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Serving Security in the Middle East



Military in Israel War, the State and Man

Marina Eleftheriadou

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Going through the resumes of the Israeli political “who’s who”, one cannot miss a recurring pattern: a military background, especially a glorious one, is a well-boasted asset which is positively related to political influence. Born out of the contradiction between the pre-1948 robust “Pioneer Zionist” and the image of Holocaust victims as passive and weak Jews, Israel could not escape its militarism. From Ben Gurion’s controversial stance towards the Holocaust survivors to Ehud Barak’s militant view on the link between the past and the present,¹ many things have changed, but in effect so few.

There is no doubt that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the “security network”² in general, hold a predominant position in Israel. It was indeed meant to be this way. Israel’s founding father, David Ben Gurion had big plans for the IDF. He envisaged the military as the lynchpin of nation-building -the reinvention of Jewish community. The IDF was responsible for upholding a strong sense of military vigilance, a consequence of Israel’s quantitative military inferiority, in the context of undefined boundaries with a perceived as highly hostile fluid environment. But the IDF was meant to fulfill societal tasks, as well. IDF was, first and foremost, assigned to entrench and sustain the idea of Zionist Israeli. It was meant to be an educational-formational force; a “melting pot” that would homogenize the disparate Jewish communities, coming from different cultural backgrounds to settle Israel, and instill patriotism in them. On a more practical note, the IDF served as a cheap working force to supplement Ben Gurion’s state-building efforts (from building roads to catering the camps of newly arrived immigrants).



Ben Gurion's legacy is equally responsible for the politicization of the military. His forceful effort to nationalize the means of violence and empower himself against his adversaries in the Zionist movement had the adverse effect of setting the structural enablers for IDF's linkage to the political establishment and its workings. He intentionally left the institutional framework vague, allowing him a highly personal problem-solving rule that was reinforced by Ben Gurion's usual practice of combining the portfolios of Prime Minister and Defense Minister.

For the most part of the first two decades after the establishment of the state, the military remained submissive to civilian rule. However, the 1967 war dealt a blow to this arrangement. Glorified by the war's outcome and having already won its place in the war-time cabinet meetings, the military entered the "down and dirty side" of political bargaining and several of its senior officers "parachuted"³ into politics. But the military landed in a totally changed environment. Some of its new features were in its benefit, such as the end of the single party (Mapai) dominance and the inauguration of the coalition governments' era, which fostered the separation of the Defense Minister and Prime Minister portfolios which allowed the Chief of General Staff (CGS) and the military in general to manipulate one against the other. Other changes, particularly related to the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, had an ambivalent if not negative effect.

Israel has no "all-powerful" military-industrial complex, and its army has shown no predisposition towards military coups, but the military is so-tightly related to politics that it can't be innocent. The military has repeatedly tried to sabotage its political counterparts, with both successful⁴ and unsuccessful outcomes. But it has always demanded representation of the military establishment or the military mentality in the political realm.⁵ And whenever the military feels sidelined, it has several sticks to put in the government's wheels.⁶ However, seduced by the charms of politics and entangled in political machinations, the military turned its back to the difficult truths of occupation.

From the military administration over the defeated Arab population in Israel from 1948 until 1966 the IDF in 1967 faced the impossible military task to govern the larger and more resistant population in the occupied territories under the constant harassment of Palestinian armed groups outside the Territories. At the same time, the IDF was exposed to shrapnel from the rift inside the Israeli society regarding the significance of the occupation. The IDF was not particularly pleased with the birth of the "Zionist-religious" as a political force incarnated in the form of the settler movement and the empowerment of the ultra-orthodox (haredi) community. Moshe Dayan's reaction to the sight of rabbis flocking to the Temple Mount, shortly after Jerusalem was captured in 1967, is indicative of the IDF's position: "What is this? Vatican?"⁷ The IDF did not remain impervious to the new tide. The right-wing (Likud) and even extreme-right officers made their way to IDF's high command, imposing their presence on the traditionally left-wing (Labor affiliated) military hierarchy. Accordingly, the religious factor entered the barracks. The return of the religious Jewish identity is increasingly seen in the option of pre-army religious preparatory programs, the hesder academies, the stretch of the IDF rabbinate to the battalion level, and the observance of kosher and Sabbath practices.⁸

This transition process unfolded against a reverse slide of the secular elements. As the religious celebrated the "revival of the Greater Israel", the secular segments, especially those in IDF's rank and file, were puzzled by the

shift from wars of necessity to wars of choice. At the same time that the Zionist-religious were (are) filling the ranks of combat units and were (are) conducting their reserve service “near home” protecting their own settlement, the secular felt (feel) more at home in Tel-Aviv’s microcosm.

The coming of age for the seculars was the 1982 war in Lebanon. Parents, reservists and conscripts dared to question the IDF and its handling of an “unnecessary war”, and even refused to take part in it. The Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit) movement and the Parents Against Silence, set the precedent. The 1987 Intifada, which revealed the true ugliness of the occupation by increasingly blurring the boundaries between the front (where the soldiers were ordered to “break bones”) and the hinterland, spurred a new tide of refusniks; at first in the form of desperate lone-wolf sabotage acts (Adam Keller) and later more organized ones: Four Mothers, Parents Against Burnout, Courage to Refuse, Breaking the Silence, Shminitism movement.⁹ Despite the fact that conscientious objectors became more radical, the government and the IDF expressed their anger selectively, even when former Israeli soldiers engaged with ex-Palestinian combatants. The days when Yigael Yadin (CGS from 1949-1952) ordered the military police to arrest the secretary of the Finance Ministry, who attempted to dodge his military service,¹⁰ were long gone. The state tried to keep them on the fringes of society where it could easily ignore them and it was even “softer” when faced with the post-heroic mainstream¹¹ that saw the 60th anniversary of Israel as the occasion to throw a party in downtown Tel Aviv.

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The IDF is fully aware that the norms are changing. Since the 1980’s, Israel abandoned its socialist underpinnings; not only in the field of economy but also society and logically the army. The loss of the Zionist-socialist strata was initially “dealt with” the 1990’s military’s “professionalization”, heralded by Ehud Barak’s tenure as CGS.¹² The process was short-lived and was officially terminated after the second Lebanon War, when soldiers and public were outraged by the organizational problems and the severe shortcomings in logistics. Aware of the difficulties in retaining a fighting army while policing West Bank, IDF used its tactical evaluation to predefine its strategy. In the urgent need to recuperate, it turned to the readily-available pool of Zionist-religious and orthodox, paving the way for becoming the “army of God and the settlements.” The refusniks refuse to occupy, while the religious refuse to abandon any inch of the “Holy Land of Greater Israel.”¹³

NOTES

1. Speaking in Auschwitz during the Holocaust Remembrance day, in 1992, Ehud Barak (then CGS) said: "We, the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces, arrived here... fifty years too late." Basil Hakki, "Without the Holocaust", Middle East Open Forum (8/2/2009) (Accessed on March 17, 2011), <http://middleeastforum.blogspot.com/2009/02/without-holocaust.html>

2. For the concept of "Security Network" see Oren Barak and Gabriel Sheffer "The Study of Civil-Military Relations in Israel: A New Perspective", *Israel Studies*, Vol.12, No.1, 2007, pp. 1-27 and Oren Barak and Gabriel (Gabi) Sheffer, "Israel's 'Security Network' and its impact: An Exploration of a new Approach", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2006, pp. 235-261 The defense establishment-related part of the network consists of several other agencies like Mossad and Shabak. However, due to their secretive nature their role in politics and society can be only a matter of speculation.

