



 ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

Developments in
**Civil-Military relations
in the Middle East**

Edited by Carsten Jensen

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Foreword

The developments in the Middle East in the aftermath of the terror attacks in USA in September 2001 put two issues on the research agenda in a new way: Civil-Military relations and civil society. The way the regimes in The Greater Middle East is organized became an issue in itself since it was widely assumed that lack of control of the central states by society, and in some cases the lack of central authority at all, was contributing to the tensions created by the political state of the region. It therefore became of interest to various actors involved in post-conflict reconstruction to know more about these areas of politics in the Middle East in order to contribute to the discussion of on-going or future missions.

The two areas of research are closely interrelated since the civil-military relations in single countries to a great part are reflecting the status of civil society towards the state sector and also the way the state managers are interacting with civil society groups. The states in the Middle East are mainly developed in an authoritarian manner where central authority has been keen to keep civil society at a distance. The recent developments in the region has challenged this trajectory by putting post-conflict management and democratization on the agenda and thereby activated the interest in the roles of both military and civil society in eventual future operations.

The Copenhagen Middle East Research Group (COMER) was put together in order to contribute to the development of better understanding of these processes by the Royal Danish Defence College and the University of Copenhagen. Among other initiatives the group has organized two research events organized around the issues of civil-military relations and civil society in the Middle East. The Royal Danish Defence College and the University of Copenhagen were thus hosts to a seminar held at the second and third of December 2005. Further a NATO Advanced Research Workshop was organized in Cairo in January 2006. The papers collected in this volume were prepared for these events

In the first chapter Ali Alfoneh and Richard A. Norton presents an overview of the history of the study of civil military relations in the Middle East with a special glance at the role of civil society. The emphasis of the chapter is on the cataloguing of the research so far.

The second chapter presents the past phases in civil-military relations in the region and the writers, Birthe Hansen and Carsten Jensen, put

forward the proposal that it is most likely that the overall character of the relations and the role of the military will change according to the renewed international pressure on the region.

In the third chapter Mohammad El-Sayed Selim discusses the general impact of internationalization of Arab politics and the specific impact on Civil-Military Relations due to the increased interest in the region.

The fourth chapter, by Mohamed Abd Elsalam, presents roles of the Arab military establishment as well as its attitudes toward the current developments in the Arab region in a more journalistic form. He argues that the ideas of civil-military relations which traditionally prevailed in the Arab countries during the post-colonial period after World War Two still persists to a great extent.

Finally, Ahmed S. Mousselli discusses the challenges of islamist movements in the Arab Middle East to both regimes and civil society. It is his conclusions that these challenges are going to persist since the regimes do not have any long time visions on how to come to terms with these movements. Instead the regimes seem to rely on the existing framework of security apparatuses including the military in order to maintain power.

Taken together the articles provide an input to the debate on the state of research on civil-military relations in the Middle East as well as on the contemporary impact on the relations by both the pressure from external actors such as the USA and the internal pressure by civil society.

It should be noted that the papers are printed in the form presented at the workshops. They are presented here as contributions to the ongoing debate on the development of civil-military relations in the Middle East. Unfortunately, due to lack of response from participants, not all papers from the workshops are included.

We would like to thank all participants in the workshops for their time and comments. We should also be grateful for the financial support from the Royal Danish Defence College, Department of Political Studies, University of Copenhagen and NATO. A special thank you must go to each of the following: Heba Raouf Ezzat, Cairo University, Chairman of the Board, Danish Institute of Military Studies, Professor Bertel Heurlin, Director, Institute of Strategy, Royal Danish Defence College Ole Kværnø, and Special Consultant, Institute of Strategy, Royal Danish Defence College, Peter Kim Laustsen. Trainee Martin Brun Jensen was helpful in the last editorial stage.

Carsten Jensen

The Study of Civil-Military Relations and Civil-Society in the Middle East and North Africa

Augustus Richard Norton and Ali Alfoneh

As Peter Feaver correctly points out, the civil-military problematique consists of a simple paradox: “The very institution created to protect the polity [i.e. the military] is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity” (Feaver 1999:214). Feaver’s claim is as true in the post colonial Middle East and North Africa (MENA)¹ region, as in the North American and Western European context.

