The costly commitments imposed on the bureaucracy and public sector included employment of all university graduates, the provision of cheap housing and free healthcare and education, and so on. In the sixties, for instance, public sector companies were forced to increase wages by 40 percent to absorb the quadrupling of university students without a corresponding increase in productivity or profit. In the bureaucracy alone, Egypt had one million civil servants on the payroll by 1967 (Yunis 2005: 66-67). The price was administrative chaos and corruption, but now there were millions of white collared employees ready to root for the ASU. Clearly, Nasser perceived state institutions more or less as political power structures, as incubators for a new class of citizens whose interests were tied to his ruling party.

To empower a stratum of conservative village notables and civil servants appeared much more expedient to Nasser's security coterie than to mobilize urban activists or unruly peasants. Egypt's long experience with elections (dating back to 1866) had laid down certain political practices in the countryside, such as having village notables register peasants to vote for their landlords or

[10] It is true that the economy grew during the first Five-Year Plan (1960-1965) at 6.9 percent, and industry in particular grew by 11 percent, but still this fell short of Nasser's official goals of 9 percent growth, and 15 percent industrial growth during the 1960s. There was also the soaring budget deficit of L.E. 417 million in 1967, which brought state-led growth to a grinding halt (Yunis 2005: 64).

mobilize them to show support for a particular candidate. All Nasser's faction needed to do was to utilize this pre-existing set-up for its purposes, that is, all it had to do was to lock into existing authority structures instead of creating new ones. In that sense, the emasculation of the upper class in the village was symbolic; its political influence was simply passed on to those next in line.

With peasant support channeled by rural notables, and employees and workers' support channeled by their supervisors in the bureaucracy and public sector companies, the ASU had a considerable social base. These notables and managers, in turn, dominated the apparatuses of the ruling party and got themselves elected to the various representative bodies. That is not to say that this stratum constituted a new 'ruling class' because its role was rather one of sustaining those in power. Its influence was mostly local, and its aspirations were limited to increasing its wealth and status. In Gaetano Mosca's terms, it represented the "second stratum of the ruling class," one which mediates power between regime and society without actually holding the keys to political authority (Binder 1978: 13). According to another political scientist, Timothy Mitchell, Nasser's experiment here provides a good case study of the complex set of relations that constitute the state: "These no longer appear primarily in the form of a central power intervening to initiate change, but as local practices of regulation, policing, and coercion that sustain a certain level of inequality… The center did not initiate change, but tried to channel local forces into activities that would extend…regime influence" (Mitchell 2002: 168-69)

The fingerprints of Nasser's security elite appear all over this power building process. The President himself aimed for a wider popular base. For example, in a speech delivered on October 16, 1961, he criticized the NU for including less than 2000 urban activists among it 29,520 committee members, with the rest representing the forces of reaction in the countryside, and pledged that the new ASU would come up with preventive measures against the infiltration of these elements, the most important of which was that its membership would include 50 percent workers and peasants.

The presidential initiative was quickly frustrated when Sabri and the rest of the security crew agreed to include those who own 50 feddans in the peasant category, and to consider those who sit on the boards of public sector companies as workers (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 78). Nasser then delegated to his security men the task of filtering out conservative elements during the transition from the NU to the ASU. The result was that only 1.5 percent of NU members who applied to join the ASU were disqualified, and a striking 78 percent of those in charge of NU village units, and 60 percent of those heading NU secretariat positions in the cities continued to occupy the same posts under the new organization (Binder 1978: 309-315). Not only that, but while village notables occupied 11.7 percent under the NU watch in the 1957 parliament, their share more than doubled (to 30 percent) in the ASU-supervised parliamentary elections in 1964 (Saleh 1988: 23). It was the typical 'the devil we know' mentality that governs security thinking that assured the continued predominance of the rural middle class and its urban offshoots. As senior intelligence official Abd al-Fatah Abu al-Fadl concluded after his five-year tenure at ASU, that the new party was not only formed of the same social material as that of the old, but of actually the same people (Abu al-Fadl 2008: 226).

It is this group of middle class opportunists that would run and benefit from the ruling party for the next five decades – although it would have to share the spoils with more affluent businessmen after the seventies. Instead of undermining the new class of security officers, the ASU provided this mostly urban class with a bridge to the countryside, thus tightening relations between security and politics more than ever. Eventually, this security-political alliance would succeed in marginalizing the military, but at the price of fortifying the dictatorship. An early demonstration of the fatal consequences of this emerging alliance was there for all to see in 1966 in a small village on the Nile Delta known as Kamshish.

The Kamshish Affair

The Kamshish Affair brought into sharp focus the alignment of forces in place during the final days leading up to the climactic 1967 war. This small village of perhaps 10,000 inhabitants and 2,120 feddans in al-Munufiya province on the Nile Delta in Northern Egypt (the home province of Sadat and Mubarak) became an international cause célèbre in 1966, receiving extensive coverage from Egyptian and world media, and attracting visits from no less than Che Guevara, Jean Paul Sartre, and Simone De Beauvoir, as well as honorable mention in one of Fidel Castro's fiery speeches. It was celebrated as the only instance of peasant revolt in post-coup Egypt, though the reality was much more humble. Its true significance was that it accurately reflected the political configuration and power balances of the time. Lutfi al-Kholi, editor of the regime's mouthpiece *Al-Tali'ah*, thought it was "a political and economic thermometer" of the state of the country (1966: 5). In fact, GIS director Salah Nasr described it as the "apex of the power struggle" that consumed the country during the 1960s (Nasr 1999: 211).

The whole affair began with peasant activists leading a campaign against the large landowning family of al-Feqi that retained 650 feddans above the limit prescribed by the land reform laws. Complaints against the formerly dominant landlords also incriminated ASU and security officials, who – together with village notables – facilitated the family's fraudulent behavior. The campaign, which centered on petitions to the president and the ASU leadership in Cairo, was led by two communists, Salah al-Din Hussein and his wife Shahendah Maqlad. But Nasser's security lieutenants kept a lid on it, making sure he never saw any of the letters addressed to him. But it all came out to the open during the President's tour to the countryside in March 1966, when he heard demonstrators chanting: 'The Kamshish Revolution Salutes the Mother Revolution!' followed by Maqlad rushing towards his motorcade to hand him a memo detailing the whole story: how Kamshish peasants were among the first to back up the land reform laws in 1952; how appalled they

were when the 'feudal' al-Feqis became the representatives of Nasser's first popular organization (the Liberation Rally), and afterwards made sure that NU and ASU dignitaries in the province were their junior allies; how al-Feqis regularly consorted with security officials to make sure peasant petitions were intercepted and their drafters detained; and finally, how this whole charade made it seem as if the revolution's political organizations were "born dead" (Maqlad 2006: 60-94) Upon returning to Cairo, Nasser demanded a full investigation. Party and police officials claimed it was a minor affair stirred by communist troublemakers, and decided to shelve the case. Weeks later, Hussein was shot dead by a police-hired peasant, sparking massive peasant riots which soon made local and international headlines. The press coverage highlighted how little the power structure had shifted in the countryside after a decade and a half of land reform.

In his dual capacity as intelligence operative and ASU functionary, Abu al-Fadl was asked to investigate the murder. A few weeks later, he reported that Hussein had in fact been submitting one complaint after the other to ASU officials and the PBI concerning al-Feqis violations. The complaints were ignored, and the Interior Ministry detained Hussein twice, once (between November 1954 and February 1956) for being a communist, and another (during the second week of September 1965) for being an Islamist (Abu al-Fadl 2008: 244-46). Hussein's widow also provided investigators with a security memo written weeks before the murder (on March 3, 1966) accusing her husband of rabble rousing and warning of his subversive activities, thus further implicating the security apparatus in his assassination (Maqlad 2006: 108). The investigation also revealed that Speaker of Parliament Anwar al-Sadat intervened in al-Feqis' favor, and that even after the murder he tried to shore them up by claiming that his own investigations (carried out by Mahmoud Game', a confidant who also happened to be a member of the Muslim Brothers) confirmed their innocence of all charges – whether land reform violations or incitement to murder. Sadat further claimed that Hussein and his wife were Soviet agents, who received regular visits and funding from the Russian

embassy (Sadat 1978: 216-23; Game' 2004: 75-77). Sadat was not the only actor in this unfolding drama that would later assume a high public position (that of president), but others who were also involved in the cover-up would rise to power and fame (rather than suffer for their complacency). Prominent examples included, on the political side, Kamal al-Shazly, future Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Deputy Secretary-General of the ruling party, who was back then ASU representative in Munufiya, and on the security side, future Interior Minister Abd al-Halim Musa, and future director of State Security Tal'at Hassan (Maqlad 2006: 138). And without getting too much ahead, it is worth mentioning that in September 1998 al-Feqi family and their hirelings spearheaded the repression of Kamshish peasants who resisted President Hosni Mubarak's reversal of the state protection guaranteed to tenant famers in the 1950s. Al-Feqis still owned land above the limit prescribed by law and were hungry for more, and Shahendah Maqlad, Hussein's widow, was still there to lift the peasants' spirits. Little had changed in three decades.[11]

The complacency of political and security cadres alarmed Nasser, who pointed to the "tragedy of Kamshish" during his May Day speech of 1967, as an indicator that opportunists have hijacked the ASU, and that even after he sequestered the lands of large landlords "they remained emperors just as they were before, even more" (Maqlad 2006: 142-43). A few days before, the daily *Al-Akhbar* came out with a dramatic headline that read: "Nasser Warns of Counter-Revolutionary Forces."[12] But it was Amer who was truly disturbed by the intimate relations that were forming behind his back between the President's ASU and security men (at PBI and the Interior Ministry) and the rural elite, and saw this as a potential threat to the political influence of the army. Determined to liquidate this last bastion of social reaction, Nasser and Amer, each for his own reasons, agreed to form a Committee for the Liquidation of Feudalism. Infighting over who should be included, however, produced a catchall 22-member committee with all the usual suspects from

[11] Farag, Fatemah. 1998. 'Kamshish: Take Two'. *Al-Ahram Weekly* 397: 3. Cairo (10/1/1998).
[12] *Al-Akhbar* 4893: 1. Cairo (3/4/1968).

both security factions: Sabri, Sharaf, Gomaa, and others associated with Nasser, alongside Amer, Badran, Nasr, and their allies (Imam 1996: 93).

In a matter of weeks, the committee received complaints from hundreds of villages against the still dominant power of large landowners. Investigations revealed that over 45 percent of the peasants were still landless, that 95 percent of the landed peasants held less than 5 feddans, and that only 5 percent of landowners controlled 43 percent of all arable land. Petitions also highlighted how the rising agricultural bourgeoisie was gaining political control over the countryside. Soon the committee issued its final report: "After eight months of continued work…the Agricultural Reform [Agency] sequestered or placed under state guardianship about 200,000 feddans…banished 220 feudalists from the countryside…expelled hundreds of mayors, clerics, and officials who were dominated by feudalists, and dissolved dozens of ASU village committees… This was an 'agricultural revolution'" (Comprehensive Report published in *Al-Tali'ah*, March 1967: 124-28). It was excellent propaganda for Amer and his associates.

In reality, the results have been much more modest. Probably under pressure from ASU-connected security officials, the committee examined only 330 cases out of Egypt's five thousand villages, before hastily concluding that there were no systematic violations, but only a handful of pockets of illegality. It did not matter that some of these 'irregularities' were as blatant as the six families, which each held between 1,275 and 4,500 feddans, although the law allowed for only 300 feddans per family (Imam 1996: 94). Nor did it matter that, as the report confessed, there was as much as 200,000 feddans concealed from legal authorities. The problem was reduced to the survival of individual feudalists associated with the old regime, rather than an indicator of the emergence of a new landowning class nurtured by the new regime (Mitchell 2002: 154-70). The civilian and military security elite had no need to investigate how this happened – they were the ones who allowed it. Committee members also had no real stake in changing the situation. Nasser's faction (probably

without his consent) was determined not to alter the power structure it had developed in the countryside, and Amer decided – after flirting a bit with the possibility of sabotaging this arrangement – that this was perhaps too distracting, that his efforts should be entirely focused on military rather than social affairs. And it was this latter decision that set the stage for the final and painfully spectacular showdown of 1967.

The Military Needs a War

For such a brief encounter, the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 remains one of history's most consequential confrontations. In Egypt, the defeat was "so unexpected in its totality, stunning in its proportion, and soul-destroying in its impact that it will be remembered as the greatest defeat of the Arabs in the twentieth century" (Aburish 2004: 249). How can we explain the astonishing sequence of events that led up to this defeat? How can we solve the central puzzle of the war, which is how a politically astute leader like Nasser held firm on the path of escalation against Israel, even though he knew how little he controlled his own military. The standard interpretation underlines the incompetence of Egypt's political and military institutions at the time. Another common interpretation in Egypt points to a mischievous plot hatched between Washington and Tel Aviv to destroy Nasser's regime. Israeli analysts and diplomats claim that Nasser thought be could actually defeat Israel, or at least snatch a substantial political concession from it through a grand military bluff. Western scholars highlight psychological pressures by other Arab states on Egypt to carry the banner of resistance against Israel and protect neighboring Syria and Jordon, adding that it was Nasser's virtuoso politics and impulsiveness that made him rush headlong onto the perilous path of war.[13] Doubtlessly, there

[13] For Egyptian interpretations see Abu Zikri (1988) and Heikal (1990); for Israeli ones see Eban (1992), Oren (2002), and Segev, (2007); and for Western analysis see Kerr (1969), Nutting (1972), Brecher (1974), Parker (1993), Boyne (2002), and Brooks (2008).

is a kernel of truth in all these claims. But if we move away from trying to explain what brought about the defeat, to considering the more perplexing question of why the military drove the country to the brink of war in June 1967, we can see that none of these interpretations hold. If regime institutions were so incompetent, and Amer knew it (as discussed below), then why rush to war? And if the U.S. and Israel were out to get Egypt, and both Nasser and Amer were quite aware of this (again as discussed below), then why fall into their trap? And if we blame the escalation on Nasser, then why was he desperately trying to diffuse the situation until the last moment? Perhaps the 'true' motivation behind this unwarranted escalation will remain forever hidden, but the logic of the intra-regime power struggle provides an explanation that best incorporates the available historical evidence. And this logic points to only one direction: that the effectives of Nasser's counterbalancing strategy convinced Amer and his associates that if the military does not accomplish something spectacular soon, it would be gradually displaced from the epicenter of power. In other words, the escalation was an attempt to salvage the image and influence of the military.

Let us first underscore how Amer knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the army was not equipped for war, even as he pretended he was preparing for one. On December 16, 1966, the Field Marshal received a report by the military's high command advising against any military confrontation with Israel in the foreseeable future. The report was based on the disastrous effects that the Yemen War had on the armed forces. The Egyptian army had sent military instructors to support Yemeni left-leaning nationalists in 1962. Amer had embraced this opportunity to boost the military's public image in what he believed would be a short and effortless campaign against pro-monarchy bandits. According to Chief of Staff Mohamed Fawzy, Amer's strategy in Yemen was theatrical, a mere show of force. He encouraged firing excessively into Yemeni mountains for no other purpose than to demonstrate lethal strength back home; he gave out field promotions and military decorations to officers who barely saw combat; and his aides fabricated press releases about

the army's heroic exploits (Fawzy 1990: 24-26). Sadat, who was responsible for the political side of the war, also complained how Amer treated the war as "a new theatre to strengthen his position and extend his influence" (Sadat 1978: 211). Amer's plan almost worked, in light of the fact that the U.S. under John F. Kennedy had initially recognized the republicans in Yemen. Soon, however, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, which both supported the Yemeni monarchy, persuaded Lyndon B. Johnson to change sides. Saudis could not live with a communist regime on their southern borders; the British could not stand losing the strategic port of Aden to communists, and Johnson was much more hawkish than his predecessor in fighting communism (Schlesinger 1965: 523). Now, the army was trapped in an unconventional war against Western-funded guerillas and European mercenaries. What started out as a simple operation requiring no more than a few hundred officers turned into a quagmire that drew no less than 70,000 men by 1965 (Vatikiotis 1978: 162).

The report submitted by the general command at the end of 1966 assessed the impact of this new reality. It emphasized how military discipline had suffered from the exigencies of guerilla warfare and policing in Yemen; how soldiers had unlearned all the rules of modern warfare in this unconventional operation; how combat pilots had forgotten the basics of strategic bombing and dogfighting after five years of aimless strikes against a country that had neither an air force nor air defense capabilities; how self-esteem had deteriorated as the army felt outmaneuvered at every turn; and how equipment and ammunition were being thoughtlessly expended by the frustrated troops. Subsequent reports pointed to the fact that budget constraints imposed by the Yemen War forced the military to discharge thousands of reservists in March 1967 and issue a three-month freeze on conscription, and that as a result of these constraints, in May 1967 (the month Amer decided to escalate), the army had been suffering a shortage of 37 percent shortage in manpower, 30 percent shortage in small arms, 24 percent in artillery, 45 percent in tanks, and 70 percent in armored vehicles; trained pilots were fewer than the available aircraft (while the Israeli ratio was 3 pilots to

every plane, in Egypt it was 0.8), and not a single fortified hanger had been built in the last five years. Another report on military training described 1966-1967 as the worse training year in the history of the Egyptian army: not a single brigade-level maneuver had been conducted; and only 5.2 percent of the training fuel was used. In terms of munitions, the infantry consumed only 26 percent of its allocated share for military exercises; the armory only 15 percent; and the artillery 18 percent. Still more startling figures revealed that on average each tank fired only one shot during that entire training period; each howitzer only 1.5 shots; and each Bazooka only 15 shots. Finally, because security considerations advised against the hiring of educated soldiers, only 19 percent of the infantry, 18 percent of the marines, and 21 percent of the air force were literate, which reduced the overall quality of the fighting force. Added to the fact that the last major divisional exercise conducted by the army dated back to 1954, the picture was unmistakably bleak (Gamasy 1993: 39-40; Dunstan 2009: 26).

Of course, Nasser was painfully aware of the sorry state of the armed forces. Even before the Yemen War, he understood that the policy of rewarding loyalty over merit, taken to an extreme by Amer's security associates, had transformed military command posts into salaried sinecures. He also knew that the army was losing in Yemen, which he used to refer to as "my Vietnam" (Sharaf 1996: 336). In fact, Chief of Staff Fawzy asserted that on the eve of the 1967 war, the President had virtually no control over the army, and tried to avert war at all costs (Fawzy 1990: 10). But there was even more. Nasser conveyed to Amer in no uncertain terms that there was an American-Israeli plot to destroy the military and overthrow the entire regime.

U.S-Egyptian relations had gone sour after 1957 because of Nasser's refusal to join U.S.-endorsed regional defense alliances. The Americans decided that Egypt's version of Arab nationalism was as subversive as communism, and began from that point on to groom Saudi Arabia to take over the leadership of the Arab world and undermine Egyptian hegemony. A telegram from

the State Department to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, on September 27, 1957, stated: "Egypt seemed determined to attempt to deny other states freedom of choice which it demands for itself. It insists all its neighbors adopt a policy of 'positive neutrality' despite the fact that some of them have freely concluded that their independence can be better assured by association with collective security arrangements against Communism… Nationalism which is used as coverall for efforts by one nation to dominate other nations and to oblige other countries to follow blindly its policies will inevitably be opposed by the U.S." (Ahmed 2007: 151). Keen on salvaging bilateral relations, Nasser responded warmly to a circular sent by Kennedy to Arab leaders in August 1961, triggering a two-year personal correspondence during which 75 letters were exchanged between the two. What kept relations from deteriorating during Kennedy's time was his belief that Nasser was more dangerous when cornered (Schlesinger 1965: 522-23). This all changed when Johnson came to office. The new President developed particularly intimate relations with Israel during his tenure as House majority leader. He resented America's role in forcing an Israeli withdrawal from Sinai after the 1956 war, and believed that force was the only language Nasser understood. Being a long-time Texan representative, Johnson was also tied to oil conglomerates that felt threatened by the spread of Nasser's left-leaning nationalism to the Gulf countries.

Johnson first charged Robert Komer, a CIA operative who later served on the National Security Council (NSC), to develop a strategy to draw the Egyptian military into a grueling struggle intended to weaken and discredit it. The Yemen War was a good starting point, and Komer played it so well that his NSC colleagues began to refer to it as 'Komer's war'. Next, Johnson suspended American wheat shipments to Cairo (subsidized via U.S. Public Law 480) to strain the Egyptian economy further. But an even more lethal operation was underway. Towards the end of 1966, former World Bank President Eugene Black warned Nasser, whom he considered now a personal friend, that officials in Washington were discussing plans to "unleash Israel" against Egypt sometime

next year. Nasser's closest advisor, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal learned that an American-Israeli coordination committee composed of Walt Rostow and Robert Komer (from NSC), Richard Helms and James Angleton (from CIA), and Moshe Dayan, Meir Amit, and Ephraim Evron (representing Israel) was formed in 1967 to plan a war aimed at installing a friendly regime in Egypt – the operation was codenamed Turkey Hunt (Heikal 1990: 361-74). In fact, on the first day of the war Walt Rostow submitted a memo to Johnson that began, "Herewith the account…of the first day's turkey shoot" (Dunstan 2009: 72). The timing was considered perfect because the new Soviet Troika was focused on domestic affairs, and was under pressure from the Eastern bloc and China not to support non-communist countries militarily. Also, the U.S. needed to distract attention from its escalation in Vietnam

Now, if Amer had a clear picture of the dismal state of the army, and if he had been forewarned about the American-Israeli intentions, why did he feel compelled to undertake such an incredible gamble in the summer of 1967? The answer lies in the success of Nasser's counterbalancing strategy against the military. The President and his security team decided in 1962 that it was impossible to either depose Amer and his group or lure them away from the army, and that they therefore had to ignore the army for the time being and work around it in order to increase their power. Restated in strategic terms, they decided to shift from frontal assault to siege warfare. If access to the military was blocked, there was still the prospect of enhancing political power through building new organizations and controlling the executive. Thus, the ASU was created in 1962, followed by the VO in 1963, and Nasser security loyalists led the cabinet – Sabri between 1962 and 1965, and Zakaria between 1965 and 1967. Moreover, there was a progressive decline in the ratio of officers in cabinet, from 51.5 percent in August 1961, to 47 percent in September 1962, to 36.3 percent in March 1964 (Dekmejian 1982: 31).

The President's faction also augmented their economic influence through the socialist laws of July 1961 and other subsequent laws that expanded state control over the economy. Even ideologically, they managed to increase their hold through the wholesale adoption of an Arab nationalist and socialist discourse, which legitimated both their new political organizations and economic laws. Taken together these strategies were gradually shifting the power balance within the regime away from the military and its security partners to the political apparatus and its assemblage of security organs. So while the army successfully defend itself against all attempts to impose political control, Amer believed that these new changes not only reduced the relative power of the military vis-à-vis the political apparatus, but they also threatened military autonomy in the years to come.

Driven by insecurity, Amer began with a few preventive measures. To tighten his control over the officer corps at this time of adversity, he asked his top security lieutenant Shams Badran to carry out a thorough reshuffling of military commands from the general staff down to battalion leaders. With 300 officers reallocated in the summer of 1966, this was the most extensive wave of reassignments since 1952. For the first time loyalists were given field commands (a quite burdensome assignment) in order to keep the troops on a tight leash, while suspect officers were recalled to GHQ where they would remain under the watchful eye of Badran and the OCC (Hammad 2010: 1380-83). Afterwards, Amer insisted that Badran be appointed War Minister, a cabinet position he never cared about before. As soon as Nasser granted him that request, in September 1966, Amer issued Vice Supreme Commander Decree 367 of 1966, which expanded the jurisdiction of the War Minister to cover all administrative and budgetary affairs concerning the military, in addition to control over military intelligence, military courts, and a host of other military-related bodies. In parallel, Amer issued Vice Supreme Commander Degree 118 of 1966, reducing the responsibilities of Nasser's ally, Chief of Staff Fawzy, to minor administrative duties and prohibiting

him from any direct contact with combat units. The Field Marshal and his War Minister then streamlined the whole military structure to where the heads of services and administrative units would report directly to them rather than the Chief of Staff or the President (Fawzy 1990: 37-38).

After defending his primary domain – the armed forces – Amer moved to the offensive by trying to undercut competing institutions. In September 1965, Badran claimed that his men at military intelligence had uncovered a Muslim Brothers' plot to overthrow the regime, and that in light of the demonstrable inefficiency of the Interior Ministry he decided to put the Military Intelligence Department in charge of the investigations. Recognizing this for what it was – a stab at the Interior Ministry – the ministry's General Investigations Department struggled to prove that these reports were fabricated. Hostility between the army and the GID ran so high that at one point Fouad Allam, then a junior GID officer and later its deputy director, was detained at a military prison when he exchanged words with Badran over a certain suspect. As Allam later recounted, if Zakaria had not learned about what happened and asked Nasser to interfere personally, he might have never been released (Allam 1996: 15). To produce evidence to support Badran's allegations, the Military Police detained perhaps 30,000 Islamists in July 1965. MID succeeded in putting a case together, at the cost of 250 Brotherhood lives lost under torture in various military prisons (Hosni 2008: 63, 82). Taking the inefficiency of civilian security as a pretext, Badran not only demanded the dismantling of GID, but he also issued Military Service Law 25 of 1966, which declared that legal disputes between civilians and officers would fall under the jurisdiction of military courts (Fawzy 1990: 42-52). Officers were now officially above the law.

Still, Amer and his cohort did not feel safe. In November 1966, Murad Ghaleb, Egypt's longtime ambassador to Moscow and future foreign minister, overheard a conversation between civilian intelligence director Salah Nasr and some of Amer's lieutenants in which they complained that as long as Nasser controlled the executive their position would remain vulnerable (Ghaleb 2001:

101). Accordingly, Amer asked that he or Badran assume the premiership, which Nasser flatly rejected. Tensions began rising again before a compromise was reached at the end of 1966 to replace Zakaria as prime minister with Sedqi Suleiman, a reputably apolitical officer. The Field Marshal then reversed the decline in the military component in cabinet, pushing it from less than 36 percent under Zakaria to 55.2 percent under Suleiman (Dekmejian 1982: 33). However, Amer's group lost a chip because part of the compromise was to appoint Muhammad Sadeq, Egypt's military attaché to Bonn, as MID chief (Sirrs 2010: 95). Having spent many years abroad, both sides perceived him as neutral; but considering that Nasser's strategy had shifted from confronting to containing the military, this new appointment was certainly added to his column of the balance sheet, and (as the future revealed) subtracted a lot from Amer.

All the above maneuvers notwithstanding, Amer's faction realized that if the military did not pull off a dramatic feat sometime soon, its relative weight within the regime's overall formula of power would continue to deteriorate. It was not enough to handle domestic issues such as investigating land reform violations or rounding up Islamist activists; these were tasks that could be better dealt with by civilian authorities. After its miserable performance in Yemen had wrecked its image, the army had to prove its worth in the arena that no one else could claim, that is: on the battlefield – for as Thomas Hobbes once proclaimed "there is no honour Military but by warre" (Hobbes [1651] 1968). Thus, the path was set for a war that proved to be not only disastrous for the region, but also Amer's undoing.

'At Dawn We Slept'

It all started in December 1966, when Amer telegrammed Nasser from Pakistan demanding the deployment of Egyptian troops in Sinai to silence Arab critics who accused the army of hiding

behind the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) positioned there since 1956. The President ignored Amer's plea. But upon receiving unconfirmed reports from Russian sources that Israel was mobilizing against Syria, the Field Marshal immediately ordered a general mobilization into Sinai (on May 14, 1967), later justifying his decision to Nasser by citing the Egyptian-Syrian mutual defense pact, which had been concluded a year before in an attempt to rebuild the lost trust between the two countries since their breakup five years earlier. The President was infuriated. He had met with Amer the night before and agreed to double-check the Soviet report before taking any action. Nonetheless, Amer convened his high command the next morning and ordered the mobilization (Brooks 2008: 90). A suspicious Nasser then dispatched the only high-ranking officer he trusted, Chief of Staff Fawzy, to Damascus to confirm the news of an imminent Israeli attack. The latter reported back to Amer on May 15 that there were no Israeli soldiers on the Syrian borders, and that the Soviet report was baseless. However, as Fawzy recalls: "The Field Marshal made no reaction… I began to suspect that the alleged [Israeli] troop concentrations was not the principle reason for his mobilization order" (Fawzy 1990: 72).

Nasser then warned Amer that an advisory committee (under Nasser confidant Mohamed Hassanein Heikal) advised against escalation because of the fragile geopolitical situation and the tense relations with America. Moreover, the Jordanian King warned Lieutenant General Abd al-Mon'em Riyad, Commander of the Joint Arab Forces and soon-to-be Egyptian Chief of Staff, during a meeting in Amman on May 2, that his sources in Washington and London assured him that Israel was plotting with the U.S. to drag Egypt into a devastating war (the king was justifiably worried about the fate of the West Bank, still under his guardianship).[14] Upon his return to Cairo,

[14] New groundbreaking work by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé (2012) reveals through the examination of recently declassified documents, that the Israeli government had devised a comprehensive legal and administrative plan to govern the West Bank and Gaza by a military regime as early as the summer of 1963, four years before Egypt's escalation – another triumph for foreign policy explanation based on power politics rather than contingencies. It is also

Riyad submitted a full report to the Amer. But when the war rhetoric intensified despite his warnings, he asked Heikal on May 13 if the President had seen the report. As soon as Nasser learned of the report's existence, he demanded a copy, which Amer only sent on May 14 after the army had already crossed into Sinai and requested a pull out of all UN troops (Heikal 1990: 268, 439-40).

In a desperate attempt at damage control, Nasser asked Amer for a copy of the letter he was planning to deliver to the head of UNEF. The Field Marshal sent him Arabic and English versions. Nasser amended the Arabic version so that instead of demanding a withdrawal of all UN troops, it spoke only of a partial redeployment. Nasser then told Amer to make sure both versions required nothing more than a partial reallocation of forces, which Amer promised he would. But on May 16, he called back the President to apologize: due to a supposed mix-up the English version of the letter he submitted to the UN still demanded a full withdrawal. Nasser quickly contacted the UN headquarters in New York to retract the order, but UN under-secretary general Ralph Bunche, possibly under American pressure, refused (Brooks 2008: 91).

Now that the army was fully deployed in the peninsula, Amer raised the stakes once more. On May 21, he demanded the closing of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli navigation. When Nasser alerted him that Israel might consider this blockade a *casus belli*, Amer retorted that his troops in Sinai could not sit on their hands as Israeli flags flashed before them, and that if his wish was not granted, they might act recklessly, i.e. shoot Israeli vessels. When Nasser asked him if he was ready for war, Amer famously responded: 'My neck is at stake. Everything is ready'. In reality, Amer and his associates had taken the decision to close the straits – regardless of Nasser's – five days earlier, on May 16. Again, he succeeded in stacking the deck against de-escalation (Brooks 2008: 92). To further reassure the President, Badran claimed that during his recent visit to Moscow, the Soviet

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acknowledged that the Israeli air strike, codenamed Operation *Moked*, was the result of twelve years of planning and several months of concerted practice and maneuvers (Dunstan 2009: 15).

Defense Minister Andrei Grechko pledged to defend Egypt should the Americans come to Israel's aid – a claim the Soviets vehemently denied after the war. Egyptian ambassador to Moscow Murad Ghaleb, who had attended the meeting between Badran and the Soviet leaders, corroborated the Soviet account, confirming that the War Minister made it all up, and that the Russians had explicitly said they could not intervene on Egypt's side (Ghaleb 2001: 107). Amer of course knew the truth about what happened in Moscow, but he deliberately hid Soviet misgivings and exaggerated Marshal Grechko's departing words to Badran to instill in Nasser a false sense of confidence.

Nasser, on the other hand, was not only clueless, but he also had no way to verify Amer's claims regarding military readiness. He became particularly concerned when an Israeli cabinet reshuffle on June 1 brought in the hawkish Moshe Dayan, member of the U.S.-Israeli committee on Operation Turkey Hunt, as Defense Minister. The only thing the President could do was to ask his intelligence sources to explore Israel's intentions. Based on their estimations, Nasser rounded up the general staff for one last time on June 2 and informed them that Israel is planning to attack from the air in 72 hours, and that they must either remove or fortify Egypt's air force squadrons in Sinai to prevent a repeat of the Suez War, when the planes were all destroyed on the ground. The President also cautioned the army not to strike first, or else he would not be able to garner international support. The Commander of the Air Force seemed reluctant to receive the first blow, but he assured Nasser that if Israel attacks, his losses would not exceed 20 percent – of course, actual losses in the air force turned out to be 85 percent (Browne 2009: 75). On June 3, Nasser gave an interview to British journalist Anthony Nutting, where he clearly stated that Egypt "planned no further escalation" (Brooks 2008: 65). In a final effort to avert war, he arranged with Washington to receive Zakaria on June 5 to negotiate a way out. It was too late. June 5 was the day the war actually started.

A couple of hours after dawn an Israeli armada of 196 fighter-bombers (approximately 95 percent of the Israeli Air Force) headed towards Egypt. Many of them were tracked by the Egyptian-

run radar system in Jordan. But when the duty officer radioed the code word (*Enab*) to warn GHQ of the impending strike the message was indecipherable because the radio codes have been changed the night before without anyone informing that advanced radar outpost. Between 8 and 11:30 a.m., Israel destroyed 85 percent of the Egyptian air force (304 planes) on the ground, together with the 17 airfields they were stationed at and the air defense installations protecting them. Over the next six days, Egypt lost 700 tanks, 450 field guns, 17,500 soldiers (11,500 killed and the rest injured or captured), and out of its 300,000 men in arms, only half remained in formation. Yet the "volume of the losses," as future war minister Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy bitterly noted, "betrays the immensity of the disaster" (Gamasy 1993: 79).[15]

Now, did Amer really seek war, or did he believe that a show of force in Sinai was all that it takes to restore the military's credibility and prove that it was still the most formidable institution in the country? A close examination of the events leading up to the war makes it clear that Amer and his group never imagined that their escalation would actually trigger a war; they were plainly bluffing. For one thing, when Amer's frantic chief of operations reminded him of the series of general staff reports and the recent report submitted by senior officers in May 1967 warning that the army was in no condition to engage Israel, Amer responded lightly: "There is no need to worry. This is nothing but a military demonstration"(Gamasy 1993: 22). GIS director Salah Nasr also admitted in an interview after the war that the Field Marshal "mobilized the troops for a political purpose, which was to demonstrate military strength [at home]" (Imam 1996: 159). The 'demonstration' aspect of the whole episode was clear enough when Amer insisted – quite imprudently – to march his troops

[15] Furthermore, the war crippled the Egyptian economy: military equipment worth over $1.5 billion was lost; countless millions were spent on settling the internally displaced population of the Suez Canal cities; and billions of dollars of expected revenue from the Suez Canal ($250 million annually), the Sinai oilfields ($100 million annually), and tourism (another $100 million) were no longer available. Preparations for the upcoming battle to liberate Sinai further strained the economy, pushing the state and its citizens to the limit. The annual rate of economic growth was almost cut in half, falling from 6 percent during the 1962-1967 period to 3.6 percent in 1970, and declining further to 1.7 percent during the period 1971-1974 (Browne 2009: 75; Wahid 2009: 131). Israel, on the other hand, lost 338 men and 122 tanks (Dunstan 2009: 88).

through the streets of Cairo, parading new Soviets weapons, and chanting patriotic slogans. In reality, he knew that 80 percent of the force assembled in Sinai was untrained reservists, hastily marshaled to the front in their civilian garments, and randomly assigned to units they have never served in – in fact, the mobilization plan was two years old, and these reservists had never been drilled before. Although on paper the size of the fully mobilized army was estimated at 250,000, and although in truth its size on the eve of war did not exceed 130,000, Amer claimed he commanded 2 million men, a number he fabricated to exaggerate his force. Also, a whole squadron of Soviet planes, as well as dozens of tanks, and hundreds of boxes of small arms and ammunition remained locked in military warehouses in the capital until the end of the war (Huwaidi 2002: 191).

In addition, the army leadership did not come up with a concrete strategy for positioning the troops, let alone commencing hostilities. Chief of Staff Fawzy remembers how the Field Marshal's orders were always changing and inconsistent, thus causing units to circle aimlessly around Sinai during the two weeks that preceded the war (Fawzy 1990: 10-11). Future war minister Kamal Hassan Aly describes the chaotic preparations as follows: "As a brigade leader in the 4th Armored Division, I was handed 14 contradictory assignments from May 25 to June 5, leading my brigade back and forth in purposeless maneuvers for 10 days until my men became completely exhausted and disillusioned with their hesitant leadership" (Aly 1994: 211-21). Another brigade traveled 1,200 kilometers up and down Sinai, as Amer introduced four major – and contradictory – revisions to the deployment plan between May 15 and June 4. In fact, the Field Marshal replaced twelve divisional commanders, and a few more further down the ladder, 18 days before Israel struck; some of them did not make it to their new commands before the war broke out. On the first day of the mobilization into Sinai, he sent shock waves throughout the high command by appointing Major General Abd al-Muhsen Murtagi – a man who, by his own admission, had been in Yemen for years and "knew little of the detailed operational plans for Sinai" – as front commander (Gawrych 1987:

539-40). Moreover, despite Amer's threats to attack, the only plan that existed – Plan Qaher – was a defensive plan, which was formulated in December 1966 and never updated. It was in fact too simple to merit the label 'plan', relying essentially on luring Israeli units into the peninsula and entrapping them in defensive 'killing zones'. Amer himself visited Sinai only three times between 1962 and 1967 to follow the erection of these defensive strongpoints (Brooks 2008: 86).

The actions of the general staff between their June 2 meeting with Nasser and the beginning of the war (three days later) provides further evidence as to how dismissive they were of the possibility of war. For starters, the military leadership ignored the President's warning of an imminent Israeli air strike on the morning of June 5. Soon-to-be war minister Amin Huwaidi testifies: "our fighter jets remained exposed on the front, even though inexpensive concrete shelters could have been built in a couple of days" (Huwaidi 2002: 191). Commander of the air force in Sinai (Abd al-Hamid al-Deghidi) only learned of Nasser's warning after the defeat (Imam 1996: 143). Not only that, but hours after the meeting, Military Intelligence circulated a report among the troops gathered in Sinai assuring them that Arab steadfastness would certainly deter Israel from contemplating an attack. The report naturally encouraged units to relax even further. In one amusing instance, a lieutenant crossed the entire peninsula to deliver anti-tank ammunition to the forward outpost of Kuntilla on June 4. Once he got there, the field commander asked him to turn his convey around, adding: "We don't need any ammunition. There isn't going to be a war. Take it back" (Dunstan 2009: 15).

Then came the inexplicable decision to fly Amer and his staff to the front in an unarmed transport on June 5, the very day Nasser predicted Israel would attack. As a result, when Israel struck, Egypt's entire high command (28 officers between the ranks of brigadier and lieutenant general) was divided between those suspended in midair with Amer, and those who were either seeing him off at Almaza airport in Cairo or waiting for him at Beer Tamada airport in Sinai. To

make matters worse, air defense units were ordered – hours before the strike – to hold their fire until the Field Marshal's plane landed safely, and Amer could not revoke these orders once the attack began because he feared that if he broke radio silence he might be detected and shot down. Accordingly, Egypt's air defense was totally paralyzed during the first waves of this devastating attack. Gamasy, who was at the advance command center in Sinai when the war began lamented: "I pitied the troops [who had no] commanding officers at a time like this" (Gamasy 1993: 50).

Next, came the ultimate testimony to Amer's unpreparedness for battle: his demand for a Soviet endorsed ceasefire one hour after the commencement of hostilities, followed by his tragic order of a general retreat from Sinai (Sadat 1978: 228). Fawzy described how he was summoned by Amer on the morning of June 6 and given 20 minutes to draft a plan to pull out the troops. "I was astounded by the request… The Field Marshal was psychologically worn out and seemed on the verge of a nervous breakdown… The land forces…were holding out steadily, and there seemed to be no reason whatsoever to consider a withdrawal" (Fawzy 1990: 151-52). "By the end of the day, we can be said to have performed acceptably," Gamasy recalled, "Fighting was continuing…the army reserves had suffered no losses" (Gamasy 1993: 61-62). Military historian Simon Dunstan (2009) confirmed in his exhaustive day-to-day analysis of the war that over half of the Egyptian ground units remained intact and offered considerable resistance to the Israeli ground campaign during the first couple of days. Egyptian troops were at their best when entrenched in defensive strongpoints; this was the tactic that required the least training or skills – only bravery. In addition, the Egyptian plan in Sinai – to the extent that there was one – was purely defensive. The soldiers successfully delayed the initial Israel Defense Force advance, forcing IDF brigades into time-consuming flanking maneuvers. And time was of essence to allow the Egyptian high command to absorb the initial shock, revise its plans, and issue specific directives to the units scattered along the front.

The sensible thing to do was to fall back to Sinai's second line of defense, order the troops to entrench themselves in the naturally fortified Mitla and Gidi Passes, block the Israeli ground invasion, and then counterattack. Fawzy, who was in charge of formulating the plan to defend Sinai a year before, believed that as long as the Sinai Passes were still at hand, the peninsula could not be conquered (Fawzy 1990: 101). This was also Nasser's advice to Amer when they he dropped by GHQ on the early afternoon of June 5: to dig-in around the passes (Sadat 1978: 229). Nonetheless, Fawzy set to work immediately in case Amer decided to ignore all that and pull out anyway. In twenty minutes he presented Amer with a rough draft of a four-day pullout plan with enough delaying tactics to keep the troops intact. After staring at him blankly for a few seconds, Amer told him he had already issued an order to withdraw in 24 hours (Fawzy 1990: 151-52). Amer, who probably thought he could repeat Nasser's 1956 rapid withdrawal tactic, apparently forgot that the number of troops this time around was enormous, and that an orderly pull out was impossible without a well-defined plan. The result was catastrophic: tens of thousands of soldiers abandoned their equipment and withdrew in chaos only to find themselves stranded in the scorching desert under the mercy of marauding Israeli fire power. In fact, less than 6 percent of the soldiers came back with their weapons. And while only 294 soldiers were lost on the first day of fighting, the general retreat of June 7 led to the killing, injuring, and capturing of 17,500 men (Aly 1994: 234). Amer's unilateral decision to withdraw was doubtlessly the single most important reason for the defeat. Gamasy summoned up those painful memories from his time at the front:

> **I watched a heavy flow of troops move westward [away from Sinai]. It was completely disorganized… Could a retreat take place in this manner, when it normally required extreme discipline and precision and, according to the doctrine of war, should take place while the fighting still continued… The [field] command had given up control of its forces at the most critical time…the situation can neither be explained nor excused…troops withdraw[ing] in the most pathetic way…under continuous enemy air attacks…an enormous graveyard of scattered corpses, burning equipment, and exploding ammunition** (Gamasy 1993: 64-65).

Abandonment by senior commanders doomed the resistance at the front. A case in point was Egypt's most heavily fortified strongpoint at Abu Ugeila, manned by the 16,000-strong 2nd Infantry Division and comprised of a forest of natural defenses, barbed wires, minefields, trenches, anti-tank guns and other artillery pieces, all reinforced with some 90 tanks reserved in concrete bunkers for counterattacks. There was only one weakness, however: the division commander (Major General Sa'di Naguib) was absent. Considering he owed his post to the fact that he was Amer's drinking-partner, he was understandably reluctant to leave his side. And the field commander "did not have the authority to act on his own initiative." The result was that Brigadier General Ariel Sharon overran this formidable defensive complex in a few hours (Dunstan 2009: 66). This abandonment was also emotionally bruising for the lower ranks. A driver with the 6th Mechanized Infantry Division by the name of Mahmoud al-Suwarqa remembered bitterly, "We were waiting to carry out our orders…when suddenly on June 7 both the company and battalion commanders disappeared. Later I found out that they fled over the canal… They [Israelis] fired shells and machine guns at us and after that I felt nothing. I awoke in an Israeli vehicle soaked in my own blood" (Dunstan 2009: 84).

A final – and quite conclusive – piece of evidence of how the mobilization into Sinai that fateful summer was no more than a bluff was Badran's confession during his trial in February 1968 that: "We were 100 percent sure that Israel would not dare to attack" (Gamasy 1993: 76). That is why future war minister Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy, drawing on his experience in the war, concluded that Amer must have thought that he could wipe out the effects of the Suez War (by removing UN observers, and reestablishing Egypt's sovereignty over its territorial waters) without actually going to war, that he could simply intimidate Israel by rushing in a sizable force into Sinai and making empty threats to attack (Gamasy 1993: 76). In that sense, all the military needed to do – in Amer's view – was to look formidable. And that it did. On the Sinai front, Egypt's 100,000 soldiers, 930 tanks

(mostly T-34, T-54 and T-55), and 430 fighters and fighter-bombers (MiG-17, MiG-19, MiG-21, Su-7, An-12, and Tu-16) were lined up against 70,000 Israeli troops with 800 tanks (Centurion, M-48 Patton, M-51 Sherman), and 280 fighter-bombers (Mirage and Mystère) (Dunstan 2009: 25). The balance seemed to be in Egypt's favor. Now that all eyes were again fixed on the armed forces and its gallant march into Sinai, Amer felt satisfied. Finally, he could "return to the center stage of…politics after he thought he was so close to the exit" (Heikal 1990: 818). Little did he know that at this point the exit had just opened-up wide. The defeat provided Nasser with the long awaited for opportunity to purge the Field Marshal and his men, and bring the military back under control.

The Final Showdown

After the destruction of the army in Sinai and the occupation of the peninsula, Nasser visited Amer on June 8, 1967 at GHQ and told him that he will deliver a speech the next day and announce his and Amer's resignation. Amer agreed on condition that his faithful lieutenant Shams Badran would be appointed President, to which Nasser conceded. But on June 9, Nasser primetime speech only mentioned his own resignation and named Zakaria his successor (Sadat 1978: 232). Immediately following the speech, hundreds of thousands flooded the streets protesting Nasser's decision and pledging to fight under his banner to liberate Sinai. The spontaneity of the demonstrations was widely contested. We know that the ASU had the organizational capacity to spark mass riots with great speed. In February 1967, Aly Sabri tested the ASU's 'political recall' mechanism for the first time, and succeeded – relying only on word of mouth – to mobilize 100,000 people in 10 hours to welcome the Iraqi President. The experiment was later repeated on a smaller scale, mobilizing 40,000 demonstrators in 3 hours (Sabri interviewed in Yunis 2005: 7-8). The fact that these drills took place barely three months before the June 9 demonstrations makes it clear that regardless of the

spontaneity of some demonstrations, ASU elements must have played a role in directing them. Also, it helped that the Ministry of Interior did nothing to repress the riots. Interior Minister Sha'rawi Gomaa called Heikal – whom Nasser delegated to answer his phone calls right after the speech – warning that his men will not control the street, and that the President must revoke his decision (Heikal 1990: 851).

There are similar question marks regarding Nasser's decision to substitute Zakaria for Badran, and relegate Amer's resignation to the late night news. Heikal, who wrote the resignation speech, says it was he who convinced the President to do so (Heikal 1990: 841-43). While one can never verify an actor's true intentions, the fact that the Ministry of National Guidance delayed the announcement of Amer's resignation until the 11 p.m. news bulletin, when the masses had already poured into the streets and very few were at home watching the news, guaranteed that the people would only demand Nasser's return; Amer was thus certainly upstaged. This was confirmed the next morning, when daily newspapers, such as *Akhbar al-Youm*, covered Nasser's resignation speech and the people's refusal in great detail on its front page, with only a small news caption at the corner of the page mentioning that Amer stepped down without further elaboration.[16] In addition, the choice of Zakaria as successor seems to have been carefully calculated. Heikal says he suggested Zakaria because he was the most capable of Nasser's associates (Heikal 1990: 841-43) – which he certainly was. But as Amer rightly noted: "A fetus in his mother's womb was bound to reject Zakaria" the feared security baron (Ahmed 1993: 913).

Amer's military associates realized what was happening that night and sounded air raid sirens to scare people away. It did not work. Then a close ally of Amer, GIS chief Salah Nasr, visited Nasser (in Heikal's presence) to dissuade him from making any changes in the general staff or else the military might overreact and trigger a crisis. Nasser rejected this veiled threat and told Nasr that

[16] *Akhbar al-Youm* 1179: 1. Cairo (6/10/1967).

he will hold him personally responsible if the officers did anything foolish (Heikal 1990: 875-86). On June 11, Nasser retracted his resignation and put Fawzy in charge of the military. The headlines reported: "Nasser Responds to the Will of Millions: I Will Stay as the People Commanded."[17]

Upon Heikal's request, the President finally agreed to meet his discharged Field Marshal on June 15. Amer demanded to be reinstated, but Nasser adamantly refused (Heikal 1990: 881-84). The confrontation that followed "came close to being a civil war," a challenge infinitely graver than any Nasser had faced (Aburish 2004: 267). Apparently, even if Nasser and Amer were ready to call it quits, their associates refused to go down without a fight.

The first bullet in this confrontation was the fierce defamation campaign that Amer's men launched against the President, basically holding him responsible not only for the 1967 crisis, but also for all the previous setbacks, from the Syrian secession to the Yemen debacle. Nasser was presented as a psychologically disturbed would-be political virtuoso, who always failed to measure up to his image of himself. And it was the President's personal grandiosity that brought about the May 1967 escalation against Israel and the subsequent defeat. The argument went as follows: sensitive to criticism from other Arab leaders, Nasser embarked on a dangerous game of brinkmanship to maintain his prestige, failing to recognize that he was unwittingly playing into Israel's hands. The defeat was therefore presented to Egyptians as the result of a reckless adventure intended to raise Nasser's standing (Gamasy 1993: 35).

Second, Amer's commanders claimed that they had warned Nasser that the army was not prepared for another episode of his rash foreign policy conquests. Chief of Operations Lieutenant General Anwar al-Qadi pointed that although Nasser had warned the high command in 1966 that President Johnson was trying to set him up, he still walked into the trap with his eyes wide open despite repeated warnings from the military that he should not let his pride jeopardize the country's

[17] *Al-Akhbar* 4664: 1. Cairo (6/11/1967).

future. Front Commander Colonel General Abd al-Muhsen Murtagi equated what Nasser did with someone: "throwing an army that cannot swim into the sea, and then blaming it for drowning" (Abu Zikri 1988: 380-97). Former President Muhammad Naguib's longtime ally, constitutional lawyer Abd al-Razeq al-Sanhouri, went so far as to claim that Nasser diabolically engineered his own army's defeat so that he could rein it in – like a merchant who burns down his store in hopes of a fresh start (al-Sanhouri 2005: 314). This latter view – as malicious as it sounds – found a receptive audience among Egypt's diplomats; having been long immersed in power politics and international conspiracies, it was easy for them to accept that their president believed that a resounding military defeat was imperative to dismiss Amer and his cronies (Ghaleb 2001: 124).

Third, the military leadership argued that if Nasser had let them have their way and strike Israel first, victory would have been guaranteed. But instead the President turned down their plans for a first strike, and gave Israel the initiative in order to appease the Americans. Air Force Commander Sedqi Mahmoud supposedly begged Nasser during their last meeting on June 2 to allow him to launch a preemptive air strike, but the President yelled at him: "As long as you have no means to win a war against America, then shut up and follow your orders." Air Defense Commander Ismail Labib said that Mahmoud returned that day to GHQ with teary eyes, knowing quite well that taking the first strike, as Nasser insisted, would devastate the army. In addition, Labib continued, it was Nasser's cabinets that had refused his repeated requests for funding to build concrete shelters for aircraft and radar installations. Fourth, the black propaganda campaign accused the President of encouraging Amer to issue the order to evacuate Sinai on June 6. As Front Commander Murtagi alleged, Field Marshal confessed to him that it was Nasser who pushed for an early retreat, and Abd al-Sattar Amin, Amer's secretary, said he overheard Amer and the President agreeing on the decision (Abu Zikri 1988: 378-79, 403, 442-44). Fifth, security officials supervised the en masse distribution of Amer's 1962 resignation letter, in which the Field Marshal implored

Nasser to adopt democracy and dismantle the dictatorship he had created before it brought about disaster (Sharaf 1996: 160-61).

Finally, even the few remaining professional officers, who loathed Amer and his clique, still blamed the President for politicizing the military. In their view, it was Nasser's obsession with security that created competing intelligence services and gave them free rein over the corps, allowing them to promote officers based on allegiance rather than merit. In 1967 alone, 173 fine officers were purged because their loyalty was suspect. Moreover, the various agencies' focus on coup-proofing the military and spying on the political leadership distracted them from their original tasks: counterintelligence and foreign espionage. Their most fateful blunder was the failure to discover that Israel's new fighter-bombers could fly at low altitudes undetectable by Egyptian radars. Future war minister Gamasy blamed Nasser for not carrying out a total overhaul of military command after its dismal performance in 1956 (Gamasy 1993: 83). Considering that many apolitical officers supported Nasser's coup because of the humiliating defeat of 1948, the thought that Israel and the West ambushed their institution once more was unbearable.

In comparison to the well-executed pro-Amer offensive, Nasser's associates seemed at a loss. For one thing, the President committed a major misstep by failing to arrest the Field Marshal and his allies immediately after the defeat. By allowing them to remain free, he not only gave them enough maneuvering space to conspire against him, but he was also implicitly relieved them from their responsibility for the defeat – or else why are they not behind bars. Moreover, upon learning from his intelligence sources that Amer's propaganda campaign was turning not only the officers, but also the common soldiers against him, an irresolute Nasser proposed to forgive Amer, Badran, and Nasr, "the unholy trio who ran a government within the government in Egypt without his knowledge or approval," if they agreed to accept less influential posts – in Amer's case, the vice presidency (Aburish 2004: 267).

The President's hesitance encouraged Amer's faction to go further, moving from slander to action. The Field Marshal's security associates urged him to reject any attempt at reconciliation with Nasser – including the latter's offer of a general amnesty – and began to work out a plot to seize power. Amer's security trio (Shams Badran, Salah Nasr, and Abbas Radwan) expectedly spearheaded the conspirators. On June 10, Nasr transferred Amer to an intelligence safe house in the heart of Cairo. He was only allowed back to his villa after Badran and Radwan had turned it into a fortress guarded by two commando platoons with a handful of heavy artillery pieces, in addition to 300 militiamen from Amer's hometown in Upper Egypt armed with machineguns and grenades. Amer's entourage then beseeched him to carry out a coup against Nasser. Their request was summarized in the words of Paratroopers Commander Major General Osman Nassar: "We implore you not to give this man power over us…he will not shrink from humiliating and destroying us" (Hosni 2008: 155). On June 11, 600 officers (among whom were fifty brigadiers and generals) drove twelve Military Police armored vehicles into GHQ, threatening to oust Fawzy, and chanting: 'There is no leader but the Field Marshal!' before turning to Amer's house to pledge their allegiance. Upon learning about the incident, Nasser dismissed thirty senior officers, including the military's twelve-member Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Fawzy 1990: 166-68). Clearly, this was not enough.

An undeterred Nasr tried to curry U.S. support for Nasser's overthrow. On June 26, he contacted the CIA via an Italian intelligence backchannel. He claimed that unlike Nasser, the military and intelligence community in Egypt was ready to recognize Israel and open up the economy. In return, they needed help in getting rid of the President and his acolytes. Despite American hostility towards Nasser, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) counseled that Nasr's proposal should be received with caution in case this was an Egyptian attempt to humiliate the U.S. in response to its complacent role in the 1967 war (Sirrs 2010: 105). The Field Marshal's men therefore decided to go ahead without American backing.

The coup plan – a brainchild of Nasr and Badran – was for commando units to escort Amer to the their headquarters near Anshas Airbase (on the outskirts of Cairo), and fly him from there to the Eastern Command on the west bank of the Suez Canal, where the army was mostly concentrated. There, in the words of Anshas Airbase Commander Major General Tahsin Zaki, the army would protect Amer while paratroopers, under Major General Galal Haridi, neutralized the Republican Guards back in the capital, and assisted GIS operatives in rounding up Nasser and his loyalists. At this point, Amer would address the nation, detailing Nasser's responsibility for the defeat, and declaring a holy war under his command to liberate Sinai (Hammad 2010: 1345). Amer's associates then prepared the public address, which began by promising "to expose the hidden truths [behind the defeat] and to rescue the citizens from this nightmare…[because] no one has the right to deceive the nation at this stage." It then recounted how Nasser ordered the May 14 mobilization to ease the pressure on Syria, but then rejected Amer's plan for a preemptive strike against Israel, and instead "startled the entire high command," on June 2, by ordering the impracticable repositioning of the troops in Sinai from an offensive to a defensive stance in three days, and requiring the air force to passively absorb an Israeli strike. The speech also pointed out how Egypt was double-crossed by the Superpowers: the Soviets recanted their pledge to fight alongside Egypt, and the U.S. deceived Nasser by claiming it would resolve the conflict peacefully if the military did not attack first. This is how the "geopolitical plot against us was sealed," the speech concluded, before calling Egyptians to arms to re-conquer their lost territory (Ahmed 1993: 925-33).

The plan was sound; but it was Amer's hesitancy to act against Nasser that delayed its execution. Why did the Field Marshal stall? One explanation is sheer ineptitude: "The same military that could not organize itself to fight a war could not organize now either" (Perlmutter 1974: 184). The dozens of officers who "milled around [Amer's] house aimlessly" for days, say he seemed unprepared "psychologically" to seize power, despite pledges of support from at least 600 officers in

service. It was only under extreme pressure from Nasr and Badran that he gathered himself and agreed to set a date for action: August 27 (Aburish 2004: 271-74). A more likely explanation, considering the history of his relationship with Nasser, is that the Field Marshal expected the President to give in as he had always done from 1956 onwards. That is probably why Amer accepted Nasser's invitation to meet in order to settle their dispute peacefully. Despite the vehement objection of his security advisors – who smelt treachery, especially that the invitation was delivered by Sadat only two days before the planned coup – Amer believed that Nasser was finally ready to patch things up and reappoint him general commander (Sadat 1978: 250). After missing his chance to act, it was now Nasser's turn.

It was days before the plot was executed that Nasser's security men got wind of Amer's intentions and began to move. The President's Bureau of Information was tipped-off by well-placed informants, who included a GIS operative, four officers in the air force and artillery, in addition to Amer's own cook. Upon learning of the conspiracy, they advised Nasser to immediately ascertain the loyalty of a few officials: his handpicked Commander of the Republican Guards Lieutenant General Al-Lethy Nassef; his recently appointed MID director Muhammad Sadeq; the new head of Military Police Major General Sa'd Abd al-Karim; and the Interior Ministry's GID chief Hassan Tal'at. The next step was to form a special taskforce to plan a counterattack. The committee included security czar Zakaria Muhi al-Din, the Minister of State for intelligence and former GIS and PBI operative Amin Huwaidi, Interior Minister Sha'rawi Gomaa, the new Commander-in-Chief Muhammad Fawzy, and PBI director Samy Sharaf. Meetings were held after midnight at a sporting club to avoid GIS surveillance, and after the first couple of meetings they presented Nasser with what they called Operation Johnson. The plan – as outlined in Sharaf's memoirs – was simple: (1) knowing that Amer's was acting under the spell of his security lieutenants, and knowing that his faction could not act without the immensely popular Field Marshal, Amer had to be lured out of his

stronghold and detained at a remote location; (2) relying on Amer's sentimental nature and his belief that Nasser would eventually back down, the Field Marshal would likely accept an invitation to clear the air with his estranged friend, especially if the invitation was delivered by someone he trusted (like his friend Sadat), and insinuated that the President felt cornered and was ready to compromise; (3) once Amer was taken into custody by Military Police, his heavily-guarded villa would be stormed by a force of Republican Guards, under Fawzy's supervision; (4) Military Intelligence and Interior Ministry officers would then swiftly arrest the conspirators before they knew the fate of their commander; (5) with Amer and his supporters removed from the scene the army would lose its rallying point for another plot; (6) Huwaidi would be appointed war minister, and through his men at GIS (the agency he had helped establish and served as its deputy director in 1957), he would also take over the agency; and (7) Fawzy and Huwaidi would finally purge the military and intelligence services of Amer loyalists, and issue laws to restructure both the armed forces and the security community. The end goal would be to de-politicize the military and redirect intelligence from domestic to external espionage (Sharaf 1996: 160-175).

The plan was implemented successfully. Amer arrived at the President's house at 7 p.m. on the night of August 24, 1967. After a stormy meeting, which lasted over ten hours, Zakaria and his aides transferred him to an undisclosed location guarded by Military Police. Fawzy and his troops took over the villa after a four-hour siege and a short skirmish. They arrested Amer's followers (including Badran and Radwan), and confiscated thirteen truckloads of weapons and ammunition. Hours after dawn, Huwaidi took charge of GIS, and immediately issued orders to place 148 military officers and 18 intelligence operatives (including the agency's chief Nasr) in custody. On September 13, Amer was removed to a GIS safe house near the Pyramids, whereupon he (supposedly) committed suicide through swallowing a poison pill that Nasr had provided him with in case their plot failed – or at least this is what the forensic team that examined his body reported (Fawzy 1990:

175-74; Huwaidi 2002: 249-275). Six days after his death, another 181 officers and civilians were arrested for allegedly planning to avenge his 'murder' (Brooks 2008: 112).

One might ask why the rest of the military did nothing to save its beloved leader and his men, and thus open the door for a more explicit military dictatorship. Amer certainly had supporters in the military despite the defeat. Colonel Muhammad Selim, who fought in 1967 and later in 1973, was furious to see him go.

> **Under Amer, the military had its own independent character; it was stronger than the President; it was the strongest component in the regime. Nasser used the 1967 defeat as a pretext to get rid of Amer; he poisoned him and placed his archenemy [Muhammad Fawzy] in charge of the military with the explicit mandate of repressing the armed forces and forcing it into submission. But Fawzy went even further than that; he not only made the army obedient, but he purged any officer who had pride or dignity, and humiliated those who remained** (Interview 2009).

So what held the soldiers back? Colonel Abd al-Aziz al-Beteshty, who served at the front in 1967, captured the general mode within the ranks in the following truism: "Soldiers abandon their leaders [in peace] when their leaders abandon them in war" (Al-Beteshty 2006: 17). Brigade commander in 1967 and future war minster Kamal Hassan Aly described how he and his comrades regarded Amer's men less as fellow officers than as "security agents similar to the political commissars of the Soviet army…a new ruling class within the army," and recalled how they habitually intimidated their comrades by threatening to report them as security risks (Aly 1994: 117). So even though Amer and his security elite had bought off the loyalty of a considerable number of officers, a critical mass within the armed forces saw clearly how the politicization (and straightforward corruption) of the military had hurled their institution into the abyss. 'Never again!' many of them thought.

Now it was Nasser's chance to sweep in before the armed forces regained its balance. His triumph in 1967 thus triggered the process of transforming Egypt from a military to a police state. Egypt's political and security leaders realized that relying on an all-powerful military was a double-

edged sword. It could render the regime literally invincible to change from below, but it could also hold it hostage. Nasser's bitter experience with the officer corps during his confrontations with Naguib and Amer made that clear. Never again would the armed forces be allowed to accumulate such political leverage. The politicization trend, which began in 1952, was therefore reversed after 1967. The army's disastrous performance at war, as painful as it was, provided Nasser with a golden opportunity to purge Amer's network and subsequently minimize the political role of the military.

Acting in his dual-capacity as War Minister and GIS director, Huwaidi created a fact-finding committee to investigate the causes of defeat. The committee attributed the defeat to "the political leadership's loss of control over the military and security agencies, which behaved as autonomous, unsupervised, and self-sufficient institutions" (Huwaidi 2002: 190-91). Between November 1967 and February 1968, the political leadership moved decisively to remedy this shortcoming: Nasser formed a twelve-member committee headed by Zakaria to purge Amer's followers: over a thousand officers and 300 GIS operatives were discharged, and 90 conspirators, including Badran, Nasr, Radwan, and members of Amer's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces were charged with treason and handed hefty prison sentences (Hosni 2008: 143, 151). Huwaidi then submitted a long memo on Re-organizing Work in the Higher Organs of the War Ministry to Nasser in October 1967. Article 5 emphasized ways of empowering the President and War Minister through control over the defense budget, arms procurement, and all expenditures and personnel issues within the armed forces; while Article 9 proposed dividing power over the military between the Supreme Commander (the President), the Chief of Staff, and the War Minister. On January 25, Law 4 of 1968 on the Control of State Defense Matters and the Armed Forces adopted these suggestions, in addition to giving the President control over all military appointments down to the level of colonel. Nasser cancelled the rank of field marshal, and reduced the number of colonel generals and lieutenant generals by more than half. More important than streamlining Egypt's top-heavy rank structure, the Office of the

Commander-in-Chief for Political Guidance – the nerve center of Amer's power – was dissolved, and the general command was restructured to where the heads of services and major military bodies reported directly to the President. Now, the War Minister became the President's representative to the armed forces and not vice-versa. Nasser also dissolved the Military's Criminal Investigations Department, which Amer had formed to involve the army in civilian criminal investigations. He then formed the National Defense Council in 1969, to be chaired by the President and composed of the ministers of war, foreign affairs, interior, intelligence chiefs, and other strategic posts, and assigned it the duty of drawing Egypt's geopolitical strategy – thus diluting the power of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Huwaidi 2002: 438-51).

To strengthen the President's grip even further, Huwaidi created a special section within GIS to take over the now-dissolved OCC role of monitoring political trends within the armed forces.[18] Huwaidi then turned to intelligence. During his three-year tenure at GIS, he managed to "overhaul and realign" the intelligence community, redirecting it away from spying on Egyptians to foreign espionage, delegating the job of domestic control to the Interior Ministry and its investigative organ, the GID. Nasser was thus able to deliver a speech on March 3 celebrating the 'fall of the *mukhabarat* state' (Sirrs 2010: 109). Finally, the ASU wrested control over the 367 public sector companies from Amer's military appointees.

The President followed these dramatic steps with issuing the March 30 Manifesto, which blamed the 1967 defeat on the military-intelligence complex, and vowed to de-militarize and open-up the political system through a new Permanent Constitution, which was drafted at the end of 1970, thought not ratified until months later. Several indicators attest to Nasser's seriousness about fulfilling these promises. For one thing, the percentage of officers in the cabinet decreased from 66 percent in 1967 to 21 percent in 1970, and those in ASU secretariats from 75 percent in 1962 to 43

[18] The section's first success was exposing Soviet attempts to spread communism in the air force, in a report submitted to Nasser on May 21, 1970, (Huwaidi 2002: 305-306).

percent in 1970 (Hammad 1990: 35-36). Another sign was that his new appointees to the high command were reputably professional soldiers who had long resented the clientelism of Amer's faction. Notable examples include Ahmed Ismail, who was appointed chief of staff in March 1969; Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy, who was appointed chief of staff of the canal front; and Sa'ad al-Din al-Shazly, who was placed in charge of the paratroops. These were the three men who led the October War in 1973. Also, Hafez Ismail, Amer's neglected military secretary, who had asked to be transferred to the Foreign Ministry in 1960 away from hornet's nest at OCC, was named director of GIS in April 1970. That being said, Nasser also rewarded two of his loyalists in 1970: longtime ally Muhammad Fawzy became war minister, and the loyal MID director Muhammad Sadeq became chief of staff. If anything, these latter appointments reflect the fact that no matter how sincere he was about professionalizing the army, Nasser still could not trust it enough to turn his back on it – or at least he was dissuaded from doing so by his top security lieutenants.

This half-hearted attitude also marked his approach to opening up the political system. With the military set on the path of political marginalization, the regime had two options: to democratize, or to find another guarantor of regime stability. Nasser signaled his determination to pursue the first path in the March 30 Manifesto. But with good intentions aside, this option was practically ruled out by the institutional set up that has governed Egypt for almost two decades. As military-based security organs were either dissolved (the OCC) or redirected towards their original duties (gathering intelligence on foreign armies in the case of MID, and policing members of the armed forces in the case of Military Police), and as the activities of the civilian intelligence agency (the GIS) was now restricted to counterintelligence and foreign espionage, the only security institutions left standing were the Interior Ministry with its dreaded General Investigations Department (GID), the President's homegrown PBI, in addition to the security-oriented ASU, and its secret Vanguard Organization. After a brief soul-searching journey, Nasser was swayed by his advisors towards

maintaining the authoritarian regime, and only substituting military protection for that of a devastatingly effective civilian security system. The President took a huge step in that direction by creating the Central Security Forces (CSF) at the beginning of 1969. These anti-riot shock units (numbering 100,000 in 1970) were composed of military conscripts placed under the control of the Interior Ministry – a most unusual arrangement. If GID and PBI were now solely responsible for surveillance and investigations, neither of them had the capacity to quell street riots, a task previously handled by Military Police. Now that Nasser no longer wanted to rely on the military, he had to create a paramilitary police force to do the job. The CSF was therefore created to "obviate military involvement in riot control" (Springborg 1989: 101).

Rise of the Centers of Power

With the military reined in and the civilian security out in force, Nasser could now devote himself entirely to the coming war of liberation. Egypt began a fierce war of attrition against Israeli forces in Sinai on the first of July 1967 – barely three weeks after the defeat – and continued until a ceasefire was signed in August 1970 to allow both sides a brief respite. The first item on Nasser's agenda was a major reorientation of Egyptian foreign policy from non-alignment with either of the two superpowers to a close alignment with the Soviet Union – a reorientation that would have a great effect on the domestic power balance. Why did the President abandon the balancing act that he had always considered the cornerstone of his foreign policy and side with the Russians? French President Charles De Gaulle said it best when he described the 1967 war as "an Israeli execution of an American war" (Heikal 1990: 914). Throughout the sixties, Nasser felt he went above and beyond to garner U.S. sympathy. His extended and cordial correspondence with John F. Kennedy was only one example. Another conciliatory gesture was his replacement of Sabri, whom the Americans believed

to be Moscow's strongman in Cairo, with the reputably pro-American Zakaria as Prime Minister in 1965. Nasser explicitly informed the U.S. ambassador a few days after the cabinet reshuffle that he hoped relations would run more smoothly after this change (Heikal 1990: 245).

Nonetheless, President Johnson continued his strong-arm tactics against Egyptian troops in Yemen. Furthermore, under the influence of foreign policy hawks, such as the Rostow brothers (Walter Rostow, the National Security Advisor, and his brother Eugene, who served as Under Secretary of State), Johnson decided that Nasser was a Soviet puppet that must be removed. Following the Egyptian mobilization of troops into Sinai in May 1967, CIA chief Richard Helms highlighted to Johnson how an Israeli victory would destroy Nasser, or at least curtail his ability to project regional power. A crucial meeting then took place at the Pentagon on May 26 between Abba Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister, and U.S. Defense Secretary, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and CIA director, to discuss the upcoming battle. The strategists agreed that a swift Israeli victory depended on its ability to strike first. The next day, the U.S. telegrammed Nasser, promising to help negotiate a peaceful settlement so long as Egypt refrained from attacking first. On May 30, Mossad chief Meir Amit traveled secretly to Washington to get a clear green light to begin operations from Robert McNamara and Helms (Browne 2009: 74; Dunstan 2009: 19). Veteran U.S. negotiator William Quandt offers a diluted version of what happened during that meeting, claiming that Johnson initially tried to dissuade the Israelis from launching a first strike, but that towards the end of May the American President realized that:

> **The only realistic means of convincing Israel not to act on its own would have entailed unilateral US military action to reopen the Strait of Tiran. This, Johnson was not prepared to undertake, in large measure because of Congress. As a result, the president acquiesced in Israel's decision to launch a preemptive war and made sure that the Israelis knew in advance that, while he was in office, there would be no repeat of the US pressure on Israel similar to that imposed during the Suez crisis in 1956. In brief, in the crucial days before Israel undertook the decision to go to war, the light from Washington shifted from red to yellow** (Quandt 1992: 199).

On June 3, the U.S. dispatched two separate envoys (Ambassador Charles Post from State Department, and Robert Anderson, Johnson's personal advisor) to Cairo to reassure Egypt that Israel would not initiate armed aggression, and invite Zakaria to meet with Johnson on June 5 to reach a compromise. The night before the war, Eugene Rostow asked Egypt's ambassador to Washington to assure Nasser that "Israel would never begin hostilities" (Gamasy 1993: 30-33). No wonder why Nasser felt that the U.S. not only betrayed him, but also tried to make a fool out of him.

But diplomatic deception was not the only thing that enraged Nasser. Nor did active American support for Israel during the battle through providing reconnaissance and jamming Egyptian communications come as a surprise to him. What really disturbed the President was the U.S. reaction towards Israeli excesses in the war. He had learned that the American administration explicitly asked Israel to stay away from the West Bank, which was under the control of intimate U.S. ally King Hussein of Jordan, and the Golan Heights, whose occupation would push Syria into the arms of the Soviets. Israelis not only ignored these demands, but to preempt any American effort to stop them they bombed and torpedoed the spy ship USS Liberty on June 8, killing 34 U.S. sailors and injuring 171 others (Scott 2009). As far as Nasser was concerned, this incident indicated that the U.S. had no leverage with Israel whatsoever, and that if he wanted Sinai back he had to fight for it using all the aid he could get. At this point, only the Russians offered help.

The Soviets not only provided new offensive weapons (such as T-62 tanks, Tu-16 bombers, and the modified MiG-21 fight bombers), and they not only promised Nasser, during his visit to Moscow in January 1970, an integrated air defense system (centered on SAM-6 missiles) without which Egypt could not have entered another war, but they also decided – in "an unequivocal military gesture" – to send their own pilots, technicians, and instructors to help rebuild the Egyptian army and operate its air defense (Gamasy 1993: 117). A few dozen instructors had accompanied the first

batch of Soviet weapons to Egypt back in 1957. But with the new shipments, this number jumped to 3,000 in 1967, then to 15,000 in 1970, and 20,000 by 1972 (McDermott 1988: 155-63). In return of course Nasser had to offer a few facilities to the Soviet Mediterranean fleet in the ports of Alexandria and Port Said, in addition to five air bases distributed throughout the country (Shazly 1980: 71).

But Nasser's preoccupation with war preparations forced him to entrust domestic affairs to his security and political subordinates. That and his dismantling of the military and GIS power structure cleared the path for the now unrivalled security trio: Samy Sharaf, Sha'rawi Gomaa, and Aly Sabri. The rapprochement with the Soviet Union promoted their rise even further, first by sidelining the pro-American Zakaria (the most influential security official and Nasser's closest security confidant), and second because the Russians maintained strong links with each of them (as will be discussed in the following chapter). Ordinary citizens referred to this new triumvirate as Egypt's "hidden government" (Hammad 2008: 1). Though the label that stuck was the one Heikal carved for them: the 'centers of power'. Once again the very people Nasser had relied on to defend his regime began to develop their own agendas.

The question one must confront at this point is how come the defeat did not spur a popular revolt, perhaps supplemented by a few mutinous regiments, as happened in Russia and Prussia following the Great War? The part concerning the military is relatively easy to answer. For one thing, the army was in a total state of shock; after all the defeat, as humiliating as it was, occurred in six swift days rather than four years of drawn out battles. Also, unlike the war-hardened and emotionally worn out soldiers of Europe's two great land powers, Egyptian soldiers scarcely saw combat during these days. Finally, the influence of a decade of politicization and security control – something without parallel in the armies of the Tsar or the Kaiser – needed years to wear off. But if all that explains inaction within the ranks, what accounts for popular submission? In truth, the people did

rise in protest. There were massive students and workers uprisings in February and November 1968 – the first of their kind since 1954. Steel workers in Helwan set off the initial wave on February 21 against what they perceived as lenient measures against military negligence during the war. This spark ignited protests in factories and universities throughout the country. Notably, however, student demands were harsher and more comprehensive, amounting basically to a wholesale denunciation of the regime; they chanted the slogans 'Down with the Military State!' and 'Down with the Police State!' simultaneously, as if indicating they will not settle for a simple change in the administrators of repression. Military tanks surrounded the protesters and helicopters hovered over their heads – the military still had one foot in the door – but it was only there for intimidation and making sure things did not get out of control. It was the Ministry of Interior that was now expected to restore order, and it did so with a vengeance: the February and November demonstrations, each lasting for barely a week, were finally dispersed after the police used live ammunition, killing 21 people, injuring 772, and detaining 1100 (Abdallah 1997: 27-45, 149-53). The containment of the 1968 demonstrations (a crucial year for workers and students in Egypt and around the world) could be attributed to the quick shift from military to police repression before protestors had a chance to organize their lot and articulate truly radical demands. Police brutality on those specific occasions, however, was only a symptom of the deep-seated and carefully administered repression of revolutionary alternatives in Egypt since 1952, whether by military or civilian security agencies. The real cause why the demonstrations that followed the defeat did not lead to an overall change was that the regime's tight security grip scarcely allowed activists to develop the organizational resources to carry out a full-scale revolt – a phenomenon replicated in the 2011 revolt.

But as ineffective as the 1968 demonstrators were, they provided the rising centers of power with an excuse to dissuade the President from seriously contemplating a transition to democracy. Society, they argued, was still until the spell of foreign-backed *agents provocateurs*, and that at a time of

war opposition activities were intolerable. Once more, the opportunity to open up the political system had come and gone. The first time, in 1954, it was demanded by a majority within the officer corps who were concerned about the negative effects of immersing the military in politics. In 1967 these fears were vindicated, and the demand for democracy should have been even more resounding. In both cases, nonetheless, the security coterie made sure that opposition was silenced and that any such demand remained a distant hope. This time, however, the symbol of leadership and steadfastness was broken. Nasser was about to bow out of the scene.

Chapter Seven

ERADICATING THE CENTERS OF POWER:
THE CORRECTIVE REVOLUTION OF MAY 1971

Gamal Abd al-Nasser's premature death of a heart attack, on September 28, 1970, could not have come at a worst time. It sent shockwaves across the country, bringing out seven million mourners to his ten-kilometer funeral procession – possibly the largest in history – and forcing the funeral organizers to transfer his body from one part of the city to another via helicopter to avoid the flood of sobbing and screaming citizens. Besides the psychological attachment to the charismatic father figure, the top political spot seemed disturbingly vacant, as the late president did not groom anyone for his succession. The existing Vice-President, Anwar al-Sadat, was perceived as weak and unpopular within and outside the ranks. Before the 1952 coup, Sadat had been part of one of the least significant army services, the Signal Corps, which handled communications. And unlike most Free Officers, he had never seen war. During the 1948 war in Palestine, Sadat was a runaway from prison, where he had landed after trying to facilitate a Nazi invasion of Egypt with the hope of ejecting British occupation. He then received royal amnesty and was reincorporated into the corps after joining the Iron Guards, a secret organization devoted to assassinating King Farouk's political enemies. After the coup, his comrades tried him for working for the palace and not reporting to his position on the night of the coup. That night Sadat took his wife to the movies and picked a fight with one of the viewers and ended up at the police station. It was widely suspected among officers that if the coup had failed he was planning to use the movie tickets and the police report as alibis proving he was not there, and if it had succeeded he would claim not to have received the orders in time – which he indeed claimed. Nasser intervened on his behalf and the charges were dropped. A grateful Sadat announced in one of the first meetings of the Revolutionary Command Council that he transferred his voting rights to Nasser, giving the latter carte blanche to take any decisions he saw fit. It was because of this meek attitude that Sadat was the only RCC member who remained by Nasser's side until the very end; and it was because of the insecure president's insistence on rotating

the vice-presidency between non-threatening candidates that Sadat – barely a few months in office – found himself the legal successor to Nasser's throne.

Popular misgivings aside, it was officers who harbored grave concerns about Sadat's presidency. The military had been counting down to war after Nasser promised to liberate Sinai from Israeli occupation in a few months time. Now, they worried that Sadat's feeble personality and total lack of war experience would drive him to abandon the military option and sue for peace with Israel, and that his conspiratorial nature – obvious from his intrigues with the Nazis and the palace before the coup – would tempt him toward backdoor deals with the Americans, the only country that could pressure Israel. The officer corps thus hoped for a firmer hand at the helm in these trying times. Yet it was not Sadat's position as vice-president that favored his candidacy, but rather the balance of forces between the centers of power that Nasser left behind. In the fall of 1970, three security magnates were in the process of consolidating their influence over the country: longtime intelligence official Aly Sabri dominated the ruling Arab Socialist Union; Sha'rawi Gomaa was interior minister and head of ASU's secret Vanguard Organization; and Samy Sharaf led the President's Bureau of Information. Though the organizations controlled by the former two were considerably larger that that controlled by Sharaf, the latter supplemented his organizational might with valuable allies: his relative Muhammad Fawzy was war minister; and his PBI protégée Ahmed Kamel directed the General Intelligence Service.

Nasser's unexpected death cut short the time these magnates had to negotiate a new power arrangement. They were still divided over whether they ought to seize the top executive position, or whether it would be wiser to install a ceremonial president, and run the country in his name (as they did during the last days of Nasser) without bearing any of the responsibilities that come with office; and if they decided to pursue the first alternative, which of them should be nominated president. Held back by these divisions, they agreed on a temporary and – what they believed to be – an easily

reversible decision, which was to elect Sadat to the presidency, and rule through him until they organized their ranks. To make sure the new president remained under control, they decided to surround him from all directions, with Sabri promoted to Vice-President, and Sharaf to Minister of Presidential Affairs. Sadat seemed like a safe bet; he had no following in the military or security establishment, he held no executive position between 1956 and 1969, and was one of the least popular politicians within ASU. Also, he was widely regarded by the public as a parasitic character.

This estimation was not theirs alone. The Americans believed Sadat would not last, for more than a few weeks, and Kissinger described him as a political clown (Kissinger 1979: 1276-77). Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, Chief Editor of Egypt's leading daily *Al-Ahram* and Nasser's closet advisor, who was involved in the succession deliberations and ran Sadat's election campaign, later admitted that he knew how weak Sadat was but had hoped that the "responsibilities of office would strengthen the positive elements in his character and enable him to overcome the weak ones. The example of Truman was in my mind" (Heikal 1983: ix). Last but not least, Sadat himself indicated in his memoirs that he was only nominated to the presidency because of his apparent weakness (Sadat 1978: 163).

Still, the new president had some assets. It is true that in terms of institutional power he commanded no personal following, but his service as Secretary-General of the National Union (1957-61), Speaker of Parliament (1961-69), in addition to his brief stint as Vice-President provided him with extensive experience in the political machinations of the state. More important perhaps, Sadat recognized the mistrust and divisions that plagued his rivals, and was determined – as he confessed in a future interview – to play his cards carefully to divide-and-conquer (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 420). Drawing advice from the indispensable Heikal, Egypt's unrivaled *Machtpolitik* strategist, Sadat patched together a hastily assembled coalition of republican guards, police officers, and

professional military men, and outmaneuvered the centers of power, despite their entrenchment in the military, security, and political institutions.

Trying to Checkmate a President

Recognizing he was meant as a temporary fill-in until his opponents put their house in order, Sadat understood that time was not on his side. He therefore set to work immediately, issuing several unilateral decisions, which aimed partly at increasing his autonomy as president, but mostly intended to distract his rivals and keep them divided over how to react. Two prominent examples were his appointment of veteran diplomat Mahmoud Fawzy (not related to War Minister) as Prime Minister, and his reviving of plans to create an Arab Federation between Egypt, Syria, Libya, and possibly the Sudan – take two in the attempt to unite the Arab world after the dissolution of the Egyptian-Syrian merger in 1961. The first decision shrewdly deprived the centers of power from appointing one of their own to the premiership, while at the same time offering a name no one dared object to; Mahmoud Fawzy served as Egypt's Foreign Minister for years, he was Nasser's chief advisor on international affairs, and was reputably competent and politically neutral. The centers of power camp, which claimed to uphold Nasser's mantle, could not dispute Fawzy's loyalty to their master's legacy, nor could they refute Sadat's argument that the country's vulnerable geopolitical situation required an expert diplomat at the helm.

Announcing the formation of an Arab Federation was another masterful stroke. After being badgered by his opponents during an ASU's Higher Executive Committee meeting on March 6, 1972 to commit to launching war against Israel in June, the federation ploy pushed back the war decision because of the lengthy procedures required to establish it, while at the same time allowing Sadat to claim that he was trying to enhance Egypt's power in war rather than just stalling. More

valuably, the Federation Agreement, upon the President's insistence, called for an institutional overhaul in preparation for the intended merger. This offered Sadat a precious opportunity to weed out his rivals from the new institutions without confronting them (Hamroush 1987: 37).

Sadat's bold and swift action summoned his enemies to battle. They could live with the harmless Mahmoud Fawzy as Prime Minister, but to go ahead with this Arab Federation was fatal because they knew he was planning to use it as an excuse to remove them away from their institutional power bastions. Immediately after the President's announcement, on April 21, 1971, the centers of power made sure the ASU's Higher Executive Committee vetoed it. And when Sadat tried to go around this rejection by appealing to the Central Committee of the ASU, Sharaf presented him with a memo (dated April 20) claiming that the armed forces expressed in a general survey their adamant rejection of the intended federation – a survey Sadat had not authorized but Sharaf carried out anyway to demonstrate that officers were eager to fight right away (Sadat 1978: 299).

More decisive steps, however, were necessary to meet the President's unexpected recalcitrance. The centers of power agreed that he must be deposed, but differed over how. The first option was to carry out a replacement coup. But it seemed too farfetched to assume that the army would allow itself to be drawn into a political battle in Cairo while Israel was still in Sinai. In addition, GIS reports made it clear that the officer corps was resolutely against reentering the political fray, especially while it was still trying to remedy the disasters that was brought about by the politicization of the military. One must also remember that Nasser's wholesale purge of the armed forces after 1967 left few officers with a taste for politics. Moreover, Sadat had made it his top priority to win over the army until he could liquidate the centers of power. Between October and December 1970, he visited the frontlines frequently, and conducted four meetings with senior officers. During a marathon nine-hour meeting with the general staff, on December 1, he pledged to wage war as soon as the army was ready, declaring that 1971 was the Year of Decision, and

insinuating that it was his rivals and their petty quibbles that were holding him back. Finally, the President promised his troops a 25 percent raise (Hamroush 1987: 30).

Despite all that, War Minister Muhammad Fawzy went ahead with coup plans anyway and issued a handwritten directive, on April 21, to Chief of Staff Muhammad Sadeq ordering him to prepare an emergency plan to secure the capital using Military Police units, the 6th Mechanized Division, and the 22nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade. The order added suspiciously that once this emergency plan was activated, the military should only receive instructions from him (Fawzy), Gomaa, and Sharaf. Instead of following the directive, Sadeq simply sat on it, and informed Heikal during the first week of May that in the event the President's faces domestic challenges, he was willing not only to support him, and swing the rest of officers behind him, but also bring onboard the head of the two-battalion-strong Republican Guards Al-Lethy Nassef (Heikal 1983: 40-41). Determined not to lose another battle to Israel, the Chief of Staff was infuriated by the treacherous political intrigue occurring in the capital at a time when all attention should be directed to the war effort. Sadeq, along with the rest of the armed forces, simply wanted to win the war, and believed that political bickering only postponed it. As Republican Guards head Major General Nassef later confessed to fellow officer Hussein Hammudah, it was Sadeq who warned him that if the guards betrayed Sadat, he would mobilize the military to rein them in even if it led to a bloodbath (Hammudah 1985: 173). Sadat gave Nassef an even stronger motive to stick with him by alleging that the centers of power were conspiring to have him dislodged in favor of one of their loyalists. Accordingly, Nassef warned Sharaf that he and his allies should not allow their differences with Sadat to reach the point of violent confrontation, or else he will be obliged to abide by his constitutional duty to defend the President (Sharaf 1996: 408-12).

As the prospects of a military coup dimmed, the conspirators now placed their bet on a political coup. Sadat was to be ousted through an ASU decision – just as Soviet leader Nikita

Khrushchev was ejected from power in 1964. But most of the Central Committee members they approached seemed reluctant to stir trouble without a clear pretext. The decision was therefore taken to provoke a political-constitutional crisis that would spur them to action (Sharaf 1996: 425). According to the new plot: ministers and ASU executives would resign collectively in protest of Sadat's growing autocracy; as soon as the resignations are announced the ASU and VO would bring about a government shutdown through a series of strikes in the bureaucracy and the public sector; state radio and television would then play patriotic anthems and broadcast stirring propaganda to propel the masses into the streets to and force the military to intervene to restore order (Binder 1978: 389). A cornered Sadat would then have to either step down or share power with his strong partners.

The President's Coup de Grace

May Day celebration in 1971 was a dress rehearsal. Among those who attended the annual workers' celebration on the first of May was Osman Ahmed Osman, soon to be the richest man in Egypt, and Sadat's closest friend. He recalls: "I noticed how the centers of power handed out Nasser's pictures to the workers and strategically distributed their loyalists around the hall to shout pro-Nasser slogans, casting doubt over Sadat's legitimacy" (Osman 1981: 402). Sadat stood his ground, concluding his speech with a resounding condemnation of the centers of power: "The people are the owners of this country, and they will be the ones who will fight for their lives along with the armed forces… No group has the right to impose its will on the people through centers of power…the people alone are the masters of their destiny" (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 142). The following day he removed Sabri from the ASU and the vice-presidency. To cover his back, he consulted Muhammad

Fawzy, and the latter did not object. The War Minister probably thought that removing Sabri would provide an opportunity for his relative Sharaf to make his move (Hamroush 1987: 88).

As news of the looming confrontation spread through the country, everyone was now expected to take sides. One figure returning from the shadows was Hassan al-Tuhami, Nasser's veteran intelligence official who had run afoul with Amer and was forced to stay out of the country until the Field Marshal's downfall. Tuhami and Sadat were close collaborators since the 1940s, and now the former hoped that with Sharaf and his associates gone, he could become the President's top security aide – and that is indeed what he became. Another senior officer was Hafez Ismail, Amer's embittered military secretary, who had to bide his time in the Foreign Ministry until the latter disappeared from the scene. Nasser appointed Ismail GIS director in 1970, and when Sharaf replaced him a few months later with his acolyte Ahmed Kamel, Sadat took him in as National Security Advisor – a new position that did not outlast its only occupant. Although Ismail's days at GIS were few, the contacts he developed came in handy during the May 1971 clash.

A precious prize then fell into Sadat's lap on May 11: audiotapes detailing the conspiracy against him. The tapes not only gave the President a heads up, but they also provided him with the material proof he needed to try his rivals for high treason. Who recorded these audiotapes, and who delivered them to Sadat? It is generally agreed upon that there were several parties doing the recording, mostly because they did not trust each other. Sharaf charged PBI and GIS with spying on both Sadat and his own co-conspirators, Gomaa and Sabri. Similarly, Gomaa had the Interior Ministry's GID tap all the conversations that went on between state officials, including his collaborators. Who turned them in, however, is more difficult to answer. Sadat claimed it was a junior police officer (Captain Taha Zaki), who was a friend of one of his in-laws, and that the tapes revealed not only a coup plot, but also an attempt on the President's life (Sadat 1978: 304). Sharaf said it was a GIS informant who worked for Tuhami or Ismail (Sharaf 1996: 457). But there is also

proof that it was a CIA officer in Cairo by the name of Thomas Twetten who informed Sadat of the conspiracy relying on information from an American KGB asset (Vladimir Sakharov), and a few calls intercepted by the U.S. embassy (Sirrs 2010: 120). The following day, while Sadat was meeting with the troops stationed at Suez, Sadeq informed him of the looming conspiracy and assured him that he had his back covered because this was time for war not political scheming (Brooks 2008: 117).

This last claim brings us to another significant aspect of the power struggle between Sadat and the centers of power, which is the geopolitical aspect. Geopolitical support was indispensable to the conspirators. They were crippled by the fact that none of them could measure up to the galvanizing charisma of Nasser, and so they tried to compensate for lack of popular support through allying themselves to a superpower: the Soviet Union. Ever since he was put in charge of the ASU in 1962, Aly Sabri had fashioned himself as an ideologically committed communist, and was often referred to as 'Russia's man' in Cairo; Gomaa, though himself no stanch ideologue, was leading the Leninist-styled VO, which the Soviets regarded as the only hope to promote 'true communism' in the country; Fawzy, again not a communist by conviction, made it clear that the army desperately needed Russian support to rebuild itself after the 1967 defeat; and Sharaf, as it turned out, was probably a KGB asset.[19] In fact, on May 14, the day the centers of power tended their collective resignation, the top Russian military expert in Cairo was dinning at Sharaf's house (Game' 2004: 151). Based on these intimate relations between the centers of power and the Russians, Sabri visited Moscow in December 1970 to warn them of Sadat's intention to deliver the country to the Americans – the only country that can help him reach a peace deal with Israel, and in mid-April 1971, two weeks before the confrontation reached its climax, Sharaf traveled to the Soviet Union to

[19] In 1974, a defected KGB officer published a book revealing how he recruited Sharaf in 1958. Sadat referred to the book during a speech to parliament on March 14, 1974, noting that Sharaf had confessed to him in a letter from prison that he had been involved in a 'special relationship' with the Soviets (Barron 1974: 51-53; Hammad 2008: 58-59, 71; Sirrs 2010: 64-65).

seek their help in removing Sadat from power (Barron 1974: 58-59). It helped that the plotters actually had material proof of the President's double-dealing. GIS had recorded secret meetings conducted in March 1971 between Sadat's envoys and the U.S. intelligence man in Egypt Donald Bergus, in which the President offered to cut the Soviet loose if the Americans persuaded Israel to return Sinai (Sharaf 1996: 401).

Sadat was aware of all this and frequently referred to his rivals as Russian agents. Sadat also knew that the Soviets considered him a transitional man, and were getting ready to elevate one of their own allies to power. He tried to offset that by visiting Moscow secretly in March 1971 to reassure Soviet leaders of his loyalty. There he informed them that he might need to reshuffle the political leadership but that they had no cause for concern because their alliance is with Egypt not particular individuals (Sadat 1978: 303). As a sign of goodwill, he granted the Soviet fleets in the Mediterranean and Red Sea a few extra facilities. The President then forewarned the Soviet ambassador to Cairo that he is about to remove Sabri from office, but that there was not need to worry because, as he added emphatically, "If you have a friend in Egypt, it is Anwar Sadat" (Heikal 1993: 224). He also appointed a celebrated communist intellectual (Ismail Sabri Abdallah) to the new cabinet (Heikal 1993: 225). Finally, to ease their suspicions, Sadat signed an Egyptian-Soviet Friendship Treaty on May 23, 1971 – an agreement Nasser was hesitant to conclude. But in the end, it was not just Sadat's maneuvers that deprived the centers of power of active Soviet support. Murad Ghaleb, who was concluding his decade-long service as Egyptian ambassador to Moscow, said that the Soviet leaders confided in him that they could only half-heartedly support a group that had no coherent leadership or agenda, and whose interactions were as often competitive as they were collaborative (Ghaleb 2001: 161, 176).

Even though Soviet support was not forthcoming, the conspirators decided to push ahead with their plans. A day after Sabri was sacked from the ASU and the vice-presidency, Mohamed

Fawzy convened the general staff to report to them that the President was abandoning war preparations. The War Minister also raised the state of readiness of the military units stationed near the capital (Hammad 2008: 153-55, 181). In response, Sadat met with senior commanders at the Anshas Airbase in Cairo to warn of lurking traitors within and outside the armed forces (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 429-30). With incontrovertible evidence of a conspiracy at hand, Sadat raised the stakes, announcing plans to restructure the ASU, and removing Gomaa from the Interior Ministry and VO on May 13. Knowing that his phones were tapped, the President sent a personal aide to summon the governor of Alexandria Mamduh Salem, swore him in as Interior Minster, and sent him over to the ministry before Gomaa received wind of his removal. Salem was a longtime security officer. He began his career in the Alexandria branch of the British-controlled secret police in the 1940s, and then headed GID's Alexandria office after the coup (Sirrs 2010: 21, 53). Not wanting to rely solely on Salem's contacts in the Interior Ministry, Sadat sent a detachment of Republican Guards to secure his control over the ministry and confiscate any surveillance tapes found there. At the same time, Sadat met with Sharaf to reassure him that he had nothing to fear from Gomaa's removal, and that he could continue in his job as normal (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 431).

Sharaf of course had other plans. He headed straight to the military's general headquarters, where he found Gomaa there waiting for the War Minister to wrap up a meeting with senior commanders. Fawzy asked the general staff to remove Sadat on account of his secret dealings with the Americans to reach a peaceful settlement and call off the war. He then turned to Chief of Staff Sadeq and asked him if he was ready to implement the directive he gave him three weeks earlier. To his surprise, Sadeq lashed out, refusing to participate in staging another coup, and adding: "If you want to resign, you can, but the army is not going to move… [There is no way] the Egyptian armed forces would get mixed up in politics at a time when we are preparing for war" (Heikal 1983: 41). As it became clear that the officer corps would not be dragged into this clash, Fawzy escorted his two

guests back to Gomaa's house. Sadeq immediately seized control of GHQ and ordered troops to stay put. He then called Sadat to inform him that the army will remain neutral in this confrontation. Sadeq was promoted to war minister that very night of May 14 (Sharaf 1996: 417-18).

It was time for the centers of power to deal their last strike, which came in the form of a live broadcast of their en masse resignation on state media. To preempt any anti-Sadat demonstrations, the Minister of Industry Aziz Sedqi ordered public sector workers into the streets to express their support for the President. Sedqi was appointed Primer Minister the next day. That evening, Ashraf Marawan, Nasser's son-in-law, and Sharaf's right-hand man at PBI, decided to side with the President and turn in Sharaf's secret archive instead of smuggling it out of the Presidential Palace as his former boss had asked. Sadat described to his longtime friend Mahmoud Game' how Marawan rushed behind one of Sharaf's assistants and fired a few rounds in the air to force him to surrender the secret documents (Game' 2004: 168). Marawan was immediately promoted to PBI director. At midnight, Sadat dispatched Ahmed Ismail to the GIS to serve as its new chief, and ordered him to hand in any secret tape recordings pertaining to the plot. Ismail last served as Chief of Staff under Nasser, but was fired twice by the former president for his ineptitude, and thus reviled Nasser and his centers of power cronies. After securing the streets and the major institutions, Sadat had all the conspirators arrested by the Interior Ministry on May 15, 1971: in all 91 officials, including 6 ministers (among them Sharaf, Gomaa, and Fawzy), the GIS director, 20 ASU executives, 23 VO cadres, 4 members of parliament, 6 senior bureaucrats, 2 media officials, and the rest from the military. An emergency court was assembled, with Sadat's security lieutenant Hassan al-Tuhami as member, to try the plotters for high treason, and eventually handed the ringleaders long prison sentences (Binder 1978: 393-94).

The arrests heralded what Sadat referred to fondly as his 'Corrective Revolution', supposedly correcting the deviation from the goals of the 1952 coup. With officers caught up on the Sinai front,

the time was perfect to transfer responsibility for domestic control from the military to the police, a process that Nasser had begun after 1967. This required a reorganizing of the security community. At the President's request, Ashraf Marawan supervised the dismantling of the PBI's intelligence core, and its reinvention as an information secretariat, which simply prepares presidential briefs relying on newspapers and memos from government agencies. Even though he could have reformed it and bent it to his own purposes, Sadat resolved that it was not really wise to maintain an intelligence organ so close to the President, where it can play the role of gatekeeper and withhold essential information. The next step was to bolster the power of the Interior Ministry. The ministry expanded considerably with more than a dozen new specialized departments, each headed by a deputy minister, in order to relief the minister and the GID from nonpolitical policing activities. He then decreed a major restructuring of the GID, which included a purge of officers whose loyalty was suspect, as well as those with a military background, and a refocusing of the agency's effort exclusively towards countering political dissidence, instead of being divided between that and combating organized crime; the all-powerful *Mabaheth Amn al-Dawla* (State Security Investigations Service, SSIS) now came to existence. (Sirrs 2010: 121).

The new SSIS reflected the institutional experience of its illustrious ancestors, the secret police of the pre-coup days, and the GID. Despite the purges that accompanied the agency's first transformation from Political Police to GID at the hands of Zakaria Muhi al-Din, Nasser's principal security chief, the enduring influence of institutional memory forced Nasser to treat GID with some suspicion, and therefore flank it with parallel security institutions. He worried that it was too early to assume that GID officers have severed all their ties with the *ancien regime*, which they served only months before. But after GID's relative eclipse in the 1950s and 1960s, it was reborn under Sadat as Egypt's leading security agency. Also, unlike its predecessors, it had a centralized military-type command structure that subjected even its distant provincial branches to Interior Ministry

supervision. Consequently, the shift in the responsibility for repression from military to security coincided with a shift in power within the security community itself power from intelligence agencies (civilian and military) to the Interior Ministry and its newly-enhanced secret police.. From this point onwards, Sadat relied mostly on police officers in major government positions, to a point where even his personal secretary (Fawzy Abd al-Hafez) was a former police officer (Heikal 1983: 76).

Finally, the President dissolved the security-oriented Vanguard Organization and appointed himself ASU Secretary-General with longtime friend (Abd al-Salam al-Zayat) as head of the Central Committee and a few handpicked subordinates as new ASU executives. The following year, he named Sayyid Mar'ie new ASU Secretary-General and Speaker of Parliament. Mar'ie came from a large landowning family, and served under Nasser as Minister of Agriculture. He also happened to be Sadat's in-law and intimate friend (Abdallah 1985: 179). By the end of May 1971, the Permanent Constitution was finally issued. Egypt now embarked on a new chapter in its tumultuous post-coup history.

That being said, Sadat startling emasculation of his powerful rivals remains a lingering question. The most common explanation places much emphasis on the President's cunning: he projected an image of weakness to survive politically under Nasser and reassure the unwitting centers of power enough to install him in the presidency before craftily reaching out to collaborators within the military, security, and political apparatuses, and playing his opponents against each other. Still, the centers of power dominated all major state institutions, and it is difficult to believe that his scheming alone caused them to lose this battle of wills. So while personal traits and tactics are certainly relevant, a careful institutional analysis provides a sufficient cause for this unexpected failure.

To start with, the centers of power were wholly consumed between 1956 and 1967 in a power struggle with Amer's group. Only in 1968 did they begin their bid for power, after undermining Amer's prized institutions (the military and military-linked intelligence), and making sure that Nasser was too preoccupied with war preparations to check their ascendancy. Nasser's death in September 1970 barely gave them time to produce a consensual pecking order. It was almost impossible for the centers of powers to become organized hierarchically when the main players were equally powerful in institutional terms: Sabri controlled the ASU; Gomaa the VO and Interior Ministry; and Sharaf the intelligence. Because coalitions are usually formed between weak parties and stronger ones, this balance of power ruled out a smooth alliance-building process. In fact, it was this deadlock that brought Sadat to the presidency; the contenders needed a lame-duck president to hold the position while they sorted things out. By virtue of the type of power he controlled – merely political power with no capacity for coercion – Aly Sabri proved to be the weakest link in the chain. He received a strong blow in July 1969 when a report from Sharaf that Sabri was becoming too cozy with the Russians forced Nasser to demote him from ASU Secretary-General to ordinary party member in the most demeaning way – justifying this downgrade by Sabri's smuggling of commercial merchandise from Moscow. When Sadat removed him from the Vice-Presidency and the ASU on May 2, his comrades abandoned him in the hopes that now they could elect a leader more easily. Without realizing it though, Sharaf and Gomaa had in fact shot themselves in the foot; Sabri's experience as Prime Minister (1962-1965), ASU Secretary-General (1962-1969), as well as his latest position as Vice-President (1970-1971), in addition to the respect he enjoyed among the Soviets, all meant that he was the only likely candidate for presidency.

Samy Sharaf thought he could become the strongest man in the country. With Sadat's approval, he sidelined Egypt's two most prominent security men, Zakaria Muhi al-Din and Amin Huwaidi. The first was removed from all official positions, while the second was offered a

humiliatingly minor ministerial post in 1971, forcing him to turn down the offer and retire. Sharaf also pressured a reluctant Sadat to place his PBI assistant Ahmed Kamel at the top of the GIS. Now Sharaf believed he held all the intelligence strings in the palm of his hand. In addition, the War Minister was his relative and ally. Why then did he hold back? Sharaf must have realized that his allies were little more than war trophies – shinny but ineffective. Fawzy did not command the respect or loyalty of the military: he was marginalized as Chief of Staff under Amer, plotted with the President against the officers' beloved Field Marshal, and had no time or resources between 1967 and 1971 to build an extensive patronage network; Kamel, in turn, had spent merely a few months on the job as GIS director before the May 1971 confrontation and could not have possibly penetrated the agency deep enough; both Fawzy and Kamel, one should add, were political lightweights, especially when compared to their mighty predecessors, Shams Badran and Salah Nasr. One must add that Sharaf and his camp were double-crossed by Ashraf Marawan at PBI and Muhammad Sadeq and Al-Lethy Nassef in the military.

Finally, there was Sha'rawi Gomaa, who controlled the Interior Ministry and VO. His control of the police force made his position seemingly more secure than the other two. However, it was only a decade into Mubarak's reign (in the 1990s) that the Interior Ministry was empowered enough to believe it could secure the regime on its own. Considering Gomaa situation in real historical time, it was inconceivable for him back in 1971 to act independently without the support of the military and intelligence. Also, the VO might have been a strong espionage organ, but it lacked the hierarchical discipline or the ideological fervor to lead a popular revolt. As Sharaf and Gomaa were still weighing their assets and measuring their relative strength, Sadat was ready to move.

It is worth mentioning that the hastily conceived plan they executed impromptu in May 14 was nothing short of disastrous. It was virtually a repeat of the March 1954 popular uprising

orchestrated to undercut President Muhammad Naguib, and the one coordinated by the ASU in the wake of Nasser's resignation in June 1967 to reinstall him. The conspirators probably forgot that unlike the 1954 crisis, they had all severed their relationship with the military. They were no longer these young hotheaded officers who could call upon their comrades to move around a few tanks or artillery guns, or fly over a few jets as a show of force. And even though they tried to stir the public by claiming that Sadat was betraying Nasser's revolution (just as they had accused Naguib in 1954), that revolution was no longer young and promising to convince Egyptians that it still needed saving. Also, no matter how influential they were, none of the centers of power enjoyed Nasser's popularity, the popularity that made it easy (and believable) for millions of people to rush to the streets in 1967 to demand his return. Their power essentially derived from the institutional positions they occupied. To resign their posts, and thus surrender these powerful positions, in hopes of shaking Sadat's regime was an unparalleled strategic blunder. But as Karl Marx hauntingly noted: 'History repeats itself twice, first as tragedy, second as farce'. What the centers of power tried to accomplish in May 1971 was certainly farce.

In a sense, therefore, May 1971 was not a confrontation between two well-defined camps, but between the President and disparate individuals scrambling to consolidate their power. Sadat won. And his triumph paved the path for the rise of Egypt's police state under the rapidly evolving Interior Ministry, and its chief spy organ, the SSIS. But first, of course, there was a war to be fought. Sadat's road to power had to pass through occupied Sinai.

Chapter Eight

TWILIGHT OF THE GENERALS:
OCTOBER 1973 AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The power struggle in 1971 between Anwar al-Sadat and the centers of power seemed little more than a sideshow, a trifling skirmish, when compared to the uphill battle he now confronted. The de-politicization of the military, which Gamal Abd al-Nasser had started in 1967, was still at an early stage. The shift from military-based to police-based political control had only just begun. To wage a successful war against Israel at this point certainly threatened to bring the army back to the center stage. To fail to go to war, or to be defeated once more meant no less than political suicide. The middle road, if in fact one existed, was narrow and thorny. It required launching a successful war without re-empowering the officer corps politically. This could only be achieved if the battlefront victory was limited, and, more importantly, faceless. No popular war heroes could be allowed to emerge – heroes that might command loyalty within the armed forces and captivate the public imagery. Liberating Sinai had to be perceived by soldiers and citizens alike as a primarily political rather than military achievement; war had to be appear secondary to politics. At this critical juncture, Sadat's scheming talents were pushed to the limit. Success required a careful and persistent strategy whereby the President would employ some of Egypt's best generals for short-term assignments in order to accomplish challenging military tasks before deposing (and preferably defaming) them so that they could not translate their war-related achievements politically. Could it be done? This is what this chapter explores.