3. Parachuting refers to the rapid move from the senior ranks of IDF to politics. Three out of twelve Prime Ministers, eight Defense Ministers (three of them former CSC) and 10% of the Knesset have landed from the military. Eva Etzioni-Halevy, "Civil-Military Relations and Democracy: The Case of the Military-Political Elites' Connection in Israel," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 22 No.3, 1996, p. 409 and Joel Beinin, "Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict: 50 Years of Jewish Statehood," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 4, No.3, 1998, p. 107

4. The most prominent case is the military's "political coup" against Netanyahu in 1999, in favor of the military man Ehud Barak. Ex-officers created two political parties ("One Israel" and "Center Party") which either directly supported Barak (One Israel) or simply wanted to undercut Netanyahu (Center Party -headed by the former Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and the recently retired CGS Shahak). Alan Weinraub, "The Evolution of Israeli Civil-Military Relations: Domestic Enablers and the Quest for Security", Master Thesis, US Naval Postgraduate Scholl, 2009, pp. 76-80

5. This dual influence was obvious during the Oslo period. The IDF was insulted to be left out of the first Oslo negotiations, more so since it was the first one to carry the burden of the Intifada. Faced with an obviously ambitious GSC (Ehud Barak) who publicly described Oslo as "a Swiss cheese with holes," Yitzhak Rabin, involved the military in the process to keep it quiet, by appointing MG Amnon Lipkin-Shahak as the head of the Israeli delegation for the negotiation with the Palestinians. But at the same time "Mr. Security" as a military man was deeply influenced by and at ease with the military way of thinking.

6. Such a "stick" in military's hands is the manipulation of intelligence. Since the military performs most of the intelligence tasks, it can distort the information and assessments given to the political leadership. See Uri Bar-Joseph, "Military Intelligence as the National Intelligence Estimator: The Case of Israel", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol.36, No. 3, 2010, pp. 505-525. But the military is also the "epistemic authority" in the eyes of the public and can manipulate their views on security issues. See also Kobi Michael, "Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control in the Reality of Low Intensity Conflict. The Israeli Case", *Israel studies*, Vol. 12, No.1, 2007, pp. 28-52. Since the military is the final executor of government's directives, it can interpret and apply them at will and

this way to sabotage the government's or particular minister's policies.

7. "Moshe Dayan - biography", JewAge, (Accessed on March 18, 2011), http://jewage.org/wiki/en/Article:Moshe_Dayan_%28Kitaigorodsky%29_-_biography

8. Stuart A. Cohen, "From Integration to Segregation The Role of Religion in the IDF", *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.25, No.3, 1999, pp. 387-405

9. Yesh Gvul was formed in 1982 after 2,500 reservists signed a petition refusing to be sent to Lebanon. (http://www.yeshgvul.org/index_e.asp) Parents Against Silence were formed by parents whose children were serving or killed in Lebanon, who turned against the political and military leadership. Adam Keller was a reservist who was imprisoned in 1983 for writing anti-occupation graffiti on military vehicles and installations. He later joined Gush Shalom. Four Mothers fought against the continuation of IDF presence in Lebanon. Parents Against Burnout is an association concerned with service in the Occupied Territories. For more on refuseniks see their respective websites: www.seruv.org.il/english/default.asp, www.shovrimshika.org/index_e.asp, www.shministim.com. See also Kidron Peretz, "I won't serve in your army", *The Progressive*, Vol. 66, No. 5, 2002 and Robert Hirschfield, "An Israeli Refusenik's Good Fight", *In These Times*, Vol 31, No.4, 2007

10. Uri Ben-Eliezer, "A Nation-In-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel's First Years", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1995, p. 277

11. For dodging in numbers see Mijal Grinberg, "IDF: Nearly 28% of Israeli males avoided conscription in 2007", (6/11/07), (Accessed on March 18, 2011), www.haaretz.com/news/idf-nearly-28-of-israeli-males-avoided-conscription-in-2007-1.232645 and Ehud Zion Waldoks, "With Just Half of Teenagers Drafted, IDF Head of Planning Says People's Army Is Becoming a Myth," *Jerusalem Post*, July 2, 2008

12. Against the background of the state's previous shift to market economy and the post-Cold War international and regional environment, Barak's version of "professionalization" was summarized in his motto "Those who do not shoot will be cut". However, quite peculiarly these "austerity measures" were taken while the defense spending was steadily increasing in part due to generous US military aid. The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, "Israel", <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4> IDF's recruitment pattern at that time was undergoing a similar marketization close to the new social-individualistic-ideals. See Uri Ben-Eliezer, "Post-Modern Armies and the Question of Peace and War: The Israeli Defense Forces in the 'New Times'", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2004, pp. 49-70 and Guy Seidman, "From Nationalization to Privatization: The Case of the IDF", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 2010, pp. 716-749

13. The refusal to enforce settlement dismantlement is widely known from the 2005 disengagement from Gaza. The first such incident occurred during the withdrawal from Sinai but it peaked after Oslo when several rabbinical institutions, even from within IDF, called the soldiers to disobey "which might facilitate the evacuation of a settlement, [military] camp or installation." See Stuart A. Cohen, "From Integration to Segregation The Role of Religion in the IDF", *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.25, No.3, 1999, pp. 387-405

The Turkish Military under Pressure: *Institutional conflict as a way to reform*

Raffaele Borreca

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Regarded as the keeper of the Turkish Republic and its secular ideology, the Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – TSK) have traditionally played an essential role in Turkish internal politics and in shaping security affairs. However, the mutual distrust between the TSK and Islamist governmental factions has led to an institutional conflict that challenges the military's position and could lead to a major change in Turkish civil-military relations.

The Turkish Armed Forces are now possibly facing the trickiest moment in their history. The year 2011 opened with the indictments of the Balyoz (Sledgehammer) trial which led to the arrest of 163 officers, including former commanders of the 1st Army, the Navy and the Air Force. These officers are accused of being involved in the Balyoz coup plot that would allegedly have taken place in 2003, following the general elections in which the Islam-aligned AKP won a crushing victory. The Balyoz case marks a turning point in Turkish civil-military relations. Never as in the last decade has the role of the TSK been so challenged and never has a Turkish government felt so confident in dealing with the military. It seems, in fact, that under AKP rule the traditional government's deference towards the military's humours and needs has been reversed. To the eyes of many commentators, this is the result of a long feud between the AKP and the TSK, wherein the quest for an Islamic salience in Turkish politics (proposed by the AKP) is opposed to the republican, secular principles defended by the TSK.²

The army has been the bearer of Turkish western-

type “modernization” since the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Turkish national movement. The Republic was born from the military success of the Turkish War for Independence (1919-1923), under the charismatic leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Since then, the TSK has been representing itself as the keeper of the Kemalist revolution. In terms of security matters, this means that the main concern for the TSK is to protect the Turkish Republic and defend its secularist principles. The main threats to the Republic's foundation values are identified with the Islamisation of the state, as well as Kurdish autonomy claims. The danger of an Islamist turn was the alleged motive of the Balyoz plan as well as of the successful coup of June 1997. The latter was triggered by the success of the Refah Partisi (RP) whose leader, Necmettin Erbakan, in 1996 became the first Islamist Prime Minister in Turkish history. However, the army did not leave the barracks and resorted to its prominence in the National Security Council to get the RP and its leaders banned from the political scene for violating the constitutional principle of secularism.³