The MENA region has experienced prolonged periods either of direct military rule, or an intimate connection between the political leadership and the military² (Halpern 1963:251). Since late 1970’s and the beginning of the 1980’s, the MENA region has experienced a remarkable decline in the Middle East armed forces’ tendency to seize power, but the military institution still plays an important role in internal Middle Eastern politics. This role is perceived to limit the growth of civil-society in the MENA region.

The role of the military in the internal politics of states in the MENA region is well reflected in the post World War II English language literature on civil-military relations in Middle Eastern politics. Generally, the literature distinguishes between the things to be explained or predicted (Dependent Variables, or DVs) and the explanatory factors (independent variables, or IVs).

(1) For the analytical purposes of this paper, the MENA region includes the Arab countries from Morocco to the Persian Gulf plus Iran, and Turkey. With the exception of Israel and the Sudan, this corresponds to Alan Richards and John Waterbury’s definition of the MENA region (Richards & Waterbury 1998). For other definitions see Davison 1960, Kemp & Harkavy 1997 and Menashri 1998.

(2) By “the military” this article refers to the entire corps of Middle East armed forces, including the police and the constabulary; security apparatuses and paramilitary organizations.

The Dependent Variable

The “classical” political science literature on civil-military relations in the MENA region addresses the problem of the direct seizure of political power by the military (military coups) and their frequency in the 1960’s and 1970’s. In this regard the MENA related literature is very much in line with the general civil-military relations literature. But a growing body of literature is also concerned with the problem of “military influence” or “military role” in the general process of state or nation building. Equally important, beginning with the pioneering work of Morris Janowitz, scholars have focused on the proliferation of paramilitary coercive institutions in Middle East, such as national police, various intelligence organizations (commonly referred to as mukhabarrat, which is usually taken to mean secret police) and militias (Janowitz 1977).

Thus, “military coups” and “military influence” or “military role” constitute the dominant DVs of the civil-military relations literature on the MENA region.

Military Coups

Political scientists have studied the frequency, and probability of military coups in the MENA region for decades. Samuel E. Finer’s systematic study of the military’s “disposition to intervene”, “levels of intervention” and “results of intervention” provided the necessary theoretical tools to analyse military coups (Finer 1962). Building upon Finer, Eric A. Nordlinger developed a tripartite model for the levels of military intervention (Nordlinger 1977:22).

More provocatively, the renowned Princeton political scientist, Manfred Halpern emphasized the possibility that the military professionals in the newly independent states of the Middle East would be a vanguard of modernization. The officer corps constituted, Halpern claimed, a key component of the “New Middle Class”, which might serve as a vanguard in the modernization of the new states (Halpern 1963)³. Halpern’s claims were followed by J.C. Hurewitz’ thesis on “Armies as agencies of social

(3) See also Lucian W. Pye’s ‘Armies in the Process of Political Modernization’ (Pye 1962).

change" (Hurewitz 1969, Hurewitz 1975), raising a heated debate on the developmental role of the military in modernizing countries. Edward Shils, Marion J. Levy and P.J. Vatikotis made similar claims (Levy, 1966, Shils 1962, Vatikotis 1961, Vatikotis 1967). In that spirit, scholars writing in the Arab world referred to the army as: "The technical college of society", to borrow the phrase of Abbas Murad (Murad 1973).

The counter argument materialized in the shape of Amos Perlmutter's critique of authoritarianism, claiming that once in power, the army would not leave voluntarily (Perlmutter 1981), while George M. Haddad⁴, Hanna Batatu, Majid Khadduri and others reveal a record of military intervention in politics and the diversion of substantial developmental resources from the civilian sector (Haddad 1965-1973, Batatu 1978 & 1983, Khadduri 1969). In the same line of argument, the prolific writer with Muslim Brotherhood affinities, Muhammad Jalal Kishk considered Middle Eastern military establishments "socialist Mamluks" of his time (Kishk 1970)⁵.