A Stormy Meeting

It began in May 1971 after Sadat imprisoned War Minister Muhammad Fawzy for high treason despite his efforts in rebuilding the army after 1967 and putting together a plan to cross the Suez Canal. That November, Sadat reconfigured the set procedures for military promotion through a presidential decree that gave him unlimited authority over the committee that made these decisions,

the Armed Forces Officers' Committee (Brooks 2008: 131). He then appointed a new high command led by War Minister Muhammad Sadeq, and Chief of Staff Saad al-Din al-Shazly. This last appointment provoked uproar within the ranks, considering that Shazly – the audacious head of the Commando Corps – was promoted over the heads of thirty more senior generals. But Sadat recognized that he needed someone with the exceptional daring and capabilities of Shazly to lead the Egyptian troops in the coming war. Shazly will have to stay till the end, whereas the War Minister and his staff were relatively dispensable once they had pushed the army to the highest level of combat readiness.

Sadeq and his men were determined to win the war. That is why as Military Intelligence director he sided with Nasser against Amer, and as Chief of Staff he helped Sadat get rid of the erratic centers of power. But now the War Minister and his top lieutenants were not so sure that the President had the same intention. Capturing the spirit of those days, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, a close advisor to Sadat and Nasser before him, commented: "The chasm between arms and politics widened in Egypt. It became apparent that neither politics trusted the ability of arms, nor did arms trust the competence of politics" (Heikal 1993: 262). At the heart of the dispute between Sadat and the general staff was the war plan itself. Chief of Staff Shazly recalled that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) was convinced that when Egypt launched its attack it had to be "forceful and unlimited: a clean, swift sweep through Sinai…to destroy the enemy concentrations…[and liberate] all our occupied territories" (Shazly 1980: 25). At minimum, as the January 2, 1972 meeting of the council agreed, the offensive must guarantee Egypt's seizure of the Sinai Passes (Brooks 2008: 132). This was also the view of the now-imprisoned former War Minister Fawzy. Egypt's first line of defense extended from its borders with Israel to the Sinai Passes; the second line of defense stretched from the passes to the Suez Canal; and third line was the canal itself. Egypt's army was

presently stationed along the third line of defense, and at minimum had to advance to the second line, which was the passes (Fawzy 1990: 101).

Because of the centrality of the 'passes controversy' in all military histories of the October War, a few words on their strategic importance are in order. Veteran Free Officer Hussein Hammudah, who participated as a junior officer in the 1948 war, describes the Mitla and Gidi Passes as nature's perfect gift to Egypt to help defend Sinai (Hammudah 1985: 137). These were the passes that Nasser advised Amer to dig into on the morning of June 5 so that Sinai would not be overrun. Curiously, these were also the passes that Moshe Dayan asked the Israeli forces to stop at during the 1967 attack, arguing that they provided "much better defense lines than the canal" (Golan 1976: 147). Israeli commander (and future prime minister) Ariel Sharon remembered vividly how well they served enemy troops in 1956: "The Israeli air attack had failed to dislodge defenders cocooned in rifle pits dug along the tops of ridges and in caves cut into the steep walls of the pass. For the Egyptians it was like shooting at a fairground target… The only way I could see to defend ourselves was to move into the pass and take up positions there, where the steep cliffs and narrow defiles would give the oncoming Egyptian tanks no room for maneuver" (Sharon in Turner 2006: 317-19). In fact, the Israelis felt compelled to build an artificial defense line along the east bank of the canal (the famous Bar-Lev Line) because they realized that – away from the passes – no defense was possible in Sinai's open terrain. The first international group of military experts to examine the October War referred to the passes as "impassible mountains" (Insight Team 1974: 70). Every cadet at the Egyptian Military Academy learned that controlling the passes was one of the few longstanding strategic doctrines in defending Egypt's eastern borders – a doctrine that extended from the days of Pharaoh Thutmosis III to the British General Allenby (Heikal 1983: 60). As renowned U.S. military expert Anthony Cordesman summarized it: with the rest of Sinai "an

exposed killing ground," any battle over the peninsula is simply "a two-way race for the passes" (Cordesman 2006: 201-202).

Why were the passes so important? Lieutenant Colonel Abd al-Aziz al-Beteshty of the Commando Corps provided a comprehensive overview. Strategically speaking, Sinai is divided into three sections: the southern triangle lying between the two great Red Sea gulfs is composed of sand dunes that are impassable by armored vehicles and troop carriers, while the northern strip along the Mediterranean is mostly quicksand beds, muddy swamps, jagged ridges, and broken foothills that hinder advance by heavy armor. The middle sector with its solid and open ground is therefore the only part suited for troop and vehicle movement. This sector, however, is too broad to be defended against air strikes and *blitzkrieg* armored offenses – the twin specialties of the Israeli army. Fortunately, several mountainous passes lie at the very core of this middle sector: the main two are Mitla in the south and al-Gidi in the north, roughly 32 km away from the Suez Canal, in addition to a few smaller ones. Once an army entrenches itself in these passes, it is impossible to push it back. For one thing, they are too narrow to allow for aerial bombardment (bombs rarely make it through the mountain tops). Also, the mountain caves along the relatively long passes (Milta is 32 km, and al-Gidi is 29 km) provide ideal posts for snipers to halt an offense (which again due to the narrowness of the passes, can only advance in a single file). Finally, they provide safe bases for operations, allowing units to launch sudden attacks throughout Sinai and retire back to the passes before enemy forces could overwhelm them. In short, whoever controls the passes, controls Sinai's middle sector, and whoever controls this sector, controls the entire peninsula. That is why military strategists consider the Sinai Passes among the most insurmountable topographic barriers in the world (Al-Beteshty 2006: 67-74, 84-85, 107).

At the beginning of his colossal, military-endorsed history of the October War, Major General Gamal Hammad (one of the leaders of the Free Officers Movement) laid out the dangers

entailed in failing to seize the passes. To start with, the Sinai passes occupy a higher slope than that of the Suez Canal, which makes those who base their defense on fixed positions along the canal banks at a great disadvantage; secondly, establishing one's defense line in an exposed desert area (such as the canal banks) threatens its penetration, outflanking, or encirclement by enemy troops – a fact taught to novice students of desert warfare at the Egyptian Military Academy; thirdly, unfortified bridgeheads (such as those Sadat wanted to establish along the canal) cannot be considered military objectives in themselves, but rather as springboards for advance – if the Allied forces had remained glued to their beachheads at Normandy, they would have certainly been thrown back to sea by the Nazis. In short, Hammad concluded, asking the Egyptian army to turn from offence to defense right after it crosses the Suez Canal (i.e. before reaching the passes) amounts to surrendering the initiative to the enemy in Sinai (Hammad 2002: 52-54).

Now, although Sadat assured the high command that he intended to seize the passes during the first wave of attack, his generals clearly saw that he did not, simply because he wanted to launch war before securing the weapons necessary for such a sweeping assault to the passes. During a general staff meeting, on January 24, 1972, the War Minister criticized Sadat openly for alienating the Soviet Union, which were Egypt's only arms supplier. Although there was no love lost between Sadeq and the Russians, he understood that waging war without adequate arms risked another military defeat. Sadat's unilateral decision to evict all Soviet experts (over 15,000 men) in July 1972 – without consulting the military – further disturbed the high command. As Chief of Operations Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy pointed out, no one was entirely sure why and how this decision was made, "We believed in general command that the decision…was taken by the cabinet or National Defense Council, but we later discovered it was Sadat's decision alone" (Gamasy 1993: 141-45). A stunned Shazly tried to reason with the President: "you must realize how dangerous this decision is… Surely you know that. There is no question that it will affect our capabilities. The Soviet units play such a

large role in our air-defense and electronic warfare'." Even Sadeq, an ardent critique of the Soviets, did everything he could to dissuade Sadat, but to no avail (Shazly 1980: 111).

The tense situation between the President and his generals reached its zenith on the night of October 24, 1972, during an exceptionally stormy meeting of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Sadat had asked Sadeq to prepare for war by mid-November, an order that the War Minister duly ignored because he knew that a premature attack could only be limited to crossing the canal without seizing the passes, and was thus potentially disastrous. Sadeq asked his senior lieutenants to sound their objections frankly the next time they met the President. During that meeting, Sadat thought he was reviewing the final preparations for war, while the high command was determined to sound their almost unanimous objection to the President's plan. According to the minutes of the meeting, Sadat began by denying rumors that he was "selling the country to the Americans," and claiming that it was the U.S. that was trying to lure him to conclude a peaceful settlement with Israel (Minutes of meeting in Sabri 1979: 31). The War Minister, his deputy (Abd al-Qader Hassan), and Commander of the Navy (Mahmoud Fahmy) questioned the wisdom of the President's decision to "go to war with whatever weapons we had," adding that to lose face in another battle with Israel would be demoralizing to the troops and the people. Sadat yelled back that none of them had "the right or the competence" to second-guess him (Sadat 1978: 319-21).

The minutes then reveal how an adamant Deputy War Minister insisted that a limited war could not liberate Sinai; if the army did not keep Israel under pressure through a sustained offensive, the war would quickly turn into a hopelessly defensive war of a few insignificant bridgeheads on the banks of the Suez Canal, which gives Israel the advantage because of its superior air force. The President's reply was that it was the Supreme Council's job to compensate for lack of weapons with good planning and talent. When the Deputy Minister objected again, Sadat barked back: "This is the second time you second-guess me. I will not allow it… I am the one responsible for the

independence of this country. I know what I am doing. It is none of your business. Make one more objection, and you will be asked to stay home… Shame on you! Learn your place! You are a soldier, not a politician." When the Navy Commander pointed out that it was inappropriate for the President to scold his generals in this degrading manner, Sadat gave him a piece of his mind too. Following the meeting, an indignant Sadeq asked Sadat why he convened the meeting if he was not willing to respect or even listen to the military's view. The President's response came two days later, when all those who objected to his plan during the meeting (including the War Minister and his deputy) were dismissed, and over a hundred high-ranking officers were purged over the weeks that followed. (Sabri 1979: 65-67; Shazly 1980: 122-23).

When Sadat later described the meeting in an interview, he pulled no punches. The President portrayed his Supreme Council of the Armed Forces as "a group of childish pupils, [composed of] a deceived leftist, an ailing psychopath, a mercenary, a traitor to Egypt, a conspirator…then it turned out that the War Minister was making rounds through the units to preach against the war" (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 335-36). In his view, Sadeq and his associates were cowards with no stomach for war. The President then claimed that Sadeq was involved in an ill-conceived coup aimed at preventing the war, and that he had to be placed under house arrest (Sadat 1978: 320). Privately, however, Sadat confided to his longtime friend Mahmoud Game' that he was worried about Sadeq's popularity among the soldiers, especially after his superb effort in training and inspiring the troops (Game' 2004: 164). Chief of Staff Shazly, who worked closely with Sadeq and attended that fateful October meeting, reached a similar conclusion: Sadeq was very successful in cultivating popularity within the ranks through material and symbolic incentives, and that Sadat believed that this threatened his security as President (Shazly 1980: 123-26). Free Officer and historian Ahmed Hamroush (1987: 147) and Heikal (1993: 251), who witnessed these events first-hand, further substantiate this claim. And it is worth noting here that the President became aware of the War

Minister's growing popularity from no other than the director of the General Intelligence Service Ahmed Ismail – one of the first instances of civilian intelligence spying on the military (Sirrs 2010: 127).

As testimony to both Sadeq's popularity and the fact that many officers shared his views, a month after his dismissal a secret society of officers calling themselves the Save Egypt Movement plotted to overthrow the President. The group echoed the deposed war minster's argument that there was an attempt to "push us into war while we were unprepared; that this would lead to the destruction of our armed forces" (Shazly 1980: 129). To officers' great dismay, the President charged a civilian security body, the State Security Investigations Sector, with the investigations, claiming that because it was SSIS spies, rather than Military Intelligence, that uncovered the secret plot, it had earned his trust. Shazly said he heard, to his astonishment, the President and Interior Minister (Mamduh Salem) accusing Sadeq and his followers of being agents for the Saudi government (Shazly 1980: 129). The investigations revealed that the conspirators were no less than the Commander of the Central District (Cairo), the head of Military Intelligence, along with two divisional commanders and chiefs of staff, commander of a ranger group, and commanders of smaller units. The organization extended deep into the armed forces, and their plan was to arrest the political and security leadership, as well as military officers loyal to the President on November 9, 1972 at Shazly's daughter's wedding (Shazly 1980: 130; Brooks 2008: 121). Before the whole affair was settled, the President took another hugely controversial decision by appointing intelligence director Ahmed Ismail Minister of War on October 26, 1972.

On the Road to October

Ahmed Ismail was an old general. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1938, and was now fifty-six years old. His cautious nature kept him from joining the Free Officers though he served with many of them as a brigade commander in the 1948 war in Palestine. And his performance was as undistinguished as scores of other officers in the 1956 Suez War. So what special qualifications did he have to assume the top military position at such a critical timing? Though no one can penetrate Sadat's mind, what appears to have distinguished Ismail from other generals was that his history in the armed forces, along with his medical condition made it practically impossible for him to nurture a following within the ranks. First, Ismail was relieved from his duties twice for incompetence, as a divisional commander in August 1967, and as chief of staff in September 1969. Thus, he assumed his new post "with the humiliation" of some who was dismissed from the service for negligence (Sirrs 2010: 121). Second, although very few officers were fond of Ismail, he had made an archenemy of one particular officer during his years in service: Saad al-Din al-Shazly, the current chief of staff. The two had remained on non-speaking terms ever since their fistfight in Congo in 1960, when Ismail tried to flaunt his authority as Egypt's military attaché in the face of Shazly who served in the UN force stationed there. Although Shazly was still a young captain, he refused to obey Brigadier General Ismail not just because he had no jurisdiction over him, but also because he believed that Ismail was blatantly inept. In fact, Shazly had resigned in March 1969 as head of the Commando Corps when Nasser appointed Ismail chief of staff, but before his resignation was considered Ismail was dismissed once more. It is not surprising that when Sadat consulted his Chief of Staff over who should replace Sadeq as War Minister, Shazly advised that anyone other than Ismail would do. When the President appointed him anyway, Shazly says he was appalled. He pleaded: "Mr. President… I have a history of disagreement with Ahmed Ismail going back more than 12 years, ever since we met in the Congo. We have had bad relations ever since. It would be impossible to work in harmony," but all that Sadat did was flap his hand and mumble, "I

know all that" (Shazly 1980: 124-25). Finally, Ismail was fighting a losing battle with cancer. Sadat admited that physicians informed him of Ismail's condition, and asserted that he cannot handle a high-stress job. Sadat dismissed their views because he trusted Ismail. Though Sadat also confessed that by October 19 (i.e., right in the middle of the war), his War Minister spent most of his time resting in a small bed outside Operation Center 10, the war command room (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 367).

So why did the President make such an unpopular decision? Despite his shortcomings, Ahmed Ismail had a few valuable political assets. For one thing, he and Sadat had been friends since 1938, which meant that the President could trust his personal loyalty (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 362). It also helped that Ismail felt bitter over his repeated dismissals. His resentment of Nasser's security and military appointees made him perfectly suited to serve as GIS director after the May 1971 clash. The fact that Sadat brought him back from oblivion to such a prestigious post made him even more grateful. This all meant that he could serve the President well in terms of de-politicizing the corps. During his first meeting with Sadat as war minister, Ismail was warned that "an unacceptable level of political activity was going on" in the military, and that his first priority was to liquidate all political factions within the armed forces. The President then added that he had appointed him to intelligence first in order to gain the experience he will need to fulfill this crucial task (Gamasy 1993: 152-58).

More importantly, Ismail had little faith in the prospects of military victory. Weeks before assuming his new job, he submitted a GIS report to Sadat arguing that: "Egypt was not ready for war…that any attack mounted or led by Egypt under present conditions might lead to disaster" (Shazly 1980: 27). In that sense, he was the only man among Egypt's unyielding generals that would likely accept the President's still hidden plan to wage a limited war, which was only meant to serve as a catalyst for political settlement. Also, in his capacity as GIS director between May 1971 and

October 1972, he ran the backchannel with the CIA (discussed below), and was therefore aware of what the President was trying to arrange with the Americans (Heikal 1983: 64). Chief of Staff Shazly provided the best summary for why Sadat might have appointed Ismail as war minister:

> **He was a weak man, alternating between submissiveness and bullying… He shunned the responsibility for decisions, preferring to receive orders rather than give them. He was thoroughly unpopular with the troops, not surprisingly since his manner was uniformly brusque; and while caring nothing for the personal problems of those around him, he was a fairly devoted believer in nepotism when it came to his own family… Such unpopularity was another virtue in Sadat's eyes. So, of course, was the fact that he and the Chief of Staff were at loggerheads… The unforgivable point is that Ismail was also a dying man. And President Sadat knew it. Ismail had cancer…the disease was killing Ismail for at least a year before Sadat appointed him Minister of War… He confessed he knew. In a speech in 1977, Sadat said he knew of Ismail's illness before and during the October war and had been told by doctors that Ismail was a very sick man incapable of taking decisions… Ismail was unfit for his job; and his weakness had terrible consequences for his country. [But] The wickedness lies in the man who appointed and then manipulated Ismail** (Shazly 1980: 126-27).

Still, any war was risky, whether it was limited or otherwise. Another defeat would be politically disastrous. At the same time, a stunning victory would create military heroes who could then ride a crest of popularity within and outside the ranks to challenge Sadat. The examples of Mohamed Naguib and Nasser were instructive. Even though Egypt lost badly in 1948, the two commanders' gallant performance in combat gained them considerable support from their brothers-in-arms, and gave them enough legitimacy to defy the king. To avoid this risk altogether, Sadat decided to shoot first for the best-case scenario: liberating Sinai without a war – a purely political triumph. Was Sadat too naïve to think that Israel would simply surrender the occupied territories? Not really. He was merely hoping for a repeat of the 1956 Suez War, minus the war. On that occasion, Egypt pulled out an astonishing political victory without having to win it on the battlefield. In his notorious meeting with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on October 24, 1972, Sadat had in fact asserted: "we should keep in mind what we did in 1956…[when] Nasser turned military defeat into political victory" (Sabri 1979: 54). To Sadat's mind, the party that delivered that victory to Egypt on a silver

platter was the United States. In his reminiscences about the war, he fondly remembered "the critical role Eisenhower played in transforming military defeat into political victory." He also saw Nasser's decision in 1967 to step down in favor of the pro-American Zakaria as an admission on his part that "there was one power that ruled Egypt and the world, that is: America." Summarized in his favorite aphorism: "America holds 99 percent of the cards" in the Middle East (Sadat 1978: 194, 232, 390).

Accordingly, Sadat embarked on his own little private war to win America's heart and mind. Confidant Mahmoud Game' claimed that Sadat had developed close ties with the Americans years before he came to the presidency (Game' 2004: 140). Former U.S. intelligence analyst Owen Sirrs says that there are strong indicators that Sadat's long-standing "links to U.S. intelligence helped bolster his hold on the presidency even though many in Washington suspected he would not last long" (Sirrs 2010: 117). Sadat's first move after he assumed the top executive post – as recorded in his own memoirs – was an appeal to Albert Richardson, U.S. Health Secretary and envoy to Nasser's funeral, to "try him out" (Sadat 1978: 296). Sadly, when the latter returned home he reported that Sadat would not last more than six weeks. The President then sought the support of Congress members during their visit to Cairo in March 1971. In fact, he developed what would become an intimate friendship with David Rockefeller during this visit. He also tried to appease William Rogers during his visit to Cairo in May 1971 – the first visit by a U.S. Secretary of State since 1953 – by pledging to remove his Foreign Minister (Mahmoud Riyad) because of his rigid positions towards America and Israel (Hamroush 1987: 17, 40-46). Sadat then went above and beyond and invited Israeli Premier Golda Meir four months after Nasser passed away to secret talks to conclude a peaceful settlement, but she turned him down (Ghaleb 2001: 193).

These sporadic attempts, however, proved insufficient. What Sadat needed was a regular and reliable backchannel. And for that he turned to an old liaison with the Americans, who was also a member of the original Free Officers clique with the name of Abd al-Mon'em Amin. Sadat asked

Amin to secretly contact the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Cairo Donald Bergus and CIA station chief Eugene Trone. Little did Sadat know that GIS had bugged the offices and apartments of both Bergus and Trone, and that every word they exchanged with Amin was tapped and sent to his rivals (the centers of power), and through them to the Soviets. During the first meeting, on January 22, 1971, Amin asked for U.S. support for Sadat, brandishing the new President's anti-Soviet sentiments and apologizing for the unwarranted suspicions Nasser held against the United States: "[Nasser's] complex was that he was over suspicious, suspicious of everyone and everything… Not only that, but he also did everything for his own glory, and believed that defying America would elevate him… He did not do it for his country, or the Arabs, or the [developing] world, but rather to enhance his personal status." When Bergus mumbled tactfully that Nasser was also a great leader, Amin retorted: "He was only great because he brought great disasters upon his country" (Tape transcript in Heikal 1993: 758-60). Nonetheless, the overture came to nothing, and Sadat began searching for a more effective channel.

At this point, the President realized he needed outside help. He reached out to a friend he was so intimate with that he stood witness to his marriage back in 1955, that was Kamal Adham, the legendary head of Saudi intelligence. Adham advised his friend to demonstrate goodwill to the Americans by, for example, expelling the Soviet military experts from Egypt, which Sadat did in July 1972. And on the same month he ejected the Soviets, he invited the CIA to send an official representative to Cairo for the first time since 1967 (Sirrs 2010: 123). But although the Nixon administration had indeed signaled its readiness, through several official statements, to work for a peaceful settlement between the belligerents if the Soviet mission in Egypt was terminated, Sadat's gesture was completely ignored. As Kissinger later explained to Esmat Abd al-Magid, Egypt's representative at the UN: Americans do not "pay for anything that is offered freely" (Abd al-Magid 1998: 121). In layman's terms, Sadat had thrown away his bargaining chip without first negotiating a

suitable reward, thinking that the U.S. was bound to appreciate his spirit of generosity – a devastating tactic he virtually grew addicted to over the next few years. The Saudi intelligence chief then approached Heikal with the following offer: "You are the only person the President really trusts, and he asked us to talk to you. We want to arrange for the installation of a hotline between my house and your house." Heikal immediately declined because he knew that "Saudi intelligence was a step-child of the CIA," only to learn a few weeks later from War Minister Sadeq that the President had installed this hotline in his own house (Heikal 1983: 44-45). American intelligence analyst Owen Sirrs confirmed that Sadat's home-based hotline was in fact used to contact CIA operatives (Sirrs 2010: 121).

Eventually, Sadat recognized that all these shadowy communications could not deliver a highly valued political prize such as Sinai. He therefore decided to redirect all his energies towards one target, towards the man he believed to hold the keys to U.S. power: Henry Kissinger. Sadat first realized that Kissinger was interested in Egypt when Donald Kendall (Pepsi-Cola chairman, and a friend of Nixon) invited Heikal on June 18, 1971 to meet privately with the U.S. National Security Advisor at his vacation house in Connecticut. Heikal turned down the invitation, and tried to explain to a very disappointed President that Egypt must not conduct talks with the Americans from a position of weakness. A frustrated Sadat turned to his new War Minister Ahmed Ismail for advice in December 1972. Ismail counseled that the President should send a personal emissary to meet Kissinger instead. Thus, a meeting was held at Kendall's house in February 1973 between Kissinger and Egyptian National Security Advisor Hafez Ismail (Heikal 1993: 235, 270-71). After so many desperate attempts, something finally clicked. Although the meeting was completely useless, it inaugurated the famous secret backchannel that played such a vital role during the war.

But as long as Egypt could not launch a war, there was little that could be done. Kissinger believed that Sadat could open the doors of the Arab world to the U.S. The Egyptian President's

eagerness to join the American camp, however, encouraged the seasoned National Security Advisor to wait until the fruit was ripe. And of course, the American-Soviet détente suggested there was no need to rush. So what was the would-be Metternich of the Middle East waiting for? A rearrangement of regional power required, in Kissinger's view, that all parties involved acknowledge two geopolitical realities: first, "that Israel was too strong (or could be made too strong) to be defeated even by all of its neighbors combined, and that the United States would hold the ring against Soviet intervention;" and second, that the "key to the Middle East, therefore, resided in Washington" (Kissinger 1994: 737). In his estimation, Sadat recognized the second fact, but he still needed to taste the first. So even though Hafez Ismail tried to promote his boss by pointing out that: "This was the first time in a quarter of a century that an Arab leader was willing to enter into a peace agreement with Israel," Kissinger was still unimpressed (Minutes of meeting in Burr 2004: 41). In remembering those days, Kissinger wondered: "What did I do in those conversations? I talked with [Sadat's envoy] about the weather and every other subject in the world… I played with him. I toyed with him. My aim was to gain time and postpone the serious stage for another month, another year" (Kissinger in Golan 1976: 145).

The pressure for war was thus building up domestically and internationally – albeit for very different reasons: Egyptians were eager to redeem themselves, while the Americans wanted to impress on them the fact that they could not do so through war. Throughout Egypt, tens of thousands of students took to the streets calling for war. And in a particularly alarming incident, on October 12, 1972, a mechanized battalion commander (Captain Aly Hassan) stationed outside the capital drove his tanks to Al-Hussein Mosque at the heart of Cairo to rally people against Sadat's hesitance to wage war. What was most disturbing about the incident was that none of the military checkpoints along the way tried to stop him (Shazly 1980: 117). On the other hand, Sadat's National Security Advisor relayed Kissinger's belief that Egyptians should not expect too much as long as

they remained militarily defeated. Hafez Ismail highlighted a section in his meeting with Kissinger in France on May 20, 1973, where the latter said: "I have told you last time, and I will continue to say that there is no better position for the Israelis than the one they are in right now… As long as Israel feels it could preserve its position, we do not think, honestly, that it will pull back" (Burr 2004: 37, 47). The message was clear: war could not longer be postponed.

'The Victory Egypt Threw Away'

As America seemed reluctant to furnish Sadat with a purely political solution, he was now forced to walk the delicate path of unleashing the military, on the one hand, and curbing its success, on the other. While his generals wanted to liberate Sinai by force of arms, the President aimed for a recipe similar to that of 1956: an act of symbolic military defiance that paves the way for a purely political settlement. From here arose the notion of a 'limited war', which Sadat believed would involve a crossing of the Suez Canal and the seizure of narrow strip of land on the east bank to prove to Israel that Egyptians can jeopardize its security. His alibi to the soldiers and the people would be that Egypt was forced to fight a limited war because it could not secure enough weapons from the Soviets, and that the U.S. would not allow Israel to lose. As strategy analyst Risa Brooks had to admit: "Sadat's war concept…premised on the fact that Egypt's inadequate military could not prevail against its superior adversary, was far from conventional" (Brooks 2008: 104). Military specialist Julian Schofield described it as an unorthodox "demilitarized [war] strategy [which] manifested itself as a diplomatic offensive pegged to a military attack" (Schofield 2007: 98).

The problem was that the President's commitment to this limited war concept clashed with the military's insistence (from the high command downwards) on liberating Sinai through a long war of attrition. The armed forces understandably rejected the President's wish to attack Israel in such as

way that produced "a diplomatic rather than a battlefield victory" (Schofield 2007: 109). But after several failed attempts at defying, or trying to unseat the President, the military's hand was forced. Officers were partly exhausted by the passage of time, and partly hopeful that once the war starts, they could see their mission through with minimal interference from the capital. Hence, they jumped to the abyss. Sadly however, as a few senior officers predicted, Sadat's tight-leash control over operations eventually led to what was described variously as Egypt's 'Lost Victory', by the Sunday Times (Ghaleb 2001: 213); 'The Victory Egypt Threw Away', by the team of international experts who studied the war (Insight Team 1974: 219); Egypt's road 'From Victory to Self-Defeat', by a Western military scholar (Barnet 1992: 128); and, more evocatively, as the "savage struggle that Egypt…had little hope for winning but nonetheless came very close – perhaps within hours – to doing so," by military historian Walter J. Boyne (Boyne 2002: xiv). This outcome was expected because, as Heikal reminded us, "The fate of battles is determined before the first shot is fired" (Heikal 1990: 24).

And Sadat had made his intention clear from the very beginning. Although the President, as Chief of Operations Gamasy noted, insisted on working alone on setting the general war strategy and conducting the field operations, he did signal his objective to wage a 'symbolic' battle early on (Gamasy 1993: 313). For example, during a meeting with his general command in February 1973, he expressed his belief that it was only important to win the first 24 hours of the war (Sadat 1978: 329). He also shared the outlines of his plan with Egypt's soon-to-be Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy in the summer of 1973. And Fahmy was duly shocked. He tried to explain to his boss that Egypt's national security demands that the war succeeds in liberating the occupied territories, or at the very least controlling the Sinai Passes. If not, then Israel will maintain the upper hand in the negotiations that will follow the war (Fahmy 1985: 30, 37-38). The military specialists who studied the war corroborated this view. It is true that the Egyptian army lacked Israel's *blitzkrieg* capacity and could

scarcely fight a mobile war across the peninsula, but it could achieve a "static victory" by holding the perfectly defensible passes (Insight Team 1974: 86). This had in fact been the original plan, which was finalized in September 1970 by former War Minister Fawzy under the name Plan 200. The plan laid out three stages to liberate the entire peninsula in 12 days: the first stage (Granite 1) covered the crossing of the Suez Canal, to be followed immediately by a second stage (Granite 2) to seize the passes, and then the general command was supposed to reassess the situation before ordering an advance to the Egyptian-Israeli borders. The plan was ready to be rehearsed in March 1971, and implemented shortly afterwards, but Nasser's death led to its postponement (Fawzy 1990: 12, 365). Sadat claimed that the plan, which he personally reviewed with Nasser at the beginning of September 1970, was merely defensive (Sadat 1978: 320). When Shazly became Chief of Staff, he was asked to update the plan and give it a more offensive edge (Shazly 1980: 18).

The new plan was quite similar. It had Egyptian infantrymen and armor crossing the Suez Canal and storming the Bar-Lev fortifications under the cover of heavy artillery barrages and air raids, then if the situation allowed they would march quickly to the mountainous passes and dig-in there until the general command reassessed the viability of further advance. So as Gamasy confirmed, controlling the topographically impervious Sinai Passes was the primary goal of the whole operation (Gamasy 1993: 138-39). Meanwhile, the Syrians – who had lost the Golan Heights in the 1967 war – would attack at the same time and eject the Israeli occupation. The plan seemed perfect on paper, yet the Egyptian top brass was not entirely certain about what Sadat had up his sleeve, as evidenced by the fact that after receiving the first war directive on October 1, they asked for another one on October 5 (both directives were penned by Heikal). They wanted the President to explicitly state that the objective of the war was to "liberate the occupied territories in progressive stages according to developments." There was a lurking fear that Sadat intended to launch a limited

attack, and then hold the army responsible for failing to liberate the whole peninsula (Heikal 1993: 311-12; Gamasy 1993: 191).

By October 1973, Egypt had mobilized an army of 1.2 million. The general staff believed it now had the capacity to offset Israeli air supremacy through a tightly integrated air defense network of fixed SA-2 and SA-3 missiles, mobile SAM-6s, and handheld SA-7 Strelas; check Israeli armored supremacy through an abundant supply of anti-tank Sagger missiles and RPGs; and deter Israeli missile threats to the Egyptian interior through Scud and FROG missiles capable of reaching deep into Israel. For the first time in years, they felt ready to take on their rival in a fair battle. Before dawn on October 6, frogmen sabotaged the underwater oil pipes that Israel had planned to turn ablaze if Egyptians attempted to cross the canal. At 2:05 p.m. an armada of 222 fighter jets delivered a devastating air strike against Israeli communication centers, airfields, and Hawk missile sites in Sinai, as 2000 howitzers and heavy mortars heralded incessant waves of artillery fire across the canal, covering the crossing of a massive stride of infantrymen in rubber dinghies and floating bridges. The troops ran over the Bar-Lev Line's thirty-five fortifications, and established five bridgeheads on the east bank of the canal. By nightfall, Egyptians had just achieved "the largest crossing in military history," with 100,000 troops armed with shoulder-held anti-tank missiles, 1,000 tanks, and 13,500 armored vehicles (Shazly 1980: 157).

With a combination of innovative anti-armor and anti-aircraft infantry tactics, under the protection of a dense umbrella of SAM batteries stationed along the canal, the Egyptian army managed by the end of the second day of fighting to destroy 49 Israeli planes and 500 tanks. Moreover, while the general command estimated that at least 10,000 soldiers would be killed in the crossing, only 200 were lost during the first two days. With Israel's strongest branches (its armor and air force) temporarily neutralized, Egyptians dominated the battlefield and were in a position to advance to the passes before Israelis knew what hit them (Gamasy 1993: 226, 250). Prominent

Israeli historian Avi Shlaim was forced to admit that: "Military history offers few parallels for strategic surprise as complete as that achieved by Egypt" (Shlaim 1976: 348).

The next step was to seize the passes and exhaust the Israeli army by incessant combat. It was not too farfetched; "Simple mathematics made it certain that Israel could not sustain a prolonged defensive war" (Boyne 2002: 58). In his first press conference during the war, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan confessed, "I doubt whether there is another place in the entire world that is protected by such a dense array of modern missiles. I doubt whether there is a place in Russia or Vietnam that is equipped like…the Egyptian front at the canal" (Insight Team 1974: 189). In other words, Israeli commanders understood that if Egypt kept the initiative, they would be dragged into a drawn-out war of attrition in Sinai – that no quick knockout was possible. In fact, Dayan secretly admitted to his staff that: "there was not a single tank between Tel Aviv and the Israeli lines in the Sinai" (Boyne 2002: 58).

Israeli reporter Matti Golan captures the mood in Tel Aviv during those first couple of days: "[Prime Minister] Mrs. Meir, Dayan, and Chief of Staff [David] Elazar were so tired and pessimistic that they were ready to throw in the towel" (Golan 1976: 66). At the same time, *New York Times* war correspondent Henry Tanner summarized the spirit on the Egyptian front as follows: "The Aim of Every Egyptian Soldier: To Advance Eastward."[20] The international team of experts who studied the war thus concluded: "[I]f the Egyptians chose to press on, it did not look as if Israel – even with its reserves – would be able to do other than fight a continuing rearguard action. The Israeli tank crews were becoming unnerved by the 'creeping, crawling' techniques of the Egyptian missile infantry and the seeming inability of the dashing Israeli tactics of the past to cope with their endless ambushes" (Insight Team 1974: 191). And indeed by the evening of October 8, Egypt had amassed a fighting force of over 100,000 men a few kilometers away from the passes, backed up by four divisions (two

[20] *Al-Ahram* 31718: 3. Cairo (10/13/1973).

armored and two mechanized) and two armored brigades just across the canal. It was time to move forward.

But instead of advancing to the passes, Egypt decided to "hand over [its] brilliantly won initiative to the Israelis" (Insight Team 1974: 226). As future War Minister Kamal Hassan Aly related, despite the war command's pressing for a rapid advance to occupy the strategically indispensable passes, Sadat halted the offensive on October 9 (Aly 1994: 319). The decision was nothing short of catastrophic. Egyptian armor had not penetrated Sinai deep enough, and while Egyptian bridgehead stretched the length of the canal, it was only sixteen kilometers deep – half the distance between the canal and the passes. This was the "first – and ultimately fatal – setback" in the war. Afterwards, Egypt practically "frittered [its] gains away by waiting far too long to launch the second phase" (Insight Team 1974: 232, 172, 135).

Gamasy said he tried to warn the President that any delay, any relaxing of the pressure on Israel meant giving it the initiative, and allowing it to consolidate its defenses and launch a counterattack; that the only way to protect our gains was to continue the offensive eastwards until we reached the passes, an offensive that at the moment would be carried out "under the best conditions for us and the worst for them" (Gamasy 1993: 264). Even the Military Advisory Board (composed of three major generals, and referred to as Operations Center 11), summarized their recommendations to Sadat on October 7 in one short sentence: "Advance to the passes" (Heikal 1993: 438). A cable sent by the U.S. Interests Section in Cairo to the Pentagon predicted that the Egyptian military would surely seize the passes right away (Burr 2004: 151). A similar message came from the Soviet embassy on October 8. Ambassador Vladimir Vinogradov invited Heikal over for what he described as an urgent matter. He then told his Egyptian guest that Russian military experts are bewildered by Sadat's decision not to advance to the passes, and that he personally told the President that based on Soviet reconnaissance there were less than two Israeli brigades blocking his

way, which meant that the passes could be seized in a couple of hours (Heikal 1993: 392-93). Foreign Minister Murad Ghaleb, relying on contacts he developed in Moscow during his decade-long tenure as ambassador, says the Soviets warned Sadat that spreading his troop over the 200-kilometer-long east bank without penetrating Sinai and entrenching the assault force in the passes is nothing short of military suicide (Ghaleb 2001: 213). Over the next days, Soviet generals repeatedly warned Egypt that such a blunder amounted to "throw[ing] away all that had been won" so far (Boyne 2002: 96). Yet to no avail.

Sadat then received Situation Report No. 4 from his field commanders on October 9, which stressed that the Israelis have redirected their energy away from the Egyptian to the Syrian front, and that this was the best chance to develop the attack. Former Prime Minister, and now Acting Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzy also called the President on October 11 to convey that many friendly states had expressed concern over Egypt's unwarranted halt, to which Sadat responded: "Rest assured, everything is in my hand." This was followed by Situation Report No. 6 on October 11 from the front, which noted that an Israeli counterattack was expected in 48 hours, and that they need to advance to the passes now. On the same day, Sadat received two reports, one from the Military Affairs Department warning that the tactical halt has caused confusion within the ranks and that it has become the sole subject of discussion among officers and soldier who no longer understood their mission. The second report came from the Interior Ministry saying that many Egyptians (including several retired officers) were confused by the sudden halt (Heikal 1993: 396-422).

Even Sadat's ally, War Minister Ahmed Ismail, seemed puzzled. Like everyone else at general command, he believed that the bridgeheads were meant to serve as springboards for capturing the passes – especially after Egyptians performed much better than anticipated (and Israelis much worse) during the first two days of the war (Insight Team 1974: 169). Encouraged by Ismail's

bewilderment, Gamasy tried to win him over so that he might persuade the President to permit an advance. The Chief of Operations explained to the War Minister that militarily speaking Sadat's order to halt was not only unjustified, but also potentially tragic. He then added emphatically, "I beg you to remember that…the principle of proceeding eastward to the passes was predetermined and there was no disagreement over this." His pleas fell on deaf ears. Ismail was clearly unwilling to question the President's orders. It was a political decision, he said (Gamasy 1993: 265-66). When interviewed by Heikal barely a month after the war, on November 14, 1973 in the Egyptian daily *al-Ahram*, Ismail would not open up about why he went through with this 'tactical halt', offering nothing but a brisk and vague response: "I am not the adventurous type" (Heikal 1993: 440). In reality though Ismail did have some insight into the President's thinking. He knew that Sadat did not aspire for a straightforward military victory, but wanted to use the war to spark a serious enough crisis to convince the United States that the regional situation was too dangerous to remain unresolved. To achieve this goal, there was no need to push any farther across Sinai.

With that in mind, a look at what Sadat was conducting behind the scenes might uncover the secret behind his ordering of a 'tactical halt' against the advice of his entire military, as well as the experts of a few other militaries. Unbeknown to his high command, a mere 20 hours after his troops had crossed the canal, Sadat sent a secret cable to Henry Kissinger through the backchannel run by Hafez Ismail. While the Egyptian forces were marking success after success, the President assured Kissinger that: "Egypt had no intention of intensifying the engagements or widening the confrontation." (Gamasy 1993: 237). The U.S. National Security Advisor (who had just become Secretary of State as well) responded instantly with a message of approval that highlighted how his intervention would have no chance if the fighting escalated. These were the first of 38 secret cables transmitted between October 7 and 29 in which Sadat was desperately trying to push Kissinger to intervene with Tel Aviv to agree to evacuate Sinai through a peaceful settlement (All reproduced in

Heikal 1993: 792-858). As Kissinger mentioned in his memoirs, "Not one day passed throughout the period of the war when we did not receive a message from Cairo or send one to it" (quoted in Gamasy 1993: 239). Sadat's war decisions, therefore, had nothing to do with battlefield developments, but rather with his campaign to enlist Kissinger's support in settling the dispute without further fighting, and thus achieve his ultimate goal of a political solution aided only partially by a modest military operation.

But instead of aiding Sadat, Kissinger summoned the Israeli ambassador to Washington Simcha Dinitz to his office to inform him of Sadat's pledge not to expand beyond the narrow foothold he secured on the east bank. He told Dinitz frankly: "They say they will not deepen their bridgeheads farther than they are right now," and prompted Israel to act accordingly (Minutes of meeting in Burr 2004: 126). Kissinger also found the cable useful during his meeting with Defense Secretary James Schlesinger on October 7. Pentagon analysts had concluded that it was madness to expect the Egyptian forces to cross the canal and then just sit still and bite their time. The Secretary of State, however, assured them that this is exactly what they will do, and advised the Pentagon to draw its plans accordingly (Hamroush 1987: 184). This conversation soon found its way to Israel. The Israeli Chief of Staff Elazar had asked for the U.S. military's help to evaluate his options. On October 8, a Pentagon official arrived in Tel Aviv with a thick dossier of satellite images of troop positions on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. His recommendation was to freeze one front, and concentrate all effort on the other, before turning back to finish off the first (Gamasy 1993: 247-48). Israeli generals concurred, knowing that they did not have the resources to engage both fronts simultaneously. The only question now was which front to freeze? The depth of the Sinai peninsula compared to the proximity of the Golan Heights to Israel's population centers made Egypt a better candidate for this freezing strategy – as long, of course, as the Egyptians were not planning on taking the passes, which thanks to Sadat now everyone knew (Boyne 2002: 45)

Major General Kamal Hassan Aly, who witnessed these developments on the battlefront, finally figured out Sadat's logic when his secret correspondence with the U.S. was declassified in the nineties. He describes how he learned afterwards that Kissinger had promised the President that if he slowed the army advance, he could persuade Israel to withdraw peacefully, but the Americans then double-crossed Egypt and told the Israelis that they could safely turn their back on the Egyptian forces and focus on the Syrians, then return to the Sinai front when they was ready. And so suddenly the Syrians, who at this point were on the verge of successfully liberating the Golan, found themselves overwhelmed, at the same time that the Egyptians were forced to remain put although Israeli resistance in Sinai was dying down (Aly 1994: 319). Gamasy also penned a few haunting reflections regarding this backchannel. His first comment was notably reserved: "It seemed unnecessary for us to reassure the United States regarding its interests at a time when it stood openly against Egypt and Syria and supported Israel entirely at every level… I believe that political actions in this case did not help the military operations." Later in his memoirs he became more candid: the secret correspondence not only explains why the President's directions seemed constantly "out of step with the military achievements," but it was quite devastating to learn that while our soldiers were dying on the battlefront, "the political leadership had divulged its military intentions" to a country that was actively assisting our enemy (Gamasy 1993: 240, 272). War historian Walter J. Boyne agreed: "Just the knowledge that Sadat intended only to cross the canal and hold a small but symbolic strip of land…allowed Kissinger to shuffle the diplomatic cards to the advantage of the United States while aiding Israel at exactly the right level" (Boyne 2002: 66). Heikal's remarks were typically more dramatic: "This was the first time in history that a country at war disclosed its intentions to its enemies, and gave them a free hand on the political and military fronts" (Heikal 1993: 360).

American contribution to the Israeli war effort took an upward surge when it became clear that Israel's heavy losses during the first days of the war had effectively crippled its offensive capabilities. Kissinger convinced Nixon during their meeting on October 9 that if the Arabs win, they will be impossible to negotiate with, and that the only way to prevent this was to compensate the Israeli losses (Kissinger 1982: 481-82). He repeated the same argument in a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group on October 17, "Without our airlift, Israel would be dead" (Minutes of meeting in Burr 2004: 207). So although some commentators resented Kissinger's unsuccessful attempt to tie the aid package to Israel with a pledge by the Jewish lobby to drop the Jackson's amendment, which conditioned the U.S.-Soviet trade agreement on allowing the free emigration of Russian Jews (Golan 1976: 54), and others blamed him for holding back the aid for tactical reasons (Boyne 2002: 119), the end result, however, was that the airlift took off in time to alter the direction of the war through replenishing all the Israeli weapons that Egyptians had fought so hard to destroy, and providing new, more-sophisticated equipment that Egypt could not counter. It is important to add though that Nixon had no reservations. Recalling his reaction a few months later (June 1974) in a gathering of American Jewish leaders, the U.S. President turned to his Secretary of State and said: "Henry, do you remember that on that fourth day [of the war] you came and suggested that I send five planes? – and I said if it's all right to send them five, let's send them fifty" (Golan 1976: 49). It was clear that despite Kissinger's valuable intervention, it was the U.S. President who ultimately made the crucial decisions. The tipping point was Nixon's October 9 meeting with his national security team, where he made it clear "that Israel must not lose the war…and that Israel be told that it could freely expend all of its consumables…in the certain knowledge that these would be completely replenished by the United States without any delay" (Boyne 2002: 75-79).

The first batch of U.S. military supplies arrived on October 10 at al-Arish airport in Sinai. Despite the urging of his generals and the Soviets, Sadat refused to destroy Sinai's last remaining airport (al-Maliz and Beer Tamada had been already destroyed) without sharing his motives with any of them. Later Sadat recorded in his memoirs that although he learned that American "tanks landed in Arish, loaded and fueled, and joined the battle immediately," he did not want to provoke the Americans by bombing the airport (Sadat 1978: 347). Three days later, on October 13, the biggest airlift in history – Operation Nickel Grass – was in full swing. In 33 days (between October 13 and November 14), gigantic U.S. transport planes (C-5 Galaxies and C-141 Starlifters) carried in a total of 569 missions with equipment worth U.S. $88.5 million. In all, 90 percent of the missiles fired during the war were supplied through the airlift. Shipments included 600 tanks (M-48 and M-60) and dozens of jets (A-4 and F-4). But what really tipped the balance were three types of advanced missiles: the anti-tank TOW missiles, the television guided Mavericks, and the Shrike missiles and electronic jamming devices, which suppressed SAM radars and kept the Israeli Air Force safe (Boyne 2002: 209, 263). As Elazar gratefully noted, the Pentagon had not only prepared these weapons for immediate use, but had also sent American instructors to train Israelis on how to use them. The airlift was thus in Gamasy's estimation a "direct and open military action" by the U.S. against Egypt, and that without this "flagrant assistance" Israel would not have been able to turn the tide to its favor. Yet when the Chief of Operations complained to the President that America was tipping the balance, "he listened calmly to my exposé, showing no alarm" (Gamasy 1993: 275-79).

Rearmed and ready, Israel managed to blunt the Syrian attack between October 8 and 14, while the Egyptian force remained in place. As Syria became increasingly a spent force, a counterattack in Sinai was underway. This was when Sadat, again defying the entire high command, ordered an advance not only to the passes, but to six advanced points in the heart of the peninsula beyond enemy lines. Why the sudden change of heart? His official justification was that the Syrians

were under so much pressure, and he felt obliged to relieve them. This is a curious explanation considering the fact that the onslaught against the Syrian forces was only possible because of his inexplicable weeklong tactical halt. A more realistic interpretation could be derived from Kissinger's suspicious aloofness during the past few days. Sadat's domestic situation was becoming critical as Israeli fighters penetrated deep into the home front, bombing Port Said and several Nile Delta cities, and leaving behind 500 civilian casualties. But as the tone of the President's letters to Washington became frantic, Kissinger's responses were patronizing and dismissive, claiming for example in a message on October 12 that the U.S. "is not following the Israeli operations in detail, nor does it get informed of them in advance," and so there was nothing it could do to stop them (Heikal 1993: 426). As befitting a soldier who never saw combat, Sadat believed that a resumption of the offensive would be a brilliant tactical maneuver to unnerve Washington. Little did he know that this was exactly what Israel was waiting for, now that it had contained the Syrians, rearmed its troops, and came back with a vengeance.

The military leadership went far and beyond to prevent what it saw as an incredible blunder, one no less fatal than the tactical halt, albeit in the opposite direction. The Military Advisory Board in Operations Center 11 strenuously disputed the order, explaining that at this late stage of the game its probability of success does not exceed 20 percent (Heikal 1993: 438). Shazly, Gamasy, and others highlighted the fact that early in the war Israel was on the run, now it was preparing a counteroffensive. Egypt's only option at this point was to defend the bridgeheads as best as it could until a ceasefire agreement is reached; any movement would break the lines and allow the enemy to penetrate (Shazly 1980: 166; Gamasy 1993: 271). Further, the commanders of the Second and Third armies (i.e. the two field commanders) tendered their resignation – though the War Minister refused to accept them and said they had to follow orders (Heikal 1993: 432). It was clear that for all concerned, "the plan was madness" (Boyne 2002: 108).

To ease the pressure, Sadat ordered the 21st and 4th armored divisions to cross the canal to back up the offensive. Now his generals were becoming positively livid. These two divisions represented the core of Egypt's strategic reserve. If they forsake the west bank of the Suez Canal and cross to the east, then it would be impossible to deter Israel from invading the Egyptian mainland. Again, though this was certainly another major blunder, the President would have none of it. As expected, the ill-conceived order to attack on October 14 cost the army 260 tanks (to only 10 Israeli ones) and had to be called off on the same day after the commander of the Second Army (Saad Ma'moun) suffered a heart attack and had to be replaced (Boyne 2002: 128). One of the most bizarre reactions to the whole debacle occurred at 3 a.m. on October 18, when fifteen middle-ranking officers made their way from the GHQ to the Presidential Palace, and demanded to see Sadat without delay. Anxious to discover what was behind them, the baffled President received them in his bedroom in pajamas. The officers confessed that the army was boiling with anger and frustration because of Sadat's inexplicable decisions, and that "crazy ideas" were spreading among their colleagues – clearly insinuating a coup – and so they decided to come and level with him. Sadat thanked them for their honesty and promised to get back to them – which of course he never did (Heikal 1993: 487).

More important, the troop movement, as the generals rightly predicted, opened a gap wide enough for Israel to slip behind Egyptian lines and cross the canal to the now exposed west bank. Again, America's role was vital. According to Kissinger's calculations, a future settlement of the dispute on U.S. terms required a spectacular Israeli accomplishment before the ceasefire. His plan was simple: to stall a ceasefire agreement, continue feeding Israel with weapons and strategic information he received from Sadat, until Israel "either ousted the Egyptians from the east bank…or made their position there untenable," after which he could proceed with a "cease-fire-in-place" to dilute Egypt's military achievements (Boyne 2002: 102). On October 9, Mordechai Gur, the Israeli

military attaché in Washington, asked Kissinger for aerial and satellite images, and the Secretary of State instructed General Brent Scowcroft to provide them (Heikal 1993: 401). Then as Sadat was tacitly threatening in his correspondence with Kissinger to escalate matters on the front – hoping that a veiled ultimatum would get the Secretary of State moving – a curious incident happened. For the first and last time during the war, an American reconnaissance plane (SR-71A Blackbird) mapped the battlefront on October 13 and October 15, i.e. the day before Egypt ordered the advance and the morning after it had failed. The aim was to discover if the troop movement had in fact created a breach between the lines, and if so, then where exactly. When the images were examined by the Israeli high command, one such gap was indeed located between the bridgeheads of the Second and Third Egyptian Armies at Deversoir (Aly 1994: 361). Immediately, as Kissinger recounted in his memoirs, he urged the Israelis to take decisive action if they wanted to finish "on top" before a ceasefire was negotiated (Kissinger 1979: 522-23) – and that they surely did. On October 15, two brigades made their way right below the right flank of the Second Army across the canal; the breach widened as Israeli forces continued to pour westward, and by October 22, when Israel commanded seven armored brigades on the west bank, Kissinger called for a ceasefire (Gamasy 1993: 282).

The breach offered one positive advantage for Sadat though: a pretext to remove Shazly and destroy his legacy. Sadat really had no choice, considering that never since Amer did an officer enjoy such charismatic authority inside and outside the ranks. On October 18, the President asked his Chief of Staff to travel to the front to stop the flow of Israeli troops. Shazly returned to capital on October 20 to warn Sadat and the rest of the war command that unless four brigades fell back from the east to the west bank to counter the Israeli intrusion, then the breach will only widen. According to Chief of Operations Gamasy, this was also his opinion and that of the field commanders. Yet the President ruled it out without providing a reasonable excuse (Gamasy 1993: 290). When Shazly

insisted, Sadat exploded in his face: "Why do you always propose withdrawing our troops from the east bank… You ought to be court-martialed. If you persist in these proposals I will court martial you. I do not what to hear another word" (Shazly 1980: 172). At this point, Shazly realized that his trip to the front was nothing but a political setup meant to hold him responsible for failing to close the breach. Nonetheless, he did his job. War experts agreed that what Shazly advocated was "the biggest threat to an Israeli victory… It was Israel's good fortune that…his recommendations had been rejected" (Boyne 2002: 180-84). No wonder why Shazly later confided in his war diary, "To refuse to withdraw the four armored brigades was a combination of madness, ignorance, and treason" (Shazly 1980: 180). The President's decision, according to military historian Boyne, was "a self-inflicted Stalingrad. He gambled the Egyptian 3rd Army, exposing it to be outflanked, surrounded, and…exterminated. In the coldest manner, Sadat calculated that…the possible destruction of the 3rd Army was a risk worth taking in the hope that he could still pull off a diplomatic coup" (Boyne 2002: 201).

Sadat in turn described his Chief of Staff as a coward: "He returned to me [from the front] trembling, and told me…we have to withdraw all our troops from Sinai… That night, I removed him and appointed Gamasy in his place" (Sadat 1978: 349). Sadat repeated the same allegations to reporters after the war, that Shazly had "collapsed…saying that the war was over, a disaster had struck, and that we had to withdraw entirely from Sinai" (Insight Team 1974: 345). In the President's account, Shazly was dispatched to the front on October 16 (two days earlier than he really had been) at a time when it was "very easy to liquidate the breach…but he wasted valuable time gathering information and establishing a leadership [on the front] to compete with his rival General Ismail. In fact, the Special Forces had already advanced to Deversoir and the Israelis admitted how fierce the resistance was…but Shazly pulled them back under the pretext of collecting more information, and the result was that the breach widened" (Sadat 1978: 348). Later students of the war were taken

aback by the "amazing disingenuousness" that characterized Sadat's account of this and other war incidents (Boyne 2002: 200).

Sadat's only witness was no other than his Air Force chief Hosni Mubarak. Everyone else who attended that meeting refuted his story. Gamasy, who eventually took Shazly's job, asserted that Shazly neither suffered a nervous breakdown, nor did he call for a total withdrawal, and that the President did not really dismiss the Chief of Staff until December, two months after he claimed he did (Gamasy 1993: 282). Even before the witnesses to these events published their memoirs few people believed this fabricated story, least of all in the army. Shazly's long-standing reputation in both the Arab world and Israel as Egypt's "most dashing and aggressive combat officer" made it quite inconceivable for him to act in this degrading manner. A Western diplomat described Shazly in 1973 as "Egypt's Dayan," adding that although he never sought this "mythopoeic status, he was nevertheless a hero to the Egyptian public even before the October war – a model of the 'new Egyptian officer'." Folk tales circulated about how he was almost overrun by Nazis in 1942 but refused to withdraw until his men were safely evacuated; how he performed brilliantly as an infantry platoon leader in 1948, and as a paratrooper in Yemen in the 1960s; and particularly how he managed to return all his soldiers to Cairo unscathed in 1967, an episode which had become "encrusted with legend." Despite the gulf that commonly separated army officers from their soldiers, Shazly was quite affectionate with his men. "Instead of the medals and gold braid he could affect, he wore standard beret, jump boots, and camouflage smock of a paratrooper." And with his sharp mind and organizational brilliance, his "legendary popularity" was inflated even more during the buildup to the war (Insight Team 1974: 226-28). It was thus clear to all that Sadat schemed with "conspiratorial instinct against a soldier who commanded immense professional respect and popular following in the armed forces" (McDermott 1988: 168).

In December 1973, Shazly was dispatched to London, then Portugal to serve as military attaché, before being dismissed from service in 1978 after he published his memoirs, which he began as follows: "I have written it with reluctance, with sorrow and with anger…at the man who is currently the President of my country," a man that he held responsible for the "wholesale distortion of the achievements of the armed forces as a group" (Shazly 1980: 9-10). Shazly then devoted a substantial part of the memoirs to exposing Sadat's deceitful behavior during the war, and detailing how the political leadership undermined the country's national security "to preserve a regime of autocratic privilege, which it upheld by lying to its citizens and then spying on them to see if they believed the lies. Even if the price were the failure of our assault on the enemy, the regime was determined to keep the armed forces subservient to that real, secret end" (Shazly 1980: 96). Expectedly, Shazly was tried in absentia for revealing military secrets, and had to move to Algeria where he formed the Egypt National Liberation Front, a movement aimed at overthrowing Sadat's regime. In 1992, he returned to Egypt to be immediately seized at the airport and taken to prison. A couple of years later, he was released and subsequently retired from public life. The top brass never abandoned him though. His family admits that Defense Minister Hussein Tantawy (1991-present) regularly checked on his health, and helped issue a court order to drop all the charges against him in 2005 (Badr al-Din 2011: 20-23). It was Mubarak, following in Sadat's footsteps, who considered him an enemy until the last day. Shazly lived through the January 2011 revolt, but died one night before the military forced the President to step down. A few weeks after, his so far banned memoirs were published in Egypt and quickly made it to the top of best-sellers chart – a symbolic gesture from the military to its cherished commander.

Going back to the October war, there was now a ceasefire agreement at hand, negotiated in Moscow between Kissinger and Leonid Brezhnev, and sanctioned via Security Council resolution 338. On his way back from Moscow, on October 22, the U.S. Secretary of State stopped at Tel Aviv

to reassure an anxious Golda Meir that the resolution did not appoint UN observers to supervise the ceasefire, and that it was understandable if the Israelis needed a couple of more days "to complete the encirclement of the two Egyptian armies" (Golan 1974: 86-87). Operating almost freely on the west side of the canal, Bren Adan and Ariel Sharon's brigades tore a twenty-four-kilometer hole in the SAM air defense umbrella, which protected the Egyptian ground troops, allowing Israel to resume its lethal combination of armor and air power on both sides of the canal (Insight Team 1974: 343). Refusing to admit his mistakes, Sadat dismissed the breach as a "circus show aimed at television audiences" (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 235). But he then quickly accepted the ceasefire.

Like all his previous decisions, accepting a ceasefire-in-place was also hotly disputed, this time though by his most intimate aide Hafez Ismail. The Egyptian National Security Advisor was startled by Sadat's unconditional compliance. He advised his chief to insist on an Israeli pull out from the west bank first – which was already a huge concession from Egypt's initial position that fighting would continue until Israel withdrew to the June 1967 borders. Ismail was also dismayed by Sadat's unshakable confidence in Kissinger despite all that has happened, especially now when the latter turned a blind-eye to Israel's violations of the ceasefire. Moreover, a ceasefire-in-place left the encircled 45,000-strong Third Army at Israel's mercy, let alone the fact that they had cut off the main access to Sinai through the Cairo-Suez road (Gamasy 1993: 295-97). During a meeting between Sadat, Hafez Ismail, and Heikal, on October 21, both advisors additionally highlighted that the UN resolution not only demanded a cessation of hostilities, but also direct negotiations between the belligerents, which contradicted Egypt's longstanding position not to negotiate directly with Israel. In other words, accepting the resolution would represent an enormous political compromise, not just a military one. The National Security Advisor implored his boss to reconsider: "Mr. President, there is no need for this rush… I honestly believe that the armed forces could still confront the situation." When his calls fell on deaf ears, Hafez Ismail took a step that would soon cost him his

job. Instead of explaining the rationale behind Egypt's acceptance of the ceasefire to a group of bewildered cabinet members on October 24, he lost his nerve and confessed that the President was acting alone. Two days earlier, on October 22, Heikal heard the same message from the frustrated head of the Military Affairs Department (Lieutenant Colonel Abd al-Ra'ouf Reda), essentially that "Egypt is in danger…the President does not listen to his advisors, and sometimes refuses even to see them…[I] tried to explain to him the military situation…and the rage spreading among young officers…but he would not listen" (Heikal 1993: 524-27, 569).

Finally, the President called a meeting for the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on November 21. The officers thought he was finally considering a resumption of the war to save the Third Army and the canal cities that were now besieged by Israel. It was not Egyptian gung-ho talking; the Israeli Chief of Staff himself had submitted an alarming memo to Gold Meir warning that a prolonged siege would give Third Army soldiers an opportunity to catch their breath while their comrades on the east bank reconstituted the SAM air defenses, "And with the Israelis so extended, the situation could abruptly reverse itself, with the Egyptian forcing the IDF into the final battle" (Boyne 2002: 262). But instead of discussing plans to resume the war, Sadat thanked them all for their great service to the country, and declared that he now considered the war over and expected the armed forces at this point not to meddle in politics, adding that the upcoming disengagement talks are "a political matter. Whether they reach an agreement or not is nothing to you. You must mind your own business" (Shazly 1980: 195). This of course did not bode well among officers, who felt that the President had ended the war abruptly and prematurely.

To top it all, Sadat presented what he called the *October Paper* to Parliament in May 15, 1974 to lay out his vision for the future. The President claimed that his strategy during the October War has "finally put an end to Zionist expansionism, which had progressively secured more land…in every generation… [And that] with the end of its expansionist hopes…Israel had embarked on a

comprehensive soul searching journey, and a review of the basis of the Zionist doctrine itself" (Sadat 1974: 135). For officers, this was a clever twist of words that implied that the war's goal was to prevent further Zionist expansion, rather than liberate the Arab land already occupied by Israel. The worst was yet to come. In this same paper, Sadat blamed the military expenditure for the drop in Egypt's economic development, hinting – even before Sinai had been recovered – that the defense budget will be substantially reduced. Sadat also made explicit overtures to Egyptian investors, signaling his intention to open up the economy. Sadat was aware that this was the class that supported his war strategy most. Even before the October War, there was a plain consensus among Egyptian capitalists that a future war should not impair their scheme to join the Western camp and partner with American investors. Their preference, accordingly, was for a short and limited war to be followed immediately by a peaceful settlement, regardless of the political or military concessions involved. The Egyptian military's hope for a long war of attrition, with all the instability and economic loss associated with it, was absolutely out of the question (Ghoneim 2005: 85).

There was no one to challenge Sadat. The short list of officers who wielded some influence within the ranks was getting even shorter. One month before the war, Republican Guards Commander al-Lethy Nassef was pushed from a balcony in London. Nassef was dismissed a few months before, presumably because he had walked into the President's office without his beret, which Sadat's interpreted as a sign of disrespect. The President then offered him an ambassadorship in Europe, but the offended general insisted on staying in Egypt. Eventually Nassef had to travel to London for medical checkups and never returned. Two months after the war, Shazly was appointed military attaché to London; the three major field commanders were assigned civilian jobs as provincial governors; and the chief of artillery was transferred to the protocol section of the presidency (Shazly 1980: 202). Chief Editor of *al-Ahram* Ahmed Bahaa al-Din remembered how the commanders felt betrayed for being cut off so ruthlessly from the army after all they had done

(Bahaa al-Din 1987: 93). It was inconceivable for Sadat, however, to act otherwise. He intended for the military to pave the road for a political settlement, not in the Clausewitzian sense, where the army accomplishes political ends, but rather by proving incapable of achieving militarily what only the political leader could achieve through negotiations.

Equally important, Sadat wanted to conduct the war in a way that would not jeopardize his plan to win America's patronage for his regime. This last aim frequently left Sadat's commanders and diplomatic advisors perplexed. No one could figure why Sadat was so fond of Kissinger, to the point of describing him as someone who is "sincere and carried out what he promised" (Gamasy 1993: 330). Sadat explained to reporters that he accepted the U.S. Secretary of State's proposals without demur because he "liked Kissinger very much. I regarded him as a friend. And I don't like to haggle with my friends" (Insight Team 1974: 442). This is probably why upon receiving a message from Kissinger offering to visit Cairo if Egypt accepted a ceasefire-in-place, Sadat immediately obliged. The President's faith in Kissinger, however, was best demonstrated during the final two days of the war. On October 24, the Soviets threatened to intervene to prevent Egypt's total defeat after it had become obvious that Israel was not willing to faithfully implement the ceasefire agreement. Kissinger and James Schlesinger responded to Brezhnev's note by elevating the American combat alert (including the nuclear Strategic Air Command) to DEFCON 3, and reinforced the U.S. Sixth Fleet with another aircraft carrier. To stress how the U.S. was determined to "go to the brink" over this issue, Kissinger threatened in a television address that because "We posses, each of us, nuclear arsenals capable of annihilating humanity. We, both of us, have a special duty to see to it that confrontations are kept within bounds that do not threaten civilized life" (Kissinger in Golan 1976: 91). But then Kissinger turned to Sadat to set the Soviets straight, and although the Egyptian President had previously asked for a joint American-Russian mission to

observe the ceasefire, he shocked the Soviets, on October 26, by asking them not to stay out of it (Boyne 2002: 260).

This sort of behavior astonished Kissinger more than anyone else. On several occasions he recorded how Sadat "agreed almost immediately" to Israel's requests, while only demanding as a face-saving measure that they be presented as American – not Israeli – proposals (Golan 1976: 112, 161). Kissinger was equally surprised that throughout the war, and after all that he did for Israel, Sadat was still warm and cordial in a most unusual sense (Kissinger 1979: 527). Foreign Minister Ghaleb reasonably concluded that Israel's military breach resulted from the "political breach through which the U.S. penetrated" Egypt's political leadership (Ghaleb 2001: 214). In a conversation with Heikal following his first encounter with Kissinger, on November 7, 1973, the President relayed proudly how he began the meeting: "I told him Henry, do not waste your time with details… You are a man of strategy, and so am I, so let us not be held back by details… The future hangs on one question: Can we be friends? I want us to become friends, and if Egypt becomes your friend, then the whole region will open up to you." He went on to describe the Soviets as the real enemy; how he plans to consult his friend David Rockefeller on the best way to open up the Egyptian market to foreign investors; and how he considers this war Egypt's last battle with Israel. It was only a year later, in September 1975, during a dinner at the Georgetown house of veteran American journalist and presidential speechwriter Joseph Kraft that Heikal learned that Sadat also asked for the U.S. to "secure him personally and his regime" because there were many people plotting against him "inside his own country" (Heikal 1993: 675-80).

When the Guns Fell Silent

By the time the war ended, only one of its major authors was left standing. With Shazly removed from office, Ismail transferred to a London hospital before passing away in December 1974, and the field commanders transferred to the civilian sector, Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy was appointed War Minister. It was now his turn to fall from fame. Gamasy's military stature was certainly threatening. He enjoyed immense prestige as the true architect of the gallant Suez Canal crossing, and he was an ardent critic of the way the President ran the war. Moreover, he would have undoubtedly objected to Sadat's plan to re-direct the army from combat towards economic and civilians project. Gamasy attributed the 1967 defeat to this misuse of military energies, "The armed forces became involved in land reclamation, housing, the national transport system…the growing power and presence of the army in civilian life was detrimental to its main responsibility, which was to be a fighting force, ready for battle" (Gamasy 1993: 85). And this was exactly what Sadat had in mind for the military in the post-war era. Letting him go at this stage was therefore dangerous; he had to become enmeshed in the unpopular peace talks and the other postwar arrangements first; he had to sign on the dotted line.

Against his will, Gamasy (while still Chief of Operations) was charged, on October 28, with the thankless mission of heading Egypt's delegation to the first direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, held in a tent on the Cairo-Suez road (101 kilometers away from Cairo) with the vague goal of finding a way to disentangle the Egyptian and Israeli troops in Sinai and pave the way for a political settlement (Gamasy 1993: 313). But although Gamasy was a professional soldier who always followed orders, Israeli officers could not help but notice that throughout the negotiations, he remained "demonstratively somber" (Golan 1976: 116). Gamasy was then invited to meet Kissinger in Aswan, on January 11, days after he was promoted to Chief of Staff, to further discuss steps towards disengagement. As soon as the meeting started, Kissinger stunned everyone by announcing that Sadat had already agreed to permanently limit the Egyptian presence in Sinai to 7,000 troops

and 30 tanks, i.e. to reduce the two armies currently stationed there (a 100,000-strong and heavily equipped force) to eight lightly-armed battalions. Gamasy lost control. As he recorded in his memoirs, he screamed at Kissinger:

> **'You are giving Israel what would guarantee the security of its forces and denying us everything that would safeguard our forces. I do not approve of this and I cannot as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces justify this to our forces'… I left the meeting room angry, with tears in my eyes, and I went to the bathroom… I had appreciated the enormous effort and the sacrifices in the war, and there seemed to be no need for this huge concession which might endanger our armed forces. I had expected President Sadat to consult General Ahmed Ismail, or me… There was no need – politically or militarily – to accept this reduction in troops and weapons** (Gamasy 1993: 335-37).

Unbeknown to the Chief of Staff, however, there was a need for this reduction, which was simply the President's desire to win American patronage at all costs. The next day, Sadat scolded Gamasy and warned him that his promises to Kissinger must be fulfilled and that he does not have to consult the military before taking political decisions (Gamasy 1993: 335-37). Two months later, in March 1974, a rebellion broke out among the soldiers of the besieged Third Army in protest of the decision to reduce troops and accept an end to hostilities. There was little these soldiers could accomplish though, considering they were cut off from the rest of the army, and the whole country for that matter (Brooks 2008: 121). In June 1975, 43 officers from several other units were arrested for planning an anti-Sadat coup. Then again between February and April 1976 a large number of officers (which remain unspecified) resigned in protest of the President's policies. Sadat also removed several high-ranking commanders in mid-1977 for supporting an attempted coup by naval officers. This was followed by the arrest of 14 paratroopers and a major shake up of the armed forces in July 1977, when many appeared to be sympathetic with former Chief of Staff Shazly's call for the army to rise against their dictator (Dekmejian 1982: 38-39).

Apparently, Gamasy's outrage (and that of numerous other soldiers) was not just that of a tough-minded old general. Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy, who ran the early negotiations with the

U.S. and Israel, noted that Sadat's concessions shocked both Kissinger and the Israelis (Fahmy 1985: 117). Kissinger described to the Israeli cabinet how the Egyptian President constantly rebuked his military and diplomatic advisors: whenever Gamasy and Fahmy criticized Israeli proposals, Sadat would ask them to leave the room and then apologize to his American guest that "Gamasy and Fahmy were good men but did not understand [anything]." On the issue of troop reduction, for example, Gamasy insisted that Egypt could not protect Sinai without at least 250 tanks. Kissinger's aim was to push this figure down to 100 tanks. When he met Sadat, he started with the implausible number of 30 tanks with the hopes that Egypt would then agree to 100. Shockingly, Kissinger reported, Sadat immediately agreed. The U.S. Secretary of State felt tempted to try his luck once more. Israelis had requested a withdrawal of the SAM air defense umbrella – the only cover for an Egyptian presence in Sinai – 20 kilometers away from the canal. Gamasy said it was impossible to pull it back more than 5 kilometers. Kissinger then appealed to Sadat, who instantly approved – with one request though: that the "details of the thinning out of forces and arms restrictions be spelled out in…private letters sent by President Nixon to him," so that the public would not know about it (Golan 1976: 160-65). The concessions kept flowing: the Egyptian artillery would only have 36 small guns in Sinai; the borders would be strictly sealed against Palestinian infiltrators; the Red Sea straits and the Suez Canal would never be closed to Israeli navigation; the Suez Canal cities would be rebuilt, expanded, and heavily populated as a guarantee against the eruption of future conflicts; Sadat would plea with the oil-rich countries to lift their embargo even before a settlement was reached; Egypt would supply Israel with two million tons of energy annually; and Nixon would be received in Cairo with cheering crowds to help improve his image in the wake of Watergate (Heikal 1983: 73, 214).

What was Sadat trying to accomplish? In a private conversation with Bahaa al-Din, he explained: "My generals…are wasting time over…trivial details. They do not understand that I was

not negotiating disengagement with Israel, but rather with America. When I went to war, I did not go to war against the Israeli army, I was fighting to shake the convictions of all the American institutions: the Presidency, Congress, the CIA, the Pentagon…and their businessmen as well" (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 158). The President's national security team saw things differently. Foreign Minster Fahmy concluded in his memoirs that Sadat single-handedly squandered all that the Egyptian military had managed to achieve during the war (Fahmy 1985: 118). Murad Ghaleb, Egypt's Foreign Minister during the war, asserted that Sadat's conviction that America was the best guarantor to his regime "cost us the glory we achieved during the crossing" (Ghaleb 2001: 215). Heikal noted that Sadat misunderstood the doctrine of limited war in which military achievement is used to increase a state's political leverage rather than sacrificed to please would-be political allies (Heikal 1993: 453). It was only normal that this attitude towards the war would hit the military leaders hardest. "Egypt's soldiers and Egypt's commanders were of a high standard and they fought well," lamented Shazly, but "They were let down by their political leaders" (Shazly 1980: 205).

When the guns fell silent, the plain statistics indicated an Israeli victory: 15,700 Arab soldiers were killed compared to 4,150 Israelis; 8,031 were imprisoned compared to 241; 1,950 tanks were destroyed compared to 875; 412 planes were shot down compared to 119; and 30 naval vessels were hit compared to only one; in terms of land, Israel ended up controlling more territory on the west bank of the canal than that seized by Egypt on the east bank. In January 1974, Egypt had to pull back its Second and Third armies back to the west bank, leaving only a token force of 7,000 soldiers (down from 100,000) to protect the ten-kilometer-wide strip they controlled after the crossing, while the Israelis troops now entrenched themselves in the passes that controlled the peninsula. The following year, the Israelis agreed to reposition right behind the passes and UN troops were deployed between the two armies (Insight Team 1974: 450; Parker 1993: 352-58). Little wonder then why Egypt's officers believed, as Major General M. Safty aptly described it, that: "Sadat had single-

handedly given away all that the Egyptian army had won with great sacrifice. Without consulting anybody, he had caved in to the Israeli request that the Egyptian military presence east of the canal be reduced to nothing" (Brooks 2008: 141). Or as the Egyptian Chief of Staff during the war somberly remarked: "The President had thrown away the greatest army Egypt had ever assembled" (Shazly 1980: 184). Yet to this day, military historian Simon Dunstan noted, Egyptians continue to believe – against the consensus of all the studies of the October War – that they were triumphant, adding mockingly, "In the Middle East, perception is everything" (Dunstan 2009: 91).

With such bitterness towards the President, Defense Minister Gamasy, Chief of Staff Mohamed Aly Fahmy (Air Defense commander during the war), and whoever remained in the ranks among their senior comrades had to go. They had all become increasingly critical of the President's warming up toward the U.S. and Israel, and more importantly about his "downgrading of the military and the redirection of its mission" (Springborg 1989: 97). On October 5, 1978, the entire leadership of the October War was therefore replaced. The timing stung, however. Gamasy recorded, "I was annoyed and dismayed at the choice of the date 5 October to introduce changes in the military command, thereby denying the old leadership – those who had played a major role in October 1973 – the privilege of taking part in the armed forces victory celebration on 6 October" (Gamasy 1993: 402). Mahmoud Game' admitted that his friend Sadat had deliberately chosen that day so that Gamasy and the others would learn their place (Game' 2004: 191).

Gamasy's successor was not any more fortunate. Just like Ahmed Ismail before, the new Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Aly had been appointed intelligence director for a brief period to prepare him for the top military post. Also, similar to Ismail, his job was to keep the army in check and away from politics. Sadat and Aly had first at the Maadi Military Hospital, on June 20, 1967, when the latter was being treated from battlefront wounds. Sadat was impressed by his resentment of the politicization of the officer corps, and the half-wit arrogant army confidants that were in

charge of the military (Sadat 1978: 242). Aly's appointment thus promised to reinforce professionalism. But his understanding of professionalism was to root out mediocre officers whose presence in the corps subjected the army to grave danger, as was obvious in 1956 and 1967 (Aly 1994: 117). Professionalism for him was not an encoded way of saying that the army should be diminished as a fighting force and kept away from national security policy. Aly advocated a strong military, and his distinguished performance as commander of the elite 4th Armored Division during the war gave him enough leverage among the troops to press forward with this demand. The new minister only lasted for a few months in the military before being appointed Foreign Minister and charged with the unpopular task of developing peaceful relations with Israel, a task that could have hardly endeared him to the troops (Aly 1994: 441-44). Aly candidly expressed his "frustration with being…demoted" to the new Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali, yet he had little choice but to follow orders (Ghali 1997: 315).

Aly's replacement in the Defense Ministry scarcely survived over a year in office. On March 2, 1981, Defense Minister Ahmed Badawy, another influential officer, was killed in a helicopter crash 400 miles southwest of Cairo with thirteen senior commanders (nine major generals, three brigadier generals, and a colonel). The official story was that the helicopter's tail got tangled in an electric wire, which caused it to lose balance and crash. The pilot had a different story though, asserting that the helicopter's engine experienced a sudden loss of power.[21] Moreover, Badawy's secretary said that right before the crash one of the officers (Major General Salah Qassem) cried out: "there is something wrong with this plane" (Al-Banna and Bakry 1981: 3). These testimonies were not the only reason why the public became suspicious. There was also questions regarding why the Defense Minister and thirteen of his top lieutenants would all be on the same helicopter, and, more importantly, how could the pilot responsible for such a distinguished crowd commit such a rookie

[21] Reporters in *Al-Akhbar* 8965: 3. Cairo (3/6/1981).

mistake, driving his helicopter into an electric wire in broad daylight. The government's response was not very convincing. An editorial in the leading daily *Al-Ahram*, passionately denied the accusations, quoting Sadat's claim that these types of conspiracies occur only in shabby regimes like the Syrian and Libyan ones, but not in Egypt (Nafe' 1981: 1). The weekly magazine *October* responded, in its March 8 issue, more creatively, cataloging twenty similar flying accidents from around the world to imply that these were only normal (Editorial 1981: 8-9).

Badawy was considered a war hero, and enjoyed considerable popularity within the officer corps. He famously defended Suez against an imminent Israeli invasion during the last days of the October War, and was responsible for checking the Israeli forces on the west bank of the canal until the disengagement agreement was signed. More significantly though, Badawy made a few controversial remarks in parliament weeks before his death, stating that: "The transition of the Middle East from a conventional [weapons] theater to a nuclear theater is very dangerous. We hope it does not happen. But if it did happen and a regional country [i.e., Israel] came to possess nuclear weapons, then we have no other option but to balance against it;" he also reiterated how "Egypt will always remain the credible force in the face of the dangers confronting the Arab world… [and that] Peace should not lead to any change in the nature or missions of the armed forces."[22] Badawy clearly insinuated his rejection of the President's attempts to sideline the army, or pledge (discussed below) not to develop unconventional weapons to deter Israel. But there was even more to the story.

Alwy Hafez, a Free Officer who was elected to parliament in the 1980s, was an old friend of Badawy, and he accused Sadat and Mubarak of conspiring to kill the Defense Minister and his colleagues because they were planning to expose the corrupt arm deals the political leadership was involved in, as well as naked attempts to keep the military subservient. Badawy confided to Hafez two weeks before he was killed that he had confronted Sadat with what he knew, but instead of

[22] Reporters in *Al-Akhbar* 8963: 7. Cairo (3/4/1981).

taking action, the President handed him a list of senior officers that he needed to be immediately purged. The infuriated Defense Minister declined, reminding his boss that these were among Egypt's best soldiers, and – according to his friend – he became convinced that the political leadership must be overthrown (Sha'ban 2011: 54-55). After incessant attempts, Hafez finally succeeded to submit a request during an official parliamentary session, on March 5, 1990, for a proper investigation of the conspiracy against Badawy and his fellows, but his request was quickly shelved. After the 2011 revolt, Ahmed Abdallah, one of the leading cadres of the ruling party and a relative of Badawy, confirmed that the latter had indeed met Sadat 48 hours before the accident and threatened to resign because of attempts to corrupt and control the army from the presidency (Baz 2011: 9).

Expectedly, many within and outside the army refused to innocently believe that the crash was an accident, viewing it instead as a preemptive move by Sadat against his unruly high command. Kamal Hassan Aly acknowledged how far this 'rumor' traveled around Egypt, though he personally refused to believe it (Aly 1994: 476). However, eyebrows were raised once more when the pilot, who mysteriously survived the crash, was shot a few months later at his apartment (Baz 2011: 9). In fact, one of the justifications cited by Sadat's assassins during their interrogations in 1981 was his implication in the Badawy affair (Hammudah 1986: 119; Abd al-Latif 2011: 5).

Besides the personality (or literal) assassination and dislodging of almost all officers who carried some weight in the armed forces, Sadat dealt his military an even harsher blow in May 1979 in the form of Presidential Decree 35. According to the decree's explanatory memorandum "officers who occupied the most senior posts in the armed forces, in operations, and as commanders of the main branches of the forces in the 6 October 1973 war shall remain in service in the armed forces for life… They will remain military advisors for life, loyal to the armed forces. They shall not occupy military posts in the organizational structure of the armed forces so that honoring them and benefiting from their unique experience will not run counter to the principles of renewal and

continuity" (Gamasy 1993: 404). The decree sealed the fate of the entire 'October Generation'. It condemned the war-seasoned leaders to a surreal existence, a state of limbo where they could neither occupy military commands, nor move on to play an influential role in politics.

Even though Israeli military sociologist Amos Perlmutter, wrote in 1974, reflecting the wisdom of his time, that Sadat's regime remained completely dependent on the military, which was now in a position to "arbitrate and, in fact, dictate Egypt's foreign and defense policies" (Perlmutter 1974: 201), the truth could not be have been further. For on the contrary, Sadat's policies during the seventies ended up pushing the military to the point of oblivion and downgrading of its political influence. A few micro indicators show the diminishing ratio of officers to civilians in the cabinet: from 19 ministers representing 65.5 percent in 1967, to 11 representing 33.3 percent in 1970, to 4 representing 12.5 percent in 1976, to a mere 3 minister representing 9.1 percent of the cabinet in 1977; another indicator was that while 9 percent of Nasser's ambassadors were officers, Sadat completely blocked their access to the diplomatic corps; lastly, while 22 of Egypt's 26 governors were officers in 1964, only 5 held that post in 1980 (Springborg 1989: 95-96; Brooks 2008: 119).

The overall view of the thorny path Sadat treaded in the 1970s reveals a much more persistent strategy to rein-in the officers corps. In May 1971, the President imprisoned War Minister Mohamed Fawzy for high treason despite his efforts in rebuilding the army after 1967 and putting together a plan to cross the Suez Canal. In October 1972, his replacement Muhammad Sadeq and his top lieutenants were placed under house arrest and accused of defeatism regardless of their valiant struggle to prepare the army for the imminent battle. Then, rather than promoting the strong-willed and popular Chief of Staff Saad al-Din al-Shazly to the top military post, the President appointed the ailing Ahmed Ismail as war minister on the eve of the war, and days before the war ended Sadat replaced Shazly, for his alleged cowardice in battle, with Chief of Operations Abd al-Ghany al-Gamasy. Gamasy was then promoted to war minister as soon as Ismail lost his battle with

cancer, as was expected, in 1974, but as soon as he concluded the disengagement agreements and other aspects of the political settlement, he was replaced with Kamal Hassan Aly, the single-minded advocate of military professionalism who was serving as GIS director at the time. Sadat then chose a vice-president (Hosni Mubarak) from Egypt's weakest service and the one least capable of plotting a coup: the air force. In addition, a few mysterious accidents took care of the remaining military heavyweights. Commander of the Republican Guards Al-Lethy Nassef was pushed off a balcony in London, and War Minister Ahmed Badawy and thirteen senior officers were killed in a helicopter crash. At the same time, Sadat carried out an extensive reshuffle of all major commands, and issued a presidential decree barring those who participated in the October War from either retiring from the army (and thus freeing themselves to pursue a political career) or assuming active military commands (where they might capitalize on their war reputation to cultivate a following), thus effectively banishing all of Egypt's great fighting generals to a no man's land between politics and the military, to a twilight zone from which they could never return. The President then re-directed the military as a whole from a combat-oriented to an economic institution, famously declaring that October 1973 was Egypt's last war and that the army should now direct its energy towards the 'war of economic development'.

One must pose a question, before concluding this section, regarding the military's seeming passivity vis-à-vis its civilian leader, though his policies obviously threatened its corporate interests and Egypt's national security. What prevented the officer corps from rising against Sadat? There are two answers. The short one is that it did in fact rise against him. Sadat's decade-long tenure was rife with attempted coups plots, and senior military men challenged his decisions on every step of the way. A second answer is that despite the fact that soldiers sounded their frustration (and on many occasions, their indignation) with the President, the army was still in no shape to take on the political apparatus in the 1970s. Nasser's decapitation of the leadership of the armed forces between 1967

and 1968, and Sadat's follow-up on that front between 1971 and 1972, left the military virtually leaderless. On a wider scale, the purging of thousands of officers between 1954 and 1974, and two resounding military defeats in 1956 and 1967, followed by an inconclusive war in 1973 undermined military coherence, hurt its popular image, and made it too weary of political intervention. Moreover, the expansiveness and aggressiveness of the politically loyal security forces played a crucial role in keeping the military in check (as discussed below). With a vacuum on top, a hole in its body, and gun pointed to its head, the military could not muster the power to overthrow its political leadership.

Season of Migration to the West

With the military demobilized and directed away from politics, the Egyptian regime was no longer military-based. It relied on security and political organs to control the populace, but it was still looking for a new ruling partner, an overall guarantor of regime stability. Because Nasser was so adamant about Egyptian independence he had refused the readily available option of becoming a client to one of the world powers, as many of his contemporaries did. His aim was to build Egypt into a regional power, and manage through strategic alliances to play a major role in world politics as well – hence, the need for a strong military capable of projecting power across the developing world. By the time Sadat came to power it was fairly obvious that empowering the military had its political costs, whether when it supported democracy (as in early 1950s), or tried to dominate the regime (as in the 1960s). A stable authoritarianism required the political isolation and weakening of the military. Egypt had to turn back to the option that Nasser had tried to avoid for so long: to become a satellite for one of the superpowers. The only question was which one. Sadat chose the United States not just because the Russians never trusted (or respected) him, but also because by the mid-1970s it was

obvious to all that the USSR was struggling to catch up with the West. A unipolar world was emerging, and Sadat wanted to end up on the winning side.

There were of course several military concessions involved. Demilitarizing Sinai was on the top of list. It not only provided Israel with a 37,000-square kilometer buffer zone, but it also deprived the Egyptian army from training or preparing installations in the most strategic part of the country. Announcing in April 1974 the end of Egypt's exclusive reliance on Soviet weapons, followed by linking Egyptian arms supply and training to the U.S. since 1979 (via the annual $1.3 billion military aid package) despite the latter's alliance with Israel was a second important concession. Agreeing in November 1980 to conduct joint military exercises with U.S. troops (the annual Bright Star maneuvers) to help familiarize them with desert wars, a skill Americans were keen on acquiring for future contingencies was a third offering of friendship. A fourth (confidential) military concession was Sadat's pledge to abandon the Nasser-instigated efforts to develop nuclear weapons (Riedel 2010: 8). There were also many cherries on top of all these concessions, sudden bouts of generosity if you will, such as Sadat's decision in 1975 to hand over a complete battery of Soviet SAM-6 anti-aircraft missiles (the highly prized weapon the USSR had provided him to protect Egypt's skies) to the U.S. army so it could explore ways of neutralizing it (Cooley 2000: 35-36).

There were major political concessions as well; concessions that puzzled the whole diplomatic corps and caused three foreign ministers to quit their job between 1972 and 1978 in protest of Sadat's undermining of the country's national interests; concessions the forced Sadat to reshuffle his cabinet four times between 1978 and 1980 to be able to oust his critics in government. So what were some of these political concessions? The most valued concessions were naturally related to the negotiations that followed the October War. To begin with, the President had surrendered totally to the machinations of U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and his 'shuttle diplomacy' between 1973 and 1975. He refused to allow his top aides to question anything Kissinger

proposed, and referred to him fondly as "the man who never lied to me, or ever betrayed his promises" (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 240). Not only that, he suddenly began singing America's praise, commending "American chivalry, and the real America…that stands by every country in need of assistance to help establish a better world" (Sadat 1978: 366) – forgetting, of course, that the U.S. was single-handedly responsible for reversing Egypt's military fortunes during the October War.

Even though Kissinger's efforts came to nothing, Sadat continued to place all his eggs in the American basket and decided to unilaterally annul the Egyptian-Soviet Friendship Treaty in March 1976 and humiliate the Soviets on every occasion in hopes of pleasing the U.S., even though his current and future foreign ministers (Ismail Fahmy and Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel) explained to him that although they were personally pro-American, what the President was doing betrayed all sound diplomatic principles. The U.S. would always look after Israel's interests first and formost, and without some measure of Soviet support, Egypt would place itself under Israel's mercy (Kamel 1983: 26; Fahmy 1985: 108). Moreover, by linking Egypt's political and military fortunes to Israel's chief ally, the President was not only committing the country to indefinite negotiations with Israel, but also forcing it to negotiate from a position of weakness.

For his diplomatic aides, however, the straw that broke the camel's back was his decision to travel to Jerusalem in 1977. In October of that year, Sadat received a handwritten note from U.S. President Jimmy Carter conditioning U.S. support on "a bold, statesmanlike move [by Sadat] to help overcome the hurdles" facing the peace talks (Brzezinski 1983: 110). Although Sadat denies that Carter's note inspired his grand Peace Initiative, Ahmed Bahaa al-Din, who was with him when he received the letter, said that Sadat showed it to him and bragged: "You see, the American President is begging me," and I cannot let him down (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 161). Soon-to-be foreign minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel also mentioned that Sadat confessed to him that the initiative to fly to Israel was inspired by Carter's note (Kamel 1983: 177). On November 5, a few days after receiving

the note, Sadat convened his top military and diplomatic staff to share his thinking. Foreign Minister Fahmy tried to reason with him, explaining that after all the pressure cards he squandered, he had only one left: recognizing Israel and ending the state of war. He pleaded with him not to throw away this last card unless he had strict guarantees that at least Sinai would be returned unconditionally, let alone other occupied Arab territories. If the President insisted on going through with his plan to recognize Israel unilaterally in the hopes of shaming the world, dazzling the Americans, and exposing Israeli intransigence, then Egypt would be completely naked in any future negotiations. War Minister Gamasy was less subtle than his diplomatic counterpart. Upon hearing of Sadat's planned initiative, "Gamasy raised his hands and screamed: 'The Knesset no! There is no need'" (quoted in Fahmy 1985: 386-97, 398).

Sadat typically ignored the advice and decided to proceed with his plan anyway. Fahmy and a handful of senior diplomats resigned. The President looked for someone outside the diplomatic corps he could count on. Days before his trip to Israel, he appointed Cairo University Professor Boutros Ghali (future UN Secretary-General) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and right after the trip, he asked his longtime friend Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel (who shared a prison cell with him in the 1940s because of their anti-British activities) to serve as Foreign Minister. Kamel took the job after the trip to Israel though. He recalled that on the day of his appointment, Sadat told him: "I allowed myself to appoint you without consulting you first because I consider you my son, and I need someone I can completely trust" (Kamel 1983: 41). On Ghali's part, it was clear why he was asked to join the President's delegation on such a controversial trip. In his diaries, Ghali remarked that Sadat chose him because he believed he was already stigmatized: he descended from one of the largest landowning families; several of his ancestors served the monarchy as ministers; his family's possessions were either confiscated or placed under state guardianship under Nasser; he was a

Christian Egyptian married to a Jew; and he was avidly pro-Western; in short, he belonged entirely to the *ancien régime* (Ghali 1997: 19).

Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote that, to America's delight, Sadat's initiative fit perfectly with Israel's goal "to confine the peace process to a separate Israeli-Egyptian agreement, which would split the Arabs while letting Israel continue its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza" (Brzezinski 1983: 235). Any student of Arab-Israeli relations knows quite well that neutralizing Egypt, the largest, most populous, and strongest Arab state from the equation of struggle severely weakened the Arab camp and deprived other negotiators (Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon) of the power to end Israeli occupation of their territories. But as Fahmy predicted, Sadat's very visit to Tel Aviv and his vow in the Knesset to make the October War the last war between the two states offered Israel all it needed – recognition and peace – and gave it no reason to present concessions. By the end of 1978, that is one year following the visit, negotiations were still stuck where they had been under Kissinger. Israel was occupying Sinai, and the bulk of the Egyptian army was positioned on the west bank of the canal – exactly where it had been since 1967. The United States now offered to host a marathon peace summit at Camp David. The goal, as described by the Camp David talks architect Brzezinski, was to pressure Sadat and limit his choices to either walking out on the U.S. or accepting whatever the Israelis offered – and as Brzezinski duly noted, "Sadat chose the latter" (Brzezinski 1983: 274). Little wonder why the President went without his War Minister Gamasy or any other military representative, and little wonder why he removed Gamasy and the rest of the general staff two weeks after signing the Camp David Accords (Brooks 2008: 136).

Gamasy and his men had learned from sources close to the President that he had already agreed in principle to demilitarize the area that falls 150 kilometers east of the Sinai Passes even before traveling to Camp David, and they warned Sadat that this would "put the forces in a weaker

defensive and offensive position, which was unacceptable from a military perspective" (Gamasy 1993: 141). Just as they expected, however, the accords divided Sinai into three zones: in Zone A, which covers the area 50 km east of the canal, Egypt was allowed to deploy one mechanized infantry division (22,000 men armed with 230 tanks), but then in Zone B and C, which vary in width from 20 to 40 km west of the international borders, only three lightly-armed border patrol units and civil police forces were allowed. Moreover, Egypt was prohibited from using any of Sinai's airfields or building new ones (Accords and annexes in Kamel 1983: 623-44). It was not that the officer corps was vying for another war, but as military strategist Anthony Cordesman explained, "Egypt's support of the peace process does not mean that it had to accept strategic inferiority or the kind of 'edge' that gives Israel offensive freedom of action" (Cordesman 2006: 202). And this was exactly what Sadat provided Israel with.

One has to admit though that the pressure on Sadat was substantial. Foreign Minister Kamel said that the President did not expect that after all his concessions and flirting with the U.S., it still adopted the Israeli position to the letter (Kamel 1983: 514). Two days before the signing of the Camp David Accords, Sadat threatened to withdraw, frustrated at the fact that despite his seemingly unbounded willingness to accommodate American interests, he was still being asked to deliver more than he could afford to. At this tense moment, Carter decided to pay him a visit. And here is how the U.S. President described the scene in his own words: "Before going up I actually went and changed my clothes so that I would look more formal… [Sadat's] whole delegation was with him on the porch. I asked him to step inside. He looked extremely drawn and nervous… I don't think I've ever been so grave or so serious about anything that I have said in my life. I then said to him, 'I understand you're leaving… [This] will mean first of all an end to the relationship between the United States and Egypt'… Sadat looked absolutely shaken," and of course decided to stay on (quoted in Brzezinski 1983: 271-72). Not only that, but after Carter's stern warning, the Egyptian

President gave him a "carte blanche for his subsequent negotiations with the Israelis" (Brzezinski 1983: 283). To justify this unwarranted submission to his aides, Sadat claimed that Carter wanted to corner Begin and show the world that Israel was against peace. In reality, as William Quandt, who was part of the U.S. team at Camp David, later told Ghali, who was also present at the talks, was that Sadat assured Carter that he was willing to accept the Israeli offer, but wanted his subordinates to think he did so reluctantly (Ghali 1997: 150).

Expectedly, the Egyptian delegation, according to Ghali, saw the settlement as "a humiliation to Egypt," and the demilitarization of Sinai in particular as a serious impediment to its capacity to defend itself against a future Israeli attack (Ghali 1997: 149, 153). Moreover, by entering into a separate peace deal with Israel, Egypt isolated itself from the Arab world, thus undermining its geopolitical power even further. Foreign Minister Kamel resigned the day of the signing. His assessment of Sadat's negotiating strategy in Camp David was vividly captured in his memoirs: "I almost died of disgrace, disgust, and grief as I witnessed this tragedy unfold" (Kamel 1983: 515).

A young diplomat by the name of Nabil al-Araby tried, in one last desperate attempt, to explain to his chief that Carter's promises concerning the Palestinians and Jerusalem were worthless. After pretending to listen to al-Araby intently Sadat responded: "As you have seen, I have heard you out without interruption so that my critics would stop spreading rumors about how I do not listen to anyone or read anything. But what you have just said has entered my right ear and exited from the left one. You people in the Foreign Ministry believe you understand politics, but the truth is: you do not understand anything. I can no longer concern myself with your advice or memos. I am a man who is following a grand strategy that none of you is capable of perceiving or comprehending. I have no more need for your sophistry and petty reports" (Kamel 1983: 607-608). Notably, al-Araby became Egypt's first Foreign Minister after the 2011 revolt. At that time, however, Sadat would have none of it. After the signing ceremony, he returned to his hotel to meet with reporters. Upon being

asked why Kamel resigned, Sadat replied: "I excuse him because his weak nerves broke under pressure," then after questions regarding his disgruntled delegation kept coming, he turned to Ghali and said: "Obviously your ministry needs a cleanup" (Ghali 1997: 156). Curiously, the only two junior diplomats who seemed onboard with Sadat in Camp David (Ahmed Maher and Ahmed Abu al-Gheit) were to later serve as Mubarak's last two foreign ministers, and whose compliant foreign policies helped fuel the 2011 revolt.

In truth, Sadat's subordinates were probably not that far out of line, considering that Brzezinski himself recorded with amazement how Sadat was "excessively deferential to American concerns and needlessly irritating to the rest of the Arab world," and that he frequently overruled members of his delegation in front of the Americans and Israelis when they tried to say so (Brzezinski 1983: 238). Kamel and Ghali recounted that whenever one of them pointed out that the President's concessions threatened Egypt's interests, he would often repeat: "Let's just do this one for Carter's sake" (Kamel 1983: 603; Ghali 1997: 149). In fact Sadat was so compliant that Carter and Brzezinski became concerned of "the possibility of something unpleasant occurring" to him in Camp David, and felt the need to take precautions. As Brzezinski recalled, "After returning to my cabin…I met with the security people to instigate tighter controls over access to Sadat's cabin" (Brzezinski 1983: 265). On the last day of the negotiations, Brzezinski confided to his diary: "We might get a compromise agreement today, though the burden will fall on Sadat's shoulders. It will be hard for him to justify it" (Brzezinski 1983: 270). Although Brzezinski sympathized with the desperate plight of his Egyptian counterparts, he understood that Sadat was only eager to impress the Americans. What Egypt's negotiating team failed to grasp, according to Brzezinski, was that their boss "saw the peace process as an opportunity to fashion a new American-Egyptian relationship…to becoming America's favorite statesman" (Brzezinski 1983: 265, 270, 236).

Besides military and political concessions, Sadat also agreed to close security cooperation with his new partner. A key aspect of U.S. covert operations was to locate regional allies willing to fund, organize, and ultimately assume public responsibility for these operations. Because the CIA had become highly suspect during the obsessively secretive Nixon years, the Carter administration was keen on minimizing black ops, and instead getting others to do what was needed. Propping Egypt for this role had been in fact one of the underlying aims of Kissinger's Middle East policy in the mid-1970s. So on September 1, 1976, the heads of U.S and French intelligence met in Cairo with four of their Middle East counterparts (Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco) to establish the Cairo-based Safari Club, a secret organization aimed at countering communism in Africa. In two years the Club had carried out covert operations against communists in Congo, Ethiopia, and Somalia (Cooley 2000: 24-27).

But then the toppling of the Shah in 1979 promoted Egypt's position as America's foremost regional security partner. Its first task in this new capacity was to supply Iraq with Soviet arms to help its effort to overthrow Iran's new regime. The second, and more spectacular task was to help fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Russian occupation of this neutral buffer state prompted Brzezinski to devise a plan to burry the Soviets there without direct American military intervention – just as the Soviets had done to them in Vietnam. His plan was simple: to unleash Islamist zealots against the Soviet occupiers. Brzezinski submitted a memo to Carter on January 9, 1980 outlining his strategy to use Egyptians, Saudis, and Pakistanis to execute this scheme (Brzezinski 1983: 444-54). By the end of month, he had sealed the deal in Cairo after Sadat agreed to recruit and train a volunteer army of young Egyptian Islamists; equip them with AK-47 rifles and ammunition, mortars, SAM-7 Strela surface-to-air missile, and Sagger and RPG anti-tank missiles from Egypt's depots; and finally, ship them to Afghanistan on authorized U.S. cargo planes flying from bases in Egypt's southern cities of Qena and Aswan; the Saudi's contributed money and preachers; and

Pakistan agreed to handle logistics. In effect, Sadat and his men became "virtual recruiting sergeants and quartermasters to the secret army of zealots being mustered to fight the Soviets" (Cooley 2000: 31-32). These of course were the militants who returned to Egypt in the 1990s to lead a violent campaign against the regime, and later took their militancy internationally through al-Qa'da.

In return, Sadat was promised U.S. protection for him and his regime. CIA operative William Buckley put together an impressive CIA-managed program of personal security with an annual budget of $20 million for the Egyptian President. As part of that program, CIA case officer in Cairo James Fees contracted U.S. anti-terrorism experts to train Sadat's bodyguards. But over a hundred bodyguard teams (each varying in size according to mission) were clearly not enough. Sadat still felt the need to travel by helicopter – for unlike his predecessor who traveled in an open motorcade, he knew how unpopular he had become. Three out of the five Westland helicopters Egypt had bought using U.S. funds went to presidency. Sadat then expanded the Republican Guard from an infantry battalion to a brigade of special troops, equipped with tanks and armored cars, and a sophisticated communication system. More importantly, the United States helped boost Egypt's security organs, which were so vital for regime stability. American surveillance technology allowed the Ministry of Interior to increase its telephone-tapping capabilities from 1,200 lines in 1971 to 16,000 in 1979. In 1980, the U.S. also provided street cameras to monitor major thoroughfares and public squares in Cairo, mobile listening posts, and other advanced electronic espionage devices that augmented Egypt's capacity for spying on its citizens to disrupt organized opposition (Sirrs 2010: 137, 153).

Why did Sadat make so many unnecessary concessions? This was the question that occupied Kissinger and the Israeli cabinet during the ceasefire talks; the question that provoked National Security Advisor Hafez's Ismail's outburst during a cabinet meeting where he openly criticized Sadat; the question on War Minister Gamasy's lips when he rushed out of his meeting with Kissinger with

teary eyes; the question that prompted the resignation of three foreign ministers in four years, and caused Sadat's fallout with his closest advisors, including Heikal and Game'; the question that puzzled Brzezinski for days at the Camp David resort. Why did Sadat dissipate Egypt's military's achievements, undersell its geopolitical assets, deliver it solidly into the U.S. orbit, and in the process, jeopardize its national interests?

Every player came up with a different answer. Kissinger told the Israeli leaders that: "Sadat had fallen victim to human weakness. It was the psychology of a politician who wanted to see himself – and quickly – riding triumphantly in an open car…with thousands of Egyptians cheering him" (quoted in Golan 1976: 152-53). Brzezinski was more imaginative. He noted in his Camp David diary, "my worry is that Sadat does not seem to differentiate clearly between fact and fiction," most of his facts were "simply untrue" (Brzezinski 1983: 93). Heikal agreed, "Sadat the escapist became Sadat the dreamer; Sadat the dreamer became Sadat the actor. Most of his life Sadat was acting a part – or sometimes several parts at the same time" (Heikal 1983: 13). Foreign Minister Fahmy had also complained of how unsettling it was to be working for someone who fabricates facts and then believes them. At the beginning of his relationship with Sadat, he judged him kindly as someone who was just "naïve and immature," but before he submitted his resignation, Fahmy had concluded that the President undermined Egypt's interests for his own glory, adding that Sadat's "fear [of war]…and overflowing vanity were pathetic" (Fahmy 1985: 13, 108, 127-129). Longtime friend and Foreign Minister Kamel described Sadat as a "unique psychological case study," a man living in a make-believe world, who constantly convinces himself that his dreams are a reality, and after becoming president, he also became unbearably narcissistic; "he fell in love with hearing the sound of his own voice and seeing his picture in the news" (Kamel 1983: 189-91, 193). Game', who was one of Sadat's most intimate friends, confessed that the President had become increasingly "narcissistic and arrogant" following the October War, and that his "excessive egoism" blinded him

(Game' 2004: 191). The Soviet officials who dealt with him during the war were convinced that he "suffered from megalomania" (Boyne 2002: 94). Even the international experts who assessed the October War judged Sadat to be "a somewhat repressed man, prone to swoops between euphoria and depression" (Insight Team 1974: 46). In short, a considerable part of Sadat's entourage – friends and subordinates, military and civilian, domestic and foreign – attributed his decisions to either "arrogance [or] opportunism" (Brooks 2008: 111).

These answers, however, are clearly unsatisfactory. They present Sadat as either an extremely poor strategist, a delusional psychopath, or a traitor. The President's long and proud record in political survival says otherwise. It is more likely that these confounded politicians and military men were simply measuring Sadat using the wrong scale. Some of them asked in frustration how someone as shrewd as Sadat could commit all these tactical blunders, squandering Egypt's military accomplishments, and diplomatic pressure cards one after the other, and receiving so little in return. Others wondered how a modern statesman could be so megalomaniac as to undermine his country's interests while continuing to think otherwise in his own fantasy world. What makes both sets of explanation misguided is that they measured Sadat's performance on the scale of national achievement. But Sadat was acting above all as a strategic actor in the intra-regime power struggle that had consumed Egypt since 1952. His aim was to augment the power and stability of the political apparatus, which he represented, against the other troublesome partner in the ruling coalition: the military. On that scale, despite his numerous tactical failures, Sadat fared quite well in terms of overall strategy.

Sadat's decision to shift alliances, substituting U.S. protection for that which has been provided by the military, was a well-calculated power strategy. Reliance on the military for the past two decades proved to be (to say the least) problematic, leaving the political leadership vulnerable to the convulsions of the officer corps. Sadat had complained that under Nasser, there was a military

plot uncovered every six months (Sadat in Mansour 2009: 336). By contrast to the military and its mood swings, the U.S. offered stable support with only a few strings attached: peace with Israel, abandoning the role of Arab power builder, contributing to the global war to contain communism (and later Islamism), opening up the economy to foreign investors, and preferably signaling an opening of the political system. Sadat had no qualms with any of these demands, since none of them jeopardized his regime. Avoiding future military confrontations with Israel, as well as opting out of the chaos of Arab politics guaranteed internal stability; combating communism abroad complemented efforts to undermine leftists at home (and the same later applied to Islamists); while economic and political liberalization could be tailored to the regime's convenience (one glance at America's allies in Latin America and Southeast Asia made it clear that democratic reforms, in particular, could remain cosmetic). Sadat himself spelled-out his strategy in a private conversation with Ahmed Bahaa al-Din, longtime acquaintance and editor of the daily newspaper *Al-Ahram*, who had just retuned from a visit to Tehran in January 1974:

> **You know, for a long time I have considered the Shah of Iran my role model among Third World leaders. Your non-aligned leaders whose clamor had occupied the world for years: Nehru, Nkrumah, Sukarno, even Abd al-Nasser, even Tito who is still alive, where are they now? Some died, some were defeated, some were overthrown, and some shrank in their borders like Tito. Only one member of this generation remains on his throne, with all its power and glory, and with the whole world seeking his friendship: this is the Shah of Iran. And the reason is simple. While all those other leaders believed the world has two great powers, Russia and America, and tried to deal with them on par, the truth could not be farther; there is only one great power, which is America. Russia is not even a second great power; it is ten or twenty steps behind America… It was the Shah of Iran who realized that. So what did he do? He sat on America's lap, and clutched its gowns. And as you see, while all your friends are gone, America fulfilled the Shah's needs. A revolution erupted [under Muhammad Mosaddeq in 1953], and he escaped to Italy. The Americans brought him back, and installed him again on the throne… That is why I think he is a brilliant and extraordinary man** (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 68-69).

When Bahaa al-Din tried to remind him that the Shah receives this type of protection because he has vast oil reserves and his country directly borders the Soviet Union, Sadat listened but did not comment (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 69). Ironically, the Shah – deposed by his people, and abandoned by

the U.S. – was forced to spend his last days in Cairo, enjoying the hospitality of his secret admirer, Sadat. Commenting on the Egyptian President's reception of the fallen Persian monarch, one observer remarked in *The New York Times* on how amusing it was to see "the new Shah embracing the old Shah" (Ibrahim 1980: 3).