But in 2002 the AKP, founded by former personalities of the RP treading lightly with religious issues,⁴ came into power after winning the elections. Its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was re-elected Prime Minister in 2007. In the same year, former Foreign Minister, prominent member of the AKP and devout Muslim Abdullah Gül became President of the Republic. This move was met with harsh resistance by the opposition parties and the TSK. The political conflict lasted from April to September 2007 with the constant shadow of a military intervention looming.⁵ In this same period, the pressure over the TSK increased when the Ergenekon investigations began. Ergenekon is an allegedly ultra-nationalist shadow organisation composed of academics, businessmen, mafia bosses and retired military officials including former generals, accused of having organised several murders and terrorist attacks with the aim to destabilize the national government in the past two decades.⁶ In the framework of these investigations the Kafes (Cage) operation, an alleged coup plot similar to the Balyoz plan, was discovered. Consequently more

than 200 people were brought to trial in June 2010; among them 33 naval officers.⁷ The government praised these investigations as the ultimate blow against the so called “deep state”; a notion which designates the existence of underground ultra-nationalist secret groups, which are presumed to date back to the Cold War, and which are ready to obstruct or even oust a government that does not share their hidden agenda.⁸

However, for many analysts these unprecedented challenges to the military institution are the AKP’s (if not the Islamist) “vengeance” against the prevalence of Turkish secularism. The significant aspect is that both the AKP’s and the military’s supporters claim to uphold and defend the values of Turkish democracy, against any abuse of power or subversive plan⁹ In any case, what is considered a TSK-unfriendly government could constitute a factor towards reform for the Armed Forces. The National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK) reform in 2003 is a good example. The NSC was set up after the 1960 military coup and increased its activity after the constitutional reform of 1982. The Council’s president originates from the military ranks; additionally it is composed of the prime minister, his deputy, and the ministers of economy, justice, national defence, interior and foreign affairs, plus the TSK Chief of staff and, before the 2003 reform, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Gendarmerie chiefs as well. The NSC constituted the privileged channel of intervention for the TSK, as it was provided with some decisional powers, and its recommendations to the Council of Ministers were assumed to be binding. Moreover, the TSK’s control over the security issues enabled them to easily fix and place the defence expenditures.¹⁰

The MGK reform, openly opposed by the army, was promptly executed by the AKP government, following the European Union’s seventh reform package in order to meet the criteria for accession in the European Union. After this reform, the MGK President is required to be to be a civilian and the institution’s functions are



merely consultative. Besides, the military expenditures are now scrutinized by the Parliament. The TSK's greater accountability to civilian power could even increase its effectiveness. It seems that, even though the TSK is the second largest force in NATO and the major Middle Eastern military power, it is far from unshakable. The Kurdish stalemate has demonstrated that military power alone is not a guarantee towards success without a comprehensive approach where political solutions have a pre-eminent role.

Moreover, the tactical problems posed by the Kurdish independentists' guerrilla warfare as well as the participation in multinational structures and operations¹¹ have raised the need to improve the army's technological and intelligence resources as well as its flexibility. This may represent a decrease in both manpower and the military's professionalization. Currently the Army is

mainly made up of conscripts and it is commanded by a cadre of professional soldiers. Large scale operations carried out by professional commandos like the Tunceli 4 in Eastern Anatolia or programs like the Force 2014, whose aim is to produce by 20%-30% smaller and more highly trained forces, can be considered as first steps towards the TSK's complete professional recruitment.¹² The transformation of the TSK in smaller professional armed forces implies that it would be divested of its political and ideological role.

The political marginalization of the military means that security matters are eventually being put under full civilian control. The dynamism and self-confidence of Erdogan government's foreign policy and its attitude towards the TSK can be read as a sign of this change. Beyond the real or presumed intention of the AKP, this could be a major legacy for Turkish future executives.

NOTES

1. The Turkish land forces are organized in four Field Armies, a Logistics Command and a Training and Doctrine Command. Turkey itself is divided in four military sectors - each one assigned to a Field Army. The First Army, with headquarters in Istanbul, is in charge of the defense of Eastern Thrace region, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits and the Kocaeli Peninsula. The Second Army, based in Malatya, is deployed in southeastern Anatolia, facing Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The Third Army, with headquarters at Erzincan, is deployed in Eastern Anatolia, covering the borders with Georgia and Armenia. The Fourth Army or "Aegean Army", headquartered in Izmir, is responsible for the vast area facing the Aegean coast from the Dardanelles in the north to the southernmost Greek offshore islands. Turkish General Staff, www.tsk.tr/eng/genel_konular/kuvvetyapisi.htm, (accessed on February 28, 2011); The Library of Congress Country Studies, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/trtoc.html> (accessed on March 14, 2011).

2. Ögret, Özgür "Sweep of Arrests Erases Any Doubt over Who's the Boss in Turkey", *Hürriyet* (13/02/2011), (accessed on February 13, 2011), www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=suspected-soldiers-of-turkey8217s-8216sledgehammer8217-alleged-coup-case-in-jail-2011-02-13

3. Fiorani Piacentini, Valeria, "La proiezione centro-asiatica della Turchia. Ricadute in materia di sicurezza regionale e Collettiva", Research Paper, Roma: Centro Militare di Studi Strategici, 2005, pp. 132-175.

4. The RP continued its activities with the Fazilet Partisi (FP-Virtue Party), but in 2001 this party was also banned for violating the secularist articles of the Constitution. Erbakan and the conservative wing of the FP then founded the Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party), with a clear Islamist platform.

5. Birand, Mehmet Ali, "Are there Preparations for a Coup in Turkey?", *Hürriyet* (30/05/2007), (accessed on February 12, 2011), www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=are-there-preparations-for-a-coup-in-turkey-2007-05-30

6. Today's Zaman, "Ergenekon Bomb Link in Unresolved Cold Case", (02/08/2008), (accessed on February 14, 2011), www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=149154&bolum=100

7. BBC News, "Latest Turkish 'Plot' Trials Opens", (15/06/2010) (accessed on February 10, 2011), www.bbc.co.uk/news/10320736

8. Rainsford, Sarah, "Deep State Plot' Rips Turkey", BBC News, (04/02/2008), (accessed on February 10, 2011), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7225889.stm>

9. See for example: Capezza, David, "Turkey's Military Is a Catalyst for Reform", *Middle East Quarterly*, 16: 3 (2009), (Accessed on February 17, 2011) <http://www.meforum.org/2160/turkey-military-catalyst-for-reform-and-aslan>, Ali, "How Turkey Tamed Its Army", *Foreign Policy*, (28/05/2010) (accessed on 16, 2011) http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/28/how_turkey_tamed_its_army?page=0.1

10. In 2005 Turkey was the only NATO country assigning over 5% of its GDP for military expenditures. As a term of comparison the USA assign 4.06% and Greece 4.30%. CIA World Factbook, (accessed on February 15, 2011), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2034rank.html>

11. Turkey is currently leading the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Regional Command of Kabul. Other troops are in Bosnia, Kosovo and Lebanon. It is also part of the Italian-Romanian-Turkish EU battlegroup.

12. Bal, Ihsan "The New Security Doctrine of the Turkish Armed Forces", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* (02/03/2010), (accessed on February 10, 2011), www.turkishweekly.net/columnist/3295/the-new-security-doctrine-of-the-turkish-armed-forces.html and CIA World Factbook, (accessed on February 9, 2011), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>

THE ANATOMY OF SAUDI SECURITY

Maria Loukopoulou

This article will dive into the security anatomy of the Saudi Kingdom and shall examine the exceptional structure of its armed forces. While the US remains the principal guarantor of national security, with massive military procurement and training, the intelligence and paramilitary apparatus of the country operates to ensure the continuity of the monarchic rule and the protection of the Al Saud family.