There are notable exceptions, arguably including the Republic of Turkey and the mandate of President Fouad Chehab in Lebanon (1958-64), but for the most part "the man on horseback" proved far more intent to protect corporate Praetorian interests than broader social concerns. As Fuad I. Khuri, the Lebanese anthropologist, pointed out two decades ago, the specialized "modern" skills that Halpern attributed to the military profession may not necessarily be easily transferred to civilian life (Khuri 1982). Moreover, the new Middle East would exhibit solidarity based on shared social origins, specifically the lower middle class origins of the new officers corps, also proved misplaced in many instances. In particular, the dichotomy of modernity vs. tradition was exceptionally misleading. It was as though those

(4) Haddad's monumental multi volume description of the military and revolution in the MENA (Haddad 1965-73) must be considered as a thorough account for the military coups in the entire region, while Eliezer Beer's analysis of the patterns of the military coups (Beer 1970) and Gabriel Ben-Dor's analysis of military elites in the Middle East (Ben-Dor 1984) complete Haddad's accounts with theoretical perspectives.

(5) See also Fouad Ajami's discussion of Kishk's views on the military: "The new men, like the Mamluks before them, consider the land and those in it the property of the sultan. For the military establishment, socialism means the military's dominance of the wealth of the country. None of this is new or modernizing." (Ajami 1992:65)

pursuing modern professions, in the military or civilian life, would simply jettison the attachments of locale, family and faith.

Also military sociology has contributed greatly to the study of military coups. Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago, the father of military sociology, delivered a groundbreaking comparative analysis of military institutions in the Middle East. Janowitz always insisted on understanding armed forces and society. In other words, you may not really understand a military unless you understand the society in which it is imbedded. Janowitz explains military coups with the characteristics of the military establishment (Janowitz 1964, Janowitz 1975), just to meet the counter argument in Samuel P. Huntington's hypothesis on "Praetorianism and Political Decay" (Huntington 1968).

The dichotomous dependent variable of "coup" or "no coup" is a rather elementary classification and had its critics. Most notably, R. Neal Tannahill suggested a ranking of the degree of, or severity of, military intervention. This could be done, suggested Tannahill, by asking two questions: First, against whom is the coup carried out? Second, what type of government is established by the coup (Tannahill 1977:276)? According to Tannahill's ranking, the most severe form of intervention was that against a civilian regime established through constitutional processes, and a coup against a military regime classified as the least violative of the norms of civilian rule. Furthermore, a military junta is considered as a greater degree of intervention than one establishing a civilian regime (Tannahill 1977:276).

In spite of the valuable data extracted from the sources mentioned above, Barry Rubin in a 2002 study argues that our views of the military's role in the Middle East politics have largely been formed by the post WWII Middle Eastern history. "Today", Rubin states "only two of the 14 main Arab countries - Egypt and Libya - have rulers who are in power because they were career military officers...Yemen and Sudan, have military dictatorships more typical of the Middle East in the 1950s-70s period" (Rubin & Keaney 2002:3). In the same line of argumentation, Risa Brooks argues: "...military coups, have become less frequent and successful military coups have been almost non-existent in the MENA region since the late 1970's (Brooks 1998:11),

while Robert Springborg's analysis of the Egyptian political elite establishes that: "the military has retreated still further from the civilian political battleground, as measured by continuing reduction in the presence of officers in the political elite" (Springborg 1998:1). Rubin's conclusion seems to be representative of the general, if not the universal, view: "The decline in the Middle East armed forces' tendency to seize power is not irreversible, but is likely to remain the predominant trend" (Rubin & Keaney 2002:20).

It was a mark of scholarship in the 1950's, 1960's and even the 1970s that development was viewed as a replication of the western experience. This also affected the study of the military institutions, and the realm of civil-military relations (e.g., see Huntington 1957). Scholars seem to forget that in Europe military institutions emerged amidst industrialization, the weakening of peasant society, and a series of nationalistic wars and political struggles for democratization.