Back to the Home Front

Although the umbrella of American protection was meant to substitute military protection for the political apparatus, i.e. it substituted the *function* of the military in the ruling alliance, one still has to remember that in a tripartite ruling bloc reducing the *weight* of one party (in this case the military) requires increasing that of the two other partners (that is the political and security apparatuses). So even as the President was reaching out to the U.S., he was considering how to strengthen domestic power brokers. Empowering the Ministry of Interior to handle domestic repression was a straightforward task. Less obvious, however, was what to do with the ruling party. The Nasser-built Arab Socialist Union needed rehabilitation, not just in terms of structure, but also – and more fundamentally – in terms of its social base. The ASU Sadat had inherited from his predecessor relied mostly on state functionaries (party cadres, bureaucrats, and public sector workers) and middling landlords. These were no longer sufficient. For one thing, public functionaries – some 3.2 million in 1978 – were likely to remain neutral when their employers bickered, as was proven in May 1971, when the President and his ministers fought it out and government cadres remained paralyzed, not knowing which side to support. Also, village notables (an estimated 3,600 middling landowners) have been – and will likely remain – provincial in outlook. They could garner votes at their home districts, or march out to welcome government dignitaries, but they certainly lacked the interest or the capacity to intervene in national political struggles. Hence, the support of public functionaries

and village notables could only be subsidiary. The ruling party now needed an active social base that identified its interests with those of the party and was ready to fight for them when necessary. In short, Egypt needed a new political elite.

Who should these be? Reverting back to the military to staff the political apparatus, as was the case before the changes brought about by the ASU in 1962, was out of the question. The whole point behind revamping the ruling party was to counterweigh the military. Brining in police officers to do the job would end the relative autonomy of the political apparatus, which the President represented; it would spell out the end of politics. While security officers would now be exclusively responsible for rooting out domestic contenders, they cannot be charged with actually running the government. Besides, even if a political order could survive for a while on naked coercion, its long-term stability requires a broad social alliance. Because Sadat wanted a loyal social base that owed nothing to Nasser, and because he knew that opening up the economy was a nonnegotiable item on the American agenda, he resolved to entrust the ruling party into the hands of an emerging capitalist class. As Middle East scholar Raymond Hinnebusch put it, "Sadat, lacking the stature to pursue Nasser's centrist balancing act between elite and mass, needed a solid support base underpinning his legal authority; since his rivals were on the left and his potential support on the right, a rightward course which would win over the power bourgeoisie made the most sense;" a decision further encouraged by his "diplomatic realignment" with the U.S. and the need to "stimulate and reinforce American interest in Egypt, to make him a suitable client" (Hinnebusch 1990: 192-93). CIA operative Miles Copeland reported that even under Nasser there were huge pressures from American investors to access the Egyptian market and set joint enterprises with Egyptians (Copeland 1970: 213). In other words, all the signs were pointing towards the need for a businessmen class, a solid interest group with a real stake in the regime. The President's first challenge now was to find (or create) one.

Military-backed regimes in places like Turkey, Chile, or Indonesia were based on an alliance between generals and capitalists united by fear of an organized communist movement. Yet the military regime in Egypt was established too early. Neither capitalists nor communists had sufficiently developed their interests, nor had their struggle matured. Instead of having to pick a side in a clearly polarized society, the July 1952 regime nationalized the class struggle and presented itself as the custodian of the nation as a whole. Moreover, it succeeded throughout the 1950s and 1960s to preempt the development of autonomous social groups, and effectively abolished the political arena in its entirety. By the time Sadat came to power, social groups could no longer perceive themselves independently from the state; they could only be developed organically within it (Suleiman 2005: 15). If Sadat needed a business elite, he had to nurture one himself. This was the goal of his open door economic policy, commonly known as *al-Infitah* (The Opening).

But where could one find the material to produce this new elite? The large landowning class had been severely damaged by the land reform laws, the middling landowners lacked cohesion, and capitalists refused to invest under Nasser's arbitrary laws. To the extent that there was a class that controlled the means and resources of production, it was the state bourgeoisie of the public sector and the bureaucracy, some 34,000 public sector managers, and 11,000 senior administrators. This class was badly hurt by the 1967 crisis in the balance of payment and budget deficit, and the subsequent economic deterioration. By the end of Nasser's reign they had become convinced that they had to look out for themselves, and thus began acting as catalysts for private capital in return for profit shares and commissions. Sadat thus found his initial base in the state bourgeoisie; "With a foot in high state office and assets in private society, this group was not only the most strategic social force, but the one most prepared to accept his leadership" (Hinnebusch 1990: 192-93). Hence, between 1971 and 1980, and despite all talk of economic liberalization, state employment grew by 70 percent; in the last three years of his tenure alone, employment in the civil service increased by 10

percent annually, a percentage higher than the 8.5 percent recorded average during Nasser's years (Brooks 2008: 115).

Now, this unwieldy class was expected to systematically let out business to a select group of private entrepreneurs in order to transform disparate landowners, merchants, and contractors into a coherent group of capitalists that would remain intrinsically linked to political authority. This was relatively easy considering that the state was responsible for issuing foreign trade and building permits, offering tax exemptions, pardoning tax evasion, providing loans through public banks (without asking for collaterals), allocating land at nominal prices, and so on. What the state simply did was not reduce its role in economic life, but rather shift its function from channeling accumulated surplus towards development, to becoming a sort of middleman between public resources and acquisitive capitalists, both domestic and foreign. One might say that what happened during those years was less state-fostered capitalism than "state-fostered corruption" (Saleh 1988: 16).

To breathe life into this new capitalist class and give it some character, Sadat decided to rehabilitate some of the 'old money' families. In December 1970 (barely two months after Nasser passed away), he formed a committee under future Foreign Minister Esmat Abd al-Magid to redress past injustices by returning the sequestered agricultural and financial properties of the pre-1952 elite, some 600 families (Abd al-Magid 1998: 111). His aim was that yesterday's landowners would become today's capitalists.

Even workers and peasants joined the bonanza. The increase in oil prices that followed (and was partly caused by) the October War triggered an exponential growth in migration of the Egyptian poor to Libya, Iraq, and the Gulf countries, a rise from 58,000 migrants in 1970 to over 5 million in 1980 (Abd al-Fadeel 1983: 11). Migrants invested most of their funds in Egypt, and returned to join the expanding business class. Their ideological outlook had changed in the meantime from how to

secure their economic rights in the village and the factory to simply how to make money. A 1996 survey revealed that 92.2 percent of workers neither belonged to a political party nor held any ideological views, and among the small percentage that did, 85.7 percent joined the ruling party (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 247-48).

Then came Law 43 of 1974, which officially inaugurated *Infitah* by opening up the country to foreign investments and abolishing many of the Nasser era restrictions. Sadat enforced *Infitah* quite aggressively, requiring the economic group in his cabinet to always consult with him so that he could 'facilitate' their work. Then in 1976, he replaced business professor Abd al-Aziz Hegazy with Interior Minister Mamduh Salem as Prime Minister, justifying his decision as follows: "When I saw tardiness and procrastination, I changed the government…Today, Mamduh is tearing down all measures and constraints that inhibit economic freedom" (quoted in Kandil 1986: 90). As Bahaa al-Din explained, Hegazy's crime was that he believed that economic liberalization was actually intended to rebuild the Egyptian economy but on a new, capitalist basis. Little did he know that it was part of a political deal Sadat made with the Americans, a deal to transform Egypt from a potentially "industrial state to a service state," a perpetually dependent market on foreign products and largesse (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 25, 90).

So while Sadat claimed that *Infitah* encouraged industrial capitalism, the numbers say otherwise. An enormous amount of money was sucked into the real estate business and various forms of commercial activities. Between 1970 and 1980, return on investment in construction jumped from 42.1 to 62.8 percent, while wholesale commerce marked an even higher increase from 43.6 to 75.4 percent (Ahmed 1993: 474). The number of agents for foreign companies climbed from a few dozen in 1974 to 16,000 by 1981, and commercial projects consumed 42 percent of total bank loans during the same period (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 105, 191). By the end of the 1970s, "Cairo became a city of middlemen and commission agents for Europeans and Americans…shuttling between

luxury hotels and government ministries, wheeling and dealing on an ever-increasing scale." In a country that had no millionaires in 1970, more than 17,000 sprang into existence by 1980, and 7,000 of those simply became millionaires through land speculation. In the second half of the 1970s, 53.5 percent of the land owned by the state on the Mediterranean Sea was "passed into private hands without any payment being made" – this land alone was resold on the private market for L.E. 4 billion (Heikal 1983: 183-91). Building construction in the second half of the seventies rose by 107 percent, over 90 percent of which went to luxury apartments, villas, and vacations houses. Another indicator: between 1974 and 1979, 43 percent of the national investments, and 60 percent of the foreign aid and loans were devoted to building construction (Abd al-Fadeel 1983: 90; Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 121).

Indeed by 1987, non-industrial sectors (mainly services and construction) represented 60 percent of the country's GDP and employed 53 percent of the workforce, at the same time that the industrial sector represented a humble 19 percent of GDP and employed 14 percent of the workforce, and agriculture represented 21 percent and employed 33 percent (Oweiss 1990: 9). Economics professor Mahmoud Abd al-Fadeel in fact compared Egypt's de-industrialization under American tutelage in the 1970s to the de-industrialization forced upon Mohamed Ali by European powers after his 1840 defeat (Abd al-Fadeel 1983: 27). Sadat was thus the founder of the Egyptian dependent state, the non-developing, de-industrialized, and randomly liberalized state; Mubarak only followed in his footsteps.

To make maters worse, Egypt began to sink in debt. In 1971, Egypt's civilian debt amounted to $1.3 billion, but it was mostly allocated toward strategic projects and the importing of strategic goods, such as the $380 loan provided by the Soviets to help build the High Dam and heavy industries, and the $205 million owed to the U.S. for wheat shipments. Military debt, on the other hand, was $1.7 billion, almost all incurred on relaxed credit terms provided by Russians. Merely a

decade later (in 1981), civilian debt had jumped to $19.5 billion (mostly owed to the U.S.), and military debt to $5.7 billion. In other words, Sadat's ten-year tenure increased Egypt's foreign debt ten times. Worst still, three-quarters of Egypt's civilian debt went to financing consumption. Not only that, but also instead of using increased oil revenues (which grew 40 percent annually as a result of the oil boom) to pay off some of the debt, the extra cash was again directed towards consumption (Heikal 1983: 78, 211). As for the military debt, the situation was even more unsettling. Egypt fought five wars in the twenty years between 1955 and 1975 using $2.2 billion worth of Soviet arms, of which $500 million was provided as aid. In comparison, during the short five years between 1975 and 1981 Egypt fought no wars (nor planned to fight any) yet it incurred a $6.6 billion debt to the U.S., in addition to an extra $650 million per year to service this debt (Handoussa 1990: 114; Barnet 1992: 130).

The American government and private investors played a crucial part in shaping this economic reality. They were both the architects of the Sadat-era changes and its primary benefactors. By his own admission, Sadat's primary economic advisor was David Rockefeller, whose frequent visits to Egypt struck a chord with a president known for his love of celebrities and powerful men. Sadat not only bragged about how the rich and famous magnate was his 'friend' – just like Kissinger and Carter were supposedly his friends – but he also gave him access to all economic data on Egypt and consulted him on every major decision. Needless to mention, Rockefeller did not always have his friend's best interest in mind, but was keen on promoting his own business and that of other American investors (Bahaa al-Din 1987: 114). More worrying, however, was the fact that on the Egyptian side there were no pressures to pursue or abandon certain policies. Sadat could rule as he pleased. This was expected considering that there were no domestic pressures on the regime to open up the economy to start with, but it was rather a top-down decision, motivated in large part by American pressure. Naturally, as soon as the Egyptian

market was open to foreign goods, American merchandise began pouring in. Between 1974 and 1984, Egypt imported $2.8 billion of American goods, constituting 33 percent of all Egyptian imports, at the same time that Egyptian exports to the U.S. market were a meager $33 million, representing only 8 percent of total Egyptian exports. The imbalance becomes even clearer when one considers that 85 percent of Egyptian exports to the U.S. represented only one item: oil (Al-Mashat 1986: 61). This of course made sense considering that American investors secured 70 percent of the profits made in the petroleum business in Egypt, some $9.5 billion in a single decade (1974-1984). On a smaller scale, the imbalance in trade relations was exemplified in the case of one sector in the U.S. economy: the milling sector. In 1983, Egypt became the largest foreign customer for American millers, importing products for $2.31 billion. In return, Egypt's strong milling industry not only suffered, but its exports to U.S. markets were met with strict protectionists barriers, allowing only $218 to get in at that year (1983). But it was U.S. banks that made the highest returns during the first years of *Infitah*. Between 1974 and 1980, private banks in Egypt had increased from zero to 56, and many of these where American. By 1985, U.S. banks had already drawn $9.9 billion worth of foreign currency deposits. The bulk of these were then transferred abroad, thus depriving the Egyptian economy of valuable savings. In sum, it is clear that *Infitah* benefited U.S. investors considerably, as reflected in the phenomenal surge in exports to Egypt, and the substantial profits reaped in the petroleum and banking sectors (Handoussa 1990: 122).

During the period between 1974 and 1984, the U.S also offered Sadat's government $15 billion in the form of loans and aid. This was the first installment in the massive USAID program that began supplying Egypt with a $2.3 billion annually after its signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Although the aid package was primarily meant to boost the Egyptian economy, the U.S. made substantial gains. To start with, USAID conditions required the Egyptian government to use aid funds to pay for "excessive US consultancy services…[and the] often overpriced American

goods and services," in addition to sustaining the inflated USAID bureaucracy (1,030 employees in Egypt in the 1970s compared to only 4 in Israel). Further, the U.S. retained the right to decide on investment priorities, thus leading some to refer to the USAID as Egypt's 'shadow cabinet'. One example stands out: although Egypt desperately needed to develop its industries to satisfy its growing market and increase its exports (and thus remedy its chronic trade balance deficit), the U.S. directed 82 percent of its aid in 1978 to the petroleum sector, which primarily served the American market, and spent less than 4 percent on industry. "On balance, therefore, it would seem fair to say that American aid to Egypt has reaped substantial American dividends in terms of investment and trade" (Handoussa 1990: 110-17).

Sadat himself lobbied directly on behalf of American investors. For example, when his cabinet turned down Rockefeller's offer to open up a branch of the Chase-Manhattan bank in Egypt in 1973, the President not only overruled his ministers, but in order to exempt the new branch from restrictions on foreign finance, he decreed that a merger be formed between Chase and one of Egypt's largest public sector banks, the National Bank. Sadat also interfered in a Boeing deal with the Egyptian national airline. Egypt Air was about to reject the overly expensive offer when it received the following letter from Sadat's secretary: "Dear Sir, the President has given orders that the agreement with Boeing and the accompanying financial arrangements should be signed immediately" (Heikal 1983: 82-83, 185; for other examples of the President's intervention in favor of U.S. investors see Kandil 1986: 91). Then in 1974, against the advice of his ministers, Sadat authorized the formation of the first business lobby in the country, the Egypt-U.S. Joint Business Council – renamed the American Camber of Commerce in Egypt (AmCham) in 1981. This interest group expectedly wielded tremendous power because of its direct links to the presidency. As a study of AmCham recommendations during its first years of operation revealed, the lobby became deeply

involved in shaping national economic policy rather than just removing obstacles to U.S. investments (Kandil 1986: 103-104).

As the 1980s dawned, Egypt was effectively locked into the course that Sadat had set. Domestically, *Infitah* has made the regime dependent on an expansive bourgeoisie "unprepared to give up opportunities for commercial and speculative enrichment or to trim its new life of consumption;" reversal was made even harder by the fact that Egypt's massive dependency on the U.S. left it vulnerable to mounting foreign pressures to surrender the economy further into the hands of this consumption bourgeoisie (Hinnebusch 1990: 192-93), a class which, in the words of prominent Egyptian economist Ibrahim Oweiss, "devoted their activities to short-term trade, reaping high cash profits that have…often been hoarded in the form of cash or jewelry, or spent on unnecessary luxuries, lavish consumption, or otherwise invested or saved abroad" (Oweiss 1990: 34). Heikal drew a stark comparison between them and the pre-July 1962 elite: "The old feudal class…was small and exploiting, but at least its wealth and ambitions were based on land ownership. Its stake in the soil of Egypt meant that it was never wholly alienated, never devoid of fundamental patriotism, which comes from planting down roots. But the new rich had no roots" (Heikal 1983: 87).

This was Nasser's greatest fear. As he one day told the director of the International Monetary Fund, Nasser was sure a state that basically provides raw materials and services to the industrialized world, and whose economic elite are largely merchants and speculators, rather than industrialists, will shortly become the victim of "an unpatriotic, corrupted wealthy class which contributes nothing substantial to the product of the country and which is inclined to export its profits to Switzerland" (Copeland 1970: 216). Ignoring Nasser's warning, Sadat infested the ruling party with the germ whose future covetousness would eventually pull the roof down in January 2011. As Heikal sardonically concluded, "Indeed, Egypt was not being transformed from a planned-

to a market-economy, but rather to a supermarket economy… Egyptian society was now divided between "the 'fat cats' and their hangers-on, perhaps 150,000 people at most, on one side, and the rest of the population on the other" (Heikal 1983: 86-88). World Bank statistics revealed an increase in the income of the top 5 percent on the income scale from 17 percent to 22 percent between 1970 and 1980, with an adjacent drop in the income of the lowest 20 percent on the income scale from 7 to 5 percent; all with a rate of inflation reaching a staggering 35 percent in 1979 (Ahmed 1993: 474-75).

All the above notwithstanding, Sadat finally had his new political elite, a veritable pyramid with state-nurtured capitalists on top, old ASU cadres and their rural allies in the middle, and state employees and workers (who either made gains as middlemen or lacked skills to survive outside the public sector) at the base. The new political alliance was stronger than ever. For the first time since 1952, it combined society's real economic elite with bureaucratic officials and political cadres. What was needed now was a political vessel through which Sadat could shore up their support. Hence, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was born.

Sadat had announced plans to reform the ASU back in July 1971, and again after the Permanent Constitution was approved by referendum in September 1971. But it was only after the war and *Infitah* that he began to reconstruct the political system. In January 1976, Sadat formed three *manabir* (platforms) representing the left, right, and center within the ASU. Prime Minister (and former Interior Minister and State Security officer) Mamduh Salem was put in charge of the sizeable centrist platform. The three platforms where then transformed into political parties via Law 40 of 1977, with the centrist platform becoming the new ruling party, first called the Egypt Socialist Party, and then renamed the National Democratic Party in July 1978. Sadat subsequently decreed that a Political Parties Committee chaired by NDP Secretary-General must approve any new party. The

aim was to engineer a political system with a hegemonic ruling party flanked by an ensemble of loyal opposition parties from left and right.

So while the ASU was officially dissolved, in reality what happened was that its six million members simply transferred to the new party. In fact, the NDP was described as a carbon copy of the ASU: it was headed by the President; it occupied the same headquarters and regional offices; it drew funds from the state budget; it advertised freely in the state media; it received administrative support from the bureaucracy; it mobilized the same public sector employees (both white and blue collar); it plugged into the same village notables' network; it employed the same corrupt opportunist cadres; and it relied on the Interior Ministry to rig elections and repress opposition. The primary difference, of course, was that after the methodical housecleaning occasioned by the transformation of the ASU to the NDP, the ruling party elite was no longer composed of political functionaries, but rather state-nurtured businessmen. The ruling party and the parliament, which it controlled, began to cater to the needs of the rising capitalist class.

To bring these economic and political changes into focus, it might be instructive to briefly survey the career of one of the prototypes of this new political elite: business tycoon, cabinet member, and NDP leader Osman Ahmed Osman. Osman was a contractor who opened business in the 1940s and presided over his Arab Contractors Company, which evolved into an empire in the 1960s. Through his acquaintance with General Commander Abd al-Hakim Amer and Sadat he skirted the worst effects of the nationalization wave, for although his company was officially nationalized in 1961 he retained effective control of its operations – as did 75 percent of the businessmen whose companies were nationalized. Like many, Osman's principle client was the government, whether in Egypt or in other Arab states: in 1953, he built the first Saudi military installations, including the kingdom's military academy; he established missile launch sites, concrete hangers and bunkers, and military bases in Iraq in the 1950s, in Libya in the mid-1960s, and in Abu

Dhabi in 1968; he also executed civilian projects, such as the building of the Kuwaiti parliament and city councils in 1954. Osman's military-intelligence connections in Egypt then secured his grandest project: a commission to build the High Dam in the late 1950s. Amer also charged him with rebuilding Port Said after its destruction in 1956. This is the year he first met Sadat, and in his words, they became the "closet of friends" (Osman 1981: 164-95, 226, 389-94).

When Sadat took power, he was commissioned to build the longest flyover bridge in Egypt, the October Bridge; he then received an L.E. 40 million commission to build bunkers, aircraft hangers, and missile bases in 1970; he was tasked in 1972 with creating floating tank carriers to be used in the crossing of the Suez Canal, and immediately following the crossing he was asked to build bridges connecting the east and west banks. On October 1973 he was appointed Minister of Construction, where his task was to rebuild the Suez Canal cities and clear and expand the canal itself, relying primarily on his own company. Sadat added to his ministerial portfolio responsibility for Food Security in 1974, allowing him for the first time to expand his business beyond construction to fields as diverse as transportation, food production (fisheries, poultry farms, livestock rearing, and agriculture produce), and land reclamation (of over 50,000 feddans). It was difficult to compete with a man who had official access to public resources and permits. Osman then went on to create one of the first private banks in Egypt, the Suez Canal Bank, in addition to his very own sports club. Osman was finally promoted in November 1976 to Deputy Prime Minister for Development, and head of the NDP's Development Committee (Osman 1981: 422-68, 607-47). During the last year of his tenure as Construction Minister (1981), he allocated a total of L.E. 3.7 billion to construction projects, half of which went to his Arab Contractors. The Arab Contractors also received two million square meters of army-owned land for free in Cairo (the area known as al-Jebel al-Ahmar in Cairo's Abbasiyeh neighborhood), and when an army major general opposed the

deal, he was forced to resign. All in all, three-quarters of the money Osman used to establish his projects were therefore public money (Heikal 1983: 188-89).

Osman provided Sadat many political favors in return. He used his strong links with the Muslim Brothers to guarantee their support for Sadat and direct their vehemence against left-wing activists at universities, labor unions, and other associations. Following Sadat's dismissal of Aly Sabri on May 2, Osman "rushed to the company headquarters and loaded a hundred buses with workers and ordered them to surround the President's house to keep him out of harms way." He then helped defame Sadat's enemies, corroborating the view that the centers of power were Soviet agents, and claiming that he witnessed first hand how Chief of Staff Saad al-Din al-Shazly was "hesitant, disturbed, unsettled" during the 1973 war. Osman also famously joined Sadat on his 1977 trip to Israel in show of support. He then engineered Sadat's economic partnership with local and foreign businesses. As minister, he orchestrated USAID involvement in Egypt's economic life, and offered favorable terms to several American conglomerates, starting with Coca Cola. He also helped set up over 80 private firms during his years at the NDP. In his memoirs, he summarized his economic role as follows: "My policy was to open the door for the private sector to lead economic life" (Osman 1981: 346-62, 404-72, 578, 643).

Osman was therefore the quintessential representative of the new ruling class: a man who expanded his capital through state commissions, and then went on to assume a leading role in government and the ruling party. It is important here to compare his fortunes under Nasser and Sadat. While Osman made a living under Nasser as a public sector manager, he had no influence over economic, let alone political life. With Sadat in power, he not only made unfathomable financial gains, but he also became a major economic and political player. This pattern would continue with little change during Mubarak's rule.

Of course the NDP was not only an economic powerhouse, but also a small intelligence apparatus. This was mediated through the security-oriented Vanguard Organization, whose 150,000 members flocked en masse to the NDP and controlled key party and government position.[23] But as strong as the NDP became though, it could barely have operated without the blanket protection provided by the Interior Ministry. The ministry not only managed day-to-day repression, but it was also involved in every aspect of the political life of the ruling party: it screened applicants for NDP membership; it investigated rising businessmen; it intimidated and subdued anti-NDP elements at universities, factories, and villages; and it rigged parliamentary, student, and syndicate elections to guarantee NDP majority. In short, NDP authoritarianism was only possible under the shadow of what was decidedly becoming a full-fledged police state.

Nemesis: The Military and the Police under Sadat

The fact that the Interior Ministry dislodged the military from the center stage of politics and acquired many of its prerogatives naturally provoked mutual hostility. While ASU secretary-generals had always come from a military background, the new ruling party was born under the watchful eyes of a police officer: Mamduh Salem. Sadat also made sure that policemen more so than military officers were now appointed as provincial governors. More disturbing still was the amount of power accrued by interior ministers under Sadat, especially the notorious al-Nabawi Ismail, who held the position in the second half of the 1970s. Ismail was one of the few police officers that stood against

[23] A quick survey of the careers of prominent VO members suffices to demonstrate that they constituted the core of Egypt's political elite; these included speakers of parliament under Sadat (Labib Shukir, Sayed Mar'ie), and Mubarak (Ref'at al-Mahgoub, Helmi Murad, Mustafa Kamal Helmi, Fathy Sourur); prime ministers under Sadat (Mustafa Khalil, Mamduh Salem), and Mubarak (Abd al-Aziz Hegazi, Aziz Sedqi, Fuad Muhyi al-Din, Atif Sedqi); interior ministers and intelligence directors under Sadat (Nabawi Ismail, Ahmed Kamel); foreign ministers and prominent diplomats under Sadat (Murad Ghalib), and Mubarak (Esmat Abd al-Magid, Amr Musa, Usama Baz, Mustafa al-Fiqi); in addition to several other ministers and ruling party leaders under Mubarak (Aly al-Din Hilal, Kamal al-Shazli, Hussein Kamil Baha' al-Din, Abd al-Hadi Kandil, and other) (Sharaf 1996: 191-221).

Naguib and helped organize the March 1954 demonstrations that brought the pro-democracy camp down. He was rewarded by a job in the post-coup secret police and rose through the ranks of what later became the State Security Investigations Sector. He became chief aid to Salem, the first police officer to hold the post of Interior Minister in 1971, then Prime Minister in 1976. After the ministry's failure in dealing with the January 1977 Food Riots (discussed below), Sadat brought in Ismail to toughen up the police force. Ismail proudly confessed that he became so powerful under Sadat that he was the one who 'nominated' future cabinet members, including the prime minister. In a famous episode, when Sadat formed the NDP and wanted those who had joined the transitional Egypt Socialist Party to switch, Ismail walked in on one of the party meetings and ordered its members to transfer to the new party without delay (Ismail in Fawzy 2008: 49, 86-90).

But what drove military officers through the roof was that they increasingly came under the purview of the ministry's SSIS. Former Chief of Staff Saad al-Din al-Shazly recalled chairing an appraisal committee composed of 15 generals in 1972. When he submitted the committee's recommendations for military promotions to the War Minister, the latter struck out a few names citing SSIS reports as the reason. Another example was when Egypt received a shipment of T-62s (Russia's most advanced tanks at the time) and the general staff decided in a meeting on February 26, 1972 to send them immediately to the front, only to discover the next day that the tanks would have to remain in Cairo until tank brigade leaders were cleared by security. A third example occurred during a meeting between the President and his commanders, on March 19, 1972, when he accused senior officers of turning the soldiers against his policies, and when the attendants denied, he produced an SSIS operative from an anteroom to elaborate on the charges (Shazly 1980: 83-99). A fourth example was Sadat's purging of War Minister Muhammad Sadeq and his senior aides based on security reports that he was becoming too popular within the ranks and critical of the president's policies (Sirrs 2010: 127). A fifth example is Sadat's charging his security aide, PBI director Ashraf

Marawan, to negotiate arms imports before the 1973 war, rather than sending a military delegation (El-Sayed 2007: 2). A final example was charging SSIS deputy director Fouad Allam to investigate an alleged plot by middle ranking officers in March 1981 (Allam 1996: 413).

As the competition between the military and the Interior Ministry intensified, the two institutions were severely tested by the January 1977 riots. Sadat's economic liberalization demanded the gradual lifting of government subsidies, something citizens have been taking for granted for almost three-decades. So following a government decision to halve its subsidies (thus raising the price of flour, rice, sugar, and other basic commodities), millions took to the streets. The January 18-19, 1977 Food Riots were the largest and most violent since the 1952 coup, so violent that Sadat had to escape from Aswan to Cairo in a helicopter before the angry masses attacked his house. Knowing that the police was still ill-equipped to deal with riots as widespread and aggressive as these, Sadat was forced to call in the army. War Minister Gamasy, however, said he would not order his men in unless Sadat's government rescinded the controversial decision, which the President was propelled to do. Order was finally restored, after 160 demonstrators were killed, 800 injured, and 5,000 arrested (McDermott 1988: 54). State Security General Assem al-Genedi and his colleagues received orders from Sadat to keep track of every army vehicle and officer on the street because he suspected that the War Minister was planning to carry out a coup. Not surprisingly, a bitter Sadat refused to acknowledge the role of the military in his public address following the riots, and asked all newspapers to follow suit. The lesson learned was that marginalizing the military required militarizing the police. General Al-Genedi said that the Interior Ministry immediately devised Plan 100, which determined how to control the state in the case of another popular revolt – this is the plan that failed miserably in January 2011 (Genedi 2011: 154).

Aided by the ruthless al-Nabawi Ismail, the President began to augment the police force in numbers and weapons. The paramilitary Central Security Forces was rapidly inflated from 100,000

to 300,000 troops in 1977 and it arsenal was upgraded from batons and rifles to tear-gas canisters and armored vehicles (Ismail in Fawzy 2008: 154-56). In 1979 alone, the U.S. supplied the CSF with 153,946 tear-gas bombs, 2419 automatic guns, and 328,000 rubber bullets (Al-Mashat 1986: 65). CSF was thus set on the path to obviate the need to call on the military to restore public order; now the army would not serve as the regime's last resort. As one analyst put it, "If SSIS comprised the eyes, ears, and interrogator of the regime, the CSF was its instrument of brute force" (Sirrs 2010: 162). Expectedly, the degree of mistrust between Sadat and his army deteriorated to a point where he asked the Interior Ministry to handle his personally safety inside the Defense Ministry and other military bases (Hammudah 1977: 239). The relationship between the soldiers and their leader was at its lowest ebb since the Nasser-Amer showdown in 1967. Colonel Muhammad Selim, who was serving his last days in the military, recalls some of the discussions he had with his colleagues back then.

> **We understood that the general strategy was to weaken the army and strengthen the police force. This began with Mamduh Salem in 1971, but it picked up only after al-Nabawai Ismail took over the Interior Ministry in 1977. We lived to see the day when the Interior Minister became the most powerful man in Egypt. We also followed how the CFS was being propped up to take over riot control. We were quickly becoming dispensable. And there was nothing we could do about it** (Interview 2009).

At this point, the Interior Ministry decided to flex its muscles in what Heikal aptly described as the 'autumn of fury'. Drunk with power, al-Nabawi Ismail decided on September 3 to detain 3,000 of the country's leading intellectuals, journalists, clerics, priests, and members from all opposition groups – including Heikal. The aim was to lock them up until they learned their lesson and stopped criticizing Sadat's policies. Although SSIS deputy director Fouad Allam had serious misgivings about this vicious campaign, he claimed he was powerless against an Interior Minister who believed he could take on the entire country. In fact, Allam recorded in his memoirs that his boss had originally recommended a list of 12,000 dissidents to be detained and was persuaded by more practical

policemen to cut it down (Allam 1996: 269). Two days after the mass arrests, Sadat delivered a fiery speech in parliament, celebrating what he called the "September revolution;" gloating that one of the detainees (who happened to be a revered Islamist preacher) was "rotting in prison like a dog;" and yelling at his petrified audience: "Beware! I will no longer show mercy towards anyone!" (Hammudah 1986: 65).

The Closing Act

On October 6, 1981, Egyptians followed the annual victory parade celebrating the heroic crossing of the Suez Canal on the first day of the 1973 war. They knew that this one was different (though little did they realize how different!). It was supposed to be the biggest parade of its kind, marking the eighth anniversary of the October War with an exhibition of Western (mostly American) weapons that Egypt had recently acquired, and it was organized a few months before Israel's final withdrawal from Sinai (in April 1982), and barely a month after Sadat's largest crackdown on domestic opposition (in September 1981). All the country's leaders and dozens of foreign dignitaries were seated in the review stand around the President in his London-tailored Prussian-style military uniform covered with ribbons and stars (that he had awarded himself) and a green shoulder-to-waist scarf (he called the Sash of Justice) as officers and cadets marched in their shinny uniforms; as endless files of tanks and artillery guns trailed along with their crews saluting the supreme commander; and as American fighters thundered above in tight formations, twisting and diving, and spewing trails of colored smoke behind them. The parade was supposed to symbolize the power and greatness of Sadat's achievements during his decade-long tenure. How the event ended was no less symbolic. At the precise moment that Sadat was gazing above at the new jets, an armored vehicle broke away from a column of twelve trailered artillery guns and made its way towards him. Four

assassins launched from the vehicle throwing grenades at the review stand and firing their rifles at the audience. In 40 seconds, the President was gunned down with nine others, and another 28 were injured. Although a record 39 shots pierced Sadat's body, the medical report cited as cause of death: a nervous shock.[24] And expectedly so: this was the first time in recorded history that Egyptians assassinated their Pharaoh. To add insult to injury, very few people bothered to attend his funeral – forcing American television anchor Barbra Walters to speculate that if Sadat was watching from above how little Egyptians cared for him, he would have died a second time out of grief (Hammudah 1986: 18-25, 233). As Heikal commented:

> **At the time, a good many people in the West saw the assassination of Sadat as just another of those apparently senseless acts of violence which have destroyed…so many prominent public figures… Nothing could be further from the truth… The forces that conspired against Sadat were just as much a part of the mainstream in Egyptian society as were the forces which overthrew the Shah from the mainstream in Iran… This was tragically and graphically illustrated at his funeral, when he was taken to his grave by a most imposing galaxy of foreign statesmen, including three former Presidents of the United States and the Prime Minister of Israel, but with only a handful of his own fellow-countrymen as mourners** (Heikal 1983: x-5).

Sadat's assassination is one of the least examined episodes in studies on Egypt. The assassination itself was admittedly one of the most spectacular in modern history. Rather than killing Sadat by poison, a roadside bomb, or some invisible sniper, the assassins decided to execute him in public – military-style – by a firing squad. All symbolism aside, the assassination and its aftermath shed light on the new power configuration that had crystallized by the forced end of Sadat's reign. It is therefore unfortunate that analysts have tended to dutifully ignore this momentous event, or at best treat it as a dramatic yet isolated episode of Islamist militancy, on account of the fact that those who pulled the trigger were religious zealots. The assassins' ties to the military have been regularly downplayed, and the context within which the assassination took place was inexplicably blurred.

[24] The medical report was printed in *Al-Akhbar* 9149: 3. Cairo (6/7/1981).

These omissions, however, cannot be sustained in light of the following facts: first, the assassins had all served in the military: the ringleader was an artillery first lieutenant (Khaled al-Islambouly of the 333rd Artillery Brigade), another was a national guard sergeant and former infantry marksman, a third was a reserve first lieutenant, and the last was a former air defense officer; second, the assassination plot was masterminded by a renegade colonel in military intelligence and an October War hero who had a street in Cairo named after him (Abbud al-Zumur – who was instantly released by the military following the 2011 revolt after three decades in prison); third, the assassination itself occurred during a military parade in a military-secured zone (with three check points to ensure that no live ammunition entered the parade ground); fourth, Interior Minister al-Nabawi Ismail revealed that the original assassination plan had an air force fighter crash into the review stand – kamikaze style – which means that the plotters had links with air force pilots (Ismail in Fawzy 2008: 119), and the operation's mastermind Abbud al-Zumur also confessed he had recruited officers in the Republican Guard (Interview in Abd al-Hafeez and Khayal 2011: 7); fifth, interrogations revealed that the assassins asked Defense Minister Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazala and other military leaders to step aside as they opened fire, and yelled that their target was the President and his Interior Minister; sixth, although the lead assassin was marked as an Islamist radical by Military Intelligence (he was interrogated by MID in October 1980 for his Islamist militancy, but the investigation was shelved), and although his brother was detained a few days before the parade for the same charge, he was still allowed to participate in the parade (Hammudah 1986: 28, 78); seventh, the assassination was supposed to serve as the opening act in a full-fledged bid for power spearheaded by a coup and supported by a popular uprising (Zumur in Abd al-Hafeez and Khayal 2011: 7) – the fact that such an attempt was even thinkable points to the widespread feeling that the military has abandoned the regime, and that given the chance it would join the revolt or at least not suppress it; eighth, as former Chief of Staff Saad al-Din al-Shazly indicated in an interview with *Newsweek* days following

the assassination: the officers he maintained contact with were convinced that the assassination was a step in the right direction (Hammudah 1986: 50-52); finally, many of the reasons the plotters gave for killing Sadat were military-related. Following his release from prison in March 2011, al-Zumur said in an interview: "We assassinated Sadat because he accepted an end to the military conflict between the Arabs and Israel…which depreciated Egypt's regional weight" (Interview in Abd al-Hafeez and Khayal 2011: 7).

In fact, al-Zumur was reportedly hesitant to authorize the assassination because he believed than in a few months he could recruit enough officers to allow him to take power effortlessly (Heikal 1983: 267; Zumur in Abd al-Hafeez and Khayal 2011: 7). Fouad Allam, Deputy Director of the SSIS, said that investigations revealed that a coup by middle ranking officers was actually planned in March 1981, but his men preempted it (Allam 1996: 413). To top it all, Interior Minister Ismail had told the Prime Minister the night before the assassination that he was almost sure the President would not survive the parade because of the radicalism lurking within the ranks, and that he had warned Sadat that he would be particularly vulnerable in a military-controlled zone, but the President brushed his warning aside (Ismail in Fawzy 2008: 110-14). Major General Ahmed al-Fouli, one of Sadat's bodyguards during that fatal day, testified that Interior Minister Ismail had warned against this parade in particular (Interviewed in Al-Keshky 2011: 5). Intriguingly, SSIS got definite word regarding the assassination two hours before, and quickly dispatched an envoy to evacuate Sadat, but Military Police prevented him from reaching the President or the Interior Minister (Ismail in Fawzy 2008: 123; Allam 1996: 312).

While none of the above indicates that the entire officer corps was implicated in the assassination, it does point towards three incontrovertible facts: that several military officers were involved in planning, executing, and covering up for the assassination; that the assassins were confident that the military was at the very least indifferent towards Sadat's regime; and that, in the

light of the above two facts, it was clear yet again that the military could not be trusted. This is why Robert Springborg rightly maintained that the assassination could not be explained in isolation of the "general dissatisfaction in the military" (Springborg 1989: 97). It was not a separate incident, but rather the climactic moment in the life of a regime in crisis.

So why then did the attempt to seize power fail? Clearly, the plotters undermined the other coercive power in the ruling bloc, the junior partner that had come to age under Sadat: the police. Although a limited military force was dispatched to the southern provinces to preempt an Islamist uprising, the army played a minor role in restoring order. Whether negligent or complacent (or both), the military could not have been deployed fully at that stage. It was the police force that had to shoulder the burden. Hours after Sadat's death had been confirmed, the Interior Ministry was asked to implement Plan 100 to secure strategic government sites through CSF units; SSIS then apprehended al-Zumur and the other ringleaders before they could cause any more damage; meanwhile a specialized SSIS counterterrorist team (Intelligence Unit 75) was assigned the delicate mission of investigating the military's possible implication in the assassination (Sirrs 2010: 149-51). The investigations lasted for over two months, after which six artillery officers were court marshaled and an undisclosed number of officers were removed from service. Among those implicated were high-ranking officers such as Major General Mamduh Abu-Gabal from artillery, and armory captain Essam al-Qamary, who reputably destroyed more Israeli tanks in 1973 than anyone else and was considered as a war hero (Allam 1996: 284). For Interior Ministry officers, this was baptism by blood. And they passed with flying colors. CSF Chief General Abd al-Rahman al-Faramawy, who went on to become governor of Port Said under Mubarak, recalled proudly how effective and efficient the ministry was in the aftermath of the assassination.

> **On the day Sadat was assassinated, I was at CSF headquarters. Without waiting to hear from the Interior Minister, I immediately put Plan 100 into effect. The plan arranged for CSF units to secure strategic sites, such as the television building and the major**

> **ministries, to preempt any possible coup. Over the next two days, I dispatched CSF troops to the south to deal with the threat of an Islamist insurgency down there. We were forced to rely on the military for transportation, especially since we needed helicopters. But we did not call on the army's help because it was then under SSIS investigations. Sadat was assassinated in a military-secured zone without a policeman in sight. It was widely believed during those early days that the officer corps was involved. We will never be completely sure, however, because the outcome of the investigations remains classified** (Interview 2009).

By the time Mubarak began his long tenure, the course had already been set: the military had been marginalized and increasingly regarded with suspicion; the police had proven to be loyal and reliable; and the new NDP business elite had come to represent the regime's strongest social base. But there was one more challenge Mubarak had to overcome. Apparently, the army still had some fight left in it.

Chapter Nine

THE LONG LULL BEFORE THE PERFECT STORM: REVOLT IN JANUARY 2011

"It was the best of times; It was the worst of times," opened Charles Dickens's haunting tale of the French Revolution. And so it was in Egypt during Hosni Mubarak's imposing thirty-year reign – a reign longer than that of his two illustrious predecessors combined, and the longest in Egypt's modern history since Mohamed Ali (1805-1848). It was the best of times for the net beneficiaries of the July 1952 regime: a ruling class plundering with impunity, and security men who perceived themselves, in the words of one of their own, as the "masters of the country."[25] It was the worst of times for everyone else: the people, and the army.

Before Sinking to Oblivion: The Military's Final Stand

Egypt's fourth president was the first not to belong to the Free Officers Movement, although he graduated from the Military Academy three years before the 1952 coup. He spent the 1950s as an air force instructor, then travelled to Russia for further training, and only returned to Egypt in the mid-1960s. During the 1967 war, he famously alleged that American jets participated directly in the air strike against Egypt, aggravating the president when he failed to produce any evidence to back up his claim. After the war, Nasser removed him to an administrative job as director of the Air Force Academy. Mubarak's fortunes changed under Anwar al-Sadat, who favored low profile and apolitical officers. He was appointed Air Force Commander and Deputy War Minister in 1972, and promoted to Vice-President in 1975, where he – unlike many of Sadat's military and political subordinates –

[25] The security chief of one of Egypt's Nile Delta governorates (al-Behera) made this comment amidst the January revolt, reminding his troops that they were the "masters of the country" and urging them to "cut the hands of those who dare to assault their masters," i.e., the demonstrators (Hassan 2011: 3).

served his boss faithfully and never questioned his wisdom about realigning Egypt with the Western world. America in particular was so much on Mubarak's mind from the beginning that during one of his first interviews after taking office he bragged about how he visited Washington so many times as vice-president that he was frequently asked whether he owned a private suite in the Madison Hotel. In fact, he visited the American capital four times during the last year of Carter's administration, and met with Ronald Regan days before Sadat's assassination in October 1981. Mubarak concluded his interview by affirming that: "without the United States it would have been difficult, if not impossible to achieve what President Sadat achieved. I am very confortable about dealing with the United States, and I will continue to do so and to enhance our relationship." [26]

By the time Mubarak came to power, the military had been considerably tamed. The purges of the 1950s and 1960s had removed politicized officers, while those of the 1970s retired or cashiered anyone who became either too popular or too loyal to the military (rather than to his political masters). Major General Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazala (initially) seemed to be none of the above. He was only two years younger than Mubarak and began his military career around the same time. But unlike Mubarak he had joined the Free Officers, participated in the 1948 and 1956 wars, and was not involved in the 1967 debacle. Abu Ghazala also played a field role in the 1973 war as artillery commander of the Second Army in Sinai (rather than spend the war by Sadat's side in Cairo like Mubarak). Unlike the new president also, Abu Ghazala was a military scholar who penned several books on military science (including the application of mathematics in battle) and the art of warfare, always with an eye towards improving the combat performance of the Egyptian armed forces. Yet Abu Ghazala shunned politics and did not actively cultivate popularity among troops, and so appeared to be nonthreatening to his superiors. Furthermore, he was removed from the corps after the war and appointed military attaché to Washington (between 1977 and 1980), where

[26] *Al-Ahram* 34634: 5. Cairo (10/9/1981).

his role in setting up Egypt's new alliance with the U.S. could not have endeared him to his wary comrades. Abu Ghazala, moreover, seemed to have good chemistry with Mubarak. They worked together on cementing relations with the Pentagon, and it was the latter – acting in his capacity as vice-president – who recommended him to the position of Chief of Staff in 1980, and then Defense Minister the following year. One of Mubarak's first decisions as President was to promote his ally to the rank of Field Marshal, which had remained vacant since Abd al-Hakim Amer's death, in addition to naming him Deputy Prime Minister, a step up the protocol ladder. But like everyone else who assumed the top military post in Egypt, starting with Amer and ending with Hussein Tantawy (Mubarak's last Defense Minister), Abu Ghazala chose the military over political loyalty. Instead of keeping the President's back, he sought to empower the armed forces through reaching out to the soldiers and the people, and securing as much personal support as he could get from the United States.

To start with, Abu Ghazala raised his men's wages, upgraded military facilities, vehicles, and even uniforms. Soon, the soldiers were referring to him in their private conversations as 'the man of the hour', 'that shinning star', 'the savior' who had rescued the army from inevitable eclipse. More dangerously, from Mubarak's viewpoint, officers were comparing him to the first Field Marshal (Amer) in his generosity and camaraderie (Aly 1986: 3). And sure enough, the relationship between Mubarak and Abu Ghazala became equally strained as that of Nasser and Amer before them. The new Field Marshal, however, was subtler than the old. He had no taste for rows, threats, or emotional outbursts. Instead, he sidestepped, rather the confronted the President, and continued to nurture his power base within and outside the army. He raised no objections, for instance, against Mubarak's reshuffling of the general command in the fall of 1983 without consulting him. Nor did he complain when the President removed him from the ruling party in 1984, invoking a constitutional article (which Sadat had blissfully ignored after tightening his grip over the armed

forces) prohibiting military officers from participating in politics. Abu Ghazala simply attended whichever NDP meeting he wished to attend under various pretenses (Al-Mashat 1986: 67).

Also, Abu Ghazala was more successful than Amer in getting to the masses; whether out of sincerity or cunning, he took the shortest and most effective route: religion. As Robert Springborg rightly noted, "In contrast to Mubarak's unhesitating preference for secularism, Abu Ghazala has cultivated an image of devoutness" (Springborg 1989: 100). A few examples suffice. In a televised interview in October 1986, the Field Marshal brandished his piety by stressing how faith was essential to his soldiers' wellbeing, and snubbing calls to secularize the army (Abd al-Quddus 1986: 3). A year later, in June 1987, he explained in an interview to the daily *al-Ahram* that the Egyptian military doctrine was "inspired by the Qur'an" (Abdallah 1990: 27). Further, Abu Ghazala repeatedly attacked the police's draconian methods against Islamists, leading chief Muslim Brothers' activist Muhammad Abd al-Quddus to assert that the Field Marshal was one of the few state officials who appreciated "the Islamic impulse in Egyptian society and politics and was willing to come to terms with it" (Abdallah 1990: 16). It also helped that his wife donned the veil, and that his brother-in-law (Mukhtar Noah) was a renowned Islamist figure.

The Field Marshal's most serious overtures, however, were reserved to the Americans. Consistent with his reputation as an "outspoken conservative" in religious matters, he was also a "fervent anticommunist" who emphasized that a militarily strong Egypt was the surest guarantee against Soviet infiltration of the region (Springborg 1989: 100). In an interview with *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, the Abu Ghazala warned that communists threatened American oil supplies through their presence in Ethiopia, Yemen, and Libya, and that building up Egypt's military power will help contain this threat because Egypt falls at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, and one must safeguard these three maritime routes to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of oil to the noncommunist world (McDermott 1988: 175). In another interview,

this time in the summer of 1988 in the weekly magazine *al-Musawwar* remarked that Cairo and Washington had a common interest in strengthening Egypt (Cook 2007: 81). It soon dawned on Mubarak that if there were ever a showdown between him and his Field Marshal, the U.S. would probably lean towards the latter. In fact combining Abu Ghazala's popularity within the ranks, his pious public image, and the intimate links he developed with the U.S. made it seem that if the President wanted to remove him, he had to "contemplate a 'corrective' revolution of at least the magnitude that Sadat launched in May 1971" (Springborg 1989: 102, 124-25). That is, of course, unless Abu Ghazala committed some major blunder. Unfortunately for the military, he committed two.

The first blunder was agreeing to pull back his troops after being deployed in full force to quell the Central Security Forces' munity in February 1986 without bargaining to increase his institution's political leverage. Aggravated by rumors of a one-year extension to their three-year service term, and infuriated by years of abusive treatment at the hands of police officers and scandalously low wages and living standards, 17,000 CSF conscripts took to the streets on February 25, 1986, burning and looting indiscriminately throughout the capital. The Interior Ministry failed to respond. CSF chief General Abd al-Rahman al-Faramawy explained that although the rumor was baseless, the ministry could not risk sending in other CSF units because they might empathize with their comrades. Regular police troops were also inadequate; they were too few and armed only with pistols. "We were in a fix," General Faramawy continued, "the CSF was the striking arm of the police force, and now that its troops were out of control, who could rein them in" (Interview 2009). The President knew the answer. To his great apprehension, he was forced to declare a three-day curfew and call in the army. The Interior Ministry did not protest. Of course, the fact that they stood helpless as some of their own spread havoc must have stung. But they did not seem too concerned about the army. In the words of the CSF chief, "We knew that there was no love lost between the

army and the CSF, and so they would certainly not join in. We also knew that Abu Ghazala was a professional and patriotic officer and would not seize the opportunity to stage a coup" (Interview 2009). And rightly so, instead of seizing the opportunity to stage a coup that would reestablish military dominance over the regime (like the army did in 2011) or at least preempt its further weakening by the President.

Deployed on the second day of the mutiny, the military came down with a vengeance against their old foes, killing 107 conscripts and injuring 715 others in a couple of days. On the third day of the rebellion, order was restored, and Abu Ghazala ordered his men back to the barracks. It was a close call, and Mubarak must have sighed in relief as he watched the tanks and armored carriers roll back to their stations. Still, Abu Ghazala's popularity soared after this critical episode. His men showed discipline and efficiency, and exited the scene in the most dignified fashion. On the contrary, public opinion resented what was revealed about police mistreatment of their conscripts, as much as by their incompetence in dealing with the mess they created.

So why did the Field Marshal act so graciously? This might have been a testament to the successful subordination of the military from 1967 onwards. Officers no longer harbored political ambitions, nor did they envisage carrying out a new coup. But the decision almost certainly derived from Abu Ghazala's overconfidence. This overconfidence was not entirely misplaced; the Field Marshal commanded the loyalty of his soldiers, the confidence and admiration of his countrymen, and the support of Egypt's chief foreign patron. He did not need to stage a coup, or seize any given opportunity to have his way with the regime – or so he thought. As it turned out, this was the military's last chance (until 2011) to replenish its rapidly depleting power. Now, a non-suspecting Abu Ghazala committed his second, and evidently fatal blunder.

The blow came on September 5, 1988, when the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* reported on its front-page that the Egyptian Defense Minister might stand trial in the U.S. for illegally acquiring (a

polite way of saying 'smuggling') American missile parts and technology without the Pentagon's permission. The missile in question was a Scud-B variant with an extended (900 km) range, which Abu Ghazala was hoping to produce through a tri-national project (referred to as Project-T) that involved Iraq and Argentina. To make matters worse, the newspaper exposed how Abu Ghazala was also secretly negotiating a missile deal with North Korea, and was trying to develop chemical weapons behind America's back. The President realized he had to move quickly. The news doubtlessly boosted the Field Marshal's status within the army. But he had lost the support of the one party Mubarak worried about: the United States (Baz 2007: 78-81).

In April 1989, Abu Ghazala was demoted to presidential aide. The menial tasks a President eager to demonstrate loyalty to Washington charged him with pushed him to resign in February 1993. To preempt the possibility of him entering civilian politics, the Interior Ministry claimed he was involved in the scandalous Lucy Artin affair, an explosive case of sex, bribery, and political abuse that rocked Cairo in April 1993. Abu Ghazala was accused by *Rose al-Youssef*, a weekly magazine close to the government, of courting the famous socialite and helping her win a land dispute in court against he divorcee. To tarnish his religious image for good, the magazine added that the police recorded several explicitly sexual calls between the two. It is true that the Field Marshal's name was cleared by court two years later, but the damage had already been done. Remarkably though, when Mubarak decided to hold the first multi-candidate presidential elections in 2005 (instead of the usual referendum over the incumbent), there was a popular consensus that Abu Ghazala – over a decade into retirement – was the only man who stood a chance against him. Reporter Muhammad al-Baz helped the old Field Marshal lay down the general guidelines of his presidential program, but hours before he was scheduled to announce his candidacy at the Press Syndicate, on June 29, 2005, Mubarak paid him a visit and persuaded him to back down. The former Defense Minister never spoke again in public. He died three years later (Baz 2007: 166). Abu

Ghazala's fall from power ended the era of eminent generals. From that point onwards, as one reporter noted cleverly, "the most popular military officer on billboards in Egypt [was] Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken" (Shatz 2010: 6).

Abu Ghazala's replacement was Youssef Sabri Abu Taleb. This was a shrewd decision on Mubarak's part for a couple of reasons. To begin with, Abu Ghazala had served under him in the Second Army throughout the 1970s forcing the embittered Abu Taleb to resign the day his subordinate was promoted over his head to the top military post. Second, the new Defense Minister had been away from the corps for six years (serving in the civilian position of Cairo's governor). The grudge he openly held against Abu Ghazala ensured that even the contacts he had with former colleagues must have been circumscribed. Also, knowing that Abu Taleb's mission was to wipe out his predecessor's legacy further guaranteed that there would be no love lost between the officer corps and their new leader. By 1992, he had cut down the army's role in the economy, and terminated the controversial R&D infrastructure Abu Ghazala had laid down for missile production (Eytan, Gazit, and Giblo 1993: 140). Mubarak's final coup de grace was to appoint Hussein Tantawy, the head of the Republican Guards, new Defense Minister in May 1991. Tantawy served the President faithfully for 20 years before defecting during the 2011 uprising.

Examining Military Privileges Under Mubarak

Abu Ghazala's overwhelming popularity within the corps, and the army's eventual abandonment of the regime in 2011 force us to wonder: Why did the military have anything to complain about during Mubarak's reign? Did it not control a lucrative niche of the economy? Is it not true that its members enjoyed various socioeconomic privileges? What about American patronage? Why would officers hold grievances against the regime when each year over 200 of them were trained by the world's

only superpower, and regularly participated in joint exercises with American soldiers? What was there to rail against when their arsenal included state-of-the-art weapons (from M-1-A1 Abrams tanks, to F-16 Falcons, to Improved Hawk missiles, and all the rest)? Surely, as most scholars assumed, these perks were more than enough to stifle opposition within the ranks, to buy-off the army (see for example Springborg 1989; Sadowski 1993; Cassandra 1995; Richards and Waterbury 1996; Weiss and Wurzel 1998; Frisch 2001; Cook 2007; Droz-Vincent 2007; Richter 2007). After all, what more could soldiers ask for than a few perks to fill their pockets and boost their self-esteem? In reality, however, these ostensible privileges masked a number of troubling issues, which can be seen in the realm of economics, U.S. ties, the political constraints imposed by the regime, and the social context within which the army was forced to operate – issues that can only become apparent if one accepts the premise that those who enlist in the armed forces are occupied with war and combat readiness, i.e. that the military actually cares about acting as a military.

A. Military-Economic Complex

After Sadat declared the October War to be the last Arab-Israeli war, he redirected the army towards economic development projects through the National Service Projects Organization (NSPO), which was created in 1978. The military-economic complex built after Sadat is said to employ perhaps 100,000 people, with a diversified business portfolio that includes construction, land reclamation, agro-industries, and over 30 factories for civilian durables and weapons (assembled helicopters, armored vehicles, mortars, howitzers, short-range missiles, and ammunition), which covered 60 percent of the military's needs and left it with enough surplus to run a $1 billion-a-year export business to developing countries. Officers also enjoyed such privileges, such as discounted

apartments and vacation homes, subsidized food and services, and brief stints in the bureaucracy after retirement.

In the summer of 1984, a flurry of op-ed articles penned by leftist opposition members questioned the motivation behind "reinventing the military as a primarily economic actor" (Farahat 1984: 7). The military was quick to respond. After making it clear that it had nothing to do with this purely *political* decision, army spokesmen underlined the official rationale, cited in a 1979 presidential directive and reaffirmed in another one three years later, making the military responsible for attaining self-sufficiency (i.e., taking care of its own) and contributing to national economic development through the provision of cheap goods and services. Officers then elaborated on that logic through newspaper articles. For example, Major General Ibrahim Shakib reminded readers that in the absence of war the army is required to find employment for its conscripts (Shakib 1984: 5). Major General Ahmed Fakhr said that until the economy was stabilized the military cannot forsake its members to the caprice of market forces; it is duty bound to provide them at least with a decent living (Fakhr 1985: 9). This was followed by a number of interviews in which Defense Minister Abu Ghazala highlighted how officers struggled with inflation, and described the subsidized services the army provides to its members as conspicuously humble in comparison to the luxurious standards enjoyed by members of the upper-middle classes (quoted in Baz 2007: 70). And verily so: it only takes a short visit to Egypt for the casual observer to note how shabby military discount stores, automobiles, housing complexes, and beach cabins were when compared to those enjoyed by an average upper-middle class Egyptian. No wonder why the military had consistently failed to recruit members of the country's educated urban elites.

Abu Ghazala then delivered a speech during the annual National Democratic Party conference in 1986, in which he complained that low defense spending subjected the army to serious financial trouble, and stressed that the current budget barely covers the modest wages and services

provided to members of the armed forces (Baz 2007: 64). Shortly afterwards, Mubarak himself mentioned in a public address that critics who accused the army of amassing wealth should know that half of its earnings were "spent on soldiers' wages and the rest on their clothing and lodging and equipment maintenance" (quoted in Abdallah 1990: 20). A 2008 report by the Central Auditing Authority confirmed that the military's economic activity covers the necessities without really generating a noteworthy surplus (Farouk 2008: 288). At least on this account, the President was not lying. Analysts also pointed out that those who highlight officer privileges forget that the inflationary economic policies of Sadat and Mubarak eroded the value of all government wages (by at least 60 percent between 1981 and 1986, and more afterwards), but whereas civil servants could moonlight and take bribes to supplement their meager and rapidly shrinking incomes, officers were stuck with their monthly paycheck. After Mubarak was deposed, a *Financial Times* commentator confessed that the army's "reputed economic 'empire'…is considerably more modest in volume than is commonly believed, and has probably shrunk in proportion to a national economy that has grown by more than 3 percent annually since 2003…[and] although a few generals are *rumored* to have become rich, the main purpose [behind the military's economic activities]…is to ameliorate the impact of a rapidly privatizing economy on the living standards of officers" (Sayigh 2011: 11, my emphasis). Finally, in March 2012, the Assistant Defense Minister for Financial Affairs and Supreme Council of the Armed Forces member Major General Mahmoud Nasr revealed in a widely attended forum in Cairo that the total size of the military's economic activities in 2011 was L.E. 6.3 billion (roughly $1 billion), and that the profits reaped during Mubarak's reign were L.E. 7.7 billion – a relatively modest figure (Gamal 2021: 2).

An intimately related claim is that military spending remained high under Mubarak, that the defense budget had remained untouchable by either the executive or legislative authorities. Reports by U.S., European, Israeli, and (recently) Egyptian sources expose the inaccuracy of this assessment.

While military spending in the mid-1970s represented as much as 33 percent of the country's GDP, it fell significantly afterwards to 19.5 percent in 1980 and further down to 2.2 percent in 2010 – reaching its lowest level in Egypt's recorded history. In money terms, defense expenditures oscillated between approximately $2.4 and $4.2 billion during Mubarak's three-decade term, without ever being adjusted for the erosive effects of inflation, the ever-mounting cost of technology, or the tenfold increase in Egypt's GDP from around $17.8 to $188 billon between 1980 and 2010.[27] Moreover, the celebrated $1.3 billion provided annually by the U.S. had depreciated in real terms by at least 50 percent since the Peace Treaty was signed in 1979. Rather than basking in prosperity and privilege, the military frequently lived with the fear that to merely balance accounts it might have to "slash military salaries severely" (Frisch 2001: 2). Indeed, the situation was so bad that Israeli strategists remarked that: "A striking factor about the Egyptian Armed Forces' combat arsenal is that a portion of it, including aircraft, is kept in storage…[because of] budgetary constraints" (Eytan, Heller, Levran 1985: 91), and that because of these constraints "Cost-effective simulation training took priority over live training" (Eytan and Levran 1986: 131).

The army also had serious misgivings regarding its arms industry, which had been originally instigated under Nasser in the early 1950s. Sadat convinced three Arab Gulf countries (UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia) in April 1975 to contribute $260 million each to finance that industry through a new venture called the Arab Military Industries Organization (AMIO). Egypt provided its share in kind, bringing AMIO's initial assets to $1.04 billion (Barnet 1992: 143). The Arab sponsors withdrew in 1979 in protest of Egypt's unilateral peace treaty. Although Sadat took over the organization, renaming it the Arab Organization for Industrialization (AOI), its capital depreciated considerably. More injurious to military pride, one could imagine, was the fact that the end goal was no longer to

[27] The figures are based on Eytan and Heller (1983: 74-90); Eytan, Heller, and Levran (1985: 74-93); Eytan and Levran (1991: 218-31); Kam and Shapir (2003: 191-93); Shtauber and Shapir (2005: 113-16); Cordesman (2006: 157-63): Wahid (2009: 137-41); Khalaf and Dombey (2011: 3) and Gamal (2012: 2).

liberate Egypt's strategic decision-making from foreign suppliers, as Nasser's had originally intended, but rather to become a regional arms dealer.

Finally, the arms export business did not provide the military with an independent economic powerhouse because the political leadership kept it under tight control. In March 1976, Sadat placed an intelligence man, his President's Bureau of Information chief Ashraf Marawan, in charge of military industrialization, where he stayed until October 1978. This appointment did not bode well among officers when Israel later alleged that Marawan was its primary asset in Egypt, codenamed 'Top Source', though Mubarak later claimed he was working as a double agent (Sirrs 2010: 130-31). Eyes brows were also raised when Sadat's former security aide moved to London, leading a lavish life as a billionaire and involved in high profile business deals, such as the 1984 bid to acquire the Chelsea football club. The sixty-two-year-old Marawan was eventually pushed off the balcony of the Carlton House Terrace in London in the summer of 2007, and no one has been held responsible (El-Sayed 2007: 2). Under Mubarak, loyal lieutenants, such as ex-intelligence officer Hussein Salem and the President's own brother-in-law were deeply involved in Egypt's arms trade. Even from a legal standpoint, article 108 of the 1971 Egyptian constitution gave the President authority over defense contracts and other related activities, a prerogative further expanded via Law 146 of 1981, which specifically gave him power over arms exports (Murad 1986: 15).

B. Geopolitical Alliance

Though any type of foreign military assistance comes with strings attached, the reason why American aid was particularly problematic from day one was the specific conditions and constraints that came with it. Four years after leaving office, former Defense Minister Abu Ghazala explained in an interview in June 1997 that Egyptian military men were deeply frustrated by the fact that their

primary source of training and weapons was committed to keeping the military power of all Arab countries behind Israel (quoted in Baz- 2007: 206-208). This pledge was recorded in the writings of some of America's leading politicians, such as Henry Kissinger and NSC member Robert Komer,[28] before being spelled out officially in a letter from President Ronald Regan to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin in 1986, reiterating America's commitment to "guaranteeing Israeli superiority in armaments over all the Arab states combined" (Letter in Heikal 1983: 71).

This general commitment was confirmed on numerous occasions. For instance, although the U.S. helped Egypt integrate F-16 fighter jets into its air force, their number was deliberately kept less than two-thirds of those in Israel's possession. When Egypt demanded specific weapons, such as the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM), which the Clinton Administration readily provided to the UAE, the Pentagon rejected its request due to Israeli objections. Also, while the U.S. cooperated closely with Israel on the production of sophisticated weapons, by for example furnishing 70 percent of the development costs of the Arrow anti-ballistic missile program, it refrained from helping Egypt in building an advanced missile program. So while the arsenal in both countries had many weapon types in common, Israel's lot was not only better in quantity and quality, but its indigenous manufacturers also had the benefit of U.S. assistance in maintaining a technology gap in its favor (Frisch 2001: 3-5). One needs to remember that Abu Ghazala lost his job when a reluctant U.S. forced him to smuggle American missile technology and deal with the communist North Korea to make sure the Egyptian army was better equipped than the U.S. would allow for. His dismissal for that specific reason infuriated scores of officers and soldiers (Interview with Colonel Muhammad Selim 2009).

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[28] Former CIA operative Robert Komer, who served on the Kennedy and Johnson National Security Council, noted in an internal memorandum in May 1967: "No one who has an insider's view could contest the proposition that the US is 100% behind the security and well-being of Israel. We are Israel's chief supporters, bankers, direct and indirect arms purveyors, and ultimate guarantors" (quoted in Scott 2009: 30). Kissinger recorded in his book *Diplomacy* that Arab must be convinced that "Israel was too strong (or could be made too strong [by the US]) to be defeated even by all of its neighbors combined" (1994: 737).

According to Israeli strategic analysts, even when the Egyptian military was driven by an "expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of weapons supplies from the U.S. and its desire to avoid excessive dependence on a single supplier" to seek the help of other countries, the United States systematically undermined its pursuits (Eytan, Heller, and Levran 1985: 87). So for example, when the army asked the Russians in 1997 to upgrade its air defense system with a shipment of S-300 anti-tactical ballistics missiles, which happened to be particularly competent in defending against the type of cruise missiles that Israel had, the Pentagon blocked the deal. After extended negotiations, Egypt was only permitted in 2003 to use American funds to upgrade some of its obsolete, low-quality SA-3 Russian missiles. Hence, U.S. missile-transfer policy to Egypt, in the view of American military experts themselves, has set "serious limitations [on Egypt's ability] in dealing with an attack by Israel" (Cordesman 2006: 175-77). A more general version of this conclusion was recorded in an early Israeli estimate of Egyptian capabilities a couple of years into Mubarak's reign: "the policy adopted by President Sadat after 1973…caused Egypt to fall behind Israel and other Arab states in the Middle East arms race" (Eytan, Heller, and Tamari 1983: 89).

An even subtler analysis highlighted that American assistance assigned priority to the air force and the navy (which received some 80 percent of the annual grant), and to a lesser extent the armored corps, to the detriment of the two other ground services: air defense and artillery. Air defense, which is so crucial to Egypt, as evidenced by the fact that it is organized as an independent service, continued to rely on outdated Eastern bloc surface-to-air missiles (especially, the SAM-6), with only a handful of state-of-the-art U.S. Improved Hawks. Similarly, in the 1990s, of Egypt's 2,200 artillery pieces only 200 were American (Eytan, Gazit, and Gilbo 1993: 136-42). It is interesting to note the correlation between the inattention of the United States to Egypt's air defense and artillery – the two services that have repeatedly proven essential to Egypt's defense and deterrence power – and its support for the air force and navy – those technology-intensive services

with which Egypt has no hope of outperforming Israel. This might explain why even Mubarak's ever-cordial Defense Minister Hussein Tantawy was rumored to have resisted U.S. attempts to restructure the Egyptian armed forces (Essam al-Din 2011: 1).

What made things worse is that Egyptian officers not only felt that their patron was devoted to keeping them inferior in strength to Israel, but also updated Israel regularly concerning Egypt's weapons portfolio, strategic doctrine, and preparation (Springborg 1989: 95). This sense of discomfort was exacerbated by the fact that the army still classifies Israel as a major threat to Egypt's security. Abu Ghazala said so himself in Parliament in February 1987 (quoted in Gendy 1987: 3). In addition, annual military exercises, such as Badr in 1996 and Jabal Phar'on in 1998, named Israel explicitly as the training target, and were conducted on a terrain that resembles Sinai. It is also no secret that Egypt's greatest concentration of forces lies in the area between Cairo and the Suez Canal. In short, "Almost all of Egypt's capabilities, equipment, and deployment of forces are concentrated on one front to engage one force only: the Israeli Defense Forces" (Frisch 2001: 6). It was not that his men were vying for war, Abu Ghazala clarified, but relying too much on the United States made them feel exposed and defenseless against a possible Israeli aggression in the future (quoted in Baz- 2007: 206-208). In the words of renowned military strategist Anthony Cordesman: "In spite of Egypt's firm commitment to peace, it cannot ignore the risk of some unexpected political crisis or strategic shift that could again make Israel a threat. It must maintain a suitable deterrent and defense capability to deal with the risk of some unlikely breakdown in the peace with Israel" (Cordesman 2006: 200).

But even aside from Israel, Egyptian officers soon realized that they were not allowed to project regional power in any direction. As a superpower, the United States vigorously defended its interests throughout the region, from the Sudan and Jordon, to Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon, and of course the Gulf. Even when Egypt was summoned, along with twenty other nations, to facilitate

America's liberation of Kuwait, it was not allowed to play a more active role afterwards in Gulf security via the ill-fated Damascus Declaration of 1992 that hoped to create an Arab defense force under Egyptian-Syrian leadership. To add insult to injury, the performance of the two divisions it had sent to war against Iraq was assessed by American sources as "middling" (Eytan, Gazit, and Giblo 1993: 141). U.S. Colonel Norvell De Atkine, who had personally supervised the training of Egyptian officers, actually described their performance as "mediocre" (De Atkine 1999: 13). It was clear that after years of U.S. 'modernization', the Egyptian armed forces had not advanced very far. That is probably due to the fact that, from the American standpoint, war was off the table for Egypt. The Egyptian military was only expected to pose as a "deterrent force situated in the background" (Frisch 2001: 6). At best, the army, which had in the past perceived itself as a vanguard of progressive forces in the post-colonial world, could be employed as a regional *gendarmerie*, deployed on the side of U.S. allies. The contrast could not have been starker as when the same men who had been sent to the Congo to support Patrice Lumumba in 1960 were dispatched there again in 1977 to prop up Mobutu's pro-American autocracy.

Even at home, the officers who had taken power in July 1952 in the name of the people and pursued developmental policies for the benefit of the lower-middle and middle classes were now being called upon to support a regime that has identified itself with the super-rich. With the rise of the President's son and his U.S.-connected business associates during the last decade of Mubarak's rule, the Defense Minister and Chief of staff (as has been recently revealed through WikiLeaks) criticized the direction the regime was taking in general, and to the increasing role of Mubarak's son and his capitalist circle in particular. It was only natural, as revolution theorist Jack Goldstone asserted, that the high command "fiercely resented Gamal Mubarak…[who] preferred to build his influence through business and political cronies rather than through the military, and those connected to him gained huge profits from government monopolies and deals with foreign

investors" (Goldstone 2011: 13). Moreover, while politically connected capitalists were making huge profits in partnership with U.S. investors, American military aid was overly expensive. It only cost Egypt $1.7 billion worth of Russian weapons to fight the Suez War (1956), the Yemen War (1962-1967), the 1967 war, the War of Attrition (1967-1970), and the October War (1973). Compared to this two-decade relationship with the Soviet Union, the first five years of its alliance with the U.S. left it in debt for $6.6 billion, even though it neither went to war, nor planned to do so during those years (Handoussa 1990: 114).

Finally, the Camp David Accords and the subsequent Peace Treaty of 1979, upon which U.S. military assistance was based, "sat poorly with many of Egypt's senior officers" from the very start (Waterbury 1983: 376). The agreements forced a semi-demilitarization of Sinai: military airfields were prohibited, and only one mechanized infantry division could be deployed along the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, while the rest of the peninsula could hold no more than three lightly-armed border patrol units and policemen. These constraints made it impossible for Egypt to amass troops in Sinai, even for training purposes, without giving Israel an excuse to declare war. Not surprisingly, one of the first recommendations made by the military representatives to the National Accord Conference following the 2011 revolt was to revise Israeli constraints on the size and deployment of Egyptian troops in Sinai.

C. Political Constraints

Despite the military's general aversion to politicization after the 1967 defeat, the alleged professionalization that coincided with the 1973 October War was not what they had in mind. What the army yearned for was to be able to perform better in combat. They accepted de-politicization as a step towards proper professionalization after analysts unanimously assigned Egypt's battle-related

shortcomings to the corruption of the corps at the hand of political appointees. But officers soon realized that authoritarianism, even without the direct politicization of the military, imposed similar constraints on their fighting capabilities. The last thing authoritarian rulers could tolerate is the ingenious war maverick that could develop an inflated ego and ride the crest of his battlefield glory to political office. Insecure regimes preempt the rise of these 'born in battle' military heroes by centralizing war-making and keeping it in the hands of a few trusted generals. This politically dictated war style is too rigid to allow for the superior 'war of movement' strategy, which relies on dynamic and spontaneous maneuvers and therefore requires autonomous middle ranking officers who improvise in battle without prior orders. The effectiveness of this type of warfare has not only been proven historically (by Roman legionaries, American Union troops, the German Wehrmacht, and others), but it has also been Israel's preferred fighting strategy since 1948. Military historian Simon Dunstan noticed that: "Throughout the IDF, initiative was encouraged in all ranks to maintain the momentum of the offensive. This was imbued in the officer corps and junior leaders in the ethos of '*Aharai*' – 'Follow me" (Dunstan 2009: 22). By contrast, the set-piece offensives and trench-style defense, which characterized Egyptian warfare, have repeatedly proven to be substandard. No student of the Arab-Israeli wars has failed to observe that Egypt's strength lies in its "tenacious defensive ability," while its chief weakness could be attributed to its "equally persistent inability to conduct a war of movement." With an over-centralized command-and-control structure that inhibits improvisation and unauthorized initiatives by field officers, Egyptian war-conduct suffered from "the total stultification of the initiative of junior officers – precisely the cadre on whose wits mobile warfare depend" (Insight Team 1974: 164, 341).[29] The Egyptian military was aware of this pervasive weakness. In the early 1970s, its chief military historians (led by major generals Hassan al-Badry and Gamal Hammad) reviewed the army's performance, and concluded

[29] For a more extensive analysis of this phenomenon see Eytan, Heller, and Tamari (1983: 88); De Atkine (1999: 13-17); and Boyne (2002: 185).

that the military "was poor at executing operations that relied on offensive maneuver, despite its inherent advantages on the battlefield" (Brooks 2008: 130-31).

This was particularly true during the October War where – compared to the havoc caused by the likes of Bren Adan and Ariel Sharon who maneuvered their way behind Egyptian trenches and created the famous breach – the independence of Egypt's divisional and brigade commanders was strapped by a handful of old generals in Operation Center 10 in Cairo. When a middle-ranking Egyptian officer was asked during an interview after the war about the most vital *field* commander in his view, he simply remarked: "[War Minister] Ismail;" when a tank commander, who complained he was "half an hour from the Mitla Pass…just half an hour," was asked why he did not seize this strategically valuable asset, he shrugged: "Ask them in Cairo;" when junior officers were asked why they had not responded to the Israeli breach of the Egyptian frontlines at Deversoir fast enough, one of them explained: "To mount an operation involving both the Egyptian Second Army and Third Army, it was necessary to circulate orders bearing signatures from four different staff officers" (Insight Team 1974: 340-41). By contrast, when asked about the most important position in the State of Israel, the founder of the Israel Defense Force David Ben-Gurion responded without hesitation: "battalion leaders… Those are the men who protect the future of the Israel" (Imam 1996: 33). U.S. Colonel Norvell De Atkine, who accumulated years of experience in training Egyptian officers, concluded: "a sergeant first class in the U.S. Army has as much authority as a colonel in an Arab army" (De Atkine 1999: 17).

So while the military hoped that its seclusion from politics would render it more trustworthy in the eyes of the political apparatus, and thus allow it to enhance its war capacity without worry, it was now told that there would be no more war – even the War Ministry was renamed in 1979 and became known as the Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, the political authoritarianism that has for long prevented Egypt from adopting a 'war of movement' doctrine persisted. Indeed, the sacking of

great generals and the uncalled-for reshuffling of those in senior commands conveyed the sense that distinctive performance and popularity among troops continue to jeopardize an officer's career even after the regime's ostensible professionalization of the army. Like those who preceded him, Mubarak relied heavily on security organs (mostly State Security) to monitor those who 'stood out' in any shape, way, or form. Security reports could send a good officer packing, usually with a decent retirement package to diffuse his resentment (Interview with Colonel Muhammad Selim 2009). A few years into Mubarak's reign, officers have become painfully aware that: "Until Arab *politics* begin to change at fundamental levels, Arab armies, whatever the courage or proficiency of individual officers and men, are unlikely to acquire the range of qualities which modern fighting forces require for success on the battlefield" (De Atkine 1999: 20, my emphasis).

D. Social Context

One of the most serious challenges facing the military is the pool of recruits it is allowed to draw from. Although the majority of Egypt's active forces (let alone reserves) are conscripts, this particular social group has for long been suffering from manpower quality problems because of their low educational and health standards. In preparation for the October War, a few steps were taken to remedy this problem, most importantly, allowing the army to recruit and retain university graduates. However, Sadat made sure that Egypt's 1.2 million war-seasoned conscripts were demobilized in the months following the war (unlike other countries that tempt experienced officers to reenlist), bringing down the size of the active forces to around 460,000 by 1980, where it remained ever since. The fact that the army's strikingly improved performance in 1973 was attributed in large part to the inclusion of educated middle class elements did not prevent Sadat from revising the conscription formula after the war, presumably to free this class to join the private sector. College graduates now

served for nine months, and those with lower qualifications served from two to three years. Once again, the military was stuck with starved and illiterate peasants for the most part (Barnet 1992: 143-44).

Several complications followed. For one thing, these conscripts were perceived only to be able to handle menial duties, and so they received little or no training. When they did get trained, they only received battalion level training (or lower) using obsolete equipment no longer deployed in active units (Cordesman 2006: 159). It became therefore impossible for the Egyptian army to absorb the advanced technology and training provided by the U.S. Even educated Egyptians have been handicapped by the overall deterioration in the education system, and the fact that free public education (all the way to university) dissuades many from pursing following technical or vocational training. Particularly problematic was the fact that the government not only offered poor technological training, but it also regarded political and security studies with great suspicion. In a country with twenty-three universities, Egypt had only two full-fledged political science programs, and virtually no influential war study centers. Because political and national security matters under authoritarianism are best kept away from scholars, the military was deprived of the 'defense intellectuals' that inform strategy and doctrine formulation in open societies. In short, the military had to suffer from the dysfunctional, underfunded, and constrained education system provided by an incompetent and corrupt regime.

When the high command asked for the right to offer special rewards for high quality conscripts who wanted to reenlist, it was rebuffed under the pretext that there was no national security threat to justify this kind of spending (Barnet 1992: 143-44). Without tempting rewards, army recruiters expectedly failed to urge members of the narrow stratum of qualified and motivated elites (who without exception attend private or international schools) to consider a military career. Intriguingly, the frustrated officer corps began, since 1996, sending recruiting delegations to Egypt's

expatriate communities to circumvent the fact that the local educational system did offer the kind of officers and soldiers the army needed, but to no avail (Frisch 2001: 5-6). As a result, as U.S. military analyst Cordesman wrote, a "substantial part of the Egyptian army's order of battle was [now] composed of relatively low-grade and poorly-equipped units, many of which would require substantial fill-in with reservists – almost all of which would require several months of training to be effective," and because such a force could hardly be used for the rapid maneuvers and improvised tactics of modern warfare, its "structure had become increasingly static;" in effect, assuming the posture of "a garrison army" (Cordesman 2006: 162).

To conclude this section, it is clear that under Mubarak the military suffered from what an Egyptian scholar described as "rank disequilibrium:" a psychological dissonance that spreads among members of an institution whose position becomes at odds with their original duties (Al-Mashat 1986: 64). Egyptians officers were training for war, while knowing full well that they were never meant to fight one; they were asked to defend the nation while being deprived of the type of conscripts, arms, and funds necessary for combat; they were resolutely dependent on a country sworn to preserve their rival's superiority; they were serving a regime that has marginalized their leaders and undermined their corporate interests in the name of professional subordination; and they were promised institutional sovereignty, but were then kept under constant scrutiny by obtrusive security organs, which controlled their careers through security reports.

Placing the Police on a Pedestal

Now that the military had been successfully sidelined, the regime turned for protection and everyday control to the civilian security apparatus, led by the Interior Ministry. The ministry had proven loyal to the post-1952 political apparatus because the persistence of authoritarianism inflated its power

and privileges; and by the same token, it stood to lose from a takeover by pro-democracy elements, which the military either supported or were indifferent to. It was thus natural for the regime to continually augment the power of this loyal ally. Influential military leaders, from Amer to Abu Ghazala, obstructed this trend all they could. But as the army's power declined, the security apparatus was expanded, and former police officers now manned senior political positions, such as the premiership and the general-secretariat of the ruling party.

This political-security alliance was severely tested by the CSF mutiny. The ministry realized it could no longer rely on 'armed slaves' controlled from above by terror rather than rewards. On the eve of Mubarak's rise to office, a Special Force Unit within the CSF had been created as an elite corps to tackle sophisticated anti-terrorist missions. But day-to-day challenges, such as riots and strikes, still had to be handled by CSF foot soldiers. These peasant conscripts suffered from the sub-human treatment they received during their three-year stints in service; they were ill fed, poorly lodged, sleep deprived, and donned wretched uniforms. After their short-lived rebellion in February 1986, CSF chief General Faramawy tried his best to ameliorate their living situation. Though their pay was only modestly increased, he made sure that their nutrition, outfits, and dwellings were at least better than what they were used to back in the lowly villages they came from. He also allowed them enough breathing space to roam around the city and develop contacts for future employment (Interview 2009). To both ease their job and boost their considerably low self-esteem, a bulk of the increased police appropriations was earmarked for the purchase of CSF riot control equipment. The reformed and reinforced CSF was now better prepared to execute its duties, which Springborg summarized as follows:

> **It has been called upon to subdue demonstrating students on several university campuses; to intimidate strikers at industrial centers in Delta; to confront Islamist activists at pray-ins and large gatherings in various parts of Upper Egypt; to deal with peasants demonstrating against interruption to irrigation water supplies throughout the**

> **country side; and…stand twelve-hour shifts at countless strategic and not-so-strategic installations around the country** (Springborg 1989: 142-43).

General Faramawy was eventually appointed governor of the coastal city of Port Said, and the President appointed a more ruthless leadership at the Interior Ministry under Zaki Badr. Badr, the notorious executer of an unforgiving campaign against Islamists in the violence-ridden south, carried out a scrupulous housecleaning job: between March and August 1986, he retired or transferred hundreds of officers, including the director of the State Security Investigations Sector (Sirrs 2010: 162)

Under Mubarak, the Interior Ministry became – as noted by one of the best studies of Egypt's public administrations – "a terrifying bureaucratic empire," especially after its significant expansion via Ministerial Decree 702 of 1986, which divided it into 34 separate departments under the pretext of specialization. The police force swelled from 150,000 men in 1974 to over a million in 2002, representing an increase from 9 to 21 percent of state employment. This is of course in addition to the 450,000 CSF conscripts (the numerical equivalent of 20 army divisions) who served for three years, and the 60,000 National Guards, and the 12,000 Border Patrol soldiers who reported to the ministry (Farouk 2008: 275-81; IISS 2009: 33). Overall, during the final decade of Mubarak's tenure, Egypt had approximately two million security (or security associated) men in a population of perhaps 83 million. To grasp the enormity of this figure, one should remember that the Soviet police force under Stalin in the 1930s was a mere 142,000 men (Skocpol 1978: 226); that today 142 million Russians suffice with a 200,000-strong security force (Soldatov and Borogan 2010: 80); that the entire Chinese army in 2009 numbered only 2.3 million in a population of 1.3 billion (Brendon 2010: 12); and that Egypt's own army in 2010 was no more than 460,000. Another interesting fact: counter-insurgency experts estimate the ratio of officers-to-citizens needed to contain insurgencies on the scale of those raging in Iraq and Afghanistan at 20 officers per 1000 citizens (O'Hanlon 2010:

75); in Mubarak's Egypt – a stable country by any measure – the ratio was 25 security men to every 1000 citizens.

At the same time, Interior Ministry expenditures increased from 3.5 percent to almost 6 percent of GDP between 1988 and 2002. In money terms, it increased from L.E 260 million to L.E. 348 million during the first four years in Mubarak's tenure. Thereafter, police wages multiplied almost fourfold, from L.E. 819 million in 1992 to L.E. 3 billion in 2002. The real increase in police revenue, however, came from the government's tacit consent to the extortions they imposed on citizens from the 1990s onwards (Suleiman 2005: 84-86; Farouk 2008: 285).

This was not the worse of it. Beginning with the 1984 elections, repression took a new turn when the police hired petty criminals to intimidate and manhandle opponents. This notion of 'outsourcing repression' harks back to the 1970s, when Sadat's Interior Ministry supplied radical Islamists with knives, iron fists, and metal bars to bully anti-Sadat groups. The ministry also created in 1972 special student squads to attack and terrorize troublesome colleagues on campus (Abdallah 1985: 1980). During the last year of Sadat's reign, the police employed thugs on a limited scale to sabotage a Lawyers' Syndicate meeting criticizing the President (Heikal 1987: 213). With the waning of opposition through continued repression, first by the military in the 1950s and 1960s, then increasingly by the Interior Ministry's since the 1970s, there seemed to be no more challenges to meet. The police's last sizeable operation was to contain a limited Islamist insurgency between 1992 and 1997. At the cost of 2,000 killed and another 47,000 detained, the Interior Ministry brought Islamist militancy to a swift end (Kepel 2006: 276-99). From then on, there were no signs of trouble on the horizon, and consequently, minor repression duties and dirty jobs were delegated to seasonally hired thugs in order not to implicate the police.

Criminal investigation units would nominate petty criminals to State Security officers, who would then prep them and turn them over to the CSF to assist them on the ground. During

elections, thugs would instigate brawls outside polling stations to give the police a pretext to arrest opposition representatives and suspend the voting process; they would also beat up activists during demonstrations to scare them away without implicating the government directly. The downturn, however, was that the police could scarcely prevent these thugs from bullying common citizens during their off-duty hours. "The secret business relationship between the thugs and State Security officers…provided the former with protection on the streets, thus transforming them into unleashed and undeterred monsters" (Omar 2011: 5). During the last decade of Mubarak's reign, police-connected thugs harassed wealthy-looking citizens for money, molested females on crowded boulevards, terrorized shopkeepers and small business owners, and more. Not surprisingly, the U.S. State Department's 2006 human rights report on Egypt warned that a "culture of impunity" had spread among the security sector; citizens have become practically fair game (Cordesman 2006: 192-95).

To make matters even worse, policemen themselves have began to act as thugs. One observer noted during a short visit to Egypt that: "The average Egyptian can be dragged into a police station and tortured simply because a police officer doesn't like his face" (Shatz 2010: 8). This has been a growing trend since the 1970s. Between 1974 and 1976, newspapers recorded for the first time cases of criminal – not political – suspects being tortured by the police to confess to the crimes they committed (or, most likely, did not commit). Torture in criminal cases was so brutal than in several instances suspects admitted to murder (a crime punishable by death) only to discover afterwards that their alleged 'victims' were still alive. This represented a watershed in the relationship between Egyptians and the police: now citizens rather than activists were being tortured to confess to crimes rather than political dissent by criminal investigators rather than secret police officers in police stations rather than isolated detention centers. Afterwards, police violence became endemic. It was no longer reserved to generating forced confessions, but also to force citizens to pay bribes,

withdraw complaints, sign business contracts, or just to make them learn their place. Indeed, police torture transcended the boundaries of "frequent practices" to become "standard behavior…[something] applied automatically without effort or reflection, something that does not require full consciousness or focus or planning; violence had become a second nature" (Abd al-Aziz 2011: 45-46). It is a known fact that as part of their initiation rituals, young officers are asked to punch and kick jailed suspects indiscriminately on their first day at the police station. Those who refuse become the laughing stock of their colleagues, and are perceived as soft and incompetent by their superiors.

Not surprisingly, in a 1989 survey conducted by a research center associated with the Interior Ministry on the popular view of the police, one third of the respondents expressed their dismay at the violence being committed against common citizens in precincts. But instead of reforming police attitudes, it was implicitly endorsed when the official police slogan was changed from 'The Police is in the Service of the People' to 'The Police and the People are in the Service of the State'. Between 2002 and 2006, citizens filed 221 reports against police abuse – this of course excludes dozens of other cases where citizens did not complain, as well as systematic torture cases in State Security detention centers. In 2008 alone, Egyptian human rights organizations recorded 916 cases of police violence against non-political citizens (Abd al-Aziz 2011: 52-59).

Why was the police acting in this way? If one might expect the relationship between regimes and their contenders to be a violent one, why was there so much violence permeating the relationship between the police and "the apolitical and peaceful citizen," violence that made "common citizens afraid of merely passing by a police station…even if they were claimants" (Abd al-Aziz 2011: 9-10). In her original and disturbing study of the Egyptian police force, Basma Abd al-Aziz concluded that because security officers had been transformed from instruments of authority to *authority itself* (i.e. from loyal servants of the regime to its main beneficiaries), the relationship

between the police and the citizen had been correspondingly reformulated into that of master and slave. "The new masters could bestow their protection on whomever they choose, and they could also deprive anyone of dignity, pride, liberty, confidence, respect, or any human value" (Abd al-Aziz 2011: 61). This new formula required that citizens be assaulted in public, that they witness first hand the omnipotence of the police, and give up any hope of resistance. It was only natural that by 2011, common citizens' hatred of the police had reached profound levels.

The only remaining component of the Interior Ministry that was diligent and sober was the State Security Investigations Sector. Yet the SSIS quickly developed into as 'a state within the state'. It dwarfed all other government institutions; scrutinized nominees for cabinet positions, parliament seats, governorships, university chairs, editorial boards, public sectors companies and banks, and of course, the military. Everything came under its purview in a way reminiscent of fascist and communist traditions at their worst. While the General Intelligence Service focused mostly on foreign relations, SSIS became exclusively responsible for domestic surveillance and repression, recruiting informants in every sector of society, and systematically applying torture against detainees, whose number during Mubarak's thirty-year tenure exceeded 30,000. In 2010 alone, there were around 17,000 in detention centers (Shatz 2010: 6). Human rights organizations described SSIS-administered torture rituals as follows:

> **When a detainee enters the prison complex, he or she is usually blindfolded and handcuffed to intimidate, disorient, or protect police identities… Stripped down to their underwear, detainees are often subjected to insults, curses, and threatened sexual abuse directed at the prisoner and his or her family members… Physical torture is part of the routine with detainees frequently beaten or kicked with sticks or batons. Some are hung by their wrists for extended periods… Electric shocks to the genitals seem to be part of the torture routine** (Sirrs 2010: 165).

Evidence for how tightly SSIS controlled political life came from the shocking episode relating to the Muslim Brothers' success in securing 20 percent of the seats of parliament in the 2005 elections

– a historic feat considering that no opposition force won more than a tenth of the vote during the previous six decades. Asked three years later if he expected a comparable success in the next elections, the Brotherhood's General Guide said he was not sure because last time "State Security gave us a list of districts to run in, and promised to let us win in most. They have not contacted us so far about next year." When prompted to clarify by the dumbfounded interviewer, he explained that the Bush administration was pressuring Egypt to democratize, and the SSIS wanted to scare them a little, and his organization did not mind getting a few more seats (Galad et al. 2009: 11). Little wonder why when SSIS turned against the Brotherhood, their share in the following elections, held in 2010, fell from 88 seats to zero. Not only did the ruling National Democratic Party control 97 percent of parliament in that last election held under Mubarak, but also 49 police officers were elected for the first time.[30] Longtime Speaker of Parliament Fathy Sourur recalled his shock upon hearing the results: "I said this was political stupidity… I telephoned Hassan Abd al-Rahman, head of State Security, and asked him what in the world was going on… I also complained to Safwat al-Sharif [former intelligence officer and NDP Secretary-General]… I have worked with the President for 25 years, but lately I felt that the Interior Ministry was running the country" (Interviewed in Muslim 2011b: 10).

Ultimately, it was the appointment of Habib al-Adly as Interior Minister, which gave Egypt's police state its final form. Adly graduated from the Police Academy in 1961, and served as a State Security officer from 1965 to 1993; he then served briefly as chief of security for the Sinai and Suez Canal districts, before returning to Cairo as security chief in 1995, SSIS director in 1996, and finally Interior Minister in 1997. As a testament to his central role in the regime, Adly occupied this post for 14 consecutive years, whereas his predecessors from 1952 onwards served on average for 3.2

[30] The significance of the 97 percent in 2010 becomes obvious when compared to percentage secured by the NDP in previous elections: 89 percent in 1979; 87 percent in 1984; 78 percent in 1987; 81 percent in 1990; 79 percent in 2000; and 68.5 percent in 2005 (Ghoneim 2005: 178).

years. Mubarak's last Interior Minister expanded surveillance to include all influential figures in society, not just government and opposition figures. He systemized the use of thugs in elections and other operations, first in Cairo during the 1995 elections, and then around the country after the 2000 elections. Most importantly, Adly forged intimate relations with the most influential wing of the ruling party, the businessmen-dominated Policies Committee (Omar 2011: 5).

From a legal standpoint, Egypt's Emergency Law sanctioned police repression. Law 162 of 1958 had been continuously in force since 1967 (except for 18 months between 1980 and 1981) until it became a permanent fixture of the Egyptian political system. The law allows for extended detention without trial, denies detainees *habeas corpus*, bans labor strikes, prohibits demonstrations without police permission, justifies press censorship, and sanctions trial of political prisoners by special courts that deliver 'swift justice' and restricts defendants right to appeal. Also, the capacity of Mubarak's security agencies was greatly enhanced by new control technologies, unavailable to his predecessors. In line with Michael Mann's (1986) notion that technological advancement enables the generation of new state structures, thus allowing hitherto unavailable historical alternatives, one could argue that Egypt's tightly-controlled police state was only possible because of the surveillance tools that allowed SSIS to spy on citizens using their own cell phones, to monitor social communication networks, to trace vehicles via sophisticated satellite technologies, etc.

Finally, one should note that the consolidation of Egypt's police state was perfectly suited to the temperament of the man at the helm. As devoted as Nasser and Sadat were to regime security, Mubarak's "passion for security [was] obtrusive, possibly obsessive" (Springborg 1989: 27). Mubarak adopted an unorthodox security strategy, which rather than targeting major opposition groups, kept the entire society paralyzed with fear through a dizzying pattern of detention, release, and then re-detention, striking almost randomly at various activists, common citizens, and even some of the ruling elites without explanation. Unlike his predecessors, Mubarak was also overly concerned with

his personal safety. Robert Springborg recalled from his time in Cairo how "The sprawling security net that spreads out from his Heliopolis villa…far exceeds any previous efforts to protect presidents. His phalanx of bodyguards is truly formidable… The conveniences and liberties of normal citizens are, in comparison to presidential security precautions, of no concern. Whole city quarters are blocked off in advance of presidential movements" (Springborg 1989: 27). Little surprise then that although the trend to marginalize the military and boost the security apparatus had begun under Sadat, it was during Mubarak's time in office that Egypt had decisively evolved from a military to a police state.

Streamlining the Political Apparatus

The marginalization of the military and the empowerment of the police did not rule out the need for an entrenched ruling party. The general structure and function of this party remained fairly consistent since the 1950s, though its social composition changed drastically. The ruling party was always pyramid shaped with a wide base in the countryside, which narrowed down as one moved upwards to the cities, all the way to the Cairo-based central command. In terms of function, it continued to act as an organizer of the regime's social bases. What were these bases, and how did their relative weight shift over time? Apart from the urban professionals who were attached to the regime through employment in the bureaucracy and public factories, Nasser aspired to build a solid base of peasants and workers through the party. But although public employees, peasants, and workers did in fact become the party's foot soldiers, they remained politically insignificant. Instead of mobilizing these loyal subjects, the party preferred to buy them off through seasonal handouts to preempt their mobilization by competing political forces. It could not have acted otherwise

considering the irresolvable contradiction between the interests of this (mostly lower class) popular base and those of party elites – elites whose composition changed across time.

Under Nasser, over a thousand military officers controlled the key political posts, and when they retired others were drawn in from the same pool (Perlmutter 1974: 112). So for example, the 25-member general-secretariat of the Arab Socialist Union in 1962 had 16 officers (Hosni 2007: 37). By the end of the 1960s, however, it was the rural middle class and their offspring in the state bureaucracy and the public sector that pulled the strings (Hamroush 1987: 223). The demands of this second stratum were minimal: like most peasants – rich or poor – the bourgeoisie in the countryside wanted to be left alone, while public employees wanted to move up the employment ladder, and maybe make a modest fortune on the side through bribes and commissions. With Sadat's economic liberalization and the oil boom, a new social group infiltrated the party: businessmen. The latter combined state-nurtured capitalists (especially in real estate, commerce, and finance) and petty businessmen (small contractors, owners of export-import and currency exchange firms).

By the turn of the century, this last stratum gave way to monopoly capitalists, who perhaps amassed their wealth through state contacts at the beginning, but were now too big to control from above. Eventually, these billionaires assumed the top political positions, whether in cabinet or the party leadership. While the rural middle class and state employees continued to handle routine matters, such as elections and demonstrations of support, it was these high profile businessmen who formulated policy. For the first time since 1952, economic elites were manipulating the state rather than being manipulated by it.

Mubarak did not plan it this way. He originally hoped to preserve the structure Sadat put in place, whereby state-linked businessmen would serve as a source of support to the ruling party, no more. His intention was to keep the NDP as the party of the state bureaucracy, with businessmen representing one of many interest groups. In other words, he refused to allow the party to be

colonized by capitalists. Mubarak believed his years as Vice-President and Vice-Chairman of the NDP had honed his domestic power brokering skills enough to enable him to keep the party on track. When he ascended to office, three incompatible groups were running the party machine: left wing cadres (ASU residue), capitalists (notably, the oligarch Osman Ahmed Osman), and opportunists (party functionaries and parasitic bourgeois elements, who joined the NDP for petty material gains). The President promoted the latter group because it appeared to be the most malleable, considering that opportunists have neither ideological nor economic power to draw on. Two years after he assumed office, Mubarak appointed Youssef Wali, a bureaucrat who built his career at the Ministry of Agriculture, as NDP Secretary-General, assisted by Kamal al-Shazly, the experienced apparatchik who served in all post-1952 political organizations. Mubarak then replaced 7 of the 13-member politburo, 16 of the 23-member general-secretariat, and 9 of the chairs of the NDP's 15 standing committees, in a move aimed at purging prominent capitalists, the likes of Osman as well as Osman himself (Springborg 1989: 137, 158-69).

Finally, the President reinforced the NDP's reliance on the state bureaucracy, which for all practical purposes functioned as an extension of the ruling party. It was no small appendage, considering that the bureaucracy had rapidly inflated from one million employees in 1974 to 3.5 million in 1986 – the time around which these changes were taking place. But regardless of what Mubarak intended, the remaining capitalist members of the NDP 'feudalized' their relationship with state bureaucrats, with the former serving as patrons and protectors, and the latter providing logistical and administrative support, and, more importantly, providing them with opportunities for personal enrichment. The ruling party thus gravitated slowly and surely into the orbit of big business. The economic structure Sadat erected made it difficult, if not impossible for it to steer away from this path.

From Opening Up the Economy to Deregulation

Mubarak came to power seven years after the open door economic policy (*Infitah*) had been implemented. And as was discussed in the previous chapter, these were seven fat years for a few, and seven lean years for everyone else. But the overall effect of this policy was so damaging to the economy that one of the President's very first decisions was to convene a national conference to explore means of averting what he saw as a looming economic crisis. Publicly, Mubarak maintained throughout his rule that Egypt's dire economic situation was the people's fault. He often identified population growth as '*the* cause' for undermining government efforts to improve socioeconomic conditions. However, the economic conference that began work in February 1982 said otherwise. Its final report, supplemented by numerous other studies during this period, exposed *Infitah's* bitter legacy.

Egypt's top economists agreed that opportunist capitalism has thwarted the economy toward foreign trade and finance, and away from productive sectors. Foreign trade as a percentage of GDP jumped from 35 percent in 1974 to 97 percent in 1979 (Abd al-Fadeel 1983: 50). This in itself was a troubling indicator in a country that claimed to be industrializing. But what was even more troubling was the fact that Egypt had rapidly shifted from a net exporter to a net importer of food. Egyptian exports fell in total from 38 percent in 1974 to 14 percent in 1981, while its agricultural exports, in particular, fell from 41.4 percent of total exports in 1973 to 15.5 percent in 1980 (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 174, 145). At the same time, Egypt was importing 60 percent of its food requirements in the early 1980s, though perhaps half of its workforce was employed in agriculture. Strategic products suffered the most. For example, while Egypt had been exporting 40 percent of its sugar production in 1970, a decade later it had not only stopped exporting sugar, but it had also begun importing 35 percent of its sugar needs. At the same time, importing luxuries span out of control: the import of

clothes doubled; the import of cosmetics tripled; the import of cigarettes and watches increased tenfold; the import of electrical appliances increased twelve times; the import of cars increased fourteen times; and the import of luxury foods increased eighteen times. By 1979, 53 percent of Egypt's GDP went to financing imports; (Heikal 1983: 210). Even within agriculture itself, there was a trend to shift to luxury produce, as expensive fruits and vegetables replaced wheat, rice, sugarcane, and other essential staples. The area devoted to such exotic produce more than doubled between 1970 and 1980, and continued to increase afterwards. Economists agree that the country could no longer tolerate the speculative activities and short-term ventures of private investors and their foreign partners, nor could it afford the consumption tendencies that surfaced in the 1970s, especially those directed toward imported luxuries. In conclusion, a return to state-planned economic development was essential, even if the private sector was allowed to play a leading role in this process (Suleiman 2005: 40).

The onus of the blame fell on the companies established according to Law 43 of 1974, which inaugurated *Infitah*. Their estimated $26 million total exports, by the end of the 1970s, was staggeringly out of step with their hefty import bill of $609 million, most of which was spent on luxury products (Handoussa 1990: 116). These petty commercial capitalists helped transform Egypt not just into a consumer society, but, more dangerously, a consumer society of foreign luxuries. The share of commerce in Egypt's GDP doubled during the decade Sadat spent in office from less than 10 percent to 19 percent, with the share of private companies in that sector increasing from less than 50 percent to 70 percent during the same period, and jumping to 95 percent by the mid-1990s (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 104). This was translated domestically through several indicators. For instance, between 1970 and 1980, wholesale commerce expanded from 43.6 to 75.4 percent (Ahmed 1993: 474); Egyptian agents for foreign merchants increased from a few dozen in 1974 to 16,000 in 1981; commercial projects consumed 42 percent of total bank loans during the same period (Abd al-Mo'ty

2002: 105, 191); and there was increase in supermarkets at the rate of 22 percent annually between 1974 and 1978 (Heikal 1987: 210-11).

The commercial capitalists of the Sadat era did not only create a broad demand for imported products that the government could not hope to satisfy, but they also forged strong ties with state bureaucrats, ties that the political leadership had first encouraged, but by the 1980s had become too entangled to be contained or disrupted. On the one hand, the "most powerful segment of the bourgeoisie derive[d] its wealth and influence from parasitic relations with the state, not through entrepreneurial activities…[they built empires] in the shadow of the state and would wither in the direct sunlight of open economic competition" (Springborg 1989: 87). They were thus fighting for their lives. On the other hand, they shared a generous portion of their profits with public employees in exchange for tailored exemptions from taxes and tariffs, illegal access to government resources (bank loans, foreign aid, land, services, etc.), trade monopolies, and so on. Indeed, in the 1970s an estimated 62 percent of public sector activities were subcontracted to connected businessmen. Corruption, in turn, raised the standards of living of civil servants to a point where they could no longer turn back. In short, what Mubarak confronted was a vast patronage network that was untouchable by all means (Springborg 1989: 85-87, 35).

Economic deformation was only one of the problems created by *Infitah*. A more politically urgent one was its social consequences. To start with, its nonproductive nature did not generate enough jobs; the state remained the primary employer, with bureaucrats alone increasing from 3.8 percent of the population on the eve of *Infitah* to 10 percent of the population in 1986 – a trend that continued under Mubarak, with the bureaucracy ultimately employing close to 5.5 million Egyptians by the end of his reign. Meanwhile, public factories employed over 600,000 workers. In comparison, private sector companies during the first decade of *Infitah* created a meager 28,000 new jobs (Abd al-Fadeel 1983: 124-25). What *Infitah* did in fact create were millionaires – thousand of millionaires in

an overwhelmingly poor society. Moreover, these millionaires were no great industrialists who might eventually expand the job market, but were rather importers, moneychangers, middlemen, as well as rehabilitated *ancien regime* landowners. Whether this band of investors constituted "a full-blown comprador bourgeoisie, or simply a mafia…the consequence is the same" (Springborg 1989: 22). They neither contributed to industry or employment. More dangerous still was *Infitah's* re-distributional effects. World Bank statistical findings in 1980 spelled out how the distributive effects of Sadat's economic liberalization threatened to create class tensions. While the poorest 20 percent of the population controlled 5 percent of the national income, the share of the highest 5 percent was 22 percent; the share of the richest 10 percent was 33 percent; and that of richest 20 percent was over 50 percent of the national income (Oweiss 1990: 12).

Mubarak, like his predecessor, was granted a relatively long grace period by the oil boom of the 1970s. With the increase in oil prices, the country's revenue from oil exports, remittances of Egyptians working in oil-rich countries, and traffic in the Suez Canal increased. Over one third of the state revenue came from these sources, as opposed to less than 50 percent from taxes. Between 1975 and 1985, remittances grew from $366 million to $3.9 billion, and petroleum exports grew from $381 million to $5 billion, while the Suez Canal administration channeled in $1 billion annually. Oil prices, however, plummeted from $36 a barrel in 1980 to $12 in 1986. The collapse was felt in Egypt in 1986 as exports were sliced in half from $2.26 billion to $1.2 billion, and Suez Canal tariffs dropped from $1 billion to less than $900 million. This immediately caused a sharp decrease in foreign currency reserves – a crippling disaster in a country with such a high import bill. By 1986, the contribution of oil exports to foreign currency reserves fell from 33 percent to 12.6 percent, while that of remittances fell from 43 to 27 percent. Inflation skyrocketed to 23 percent, and unemployment to 19 percent. What strained the economy even further was the U.S. decision that

same year to suspend an aid package worth $265 million until Egypt submits to IMF-recommended reforms (Suleiman 2005: 54). The stage was set for a devastating debt crisis.

Eager to give his people a quick taste of the prosperity he promised after concluding peace with Israel, Sadat had to rely on foreign aid. His policies doubled the foreign debt from $7.5 billion in 1977 to $14.7 billion in 1980, with the associated debt service jumping from $454 million to $1.6 billion during the same period. The end of the oil boom forced the country into more debt, which by 1987 had reached the unfathomable figure of $40 billion (and projected to climb to $53 billion in 1991), with annual debt service of $2.1 billion. Debt service, which consumed 24 percent of total exports in 1980, almost doubled to 46 percent less than a decade later (Suleiman 2005: 190). By the end of 1987, the Egyptian government announced it could no longer service its foreign debt, let alone being able to repay it, and in 1989 it declared bankruptcy, meaning that it was no longer eligible to receive these international loans it needed so desperately to meet its domestic obligations.