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The Khaleeji, or the Gulf, is a pivotal regional subset of the greater Middle East. Blessed and cursed by the black gold reserves, the birthplace of Islamic faith is ruled by tribal family monarchies. The security system of the Saudi Kingdom, since its founding in 1932, has long occupied a position of importance regionally and internationally as the successive US administrations have proved their commitment to a special bilateral military cooperation. The absolute monarch, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz of the House of Saud and custodian of the Two Holy Mosques dominates the largest country of the Arabian Peninsula, where the Hanbali School of Sunni Islam is strictly followed.

The regional security concerns of today have not significantly changed since the Cold War era. The relatively new challenge that the Kingdom currently faces is counterterrorism and the fight against extremist groups, especially after 9/11. Moreover, Tehran's nuclear development continues to place Iran as a potential rival for regional hegemony in the Gulf, while the power vacuum in neighboring Iraq since Operation 'Iraqi Freedom' has unleashed sectarian tensions within the Gulf and the Kingdom's significant Shi'a minority. In addition, Yemeni instability of illegal immigrants and drugs continues to cause problems for the Saudi kingdom. Last, regarding Israel, Saudi Arabia clearly does not perceive it as a potential threat. The greatest challenge that Saudis face is the preservation of the monarchical rule of Ibn Saud's family.

The Kingdom's armed forces consist of the Royal Saudi Land Forces, the National Guards, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Air Defense Force and the Royal Navy in the limited but controlled number of 300,000 men. The United States has played an integral role in the development, training, and arming of the Saudi armed forces since the 1940s and a close relationship between the United States and the ruling Al Saud family was fertilized on shared interests: securing the Saudi oil production, combating global Communism, and protecting the monarchic rule.

In 1953, Washington launched the program 'United States Training Mission to Saudi Arabia' (USMTM)¹ under the scheme of participation in Gulf defense, known also from the late 1960's as the "two-pillar policy," which saw the Shah-era Iran and Saudi Arabia sharing the main responsibility for Gulf regional security until the late 1970s. The Iranian Revolution changed the regional chessboard of security, and the "Carter Doctrine," in the early 1980s proved Washington's commitment to resist any party seeking to destabilize the Gulf States and disrupting the Gulf oil flow.² The Clinton Administration's policy of "dual containment" for Iraq and Iran was supported by U.S. military personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia. From 1950 through 2006, Saudi Arabia purchased and received from the United States weapons, military equipment, and related services through Foreign Military Sales worth over \$6.7 billion and foreign military construction services worth over \$17.1 billion. U.S. arms sales have continued, with over \$18.7 billion in potential Foreign Military Sales to Saudi Arabia approved by the executive branch and Congress from 2005 to 2009.

Two unique characteristics of the Saudi defence are the 'military cities' and the Western military personnel. Saudis have constructed 'military cities' near its most threatened borders, particularly close to Iraq, Yemen, and the Tabuk air base, as well as Jordan and the Jelin port by the Red sea.³ A unique element in the Saudi Defense is that the Kingdom depends on senior foreign advisors serving, especially from the US, along with a number of Western contract personnel. Now, as before, between 200 and 300 U.S. military personnel remain in Saudi Arabia at any given time to administer long-standing U.S. training programs.⁴

Saudi Arabia maintains one of the largest and most sophisticated intelligence systems in the Middle East, not only because of its strategic location in the Arabian Peninsula, the vast oil wealth and the Islamic extremism. The main aim of this advanced security apparatus is the protection and continuity of the monarchical rule of the Al Saud family. The security system of the Kingdom consists of a complex mix of paramilitary and intelligence system for dealing with civil and security cases. The internal security budget rose from \$7 billion in 2003 to \$10 billion in 2005.⁵ The ministries of Islamic Affairs and Guidance, Foreign Affairs, Culture and Information, Education, Justice, Petroleum and Mineral Resources and Pilgrimage and Islamic Trust play an indirect role in the internal security. The

Kingdom's security forces involve a mix of elements in the regular armed forces and the National Guard and a range of internal security and intelligence services under the Ministry of Interior. The National Guards, who used to be called the 'White Army' before 1963, maintain more than 100,000 troops that provide internal security, using both its regular forces and tribal auxiliaries.

The key to the Saudi security apparatus is centralized under Prince Nayef Bin Abdul Aziz, the Minister of Interior and one of the Sudairi Seven, playing a critical role in the Kingdom's security. The National Information Center in Riyadh, under the ministry's supervision is one of the most sophisticated centralized computer systems in the world. Some security activities, however, continue to be enforced on a tribal level in tribal areas as the King provides payment or subsidies to key Sheikhs who are largely in charge of tribal affairs. Offenses and crimes which are not punished by the responsible Sheikh are dealt and controlled by the National Guards. The General Security Service (GSS), or Mabahith, has the largest budget of any of the domestic intelligence divisions and the number of its staff remains strictly confidential. The General Intelligence Presidency is dealing with internal and foreign threats, and from 1977 until 2001 has been under the supervision of Prince Turki Al Faysal, who worked closely with American intelligence. Since 2005, the head of this division is Prince Muqrin bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.⁶ Furthermore, the Public Security Directorate (PSD) controls the regular police forces while the Special Emergency Force (SEF) plays the leading role in counterterrorism intelligence.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by transferring defense responsibility to US, designed a mukhabarat state system, influencing all aspects of the society. Multiple security branches and intelligence services are maintained to cancel each other out in terms of any growing influence or threat. Much of the intelligence effort focus on gathering information and there are times, when money rewards are given to those who inform these services on any threat to the royal loyalty. Saudi Arabia uses the 'Middle Eastern' modus operandi of parallel military and intelligence services, along with the regime penetration model, in every aspect of society and state institutions like the armed forces. The primary aim of this model is to protect the Kingdom from internal and external threats.

NOTES

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Palestinian Security Apparatus

Zakia Aqra

At the beginning of the last decade, the Palestinian Security forces were mentioned as Arafat's security services "granted" by Oslo II agreements to the Palestinian Authority. Nowadays, this narration cannot disregard the sturdy and institutional presence of Hamas and the separate security structure. Both Hamas and the PA actions of sowing dissension, in an attempt to rule Palestine, are quashing the possibilities for a viable Palestinian state in the future.

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In 1959, long before Oslo, Farouk Qaddumi formed the first Palestinian intelligence organization (Ras-al-Amman) within the Palestinian Liberation Organization.¹ However, the PLO did not have an exclusive military branch until 1964 when the Palestinian Liberation Army was established based on the resolutions of the 1st Palestinian Conference.² The PLO's security forces gained importance in the late 1960s, when Fatah began to dominate the Organization politically. By 1974, the PLO shifted its policy towards institution-building, – reflecting a state-like image, while the armed forces were characterized by guerilla military tactics. The PLO pursued this policy track in a shattered and rather trivial manner until 1994. The Cairo Arrangement in 1994, or the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, established the official Palestinian security apparatus known today, as the General Security Services (GSS). Additionally, the Oslo II Agreement signed in Taba, in 1995 allowed the establishment of a Palestinian "police force" of 24,000 men to fight "terror" and to provide security in Palestinian Authority's administered areas. Nevertheless, the actual number of Palestinian security forces exceeds 50,000 men.