In contrast, military models in the Middle East were born out of colonial situations, an imperial bureaucracy and a peasant social structure. Equally important, and with the exception of Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Iran, the military as a specialized institution arose only after WW I, and then only as a colonial institution. The variant experience of Middle Eastern countries gave rise to a rather different military ethos.

While direct seizures of power by Middle East militaries have occurred for decades, there is no doubt that the military as an institution is deeply implicated in the internal politics of states in the MENA (Owen 1992:218, Richards & Waterbury 1998:330). For indigenous scholars, this is often risky research to undertake and foreign scholars would be hard-pressed to gain the requisite access.

Military Influence/ Roles of the Military

Therefore, some theorists study the influence of the military and roles of the military in the internal politics of states in the MENA region beyond the coup/no coup dichotomy. Or in the words of Feaver: "the military institution may be politically powerful even (or perhaps especially) when it does not seize direct power thorough a forceful takeover" (Feaver 1999:218). This explains

the academic interest in the next DV to be mentioned, the influence of the military, or the roles of the military in the internal politics of states.

How to measure military influence

But military influence is often masked from public view and is far more difficult to measure than military coups. Thus, the theory of “military influence” is presently undeveloped. Nordlinger did present a tripartite typology of praetorianism consisting of “Moderators”, “Guardians” and “Rulers” in a Middle Eastern context (Nordlinger 1977:22)⁶.

Finer addressed the very same problem by asking the fundamental question of what regimes qualify as “military” ones and how to classify them. In doing so, he applied his algorithm (Finer 1982:284) to the political regimes of the day and estimated the weight of the military establishment in the exercise of supreme control over top policy-making. The algorithm proposes test questions such as: “Is the Head of State an ex-coup leader?”, “Does he govern by a Revolutionary Command Council or military Cabinet?”, “Are political parties permitted?”, “Is more than one competing party allowed?”, “Is there a legislature?”, and so on (Finer 1982:284). Concluding upon the answers to such questions, Finer distinguishes between four main classes of “military regimes”: “The military junta-type”, “the military-junta type with legislatures and parties as simple ancillaries or appurtenances”, “the personalist-presidential type”, and finally, “the authoritarian type” (Finer 1982).

Updating Finer’s typology, Mehran Kamrava combined the problem of “military influence” or “military role” with the problem of military professionalization and distinguishes between “military democracies”, “Autocratic Officer-politician states”, “dual military states” and the “monarchies” of the Middle East (Kamrava 2000). But unfortunately, the

(6) Nordlinger’s typology is probably inspired by Janowitz 1964 and John Lovell’s distinction between three levels of intensity or degree of military influence (this study does not include empirical references to the MENA region). In the first of these, the military wield minimal political influence. At the second level, the military are influential but not the ruling group. Finally, at the highest level of influence, the military rule. Lovell also addresses the question of the scope of influence (Lovell 1970:1-14).

model pays little attention to states with competing armed militias, such as the Hezbollah in Lebanon or competing armed factions in Iraq after the toppling of the Ba'ath regime.

Models of the military ethos

According to Khuri, one can distinguish between the following models of military ethos (Khuri 1082:13). A) National-building: Egypt, Turkey, Iran. While the model of a military command structure at the helm of national politics was something of a myth, the ethos of the military as nation builder has been strong in some key Middle Eastern states. In practice, this often led to "revolutionary at the top but pragmatic-pluralism at the subnational level," to borrow from Illiya F. Harik's study of Shubra al-Jadida, Cairo (Harik and Sullivan, eds., 1992). B) National Liberation/Struggle for independence: Algeria. To paraphrase Mirabeau's description of Prussia, "every state has an army but in Algeria the army has a state"⁷. C) Peasant and minority-dominated model: Syria and Morocco. In this model, we sometimes find a minority dominated-military in a country with a different socially dominant group. This need not lead to disaster, as the Berbers accommodation to the "makhzan" in Morocco shows, but in other instances, Syria notably, the minority's continuing control of the military becomes an existential imperative. As Khuri notes, such armies tend to be susceptible to nationalist ideologies, but less out of principled commitment than collective self-interest. Munif al-Razzaz in *al-Tajriba al-Murrah* – the bitter experience – notes that "the Syrian military used nationalist ideology to seize comprehensive, coercive control of society" (Razzaz 1967). D) Tribally based model: Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, as well as Lebanon in the Levant. The army may even retain a semblance of institutional cohesion, while fragmenting under crisis into sectarian or religious fragments, as happened in Lebanon in the first years of the civil war there. Even though the army largely ceased to function as a coherent fighting force, the national headquarters continued to function as though the head lived on while the parts were amputated.