It was only through participating in the war against Iraq in 1991 that the country could start running again, since its biggest creditor, the U.S., conditioned pardoning half of its debt, as well as convincing the Paris Club and Gulf countries to follow suit, on its participation. The credibility of the international coalition George Bush was trying to put together to liberate Kuwait hung on the participation of other Arab states. Egypt's involvement was, in Bush's own words, an essential "'cover' for the other Arab states who wanted to join." Mubarak initially hesitated. During his meeting with Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney on August 7, 1990, he offered over flight rights to U.S. aircraft, allowed U.S. battleships through the Suez Canal, and permitted the use of Egyptian bases for refueling, but ruled out actual participation in the war coalition. On September 1, Bush made him an offer he could not refuse: forgiving half of Egypt's foreign debt. The Egyptian President was now completely on board. Recalling his reaction during their first meeting in November 1990, Bush reported proudly: "I saw eye-to-eye with him on almost all issues… I also

asked him whether Egyptian troops would go into Iraq. He said he'd do whatever was necessary" (Bush and Scowcroft 1998: 339-40, 412).

Despite the elimination of half its foreign debt in 1991, Egypt still lost most of the workers' remittances coming from Iraq and other Gulf countries as a result of the war. Foreign assistance was also reduced as Egypt had to compete for Western aid with dozens of ex-communist countries in Europe after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. With economic growth at barely 1 percent in 1991, and population growth rate at 2 percent, per capita income declined to $600 (from $750 in 1986), gravely affecting the standard of living (Wahid 2009: 133). The government was now expected by the IMF to add to its people's suffering through reducing state subsidies.

Egypt's dire finances forced Mubarak, under intense American pressure, to adopt in 1991 an IMF-tailored Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program that called for reducing social welfare and selling public companies in order to bring state expenditures and debt under control. By 1995, the government had cut 75.82 percent of the subsidies it provided in the eighties, and it was no longer committed to hiring university graduates. Law 203 of 1991 restructured the public sector into 314 holding companies and affiliates to prepare for their privatization. The United States and leading capitalists companies devoted close to $600 million to fund private sector acquisition of these companies. By 1999 the government had sold shares in 124 of its 314 enterprises (Ghoneim 2005: 158, 86).

The first few years appeared to have "vindicated the principles of neoliberalism." During its first decade (1991-2001), the program succeeded in reducing the budget deficit from 15.3 percent to 3 percent of GDP, and achieving a 5 percent growth rate (Mitchell 2002: 272). Also, as the program intended, the share of private capital jumped from 58 percent in 1991 to 74 percent in 1996.[31]

[31] A breakdown of the shares of private firms in the various sectors of the economy between 1981 and 1999 reveals how their share increased from 70 to 94.4 percent of GDP in commerce; 51.3 to 76.6 percent in construction; 26 to 32

Indeed, between 1982 and 2002, the share of the public sector was reduced from 54 percent of GDP and 70 percent of total investment to 28 percent of GDP and 44 percent of investments (Adly 2009: 11).

A closer look, however, reveals this economic boom had little to do with the economic 'reform' program. To start with, the creditors' decision to write off half of Egypt's external debt in return for its participation in the 1991 Gulf War made available $15.5 billion in savings on interest payments by 1996. So the greatest contributor to Egypt's economic turnaround resulted from a political decision by the U.S. and its allies. Furthermore, the state continued to derive one third of its revenue from rents administered by two public enterprises, the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation, rather than from taxing the expanding the private sector. This latter fact reveals how the purported economic liberalization did little to deprive the regime of its most salient asset: its ability to tap into various types of rents and then redistribute them in ways that allow it to maintain power. In addition to oil and gas fields, rents in Egypt were derived from state control over the dispensing of foreign aid, the revenues of the Suez Canal, and, most importantly, the allocation of land. The fact that only 4 percent of the country is inhabited, with the rest classified as public land, allows the regime to allocate land for select property developers, hotel magnates, or realtors at whatever price and under whatever conditions it chooses. Politically-linked businessmen dug assiduously into this gold mine: beginning from the 1990s, gated compounds, masquerading as American-style suburbs, mushroomed around the capital; holiday resorts spread over tens of thousands of acres on the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts; and real estate speculation became the most lucrative investment in town. Indeed by 2002, real estate had replaced agriculture as the third largest nonoil investment sector, way ahead of manufacturing. Instead of generating an export boom, economic liberalization generated a building boom. Egypt was paving over its arable

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percent in finance; 33.6 to 73.8 percent in industry and mining; and 98 to 99.6 increase in agriculture (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 359).

land while its people were forced to import their food needs from the West (Mitchell 1999: 274-81, 29).

Another troubling aspect of this whole economic reform episode pertains to the very rationale behind the privatization program. The conventional account emphasizes how Egypt could not longer cover the losses generated by its failed public sector. Yet on the eve of the IMF program, 260 out of the 314 state-owned companies were profitable, only 54 were suffering losses, and the rest were breaking even. Moreover, the profitable companies (making a net annual profit of $550 million) more than compensated for the losses (only $110 million every year). The real concern was the four large public-owned banks, since over 30 percent of their loans were nonperforming. The problem with these banks, however, was that they were channeling public funds through their private sector affiliates to a small group of state-connected businessmen, and it was those who were not only defaulting on their loans, but also acquiring even more loans after they have defaulted through their political links, delaying legal action against them, and arranging to flee the country before charges were pressed (Mitchell 2002: 276-82). Public banks held 60 percent of total deposits and provided 50 percent of loans. By the late 1990s, 28 politically tied clients received 13 percent of the total public credit extended to the private sector, with an average of L.E. 1 billion each. Over 53 percent of these loans were provided without sufficient collateral. By 2002, only 12 debtors held 18 percent of nonperforming loans in the public banking sector (Adly 2009: 11-12). Not surprisingly, the government used 40 percent of its proceeds from privatization ($1.5 billion by 1997) to payoff the bad debts of its business cronies, rather than provide welfare services as promised. Egypt financial difficulties, therefore, had little to do with a failed public sector than with a situation where public funds were knotted to the projects of politically connected businessmen. That is why it is fair to conclude with political scientist Timothy Mitchell that: "The reform program did not remove the state from the market or eliminate profligate public subsidies. Its main impact was to concentrate

public funds into different hands, and many fewer. The state turned resources away from agriculture and industry… It now subsidized financiers instead of factories, cement kilns instead of bakeries, speculators instead of schools" (Mitchell 2002: 276-82).

Finally, deepening the involvement of the private sector in the economy made it more vulnerable to global capitalism, especially that Egyptian firms during the 1990s imported over 70 percent of their production inputs and exported less than 44 percent of their products. The domination of the foreign component in domestic industries, which in most cases was little more than domestic reassembly of foreign-manufactured products, ruled out the possibility that a viable industrial capitalist class would emerge from the restructuring of the 1990s. In character and interests, therefore, this new class was merely an extension of the old: "the merchants of the seventies were the capitalists of the nineties" (Abd al-Mo'ty 2002: 160-76, 195). The main difference, however, was that the latter group was no longer satisfied with living in the shadow of power; with so much capital accumulated it was time to move up in the political world, they thought. For the first time since 1952, the reins of political leadership were slipping into the hands of the economic ruling class.

The Changing of the Guards

Who were these new capitalists? At the beginning of the new millennium, the Egyptian economy was dominated by less than two-dozen family-owned conglomerates. The founders of these dynasties had a lot in common: most were into construction; their businesses were kicked off through state contracts; they drew funds freely from public banks; they partnered with foreign (especially American) investors; they employed a relatively small working force (3000 on average); and their products catered to the needs of the affluent. This class fraction certainly did not represent

the Egyptian bourgeoisie in its entirety, but it was the fraction off which the rest of the class members made their living, and the one none of them had any hope to compete with or dislodge. Directly below this limited group of state-nurtured super-rich businessmen, another 5 percent of the population enjoyed modest affluence, while the rest of society was neatly divided between the relatively poor, and the 50 percent living below the poverty line (less than $2 a day). Among the latter group, perhaps ten million dwelled in self-built shantytowns on the outskirts of the capital, described by an Egyptian sociologist as "slums with no schools, hospitals, clubs, sewage systems, public transportation or even police stations, which had become a Hobbesian world of violence and vice" (Ibrahim 1999: 39-41; Singerman 2004: 161).

This disheartening socioeconomic imbalance, notwithstanding, the new mega-capitalists began vying for more political power. Mubarak hesitated. He knew quite well that the stability of the 1952 regime rested on a formula that exchanged social rights for political ones. According to this unwritten social contract, the state provided employment, education, health care, and subsidized goods and services to its citizens, in return for their forgoing of their right to participate in politics. But the President also realized that this arrangement required a constantly solvent state. Until 1971, sequestered land and financial assets, nationalized businesses, and cheap Soviet aid provided enough revenue for the state to carry out this role. Nasser believed that before these resources dried up, his state-led industrialization would produce sufficient returns to continue these welfare policies. However, Sadat's partnership with the U.S. (with its free-market price tag) replaced cheap Soviet assistance for an increasingly expensive and conditional American aid, and, his open door policy not only squandered state wealth in non-industrial pursuits, but also left the state in debt to foreign governments. More importantly, the wedding of business and politics, that was so actively encouraged by Sadat, allowed rising capitalists to entrench themselves too deeply in the bureaucracy and ruling party to be purged from above. Ultimately, Egypt's deteriorating finances and sustained

pressure from the world capitalist centers propelled Mubarak to dismantle the last vestiges of state economic power (government subsidies and the public sector) and to rely more and more on private investors.

Politically speaking, however, this new stratum was the most dangerous of all the economic elite groups of the post-1952 era because it was the only one that combined alliances with global capitalist centers with alliances with state rulers and functionaries. Not only that, but they were also avid organizers. In the 1990s, they established a joint committee between the Egyptian Businessmen Association (EBA), their formal platform since 1979, and the cabinet. The declared aim of this committee was to 'advise' ministers before they issued economic policies and regulations. They then infiltrated state-run economic bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Industry, to be able to "fashion more reciprocal power relations" between these corporatist associations and the government, and use them to promote business interests (Bianchi 1990: 215).

These lobbying tactics, however, soon proved to be insufficient. A more daring strategy was evidently required. They now decided to cluster around a young investment banker, who had begun his career in the Bank of America and worked in London for a while before returning to Cairo in 1995. The young man had two enticing assets: he was politically ambitious, and he was the President's son. In 2000, Gamal Mubarak and his new best friends established the Future Generation Foundation (FGF), a civil association designed to promote Gamal's image as Egypt's youth leader. That same year Mubarak appointed his son to the NDP's General Secretariat, as Head of the Youth and Development Committee. And in 2002, Gamal created and chaired a new political body within the party: the Policies Committee (PC), which soon became the beating heart of the ruling party and the embodiment of its 'New Thinking' – the NDP's 2002 convention slogan. The PC was essentially a crystallization of capitalists and self-styled neoliberal intellectuals. Gamal himself became "a symbol of what Mubarakism has wrought…economic liberalization in the

absence of political liberalization; and corrosive nepotism" (Shatz 2010: 9-10). From the very start, the public referred to the committee sardonically as 'Gamal's cabinet', not knowing, however, that its members will soon in fact form the country's first 'businessmen cabinet'.

On the morning of July 14, 2004, unsuspecting Egyptians woke up to the news that a computer engineer, Ahmed Nazif, was charged with forming a government stacked with Gamal's crony capitalists and neoliberals. The cabinet included six monopoly capitalists who were put in charge of ministries directly related to their business portfolios, in addition to a number of prominent neoliberal intellectuals. A few examples suffice. Ahmed al-Maghraby, owner of the tourism conglomerate Accor Hotels, was appointed Minister of Tourism, and a year later Minister of Housing and Construction; Rashid Ahmed Rashid, head of the Middle East and North Africa affiliate of the multi-national Unilever, became Minister of Industry and Trade; Mohamed Mansour, chairman of Al-Mansour Motor Group, was charged with the Ministry of Transportation (he had also served as Secretary-General of Gamal's Future Generation Foundation, and President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt between 1999 and 2003); Youssef Boutros Ghali, longtime IMF executive, was entrusted with Treasury; and Mahmoud Muhi al-Din, a Cairo University professor who was later elected Executive Director of the World Bank, handled economics and investment. These were all of course members of the Policies Committee.

Seizing control of the cabinet was only the first step. What followed afterwards was nothing less than a full-fledged 'bourgeoisification' of the entire leadership of the ruling party. NDP businessmen more than doubled their share of parliament seats from 37 in 1995 to 77 in 2000, i.e. from 8 to 17 percent of parliament (Abu Reeda 2001: 81). Their influence was further augmented by the fact that they controlled key parliamentary committees, most significantly, the Planning and Budget committee, which was chaired by iron and steel tycoon Ahmed Ezz, Gamal's mentor and closet associate. Starting from 2005, Ezz became majority leader in parliament. In the words of

Speaker of Parliament Fathy Sourur, "Whenever we voted, if Ahmed Ezz raises his hand in approval, the representatives of the majority [party] approve, if he does not raise his hands, they disapprove…the [NDP] members believed he had the power to have them nominated [to parliamentary elections] by the party…and he had a strong relationship with Gamal Mubarak" (Interview in Muslim 2011a: 7). In 2006, Gamal himself became NDP Assistant Secretary-General.

Controlling business lobbies, the cabinet, the ruling party, and parliament were important steps. But there was more; there was the presidency. The new business elite now flirted with the idea of pushing Gamal to the top executive position, under the pretext of civilianizing the presidency after it remained in the hands of former officers since 1952. And to pave the way, constitutional amendments in 2005 and 2007 placed conditions for presidential elections that only fit Gamal, and eliminated judicial supervision over the voting process. Thus began the ill-fated campaign to boost the legitimacy of the younger Mubarak, a campaign that reached the height of absurdity when Ezz introduced his friend to the last NDP conference in 2010 as 'Gamal the leader of the modernization revolution'.

The NDP's old guard, of course, resisted. Regime loyalist Fathy Sourur shared his frustration with reporters after the 2011 revolt: "Their [the businessmen's] entry into the cabinet was a big mistake, especially that they were put in charge of the fields they specialized in, which caused a contradiction between public and private interests, and I said this more than once…to the party, but no one listened" (Interview in Muslim 2011c: 9). Many probably blamed these changes on the proud father who wanted to pass the mantle to his son (some add, under the insistence of the mother). But a number of objective conditions explain why the political apparatus became increasingly reliant on Gamal's monopoly capitalists. The most important of these were solvency and geopolitical support.

Between 1992 and 2002, domestic debt increased from 67 to 90 percent of GDP. The state was in fact running on debt. And since the ruling party lived off state finances, it too was running on

debt. But who were the creditors? Half of the debt came from public sector banks, which had little choice but to obey the rulers, even when they went beyond regular deposits and dabbled into the pool of pensions and social security funds. A second source was treasury bills, though raising money through this route was time-consuming and cumbersome. The easiest and most readily available way to keep the political machine solvent was to count on the generosity of regime-friendly capitalists (Suleiman 2005: 192-96, 218). At the beginning, they channeled funds through crooked business deals, whereby the investor would secure a contract or a plot of land, and in return the politician would get a commission. Donations and philanthropy also paid part of the bill. But as monopoly capitalists began to take charge of the ruling party and government, they assumed financial responsibilities as well. They funded NDP conventions; they launched government media campaigns; they paid bribes to stifle opposition; they bought votes and organized pro-regime demonstrations; and so on.

Also, through their business partnerships with global investors, Gamal's cronies assured the regime that despite official pressure to democratize, Western support would remain forthcoming. This was the bridging role that businessmen on the periphery of the world capitalist system traditionally played to keep their markets linked to the global investment centers. And the Egyptian capitalists performed it par excellence. During the first three years of the Nazif cabinet, foreign investment in Egypt tripled (Amin 2009: 93). Then, the American decision in 2004 to allocate USAID to the private sector rather than the government further enhanced their political weight.

It was only natural afterwards that Egypt's new business stratum would demand more than it used to get through shabby deals with politicians. In return for the valuable services it provided to the regime, it now wanted to restructure the economy itself through neoliberal concepts. A new tax regime, which gradually materialized between 2002 and 2010, imposed 60 percent of the tax burden on the general population via indirect taxes and tariffs (such as the sales tax) that do not discriminate

between rich and poor. At the same time, taxes on business revenues were sliced in half from 40 to 20 percent. In addition, the tax collecting authority was quite lenient on tax evasion, allowing businessmen – if caught – to pay the amount due plus a small fine without the prospect of imprisonment (Suleiman 2005: 207-17). Then in 2009, the government drafted the infamous real estate tax, which taxed citizens' private residences regardless of their wealth or income level – a decision that was so contentious that the President himself intervened against it weeks before it was supposed to come to force. Another problem was the ever-increasing price levels. In January 2003, the government floated the currency exchange rate, causing the value of the Egyptian pound to lose 25 percent of its value vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar. The decision was justified by the need to improve Egypt's balance of trade. What happened instead was that importing activities persisted at the same level, while the price of imported goods and services (and domestic products that relied overwhelmingly on imported components) skyrocketed. For the first time in their modern history, Egyptians experienced the smoldering effects of stagflation. Mitchell, an avid student of both Egypt and neoliberalism described why:

> **Neoliberalism is a triumph of the political imagination. Its achievement is double: while narrowing the window of political debate, it promises from this window a prospect without limits. On the one hand, it frames public discussion in the elliptic language of neo-classical economics. The collective well-being of the nation is depicted only in terms of how it is adjusted in gross to the discipline of monetary and fiscal balance sheets. On the other, neglecting the actual concerns of any concrete local or collective community, neoliberalism encourages the most exuberant dreams of private accumulation** (1999: 28).

From day one, these capitalists-turned-politicians turned their back on Egypt's severe social problems: poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, deteriorating public services, urban congestion, shantytowns, pollution, and all the rest. "The rhetoric of management, financial soundness, and market forces depoliticized these complex issues…[and] transformed questions of social inequality and powerlessness into issues of efficiency and control" (Mitchell 2002: 230). Unlike their rural

counterparts and the small fish of the 1970s, the new capitalist elite were not only richer, but also more demanding; their business expansion required the state to deregulate the economy, privatize public enterprises, reduce subsidies for the poor and taxes for the rich, and allow them cheap access to public resources. Whatever surplus the state could use to fulfill urgent social needs was being sucked into the pockets of the ruling party's capitalist cronies. The political apparatus was strained to the limit, and the maneuvering space of traditional politicians shrunk considerably.

At the same time, the level of corruption became overwhelming; and it extended from head to tail. The President and his family were rumored to have amassed as much as $70 billion, and forty of his ministers and close business associates were alleged to have made at least $1 billion each (Goldstone 2011: 11; Inman 2011: 1). The Central Auditing Authority submitted 1,000 reports between October 1999 and July 2004 detailing various violations committed by state officials and favored businessmen. The reports estimated that financial corruption cost the economy L.E. 100 billion during those years, in addition to L.E. 5 billion in money laundering, and L.E. 500 million in bribes paid to public servants (Ghoneim 2005: 93). After the 2011 revolt, dozens of corruption cases flooded the office of the General Prosecutor. It is enough to mention that in the weeks following the revolt, the President and his entire family and aides, a dozen ministers (including the prime minister), the speakers of the upper and lower houses of parliament, and perhaps two dozen businessmen (including Ahmed Ezz) have been taken into custody or had arrest warrants issued against them for financial corruption and abuse of office charges. A full catalog of the charges deserves an independent study, but a few examples might illustrate the type and scale of corruption during Mubarak's final two decades.

A good place to start is the case of Hussein Salem, the President's best (perhaps only) friend. Salem started out as a security operative. He resigned his government job and turned to business on the eve of Mubarak's coming to power. His first successful enterprise was a joint venture with

Mubarak's brother-in-law and two former CIA officers. The American-Egyptian Transport and Service Company (AETSCO), later known as White Wings, received (as it turned out, illegal) Pentagon commissions to transport U.S. weapons to Egypt. From then onwards, Salem became one of the most notorious arms dealers, involved in such high profile contracts, such as Iran-Contra in the 1980s. The whole venture was exposed in 1987 first in the American media, then in the following year through a seven-hour hearing in the Egyptian parliament by opposition delegate Alwi Hafez. Salem then turned to tourism, building and running some of the most luxurious resorts in coastal cities like Sharm al-Sheikh. In 2000, Salem co-founded the Egyptian Mediterranean Gas Company (EMG) with an Israeli partner, former Mossad officer Yussi Miman. The company supplied Israel with 40 percent of its natural gas needs at a discount price, at a time when Egypt was in dire need for energy and cash. In 2008, Salem sold 12 percent of his shares to two American investors for $2.2 billion. During that time, Egypt had lost $714 million for selling its gas for cheap (Samir 2011: 1; Zahran 2011: 6). Salem, whose wealth was estimated at $15 billion, escaped to Dubai five days into the uprising with a bag containing $500 million in cash. The authorities refused to allow him in with all this cash and he was returned to Egypt shortly before escaping to his lavish villa in Spain, where the Interpol arrested him, but refused to extradite him because – as it turns out – he had acquired a Spanish citizenship and gave up his own (Munir 2011: 3).

Another flagrant example is Ahmed Ezz, the third richest man in Egypt (with a fortune of over $10) and the self-proclaimed architect of the new political order. Ezz, who owned two small factories for steel and ceramics in 1996, monopolized the industry by 2004 after acquiring the biggest state-owned iron and steel company almost for free, and without a public auction. State largess continued as the Trade and Industry Ministry granted Ezz licenses worth L.E. 660 million for free to build two additional factories in the free industrial zone in Suez. Gawdat al-Malt, head of the Central Auditing Authority, submitted two 278-page reports to the Speaker of Parliament on May 29

and September 15, 2004 regarding Ezz's illegal monopolies. The reports exposed how the business tycoon controlled 55.3 percent of the domestic market and 72.3 percent of exports of reinforced iron, and 47.9 percent and 83.2 percent of exports of flat iron (Al-Malt interviewed in Hamadah 2011: 5). The Speaker of Parliament Sourur confessed that when the government suggested an anti-monopoly legislation that would seize 10 percent of the violator's profits, Ezz – the head of parliament's Budget Committee – intervened to cap the fine at L.E. 300 million. "I complained to the President, and told him this cannot pass, and he asked Safwat al-Sharif [NDP Secretary-General] to resolve the issue. Al-Sharif came to my office and called in Ezz to relay the President's objections… To my astonishment, Ahmed Ezz stuck to his guns…and we were forced to compromise… At this point, I realized that Ahmed Ezz was stronger [than the President], that he represented a dangerous power [that could] defy the President" (Interview in Muslim 2011b: 10).

Under Mubarak the state allocated 67,200 squared kilometers (an area equivalent to the size of Palestine, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain combined) worth L.E. 800 billion to favored investors. In addition, the illegal diversion of 185,000 feddans of arable land to construction projects cost the economy L.E. 78 billion in the past decade. In the weeks following the 2011 revolt, 123 cases pertaining to violations of Law 89 of 1994, which requires allocating public land to the highest bidder, were considered by court. A small sample is enough to demonstrate: Ezz acquired 21 million squared meters at the price of L.E. 4 per meter in the industrial area on the Gulf of Suez, only to resell it to foreign companies for L.E. 1000 per meter a couple of years later; Minister of Tourism Zohair Garanah allocated plots in some of the best tourist sites at prices considerably below that of the market, thus costing the state over L.E. 2 billion in 2006 alone; Minister of Housing and Construction Ahmed al-Maghraby allocated between January 2006 and December 2008 over 27.2 million squared meters to 13 companies in which his family-owned Palm Hills Company controls between 49 and 100 percent of each – in Palm Hills itself, the President's younger son's stock

increased by L.E. 16 million in 2009 alone as a result of the appreciation of the value of land acquired by the company; Minister of Agriculture Amin Abaza gave away 11,556 feddans in Sinai for free to a businessman, who then sold 8,000 of those feddans for L.E. 350 million to foreign investors; companies owned by the Presidents sons and in-laws acquired vast amounts of agricultural land on the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road for the ridiculously cheap price of L.E. 200 per feddan to build luxurious compounds with hundreds of multi-million-dollar villas; former Minister of Housing and Construction Ibrahim Suleiman sold 40,000 squared meters of land on the Mediterranean Sea for L.E. 300 instead of its true market value of L.E. 8,000; finally, the Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif cost the country a total loss of L.E. 51.2 billion by passing Ministerial Decree 2843 of 2009, which legalized the disputed acquisitions of 1.5 million feddans for 2.5 percent of their market price (Al-Gahmy and Abd al-Qawy 2011: 7). It was only natural then that while Garanah's company was in debt for L.E. 4 billion before he joined the cabinet, he was now worth perhaps L.E. 13 billion; and al-Maghraby who had only L.E. 4.9 billion in 2004, quadrupled that amount after he became minister to L.E. 17 billion, in addition to L.E. 3 billion in the form of discounted loans from banks (Allam 2011: 3).

Expectedly, the privatization file was reopened after the 2011 revolt. Although nationalization of the means of production took place through laws in the 1950s and 1960s, their privatization was allowed through arbitrary administrative decisions with little or no transparency. So, for example, while the government estimated the total value of public sector at L.E. 124 billion in 1991 – though a private consultant inflated that figure to L.E. 500 billion – by July 2000 almost half of the public sector was sold for a meager L.E. 15.6 billion, leading the government to adjust its previous estimation retroactively to the absurd amount of L.E. 28.8 billion. Soon, high-profile corruption cases were exposed. An early corruption case that occurred in 1994 involved the selling of the public sector affiliate of Pepsi Cola for L.E. 131 million divided as follows: 49 percent to the

politically connected Muhammad Nusair, 49 percent to a Saudi company, and 2 percent to the global conglomerate of Pepsi Cola. Four years later, Pepsi Cola bought 77 percent of the shares for L.E. 400 million, i.e. nine times the value of the entire company when it was first sold. Nusair's claim that he managed to turn the company around in such a short period did not convince anyone, especially that reports by the Central Auditing Authority revealed how private investors were performing so poorly in the public companies they bought. Indeed, during the period in question (1997-2002), businessmen delivered 52 percent of the promised investments in all sectors, and 26 percent of the projected investments in the industrial sector, with the state covering the rest (Ghoneim 2005: 93-95). Months after the 2011 revolt, three of the major privatized companies were returned to state ownership after the courts exposed the corrupt means by which they were passed to private hands, and dozens of other cases were being investigated (Bassal 2011: 1).

Governing a Time Bomb

Egypt's dark days were getting even darker. Between 2000 and 2009, the GDP increased from $92.4 billion to $187.3 billion, and economic growth increased from 3.2 to 5 percent. But the economic growth achieved during that decade (mostly due to the doubling of oil prices after the invasion of Iraq, and the increase in foreign investments) did not translate into an improvement in the standard of living of common people. In 2006, gross national income per capita was 7 percent lower than its had been in 2000. During that same year, World Bank reports indicated that 47 percent of the population was living on less than $2 a day (Wahid 2009: 134-42). In 2010, unemployment was estimated at 26.3 percent, though the government claimed it was only 10 percent (Shatz 2010: 6). More than 3 million people joined the underground economy. Education spending consumed less than 5 percent of GDP; food subsidies were reduced by 20 percent causing the price of various food

items to increase threefold; and while the rich decorated their lavish compounds with artificial lakes and swimming pools, 79 percent of Egyptians had no access to clean drinking water and a proper sewage system (Abd al-Aziz 2011: 90-91).

During the last two decades of Mubarak's reign, almost all Egyptians suffered. The countryside was an easy and early target. Law 96 of 1992 abrogated the gains the peasantry had made through the Agricultural Reform Law 178 of 1952. Instead of the regulated rents of the old law, the new one decreed that the 1.2 million tenant contracts in the countryside would expire by the end of 1997, allowing absentee landowners to either re-negotiate new contracts or sell the land and drive the peasants out. Of course the justification was to provide more capital for investment. But considering that seven million peasants and their families lived on these lands, and that the government had no solution for their inevitable plight, violent protests soon erupted. Between October 1997 and the summer of 1999, land seizures and sabotage of agricultural equipment was so rampant that the government had to order in the Central Security Forces to subdue the angry peasants. Likewise, aggressive privatization and the government's wholesale abandonment of the public sector triggered numerous labor strikes: 161 strikes in 2001, 86 in 2003, the violent April 6 national strike of 2008, and over 700 in 2010. In fact, between 2001 and 2011, perhaps 2 million workers participated in strikes (Ghoneim 2005: 113-15; Benin 2011). Even within the traditional bastion of state power – the bureaucracy – things were going downhill. Only the top 0.2 percent, a little over 8000 officials (including ministers) were well paid (some receiving six-figure salaries), while the rest of the 5.5 million employees gradually descended to the ranks of the proletariat (Ghoneim 2005: 142). Moreover, the structure of the leading class fraction – the new business elite – did not lend itself to class-based cooperation. Egyptian monopoly capitalists continued to act more like competing magnates than a consolidated class leadership, and therefore failed to absorb high-level bureaucrats, middling landowners and agricultural capitalists into their fold. More generally, the

state's deteriorating ability to provide essential services and indifference to unemployment and poverty infuriated millions.

Of course, the ultimate guarantor of the regime could not have stood by idly as billions were passing from hand-to-hand under its nose; it had to be given a piece of the action. Preliminary investigations revealed that the Interior Minister Habib al-Adly and his immediate family owned nine villas, seven apartments, 75 feddans of agricultural land, 13 construction sites, a shopping mall in Sharm al-Sheikh, four Mercedes automobiles. In addition to bank deposits, his wealth amounted to L.E. 8 billion (Al-Geziry 2011: 1). State Security laid claim to a vast plot of (military) land in the buzzing Cairo neighborhood of Nasr City to establish its new headquarters. In Alexandria, 38 SSIS officers acquired 750,000 squared meters of land for L.E. 13 per meter in 2000, when the market price exceeded L.E. 300 per meter. After the uprising, Egyptians courts froze the assets of 52 high-ranking police officers for corruption (Sabri 2011: 6). Adly received a 12-year prison sentence and a L.E. 23 million fine for money laundering and abusing office to amass wealth.

Needless to say, increasing government corruption pushed the regime more into the Interior Ministry' iron cage. Rather than pressure the regime to democratize, as liberal theorists would predict, Egypt's capitalists-turned-ministers realized that they were now beholden to the police forces more than ever. The social unrest resulting from the shrinking of social benefits, the steady rise in price levels, the laying off of thousands of public and private sector workers, and the systematic and rabid corruption inflicting economic life required constant repression. Little wonder why Gamal's Policies Committee was expanded to include the Interior Minister in 2005 in its fold. In other words, even after the post-1952 political apparatus lent itself to neoliberal control, it still rested on coercion. This was not only a domestic deformation of global neoliberalism. In Mitchell's judgment, for the advocates of neoliberalism "repression is an unforeseen, unfortunate, intermittent, and probably temporary side effect of the shocks that accompany the expansion of the global

market," but viewed critically "violence is a common instrument of capitalist development, in particular the penetration of capitalist relations into new territories" (Mitchell 2002: 297-298). Michael Mann held a similar view of the intertwining of authoritarianism and neoliberalism. Authoritarian regimes are particularly prone to implementing policies that produce "short-term economic misery for the sake of some dubious neo-liberal vision of the long term" because they do not have to worry about winning elections (Mann 2003: 70). This might explain why the Fact Finding Commission appointed to investigate the attempted repression of the 2011 revolt concluded that the NDP and the Interior Ministry were equally responsible for the corruption of political life (Report in Hassan 2011: 4). The fortunes of the political and security apparatuses remained symbiotically linked until the very last day. And their alliance tempted them to push society to the limit.

What effectively happened was that the Egyptian economy became increasingly divided into two spheres, with nothing in the middle: one servicing less than 10 percent of society with a conspicuously high purchasing power, and another for the barely surviving masses. As the overwhelming majority watched, the country's minuscule upper class sent its children to overpriced private schools, received treatment in highly-equipped hospitals, resided in lavish compounds with golf courses and country clubs, vacationed in extravagant beach resorts, drove luxurious cars, and shopped at some of the most expensive malls in the Middle East. Egypt had become a failed state in the eyes of its own people. It belonged to the upper class. Laws were only passed so that a few could enrich themselves by breaking them, while the rest of society suffered the brunt. The tax burden fell on the poor in order to serve the tax-evading rich. Bribery had become the norm, and legal permits were up for sale. In short, corruption had become a way of life. As political economist Samer Suleiman somberly concluded, "Egypt's story in the last quarter century had been the story of regime success and state failure" (Suleiman 2005: 271).

But how come did society become so polarized? And why would the middle class that had been long nurtured by the regime turn against it? Although the non-industrial middle class (rural and state bourgeoisie, small businessmen, and professionals) initially provided the bulwark of the coup-installed regime, changing political contingencies splintered this middle class, since different fragments proved useful at different times. And as the new regime produced more and more fragments, it became no longer capable of satisfying them all. Nor did it need many of them any longer. The rural middle class had become dispensable because the outright rigging of elections (financed by direct handouts from ruling party capitalists and carried out by the Interior Ministry) rendered its political control function in the countryside superfluous. Now they could be pressured to sell their land to satisfy the appetite of the super-rich for giant agro-industrial projects. The wells of the state bourgeoisie were also drying up since the dismantling of the public sector diminished their middlemen role between aspiring businessmen and public resources. With capitalists in direct control of government, who needs middlemen? But not only was the fox in the henhouse, market deregulation and bureaucratic streamlining deprived them of the petty extortions they imposed on citizens and small businessmen. Added to the woes of the middle class fragments, were those of the parasitic business class of the late 1970s and 1980s. Ruling party tycoons raised market entry barriers and eliminated competitors with relative ease. Tolerance for small fish in the business world was shrinking by the moment. Finally, staggering unemployment and inflation rates made life impossible for educated middle class youth who realized that their hard-earned diplomas no longer carried them far in Egypt's neoliberal economy. All these middle class fragments had gradually fell out of favor and thus became disgruntled. At the end, only the tiny fragment linked directly to the political apparatus (the uppermost crust of the bourgeoisie) remained loyal, while the majority of the middle class fragments resented the regime for abandoning them. Revolt, in this case, seemed the only way out of their suffering. With the clock ticking away toward September 2011, the date the President

was supposed to pass on the mantle to Gamal and his capitalist allies, the middle class expected nothing less than their total ruin. When a call went out to make a final stand against the regime on January 25, 2011 they had only their chains to loose.

Truth be told, however, Mubarak did little more than follow the dotted line marked by his predecessor. He simply extended and reinforced the three trends set in place when he assumed office in 1981: the marginalization of the military; the empowerment of the security force; and the increased reliance on a state-nurtured capitalist class to run the country. It was these three powerful undercurrents that carried the regime slowly but surely to its end destination: the January 25 Revolt in 2011. This does not, of course, absolve Mubarak of responsibility for all the deterioration and misfortune that befell the country under his watch. But to understand what really happened, rather than just assign blame, one must begin by recognizing that what Mubarak essentially did was hold steady and keep the regime structure he inherited on track; he was a stabilizer, not an innovator. Admittedly, the ride down this destined pathway was rough, and the outcome far from inevitable. There were storms to be weathered, crises to be defused, and obstacles on every step of the way. The military under the charismatic and resourceful Field Marshal Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazala was far from eclipsed. The supposedly reliable Central Security Forces led an armed mutiny against the government. The insatiable business elite that infiltrated the ruling party deeper than intended thoughtlessly squeezed the state for concessions. But after all is said and done, the sudden (and maybe temporary) collapse of the regime in 2011 was the cumulative result of the six-decade power struggles within the ruling coalition.

Chapter Ten

ON THE THRESHOLD OF POWER: THE MILITARY AFTER THE REVOLT

Commenting on the popular revolts that beset Europe in 1989, sociologist Charles Tilly wrote, "In a time of consumerism and powerful states…it hardly seemed that dissidents within European countries could do much more than plant bombs, scrawl graffiti, mumble curses or give up. Reform or repression, perhaps; revolution, never… In 1989, however, the people of Eastern Europe vigorously vitiated any analysis that implied an end to rebellion. They made their own revolutions" (Tilly 1993: 2). Less than two decades after Tilly penned down these memorable words, it was the Arabs' turn.

The snowball started rolling from the west. When a policewoman slapped an unemployed college graduate for working as a street vendor without permit, the indignant young man set himself on fire, triggering a massive uprising that overthrew the country's political leadership in three weeks. This all occurred in a country with strikingly similar circumstances to Egypt: Tunisia. Unlike the monarchies of Morocco and Jordan, where the army is loyal to the sovereign, and the tribal societies of Libya and Yemen, as well as the monarchial-tribal societies of the Gulf, where the reigning tribe controls the military leadership whereas the (potentially rebellious) rank-and-file come from lesser tribes, the Egyptian and Tunisian armies were drawn from ethnically and religiously homogenous populations and swore allegiance to modern republican constitutions. Also, contrary to the army-controlled regimes of Syria, Algeria, and the Sudan, the two countries had metamorphosed from coup-installed military regimes into full-fledged police states. In the process, armies in both countries were gradually sidelined by a suspicious political elite in favor of an expansive security institution, and thus grew eager to alter the political formula once circumstances allowed. Finally, the lower classes in both states suffered from an exploitative and corrupt state-nurtured business elite

with strong ties to global investors. Tunisia was, of course, considerably smaller that Egypt in area, population, and the size of its police and military forces, but its experience had a crucial demonstrative effect for Egyptians. It showed them that the unthinkable was in fact thinkable. Now, Egyptians started moving, and a demoralized military realized that at last the external factor they hoped would shift the stagnant power balance to its favor began to materialize.

18 Days[32]

The year (2011) was the year of the purported succession. Reports circulating around the country confirmed that Hosni Mubarak was planning to pass on the mantle to his son in September. With the father and the last of the ruling party's old guard gone, there would be no court of appeal against the economic corruption and exploitation of Gamal Mubarak's capitalist cronies. The day (January 25) was Police Day – a national holiday honoring that bloody morning in 1952 when the British killed dozens of Egyptian policemen because they refused to surrender their weapons and stood tall in defense of national dignity – a day that always highlighted the dark contrast between what the police used to be and what it had become.

But on January 25, 2011, Egypt had no organized opposition to speak of. Disgruntled intellectuals and activists from all walks of life joined several united fronts. There was *Kefaya* (Enough), a movement founded in 2004 to oppose Mubarak (father and son) from running for presidency the following year; there was the National Association for Change, which began in 2010 to campaign for free elections and advocate the candidacy of Mohamed ElBaradei, former director of IAEA, to the top executive position; there was a mixed lot of unassuming opposition parties

[32] The information in this section is based on dozens of personal interviews with demonstrators as the revolt unfolded, as well as *Al-Shorouk* newspaper's eighteen short documentaries that recorded the daily developments of the uprising (http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=12022012&id=2cdddca8-b9d6-4148-9a2b-944d2d75794f).

representing liberals and leftists, which had rarely challenged the regime; there was the eighty-year-old Muslim Brothers, a highly bureaucratic reform movement, which has been invariably manipulated by the regime (to scare liberals in the early fifties; leftists throughout the seventies; militant Islamists in the eighties and nineties; and Americans throughout Mubarak's reign) before being caste aside (usually to prison) once it has served its purpose; and there were two Internet-based movements: the April 6 Youth Movement, whose name commemorates the failed national strike on that day in 2007, when striking workers were repressed using live ammunition; and the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page, named after the Alexandrian boy whose head was smashed on the pavement in the summer of 2010 because he exchanged words with police hoodlums. The fact that the latter, which was created by the thirty-year-old Google marketing executive Wael Ghonim, drew over half a million members in three months indicated how Egyptians identified with the murdered youth; citizens felt that no matter how politically compliant they were, no one was safe anymore. In short, the Egyptian opposition on the eve of the revolt was little more than an amalgam of loosely organized platforms with overlapping memberships representing all political affiliations and age groups. And even though they were becoming increasingly vocal and active since 2005, politicians and security men saw no cause for concern. This relaxed attitude was brilliantly captured in Mubarak's sardonic sideway during the inauguration of the 2010 parliament (a month before the revolt), 'Let them [opposition forces] entertain themselves'.

This is why no one thought much of the call to demonstrate on January 25. The invitation was posted on the Facebook pages of the April 6 Youth Movement and We Are All Khaled Said, and on the designated day members from both internet groups along with mostly young activists from all ideological camps (perhaps 20,000 in all) staged a demonstration in front of the Interior Ministry, three blocks away from Cairo's Tahrir Square in the historic Downtown neighborhood, built in the nineteenth-century to resemble the circular layout and architecture of central Paris. This

was an impressive show up, considering that past events attracted at most a couple of hundred participants. Demonstrators were repressed using tear gas and water hoses, thirty activists were detained and a university student was killed. Over the next two days, the marches persisted, attracting more and more participants and spreading throughout the country (from Cairo, Alexandria, the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal cities, to the independent-minded southern provinces, all the way to the isolated oases of the Western Desert). The police raised the ante, arresting four thousand demonstrators and organizers (including Wael Ghonim and Egypt's future president Mohamed Morsi); adding rubber bullets to its gas-and-water cocktail (killing four people and injuring over a hundred); attacking the press syndicate and detaining two-dozen reporters for refusing to repeat state media allegations about the 'saboteurs' and 'outlaws' that were supposedly looting and burning public property; and issuing a stern warning to opposition forces to immediately stop whatever they thought they were doing.

But instead of scaring activists away – as they always did – this time the regime's brutal repression and outrageous lies steeled their will to resist. A call went out through all forms of social media for a Day of Rage on Friday, January 28. The embattled activists appealed to the people to join them. Egyptians hesitated. With the possibility of succession right around the corner, their lives promised to become considerably worse. Yet a potentially devastating clampdown unnerved many. That morning, horrified citizens woke up to discover that the security had cut-off all cellphone and Internet communication services, and flooded the streets with anti-riot police squads and armored vehicles. Many would have preferred to stay home that day if they were not obliged to attend Friday prayers. In the mosques, however, the euphoria of the last three days apparently inspired the country's timid preachers to denounce dictatorship and urge defiance. Fired up by religious sermons and besieged by a sea of angry demonstrators pouring out of Cairo's 300,000 mosques, common folk were carried away; their mind was finally made up. Thus began the march to Tahrir Square.

Policemen tried to resist. They used live ammunition and laser-guided sniper fire; they ran over demonstrates with armored vehicles; they blinded them with a fog of tear gas; they drove them back with high-pressure water hoses – but to no avail. Policemen were exhausted. They had been out on the street in full force for four consecutive days, and by the Interior Minister's own admission, they were drained and overextended. Equipped only to repress a handful of urban protestors, hotheaded students, or small groups of workers and peasants, they now confronted millions of protestors, they now confronted 'the people'. Former State Security officer General Assem al-Genedi witnessed firsthand how police troops were left stranded without food, water, sleep, or even fresh batteries for their walkie-talkies. He saw many of them taking off their uniforms and deserting (Genedi 2011: 152-53). Following heroic street battles around Cairo's Downtown neighborhoods and Nile bridges, where hundreds were killed, the security forces seemed about to throw in the tool. After a particularly fierce tug-of-war on the Qasr al-Nil bridge, the western key to Downtown, police units pulled-back and the road ahead was clear. At this critical point, the revolutionaries had a choice to make: Where should they turn to next? Leftward to the Union of Television and Radio Stations Building, the regime's central media organ, and the Foreign Ministry adjacent to it; or rightward to the seat of parliament, the cabinet headquarters, and the Interior Ministry, the nerve center of Egypt's police state; or straight ahead, as was originally intended before the sudden police collapse, to Tahrir Square. They opted for the latter, providing the regime with valuable time to fortify each of these strategic posts by nightfall, so that when a few dozen demonstrators, suspecting they might have made the wrong choice, tried to make their way to some of these sites later that night, the roads were already sealed.

Why did the protestors choose a giant public square (approximately 490,000 square feet with the capacity to host perhaps a million people) rather than sensitive state organs – a fateful decision that determined the revolt's trajectory? Everyone knew that seizing a central downtown plaza would

not stifle life in a sprawling city like Cairo, nor was it likely to make traffic on its congested roads any worse than it already is. Also, unlike the narrow alleyways and crammed-up buildings in the capital's popular neighborhoods, the square was an open ground with nowhere to hide. So if the demonstrators' plan was neither to paralyze the city nor to be able to maneuver if forced into street battles, then what did they have in mind? It seems obvious that the only advantage such an expansive and exposed location offered was *visibility*. The organizers of the uprising drew inspiration neither from the revolutionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe, nor from their neighbors in Libya and Syria. They did not grasp the necessity of creating a situation of dual power by occupying government buildings, entrenching themselves in crowded neighborhoods, seizing entire cities, and using all these as bases for incrementally supplanting the regime. Instead the organizers drew inspiration from Eastern Europe in 1989 (in fact many of them later admitted to studying this experiment thoroughly). The dazzling success of peaceful demonstrators in overturning their communist regimes was enviable. And occupying plazas and wide boulevards seemed to be a viable strategy indeed. For a strategy based on galvanizing domestic and world opinion and daring the regime to shoot civilians in front of hundreds of cameras and news reporters, Tahrir Square (and other central squares throughout Egypt's provincial cities) fit perfectly. And it worked – for the moment.[33]

Still the police had one more card up its sleeve. The gates of eighteen prisons and dozens of police stations were opened and inmates incited to make the best of the chaotic circumstances.

[33] Of course, the missing ingredient here was the radically different geopolitical context. With the Soviet patron of the ailing communist regimes of Eastern Europe retrenching, and the anxious capitalist world, spearheaded by the United States and the European Union, determined not to allow the chance to slip by, 1989 demonstrators were offered every possible form of help, including sustained media attention and Western ultimatums against their violent repression. In Egypt, by contrast, the authoritarian regime had been serving the interests of the strongest regional and world powers, and after the initial wave of international support subsided, the country's new rulers were expected allowed (regardless of American and European rhetoric) to slowly liquidate the revolt, or do whatever was necessary to return to business as usual. In the months following Mubarak's ousting, Tahrir Square became more like an open-air prison, where demonstrators could be sealed off and ignored as life outside continued as normal, and government troops waited for the revolutionary steam to run out, which inevitably did.

When the head of the prison administration (Police General Muhammad al-Butran) resisted, he was shot dead. Police officers reckoned that ransacking criminals would terrorize citizens enough to go home. Instead the demonstrators torched police stations and ruling party headquarters throughout state in retribution and quickly formed neighborhood watches to guard their families and properties. For a few valuable hours, the demonstrators controlled the streets, and the twin chants that had come to define the uprising reverberated across the country: 'The People Demand to Overthrow the Regime!' and 'Raise Your Head High, You're Egyptian!'

Waiting in the winds was the armed forces. As it became clear that the Interior Ministry was unable to stem the uprising, the cornered President was forced to summon his gravediggers – the military – in a final attempt to restore order. An army that had been subdued by its other two ruling partners for four decades rolled confidently into the streets. The fact that members of the general staff were doubtlessly loyal to Mubarak (or at least indifferent to his policies) did not prevent them, under the weight of general opinion within the corps, from abandoning their old political master to his fate. Acting otherwise risked fracturing the army that from day one was visibly supportive of the revolt – without waiting for instructions from above. A group of demonstrators threw themselves over an army jeep before it reached Downtown Cairo, crying frantically: 'Are you here to shoot us'. A colonel descended from the vehicle and wrapped his arm around a demonstrator's shoulders and replied: 'You have nothing to fear. We would cut our hands before firing one bullet. Your demands are legitimate. Go ahead, and don't turn back.' On that first night, soldiers were seen on television smiling and hugging demonstrators. Tanks paraded scrawls that read 'Down with Mubarak!' and the demonstrators chanted: 'The People and the Army are One Hand!'. The message was unmistakable. Even before the military knew how massive or persistent the uprising was, it was here to see it through.

At the end of this bloody day, U.S. President Barack Obama held a press conference expressing concern at the use of violence against peaceful protestors. Still, Mubarak had to try. The seasoned dictator mixed sticks with carrots during his first address to the nation after the revolt, close to midnight on January 28. A curfew was declared in all the major cities, but the President dismissed the 'businessmen cabinet' and appointed a Vice-President for the first time in thirty years. The apprehensive demonstrators were soon frustrated when it turned out that the Vice-President was no other than the fearsome intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, and that the new cabinet was formed under Mubarak's intimate friend Ahmed Shafiq, former commander of the air force and civil aviation minster in the old cabinet. To add insult to injury, fifteen members of the just dismissed cabinet retained their positions, and only the Interior Minister and a handful of monopoly capitalists were removed. Clearly, Mubarak was not prepared to go an inch beyond what he thought was absolutely necessary. Demonstrators declared a 'permanent' sit-in in Tahrir and other major squares around Egypt until Mubarak stepped down. Hardcore activists camped continuously in the central squares (Tahrir Square for example was occupied by no less than 50,000 at all times), but during the day their ranks were swelled by tens of thousands of citizens. Field hospitals, open-air theaters, stages for singing and speechmaking, gigantic television screens, food vendors, a garbage collection service, and even barbershops were set up for the comfort of the demonstrators. With their flags, placards, and tents, the revolutionaries were prepared for the long haul. From this point on, it was a waiting game.

On January 30, the police cautiously deployed its forces but strayed away from hotspots, preferring to let the military handle the situation. The next day, the high command issued its first communiqué asserting that the armed forces shall not use force to repress the demonstrators. The Speaker of Parliament admitted that during a meeting he attended with the President and his top aides, the Defense Minister made it clear that: "the soldiers are not going to strike against

demonstrators; that they were there to protect not assault them" (Sourur in Muslim 2011c: 9). As one member of SCAF later explained, "The armed forces took charge before the President stepped down in accordance with the communiqué that stated that the military acknowledges the legitimacy of the [demands of the] Egyptian people" (Osman 2011: 8).

So the following day, Mubarak had to try harder. In an emotional speech, he promised not to run or allow his son in the coming elections, and reminded citizens of his patriotic role during the October War in 1973. He also hinted at fundamental changes in the ruling party and a thorough investigation of police responsibility for the violent repression of protests. Many were swayed by his sentimental plea. Less than twenty-four hours later, however, NDP- and police-hired goons dashed into Tahrir on camels and horses, whipping protestors and chasing them around the square, and in a few hours more regime supporters appeared on the rooftops of the surrounding buildings showering demonstrators below with Molotov cocktails. The revolutionaries fought back with hastily built barricades and stones. After a sixteen-hour battle, the attackers withdrew. The notorious 'Battle of the Camel' incident on February 2 further convinced Egyptians that Mubarak had to go. But instead of stepping down, the President tried his best to appease the revolutionaries through political concessions: the Vice-President was directed to negotiate with the organizers of the revolt; a committee to amend the constitution was set up; NDP Secretary-General and leading cadres, including the President's son Gamal and his chief lieutenant Ahmed Ezz, were removed from the ruling party, the infamous Policies Committee was dissolved, and a reformist figure was appointed to overhaul the entire party; the Interior Minister and the businessmen-ministers of the old cabinet were banned from travel, their assets were frozen, and they were interrogated by the General Prosecutor; a handful of activists, including Wael Ghonim, were released (the latter gave a stirring television interview, breaking down in tears toward the end, and thus winning more public sympathy for the revolt); the Internet service returned; and it was announced that Mubarak was traveling to

Germany for medical checkups. But the protestors remained adamant. And beginning from February 8, daily marches and sit-ins were supplemented by strikes in public and private companies and factories. At the same time, governments all around the world, with the notable exception of Israel and Saudi Arabia, called on the regime to submit to popular demands. Then on February 10, military legend and staunch regime opponent Saad al-Din al-Shazly, chief of staff during the 1973 war, passed away. Sobbing demonstrators marched around Tahrir yelling out his name and offering condolences to the teary-eyed officers that surrounded the square.

On that same day, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) convened without its Supreme Commander (the President) in what was perceived as a soft coup. Later that night, the state television announced that the President was going to deliver an important speech. CIA director Leon Panetta said in Congress that Mubarak was going to step down. Demonstrators prepared for the party of a lifetime. Instead, the President gave a pedantic and anticlimactic address, ending it with his decision to temporarily delegate his powers to the Vice-President. This last part of the address was hardly heard, as the stunned demonstrators began screaming and hurling shoes at the television screens in Tahrir Square. As soon as it was over, hundreds of thousands marched to the Presidential Palace, some 40 kilometers away from Downtown, and were surrounding it by early dawn February 11. This was it. Either Mubarak was going to order the army and security to liquidate the revolution using all means necessary, effectively causing a bloodbath, or he would be pushed by SCAF to resign. Later in the afternoon, a helicopter transported the President and his family to the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh, and the Vice-President announced that Mubarak has surrendered authority to SCAF. The high command instantly declared its intention to withdraw from politics after a six-month transition period, which would supposedly end with the passing on power to an elected authority. After eighteen days of popular defiance and over one thousand martyrs, a new chapter has begun.

Despite the fact that perhaps twelve million Egyptians participated in the eighteen-day uprising, decades of police repression ruled out the possibility that an organized revolutionary movement could have emerged to lead the way. If the military had not sided with the people, it is doubtful that the revolt would have persisted long enough to convince the political leadership it had to step down. And if intra-regime relations were not volatile due to the simmering power struggle within the ruling bloc, the military would not have turned its back on its political and security partners at this critical juncture. After having been sidelined by the security and political apparatuses for years, the military saw the revolt as an opportunity to outflank its partners and get back on top. Now that the military was (at least temporarily) back on the political saddle, how did it exploit its new position?

In the months that followed Mubarak's overthrow, the military took several bold foreign policy steps in a clear indicator of its frustration with Egypt's diminished geopolitical role, and its determination to project regional power. These steps included allowing two Iranian vessels (rumored to be carrying missiles to Lebanon) to sail through the Suez Canal in March 2011 for the first time since the Islamic Revolution, despite vehement opposition from the U.S. and Israel (and repeated the same move again in February 2012); sending popular delegations to Tehran to mend Egyptian-Iranian relations; dispatching the new intelligence director to Syria and Qatar (two countries Mubarak almost considered enemy states) to explore means of resuming cooperation; opening up the borders with Hamas-controlled Gaza against Israeli protests; brokering national accord between Hamas and Fatah after the old regime's unconditional support for the latter had stalled its prospects for years; brokering a prisoners' swap that freed over a thousand Palestinian activists for one Israeli solider; encouraging public discussion of the necessity of reversing the de-militarization of Sinai and

amending the Egyptian-Israeli peace accords; arresting an alleged Mossad officer (who also happened to be an American citizen) for the first time in decades, and trading him for Egyptian detainees in Israeli prisons; raiding foreign NGOs and banning nineteen Americans from travel for receiving illegal funding (though it had to release them under U.S. pressure two months later); and other similarly controversial steps.

One remarkable incident is the military response to the killing of six Egyptian soldiers in Sinai by Israelis on August 17. The military insisted on an official Israeli apology, and received one. Although this does not display particular bravado, one should note that between September 2004 and August 2011, 22 Egyptians were killed in similar border incidents with little complaint from Mubarak's diplomatic corps. Moreover, in an angry rejoinder published the following month in the military's mouthpiece *Al-Nasr*, Major General Abd al-Mon'em Kato warned that Israel could no longer act with impunity, and attacked the U.S. for "offering all its support to Israel…as usual," adding that the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement grant each party the right to revise the articles governing the size of troops in Sinai, "even though," he added indignantly, "the old regime never utilized this right" (Kato 2011: 14-15). Even though these erratic endeavors did not add up to much, they at least reflected the high command's desire to rock the boat a little after the political leadership had taken the wind out of Egypt's sail for over three decades.

On the home front, however, the military acted much more hesitantly. During its first two months in power, SCAF was too timid and cautious in isolating the powerful players in the old regime. It required court orders to dissolve parliament, municipal councils, and the ruling party; it only put regime leaders (including the President, his family, and top political and security aides) on trial for financial corruption and criminal charges rather than political charges; it winked at demonstrators to raid State Security headquarters and branches before its operatives could shred incriminating documents, but then quickly directed its troops to protect police stations and the

Interior Ministry, and authorized limited security purges, which stuck to the letter of law, and cashiered officers close to retirement age; and instead of annulling the 1971 Permanent Constitution, it reissued it (after sweeping amendments) in the form of a Constitutional Declaration approved via popular referendum.

But it is not just that reforms were stubbornly slow and partial. More unsettling, was the fact that the Military Police progressively resorted to violence to repress popular demands for more radical changes, beginning with the forced dispersion of Tahrir Sqaure sit-ins in March 9 and April 8. Worse still, the military soon unleashed the Interior Ministry against demonstrators, starting from June 28 when the families of the revolt martyrs were assaulted because they insisted on faster trials, as well as endorsed the use of security-hired thugs (posing as SCAF supporters) to entrap and manhandle a march to the Defense Ministry on July 23. Thereafter, military-security violence against demonstrators became systematic, occurring once a month – as regular as a clock – and has followed more or less the same pattern: police assaults on demonstrators in conjunction with or following provocations by hired thugs; the rallying of thousands of activists and common folk to repulse the attack; the call on the Military Police to intervene to protect key installations; and the inevitable dragging of the military into the fray. State brutality reached a particularly high pitch in the last two months of 2011 when nerve gas (in addition to your run-of-the-mill tear gas) and live ammunition was used against demonstrators and close to 100 activists were killed. And then again in February 2012, when pro-revolution soccer spectators (the so-called Ultras, who regularly protected demonstrators against police brutality) were assaulted during a game in Port Said by thugs (killing perhaps 70 and injuring dozens) while security forces chained the stadium gates to prevent anyone from escaping. The military also turned a blind eye (and sometime participated in) the detention and torture of revolutionary activists, and resorted to gray and black propaganda and character

assassination tactics to defame them (as in July 22, when SCAF members openly accused the April 6 Youth Movement of being funded and trained in subversion by foreign agents).

In short, although SCAF decapitated the political and security institutions, it refused to carry out the revolutionary changes that its forerunners resorted to in 1952 to reconfigure the regime. Assistant Defense Minister for Legal Affairs has made it clear in an interview with the daily *Al-Masry Al-Youm* on March 17, five weeks after Mubarak stepped down, that the high command shunned politics and that – unlike the Free Officers – SCAF rules in the name of the military as a whole, not as a revolutionary actor:

> **Some believe that the armed forces took charge by virtue of revolutionary legitimacy, but what happened was that…when the armed forces found the country collapsing, they intervened by virtue of being the only power on the ground capable of protecting the country. They managed the country's affairs in accordance with a declaration based on Article 88 of the [1971] constitution, which holds the military responsible for the security and protection of the country… What happened in 1952 in fact had been revolutionary legitimacy, because the Free Officers…carried out the revolution and seized power… Now we have a different situation, where those who revolted on January 25, 2011 were not the ones who seized power** (Osman 2011: 8).

What the general did not explain was *why* the army could not pursue a course similar to that of the Free Officers Movement in July 1952. Why has the military's domestic performance been so circumscribed and confusing, with one step forward and several steps back? Is this proof of army complacency, or simply a symptom of the conservative and paternalistic 'military mind', which is naturally loath to revolutionary changes?[34]

[34] The paternalistic attitude of the army was evident in Field Marshal Hussein Tantawy's comment that "the revolutionaries are our sons and brothers, but maybe they lack a clear and comprehensive understanding of the situation" (quoted in Tawfik 2011: 1). This attitude reached comic proportions when one SCAF member tried to justify the council's harsh response to demonstrators as follows: The relationship between the military and the revolutionaries "resembles a father whose son goes to school, and he encourages him to study every once in a while, saying: 'Study my dear for my sake'. Then the exam time draws near, and he has to yell at him: 'Attend to your studies!'" (Mamduh Shahin in Bahnasawy 2011: 7).

One the one hand, the objective interests of the officer corps is not necessarily inconsistent with the revolution's democratic ideals. Contrasting the status of armies under authoritarianism and democracy makes this much clear. Dictators are typically suspicious of their militaries, and so despite the privileges they offer them, they keep officers on a tight leash through constant security surveillance, promoting loyalists regardless of merit, fostering divisiveness within the ranks, preempting the rise of popular generals, weeding out independent-minded figures, and ignoring military input during policy formulation – strategies that undermine professionalism and combat readiness. Many democracies, by contrast, shower their armies with privileges and social distinctions, celebrate military heroism, encourage retired generals to pursue lucrative careers in the private sector or to run for office, and involve the chiefs of staff in developing national security goals and defense doctrines. It is not a coincidence that the armies of democratic states repeatedly proved their worth on the battlefield against armies of autocracies. The truth is that armies tend to thrive in democracies and wither under the shadow of authoritarianism. Most importantly, democracy removes once and for all the threat of an entrenched security apparatus charged with taming the armed forces to satisfy the dictator's insatiable appetite for control.

However, striving to improve one's position within the pecking order of an authoritarian regime is one thing, and transforming society to maximize the overall interest of one's institution is another. The latter is a pioneering feat evidently beyond the grasp of a military caste that cannot even begin to imagine what free governance looks like. Yet it is not only a failure of the imagination that accounts for the officers' timidity towards democratic reform. A closer look reveals that there are three reasons that held the military back from fully endorsing the revolution's demands or dashing confidently into politics as it had done in 1952, and all have to do with the security apparatus.

To start with, the sealing of the armed forces from all political currents, through placing officers under constant surveillance and removing politicized elements, prevented the creation of a movement with the daring and political imagination of the Free Officers within the ranks. Hence, those who came to the helm had no alternative vision for Egypt's future, or even an adequate understanding of its political terrain and socioeconomic complications. Secondly, contrary to the rudimentary and malleable security infrastructure that fell into the coup makers' laps in 1952, the military now faced an overbearing and hydra-headed establishment capable of resisting a takeover from above with great ferocity. The menace represented by today's Interior Ministry was further enhanced by the fact that police officers have become too closely wedded to public officials, businessmen, and petty (and not-so-petty) criminals to go down without stirring intolerable havoc. Thirdly, the extent of economic distortion, social inequality, and political deprivation produced by the old regime compels the military to think twice about the forces it might unleash by opening up political life, and the turmoil that might result if security organs were weakened to the point where they could not check this popular stampede. Especially relevant here is the anarchic and mind-bogglingly polarized political scene SCAF inherited, where (over a year after the uprising) no recognized leadership emerged and no concrete movement crystallized to harness popular energy and negotiate on the people's behalf – thanks to decades of security preemption and fragmentation of opposition. Neither the uneasy alliance of ideologically opposed activists who spearheaded the revolt, nor the Muslim Brothers – the large opposition movement waiting in the winds to reap the gains – were up to the task of directing the uprising they helped generate. The absence of a reliable revolutionary vanguard that credibly represents the demands of the uprising and is capable of controlling the street (in cooperation with the military) has added to SCAF's fear that if the dam of autocracy is broken, a sea of angry people will flood the country. By the same token, the failure of the democratic activists to recognize the potentially revolutionary role of the army has prevented

them from considering a real partnership with the officers. Liberals continued to hold dogmatically to the axiom of civilian control, and leftists saw the military only as a conservative institution in the service of the ruling class – both positions, one must add, were based mostly on theoretical clichés (and unsubstantiated news reports and hearsay) rather than on an accurate analysis of the specific situation and grievances of the military in the Egyptian ruling bloc.

SCAF therefore flinched from taking on the security organs and opted for the safer route: to side with the police, even if it meant wasting a rare opportunity to dismantle the authoritarian regime while preserving its own power and privileges within a democratic framework. Little did it realize that by cooperating with the police, the military has played into the hands of the security establishment. Interior Ministry officials were well aware that the army does in fact have a choice. Both democracies and autocracies have external enemies and therefore need strong armies, but only dictatorships, with their natural obsession over 'the enemy within,' sanction unbridled domestic repression. If Egypt became a democracy it can still take pride in its military, but it will surely abolish the inflated prerogatives of the security organs. So although military interests dictated the restructuring of a security apparatus that has been employed against it for decades, and although these interests did not necessarily contradict with democratic rule, political inexperience and fear that internal instability might drag the army into protracted policing activities, prevented SCAF from conquering and streamline the security forces, preferring to delegate this thankless task to an elected civilian authority that could carry it out whenever circumstances allowed – if ever. SACF dared not open Pandora's box.

This position has tied the military's destiny to the security organs. Those who chanted 'The People and the Military are One Hand!' are now crying furiously: 'The People Demand the Execution of the Field Marshal!' Praise for the patriotism and integrity of the armed forces have turned into sour denunciation by activists of the corrupt and complacent officer corps. The

international acclaim for the military's professionalism gave way to condemnation of the appalling policies of the high command, and threats to suspend American aid. Even non-assuming citizens, who have not yet warmed up to the revolt, have come to regard the military with suspicion (though they might still support it as an antidote to civil unrest). In short, the public image of the armed forces has deteriorated from an esteemed partner in the revolution to the avowed leader of the counter-revolution. With eyes wide shut, the army has crossed over to the other side of the barricade, and joined its most ruthless competitor for power: the security apparatus. Today, as demonstrators have come to realize, 'The Military and the Police are One Hand!' Now the army can hardly alter the power formula created by Sadat and maintained by Mubarak, whereby the security dominates, its political auxiliaries enjoy status and wealth, and the military watches passively from a faraway corner.

There was, of course, another unspoken of option: a coup or some kind of breakdown in the chain of command. Yet officers and soldiers have remained united behind their commanders for a number of reasons: first, the absence of a revolutionary movement inside or outside the ranks; second, past frustration with the top brass had sprung from the feeling that it was too subservient to politicians, which it no longer is; third, army members do not see their leaders as devious or complacent: the revolt demanded democracy, and SCAF has indeed organized free elections– 'What else do revolutionaries want?' they keep asking. Also, violent repression of civilians has been relatively limited and carried out mostly by the Military Police, and so occasions for fraternization have been few. Furthermore, the army does not suffer from ethnic, tribal, sectarian, or social divisions. Its members come from a fairly homogeneous background. And although there is a clear distinction between the middle class corps and lower class (mostly peasant) conscripts and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), historically this has not produced class tensions. Conscripts serve for three years before returning to their respective provinces, and consider their term an unfortunate

yet temporary ordeal. The only recorded conscript mutiny (in 1986) occurred in the police not the military, and was triggered by rumors that their term of service was going to be extended. As for NCOs, joining the service is the best road to social status and mobility, or at least a safety net against poverty and humiliation. They might have had financial complains every now and then, but there is no evidence of them clustering into a coherent opposition front. It is true that the impromptu politicization that followed the revolt might precipitate a coup at some point, but even in that case those who come to power will probably be as politically clueless as the rest of their colleagues.

The Security: 'Bloodied but Unbowed'

With so much power at hand, one must wonder, what paralyzed Egypt's all-powerful security institution during the revolt? The evidence so far suggests that it was the arrogance of power that infected the security apparatus during the final years of the regime that caused it to dismiss signs of an imminent uprising. The always-sober State Security Investigations Sector was not really caught off guard. On January 18, 2011, SSIS chief submitted a report to the Interior Minister warning of the repetition of the Tunisian scenario in Egypt, and proposed practical steps to avert a popular revolt, such as relieving citizens of some of the new economic burdens, halting (temporarily) illegal acquisitions of public land, and reducing the level of police violence (Report in Hanafy 2011: 10). But an overconfident Interior Minister ignored the report, and as a result, the ministry's striking arm, the Central Security Forces, were neither briefed regarding the anticipated uprising nor equipped to confront it. In the city of Suez, for instance, where some of the bloodiest confrontations took place during the revolt, CSF chief complained in an official memo that his men were not prepared to meet the massive demonstrations because SSIS reports "were not taken seriously" (Report in Khaled 2011: 7).

Expectedly, the overconfident minister was in a state of shock. For years, security men have been dealing with scattered activists and ineffective opposition groups, but never expected a mass uprising, which they believed would need extensive – and easily detectable – preparations. After his arrest, Interior Minister Habib al-Adly confessed to the General Prosecutor how bewildered he and his men were:

> **We met at the Interior Ministry on January 24, [one day] before the first outbreak [of demonstrations], and again on January 27, one day before the Day of Rage on Friday, but none of us foresaw the size or persistence of the demonstrators, we never thought we might be outnumbered… We had no plan to deal with such [momentous] events…the troops did not have the know-how and training to conduct a multiple-day operation… I decided to inform the President that we must resort to the armed forces… Nobody expected demonstrations with this size and those numbers. This was unprecedented. Nobody could have expected what happened** (Interrogation transcript in al-Seginy and Donya 2011: 4).

Nobody indeed. In an interview with the daily *Al-Ahram* on the morning of the planned demonstrations on January 25, this same minister assured citizens that "those who plan to take to the streets have no weight…that the security force was capable of deterring them…[and] that those who hope for a possible repeat of the Tunisian scenario…[were] intellectual adolescents" (Genedi 2011: 149).[35] Thus, one of the main reasons why the uprising succeeded was the fact that demonstrators had no coherent plans or an organization that could have alerted the security agencies. They coordinated on site, rather than beforehand, and made their decisions one day at a time. And after the revolt broke out, there was no well-defined revolutionary movement to be dismantled, no particular leaders to be detained, and no detailed schemes to be uncovered. In short, there was no specific object to monitor and repress.

Moreover, the quality of the riot control forces was evidently low. The absence of effective opposition movements made them sloppy to the point of delegating repression to hired thugs (as

[35] Full interview with editor-in chief Osama Saraya in *Al-Ahram* 45340: 3. Cairo (1/25/2011).

discussed in the previous chapter). The CSF remained until the very end "poorly trained, paid, and equipped and…[composed of] lower-grade conscripts" (Cordesman 2006: 187). During the interrogations that followed the uprising, al-Adly admitted that he failed to suppress the demonstrators because "the CSF became exhausted… They were only used to dispersing limited demonstrations using batons, or at most water hoses, tear gas canisters, and rubber bullets… They [panicked because they] were outnumbered for the first time" (Interrogation transcript in Al-Seginy and Donya 2011: 4).

One month after the President was deposed, the top ministry officials were arrested for issuing orders to shoot demonstrators and abusing power to amass wealth. The list included the Interior Minister, the heads of the SSIS, the CSF, general security, as well as the chiefs of security in five governorates, and fourteen high-ranking officers. Curiously, the Interior Minister's top lieutenants were all members of the Class of 1971 at the Police Academy, that is the year Sadat began his empowerment of the police force. The post-revolt Interior Minister issued Ministerial Decree 509 of 2011, which replaced SSIS with a new agency: the National Security Sector. The old SSIS leadership was supposedly purged: 500 officers (out of 1,100) were dismissed, including 23 generals, while 66 brigadier generals were transferred to other police departments (Al-Badry 2011: 1). These purges, however, were cosmetic – mostly applied to officers in peripheral positions or eligible for retirement.

The police then made its grand comeback on June 28, 2011 when CSF units assaulted protestors in Tahrir Square, who were calling for more resolute measures against the old regime. Police violence was not just excessive, with the generous use of new and more devastating tear gas bombs (made in the USA in May 2011 – America's contribution to democracy in post-Mubarak Egypt), but it was also accompanied by verbal abuses and threats that the police was determined to punish the people for what they did. After an all-night street fight, however, where over 1,000

civilians were injured, the police was forced to retreat under pressure to the Interior Ministry's fortified headquarters, and Military Police units soon cordoned the demonstrators. The incident sparked a second uprising, the July 8 Second Day of Rage, which began with a million-man-march on Friday followed by a three-week sit-in in Tahrir. SCAF responded by reshuffling the powerless civilian cabinet and authorizing the purge of 669 senior police officers, including 505 generals, 82 brigadier generals, 82 lieutenant colonels, in addition to transferring 54 junior officers accused of killing demonstrators to administrative duties pending trial, and rotating another 4,000 officers (Farouk 2011: 1).

But the fight was far from over. This tug-of-war continued over the next few months, making two facts abundantly clear: first, that the embittered security apparatus, despite the purges and humiliation, still hopes to weather the revolt and regain its privileged position by creating a rift between the people and the army – the always helpful divide-and-rule strategy; and second, that the police strategy has so far succeeded because of the army's cautious attitude and apprehension over the possibility of domestic chaos. Clearly, these security-instigated episodes have managed to entrap the armed forces on a spiraling course of violence aimed at liquidating the revolutionary camp.

More important, symbolically, was that no security official has been held responsible for killing demonstrators during the revolt itself. On June 2, 2012, a judge sentenced Mubarak and his last interior minister to live in prison for failing to protect the demonstrators—a political rather than a criminal charge—but was forced to release the leaders of the security establishment for lack of evidence. Despite all that has passed during and after the revolt, the security apparatus emerged miraculously unscathed.

Wither the Political Apparatus?

If the January revolt and its aftermath have proven anything, it is that the security apparatus was not just the main supporter of the regime; it was the throbbing heart of the regime itself. Without the rigging of elections, the suppression of civil society, the intimidation of political contenders, the containment of mass unrest, and the close monitoring of the armed forces, the political apparatus was likely to crumble just as it had done after the Interior Ministry was temporarily defeated by the revolt. As soon as the police withdrew from the scene, the political component of Egypt's ruling bloc, with its ruling party, state agencies, established norms and regulations, and foreign alliances could hardly put up a fight. The President, his family, and top associates were arrested; the National Democratic Party was dissolved; party leaders, cabinet ministers (including the prime minister), speakers of the upper and lower houses of parliament, and their business allies (starting with steel tycoon and political mastermind Ahmed Ezz) were taken into custody and their financial assets were frozen; regime loyalists in the press, the universities, and the state bureaucracy were purged; and the existing political map was scrapped in a matter of weeks with almost no resistance. Regime cadres denounced their old masters and scrambled to join new parties; the most stubborn among them – encouraged by the partial return of their police protectors – could only hope to stir enough trouble for SCAF to leave them alone, rather than re-empower them. It became clear that the political apparatus, as exploitive and despotic as it was, had no power of its own; it was wholly reliant on its security lieutenants for survival. And this is why it is only natural to expect that as long as this institution persists there remains a high probability that future elected officials will be corrupted or blackmailed into submitting to its omnipotence.[36]

[36] 'Exhibit A' here is how fast the Interior Minister, appointed in March 2011 to restructure the ministry had been coopted. His complacency, which triggered massive demonstrations and a three-week sit-in in July, could not have been more blatant than in his interview with *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, on September 19, where he mocked the million-man-marches in Tahrir Square by claiming that the square cannot hold more than 300,000 people; deprived hundreds of martyrs of their special status by arguing that those who died in confrontations with the police were simply thugs, and that only those killed by sniper fire in Tahrir Square were true martyrs; and then ended by insisting that those snipers were foreign agents who crossed the borders days before the revolt, thus absolving the ministry of any responsibility. The supposedly

But now that the Mubarak political apparatus had been overthrown, the search for those who could fill the vacuum began in earnest. Out of the ruins of the old political temple emerged an incredibly chaotic political scene – thanks to decades of police repression. The leaderless character of the revolt might have contributed to its success, but it proved quite problematic once the dust began to settle down. Islamists, who claim to represent a critical mass of the population (a claim that has been substantiated by their winning 70 percent of parliament seats) were divided into two great camps: the fundamentalists (*salafis*), historically known for their political passiveness (except for a small militant fringe, whose leaders were imprisoned by Mubarak); and the Muslim Brothers, the prominent eight-decade old sociopolitical movement. Fundamentalists now debated whether it was appropriate for them to descend from their moral high ground into the political swamp. Those who agreed to participate in politics organized themselves into more than four different parties, and those who refused still added a political twist to their televangelist role. The Brotherhood was equally fragmented. In the weeks following the revolt, the conservative leadership jostled to keep its members in check, but reformist cadres (especially young ones) argued that since the movement was finally out of the political can, the iron rule of 'obedience' was no longer necessary. Although the central leadership formed an official political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party, hundreds broke off and created three other political parties, or joined factions that had already done so a few years ago.

Despite their fragmentation, Islamists have all accepted SCAF's roadmap (which called for elections in January 2012) without reservations, and refused to endorse revolutionary marches and calls for reigniting the revolution. If they can effortlessly win elections, why risk confrontations with the military. In return, the military and security allowed Islamists to consolidate their power over

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'revolutionary' minister concluded by warning Egyptians that whoever dares to attack a police station or other public installations will be shot mercilessly in the heart. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* 2654: 13. (Cairo 9/19/2011).

parliament. The Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party secured 45.7 percent of the vote, and the largest fundamentalist party, al-Nur, won 24.6 percent. This certainly had nothing to do with army and police officers' political outlook or religiosity, but rather with the potential use of Islamists in stabilizing the political situation. Islamists were not only historically used to being cast into subordinate roles despite their popularity; and not only is their understanding of politics limited to trying to make themselves useful to whoever is in authority; and not only does their 'religious determinism' push them to prioritize spiritual over political struggle in the hope for divine intervention;[37] but they have two specific traits that render them particularly useful to both officers and security men. From a military standpoint, geopolitical powers (whether regional or international) will never completely trust Islamists at the helm, and will always prefer having a prudent guardian on their side to check their excesses – and whose better and more responsible than the high command. In addition, of course, Islamism's grand geopolitical designs could potentially furnish the army with the kind of rhetoric needed to expand its influence, maintain its privileges, and play a more active regional role.

Likewise, the security institution recognized that Islamists could be made repression-friendly. Years of underground operations have made them paranoid and willing to see conspiracies everywhere, and an agenda for strict moral reform demands constant policing. Hence, they might appreciate expansive monitoring and law enforcement organs and turn a blind eye to the transgressions naturally associated with them. Ideological movements by definition (regardless of how pragmatic or opportunistic their members are) allow themselves exceptional prerogatives to be able to accomplish the wholesale transformation of society they aspire towards. And the more

[37] This attitude may be traced to their 'religious determinism' thesis: a peculiar philosophy that demands piety of its members in return for political rewards. Good Muslims, in this interpretation, need not confront authority; power will fall on their lap if they exert themselves on the moral field (with some minimal effort on the worldly as well) so that they could deserve divine grace. The 2011 revolt is seen as a prime example. Non-suspecting revolutionaries challenged political power, forcing a new leadership (the military) to hold free elections, which the Islamists – despite their minor role in the revolt – won by a landslide; divine intervention indeed.

society proves recalcitrant and unwilling to change along the lines of their imagined utopia, the more doses of despotism are justified to force society to fall in line. This is why they are not fundamentally opposed to authoritarianism, as long as they are not its victims.

So far, Islamists have proved they were up to the task. They have turned their backs on several opportunities to spearhead the revolt, as Islamists had done in Iran in 1979, and despite the turmoil that has embroiled the country, their strategy for change remains pretty much the same. They believe in using political gains – such as their landslide victory in parliament – as platforms for propagating and popularizing their cultural agenda and legitimizing their role as representatives of Islam, in the hopes that eventually all Egyptians will commit to their ideological project and submit to their absolute command. Only then will they grip power firmly and shove away all political competitors. In their view, patience is the key to victory; real triumph will only come when Egyptians rally under their banner out of ideological conviction, not merely as a matter of preference. Right now, they need to pass with flying colors this probation period (which tests their commitment to democracy) and pursue their campaign for cultural transformation without antagonizing the military, the security, or the people. Eventually, they would be in a position to stand on their own two feet and overpower the military and security institutions. Will this strategy work? Maybe. Frictions between officers and Islamists over presidential elections and the drafting of a new constitution show that their tactical alliance is tension-ridden – Islamists are justly concerned the military will sell them out (as Nasser did in 1954), and the officers are worried Islamists might be tempted to monopolize power and push them aside. But then again, there is a chance that Islamists might be steered by the military and the police to play the role they have always excelled in: the role of catalyst to those in power. Once again, they might find themselves on the wrong side of history.

Secular groups were no less diversified than Islamists, but their influence in the street was much weaker. This has been demonstrated by the fact that their concerted campaign against the

Islamist-endorsed referendum on the Constitutional Declaration in March 2011 convinced only 23 percent of voters, and their gains in parliament were equally humble. Secular activists drew legitimacy from their role in sparking the revolt, which Islamists joined reluctantly later; that they could provide the new regime with more modern and democratic statesmen; and that they had more international sympathy. Yet the months that followed the revolt witnessed continued friction between them and the army because of SCAF's restrained attitude towards the old regime and its insistence on referendums and elections (which secularists cannot win) as the only means to reform. Also, the fact that both liberals and leftists were openly skeptical about the value of maintaining a sizeable and expensive military force certainly did not endear them to the high command. This all suggests that in the absence of another major shock – possibly the result of the amalgamation of local resistances by a now seemingly fearless citizenry – non-Islamist forces will not be able to accomplish through the ballot box what they have failed to accomplish through revolution.

One could thus conclude that in the months that followed the revolt, the political balance of forces has been a balance of weakness. The military's abandonment of the old regime, and the police's temporary defeat exposed how weak the political component of the regime had been, and the opposition forces that dominated the scene after the revolt proved to be even weaker than the one that has been overthrown. The two effective players remain the military and security establishment. And a new round of struggle is about to begin.

It remains to be seen who will win the race to the summit – will Egypt once again become military-dominated, as it started in the 1950s or will it continue to function as a police state, as it has been since the late 1970s? One thing is for sure: bickering between them has been momentarily shelved as they both found themselves driven into an alliance of necessity to stabilize the political situation through undercutting radical forces and ushering into the transfigured ruling bloc a reform-minded political partner.

A Second Republic?

The tensions and contradictions of the transitional period came into sharp focus in the summer of 2012. As Egyptians prepared for the country's first competitive presidential elections, divisions within the revolutionary camp reached tragic proportions as it failed to nominate a single representative of the revolution, producing instead five presidential candidates. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood presented its own candidate, the leader of the Freedom and Justice Party Mohamed Morsi, and the remnants of the old regime clustered around Air Marshal Ahmed Sahfiq, former air force commander and Mubarak's last prime minister. In the first round, held during the last week of May, Egyptians voted decisively for the revolution—yet, alas, their votes were scattered among the five revolutionary nominees, thus failing to carry any of them to the second round. The runner-ups, the Islamist and old regime candidates, now competed for the votes of Egypt's 51 million registered voters.

In mid-June, however, several developments ensured military supremacy in the new regime, regardless of the winner. On June 14, the Constitutional Court dissolved parliament citing a flaw in the elections law. Three days before the second round of the presidential elections, scheduled for June 16 and 17, the Minister of Justice granted the Military Police and Military Intelligence the right to arrest citizens, thus legalizing their domestic security responsibilities. And an hour after the ballot stations for the presidential elections closed, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces issued a Complementary Constitutional Declaration reclaiming legislative power pending the election of a new Parliament; securing a veto over the drafting of the new Constitution; maintaining exclusive authority over all decisions pertaining to the armed forces; and requiring the elected president to seek its permission before declaring war.

The most significant development, though, was SCAF's reviving of Egypt's National Defense Council (NDC), first created by Nasser in 1957 to decide how to confront national security threats (both external and internal). The old Council convened at the invitation of the president and had only two military representatives: the general commander and the war minister. Since the president and his successors usually took unilateral decisions without much consultation, the Council rarely met, and soon fell into disuse. SCAF's latest rendition, introduced on June 18 via Decree 348 of 2012, was drastically different. The Council has eleven military representatives and only six civilians, including the president.[38] It could be convened at the wish of the majority of the members and takes decisions by absolute majority. This practically means that the NDC could assemble and pass resolutions without the president, and—by the same token—cannot do so if officers chose to ignore the president's call.

After a fiercely competitive election, in which only half of the registered voters participated, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohamed Morsi, won by 51.7 percent of the vote becoming the first civilian, the first Islamist, and first popularly elected president in Egypt's history. Islamists, with military and security blessing, have come close to assuming the role of the third partner in the country's ruling bloc, that of the political apparatus. But with a reinvigorated military, and a security establishment kept intact despite revolutionary turmoil, the Muslim Brotherhood has a strategic choice to make. If it decides to counterbalance the two coercive institutions in a bid to dominate the regime, then Egypt will probably be headed for more political unrest, with the outcome still uncertain. If it follows in the footsteps of the old regime and allies itself with the security forces, then Egypt's authoritarian regime would likely be reproduced, albeit with an Islamic flavor that adds

[38] The military representatives are: the defense minister; assistant defense minister (for the topic being discussed at the NDC); chief of staff; three service cheifs; chief of operations; secretary-general of the defense ministry; chief justice of the armed forces; military intelligence director; and civilian intelligence director (usually an army officer). The civilian representatives are: the president; the prime minister; Speaker of Parliament; ministers of interior, foreign affairs, and treasury.

to its legitimacy. Finally, if the Brotherhood negotiates separate (yet overlapping) spheres of influence with the armed forces, whereby the latter would have final say in military and national security affairs, while civilians would retain control over political life in general, then Egypt's nascent democracy might be gradually consolidated and expanded—as in Turkey and other cases where the military (as an institution not a political junta) maintains a decisive influence over "high politics" without necessarily undermining multi-party politics.

What one has to look forward to, therefore, is the unfolding of yet another round of struggle between the three members of the reconstituted power triangle: the military determined to regain its long-lost dominance; the security establishment adamant to keep its leverage; and the new political partner striving to establish its position among these mighty players. And while this outcome might not seem gratifying for those who sacrificed their lives to liberate themselves from the grip of these powerful institutions, it is what we are left with in light of the existing balance of forces.

PART [III]

The Last Great Revolution: Iran's Royal Absolutism in the Modern Age

How could he then miscarry, having…so many trained soldiers…[and] ammunitions in places fortified?

Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 1681

The Iranian revolution earned a double entry in revolution literature: it was the first Islamic revolution in the modern age, and the last 'great revolution' of our time. This is why it was natural for every aspect of it to be so well documented and analyzed. A little less natural was the early consensus regarding its causes. While rival thesis and revisionist histories are still being advanced today to explain the great democratic and communist revolutions, in the Iranian case scholars agree—albeit with different degrees of emphasis—that two main factors, and a third complementary one, produced the revolution.

First, Iran suffered from uneven development. Early works by Fred Halliday (1979), Amin Saikal (1980), Ervand Abrahamian (1982), later ones by Moshiri Farrokh (1991), and Mohsen Milani (1994), as well as recent ones by Vanessa Martin (2007) and Abbas Milani (2011) underlined the disjunction between Iran's economic and political progress, which resulted in a failure to absorb the political ambitions of a rising middle class—an explanation that mirrors Alexander De Tocqueville's analysis of revolution in his home country. Best summarized by Martin (2007: 24), Iran had become "an economic giant but a political dwarf." A rapidly modernizing society starved of democracy was bound to explode. Military and political experts with firsthand experience with Iran endorse this view. General Robert E. Huyser, America's special envoy to the Iranian military days before the regime collapsed, blamed the attempt to "impose twentieth-century industrialization on top of a medieval concept of rule" (1986: 294). Likewise, U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who saw Iran turn Islamic on his watch, ascribed the revolt to the "fateful conflict between the effects of rapid socioeconomic modernization and the consequences of a highly traditional and excessively personal system of

power" (1983: 366). Two variants within this same line of argument stress how the regime's intervention in the economy, as opposed to the "depoliticized, abstract, and invisible hand of the market," provided a visible target for aggrieved Iranians (Parsa 1989: 17), and how the rupture in traditional norms and structures drove the alienated masses into the hands of clerics (Arjomand 1988: 197).

This last point connects with the revolution's second widely held cause: that the Iranian masses were exceptionally imbued with (religious) ideological zeal. Pioneering works by Mansoor Moaddel (1992), Hamid Dabashi (1993), and Hamid Algar (2001) brought to life the vigor of the Islamic ideology that animated the revolutionaries. Even a skeptic like Theda Skocpol had to admit that this incredible revolution "forces me to deepen my understanding of the possible role of idea systems and cultural understandings in the shaping of political action" (1994: 244). Drawing on social movement theory, Asef Bayat (1998) and Charles Kurzman (2004) went further by identifying the specific mechanisms of mobilization and collective action at work. Within this camp, many highlighted the charisma and astonishing sway of Ayatollah Khomeini. Henry Munson (1988: 134) claimed that Khomeini's "aura enabled him to mobilize segments of Iranian (urban) society that had traditionally been apolitical and acquiescent." Algar (2001: 44) asserted more dramatically, "The historians will still be scratching their heads a hundred years from now wondering how it happened. But the Muslim when he sees this will see the kind of leadership provided by Imam Khomeini and the moral and spiritual dimensions that he gave to the Iranian revolution."

A more modest weight was assigned to the geopolitical aspect of the revolution: the fact that the United States stood by idly as its political ally was being overthrown. This third element figures mostly in accounts that list all the influential factors that preceded, accompanied, and followed the revolution – typical examples include Nikki Keddie (1981) and John Foran (2005). The latter, for instance, rejected partial explanations in favor of one that combines all the usual suspects: boom and bust cycles of dependent development; an exclusionary state; a culture of

resistance; an economic downturn triggered by domestic mismanagement; a global recession; and a world-system opening (2005: 75, 87). Significantly though, he believed that it was the "non-action of the key world power in the Iranian equation [which] opened the door to the full play of the internal balance of forces" (2005: 79). Of course, the testimonies of the American officials who dealt with Iran at the time are rife with examples of negligence and discord (see Sullivan 1981; Brzezinski 1983; Sick 1985; Daugherty 2001; Precht 2004). A more extreme version of this explanation holds that the American actually plotted against the regime. The chief advocates of this conspiracy theory are the deposed monarch (Pahlavi 1980), his embittered aides (such as chief of staff Abbas Gharabaghi 1999), and those prone to exaggerate the omnipotence of U.S. influence in the region (Saleh 2008: 279).

What about repression? How did the revolutionary masses bear the brunt of the regime's coercive agencies? No one questioned the fact that Iran's repressive organs remained intact during the early phases of the revolt. Unlike its French and Russian counterparts, the Imperial Armed Forces had not been exhausted or demoralized by war, nor had it been subject to geopolitical pressures. Similarly, the security apparatus, spearheaded by the notorious secret police (SAVAK), functioned just fine. On the eve of the revolt, the Iranian monarch had full control of "a thoroughly modernized army and a ruthless, omnipresent secret police force" (Skocpol 1994: 243).

So what happened? The universal answer seems to be that the sea of angry masses has swamped the repressive apparatus. The "military-security complex was not so much weak as overwhelmed. No system of repression is intended to deal with wholesale popular disobedience like that which emerged in Iran" (Kurzman 2004: 165). Some say it was ideology: "A non-violent revolution against a heavily armed dictatorship could not have taken place without remarkable cultures of opposition" (Foran 2005: 80). Or as romantically restated by a Foucault temporarily infatuated by the Islamic revolution: "ideas are more active, stronger, more resistant, more passionate than 'politicians' think," and to appreciate their power we only need to witness the

"bursting outward of their forces" against repression (Foucault in Afary and Anderson 2005: 3). And here, of course, Khomeini was essential in generating this unarmed torrent against a highly equipped military-security establishment (Harney 1999: 1; Algar 2001: 44). Others try to be more practical, pointing, for instance, to the unprecedented level of mass participation. Repression, they claim, fails when numerous social groups consolidate their forces against the state (Parsa 1989: 25; Ward 2009: 225). Either way, average Iranians seemed to merit the badge of honor for their exceptional bravery. So much so that a scholar with as little faith in agency as Skocpol (1994: 242, 249) conceded:

> **[I]f ever there has been a revolution deliberately 'made' by a mass-based social movement aiming to overthrow the old order, the Iranian Revolution…surely is it… An extraordinary series of mass urban demonstrations and strikes, ever growing in size and revolutionary fervor, even in the face of lethal military repression… Their revolution did not just come; it was deliberately and coherently made… It *did* matter than the Iranian crowds were willing to face the army again and again—accepting casualties much more persistently than European crowds have historically done—until sections of the military rank-and-file began to hesitate or balk at shooting into the crowds.**

At the risk of oversimplifying their differences, students of the Iranian revolution appear to agree that (1) the regime acted inconsistently by preserving political authoritarianism next to socioeconomic modernization, and thus fell victim to its own contradictions; and (2) that the ideological zeal that seized the masses unleashed an irrepressible force that swept aside the agents of repression. By contrast, I demonstrate here that the Iranian regime acted in consistence with the ruling model it chose to adopt. By replacing the Qajar monarchy with that of the Pahlavis, rather than declaring a republic, the 1921 coup placed Iran on a different trajectory than that of the new regimes in Turkey and Egypt. Parting ways with modernizing republics, the Pahlavi dynasty tried to emulate the absolutist monarchies of Europe (those of Philip II, Henry VIII, Louis XIV, and above all, Napoleon and his militaristic nephew), as well as the modernizing tsars of the nineteenth century (whether its northern neighbors in Russia, or those in the country the first Pahlavi was most infatuated with, Prussia). Although Iran's situation was

very different from those it sought to resemble, its rulers saw enough in common to follow in their footsteps. As avid readers of history, the new shahs believed Iran's glorious past qualifies it to play an assertive military role (as that of the monarchs of Spain, England, and France), but that because its progress had been delayed by a series of unfortunate historical events, it required an actively modernizing monarch to catch up (as other late modernizers have done in Europe). This reading of Iran's place in history might have been flawed on many levels (notably, the frailty of its army; its economic backwardness; and the entirely different geopolitical settings it operated within), but it locked the country on the path of past absolutist monarchs, those obsessed with maximizing their military capabilities in order to keep their kingdoms united, fend off aggressors, and project power on a world scale. Everything the Pahlavi kings did was perfectly in line with this model. The fact that their chosen form of militarized royal absolutism was much less sustainable at the end of the twentieth century than it has been during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries does not mean it was inherently contradictory—it simply belonged to a different time and place; it contradicted its environment.

Absolutist monarchies were at bottom agrarian bureaucracies embedded in rural society and relying on the support of a landed aristocracy. Their power rested on the loyalty of a unified feudal class – a loyalty that in turn depended on how well the sovereign defended their interests and incorporated them within state organizations. This traditional structure could not be maintained in the age of industry and capitalism, and with an economy increasingly dependent on oil revenues. Protecting the economic dominance of landlords was practically impossible in the second half of the twentieth century, while empowering the bourgeois politically and accepting ceremonial duties meant that the monarchy would have to abandon its top-down modernizing role, which was its sole purpose.[1] As in other cases in the history of royal

[1] This discrepancy between the regime and its environment has bewildered Halliday (1979: 56), who thought "Iran is probably the only country in the world where the state has combined the vigorous promotion of capitalist development with a fully constituted monarchist regime," and was not clear on how to classify it. It was not a military dictatorship because although it was installed by a coup and relied on military support, Iran's commanders were politically powerless (as opposed to regimes in Greece, Chile, and Indonesia). Nor was it Bonapartist or fascist

absolutism, when kings attempted to increase their autonomy vis-à-vis the landed class, the regime cracked and was either overthrown (as in France and Russia) or overtaken (as in Germany) by a bourgeoisie waiting in the winds. Because the power formula on which royal absolutism rested could not endure in the modern age, the weakest monarchies were (more or less) peacefully cast aside (as in England), and those that resisted came down in pieces. Little wonder why Iran's revolution was "so thoroughly transformative of basic sociocultural and socioeconomic relationships…that it surely fits more closely the pattern of the great historical social revolutions than it does the rubric of simply a political revolution" (Skocpol 1994: 241). The fact that no such regime exists today (or is likely to exist) explains why Iran's was probably the 'Last Great Revolution'.

Yet regimes do not simply collapse, they are either seized or overthrown. And this indicates, in turn, either the disloyalty or futility of the agents of repression, whose job is to protect the regime. So how can we account for this particular failure in the case of Iran? The answer is connected with another remarkable feature of royal absolutism: the dominance of the political apparatus (represented by the court) over the military and security organs. A hegemonic monarch keeps his military and security organs on a tight leash, and prevents them from developing their own corporate identities or acting independently (recall Louis Bonaparte in 1871). The inevitable result is paralysis once the monarch decides against bloodshed for one reason or the other (in the Iranian case, it was to preserve the legitimacy of the Pahlavi dynasty and pass on the throne to his son). The other two partners in the ruling bloc lack the independence to act on their own to save the regime. As Skocpol shrewdly noted, though without explaining why, "Once the Iranian state came under revolutionary pressure…the Shah's absolutist role [became] very consequential… Military officers…lacked the corporate solidarity to displace the Shah in a coup and save the state at his expense" (1994: 240). Regimes dominated

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because it did not draw on the loyalty of a conservative peasantry or a petite bourgeoisie; it was not erected to repress radical workers; it had no capitalist class to speak of; and it had no ruling party or ideology (Halliday 1979: 51-53). Its closest description was that it represented a unique "absolutist-monarchical military dictatorship" (Skocpol 1994: 240).

by the political apparatus, as opposed to the military and security, are by definition the least capable of repression.

So while it does matter that thousands of Iranians took to the street and risked their lives, they could not have really accomplished much had the regime not been vulnerable. And its vulnerability was caused by the relative weakness of the military and security institutions within the overall regime structure. Popular forces slipped through the cracks of a weak regime centered on the royal court. It was the logic of absolutist monarchism that guided the building of subordinate military and security institutions, and it was this same logic that rendered them useless when the regime began to crumble. To understand the Iranian revolution we therefore need to examine intra-regime relations from its creation to overthrow (1921-1979) in order to see how the political apparatus established and retained its dominance within the ruling bloc, causing its repressive functions to fail the ultimate test.

Chapter Eleven

A ONE MAN COUP:
FEBRUARY 1921

The 1921 takeover of power by Colonel Reza Khan was hardly a military coup, considering that Iran had no real military at that point. The armed retainers, tribal levies, and foreign-controlled militias that existed back then were too frail and fragmented to orchestrate a coordinated move, and had neither political ambitions nor institutional grievances to act against their rulers. If anything, regime change was prompted by the British desire to place a strongman at the helm amidst great adversity, namely after Russia deserted the Allies and fell into the hands of Bolsheviks. From the start, therefore, the so-called 1921 'coup' was little more than a one-man-show. In this part, we will analyze why the coup was not followed by the creation of a republic, as in the case of Turkey and Egypt, and how this influenced the nature and prospects of the new regime in Iran; we will examine the state of the Iranian armed forces on the eve of this power seizure, and how it remained structurally weak despite the new shah's subsequent efforts to build a strong military; and we will note, in passing, how he paid no attention to the creation of an effective security establishment. All these factors will come into play as we see how the entire house of cards Reza Shah built collapsed in the summer of 1941when the Allies invaded Iran.

Slipping off the Road to Republic

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and the five-year civil war that followed had weakened the Qajar dynasty, which ruled Iran for over a century. The pitiful state of the ailing monarchy troubled all those who understood what was at stake if the country descended into lawlessness and chaos. Fear that Iran might disintegrate along tribal and ethnic lines was further fueled by the looming threat to the north, the new Bolshevik regime and its subversive ideology. A strong man was needed to hold the country together and it from falling into the hands of the Soviets.

The best candidate was a colonel at the Cossack Division who goes by the name Reza Khan. In the hagiographic account of his son and heir, Colonel Reza was supposedly revered by his men and feared by his enemies: "My father was the stuff of legends and there were legends of him aplenty" (Pahlavi 1980: 49).[2] In truth, this forty-year-old giant of a man was an obscure figure, an illiterate descendent of a humble Turkish-speaking peasant family (Abrahamian 1982: 117). Although he enlisted at the age of fourteen, his military record was quite unassuming, little more than petty raids against bandits and recalcitrant tribes. The first we learn of him was in 1918, when he rendered the British a valuable service by conspiring to turn over the Russian-supervised Cossack Division from Colonel Clergi, the commander appointed by Kerensky's Provisional Government, to his deputy, the White Russian Colonel Starroselsky.[3] His role in this minor intrigue earned him a promotion from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general and a regimental command, but he soon fell afoul with his superiors and lost both. The whole affair, however, brought him to the attention of the British, who controlled Iran's southern oil-rich regions (Ward 2009: 82, 127; Cronin 2010: 15).

At the instigation of General Edmund Ironside, commander of the British forces in Persia, and with British supplies, ammunitions, and funds, Reza Khan marched on the capital with 3,000 Cossacks from the Qazvin garrison in February 1921. As instructed, he reassured the Qajar sovereign Ahmed Shah that this was not a coup, but an attempt to fortify the dynasty against an imminent Russian invasion. He then talked the Shah into forming a new government under the pro-British journalist Sayyid Ziya al-Din Tabatabai (Abrahamian 1982: 117-18). Reza Khan's role was supposed to end at this point, especially after the cabinet chose an officer from the Gendarmerie (a rival service to the Cossacks) as war minister. But the ambitious colonel was

[2] One of several amusing 'legends' Mohamed Reza remembers about his father is the following: "While up north with his soldiers fighting yet another gang of bandits, he swung onto his white horse and galloped toward enemy lines. Frightened at first by the sudden apparition of a giant on his white steed, the bandits were too stunned to react. Then, when they opened fire, they shot at random without taking careful aim. As a result, my father was able to spur his horse through the barrage unharmed" (Pahlavi 1980: 50).

[3] The British first approached his superior, the St. Cyr-educated commander Sardar Homayun, but when he refused to take part in the plot they turned to his second-in-command, "a man of humble background who lacked the prestige and military education of his superior" (Arjomand 1988: 60).

determined to use his newly won prominence to consolidate power over the dynasty. He began by inciting the Cossacks not to obey the war minister, forcing the latter to resign in frustration in April 1921, and opening up the way for himself to assume the post. In a couple of months he had gained the confidence of the last Qajar shah, and advised him to dismiss the prime minister on account of his subservience to the British, forcing the latter to forfeit his post in May to the much weaker Qavam as-Saltaneh and flee the country. By the end of 1923, the confident War Minister had persuaded his sovereign to take an extended vacation in Europe. And in a couple of years, Reza Khan managed through his divide-and-rule tactics, increasingly nationalistic posture, and modernization programs to gain the support of the members of parliament, the clergy, the educated middle class, and the officers. In December 1925, the Majles (parliament) replaced the Qajar dynasty with a new one, the Pahlavi (Keddie 1981: 88-91). It is important to note here that Reza Khan's rise to power depended less on coercion (by the modest military, or the even more modest police force) than on mobilizing political support. The widespread belief among parliament deputies (and the Tehran crowd that rooted for him) that the Qajar dynasty was beyond reform certainly helped, but equally important was how he presented himself as a politically unaffiliated man of the people; someone placed by fortune in a position to build the kind of state citizens aspired for (Cronin 2010: 19-20). In a ceremony held in April 1926, Reza Khan, imitating his hero Napoleon, placed the crown on his own head; he now became Reza Shah (Ward 2009: 133).

But why did Reza choose to reproduce monarchism rather than declare a republic like other twentieth-century modernizers? Some say, this was the price he had to pay in order to secure the clergy's vote. Kemal Ataturk had given republicanism a bad name, and most associated the new regime in Turkey not with secularism but active hostility to Islam. This is the answer the new shah himself offered. After consulting with senior clerics in the shrine-city of Qom on March 31, 1924, he issued a statement abandoning the idea of forming a republic (Rahnema 2000: 2). Others point out that the influence of the clergy was overstated, that it was

probably geopolitics that forced the hand of the aspiring ruler. The 1920s were in many ways the heyday of monarchies in the region; King Fuad of Egypt and Al-Sharif Hussein in Hejaz were vying for the empty seat of the Caliphate; and new thrones were created in Iraq and Jordan. Reza believed that only monarchy would allow him to deal with his neighbors on an equal footing (Heikal 1981: 31). We often forget that other than Turkey, republics began to spread in the Muslim world from the mid-twentieth century and not before. Only after the Second World War did the colonized countries of Africa and Asia associate national independence with republicanism. If we consider Turkey an outlier, then Reza Khan has made a fairly standard option. Besides, he knew from the European examples he so admired that absolutist monarchism was not mutually exclusive with modernization. In fact, he paid an extensive visit to Turkey in the summer of 1934, a decade into his monarchical rule, to learn how he could best implement its modernization program (details of the visit in Marashi 2003). Still, a third explanation relates his decision to a sense of inferiority. As opposed to Ataturk and Nasser's political activism and impressive war record, Reza Khan was "a figure of marginal significance, rescued from obscurity only by immediate British strategic needs…inarticulate and a poor reader…invisible in Iranian political and military life… The blankness of [his] early life contrasts strikingly with the biographies of other nationalist officers of the period" (Cronin 2010: 14). A crown over his head went a long way toward boosting his insipid persona.

But however we chose to justify his decision to scrap plans for declaring a republic, we must not forget the role of the military. Although Ataturk and Nasser might have had the ambition and ego to install themselves as sovereigns, their armies would not have warmed up to having one of their own assuming the royal title and casting them off into the role of obedient subjects. The weakness of the Iranian army, and the fact that Reza owed nothing to it (as symbolized by his self-coronation), he had more freedom to choose than his Turkish and Egyptian counterparts.

So why was this early decision so crucial to the future development of the regime? We know that Reza Shah adopted the general mantras of modernization from above as faithfully as Ataturk and Nasser. He believed in nationalism, centralization, secularism, state-planned economy, and the rest. Yet his decision to diverge from the Turkish and (the later) Egyptian path did have a long-term impact on Iran's regime structure. While the political apparatus in Turkey and Egypt crystalized into a ruling political party, with an enormous bureaucracy at its aid, the court was from the start the seat of political power, and court functionaries and other bureaucrats were considered instruments of the monarch's will.[4] Likewise, Ataturk and Nasser imbued their ruling parties with a strong nationalist ideology that in many ways re-wrote their nation's history to justify their historically prescribed role in leading them. They also sought to legitimize their actions through manifestos granting them some theoretical consistency (such as the Six Arrows of Kemalism or Nasser's National Charter), and a charismatic aura that won their people's hearts and minds. As king, Reza Shah could not create a ruling party to undercut the power of the court, had little need (or aptitude) for theoretical justifications to legitimize his rule nor for the charisma he clearly lacked. The allure of monarchy and the ethos of Persia's ancient (pre-Islamic) glory severed the purpose.[5]

One of the most telling differences, however, relates to the economic outlook of the new political order. Ataturk and Nasser were committed to industrialization. That is why the former tried to undermine the landed class as much as he could (though his success was limited), and the latter replaced large landlords with middling ones. Reza Shah, by contrast, not only strengthened Iran's great landlords, but he also joined them. During his decade-and-a-half in power, he went from being the son of a small landowner to becoming the country's largest and richest landlord, owning two thousand villages (over 3 million acres) of the most fertile estates

[4] Iran's burgeoning bureaucracy grew from a few thousands to 90,000 between 1921 and 1941, and later expanded to 310,000 in 1956 and 630,000 in 1977, but this never subtracted from the centrality of the court and its functionaries (Martin 2007: 23).

[5] It should be remembered that the imperial name Reza chose for himself, Pahlavi, referred to the language spoken by the Parthians who ruled Persia after Alexander the Great and fought memorable battles against the Romans.

(an estimated 15 percent of Iran's arable land) and employing 235,800 peasants in the royal domain (Graham 1978: 55). This fortune was acquired through forced sales by those eager to attain royal favor, and outright confiscations of the land of those who have fallen into disfavor (Parsa 1989: 36). Again his humble origins might have exerted some influence; his "mania" for acquiring land betrays "a typical peasant land hunger, albeit on a scale made possible by his own meteoric political rise" (Cronin 2010: 4). To further cultivate the loyalty of the traditional upper class, Reza married into the old Qajar aristocracy, granted noble families lucrative court positions and stipends, and built an extended patronage network tied to the throne (Abrahamian 1982: 137, 149). His promotion of landlordism was clear a decade after his coronation, when a 1934 study revealed that large landlords still controlled half of Iran's cultivated land, while 98 percent of the rural population remained landless. It was also striking that 90 percent of the workforce was still employed in agriculture despite modernization rhetoric (Keddie 1981: 103; Parsa 1989: 36).

With no interest in fundamental socioeconomic reform, and with trifling alterations to the mode of production he inherited, Reza Shah's modernization program came down to measures aimed at enhancing centralization and government control over Iran's unruly provinces, and for that he built roads (14,000 miles of new roads between 1923 and 1938) and an 808-mile-long Trans-Iranian Railroad, which started in 1927 with German help, and ran from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea (Ward 2009: 134). Industry barely made progress, with perhaps 50,000 manufacturing workers by the end of his reign. In fact, public investments were redirected toward commerce and import of Western products (Keddie 1981: 101, 127). But even his attempt to increase state capacity was limited because of the difficulty of extracting revenue from a landlord-based agricultural economy. It was a vicious circle. The Shah did not want to offend his landed nobles by enforcing direct taxes or pushing industrial development too far, but the insufficiency of internal revenue prevented him from creating an effective tax-collecting authority to administer a proper system of indirect taxation. At the same time, oil revenues,

which provided 10 percent of government income, were still too meager to support the state (Keddie 1981: 102).

In the end, Reza Shah's abandonment of republicanism and accession to the vacant Peacock Throne "fundamentally alerted the trajectory of Iran's political development" (Cronin 2010: 21). Now, the court of an autocratic and patrimonial ruler occupied the center of power, and a constellation of great landlords tied to the monarchy became its main political bastion. This traditional structure, however, was out of step with the times, and quickly collapsed in the face of external pressure. But what about the military, that supposed jewel of the Pahlavi crown and shield against foreign aggression?