Internal tensions were increasing, as the Palestinian security forces were becoming more powerful and more concrete in the Palestinian political arena. The animosity of the security apparatus was between those who joined exiled Arafat and those who were living in the occupied territories and carried the burden of the Intifada.⁴ The leadership of the Palestinian Security Services consists of three groups ; the high ranked positions were held by Nasr

Yusef, commander of the GSS, GSS's Gaza units under the commander Abdel al-Razzak Majaideh, and a representation unit to Israel, the Liaison Security Committee under Ziad al-Atrash. These generals and all the PLA leaders shared two main characteristics; their long serving military experience and their unpopularity among Palestinians. The second group of leaders was more popular as the Palestinians could identify with them: Jibril Rajoub and Muhammad Dahlan, - the Preventive Security services – one of the most powerful security branch dealing with internal issues in West Bank and Gaza. Both men were sentenced in Israeli prison for their political activity, before they were expelled from Palestine in 1988. Lastly, Arafat in order to counterbalance the other two divisions, appointed a third group of officers, loyal to him, including Amin al-Hindi, head of the Mukhabarat, Abu Yusuf al-Wahidi, SSF Commander, Faisal Abu Sharah, who commands al-Amn al-Ri'asah presidential force and Ghazi Jubali, the commander of Civil Police.

The Security apparatus was divided in twelve divisions, under Arafat's leadership.⁵ This structure aimed to prevent the intelligence units from gaining power and deposing him. Realistically, the structure of PSS consisted of an amalgam of police and military branches, failing to represent an effective armed force as it was characterized by chaotic and weak integrity. Arafat, in order to improve and fortify its structure, he launched a PSS reform plan in 2002 which narrowed PSS twelve divisions into three⁶ general branches; the National Security Unit, the Interior Unit

and the Intelligence Service. However, this was not fully implemented until Mahmud Abbas took office in 2005. By then, the issue of reform was not only concerning the structure but also its character, as Hamas was becoming a more solid political adversary. When the Palestinian legislative council elections took place, Abbas's necessity was to overcome Arafat's cult to reinforce his position within Fatah and impose himself on Hamas. As a result, he attempted to establish a power base commanding a big part of the security forces to check Hamas. The anti-Hamas campaign was running mostly in Gaza; where Hamas was most popular. Eventually, the floor went to Muhammad Dahlan, the former head of the Gaza Preventive Security Force and Minister of Security Affairs in Abbas's government. Abbas entrusted him with the task to fight Hamas militias. Dahlan was a powerful and influential figure in Gaza and within the security forces of the PA and the military arm of Fatah, the Tanzim.⁷ The victory of Hamas in Gaza was official when Dahlan resigned⁸ and was not unjustifiably blamed for "loosing Gaza". At that point, Hamas rivalry with Fatah was a fact, especially once the former established a separate security service.

Before Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, its security numbered two military divisions: Izz al-Din al-Qassam responsible for Hamas' military operations within the Gaza Strip, and Jihaz al-Aman, responsible for the internal security of the organization. Furthermore, Hamas Executive Force was created in 2006 as a parallel security body, after the party's electoral victory, to counter Dahlan and other Fatah allied forces dominating the police at that time. Once Hamas took control of Gaza, it began to change the structure of the Interior Ministry- ruled by Fathi Hammad- incorporating the Executive Force as the civilian security force and the internal security. The latter, dealt with individuals accused of collaboration with Israel or the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority and other factions opposing Hamas.⁹

Unsurprisingly, the battle between Hamas and the PA is not over. The power distribution of Hamas in Gaza or PA



in the West Bank appears to be insufficient for all of these organizations. As a result, a number of Western states precisely the US, the EU and Israel decided to contribute¹⁰ to PA's security forces reform. The former began to express their willingness to fund and train Dahlan's men -unofficially known as the "Death Squad"¹¹- to recapture Gaza, despite his previous failure. Regardless of the debate within Israel concerning the demilitarized future of Palestinian state, the dominant opinion prevailing was the assistance towards PA to fight Hamas and 'terror'. Maj. Gen. Diab El-Ali, commander of the Palestinian National Security Forces has claimed¹² that any weapons which Palestinians receive from Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere must be approved by Israel and are largely funded by US.

On the other hand, Hamas, in comparison to the PA, 'has received minimal outside assistance'. It is supported and funded by Sudan, Iran and Syria.¹³ The financial support began back in the 1980s and the 1990s and is crucial for Hamas's armament and weaponry procurement allowing the organization to divert funds from other societal tasks. Nevertheless, this lack of assistance pushed Hamas 'to design its policies and programs and set its priorities'; resulting in "a more integrated institution... [with] a clearer chain of command."¹⁴

Concerning the use of their respective security forces upon the Palestinian citizens in the West Bank and Gaza, both the PA and Hamas exercise repressive policies in order to eliminate threats and maintain power. In other words, Hamas prevents militia groups acting against Israel from Gaza and averts them from gaining power. Hamas spreads the sense of security in contrast to the PA prior 2007; nevertheless, the non-Hamas members of Gaza do not enjoy the

same rights, at least not fully. While the popularity of Hamas is facing a step-by-step decline, the PA's took the elevator to the basement. Unlike Hamas, the PA is constantly accused of corruption and torture. According to the Human Rights Watch, since January 2009 Palestinians filed more than 360 allegations of torture by Palestinian security agencies.

The current status quo of the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank and Gaza presents a paradoxical and discouraging picture for the prospects of Palestinian unity. The governments of Haniya and Fayad each lack democratic governance and a constitutional order.¹⁵ In addition, the security forces are 'highly partisan and loyal to

Fatah and Hamas, respectively, rather than to a hypothetical Palestinian state-in-the-making'.¹⁶ It is quite ironic that both security forces invest in their own institutional building when there is no state to implement them. The absurdity lays in the impact of their policies. Firstly, they divide the Palestinian society apart and secondly, they diminish the Palestinian Question since they disdain the harrowing Israeli-occupation, which was once a priority. What has gone so astray in the Palestinian political landscape, is it the actual realization that there will never be an independent Palestinian state so "they" are trying to strengthen their position in the status-quo?

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The sword of Ali.¹ Iran's MILITARY AND THE PASDARANS' POWER

Raffaele Borreca

Composed of about 125,000 men, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards constitute not only the military stronghold of the regime but also its political, ideological and economic core. The militarization of Iranian politics has reinforced the Ayatollah's regime, crushing internal opposition as well as implementing an asymmetric strategic doctrine that makes the country a major regional player.

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The defence of Iran is committed to two main institutions. The largest is the Regular Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Artesh), inheritor of the Shah's military. The Artesh is composed of the Ground Forces (350,000 men, including 220,000 conscripts, organised in four corps, with four armoured and six infantry divisions), the Navy, the Air Force and the Air Defence.² But the centre of gravity of Iranian security and defence is the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami, IRG), composed of its own navy and air force. The IRG has been created by Ayatollah Khomeini with the mission of guarding the Revolution and its achievements. Therefore, it is unclear whether the IRG should act as an army or as a police force. The defence from external threats is generally considered the IRG's main mission but its activities have been expanded to include the internal security with the Basij Resistance

Forces as well as the intelligence and the undercover operations with the Qods (Jerusalem) Force.