From Humble to Crumble: The First Imperial Army

The Imperial Armed Forces was the sacred cow under both Pahlavi monarchs; it consumed most of the state's resources with their blessing, but did not lift a finger to prevent their tragic fall. It was not that its members were politically disloyal, but they simply failed to rise up to the task. In contrast with its shining image, the Pahlavi military was always pervaded by structural weakness; it was hollow and powerless and could barely help itself, let alone extend a helping hand to its political masters. To uncover those weaknesses we need to delve beneath the surface and question the effectiveness of the impressive military buildup that Reza Shah and his son continually bragged about. Let us begin by analyzing the state of the armed forces on the eve of the 1921 coup.

Unlike the Turkish military, which ruled a sprawling empire until the end of the Great War, and Egypt, which developed a formidable army in the 1820s and occupied a vast stretch of territories in the Levant, the Arab Peninsula, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Crete, and was only stopped at the gates of Constantinople by an alliance of European powers in 1840, Iran at the turn of twentieth century was still struggling to create an army worthy of the name. Historian

Nikki Keddie noted that while nineteenth-century modernizers, such rulers as Ottoman caliphs Selim III and Mahmud II and Egypt's Muhammad Ali, were obsessed by the need for a strong military, "it remains surprising the Iran did not follow their lead" (1981: 29). Even though the Qajar dynasty had many shortcomings, its most apparent one was the failure to create a viable military force due to its weak finances and centralization. It compensated for its lack of coercive power by a variety of survival tactics, such as fostering divisions among opposing factions, bribing nobles and tribal chieftains, and keeping hostages from powerful families as 'guests' in the capital (Ward 2009: 82). It is thus fair to claim that the Iranian regime Reza Shah ascended to had been for long characterized by a prominent political establishment, represented by whoever occupied the royal court, alongside a humble military.

Iran's armed forces consisted of several separate bodies: the Persian Cossack Brigade, the Government Gendarmerie, South Persia Rifles, and the regular army and cavalry. Let us consider each of these in turn. The Cossacks began as royal bodyguards. During a visit to Russia in 1878, Qajar king Nasser al-Din Shah was impressed by the Cossacks and asked his host Tsar Alexander II to help him establish a similar cavalry regiment for his personal protection. The following year, Russians (under Lieutenant General Domantovich) managed to fund and lead a brigade of volunteers trained to safeguard the throne. The Cossacks failed to prevent the sovereign's assassination in 1896, but as fit for a praetorian guard they secured his successor's (Muzaffar al-Din Shah) rise to power by deterring his challengers. And although they failed again in preempting the riots of 1905, which culminated into what became known as the Constitutional Revolution, they spearheaded a Russian-backed royal coup in 1908 and literally bombed Iran's first parliament over the head of its deputies that summer, triggering a civil war that lasted until 1911. Obviously, the fact that the brigade was officered and administered by Russians, in addition to its vicious repression of the enemies of the throne did not endear the Cossacks to Iranians. In 1911, only 10 percent of those who volunteered to serve were ethnic Persians, while the rest were Turks and Kurds, and almost all served only during summers and

tended to their land during the rest of the year. In 1921, it had 700 officers and 3000 troops (Ward 2009: 82-85, 95).

By contrast, the Gendarmerie had a proud past. In 1911, two Americans, Iran Treasurer-General W. Morgan Shuster and his aide Colonel J. N. Merrill recognized the need for a professional tax-collecting agency under the supervision of meticulously selected nationalist officers with good family backgrounds and connections in the countryside. Most of those who volunteered in the nascent Treasury Gendarmerie were constitutionalists with a strong sense of patriotic duty. A year later, it was reborn as the Government Gendarmerie by the Second Majles (after the Cossacks destroyed the first) to help the new democratic government restore order in the countryside encourage national trade. The reformers preferred to rely on military experts from a neutral country with no strategic interests in Iran, and so turned to Sweden. By the early 1920s, urban intellectuals hailed the gendarmes (who at that point had 700 officers and 9,300 soldiers) as an essential pillar in Iran's democratic experiment, while merchants, peasants, and clerics praised their contribution to security (Ward 2009: 102-107).

The third foreign-created unit was the short-lived South Persia Rifles of 2,000 men, developed by British General Percy Sykes in 1915 and commanded by Indian officers to police the oilfields of the southern regions during the First World War, and was soon dismantled afterwards (Ward 2009: 118). Finally, there were the regular all-Persian forces, which in 1921 consisted of 13,000 infantrymen scattered across the country; 5,000 artillerymen with a few barely operational field guns; and tribal levies serving occasionally as a cavalry corps. The Iranian military did not compensate size for ability. On the contrary, officers received almost no training, soldiers rarely fired a rifle, and both made a living by working second jobs, in many cases as shopkeepers in garrison towns, because their superiors usually pocketed their already meager salaries. The end result was a military "totally incapable of fighting," one that "existed mostly on paper and was barely coherent as an organization" (Ward 2009: 108). Or as an Iranian journalist

described it at the beginning of the twentieth century, "Our army is the laughingstock of the world" (Ward 2009: 85).

Clearly then, on the eve of Reza Khan's coup Iran had only two (very small and underequipped) armed units, the Cossacks and the Gendarmerie. And the only reason they survived the degeneration of public institutions during the last years of the Qajar dynasty was because they made few demands on the state. On the one hand, they were small in size and financed by foreigners and so required no taxes, and on the other hand, their recruits were volunteers and so required no system of imposed conscription (Cronin 1997: 8). By the same token, neither held any professional grievances against the country's rulers – they rarely had anything to do with them. It was understood at the time, however, that due to their different natures the type of regime they would likely install if they seized power would be very different. "On one path was the promonarchy and authoritarian Persian Cossack Brigade, which had no tradition of being answerable to Iranian authorities or the Iranian people. On the other, the prodemocratic and nationalist Gendarmerie [which] was allied to reform-minded liberals and had a good reputation [among the populace]" (Ward 2009: 125). What eventually enabled the Cossacks to make the first move was the fact that the gendarmes' nationalist outlook made them suspect in the eyes of the British, and it was foreign intrigue that underwrote Reza Shah's march on the capital. Yet, as we might expect, the Gendarmerie did not surrender without a fight.

In April 1921, the month Reza Khan installed himself as war minister, Colonel Muhammad Taqi Khan Pasyan, the Gendarmerie commander of the Khorasan province declared a new revolutionary government in city of Mashhad and invited all constitutionalist forces to join him. Pasyan was everything Reza was not. He hailed from a notable Persian (not a humble Turkish) family, received an excellent education in Europe (as opposed to the illiterate Cossack), got promoted because of his brave service during the Great War (rather than for plotting to remove his superior officer), professed republican democratic sympathies (unlike his unaffiliated rival), and enjoyed an exceptional charisma. In addition to these personal attributes,

Pasyan reinforced his 200 gendarmes with a force of irregulars to create a revolutionary militia of 4,000 men. Yet Reza Khan refused to yield. In May 1921, he released Qavam al-Saltanah, the corrupt governor of Khorasan who Pasyan had sent in chains to the capital the month before, and named him prime minister. Knowing he had no real force to rein in the insurrectionists (the regular army was in shambles and the Cossacks were much less qualified than the gendarmes), Reza enlisted the support of tribal chiefs, landlords, and Kurdish leaders, who had benefited in the past from shabby deals with Qawan al-Saltanah. The coalition he quickly put together managed by October to liquidate the six-months old revolutionary regime and kill Pasyan. To prevent future agitation, War Minister Reza Khan incorporated the gendarmes and Cossacks into a unified force via Army Order Number One in December 1921. To place his loyalists on the saddle, he recruited 10,000 new Cossacks to increase their ratio vis-à-vis the gendarmes to two-to-one, and put them in charge of field formations, while limiting gendarmes to staff positions in the capital. But instead of ending the mutual antagonism, this forced fusion exacerbated it further, contributing to the eventual dissolution of the army after the allied invasion twenty years later (Ward 2009: 130-32; Cronin 2010: 44, 97-100).

Two things are important to note here. First, that unlike Ataturk, who relied on the army to brave early challenges, and Nasser, who immediately erected a strong security apparatus to counter political and military intransigence, Reza Khan had no reliable military or security institutions, and was forced to make due with traditional intrigues. From the very start, therefore, court politics was the locomotive of the emerging regime. Second, that the Mashhad mutiny was the closest thing to what a real military coup in Iran would have looked like; it was triggered by a popular military figure leading a group of politicized officers to establish a truly revolutionary regime. Its preemption by the foreign-prompted Cossack move in February 1921, and its subsequent defeat by an ensemble of tribes and countryside retainers marked the victory of traditional politics over the most professionally organized branch of the army. As Stephanie Cronin, the leading historian on the first Pahlavi military, pointed out, "Perhaps under a

[Gendarmerie] leadership…Iran might have followed a path closer to that of Turkey under Kemal" (1997: 12).[6] Instead, Reza was now marking his own path.

The power-thirsty ruler tried retrospectively to build a solid military to support his rule. Claiming that tribal dissidence obstructed his state-building program, he persuaded parliament to finance his bid to create a proper military force to extend state sovereignty to the peripheries (Cronin 2010: 21). Before the end of 1921, he had established Iran's first Military College; a General Staff with specialized departments; a Tehran-based Higher Military Council for planning and coordination; and organized the army into five divisions, with each stationed in one of Iran's major cities. Then in 1924 he took the crucial step of introducing a conscription bill, which called for two-year compulsory service and a commitment to remain on the reserve for another twenty-three years. The defense budget increased fivefold between 1926 and 1941 (consuming on average half the state's annual budget), and the armed forces increased from 40,000 to 126,000 soldiers led by 2,100 officers and supported by 1,000 NCOs—and by mobilizing reserves, as he did in 1941, the number increased to 180,000 men (Ward 2009: 132-45). His more ambitious projects included the creation of an air force in 1924, a navy in 1932, and an army bank (Bank Sepah) and cooperatives to provide his men with discounted loans and goods. He also sent promising officers to receive advanced training in Germany, France, and Russia, though never Britain (Halliday 1979: 66).

Nonetheless, all these seemingly great accomplishments were much less impressive in reality, mainly because Iran's agricultural economy could hardly sustain an expanded military. Battle equipment were poor, to say the least. The year of his abdication, armored divisions had 100 (mostly Czech) light and medium tanks, but mounted cavalry remained its main strike force; the Imperial Navy operated no more than six vessels with perhaps 1,000 sailors; the Imperial Air Force owned 245 obsolete British biplanes, as well as 10 U.S. Hawk fighters, using 300 poorly

[6] A less critical challenge confronted Reza in January 1922, when Major Abulqasim Lahuti declared a communist regime in Tabriz, placing power in the hands of a workers and soldiers' council. But his eleven-day mutiny was easily crushed (Cronin 2010: 101; Arjomand 1988: 61).

trained pilots – so unqualified that the air force "lost aircraft almost as quickly as new ones were being purchased" (Ward 2009: 142-54). The condition of the soldiers was even more miserable. Conscripts were poorly fed and housed, and received almost no training or medical attention. Their low moral rendered them utterly ineffective in battle (Cronin 2003: 44).

Moreover, the Shah's insecurities made him entrust the military to men of humble origins who owed him everything and continued to rely on royal favor, officers who regarded themselves simply as state employees (Halliday 1979: 67). Members of the landowning aristocracy were therefore denied senior positions in the army (though they were highly ranked in court, under the Shah's watchful eye). As in Europe, the divorce between the military and the economically dominant class, while presumably enhancing professionalism, weakened the bond between the coercive organs and the ruling class.

Lastly, the monarch's insistence on brandishing the power of the court in the face of officers with or without occasion compounded military demoralization. Acting as a medieval ruler, he expected his sons to become officers. His eldest, Muhammad Reza, graduated from the military academy in 1938, and was commissioned at the age of twenty Special Inspector of the Armed Forces (Abrahamian 1982: 136). Also, appointing court favorites to top military posts regardless of merit naturally alienated junior officers. This unsavory group of corrupt officials "falsified rosters to draw more funds and rations, stole taxes, and commandeered materials almost without restraint…[and continued] the Qajar practice of keeping a share of their subordinates' pay" (Ward 2009: 147). Adding insult to injury, the king's bigotry fostered an "atmosphere of arbitrary terror" within the ranks (Cronin 2003: 44). Reza got into the habit of meting out harsh punishments at the least sign of suspicion. Although he knew, for example, that tribal disturbances were endemic, he accused his commanders of complacency every time a tribal revolt broke out. In 1929 alone, four generals were imprisoned on such charge, among them the commander of the southern army division and his chief of staff; and in 1933, the war minister himself was arrested (Cronin 2010: 194-95). Similarly, charges of disloyalty to the crown

brought about the detention of dozens of officers, including the commander of the central army division in Tehran, and—most horrific of all—the execution of the Shah's own aide-de-camp (Ward 2009: 150).

Reza Shah had even bigger trouble with the tribes. Although most of his conscripts came from tribal areas, he could hardly count on their support considering the looting and massacres that characterized his (largely futile) pacification campaigns. Therefore, forcefully conscripted tribesmen were commissioned away from home, while their kinsmen were held hostage in the capital as collateral. It was only natural that whenever tribe members had a chance to flee—as during the 1941 invasion—they did not hesitate (Arjomand 1988: 63-64).

So behind the façade of modernization, the Iranian military remained basically "a parade-ground army, largely untried in battle and led by complacent and corrupt officers" (Ward 2009: 145). It was, in Cronin's words, "militarily ineffective, structurally weak, deeply politicized, and expensive beyond the capacity of the state to sustain" (2003: 37). This all became quite plain with the armed forces' catastrophic collapse in 1941. The Allies rightly suspected Reza Shah of harboring Nazi sympathies, and could not risk losing Iran, the most efficient corridor to transport aid to the Soviets in their fight against the Wehrmacht. Refusing an allied ultimatum to aid in the war effort against Germany, the defiant Shah cancelled all military leaves, mobilized close to 50,000 reservist, and delivered an enthusiastic speech on August 19 asking his army to prepare for the greatest sacrifice (Saleh 2008: 61). The invasion commenced on August 25, and by the next morning the majority of the soldiers had deserted. How fast the army dissolved surprised even the Allies. Within four days, the British had subdued the country, after killing 6,000 Iranians and suffering only 60 casualties. Without awaiting instructions, the shaken general staff released all conscripts, forcing the monarch—who had no more soldiers on the frontline—to call for a ceasefire. When the furious king called for a meeting of his high command, only the war minister, chief of staff, and two other generals showed up. Always a violent man, Reza hurled obscenities and abuse at his senior generals, whipped them with his cane, stripped them

of their ranks, accused them of treason, and ordered immediate courts-martial for his five division leaders (Ward 2009: 159-60, 168-69).

In reality, though, the Shah was rendered powerless by his army's sudden collapse. "Deprived of his soldiers the Shah no longer mattered, no longer existed" (Kapuscinski 2006: 25). He abdicated on September 16, 1941, and after several stops ended up in South Africa where he died in July 1944 – probably of a broken heart. The military he left behind was as much of a wreck as the one he had inherited from the Qajars. The massive desertion of 1941 reduced its size from 180,000 to less than 65,000 dispirited and disorganized men (Arjomand 1988: 69). In contrast to the militaries that rallied around Ataturk and Nasser to repel foreign aggression at a time when they still had not consolidated power, the Iranian armed forces, almost two decades after Reza took control, proved good only for pacifying tribes (and even not that good at that), and disintegrated once confronted with a real challenge. Internal tensions arising from the attempt to combine traditional monarchical control with modern military professionalism was on the surface the cause for this catastrophe. But it was not a matter of incompatibility between traditionalism and modernization. In the regime the Shah envisaged, the political apparatus had to remain hegemonic in order to direct the entire state, and the historic weakness of the Persian army (and the non-existence of a security establishment[7]) allowed him to see this vision through – unlike the similarly ambitious Ataturk and Nasser, whose power-hunger was checked by strong military and/or security institutions. Prioritizing political power, represented by the court, over coercive power eventually doomed the regime.

Geopolitics: From Complacency to Defiance

[7] There is no need to devote a separate section here for the security institution because it was composed of little more than the local police in every city and the rural police in the countryside. There was no effort to centralize the security apparatus, and no attempt to establish a secret police or intelligence service.

After decades of coexistence between the British and Russian spheres of influence in southern and northern Persia, respectively, the Bolshevik Revolution forced Britain to tighten its grip on the central government in Tehran. The Anglo-Persian Agreement drafted by Earl Curzon and issued unilaterally in 1919 by the Foreign Office was an attempt to restate British drilling rights, but it was never ratified by the Persian parliament. At the beginning of 1921, the British ambassador to Iran described in a telegraph to London how the political turmoil in the capital was so destabilizing that it led to the collapse of six cabinets in eighteen months (Abrahamian 1982: 117). British General Ironside, therefore, groomed Reza Khan essentially as "an antidote to chaos" (Katouzian 2004: 2).

But, truth be told, the ambitious colonel displayed signs of independence early on, and with time his anti-British sentiments became manifest. As a newly appointed war minister, he pushed the Qajar monarch and parliament to refuse to ratify the 1919 treaty; a few months after he ascended the throne (in 1926) he dismissed A. C. Millspaugh, the U.S. expert appointed Administer General of Iranian Finance four years before, because he was resented his constant interference in the country's affairs; he abrogated all nineteenth-century legal capitulations to foreigners; he founded the National Bank of Iran (*Bank-e Melli Iran*) and authorized it to issue currency so that he would not have to rely on the British-run Imperial Bank; he nationalized the European-managed customs and telegraph administration; he closed down missionary schools; he eliminated all non-oil economic concessions; and in November 1932 he boldly cancelled the 1901 D'Acry Oil Concession, starting a confrontation he could not win against the British over oil. Even though he clearly overplayed his hand and was eventually forced by British gunboat diplomacy to sign another slightly less unfavorable agreement in 1933 (increasing Iran annual profit share from 16 percent to 20 percent), but he at least showed remarkable resolve in trying to defend his country's interests (Abrahamian 1982: 118, 143-44).

The Shah's frustration with the British, in particular, grew because he held them responsible for strengthening the southern tribes in order to secure their access to the oilfields

regardless of how this undermined his state-building project (Cronin 2010: 194). He first tried to check Britain's influence by forging a small-power bloc with Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but obviously this was not sufficient. So by the mid-1930s he drifted slowly but surely toward Britain's budding enemy: Germany. Although he maintained friendly relations with the Weimer Republic, his German overture intensified as the Nazis consolidated power. As the clouds of war gathered, Iran had between 600 and 1,000 German experts in industrial, commercial, and education projects, and bilateral trade between the two countries increased to the point where Germany accounted for 41 percent of Iran's foreign trade in 1939. The Nuremberg Racial Laws acknowledged Iranians as pure Aryans, thus removing (theoretically) the threat of German domination, and henceforth the Shah began referring to Persia as Iran (Saikal 1980: 23-24). Winston Churchill could not risk having Tehran enter the war on the German side at a time when he needed to transfer supplies to his present ally (and future enemy) Joseph Stalin through Iran's German-built railway. The Shah's last act of defiance was to reject the British request to use Iran as a corridor since this infringed on her sovereignty and declared neutrality, thus provoking the joint British-Soviet invasion of 1941 (Saikal 1980: 25). Fatefully, Reza Shah had clearly offended his foreign patrons without having the military machine to hold them at bay, or to at least delay their victory until diplomacy prevailed. This is because, again unlike the Turkish and Egyptian cases, the coup that installed the new Iranian regime was the product of foreign designs rather than a move by a politicized officer corps.[8]

With the forced abdication of Reza Shah, the first chapter in the reign of the Pahlavi regime came to a close. Most of his achievements went with him. The tribes regained their independence, and the control of the central government was again limited to the capital; the economy remained as backward as when he first came to power; the military he took great pride in building was effectively dismantled. The country he left behind was sinking into social disorder, political disarray, and economic suffering—pretty much like the one he inherited two

[8] It is possible that Reza Shah had again counted on foreign assistance, this time from the Germans, though there is no evidence that he had sought their help to repel an Allied invasion.

decades before. In the words of Reza Shah's heir, the twenty-two year old Muhammad Reza: "We have returned in 1941 to the same position Iran was at in 1920" (Pahlavi 1980: 33). The only institution left intact was the monarchy, and the young shah was determined to reestablish its political preeminence. But first he had to weather an even more severe storm than the one that swept his father away. And this time the challenge came from within.

Chapter Twelve

A COUP DE THÉÂTRE: AUGUST 1953

The conventional account of the events leading to the downfall of Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddeq, the only political leader with the legitimacy and stature to compete with the Shah, describes a long-simmering foreign-instigated coup that came to fruition on August 19, 1953. The belief that it was the military (or at least a handful of determined military leaders working in concert with foreign powers) that intervened to safeguard the regime has led many to puzzle over why officers did not rise to the occasion once more in 1979. Likewise, the notion that the Shah was indebted to his army for saving the crown, leads to the erroneous perception that he showered them with benefits in gratitude, and that he somehow expected them to do it again as the revolution unfolded twenty-five years later. This is why it is crucial to understand the 1953 watershed for what it truly was. As this part demonstrates, it was divisions within the embattled Prime Minister's camp and other domestic tensions that sealed his fate. The Americans and the British did play a complementary part through financing anti-Mosaddeq propaganda and mob leaders, and emboldening the Shah to dismiss him. But the role commonly ascribed to the military is wildly exaggerated. If anything, this was a 'political' rather than a 'military' coup. Recognizing this fact is key to grasping the real power balance within the Iranian regime. Even at its weakest point, the court was still the most powerful institution in the realm, the only one that really counted.

The Few Triumphs and Great Failures of Mosaddeq

During the first decade of his rule, Muhammad Reza Shah was described by an Egyptian writer who met him occasionally as a "thoroughly demoralized young man…shocked by what had happened to his father, appalled by the responsibilities that had been thrust upon him,

bewildered by all the new faces and problems surrounding him, and conscious that he had no exceptional qualities with which to meet the challenge" (Heikal 1981: 39). But although he had not yet cultivated the skills required for an interventionist monarch, his early obstructionist policies proved that his determination to play this role was no less than his father's. Between 1941 and 1953, thirty-one cabinets governed Iran in rapid succession; the average life of government was about six months, with the longest serving twenty-two months (Katouzian 2004: 5). While the Shah was still trying to consolidate executive authority, he seemed determined not to allow any prime minster to rule long enough to be able to cultivate his own powerbase. In the early 1950s, however, the topic that dominated public and parliamentary discussions demanded a strong political leader, not one still in the making: this was the need to nationalize Iranian oil.

There was nothing new about Iran's complaints against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which controlled the drilling and marketing of Iranian oil in return for a fixed royalty. But the price of oil had increased threefold since the signing of the 1933 agreement, and the Iranian economy had deteriorated significantly in the aftermath of the British-led 1941 invasion, and Iranians felt they were entitled to make the most out of their resources in these trying circumstances – especially after it became known that in the postwar years the company paid more to the British government in taxes than it did to the Iranian one in royalties. Iranians were also offended by the fact that the government had no say in how AIOC was operated and was no right to inspect its accounts. In 1947, AIOC kicked-off a fresh round of negotiations with the Iranian authorities to absorb some of these grievances before they piled up. But after two years of tedious discussions it became obvious that the company was not willing to offer more than a supplemental agreement with minimal changes. It even refused to match the fifty-fifty percent profit sharing formula introduced by the American-Saudi deal in 1950, and was now becoming standard. It was only natural that parliament elections that year centered on how deputies would counter British intransigence. And the pulse of the street was accurately reflected in the

assassination of Prime Minister Ali Razmara in March 1951 because of his willingness to accommodate AIOC. At this crucial juncture, a coalition of like-minded deputies, calling itself the National Front, pushed parliament to nationalize the oilfields, and demanded that its chief spokesman Muhammad Mosaddeq (chairman of the parliament's ad hoc committee on oil) be appointed prime minister to see this through (Keddie 1981: 133). By the end of April 1951, parliament had passed the Nationalization Law and voted Mosaddeq prime minister—two decisions the Shah had little choice but to ratify. On June 21, the new premier promised a euphoric crowd, "With the oil revenues we could meet our entire budget and combat poverty, disease, and backwardness among our people" (quoted in Saikal 1980: 39).

Evidently, Mosaddeq had underestimated British resourcefulness. He believed that Britain's threatened boycott of Iranian oil would soar up the price of energy to unexpected levels, without reckoning how an increase in British-controlled Iraqi and Kuwaiti production could offset any such shortage. Unlike the Suez Canal, the international waterway that Nasser nationalized in 1956, world demand for oil could be met through alternative sources without relative ease. With the doubling of Arab oil output, an oil embargo was conceived between the leading Western companies (the Seven Sisters) without aggravating world demand. As a result, Iranian oil production fell from 241.4 million barrels in 1951 to 10.6 million barrels the following year, bringing the whole industry to a grinding halt (Saikal 1980: 41). On May 28, the proud Prime Minister pleaded with Dwight Eisenhower for help, but the American President refused to bail him out, sending him instead a disheartening note, dated June 29, claiming that considering Iran's abundant resources: "it would not be fair to American taxpayers for the United States Government to extend any considerable amount of economic aid to Iran" (Eisenhower 1963: 161).[9] The economic hardships brought about by the blockade polarized Iranians; it was the first nail in Mosaddeq's tomb.

[9] Needless to mention, once Mosaddeq's fell, Eisenhower approved a $23.5 million aid package to Iran, and an additional $45 million grant to help the new cabinet balance its finances (Saikal 1980: 48).

Still, the Prime Minister commanded his people's support, as demonstrated by the *siy'e tyr* uprising in the summer of 1952. On July 16, the Prime Minister tended his resignation when the Shah opposed his right as cabinet leader to name the war minister. On July 21, members of parliament led a massive demonstration to the royal palace demanding Mosaddeq's reinstatement. Stores and workshops closed down, transport workers and public employees went on strike, and violence was in the air. As a compromise, it was agreed that the Prime Minister himself would supervise the War Ministry aided by three generals handpicked by the monarch. In return, the obstinate Mosaddeq removed royalists from the new cabinet and insisted that the court—which he saw as a hub of conspiracy—be purged of treacherous figures, including the Shah's notorious twin sister Princess Ashraf, who was persuaded to leave Iran temporarily (Abrahamian 1982: 272; Katouzian 2004: 10).

The tide soon turned, however, during the Prime Minister's second confrontation with the Shah the following winter. On this occasion, Mosaddeq's request that the Shah surrender the crown lands to the state was not only an offence to the royal sense of entitlement, but it threatened traditional groups as well. Around the same time, his cabinet issued two agricultural reform decrees: one requiring 20 percent of the crop share of absentee landlords to remain in the village to benefit peasants through development projects, and another abolishing free service and other arbitrary duties imposed on agricultural workers. Rumors that Mosaddeq was pushing Muhammad Reza to leave the country, and the visible endorsement he was receiving from the communist *Hezb-e Tudeh-e Iran* (The Party of the Iranian Masses) further aggravated his supporters, who began to suspect that Mosaddeq might be flirting with the idea of proclaiming a republic. The landowning class, which constituted the largest bloc in parliament, saw his attempt to seize the royal domain and his limited land reforms as first steps in a wider land redistribution policy meant to appease the disgruntled lower classes. Tribal magnates were also enjoying a honeymoon with the court, now that the queen (Soraya) hailed from one of the biggest tribes (the Bakhtiaris). Both groups of notables knew that monarchy guaranteed their wealth and

political clout. They supported Mosaddeq with the aim of sharing power with the monarch not to create an equal society that would deprive them of their oligarchic privileges. Needless to say, peasants and tribesmen took cue from their social superiors. The independent-minded bazaar merchants were equally concerned about the spread of communism, which they believed would threaten their thriving export-import business. At the same time, the clergy believed that monarchy was the only acceptable form of rule in Islam; they associated republicanism with Turkish secularism; and saw nothing in communism but abject atheism. Mosaddeq finally provoked another dangerous faction: the militant *Feda'iyan-e Islam*, which was composed of young radicals vying to create an Islamic state. The militia originally routed for him because they believed that the Pahalvi dynasty was responsible for Iran's creeping secularization, but when they asked him to prohibit alcohol, impose the veil, suspend work during prayer times, he flatly rebuffed them, thus adding one more group to his growing list of enemies (Parsa 1989: 42; Azimi 2004: 32, 80; Katouzian 2004: 14; Bayandor 2010: 75-77).

What Mosaddeq failed to understand was that those who voted him to office supported oil nationalization because they thought it would bring prosperity; that although they pressured the king sometimes, they wanted the monarchy to be circumscribed not abolished; and that despite their differences, they were united in their hostility to communism. On February 28, Ayatollah Kashani, prominent leader of the now-disintegrating National Front and its first speaker of parliament, issued a rabble-rousing declaration that read:

> **People, be warned! Treacherous decisions have resulted in the decision of our beloved and democratic shah to leave the country… You should realize that if the shah goes, whatever we have will go with him. Rise up and stop him, and make him change his mind…our existence and independence depend on the very person of His Majesty Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, and no one else** (Katouzian 1999: 172).

Later that day, Mosaddeq's own parliamentary allies led a huge royalist crowd to the Winter Palace during the Shah's farewell lunch with the Prime Minister.[10] Protestors chanted pro-monarchy slogans and threw stones at Mosaddeq's motorcade. The *noh'e esfand* uprising was a dress rehearsal for what lay ahead for the ill-fated premier.

One way out of this quagmire was for the Prime Minister to declare a republic and throw himself in the arms of the fairly organized and militant communists; for in contrast to his National Front, which was a loose coalition of like-minded politicians and intellectuals with no political organization, *Tudeh* was a well-disciplined party with at least 25,000 members (Parsa 1989: 39). Yet Mosaddeq was fundamentally unprepared to abandon his cautious approach and adopt such a revolutionary course. Born in 1882 into an upper-class landowning family with kinship ties to the Qajar aristocracy, which still held sway under the Pahlavi dynasty, the French-educated Mosaddeq had served in prominent government posts, including that of finance and foreign minister, and provincial governor, and had been first elected to parliament back in 1924 (the most complete biography is provided by Katouzian 1999). If anything, Mosaddeq was a conservative establishment figure, despite his nationalistic position on the oil issue,[11] and his insistence that the monarch respect the constitution. He was simply no revolutionary. U.S. Foreign Secretary Dean Acheson described him after their first meeting as essentially "a rich, reactionary, and feudal-minded Persian" (Acheson 1969: 504). In his own memoirs, the Prime Minister confessed: "I was opposed not only to democratic, but to all kinds of republics, because a change of regime would not make for a nation's progress, and unless a nation is enlightened and has able statesmen, its affairs would be run as in this country" (1988: 353). He then proudly declared: "Everyone knows that, on 18 August, I issued strict orders for anyone who advocated a republic to be brought to the law. I was also thinking of requesting His Majesty the Shah-in-

[10] The royal couple was indeed planning to visit Europe for medical exams, purportedly related to the queen's sterility, but the Shah was intentionally vague about the purpose of him leaving Iran at this point both for personal reasons (royal reproduction is always a sensitive issue), as well as for political reasons (to feed rumors that his prime minister was intent on abolishing the monarchy).

[11] Incidentally, communists were not completely on board in terms of oil nationalization, because it prevented the Soviets from gaining the concessions they have been vying for during the past decade (Heikal 1981: 57).

Shah's return as soon as possible; and, if this was not feasible, his appointment of a regency council, so that the country's business would continue in the normal way" (Mussaddiq 1988: 352).

Progressive elements, in general, and *Tudeh* leaders, in particular, believed that the Prime Minster's positions were "determined by his class origins and interests," and that he would eventually substitute British for American hegemony (Azimi 2004: 69). His refusal to renew Moscow's fishing concessions in February 1953 at the same time that he was luring U.S. investors into the oil industry, confirmed this view (Katouzian 2004: 19). Like many nationalist leaders of the time, the Prime Minister was flapping the communist threat card to force Americans to support his agenda as the only antidote to communism—though eventually this tactic backfired as Americans felt he had given communists too much power and could no longer rein them in (Bayandor 2010: 160). So when he turned down *Tudeh's* request to terminate oil negotiations with Britain, expel Western diplomats, and abolish the monarchy, the party decided in was time for it to seize power. Disregarding the fact that the country's economy had hit rock bottom, it invited workers to strike; and underestimating the strength of the religious and conservative sentiments of the overwhelming majority of Iranians at the time, it called for the establishment of a secular republic. These actions expectedly caused real panic among Mosaddeq's supporters and the population at large (Azimi 2004: 70). Future Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani remembers clearly how *Tudeh's* extreme positions fostered divisiveness within the National Front and convinced religious activists (like himself) that if Mosaddeq remains in office the country will fall into the hands of communists (Rafsanjani 2005: 39). Treating the premier as a sort of necessary evil it had to tolerate until it firmly grasped power, *Tudeh* now engaged in a dangerous game, whereby it undermined Mosaddeq whenever he seemed to be consolidating power, and rallied around him whenever he came under attack from conservatives – a strategy that was ultimately destabilizing and counterproductive (Azimi 2004: 71).

Caught between the conservative rock and the radical hard place, Mosaddeq made the worst conceivable choice: he decided to dissolve parliament. He had already been granted emergency powers by parliament after the July 1952 uprising, but he wanted to free his hand even further and disempower his old allies, who he rightly suspected were conspiring to overthrow him. It was clear that the Prime Minister was now trampling all over the constitutional legitimacy he had championed for so long, for according to the constitution only the Shah had the authority to dissolve parliament. In the summer of 1953, he tried to amend this royal prerogative or at least convince enough deputies to resign to make it impossible for parliament to attain decorum, but he failed to muster enough votes on both occasions. So he decided to go ahead anyway, appealing—over the heads of the deputies—to the people through a national referendum scheduled on August 3 (Bayandor 2010: 88). On August 15, he triumphantly announced in a radio address: "A Majles that is unwilling to carry out the goals of the people in their anti-imperialist struggles must be eliminated" (Parsa 1989: 43).

This was a momentous blunder because now the pendulum of constitutional legitimacy swung back to the Shah and society's traditional leaders (landlords, tribal chiefs, and clerics). The longtime enemy of royal autocracy was acting as a dictator; the chief representative of the centrist National Front was inadvertently even-handed in alienating the movement's conservative and radical wings, disregarding the advice of the diminishing circle of allies that stuck with him to the end. Both left and right factions tried to bring him down, but it was the latter that succeeded because it received support from the always-proactive Western powers. It was on the night of the referendum that the Shah finally agreed to meet with a CIA representative, and move against his now delegitimized Prime Minister (Bayandor 2010: 93). Without a parliament to vote out the cabinet, only a royal decree could dismiss Mosaddeq and appoint a new prime minister. By issuing such a decree, on August 13, the Shah was acting strictly within his legal boundaries—though preferring not to be involved in the upcoming confrontation he left Iran on the day it was delivered to the Prime Minister.

Tudeh promptly took to the streets, calling for a secular democratic republic built on the ruins of the monarchy and all its vestiges, a reference to landlordism, tribalism, clericalism, as well as bureaucratic capitalism. Party militants occupied municipal buildings in a few provinces and hoisted red flags, and desecration of mosques became rampant. This culminated, on August 17, with a raid on the Reza Shah mausoleum and the overturning of statues of the Shah and his father throughout Tehran.[12] The following day, the party's Executive Bureau issued a four-point declaration on its post-monarchical plans. In a late bid to distance himself from what he saw as unbridled radicalism by *Tudeh*, the Prime Minister committed his final misstep, on August 18, by banning all rallies and arresting 600 communist cadres—although *Tudeh's* Central Committee member (and future Secretary-General) Noureddin Kianouri warned him on August 15 that his conservative opponents were plotting against him. On the day of the decisive confrontation, August 19, the only people who could have countered Mosaddeq's reactive enemies were off the street. In his memoirs, Kianouri says he telephoned Mosaddeq two hours before the riots reached his house to ask him to arm and unleash communists against their common enemy, but it was obviously too late (Bayandor 2010: 95-100, 107-11).

On August 19, at 8 a.m., a crowd of perhaps 3,000 people gathered around the northern entrance of the bazar. It included hoodlums like gym owner Shaaban-bi-mokh Ja'fari (literally, Brainless Shaaban Ja'fari), renowned market thug Al-Tayyeb Haj Reza'i, and an undetermined number of hired *agents provocateurs*. Later, Bakhtiari tribesmen (longtime allies of the British, and now the monarch's in-laws) poured into the capital to swell the ranks of the angry mob. Rioters marched with clubs, knives, and rocks toward Mosaddeq's residence, shouting pro-Shah slogans. On their way, they seized the Telegraph and Telephone Office and the Tehran Radio (sometime around 3:30 p.m.), and freed Imperial Guard chief (Colonel Ne'matollah Nasiri), who was detained by the military a couple of nights before when he delivered the royal dismissal edict to

[12] Some suggest that a number of CIA-employed *agent provocateurs* helped heat up the communist march on August 17, but it is clear that *Tudeh* actions on that day were in line with the radical campaign they had launched a few weeks before; "it is safe to assume that these events would have occurred with or without their [hired agents'] input" (Bayandor 2010: 100).

Mosaddeq. Military and police were paralyzed, not knowing whether to support the deposed prime minister, who still claimed to be running the country, or the newly appointed prime minister General Fazlollah Zahedi. No more than four tanks (the ones stationed outside the Shah's palace) joined the gang that surrounded and eventually torched Mosaddeq's headquarters. The defeated prime minister raised the white flag at 5 p.m. and escaped to a nearby house before turning himself in to the police. Only at this point did General Zahedi deliver his victory speech. During the next few months, the new government destroyed all organized opposition forces, arresting over 4,000 activists (mostly communists), and purging 400 officers and 3,000 civil servants (De Bellaigue 2004: 173; Gasiorowski 2004: 253-57; Bayandor 2010: 104-12).

Two things are noteworthy here. First, it was mainly a civilian mob that actually overthrew Mosaddeq; soldiers and policemen lent symbolic support at best—mostly through their understandable passivity in such a confusing situation. Political battles and reconfigurations within and outside the National Front were the main cause of this popular agitation, rather than military action. Second, all those who resolved to attack Mosaddeq on August 19 might be blamed for taking the law into their own hands, but they were simply implementing a perfectly legal royal edict to replace one prime minister with another; technically—as well as politically—Mosaddeq's defiance of parliament, the constitution, and the king turned him into an outlaw. By virtue of its civilian nature and the fact that its goal lied within the bounds of constitutional legality (even if the means to achieve it were extra-legal), it is not entirely clear why this could even be considered a coup – except in the figurative sense of it being a coup against the general will of the people personified in their national hero Mosaddeq. That being said, it is still crucial for use to delineate the position of the military and geopolitical forces at this precarious juncture in order to get a more accurate picture of their influence on the nature and development of the Iranian regime in the coming years.

In the Presence of Absence: The Military in 1953

Let us begin with a brief overview of the state of the armed forces during the first decade of the new shah's rule. Reza Shah's abdication had left the military in a state of disarray. Many conscripts deserted and rejoined their tribes, taking their weapons with them, which meant that even the modest results of the pacification campaign of the 1930s have been reversed (Roosevelt 1979: 61). Things seemed to be getting back on track when Soviet reluctance to withdraw from the north of Iran after the war prompted the U.S. to send instructors to reorganize the Iranian army. Even when Moscow agreed to pull out in 1947, it set up independent republics in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan to secure it southern borders, triggering a limited campaign by the resurgent Imperial Armed Forces to rein in the separatists. Several political factions now competed for the loyalty of the military. The Shah showered officers with benefits and promotions (producing twice as much generals and colonels in his first twenty months in power than his father had done in twenty years), and packed the War Ministry with royalists (Ward 2009: 170). But many officers preferred to join opposition movements. *Tudeh*, in particular, succeeded in creating a 700-officer-strong Military Organization in the late 1940s.[13] There were also nationalist cells organized into a Patriotic Officers movement under General Mahmoud Afshartus, Mosaddeq's future police chief, and those rooted for the National Front (Behrooz 2000: 13).

Divided loyalties and general weakness prevented the military from challenging Mosaddeq's austere measures during his first months in office: reducing the defense budget by 15 percent; purging 136 officers (including 15 generals); transferring 15,000 soldiers to the Gendarmerie; setting up a fact-finding committee to investigate financial corruption in the military; and announcing that Iran would henceforth purchase only defensive weapons

[13] The identities of these 700 officers were exposed in September 1954: 429 of them were arrested in the weeks following Mosaddeq's downfall; 37 fled the country; and the rest were cashiered (Behrooz 2000: 13).

(Abrahamian 1982: 273). Yet no coup plans materialized.[14] On the contrary, the military remained docile, with a bulk of the officer crops loyal to the new Prime Minister (Cronin 2010: 262).[15]

The Shah was, in fact, so sure that the military followed cabinet orders to keep him under surveillance that he refused to discuss plans to dismiss Mosaddeq with his twin sister Princess Ashraf, who flew in from Switzerland on July 29, 1953 to convince him to corporate with Western secret services; nor did he want to listen to what U.S. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf had to say on August 1. Even when the Shah finally agreed to meet with CIA operative Kermit Roosevelt in a car parked close to the palace gates in pitch darkness, he was so evidently unnerved that Roosevelt had to reassure him: "Your Majesty, I don't see any way that our conversation could be 'bugged' in this car. You were right to suspect that it would be dangerous to talk to Princes Ashraf or General Schwarzkopf in the palace, or even perhaps near any tree in your garden; [but] this isn't even your car" (Roosevelt 1979: 146-47; 162). Muhammad Reza's doubts regarding the military loyalty to Mosaddeq were confirmed on the night of August 16, when Chief of Staff General Taqi Riahi detained the head of the Imperial Guard Colonel Nassiri because he tried to deliver a royal dismissal to the prime minister (Roosevelt 1979: 174). That is why when the monarch returned to Tehran, on August 22, he requested an Iraqi fighter escort, since he did not trust his own air force. It is also why the CIA resorted to market hooligan Brainless Shaaban Ja'fari to prepare a warm welcome for the returning sovereign at the airport, rather than organize an official military reception. Finally, this explains why the Shah purged 1,800 officers in the weeks following his return (Gasiorowski 2004: 256-57).

Now, the overthrow of Mosaddeq is generally considered a coup because the man who took his place was a former general who supposedly had the support of the officer corps. So let

[14] A bunch of disgruntled retired officers, meeting in the Officers Club in Tehran, discussed plans to establish a Committee to Save the Fatherland (*Komiteh-e Najat-e Vatan*), but their intention was to incite tribes to rebel, and turn mullahs and landlords against the cabinet; a coup was not in the cards (Abrahamian 1982: 279).

[15] This also applied to the miniscule security apparatus, as evidenced by the fact that in April 1953 Mosaddeq's opponents kidnapped and killed General Mahmoud Afshartus, who headed the civilian security sector, because of his fidelity to the Prime Minister (Katouzian 2004: 15).

us look more into the career of General Fazlollah Zahedi and his relationship with the military. The general was born in 1893 near the city of Hamadan to a relatively wealthy family. At the age of thirteen he met Cossack commander Colonel Reza Khan, who convinced him to join the force. When Reza ascended the throne he employed Zahedi in his pacification campaigns. Though some describe him as brave and skillful, his greatest military feat was to capture Sheikh Ghazal, the tribal chief who had turned the southern oil-rich province of Khuzestan into a British protectorate, and Zahedi managed to arrest the sheikh by inviting him to a feast and intoxicating him – hardly a act of military bravado. Reza Shah then transferred him to the Gendarmerie, but was not impressed by the way he handled himself and ordered his arrest. After a few months in prison, he was released and managed to worm his way back into royal favor. But he could not get back into the army and accepted the position of police chief instead. Barely a year in the job, the monarch dismissed him for negligence, dramatically tearing away the stars from his uniform. A shamed Zahedi now had to make a living as a civilian. He first opened a shoe store, and then partnered with the Ford Motor Company dealers in Iran. After a year of pleading for forgiveness, the sovereign took him in as an adjunct in court. The king soon got irritated with him again and demoted him to administrative and perfunctory army duties away from court. With the gathering clouds of the Second World War, Zahedi pushed for a provincial post and after much hassle secured command of the 9th Army in Isfahan. There he was exposed to one of the most humiliating episodes that could befall an officer on duty: suspected of pro-Nazi sympathies (like his monarch), Zahedi was kidnapped from his house in the garrison by a British agent (Fitzroy MacLean) acting singlehandedly, on December 5, 1941, and shipped to a British camp in Palestine for three years. Probably out of embarrassment, the Iranian army announced his retirement. Two years after he returned home, in 1946, the new shah appointed him as governor of the Fars province, then transferred him in 1949 into his old job as chief of police, and finally appointed him the senate the following year. This last position helped him, in February 1951, land the job of Interior Minister in the cabinet led by court minister Hussein Ala,

who the Shah tried to use to preempt the victory of the National Front in the coming elections. Whether out of integrity or incompetence, Zahedi did not rig the elections, resulting—to the Shah's utter disappointment—in a landslide victory for the National Front. A grateful Mosaddeq kept him as Interior Minister, but soon he got into trouble again, shooting a crowd of demonstrators with live ammunition, killing 30 and injuring dozens, just because they chanted anti-American slogans during the visit of U.S. envoy Averell Harriman. Both the Shah and Mosaddeq vocally condemned his recklessness and asked him to resign in August 1951. After laying low for a couple of years, Zahedi tried his luck again with court. He met court minister Hussein Ala (his old cabinet boss in 1951) three times during the first couple of months in 1953 offering his help to remove Mosaddeq, but he was rebuffed by the Shah who believed that the prime minister's fall was inevitable after he had alienated his supporters and saw no reason to involve the court. On February 26, 1953, Zahedi was arrested on accusations of conspiracy, but thinking he was harmless, Mosaddeq let him go, at which point he immediately went into hiding. And this is where the CIA found him (Kinzer 2003: 142-44; Milani 2008a: 496-500; Bayandor 2010: 83).

This snapshot of Zahedi's career demonstrates clearly that his relationship to the military was at best tenuous, and his influence on officers and soldiers almost negligible. His only occupation in 1953 was that of President of the Retired Officers Club. When the CIA began looking for someone to replace Mosaddeq, a former officer and senator like Zahedi seemed like a good choice. His eagerness to help was transmitted by his son Ardeshir (future ambassador to Washington), who served as deputy administrator for the American aid program, and acted as liaison between his father and the CIA during those crucial weeks (Rubin 1981: 84). And in return for his service, Zahedi received $1 million in cash from the U.S. immediately following Mosaddeq's fall (Gasiorowski 2004: 257). Now with a (former) general onboard, the ousting of Mosaddeq could be presented as a coup – a sort of warning to other nationalist adventures. On August 20, Kennett Love reported to the *New York Times* that "a mutiny by the lower ranks

against pro-Mossadegh officers" was already simmering, and a pro-Shah uprising "was all the troops needed. Ordered to break up the demonstration, they turned their weapons against their officers" (Kinzer 2003: 187).[16] This fabrication was based on how things were actually supposed to go had the CIA succeeded in enlisting military support. But, in reality, it had not.

On July 21, 1953 CIA paramilitary expert George Carroll was dispatched to Tehran to evaluate if there were officers ready to partake in the operation. He reported back that the officer corps, from the chief of staff downward, had not quells with the current government, and that CIA's main contact (Zahedi) had no reliable contacts in any of the main formations—his friends were mostly in peripheral posts (such as the army's transportation branch, and border guards). There was also Colonel Teimur Bakhtiar, the queen's uncle, but as commander of the Kermanshah garrison, which was 525 km west of Tehran, he was too far to lend support. Finally, there was Colonel Ne'motallah Nasiri, commander of the 700-strong Imperial Guard, but his force was minuscule by any measure. After their initial meeting with Zahedi, the CIA concluded that he had "no military assets," and that the informal contacts he had with retired officers were blatantly "inadequate for carrying out a coup" (Gasiorowski 2004: 241). Quoting from recently declassified U.S. documents, Darioush Bayandor paints a similar picture of CIA frustration:

> **A run of the mill *coup* plan of a Latino variety, comprising the neutralization of key strategic command and communication posts in Tehran, assorted with an arrest list had been prepared… It soon became clear to the planners that General Zahedi, by then retired from the army for several years, had no significant allies, and none among the brigades. He had indicated that he could count on help from the Imperial Guard, while mentioning elements in the police and the Armed Customs Guard as well as some units from the Army Transportation branch. This was patently inadequate** (2010: 115-16).

This was old news to the British War Office, whose military attaché in Tehran had reported back in August 1952 that a coup was "unlikely to have much support in the army" (Azimi 2004: 76). Now, a month before the planned overthrow, British and American governments saw clearly that: "MI6-CIA assets within the armed forces were too limited and, as such, incapable of

[16] This version of events was echoed in works published before the declassification of some of the important documents relating to the 1953 clash (see for example Abrahamian 1982: 280; Parsa 1989: 45).

assuring the military objectives" (Bayandor 2010: 86). As the operation's field leader admitted, Iranian officers and soldiers were fence sitters and cannot be relied on (Roosevelt 1979: 109).

Still, an ensemble of senior officers was needed to dress up the overthrow as a coup. Colonel Abbas Farzanegan, a CIA asset recruited while serving at the Iranian embassy in Washington, was hastily sent to Tehran in July 1953 to find such officers. He called on two old friends, General Nader Batmanqelich and Colonel Hassan Akhavi, and the latter brought in another good friend on board, Colonel Zand-Karimi. General Zahedi, the supposed leader of the coup, had never met any of them. After extensive meetings in August 6-8, almost a week before the planned operation, Carroll managed to draw a list of forty police and army officers who "might be useful" if the need arises to unseat the government by force (Gasiorowski 2004: 241-42; Bayandor 2010: 116). Alas, none of the abovementioned played any role in the actual overthrow on August 19. Akhavi fell sick a few days before; Batmanqelich and Zand-Karimi were arrested on August 16; and at that same night the top two American assets, Zahedi and Farzanegan, ran for cover in a CIA safe house three blocks away from the U.S. embassy (Gasiorowski 2004: 249; Bayandor 2010: 116).

So what went wrong? The conspirators insisted that they would not move against the current prime minister unless the Shah officially dismissed him and appointed Zahedi in his stead – a request that already divests the entire operation of its 'coup' status. Once the royal decree was procured, Colonel Nasiri of the Imperial Guard was asked to deliver it to Mosaddeq at 1 a.m. on August 16. The latter refused to meet him, and instead ordered his arrest (Katouzian 1999: 189). Chief of Staff Riahi obliged, accusing Nasiri of spearheading a coup, to which the later barked back: "Nonsense! You are the one who is guilty of dangerous action. I am simply carrying out the Shah's orders" (Roosevelt 1979: 175). He was right: the "real coup," from the royalist viewpoint, was Mossadeq's refusal to implement the "fully legal dismissal order signed by the sovereign" (Milani 2008a: 502). As soon as the plan miscarried, CIA's rashly assembled cast of officers pleaded with their forty police and military officers for help, but they were harshly

rebuffed. Their role was practically over (except for Zahedi, of course). On the morning of August 17, operation leader Kermit Roosevelt received orders to evacuate. A desperate Roosevelt sent an envoy to the nearby garrison commander in Isfahan, since no officer in Tehran or its vicinity wanted to cooperate, but he was denied support. A word was sent out to Queen Soraya's uncle Colonel Bakhtiar, and he did eventually move out of Kermanshah with a token unit, but the distance was prohibitive (over 500 km away from the capital), and by the time he reached Tehran (two days later), it was all over (Gasiorowski 2004: 249-53; Bayandor 2010: 114).

With no military support at hand, Roosevelt placed his bet on a popular uprising, which was already in the air because of Mosaddeq's defiance of the royal will (and constitutional law, before that), as well as the disturbing upsurge in *Tudeh's* radical campaign after the August 16 showdown. CIA's hope at this point was limited to making sure their man (Zahedi) ended up on top. Through his civilian contacts (the wealthy Rashidian brothers), Roosevelt claims to have hired weightlifters and thugs to kick off the march to Mosaddeq's house during the early hours of August 19 (Roosevelt 1979: 186). He watched patiently as the number of rioters swelled, and by 4 p.m. he decided it was time to "collect the good general…[and] turn [him] loose to lead the crowd" (Roosevelt 1979: 178). Back at the CIA safe house the scene was awkward: "There I found the legal—about to become actual—Prime Minister of Iran sitting in what looked to me like his winter underwear. His uniform was draped over a chair beside him… He rose immediately and started pulling on the uniform over his heavy woolens" (Roosevelt 1979: 193). While Zahedi was getting ready, Roosevelt went to scout out the best point to "deliver him" to and settled on the area surrounding the deposed prime minister's residence where most of the mob was gathered. There he ran into a retired air force general standing with the rest of the spectators. They had met before in Washington. General Guilanshah approached Roosevelt with a big smile and inquired if there was anything he could do to help, to which the latter responded, "Damn right there is! Pick up a tank if you can and meet me one block west of here in fifteen

minutes…and I'll turn over General Zahedi to your care" (Roosevelt 1979: 192). Roosevelt wanted his man to make a hero's entrance—and that he did. Through the good offices of Deputy Police Chief Colonel Ziauddin Khalatbari—i.e., a policeman not a military officer—a tank was procured for the occasion (Bayandor 2010: 111). General Zahedi was then placed over the tank and paraded through the streets. At the same time, the four tanks stationed outside the royal palace rolled on to the vicinity of Mosaddeq's house at the eleventh hour, but the thoroughly intimidated national hero had already thrown in the towel. At around 5 p.m., General Zahedi delivered his victory speech (Gasiorowski 2004: 255).

Finally, there is no better testament to how little power Zahedi had over the army then what happened after Mosaddeq's overthrow. The Prime Minister's first action was to telegram the Shah in Rome asking him to return at once, though many friends advised him to keep the king waiting for a while until he had cultivated his own powerbase. Then, according to the Shah's wishes, the new cabinet was composed almost exclusively of civilians, and those officers who had cooperated with the CIA were transferred to the civilian sector. Even so, the Shah's mind was set as soon as he landed in Tehran to get rid of his new prime minister. After several hints that he should quit went unheeded, the Shah sent his courtiers in March 1955 to obtain his resignation one-way or the other. Without much fuss, Zahedi packed his bags and left the following month. Hours after tendering his resignation, he learned that the Shah wanted him to leave Iran permanently, and again the disgruntled general obliged. He spent his time in Europe, mostly in Geneva in the ceremonial role of ambassador at large, and died in exile ten years later, a lonely and broken man (Gasiorowski 2004: 257; Milani 2008a: 502-504). The Shah demonstrated that Zahedi was just another prime minister than can be hired or fired at will, while Zahedi made it clear he never had the support of the military. It was the power of the court and its traditional allies that had brought down Mosaddeq; it was the political institution that mattered, not the military. And Zahedi knew it.

The above analysis makes it clear that this was not a military coup. The handful of (mostly retired) officers handpicked by the CIA to lend support in overthrowing the Prime Minister was neither an organized cabal, nor representatives of the military leadership or the officer corps. Their ranks were the only assets they had to offer. More importantly, they dared not mobilize the army or act on their own before the CIA convinced the Shah to sign a royal decree dismissing Mosaddeq and appointing General Zahedi in his place. And when the chief of the Imperial Guard, who relayed that edict to the Prime Minister, was detained without much fuss, the conspirators ran for cover in CIA safe houses, knowing full well that they had no military support whatsoever to fall back on. Only when civilian gangs forced the deposed prime minister to surrender, did General Zahedi—as a legally appointed prime minister, not as an officer—ask the Iranian people and members of the various state institutions, including the army, to show respect for the royal will by supporting him. But though we can fairly conclude that the armed forces had no role to speak of in this whole affair, we cannot overlook the significant (though complementary) part carried out by U.S. and British secret services.

Operation Ajax: Pushing Open an Unlatched Door[17]

From day one, it was clear that Britain would not accept Iran's oil nationalization as a *fait accompli*. Its postwar economy was too shaky to withstand loosing investments abroad, and if it let this one go, a wave of nationalist takeovers in the postcolonial world might soon follow (Rubin 1981: 61). Moreover, the AIOC refinery in Abadan not only produced more than half of the total Middle East production of oil, but it was also "the largest installation of its kind in the world. It was Britain's single largest overseas asset and a source of national pride;" in fact, London believed that Iran's oil was "actually and rightly British oil because it had been discovered by the

[17] In addition to the cited sources, the information in this section draws on declassified documents in the National Security Archive Electronic Book No. 28, entitled The Secret CIA History of the Iran Coup, 1953 (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/#documents).

British, developed by British capital, and exploited through British skill and British ingenuity" (Louis 2004: 129).

The United States, on the other hand, had no reason to go out on a limb to save British money and wounded pride. While the British have been entangled in Iran for at least a century, Americans kept their distance until 1942 when the Allies requested 30,000 U.S. troops to help deliver aid to the Soviets through the Iranian corridor. The following year, a Shah embittered by British humiliation of his father turned to the Americans to help him rebuild his economy and army (Saikal 1980: 54). A. C. Millspaugh was recalled in 1942 (after Reza Shah had dismissed him two decades before) and granted extensive control over Iranian finances, whereupon he promptly planted American advisors in all economic departments (Keddie 1981: 115). By 1947, in line with President Harry S. Truman's containment doctrine, two U.S. military missions were set up: one with the Imperial Armed Forces (ARMISH), and the other with the Gendarmerie (GENMISH) (Ward 2009: 186).[18] After helping Iran get rid of the Soviets and their allies in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, the two countries signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (Halliday 1979: 91).

Around this period, the Americans developed an interest in Iran's oil. U.S. oil experts submitted a report to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, alerting him to the fact that the "center of gravity of the world's petroleum output was shifting to the Persian Gulf" (Saikal 1980: 29). Preventing a communist government in Tehran thus became Washington's first priority. Ambassador Leland Morris sent a dispatch to the State Department warning that the expanding Soviet influence would not only "end all possibility of an American oil concession in Iran…[but] Most important of all it would mean extension of Soviet influence to [the] shores of [the] Persian Gulf creating [a] potential threat to our immensely rich oil holdings in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait" (Heikal 1981: 45). The Joint Chiefs of Staff reached a similar assessment, asserting that

[18] In August 1942, West Point graduate, and former head of the New Jersey State Police Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf was the first important U.S. officer to arrive to Tehran to help, along with 24 police experts. One of his first achievements was to re-separate the army and gendarmerie (after Reza Shah's forced merger), and place the latter again under the supervision of the Interior Ministry (Ward 2009: 172).

the "oil resources of Iran…are very important and may be vital to [U.S. military needs]" (Heikal 1981: 50). An alarmed President Truman recorded in his diary, "Russian activities in Iran threatened the peace of the world [because] if the Russians were to control Iran's oil, either directly or indirectly, the raw material balance of the world would undergo serious damage, and it would be a serious economic loss for the economy of the Western world" (Truman 1956: 94-95).

Nevertheless, on the eve of the Iranian oil crisis in the early 1950s, James A. Bill, an American academic close to decision-makers in Washington, noted: "United States policy [toward Iran] was yet unformed, confused, and ad hoc in nature. Competing policy centers and missions clashed with one another, neutralizing their effect and damaging their credibility. American ignorance of Iran was embarrassing" (Bill 1988: 41-42). The confusion was enhanced by the fact that the crisis occurred around election year (1952), and despite their agreement on the necessity of keeping Iran out of communist reach, the departing Truman handled the Iranian affair quite differently from the new president, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Truman believed that Mosaddeq's popularity could help block a communist takeover, and he knew from his talks with the Iranian premier in October 1952 that he distrusted his *Tudeh* supporters and their Soviet patrons. Washington therefore dissuaded the British from intervening militarily to occupy the oilfields, and sent several emissaries, notably, presidential envoy Averell Harriman, to help both sides reach an agreement. CIA station chief in Tehran, Roger Goiran, likewise preferred a negotiated settlement (Gasiorowski 2004: 229-31), and Defense Secretary Robert Lovett warned that Mosaddeq's departure would lead to the "absorption of Iran in the Soviet system" (Byrne 2004: 223). This is why during their meeting in Paris on November 9, 1952, Secretary of State Dean Acheson relayed to his British counterpart in no uncertain terms that they must deal with Mosaddeq as a partner rather than conspire against him. The unyielding Anthony Eden thought: "Our reading of the situation was different. I did not accept the argument that the only alternative to Musaddiq was communist rule. I thought if Musaddiq fell, his place might well be taken by a more reasonable government with

which it should be possible to conclude a satisfactory agreement" (Eden 1960: 200). Little wonder that Acheson blamed the British in his memoirs, describing their government as "destructive and determined on a rule or ruin policy in Iran" (Acheson 1969: 602). In fact, Truman went as far as to dispatch special aide Paul Nitze to warn Eden that if AIOC does not offer concessions, the U.S. would bring its own oil companies to the picture (Rubin 1981: 75).

Mosaddeq's chance to curry U.S. support diminished with the election of the aggressively anti-communist Eisenhower administration, with its hawkish Dulles brothers at the head of the State Department and the CIA, in addition to militant CIA director of operations Frank Wisner, and former CIA director General Walter Bedell Smith as Undersecretary of State. What all these Cold Warriors had in common was a belief in the efficacy of covert operations. Truman, who had created the CIA, was disheartened by the disastrous failures of many of its black-ops. Eisenhower, by contrast, had been convinced through his war experiences of the value of covert action as the best means for accomplishing sensitive missions at low political and economic costs (Byrne 2004: 223). A CIA eager to break loose from the restrictions of the National Security Act of 1947 saw in the transition a chance to prove its worth as the most efficient instrument in the Cold War (Zegart 1999: 167-83). In addition, the Republicans had run on a platform that called for rolling back the Iron Curtain after losing China, and in a climate heated up by McCarthyism. Ideologically, as well, Eisenhower's men were suspicious of Third World nationalism, and saw it as a gate for communist infiltration, especially after the gradual communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948 (Rubin 1981: 56, 76).

The change of guard in Washington was only one of three unfortunate changes that ended the possibility of a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The second was the Tory victory in England in fall 1951, and the appointment of Winston Churchill as prime minister, and Eden as foreign secretary. Churchill's predecessor, Labor Prime Minister Clement Attlee, had kept his zealous chiefs of staff in check. He vetoed, for example, plans to occupy Abadan (Operation Buccaneer) because the Americans were against it; because the loss of British bases in India

hindered its military capacity to undertake a major operation in the Middle East; and because the dire economic situation made it impossible to call-up reservists. Attlee had also objected to several MI6 schemes against Mosaddeq, preferring to give negotiations a chance. With Churchill in charge, the aggressiveness of the British doubled overnight. He had been personally involved in securing Iran's oil concessions in the Great War, and frequently bragged about how he converted the Royal Navy from coal to oil without costing the British taxpayer a single penny, and how cheap Persian oil saved the British budget £40 million, allowing the creation of the greatest fleet the world had seen. To make things worse, Eden who supervised covert actions as part of his portfolio fell ill in 1953, and this file was transferred to Churchill, whose general enthusiasm for secret operations was only too well known (Louis 2004: 133, 161-67).

The third misfortune to befall Mosaddeq was the untimely death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953. In planning his confrontation with Britain, the Prime Minister had counted on the fact that the feared Soviet leader would deter Western powers from imposing their will on Iran (Mussaddiq 1988: 272). He was probably right. Kermit Roosevelt noted that Stalin's death, more than any other international development, rendered "our hopes for a favorable climate" for intervention as strong as ever (Roosevelt 1979: 129). Now, both the Americans and British were more prone to risk intervention, while Soviet leaders bickered over post-Stalin power arrangements.

After the geopolitical conditions were set for intervention, two events inside Iran convinced Western powers that the time for change had come. The February 1953 riots by National Front activists against Mosaddeq made it clear that the ailing leader was losing control over his own camp, and the Prime Minister's rejection of yet another British proposal the following month diminished hope for a negotiated settlement (Byrne 2004: 225). Finally, Eisenhower was ready to sign on to a long-simmering British plot.[19] As early as November 1952,

[19] Two British scholars are credited with providing the theoretical impetus for the plot. Ann K. S. (Nancy) Lambton, a reader at SOAS and a good friend of Anthony Eden, and Robin Zaehner, Professor of Eastern Religions at

MI6 had presented a rudimentary plan to Kermit Roosevelt, the thirty-six year old CIA operative in charge of the agency's Middle East operations (Roosevelt 1979: 107). The British could not pull it out on their own because a month before the Iranian premier severed relations with London and forced it to withdraw its diplomatic mission and intelligence station. When Roosevelt said that his superiors were still dragging their feet, two British representatives flew to Washington in December hoping to make a stronger impression: Christopher Montague Woodhouse, who headed MI6 in Tehran during the last months of the Labor government, and Sam Falle, the Foreign Office's Oriental secretary at the Iran embassy (Gasiorowski 2004: 227). Knowing exactly which tune to play, the British dignitaries presented the plot as the only hope to block a Soviet march southwards. As Woodhouse later wrote, "Not wishing to be accused of trying to use the Americans to pull the British chestnuts out of the fire, I decided to emphasize the Communist threat to Iran rather than the need to recover control of the oil industry" (Kinzer 2003: 3-4).

What the British had to offer, since they were banned from working in Iran, was the MI6-controlled political network, managed domestically by the rich and politically connected Rashidian brothers. The network included parliament members, clergymen, courtiers, landlords, businessmen, journalists, in addition to thugs and mob leaders. The Americans had created a similar network between January and July 1952 through the good work of CIA operative Donald Wilber, a Princeton-educated scholar of Islamic architecture who served at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Tehran during the war and specialized in psychological warfare. Two journalists, Ali Jalali and Faruq Kayvani, now ran it on behalf of the CIA. In May 1953, Wilber moved to Nicosia to plan with his British counterpart, Norman Darbyshire, how to consolidate their assets in Iran and direct them toward the joint goal of overthrowing the government. A plan was drafted on May 30 in Nicosia, and was finalized during a joint CIA-MI6 meeting in Beirut on June 13. It had no significant military component, and was rather centered on

Oxford. They both argued that a harmony of interests was perfectly possible between Iranian and Western elites, and that Mosaddeq's crude nationalism was the only obstacle (Louis 2004: 131).

destabilizing the country through agitation in the streets and mosques, and grey propaganda portraying Mosaddeq as a closeted communist dictator. The end goal was to provide parliamentarians with an excuse to vote him out of office and install another parliament member, senator (and retired general) Zahedi. Total expenses were estimated at $1 million, mostly as bribes to hooligans, clerics, journalists, and parliament members. And Kermit Roosevelt was appointed field commander of what was now called Operation Ajax (Gasiorowski 2004: 232-37). It is clear therefore that: "In its original conception, the plan was to provide a catalytic framework within which local political and social forces would be unleashed; the dynamics they generated would lead to the downfall," and that the main protagonists were civilians (Bayandor 2010: 86-87). Even when Mosaddeq's suspension of parliament days before the plot unfolded destroyed the hope to vote him out of office by his peers, Roosevelt turned to the Shah to issue a royal decree to replace him with Zahedi, i.e. a political coup from above rather than from below. The military was only expected to remain loyal to the constitution. When the emissary who went to deliver the royal edict was arrested, the plan was aborted and the U.S. field officer was recalled. But Roosevelt decided to give it another shot. Failing to secure military support, he placed his hopes on the combined CIA-MI6 civilian network

On August 16, Roosevelt directed Jalali and Kayvani to disseminate thousands of copies of the Shah's decree in the bazaar and instructed media men on CIA payroll to underline how Mosaddeq had instigated coup to overthrow the Shah. He then asked the Shah, through U.S. ambassador to Baghdad (Burton Beryy) to make a radio address to the same effect, denouncing the anti-constitutional forces led by the now illegitimate prime minister. On that same night, Roosevelt used $50,000 to hire dozens of *agent provocateurs* to tag onto *Tudeh* demonstrations, and incite the crowd to attack mosques and royal symbols, as well as loot and vandalize private property. Clerics, including the prominent ayatollahs Kashani, Behbahani, and Borujerdi were asked to issue *fatwas* (religious decrees) calling for a holy war against communism (though the senior ones declined). At this point, U.S. ambassador Loy W. Henderson, who was vacationing

in Beirut, was rushed back to Tehran to deliver an ultimatum to Mosaddeq, on August 18, that if he did not rein in street violence, the U.S. would have to deport all Americans. Mosaddeq, who still believed it was the British, not the Americans, who were out to get him, and still hoped to win U.S. support, fell into the trap and gullibly cleared the streets for the mob that will overthrow him the next day (Gasiorowski 2004: 251-53).

For all his good work, Roosevelt claims, the indebted monarch thanked him during their last meeting, on August 23, with a dramatic phrase: "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army – and to you" (Roosevelt 1979: 199). Immediately following the coup, Washington provided Iran with $45 million as an emergency loan to help stabilize the economy, and between 1953 and 1957, it supplied it with over $500 million in loans and grants (Parsa 1989: 46-47). A grateful Shah then signed a contract with a consortium of Western oil companies in August 1954. The new deal was brokered by Herbert Hoover Jr., son of the ex-president and petroleum advisor to Eisenhower, and granted Iran its coveted 50 percent profit share. Although the consortium allocated a 40 percent share to British Petroleum (the reincarnated AIOC), what was new was that five U.S. companies received 8 eight percent each, i.e. a total share of 40 percent (Saikal 1980: 48). And four years later, Roosevelt left the CIA to become an oil executive in the Gulf (Bayandor 2010: 7).

It is worth noting that recent scholarship has cast doubt over Roosevelt's Homeric exploits (notably Gasiorowski 2004; Bayandor 2010). His claim to have single-handedly mobilized and manipulated the crowds on August 19 seemed disingenuous. President Eisenhower recorded in his diary, on October 8, 1953, after meeting Roosevelt: "I listened to his detailed report and it seemed more like a dime novel than historical fact" (Bayandor 2010: 7-8). And Ambassador Henderson denied in his testament for the Truman Library of Oral History project that either he or Roosevelt had much to do with the demonstrations that brought down Mosaddeq (Bayandor 2010: 167). Exaggeration aside, however, there is still a major dispute over how critical foreign intervention had been to Mosaddeq's downfall. Some, like Bill (1988: 94) and

Parsa (1989: 45), insisted that without Western intervention, the anti-Mosaddeq forces would have been unable to remove him from power. Others, like Azimi (2004: 89), saw Operation Ajax as a "concentrated final blow delivered against a cumulatively incapacitated, fragile government;" or, as Richard Cottom put it, the operation was like "pushing on an already-opened door" (quoted in Rubin 1981: 89). One of the most thorough studies of the failure of the communists to protect Mosaddeq concluded that the effectiveness of the August 19 riots with minimal expenses and organization only shows the political insignificance of anti-royalist forces (Behrooz 2000: 3). Drawing on recently declassified documents, the latest study of the events of 1953 maintained that: "internal political dynamics more than foreign intrigues were responsible for the ultimate blow" (Bayandor 2010: 155). The ill-fated prime minister failed to recognize that monarchy was the linchpin of a whole system of oligarchic privileges: the aristocratic families, the landlords, the tribal chiefs, and the courtiers. At the same time, it embodied tradition and continuity for clerics, peasants, and the petit bourgeoisie who had a lot to lose if Iran followed the secular modernizing path of Turkey. Mosaddeq's situation was further undermined by the fact that his National Front was a disorganized coalition of parties and parliamentarians, and that while he excelled in communicating with the masses (or maybe because he was), he was a notoriously poor communicator with his own political allies. In short, the Prime Minister "stepped over the interests of virtually all elements in the power structure" instead of trying to divide it or replace it (Bayandor 2010: 156-59). Though the debate rages on, it is sufficient for our purposes to see that it was political forces inside Iran and geopolitical forces outside it—rather than the military—that was responsible for the events of 1953, and that loyalty to the throne was the cornerstone of both domestic and foreign efforts.

Chapter Thirteen

THE ROAD TO PERSEPOLIS AND BACK:
AUGUST 1953- JANUARY 1978

If history offers a few examples of how to build a self-destructive regime, what the Shah did during the following two decades of his rule would certainly occupy the top of the list. While the world's few remaining monarchs were struggling to modernize their political institutions through separating themselves from direct governance, the Shah refashioned his monarchy along medieval (or even ancient) lines. He shunned prevalent terms such as 'modernization' and 'development' for one telling label: rebuilding the Great Civilization (*Tamaddon-e Bozorg*). It was more than a mere semantics. His goal was not to catch up with the advanced countries of the West, as an Ataturk or a Nasser hoped to, but rather to reclaim the ancient glory of Persia under a wise and great king—himself. In comparing the two Pahlavi kings, one commentator noted: "Reza Shah saw himself as a patriot; his son has gone beyond this and seeks to give his rule a sense of divine mission" (Graham 1978: 57). But to enhance the power of the court over all other institutions of rule—most crucially, the military and security—was a recipe for disaster because in the face of broad and persistent opposition there is no better protection that a military and security invested in the regime. A political apparatus cannot coerce demonstrators, especially if this apparatus was not a mass-based ruling party that could mobilize scores of supporters, but an elite-based and narrowly grounded royal court. Once the scepter of power shook in the hands of the monarch, it was only natural that the whole system would crumble. In this part, we will not only focus on why there was so much popular opposition to the Shah by the late 1970s, but also on how the court weakened its own military and security institutions to the point where they could not defend the regime at the time of greatest need.

White Revolution, Black Reaction

In January 1963, the Shah publicized his so-called White Revolution, later renamed the Revolution of the Shah and the People, which was basically a six-point initiative centered on land reform and industrialization, though it also included social benefits, such as profit-sharing for workers, enfranchisement for women, and literacy and health corps in the countryside. The package was presented as a token of royal benevolence; it was formulated in court, away from government and parliament, and legitimized over their heads through a popular referendum that registered a record 99.9 percent approval rate. Carrying out these reforms against the wishes of Iran's countryside magnates was meant to demonstrate court autonomy. Until the late 1950s, landlords and tribal chiefs fiercely opposed plans for land reform in parliament. One of them once declared: "talk of land distribution incites class hatred against our noble one thousand families—the families that are the main bulwarks of Iran and the recognized protectors of Islam." Another proclaimed: "Proposals for land reform may have been suitable for medieval Europe, but are in no ways applicable to Islamic Iran. For Iran, unlike Europe, never experienced feudalism. Our peasants remained free men… And our landlords acted as responsible and peaceful citizens, treating the peasants as their own children. Consequently, the relationship between landlords and peasants has been one of love and respect" (Abrahamian 1982: 246). Yet when reform was decreed, none of them dared challenge the royal will—at least directly.

It might have seemed unintuitive for the Shah to undercut the social groups on which traditional monarchism was based, but the aim behind destroying independent powerbases in the countryside and tribal regions was to make the elite exclusively dependent on the court, like the great centralizing monarchs of France and Russia had done before. The Shah understood that "centralizing power around himself…meant depriving others…of the power they had enjoyed for centuries" (Kian-Thiébaut 1998: 127). It was estimated that a thousand families dominated the countryside, where 70 percent of Iranians lived in the 1960s, and the richest half of these families controlled 56 percent of Iran's arable land (Halliday 1979: 106). By 1965, land holdings

per family were limited to 370 acres, and the surplus (almost 20 percent of arable land) was sold at nominal prices to 743,406 peasant families (Saikal 1980: 84-85). A decade after the reform was launched, as reported by the International Labor Office in 1972, only 350 families owned large farms (over 300 hectares), and their holdings, together with those of another 45,000 families, represented only 20 percent of arable land (Abrahamian 1982: 429). Power in the countryside was now clearly diffused.[20] Though some families retained large holdings, and others were quick to make the transition to commerce and industry, and though they remained part of the Pahlavi political elite, "there can be no doubt that the traditional peasant-landlord relationship, which was the power basis of the landowning class…was destroyed" (Arjomand 1988: 73). State control of religious endowments, forests, and pastoral land affected clerics and tribal leaders in much the same way (Saikal 1980: 84-85). As the influence of the country lords waned, the peasants came to regard the monarch as their main benefactor (Rafsanjani 2005: 62). Moreover, by shifting their economic activity to industry they increasingly came under the purview of the emerging state-managed economy controlled by the Shah and his loyal cabinets (Keddie 1981: 156).

So economically, the White Revolution replaced the largely independent agricultural economy for a state-centered economy "in a manner designed to assure maximum profit for the royal family [and its] oligarchy" (Algar 2001: 55). Politically, the Shah's revolution resulted in the reduction of the countryside magnates' representation in parliament by half between 1961 and 1967. By the late 1960s they occupied only 23 percent of the seats (Kian-Thiébaut 1998: 130). Loss of dominance in parliament forced elite families to flock en masse to court, hoping to reserve a place in the expanding administrative hierarchy (Halliday 1979: 14). This was a real shift in the political configuration. After the White Revolution, the social composition of the country's political elite remained the same, but it had become a much more weakened (and embittered) elite. Soon, it was joined by another of the Shah's social creatures, "a new class,

[20] For details of the land reform and the power struggle in the countryside see Majd (2000).

previously unknown to historians and sociologists: the petro-bourgeoisie," which was even more reliant on the court; "Promotion to this class depended on neither social conflict (as in feudalism) nor on competition (as in industry and trade), but only on conflict and competition for the Shah's grace and favor" (Kapuscinski 2006: 64).

Of course, none of the injured parties went down without a fight. Agitation against the Shah from country magnates and clerics became rampant; culminating in the June 1963 uprising six months after the White Revolution came to force. Ironically, it was the Shah's inflated sense of power that both sparked the revolt and ended it. In March 1963, a minor criticism leveled against the court by a still-unknown Ayatollah Khomeini provoked the Shah to send paratroopers to Fayziya School in the shrine-city of Qom as a show of force. Khomeini was arrested for a few days, and the students who tried to protect him were shot dead. When he resumed his critiques of the White Revolution, he was detained again for short stints in June, August, and October, before being exiled the following year (Keddie 1981: 158-59). The tension fueled by landowners and clerics climaxed on June 5, 1963, when thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets of Tehran and Qom denouncing royal autocracy. It was a contained uprising though, lasting only three days and spreading to a limited number of provincial cities. It failed to attract peasants, workers, professionals, or students who all looked favorably on the Shah's reforms (Abrahamian 1982: 426; Parsa 1989: 51). Muhammad Reza was probably right to point out that the June 1963 uprising was the last battle of those he dispossessed of land and religious endowments (Pahlavi 1980: 103). Determined not to allow these disgruntled subjects to deter his consolidation of power, he authorized his loyal prime minister (and future court minister) Asadollah Alam to ruthlessly quell the uprising. Alam remembers fondly how they laughed together when they finally decided to hit the demonstrators where it hurt, and "give

them the screwing they'd been asking for" (Alam 2008: 280). At the price of 3,000 killed (though some inflate that figure to 15,000), the uprising came to an end (Algar 2001: 58).[21]

The next necessary step in enhancing royal power was to secure an independent source of wealth. And maximizing oil revenues seemed to be the most promising option. Even before the series of crises that led to its astronomical surge in the early 1970s, Iranian oil revenue had already increased from $34 million in 1954 to $555 million in 1964. The Arab-Israeli war of 1967 almost doubled that to $958 million in 1969 and $1.2 billion in 1971. But it was the second round of that war in October 1973 that triggered a fivefold jump to $5 billion in 1974, reaching the unfathomable figure of over $20 billion in 1976 after the newly empowered oil producing countries gathered the nerve to dictate their conditions on the world market. In total, Iran's cumulative oil revenue between 1964 and 1977 was $38 billion (Abrahamian 1982: 427). With such an enormous fortune, the Shah not only felt he could afford to buy anything he desired, but more importantly that his grand vision for Iran was finally within reach. It was time to celebrate––and celebrate he did.

The first big party coincided with the first oil boom in 1967. On October 26 of that year, the Shah held a belated crowning ceremony at the Gulistan Palace. Like his father, and Napoleon before him, he placed the crown on his own head to make it plain to all that he was "beholden to nobody," and ended the proceedings with a short but telling speech: "I have crowned myself because now the Iranian people are living in prosperity and security. I long ago promised myself that I would never be king over a people who were beggars or oppressed. But now that everyone is happy I allow my coronation to take place" (quoted in Heikal 1981: 93). Notably, the previous month he had amended the constitution to allow the Queen to act as regent if the Shah died before the Crown Prince's twentieth birthday, and around the same time he began referring to himself as the Shahanshah (king of kings) and took on the title of Aryamehr (Light of the

[21] To justify this shocking violence the headline of the *Tehran Journal* on June 16, 1963 read: 'Nasser Behind Iran Riots!' and the front-page displayed the image of a captured Egyptian agent who supposedly confessed to doing Nasser's bidding.

Aryans) to indicate both his greatness and the racial purity of his people (Alam 2008: 51). It was a demonstration of the growing confidence of the court.

Then came the fancy-dress party that dwarfed all others in magnificence and political symbolism. The occasion was quite imaginative (or downright silly): the commemoration of the passage of twenty-five-centuries of Persian royalty, which the Pahlavi dynasty supposedly crowned. The objective was to emphasize the continuity between Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenian Empire, and the Shah—now an unmistakable victim of *folie de grandeur*. Fittingly, the designated site for the splendid ceremony, scheduled for October 1971, was at the ruins of the temple complex at Persepolis, which dates back to the age of Achaemenian King Darius in the sixth century BC. Like a Technicolor epic of Cecil B. de Mille, a parade of colorfully dressed imperial warriors representing all the various epochs of Imperial Iran marched to the sound of music. A company of horsemen approached Muhammad Reza in his ornate uniform to deliver a parchment, supposedly the empire's message of homage. The Shah replied––in a voice projected to all through an elaborate loudspeaker—"Hail to the great and noble Iranian people… Hail Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire… On this historic day when the whole country renews its allegiance to its glorious past, I, Shahanshah of Iran, call history to witness that we, the heirs of Cyrus, have kept the promise made two thousand five hundred years ago" (quoted Hoveyda 1980: 115-16). Twenty kings, five queens, twenty-one princes and princesses, sixteen presidents, three premiers, four vice presidents, two foreign ministers, five hundred foreign dignitaries, and six hundred journalists from around the world attended the three-day gala, housed in sixty Parisian designed villa-sized tents that cost Iran $200 million (Bill 1988: 183). At last the Shah felt equal to his admired European history peers, and could brag to confidants about how: "The decedents of Charlemagne came to Persepolis to pay homage to son of a corporal" (Heikal 1981: 95).

In 1977, the monarch authored a book, *Towards the Great Civilization*, which proclaimed his White Revolution the "greatest change in the history of Iran" (quoted in Hoveyda 1980: 30).

And in an interview later that year, he proudly stated, "Today our ancient land, the mother of civilization, which gave the world its first empire, is in the throes of a glorious rebirth. Our White Revolution has its roots in a similar bloodless revolution that was accomplished by the Emperor Cyrus some 2500 years ago, when he built his empire…within a single generation" (Hoveyda 1980: 118). If Cyrus could do it, than he could too. The Shah genuinely believed that in two decades, Iran would achieve "greater economic and conventional military strength than that deployed by Britain and France" (Saikal 1980: 138). In an interview with Egyptian editor Mohamed Hassanein Heikal in the late 1970s, he said, "I want the standard of living in Iran in ten years' time to be exactly on a level with that in Europe today. In twenty years' time we shall be ahead of the United States" (1981: 109). His aim now was not only to make Iran the fifth industrial and military power in the world during his own lifetime, but also to eventually transform it into a great empire (Hoveyda 1980: 79). And the only was to accomplish that was to strengthen the monarchy further. Fereydoun Hoveyda, Iranian diplomat and translator of the Shah's books, noted how the monarch's conception of his office harked back to the European past: "three centuries after Louis XIV he was proclaiming, *L'état, c'est moi*" (1980: 87). In his last book, *My Answer to History*, the Shah made that much clear:

> **Intellectually, my education confirmed my passion for history and for the great men who had important roles in shaping it. I admired the emperor Charles V, for example, for his military genius in establishing what was then the best infantry in Europe and for giving such prestige and strength to Spain. Peter the Great unified Russia and I found his accomplishments fascinating… And Catherine the Great continued the course he had set. The French, of course, were closest to my thinking. I admired the great French rulers like Henri IV and Louis XIV, the Sun King, and most of all Napoleon** (Pahlavi 1980: 64).

At the height of his power he flirted with the idea of creating a loyal ruling party. But although he did set one up in 1975—*Rastakhiz* (Resurgence Party)—it never had any role in the political system, except as an additional avenue for gaining royal favor. What is significant, however, is the speech he gave on the eve of the party's creation: "We must straighten out Iranians' ranks…we must divide them into two categories: those who believe in the Monarchy…and

those who don't… A person who does not…is a traitor. Such an individual belongs in an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country…because he is not Iranian" (quoted in Halliday 1979: 47-48).

Most analysts focus on how political extravagance, financial profligacy, and appeals to ancient pre-Islamic history offended conservative lower class Iranians and turned them against their sovereign. This is probably true. But for our purposes here, these developments provide unique insight into the Shah's perception of the role of the political institution he commanded, the royal court. As someone who met the king before and after Persepolis, Heikal could provide an accurate analysis of his change in psyche, as well as its political implications:

> **[The] regime seemed to have been seized with a sort of madness. Persepolis had gone to the Shah's head…thinking of himself as the reincarnation of Cyrus or Darius. Court ceremonial was greatly elaborated. There was continual bowing and scarping, visitors had to leave the royal presence walking backwards, and similar absurdities… He was consciously turning himself into an oriental monarch—the old Persian kings, the Egyptian pharaohs, and the Byzantine emperors all rolled into one.[22] And these monarchies, which he was setting out to imitate had in common not just the magnificent ritual of their courts, but a tradition of absolutism. That too became the hallmark of the Pahlavi monarchy. There was one man and one man alone who could make the decisions. All those around the Shah cowered in his presence, for they were all his creatures. The more he grew in stature in his own eyes, the more they seemed to diminish, for without him they were nothing** (Heikal 1981: 96).

So while it is certainly a problem when the head of a state becomes obsessed with "his very own little invention, an imaginary world which was more real to him than reality (Hoveyda 1980: 29), we still need to examine how his political imagination impacted the regime. A diary entry, on January 12, 1971, by court minister (and former prime minister) Asadollah Alam is especially revealing, "More and more I get the impression that national affairs are uncoordinated, with no firm hand on the tiller, all because the captain himself is overworked. Every minister and high official receives a separate set of instructions direct from HIM [His Imperial Majesty] and the

[22] Brzezinski recorded in his diary that when he called the Shah amidst the revolutionary crisis of 1978 to express U.S. support, "I was struck, while I was waiting on the line, by the strange protocol followed at the other end in Tehran: a guard or a functionary of some sort barked out several times in aloud voice and in Iranian the Shah's full title before he actually came to the line" (1983: 365).

result is that individual details often fail to mesh with any overall framework. Thank God, the Shah is a strong man, but he's no computer" (Alam 2008: 190).

However, these political deficiencies did not come to the surface until the revolutionary turmoil at the end of the decade. Their immediate effects were economic. It is a well-known fact that political aspirations frequently contradict with economic prudence. And the wilder the aspirations the wider the discrepancies. First of all, because the politically motivated White Revolution was hastily prepared, it had several disturbing effects on the national economy. Landlords were pressed to invest the proceeds of their surplus land sales in industry causing factories to mushroom from 8,520 in 1961 to an incredible 112,500 factories a decade later, with a corresponding swelling of industrial labor from 121,800 to 540,000 workers (Saikal 1980: 86). But the lack of basic skills, experience, and infrastructure minimized the quality and productivity of Iranian manufactures, which meant they could neither accumulate enough capital on their own nor compete on the world market to bring in foreign currency (Halliday 1979: 285-86). At the same time, the impressive rise of independent farmers from 5 percent to 76 percent in the short few years following land reform concealed the fact that most of them did not acquire enough land to be able to make it on their own. In fact, over 65 percent of them owned less than 5 hectares (Abrahamian 1982: 429). Naturally, most of them sold their "uneconomic smallholdings" to agro-businesses and migrated to the cities, causing a rapid 20 percent rise in urban population, which no city was equipped to handle (Martin 2007: 21). Tehran's population alone doubled from 2.5 to 5 million during the 1970s (Saikal 1980: 184). Worse still, land fragmentation hurt agricultural production, reducing its GNP share from 27.9 percent in 1963 to 9.3 percent in 1977, and turning Iran into a net importer of agricultural products (Kian-Thiébaut 1998: 133).

But what made the Shah oblivious to all these challenges was the autonomy afforded by state control of oil. The advice of his minsters not to inject the entire oil revenue into the economy fell on deaf ears (Hoveyda 1980: 79). Moreover, the absence of a strong indigenous

bourgeoisie that could influence government spending allowed him to dispense state revenue anyway he wanted (Halliday 1979: 20). Soon, the vultures began circling around court and global investors flocked to Iran to join the gold rush. *Financial Times* correspondent Robert Graham recalled from his time in Iran, "One of the most lasting impressions was to see senior executives of major international companies prepared to tolerate every indignity and discomfort, including sleeping in hotel lobbies…and waiting for days on favor of Iranian officials in the hope of doing business" (1978: 11). By 1976, there were 215 multinational corporations operating in Iran, and most of them were based in the U.S. (Parsa 1989: 68). And it seemed to work just fine. GDP experienced a fivefold increase from $10.6 billion in 1960 to $51 billion in 1977, and was growing at the annual rate of 10.8 percent between 1963 and 1978; and economic growth registered a drastic increase from 4 percent in 1962 to 41.6 percent in 1975 (Foran 2005: 75; Milani 2008b: 583). Even industry, as inefficient as it was, developed at a rate of 15.2 percent per annum during the decade 1965-1975; this was almost twice as much as it did in other developing countries (Parsa 1989: 66).

Eventually, bottlenecks developed throughout the economy, which lacked the absorptive capacity to deal with such a sudden boom. Power outages in 1977 caused 180 factories to shut down, and another 700 to severely cut down their production. During the summer of that year, one factory alone suffered 760 power cuts. Ground and sea transportation delays ruined 30 percent of Iran's agricultural produce after the spring harvest of 1977. Imported goods, which were crucial to domestic production and consumption, were stuck for months on end at Iran's seaports and borders, waiting to go through the overloaded customhouses and securing transportation to the cities. In 1975, for example, 200 ships with 1 million tons of goods had to wait for 160 days to unload at one of Iran's chocked harbors because the port authority was only fit to handle 9,000 tons of goods per day (Kurzman 2004: 87). And it was the Shah's entire fault, as Ryszard Kapuscinski made clear in his evocative depiction of these smothering bottlenecks:

> **[The] Shah is making purchases costing billions, and ships full of merchandize are streaming toward Iran from all the continents. But when they reach the Gulf, it turns out that the small obsolete ports are unable to handle such a mass cargo (the Shah hadn't realized this). Several hundred ships line up at sea and stay there for up to six months, for which delay Iran pays the shipping companies a billion dollars annually. Somehow the ships are gradually unloaded, but then it turns out that there are no warehouses (the Shah hadn't realized). In the open air, in the desert, in nightmarish tropical heat, lie millions of tons of all sorts of cargo, half of it consisting of perishable foodstuffs and chemicals, end up being thrown away. The remaining cargo now has to be transported into the depths of the country, and at this moment it turns out that there is no transport (the Shah hadn't realized)… Two thousand tractor-trailers are thus ordered from Europe, but then it turns out there are no drivers (the Shah hadn't realized). After much consultation, an airliner flies off to bring South Korean truckers… With time and the help of foreign freight companies, however, the factories and machines purchased abroad finally reach their appointed destinations. Then comes the time to assemble them. But it turns out that Iran has no engineers or technicians (the Shah hadn't realized). From a logical point of view, anyone who sets out to create a Great Civilization ought to begin with his people** (2006: 56-57).

And yet 'the people' did not really benefit from or contribute to the Shah's grand project; they did not really figure out at all. A 1974 survey by the International Labor Office reported that the richest 20 percent of Iranians accounted for almost 60 percent of expenditures, while the poorest 20 percent were responsible for less than 4 percent (Abrahamian 1982: 448). Another statistic showed that only 10 percent of Iranians accounted for 40 percent of consumption (Halliday 1979: 15). But the worst was yet to come. With the decade-long overheating of the economy, Iran succumbed to acute double-digit inflation, raising the cost-of-living index from 100 in 1970 to 190 in 1976 (Abrahamian 1982: 497). The following year, inflation reached a record 30 percent (Saikal 1980: 186), and even the most reassuring statements by the Central Bank of Iran dared not put that number lower than 25 percent (Kurzman 2004: 99).

What made the situation much more acute was the temporary decline of oil revenue in 1977 because of the global business slowdown. Low domestic demand meant that the oil sector relied primarily on the world market, and therefore the whole economy became dependent on international economic forces (Parsa 1989: 62-63). The artificiality of Iran's economic boom now became apparent. The share of oil in state revenues increased from 45 percent in 1963 to 77 percent in 1977. At the same period, the percentage of direct taxes rose only from 5 to 11 percent, and that of indirect taxes actually fell from 35 to 9 percent. And while oil funds financed

30 percent of the first development plan in the late 1950s, by the time the fifth plan was put together (1973-1978), it accounted for over 80 percent (Parsa 1989: 64; Rajaee 2007: 93). In 1976, oil exports provided over 80 percent of foreign exchange, which was essential to financing Iran's heavy import bill (Rubin 1981: 131), while non-oil exports represented less than 3 percent of total Iranian exports (Parsa 1989: 68). In fact, economic growth outside the oil sector declined from 14.4 to 9.4 percent between 1977 and 1978 (Saikal 1980: 184). The oil sector, which represented 17 percent of GNP in the late 1960s, had climbed to 38 percent of GNP a decade latter (Halliday 1979: 138-39). Yet as we know, the petro-bourgeoisie was an "unusual social phenomenon [which] produces nothing, and unbridled consumption makes up its whole occupation" (Kapuscinski 2006: 64).

What were the political effects of this uneven development? Theda Skocpol suggested that Iran had become a rentier state; "awash in petrodollars" it not only became suspended above its people, but it also bought them off (1994: 244). In reality, the Shah's ambitious designs prevented him from reserving enough oil money to throw at his people when hard times struck, like his Arab neighbors across the Gulf. Instead, he squandered all his oil income over expensive projects—above all, his cherished military buildup—to transform Iran into a great imperial power. But the most concrete political result of the way the regime handled the economy was that it made itself fully responsible for all its busts and booms. As Parsa explained, increase in oil revenue triggered a corresponding expansion in state intervention in the economy, thus "politicizing capital accumulation" and rendering the state the most 'visible' economic actor: it was the state that built infrastructure, issued permits and exemptions, provided cheap credit, set tariffs and exchange controls, and kept wages low (1989: 29, 34-35). And now it was the state (or the man who spared no effort to prove that he controlled the state) that was expected to deal with the mess it had created.

But it was not just the state's interventionist role that caused the majority of Iranians to place the blame on it (rather than the unpredictable and apolitical market forces) for the

economic downturn. Developing and communist governments also managed their economies closely. What rendered the Shah particularly guilty was the role of the royal family. To understand how this worked let us examine Iran's socioeconomic composition on the eve of the revolution. The upper class was constituted of approximately one thousand families, headed by the royal family and its 63 princes and princesses, in addition to landed aristocrats, wealthy investors, and senior bureaucrats. Below them there was a propertied middle class of perhaps one million families, half of them bazaar merchants. Bazaaris had considerable economic power: they controlled three-quarters of Iran's wholesale trade, two-thirds of its retail trade, half of its handicraft production, one-third of imports, and one-fifth of the credit market. They were also politically organized through independent craft and trade guilds. Then there was a salaried middle class of about 630,000 employees, a class fragment that had doubled in the last two decades. Below all these was the working class, which grew fivefold during the 1970s, to 1,270,000 workers, though this figure increases to 2,400,000 if one added the urban poor, and to 3,500,000 if one included rural wage earners (Abrahamian 1982: 432-34; Kurzman 2004: 101).

The problem was that the upper class was so tightly linked to the court that the middle and lower classes could not blame the class as a whole (landlords, industrialists, and top bureaucrats), but only the royal family. The Pahlavi family owned 137 of Iran's largest 527 industrial and financial corporations, and ten elite families attached to the court owned another 390 of these corporations (Parsa 1989: 69-70). Another statistic shows that the royal family and its immediate associates controlled 80 percent of the cement industry, 70 percent of tourism, 62 percent of finance, 40 percent of the textile industry, and 35 percent of the motor industry (Heikal 1981: 95). Iran's industrial capitalism was top heavy, led by 150 families, and including only 50,000 employers. It was entirely reliant on the court for all aspects of business and failed to develop its own powerbase. Small manufacturers were ignored by court—they were too invisible and had no way to cultivate contacts with courtiers—though they represented 98 percent of manufacturing and employed 70 percent of the urban working force (Parsa 1989: 69-70). The

official court budget itself was ridiculously high, over $40 million in 1977. The court minister was ranked on par with the prime minister and was considered the most powerful man in the government, though he rarely sat on cabinet meetings, because he ran the Special Bureau, which passed the Shah's orders down to his ministers and parliament members. In fact prime ministers were sometimes 'promoted' to court ministers, as the examples of Asadollah Alam and Amir Abbas Hoveyda demonstrate (Graham 1978: 139). And, of course, with great power came great corruption. "Anyone who wanted to build a factory, open a business, or grow cotton had to give a piece of the action as a present to the Shah's family" (Kapuscinski 2006: 63). When the Shah was faced with this he simply dismissed it, as his court minister Hoveyda testifies, as "only natural, that his brothers and sisters had the right to do business and to earn their living like everybody else, and that the practice of business commissions was common everywhere" (Hoveyda 1980: 32). In an interview with Ehsan Naraghi, on November 13, 1978, he claimed that senators and ministers in Europe and the United States are implicated in similar business deals (Naraghi 1999: 73). Iranians did not regard the matter so lightly. Their monarch obviously treated the country and its people as his private property, and "first pickings naturally went to his family" (Heikal 1981: 95). Yet in the eyes of the average Iranian "the Great Civilization, the Shah's Revolution, was above all a Great Pillage" (Kapuscinski 2006: 63).

In August 1976, the Shah replaced his longtime premier Amir Abbas Hoveyda with economist Jamshid Amouzegar with the hope of cutting down spending and saving the country from hiking inflation. One of new cabinet's first decisions was to stop low-interest loans to the bazaar tradesmen and small manufactures. Another step was to cancel the annual $11 million secret fund that Hoveyda had used over the last thirteen years to 'support' mullahs and finance religious events—a sort of compensation for those who held a grudge after losing their endowments (Hoveyda 1980: 84). The government's aggressive deflationary policies curtailed public investments, triggering a spiral increase in unemployment (Martin 2007: 26). When these measures did not produce the required results, the Shah decided to ignore the folly of his

grandiose schemes and blame inflation on profiteers. He then enlisted the support of 10,000 students to wage a hardnosed battle against bazaaris, finning between 1975 and 1977 perhaps 250,000 merchants, banishing another 23,000 from their hometowns, imprisoning an additional 8,000, and closing down 600 shops (Abrahamian 1982: 498). It did not help that the year before he had ordered a number of redevelopment schemes that involved razing traditional neighborhoods, with their bazaars, to widen boulevards and create parks (Keddie 1981: 241). It was his alienation of the most organized urban class (bazaar merchants), along with small business owners, unemployed youth, and clerics that sparked the unrest that eventually became a revolution. Even the burgeoning economic elite became concerned that the sovereign had violated their implicit contract; that they would eschew politics and allow him to rule unopposed as long he guaranteed a healthy business environment (Milani 2008b: 581-82). But the question still remains, why did the military, whose expensive buildup sucked most of the state's revenue, allow things to get out of hand? Why did it not save a regime that singled it out with so much care and resources?

The Shah's Paper Tiger Examined

Exuberant military spending, which consumed at least half of Iran's oil revenue in the 1970s, was the most expensive of all of the Shah's expensive projects, and was thus considered one of the direct causes of the economic crisis. This section reviews the Shah's impressive military buildup, focusing on how it was driven neither by regional or international threats but was rather a reflection of royal will. It then demonstrates how (despite the buildup) the military remained hollow, unequipped, and dependent on court for almost everything in a way that rendered it utterly powerless to save the regime when the time came.

When Muhammad Reza ascended the throne, his father's army had been reduced to 65,000 men, and by 1949 he had barely managed to double that number to 120,000. The size of

the military then expanded to 200,000 men in 1963, and reached its highest limit of 410,000 men the year of the revolution (Abrahamian 1982: 246, 435-36).[23] Defense expenditures increased from $67 million in 1953, after the Shah wrested control from Mosaddeq, to $183 million in 1963, before the oil price hikes (Halliday 1979: 71; Abrahamian 1982: 420). Once these hikes kicked in, the defense budget increased over 3.5 times in less than a decade, from $900 million in 1970 to $10.6 billion in 1977, though it was urgently decreased to $8.6 billion the following year under the impact of the economic crisis (Wahid 2009: 57; Ward 2009: 194). Military purchases during the last decades of the Shah's rule were estimated at $17 billion (Wahid 2009: 57). Over $12 billion were used to purchase American products, and an equal amount was earmarked for orders to be delivered by the U.S. in 1980 (Abrahamian 1982: 435-36). By the mid-1970s, Iran had become the world's largest single purchaser of U.S. arms, and in 1977 alone it bought arms worth $5.7 billion, which was more than the entire U.S. sales to other foreign countries that year (Saikal 1980: 157-58).

The Iranian stockpile was quite diversified—not entirely reliant on the U.S. as some believed. Its armored forces had 860 American tanks (M-47 and M-60 Patton), but its main battle tanks were British Chieftains, which it owned 760 of in 1977 and had ordered another 1,450 before the regime was overthrown. In terms of artillery, its 1,500 pieces were divided almost equally between American and Soviet field guns and missiles, and its main air defense SAMs were Russian-made, with only a handful of American I-HAWKs. Similarly, army aviation relied on American, British, and Italian helicopters. The navy was relatively more dependent on the Americans, especially after the Shah became fond of the Spruance-class long-range destroyers, and ordered four of them. But it was a very small force in 1977, with only 28,000 personnel, three destroyers, and four frigates. And the Shah was actively negotiating for non-American vessels, including Italian frigates and German diesel submarines. It was only the

[23] In 1977, the relative size of each service was as follows: ground forces, 200,000; the gendarmerie, 60,000; the air force 100,000; the navy 25,000; the elite commando unit 17,000; and the Imperial Guard 8,000 (Abrahamian 1982: 436).

Imperial Iranian Air Force that relied almost exclusively on the U.S., and received the largest share of the defense budget because of the high cost of American jets. After having only 7,000 personnel and 75 combat aircrafts (including some F-5 Tigers) in 1965, it expanded at an explosive rate to 100,000 men and 500 combat aircrafts (including F-4 Phantoms and F-14 Tomcats armed with Phoenix missiles) in 1978. Curiously, the astronomical expansion had less to do with any objective needs than with subjective royal favoritism, Muhammad Reza "was a pilot and loved to fly" (Ward 2009: 197-200). Of course, it was also the service least capable of plotting a coup—and, by the same token, the least capable of protecting the regime against domestic overthrow.

By 1977, the Shah could brag about having the largest navy in the Gulf, the most advanced air force in the Middle East, and the fifth largest army in the world (Abrahamian 1982: 436). The Imperial Air Force was in fact larger than the French or the West German ones, and as soon as the orders he had placed were delivered, Iran's tank inventory was projected to become as large as that of France and twice as large as the British (Ward 2009: 197-98).

Yet once we delve beneath the surface, a radically different picture emerges. Iranian scholar Amin Saikal cautioned that Iran's military "potential" must not be "misunderstood as military capability" (1980: 156). Others did not put it so mildly. Former U.S. officer and military historian Steven Ward described the Imperial Armed Forces as a "Crippled Giant," which might have looked "Imposing on paper" but was truly "much more modest" in reality (2009: 201, 205). Barry Rubin said that "Poor performance and even poorer leadership were the norm," and any military analyst knew that Iranians lacked the technical education and management procedures required to run such a mammoth (1981: 166). Kapuscinski was even harsher: "I hesitate to use the term 'army'" when referring to the Iranian armed forces because it is "nothing but…a kind of police that live in the barracks" (2006: 61).

Interestingly, this was the view of the various American administrations and Congressmen from the beginning of the buildup in the 1960s. Considering that the United States

was Iran's main military patron, let us cite some specific examples. Ted Sorensen, President John F. Kennedy's personal advisor, complained in 1961 that the Shah demanded U.S. support for "an expensive army too large for border incidents and internal security and of no use in an all-out war…[like] the proverbial man who was too heavy to do any light work and too light to do any heavy work" (quoted in Halliday 1979:92). Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General George Brown remarked mockingly that the kind of military the Shah was eager to build makes one wonder if he believes he was ruling the ancient Persian Empire (quoted Halliday 1979: 97). U.S. military instructors in Iran frequently warned that the whole Iranian military would "grind to a halt" if the buildup continued (Rubin 1981: 137). In a seminar on the future of Iran in May 1977, U.S. ambassador to Tehran William H. Sullivan was asked by the attendants to relay to the monarch their consensus that his country "lacked the material and human infrastructure necessary to support the advanced military…technology [he] imported" (Hoveyda 1980: 101). A Congressional Staff Report issued in Washington in July 1976 concluded that Iran lacked "experience in logistic and support operations and [it] does not have the maintenance capabilities, the infrastructure…and the construction capacity to implement its new programs… Iran will not be able to absorb and operate…sophisticated military systems purchased from the U.S…. The schedule for virtually every major program…has slipped considerably due to the limitations noted above" (Saikal 1980: 186-87). Among the Congressmen involved in foreign arms transfers, the most optimistic believed that Iran would have to recruit "virtually the country's entire high school graduating class each year" in order to catch up with the expansions the king imposed from above (Rubin 1981: 166). Iran's buildup was also mindboggling to its superpower neighbor to the north. In September 1976, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko asked his Iranian counterpart: "All these arms you're equipping yourself with…we wonder why, and against whom. Iraq? But that is a small country. The Emirates? They don't count militarily. Saudi Arabia? It is not a threat. Then why?" (Hoveyda 1980: 99).

The answer was that this unreasonable enlargement was only meant to satisfy the sovereign's own appetite and delusions of grandeur. Iran had become "a great showcase for all types of weapons and military equipment. 'Showcase' is the right word, because the country lacks the warehouses, magazines, and hangars to protect and secure all. The spectacle has no precedent" (Kapuscinski 2006: 62). The first president of the Islamic Republic Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, who had to prepare for a war with Iraq weeks after his election, provided the best summary we have on the state of the Iranian armed forces:

> **The man in the street considered the army a product of the superpowers…an official study of the army was impossible… [It was a] mystery… We then realized that about 90 percent of the army's power depended on this mystery… Secret investigations of the army…revealed [that] the organization of the army…was based not on the necessities of terrain, climate, neighboring countries, and other armies, but on a multinational model [in the Shah's mind]…the soldiers did not know how to use their equipment in the field…our soldiers' lack of practice prevented us from making the most of the limited resources we had… How could a war be fought with an army like this, an army no longer shrouded in mystery, an army afraid of its own shadow** (1991: 105-108).

What was crucial politically was that the Iranian officers themselves knew it all. Court minister Asadollah Alam noted in his diary, on October 8, 1973, that the Commander of the Imperial Air Force General Khatami "confided in me that we're ordering far more planes than we can possibly use. We simply haven't enough pilots, or the facilities to train more. Yet, despite being his brother-in-law, the Commander dares not draw the matter to HIM's attention. Instead he asked me to bring it up when an opportunity arose, being careful not to reveal who had supplied me with my information" (2008: 390). Deputy Defense Minister General Toufanian frequently complained that although he was officially responsible for all weapons procurements the Shah refused to consult with him. Not only that, but whenever he tried to relay the demands of the military chiefs or explain that the type and speed of the arms deals was creating problems, the Shah would yell: "The arms I choose. All the systems I choose" (quoted in Schofield 2007: 115). Military Intelligence chief, General Hassan Pakravan, told a U.S. official in a private conversation that "he opposed our supplying military equipment on a scale that cut into the development

budget," and hoped the Americans would dissuade the monarch from pressing ahead further (Milani 2008a: 480). This feeling of powerlessness vis-à-vis the sovereign pervaded the Imperial Armed Forces on all levels. Admiral Kamyabipour, who commanded a navy frigate division in the 1970s, said, "I respected the Shah as my commander, but I have to admit that he ran a one-man show" (Kamyabipour 2011: Personal Interview).

Here are a few concrete examples of the kind of problems that faced the air force, navy, armory, in addition to general complications associated with manpower and procurement. Let us start with the air force. The most scandalous and oft-cited example was Iran's purchase of the swing-wing F-14 Tomcats. This new fighter jet was so sophisticated that even the U.S. Navy was struggling to absorb it. At the same time, Iranian air force personnel had clearly failed to master relatively simple models, such as the F-4 Phantoms and F-5 Tigers (Ward 2009: 198, 208). When the Shah expressed interest, the Pentagon strenuously objected, explaining in a note to President Nixon, on May 12, 1972, that aside from the fact that "virtually no military exigency possible could justify this sale…[Iran] lacked even the most basic technical skills to maintain airframes, engines, and weapons systems on much less sophisticated aircraft" (Daugherty 2001: 50). Nixon hesitated. So the Shah went through the backdoor, loaning Grumman the funds it needed to improve the jet, and reserving eight out of the first batch of F-14s produced – even before the U.S. Navy had received its own. William J. Daugherty, the CIA operative based at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, described the ludicrous result:

> **In the end, the Tomcats were squandered. Fear of crashing or otherwise losing the aircraft and thus displeasing the shah made [air force] commanders unwilling to schedule aggressive training missions for the F-14s. Likewise the aircrews were hesitant to fly them in any flight or weather conditions that might be conducive to accidents lest they lose or damage the plane and bear the burnt of the shah's wrath. What was arguably the world's most sophisticated and combat-capable aircraft was flown almost entirely in daylight hours, only when good weather permitted, and only in low-risk, straight-level missions – no dogfighting, no close air support, no armed reconnaissance training missions** (2001: 50-51).

Even much more modest aircrafts, such as the Bell helicopter that required ten hours of maintenance for every hour of flight, were useless because Iran had only a few good pilots and even less skilled technicians (Rubin 1981: 137). As late as 1975, Iran had no qualified helicopter gunship pilots because it had neglected to build suitable firing ranges; the only thing the Shah cared about was that the helicopters were there (Ward 2009: 207). In a rare incident that same year, American instructors organized a strike at the Isfahan's Aviation Training School because they were being pressured by the court to pass substandard pilots with little flying experience to arbitrarily expand the Iranian air force (Halliday 1979: 98).

Also in 1975, the British naval attaché dismissed the Imperial Navy as "inefficient and understaffed" (Halliday 1979: 98). A most telling entry from the diary of Court minister Alam describes the performance of the navy during a maneuver attended by the Shah and several foreign dignitaries, on November 5, 1972: "Twenty-nine ships and a whole flotilla of torpedo boats swept by, firing off a salute as they passed our position… On the spur of the moment HIM requested that a couple of ships armed with missiles take a shot at the targets… Two vessels were selected for the display. The first missed the target altogether; the second could not even get its missiles off the launch pad. A total shambles" (2008: 252). Alam then recalls an awkward meeting with the British ambassador, on June 7, 1973, where the troubled diplomat explained that while his government was "anxious to conclude the deal on Chieftain tanks which promises Britain employment and considerable revenue. However, I cannot help thinking that 800 tanks may be too many for Iran to cope with, given the cost of maintenance and your shortage of skilled technicians. Moreover, the tanks themselves are ill-suited to mountainous or marshy terrain such as you have"(Alam 2008: 297). Needless to say, the army chief was never consulted before the Shah decided to purchase large quantities of Chieftains and use them as Iran's main battle tanks (Schofield 2007: 119).

Of course, the most pervasive problem was that of manpower. A Congressional report estimated that Iran had a shortfall of 10,000 technicians in the air force (Halliday 1979: 97). More

disturbing was the fact that Iran frequently had more fighters than trained pilots (Wahid 2009: 58). Even the ground forces, which relied mostly on conscripts, suffered considerably. Conscripts came from different regions and ethnic groups and the few who were literate spent months to learn how to communicate with each other and their commanders in Persian, let alone absorb sophisticated Western equipment (Saleh 2008: 76). It was clear that the only way the Shah kept his military running was through excessive dependence on foreign personnel in every branch of the armed forces. The number of U.S. advisors in Iran exceeded 58,000 in 1978, and 80 percent of these were employed in the military (Naraghi 1999: 113). Once more the Shah's perceptive court minister captured this dismal state of affairs in the diary entry he recorded after attending a parade on the outskirts of Tehran, on December 12, 1969:

> **HIM reviewed the troops on horseback… [The] Commander of the First Army, an infantry man in charge of today's proceedings, was unseated by his mount. How humiliating! The loose horse stepped out in front of HIM, ahead of the royal party, and worse still, television cameras broadcast the whole thing live. Elsewhere an officer stepped out of rank when passing the royal box and tried to present some sort of petition to the Shah. He was held back by security men, and it turned out that his sole request was to be sent to study electronics in the USA** (Alam 2008: 111).

Finally, the arms procurement program was a mess. Billions were spent on buying "unnecessary and militarily unjustified" ultra-sophisticated systems from the U.S. in order to create "an illusory sense of power," systems that were too expensive and complicated for many NATO members (Wahid 2009: 48). For every billion spent on these high-tech weapons, an additional million or two were needed to import American technicians and instructors to manage them. Iran's failure to assimilate the equipment piling up in its arsenal was augmented by the absence of a coherent procurement strategy. The court occasionally bought a mix of equipment from diverse suppliers with few common components (Ward 2009: 207). Sometimes materials worth hundreds of millions of dollars arrived too early and had to be stored or left unused for years. Because of the lack of a well-planned schedule, airports and harbors were clogged when deliveries reached the country at the same time. Officers had little time to master one piece of equipment before

another more advanced one was introduced (Rubin 1981: 129). Obviously, the service and branch chiefs were never consulted on issues related to procurement (Schofield 2007: 119). Courtiers noted how news that the Shah had placed orders would catch his military leadership completely by surprise, triggering "a mad rush to allocate funds and ensure that troops were trained and logistic arrangements made to receive such new equipment" (Alam 2008: 13). It was the Shah that took all decisions. One Pentagon official expressed his amazement at how the king read armaments trade magazines avidly to the point where he sometimes knew more about the equipment he demanded than his men (Rubin 1981: 128). "Arms dealers began to jest that the shah read their manuals in much the same way other men read *Playboy*" (Abrahamian 1982: 436). He could not care less about whether the weapons he ordered were actually useful or desired by his service chiefs. As a result, "A stream of the most fantastic orders flowed out from Tehran. How many tanks does Great Britain have? Fifteen hundred? Fine…I'm ordering two thousand. How many artillery pieces does the Bundeswehr have? A thousand? Good, put us down for fifteen hundred…we've got to have the third-best army in the world" (Kapuscinski 2006: 62). He not only refused to listen to his own military men, but he consistently ignored the recommendations of American advisors and arms manufactures. When it came to procurement, commented U.S. diplomat John Wiley, the Shah's thinking was "strictly in never never land" (Rubin 1981: 39).

In addition to all the above, the Iranian armed forces had no combat experience to speak of. The absence of traumatic defeats or difficult and bitter battles, such as those experienced by the Turkish and Egyptian armies, "permitted the Iranian army to cultivate an unusual degree of complacency regarding its own capacities and of satisfaction regarding its political master" (Cronin 1997: 234). Unlike Turkey and Egypt, the Iranian army never experienced a military challenge that might have inspired a clique of embittered officers to coalesce and make a bid for power. Until the mid-1960s, the army was still preoccupied with subduing tribes and bandits (Halliday 1979: 74, 76). It is true that the Shah ordered logistical support for the Kurds in the

1960s, engaged in sporadic border skirmishes with Iraq in the early 1970s, and lent a helping hand to his neighbors in Oman to counter communist insurgents between 1973 and 1976, but these were all low-intensity conflicts.[24] Even when Iran occupied the three empty islands of Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tumbs in the Persian Gulf in 1971 following the British withdrawal, its troops faced no resistance (Saikal 1980: 156).

What was the Shah up to? The first comprehensive study of Iran's military history underlined a single continuity in the country's military doctrine, regardless of the type of regime in power, which was the "pretentious pursuit of great power status" (Ward 2009: 300). In an interview with Heikal in the late seventies, the Shah explained:

> **You ask me what these arms are for. I will tell you. They are because we want to be very strong in the area in which we live… I live in an area which…[represents] the center of gravity of the world. I belong to this area; I have a stake in it which I intend to preserve. I have a function in it which I intend to exercise. I have a policy which I intend to pursue. There can be no stake, no function, no policy, which is not backed by military power…. The Iranian air force ought to be strong enough to protect the whole area from the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Japan… India and Pakistan will become natural markets for Iranian industrial projects, but I shall have to protect Pakistan against Indian aggression… I can assure you…that Iran will not be the last in the area to be a nuclear power** (1981: 106).

At a very early meeting with the Shah, in Washington in November 1949, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson judged him as a "very impractical young man…full of grandiose ideas; he fancied himself a great military leader," but his belief that his country could be a great military power was "utterly fanciful and never had any basis at all" (Rubin 1981: 42). Acheson was right. Iran's military buildup was no more than a sandcastle, an impressive structure meant to enhance the prestige of the man on the Peacock Throne, a man obsessed—as was his father—with becoming a great modernizing monarch like his European heroes.

[24] Military analysts agree that the Iranian performance in these limited operations gave no indication of its battle effectiveness. "If anything, it exposed the inherent weakness of a bureaucratic command structure that stifled initiative" (Graham 1978: 180).

Tragically though, his eagerness to develop "an outward-looking military that reflected his perception of Iran's strategic position" prevented him from providing it with arms and training fit for dealing with domestic disturbances. Without these essentials, the military was ill-equipped to restore order during the revolutionary crisis that swept the regime. They had no rubber bullets, tear gas canisters, or any other riot-control gear. So when they did respond, they did so with disproportionate force, therefore inflaming popular anger even more (Hickman 1982: 3).

But if the buildup reflected one man's ambitions, how come the military enjoyed so little autonomy in deciding its own fate? The truth is that the military was kept at a tight leach through a combination of structural, procedural, and traditional means. The Defense Ministry was only assigned administrative and budgetary duties, and within that domain was not permitted to make suggestions or take initiatives; it was only expected to carry out orders from above (Schofield 2007: 115). More importantly, the Iranian armed forces never developed a Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Iranian military was run from court. "Instructions went directly from the Military Office in the Royal Palace to the chiefs of staff and the field officers," bypassing all military and civilian institutions (Abrahamian 1999: 73). When the Shah asked U.S. General Robert E. Huyser to set up Iran's command control system, "He told me that one of his principle requirements…was that he should be able to maintain absolute control" (Huyser 1986: 8). Every two weeks, the Shah met with each of his service chiefs separately. They were never allowed to communicate except through him, and they were discouraged from meeting even in social occasions. Furthermore, no provincial commander was allowed to visit Tehran without a signed authorization from the Shah himself. There were also security checks. The Shah created two security organs within the military to report on suspect officers: the Imperial Inspection Commission, and the Military Intelligence, the so-called Second Bureau (*Rokn-e Do*), which was modeled after the famous French Deuxième Bureau (Abrahamian 1999: 74). The court not only approved every promotion above the rank of captain, but also screened cadets before their entry

exams (Ward 2009: 209). Army training inculcated soldiers with the regime's imperial mythology: how the military had been dependent on a strong monarch throughout Iranian history (Halliday 1979: 74).

Even though the monarch showered his generals with generous allowances, he always made sure they knew who controlled the purse, and so these incentives were presented as royal gifts rather than systemized in the form of bonuses. Like other absolutist leaders, he shuffled his commanders frequently in order to preempt the forming of long-term loyalties, and every few months accused some senior officer of corruption and sent him to jail—a good reminder that he who had the power to give also had the power to strike down at will. So for example in the 1960s, he imprisoned five generals and put three hundred colonels on trial; in 1974, he sentenced three generals and two colonels; in 1976, he sacked the head of the navy, his deputy, and twelve naval officers. This last navy massacre had a precedent seven years before. On August 12, 1969, he casually remarked to his court minister, "I have received unfavorable reports on the Naval High Command. Today I ordered that every Admiral and senior officer accept early retirement. They will be replaced by new blood from amongst the younger generation" (Alam 2008: 85). In 1971, he fired Chief of Staff General Fereydoun Djam because he moved troops in response to Iraqi provocations without a royal order (Hoveyda 1980: 89). When navy commander Admiral Ahmad Madani dared request more autonomy for the service chiefs he was forced to retire (Rubin 1981: 226)—and later became Khomeini's military advisor. Another entry, on November 18, 1972, reveals how the king treated his high command. On that day he relayed to Alam how he fired a general because "The bloody fool suggested at a meeting with the Minister of Finance that we increase the medical allowance for army personnel sent abroad for special treatment. As he put it, the expense would be a drop in the ocean compared to the profligacy of Princess Ashraf. I had to remind him that I myself paid out $30,000 to settle his private gambling debts… [Then I told him] I always knew you were a clown but had no idea quite how stupid a clown you were" (Alam 2008: 257). When Alam conveyed to the Shah that the Air Force Chief suggested

that the Crown Prince's training aircraft be painted in the same colors as every other military trainer, "HIM retorted that on the contrary, all the others must be altered to match the princes' colors" (Alam 2008: 428). The Shah "scolded senior officers like a father training little children" (Ward 2009: 209). During a meeting that included the Iranian and Israeli military personnel at the office of the court minister, on August 17, 1972, Alam was elaborating on improvements to the Iranian military, when Chief of Staff General Gholam-Reza Azhari "butted in with an appalling howler, remarking that we owe any progress we have made to one fact: that everyone here is scared rigid by HIM" (Alam 2008: 237). There was no better proof of the "*exceptional dominance* of the monarch" over the military than how he dismissed his top commanders left and right without much scuffle (Halliday 1979: 68).

Especially significant was the typical monarchical strategy of appointing family members to the army. A few demonstrative examples suffice. General Mohammed Khatmai, commander of the air force between 1957 and 1975, was the Shah's brother-in-law. General Fereydoun Djam, chief of staff between 1969 and 1971, was another brother-in-law. General Fathollah Minbashian, commander of the ground forces between 1969 and 1972, was the brother of yet a third brother-in-law. The Shah brother, General Gholam Reza, was Inspector-General of the army, and his nephew, Shahriar Shafiq, was a naval officer (Alam 2008: 60, 509). Then came the historic meeting on November 22, 1973, when the Shah gathered his military command for one rare occasion and delivered a long written speech designed to impress upon officers that they must obey whoever was on the Peacock Throne: "Their orders may come from a woman or a man of tender years, but they are to be obeyed with no less respects. The safety of all your lives depends on this… The men of the armed services owe nothing but blind obedience to his [the monarch's] commands…each officer puts obedience to the Shah above loyalty to fellow members [of the military];" the Shah then asked that every officer from brigadier upwards must read the speech and sign to record that he did so (Alam 2008: 334-37).

One of the most striking features of the Iranian regime is that until 1957 (that is over three decades into the establishment of the Pahlavi rule), the country had no specialized political police or intelligence service. There was a national and provincial police to deal with criminals and bandits, but we have no record of a secret police of the type present in all authoritarian regimes. After the Mosaddeq debacle the United States recognized this as a fatal weakness and decided to remedy it. It sent a team of security experts to Tehran in September 1953, and in two years they had development a blueprint for a political security apparatus, which came into being in 1957 as the National Security and Information Organization (*Sazman-e Etelaat va Amniyat-e Keshvar*), better know by its acronym SAVAK (Gasiorowski 2004: 257). The new apparatus, however, was born with a fatal weakness. As CIA agent William J. Daugherty explained: "Against all advice from the U.S. government, the shah chose to concentrate law enforcement, internal security, and foreign intelligence collection duties in SAVAK," which means that it combined (and eventually received training from) the CIA, FBI, and the Border Patrol (Daugherty 2001: 40-41). The Shah might have underestimated domestic threats or worried that a cutting-edge security organ might dilute the power of the court, but it was a strange decision that diverged from the standard practice of authoritarian regimes. SAVAK was responsible for political dissidents, counter-intelligence, guerillas, high-profile criminals inside Iran, as well as overseas espionage, liaison with foreign intelligence services, covert operations, and the monitoring of the Iranian diaspora abroad (Halliday 1979: 77). These were duties beyond the capacity of the best security institution and caused SAVAK to be perpetually overstretched.

And yet it was also kept limited in size. Estimates vary. The Shah claimed that in 1979 SAVAK had only 4,000 operatives (Pahlavi 1980: 157). A few journalists stretched this figure widely to 30,000 members (Graham 1978: 144). But most researches now agree that the number of full-time officers ranged between 3,000 and 5,000 in the two decades of SAVAK's short

existence (Rubin 1981: 179; Abrahamian 1999: 104). It is true that its work was supplemented by informers, whose number remain unknown, but those who studied the organization concluded that its claim to have recruited countless of informers was mostly a physiological ruse. The agency "shrewdly cultivated a politics of distrust so that the people were led to believe that they were being constantly watched by its numerous members" (Saikal 1980: 190). In reality, "SAVAK's basic weapon has always been intimidation" (Graham 1978: 146). We have a few examples here of this resource limitations. In the fall of 1978, SAVAK complied a list of 124 clerics critical of the monarchy, but—as the report confessed—did not have the manpower to enforce a ban on all of them or keep them under constant surveillance (Kurzman 2004: 111). Similarly, SAVAK was good at putting together comprehensive dossiers about the various dissidents, but constantly "failed to penetrate their networks" (Ward 2009: 212). Another example. The court had required a thorough investigation of all those residing within a one-kilometer radius around the Shah's palaces. When the court minister asked for what he assumed was a regularly updated database of residents, he found none. SAVAK complained it had no capacity to carry out such a broad survey. When pressed to produce a preliminary report,

> **The results [were] incredible…there were literally dozens of local residents who were either ex-army officers sacked for their communist affiliations, or else related to those who were executed for the rebellion against land reform [June 1963 uprising]. My report came as just as much of a shock to HIM. 'I must commend your initiative', he said, 'but what the hell do Savak, the police and even my guards think they're playing at?' I told him that it was God alone that protects him, no thanks to any human agency** (Alam 2008: 174).

Then came the celebrated visit by President Nixon and his top foreign policy aide Henry Kissinger in May 1972. Not only were security checks incomplete and security measures uncoordinated, but also a couple of bombs actually exploded near the residence of the American dignitaries. SAVAK's abject incompetence during that visit convinced the Shah that they "couldn't so much as guard a sack of potatoes" (Alam 2008: 223). Nor did SAVAK have an anti-riot force to help it clamp down on demonstrators or take down guerillas (Harney 1999: 38).

Again it might be that the Shah had discounted a widespread internal uprising (though he almost faced one in June 1963), but SAVAK (and the military) had "no plans, no training, and no equipment for riot control" (Ward 2009: 210). Only in November 1978, almost a year into the revolution, did the Shah request clubs, tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and other anti-riot equipment from the Americans and the British, and the first shipments arrived in December, days before his forced abdication (Naraghi 1999: 134). Even when it came to countering leftist and Islamist guerillas in the 1970s, the court refused to allow SAVAK to develop its own counter-insurgency arm (as was the case in Egypt and other authoritarian settings), and forced it to rely on gendarmes in the countryside and policemen in the cities. The result, of course, was that these militias increased in membership and strength and provided muscle to the revolution (Ward 2009: 212).

In terms of counter-espionage, SAVAK's proudest moment came when its master spy-catcher (General Manuchehr Hashemi) caught a mole in the army in September 1977. There were only two problems with this glorious feat: first, SAVAK had actually received the tip from the Shah himself; and second, the man they caught had been in charge of the entire military's strategic planning—and had been working for the Soviets for thirty years (Milani 2008a: 465). SAVAK was not very successful on the external front either. Their two most coveted operations, a coup against Saddam Hussein in 1969 was exposed, resulting in an international scandal, and their attempt to use Kurdish forces to undermine the Iraqi regime between 1972 and 1975 was terminated by the Shah. The agency also failed consistently in disrupting the political activities among the Iranian diaspora—this is the diaspora that arranged for Khomeini's stay in France during the critical weeks of the revolution, spread his views in the media, and provided the new Islamic regime with its first president and foreign minister. Nor was SAVAK capable of intercepting or limiting in any way the dissemination of thousands of cassettes recording with Khomeini's inflammatory speeches and directives (Halliday 1979: 68).

It is worth mentioning here that the Shah was not particularly careful about choosing his top security lieutenants. General Hassan Pakravan, the man he appointed to head the SAVAK during the explosive first years of the White Revolution, was described as a "a true Renaissance man…a humanist" immersed in European literature and philosophy (Milani 2008a: 474). He was described by one of his SAVAK colleagues as "a nice man, but should have been a professor at some university" (Milani 2008a: 479). Driven by his mild temperament, Pakravan spent his time bantering with intellectuals and trying to reconcile between the Shah and the opposition. On June 5, 1963, the day the popular uprising caught him off guard, Pakravan "delivered a passionate speech on the radio, blaming the leaders of the uprising for abusing his trust and leniency," and after the revolt was suppressed, Pakravan pleaded clemency for the ringleaders, including Khomeini (Milani 2008a: 478). After barely four years in SAVAK he was removed because of his failure to anticipate or preempt the 1963 uprising. But his replacement was not other than the Imperial Guard commander who had walked blindly into Mosaddeq's trap on August 16 and was stripped off of his uniform and detained. Little wonder that General Ne'matollah Nasiri failed to forestall the simmering revolt in the 1970s and had to be dismissed in 1978.

Another ubiquitous restriction was that the Shah never gave SAVAK a blank check in dealing with opposition. Torture was a case-in-point. Despite the notoriety of SAVAK, recent research has shown, based on archival material and dozens of memoirs by political detainees, that torture was much less systematically used compared to other authoritarian settings. Ervand Abrahamian affirmed that: "Brute force was rarely used" against dissidents throughout the Pahlavi rule" (1999: 2). Reza Shah had abolished torture in the 1920s, and appointed a three-member committee (composed of the justice, finance, and court ministers, who all held law degrees from Europe) to reform the judicial and incarceration systems. In the year of his forced abdication (1941), Iran's largest prison, *Qasr-e Qajar*, held less than 200 political prisoners and none of them was subject to torture. Iran did not even have a maximum-security detention

center before the *Evin* prison was built in 1971, and by 1977 its maximum capacity was 1,500 prisoners (Abrahamian 1999: 25-28, 105). In the 1960s, SAVAK chief not only warned his officers against the use of torture, but "When he heard that an interrogator had slapped a prisoner, he moved swiftly to reprimand and demote the man" (Milani 2008a: 478). Admittedly, there were two glaring exceptions. The first one was the period that followed Mosaddeq's overthrow. But according to *Tudeh* detainees, the "barbaric practices" introduced in 1953 were hardly used afterwards. Likewise, Islamist militants detained in 1956 for plotting to assassinate the prime minister confirmed that they "were not subjected to physical torture." Even the deposed prime minister's associates at the National Front were treated leniently (except for his foreign minister), and Mossadeq himself was tried publically and spent less than four years in prison (Abrahamian 1999: 88-89, 99). The second exception was occasioned by the resurgence of the Marxist and Islamist guerillas. During intense shoot-outs between 1971 and 1976, 275 guerillas were killed in action and another 93 were tried by military tribunals and sentenced to death. But the Shah forbade the use of torture again in 1976 and, according to inmates, his decision led to an overnight change in prison conditions (Abrahamian 1999: 102, 119). Hashemi Rafsanjani, future president of the Islamic Republic, was detained six times for crimes no less that plotting to assassinate the king and the prime minister and deserting military service, and he was held at several locations, including the notorious *Evin* and *Qasr-e Qajar* prisons. And although he has every reason to slander the old regime, he confessed in his memoirs that he was subjected to physical violence in only one of his six detentions, and even then it was no more than beating (Rafsanjani 2005: 118).[25]

Over and above, the Shah frequently reprimanded SAVAK, sometimes even publically. For instance, when the agency confiscated subversive books from the Tehran University library, the Shah ordered them to return the books and apologize, adding that: "such stupidity will not go unpunished in the future" (Alam 2008: 361). When SAVAK directed the police to raid a

[25] It is also worth adding that (unlike Egypt) the regular police was prohibited from using violence to extract information or confessions from criminals in police stations (Abrahamian 1999: 1).

neighborhood to arrest a suspected drug dealer, on September 28, 1970, and manhandled citizens who stood in their way, the Shah sacked the chief of police and issued a statement expressing his disapproval (Alam 2008: 171). Also, the agency's presence in Iran's Washington embassy was terminated after the ambassador (who happened to be Ardeshir Zahedi, the king's son-in-law) thought its agents were brutish and undiplomatic (Rubin 1981: 152). Famous bazar strongman Al-Tayyeb Haj Reza'i, who played a key role in Mosaddeq's overthrow, narrated another degrading incident. In his interview with Christopher De Bellaigue, Al-Tayyeb proudly recounted how he lined his men around the hospital where Queen Farah had given birth to the crown prince in 1960 as a show of popular support, and when security officials cordoned him and his crew, the seasoned thug cried out for the Shah's help. Once the king heard him, he immediately asked the security men to step aside and chastised their chief – "the scuffle and the Shah's rebuke were a great humiliation," Tayyeb concluded (De Bellaigue 2004: 174). It is important to note here that, again unlike Egypt, the security apparatus did not control popular thugs, who remained mostly tied to traditional social networks organized around the market. All the above notwithstanding, there was no greater undermining of SAVAK's work than what the Shah did during the revolutionary turmoil itself. The details of how he disrupted and almost disowned the agency will be discussed in the following chapter. Suffice it to point out here that he forced SAVAK to release valuable political assets (detainees dropped from 3,000 to 300 in 1978) and lift censorship, and then carried out a sweeping purge of agency officials during these tense months (Abrahamian 1999: 120).

But if all these reasons contributed to SAVAK's incompetence, Iran's security elite had a more serious problem: disloyalty. As summarized by Milani (2008a: 445), out of his seven security chiefs, four had conspired to overthrow him, and we cannot ascertain the loyalty of the remaining three. The first SAVAK director was General Teymur Bakhtiyar, the Queen's uncle who supported the Shah during the 1953 showdown. After barely a year on the job, however, the director began plotting against his sovereign and was only exposed when he sought U.S.

support. During a visit to Washington in 1958, Bakhtiyar asked to meet with Allen Dulles and Kermit Roosevelt and requested their help to topple the Shah—since the SAVAK chief had no power of his own. They listened to his proposal and asked him to leave. Later that day, the clumsy director received a "verbal barrage" from John Foster Dulles and was humiliatingly ushered out of the State Department (Rubin 1981: 108). Undeterred, Bakhtiar tried his luck again in 1960 with president-elect Kennedy, which he knew was not very fond of the regime in Tehran, and again with the American embassy upon his return in May 1961. This time the Shah was informed and Bakhtiar was forced to escape the country in 1961, and his deputy, General Alavi Kia, was sacked for colluding with him. The former SAVAK chief ended up in Iraq after Europeans gave him the cold shoulder, and there he desperately offered his services to all the Shah's enemies, from *Tudeh* communists to Khomeini and his Islamists, but no one seemed interested. When he formed his own Liberation Movement of Iran in Baghdad, very few joined. But he had become too irksome and was assassinated by the Shah's henchmen in 1970 (Milani 2008a: 433-36).

Then there was the head of Military Intelligence (*Rokn-e Do*) General Valiollah Gharani, who plotted against the court and later joined Khomeini's secret Revolutionary Council and became the Islamic Republic's first chief of staff (Halliday 1979: 68; Milani 2008a: 445). On January 22, 1958, Gharani met three members of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and, according to the only available record of the meeting, tried to convince them that: "The Present government has no popular support and is despised by the mass of Iranian people and… Soviets are quite openly engaged in penetrating and wooing the Iranian people…Therefore [it] is urgent that a change in government be brought about…the Shah…should reign and not rule" (Milani 2008a: 448). On February 27 of that year, Gharani and 38 accomplices (mostly intellectuals) were arrested, but he received a light two-year sentence. Though he vowed to shun public life, he was arrested again in 1963 for meeting with dissidents and oppositional clerics, and was sentenced for another two years (Milani 2008a: 448-49).

The most drastic case of betrayal, however, was that of General Hussein Fardust, the unrivaled "intelligence tsar of the Pahlavi regime" (Milani 2008a: 438). He and the Shah were best friends since the age of six, and he had accompanied the monarch in every step of his educational and professional career. Fardust headed the Imperial Inspection Commission, which was charged, since its establishment in 1958, with overlooking the work of both SAVAK and Military Intelligence (Halliday 1979: 70; Abrahamian 1982: 437). Again the Shah's choice was miserable. Fardust has been caught leaking damaging information about female members of the royal family and was banished from court in the late 1940s, before the queen mother prevailed over her son to forgive him. He was then exiled to Paris on Mosaddeq's orders because of his constant scheming. There, KGB recruited him through an Iranian rug merchant. Prime minister Fezlollah Zahedi warned the Shah when he took him back into court that he was a Russian spy, but the monarch still placed him on top of the country's most sensitive intelligence organ. Even when the Shah, in the mid-1970s, turned against his old friend (for unknown reasons) and no longer met with him regularly, Fardust still kept his post. We now know that Fardust defected to Khomeini's camp and was rewarded by heading the Islamic Republic's top security agency SAVAMA between 1979 and 1984—before he was arrested for being a KGB agent. Fardust not only delivered the intelligence organizations to Khomeini, but he also played a critical role in convincing his protégé General Abbas Gharabaghi, the Shah's last chief of staff, not to repress the revolution (Milani 2008a: 438-40).

All the above leads one to believe that the aura of effectiveness that shrouded SAVAK was "exaggerated and misleading. SAVAK [was] clumsy…riddled with administrative and personal pettiness, [and] frequently blinded by a bully-boy mentality" (Graham 1978: 148). Or as the chief of French intelligence in the 1970s put it, SAVAK was "hardly more than a glorified police force" (Kurzman 2004: 109). Overstrained, restricted, and frequently subject to royal hostility and distain, SAVAK was hardly invested in the current regime. After a couple of amateurish attempts by its directors to seize power, security officers realized that their political

influence would remain severely in check under the Shah, and busied themselves with amassing personal wealth. When a retired SAVAK general was asked how the revolution took the agency by surprise, he replied: "we were doing real estate" (Kurzman 2004: 90).

Friendly Fire: Geopolitics Before The Fall

The United States doubtlessly played a key role in building up the Iranian military. But as this section demonstrates, the relationship between the Americans (and the West, in general) and the Shah were not as smooth or intimate as is commonly held. Like his father, once the Shah secured his throne, he not only displayed alarming signs of independence, but he also adopted a combative attitude vis-à-vis the industrial world over the oil issue. Certainly, his growing megalomania raised eyebrows on several occasions, and his detachment from Iranian reality was disconcerting to many visitors. It was only natural for the United States to consider whether it might be better off with a less ambitious and more popular regime. The revolution interrupted its train of thought. The result was that the country that provided the Shah with unconditional backing in 1953 did so only halfheartedly in the late 1970s. Although Washington was surprised and uninformed about many aspects of the revolution, it did not technically drop the ball like many analysts belief, nor was it overawed by the persistence of the revolutionaries; it simply had mixed feelings about the regime and could only provide it with lukewarm support. And this change of heart was only expected in light of the court's foreign policy in the final decade of the old regime.

Let us begin by considering U.S. military aid more closely. The Shah's ambitious program has been the source of endless friction in Iranian-American relationships from the very start. On the eve of the first arms sales agreement in 1947, the court requested U.S. help to erect a 300,000-men army equipped to deter the Soviets. The State Department thought otherwise and warned in a memo to President Truman that the Shah's unrealistic goals would drain the

economy and impoverish Iranians to the point where they might welcome a communist takeover. The Truman administration tried to convince Tehran that an American military umbrella, rather than a large and ineffective Iranian army, would work best (Rubin 1981: 37). However, the tenacity of the Shah drove the U.S. ambassador to complain to his superiors that nothing short of "harpoon therapy" could help "deflate his 'extravagant' aspirations and 'astronomical figures' for modern weapons" (Abrahamian 1999: 74). The Americans, of course, had their way. In March 1959, the two countries signed a mutual defense pact to reassure Tehran further, but President Eisenhower was adamant about not supplying the king with the kind of advanced equipment he strenuously demanded, explaining that such levels of military spending would damage the economy, provoke a popular uprising, and trigger an arms race in the region (Rubin 1981: 102). From the time the Shah took power in 1941 until 1963, total U.S. military grants amounted to $535.4 million—a reasonable figure by all accounts—and instead of providing Iran with weapons it can neither afford nor absorb, Washington focused its effort on modernizing the Iranian armed forces through integrating the various missions present there into one Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in 1953. Until 1965, MAAG had supplied Iran with 10,000 advisors and invited 2,000 Iranian officers to receive training in the U.S. (Saikal 1980: 54). The Kennedy administration upped the ante by pressuring the Shah in March 1962 to reduce the size of his army from 240,000 to a little over 100,000 men, and scaled down military purchases (Rubin 1981: 107). Though President Lyndon B. Johnson showed some flexibility, agreeing for example to raise Iran's military sales credit from Kennedy's stringent $48 million to $300 million, he believed this was a temporary policy dictated by the British withdrawal from the Gulf region, scheduled for 1971 (Halliday 1979: 93-96).

Only when Iran's oil revenues increased in the 1970s did the Shah finally manage to "have his way" with the Americans (Rubin 1981: 38). Many date the beginning of this shift to President Richard Nixon's famous visit to Tehran in May 1972. It was during this fateful visit that Nixon gratified the Shah's longstanding desire to buy any weapons he could afford, short of

non-conventional weapons. In six short years, Iran would become the world's largest single purchaser of American arms; would build the fourth largest air force in the world; and would quadruple its military from 100,000 to over 410,000 men (Halliday 1979: 93-96).[26] Whereas U.S. arms sales to Iran between 1941 and 1971 barely exceeded $1 billion, in the last decade of the Shah's rule, this number—including future orders—jumped to about $19 billion (Hoveyda 1980: 98). Clearly, the Shah philosophy was to "buy the best equipment in the greatest quantities at the fastest possible rate" (Rubin 1981: 158).

How can we explain this shift in the last six years of the Shah's reign? Why would Nixon adopt a policy that simply "overturned the efforts of five presidential administrations to convince the shah to moderate his arms purchases" (Daugherty 2001: 49)? One explanation was the post-Vietnam Nixon Doctrine, which called for regional powers to play an active role in blunting the threat of communism without direct American involvement, in effect, to appoint a friendly policeman (or more) in every region. The natural limitations of the armies of the Arab Gulf kingdoms and Jordan, and the demonstrated volatility of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria rendered Iran the best candidate. Another explanation points to regional changes. The greatest concentration of oil reserves (66 percent of global reserves, and 75 percent of the non-communist world reserves) was discovered in an area the British had to abandon militarily in 1971. The powerless sheikdoms of the Gulf worried that communists would fill the power vacuum the British left behind. These fears were substantiated when a Marxist South Yemen was created; another was trying to consolidate power in the Dhofar province of Oman; and a Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Agreement was signed (Rubin 1981: 124-26). There was a need for a powerful regional actor to deter the communist insurgents and their Soviet patron.

A third and final explanation suggests we 'follow the money'. There were several reasons why the U.S. was in need of Iranian cash during this period. First, the U.S. became a net

[26] According to one estimate, "Sales of military hardware to Iran jumped from $524 million in 1972 to $3.9 billion in 1974… [And] Between 1970 and 1978, the Shah ordered $20 billion worth of arms, which accounted for 25 percent of all United States arms sales" (Parsa 1989: 52). During his last visit to Washington, in November 1977, an unabated Shah presented a list of weapons he planned to buy for about $10 billion (Halliday 1979: 294).

importer of oil in 1970 (with 38 percent of its imports coming from the Gulf) and it used its arms sales to balance its rising oil-import bill (Rubin 1981: 130). When Iranian military leaders complained that the price of a certain weapon system had gone up by 50 percent between 1973 and 1976, a Pentagon official responded that Iranian oil prices had tripled during the same period. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger occasionally told his aides, "We are going to make them pay through the nose, just as they are making us pay them through the nose for oil" (Rubin 1981: 172).

It was also a marketing bonanza. MAAG chief General Ellis Williamson described Iran in the 1970s as "a salesman's dream" for arms companies; and surely enough, Tehran received over thirty corporate visitors a week. For many of these companies, especially in the aerospace industry, this was a golden opportunity to counteract the post-Vietnam cutbacks. Some of them began to market their newest jets to the Shah while they were still on the drawing board, and without clearance from the Pentagon. A case in point was the sale of the F-18 Hornets, which the Shah ordered 250 of in 1976 before the Pentagon had even reviewed it (Rubin 1981: 135, 160-63, 175). By 1975, thirty-nine of America's top arms, electronic, and communication companies had permanent representation in Iran, including Bell Helicopter International, General Electric, Grumman Aerospace, Lockheed, McDonnell-Douglas, Northrop, and Westinghouse. It was companies that were chasing after Iran not the other way around. In fact, the *New York Times* broke a scandal implicating Grumman in pledging a $28 million commission to Iran's deputy war minister to expedite the $2.2 billion F-14 contract (Bill 1988: 209). As we mentioned before, the Shah saved the F-14 program by loaning the troubled Grumman the money to finance its manufacture (Ward 2009: 198). Another example was how the producers of the ultra-sophisticated AWAC (aircraft-borne radar warning system) justified its sale to Iran by arguing in Congress that it reduced per-unit-cost enough to make it marketable to European armies. Iranian military men were not completely off the mark when they suspected that

American companies were using their country as a "technical dumping ground" (Rubin 1981: 168).

But whatever caused of the shift in American policy, it is obvious that it marked the triumph of the Shah's obsession with bolstering his military over three decades of U.S. reservations. And the feeling the Americans now had was that the Shah's intention was to "use American arms in order to free himself as much as possible from any dependence on American protection" (Rubin 1981: 124-26). Starting from the mid-1960s, this ambition to achieve Iranian independence dominated the Shah's actions and talks, both public and private.

First signs of trouble surfaced in 1961. The Kennedy administration, following the same rubric of its Alliance for Progress policy in Latin America, pressured the Shah to implement land reform to preempt the radicalization of the peasantry (as happened in China, Cuba, and Vietnam), and to spur rapid industrialization to create a capitalist class able to withstand communism. President Kennedy was justly worried that 70 percent of Iranians still lived in the countryside; 85 percent of the population was illiterate; the top 20 percent of the population accounted for 52 percent of total consumption; and political participation was limited to traditional magnates crystalized around the court. This sense of urgency drove the President to tactlessly threaten to withhold U.S. aid if the Shah does not name Ali Amini prime minister and entrust him with land reform (Saikal 1980: 73-76). Amini had served as ambassador to Washington between 1955 and 1958 and made a good impression on the young Senator Kennedy (Rubin 1981: 106). It did not help the Shah's injured pride that the U.S. offered an $85 million bonus package if Iran undertook land reform fast enough (Martin 2007: 20). If anything, this worn-out carrot-and-stick strategy added insult to injury.

The Shah's second shock at America's mistreatment of its allies came in 1965, when President Johnson failed to protect Pakistan from Indian attacks. He saw this as proof that if Iran came under threat, Washington would simply abandon it to its fate. When he tried to use this argument to convince Johnson to help him build a powerful Gulf fleet before the British

pulled out in 1971, he was rebuffed. And only when he threatened to turn to the Soviets for MiG-21 jets, did a reluctant Pentagon agree to supply Iran with F-4 Phantoms (Rubin 1981: 117-19). Then in November 1967, the Johnson administration classified Iran as a developed country, which made it no longer eligible for military aid. From now on it had to pay for whatever it needed (Saikal 1980: 94). At this point, the Shah understood that he had to secure the funds to force his way, that he could no longer count on American generosity, and from then onwards he fought viciously for his country's independence. He infuriated Americans by showing readiness to bury differences with communist regimes. In 1970, he wrote:

> **We in Iran have adopted a policy which we call a policy of independent nationalism. Its essential principles are non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and peaceful co-existence…especially to countries with different political and social systems from ours…peace cannot be achieved without sincere respect for the principles of co-existence between different ideologies and systems and systems of government** (Pahlavi 1970: 173-74).

After 1969, his court minister's diary is peppered with instances of the Shah's growing hostility toward Iran's longtime Western patrons, the U.S. and Britain. An entry on August 6, 1969 relays the Shah's bitter denunciation of Nixon's Détente: "they can both go to hell. We will simply not allow them to strike their sordid little bargains as if we had no say in the matter. Don't they realize how easily we can come to our own agreement with Russia? Iran is not some pawn to be shunted about by Britain and America" (Alam 2008: 82); then on the eve of his decision to increase the oil price, on January 20, 1973: "Nixon has the audacity to tell me to do nothing in the interest of my country until he dictates where that interest lies. At the same time he threatens me that failure to follow his so-called advice will be to jeopardize the special relations between our two countries. I say to hell with these relations" (Alam 2008: 278). When the Egyptian foreign minister fiercely attacked the U.S. representative to the United Nations, on October 18, 1970, the Shah asked "why on earth we didn't follow the Egyptian lead, and voice our grievances against America" (Alam 2008: 172-73). Muhammad Reza then wrote a pointed letter to President Gerald Ford, on November 1, 1976, saying, "You are no doubt fully aware, My President, of my

deep concern to maintain close cooperation between our two countries. However, if there were any opposition in the Congress and other circles to see Iran prosperous and militarily strong, there are many sources of supply to which we can turn, for our life is not in their hands… Nothing could provoke more reaction in us than this threatening tone from certain circles and their paternalistic attitude" (letter in Alam 2008: 522). The Shah was convinced that the Americans were deviously undermining him while pretending to be his friends. Commenting on his visit to Washington in 1977, he wrote: "I remember the protests…when about 50 people demonstrated against me…while 500 were demonstrating support for me. The media switched the numbers and asked rhetorically who had paid for the Shah's supporters. No one bothered to answer my question: Who had paid the anti-Shah demonstrations. The crowd was dotted with black faces and blond manes, rarely found in Iran" (Pahlavi 1980: 20). The British were treated even more scornfully. On August 16, 1972, the court minister was charged with conveying the following message from the Shah to the British Foreign Secretary:

> **We were wrong to believe that the British are our friends. You are obsessed solely with your own selfish interests and treat us as a people beyond the pale. But your attitude is a matter of profound disinterest. Your democratic system has already erupted in chaos. We shall soon overtake you and in a decade you will be struggling in our wake. Perhaps then you will remember how once you treated us** (Alam 2008: 236).

In the Shah's mind, Iran and its old Western patrons were on a collusion course. He wrote, "the West created an organized front against me…[because] my policies diverged from theirs" (Pahlavi 1980: 22). During his last meeting with Kissinger, in the summer of 1978, he told him he was sure that the CIA triggered this revolution against him because they felt "he was too cozy with the Soviet Union. If the Americans thought he was soft, maybe the religious people would be more stanchly anti-Communist" (Precht 2004: 10). On December 25, 1978, he confessed in an interview with Iranian scholar Ehsan Naraghi that the Americans and British wanted to liquidate him because they "oppose having a strong state in the region, they fear for their long-term interests" (Naraghi 1999: 140).

Driven by this sense of mistrust, the Shah sought to distance himself from the CIA. According to one CIA official in Tehran, the court terminated agency training for SAVAK in the 1960s (Daugherty 2001: 41). He then insisted on the withdrawal of CIA 'consultants' from all government administrations (Heikal 1981: 101). The next step was to prevent U.S. and British intelligence from holding (official) meetings with Iranian activists and opposition members, and direct them to rely on SAVAK reports to assess the domestic situation—a step that spelled disaster for the U.S. as the revolution unfolded (Milani 2011: Personal Interview). Finally, the Shah cancelled his weekly two-hour meetings with the Tehran CIA station chief in the fall on 1973 (Heikal 1981: 16). When his court minister asked why, the overconfident sovereign replied: "I simply can't afford to waste my time listening to the rubbish they give me… If and when they have something worthwhile to report, then I shall receive them; meanwhile they should present you with whatever material they come up with" (Alam 2008: 316).

This private attitude eventually spilled over to his public pronouncements. Attending a royal dinner in the summer of 1976, Iran's UN representative Fereydoun Hoveyda watched painfully as a Senator from New York had to endure the Shah's speech on America's unashamedly corrupt political system. The king then warned Americans in his interview with Mike Wallace on *Sixty Minutes*, on October 24, 1976, that the Jewish lobby controlled their policy-making and the media (Hoveyda 1980: 19, 155). He publically lectured the United States on its need for increased "social discipline" and fired at Britons for becoming "lazy, undisciplined, and permissive" (Bill 1988: 192). His abusive language triggered a report by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the U.S. State Department, on May 4, 1976, complaining that: "In recent months the Shah has permitted unusually sever criticisms of the United States in Iranian media. He has lent his own name to sweeping charges against the U.S., raising public questions about the bases of the alliance and U.S. reliability" (Bill 1988: 214). As his confidence grew, mostly in correspondence with Iran increased oil revenues, the world became his stage. Convinced that his fat bank account has automatically turned him into a royal sage, the Shah

dispensed advice to Westerners left and right: to investors, journalists and academics, and even heads of state (Harney 1999: 8). "He lectured London and Rome, advised Paris, scolded Madrid. The world heard him out meekly and swallowed even the bitterest admonitions because it couldn't take its eyes off the gold pyramid piling up in the Iranian desert" (Kapuscinski 2006: 55).[27]

But it was not all just talk. The Shah took several concrete steps to undermine Western interests. The most explosive, of course, was the increase in oil prices. The Shah pushed his partners in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Companies (OPEC) to extend their share of the pie, especially after the rise in the price of oil caused by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and after world demand for energy tripled between 1960 and 1970. He certainly knew that those who would bear the brunt of any increase in oil prices were the United States and Western Europe, which accounted for 70 percent and 50 percent of world demand, respectively. In December 1970, the Shah instigated an OPEC threat to reduce oil production by half unless the share of its members was increased. The bluff worked, leading to the Tehran Agreement of February 1971, in which the large oil companies (the Seven Sisters) succumbed to OPEC demands in order to maintain current prices. Iran observed the Arab oil embargo on countries that supported Israel during the October 1973 war, and reaped huge gains from the ensuing price hikes. The Shah then upped the ante on December 23, 1973, by announcing in a press conference at the Niavaran Palace his unilateral abrogation of the 1954 consortium agreement and the nationalization of Iranian oil (Saikal 1980: 99-109, 124; Rubin 1981: 131-32). On the first day of the new year, the Shah declared, the price of oil would rise from $5.032 a barrel to $11.651 a barrel, an almost 128 percent increase (Pahlavi 1980: 97). The Shah ended the conference on a

[27] A disconcerting example of the Shah's bursting ego comes from a diary entry penned by his court minister, on May 26, 1973: "Amongst the backlog of work, I had to report a request from the English royal family. Prince Philip wishes to be elected to the governing committee of the Iranian Imperial Equestrian Society. HIM was amused by this, commenting, 'In days gone by, an Iranian politician would have considered it a catastrophe if he'd been missed off the guest list to a British embassy cocktail party. Now it appears the boot is on the other foot; a request from the British royal family is fled away amongst insignificant trivia'" (Alam 2008: 294). This megalomania prompted William Simon, Nixon's Secretary of Treasury, to state in an interview with *American Banker*, on July 15, 1973, that: "The Shah is a nut" (Alam 2008: 381), and to repeat the same claim – weeks after he had ostensibly apologized to Tehran – before the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee (Heikal 1981: 16).

defiant note, warning the industrial world that the "era of their terrific progress and even more terrific income and wealth based on cheap oil is finished" (Kurzman 2004: 86). Reporter Robert Graham recalled how the Shah lectured the West:

> **Well, some people are going to say this [oil hike] is going to create chaos in the industrialized world… That is true, but as to the industrialized world they will have to tighten their belts, and they will have to work even harder… Eventually all those children of well-to-do families who have plenty to eat at every meal, who have their own cars…will have to rethink all these privileges of the advanced world** (Graham 1978: 15).

When the U.S. openly accused Iran of fashioning a consumers' cartel and hinted threateningly, in Kissinger's words, that the West will not allow oil to be turned into a political weapon, the Shah lashed out, pledging to rally to the defense of any country that gets attacked for trying to maximize the use of its own resources (Saikal 1980: 23). The king then added in a press conference: "No one can dictate to us. No one can wave a finger at us, because we will wave a finger back" (Rubin 1981: 140). In fact, he told his military leaders that they might be engaged in an "oil war" with the U.S. and the UK, and asked them to develop contingency plans to face them off (Milani 2011: Personal Interview). Americans were positively baffled. U.S. representative to the UN John Scali cornered his Iranian counterpart Hoveyda, in January 1974, to try to figure out: "Why have you pulled this trick? It's hard to swallow, coming from a friend" (Hoveyda 1980: 80). The Shah himself gave the answer in response to journalists, "Obviously, to have weapons and an army is not something which can be had free of charge, but thank God, today we can afford to purchase as many of the best weapons in the world…without any favors from anybody, for we pay in cash" (Saikal 1980: 157). And surely so, in November 1976, Iran struck its first oil-for-weapons deal with Britain, and laid the infrastructure for a domestic arms industry with the goal of becoming self-sufficient in a couple of decades. During the regime's final years, Iran was producing small weapons and antitank missiles, and assembling helicopters and tanks under license. The court's objective was crystal clear, to use the oil money to turn Iran into "a global power in its own right, before the end of the century" (Saikal 1980: 135).

To boost this military buildup and secure greater independence from the West, the Shah took two more bold steps: to balance the Soviets against the Americans (the standard post-colonial practice at the time) and to reintegrate himself in the region by mending relations with his neighbors. In the 1960s, Iran "moved dramatically toward rapprochement with Moscow" (Rubin 1981: 108). In September 1962, the Shah pledged not to allow U.S. bases or missiles on Iranian soil. Next came the well-publicized visit to Moscow in the summer of 1965, when the two sides initialed two major economic and military agreements. In exchange for $600 million worth of Iranian natural gas, the USSR constructed Iran's first steel mill complex in Isfahan together with a pipe line from north Iran to the Caucasus. On the military side, Soviets provided Iran with $110 million worth of armored carriers, anti-aircraft guns, and other weapons (Saikal 1980: 95). An Iranian diplomat remembered how the Shah was euphoric after the visit, crying triumphantly when he saw him, "That's it! We've just signed the contract with the Russians. The steelworks that the Westerners refused us will soon stand… Heavy industry will guarantee our independence!" (Hoveyda 1980: 72). He was no less excited about importing Soviet weapons. The monarch frequently noted that the USSR produced the best artillery in the world, and that his antipathy toward communism should not deprive Iran from benefiting from it (Huyser 1986: 202). He was also deeply impressed by the effectiveness of the SAM missiles that Egypt used in 1973, and dispatched his deputy war minister to Moscow to procure as much of these missiles as he could. This resulted in the largest Iranian-Soviet arms deal, concluded in November 1976, for $414 million (Saikal 1980: 159). That same year, the two countries signed a trade agreement, and Iran received a complementary $280 million economic aid package. By 1977, more than 15 percent of Iranian exports went to the Soviet Union, and there were 1,500 Soviet experts assigned to various civilian and military projects in Iran (Halliday 1979: 262-63). In a final act of defiance, the Shah reversed his earlier decision not to recognize the People's Republic of China and established diplomatic relations with it in 1971 – before the famous Nixon visit (Halliday 1979: 262-63).

In terms of regional efforts, the Shah tried in the summer of 1964 to draw Turkey and Pakistan into a tripartite regional alliance separate from the Western-sponsored CENTO, though nothing came out of this attempt (Saikal 1980: 93).[28] The Shah improved relations with India and Afghanistan; dropped Iranian claims to Bahrain; settled territorial and offshore boundary disputes with Saudi Arabia; provided economic and technical support to the newly independent Gulf sheikhdoms; and, most crucially, resumed diplomatic relations with Cairo, in August 1970, while Nasser was preparing for war with Israel and had recently cut-off diplomatic ties with America. One should note that relations between the two regional powers had been severed in 1949 when Nasser castigated the Shah, in a public speech, for dealing with Israel. Iran demanded an official apology, but never received one. Yet the Shah understood that in order to join the emerging anti-Western regional power bloc, he had to appease Cairo (Rubin 1981: 127). An equally important step was signing the Algeria Accord in March 1975 with Iraq's Saddam Hussein, pledging to terminate Iranian support for the Kurdish secessionists—against American wishes—in exchange for territorial concessions over the Shatt al-Arab waterway (Wahid 2009: 49). And this is how he justified his unexpected decision: "We agreed to bury our differences and succeeded in ending the misunderstanding which [U.S.] colonialist influences had maintained between us" (Pahlavi 1980: 133).

A question that arises here, of course, was how could the Shah balance these overtures toward the Arabs with his reputably cozy relationship with Israel? In truth, Iran had always been careful not to offend its Arab neighbors. In 1949, the Shah only extended a *de facto* recognition of Israel. The Jewish state's mission in Tehran was unofficial and low key. But starting from the late 1960s, the diary of his court minister demonstrates how careful he was to conceal Iranian-Israeli relations, even at the risk of upsetting the Israelis. Here are some of Alam's (2008) entries: on February 26, 1969, "Levi Eshkol, the Prime Minister of Israel, has died. I've arranged for HIM to

[28] Curiously, his father had taken a very similar step and for the same reason (independence from foreign powers). He invited Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan in July 1937 to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Nonaggression, but nothing came out of this initiative either (Saikal 1980: 155).

offer condolences to the Israeli President, without risking trouble from the Arabs" (36); on May 12, 1970, "The unofficial Israeli mission in Tehran celebrated Israel's twenty-second anniversary. HIM forbade anyone from the court or government to attend…he's keen that we should adopt a pro-Arab stand" (152); on April 28, 1972, "passed on a request from the Israeli envoy here, that HIM accept a visit from Prime Minister Golda Meir or from Abba Eban, the Israeli Foreign Minister… 'We have nothing of importance to discuss with Israel', said HIM, 'but if they're really determined to see me, they must bear full responsibility for keeping our meeting a secret'" (212); on December 6, 1974, "HIM was due to receive Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel… I made all the necessary arrangements…instructing the guard how to transfer him to the Palace without arousing suspicion, and even selecting a servant to attend [the meeting]… I picked a man of quite outstanding stupidity in the knowledge that he would be incapable of recognizing Rabin" (Alam 2008: 401).

By the late 1970s, it was obvious that the Shah assumed the posture of a "supreme nationalist," pursuing an independent policy based on his manifest glorification of Iran's potential role, what one can describe as "a foreign policy of prestige" (Chubin and Zabih 1974: 15). Washington now began to suspect that he had been using "the shield of the West to gain the necessary time to strengthen…his own position," and that he was gradually perfecting (and enjoying) the small battles, realignments, and maneuvers of "small-power statecraft" (Chubin and Zabih 1974: 296). It was clear that the Iranian sovereign no longer considered himself "a vassal but a peer" (Hoveyda 1980: 76). Unfortunately in one short year, between January 1978 and January 1979, the Shah learned—the hard way—that maybe he should not have sailed too far away from Western shores, nor should he have placed too much confidence on his ability to survive on his own. With a dependent military, an incompetent and conspiring security apparatus, an increasingly suspicious foreign ally, and nothing but an omnipotent court to rely on, he was as unprepared as anyone could be for a revolution.

Chapter Fourteen

THE COUP THAT NEVER WAS: JANUARY 1979

The central theme of the jealously guarded mythology of the Iranian revolution centers on how an exceptionally motivated people challenged with unconquerable passion one of the strongest repressive machines in the world (and its superpower patron)—and won. In the previous part, we have shown that looks can be deceiving. In reality, the Imperial Armed Forces was only impressive on the outside, and the security establishment was in shambles. We also demonstrated that the Americans were beginning to question their alliance with the Shah. In this part we will examine how the ruling bloc and its foreign ally reacted to the revolutionary crisis. But for the sake of clarity, let us first lay out the events constituting the Iranian revolution before analyzing them.

The loosening of repression, caused by the Shah's confidence that he had the support of his people and could afford to respond to international pressures to open up the political system, encouraged intellectuals and National Front activists to pen open letters asking their sovereign for democratic reform. The first of these letters was published in May 1977 and signed by fifty prominent lawyers. In November of that year, Ayatollah Khomeini's eldest son was allegedly killed by SAVAK, provoking uproar amongst his students and followers. Indignation turned into rage after Information Minister Darius Homayoun—acting on the court's orders—arranged for the publication of a vicious personal attack on Khomeini. The article, published anonymously on January 9, 1978, in Iran's leading newspaper *Etelaat*, accused the activist-cleric of homosexuality; claimed his mother was a professional dancer; mocked his lowly birth in India; and accused him of being a longtime British agent (Saikal 1980: 196).

The imprudent provocation sparked riots in the shrine-city of Qom, and several were killed. This began a series of fortieth-day mourning demonstrations, each commemorating the deaths that occurred forty days before. The demonstrations spread geographically from Qom

(January 9) to Tabriz (February 18) to Yazd and Kermanshah (March 28) to Tehran (May 6). The cycle was interrupted briefly in June, and then resumed in Mashhad and Isfahan in July. On August 19, the Cinema Rex complex at the city of Abadan was set on fire, killing perhaps four hundred people. SAVAK tried to pin it down on Islamists, who had attacked movie theaters in the past for showing indecent Western films, but the accusation did not stick because this time the movie being shown glorified antigovernment guerillas.[29] The Shah appointed a new cabinet under Jafar Sharif-Emami, on August 27, to carry out a crash liberalization program to absorb popular anger. Emami was close to clerical circles, but he was also head of the corrupt Pahlavi Foundation and had no public credibility. On September 7, Khomeini called for a general strike from his exile, and in response the government declared a curfew starting the following morning, Friday September 8, soon to be known as Black Friday. Either because they had not learned about the curfew or because they were determined to defy it, hundreds of demonstrators gathered in Tehran's Jaleh Square. Soldiers were ordered to impose the curfew at all cost, and after firing a few warning shots, they opened fire. Estimates of how many people died that day vary wildly between 40 and 4,000.[30] Oil workers responded the following day with a series of intermittent strikes, leading production to drop from 6 million barrels a day earlier that year to almost nil by December. The revolution died down for a couple of months, then on November 5, later known as Bloody Sunday, an unruly crowd burned and ransacked dozens of buildings, including the British embassy compound. The violence convinced the Shah that a tougher stance was required. On November 6, he declared martial law and appointed a military government under General Gholam-Reza Azhari. These measures did not calm down demonstrators, nor did it prevent the celebrated one-million-man march of December 11, which marked the religious celebration of *Ashura* (Keddie 1981: 242-50; see also Harney 1999; Kurzman 2004).

[29] CIA learned from its SAVAK contacts that it was they who set the Rex theatre on fire (Precht 2004: 12).
[30] The authorities put the number at 87 dead, and the opposition claims it was close to 500 (Abrahamian 1982: 516). Keddie (1981: 50) suggested that perhaps 900 people were killed; Rubin's (1981: 214) upper limit was 2,000; and Algar (2001: 76) raised the bar to 4,000. U.S. embassy sources said casualties did not exceed 125 (Precht 2004: 13); and Kurzman (2004: 75) working off government documents a few decades later insists that the number did not exceed 80, though it was probably close to 40.

On December 30, the Shah appointed a new cabinet under National Front veteran Shahpour Bakhtiar and charged it with carrying out comprehensive reforms. The Shah set up a Regency Council and departed Iran for the last time on January 16, 1979, and after an arduous and humiliating trip ended up in Egypt, where he died in July 1980. In the meantime, Khomeini returned to Iran after sixteen years of exile, on February 1, and named a cabinet headed by Mehdi Bazargan, former National Front member and oil director under Mosaddeq. With two competing cabinets the tense situation persisted for a few days. But on February 10, an attempt by the Imperial Guard to suppress the mutiny of air force technicians (*homofars*) aggravated Islamist and leftist militias (*Mujahidin-e Khalq* and *Feda'iyan-e Khalq*, respectively). They occupied a nearby machinegun factory and several police stations and handed out weapons to demonstrators. Those arms stocks, in addition to the weapons seized by *homofars* at the airbase, helped repel the Imperial Guards. The armed revolutionaries then forced their way into the public radio building and began issuing directives and propaganda. Two days later, on February 11, the military declared its neutrality; Bakhtiar was forced to flee; and the Khomeini-endorsed Bazargan government became the only legitimate power. Soon, however, Bazargan proved to be Iran's Kerensky, and after a series of successive changes, Khomeini and his followers secured power, declaring Iran an Islamic Republic (Rubin 1981: 242-51; Schanahgaldian 1987: 15-16).

Street Politics, Court Intrigues

Native and foreign observers of the popular ferment that characterized the Iranian revolution tend to highlight (and romanticize) the role of the Islamic Shi'ite leadership and the willingness of Iranians to sacrifice their lives for what they believed. So let us begin by assessing the influence of Shi'ite doctrines and Ayatollah Khomeini leadership, before turning to the court's reaction to the revolutionary upheaval.

In a widely quoted article, Mansoor Moaddel (1992: 353) stated that the distinctive characteristic of the revolution in Iran was the "all-encompassing role played by the imageries and symbolism of Shi'i Islam in initiating and sustaining the revolutionary movement." Theda Skocpol (1994: 247-49) agreed that Shi'a Islam was both "organizationally and culturally crucial to the making of the Iranian revolution" because it has "especially salient symbolic resources to justify resistance against unjust authority, and to legitimate religious leaders as competitors to the state." French scholar Michel Foucault was (temporarily) inspired, "Islam—which is not simply a religion, but an entire way of life, an adherence to a history and a civilization—has a good chance to become a gigantic powder keg, at the level of hundreds of millions of men" (in Afary and Anderson 2005: 4). But what is it exactly about Shi'ite Islam that was inherently revolutionary? Robin Wright (2000: 10) explained, "Shi'ite Islam demands that the faithful fight against injustice and tyranny, even if it means certain death." Why so? Because, Wright continued, Islam's second sect was born out of the usurpation of the nation's legitimate leadership in the seventh-century, a traumatic event that spawned a sense of indignation that lives on today. That is why it was surely the "willingness of almost the entire population…to face martyrdom, indeed to welcome it…which ensured that the Revolution would triumph" (Heikal 1981: 176; this Shi'a exclusiveness argument is well summarized in Algar 2001: 13-19).[31]

In addition to their peculiar world outlook, Shi'ites also seem to have an organizational advantage over other Muslims. Clerics enjoy greater influence over their flock because they represent the infallible knowledge of the twelve holy descendants of the Prophet, as opposed to Sunni clerics, whose knowledge is merely based on interpretation. Also, their financial independence from the state allows them to defy rulers. Unlike their Sunni counterparts, Shi'ite

[31] Special reference is usually made here to the 'Karbala complex' when Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussein and perhaps seventy of his kinsmen were massacred by the henchmen of the Umayyad despot Yazid in 680 A.D. Shiites supposedly identify with the martyred Imam and long to follow in his footsteps by fighting oppression to the end.

mullahs have not been made salaried state functionaries, but rather rely on religious offerings from their followers.[32]

Structurally and historically, however, these differences have been superficial. First, while Shi'a mullahs officially present their religious opinions as infallible and Sunnis advance them as informed interpretations, their effect is practically the same. On the one hand, ayatollahs in Iran uphold radically different interpretations, a fact that undermines any claim to infallibility, and on the other hand, Sunni opinions carry all the weight and authority of (religious) science, and so are considered binding. Pious Muslims, regardless of their sect, adhere faithfully to the interpretations of their religious scholarly authorities, and it is ludicrous to assume that Shi'a Muslims take their clerics more seriously. Second, both Shi'a and Sunni clerics are theoretically dependent on the financial offerings of the devout, usually in the form of religious endowments and alms. Whether or not rulers disrupt the flow of funds is historically contingent on regime type. In other words, the clergy's financial independence, again regardless of their sect, has varied across time and place. So before Nasser nationalized religious endowments in Egypt, for instance, Sunni scholars were arguably as independent as their Shi'a counterparts. And even in that case, Egyptian clerics have become subordinated because of political repression not their dependence on state salaries. In terms of livelihood, generous donations by believers and rich patrons usually suffice. The third and most important flaw in this argument, of course, is historical. An overall survey of Islamic history shows that Sunnis have been at least as much, if not more, revolutionary as Shi'as. In fact, Shi'ite communities have long been characterized by political quietism and the doctrine of 'dissimulation' (*taqiya*) by which they conceal their religious beliefs from authorities to avoid persecution. In modern history, the revolutionary role of Azhar clerics, between Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the national revolution of 1919, is well documented. It is also well known that the cleric who incited the famous 1891 Tobacco Protest in Iran against the Qajar monarch Nasser al-Din Shah's concessions to the

[32] Laymen 'emulators' provide one fifth of their annual income to the ayatollahs they emulate.

British was the Sunni Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who then went on to inspire revolution throughout the Muslim world. From the late 1980s, the banner of militant resistance and martyrdom among Islamists has been carried by the Sunni Hamas as much as by the Shi'ite Hezbollah. Most recently, the Arab Spring revolts demonstrated beyond doubt that Sunnis are as willing to face oppression and sacrifice their lives as the Iranians had been in the 1970s—and they did so without a single mobilizing ideology, whether religious or secular.

This last claim forces us to scrutinize more closely how many Iranians made the 'ultimate sacrifice'. The revolutionaries themselves claim perhaps 50,000 martyrs (Algar 2001: 139). U.S. military and intelligence sources say it was around 10,000 (Bill 1988: 236; Daugherty 2001: 65; Ward 2009: 225). According to Said Amir Arjomand, notwithstanding "wild rumors," the number of persons actually killed during the sixteen months of revolt was less than 3,000—"[a] relatively small number of casualties for an upheaval of major proportions." (1988: 120). Former British diplomat Desmond Harney, who lived through the revolution in Tehran, records an overall death toll of 1,600 people (Harney 1999: 97). The most recent account, based on scrupulous research in the archives of the Martyr Foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the coroner's office in Tehran, drastically downgrades the range to between 744 and 895 dead, and concludes, "These may be under-accounts, but even if multiplied many times over they do not match the image of vast masses standing up to machine-gun fire" (Kurzman 2004: 71). To put these figures in perspective, let us remember that Egypt's reputably 'peaceful' revolt claimed the lives of over 1,000 demonstrators in less than 18 days, and that the first few months of the Syrian and Libyan revolts produced 9,000 and 40,000 casualties, respectively.

So if Shi'ite ideology was not exceptionally inspiring, did the clerical hierarchy present the revolutionaries with a comparative advantage? Asef Bayat argued that religion was not really the key per se, but considering that secular opposition groups have been "organizationally decapitated," it was the clergy's unique "institutional capacity" that ensured its success (1998: 37). Similarly, Fred Halliday contended that the mosque "found itself" the focus of resistance

because all other forums were closed down (1979: 19). What exactly constituted this mosque institutional capacity? Halliday suggested that in the late 1970s Iran had perhaps 80,000 mosques and 180,000 mullahs (1979: 19). Yet future research confirmed that the country had no more than 5,000 major mosques (including seminaries and theology schools) and 15,000 minor ones run by 90,000 clergymen (Abrahamian 1982: 432-34; Kurzman 2004: 37, 101; Martin 2007: 23).[33] Moreover, Charles Kurzman uncovered through ethnographic fieldwork that these mosques were not the "sanctuaries" that the Islamist revolutionaries later made them to be; that until the last days of the Shah "mosques were considered dangerous places for oppositionists" because the majority of the clergy remained firmly opposed to political activism (Kurzman 2004: 39). One only needs to remember the ruthless attacks on Qom, the most sacred shrine-city, during the 1963 uprising to realize that clerics and their mosques were never really off limits.

What about the particularly revolutionary nature of the clergy? The real litmus test for the revolutionary potential of Iran's clerics was their reaction to the first Pahlavi. Compared to his father, Muhammad Reza was mildly secular and less prone to making clerical enemies, since he believed communists and republicans were the real threat to royal absolutism. In fact, he revoked most of his father's secular measures, including the ban on veiling and the legal sidelining of Sharia (Huwaidy 1991: 26). From 1925 to 1928, Reza Shah introduced new commercial, criminal, and civil codes based on French law rather than Sharia, and restricted the judicial role of mullahs to family law. He decreed European dress in 1928; outlawed the veil in 1936; expunged Arabic vocabulary from Persian and enforced the use of Farsi in official documents; revived Zoroastrian symbols and architecture; required schoolchildren to memorize parts of the epic poem *Shahnameh*, which glorified Iran's pre-Islamic history. Most crucially, he placed religious education and institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in 1929, and extended state control over religious endowments in 1934. His treatment of clerics was, to say the least, abusive. In October 1928 he arrested the most senior cleric, Seyyed Hassan

[33] The same sources divided the clerical hierarchy into 50 ayatollahs (senior scholars), 5,000 hojjat al-Islams (junior scholars), 10,000 theology students, and a mass of low-ranking mullahs and prayer leaders.

Modarres, to preempt his objection to the Uniform Dress Law, and kept him in prison for nine years before executing him in December 1936 (Rahnema 2000: 3-5; Martin 2007: 14). When a female member of the royal family was castigated by a senior mullah for showing her hair in a holy shrine, Reza Shah returned to that shrine with a hundred men, entered without taking off their boots, and whipped the errant ayatollah (De Bellaigue 2004: 90). The climactic act in his humiliation of the clergy, however, occurred in 1928. When the mullahs of the Gowharshad Mosque at the shrine-city of Mashhad demonstrated against his Westernizing reforms, Reza Shah surrounded the mosque with 2,000 soldiers and opened fire on clerics and students, killing close to 200, and returned to the capital with 800 of them in chains (Zabih 1988: 84). With this type of treatment, it is no wonder that the percentage of clerics in parliament dropped from 40 percent in the early 1920s to zero in 1937 (Parsa 1989: 36).

But although Reza Shah's attack on the clerical class was as ferocious as that of his Turkish role model, clerical resistance to his rule was "most notable by its absence" (Martin 2007: 15). Pious Iranians were no less apathetic. In fact, the intellectual who later mobilized revolutionary youth more than any other (Ali Shari'ati) lamented in his writings in the early 1970s that Iranians suffered from spiritual poverty, and that the "flames of faith have died in the hearts of the youth" (quoted in Rahnema 2000: 62). When he tried to 'revolutionize' Shi'ite Islam by mixing religious themes with socialist and anticolonial vocabulary, most clerics considered him a heretic (Naraghi 1999: 28).[34]

But though there was nothing essentially revolutionary about the Shi'ite theology and hierarchy, one exception stands out: Ayatollah Khomeini. In his comparative study of revolutionary trends in the Muslim world, Henry Munson concluded that because of the particular symbols and values of Shi'ite Islam, "Khomeini attained a far greater degree of

[34] Truth be told, Ayatollah Khomeini was infuriated. He wrote in his 1944 tract *Kashf al-Asrar* (Uncovering the Secrets): "All the orders issued by the dictatorial regime of the bandit Reza Khan have no value at all. The laws passed by his parliament must be scrapped and burned. All the idiotic words that have proceeded from the brain of that illiterate soldier are rotten and it is only the law of God that will remain and resist the ravages of time" (Algar 2001: 53-54). Yet only his students read these angry words, and neither he nor they defied Reza Shah politically.

charismatic authority than any other Muslim fundamentalist… His messianic aura enabled him to mobilize segments of Iranian (urban) society that had traditionally been apolitical and acquiescent" (1988: 134). But Khomeini was not a typical Shi'ite leader, and his blend of religion and politics was fairly innovative and controversial. Even though Hamid Algar tried to present him as the culminating figure in a long Shi'a tradition of clerical leadership of the nation, he had to admit that in many respects "he also *broke sharply* with the existing tradition of the learned institution by cultivating from a quite early point radical political interest" (Algar 2001: 53; my emphasis).

As late as 1977, the position of the critical mass within the clergy, represented by the most senior authority Ayatollah Shariatmadari, never demanded the overthrow of the monarchy (though they did ask the Shah to respect the constitution), and never called for the establishment of an Islamic republic (Hoveyda 1980: 38). After an extended study of the role of religious ideology in the revolution, Gene Burns confessed that a few months before the Shah's overthrow one could hardly claim that the dominant trend among the clerics was revolutionary (1996: 364). Likewise, Moaddel explained that the Islamist revolutionary discourse did not naturally emerge out of a pre-existing tradition, but was hurriedly developed as the confrontation between the regime and its opponents escalated (1992: 375). In the early months of 1976, Khomeini's right-hand aide Ayatollah Beheshti voiced his frustration at the absence of a brave and progressive leadership within the clerical establishment. Mullahs were constantly ordering their followers to "keep quiet and not expose the seminaries to further repression" (Kurzman 2004: 33). Caught in the revolutionary turmoil, British observer Desmond Harney recorded in his Tehran diary the pronouncements of the clerical leaders. On September 18, 1978, he wrote, "One light on the clergy: much of the trouble is said to stem from the lack of one unchallenged Iranian Shi'ite leader since the death of [conservative pro-monarchy] Ayatollah Borujerdi ten years ago. So there is rivalry between the non-violent, moderate traditionalist Shariatmadari and the demagogic, radical Khomeini" (1999: 29). Later in the fall, he was marked how the most

senior Shi'a cleric of the time Ayatollah Kho'i in Najaf—"the Pope of the Shi'as"—carefully distanced himself from Khomeini (1999: 109). Two weeks before the Shah abdicated, Ayatollah Qomi in Mashhad, one of the most five senior authorities, published in all the leading newspapers how Imam Reza, one of the twelve Shia's 'saints', visited him in his sleep, enquiring angrily "why [Iranians] were trying to destroy the only Shi'a king and the only Shi'a nation?" (Harney 1999: 118). To claim that the weight of Shi'a tradition or the general tendency of the clergy supported the revolution is therefore highly misleading. The truth is, "During the revolutionary conflicts, the clergy were divided among themselves… The political faction interested in confronting the government was small and unable to mobilize the population against the government" (Parsa 1989: 218).[35]

Notably, there was a clear status division within the clerical hierarchy. Senior scholars were keen on cooperating with the regime, and the most politicized among them were moderately reformist. More radical views were mostly found among the lower-ranking mullahs. The revolutionary intransigence of a prominent cleric like Khomeini was therefore "entirely exceptional" (Cronin 2010: 266).[36] Khomeini's radical ideas "ran contrary to traditional Muslim political thought, the established practice in the seminaries, and even the position he himself had taken before," they were nothing less than "a paradigm shift" (Rajaee 2007: 90-91). And until September 1978, it was mostly his former students who propagated his views (Keddie 1981: 263). One of his leading lieutenants, future president Hashemi Rafsanjani, remembers that what fascinated them as students about Khomeini was how radically different he was from all the other clerics, adding that until Ayatollah Borujerdi died in 1961, their teacher kept his opinions to himself and a close circle of followers in order not to antagonize the clerical order. When they pushed for revolution, he would say that the ground was not yet paved and urge them to wait for

[35] John Foran further observed that even within the clerical revolutionary camp in the 1970s there was no homogenous doctrine, but "at least five distinct orientations," including militant Islamism, radical liberation theology, liberal Islamism, socialist Islamism, and secular nationalist Islamism (2005: 80).

[36] Nikki Keddie speculated that maybe the source of the schism was that revolution threatened the prestige and privileges of the high clergy because its advocates were among the lower clergy. Be that as it may, she admitted that all those who outranked Khomeini considered him a populist innovator (1981: 210).

the right opportunity (Rafsanjani 2005: 33-34, 64). This was certainly wise because, as Kurzman noted, although the revolutionary ayatollah had been calling on Iranians to rise against the monarch since 1963, only a small fraction heeded his call before 1978 (2004: 68). Even the group that some like to consider 'naturally' wedded to the clergy, that is the conservative merchants of the bazaar, turned their back on Khomeini's political agitation when the economy was prospering in the 1960s and early 1970s, and only rediscovered their piety after the regime undermined their economic interests and accused them of profiteering (Parsa 1989: 123-24). In fact, in June 1963 when the clerics went too far in championing the interests of the landlords, several sections of the bazaar "issued threats to withhold their religious payments to Qom" if the mullahs did not pay more attention to commercial interests (Katouzian 1999: 175).

But if those who outranked Khomeini opposed his views, and if the Iranian people did not feel religiously obligated to rally around him, then what was the source of his authority? Arjomand argued that his articulate vilification of the regime, rather than his representation of Islam, was what made him popular among the revolutionaries (1988: 103). Similarly, Parsa thought that his uncompromising position at a time of political turmoil attracted the increasingly radicalized population to his sermons (1989: 219). Heikal (1981: 88), Rubin (1981: 221), and Burns (1996: 375) compared him to the astute V. I. Lenin. His maximalist positions, his unique sense of timing, his lucid and inspiring rhetoric steeled the opposition. And like the Bolshevik leader, he led his faction from the benches of the minority to the height of political power, even though most of the population was not devoted to his radical ideology—many of them never even heard of it.[37] Also like Lenin, he was a master tactician and an unrivaled revolutionary strategist who brought together disparate opposition groups and used them to achieve his goals

[37] "Khomeini's only goal was the recreation of an idealized past. But those in Iran who awaited his return were looking above all for a better future – and not necessarily only in spiritual terms" (Moin 1999: 200). In fact, Burns asserted that one of the main reasons why the revolution succeeded was its "ambiguous ideology," which allowed the motely alliance of regime opponents (1996: 370). A testament to the lack of popular support for Khomeini's ideology was the fact that revolutionary tribunals executed over ten thousand Iranians for their disloyalty to the new regime, and that half-a-million of Iran's 40 million Shi'as emigrated shortly after the revolution. In many ways, the Iran-Iraq war, which commenced a year after the revolution triumphed, was "godsend for Khomeini and his allied hard-liners, who were facing waning popular enthusiasm for the new order" (Ward 2009: 241-42).

(Heikal 1981: 186; Moin 1999: 200). According to Harney, Khomeini seized the revolutionary masses not by posing as a religious symbol but rather by "his boldness, his steadfastness, his consistency, his simplicity. This is what political leadership is about" (1999: 132). Hamid Algar, who was close to Khomeini, agreed, "Anyone who has come into the presence of Imam Khomeini has realized that this man is a kind of embodiment of the human ideal. It is by exercising a combination of moral, intellectual, political, and spiritual ability that he has come to have such a tremendous role in Iran" (2001: 42).

While these personal qualities were certainly important in Khomeini's leadership of the revolution, they were more tangibly reflected in his organizational skills. And it was organization rather than a presumed ideological hegemony that allowed Islamists to capitalize on the breakdown of 1978-1979.[38] Islamists neither inspired nor hijacked the revolution, they rode its crest to power with considerable agility. Organization enabled them to move swiftly and decisively when others waivered. Advocates of the ideological hegemony thesis seek to downplay this organizational element. Algar claims that the "organizational structure of the Revolution is extremely simple. It was a question of the directives given by Imam Khomeini being distributed throughout Iran and then evoking an immediate response of obedience from the mass of people" (2001: 146). But Islamist organization was far from simple. Khomeini built an effective network of associates. Some of them, such as Ibrahim Yazdi and Sadeq Qotbzadeh (both future foreign ministers of the Islamic republic) had received military training in Cairo in the mid-

[38] The focus on ideology has probably resulted from the nature of the new regime. Because Islamists prevailed, studies of the revolution "tend to be circular accounts beginning with the outcome" (Parsa: 1989: 9). Not only that, but the outcome of the 1979 revolt has tempted scholars to overemphasize the role of Shi'ite clerics in past revolts as well, such as the Constitutional Revolution at the turn of the century, and the 1953 uprising against Mosaddeq. New scholarship, however, has revealed that the clergy did not act as a political actor, but individual clerics joined various social forces according to their views, clerical rank, and social background. Also, Western ideas (notably, constitutional democracy) were more relevant to these past upheavals than traditional Shi'ite themes (Afary 1996: 22-23; Martin 2007: 8). In addition, one must not forget that religion had been often used as a proxy for nationalism in many postcolonial settings. "In the European revolutionary context, to be oppositional meant to oppose the established institutions and to rebel against one's own solidified culture, including the church. In an anticolonial context where 'the church' was under attack by domestic power-holders with strong ties to foreign powers, religion could play a part in nationalism" (Benard and Khalilzad 1984: 23-24). If the Shah had not been a champion of Westernization, "religion might not have been such a symbolic indicator of opposition" (Benard and Khalilzad 1984: 48).

1950s;[39] others, such as future president Hashemi Rafsanjani set up *komitehs* (revolutionary committees) in neighborhoods all over the country; a third group enlisted the support of Islamist and leftist guerilla groups that have been already operating in Iran for years; and all of these quickly evolved upon Khomeini's return into highly effective popular militia: *Hezbollahis* to enforce Islamic law, as well as the standing *Pasdaran* and volunteer *Basij* forces to protect the new regime (Heikal 1981: 71, 166). On the political front, Khomeini created a secret Islamic Revolutionary Council and—a full-year before the Shah's overthrow—complied a list of trustworthy candidates for various government posts (from ministers to governors and mayors) once the revolution triumphs. He also asked Bazargan, who had been the director of the National Iranian Oil Company under Mosaddeq, to prepare a detailed oil policy for the new regime (Heikal 1981: 169). As soon as he returned to Iran, the methodical ayatollah instructed Rafsanjani to work with Ayatollah Beheshti on forming the Islamic Republic Party to bring together their various supporters and win the upcoming parliamentary elections, which the party won with a landslide (Rafsanjani 2005: 221). Khomeini also drafted a new constitution and secured its legitimacy via a referendum in October 1979, before the other factions knew what hit them. As Abbas Milani noticed, every mistake the U.S. committed in Iraq in 2003, Khomeini skillfully avoided. He decapitated the military and security institutions, but kept them intact; he weaved an unwieldy coalition of Islamists, liberals, leftists, and nationalists, and then destroyed it once it had served his purpose; and he had a complete plan for the future (Milani 2011: Personal Interview).

So while Khomeini was ideologically driven, his power derived from his ability to translate beliefs into effective revolutionary organizations and tactics. A good example is how he turned the traditional fortieth-day mourning ceremonies honoring the deceased (ceremonies which exist in the Sunni world as well) into large-scale demonstrations, or as Kurzman put it,

[39] Nasser's lieutenants provided training in arms and subversion tactics to Third World 'liberation' movements at the Inshass military camp on the outskirts of Cairo (Heikal 1981: 71).

how he transformed "grief recovery into grief-based mobilization" (2004: 54).[40] Another example is how he used the media. Any student of the revolution knows that Khomeini's most potent propaganda weapons were his cassette recordings and public interviews. The ayatollah did not rely on traditional networks of clerics and followers during his stay in the Shi'ite stronghold of southern Iraq, but mostly on the modern Western communications technology offered by France. And he appreciated this goldmine; "When I entered Paris…the French government was a bit cautious. But then they were kind to us and we could publicize our views extensively, much more so than we expected" (quoted in Moin 1999: 3). It was not his religious authority but the fact that he had become a media celebrity that helped with the mobilization. With this stern-looking mullah "the first media revolution was born" (Rajaee 2007: 113).

But Khomeini's organizational abilities notwithstanding, the Iranian revolution—like others—has not been brought about by an ideological revolutionary movement mobilizing the masses to destroy the old regime from below. His unique skills were useful only because the regime began to crack – this is why he failed in 1963 and triumphed in 1979. So what caused regime breakdown in the late 1970s? Numerous accounts attribute it to the mass rising of the urban poor.[41] On the eve of the revolution, at least one million of those occupied the capital's slums, and close to half of them lived as squatters, representing 35 percent of Tehran's population (Bayat 1998: 29). This is certainly the official version. It was supposedly a revolt of what Khomeini called the *mustaz'afin* (the oppressed). The leader thanked them shortly after his triumphant return, "This momentous Islamic Revolution is indebted to the efforts of this class – the class of the deprived…the shanty dwellers, the class that brought about the victory of the revolution" (quoted in Bayat 1998: 35). Keddie also highlighted the role of the sub-proletariat that recently migrated to the city and dwelled in urban slums (1981: 246). Cronin partly agreed,

[40] Doubtlessly revolutionary tactics are most effective when they draw on established traditions and practices (Skocpol 1994: 250).

[41] Though half of Iranians lived in the countryside, everyone agrees that peasants remained docile throughout the revolution, and most of them supported the Shah till the very end (Halliday 1979: 213; Milani 2008b: 583).

though in her analysis it was the decisive entry of the working class into the revolutionary fray in the fall of 1978 that paralyzed the system through successive strikes (2010: 267).

This interpretation, however, was widely disputed. Two of the best-researched accounts on the situation of the urban poor—Farhad Kazemi's *Poverty and Revolution in Iran* (1980) and Asef Bayat's *Street Politics* (1998)—concluded that the urban poor remained on the sidelines until the very end of the revolution (for a similar conclusion see Halliday 1979: 278; Kurzman 2004: 100). Bayat, himself a rural migrant to Tehran, compared their situation to eighteenth-century European mobs who regarded their ruler as "a great patron, the provider of livelihood, and the source of justice: they both admired and feared his power" (1998: 39). Parsa saw them mostly as apolitical: a typical city squatter told the *Washington Post*, on January 14, 1978, "We have heard about the demonstrations, but we don't take part; to demonstrate you have to have a full stomach… Whoever gives us bread and work, we will be with him" (1989: 5). In Bayat's succinct description, the disenfranchised "cannot afford to be ideological" (1998: 159). Halliday extended the argument to the working class. Although Iran had 10.6 million workers in 1977, over half of them were isolated in the countryside (Halliday 1979: 173). And, contrary to Islamists, both the urban poor and the proletariat had no organizations or any type of formal associations to work with (Halliday 1979: 216; Bayat 1998: 41).

This lack of organization allowed Islamists to get them onboard during their struggle to consolidate power. Bayat noted that until the Shah stepped down both religious and secular movements had paid little attention to the lower classes, preferring to focus on students and professionals. A meticulous breakdown of Khomeini's sermons and letters during his sixteen years in exile shows that he only made eight passing references to the underclass compared to fifty to students. It was only after the revolution that he claimed to represent the *mustaẓ'afin* (Bayat 1998: 43). On their part, the lower classes rallied to the support of the new regime, though they played no part in overthrowing the old, because it promised to end their poverty (Parsa 1989: 5).

In the end, it seems that the popular revolt involved a loose coalition of urban middle class groups mobilized by a range of social and ideological leaderships with varying – sometimes conflicting – political agendas (Martin 2007: 148; Cronin 2010: 265-66). Even the leading (or at least most visible) middle class fragment, the bazaar merchants, did not act as a coherent group,[42] and this diversity was even more apparent in the case of students and professionals (Parsa 1989: 10). One has to add here that this supposedly 'mass' uprising involved less than 10 percent of the Iranian population (Bayat quoted in Hennawy 2011: 6). The absence of the urban poor, the workers, and the peasants, in a word, the most numerous, oppressed, and potentially violent social groups, as well as our previous uncovering of the wildly exaggerated death toll during the revolution, casts doubt over the conventional reading of the Iranian revolution as an invincible popular uprising that overwhelmed the state's organs of repression. The Shah was not overthrown by the force of the masses, and the revolution could have been defeated if the regime had not been structured the way it has been.

A contingent yet noteworthy element here is the fact that Muhammad Reza had been struggling with lymphomatous cancer for six years, and realized by 1978 that he was a dying man (Pahlavi 1980: 11). This is important not just because he was sedated with cancer medication in a way that impaired his decision-making (Keddie 1981: 232); and not just because his diagnosis in 1973 (shortly before he decided to triple oil prices) partly explains his feverish attempts to build up Iran's strength with dizzying speed (Daugherty 2001: 78); and not just because Americans, who were completely in the dark about his fatal condition, overestimated his ability to handle pressure (Brzezinski 1983: 361); but most decisively because his only thought during the revolutionary crisis was how to pass the Peacock Throne to his son. If the Pahlavi dynasty was to

[42] This middle class group represented a mini class coalition in itself. As Keddie explained: "Bazaaris are not a class in the Marxist sense, as they have different relations to the means of production; the journeymen artisan or worker in a small bazaar factory is in a different position from a banker or moneylender, who may be quite wealthy; nonetheless the expression 'bazaari' has meaning in its involvement with petty trade, production, and banking of a largely traditional or only slightly modernized nature, as well as its centering on bazaar areas… These people are sometimes called 'petty bourgeois', but this term seems inadequate, as some are very rich wholesales and bankers and some are workers" (1981: 244).

continue he could not have tarnished the image of the throne with a bloodbath. And unlike 1963, the Shah knew he was not going to be around long enough to mitigate the effects of a ruthless crackdown. "He was afraid if he slaughtered his people in the streets and turned over to a teenager a situation he could not handle the dynasty would be swept aside" (Precht 2004: 17). Just like father, who had stepped aside quietly to allow the monarchy to survive under his young and inexperienced son, Muhammad Reza thought that his abdication would similarly save the crown. He did not give much thought about his partners in the ruling bloc, the military and security forces. As an absolute monarch, he had no partners. And now these partners were about to pay the price for their subservience to and dependency on their political master.

A Coup at the Eleventh Hour?

The Shah confessed to the American and British ambassadors that his military pressed him to restore order through a wave of arrests and other strict measures, but he refused because a terror campaign would antagonize wide sections of the Iranian population (Brzezinski 1983: 366). The question is: if the Shah had in fact stifled his officers, why could they not act on behalf of their own institution to protect the regime despite the king's wishes or immediately after he left? The conventional account claims it could not do so because the instruments of repression broke (or rather melted) in its hand, i.e. soldiers flocked to their Imam, as good Muslims, or fraternized with the demonstrators, as good Iranians. This would have truly impaired the military because it relied on perhaps 200,000 conscripts and 150,000 NCOs (Naraghi 1999: 113). Yet careful examination of the attrition rate proves that it did not really incapacitate the army.

An army report issued on December 7, 1978 stated that a total of 5,434 conscripts and NCOs had deserted (Parsa 1989: 243). U.S. General Robert E. Huyser, Washington's envoy to assess the state of the Iranian military, reported that as late as January 20, 1979, the rate of desertion was relatively low: "The media was talking of 2,000 to 3,000 desertions each day, but

this was rubbish. A more realistic figure was probably 200 to 300, out of some 450,000. This left us with far more than we could even need" (1986: 160). Similarly, Samir Abbas Arjomand asserted that desertions were on average 100 a day in the first half of January 1979; 200 a day after the Shah departed in the middle of the month; and only jumped to over 1,000 a day after Khomeini returned at the beginning of February (1988: 121). Moreover, desertions occurred mostly due to the breakdown of communications and the absence of clear instructions not for religious or nationalistic reasons (Huyser 1986: 160). A senior general told former British diplomat Desmond Harney in a private conversation on January 15 that the troops were bewildered because their sovereign was going away, not because they sympathized with the revolution (Harney 1999: 155). Halliday (1979: 293), Parsa (1989: 243), Kurzman (2004: 114), and (Milani 2011: Personal Interview), agreed that the rate remained low until the Shah left; that it only increased because the monarch's abdication shattered cohesion and confused loyalties; and that it did not represent a drain on the military. In brief, the military did not melt away under pressure from the street or the mullahs; "discipline in the ranks was maintained and the army was still largely intact…the incidents of the breakdown of discipline were isolated and the desertions did not amount to a fraction of the army…[which] held together very well, perhaps even better than could have been expected" (Arjomand 1988: 121).[43]

The most tangible incident of *en masse* desertions is the one that occurred among the *homafars*, the 12,000-strong corps of non-commissioned air force technicians (Arjomand 1988: 123). In the Islamist revolutionary imagery, they have been motivated by their loyalty to Khomeini. It all supposedly began, as Hamid Algar described, on February 10, 1979, when a crowd gathered around the television in an air force base in Tehran watched a replay of the victorious leader's return, and were so moved that they "broke out into demonstrations demanding the installation of an Islamic government under Imam Khomeini" (2001: 136). There

[43] One should keep in mind that conscripts served in units far removed from their home regions (for example, Azerbaijanis served in Tehran) so they would have little in common with the population they might need to repress. The theory has been that a conscript is more likely to shoot a stranger rather than a kinsman if asked to use violence to protect the regime (Heikal 1981: 144; Hickman 1982: 7).

was much more to it, of course, than this idealized account reveals. *Homafar* mutinies began from January 23, 1979, and spread to several air force bases in Tehran, Shiraz, and Isfahan (Huyser 1986: 181). This technical corps was created in the 1970s to help maintain Iran's rapidly expanding inventory of aircrafts (Ward 2009: 198). But the Shah refused to incorporate them into the regular air force because they were little more than skilled mechanics from humble backgrounds. Witnessing firsthand the benefits and privileges of air force personnel, the *homafars* certainly held a grudge (Hickman 1982: 6). Moreover, when their temporary contracts expired, they were forcefully reenlisted, thus preventing them from capitalizing on their newly acquired skills on the market (Rubin 1981: 227). Over and above, they were infuriated to learn that General Huyser planned to fly Iran's F-14s out of the country lest they fall into the wrong hands. After spending precious years with these jets, they naturally felt protective (Huyser 1986: 188; Zabih 1988: 44). The important thing to remember here is that although these men wore uniforms, they were not part of the armed forces, and would not have been expected to play any role in repressing the revolt. Also, that their major mutiny took place three weeks after the Shah departed.

But if desertions were not the reason why the military failed to act, then what was the real reason? And the answer is simply that they did not have the capacity to do so. As we have repeatedly noted, the political weakness of the military had been a distinguishing feature of the Iranian regime since its establishment in the 1920s. All the money and sophisticated weapons it had could not overcome the fact that the Imperial Armed Forces had no separate institutional identity and no sense of its corporate interests. As the following analysis demonstrates, the high command was paralyzed and officers and soldiers were even more clueless.

As part of his mission to evaluate the cohesiveness of the Imperial Armed Forces, General Huyser scheduled a number of preliminary meetings with the top brass during the first week of January 1979. To his surprise, the commanders all adopted the same attitude: essentially, that if the Shah departed they will leave with him and the military would then collapse. He

lectured them on how leaders come and go but the nation lives on, and told them, "As military leaders, your responsibilities are not to defend one person, but all the people of your nation" (Huyser 1986: 39). But their response was best articulated by Deputy War Minister General Hassan Toufanian during his meeting with the American envoy on January 6: "The Shah is not just a man. He is the *country*" (Huyser 1986: 32). This should not have been surprising considering that the military's motto was 'God, Shah, Fatherland', and that officers and soldiers joined together every morning in reciting a prayer for their sovereign (Ward 2009: 209). As for the king, he had described himself in an interview with an American academic not as the state, as Louis XIV once did, but as the army (Abrahamian 1982: 436). Devotion to the throne was reinforced by the military's strong psychological dependence on their sovereign. He decided everything on their behalf: who got admitted to the Military Academy; who deserved a promotion (or demotion); what weapons need to be ordered; which doctrine should be adopted; and so on. Long conditioned by his patrimonial command style and micromanagement of everyday military affairs, officers learned to adjust their behavior (even their feelings and thoughts) to royal expectations. U.S. military instructors were often frustrated by the Iranian officers' aversion toward decision-making on routine matters, let alone initiatives, to avoid any chance of rebuke from the court (Ward 2009: 206). The full effect of this "paralytic loyalty" was painfully evident during the revolutionary crisis (Rubin 1981: 226). An army needs more than weapons, funds, and discipline; it needs a united leadership capable of concerted action (Arjomand 1988: 126). This was the one thing the Imperial Armed Forces lacked.

This intense psychological dependence was sharpened by more concrete measures. To being with, the Shah faithfully adhered to the divide-and-rule principle in organizing his upper military echelon. He actively fostered fissures, rivalries, and mutual resentment among his generals, making it difficult for the high command to undertake a coordinated action in times of crisis (Arjomand 1988: 124). And he did so deliberately. He confided to his court minister, on February 3, 1971, that his foreign enemies could not hope to unseat him through a coup

because: "my generals distrust—and lack professional respect for—one another… I don't think there's a single member of the army prepared to betray us…they're too much at one another's throats to constitute a threat" (Alam 2008: 197-98). Oddly enough, the commanders seemed to enjoy that royal game. They preferred one-on-one audiences with Shah, with each of them thinking he had a better relationship with him than the next man, and relishing the challenge of competing for royal favor and outdoing the others. The generals "almost worshipped him" (Huyser 1986: 27).[44] As a result, the Pahlavi military "never developed a corporate and independent political identity," and its most ambitious officers only sought to advance their careers by impressing the sovereign (Cronin 2010: 262). In his Tehran diary, Desmond Harney deduced from his intimate knowledge of the armed forces that no coup was on the horizon. The corps has been weeded of independent-minded officers, and those left were "terrified of responsibility" (1999: 47). The Shah himself remarked to confidants that his generals were "mere exhibitionists" and "gutless wonders" (Alam 2008: 341). It was only expected that the military would disintegrate once abandoned by the monarch.

There were also no organizational structures to work through. The War Ministry was a hollow shell, and its occupants were treated as no more than "grand quartermasters" for the army (Abrahamian 1999: 73). The Supreme Defense Council existed only on paper, and almost never met (Ward 2009: 209). Most crucially, there was no such thing as a council for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Shah believed that such an independent body might be a hotbed for criticism, and eventually munity, and so decided to do without it (Heikal 1981: 68). Even more disastrously, the Shah's suspiciousness of any sort of informal contact between officers prevented the establishment of an 'old boy network' that could be operationalized in times of trouble (Huyser 1986: 8). The absence of viable structures to coordinate army actions was further complicated by the oversized military, which the Shah had partly enlarged to preempt ambitious officers from ever being able to control the entire machine (Graham 1978: 180). The

[44] According to Milani, starting from the rank of colonel, officers communicated directly with the Shah. He added, "as a conscript, I needed a royal permission to go on vacation" (Milani 2011: Personal Interview).

inaction of the top command, the bewilderment of the conscripts, and the dilemma of the officers caught in between encouraged apathy and paralyzed the whole structure (Cronin 2010: 263).

Even amidst the revolutionary upheaval the Shah persisted in his old ways. Iranian diplomat Fereydoun Hoveyda remembers that during his last audience with the king, in April 1978, "I was astonished to observe that the Shah was receiving them one at a time…[they were] not at all offended by what was, to say the least, an unusual procedure. It was often said that the Shah approved of the idea of divide and rule, but who would have thought to such an extent" (Hoveyda 1980: 28).

When he finally decided to form a military government, on November 5, 1978, he entrusted it to General Gholam-Reza Azhari, a weak and aging commander suffering from a serious heart condition (Rubin 1981: 224). The revolutionaries knew he was nothing more than "an ineffectual parlor general" and were certainly not deterred by his appointment (Arjomand 1988: 116). The general soon broke down physically. On November 11, he invited U.S. ambassador William Sullivan to his house. The ambassador found him in a dimly lit bedroom, lying down in his pajamas, with an oxygen tent installed over his bed. The commander pleaded with his American visitor to convince the Shah to authorize the use of force or else the regime would crumble (Heikal 1981: 161). This was because although the king imposed martial law, he forbad the Martial law Commander General Gholam-Ali Oveisi from firing on demonstrators, and frequently reprimanded him when fatal shootings happened accidently. Instead of turning to the military, Oveisi as well turned to the Americans to weigh in on the sovereign (Arjomand 1988: 115, 120). The rest of the cabinet was not of much help; it was military in name only, since civilian deputies administered the various ministries and the generals remained mere figureheads. Whether the cabinet could have pulled itself together with time is a question we can never answer because it was dismissed after less than two months on the job. The prime minister's heart condition committed him to bed most of December 1978 and in a few days he had to be

transported to the U.S. for an open-heart surgery (Rubin 1981: 228). On December 30, the Shah asked an opposition figure (National Front leader Shahpour Bakhtiar) to form a new government.

Not matter how dysfunctional the military machine was, however, it was jammed even more by the fact that the Shah took his time to fill up the vacancies at the top echelon at this critical time. As head of the military government, General Azhari was also chief of staff. His incapacitation by illness most of November and December 1978 meant that this spot was practically vacant. And because the king vetoed the new premier's candidates in early January, the position remained literally unoccupied until January 7. Again royal trepidations kept the position of war minister empty until January 10. Between those two dates, exactly on January 8, the martial law commander, who was also commander of army, fled the country because he realized the sovereign was about to abandon his generals; and his position was only filled three days later. One should remember, of course, that all of this joggling was taking place at the most dangerous phase of the revolution. Worse still, the Shah's appointments revealed that he was still determined to keep the military subordinate, probably because he was "hoping against hope" to return to Iran or pass the crown to his young and inexperienced son (Arjomand 1988: 124). His choice for chief of staff was General Abbas Gharabaghi, an Azerbaijani who spoke Farsi with a strong Turkish accent, and who – as former commander of the Gendarmerie – was considered an outsider by the officer corps. Surely he was an officer likely to unite the military behind him (Rubin 1981: 239). His new war minister General Shafqat was junior to the service chiefs, which aroused sensitivities and assured he was not taken seriously (Huyser 1986: 25). Prime Minister Bakhtiar, in contrast, was hoping to bolster the high command, and invited military strongman General Feridun Djam from Europe to take charge. The monarch was adamantly opposed to this appointment, and ultimately had his way (Ward 2009: 219). Iranian academic Ehsan Naraghi was at the royal palace and saw Djam walk out of the Shah's office on January 8, and learned that the sovereign made it clear that he was a *persona non grata* (Naraghi 1999: 152). After he returned

to Europe, the embittered general commented, "My visit to Tehran convinced me that… There is no one from whom it [the military] could receive command" (quoted in Zabih 1988: 38).

General Huyser tried to overcome this disarray by creating an impromptu Joint Chiefs of Staff on January 9 (a week before the Shah left), which he called the 'board' (Huyser 1986: 41).[45] But during board meetings, the high command mostly insisted that the U.S. either convinces the Shah to stay or provide the Imperial Armed Forces with a detailed plan on how to act if he insists to leave. General Huyser said he understood their quandary since they were used to receiving their plans from the court, but then explained that they had to play an active part in formulating a plan to prevent the country from descending into chaos, and that he was only there to provide assistance (Huyser 1986: 48). His little speech obviously fell on deaf ears since Air Force Commander Amir Hussein Rabi'i still blamed Huyser and the Americans for not saving the country, and famously proclaimed during his trial that they "took the Shah by the tail, and threw him into exile like a dead rate" (Arjomand 1988: 114). A senior navy admiral—summarizing the view of most military members—insisted years later that the blame falls completely on the United States. It was the Americans who forced their supreme commander (the Shah) to leave, and held the military back from seizing power (Kamyabipour 2011: Personal Interview).

What added to the confusion was that the military's inability to develop a viable plan to take power was constantly muddled by their threats to do so. On January 4, for instance, they warned Ambassador Sullivan that they were ready to carry out a coup—though they said they would only do it to prevent the Shah from abdicating (Brzezinski 1983: 379). U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski threw all his weight behind this promise. He recorded in his diary on January 4: "I was gratified by this firmness and dismayed that anyone at this late stage would actually wish to prevent what was clearly in the collective interest of the West. I

[45] The board included chief of staff Gharabaghi, war minister Shafqat, deputy war minister Toufanian, air force commander Amir Hussein Rabi'i, navy commander Kamal al-Din Mir Habiballahi, army commander Badraie, and it meetings were sometimes attended by SAVAK chief Nasser Moghadam.

could tell that the President was quite concerned about the possible bloodshed, and I mentioned to him…that, unfortunately, world politics was not a kindergarten." The briefly elated Brzezinski soon bewailed, "Alas, nothing happened…[they] simply procrastinated" (Brzezinski 1983: 363). Another of these empty threats provoked a harsh rejoinder from Huyser during the January 10 board meeting:

> **'I think you had better settle down! This is a very serious business. Your country is at stake. How on earth do you think you are going to pull a coup? Is there something that I don't know about, which will enable you to take control?'… All of them wore the same blank looks that I had always received when asking such questions. I therefore pressed harder, because I wanted to reach the bottom line—to find an answer to the one question that nagged me ever since my arrival: Did this group have secret plans for a coup that I did not know about? At last I found the answer I was looking for. Iran's military leadership was in a totally helpless state** (1986: 69).

While the armed forces was tossing and turning around aimlessly, the farsighted Khomeini was already thinking about how to strike a satisfactory deal that would keep the military intact in order to protect his envisioned Islamic Republic from communists, secular guerillas, and the militias of tribes and ethnic minorities. The revolutionary leader instructed his followers not to clash with soldiers even if they came under fire. He famously preached to demonstrators: "Do not attack they army in its breast, but in its heart" (Ward 2009: 216-17). As he later explained in a cassette recording, "We know that the soldiers are confused, not knowing how to act, but they…obey their orders. How can they refuse to obey orders when they are bound by military discipline?" (Heikal 1981: 146). Even while he was still in exile he reiterated in a sermon on September 6, 1978, "I extend my hand to all those in the army, air force, and navy who are faithful to Islam and the homeland and ask them to assist us in preserving our independence and emerging from the yoke of slavery and humiliation. Proud soldiers who are ready to sacrifice yourself for your country and homeland, arise! Suffer slavery and humiliation no longer! Renew your bonds with the beloved people!" (Khomeini 1981: 236). On the day he returned, Khomeini infused his address to the nation with favorable gestures toward the military, vowing to protect officers and soldiers, and urging them to join the people—"[You] noble class of military

forces… This is your nation. You are the nation" (Huyser 1986: 237). He also made several hints that the military forces—the "the army of Islam," as he called it—would be empowered under the new regime (Martin 2007: 168). On his second day in Iran, he offered the following advice to the army: "We want you in the army to be independent… Army commanders, do you want to be independent? Do you want to be the servant of others? My advice to you is to enter the ranks of the people… Islam is better for you than unbelief, and your own nation is better for you than foreigners. It is for your sake, too, that we are demanding independence" (Khomeini 1981: 260). He struck again on that same theme on February 28, declaring that officers and soldiers "are now in the service of Islam and the nation. The nation should support them, and do nothing that might discourage them or hurt their feelings… I emphatically warn the Iranian nation that the government must have a strong national army with a mighty morale" (Hickman 1982: 10).

But Khomeini did not just rely on encouraging speeches. He combined words with actions, as he usually did. Seizing on the confusion that permeated the top brass, he directed his top political representatives, Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Beheshti, to negotiate a settlement. The day following the Shah's departure, on January 17, talks began to find a way for the military leaders to continue to serve under the new regime and not be held responsible for the sins of the old one. As a sign of good faith, the pledge of loyalty to the Shah was omitted from the military oath on February 6. Four days later, General Neshat, commander of the Imperial Guard, defected as a result of these negotiations (Arjomand 1988: 127). Then on the morning of February 11, the chief of staff convened a meeting for the military's twenty-seven senior officers and convinced them to sign a declaration of neutrality, which was broadcast on radio at 2 p.m. (Zabih 1988: 61). The preamble to the declaration read: "To prevent disorder and further bloodshed, the army proclaims neutrality in the current political conflicts and had ordered all its units to return to their garrisons. The Iranian army has always supported and will support the noble and patriotic people of Iran and their demands" (Parsa 1989: 247). Bazargan later confided to an American diplomat that he was very surprised by how easily the army folded in (Sick 1985:

156). It was obvious to all that a deal had been reached. These top military figures could have fled the country anytime, but the fact that they stayed proves they thought their future was safe (Milani 2011: Personal Interview).[46]

Khomeini then moved cautiously. He first dismissed the service chiefs but confirmed the chief of staff in his position (Huyser 1986: 277). He then named his military advisor Admiral Ahmad Madani war minister. Since the former navy chief had once occupied this position under the Shah, the appointment was met with general approval within the ranks (Harney 1999: 199). By the end of his first month in power, he allowed chief of staff General Gharabaghi to leave to Paris and replaced him with General Muhammad Vali Gharani. The former director of Military Intelligence was again no outsider, and so the choice was met with relief. Khomeini followed that by two decisions that were immensely popular with the rank-and-file: he halved the conscription period from two to one year, and dismissed foreign instructors (Ward 2009: 225).