The Organization for the Mobilization of the Oppressed (Sazman-e basij-emostazafan, or, simply, Basij) was founded by Ayatollah Khomeini as a grass-roots paramilitary volunteer organization. In 2009 it was transformed in an auxiliary force with the specific mission of confronting political and cultural threats against the regime, thus overlapping with the tasks of the Law and Enforcement Forces (LEF, placed under the Ministry of Interior).³ The Basij has ramifications in all sectors and segments of Iranian society and it is a vehicle for indoctrinating the populace. The Basij has played an important role in the crackdown of the June 2009 elections protests and in the February 2011 clashes. Contrastingly, the Qods Force is an elite corps of around 1,000 soldiers which engages in foreign activities among which was the support of Hezbollah and the Iraqi Shiite paramilitary militias as well as the infiltration of the Kurdish movements of Iraq and Turkey. The IRG, and specifically the Qods corps, constitutes the operational com-

ponent of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security.⁴

The prominence of the IRG in Iranian security matches the country's strategic doctrine. Despite the regional ambitions of the Islamic Republic, the Iranian defence budget (which is a little higher than \$5 billion per year) is considerably lower than the regional average of some \$70 billion per year (respectively 2.5% and 6% of the GDP in 2006) placing Iran in a vast technological gap that separates it from its neighbours. While the latter can deploy the best of Western weaponry and enjoy U.S. military assistance, Iran's hardware relies mainly on the Asiatic market (China) and on obsolete materials coming from ex Soviet countries or inherited from the Shah's military.⁵ Moreover, the US direct military presence in the region underlies further the Iranian conventional military inferiority. There of the necessity to develop a defensive strategy relying on non conventional capabilities and tactics arises.⁶ In this framework, the IRG commander Ali Jafari announced in 2008 the establishment of individual commands in each of Iran's 31 provinces, charging them with the elaboration of specific defensive strategies without having to depend on central command in Tehran. Moreover, the entire Persian Gulf region and the Hormuz Strait have been taken under the sole command of the IRG Navy.⁷ If the Artesh Navy is powerless compared to the US Navy's 5th Fleet based in Bahrain, the IRG's small and fast-armed boats could threaten a carrier battle group applying the naval swarming tactics, with hundreds of them attacking in different waves and from different positions.⁸ Finally, both the development and deployment of Iran's ballistic missiles and the nuclear programme are under IRG control, thanks to the Pasdarans' takeover of the Iranian military industry.

The IRG's influence over the economy dates back to the aftermath of the Iraq-Iran war when a large share of the post-war economic reconstruction was given to the pasdarans, in order to keep the IRG far from politics. A firm like Khatam al-Anbia/GHORB, founded by the IRG engineering corps, is today one of the largest and strongest contractors in Iran with activities encompassing civil engineering, mining, cultivation, telecommunications and, of course, armaments and oil and gas industries.⁹ The liberalization of the Iranian economy pursued by the presidencies of Rafsanjani and Khatami, thus, has resulted in the militarization of the private sector and it has emboldened the IRG's political ambitions. The affirmation of Ahmadinejad represents the political pay-off of the pasdarans' commitment at the side of traditional conservatives during the years of the Khatami reformist presidency (1997-2005). At the 2005 presidential elections Ahmadinejad was one of the four candidates with a past in the IRG while, the year before, many of the 152 newly elected members at the Majles (the Iranian unicameral Parliament) were members of the Sepah. Both the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2008 and 2009 reconfirmed the principlist faction, representing IRG interests, as the main political force of the country while the reformist opposition denounced the intimidating intrusion of the IRG in the electoral process. The sepah's grip on power has also been openly supported by the Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei. The Leader, who is officially the commander in chief of the entire Iranian security and defence machine, has the power to declare war and peace and to mobilize the armed forces. However it is unclear to which extent Khamenei controls or steers the IRG's domestic and foreign activities. As chief of the Supreme National Security Council, the ministers of intelligence, security, defence and interior are subordinate to him. But the risk that the military could exploit the present momentum in order to shift the institutional balance of power to its benefit represents a major challenge to the wilayat al-faqih, the council of the clerics at the base of the

Islamic Republic of Iran. Meanwhile, the patronage of the clerics has been already ousted by the IRG's influence over those looking for political or economic benefits.¹⁰

Moreover the Sepah has its own internal dissents, reflecting Iran's political factionalism. During the last decades there have been several episodes highlighting the margin between the official position of the hard-liners and the humours of those less so.¹¹ During the February 2011 anti-government protests, some IRG senior officers reportedly wrote a letter demanding from their commanding officer not to be required to open fire on demonstrators.¹² The Islamic Republic's political fate relies heavily on the pasdarans. This certainly safeguards, for the leadership, a thorough control on Iranian society and an assertive hand able to exploit the opportunities in the Middle East's present situation. Nevertheless, the outcomes of a further authoritarian and repressive turn will not necessarily insure major stability to the Ayatollahs' regime.

NOTES

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Syria: The “Mukhabarat” state

Eleftheria Karagiorgi

Syria's régime has remained the most stable one in the Arab world from 1970 until today, mainly due to its rulers' close ties to the Intelligence Services, widely referred to as “Mukhabarat”, and their extensive control of the Army.

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Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Syria was administered by the French colonial power until its independence in 1946. Consequently, Syrian Intelligence Services owe a lot to the French model, which has shaped their early development.

An acknowledgement of the key role of the Army in Syrian politics is the rise of the “Deuxième Bureau”, the predecessor of the Military Intelligence (M.I.). Abd al-Hamid Sarraj was the first head of the “Deuxième Bureau” and, during his time (1955-1958), the Bureau became increasingly active both in Lebanon and in North Israel. Following the Baath coup of 1963, the Intelligence Services continued to remain powerful. Although in the 1950's and the 1960's the army did succeed in successive military coups by seizing power in Syria, it failed to maintain rule for longtime. That was mainly due to power struggle within the military and the lack of a commander able to enforce his will.

In November 1970, Hafez al Assad's regime was established. The “Corrective Revolution” brought Assad to power and was the first coup where the army stood united under its commander. The Army had been called on repeatedly to ensure the régime's stability. Such an example was the operation in Hama. In the Hama massacre of 1982, the Syrian army bombarded the city in order to crash the uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood and allegedly killed 20,000 people.¹ A year later, Rifat al Assad

used the elite “Defense Companies” under his command to challenge his brother but the army stood by Hafez al Assad and forced Rifat to give up.

Hafez al Assad established a régime based on personal, familial and even tribal relations. Most of the senior officers in the Army were in fact Alawite or even members of his own tribe, the Kalabiyya. Furthermore, the army has always been loyal to the President than the appointed General Army commander. This characteristic, along with the personalized relations described above and the long serving of high ranked officials at the M.I.,² were the key to Assad's regime stability.

Between 1970 and 1980, the Syrian Army became more professional. Following the 1967 war and the Israeli defeat, Assad acknowledged that he needed the army to focus on confronting Israel. In the 1967 war and while the concept of inter – Arab cooperation was fading away, the Syrian Army was consisting of 50,000 men compared to the 170,000 of the 1973 war. Most importantly, Syria was racing to achieve strategic parity with Israel. After the Israeli invasion in Lebanon in 1982, the Syrian Army almost doubled its size, specifically from 300,000 men to 500,000 by 1985.³

In the 1980's, the internal security apparatus consisted of multiple organizations, aiming at the apprehension of the régime's opponents. It included the Air Force Security Administration and the Military Security Department. Along

with these divisions, Assad established strike forces whose task was to eliminate threats deriving from Army officers or external opponents. Such a force was the Republican Guard Division where both Assad's sons Bashil and Bashar have served. These units reported directly to Assad.

In the late 1970's, Syria emerged as a country exporting terrorism, placed on the terrorism list issued by the United States in 1979. At the same time, Intelligence Services turned their attention to foreign policy issues. Such a case was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), the paramilitary Palestinian group, which was operating in Lebanon and Europe with the financial support of Damascus. It did not always enjoy strategic and operational autonomy, since it operated more as an extension of the Syrian Military Intelligence. In fact, in the mid-1980's the group played a supportive role in fighting Israeli forces in south Lebanon.⁴

Imad Mughniya is another indicative example. As head of Hizballah's military apparatus, Mughniya was considered as an "A list" terrorist and the "architect" of a series of Hizballah attacks, including the high-jacking of a TWA plane in Beirut in 1985, bombing strikes on the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires in 1994. Mughniya stood in the nexus point of Syria, Iran and Hizballah and he was assassinated in 2008 in Damascus; possibly a Mossad hit.⁵

Yet, since 1986 the Syrian government has not been directly involved in actions of terrorism. The Gulf war of 1990-91 seemed to be a turning point for Syria's radicalism and militancy by reducing support for terrorist groups.⁶ The new policy involved the decision to join the anti-Iraqi coalition led by the United States and the Madrid round of Peace Process. According to an Israeli analyst, all these actions did not constitute a basic change in Damascus' policy up until then.⁷ Here, it would be worth mentioning some reports that several high-ranking generals opposed Syria's peace agreement with Israel fearing it would dimin-

ish the role of the Army in Syrian politics.

This is the authoritarian state that Bashar al-Assad inherited from his father Hafez in 2000. Syria maintains at least 15 Intelligence and Security Services. Among them, the Political Security Directorate and the General Security Directorate are the primary agents of surveillance and suppression of dissent. Moreover, Syria runs a separate M.I., the Shubhat al Mukhabarat al Askariyya (Department of Military Intelligence), which is attached to the Ministry of Defense. Apart from the usual methods of interrogating and analyzing enemies' information, it also provides financial help, weaponry and military training to the militant groups active in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories⁸ such as PFLP-GC. A pivotal Intelligence agency is the Air Force Intelligence Directorate ("Idarat al Mukhabarat al Jawiyya"), which is supposed to be the most powerful and feared Intelligence Service, mainly due to the fact that Hafez al Assad served as an Air Force Commander.

Syrian Military Intelligence and Air Force Intelligence presence in Lebanon has enjoyed a dominant status. Syrian troops invaded Lebanon in 1976 and until their withdrawal in 2005, the Syrian Mukhabarat branches in Lebanon were controlling all political activities, appointing political leaders and diminishing opponents. According to a report of Human Rights Watch in 1997, an unknown number of citizens and stateless Palestinians of Lebanon have been taken into custody by Syrian security forces, which transferred and detained them in Syria.⁹ It is common ground among analysts that Syrian Intelligence has been directly involved in the assassination of the former Lebanese President Rafik al Hariri in 2005. Under immense pressure that same year, the Syrian army finally withdrew from Lebanon. Although Syria has abandoned its overt control with troops and Intelligence Bureau, Bashar al Assad remains an influencing power in the neighboring country.

Assad's inherited M.I. apparatus remains more or less the same. Almost 90% of the major military formations



are still commanded by Alawis and so are most of the top echelons in the various security services. The Syrian dictatorship has managed throughout its history not only to control its domestic affairs but also to act as a coordinator

abroad. In the Iraqi war in 2003, Syria was accused by the US of supporting the armed Iraqi groups. Various sources mention “foreign fighters” using Syrian borders as a transit point into Iraq.¹⁰ Syrians were in fact “financing” the Iraqi resistance by all necessary means.

As far as modern Syria’s police apparatus is concerned, it is vividly described by Farwas Gerges, a professor of Middle Eastern Politics at the LSE: “The Army in Syria is the power structure (...) the army would fight to protect not only the institution of the army but the regime itself, because the army and the regime is one and the same”.¹¹ This basic trait of the Syrian “Mukhabarat” state is deeply attached to the Syrian psyche and this is what distinguishes it from the other authoritarian regimes of the region (see Egypt). Last, but not least, the intelligence and security agencies alone are not enough to secure the regime. That is where the army comes in, the backbone of Hafez al Assad’s regime for the past 30 years, committed to the survival of the Syrian regime, remains up to this day willing to suppress any acts of rebellion.

NOTES

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From the Arab Legion to the Jordan Arab Army

Ilias Tasopoulos

Back in the 1950s, it seemed as though the Armed Forces of the House of Hashem actually created the state of Jordan. Several decades later and following many state transformations, the role of the military cannot be excluded from the analysis of the political trends in Jordan.

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The Arab Legion, as the regiments of the House of Hashem were originally called, had been established to protect the authority of its ruler, while managing tribal disputes at the same time.¹ And this is what they did until the late 1940s. Following, however, the turbulence of the Second World War and its aftermath, the pace of change in the Arab Legion was dictated by the exigencies of regional politics. The incorporation of a region populated by a majority of Palestinian inhabitants, named the West Bank after 1950,² added new difficulties for the Jordanian Army. At the same time, Jordan's 1948 success had provoked the furor of almost all other Arab states, which were suffering from the consequences of their heavy defeat.

The fate of Jordan's army remained connected to that of the Jordanian state. The military was usually selected as the battleground between the state elites for the future course of political evolution in Jordan while events in the military seemed to precede wider developments in Jordanian politics.

The repercussions of Arab nationalism in Jordanian politics became obvious in the Army. At

that time, the young King Hussein chose to ride the wave of pan-Arabism, which was sweeping the region, and dismissed the British commander of the Jordanian armed forces, Glubb Pasha, from the Army's leadership in 1956. The Hashemite regime's choice minimizing the British influence within the Army and promoting Arab soldiers to the higher echelons of the army command, indicated Jordan's shift towards the heart of the Arab world in the coming years.

The ascent and descent of the Palestinian Armed Organizations in Jordan were also related to the developments in the Jordanian Armed Forces. During the 1960's, provocative Israeli actions gradually impinged upon the perspectives of the Jordanian Armed Forces towards the activity of Palestinians within its borders. When Israel inflicted the disastrous defeat of 1967 in Jordan, the willingness of Jordanian armed forces to restrain the activities of Palestinian armed groups was further diminished. Consequently, Palestinian groups found a fertile ground to develop their military capabilities and reached the apex of their fame in the Arab world in 1968, when, fighting along with Jordanian regiments, they routed the Israeli army in the battle of Karameh. Once the Palestinian groups extended their ambitions to exercise full authority in areas within Jordan however, the military turned against the Palestinian fighters in 1970, paving the way for the future alienation between the Jordanian regime and Palestinian Organizations.

The man on the Jordanian throne symbolizes the impact of the Jordanian armed forces on the country's politics. King Abdallah's ascent to the Jordanian throne followed a long career in the armed forces. The eldest son of King Hussein found himself thrust on the most prestigious position of the little kingdom³ when he was selected to succeed his father just two weeks before Hussein's death. In 1999, he was appointed to replace his uncle and his father's brother, Hassan who had served as Crown Prince for more than thirty years.

Hussein's decision to change the line of succession from his brother to his eldest son was partly attributed to Hassan's actions of appointing his own trusted officials to echelons positions of the Jordanian Army.⁴ Furthermore, Abdallah's military experience and his ability to hold the allegiance of the Jordanian Armed Forces persuaded his father that he was able to inherit the throne for years to come.