There were, nevertheless, some disturbing developments. Khomeini did not keep his word and abandoned (sometimes delivered) many of the top generals to their fate. The commanders of the army, the air force, the Special Forces, and Tehran's military governor were summarily executed on February 15; the commanders of the navy, and the deputy war minister were detained, but escaped and fled to America; the commander of the Imperial Guard, and the director of army aviation committed suicide to avoid immanent arrest (Heikal 1981: 178). Some of those who fled, such as former martial law commander, were later assassinated (Arjomand 1988: 121). Then the purges began. The first purge, between mid-February 1979 and September 1980, was limited. Of the first 404 executions, only 85 were of military personnel, and of those only 26 were senior officers. The rest were security officials, policemen, and gendarmes. It was the second purge, instigated by the zealous war minister Mostafa Charman that cut deeply into the fabric of the armed forces (Hickman 1982: 9). In a Rand report prepared in March 1987 for

[46] Even if they did not trust Khomeini they felt that if he renegaded on his promises, the U.S. would not allow the country to fall into the hand of Islamists. The memories of 1953 were present in the back of their mind; maybe the Americans will support the Shah's son this time (Milani 2011: Personal Interview).

the U.S. Secretary of Defense, it was estimated that by 1986 perhaps 500 officers were executed and 23,000 military personnel purged, 17,000 of which were officers—an estimated 45 percent of the officer corps (Schanahgaldian 1987: 26). The military was also reduced in size, from 410,000 men to 238,000, to make it more manageable (Ward 2009: 244).[47] Khomeini then established the Supreme Defense Council (dominated by loyal clerics) to supervise the armed forces, which he was keen to keep under his direct control (Martin 2007: 168). Most importantly, the new leader created the revolution's parallel military body, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (*Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami*) to counterweigh the regular army (Ward 2009: 226).

Even after Khomeini showed his true colors, even after the officers realized that their very lives were at stake, they still failed to act in unison. According to a senior navy admiral, "We did not anticipate Khomeini's consolidation of absolute power. When we understood what he was trying to do, it was too late. He had already formed a strong militia and we did not want to plunge the country into a civil war" (Kamyabipour 2011: Personal Interview). The most serious coup attempt, the so-called Nuzhih Plot, which was organized by a movement labeled the Patriotic Officers in July 1980, had a few striking features. First, the ringleaders were retired gendarmes and intelligence officers, not regular army members. Second, the movement was organized and financed by exiled civilians, spearheaded by deposed primer Bakhtiar in Paris. Third, the movement's approximately one thousand members comprised a mix of intelligence operatives, policemen, Imperial Guards, NCOs, and at least one hundred civilians, in addition to army officers. Needless to mention, the plot was exposed and the participants punished before it had any chance of success (Ward 2009: 238-39; Schanahgaldian 1987: 23).

In conclusion, Iran's armed forces never crystalized into a coherent institution with well-defined corporate interests. Despite all the Shah's modernization policies, it still acted as a medieval army expecting its monarch to personally lead it into battle. The military was not

[47] In terms of military spending, we cannot be sure what the new regime's policy would have been if it had not been for the war of Iraq. Military spending was initially cut down from $9.4 billion in 1978 to $4.8 in 1979, but it was then increased to $16.1 billion with the outbreak of the war in fall 1980, and during the eight years of war, it remained as high as it was under the Shah, ranging between $7.7 billion and $10.2 billion (Wahid 2009: 61).

national, but royal. By training and indoctrination, as well as by shrewdly designed court measures, it saw itself as the servant of monarchy rather than a partner in the ruling bloc. When the Shah jumped ship, hoping that his peaceful exit would extend the life of the Pahlavi dynasty, the military fell to pieces. What about the security organs?

Using A Scapegoat For A Shield

We have seen before how unreliable Iran security establishment was. But whatever competence and loyalty it had left was devastated by the Shah's actions during the revolutionary crisis. Beginning from 1977, the monarch tried his best to distance himself from his security men. He authorized Red Cross inspection of Iranian prisons, and allowed foreign observers to attend the trials of political prisoners, asking them to report any abuses so he could rectify them and punish the wrongdoers. When the first wave of demonstrations in January 1978 was repressed, he fired the police chief and two of his top aides (Harney 1999: 13). By the summer of 1978, he had dismissed three-dozen SAVAK operatives, including the agency's chief (who was sacked in June and arrested in November) to appease the opposition (Ward 2009: 214). This drove the man who was supposedly in charge of counter-insurgency, SAVAK deputy director General Parviz Sabeti, to flee the country on November 27, 1978, to avoid arrest (Harney 1999: 29). Martial law commander General Gholam-Ali Oveissi and Tehran police chief General Mulawi fled to the U.S. the following January for the same reason (Rubin 1981: 240). The Shah appointed the popular head of the Gendarmerie General Nasser Moghadam new SAVAK director, on June 6, 1978, and instructed him to carry out a complete housecleaning (Hoveyda 1980: 36). Moghadam had cordial relations with the opposition and was an advocate of compromise. His appointment certainly blunted the edge of security repression and made it clear that the regime was not planning to clampdown on demonstrations (Rubin 1981: 207). His efforts coincided with the forming of the Sharif-Emami cabinet, which the Shah authorized to dismantle or rehabilitate

SAVAK as it saw fit. The new premier immediately sacked thirty-three senior security officers in September 1978; banned another 2,000 from travelling; released 4,000 political prisoners; lifted censorship; and threatened to try anyone involved in repression through popular tribunals (Arjomand 1988: 114-15; Parsa 1989: 56).[48] Yet even the moderate SAVAK chief thought the monarch had gone too far in accommodating the revolutionaries. He complained to a CIA official about how the king has "tied our arms and the hands of the armed forces… We are of course astonished as to why the Shahanshah follows these policies" (quoted in Arjomand 1988: 115). In his historic address to the nation on November 5, 1978, the Shah attacked SAVAK and promised that its mistakes would not be repeated in the future (Saikal 1980: 196).

As could only be expected in light of these royal actions, General Moghadam sent a secret envoy to Paris in November 1978 to negotiate a deal with Khomeini, and the terms of the deal became obvious after the revolution: the security chief was not harmed and much of SAVAK was preserved under the new regime, though renamed the Organization of the Iranian Nation's Security and Information, known by its strikingly similar acronym SAVAMA (Rubin 1981: 240, 266). Clearly, Moghadam defected to the revolutionary camp that fall (Zabih 1988: 37). The more important defection doubtlessly was that of the Shah's general security supervisor General Hussein Fardust, who subsequently headed Khomeini's new agency SAVAMA (Keddie 1981: 261-62; Ward 2009: 224). A week after the Shah left the country, General Moghadam informed the military leadership that he could no longer provide them with any help, claiming that his agency has been practically dissolved and its agents were wandering aimlessly around the country (Parsa 1989: 246)—a move that further convinced the top brass that it was hopeless to resist. It was hard to blame him, however. The truth is, "the awe-inspiring SAVAK [was] disabled by its [political] master" (1988: 132).

[48] Expectedly, a flight of senior officials began in October 1978, including 27 royal family members, 21 army and security officers, 32 high-ranking bureaucrats, 32 former ministers, 14 parliament representatives, and 25 industrialists and bankers (Parsa 1989: 57).

Geopolitical Bliss?

Most accounts of the U.S. relations with the Pahlavi monarchy begin backwards. They start with American President Jimmy Carter's notorious New Year's toast in December 1977 at the Niavaran Palace, when he decided—against the advice of his ambassador William Sullivan—to commend the monarch with the following memorable words: "Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in a turbulent corner of the world… This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect and admiration and love which your people give you" (Sullivan 1981: 134). Frequent references to this little speech (probably one the greatest verbal blunders in recorded history) is meant to highlight the special relationship between the two regimes, and imply that if the United States had not been caught off guard by the revolution, it would not have allowed the monarchy to crumble. But as Fred Hallidy rightly points out, "The reality of Iranian-US relations lies somewhere in the middle between the official rhetoric about Iran being a fully independent country, ready to stand up to the US if necessary, and the claims…that the Shah is some kind of 'agent' of Washington's" (1979: 254). In this final section let us attempt to understand this reality.

We should begin by determining to what extent the United State was responsible for the Shah's overthrow, especially that the monarch himself had made it clear that as far as he was concerned it was Americans who had "undone" his rule (Pahlavi 1980: 14). The Shah's most recent biographer Abbas Milani said that added to his personal indecisiveness, once the monarch realized that his Western allies were ready to let him go, he lost his composure even further (Milani 2011: Personal Interview). So what did the U.S. do wrong? Firstly, it is claimed, open opposition to the Shah was encouraged under what Iranians called to as the 'Carter breeze (*nasseem-e Carteri*) – a reference to the perceived pressure by the U.S. president on the regime to liberalize (Bayat 1998: 36). And this is partly why many in both countries blame Carter's naïve idealism for pushing the Iranian regime until it cracked. This was, however, a misperception.

Careful not to alienate the Shah, Carter had in effect exempted Iran from his pro-human rights stance as well as the presidential directive that limited arms transfers (Daugherty 2001: 57). Ambassador Sullivan confessed after his first meeting with the President that when it came to Iran he wanted business to remain as usual, "We would sell him whatever arms we could…[and] wouldn't press him on human rights" (Sullivan 1981: 133).[49]

Those who blame the U.S. also point to a more obvious slip-up: the indisputable intelligence failure to assess the regime's capability to withstand the revolution. Iran's UN representative saw this is a typical illustration of the confusion and errors of judgment that plague the American intelligence community (Hoveyda 1980: 16). Likewise, Henry Precht, Country Director for Iran at the State Department between 1978 and 1980, and former political-military officer at the U.S. embassy in Tehran between 1972 and 1976, gives credence to this view: "I recall sitting in one of those meetings [at the White House's Situation Room] and looking around the room at the others present, all far senior to me, and thinking that there was nobody in the room who knew anything about Iran except me, and I knew how inadequate my knowledge was. So we were really in the soup during this crisis" (Precht 2004: 16). The Iran action officer on the National Security Council (NSC), Admiral Gary Sick, agreed that the intelligence they were receiving on Iran was "dreadful" (Sick 1985: 91). President Carter himself complained in a note to his intelligence staff, on November 11, "I am not satisfied with the quality of our political intelligence. Assess our assets and, as soon as possible, give me a report concerning our abilities" (Brzezinski 1983: 367). Exhibit A in the case for intelligence failure is three reports: one issued by the CIA in August 1978, and two issued the following month by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), all confirming that the Shah was likely to weather the storm (Daugherty 2001:

[49] It did matter, however, that the Carter administration's general support for human rights, coupled with Iranian's exaggerated conception of U.S. influence over the king, emboldened the opposition (Bill 1988: 228). It also helped that the perceived change in the American position coincided with the Shah's genuine attempt to reach a workable relationship with the opposition to smooth the transition of power to his son after his illness began to take a toll on him (Arjomand 1988: 108).

74). The CIA report, in particular, scandalously claimed that Iran was not even in a "pre-revolutionary situation" (Precht 2004: 15).

Despite this damning evidence, many have accused politicians of cherry picking from the various intelligence estimates to reinforce the prevalent attitude. Robert Daugherty, the CIA operative in Tehran during this turbulent time, asserted,

> **[Policy] preferences and desires of the senior policymakers played a larger role in the 'failure' than they might wish to acknowledge. A 1979 House of Representatives review of the intelligence produced prior to the fall of the shah ascertained that 'long-standing U.S. attitudes toward the shah inhibited intelligence collection, dampened policymakers appetite for analysis of the shah's position, and deafened policymakers to the warning implicit in available intelligence'** (2001: 66).

Richard Helms, former CIA director (DCI) and Nixon's ambassador to Tehran, similarly stated that Washington required little political reporting, and instructed the agency to focus on the best ways to use Iranian territories to spy on the Soviets. In addition, the agency suffered from a series of devastating budget cuts under Carter, whose DCI Admiral Stansfield Turner terminated eight hundred positions from the Directorate of Operation, which was responsible for recruiting, training, and managing assets in foreign countries. At the same time, State's INR did not have a single full-time Iran expert, and the Iran action officer on the NSC was a Soviet and Chinese naval activity specialist (Daugherty 2001: 70-72). The latter himself admitted that the White House displayed lack of interest in understanding Iran, and had become obviously "a hostage to the shah, [and] to his particular view of the world," adding that although Carter did not invent this attitude, he never questioned it either (Sick 1985: 127-31). A good example of this attitude was Kermit Roosevelt, CIA's greatest Iran expert, predicting weeks after the Shah abdication that although it was not clear who will take over power, the present confusion will almost certainly result in the establishment of another absolutist royal dynasty (Roosevelt 1979: x).

In his piercing analysis of the American fiasco in Iran, Edward Said explained in *Covering Islam* (1997: 99-113) that this so-called intelligence failure was yet another instance of the perils decision-makers subject themselves to when they discount the intractable relationship between

power and the production of knowledge. The American institutions that benefited from the close ties with Iran had to market the 'modernization' of Iran as a success story, researchers and area experts who were willing to reach the 'right' conclusions were generously funded; their work shaped public opinion and captured the ears of senior policymakers. The chorus sang praise of how the American-Iranian partnership was making the latter more stable, prosperous, industrialized, institutionalized, Westernized, and of course, secularized. To suggest that the Iranian opposition was rallying behind a 'traditional' religious leader was politically improper. It was a political rather than an intelligence failure.

A third group of critics highlighted the political infighting and bickering at the highest echelons of the U.S. decision-making hierarchy during this critical juncture. In the words of Iranian scholar Said Amir Arjomand, the American policy was "a complete muddle [of] contradictory measures," and by the time they came up with a coherent policy it was too late (1988: 132). Certainly, the regime's sudden and unexpected collapse provided plenty of ammunition for this last argument in the form of angry accusations over who lost Iran. There was, of course, the oft-cited divide between the State Department's soft-liners and the NSC's hawks. Carter usually received contradictory advice from Ambassador Sullivan and Iran's desk officer Precht, on the one hand, and his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and NSC's senior Iran officer Admiral Sick, on the other hand. In Brzezinski version, the fall of the Shah could have been prevented if the U.S. took a firmer line, but the State Department was too hung-up on promoting democratization to see the importance of protecting America's geopolitical interests, and constantly pulled the President to the wrong direction. Yet "Given the central role of the Shah in a system of power that was almost uniquely personal, I argued that the deliberate weakening of the beleaguered monarch by American pressures for further concessions to his opponents would simply enhance instability and eventually produce complete chaos" (Brzezinski 1983: 354-55). The American president, however, was not the only one suffering from this mix-up. According to Precht, the Shah, that "poor fellow, was confused by the

conflicting advice. He was getting one line from Brzezinski [Iron fist], and another from Sullivan [moderation], and was desperate to know what to do" (Precht 2004: 17).

Still, this did not mean that the Shah's hands were tied. We have seen before that he did not receive his marching orders from the White House, as some liked to believe. Moreover, Brzezinski recorded that after a seminal meeting on November 2 at the Situation Room, the entire foreign policy and national security team agreed to convey to the Shah a message to the effect that America supported him unconditionally because "the situation called for decisive action to restore order and his own authority… I added that it was my view that we had pressed the Shah too hard on liberalization and that the Shah himself had gone quite far toward meeting our expectations." After receiving Carter's endorsement, Brzezinski himself called the monarch to assure him that the U.S. "supports you without any reservation whatsoever, completely and fully, in the present crisis," and that in such an explosive situation concessions to the opposition will make things worse (1983: 363-65). This is why the toughest critic of the State Department could not hold it responsible for losing Iran, "for the record does show that the Shah had encouragement from Carter and me to have taken – had he wanted to and had he had the will to do so – the tougher line… The outcome was his personal tragedy" (Brzezinski 1983: 356).

A fourth common accusation was that the U.S. was "instrumental in persuading military commanders to proclaim their neutrality," thus allowing the country to fall into the hands of Islamists (Parsa 1989: 241). Much of this rests on the suspicious trip of Four-Star Air Force General Robert E. Huyser, Deputy Commander of the European Command, to Tehran ten days before the Shah left. What was the general up to? In his own memoir, *Mission to Tehran* (1986), Huyser claimed that the purpose of his visit was to deliver a message from President Carter to the high command that asserted that: "It is extremely important for the Iranian military to do all it can to remain strong and intact in order to help a responsible civilian government function effectively… [And that] No Iranian military leaders should leave the country" (1986: 18). Brzezinski confirmed that Huyser's mission, as dictated by the President on January 4, was "to

assist the Iranian military in retaining their cohesion once the Shah left" (1983: 376). Milani added that the U.S. general was also there to supervise the dismantling of the sophisticated listening posts on the Iranian-Russian borders and the reallocation of America's cherished F-14 Tomcats and Phoenix air-to-air missiles (1994: 126). But Iranian chief of staff General Abbas Gharabaghi insisted in his rendition that the American envoy was there to convince them that the immediate departure of the Shah was essential for the restoration of order, and urge them to reach out to Khomeini's camp (Milani 1994: 127). Yet Precht recounted another version of events, which implied that the U.S. was contemplating a coup until the evident weakness of the Iranian army (as assessed by Huyser) convinced it otherwise. Whatever the truth is, we know that on February 11 Brzezinski asked Ambassador Sullivan to order the senior U.S. officer in Iran, MAAG chief General Gast, to instruct the Iranian leadership that now was the time for a coup. Sullivan replied, "I can't understand you. You must be speaking Polish. General Gast is in the basement of the Supreme Commander's headquarters pinned down by gunfire and he can't save himself, much less this country" (Precht 2004: 25). If we believe this last account than the United States did in fact try to push the military to coup, but the Imperial Armed Forces was not up to the task. And whether this is true or not, we know from our earlier analysis of the weakness of the Iranian military that a coup was not in the cards even if the Americans had endorsed one.

All the above notwithstanding, a close examination of the historical evidence points us to another unexplored direction, which is that there had already been a backstairs debate since the early seventies questioning the wisdom of continuing to support the Shah in light of his alarming independence and ingratitude (even hostility) toward the United States. The Shah of the 1950s, whom the U.S. had gone through so much trouble to preserve his throne, was not the same man on the helm at the close of the 1960s, and many in Washington became convinced that it was time to let him go. Not surprisingly, as the revolutionary crisis erupted, the Americans were not completely opposed to considering the advantages of a more stable and compliant regime (albeit

more socially conservative). Ironically, the Shah had followed too closely on his father's path, the monarch whose growing independence alienated his British patrons four decades earlier. By the time Carter took office in January 1977, advocates of cutting the Shah loose warned that by investing so much in one man, the U.S. was taking "an extraordinarily dangerous risk. And what a man he was: arrogant, ambitious, and likely to create a local arms race, if not outright war" (Rubin 1981: 147). A report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on arms sales to Iran, in August 1976, concluded that the Shah's regional superpower illusions threatened to drag the U.S. into a local war, or perhaps ignite a global conflict (Rubin 1981: 173). Committee chairman Senator Frank Church then noted reassuringly, "Any government in Iran that comes to power will have to sell its oil and the only place to sell its oil is in the Western world" (Rubin 1981: 245). Why stake so much on one unruly leader if the same geostrategic factors that pushed him toward cooperating with the U.S. will still be at work under any new regime? How could Washington rest assured with this inherently unstable one-man regime?

The White House hesitated because, according to Admiral Sick, there was "no visible strategic alternative" to the Shah (Sick 1985: 22). But in 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini presented just such an alternative. The CIA was thinking of a solution along the Saudi and Pakistani lines. If people wanted a republic, then let them have it. If they wanted a good Muslim installed as president, then let them have one. None of this should impair bilateral relations (Heikal 1981: 151; Brzezinski 1983: 358). The State Department endorsed this position, picturing Khomeini as a Gandhi-like figure whose accession to power could stabilize Iran, and there was nothing to fear because Islamists were naturally friendlier to the democratic West than to the atheist communists (Keddie 1981: 253; Huyser 1986: 290).[50] Then on November 9, Ambassador Sullivan sent his famous cable 'Thinking the Unthinkable' in which he highlighted that Khomeini's camp and the army were anti-communist and could cooperate to maintain order, adding that Islamists will

[50] Precht defends American ignorance of the implications of Khomeini's ideology, "There had never been an Islamic revolution… I recall a cable coming in from the Embassy in May 1978 which identified Khomeini… That the Embassy had to identify him in a cable to the Washington audience tells you something about how much we knew about Iranian internal politics and Khomeini's role" (2004: 10).

certainly keep the military intact because they had no alternative instruments for securing the country; that Khomeini would likely assume a ceremonial or symbolic role (as a Gandhi or a Dali Lama); that elections would produce a coalition government (albeit with an Islamic flavor) that would stabilize the country and preserve friendly relations with Washington; and that the fall of the Shah might therefore be in America's interest (Brzezinski 1983: 368). Sullivan later defended his strategy as the only available alternative since Iranian politicians and military men seemed powerless and desperate as the Shah prepared to leave (Sullivan 1981: 201).

On his part, Khomeini's faction helped cultivate this impression as best it could. Mehdi Bazargan confessed "there was only one way of freeing ourselves from the shah—to persuade America to abandon him gradually" (Rubin 1981: 221). Toward that end, he presented the U.S. ambassador in Tehran in December with a five-point program that guaranteed the smooth transition to democracy following the declaration of a republic. When Sullivan asked what would happen if Khomeini's candidates did not secure a majority in the post-Shah parliament, Bazargan said they would not mind the role of a strong minority. The Americans were impressed, though they added that there should be no interfering with the army and that the current agitation against the U.S. must stop, to which Khomeini's representative readily conceded (Heikal 1981: 166). Similarly, in a meeting between another chief Khomeini aide, future foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi, and Warner Zimmerman, the political counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Paris in mid-January, it was agreed that if the Americans bloc a possible coup by the Shah's generals then the Islamists would be keen on maintaining friendly relations with Washington (Milani 1994: 125). A third Khomeini associate, future president Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, drafted several proposals concerning the ayatollah's preferred form of government, emphasizing that he was against a "religious dictatorship dominated by the mullahs" (Bani-Sadr 1991: 1). When the Americans inquired about the ayatollah's problematic 1971 book on Islamic Government, his followers responded that these were abstract philosophical ideals not intended for application, something akin to Plato's *Republic*, or Thomas Moore's *Utopia*, and that, moreover, the

manuscript was published out of student notes and was therefore inaccurate (Milani 2011: Personal Interview). Khomeini himself pledged on January 1, "It would be a mistake for the American government to fear the shah's departure… If the United States behaves correctly…we will respect them in return" (Rubin 1981: 241). In his last interview with *Le Monde* before returning to Iran, he again made it clear that "Our intention is not that religious leaders should themselves administer the state;" and upon his return Khomeini headed to Qom's theological center and remained ostensibly detached from politics until the constitutional debates of the fall of 1979 (Wright 2000: 14-16).

The earliest attempt to contact Khomeini occurred in September 1978, when American academic Richard Cottam tried to arrange a meeting in Washington between Yazdi and Precht. The Iranian dissident, who was living in Texas and passing by the capital on his way to France to arrange for Khomeini's arrival, was eager to establish early contact but the State Department got cold feet at the last moment (Precht 2004: 14). The following month, however, Yazdi established direct contact with the CIA, which rented a villa near the ayatollah's suburban residence at Neauphle-le-Château, as well as members of the U.S. embassy in Paris (Rubin 1981: 220). There were also informal contacts with the revolutionary leader through American emissaries, such as former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, in addition to scholars and journalists (Hoveyda 1980: 182). Early November, the State Department shook itself out of its timidity and gave the green light to a business dinner between Yazdi and Precht, after which the two exchanged telephone numbers and remained in touch. This meeting paved the way for Professor Cottam's visit to Tehran over Christmas to introduce the embassy staff to Khomeini's right-hand man, Ayatollah Beheshti. That December, Brzezinski called Precht into his office to think out loud about the future of Iran under Khomeini (Precht 2004: 18-21). Brzezinski reluctantly agreed to approaching Khomeini with the purpose of establishing whether he would agree to some form of accommodation with army guardianship and a civilian government at the helm (Brzezinski 1983: 372). It was around this time, on December 7 to be exact, that a change of tone was

evident in the American rhetoric. On that day, Carter announced during a press conference that although he liked the Shah personally, it was up to Iranians to decide their future (Hoveyda 1980: 184). On January 10, General Huyser reported from Tehran to Secretary of Defense Harold Brown that there is a need to "establish some relationship with Khomeini," and after receiving Washington's approval, on January 14, he and Sullivan began to arrange meetings between Khomeini's representatives, Bazargan and Beheshti, and the army leadership (Huyser 1986: 74, 109). Ten days later, the general and the ambassador submitted a report to their secretaries back in the capital praising the advantages of a "military-Khomeini coalition" (Arjomand 1988: 131). Days before the Shah abdicated, the Americans sent Khomeini a questionnaire, and his answers were exemplary: the ayatollah assured them that the oil would continue to flow; that Soviet influence would be checked and domestic communists repressed; and that a coalition government including (in addition to Islamists) moderate nationalists and liberals would be appointed to stabilize the situation. Carter's envoy George Ball drafted a report that reinforced the growing pro-Khomeini position, confirming that it would a mistake to over-identify with the Shah, and that a stable and legitimate government with Khomeini's blessing would better serve U.S. interests (Milani 2011: Personal Interview).

Considering all the above, it is clear that the United States was not overtaken by the heroic uprising of the Iranian people, but had been rather pushed by the Shah's alarming foreign policies to question the wisdom of keeping him at the helm. The sudden and massive revolt, as well as the Shah's decision not to repress it and the powerlessness of the army and security, forced Washington to hasten the desired transition (and therefore make disastrous choices for U.S. interests). What is important here is that it was the regime's dynamics that alienated its foreign patron and forced it to consider a better alternative. As Barry Rubin pointed, "*All* sides have tended to exaggerate the importance of American actions and decisions on events in Iran… The fact that Washington was seeking to undermine an already shaky regime…explains why the 1953 operation was so simple and successful…in 1978 it was the shah who headed the similarly

faltering and even more unpopular regime" (1981: 254-5). No foreign patron could have saved him from the power structure he had created over the years, the power structure that eventually doomed the regime.

To conclude this part, it is evident that Reza Shah's decision in the 1920s to maintain the Persian monarchy set Iran on a separate path from other coup-installed regimes in the region (like the Turkish and Egyptian ones), which preferred republican rule. Preserving the power of a full-fledged traditional monarchy prompted the king and his heir to centralize power in the court, and subordinate other state institutions, including coercive organs. A viable intelligence agency was only erected in the late 1950s, and was never fully empowered, and the military was prevented from developing its own corporate identity through constant interference by the court and the micro-management of its affairs by the king himself. Moreover, the country's increasingly megalomaniac monarch alienated his most important geopolitical ally, the United States, without first developing the strength to survive without the protection of a foreign patron. As a result, the Iranian regime was wholly centered on the political apparatus—and a medieval-styled one, for that matter. At the moment the fate of the regime came to depend on its ability to coerce opposition, the man on the helm waivered, fearing that violence would undermine the legitimacy of the monarchy. And the custodians of violence were neither robust and autonomous enough to act on their own, nor too invested in the regime to dismiss thoughts of defecting in the hope of improving their lot under a new ruler. So despite the unquestionable agility of Khomeini as a revolutionary strategist, and despite the impressive popular mobilization that the Iranian opposition managed to generate and sustain, the very structure of the Iranian regime had rendered it vulnerable to overthrow long before 1979.

PART [IV]
The Limits of Military Guardianship: Turkey's Evolving Democracy

Even without an express prohibition it would appear doubtful whether officers as a type have the ability, the suppleness, the temperament, or the time for a continuous application to politics.

Vagts, *History of Militarism*, 1959

Defining the nature of any regime (including the Egyptian and Iranian ones) is usually a simple task compared to analyzing how it got to be this way. Not in the Turkish case, though, where one could almost claim that the opposite is true. Turkey's political trajectory has been usually presented in a fairly straightforward manner: because the military considered itself the guardian of the republic, it had always dictated the rules of the political game, and whenever political parties violated these rules, it had to intervene to set things straight. Yet the type of regime that has been produced by this historical pendulum has been relatively difficult to determine. Turkish political scientist Ihsan Dagi described Turkey as "a strange country that *swings constantly between democracy and militarism*" (2008: 5). Others have noted that Turkey represents "a paradox in civil-military relations," where civilian politicians have constantly failed to subordinate the military (as their counterparts had done in Eastern Europe and Latin America), even though the military "accepts the legitimacy of civilian authority in principle" (Uzgel 2003: 179-81). In the words of one analyst, "The most crucial feature of the Turkish military's political autonomy, which in turn distinguishes it from armies elsewhere in the Third World, is its acceptance of the legitimacy of both democracy and civilian rule… It is not praetorian; it has not tried to undermine democracy or usurp civilian authority" (Sakallioglu 1997: 153).

This is probably why there is a general agreement that, regardless of repeated lapses to military rule, the Turkish political trajectory has been characterized by a steady drive toward democratic consolidation (Kalaycioglu 2005: 197). As Perry Anderson put it, "Turkey has on the whole been a land of regular elections, of competing parties and uncertain outcomes, and alternating

governments…democracy [has become] so entrenched that even serial military interventions could not shake its acceptance as the political norm in Turkey" (2009: 431-32).

The literature is then divided over how this came about. Class-based interpretations argued that because the struggle for regime dominance in Turkey has essentially been between two right-wing factions—a conservative officer corps and a (religiously and economically) conservative social force—compromise has always been possible. This was confirmed by a comprehensive survey of the development of the Turkish political system, which revealed the curious fact that the system has "always worked in favour of the right" (Aksin 2007: 282).[1] As Anderson concluded, throughout Turkey's tumultuous history:

> **[It suffered from neither an] explosive class conflict to be contained, nor radical politics to be crushed. Most peasants owned land; workers were few; intellectuals marginal; a Left hardly figured. The lines of fissure in society…were ethnic more than class in nature. In these conditions, there was small risk of any upsets from below. The elites could settle accounts between themselves without fear of letting loose forces they could not control…sociologically speaking, the basic parameters set by the first election decision of 1950 have remained in place to this day. Turkish democracy has been broken at intervals, but never for long, because it is anchored in a Centre-Right majority that has remained, in one form after another, unbroken** (2009: 433).

Still, the Turkish case remains problematic because the hegemonic role of the armed forces is "at best anachronistic and at worse incongruent with the regime's commitment to the norms associated with liberal democracy and free market capitalism" (Sakallioglu 1997: 151). This is why a second view claimed that the army has retreated from politics due to geopolitical developments. Here, EU's political conditions for Turkey's accession is the privileged factor in most analyses. Officers eager to join the EU, or at least afraid of being held publically responsible for depriving the country of that privilege, were forced to abstain from politics as decreed by European standards (Uzgel 2003: 178).

[1] The best that leftist had ever achieved in electoral politics was securing 41% of the national vote in 1977 for a party they believed to represent their agenda, that is the ruling Republican People's Party (Aksin 2007: 282).

An overwhelming amount of works, however, focused on the successful strategies developed by Turkey's conservative forces, especially the Islamist-leaning ones. After their armed rebellions have been crushed by the military in the 1920s and 1930s, they shifted toward electoral politics, where they experienced with a series of political parties, beginning with the Democratic Party in the 1940s, and through long and bitter interactions with the armed forces—what one author has described as the 'politics of engagement'—they finally reached the right formula for maximizing their power vis-à-vis officers in 2002, with the Justice and Development Party (Turam 2007: 29). The argument here is that through flexible and innovative strategies, conservative political groups have finally outmaneuvered (maybe even exhausted) the armed forces. The most prominent author of Turkish Islamism, Necmettin Erbakan, had made such a prophecy himself in 1998, weeks before one of his numerous parties, the Refah, was suspended: "They have dissolved the MNP [his first party] so we created the MSP, which was much more popular and allowed Islamists to participate in government for the first time. Then they dissolved MSP, so we created Refah, which became the largest Turkish political party and led a coalition government. If they dissolve Refah, then our next party will dominate government alone" (Helal 1999: 220).

Despite their different approaches, sociologists Serif Mardin (1989), Sami Zubaida (1996), Hakan Yavuz (2003), and Cihan Tugal (2009), among others, have examined the social context within which the interaction between the military and Islamists took place, and described it as a dynamic field in which cultural and institutional constructs were created, negotiated, and modified. Two strategies were particularly highlighted. The first—a fairly common strategy among Islamists in authoritarian settings—is popular mobilization through the transformation of everyday life, rather than direct political contestation with state rulers (Tugal 2009: 424). The second strategy—a distinctive feature of Turkish Islamism—is the division of labor between several independent sociocultural movements and a series of political parties, each working in parallel through various

and unrelated organizations. This not only created perfect conditions for evolution and innovation, but also ruled out the possibility of an all-inclusive repression of Islamism in Turkey (Zubaida 1996: 15).[2]

But the underlying premise here is that the die has been cast against the officer corps once it has identified itself with secularism, as one of the founding principles of the republic. The irrepressible Islamic identity of Turkish citizens was bound to resurface no matter what. And although political strategies mattered, conservative parties were bound to win—eventually—because they have identified with the winning side (i.e., Islamism) from the beginning. This begs the question of why the military (a professional war making institution) has identified with secularism (a cultural value) to start with. Three explanations have been put forward. The first one maintained that the military has fallen hostage to its own revolutionary legacy in the 1920s, and could no longer break away from its image as the guardian of the haloed principles of the republic, including secularism (Brooks 2008: 213; Güney 2002: 162) A second explanation is that the military, again because of its revolutionary history, continued to perceive itself as a progressive and modernizing force in Turkish society (Brown 1988: 140). A third (more practical) explanation is that Turkish officers, as most officers around the world, "do not see themselves as agents of change but preservers of the status quo" (Harb 2002: 41). According to this last view, officers have not been particularly attached to secularism, but have simply inherited it from their predecessors.

What is not explained here is that "contradicting their vigilant rhetoric," Turkish officers have in fact been "pragmatic in their dealings with even the more extreme versions of religious affiliations" (Keyder 2004: 69). In other words, although military interventions were 'framed' in

[2] This new scholarship broke away from the essentialism of Berkes (1964), Lerner (1964), and Lewis (1969) and other modernization theorists who depicted Turkey's political struggle as one between modernity, epitomized in the military, and the traditionalists, who continued to adhere to a religious worldview (for an excellent review of this shift in the literature see Tatari 2005).

terms of safeguarding secularism, officers have in reality allowed Islamism to thrive—in contrast to communism, which was effectively eradicated. Indeed, as Anderson stated, each intervention saw the "steady weakening of one of the pillars of Kemalism," starting with secularism, and then statism (2009: 442). Officers, therefore, were no blind custodians of any legacy or dogma. So how can we explain their recurrent intervention in politics?

The answer might be that Turkish officers intervened in politics to maintain the country's security and political stability. The military's guardian role was not inspired by an ideological commitment to secularism, as many writers suggest. All divisive issues that threatened the unity and integrity of the state were treated on the same plane, including secular-Islamist frictions, communist intrigues, separatist actions (mostly by Kurds and Alevis), economic crises, and political violence. As one Turkish general explained in his memoirs, published in 1999, "the military cannot handle a problem as a social issue, an officer is not a social scientist, he regards those who pose the threat as an 'internal enemy' who may even be more dangerous than external enemies" (quoted in Uzgel 2003: 187). As far as officers were concerned, communists in the 1970s were Soviet proxies; Kurds were working hand-in-hand with Syria and other hostile Arab states; and Islamists might be doing the bidding of the Saudis or the Iranians (Uzgel 2003: 187). Their obsession was not secularism, but rather the "Sèvres syndrome," the pathological fear that foreign powers, together with their regional minions and internal agents, were trying to partition Turkey, as they had attempted in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 (Yavuz 1999: 584).

As this chapter will demonstrate, it was clear and present threats to stability, rather than matters of principles, that triggered military intervention in politics. In other words, whenever officers intervened, they did so as official guardians of national security, not as a political junta. As Metin Heper and Aylin Güney indicated, "They were not in a *political* competition with the political elite. They considered themselves as nonpartisan arbiters, and not as rivals to the political elite. Most

of the time they were on the sidelines and not in the political swirl, not because they have been forced to act in that manner, but because they thought it was proper for them to act in such fashion" (2004: 195). Put differently, despite their numerous interventions in politics, Turkish officers were "reluctant participants" (Brown 1988: 143). In fact, they were never "enthusiastic even for indirect intervention" (Heper and Güney 2000: 647).

And this attitude by the armed forces distinguished the Turkish case from those of Egypt and Iran. At the moment of birth of the three new regimes, the Turkish military has been by far the strongest: it had governed a world empire (albeit a disintegrating one) for almost six centuries; it had carried out several palace coups (the last of which occurred in 1908); it had been a full contestant in the Great War (although on the losing side); and it had played a crucial role in preventing Turkey's absolute subjugation by the victors in the war. Largely because of its perceived strength and legitimacy, once it seized the reins of power, it did so confidently and could truly conceive itself as above politics, as the historical guardian of the nation. The Egyptian army was in a much less secure position, considering its diminishing status since the defeat of Muhammad Ali in 1840 (a full century before it carried out the coup); its immediate subordination to British colonial officers; and its failure to carry out a successful national liberation war. The ambitious coup leaders in Egypt could not rest their power on the strength and legitimacy of the military, and were forced to erect a pervasive security apparatus to maintain control not only over the population, but also over an officer corps naturally loath to everyday politicking. Iran, by contrast, had neither a viable military nor a security establishment to speak off, and was therefore forced to continue the ancient monarchical tradition to guarantee popular obedience.

Once they secured hegemony over Turkey's new regime, officers' lack of interest in daily governance and policing meant they could afford to respond positively to domestic and geopolitical pressures to allow multi-party politics—granted they could always intervene to check political

excesses. The establishment of a political space on the side for parties to compete in sparked a series of dynamic interactions (involving both conflict and cooperation) between officers and politicians, with the former trying to preserve their overall domination over the state, in order to maintain social peace and order (but without directly governing), and the latter bent on increasing their autonomy and extending the margins of democracy (but without carrying out a revolution). And what was noteworthy about this relationship is that it has been dialectical, not circular: following every military intervention, things did not revert to the way they were before; instead, power relations were reconstituted in a way that empowered politicians further. That is because the aim of each intervention was to render future interventions redundant, and because politicians recognized that from the start, they tried to extract as much concessions from the military as possible, sometimes testing military patience to the limit. And with the control of the military gradually eroded, the power balance shifted slowly but surely toward politicians, who during the tenure of the Justice and Development Party felt confident enough to challenge officers openly.

What about security? Because of the unrivaled domination of the Turkish military, it had for long incorporated domestic security in its portfolio. Historically, Turkey's police and intelligence agencies have been notably weak. They had no part in the establishment of the new regime, and did not figure—as an independent player—in the power struggle between military officers and politicians. It was only after the 1980 coup that the army decided to unburden itself by rehabilitating the police force to carry out more duties. But the decade that witnessed the expansion of the size and responsibilities of the security agencies was the same decade that saw the ascendancy of Turkey's most powerful political parties, who succeeded in winning the still emergent security establishment to its side. It thus seems that the security institution has simply shifted positions from the military to the political apparatus, though it remains a junior partner. Clearly, the absence of a

robust and forceful security machine goes a long way in explaining why Turkey succeeded in developing a viable democracy.

This chapter follows the intertwining story of Turkish officers and politicians over the past century. On the one hand, it examines the coup that produced Turkey's republican regime in the 1920s, and the series of military interventions that followed (in 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997), as well as the allegedly aborted coup attempts in the last decade. On the other hand, it traces the complicated (and positively baffling) developments on the political scene, with its myriad of political parties, shaky coalitions, and colorful actors. The chapter also analyzes why the security apparatus has remained so rudimentary throughout the life of the republic, and how this has affected the Turkish trajectory. The conclusion here is that the early domination of the military (versus the security in Egypt, and the political apparatus in Iran) helped Turkey transition to democracy.

Chapter Fifteen

THE FOUNDING COUP:
MARCH 1924

Turkey's revolution from above in the 1920s was described as the third attempt of its kind in a little under a century. Since the 1830s, modernizing Ottoman officers and bureaucrats championed Western-inspired reforms to reverse the decline of the empire. The first wave of reforms, known as the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876), produced a modern army and a Constitution. Yet the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) interrupted the process. Instead of the reformed and reinvigorated empire—promised by the modernizers—he inherited a weak and disintegrating state besieged by crises, ravaged by military defeats, and on the verge of bankruptcy. After the devastating loss in the war against Russia in 1878, where the Ottomans were forced to forfeit their major Balkan provinces, the Sultan tried to restore the power of the court through suspending the Constitution, and rehabilitating his position as Caliph (religious leader of all Muslims). However, his rearguard action backfired. A cabal of junior officers and bureaucrats, with strong institutional and financial support from masonic lodges and European governments, conspired against the throne to resume and extend modernizing reforms to the fullest. The conspirators organized themselves into a Committee for Union and Progress (CUP)—commonly referred to as the Young Turks—of some 850,000 members operating 360 branches across the country and headed by a fifty-member Central Committee based in Salonika. Claiming that the Sultan's dictatorship was responsible for the empire's successive military setbacks, they called for a general mutiny. The Salonika garrison fired the first shot in 1908, and mutiny soon spread to other garrisons. The Sultan initially agreed to reinstitute constitutional rule and surrender executive power, but the following year he incited the Istanbul garrison to rise and defend the throne. Troops stationed in Macedonia marched on the capital in 1909, replaced the obstinate monarch with his accommodating cousin Mehmed V Rasad

(r. 1909-1918), abolished the political prerogatives of the court, and transferred rule effectively to a CUP triumvirate composed of the ministers of war, navy, and interior: Enver, Cemal, and Talat, respectively (Yılmaz 2008: 2-3; Anderson 2009: 400-10).

Unlike the Free Officers in Egypt, and most other coup-makers in the colonized world, the Young Turks were not anti-colonial, but rather keen empire builders set on rejoining the imperial bandwagon with other European powers. They were inspired less by liberal constitutionalism (as the first modernizers of the *Tanzimat* had been), than by secular nationalism—a nineteenth-century European ideology that spread like fire on the flanks of the Ottoman Empire: in Greece, Armenia, the Balkans, Russia, and eventually the Arab world. Espousing this new ideology was meant to help Istanbul copy the Western model more faithfully, thus enabling it to stand on an equal footing with its mighty neighbors. The new rulers and their Westernizing reforms, however, failed to reverse their country's fortunes: between 1911 and 1912 Libya was lost to Italy, and the Ottoman armies were swept out of Greece and the Balkans. The venturesome triumvirate therefore decided to gamble by entering the Great War in hope of arresting the Ottoman imperial breakdown. After being rebuffed by the Entente, the Young Turks threw their lot in with the Germans. The hope was that a Central Powers' victory would allow Istanbul to reclaim its lost provinces. But not only did the Entente hold its ground, and not only did Britain and France outflank the Ottomans by enlisting the support of their Arab subjects (through the so-called Arab Revolt), and not only did the Ottomans fail to pay them back in kind through unleashing Indian Muslims against Britain, but it also became obvious that the exhausted and overextended Ottoman armies were no match even for Russia—the weakest link in the Entente camp (Hopkirk 1994).

Yet despite Istanbul's unconditional surrender, as dictated by the Moudros Armistice in October 1918, the Ottomans were not completely vanquished. An occupation of their capital at the early stages of the war was prevented through the famous blocking of the Anglo-French landing at

the Dardanelles in April 1915, and—unlike Tsarist Prussia and Russia, and Habsburg Austria next door—the CUP regime remained relatively intact till the end. Between September and October 1918, CUP cadres laid the groundwork for a national resistance campaign against a possible occupation by the victors—through what they called Defense of Rights Committees—and on the night of November 1, the top CUP leadership escaped by sea to Berlin to direct resistance under the protection of Friedrich Ebert's new Social Democratic government. Also, while the military failed to protect the empire's outlying provinces, it was determined to prevent the Entente from acquiring more territories in the Turkish mainland, especially in Anatolia (Rustow 1959: 542).

After the guns fell silent, the military situation was as follows: the empire's Arab provinces (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and the Arabian peninsula) had fallen to British and French forces; the French also occupied Adana (Cilicia), Alexandretta, and eastern Thrace; the British controlled parts of eastern Anatolia and the Black Sea coast, as well as the strategic city of Mosul; the Italians landed in western and southern Anatolia; and the Greeks occupied Izmir (Smyrna) and other cities in western Anatolia, western Thrace, and the Aegean. In March 1919, Istanbul itself was placed under a joint Anglo-French supervision. A puppet sultan, Mehmed VI Vahideddin (r. 1918-1922), was installed by the occupiers and forced to sign the Sèvres Treaty in August 1920. The treaty not only formalized the Allies' territorial gains but also decreed the establishment of an independent Armenian state in northeastern Anatolia, and a Kurdish one in the southeast; granted all deported subjects (mostly Greek and Armenian) the right of return and financial reparation; demilitarized the Turkish Straits and placed them under an international supervisory body; appointed a committee to regulate the fallen empire's finances; and permanently demobilized the Ottoman army, allowing only for rural and urban police forces. Militarily speaking, however, there was some reason for hope despite this gloomy picture. To start with, the Allies committed a fatal mistake by not stationing enough troops in the Anatolian hinterland. The reasons were purely logistical. There was only one

railroad that passed through Erzurum in eastern Anatolia, a terrain naturally inhospitable to troop movements. Control over Anatolia therefore remained effectively in the hands of seven Ottoman army corps: those that were based there during the war, and those that joined them upon returning from the Arab and Caucasian provinces. Moreover, with eastern Anatolia neutralized after the Bolshevik revolution and Russia's subsequent civil war, the Ottoman troops could afford to concentrate all their forces on the southwestern front on the borders with Greece (Kinross 1977: chapters 6 and 7; Walt 1996: 299-302; Fromkin 1989: 392-99).

This was the chaotic situation into which an ambitious and handsome officer by the name of Mustafa Kemal stepped in. While stationed in Damascus in 1906, Kemal had founded the Fatherland Freedom Society, a Young Turk splinter group. He briefly joined the CUP but remained aloof because he was no assigned the leadership position he thought he deserved. Nonetheless, he contributed in the most tangible way to the success of the Young Turk coup by leading units of the Macedonian contingent that suppressed the Istanbul garrison and ousted Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1909. Kemal achieved national eminence in Gallipoli when he helped repel several Allied attempts to invade the capital, and later when he prevented a rout of the Ottoman armies in Syria. In fact, "No other military leader in 1919 could match Kemal's popularity or reputation of invincibility" (Rustow 1959: 537; Armstrong 1933). As soon as the war ended, Kemal was recalled to Istanbul. After six months of observing, he used his connections at court (he had travelled to Prussia with the Sultan while he was still Crown Prince) to land an appointment as Inspector of the Third Army and was dispatched to eastern Anatolia in May 1919 to demobilize the troops. He targeted this specific post for two reasons: first, he knew that the Allies closely monitored the other two army commands (in Istanbul and Konya), and his intention was anything but securing the faithful implementation of the armistice; second, he knew that the Greek occupation of Izmir (Smyrna) had sent shockwaves across Anatolia, further igniting popular anger, and swelling the ranks of those bent on resistance. After a

two-months head start, Kemal resigned his army post (in July 1919) and began organizing Turkey's War of Liberation (Rustow 1959: 542).

The War of Liberation

A crucial difference between Kemal and his counterparts in Egypt and Iran, as well as in many postcolonial settings, is that his modernizing coup was tightly linked with an immensely popular war of national liberation. Winning this war not only guaranteed the success of his coup, but also granted him more legitimacy than other coup-makers, thus allowing him to carry out a more sweeping revolution from above. So how did Kemal snatch this difficult victory from the jaws of defeat? From the very start, Kemal adopted the winning strategy of "uniting his followers and dividing his antagonists" (Rustow 1959: 545). In other words, his success hinged on the fact that he was uniquely prudent in both military strategy and diplomacy in a way that enabled him to unite revolutionary forces at home, exploit geopolitical opportunities to the fullest, balance the great powers against each other, and take his internal and external enemies one at a time (Mango 1999: 355).

The first step was to organize military resistance. Kemal initially drew inspiration from the French model of the National Guards, as popular militias embodying the will of the nation, yet he insisted on placing these militias under the supervision of professional officers, specifically the 50,000 nationalist officers he now led in Anatolia. Guerilla warfare against foreign occupation was therefore only a temporary expedient before a regular war against the Greeks in Anatolia could be launched (Mango 1999: 229). In September 1919, Kemal integrated all Defense of Rights committees—composed mostly of volunteers led by village notables and intellectuals—into one central body: the Committee for the Defense of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (i.e., Asiatic and European Turkey), and merged this new popular militia with the bulk of the regular army in what

became known as the National Forces. He then recruited two generals to lead them: Mustafa Fevzi Çakmak, the Ottoman War Minister between 1918 and 1920, and Mustafa Ismet Inönü, one of the ministry's young and bright undersecretaries. To endow his new army with legitimacy, Kemal convened a congress of the nation's elected representatives in Ankara in April 1920. And one of the first tasks of this Grand National Assembly—half of whose members were officers and bureaucrats—was to elect him chairman and general commander of the National Forces (Rustow 1959: 542; Mango 1999: 276). Kemal's monopoly over power was further guaranteed by the curious fact that between 1921 and 1922 the Armenian Revolutionary Party assassinated all CUP leaders that could have challenged his position, in retribution for the Armenian massacres during the Great War (Anderson 2009: 411-12). No less important was the Allied occupation of Istanbul, which justified his discrediting of the Sultan for failing to protect Turkish independence and Islam. So when the religious authorities in Istanbul excommunicated Kemal and his associates, he directed 250 clerics in Ankara to respond with a *fetva* (canonical decision) declaring that the current ruler was "the prisoner of the infidels, that it was the duty of the faithful to save him and his dominions, and that *fetvas* issued at the behest of enemy states lacked validity" (Mango 1999: 275). In that sense, as a keen student of Kemal's coup noted, "Without the Western threat there probably would have been no revolution" (Trimberger 1978: 43). A situation of dual power now crystalized, with the revolutionary regime in Ankara, on the one hand, and the old and withering regime in Istanbul, on the other. But how could Kemal win foreign recognition for his camp?

The perceptive leader estimated that the Great War victors were too exhausted and divided to launch a concerted military campaign against his emerging new regime. They would, nonetheless, support a regional proxy. And Greece was best suited for this role because of its strong territorial ambitions in Turkey, and its friendly relations with British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Kemal realized that his only chance for success was to defeat the Greeks, while avoiding a

confrontation with the European powers at all costs. Ankara therefore had to make a stand on the battlefield while pursuing peace negotiations with the major power players (Mango 1999: 286).

The campaign against the Greeks benefited from three factors. First, Greek moves were suspect (and likely to be checked) by France and Italy, who saw Athens as nothing more than London's pawn. Second, the Greeks themselves were consumed by internal feuds between monarchists and their enemies, and by the end of 1920, the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos lost in the general elections to a majority determined to reinstall King Constantine. And the French and Italians, one should add, were hostile to the deposed King for wishing to keep his country neutral during the Great War regardless of what happened to the Allies (Mango 1999: 306). But the third and most important card in Kemal's deck was Russian support. The destruction of the Tsarist regime in the east not only allowed Kemal to focus exclusively on the Greeks in the west, but the new rulers in Moscow also held a grudge against Athens for intervening against them during the Civil War. Moreover, the Bolsheviks saw a victory for Britain's protégé as a victory for their capitalist enemies in Europe. Russian-Turkish cooperation quickly bore fruit. Ankara's signing of the Moscow Treaty in March 1921 alarmed the Allies enough to reconsider the dangers of alienating the Turks. In this treaty, Kemal pledged to respect the current borders with Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and to look favorably upon Russian interests in the Black Sea and the Caucasus in return for arms and financial assistance. This was perhaps the deciding factor in the fight against Greece. The Russians were the only source of money, rifles, field guns, and ammunition. Without their help, the Turkish National Forces could not have prevailed militarily (Ahmad 1993: 50 Walt 1996: 304-310). The ever shrewd Kemal, however, was not carried away by Russian generosity, and reassured the Allies on several occasions that his rapprochement with the Soviet government would

not be at their expense, should they decide to abandon their territorial ambitions in Turkey and come to an agreement with Ankara (Mango 1999: 328).[3]

With his cards carefully arranged, Kemal began his diplomatic maneuvers. Recognizing that France's primary concern was Syria and Lebanon, he sent emissaries to George Picot, who was then the French High Commissioner in Syria and Armenia, advising him not to make enemies of Turks and Arabs at the same time, and proposing that a withdrawal of French troops from Cilicia would be matched by Ankara's relinquishing of all claims over these Arab provinces, a favorable compromise over the control of the disputed border districts of Alexandretta and Antakya, and a guarantee of French economic interests in Turkey. Kemal then lured the Italians with economic concessions as well, knowing full well that Rome viewed the Treaty of Sèvres with little enthusiasm because it favored the British. As a result, France and Italy broke ranks with Britain and signaled their intention to pull out their troops from Turkey (Mango 1999: 259-60). Seeing that a wedge has been driven between the European partners, Lloyd George called for a conference in London in February 1921 to conduct multi-lateral talks between the Allies, Greece, and Turkey. The London conference further exposed European discord, as Ankara's representatives negotiated separate agreements with the French and the Italians delegations, convincing Paris and Rome not only to withdraw their forces, but also to declare their neutrality in the Turkish-Greek war. Now that he had neutralized the great powers, Kemal turned his attention back to the Greeks (Ahmad 1993: 50; Mango 1999: 306-10; for a detailed analysis of the divisions within the Allied camp see Fromkin 1989: Chapter 59).

Ankara's National Forces won two landmark victories against Greece: first in Sakarya in August 1921, followed by a route of Greek forces in Anatolia in September 1922. The Turks then crossed the Dardanelles the following month in pursuit of their enemies. The sober Kemal,

[3] Later Kemal would also try to win American favor by vilifying Moscow. In 1934, he told General Douglas MacArthur: "We Turks, as Russia's close neighbors and the nation that has fought more wars against her than any other country, are following closely the course of events there and see the danger stripped of all camouflage… The Bolsheviks have now reached a point at which they constitute a threat" (Shmuelevitz 1999: 302).

however, realized that a Turkish invasion of Greece would certainly trigger British intervention. Determined to avert such a clash, he ordered back his troops and offered the British the oil-rich Iraqi province of Mosul and the international supervision they demanded over the Straits in exchange for a cessation of hostilities, which was finally agreed upon in the Mudanya armistice, signed in October 1922. Ankara's successful maneuvers encouraged British conservatives to withdraw from Lloyd George's wartime coalition, and elect a new government to negotiate peace at Lausanne in November 1922 (Walt 1996: 303-306; Mango 1999: 356-57).

Kemal seized the opportunity and pushed a law through the General National Assembly to abolish the sultanate on November 1, 1922, under the pretext that Turkey must speak with one voice during the negotiations scheduled to begin in Lausanne before the end of the month. This had to be done tactfully considering that the oath each deputy took during the Assembly's opening ceremony stated that national resistance aimed to liberate the "fatherland, nation, sultanate, and caliphate from foreign rule" (Yılmaz 2008: 7). Kemal tried to ease the religious conscience of his deputies by claiming that the abolishment of the sultanate—the political wing of the Caliphate—did not amount to abolishing the religious leadership of the Caliph. When deputies seemed still unconvinced, he addressed them in an unabashedly threatening tone:

> **Sovereignty and sultanate are taken by strength, by power and by force. It was by force that the sons of Osman seized sovereignty and the sultanate of the Turkish nation; they have maintained this usurpation for six centuries. Now the Turkish nation has rebelled, has put a stop to these usurpers, and has effectively taken sovereignty and sultanate into its own hands. This is an accomplished fact… If those gathered here, the Assembly, and everyone else could look at this question in a natural way, I think they would agree…if they do not, the truth will still find expression, but *some heads may roll* in the process** (quoted in Yılmaz 2008: 8, emphasis added).

The law was passed, the last Ottoman Sultan fled his capital in a British submarine, and the Assembly elected a compliant Caliph, Abdülmecid Effendi, who—as it turned out—was the last Muslim Caliph. The Treaty of Lausanne, concluded in July 1923, established the modern borders of

Turkey, and cemented the legitimacy of Ankara's rulers, now hailed as national liberators. Clearly, had the Allies been able to act with resolve and in unison, Ankara would have had no chance in taking them on. War fatigue and old power rivalries provided a valuable opportunity for Kemal's clearheaded realism to work its magic.

Building the Dictatorship

Those who studied the life of Mustafa Kemal had little doubt that he was "a rebel from within the ranks of the Ottoman establishment, not a popular revolutionary;" that his ultimate goal was "to bring order out of chaos" (Mango 1999: 242). To achieve this goal, he had to consolidate his power over the polity rather than empower the people. While the War of Liberation offered him an opportunity to undermine the old political elite in Istanbul, his concessions to Western powers provoked opposition within his own camp in Ankara. A group within the Grand National Assembly—calling themselves the Second Group—rejected the Lausanne Treaty and tried to persuade their colleagues not to ratify it. Kemal's solution was simple. He dissolved the Assembly in April 1923; directed his delegation in Lausanne to sign the treaty in July; held fresh elections in August, while banning members of the Second Group to run; and had his new Assembly of loyalists ratify the treaty on the same month. Recognizing the importance of separating friend from foe, Kemal decided the following month to create the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), thus inaugurating the single-party rule that would last for over two decades (Trimberger 1978: 105-108; Yılmaz 2008: 9).

The incipient dictator then turned to his opponents, both regime insiders who opposed his growing personal autocracy, and the countryside resistance, spearheaded by conservative peasants and Kurds, who opposed the secularism and Turkic nationalism of his regime. Kemal again carefully

separated his battles. To appease intra-regime contenders, he replaced his closest ally, Ismet Inönü, with a liberal and nonpartisan figure (Ali Fethi Okyar) at the head of cabinet. He also allowed his opponents to form a new political party, the short-lived Progressive Republican Party, which came to life in November 1924. His real aim was to distract them for as long as he needed to pacify the countryside. In February 1925, Kemal crushed a Kurdish armed rebellion, while dissuading peasants and landowners from joining in the battle against him by repealing the tithe. Barely three weeks afterward, he reinstalled Inönü as premier, and passed two of his regime's most draconian laws: the Law for the Maintenance of Order, which gave the state dictatorial powers against whomever it deemed a public enemy; and the Independence Tribunals Law, which delivered swift justice to the regime's opponents, with no right to appeal—a mild version of the Jacobin Committee of Public Safety. He employed the Law for Maintenance of Order to close down the Progressive Republican Party in June 1925, while depriving its members of popular support by offering Turkey's urban intellectuals and rising bourgeoisie valuable legal concessions. In February 1926, the Assembly passed the Civil Code (almost translated to the last word from the Swiss law), which expanded civil liberties, especially for women, followed by laws in April and May granting capitalists generous privileges, notably the Law for the Promotion of Industry, which provided cheap credit to investors, promised state purchase of their surplus products, and exempted them from taxes. Kemal then allegedly uncovered a plot to assassinate him in June 1926, and passed the case to the Independence Tribunals. Before the end of August, nineteen of his prominent opponents were sentenced to death, and seven were handed ten-year prison terms (Yılmaz 2008: 11-12).

The unrivaled leader—who now adopted the surname Atatürk (literally, Father Turk)—then expanded the privileges of the ruling party, the CHP. The party's 1935 congress effectively merged state and party, by decreeing that the CHP secretary-general should automatically become Interior Minister; heads of regional branches should become provincial governors; and all state officials

should be party members (Ahmad 1988: 754; Sakallioglu 1997: 154). Kemal, who at the beginning of his reign seemed to draw inspiration from the French Revolution, now appeared to be infatuated with the totalitarian parties of the 1930s, both fascists and communists.

Kulturkampf?

Kemal's revolutionary project was not mainly political—after all he simply substituted a traditional dictatorship for a modern one—but his most lasting (and notorious) achievement, unlike his counterparts in Egypt and Iran, was cultural. And the most shocking act of Kemalism as a cultural creed was the abolishment of the Caliphate—for the first time in Islam's fourteen-century history—on March 3, 1924, and the banishment of the members of the house of Osman—after their six-century rule. This was accompanied by the substitution of the longstanding religious institution, the office of *Seyhülislam* (the most senior Islamic scholar in the realm), with a bureaucratic department, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, charged with managing the mosques, appointing religious functionaries, and circulating authorized sermons. Shari'a laws were first confined to family law, before being entirely supplanted by Swiss-inspired civil codes. Private religious schools and Sufi orders were banned in 1925. And even Kemal's meager formal concessions were soon withdrawn. For example, while Article 2 of the 1924 Constitution initially maintained that Islam was the religion of the state, this provision was removed in 1928, and a new clause, introduced in 1937, declared Turkey a secular republic. Also, the new Faculty of Theology in the University of Istanbul, created to provide a more modern interpretation of Islam (i.e. one to the liking of the political masters in Ankara), was transformed in 1933 into an Institute of Oriental Studies attached to the Faculty of Arts. Marginalization of religion was then complemented by Westernizing measures to undermine Islamic culture in the broader sense. Famously, the banning of the veil, enforcing European hats by

decree, replacing Arabic with Latin script, prohibiting the Arabic call to prayer, and changing the Islamic lunar calendar (Lewis 1952: 41). This all led eminent Turkish sociologist Serif Mardin to judge Kemal's revolution as primarily cultural:

> **The Turkish Revolution was not the instrument of a discontented *bourgeoisie*, it did not ride on a wave of peasant dissatisfaction with the social order, and it did not have as target the sweeping away of feudal privileges, but it *did* take as a target the values of the Ottoman *ancien régime*…the symbolic system of society, culture, seems to have had a relatively greater attraction as a target than the social structure itself. And within culture, religion seems to have been singled out as the core of the system** (1971: 202).

Perry Anderson similarly asserted that the astonishing fact about Turkey's transformation was that it culminated into "a cultural revolution without a social revolution, something historically very rare, indeed that might look *a priori* impossible"(2009: 414). Anderson convincingly explained the absence of anti-feudal, or even anti-capitalist impulse in the Turkish revolution by the fact that the Ottoman social structure was based on an office-holding elite that had not been allowed to evolve into a powerful landowning class (2009: 415). But even if that was the case, why was Kemal so determined to achieve a wholesale transformation of Ottoman culture, especially religion?

Some argue that secularism had been lurking in Turkey since the nineteenth century, and that Kemal only drove it to its logical end (Mardin 1971: 208; Helal 1999: 37). It was said that pious Muslims were "genuinely frightened by the agnosticism, not to say atheism, of leading CUP members" since 1908 (Mango 1999: 86). Ottoman modernizers, in general, and Young Turks, in particular, had for long turned their back on Islam as a binding identity, advocating instead "a common Ottoman citizenship and loyalty irrespective of religion or origin" (Lewis 1952: 38).[4] So even though the population that Kemal governed was more than 97 percent Muslim and less than 75 percent Turkic, his espousing of secular ethnic nationalism was in line with intellectual

[4] Notably, while Western secularism had resulted from the integral logic of European history, Turkish secularism was "a reactive phenomenon, a partial abandonment of identity in the effort to preserve any identity at all" (Dunn 1972: 179).

developments in Turkey in the last few decades (Kalaycioglu 2005: 2). Yet Atatürk's sweeping legal and institutional changes remain unprecedented—at least when compared to other Muslim countries, which never suffered the scrupulous secularization of the Catholic West. As Anderson put it, "The scale and speed of this assault on religious tradition and household custom, embracing faith, time, dress, family, language, remain unique" (2009: 414). Why did Kemal pursue secularism with such audacity?

Barbara Ward (1942: 51) believed that Kemal was a faithful son of the Enlightenment, and as such was convinced that the spread of pure reason and scientific thinking would create "an almost unlimited future of material progress for mankind." Kemal was certainly never a man of faith, even during his youth, and he certainly thought of himself as an apostle of the Enlightenment, confiding to his diary, months before his coup:

> **If I ever acquire great authority and power, I think that I would introduce at a single stroke the transformation needed in our social life. I do not accept and my spirit revolts at the idea entertained in some quarters that this can be done gradually by getting the common people and the *ulema* to think at my level. After spending so many years acquiring higher education, enquiring into civilized social life and getting a taste of freedom, why should I descend to the level of the common people? Rather, I should raise them to my level** (quoted in Mango 1999: 176).

But there are reasons to believe that Kemal's secularism was more instrumental than value-based. For one thing, Kemal did not shrink from employing Islam to the fullest during the War of Liberation. He proudly embraced the title of *Gazi* (Islamic conqueror), and frequently glorified God and religion in his speeches until 1924. Examples abound. On Kemal's orders, the opening ceremony of the Grand National Assembly was scheduled on a Friday, the day of Muslim congregational worship, and began in the Hacı Bayram Mosque. "After prayers, a procession was formed, led by a cleric carrying a Koran on a lectern, while another man held above his head what purported to be a hair from the Prophet's beard. As a crowd of onlookers shouted '*Allahuekber*'

(God is great), the deputies and accompanying officials walked to the CUP club building…chosen as the meeting place of the assembly… The procession stopped in front of the building, where more prayers were recited and sheep sacrificed." Kemal then made a long opening speech in which he reminded the delegates of how Islam grants "the greatest of authority to the united mass of believers" (Mango 1999: 277). The following day, Kemal asserted in his first official pronouncement, "We, your deputies, swear in the name of God and the Prophet that the claim that we are rebels against the sultan and the caliph is a lie. All we want is to save our country" (Mango 1999: 278).

The reasons why Atatürk thought Islam would serve his purpose are too many and too obvious to dwell on. But why did he later turn against it? Mardin suggested that Kemal recognized Islam as the "mediating link between local social forces and the political structure," and knew that without disrupting this link, he would never be able to firmly control the state (1971: 205). In his memoirs, Inönü confessed that Kemal abolished the Caliphate because he understood that in order to establish his rule: "the two-headed system had to go" (quoted in Mango 1999: 403). As Anderson commented: "The spirit in which Kemal made use of Muslim piety in these years was that of Napoleon enthroning himself with the blessing of the pope. But as exercise in cynicism they moved in opposite directions: Napoleon rising to power as a revolutionary, and manipulating religion to stabilize it, Kemal manipulating religion to make a revolution and turning on it once his power was stabilized" (2009: 417).

But besides personal beliefs and the need to disrupt the traditional political structure, a third crucial reason for Kemal's radical cultural campaign was geopolitical. Kemal was a staunch realist, or as described by his most recent biographer, "He was a practical man of action, a realist with a vision" (Mango 1999: 396).[5]Considering that even before the territories lost in the Great War, the

[5] He was once quoted mocking Wilson's principle of the right of national determination, "Poor Wilson, he did not understand that lines which are not defended by the bayonet, by force…cannot be defended by any other principle" (Rustow 1959: 536).

Ottomans had already lost 83 percent of their provinces, Western powers recognized that if Istanbul continued to adhere to its Islamic leadership role, it would soon find itself driven toward recapturing its lost territories, subduing its mutinous subjects, and maybe even resuming its historical struggle with the Christian West. Preserving the traditional position of Islam in the heart of the empire was a call for renewed war between Turkey and its newly independent neighbors in the Balkans, Greece, and the Arab world, and by extension their European patrons. With such doubts concerning Turkey's future intentions, it would have been impossible for the Allies to relinquish their territorial gains in and around Anatolia. Transforming the "very fundamentals of [Muslim] political existence" through introducing the "artificial state system" into the Muslim world was therefore high on the Allies' postwar agenda (Fromkin 1989: 17). And the twelfth point in U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points emphasized the right to self-determination, which translated into 'liberating' Muslim countries from the grip of the Caliphate, as one of many colonial powers (Fromkin 1989: 258). In fact, when Ottoman radicals in Paris and Geneva before the war adopted the name 'New Ottomans', their European hosts converted them to using the term 'Young Turks' instead (Rustow 1959: 516).[6]

Kemal realized that— with Turkey under their mercy—there was no chance that the Great War victors would evacuate peacefully at the slightest indication of expansionist yearnings on Istanbul's part. So in order to justify to his countrymen the surrendering of the Caliphate provinces in the Treaty of Lausanne, and to spare himself the burden of having to explain why he did not intend to reclaim them in the future, and more important, to put the anxious Western powers at ease, Kemal had to substitute Islam with secular nationalism. In other words, it was structural conditions that dictated secularism as an official ideology. Turkey's successive military defeats forced the new regime to "resolutely cast aside all dreams of imperial glory" (Rustow 1959: 551). Or as one

[6] The word would ultimately enter the Turkish lexicon in the form of a French loan word: *Jön Türk*.

insightful scholar remarked, the territorial unit that survived the collapse of the empire "turned out to be the Turkish nation," and this is all that the new regime felt it could defend (Dunn1972: 179-80).

Turkey's republican elite also understood that in order for them to preserve sovereignty over the state, they had to establish friendly relations with the major Western powers. To help establish these relations, they wanted to recast Turkey into a European mold, and they knew that the West considered secularism and ethnic nationalism the linchpin of modern statehood. Seen in this way, one can claim that Turkey's Europeanization efforts were "strongly bound to the goal of state survival," (Oguzlu 2003: 290-91). Turkey's newfound secularism scrapped any hope of resurrecting the Ottoman Caliphate as a religious-based multi-ethnic empire, and was therefore received with open arms in Europe and the United States. Accordingly, the National Pact of 1920 abandoned all mention of the Caliphate. And Kemal himself made clear right after its adoption that: "Turkey does not desire an inch of foreign territory, but will not give up an inch of what she holds" (Shmuelevitz 1999: 300).

So even though many claim that if Kemal had failed to win the War of Liberation, it would have been impossible for Turkey to become secular (for example Kalaycioglu 2005: 198), this analysis shows that the opposite is also true: if Turkey had not become secular, it would have been impossible for Kemal to win the war. Factoring this geopolitical dimension in Turkey's radical embrace of secularism is important for two reasons: first, it underlines how secularism was not the product of internal sociocultural processes, but rather an ideology imposed from above as a national security imperative—a fact that will have far-reaching political implications in the future; and second, it justifies why adherence to Kemal's secular principles became less rigid among Turkey's military guardians with changes in the international context.

Depoliticizing the Army?

Several Ottoman officers had spearheaded modernization efforts since the 1830s, and following the 1908 coup, the leadership of the armed forces, as a whole, became the dominant political actor in Turkey. Under their tutorship, most junior officers became indoctrinated in the Young Turks' nationalist ideology on the eve of the Great War—an indoctrination that had become sharply intensified once these officers came face-to-face with the nationalist zeal of the Arab, Balkan, and Slavic populations in the provinces they served in during the war. This is why Kemal found dozens of supporters among army majors and captains—much more so that among senior officers (only seven brigadier generals and three major generals joined his camp). But although not everyone subscribed to Kemal's vision for Turkey, the officer corps was united in its frustration with the military sterility of the old regime. And this is why Kemal's faction enjoyed the tacit support of the War Office and the General Staff in Istanbul from day one, and this is why he managed to win the backing of all the forces stationed in Anatolia with relative ease (Rustow 1959: 534, 540).

The regular army was crucial to winning the War of Liberation, and in carrying out the coup against the Sultan, and later the Caliph. It also played a significant role in quelling provincial rebellions after the declaration of the republic, most famous, the 1925 uprising under the Kurdish Sufi Sheikh Said, which was crushed using 50,000 troops (half of the Turkish infantry at that point) and the 1937 Alevi revolt in the southeast, which required heavy artillery and bombers, in addition to thousands of infantrymen. Nonetheless, the new regime was adamant from the start in keeping the military away from politics. This presents one of the clearest points of contrast between civil-military relations under the Young Turks and under Kemal's emerging dictatorship: "The Young Turks, swept into power as champions of constitutional and parliamentary government, proceeded

to concentrate power increasingly in military hands… The Kemalist movement, starting from a military apex, worked hard to provide itself with a solid civilian base" (Rustow 1959: 544).

Before the first bullets were shot in the War of Liberation, Kemal insisted on convening the Grand National Assembly to lay the foundations of a strong parliament. In that same year, he adopted a National Charter, which became the basis of the 1924 Constitution. And later, he made sure that his Defense of Rights Committees metamorphosed into a formidable ruling party, the CHP. Kemal finally supplemented these civilian institutions with a carefully delineated ideology to bestow legitimacy—or at least consistency—on the new regime, rather than relying solely on military power. This national creed was elaborated in a series of ruling party congresses, beginning with his famous six-day speech (*Nutuk*) in October 1927, where he offered his proficiently reconstructed version of the Turkish revolution, and culminating in the 1935 congress that produced the Six Arrows of Kemalism (republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism, and reformism), which were then incorporated in the 1937 Constitution. Ideology was reinforced by an arresting personality cult, with equestrian statues of the leader adorning every corner of the country, and with the CHP declaring Atatürk an Eternal Leader (*Ebedî Sef*), and eternal party chairman in a congress held one month after his passing—a congress convened under a slogan "very much reminiscent of the Nazis: One party, one nation, one leader"(Yılmaz 2008: 12; Helal 1999: 86-88).[7] Equally important to civilian institutions and ideology, Kemal required all officers involved in politics to resign from the military, and prohibited the chief of staff from attending cabinet meetings. Even the Independence Tribunals he formed to prosecute his political foes were mostly civilian courts (Helal 1999: 92; Wahid 2009: 66).

This remarkably strict separation between military and government was attributed to Kemal's belief that officers' meddling in politics brought about Turkey's successive defeats in the

[7] A short-term flirtation with a loyal opposition party was attempted in 1930, with the Free Republican Party, but the idea was dismissed within months (Ahmad 1988: 754).

last three decades. Kemal was also quoted saying, "As long as officers remain in the Party we shall never build a strong Party nor a strong Army" (Brown 1988: 132). A more sinister explanation is that the emerging dictator preferred to separate his increasingly long list of opponents from the army so that he could crush them at will without risking civil war (Rustow 1959: 545). In other words, removing officers from politics was not intended to establish civilian control in the Western sense, but rather to preclude the military from becoming a rival source of power to Kemal's ruling clique, which included both civilians and former officers (Sakallioglu 1997: 156). Regardless of the motive, it is clear that Atatürk's revolution included "a civilian component that militated against full-scale praetorianism" (Brown 1988: 140).

So what drove officers to intervene every so often in future Turkish politics? The conventional response has been that while Kemal barred them from practicing everyday governance, he entrusted them with guarding the overall values and character of the republic. In his last message to the armed forces, on October 29, 1938, the leader beseeched his soldiers: "As you have protected and saved the country from oppression, catastrophe, and calamities… Our great nation and myself have complete trust and faith in your readiness and willingness to do your duty at any moment to protect the…Turkish people against any danger from within or without" (quoted in Kili 2003: 153). According to this view, the military has not really been removed from politics, but instead "subsumed as a corporate element" in the new regime (Mango 1999: 417). But as the analysis presented here shows, military interventions have been invariably propelled by conditions intimately linked to the interests and responsibilities of the officer corps. In fact, it is clear that—rhetoric aside—officers have actually abandoned many of the principles of Kemalism, notably statism and radial secularism, to guarantee the country's security and stability.

What is interesting about these interventions is that—again, despite claims about an ideologically committed Kemalist elite—they were "conducted by the military-as-institution and led

by its top leadership" (Harb 2002: 194). At the same time, revolutionary officers or those who refused to fall in line during these disciplined interventions (such as those spearheading the early stages of the 1960 coup) were quickly purged. This is largely because the military structure that Kemal himself had set up in the 1920s produced a remarkably cohesive institution. The Defense Ministry and its head, supposedly the representatives of civilian authority, had no influence over the corps. The ministry was charged with minor administrative and financial duties, and generally deferred to officers' demands rather than enforce civilian orders—in fact, general staff dealt with the ministry as an adjunct (Brown 1988: 140). Moreover, although the minister was normally a civilian, officers colonized the ministry itself. As Defense Minister Ahmet Topalglu commented tongue-in-cheek in 1970: "In the Ministry of Defense, I am the only civilian person…the undersecretary is a general" (quoted in Sakallioglu 1997: 159). As late as 1989, the Defense Minister confessed in an interview with a foreign correspondent that: "The Turkish general chief of staff establishes the priorities and presents the requirements and needs [so that] tasks are carried out by he Ministry of Defense according to the principles, priorities and major programs as determined by the general chief of staff" (quoted in Sakallioglu 1997: 159). The chief of staff and the service commanders thus remained autonomous. The chief of staff was appointed by the president from the list of generals who have commanded the land forces, though it was generally acknowledged that the incumbent chief of staff selected his successor and presented it to the prime minister to pass it on to the president *pour la forme*. The chief of staff reported directly to the prime minister since 1924 (except for a brief period between 1949 and 1961), and was solely responsible for choosing the commanders of the various services (Sakallioglu 1997: 159). This structure guaranteed the independence and unity of the armed forces, and that, in turn, helped officers set and implement their corporate agenda in a systematic manner.

Yet it is also important to note that Kemal had a lasting influence on this corporate agenda by extending it to include domestic security. The police establishment he had inherited was rudimentary, to say the least. The first modern police force, established in 1845, was merely responsible for Istanbul, and within a year it was abolished and its duties transferred to the military-supervised Gendarmes. A second police force was organized in 1879, again for Istanbul only, and in 1893 its portfolio was expanded to include a limited number of provincial towns. The new force was made subordinate to the Ministry of the Gendarmes, which in turn reported to the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Ottoman Army. A decade before the War of Liberation, in 1909, a General Directorate of Security (GDS) and an independent Ministry of Interior Affairs were created. But both were based in Istanbul, and so Kemal's revolutionary government in Ankara could not trust these security organs until it consolidated power completely. That is why the military, before and after the coup, assumed domestic security duties (Caglar 1994: 117-18).

There was a final element that weakened the political apparatus vis-à-vis officers despite Kemal's formal separation of the military from politics. Unlike Nasser in Egypt and the Shah of Iran, Kemal had no penchant for everyday governance, and from the late 1920s delegated control to weaker figures, most prominently his chief subordinate and future successor Ismet Inönü, so that he could devote his time to nocturnal adventures in the cabarets of Ankara and all-night gambling parties at his luxurious mansion, the villa on Çankaya Hill. By the 1930s, Turkey's chief politician had become an alcoholic, and soon the "pleasures of the will yielded to pleasures of the flesh." Kemal ultimately caught cirrhosis and died in 1938 at the age of fifty-seven. Despite his remarkable achievements, Anderson rightly noted that Kemal was "A ruler who took to drink in despair at the ultimate sterility of his rule" (Anderson 2009: 425). Maybe he sensed with his characteristic farsightedness that the tightly knit regime he had so carefully weaved together would soon begin to unravel.

Chapter Sixteen

THE COERRECTIVE COUP:
MAY 1960

If the Kemalist revolution was simply the last instance of the power struggle that had consumed the Ottoman ruling clique since the early nineteenth century, and if the Kemalist elite were simply the fourth generation of officers and bureaucrats trying to undermine the power of the court in order to modernize the state,[8] what ultimately made this last revolution successful, while others failed, was the geopolitical context that Kemal so skillfully exploited. This same context was largely responsible for the transformation of the regime less than a decade after its founder existed the scene. Drawing on literature underlining the primacy of international pressures in the democratization of Southern Europe in the 1970s, Latin America in the 1980s, and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, sociologist Hakan Yılmaz (1997) showed that the role of geopolitics in Turkey's political liberalization in the 1940s was no less prominent.

Political Pluralism as a Security Imperative

Turkey's international standing was at its lowest ebb immediately after the Second World War. President Ismet Inönü and his government had not only refused to support the Allied war effort in the slightest, but also remained friendly (sometimes even collaborative) toward the Nazis. Inönü had sought an understanding with Berlin on the eve of the war but received no guarantees. Concerned about Germany's intentions, he felt propelled to conclude a defense treaty with Britain and France. But once the Nazis invaded Russia, Adolf Hitler seemed more willing to placate Ankara in order to protect his supply lines. The Turkish President hastened to sign a non-aggression treaty with Berlin

[8] The first three generations being the powerful Pashas of the Tanzimat (1839-1876); the Young Ottomans (1876-1878); and the Young Turks (1908-1918) (Yılmaz 2008: 2-3).

in 1941, and dispatched two of his top generals (Emir Hüsnü Eriklet and Ali Fuad Erden) to meet the Führer and propose to help him conquer Russia by rousing the Turkic populations of the Soviet Union against Moscow. As soon as the Third Reich began to lose, however, Turkey scrambled once more for Anglo-American support. Still, it refused to declare war on Germany until February 1945, a week before the deadline set by the United Nations for all those willing to join the new organization (Anderson 2009: 427-30).

As soon as the war was over, Joseph Stalin thought the time was ripe to swallow his treacherous neighbor. He offered to renew Soviet-Turkish 'friendship' on condition that Turkey accepts Russian defense of the Straits. The ruling bloc in Ankara now feared that if the USSR spread its hegemony over their country, a pro-Soviet communist elite would eventually dislodge them from power—a fear that was poignantly recorded in Inönü's diary: "The Russians proposed a joint defense of the Straits. The Russian forces would settle on the Straits area. Then Russia would keep coming up with new demands as the requirements of the joint defense. Their status in our country would be no different than their status in the eastern European countries which they had occupied. I made my decision immediately: Our answer would be no" (Yılmaz 1997: 4-5). Resisting Soviet domination thus became a matter of political survival. And the key to success was garnering American support.

The problem, however, was that at this early stage of the Cold War (before NATO was established, or George Kennan's 'Long Telegram' had evolved into a Doctrine of Containment) the price of joining the Western camp was to become democratic, a residue of the free world versus fascist mentality, which dominated international discourse during the early postwar period. Propping authoritarian regimes to block communist advances had not yet become standard practice. And even if the U.S. was willing to grant an exception, Turkey still needed to overcome the Anglo-French resentment that resulted from its double-dealing with the Nazis. Ankara therefore felt compelled to

indicate its willingness to repent and transform itself to meet Western standards. It had to open up its political system, or at least pretend to do so.

The link between Turkey's domestic reform and geopolitical desperation becomes clear when one considers that the first signals toward democratic reform were made in April and May 1945, one month after the Soviets offered to enter a joint defense agreement with Turkey, and one month before the UN founding conference in San Francesco. The Turkish President in fact communicated the following instructions to his delegation to the UN conference:

> **The Americans may ask you when we will establish a multi-party regime. You will give the following answer to the question: 'In the history of the Turkish Republic Atatürk was the great reformer. The role of Inönü will be to institutionalize reforms and to establish a full democracy, which was the intention of Atatürk himself'. Inönü would like to have done this before. The many dangers and problems that came with the war held him back. It is the greatest desire of the President to achieve this goal as soon as the war will be over** (quoted in Yılmaz 1997: 7).

Turkey's nascent opposition forces, composed of ruling party members whose views differed from the party's leadership, cunningly played the same card. One of the leaders of that faction, Adnan Menderes, declared in a speech, in August 1945, "By ratifying the UN Charter we do not commit ourselves to anything that is not consistent with our Constitution. However, there are undeniable inconsistences between our Constitution and the de facto state of affairs in the country. Hence, I wish we could use the ratification of the UN Charter as an opportunity to repeal these inconsistencies" (quoted in Yılmaz 1997: 8).

But after joining the new organization, the ruling party thought a rigged election, such as the one held in 1946, was good enough—especially after the Truman Doctrine, promulgated in March 1947, promised U.S. aid to nations threatened by communism, and after Turkey was received with open arms in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). What the masters of Ankara did not see coming was the tirade of harsh critiques of their autocratic regime during Congressional debates on

Truman's Aid Bill to Turkey in the early summer of 1947. Congress members attacked the Turkish government so severely that the Truman administration almost withdrew the bill, and it only passed on condition that Congress had to review it annually. Turkey's rulers could hardly imagine reliving this drama ever year, especially now that they had their eyes fixed on the lucrative Marshall Plan aid that they desperately needed to reboot the economy after the war (eventually Turkey's share would be $574.3 million), and the aid was subject to the same conditions set by Congress. It became apparent that real democratic change was necessary.

All these financial incentives aside, what truly unnerved the Turkish generals was fierce opposition to Turkey's joining NATO (established in April 1949). An influential group of members, spearheaded by Britain, cited the country's shaky democracy and its proximity to the USSR (which threatened to overextend NATO's responsibilities), concluding that Turkey was too unreliable and burdensome to be included in the joint defense organization. As the Turkish military expected, only after power was transferred to the opposition forces in 1950 was Turkey's application finally accepted (Yılmaz 1997: 14-17). The military now openly advocated multi-party politics, and to furnish their democratic credentials further, the generals went as far as to dispatch a token force to abet America's 'democracy promotion' campaign in Korea. Soon, the influence of those who championed the conservative German school within the Turkish armed forces, usually referred to as 'the Prussians', was supplanted by that of the junior officers who embraced U.S. weapons and training (and thinking) with great zeal (Uzgel 2003: 197).

Of course, geopolitical pressures cannot alone carry the weight of explaining Turkey's political opening. But as Yılmaz's illuminating study explained, Turkey's domestic structure enabled it to respond to democratization demands more readily than other WWII fence sitters, who were officially neutral during the war and needed to rehabilitate their image and integrate themselves into the new Western-led organizations. Turkey's advantage was that it felt secure enough to tread that

path. Franco's dictatorship, for example, had only been consolidated in 1939 after a bitter civil war and faced the threat of a resurgent republicanism; and Salazar's Portugal faced a strong communist movement and was set on preserving its African colonies (which it kept until 1974) despite internal opposition. The Turkish ruling bloc, by contrast, had been firmly installed in power for a quarter of a century by popular heroes (such as President Inönü) who won their legitimacy by resisting foreign occupation; it had no bourgeoisie to speak of after the deportation of its non-Turkic merchant class by the 1920s; and had a minuscule working class (its communists were mostly intellectuals and students).[9] Also, Turkey was more vulnerable to Soviet invasion than Southern European autocracies, and was therefore more determined to secure Western protection than they were (Yılmaz 2002: 80-81).

Despite external pressures to democratize, the transition to multi-party politics was carefully controlled from above. As mentioned, the first advocates of democracy were no other than the ruling party elites themselves. In June 1945, four Republican People's Party (CHP) leaders presented the party congress with a list of reform proposals, what became know as the Manifesto of the Four (*Dörtlü Takrir*). The principle defectors were Adnan Menderes, an affluent cotton planter who was in charge of CHP propaganda and education, and Celâl Bayar, who had been Minister of the Economy (1932-1938), and Prime Minister (1938), as well as the founder and governor of the state-owned Turkish Business Bank (*Türkiye Is Bankası*), the largest commercial bank in the country (Yılmaz 2008: 15).[10] All they had initially hoped for was to replace the secular statist faction at the helm of the party with religiously tolerant and market-oriented cadres. Though their demands were rejected, Inönü acknowledged their concerns in his address to the CHP congress, on November 1, 1945. The President explained that autocracy was essential at the formative period of the republic, but that now

[9]At the time Atatürk consolidated his power, Turkey had perhaps 17,000 workers, and no industrialists to speak off (Fromkin 1989: 123). Until the late 1930s, Turkey remained an agricultural society with large and middling landowners dominating the countryside, and a small bureaucratic middle class in the towns (Mango 1999: 533).
[10] The other two defectors (Refik Koraltan and Fuat Köprülü) were less prominent party figures.

those in opposition should feel free to break away and form their own party. During the first week of January 1946, the signatories of the reform manifesto founded the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP), which adopted the Six Arrows of Kemalism, though it clearly intended to undermine two: statism and secularism—for the two contradicted the twin promises that the DP offered its constituency: curbing bureaucratic control of the economy, and reintegrating Islam into public life (Yılmaz 1997: 8). As Anderson noted, the DP leadership formulated the general credo of their political heirs: "a liberal populism, combining commitment to the market and an appeal to tradition in equal measure" (2009: 433-34).

As mentioned before, the first national election, in July 1946, was unabashedly rigged: CHP won 85 percent of the vote, and the DP barely 14 percent, with the rest going to independents, notably former Chief of Staff Marshal Mustafa Favzi Çakmak. The ruling clique then began harassing DP deputies and supporters in the press, forcing the opposition party, on January 11, 1947, to issue an ultimatum, known as the Freedom Charter (*Hürriyet Misakı*), threatening to dissolve itself if government repression and duplicity continued. This coincided with strong international signals (discussed above) that sham democracy would deprive Turkey of Western assistance and protection. At this stage, ruling party autocrats reckoned that the geopolitical cost of repression was too high, and reluctantly agreed to mend their ways. Inönü began extensive negotiations with Menderes and Bayar, culminating in the July 12 Declaration of 1947, which promised fair elections. Fortunately, DP's biggest political asset-turned-liability, the embittered Marshal Çakmak who insisted on becoming president, died conveniently in April 1950, thus allowing a smooth reconciliation between the President (and CHP chairman) Inönü and the opposition leaders a month before Turkey's first truly competitive elections (Yılmaz 1997: 12-16; Karpat 1959; Eren 1963).

The CHP was certainly reluctant to surrender power, but it reckoned that it was perfectly capable of securing a parliamentary majority in the free election of 1950, though by a smaller margin

than the one produced by the rigged elections of 1946. This misplaced confidence by an elitist party that was totally out of touch with its people rested on one major pillar: that it had spared the country the ravages of war between 1939 and 1945. But gratitude is a fairly cheap currency in the political market. As future president and premier Süleyman Demirel explained: "By the end of the war, the people were living in miserable conditions… When the state leaders asked the people 'What do you want?' the answer they received was 'Bread'. To this, the state leaders replied 'But at least you are alive, we saved you from the horrors of war'. But in the eyes of the people the war was a thing of the past" (quoted in Yılmaz 1997: 20). This is why the 1950 elections reversed the 1946 results: DP won 54 percent of the votes, and the CHP came second with 40 percent. Bayar became president, and Menderes headed an exclusively DP cabinet. For the first time, the Republican People's Party was no longer the ruling party, and DP rule would continue for an entire decade. "The dictatorship Kemal had installed was over" (Anderson 2009: 431).

Turkey's democratic transformation was therefore the product of state-led reform dictated by geopolitical imperatives rather than induced by pressure from below; and its end result was the redistribution of power within the political and social elite rather than sharing it with non-elite groups. This view contradicts class-based explanations that portray Turkey's transformation as a successful bourgeois-led conquest of power from bureaucrats, a conquest that was supported by landlords and peasants in the countryside. Advocates of this explanation highlight the rapid accumulation of capital during the war years (mostly through wartime profiteering); aggressive state actions against capitalists and landlords, exemplified by the postwar capital tax and the land reform bill of January 1945; and the impoverishment of peasants and the popular classes in general, which was blamed on bureaucratic corruption and mismanagement (Sunar 1974: 67-87; Keyder 1987: 113-17). Yılmaz refuted this argument by discounting the possibility that a bourgeoisie-bureaucracy struggle could have unfolded at this early stage of Turkey's socioeconomic development, mainly

because the country's mostly commercial bourgeois had not yet crystalized into a 'class-for-itself' in the Marxist lexicon, or a class capable of establishing 'hegemonic' control, as Gramsci would put it. Only in the late 1980s did the Turkish bourgeoisie begin to develop the ideological and organizational capacity for class action against entrenched state elites. All that the merchants, small manufacturers, landowners, and the lower classes could achieve in the 1940s and 1950s was to lend support to one ruling faction against the other, those being the secular and statist faction that stayed in the CHP, on the one hand, and the less-secular and more pro-market faction that formed the DP, on the other. Nor is there any evidence, Yılmaz continued, that the DP was a surrogate party that acted on behalf of the bourgeoisie. "The relationship between the DP and the Turkish bourgeoisie, just as the one between the DP and the peasant masses [and the landowners], was not one of political representation but a complete 'delegation of will' from the social support base of the party" (1997: 21-22; see also Brown 1988: 134).

Be that as it may, DP fortunes waned by the end of the decade. Its 54 percent of the votes in 1950 rose slightly to 57 percent in 1954, then dropped to 48 percent in 1957. By contrast, CHP's meager 40 percent of the votes in 1950 fell to 35 percent in the following election, then picked up again in 1957, ending up where it had begun with 41 percent (Dodd 1969: 46). The reason for this reversal was primarily economic.

Shortly after locking its military alliance with Moscow in the 1920s, Kemal instructed his ministers to study Soviet economic development. The etatist component of Kemalism was simply the Bolshevik industrialization program "detached completely from its ideological moorings and its…profound hostility to the peasant society" (Dunn 1972: 193). The Soviet model was intriguing for several reasons: it fitted nicely with Kemal's autocratic dispositions, and its self-sufficiency squared with his desire to keep Turkey independent of foreign entanglements. In addition, this model reinforced the ruling elite's inherent hostility toward business interests. One should not forget

that, historically, Turkey's most prominent businessmen were either minority groups (Greeks, Armenians, and Jews) or foreigners, and both were perceived as exploiting Turks in various ways (Roos and Roos 1971: 6, 17).

DP leaders banked on the tense relationship between bureaucrats bent on developing a strong national economy, and landowners and merchants hoping to be left alone, to score their remarkable electoral gains in 1950. But the Second World War had devastated the Turkish economy: soaring inflation spared no one, and unemployment forced many to seek public employment and welfare. The DP government used Western assistance to provide peasants with cheap credit and offer generous compensation for their produce. It also helped expand the cash-crop economy in the countryside through building roads and importing modern farming equipment. However, while these measures initially spurred economic growth and raised per capita incomes, lavish public spending relying on foreign assistance and internal debt was naturally short lived. By the end of the 1950s, the budget deficit, external debt, inflation, and unemployment were running high (Anderson 2009: 434-35). The resulting social unrest threatened political stability. The supposed harbingers of democracy increasingly turned to dictatorial measures to contain protests. Menderes created a parliamentary committee to investigate what he described as the 'subversive activities' of his political foes; he resorted to patronage to augment his control over the bureaucracy; he imposed press censorship; and when riots continued, he closed down university campuses in Istanbul and Ankara, and declared martial law. After a whole month of disturbances, the military intervened (Harb 2002: 182).

The 1960 Coup: An Original Sin?

It can be argued that the military supported multiparty elections to guarantee that the Western powers would deter the Soviets from subduing Ankara, and come to its aid should a war break out. The military considered a Soviet attack on Turkey a real and present danger, considering not only its geographical proximity, but also the long history of war between the Ottoman Caliphate and Tsarist Russia. And the U.S., on its part, was not ready to risk losing Turkey, considering the country's sensitive geopolitical position (Bâli 2010: Interview). It can also be added that young Turkish officers saw that authoritarianism was politically destabilizing, and therefore threated national security (Heper and Güney 2000: 637). But over and above these geopolitical and security concerns, the officers that carried out the 1960 coup held an institutional-related grudge against the DP leadership.

Back in the 1940s, scores of officers supported the DP for reasons specifically related to the military. First, they scorned the dislodging of military strongman Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, who had been Ottoman War Minister after the Great War, a hero of the War of Liberation, and Chief of Staff for a record twenty-two years (1922-1944) before being forced to retire by President Inönü (his former subordinate) because he considered the powerful Marshal as a threat to the ruling party's subordination of the armed forces. Çakmak was an iconic figure and revered mentor of dozens of officers, and his humiliating dismissal damaged the prestige of the army. Equally rejected by officers was the appointment of weak Inönü loyalists as military chiefs, as well as the 1949 law that subordinated the chief of staff to the defense minister rather than the prime minister. Çakmak himself did not hide his bitterness, and accordingly lent his full support—and that of his devotees in the army—to the DP in hope of replacing Inönü in the top executive position (Yılmaz 1997: 9-10). His death in 1950 left officers wondering whether the DP would have fulfilled its promise and installed him as president—especially that it seemed to be renegading on its promises in another crucial field: the reorganization of the armed forces.

Turkish officers (particularly junior ones) resented Turkey's apparent military sterility during World War II and placed the blame on their old commanders – pejoratively dubbed 'the Prussians', for adhering to the archaic German school of military thinking. Dazzled by the performance of the U.S. troops during the war, these young officers recognized that the Turkish armed forces could not be upgraded without switching to American training. And they understood that opening up the political system was the price Washington demanded. At the same time, once U.S. aid began pouring in, after the 1947 assistance package, these same junior officers, who began to accumulate new experiences and superior know-how, felt confident enough to defy the control of the Old Pashas. Representatives of this young cabal concluded a secret pact with DP leaders in 1950, guaranteeing military support for democratization (or at least preventing the use of the army in repression) in exchange for sweeping military reforms. And indeed two of these officers (Fahri Belen and Seyfi Kurtbek) were assigned cabinet posts in the first DP government, and the top brass was thoroughly purged. However, the new political rulers did not keep their end of the deal. Once firmly installed in power, they feared that an overhaul of the military might politically empower it further. They dragged their feet, and even the resignation of the two officers-turned-ministers did not propel them to revise their position (Yılmaz 1997: 10-11). Officers felt double-crossed.

Worse still, Primer Minister Menderes displayed "a thinly veiled contempt" for officers, letting their social and financial status to suffer, and allowing them no say in defense and foreign policy formulation. His government also interfered in military appointments and promotions to reward loyalists, regardless of merit. Moreover, Menderes resorted to martial law with or without cause, pushing soldiers against civilian demonstrators, and thus tarnishing the military's public image—a policy that pushed General Cemal Gürsel, commander of the land forces (and future leader of the 1960 coup), to resign in protest on May 3, 1960 (Brown 1988: 134; Harb 2002: 181).

Unlike future military interventions in Turkey, it was junior officers who took the initiative on May 27, 1960, arresting DP leaders and cabinet members. Prime Minister Menderes and two of his minsters were hanged; President Bayar was only sparred by former President Inönü's interjection; and DP loyalists in the armed forces were purged. The plotters did not have a clear political affiliation. Some were social radicals, others were nationalists, but most had no clear program beyond restoring order and doing away with the troublesome Democratic Party. Soon, the high command reasserted itself (Anderson 2009: 435-36). Thus, when the thirty-eight-member National Unity Committee (NUC) was created to supervise political reform, it included two wings: a radical camp of fourteen junior officers, under Colonel Alparslan Türkes, who all wanted to maintain power, and a larger camp of senior officers, led by General Cemal Gürsel, who wanted to withdraw rapidly from politics. The moderate generals warned junior zealots that if they did not fall in line, the Third Army, based in eastern Anatolia, would be used crush them. At the beginning of 1961, Gürsel arrested (and later exiled) the obstinate members of the radical faction (Dodd 1969: 72; Harb 2002: 182).

A commission of professors and jurists, headed by the University of Istanbul's distinguished law professor Sıddık Sami Onar, were invited to draft a new constitution to be ratified by referendum. The constitution reestablished democracy, instating safeguards for civil liberties and freedom of the press. And by October 1961, the military returned to barracks after having spent sixteen months in power (Anderson 2009: 435-36). By all accounts, the new constitution paved the way for a more stable democracy. Drawing on the experience of Western democracies, it ensured the separation of powers and created a balance between parliament, the government, and the presidency; introduced proportional representation and an upper chamber to review legislations; enhanced judicial independence and created a Constitutional Court to arbitrate political differences; allowed the formation of unions, professional syndicates, and ideological parties. Another major

difference between the new Constitution and that of 1924 is that it laid the foundation of a democratic welfare state, where the government is strong and stable enough to lead economic development and undertake extended social responsibilities (Dodd 1969: 123; Caglar 1994: 113).

But even though the 1960 coup helped consolidate democracy, officers also established mechanisms to enable them to monitor and influence politics in a routine and legal manner without having to resort to an armed intervention in the future (Shmuelevitz 1999: 7; Aksin 2007: 268). The Internal Act of the Turkish Armed forces, formulated in 1961, stipulated in Article 35 that: "the military is responsible for defending both the Turkish Fatherland and the Turkish Republic as defined by the Constitution." And a National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK) was set up to help it achieve this duty through regular coordination between officers and civilians. MGK was composed of ten members: five civilians (the president, prime minister, ministers of war, the interior, and foreign affairs) and five military men (the chief of staff and service chiefs), and it convenes monthly to make policy recommendations (Heper and Güney 2000: 637). Its true purpose, however, was to serve as "a platform for the military to voice its opinion on matters of national security" through a legally designated channel (Sakallioglu 1997: 156). To formalize civil-military relations even further, the MGK introduced, in 1963, the National Security Policy Document (*Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi*, MGSB)—known as the 'red booklet'—prepared by the military, intelligence, and foreign office. The document defines threats and specifies how to respond to them, before being sent to the cabinet for approval. It is revised every December, and renewed every five years. Military officers initiate most changes, and it has been used since as another tool to present military views of national priorities in a legal and subtle way (Uzgel 2003: 194). Finally, to help smooth civil-military communications even further, the coup's moderate leader, General Gürsel, resigned from the military and served as president for one term only (1961-1966).

Despite all that, once the military returned to barracks, it had to withstand "a crescendo of insinuations and criticisms of their revolution" by civilian politicians (Dodd 1969: 61). Some lost patience. On February 22, 1961, sixty-nine junior officers and cadets of the Ankara War School, led by Colonel Talat Adyemir, drove a tank battalion out to the streets demanding the dissolution of parliament. Their move was aborted in twelve hours by the solid refusal of the rest of the armed forces to follow suit. The air force, under Air Marshal Irfan Tansel, was the first to react to the coup attempt, threatening to bomb the tanks from the air if they did not withdraw. Seeing this positive response by the leaders of armed forces, President Inönü was lenient with the mutinous officers, forcing them to retire rather than arresting them. Another coup attempt, in May 1963, was aborted with similar ease. This one started with the arrest of ten officers—who called themselves the Young Kemalist Officers—at the naval and military schools in Istanbul for distributing pamphlets that praise Kemal's authoritarian form of government. On May 20, the same Colonel Adyemir, now in retirement for almost two years, donned his uniform and led officers and cadets from the same War School in Ankara in a second attempt to overthrow the government. This time there were causalities, as the rest of armed forces came down heavily on the conspirators, killing two of the cadets and losing six loyal troops. The punishment this time was more severe: 1459 cadets were tried, seventy-five received four-year prison sentences; ninety-three received three-year terms; and the rest were acquitted; also 106 officers were tried, seven were handed death sentences (though only two, including Adyemir, were executed); twenty-nine were imprisoned for life; and half of the remaining sentences were between four and five years (Dodd 1969: 61-62, 79-80; Aksin 2007: 269). The two failed attempts underlined the fact that 'radical' coups had "no support from the institution as a whole" (Harb 2002: 195). The military did not tolerate, let alone encourage, full-fledged political interventions.

Secularism Loosens its Grip

One of the most curious outcomes of the 1960 coup was that officers seemed to have become more accommodating of the role of Islam in society. By the late 1940s, it had become obvious to all that Islam was "too deeply rooted an element in the Turkish national identity to be lightly cast aside…[and] restoration of Islamic belief and practice [was perceived] as necessary to the health of the Turkish people [and therefore the country's political stability]" (Lewis 1952: 46). Even though members of the National Unity Council, which represented the coup makers, felt compelled to formally express their commitment to Kemal's secular principles, they did not back them up in practice. One of the junta members confirmed that: "It is the greatest aim of the NUC to keep our sacred religion, which is the treasure of freedom and conscience, pure and unblemished, and save it from being a tool of reactionary and political movements" (quoted in Ahmad 1988: 755-56). Even before the coup, President Bayar had proclaimed: "The Turkish nation is a Muslim nation and will remain so;" and Prime Minister Menderes attacked secularism as "a means of provoking hatred and persecuting people" (quoted in Helal 1999: 79). The significance of these statements becomes obvious when contrasted with an older statement by Interior Minister Shükrü Kaya, on December 3, 1934, in the Grand National Assembly, which began: "Religions have fulfilled their purpose and their functions are exhausted" (quoted in Ahmad 1988: 757). The contrast becomes clearer when compared to Kemal's notorious assertion in 1927: "I have no religion, and at times I wish all religions at the bottom of the sea… My people are going to learn the principles of democracy, the dictates of truth and the teachings of science. Superstition must go" (quoted in Mango 1999: 463). This change of attitude reflected the influence of Islamists in society.

Kemalist secularism had clearly become tempered once its founder passed away, not only because his successor was personally "pious and conservative" (Anderson 2009: 426),[11] but because of the reconfiguration of social forces that accompanied multi-party politics. It is no secret that Atatürk's "deeply unpopular" cultural reforms took root only because the majority of Turks—in the 1920s—were too militarily exhausted and geographically dislocated to resist, but was bound to do so once it regained its strength (Bâli 2010: Interview). With the dissolution of Sufi orders in 1925, popular piety was channeled toward underground religious communities, some of which were connected with the old orders, notably, the *Naqshbandi* order, but the more effective ones were new Sufi-inspired movements (Tugal 2002: 92-93). The most important in the 1940s and 1950s was the Nur movement (*Nurcu*), which encompassed loosely organized circles of students and followers of spiritual leader Bediüzzeman Said al-Nursi (1870s-1960).

Ethnically a Kurd, Nursi was born in eastern Anatolia as a subject of the Ottoman Caliphate. At a very young age, he became occupied with the dilemma that riddled Ottoman rulers during the last decades of the Caliphate, namely, how to incorporate Western modernity without violating their faith or compromising their Islamic identity. His answer was to educate Muslims in ways that reconciled scientific thinking and religious tenets. In 1907, he presented his ideas to Sultan Abdülhamid, only to be rejected and ushered to prison. The bitterness of this encounter fueled Nursi's constitutionalist beliefs, whereby he unwittingly supported the Young Turk's modernizing regime, and joined the army during the First World War. After a two-year stretch as prisoner of war in Siberia, he retuned to Allied-controlled Istanbul in 1918. The humiliation of defeat drove him to hastily join forces with Mustafa Kemal and his mutinous fellow officers. Kemal invited him to address the Grand National Assembly in Ankara in 1922, at a time when the Caliph in Istanbul still considered its members outlaws. Immediately disenchanted by the religious irreverence of the soon-

[11] "In his private life, Inönü was a conventional Muslim, who carried a miniature Koran in his pocket. He saw to it that his children received private religious lessons" (Mango 1999: 529).

to-be master of Anatolia and his coterie, the young preacher considered the train-ride back to his residence in Van a spiritual journey between the rebellious and politically engaged Old Said and the ascetic and detached New Said. In this new phase, Nursi would turn away from national politics to social reform, to the task of nurturing a group of pious individuals with a correct understanding of Islam and a healthy appreciation for science and material success, what he frequently referred to as an 'intellectually able group'. Only through spiritual renewal, reflected in everyday practices, could society achieve a new, more powerful Islamic consciousness, and gradually transpose these values to the political sphere. From this point on, Nursi began disseminating his writings among a select group of students. His prolific writings (mostly in Arabic) include an exegesis of select verses of the Qur'an, in addition to a voluminous compilation of religious commentaries, fragmented reflections, memoirs, and the long speeches he insisted on improvising and delivering in person during his numerous trials. These were all collected under the title of *Risale-i Nur Külliyatı* (The Complete Epistles of Light). Nursi' work was interrupted by detention and trial on several occasions, and he was falsely accused of inciting subversion. The suffering associated with his numerous prison stints and long periods of exile enhanced his mystical aura and reinforced the commitment of his followers. Kemal's ban on the private production of religious materials had a decisive influence on the character of the Nur movement. Transcribing, translating, and circulating handwritten copies of his commentaries cemented his network of students. Also, the fact that Nursi was kept almost permanently under house arrest prompted his expanding base of followers to organize themselves in independent study groups (*dershane*) to examine his texts.

As the republic moved to a multi-party system in the 1940s, the Nur movement was the most well organized section of Turkish civil society. This political change marked the final transition of Said al-Nursi, to what he called the Third Said: the community activist who lends support to political leaders who uphold Islam without formally identifying with any particular faction. This not

only became the model for future Islamist activists, but it also made the Turkish Islamist movement in general flexible enough to weather the storms of military reaction that swept away political parties between 1960 and 1997. The Nur network was crucial to garnering the votes that brought the Democratic Party to power in 1950—the party that was violently overthrown days before Nursi passed away in the summer of 1960. Afterward, the Nur study groups became more institutionalized, establishing branches all over the country (5,000 by the 1990s) and spreading abroad. Moreover, the diverse temperaments, backgrounds, and interpretations of Nur adherents (an estimated six million today) divided them into several groups rather than a single hierarchical organization, which made it impossible to repress them all (Yavuz 1999: 586-92; Abu-Rabi' 2003). There is no better indicator of the influence of Said al-Nursi than the rumor that the radical officers of the 1960 coup reallocated his shrine to an unknown destination, "some say they tossed his body into the sea from a helicopter!" (Yılmaz 2009: Interview).

Long before Nursi's death, however, the ruling elite provided several concessions to appease popular religiosity. Preachers returned to the army in May 1940; elected deputies debated reintroducing religion to public education in 1946, and by 1949 Islamic subjects were integrated into school curriculums. Following the Democratic Party's 1950 electoral victory, religious education became compulsory after the Republican People's Party had only made it optional the year before; Sufi orders were tolerated; calls to prayer were heard in Arabic again; and state radio aired Qur'an recitation (Lewis 1952: 40-43). DP leaders made sure to praise al-Nursi on every occasion, and frequently boasted about the number of mosques built under its tenure (Ahmad 1988: 756).

In short, the 1960 coup was carried out in defense of military interests and political stability, not to safeguard the republic's secular nature. Its long-term effects were the creation of a more stable democracy, on the one hand, and the instituting of regular mechanisms for the management of civil-military relations, the most important of which was the National Security Council.

Chapter Seventeen

THE COMMUNIQUÉ COUP: MARCH 1971

The 1960 coup might have produced legal and institutional changes, but it did not really reconfigure the political arena: the voting bloc commanded by the Democratic Party remained intact. It was only normal that remnants of the now dissolved DP would regroup in a new party that caters to the same constituency: this was the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP), formed under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel, an American-educated civil engineer. In the first post-coup elections, held in 1961, the old ruling party (CHP) returned with 37 percent of the votes, followed by AP as a close second with 35 percent. The CHP come back was evidently short lived, and in the 1965 elections, AP secured 53 percent of the vote versus 29 percent for CHP, and in 1969 AP maintained its lead with 47 percent, and CHP came second with 27 percent—what some considered a sort of 'Restoration' after the 1960 coup (Dodd 1969: 306). The only disconcerting political development was the return of exiled radical officer Colonel Alparslan Türkes to form the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), a fascist party with a Nazi-like militia, the notorious Gray Wolves, that terrorized leftists and ethnic and sectarian minorities across the country, although it received only 3 percent of the vote in its first electoral showing in 1969 (Heper and Güney 2000: 638).

But although AP inherited the Democratic Party's constituency, it did not replicate its policies. The plight of the DP dissuaded the new political rulers from clashing with the military or drifting toward authoritarianism. An additional deterrent was the fact that, during AP rule, the president remained a military figure: General Cemal Gürsel occupied the position until 1966, and was followed by Chief of Staff Cevdet Sunay (Harb 2002: 187). Economic policy presented another point of difference between AP and its predecessor. Although the new ruling party continued to dispense benefits to the countryside, its policies were much less liberal. AP supported state-led

development and import-substituting industrialization enshrined in the 1961 Constitution. Although statism had for long been a pillar of Kemalism, the role of the state in the 1960s expanded to the point where it resembled the "national developmentalist variety of socialism" (Yılmaz 2008: 2). The military itself became involved in this through the Armed Forces' Trust and Pension Fund (*Ordu Yardimlasma Kurumu*, OYAK), established in 1961, which was a holding company run by civilians that channeled 10 percent of officers' salaries toward industrial investments (Uzgel 2003: 183).

However, Turkey was not spared the typical problems of late modernizers. The shifting of resources to industry and artificial price controls disrupted the agricultural economy. Two million peasant families, representing two-thirds of those engaged in agriculture, were now farming uneconomical units, and were forced to seek jobs in the industrial sector. When those were added to tens of thousands of landless rural laborers trying to find employment in this expanding sector, the result was rising unemployment and lowering of wages (Dunn1972: 192). Workers expectedly became radicalized, and the state's loyal trade union, the Trade Union Confederation of Turkey (*Türkiye Isçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, Türk-Is) no longer satisfied their needs. Many embraced communism, and a Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation (*Devrimci Isçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, DISK) came into being as an alliance of several militant unions fighting for workers' right to strike and imposing their demands (Tugal 2007: 9). At the same time, peasants and merchants in the countryside, and artisans and petite bourgeoisie in the cites drifted toward Islamism, which was about to form its first political party in 1970, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP), under an engineering professor by the name of Necmettin Erbakan.

Although members of the Nur movement provided solid support for the AP, and although the party's leader, Demirel, frequently professed his devoutness, remarking once for instance that: "I was born into a family that does not sit down to breakfast before reading the Holy Koran," the liberal 1961 Constitution permitted Islamists to organize their own parties, instead of influencing

politics by proxy (Ahmad 1988: 764). This was a departure from the model set forth by Said al-Nursi, a departure that Islamists will come to regret in the 1980s and 1990s before returning to Nursi's model at the turn of the century. Erbakan and his followers, who mostly belonged to the *Naqshabandi* Sufi order, created an ideological movement that issued its first manifesto, the National View (*Milli Görüs*), in 1969, asserting that Islam is the core of Turkish identity, rejecting Westernization, and proposing to strengthen ties with the Muslim world.

The emergence of fascists, leftist radicals, and Islamists on the periphery of the political system polarized society, and the extremism simmering under the surface threatened the stable democracy that officers had tried to establish through the 1961 Constitution. Workers paralyzed economic life through a series of strikes in the summer of 1970; students shifted from demonstrations to urban guerilla warfare inside and outside campuses; political activists resorted to bank robberies to finance their activities; foreign dignitaries (mostly, American and Israeli) were kidnapped and harassed (Aksin 2007: 272). More dangerous was reports that a leftist coup was in the offing, and a coup by the top brass was crucial to block it (Aksin 2007: 272).

Alarmed that radicalism outside the corps might seep into and factionalize the armed forces, Chief of Staff Cemal Tural and the service chiefs decided to head off an anticipated move by another group of hothead officers, as the one that spearheaded the 1960 coup (Dodd 1969: 308; Harb 2002: 44). On March 12, 1971, the military leadership issued a communiqué addressed to the President and Speaker of Parliament "warning of dire consequences if civilians continued to jeopardize the state and law and order." When Demirel failed to respond, he was replaced by a technocratic government under former CHP functionary Nihat Erim, which amended the constitution to curb the influence of minority groups, and prepared for fresh elections (Harb 2002: 187-88). Meanwhile, martial law was declared, radicals (especially from the left) were suppressed, and the Islamist MNP was dissolved. In addition, five generals, one admiral, and thirty-five colonels were

cashiered (Kili 2003: 167; Aksin 2007: 272). A mild change in the job description of the National Security Council (MGK) was introduced in 1973, allowing officers not only to share their views with politicians, but also present specific recommendations to the cabinet. More important, the military—increasingly becoming distrustful of civilian rulers—enhanced the autonomy of the chief of staff in formulating defense policies, preparing the defense budget (which could no longer be debated in parliament or scrutinized in the press), weapons manufacturing and procurement, and the management of military personnel (Sakallioglu 1997: 150).

In terms of security, the military continued to be responsible for internal stability and intelligence gathering. Article 85 of the revised Internal Service Regulations of the Turkish Armed Forces stated: "Turkish Armed Forces shall defend the country against internal as well as external threats if necessary by force" (Heper and Güney 2000: 637). It carried out this function through its own intelligence units, as well as working closely with the newly created (in 1965) National Intelligence Agency (*Milli Istihbarat Teskilati*, MIT), which was supposed to report to the prime minister, but in reality was subject to military supervision. MIT head and leading officers (as well as half of its personnel) have been recruited from the army as a matter of course. And unlike its counterparts in the Middle East and Latin America, it did not establish much autonomy and remained attached to the military (Uzgel 2003: 181). Also, an anti-riot police was established for the first time in 1961 under the name of the Society Police (*Toplum Polisi*), though it would soon prove powerless without the direct support of military troops (Caglar 1994: 125).

Once the political arena was "judged sufficiently purged of subversion," democratic life was allowed to resume in October 1973, two and a half years after military rule (Anderson 2009: 438). This relatively minor regression revealed that the Turkish army was determined to keep political excesses in check. But as the next few years would prove, a more radical intervention would be needed to contain the social forces that multi-party politics had unleashed.

Chapter Eighteen

'PASSIVE' REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE: SEPTEMBER 1980

Unlike the case after the 1960 coup, the 1971 intervention produced a divided political landscape. Between January 1971 and December 1979, Turkey witnessed twelve coalition governments, with an average of one government every nine months (Helal 1999: 140). Most of these weak cabinets were headed by either Süleyman Demirel's AP or Bülent Ecevit, the medicine professor and author of *Left of the Center*, who replaced Ismet Inönü at the helm of the CHP in 1972, and included—as junior ruling partners—the fascist MHP and Necmettin Erbakan's new Islamist party, the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selâmet Partisi*, MSP). The inclusion of Islamists for the first time in government was a significant development, although its minor share in parliament (12 percent in 1973; and 9 percent in 1977) still indicated that it did not carry real political weight. Its social base was admittedly large numerically (artisans, small traders, peasants) but politically marginal and geographically limited to the provincial towns of Anatolia, with its conservative and traditional-minded populace (Narli 2003: 126).

Though these coalition governments signed on to the military's decision to invade Cyprus in 1974, under the pretext of protecting the Turkish minority against a Greek-inspired coup against Archbishop Makarios, they still challenged the military on several occasions. In 1973, for instance, parliament rejected the general command's nomination of Chief of Staff Faruk Gürler for the presidency. Even though the latter resigned his army post to prepare for elections, parliament chose Admiral Fahri Korutürk instead (Aksin 2007: 274). Three years later, Prime Minister Demirel fought for the right to appoint service chiefs, though his attempt was overruled by the military's administrative court. Demirel was also openly critical of the officers' monopoly over the revising of the National Security Policy Document (MGSB), demanding that they consult the government

before requiring any revisions (Sakallioglu 1997: 162; Uzgel 2003: 194). These and other incidents inflamed civil-military relations throughout the 1970s.

The economic situation was no less troublesome. State-led industrialization halved agriculture's GDP share from 40 percent to 20 percent, but the import-substituting industrial policy harmed the economy without achieving the hoped for growth. While state-protected manufacturing and agriculture covered domestic needs, the two sectors failed to compete on the world market, causing a chronic shortage in foreign exchange, which the state was then forced to borrow, thus accumulating huge foreign and domestic debts. Fixing prices and exchange rates only made things worse, forcing consumers to turn en masse to the black market. To top it all, Turkey imported close to 80 percent of its oil, and was therefore devastated by the quadrupling of oil prices after 1973. In short, the closed economy was driving the country to the abyss: inflation exceeded 100 percent; the balance of payment deficit was as high as $3 billion; and foreign debt reached $19 billion—from only $2 billion a decade before (Wahid 2009: 70-74). The obvious exhaustion of the import-substitution model combined with external shocks to paralyze the economy. A complete overhaul was due, and weak government coalitions lacked the political will or the popular legitimacy to carry it out (Önis 1997: 749). Little wonder that some observers considered the soon-to-come 1980 coup a legitimate response to the country's economic impasse (Keyder 2004: 66)—though a more obvious reason was the "total collapse of civil peace" in the late 1970s, and the failure of civilian politicians to alleviate popular unrest (Harb 2002: 189). What was the source of this political turbulence?

Rapid industrialization, and the economic crises it invited, provided a fertile ground for communism. Not only did the expanding urban underclass bolster the ranks of the radical left, but also the ethnically persecuted Kurds threw their lot in with leftist. Even policemen and junior military officers developed leftist sympathies. At this critical juncture, Greek communists came to power in Athens and supported their counterparts over the border. Turkish communists were now

armed and ready. They had every reason to believe that Turkey was experiencing "an Allende moment" (Yılmaz 2009: Interview). The rise of the left aggravated the fascist squads (the Gray Wolves) even further. Its attacks on the left intensified, and their political representative in government, the MHP, protected them from prosecution (Anderson 2009: 438-39).

At the same time, Islamists were gaining ground. Economic-driven migration from the countryside crowded the major cities with shantytowns. The new city dwellers remained rural in outlook, but without the dense communal bonds that sustained them in the village. Millions of peasants thus created "urban villages" and began to cluster around the Islamist MSP, which received the newcomers with open arms, providing them with welfare, job opportunities, social connections, and promised them a voice in national politics (Ahmad 1988: 758). As Islamist zeal increased, there were more signs of defiance. In September 1980, a 'Save Jerusalem Rally' organized in Konya (where Erbakan was first elected deputy) included demonstrators in traditional garments (including the banned fez), waiving green flags, calling for a restoration of Shari'a, and refusing to sing the national anthem (Ahmad 1988: 750).

Just like in the 1960s, polarization led to violence, but this time the violence was categorically different: clashes between fascists, separatists, communists, and Islamists gave way to kidnappings, bombs, and assassinations on an unprecedented scale. And the weak government coalitions and divided parliaments had no sway over the political street, and therefore could not bring the situation under control. Between 1975 and 1980, political violence claimed the lives of 5,000 people, and three times as much people were injured (Harb 2002: 91). Clashes escalated in 1978, when in less than nine months (between January and September) Turkey's witnessed 4,459 violent incidents (2,2746 armed clashes, and 325 robberies), killing 711 people and injuring another 4,652

(Shmuelevitz 1999: 121).[12] In this bleak year, authorities confiscated enough arms and ammunition to supply three military divisions—35,294 machineguns and 7,073,000 rounds of ammunition, in addition to dozens of rockets (Shmuelevitz 1999: 131). A particularly shocking incident was the three-day confrontation between right-wing Sunnis and left-leaning Shi'is in the neighborhood of Kahramanmaras in December 1978. After 109 people were killed, and after hundreds were injured on both sides, and after 500 houses and businesses were torched to the ground, the government (headed at this point by CHP's Bülent Ecevit) had no other choice but to call in the army to intervene. The government and parliament then agreed to declare martial law in thirteen provinces including Ankara and Istanbul in order to enable the army to carry out its duty (Shmuelevitz 1999: 12; Aksin 2007: 277).

This was a last resort measure after the police force proved utterly ineffective, even after its ranks were reinforced with 20,000 recruits in the summer of 1978, and another 5,500 the following summer (a total of 40 percent increase in personnel); and even after the rural-based gendarmes were asked to help restore order in the cities; and even after all the heads of the police and intelligence agencies were changed (Shmuelevitz 1999: 78). The police was not just unequipped to deal with such wide scale violence, but because the Constitution allowed officers to create independent professional associations, the police force was soon torn between two syndicates—the right-wing Police Unity (*Pol-Bir*) and the left-leaning Police Association (*Pol-Der*)—and this fragmentation made it difficult for policemen to unite behind the regime, or even their own institutional interests (Caglar 1994: 152).

Unfortunately, even the military's 'peacekeeping' units proved insufficient. Between December 1978 and September 1980, an average of twenty people were killed each day (a total of 5,241 people) as a result of political violence (Aksin 2007: 279). With ideological, religious, and

[12] A breakdown of those killed during these nine months shows that they included 215 students, 101 workers, 30 teachers, 20 policemen and watchmen, five soldiers, two judges and 338 from other professions (Shmuelevitz 1999: 121).

ethnic agitation escalating beyond control, many felt that the country "may be slipping down the path of Lebanon into a state of civil war" (Wahid 2009: 70). A full-fledged military intervention seemed necessary if total collapse was to be averted.

Yet the general staff was reluctant to intervene, and did in fact issue several communiqués warning against involving the army in internal feuds. And the new Chief of Staff Kenan Evren, appointed in March 1978, supported this position (Shmuelevitz 1999: 81). However, military intelligence reports revealed that polarization had reached the armed forces, prompting Evren, in March 1979, to accuse political factions of trying to "split the Turkish army into pieces" (quoted in Shmuelevitz 1999: 117). The United States, along with the rest of NATO's members, also promoted the military to intervene lest political instability ends with communists coming close to assuming power, as they did in Greece and Italy, or with Islamist rule, as in Iran (Yılmaz 2009: Interview).[13] After consulting with the field commanders and the service chiefs, and after several warning memos to civilian politicians, the army stepped in. On September 12, Chief of Staff Kenan Evren announced in a short broadcast that the military invoked the power granted to it by the Internal Service Code to protect the republic from external and internal dangers, blamed politicians for failing to curb violence, and declared martial law (Sakallioglu 1997: 152).

Militarism and 'Leftocide'

The military acted in a cohesive and disciplined manner from the start. Six weeks after the coup, a new law (the Law on Constitutional Order) entrusted the military members of the National Security Council (MGK), i.e. chief of staff and service chiefs, with legislative and executive power, and delegated everyday governance to technocrats (Kili 2003: 170). MGK then institutionalized itself as

[13] American blessing for the September 1980 coup is evident in the fact that U.S. military aid increased from $453 million before the coup to $688 million eight years after (Wahid 2009: 81).

an emergency ruling body and pledged to return power to civilians after an estimated three-year transitional period, which it did. Evren repeatedly reminded the people that the aim of the intervention was "to avert civil war and to save democracy" (Harb 2002: 189). In one of his first declarations he summarized the military's position as follows: "We have not eliminated democracy. I would particularly like to point out that we were *forced* to launch this operation in order to restore democracy with all its principles, *to replace a malfunctioning democracy*" (quoted in Brown 1988: 138). In a speech on July 24, 1981, Evren declared: "I did not say 'return of democracy', but 're-founding democracy'. This is because 'return' would mean going back to pre-12 September [1980]…the bitterness of these days still burns in our hearts. Because of a degenerate democracy, democracy in name only, this nation suffered bigger casualties up to 11 September than it sustained in the Battle of Sakarya [the decisive battle against the Greeks in 1922]" (quoted in Shmuelevitz 1999: 168).

This 're-founding of democracy' involved brutal measures. Parliament was dissolved; municipal councils were dismissed; and prominent politicians (including all party leaders) were imprisoned or banned from practicing politics for ten years. In a few months, 650,000 activists were detained, 230,000 were prosecuted, and among those 517 were sentenced to death (though only 50 were actually executed), and an additional 450 died under torture; 14,000 were stripped of their citizenship; and around 30,000 sought exile abroad (Helal 1999: 7; Sahin 2012: 2). In addition, more than 100 cadets were expelled from the army on account of their political affiliations (Ahmad 1988: 751). By the end of 1981, the MGK had passed 268 laws to regulate political life, signaling a complete overhaul of the system of government (Aksin 2007: 280). State Security Courts were introduced, in 1984, as an expedient legal body to try enemies of the state, and cases before these courts increased from 2 in 1984 to 128 in 1987 (Ahmad 1988: 752).

More important, the 1980 intervention institutionalized militarism in Turkish politics more than any other period since the birth of the republic. Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution obliged

the cabinet to prioritize, rather than just consider, MGK recommendations. And these recommendations, in turn, extended beyond security issues to school curriculums, television programs, and bureaucratic appointments (Heper and Güney 2000: 637). MGK now had a General Secretariat, headed by a military officer, to prepare the agenda for the monthly meetings and follow the implementation of the council's decisions with the relevant government agencies. The new Constitution also decreed that in time of war, the chief of staff would assume the position of commander-in-chief on behalf of the president. In addition to these institutionalized mechanisms, it became normal, in the post-1980 years, for senior officers to make public statements on all matters of governance, sometimes even hold press conference to clarify their views on daily events (Uzgel 2003: 191-95). Collectively, these changes were meant to provide the general command with a permanent veto power over government, and thus render "crude military intervention into politics redundant" (Sakallioglu 1997: 154).

To make sure that the military would not be dragged again into law and order missions, the junta tried to rehabilitate the police force. The Turkish police in the 1970s suffered from low self-standing because of its helplessness vis-à-vis regular crimes, let alone political violence (Caglar 1994: 125). The anti-riot police (the so-called Society Police) was thus replaced after 1980 with a new semi-militaristic force called the Active Force (*Cevik Kuvvet*), which was focused mostly on anti-terrorism––though it only operated in 43 of Turkey's 74 cities. And the army still had to use its own troops to fight militants, especially in the Kurdish areas and in the face of massive social unrest (Caglar 1994: 126). Also, despite the fact that a Political Police branch was added to the Interior Ministry it remained limited in activity and scope. Political monitoring remained the responsibility of the military and civilian intelligence (Caglar 1994: 133).

Ironically, the 1980 coup and the repression that followed it were "not the gateway to a dictatorship in Turkey, but to a democratic catharsis" (Anderson 2009: 440). A new Constitution

was drafted—the one still in effect today—and received 91 percent approval in a public referendum in 1982. The following year, martial law was lifted, except in the southeastern Kurdish areas. In 1983, parliamentary life was once again resumed. Evren resigned his military commission and was elected president for a seven-year term. With regards to parliamentary politics, the participation of peripheral parties was limited by prohibiting those who receive less than 10 percent of the votes from entering parliament. This and other measures were designed to create a stable two-party system representing centrists on both left and right, rather than shifting coalitions between mainstream parties and extremists on the fringes. In addition, the role of the president was enhanced to help him smooth the functioning of the political system and mediate between political parties (Harb 2002: 193).

The lasting effect of the post-1980 repression was the complete eradication of the Left—a fact that led Yılmaz to describe the coup as "openly fascist," and one that perpetrated "leftocide: a genocide of the Left" (Yılmaz 2009: Interview). Yet other political factions benefited from the coup. Although the ruthless elimination of communism during three years of military rule succeeded in achieving "a permanent alteration in the political landscape," there was a need to keep the ground clear and preempt a leftist resurgence, especially as the junta had resolved to liberalize the economy in a way that certainly threatened to provoke workers' unrest. Here, Islamism proved useful. Empowering moderate Islamist parties not only promised to keep communists in check, but also to prevent the rise of religious militants, such as the Turkish *Hezbollah* and the Great Raiders' Front of Islam (*Islami Büyük Akıncılar Cephesi*). The Islamic Revolution in Iran, which occurred barely a year before the coup, convinced the generals of the dangers of radical Islamism, and that moderates must be endorsed as an antidote. This is why the 1982 Constitution expanded the definition of Turkishness to include Islam, and encouraged the teaching of Islam in public schools (Tugal 2007: 9-11). Article 24 specifically stated: "Teaching and education in religion and ethics shall be

conducted under State supervision and control. Religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools" (Kili 2003: 172).

Of course, on the official level the coup leaders criticized Islamists, and made several references to Article 163 of the Penal Code, which criminalized attempts to alter the secular character of the republic (Ahmad 1988: 750). In truth, however, the junta's actions proved that they have effectively abandoned secularism in the interest of suppressing communism. Evren stated that: "Laicism does not mean atheism" (Anderson 2009: 441), and many knew that despite his secular training in the army, his cultural background was "virtually the same as that of the people who are described as Islamists" (Ahmad 1988: 765). This is why repression against Islamists was minimal. Although the Islamist party (the MHP) was dissolved and its leader was detained and barred from politics, Erbakan spent less than a month in prison, before being tried and acquitted, and returned to politics with a stronger party and a more vigorous national role. In other words, while the junta ostensibly dismantled the Islamist party, it soon winked at its members to try again.

This is why sociologists Cihan Tugal (2009a) perceived the 1980 coup as a typical Gramscian-style 'passive revolution', which defuses popular revolutionary impulses through top-down reforms, as European governments did after 1815 to curb the spread of French revolutionary ideals. Military leaders effectively employed both repression and Islamism to rule out a communist comeback. But tolerating Islamism as a remedy of last resort against the communist epidemic did not mean that the military was totally renouncing secularism. Generals thought that Islamism would remain confined to culture; they did not envisage a political resurgence of the sort that was soon about to take place (Bâli 2010: Interview). The attempt to enlist Islam in the battle against communism was reminiscent of the strategy of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat and Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi in Iran. And as with both of these experiments—albeit less dramatically—things got out of hand.

Chapter Nineteen

THE WHITE COUP:
JUNE 1997

After returning to barracks in 1983, the military was obviously reluctant to carry out another covert intervention; officers seemed willing to cede more autonomy to civilians. But instead of the stable two-party system the military envisaged, a much more fragmented political scene emerged from the rubble. What did this new scene look like? Before 1980, Turkey's two major parties were Kemal's original ruling party, the People's Republican Party (CHP), which represented the left-of-center since Bülent Ecevit took over, and the Justice Party (AP), which represented the right-of-center under Süleyman Demirel. The military regime dissolved both parties and barred their leaders from politics for ten years. However, the banned leaders defied military proscription and returned to politics, in 1987, via a popular referendum that rescinded the military ban. The problem was that when they resumed their activities there were already two new parties occupying their old positions on the political spectrum: the Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP), composed of the remnants of the CHP on the left, and Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP), the successor of AP on the right. Refusing to join one of these two—mainly because they were perceived as having the military's blessing—Demirel formed another right-wing party, the True Path Party (*Dogru Yol Partisi*, DYP), and Ecevit formed the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP). Now, there were two parties on the right-of-center, and another two on the left-of-center. Only Islamists maintained their ideology, members, and organization—albeit under a different name. Their banned National Salvation Party (MSP), which was in turn the successor of the National Order Party (MNP), was quickly reinvented as the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP), under the leadership of the same leader of the previous two parties: Necmettin Erbakan. It is this

fragmentation of the party system on the left and right that helped Refah position itself, in the 1990s, as the mainstream party in Turkey.

Another important factor had to do with changes within ANAP, the leading political party in the 1980s. While Prime Minister Özal headed the party, he managed to keep the liberal and Islamist constituencies under one roof through his unusual mix of economic liberalism and nationalism, on the one hand, and his strong ties to the Islamist movement, on the other.[14] That is why ANAP secured 45 percent of the votes in 1983, and 36 percent in 1987. ANAP became so powerful that during this same year (1987), Prime Minister Özal appointed General Necip Torumtay as chief of staff instead of the favored candidate of the general command, and commented in an interview, "no civilian government has appointed the general chief of staff itself. The position has been filled by automatic succession. From now on, this is going to be normalized. Governments should appoint the general chief of staff themselves according to merit" (quoted in Sakallioglu 1997: 161). In 1989, Özal himself became president against the wishes of the military, which wanted to either extend coup leader Kenan Evren a second term, or appoint a general in his stead. But when Özal became president and abandoned party politics, ANAP's new leader, Mesut Yılmaz, the representative of the liberal faction, failed to preserve the Islamist base within the party's orbit. Özal's ensuing death in 1993 weakened the party even further. At the same time that ANAP was growing weaker, its most likely successor, Turkey's second right-of-center party, the DYP, was also losing ground. Süleyman Demirel's rise to the presidency in 1993 deprived this largely personalist party of its most charismatic and powerful leader. Demirel's successor, economics professor Tansu Çiller, weakened the appeal of the party, shifting more votes to Refah. Finally, both ANAP and DYP lost Kurdish votes to Islamists. That is because after the destruction of the Left in the early 1980s, Kurds placed their trust

[14] Turgut Özal, an engineer by training, relied on Islamist support to move to politics. His brother Korkut was one of MSP's leading figures, and managed to get him on the party's ticket in the 1977 municipal election in Izmir, but he lost. Months before the 1980 coup, another Islamist-friendly figure, Süleyman Demirel, appointed him to an economic post in cabinet, and the military retained his services.

in Özal and Demirel—personally, rather than as party leaders. As the Kurds suspected, once the founders stepped down, their parties instantly became more nationalistic and rescinded their leaders' promises to relax constraints on the use of the Kurdish language and cultural symbols (Önis 1997: 751-57; Aksin 2007: 297).

In addition to the fragmentation of non-Islamist parties and the lost of their religious and Kurdish voters, Refah's rise to power, in the 1990s, also had to do with the Turkey's new economic situation. Shortly before the 1980 coup, Prime Minister Demirel had decided to implement the IMF recommendations for economic readjustment, the so-called 24 January Decisions, and entrusted Turgut Özal with this sensitive task. Özal had served in the World Bank from 1971 to 1973, and now served as Undersecretary for the State Planning Organization. He continued his work for two years under the military government, which believed that his deflationary policies would bail Turkey out of its financial difficulties (Aksin 2007: 278). "Coming to power at the turn of the eighties, the hour of Thatcher and Reagan, he was the local equivalent in neo-liberal resolve" (Anderson 2009: 441). His job was much easier, however, than his Western counterparts because the military's crushing of left-wing opposition helped him cut down public spending, revoke price controls, and reduce wages without much fuss. But Özal's economic liberalization was a major reversal of Kemalist statism. Turkey now adopted an export-oriented market economy, abandoned the import-substitution model, and dismantled the public sector. Manufacturing employment in the public sector fell from 250,000 to 100,000 between 1980 and 2000, at the same time that dozens of new export-oriented enterprises sprang up (Keyder 2004: 67). As in similar cases of economic liberalization, there were some indicators of initial (and short-lived) growth: GNP increased (by an average 5 percent), industry overtook agriculture as the dominant sector, exports grew, and the local currency was devaluated. Also similar to other cases, income and wealth disparities increased,

sparking social conflict. And both new opportunities in the cities and constraints in the countryside further fueled the continuing mass exodus from the village to town (Önis 1997: 752).

How did this economic makeover benefit Islamists? In a sense, Refah benefited from both the negative and positive effects of Turkey's neoliberal restructuring. At a time when the republic's political economy was experiencing its most comprehensive shakeup, Islamism appeared as an alternative to both the social democratic politics of the left, and the conservative liberals on the right. Islamism differed from typical social democracy in its emphasis on free enterprise and individual initiative as the engines of growth, and from conservative liberals in its stress on social justice. As Islamists always liked to portray themselves, they provided a third way, a mixed economy lying somewhere between the merciless free market of capitalism and the suffocating state control of socialism. That is why Islamism became a viable alternative to many. For the poor classes, religious-inspired stress on social justice and Islamists' solid record as welfare providers was encouraging. For aspiring merchants and businessmen, still striving to consolidate their position in society, insistence on the sanctity of private property and individual initiative in Islam protected what they already had and promised to increase their share of the pie—so far reserved for large state-connected enterprises. For both the lower and the middle classes, religious identity provided a unifying framework, a sort of class compromise among believers that could save Turkey from polarization and social violence (Önis 1997: 748-54).

But it was demography rather than economic ideology that helped Islamism most. Islamist leaders encouraged their supporters to move from the countryside to the city to benefit from the new economic opportunities. The aim was to help them move up the social ladder so that they would have more of a say (and a stake) in politics. Islamists offered the newcomers food, casual employment, cheap credit, and hostels for temporary residence. In the 1980s, a new urban middle class emerged in Istanbul; its members maintained strong links with the Anatolian towns they came

from, and the small- and medium-manufacturers and merchants who still operated there (Narli 2003: 127).

These Anatolian manufactures and merchants were crucial to the Islamist success story in the 1990s and afterward. Although perhaps 40 percent of the population was still employed in agriculture at the time, the more active elements in the countryside—those with a 'commercial impulse', as Barrington Moore would have it—began devoting themselves to trade and industry. The violent elimination of Greek and Armenian merchant class first made their fortunes, allowing them to shift from farming (as peasant smallholders) to trade. Turkey's economic liberalization and integration into the global market, in the 1980s, encouraged them to become manufacturers and exporters (through small and medium enterprises employing 50 workers or less). They were traditionally focused on textile and clothing, though competition from China drove them to expand to other sectors, such as iron and steel, chemical and metallurgical products, automotive parts, construction, food products, tourism, and finance. By virtue of their provincial piety and anti-statist bias, members of this class supported Islamists since the 1970s. But it was only with the liberalization of the economy and international trade, in 1980s, that they accumulated enough capital to count politically (Önis 1997: 757-58; Narli 2003: 127). So what were their political demands?

Provincial capital in Anatolia was distinguished from the beginning with its dependence on private accumulation rather than state patronage. As one Turkish sociologist explained:

> **The industrial structures of the developmentalist era had been characterized by the oligopoly of a few multi-tentacled holding companies, through which the import-substituting bourgeoisie of Istanbul, with their privileged access to policy makers in Ankara, had been able to maintain an iron grip over the economy. With the liberalization, a new breed of entrepreneurs emerged who had to compete in globalized markets, and indexed their behavior to commercial and consumer signals rather than bureaucratic decisions…a number of smaller Anatolian cities with craft traditions and non-unionized workforces, where households could be incorporated in subcontracting deals began to emerge as regional industrial centers. Most of the production in these towns…was located on buyer-driven networks: businessmen contracted directly with retail chains and volume buyers in Europe** (Keyder 2004: 68).

These were the so-called 'Anatolian tigers', hailed in the Turkish media because of their success in establishing themselves as major exporters of manufactured goods to the global market without state support. Largely due to their efforts, Turkey's exports jumped from $3 billion in 1980 to $13 billion in 1990, and to the unfathomable figure of $50 billion by the end of the decade (Keyder 2004: 68). Yet bureaucratic obstinacy retuned after Özal passed away in 1993. The bureaucracy refused to abandon its role as primary provider of economic rents, promoting favored businessmen through export subsidies, public land allocations, construction permits, and sale of public enterprises (Wahid 2009: 75).[15] Because Islamists promised to end state cronyism, the emerging business elite mobilized behind them.

What enhanced the political weight of this provincial business elite was not just their acute class-consciousness, but also their rigorous organization. They combined their funds to form joint-stock companies that could compete with state-supported monopolies (Narli 2003: 128). Equally important was their creation of an independent business association. Big businesses were organized in the mainstream Turkish Industry and Business Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve Isadamları Dernegi*, TÜSIAD), and so the middling bourgeoisie decided, in 1990, to establish a separate body, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (*Müstakil Sanayici ve Isadamları Dernegi*, MÜSIAD). MÜSIAD's was exceptionally dynamic. Founded by a small group of young businessmen, mostly in their early thirties, its membership grew spectacularly, reaching 3,000 in a decade (and 4,900 members by 2012), whereas TÜSIAD remained limited to perhaps 400 members. With the exception of a handful of large companies, most MÜSIAD members were small and medium businesses. And unlike its rival's members, who were concentrated in Istanbul and the

[15] To cover these activities, the state borrowed heavily from the public, thus producing the staggering domestic debt and budget deficits that will eventually cause the economy to crash in 2001, the year the economy shrunk by 7.5 per cent and foreign debt increased to over $100 billion (Wahid 2009: 75).

surrounding Marmara region, MÜSIAD members came from all over the country, whether major metropolitan centers (such as Istanbul and Izmir), or Anatolian strongholds (such as Konya and Kayseri), or small towns (such as Denizli and Çorum). The same applied to trade unions. While workers loyal to the regime were members of Türk-Is, and the left-leaning ones preferred to join DISK, Islamists created their own trade union: HAK-Is. And with the decline of the left, HAK-Is came to represent most independent workers. Expectedly, the members of these associations realized that to obtain a larger share of the economic pie, they had to stand firmly behind a political party that adopted their agenda. And in the 1990s, the best option they had was Refah (Zubaida 1996: 13; Önis 1997: 758-60; Tugal 2007: 8-9).

One cannot deny that in addition to all these structural reasons (political and economic), Islamist success, in the 1990s, was greatly enhanced by their first-rate grassroots organization and face-to-face contact with voters. Cihan Tugal's ethnography of Sultanbeyli, the first Istanbul district to vote solidly for Islamists, revealed the importance of this aspect of Islamists' work. Until the mid-1980s, most of the district's residents were politically unaffiliated. As soon as Islamists set camp in this poor district, pious families in provincial towns and villages got wind of their educational and social activities, and began to pour into Sultanbeyli to benefit from them. The neighborhood expanded phenomenally, from 4,000 residents in 1985 to 80,000 four years later, though most of the newcomers lived in unregistered houses. Refah activists set to work, organizing the new residents into networks of family and kin, and linking them to other networks inside and outside Istanbul. By virtue of the welfare they provided, and the religious affinities they enjoyed with the Sultanbeyli voters, it was only normal for Refah candidates to carry the district in every election in the 1990s. The Sultanbeyli model was replicated in dozens of neighborhoods around the country. Thus, instead of relying on street demonstrations and angry riots, Islamists adopted a strategy centered on

transforming the everyday life of their voters through schools, mosques, hospitals, employment offices, and other grassroots activities (Tugal 2009: 432-36).

This does not mean that all those who voted for Islamists adhered to an instrumental rationality; Islamist activism also had a distinctive cultural component. Islamists managed to reconstitute identities and communal values through influencing cultural life (Yavuz 2003: 23).[16] Their success not only affected pious Turks, but even seculars have come to associate Islamists with social reform and moral uprightness. Gradually, Islamism and secularism were no longer juxtaposed as two conflicting ideologies, but rather as two interpenetrating bodies of norms and practices (Turam 2007: 4). Even more important was how this sociocultural campaign transformed the relationship between Islamists and the state. Increased exposure to Islamist soft-power convinced state functionaries that Islamists were not determined to destroy the republic, and that they were willing to let themselves be influenced by the principles of the republic as well as help develop them. Islamists and bureaucrats began to "interact and reshape each other," and "an emerging *convergence*" slowly appeared on the horizon (Turam 2007: 9).[17]

It mattered, of course, that in the 1990s Islamists had the economic power to support these cultural activities. Özal's long tenure (premier between 1983-1989, and then president until 1993) witnessed the coinciding of civil society deregulation and the rise of 'Islamic' capital in provincial towns. Özal himself had strong connections with the *Naqshabandi* Sufi order, and tolerated the spread of religious foundations and charities, as well as a vibrant Islamic press (Zubaida 1996: 11; Yavuz 1999: 585). At the same time, the budget of the Directorate of Religious Affairs increased sixteen-fold, and five million copies of the Qur'an were printed by the state (Anderson 2009: 442).

[16] Several recent ethnographies have detailed their activities in this field (most famously, White 2002).
[17] This is what Berna Turam referred to as the *Politics of Engagement*, which referred to the "continuum of interplay between Islamic actors and state actors, ranging from contestation and negotiation to accommodation, cooperation and alliance" (Turam 2007: 13).

Official figures also indicate that by 1987, Turkey had more mosques than schools, 60,161 and 58,455, respectively (Ahmad 1988: 765).

Also, these cultural feats would not have been possible without the Islamist religious education network. The state had tolerated Qur'an teachings in small mosques and private tutoring beginning from the late 1940s. But the 1970s witnessed the dizzying proliferation of a new phenomenon: *Imam-Hatip Okullari* (Prayer Leader-Preacher Schools), which taught students from the sixth through eleventh grades.[18] The official rationale for these schools, as their name indicates, was to produce religious functionaries. But in reality, restrictions on religious education in public schools propelled pious families to enroll their offspring in these schools to learn about Islam, and then pursue higher education in secular universities to be able to find regular jobs (Aksin 2007: 304). So although the national 'market' for religious functionaries required less than 3,000 prayer leaders and preachers every year, these schools produced more than 50,000 graduates annually, and in 1997, enrollment reached 1,685,000 students (Helal 1999: 209; Heper and Güney 2000: 640). And correspondingly, the number of Imam-Hatip schools increased dramatically from 72 in 1970, to 374 in 1980, to 389 in 1992. Islamist social foundations played a crucial role in their success by providing scholarships, setting up residence halls and clubs, and publishing books. Graduates, who ended up working in the bureaucracy (notably, the police), the private sector, and civil society, maintained their Islamist connections, constituting a large body of well-educated intellectuals, business professionals, and state functionaries (Zubaida 1996: 13). No wonder that Erbakan reportedly described these schools as "the backyard of our party" (Aksin 2007: 304). Refah's leader clearly understood that in time these graduates would represent "a religious middle class capable of competing with the secularist intelligentsia in economic, cultural, and political realms…[and that]

[18] These schools began to appear in the 1950s under the auspices of the Democratic Party, and later the Justice Party. Students are educated on two levels: intermediate (sixth to eighth years) and *lycée* (ninth to eleventh) (Aksin 2007: 304).

this new avowedly Muslim intelligentsia would be a significant element in the construction of Islamism as a hegemonic [political] alternative" (Tugal 2007: 10).

This pious middle class was spearheaded by the Anatolian business elite, who conceived themselves as 'Islamic Calvinists', and publicized how they lifted themselves from the ranks of peasants, tradesmen, and artisans through religious-inspired prudence, parsimoniousness, hard work, and moral righteousness—all the elements of the Weberian lexicon (Ahmad 1988: 759; Yavuz 2010: Interview).[19] Their joint business ventures were aided by "a rhetoric emphasizing the need for the unity of believers against the nationalist and secularist bourgeoisie," and religion-based trust networks allowed these entrepreneurs to secure loans, hire trustworthy employees, and arbitrate business disputes (Tugal 2002: 92). And their professional associations advertised their piety: observing Muslim rituals in their meetings, not serving liquor at their dinners, and celebrating religious festivals annually (Zubaida 1996: 13).

For all the above reasons (structural and strategic), Islamists managed to double their share of the votes. Their signal success was in the municipal elections of 1994 and 1998, when Refah carried Turkey's most important cities, including Istanbul and Ankara. These electoral victories "dramatically altered the previous image of the party in the public mind" from a peripheral and parochial Anatolian-based party to a mainstream national party (Önis 1997: 743). Control of municipal administration, in turn, helped the party redistribute funds to poor neighborhoods; provide welfare to the needy; distribute coal and clothing in the winter, and medicine and food all year round; improve infrastructure and services; pressure wealthy residents to donate generously to city-managed charities; and purge corrupt and unpopular state officials. Voters were also impressed by Islamists' institutional innovations, most notably, their creation of People's Councils (*halk meclisi*) as forums for district residents to present their demands and sound their grievances to local

[19] This was different than Iran's pious middle class, which was spearheaded by the merchants of the bazaar.

government representatives (Zubaida 1996: 12). Social activism in the 1980s, and successful municipal administration in the 1990s, increased Islamists' share of the national vote, jumping from 8 percent in 1987, to 17 percent in 1991, and reaching 21 percent in the 1995 elections. Slowly but surely, Erbakan pushed his party from being a junior partner in cabinet to the leader of a government coalition (with DYP). In June 1996, he became the first Islamist prime minister in the history of the republic (Heper and Güney 2000: 638; Narli 2003: 127-29).

Provoking a Soft Coup

When Refah assumed power in June 1996, which was more than what officers had in mind for Islamists, the military adopted a wait-and-see policy.[20] By January 1997, intelligence reports accused Islamists of trying to erect a parallel state through packing the bureaucracy with likeminded employees, especially those graduated from religious schools. Reports also indicated that Refah was organizing a national campaign to reinstall Shari'a law; that it was collecting substantial funds through Islamic holding companies and affiliated banks; and that its rhetoric has become militantly anti-secular and anti-Western (especially during a second 'Save Jerusalem Rally' organized on February 5, 1997). Disturbing public statements by party's leaders substantiated this latter accusation. For example, a prominent Refah deputy (Ibrahim Halil Çelik) threatened that if religious schools were closed down "there would be bloodshed. It would be worse than Algeria. In such an eventuality I will be rejoiced to see bloodshed… The army could not deal with even 3,5000-strong PKK [Kurdish militants]. How will it cope with six million Islamists?" Erbakan himself was quoted reassuring his followers that Islamists would remain in power "either through normal channels or by shedding blood" (Heper and Güney 2000: 640-41). And in a blatant defiance of decorum, Erbakan

[20] In the 1990s, the military enlisted the support of intelligence experts in the so-called West Working Group, a body devoted to monitoring the activities of Islamists (Güney 2002: 167).

invited fifty-one Muslim clerics dressed in traditional garbs to the prime ministerial residence for *iftar* (the ceremonial breakfast banquet in the holy month of Ramadan) in January 1997 (Heper and Güney 2000: 640-42).

Furthermore, Erbakan tested military patience by trying to demote the position of chief of staff, subordinating it to the defense minister rather than the prime minster (Aksin 2007: 303). Failing to do so, he imprudently upped the ante and decided to challenge the general staff's prerogatives in a more direct way. The Prime Minister now demanded full control over all decisions relating to military personnel.[21] Officers rightly suspected that Erbakan's real aim was to prevent the generals from cashiering officers with Islamist sympathies because this disrupted his plan to Islamize the army. During a meeting with the general staff, on May 26, 1997, the Prime Minister was presented with a list of 141 officers that should be purged for peaching political Islam to their comrades. When he tried to discuss the principle involved, he was told that the professional code of the armed forces prohibits officers from belonging to any political faction, Islamist or otherwise. Erbakan stalled for as long as he could, and after he finally signed the decree, he tried to avoid future meetings where such requests could be tabled. This might explain why the general command purged another 541 officers immediately after Refah was ousted (Helal 1999: 265; Brooks 2008: 215).

The Islamist Prime Minister went even further by trying to interfere in the armed forces' most jealously guarded field: geopolitics. Here, the military's position was best captured in a remark by General Cumhar Asparuk, MGK secretary general, to the *Financial Times* in December 1997, that Turkey was "not ripe" for complete civilian control over national security issues (Brooks 2008: 223). For example, when the general command launched Operation Poised Hammer against Kurdish separatists in Iraq in May 1987, it did not require the permission of the government, even though

[21] Officially, the Supreme Military Council, composed of fifteen top generals, convenes annually under the chairmanship of the prime minister to make such decisions. The latter's role was traditionally to approve whatever the generals suggested.

the operation involved close to 50,000 troops; neither did it care to do so the following year when it threatened to invade Syria to pursue Kurdish militants. The most striking aspect of military autonomy in that field was its strategic alliance with Israel. The Turkish army concluded an agreement with its Israeli counterpart in February 1996, before Turkish politicians had even formed a government. It then forced the Refah-led coalition not only to recognize this agreement, but also to sign a couple of complementary accords—totally ignoring Erbakan's objections. And when he tried to postpone the joint military exercises scheduled for the summer 1997, the Turkish army went ahead anyway (Aksin 2007: 309; Brooks 2008: 218-20).

In response, the Prime Minister indicated his desire to see Turkey heading in a different direction. He was quoted saying, "Jihad is the first precept [of Islam] and all of us will be included in [its] army and become soldiers… This is the army of the Welfare Party. You have to work to strengthen this army" (Güney 2002: 168). Erbakan then decided to counterbalance the military-imposed defense treaty with Israel with visits to Iran, Libya, and Pakistan—visits that infuriated the military to the point where General Çevik Bir of the high command decided to describe Iran as a terrorist state while Erbakan was in Tehran, just to embarrass him (Uzgel 2003: 204).

Generals now suspected that Refah was planning to dislodge the military completely from its historical role as the guardian of the republic. But how far were Islamists ready to go? To test the waters, the general command demanded a small concession during one of the National Security Council (MGK) meetings: enforcing obligatory eight-year attendance at public schools, which practically meant cutting two years from the religious Imam-Hatip schools. When rebuffed, the commanders officially expressed their alarm at the rising power of Islamism during an MGK meeting, on August 17, 1996. President Süleyman Demirel duly noted their concern and sent a reproving memo to Erbakan. Weary of another civil-military showdown, Chief of Staff Ismail Hakki Karadayi reiterated publically, on December 24, 1996, the importance of respecting secular

democracy as defined by the Constitution. Two days later, he stated clearly at an MGK meeting that the military would not remain idle if its warnings went unheeded. The Chief of Staff then organized briefings with several journalists, intellectuals, and top bureaucrats (starting from April 1997) to explain that political Islam threatened to polarize society once more and lead to the type of violence that devastated the country in the 1970s (Uzgel 2003: 184; Aksin 2007: 307).

President Demirel then addressed a final warning note to Erbakan in February 1997, clearly stating, "Article 2 of the Constitution stipulates that [the] Turkish Republic is a democratic, secular, and social state… Threats the anti-secularist activities pose for the secular Republican State give rise to serious concern both in the society and in the state institutions. I would like to bring to your attention the need to implement intact those laws enacted to safeguard secularism…and prevent the fundamentalist views from penetrating into schools, local governments, universities, the judiciary, and the military." But the Refah government remained undaunted. Accordingly, during the decisive February 28 MGK meeting, the commanders submitted the famous list of eighteen recommendations for immediate implementation by the government, including restrictions on the Imam-Hatip schools, and controls against the spread of religious orders. Faced with an ultimatum, Erbakan decided to temporarily switch positions with Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Çiller—believing that this game of musical chairs might get him off the hook. When this step proved too little too late and the high command was adamant about the implementation of its eighteen recommendations, Erbakan was forced to endorse the measures. But when he later tried to maneuver, claiming in an interview that these measures were not binding to the government, the generals pressured Refah's political partners to defect, forcing Erbakan's resignation on June 18, 1997. The President immediately appointed a new government under Mesut Yılmaz, of the Motherland Party (ANAP). On January 16, 1998 the Constitutional Court dissolved Refah on account of the anti-secular statements of its members, and banned Erbakan and four party leaders

from politics for five years (Heper and Güney 2000: 642-45; Aksin 2007: 306; Brooks 2008: 216; for details of the twelve recommendations see Helal 1999: 197-99; Shankland 1999: 115-17).

An interesting question here is why did the military go through so much trouble to bring about the downfall of the Refah government rather than just oust it by force? There are several good explanations. Historically, this behavior fit the pattern that the Turkish military had set for itself since the birth of the republic, where direct action was considered a final and un-preferable option (Heper and Güney 2000: 646). A more context-specific explanation is that the military was embroiled in a vicious war against Kurdish separatists, between 1984 and 1999. Though this was not really a full-fledged war, the general command's hands were full enough to make it reluctant to carry out a complete coup that might risk dividing the corps (Keyder 2004: 72). A third view, which would become more significant in the future, is geopolitical. Turkey had applied for entry into the European Community in 1987, and although it was rebuffed in 1989, it was offered instead a free-trade customs union in 1995. The hope was to use this agreement to increase Turkey's chances of joining the EU. A coup at this point would be an indicator of both political instability and latent authoritarianism (Anderson 2009: 442). Also, the group of junior officers who witnessed the transition of the Turkish military from the German to the American school in the 1950s had come to occupy the top echelon in the armed force in the 1990s.[22] And President Bill Clinton's administration did not welcome a coup in what it considered one of the few democracies in the Middle East—especially that it sensed neither a militant Islamist nor a communist threat to Ankara (Uzgel 2003: 197).

All that being said, the military not only perceived its ultimatum to Refah as part of its legally prescribed role in the constitution, but it also believed it had the support of the people. Erbakan was

[22] Chiefs of staff Necip Torumtay and Necdet Öztorun, for example, were awarded medals by President Ronald Reagan. And between 1984 and 1996, some 2,900 Turkish officers received training in the U.S., and approximately 90 percent of the Turkish stockpile came from America.

politically weak, considering that his party's 21 percent of the national vote was hardly a popular mandate. At the same time, a national survey conducted by an independent institution in October 1990 revealed that 92 percent of Turks considered the military as the most trustworthy institution in the state, and only 50 percent expressed trust in politicians.[23] Another survey in the mid-1990s, showed the only 7 percent of the population sympathized with political Islam as an ideology. Also, by the end of 1996, both business and labor associations issued highly critical statements of Refah's increasingly ideological politics. In other words, regardless of the fact that officers monopolized the means of violence, the popular balance of forces clearly titled towards the military (Heper and Güney 2000: 646; Brooks 2008: 213).

[23] The fact that the military was perceived as an embodiment of "all the cultural characteristics of the society" was reflected in the words of the Turkish Minister of Culture, who stated in a press conference in the summer of 1999, while introducing a new book on the history of the armed forces, "Turks have been known as a military-nation throughout history. The Turkish military is synonymous with Turkish national identity" (Altinay 2004: 1). The Turkish army therefore was not only seen as the guardian of republican principles, but also as a true representative of society. This sense of representation was reflected in its large size relative to population: a 790,000-strong army in a population of 80 million (Wahid 2009: 73), in addition to its balanced social composition. An examination of officers' family backgrounds in 2000 showed that 25 percent came from a working class background; 7.3 percent from peasant families; 10 percent descended from artisans or shopkeepers; 19 percent from bureaucrats; 10 percent from teachers; and around 5 percent from professionals. These percentages have been quite stable over time (Kili 2003: 159).

Chapter Twenty

ABORTED COUPS?
TURKEY UNDER AKP RULE (2002-2012)

The first general elections after Turkey's 'white coup' was held in 1999. In this election, the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of Bülent Ecevit secured a plurality. An all-inclusive coalition was formed between the left-of-center DSP, the right-of-center Motherland Party (ANAP) of Mesut Yılmaz, and the extreme right Nationalist Action Party (MHP), now headed by Devlet Bahçeli. This was the seventh coalition government since the beginning of the 1990s. The three odd partners wiggled on for three years before finally collapsing under the weight of their internal contradictions. It had become sufficiently evident that all the parties that have governed Turkey in the past five decades have failed to secure a stable constituency. Most of them were in fact little more than "loose associations of interests without a stable political line" (Keyder 2004: 75). The new president, who succeeded Demirel in May 2000, was also a non-partisan civilian, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, former head of the Constitutional Court (Aksin 2007: 313). The old parties seemed to have become politically bankrupt after the dizzying shifts and tactical alliances of Turkish politics since the 1940s. It was therefore expected that in the watershed elections of November 2002, almost all of the old governing parties failed to receive the necessary 10 percent of the vote to enter parliament. The only exception was the Republican People's Party (CHP), which hardly secured 19 percent of the vote. In those elections, there was one big winner: the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP).

The AKP, which was formed barely a year before the 2002 elections, won 34 percent of the vote. And after the gains of the parties that acquired less than the minimum 10 percent were allocated among the winners, AKP ultimately controlled 60 percent of the seats in parliament—a majority unsurpassed since the 1950s. For the first time in almost two decades, a single party won

enough votes to be able to form a government on its own. AKP's ascendency continued with a 40 percent win in the 2004 municipal elections, a 47 percent win in the 2007 national elections, and a landslide victory of over 50 percent of the votes in the 2012 elections—an ascendancy unheard of since the country's transition to multi-party politics. Equally significant was the election of the party's Foreign Minister Abdullah Göl to the presidency, despite the fierce resistance of secular parties and the misgivings of the top generals. This was again the first time since the 1940s that the president and prime minister belonged to the same party. Where did this new party come from?

A few weeks before Refah was officially dissolved in 1998, another successor Islamist party was created to carry the torch: the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*). The two were identical in ideology and membership, albeit the successor was more cautious about alienating the secular elite or the military. Still, in the April 1999 elections Fazilet obtained barely 15 percent of the votes, falling into fourth place behind the DSP, MHP, and ANAP—who were at that point members of the tripartite coalition government (Heper and Güney 2000: 639). Many young party cadres saw this as an indicator of voters' weariness with ideological parties and the instability they produce. After so much political turmoil, pragmatism and flexibility was what citizens were looking for in a party. In short, young Islamist activists realized that they had to free themselves from "the clutches of an Islamic ideology in order to appeal to larger groups of the electorate" (Heper and Güney 2000: 649).

When the youth of Fazilet failed to impress this on the old leaders in the party's 2001 congress, they decided to break away and form their own party: the AKP. The new party's motto in the 2002 elections was 'We have changed'. Meanwhile, Fazilet's insistence on avowedly Islamist politics prompted another court ban in July 2001, and the rump of the party regrouped in what turned out to be the last and the weakest of Erbakan's chain of Islamist parties: the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*).

In contrast to the ailing Erbakan and his associates, the leaders of AKP were young, dynamic, professional, media savvy, and particularly attentive to business interests. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, AKP's charismatic prime minister, came from Istanbul's violent and underprivileged Kasımpasa neighborhood. He was among the first generation activists trained in Imam-Hatip schools. He then studied economics at Marmara University, and played soccer semi-professionally for over a decade. At the same time, he became involved in grassroots organization with Erbakan's various parties since the 1980s. His working class background, his rough character (tuned through years on the soccer field), and his street activism distinguished him from other political elites. At the age of forty he became mayor of Istanbul (1994-1998), where he basically managed to turn the city around. His popularity soared when after his remarkable achievements as mayor, he was banned from politics for five years and sentenced to prison for ten months for reciting what were perceived as inflammatory verses in a public address in the provincial town of Siirt, in December 1997.[24] The party's second-in-command, Abdullah Gül, AKP foreign minister, and later president of the republic, came from a central Anatolian city (Kayseri), whose business community were archetypical AKP supporters: export-oriented small- and medium- manufacturers. He studied economics in Istanbul and England, and after receiving his doctoral degree he landed a job at the Saudi-based Islamic Development Bank until 1991, before devoting himself fully to politics. Thus, his social, educational, and professional background was particularly reassuring to Turkey's bourgeoisie (Aksin 2007: 308; Besli and Özbay 2011).

AKP's pragmatism was manifest in substituting Islamism as an ideology with what its leaders proclaimed was 'conservative democracy'—a catchall label meant to help the party garner more votes through posing as "a corridor between Islamism and nationalism" (Bilici 2006: 4). And surely

[24] The poem penned by Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp had religious overtones. It read: 'The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers'. Although it was approved by the Ministry of Education and taught at schools, the court deemed it inciting religious hatred.

enough, by transcending its Islamist origins, AKP catered to a much broader constituency centered on middle class business owners, though also including the lower classes in the city and countryside, in addition to religious and ethnic minorities and intellectuals opposed to the military's rigid definition of Turkish identity (Önis 2004). Yet despite this broad social base, AKP was not a 'standard' populist movement—it could not have been so in light of its strict adherence to IMF guidelines and market liberalism. What distinguished its particular brand of populism was: first, that the party represented an aspiring middle class rather than relying on a single charismatic leader (after all Erdogan was not a Nasser or a Peron); second, it pursued democratic politics that redistributed wealth more evenly rather than building loyal patronage networks with privileged access to public resources; and third, it devised policies that addressed different social interests rather than treating the masses as an undifferentiated bloc whose interests conveniently coincide with that of a reified state (Tugal 2002: 95). So rather than conceiving AKP as a populist party, it might be more accurately described as a party that has established an exceptionally wide and sustainable majority. Who were its main constituencies?

Its core supporters were the Anatolian-based small- and medium-sized manufacturer-exporters. AKP, in fact, owed its success to this distinctive economic class. But why did the Anatolian tigers lean toward AKP rather than support the Saadet Party, Erabakan's latest Islamist rendition? The truth is that the Islamist economic program had been rife with tensions and contradictions since the 1970s. Islamist party bases included both capitalist entrepreneurs and their workers. And although the wealthy provincials constituted the sponsors and driving force behind Islamism, electoral politics demanded appealing to the lower classes as well, especially after the crushing of the Left made the votes of the poor available for grabbing. Naturally, Anatolian businessmen were always suspicious of Erbakan's emphasis on social justice, and his claim that Islam encourages full employment, guarantees a decent livelihood for all, and frowns upon

accumulation of excessive wealth. Suspicion of these 'prosperity for all' slogans increased in the 1990s, when the growing army of informal laborers, having no communists to turn to, swelled the ranks of Refah, and Erbakan's government seemed to be focused on reducing unemployment, raising wages, and fixing profit ceilings (Tugal 2007: 12-15).

This class-based polarization within the Islamist camp reflected a fundamental ideological difference between two main factions within Islamism: the proponents of 'moral capitalism' and those of 'alternative capitalism'. The first group accepted the free market and sought to use Islamic precepts to minimize its social damages, precepts that warn against luxury and consumerism, and foster communal solidarity and charities. Adherence to Islamic principles, according to this school, promised an end to the problems of unemployment, poverty, and exploitation. This group was also circumspect about joining the EU, preferring to create an Islamic common market through mechanisms such as Erbakan's short-lived exclusively Muslim Development-Eight (D-8) countries (designed to mirror the G-8) in January 1997.[25] The second group believed in the virtues of the open market and free trade, where middle class entrepreneurs, protected from state intervention, would bring about prosperity and leadership to their communities. This view was advocated by the young Islamists who broke off to form AKP, and had, of course, the overwhelming support of the Muslim bourgeoisie in Anatolia and elsewhere. It eagerly pursued EU membership, and refused to anchor economic cooperation on religious identity.[26] According to this school of thought, Islam plays a role very similar to Weber's Protestant ethic, where religious affinity makes businessmen moral, efficient, and prudent (Tugal 2002: 98-100).[27] This was exactly the type of story the Anatolian tigers were

[25] Curiously, he wanted to name it M-8 (with 'M' for Muslim), but on Egypt's insistence changed it to D-8.
[26] A representative of this school, Ali Bayramoglu, president of MÜSIAD, proclaimed that the only war between Muslims and Westerners is a "war of brand names" not a "war of civilizations," and that "capital cannot be classified as pious and irreligious. The objective of capital is making profit" (Tugal 2002: 100).
[27] There was also a radical group of Islamists that presented capitalism as immoral and evil, but it remained small and unsuccessful in drawing popular support.

promoting, and it is therefore not surprising that they and the rest of Turkey's bourgeoisie provided unyielding support to AKP.

In fact, even the state-sponsored association of big business conglomerates (TÜSIAD) drafted a democratization package that openly demanded reducing military autonomy, and called for the subordination of the chief of staff to the defense minister (not the prime minister), and the abolition of the National Security Council (MGK) altogether. Evidently, with large corporations no longer having to look over their shoulder for communism, the demand for a stable democracy that would help integrate Turkey more fully into the global business world rose to the top of their agenda (Uzgel 2003: 209).

What was certainly surprising, however, was AKP's popularity among the lower classes despite its faithful adoption of "a neo-liberal regimen with the fervour of the convert" (Anderson 2009: 449). This popularity was partly explained by Erdogan's crushing native charisma, his humble origins, militant roots, common man piety, traditional Turkish machismo, and plain-talking populism, which all combined to create a powerful personality cult that retained the support of the masses on an unprecedented scale. "In his person," said Anderson, "[lays] a good deal of the symbolic compensation enjoyed by the mass of the party's electorate for any material hardships" (2009: 449-51; see also Tugal 2007: 20). However, it was not all a matter of popular sentiments and charisma: AKP did actually provide "neo-liberalism with a human face;" it combined respect for market forces with systematic efforts to alleviate poverty and improve public services (Önis 2007: 24). And in engaging the rising bourgeoisie and urban slum-dwellers equally, AKP based its appeal on providing a voice to the voiceless, whether those who despite their business success remained excluded from the ruling circles, or those who did not share in the benefits of economic growth and free trade (Önis 1997: 748; Keyder 2004: 71).

Kurds also threw their lot with AKP. War with the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), which involved more than 250,000 Turkish troops and cost the Turkish taxpayer $6 billion annually, claimed the lives of some 30,000 people, and led to the internal displacement or deportation of 380,000 Kurds between 1984 and 1999. AKP promised to allow the use of the Kurdish language in private classes (though not public schools) and television programs. And in the summer of 2005, Erdogan began talking about the 'Kurdish question' – "a phrase that is anathema to the national-secular establishment, as it implies a bigger problem than terrorism and poverty" (Tugal 2007: 23).

Apart from Kurds and other subaltern populations, Turkey's liberal and leftist intelligentsia, as well as human rights activists and academics, backed AKP because of its inclusive message, civil society activism, and its attempt to curtail military power in a way that extended the margins of democracy. All pro-democracy forces perceived AKP as the only effective weapon against the lurking authoritarian tendencies among Turkish elites, especially in the armed forces (Zubaida 1996: 15; Tugal 2007: 19). Ethnographer Berna Turam recorded: "in every visit to Turkey, I found an increasing number of educated people, professors, intellectuals, artists and businesspeople from secular circles appreciating AKP." Even more surprising, whenever these secular intellectuals referred to Erdogan they insisted that he was not an Islamist, "He is *our* leader" (Turam 2007: 4-5). Turkish academic and essayist Ihsan Dagi captured this spirit in the following account:

> **Some in Turkey and abroad are inclined to see the [AKP] as an Islamist movement, with a secret agenda to change the secular regime in Turkey. This is a fundamental misconception shaped by a false dichotomy of Islam vs. secularism. When one looks deeper at the AK party's social base, political program, their public discourse and performance in government, these do not confirm the assertion that the AK party is an Islamist party. Instead the AK party stands at the center-right of the political spectrum, representing, as did the earlier center-right political parties did in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s, the rising peripheral forces vis-à-vis the bureaucratic/authoritarian center** (2008: 103).

AKP's ascendancy marked, for many Turkish intellectuals, the beginning of "a new phase in the struggle between the old Turkey and the new Turkey…with the AK Party on the side of the new

Turkey" (Dagi 2008: 292; for similar views see Radwan 2006; Yavuz 2006). Even non-politicized citizens appreciated AKP for sparring the country the political instability and economic mismanagement of the past decades (Kalaycioglu 2005: 190). In sum, all major classes and social groups "could see something for themselves in the AKP; this was, in the classical sense, a potentially hegemonic capitalist project" (Tugal 2007: 20). And by relying on a permanent majority, AKP was no longer hostage to the voter mode swings that plagued Turkish politics for so long.

One must add here that AKP popularity was enhanced by its solid economic accomplishments—or, at least, the accomplishments the party convincingly took credit for. The decade before its rise to power was dismissed as "Turkey's lost decade" economically. Instead of an average 5 percent growth in the 1980s, the economy shrank by 9 percent in 2001; inflation hit 80 percent, and sometimes reached a three-digit figure; public debt comprised a shocking 150 percent of GDP; and the lira suffered 50 percent devaluation. Consequently, investments dried up, unemployment soared, there was an explosion of bankruptcies, and the country was sliding toward complete insolvency. No more capable of providing for the population, pre-AKP governments allowed education and health care to deteriorate significantly (their share in GDP in 2000 was 3.5 percent and 2 percent, respectively). Subsidies were first cut down then discontinued, and public expenditures reached their lowest ebb. By 2001, the Turkish economy had hit rock bottom. During its first term in power (2005-2007), AKP managed to reverse the country's economic deterioration, bringing inflation down to 8.8 percent; reducing the budget deficit to 1.2 percent; generating a 6 percent surplus, and an economic growth rate between 7 and 10 percent. At the same time, exports skyrocketed from $30 billion to $100 billion (82 percent of which came from private manufacturers), and the ratio of exports to GDP rose from 14 percent to 21 percent between (Keyder 2004: 75-77; Tugal 2007: 21; Anderson 2009: 450).

The most recent economic indicators are equally positive. Between 2002 and 2010, AKP government sustained an average GDP growth of 9 percent; reduced average inflation to 6.4 percent; reduced government deficit relative to GDP by more than half, and government debt relative to GDP from 74 percent to 41.6 percent; kept unemployment between 8 and 12 percent; increased foreign investments from $2 billion to $20 billion (three-quarters by European investors); and increased exports from $36 billion to $132 billion (half of which went to Europe). Even the global downturn of 2009, which slashed exports and foreign investments, did not damage the Turkish economy as it did in other countries. In 2009, the IMF decided that Turkey no longer needed international aid and could finally stand on its own two feet. And by 2010, Turkey had become the world's 17th largest economy (Pope 2010: 2; see also the European Commission's *Turkey 2011 Progress Report*: 111-15). More important, AKP's combination of sustained growth and low inflation expanded the base of beneficiaries from Turkey's economic growth, boosting the party's electoral fortunes considerably (Önis 2007: 23).

The party's political and economic successes were augmented by a vigorous cultural campaign that crystalized persistent efforts to harmonize the relationship between Islam and Turkish nationalism in a way that pleased both elites and the general populace.

Cultural Shift

An understanding of AKP power cannot be complete unless one captures the fact that, compared to other Turkish parties, it "enjoyed an ideological hegemony over the whole political scene that none of them had ever possessed" (Anderson 2009: 447). AKP indeed had become so dominate that some criticized it for transforming the Turkish political system into "a one-dimensional democracy" (Önis 2009: 22). How did an Islamist-leaning party achieve cultural hegemony in such a sharply

divided society? Of course, like any ideological hegemon, AKP presented its program as non-ideological, but rather as pragmatic and sensible—or as Gramsci would put it: an expression of common sense. AKP advertised its platform as a perfect synthesis between everything that Turks cherished: economic liberalism and free trade, and the defense of traditional and religious values, i.e. "a progressive and modernist vision with a conservative face," and portrayed its opponents as "defensive nationalists [inspired by] authoritarian biases and [employing] fear-based politics in a futile rearguard action" (Önis 2009: 22). The party gradually "instilled in ordinary citizens the desire to see pious rulers" take over, preaching the view that good, uncorrupt people should run the state, and that practicing Muslims are most likely to be so—a view claiming to relax rather than abandon the strict secular commandments of the founder of the republic (Tugal 2009: 451). Such innocuous notions were the only effective means to win the support of all the various constituencies in Turkey's pluralistic system, a system were avowedly ideological (let alone militant) movements were quickly marginalized (Zubaida 1996: 11). Finally, AKP, unlike many other Islamist groups, dropped any hint of anti-Western or anti-capitalist rhetoric, which fit perfectly with Turkey's Westernized and bourgeois society (Anderson 2009: 447).

All that being said, one still cannot grasp the intellectual edge of AKP without a deep look into the hugely influential cultural movement that succeeded for the first time in presenting Islamism in such a manner that did not offend the secular elite, that is the movement clustered around the spiritual leader Fethullah Gülen and his "impeccably pro-business, pro-modern, pro-American" Islam, and his "Opus Dei-like empire" of social, financial, educational, and media networks (Anderson 2009: 455). From the beginning, Turkish Islamists operated on two parallel fronts: loosely-organized religion-based social movements (such as the *Naqshabandi* Sufi order, al-Nur movement, and finally the Güllen movement), and a series of political parties bent on undermining secularism in various degrees (with AKP as their latest manifestation). While the

religious movements were never officially affiliated with the political parties, they were the ones that seized society and delivered it to the parties in the form of votes. The leaders of these cultural movements ran extended social networks. They collected donations from an increasing pool of pious Muslims (millions of dollars in the case of the Güllen movement) and used them to offer healthcare, education, scholarships, stipends, lodging, religious study groups, and employment for their followers. They also helped arrange marriages, resolve family disputes, establish business contacts, and acted as social trust brokers in all social matters. The guiding principle here was that through participation in these networks one was fulfilling his or her religious duty to express solidarity with other believers (Yılmaz 2009: Interview). So although these movements were not officially entangled in politics, they produced likeminded Muslims, who then acted as a single voting bloc.

Understanding the success of AKP therefore requires an appreciation of the unique achievements of the Gülen movement. The founder, Fethullah Gülen, was a preacher (*Hocaefendi*) born in the early 1940s in the eastern Anatolian town of Erzurum, home of Kemal's first national congress, and a historically insecure frontier zone that cultivated the young preacher's appreciation of a strong military. The movement he founded evolved from the teachings of Said al-Nursi, though Gülen reformulated the master's ideas considerably, and combined them with Turkish nationalist and Western intellectual influences. The end result was an ideology that supported a strong state, a market economy, free trade, integration into the advanced (i.e. Western) world, and most important, Turkish nationalism and secularism. In other words, this neo-Nur movement interpreted Islam in a way that appealed to both the Kemalist establishment and the intellectual and business elites. Its 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' was perceived to have finally succeeded in establishing a *modus vivendi* between the country's religious population and nationalist military, at the same time that its carefully

crafted discourse of moderation and tolerance reassured seculars.[28] Besides its potent and highly pragmatic ideology, the Gülen movement became hegemonic through its formidable organizational resources, including a media empire, with a prominent daily (*Zaman*), several periodicals, television and radio stations, a first-rate public relations company (Journalists' and Writers' Foundation, JWF), an impressive array of educational institutions (300 high schools, seven universities, and dozens of dormitories and summer camps), all funded by a giant business network spearheaded by 2,000 members of the Business Life Cooperation Association (*Is Hayatı Daynaısma Dernegi*, ISHAD), and homegrown financial intuitions (such as *Asya Finans*, whose capital in the 1990s reached $500 million). It also helped that Gülen himself (who since 1999 moved to the U.S.) never criticized military repression of communists (a threat to Islam), or avowedly Islamist parties (whom he accused of manipulating religion).[29] As such, his movement is usually credited with inspiring the ideas behind AKP and creating the popular force that brought it to power in 2002 and kept it there for over a decade (Yavuz 1999: 593-97; Aras and Caha 2003: 141-44: Yavuz and Esposito 2003).

There are a few noteworthy features that distinguished the Gülen movement from its predecessors. To start with, the movement was obsessed with fast and effective growth, and in order to "generate maximum success within a short time and with the limited resources, the *intelligent* students, the *wealthy* businessmen and *celebrities* [were] seen as primary target groups" (Bilici 2006: 10-11). As the richest and most organized offshoot of the Nur movement, it helped "a large body of bright and promising students from lower economic status, students whose education depends on the funding from the movement's foundations and individual benefactors" (Turam 2007: 20). Also, the movement leaders consciously reformulated their Islamic interpretations to better suit the

[28] One should note that this 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis," which had become a "textbook doctrine" by the late 1990s (Anderson 2009: 441), was not entirely new. Even before the birth of the republic, it was broadly perceived that "despite secularism, the older idea that Muslim equals Turk and non-Muslim equals non-Turk persisted" (Lewis 1952: 39). And in the 1960s, Colonel Alparslan Türkes, the leader of the fascist MHP, promulgated similar ideas (Ahmad 1988: 760).

[29] With regard to the military-Islamist showdown in 1997, for instance, he was quoted saying: "The MGK is a constitutional institution. It is a part of the state… In an enlightened era which has experienced democracy and secularism, it is impossible for the Turkish people to go back" (quoted in Aras and Caha 2003: 147).

Turkish cultural and political context. These two aspects of the party's work are related. Because the ranks of Turkish Islamists included prominent intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences, fully acquainted with Western thought—rather than the engineers, doctors, and technicians that dominated Islamism in Egypt and elsewhere—they could come up with innovative reinterpretations of Islam (Zubaida 1996: 14). The most remarkable occasion when this took place was the three 'brainstorming sessions' held at the small city of Abant: the first session (July 1998) dealt with Islam and secularism; the second (July 1999) with state, society, and religion; and the third (July 2000) with democracy and law. The Declaration of Abant (*Abant Bildirisi*) issued after the first meeting stated: "revelation and reason do not conflict; individuals should use their reasons to organize their social life; the state should be neutral on beliefs, faith and philosophical orientation of society; governance of the state cannot be based on religion and secularism, but should expand individual freedoms and rights and should not deprive any person from public participation" (quoted in Yavuz 1999: 601). And along those lines, Gülen himself would later argue that the veil—one of the most explosive and divisive issues in Turkey—is a cultural habit not a religious obligation and that if young girls had to choose between veiling and education, they should choose education (Yavuz 1999: 601; Yavuz 2003). Such diluted versions of Islam not only appealed to secularist, but also catered to the modern taste of most citizens.[30] With this attitude, the Gülen movement presented itself as "a bulwark against the populist and revolutionary interpretations of Islam," and then banked on its reputation for moderation to Islamize society (and eventually the state) in a non-confrontational way (Tugal 2002: 93).

[30] "All the changes introduced after 1923, which helped to produce a consumer culture, vitiate against [an Islamic] restoration. For, however 'tradition-bound' the peasant may be on arrival in the city, he is soon attracted by its material culture, far more appealing and comfortable than anything he has experienced before. With his appetite whetted, he wants more of the benefits associated with the secular city–such as education, cinema, and television" (Ahmad 1988: 759).

What is the end goal of this political-cultural axis? Building on the social influence and prestige of the Gülen movement and others, it seems that AKP's strategy is based on transforming the Turkish system without attacking it head on. The aim is to depart gradually from the set script by loosening secular restrictions gradually rather than abolishing them all at once, by renegotiating where the red lines should be drawn rather than trying to discard them. This roundabout strategy was the only available option to avert a direct military intervention (Bâli 2010: Interview).

Neo-Ottomans

AKP combined its political, economic, and cultural power to radically alter Turkey's foreign policy. The boldness and progressiveness of its geopolitical strategy not only increased its popularity at home and abroad, but also appealed to the Turkish armed forces. In 2002, AKP declared its intention to make Turkey a global power by 2023, the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the republic. This was a paradigmatic shift from Kemalism, with its isolationist and defensive foreign policy, and its narrow focus on protecting Turkey's national security,[31] to what has now been standardly referred to as 'neo-Ottomanism' (*Osmanlicaler*), an active and assertive foreign policy geared to establish Turkey as a global power in its own right (Murinson 2006: 946). AKP's ambition was not only to transform Turkey, but also to reshape the entire region in its image, and thus ultimately "undo Napoleon's legacy" in the Middle East in the early nineteenth century (Cagaptay 2012: 7).

The intellectual underpinnings of AKP's foreign policy shift have been articulated almost singlehandedly by the party's foreign policy architect Professor Ahmet Davutoglu and his Strategic Depth (*Stratejik Derinlik*) doctrine. "The main thesis of this doctrine is that strategic depth is

[31] Commentators agree that Kemalist foreign policy reflected a culture of insecurity, centered on the belief that: "Turks are alone in the world, have no friends, and many foes" (Kalaycioglu 2005: 199; Dagi 2008: 23).

predicated on geographical and historical depth," and that Turkey is uniquely positioned to benefit from both because it is embedded geographically at a crossroad of geopolitical spheres of influence, and its Ottoman legacy provides it with the historical and cultural ties to build on (Murinson 2006: 947). Trained in philosophy before heading the Department of International Relations at Beykent University, Davutoglu first expressed his views in an influential 1998 article, *The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World (Dis)Order*, which exposed the deformities and imbalances of the post-Cold War order and predicted that the Islamic world will soon become the center of global power struggles. What was notable about this article was that it did not mention Kemalism in the slightest, and called upon Turks to act proactively to establish their own power axis. Later, his book *Strategic Depth*, published in 2000, openly criticized Kemalism for failing to make use of Turkey's valuable geographic location and history, and then laid down the five pillars of his proposed doctrine, most famously, the 'zero-problem' principle, whereby Ankara labored to resolve all its standing conflicts with its neighbors, from Greece, to Cyprus, Armenia, and Syria. The goal, as stated by Davutoglu, is for Turkey to discard its perception of itself as a peripheral country, and "appropriate a new position: one of providing security and stability not only for itself, but also for its neighboring regions" (Davutoglu 2008: 79).

Davutoglu, became chief foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Erdogan, and later had a chance to implement his ideas as Turkey's Foreign Minister. This doctrine found particular resonance with Erdogan, who lent his personal dynamism and charisma to the cause (Murinson 2006: 946). But what rendered this doctrine practical, unlike Nasser's pan-Arab ambitions for example, is the following: first, as with other AKP cadres, Davutoglu stamped his ambition with a pragmatic touch, suggesting that in order for Turkey to become a global power, it needed "to practice caution and to calibrate Turkish foreign policy within the 'strategic parameters' set by the great powers" (Murinson 2006: 950); second, geopolitical changes in the 1990s were remarkably

opportune: the collapse of the USSR, and the ensuing independence of a handful of Turkic republics, in addition to disintegration in the Balkans and the Caucasus offered new possibilities—and the threat posed by Moscow and Tehran's attempt to influence these newly independent countries, alleviated Western concerns about Turkey's role extension. One can also add that the failure of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process kept regional relations tense, and offered Turkey—now posing as an impartial arbiter—a significant role. In other words, the weakening of Turkey's neighbors over the last three decades provided Ankara with an enviable comparative advantage. Finally, while AKP's geopolitical project challenged the monopoly of generals over foreign policy, it intrinsically appealed to the prestige of the Turkish armed forces, and provided it with a popular justification to continue building Turkish military strength in the post-Cold War era. Unlike officers in weak states with little more to do than bicker with politicians, the Turkish military was provided with an ambitious project at a time when NATO seemed to have lost its purpose, and Turkish soldiers had little more to look forward to other than serving in peacekeeping missions in places like the Balkans, Somalia, Lebanon, and Afghanistan (Uzgel 2003: 191-96; Kalaycioglu 2005: 12-13).

How did this new foreign policy manifest itself practically? AKP cemented relations with Israel during its first term. Party leaders visited Tel Aviv; businessmen close to AKP made profitable deals with their Israeli counterparts; and the government concluded more bilateral agreements with Israel than any other Turkish government. However, Erdogan was aware that his real power base was in the Muslim world, and that while he could be seen as mediating between Arabs and Israelis, he must not appear complacent with the latter (Pope 2010: 7).[32] One indicator of a more influential role in the Muslim world is that out of the thirty-three Turkish diplomatic missions opened under

[32] The Prime Minister's famous theatrical outburst at the 2010 Davos summit during a discussion with the Israeli president can be seen in this light. On this occasion, the Turkish Premier publically denounced the Gaza blockade and the Israeli commandos' surprise night attack on the *Mavi Marmara*, the leading vessel in the Turkish aid flotilla, while it was still in international waters, killing nine Turkish citizens. Erdogan flew back to Ankara that night to a cheering crowd of tens of thousands of Turks, and thousands demonstrating in several Arab capitals in his support—a public relation *coup de grace* of the first order (Pope 2010: 7).

AKP rule, eighteen were in Muslim countries. And while EU accounted for 56 percent of Turkish trade in 1999, its share dropped to 41 percent a decade later, at the same time that trade with Islamic countries climbed from 12 percent to 20 percent. The Prime Minister became very active in Middle East politics. He visited Tehran in the summer of 2004 to sign security cooperation and trade agreements, and mediated between Iran and the international community on the nuclear energy dispute. He also visited Syria (the first state visit by a Turkish official in 57 years), Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia in 2006, and invited Hamas's political leader Khaled Mash'al to Ankara after his party's electoral victory that year. Erdogan was then invited to deliver the opening speech at the Arab League summit meeting in 2007, and he returned the gesture by hosting a Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Istanbul.

Also notably, Turkey unhesitatingly threw its weight behind the 2011 Arab revolts, and its support for the Syrian rebellion, in particular, was essential to its persistence. This risky policy yielded high dividends on the Arab street, causing AKP popularity to soar among Arabs, as evidenced by the exuberant millions who received Erdogan in Cairo that summer (Cagaptay 2012: 7). The emerging Arab regimes looked up to the Turkish democratic model, which was achieved after a long and bitter struggle, and ordinary people came under the sway of Turkey's public diplomacy and soft power, such as soap operas, music, tourism, and other cultural products (Dagi 2008: 284; for a highly romanticized view of Erdogan as the designated leader of the Muslim world see Sergany 2011; Tughian 2011).

AKP also tried to resolve longstanding problems in its immediate surroundings. In October 2009, Ankara reestablished diplomatic relations with Armenia, and endorsed the creation of an independent commission to examine the Armenian massacre (Pope 2010: 4). Erdogan also declared his intention to establish "perpetual peace" with Greece (Dagi 2008: 285). And even though Ankara

has not pulled out its troops from Cyprus, AKP signed, in 2005, protocols extending Turkey's 1995 Customs Union agreement with the EU to include new members, including Cyprus.[33]

Doubtless, however, AKP's most popular foreign policy is its success in improving Turkey's chances to join the EU. After the Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the EU had come into effect in January 1996, the Helsinki conference, in December 1999, designated Turkey as a candidate for full EU membership. Within a month of AKP's 2002 victory, the party scored a diplomatic victory by fixing a date to start negotiations for accession (scheduled for fall 2005) at the EU summit in Copenhagen. The party mobilized civil society and business associations to lobby at Brussels, and carried out the required reforms with such scrupulousness that in 2004, the EU announced that Turkey has met the union's political and economic standards, and no longer needs to be subject to continued monitoring (Davutoglu 2008: 83). To appreciate the importance of this aspect of AKP policies, one needs to understand that EU accession is arguably the only national project with overwhelming popular support in Turkey—in fact, opinion polls in the first decade of AKP rule showed that close to 75 percent of Turks were eager to join (Keyder 2004: 77-79). EU accession had for long been "a Turkish dream, a panacea for all ills" (Aksin 2007: 318). As Anderson explained:

> **Entry into the EU had, indeed, to date been the magical formula of the AKP's hegemony. For the mass of the population…a Europe within which they can travel freely represents hope of better-paid jobs… For big business, membership in the EU offers access to deeper capital markets; for medium entrepreneurs, lower interest rates; for both, a more stable macro-economic environment. For the professional classes, commitment to Europe is the gauge that Islamist temptations will not prevail within the AKP. For the liberal intelligentsia, the EU will be the safeguard against any return to military rule. For the military, it will realize the longstanding Kemalist dream of joining the West in full dress. In short, Europe is the promised land towards which the most antithetical forces within Turkey can gaze, for the most variegated reasons. In making its cause their own, the AKP leaders have come to dominate the political chequerboard more completely that any force since the Kemalism of the early republic** (Anderson 2009: 449).

[33] Erdogan made it clear though that this did not amount to recognition of the Cypriot government (Tugal 2007: 28).

One of the reasons why AKP, and so many other Islamist-leaning Turks, were so keen on EU accession is their realization that Turkey's democratic forces cannot muster the resources necessary to take on the military, and that they must capitalize on the EU candidacy process "as the only way of winning support for greater democracy, rule of law and an expanded pluralism" at home (Keyder 2004: 77). Turkey thus provides a typical example of Adam Przeworski's (1991) famous model for democratic transition in countries where the ruling bloc is divided between a dominant and a weaker faction. Here the weak faction lures the dominant one with external incentives to convince it to loosen its authoritarian grip, and subsequently uses the political opening to enhance its status and consolidate its democratic gains. The European Council's 1993 Copenhagen criteria, which required members to have stable democratic institutions, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and commitment to free market mechanisms, was welcomed by those who were trying to prevent another military intervention. EU political conditionality and generous funding enhanced the status of human rights groups in Turkey and trusted them with documenting violations; Euro-parliamentarians paid frequent visits to Turkey, inspecting prisons and conflict zones; and EU's Ankara office established strong links with Turkish NGOs. At the same time, the EU's balanced mixed of conditions and incentives were carefully designed not to alienate the generals.

As the political dividends of complying with EU conditions dawned on leading Islamist activists, the anti-Western rhetoric gave way to a pro-EU and human rights discourse, employed instrumentally to preempt military intervention. Famously, the explosive veiling issue was reframed as a matter of human rights rather than a matter of religious obligation. Islamists began to "routinely invoke a global language of democracy and human rights when explaining their action," and by articulating their demands in the language of universal rights, they transposed what was essentially a domestic conflict onto the global sphere (Rumford 2003: 387-88). In short, joining the EU was no

longer a foreign policy vocation, but "a must to establish and consolidate an 'open society' in Turkey"(Dagi 2008: 106).

In return, of course, Turkish Islamists had to demonstrate to Europe's satisfaction that they had become "good Muslim 'moderates'" (Tugal 2007: 17). Though European citizens showed little enthusiasm for closer ties with Turkey, EU leaders saw in the AKP-Gülen phenomenon a good model for Muslim immigrants in Berlin, Paris, and other European capitals. Europe's neighbor across the Atlantic thought likewise. In the post-9/11 security environment, Washington supported the AKP to prove that its war against terrorism was not a war against Islam or a clash of civilizations, and to be able to draw on Turkey's strategic location and regional influence to restructure the Middle East (Oguzlu 2003: 295-95). With Americans increasingly concerned about militant Islamism, moderate Western-friendly Islamists were encouraged in an effort to isolate militants. AKP-ruled Turkey was framed by Washington as a "beacon of democracy in the Muslim world" (Keyder 2004: 84). The "Turkish Model" was celebrated as a model that should be replicated in every Muslim country (Kalaycioglu 2005: 193). It helped, of course, that the Gülen movement, which provided the intellectual underpinnings for Turkish Islamism, was highly critical of what it claims to be the Arab's negative version of Islam, which was tribal and combative, versus the urban and tolerant Turkish version (Yavuz 1999: 596; Aras and Caha 2003: 143).[34]

At the same time that Western relations with AKP and the Güllen movement was thriving, U.S. relations with the Turkish military began to suffer beginning from the 1990s, especially after the Soviet threat had sunk into the background. American support for the Kurds in Iraq, from the 1990 Gulf crisis onward, provoked several muted conflicts. Top generals suspected that Washington would secure considerable autonomy for the Kurds on Turkey's southern borders (which became obvious after 2003). In an unprecedented incident, Chief of Staff Necip Torumaty resigned his post,

[34] One should note here that the Güllen movement operated dozens of branches in the United States (Uzgel 2003: 199).

in December 1990, in protest of President Özal's intention to help weaken the central government in Baghdad,[35] and his marginalization of the military leadership in all decisions related to the Gulf crisis—in fact, the Chief of Staff had learned of the closure of the pipeline between Turkey and Iraq from television. His angry resignation letter read, "The principles I believe in and my understanding of the way the state should function make it impossible for me to go on holding this office" (Güney 2002: 166; Kili 2003: 173; Uzgel 2003: 198). Washington, in turn, expressed its alarm over the Turkish army's shift from a defensive to an offensive strategy against the PKK beginning from 1993, as well as the cross-border raids deep into northern Iraq to pursue PKK militants, which began in March 1995 (with no less than 50,000 troops) and continue still—what Chief of Staff Dogan Gilres described as a long-term campaign to achieve complete field control over Kurdish regions (Uzgel 2003: 205). The general command certainly did not appreciate U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright's strict warning against a military coup in 1997. The office of the Turkish chief of staff published a pamphlet, in 1999, that carefully listed unfriendly actions by Washington, including opening up a Kurdish cultural institute before a Turkish one was established; encouraging Armenian and Greek lobbies in Washington to criticize Turkey; and incorporating the Armenian genocide into American school textbooks. Needless to say, AKP shrewdly played the Kurdish card to sever the military's U.S.-ties even further (Bâli 2010: Interview).

In 2003, Chief of Staff Hilmi Özkök defended his country's successive wars against Greece (in 1974, 1987, and 1996) and the deployment of 30,000 troops in Cyprus, and warned that: "if Turkey looses Cyprus, the process of the Turks' imprisonment in Anatolia would be completed,"

[35] Özal had declared that the map of the Middle East was about to be redrawn and that Turkey must be an active partner in this process. He accepted an American request to mobilize the army on the borders with Iraq to force Baghdad to divide its forces, and in fact the Turkish concentration of forces (180,000 troops) tied down eight Iraqi divisions (Aksin 2007: 294-95).

something the military will never allow, regardless of the opinion of Turkey's Western partners.[36] Turkish officers were infuriated by the way the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 transformed the power balance between the army and the Kurdish militants almost permanently. Kurds were now no less important allies to the Americans than the Turkish military itself. Little wonder that it was the Turkish army that rejected U.S. use of Turkish territories and air space in its 2003 invasion of Iraq, while AKP leadership did not mind (Uzgel 2003: 200-202). The general staff's "deep disturbance" with the U.S. was displayed in a press conference by Chief of General Staff Büyükanıt, on April 12, 2007, in which he criticized Washington for supporting Turkish Islamists and emboldening Kurdish separatists, claiming that such policies "will divide Turkey into pieces" (Dagi 2008: 44). In the same press conference, he attacked domestic forces for trying to undermine the military "under the façade" of meeting Western democratic and human rights conditions (Dagi 2008: 271). Ihsan Dagi catalogued similarly sharp criticisms by top Turkish commanders against the West between 2006 and 2008, commenting at the end: "Common knowledge that the US and Turkey are allies does not hold entirely true in the eyes of the commanders. It seems that the 'comrades in arms' notion from the Cold War years is a thing of the past. What we see instead is a deep distrust. Turkish generals expect the worst from the Americans, including an outright occupation of Turkey" (Dagi 2008: 273).

The dilemma that faces the military could be therefore summarized as follows: "Democratization might increase state power in the international arena relative to other states [through EU accession and stronger U.S. support] but it could also decrease the power of the [military] in the domestic arena relative to society" (Yılmaz 2002: 75). This is why the military seems divided more than any other time. Some are keen on deeper integration with the West, while others are worried about how Islamists and ethnic minorities are manipulating Western countries to increase their political leverage vis-à-vis officers (Yılmaz 2009: Interview). Either way, Turkey's

[36] The U.S. had responded by banning the sale of Cobra attack helicopters to Ankara in 1974, and took similar punitive measures against Turkey whenever its renewed attacks against Greece and Cyprus (Uzgel 2003: 205).

generals have come to realize that with the end of the communist threat and the warm relations between AKP and the West, the international situation has become certainly unfavorable to a coup (Yılmaz 2009: Interview). "If there was a military coup in Turkey," Dagi wrote, "it would be not only against the government and Parliament but against the US and the EU" (2008: 45).

The Security Shifting Sides

The Turkish security has not been a full partner in the political game since the birth of the republic. Security functions have been subsumed by the military according to the law. Police and civilian intelligence have acted as military aides in terms of urban security, while rural security remained in the hands of the gendarmes, a military branch proper. The reasons for this odd arrangement are both historical and political. Historically, Ottoman security agencies were late and feeble creations (unlike Egypt, whose British colonial rulers created and supervised a first-rate police force during their eight-decade rule). Moreover, the rudimentary security structure that existed was based in Istanbul (the seat of the old regime) at a time when Mustafa Kemal's revolutionary regime was centered in Ankara, and so the new rulers were forced to entrust security to the military (again unlike Nasser, who made immediate use of the security apparatus he inherited from the British).

No less crucial in the Turkish case was that since the transition to multi-party politics, administrative control of the main internal security body, the General Directorate of Security (GDS), which is part of the Interior Ministry, lay in the hands of elected politicians (rather than members of an authoritarian ruling party, as was the case in Egypt). The Interior Minister, an elected government appointee, decides on all security personnel issues, and holds the GDS accountable for its actions—since he has to justify these actions to parliament and respond to various public inquiries. In other words, the Interior Minister, as a representative of a political party in a competitive political system,

has to rein in the security forces during his tenure if he wants his party to win in the next elections. And political parties, on their part, practiced this right to the fullest, frequently reshuffling officers and reorganizing police work as they saw fit. One striking example suffices: when an internal change of leadership occurred in the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP), in 1991, the party's new chair, Mesut Yılmaz, replaced the heads of all the police departments that were appointed by his predecessor in the party (Caglar 1994: 139).

Turkish security agencies therefore could not develop a separate political agenda; their functions were usurped by the military, and they remained organizationally and financially bound to defer to whichever civilian government was in charge. This was entirely different from the case of the armed forces. Military guardianship over political life and responsibility for internal (as well as external) security was enshrined in Turkey's political system from the start; and Turkish law grants full powers to the chief of staff and service chiefs over the military institution (though they nominally report to the president), and they are officially involved in policy-making through the MGK.

That being said, one must note that the military expanded the Turkish security forces after the 1980 coup and propped it up to play a more active role in domestic control. Three important developments spurred this change: first, the dismal failure of the police to end political violence in the late 1970s, thus forcing the military to intervene; second, the start of the war against the Kurds in the early 1980s, which promised to tie the military's hands for quite some time (the war officially ended in 1999, but operations continue until today); and third, this latter war forced thousands of Kurds and poor peasants to flee the southeast region and migrate to the big cities, where they joined the growing urban 'underclass' in the shantytowns—itself a product of the economic liberalization of the 1980s—and all contributed to increasing crime rate against the wealthy, as well as violence among themselves in the shantytowns. This poverty-ridden social group terrified the upwardly

mobilized middle class, let alone the upper classes. And this is why a member of the 1980 junta declared in the Constitutive Assembly that prepared the new Constitution that the police forces will go through a comprehensive "re-organization project to effectually carry out its duties that will become heavier after the termination of the martial law" (Berksoy 2010: 142-43).

The police force, which occupied "a modest place among state institutions until the 1980s," entered an unprecedented phase of "expansion and militarization, during which it was structurally and legally strengthened with the help of the military." The police budget was increased, its equipment modernized with high-tech guns and armored vehicles, and new police schools were opened in several Turkish cities (Berksoy 2010: 137-39). Police officers increased from 50,000 in 1980 to 92,000 in 1991, and thousands more were added in 2002, 2005, and 2007 (Caglar 1994: 134).

There were other important structural additions. These included the reorganization of the anti-riot units (Society Police) into Rapid Action Units (*Çevik Kuvvet*), in 1982. The new force made use of sophisticated equipment, such as electrified truncheons, teargas bombs, machine guns, and armored vehicles. The following year, an anti-terrorism force, the Special Operations Teams (*Özel Harekat Timleri*), was organized and trained by the vice-commander of the military's Special War Department, which was responsible for confronting armed guerillas, and was aided by a newly created Anti-Terrorism and Operation Department. A draconian anti-terrorism law (Law 3712 of 1991) defined a broad array of activities as terror, including counterfeiting documents, inciting youth against conscription, as well as the 'intent' to commit violence. In 1993, Motorcycle Police Teams were introduced, with the aim of controlling the streets and collecting information in a systematic way. And finally, a sophisticated electronic surveillance system was set up in 2005 (Berksoy 2010: 140-47).

But the military's belated decision to expand and empower the security apparatus coincided with its decision to turn-a-blind-eye to Islamists in order to prevent a communist resurgence. As a

result, the purges that accompanied the 1980 coup removed police officers with leftist sympathies, and recruited Islamists in their place to act as a bulwark against the infiltration of communism into the force (Tugal 2007: 11). Surprisingly, the military's change of heart vis-à-vis Islamists, in 1997, did not affect the police, as evidenced by the fact that purges of military officers with Islamist sympathies after the 1997 soft coup did not extend to police officers (Tugal 2007: 16). Ali Caglar (2004), a sociologist who investigated the police force through employment data analysis and interviews, concluded that because of the low political value of the police force, the background checks carried out before admitting police officers were performed by "untrained, inexperienced and non-professional officers" and there were no systematic purges of politically-affiliated members, and the few that were carried out targeted leftists not Islamists (Caglar 2004: 357). In fact, since most police officers came from the same social background as religiously conservative citizens (urban lower class and provincial middle class) piety became "very important in determining promotion prospects" (Caglar 2004: 361).[37]

But it was not just a matter of demography: the Gülen movement purposely infiltrated the police just around the time the force was expanding (Tugal 2002: 94). By the end of the 1990s, Islamists had turned the security apparatus into one of their "strongholds," and those who held top security positions recruited and encouraged likeminded Muslims. It was in fact reported that 700 of the 1,600 senior police chiefs were members of Refah, and that this explains why they were "zealous in suppressing unauthorized demonstrations by leftists and trade unionists, yet remarkably friendly to the unauthorized massive Islamist demonstrations" (Zubaida 1996: 12). By the time AKP came to power, Islamists had succeeded in turning police officers into avowed supporters of the new ruling

[37] A police survey in 2000 showed that 80 percent of police officers were the sons of workers, small tradesmen, merchants, and farmers, and 82 percent of them came from villages and small provincial towns (Uysal 2010: 196). This in why despite the fact that 41 percent of arrests and prosecution against demonstrators between 1994 and 2000 occurred against Islamists, there is still a "widely-held perception that the police is more tolerant of religious groups" (Uysal 2010: 202).

party (Tugal 2007: 5). AKP then used its leverage over the police force to improve the police's public image, and therefore the party's own popularity. With Erdogan's trusted Interior Minister (Idris Naim Sahin), the police "internalized the market-oriented rationality, engaged in 'proactive policing' and increased its surveillance capacity" in order to achieve security on the street without having to resort to repression (Berksoy 2010: 137). According to Amnesty International, police torture decreased significantly since AKP took power (Tugal 2007: 30). Other forms of state repression were done away with: State Security Courts were eliminated, the martial law declared in the Kurdish areas since 1987 was lifted, and the death penalty was abolished (Anderson 2009: 449).

AKP then turned the magic on the magician, and charged the police with investigating military officers. In 2006, the police announced it had found "secret official files" in the homes of recently retired army officers, detailing plans to destabilize AKP rule through random acts of violence and black propaganda. The files were somehow 'leaked' to the public by the pro-AKP newspaper *Zaman* (Dagi 2008: 55). This was the beginning of the explosive confrontation between AKP and the military (discussed below). In response, pro-military press accused "conservative religious elements in the police" of fabricating these secret files to implicate army officers. The ensuing drama revealed the depth of the "hitherto covert conflict between the military and the police" (Tugal 2007: 30).

Subordinating the Military

On the eve of AKP's rise to power, in 2002, opinion polls showed that the military was the most trusted institution in Turkey, the most recent poll, in 2011, was not as flattering: the percentage of citizens who still regarded the military in that way declined during that relatively short period from 90 percent to 60 percent (Tuysuz and Tavernise 2011: 5). As fit for a party built on political

prudence, AKP carefully avoided an early confrontation with the military. Until it managed to cement its political base, it did not object to military operations against the Kurds, and readily deferred to generals in matters of national security. Erdogan also developed cordial relations with the "more liberal wing of the military," represented by Hilmi Özkök, who was chief of staff until 2006 (Tugal 2007: 27; Dagi 2008: 48).[38] Slowly but surely, however, AKP began curbing the military's political influence. In August 2003, the powers of the National Security Council were reduced: civilian members outnumbered generals with the addition of the ministers of finance and justice, and a representative of the Human Rights Coordinating High Council; MGK's General Secretary became a civilian; the council was no longer allowed to communicate with government departments directly to follow up on its decisions; and its meetings were now convened bimonthly rather than monthly. These changes have effectively recast MGK—the military's main mechanism for influencing politics—into no more than a consultative body (Güney 2002: 174; Uzgel 2003: 192). AKP also succeeded in cutting down the defense budget. During the decade before the party came to power, the defense budget had increased steadily from $10 million to $16.4 million. By contrast, in the first four years of AKP rule, the budget shrunk back to $10.3 million. So although the Turkish economy was growing on an exceptional scale, "military expenditure declined substantially" (Wahid 2009: 84-85).

At the end of 2004, army officers began contemplating a coup, but since the domestic and international situation did not allow for one, they needed a considerable amount of instability to justify a military intervention—even if they had to create such instability (Dagi 2008: 45).[39] In 2005, a series of bombs claimed the lives of several people in the poor Kurdish town of Semdinli, and police

[38] Özkök's colleagues criticized him for being "too soft" on AKP, and blamed his leniency on the fact that he had spent far too long serving as military attaché in Brussels, where he probably came under persistent pressure from EU governments (Dagi 2008: 48).

[39] Sener Eruygur, an army general, was the main culprit, and after retirement he went on to head the Kemalist Thought Association (ADD), a Turkish political think tank (Dagi 2008: 49).

investigations implicated military officers. This was the beginning of what was later revealed to be an organized campaign of assassinations and random acts of political violence meant to embarrass AKP and expose its powerlessness.[40] The general suspected of masterminding this terror campaign was the Army's second-in-command, Yasar Büyükanıt. Erdogan asked the public prosecutor to take action against all those involved regardless of their status, but at the end the general was acquitted and two low-ranking officers assumed responsibility and were sentenced to prison (Tugal 2007: 29-30). And in defiance of Erdogan, the high command pulled back no punches to appoint the suspect general Büyükanıt chief of staff in 2006. Also, at the military's behest, Turkey's public prosecutor filed a lawsuit, in 2007, before the Supreme Court demanding AKP's dissolution on the grounds that it undermined the secular principles of the republic, but the case was ruled out, in 2008, for lack of evidence. At the end of that year, AKP uncovered yet another coup plot and put its protagonists on trial. The ruling party claimed that senior officers created a secret gang, called Ergenekon, to destabilize the country and pave the way for military dictatorship (Dagi 2008: 5). And in April 27, 2008 an e-memorandum issued by a group calling itself the 'Young Officers' expressed the frustration of the armed forces with American and European dictates, and the complacency of the AKP with these foreign powers to undermine the military's guardian role (Dagi 2008: 48).

Then, after years of covert plots by disparate members of the military, the general command decided to take a formal stance against the AKP. In the summer of 2011, Chief of Staff Isik Kosaner and the service chiefs submitted their resignation in protest of the prosecution of 200 military personnel, including 60 generals, since AKP took power, on various charges relating to anti-government plots—what they considered a public humiliation of the armed forces (Dombey 2012: 1). Yet in less than a week, AKP succeeded in appointing a new general command, headed by

[40] The weekly news magazine *Nokta* also revealed, in March 2007, that the military was profiling media personnel to decide which elements to employ in its propaganda campaign against AKP. The military responded not with a denial but rather by launching an investigation to discover who leaked these reports, raided the magazine's headquarters, closed it down, and confiscated its documents (Dagi 2008: 36-38).

former commander of the military police (General Necdet Ozel), thus "decisively strengthening its control over its armed forces" (Arsu 2011: 3). Observers agreed that the resignations and the ease with which AKP installed a new military leadership signaled that coups had become a remote possibility, even if the interests of the armed forces were at stake. As the outgoing Chief of Staff complained, the government had succeeded in creating the general impression that the Turkish army was "a criminal organization," and that he had regretfully failed to protect his men (Tuysuz and Tavernise 2011: 5).

Then the unthinkable happened. In April 2012, AKP moved from defense to offense, bringing a judicial case against the two surviving generals of the five-member junta that carried out the 1980 coup. Kenan Evren (94 years), former president and chief of staff, and Tahsin Sahinkaya (86 years), former air force commander, were tried and found guilty for staging an extralegal takeover of power, even though the two could not make it to the courtroom because of their poor health condition. The government's prosecutors followed through with a series of charges against the surviving leaders of past military coups. In May 2012, a Turkish court sentenced five generals, including the former head of the MGK, and the former heads of the army and the air force, to prison for staging the 1997 soft coup. And more than thirty officers have been arrested on that charge and are still on trial. The plot thickened. The recently retired (2008-2010) chief of staff, General Ilker Basbug, was arrested and charged with leading a subversive organization that aims to spread chaos as a pretext to overthrow the government. In his court appearance, the embittered general commented: "Accusing the chief of the general staff of setting up an armed terrorist organization is the greatest punishment that could be given to me" (Arsu 2011: 3).

Prominent Turkish writer Sahin Alpay hailed this "great achievement for Turkish democracy," and predicted that this mind-bending shift in civil-military relations meant that coups in Turkey were about to "take their place in the dustbin of history" (Alpay 2012: 1). Former military

officer Atilla Sandikli commented, "from now on, I believe that the army would not be able to dismiss any civilian authority" (Arsu 2011: 3). And Asli Aydintasbas, the Turkish columnist in the widely circulated daily *Milliyet*, concluded dramatically, "This is effectively the end of the military's role in Turkish democracy. This is the symbolic moment where the first Turkish republic ends and the second republic begins" (cited in Tuysuz and Tavernise 2011: 5).

In conclusion, the early hegemony of the armed forces over the Turkish republic proved to be a blessing in disguise. Because this hegemony implied the appropriation of domestic security duties, the security apparatus—usually the strongest advocate of authoritarianism—remained feeble and fragmented for decades. And because professional officers are naturally disinclined to handle everyday governance, they responded positively to internal and external pressures to allow multi-party politics. Finally, because the military was the most powerful player in the political system, it developed the confidence and the discipline to act as a united institution with a clear corporate agenda—it was neither subjugated and corrupted by autocratic rulers, nor penetrated by security agents. The military was the *guardian* of the nation. But what did that mean exactly?

In contrast to the common belief that the military has always intervened in Turkish politics in defense of Kemalism, the founding ideology of the republic, or secularism, in particular, this chapter demonstrates that whenever the military acted, it did so mainly to defend its own corporate interests and autonomy, or to preserve the state's national security (as defined by the general command). And the reason why the military intervened so frequently in politics is because Turkey did in fact suffer from domestic instability and was often involved in high-stake geopolitical confrontations. On the one hand, separatist and radical political movements produced enough turmoil to force civilian politicians to summon the military to restore order on several occassions. And, on the other hand, the country's NATO assigned role as a bulwark against communism during the Cold War; its numerous armed confrontations with Greece over Cyprus and the islands of the

Aegean; and the protracted confrontation with Kurdish militants in the south (especially after the collapse of central authority in Baghdad), have all combined to justify military intervention in politics form a national security viewpoint.

Unfortunately, for officers, the price of turning away from routine governance and direct everyday administration was reallocating more and more power to those who were ready to shoulder this hefty burden: civilian politicians. After every intervention, Turkey's generals did their best to create a more stable political system, so that they would not have to re-intervene in the future. The unintended consequence of their institutional reforms was the creation of stronger political parties. Predictably, these parties acquired the stamina and experience to beat the masters in their own game. Political leaders fine-tuned their ideologies to suit the temperament of Turkish society; formulated and re-formulated their socioeconomic programs several times to capture as much votes as possible; divided labor scrupulously with civil society groups; allied themselves to forceful class players; learned the ropes of international politics; and negotiated smartly with the military.

The latest and most developed version of Turkey's political parties is the all-powerful Justice and Development Party (AKP)—a party that has enjoyed (and still does) unparalleled hegemony over the Turkish political system, so much so that it has not only curbed the military's political influence, but it has also resolved to punish officers for their past sins—the hunter has become the hunted.

Is this trend reversible? Will the military somehow regain the upper hand and resume its guardianship role in Turkish politics? Maybe. But if it did, it would be caused by political failure rather than a military feat; it would be because the ruling party overshot the mark. If there is a present threat to Turkish democracy, it is the AKP's potential arrogance of power rather than the highhandedness of the generals—an arrogance that might alienate considerable segments of the party's broad consistency. Political jealousy is another source threat. Constant failure to unseat AKP

through the ballot box might tempt other political factions to (temporarily) betray democracy and rally around the armed forces in an attempt to undermine their mighty rival. The future of Turkish democracy thus remains uncertain. The only thing for sure is that overall military control over the Turkish regime has allowed this democracy to evolve, albeit at a high cost for all involved.

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