Nowadays, King Abdallah II has to deal with fundamental issues of Jordanian politics that are currently raised anew in the military. The precariousness of the state finances has resulted in fissures within the ruling coalition of the Hashemite regime as the state has far less patronage to dispense. The strict economic policy that successive Jordanian governments had to follow, seems to have exacerbated the cleavages among state elites.⁵ Men who have previously served in the Jordanian army have already joined other members of the East Bank constituency demanding that Palestinians are stripped of some of their civil rights, such as full Jordanian citizenship. The culmination of this trend was an announcement by the "National Committee of Military Veterans" in 2010 calling the state to revoke the Jordanian nationality of almost all Palestinians in Jordan.⁶

While the economic recovery of Jordan relies mainly on its private sector, dominated by Palestinian elites, the Hashemite regime's core constituency has considerably narrowed regime options. Starting from the military,

the King has selected a number of officers, with connections to other Arab states such as Syria and Iraq, for early retirement, while promoting candidates from the Beduin tribes to sensitive military positions. Palestinians are not selected anymore even as auxiliary units of the Jordanian Army, such as transport and ordnance, as a token of goodwill to the East Bank constituency. In addition, according to unconfirmed reports, the process for revoking the Jordanian citizenship of several Palestinians, who relocated from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Hashemite Kingdom has already begun. The King attempts to channel the opposition to the regime's financial policies into additional support for his unhampered reign, on the basis of his Jordanian credentials.

King Abdallah II's moves could also be considered as a sign of concern among Jordanian officials that international and regional pressure would push the Jordanian troops in the future to take responsibility for patrolling the West Bank in the future.⁷ In 1950, when the Jordanian Armed Forces had to deepen its involvement with the Palestinian communities of the West Bank through their attempt to enhance the leadership of King Abdallah I, Jordan was facing the danger of extinction for the next decades. The Hashemite regime would now want to protect itself against such an eventuality.

NOTES

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1981-2011...behind the Egyptian regime, who?

Thanassis Papamargaris

On February 11, Hosni Mubarak, the only President an entire generation of Egyptians has ever known, resigned. The subsequent military takeover has raised numerous questions about the Army's and the Mukhabarat's role in Egyptian politics.

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Since the eve of Mubarak's resignation, the Supreme Military Council, which has assumed leadership, has repeatedly called on Egyptians to return to work, to stop the anti-governmental rallies, and appeased demands by suspending the Constitution and dissolving Parliament. The positive moves for change were also accompanied by warnings of the use of force to dispel continuing protesters, who are increasingly being stigmatised as a threat to national security. Nevertheless, it is quite early to draw any conclusion on the future development of the Egyptian political system; the only thing one can be sure of is that the institutions who have long shared a special relationship with the Egyptian political elite (such as the Army and the Mukhabarat), will continue to fight for their share of power.

Both the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate (EGID), commonly known as Mukhabarat, have long been involved in the politics of Egypt, albeit in different ways. The army's prominent role in the Egyptian economic and political process is more obvious due to its ownership of several companies, which has created what has been called "an entire military-industrial complex."¹ Nevertheless, with the exception of the 1977 and 1986 riots, when the army intervened in support of the regime, the military has never

openly been involved in politics. However, the fact that all post-1952 Presidents (Muhammad Naguib, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak) were military officers is indicative of its importance in the Egyptian political process. Its role was further reinforced during Mubarak's regime, as it was permitted "to command an increasing share of central government expenditure, to control a widening sphere of government activities and to exert greater influence in domestic politics."² It is however important to point out that despite its affinity with Egypt's Presidents, the army was not a mere tool of governmental policies. On the contrary, it seems to have gradually emancipated from the regime. Since the 1980's, the Egyptian army has built closer ties with the USA, through numerous joint military operations,³ lest not forget the large percentage of American aid which is pumped directly into the military. These ties with the USA are likely to have contributed to the growing self-assertion of the Egyptian army. Its growing independence has clearly manifested in the case of Mubarak's succession, when the EAF refused to accept his son, Gamal, as his heir,⁴ weakening thus the government only a few months before its fall. Mubarak himself appeared to become wary of the army's increasing independence from the régime, the likely reason behind his

ordering the EGID to monitor high-ranking army officials.⁵

The EGID, the intelligence service created by Nasser in 1954 for domestic and international issues, seems to have shared a much closer relationship with the regime. The growing political leverage of the Intelligence Directorate, which has been traditionally characterised by great secrecy,⁶ was demonstrated in the appointment of its Head, Omar Suleiman, as Egypt's Vice President, a position left empty for 30 years, only a few days before Mubarak's fall. At the same time, it demonstrates Mubarak's trust of the Mukhabarat which, compared to the EAF, has been more tightly controlled by the regime, owing to its smaller size and recruitment procedures. Naturally, the EGID's loyalties were with the regime; during the 1977, 1986, 1996 and 2011 demonstrations, it collected information and even targeted the leaders of the demonstrations, such as Wael Ghonim, while consistently maintaining surveillance and harassment of the regimes main opposition, the Muslim Brotherhood under the pretext of terrorist threats. However, the EGID's multilevel dependency on the régime and its strong ties with the United States and Israel⁷ have cost it in terms of public acceptance. The Egyptian people perceived the EGID as Mubarak's secret hand over society, while the EAF was considered neutral if not supportive of the Egyptian people.

These differences encouraged the development of a deeply antagonistic relationship between the EAF and the EGID; the army's gradual detachment from the government, the Mukhabarat's dependence on it, and the latter's surveillance of the military leaders created a hostile atmosphere between them. Compounding the dislocation of each institution from the other were the command ethics that governed their positions - the Armed Forces served the Egyptian nation, whereas the Intelligence Directorate's loyalties lay with Mubarak.⁸ This difference in ethics is likely to account for the reason that the army became so popular with the Egyptian public (another reason is that conscrip-

tion in the army is mandatory whereas one chooses to join the police).

Consequently, during the recent demonstrations, Egyptian public's anger was largely directed towards the EGID and, also, the Central Security Forces (CSF), which, is viewed as an extension of the EGID, whereas the arrival and positioning of the army around the country was welcomed and celebrated. Chants during the demonstrations point to the different sentiments directed towards the institutions; slogans such as "the army and the people are one – hand in hand"⁹ and "police of Egypt, oh police of Egypt, you've become the dogs of the castle,"¹⁰ narratives that were constant throughout the 18 days of demonstrations demonstrate that public anger concentrated on the police, the CSF and, therefore, the EGID, while the EAF was, and still is, highly respected in the Egyptian society.¹¹

In conclusion, in the pre-2011 era, both the Army and the Mukhabarat have played a significant role in the politics of Egypt; The Army was gradually marginalised and there-



fore gained greater independence from the regime, whereas the Mukhabarat became increasingly entrenched in the regime and proved to be the government's most powerful weapon. These contrasting roles, opposing command ethics, and difference in structure vis-à-vis the regime have accounted for the complicated and antagonistic relationship that has developed between the various institutions. In this new, post-Mubarak era, where the army has officially risen to power, the EGID is likely to go through a period of total depreciation, and will resurface after a degree of structural readjustment within the leadership. The public calls for the complete disbanding of the EGID will not be met, as governments need an effective intelligence service, and the EGID already has the infrastructure and the know-how. The Army's role will become even more important and crucial, since it is the only guarantor of the current internal "status quo". This means that it is the opportune chance to strengthen its presence in this new era; a likely

scenario being that the Army hold free elections, but only after it has made sure that its powers will be maintained if not increased. It seems probable that the Army may wish to adopt a position such as that of the (Kemalist) Turkish Army, thus securing its right to intervene in domestic issues whenever it is considered necessary. With new and old political actors, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, now openly courting the public in the Egyptian political scene the patience and control of both the Armed Forces and the Intelligence services will ultimately be tested by their interaction with these political actors and their readiness to meet popular demands. The Egyptians seem ready to continue demonstrating for the aims of the 25 January Revolution. After all, that is what most Egyptian people were shouting; "Revolution, revolution everywhere, against the traitors and the scoundrels" ...

NOTES

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