(7) The observation is borrowed from Eva Bellin's fine work (Bellin 2004).

The problem of the “militarization of the administration” and the bureaucracy is largely ignored by the literature⁸. To our knowledge there is no systematic analysis of the redirection of (retired) military personnel into Middle Eastern bureaucracies, but anecdotal evidence suggests that in some states, Egypt in particular, retired senior officers regard a senior “civilian” post in government as a crucial fringe benefit of military retirement.

While each of the mentioned typologies has its qualities, the one provided by Finer has superior operational qualities because of his algorithm (1982:284). The ideal model would therefore be Kamrava’s typology coupled with a modified version of Finer’s algorithm, extended with some research on the “militarization of the administration”, and a sub section explaining civil-military relations in states with a number of competing armed militias such as Lebanon and present day Iraq.

The Independent Variable

As Feaver correctly points out, the explanatory factors, or the IV’s can be differentiated according to whether they are external or internal to the country (Feaver 1999:222). External threats to the security of states, or military aid from great powers can influence civil-military relations in a country. On the other hand, internal factors such as independence from colonial powers; internal threats or civil war; the nature of the domestic political system; or the characteristics of the military establishment constitute some of the dominant explanatory factors in the civil-military relations literature addressing the MENA region.

External Factors

The importance of the external factors to the intervention of the military in the internal politics of states is first and foremost emphasized by one of the greatest social scientists of the 20th century, Harold Lasswell. Lasswell has

(8) Mr. Khairi Abaza most kindly informed this writer of the prevalence of such administrative practice in contemporary Egypt (Interview in Washington D.C. November 2005). This information was confirmed by the Egyptian participants of the COMER working seminar in Copenhagen on December 2nd 2005 and by Dr. Ahmed Abdalla of the Jeel Centre of Social Science in the course of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop in Cairo, January 2006.

not commented on civil-military relations in the MENA, but his seminal writing must be mentioned because of the influence he has had on writers focusing on the relationship between external threats to the security of states and the changing role of the military apparatus⁹.

Lasswell is probably best known for his “developmental analysis” and “developmental constructs”. Lasswell’s emphasis on developmental analysis was based on the assumption that societies are always undergoing change. The developmental construct specifies the thesis and antithesis of the continuum or the “from what” and “to what”. Or, in the context of civil-military relations in the MENA, a development from the “Civilian State” to the “Garrison State” (Stanley 1997:18).

Lasswell presented the “Garrison State” construct in 1937 in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war. In Lasswell’s view, the seemingly permanence of the Sino-Japanese conflict had influenced the political structures in China and Japan and delivered the following analysis: “If the existing emergency is permitted to careen from bad to worse, it may be doubted whether civilian institutions are equal to the strain. The upshot may be the rise of the garrison state to displace the civilian state.”(Lasswell [1937] 1997:43).

In Lasswell’s view, the permanent sense of insecurity and the increased risk of armed conflict were global. This, coupled with modern air warfare and bombardments of civilian targets would lead to what Lasswell calls “the socialization of danger” (Lasswell [1941] 1997). In Lasswell’s view, such bombardments increase the sufferings of the civilian populations (Lasswell [1941] 1997:61), who turn to “specialists in violence”, i.e. the military, to shield them against it.

In a reconsideration of the original hypothesis in 1962 Lasswell considered the Soviet Union during the reign of Stalin, Fascist Italy and pre-1945 Imperial Japan as “Garrison States” (Lasswell [1962] 1997:83). In spite of the United States preserving her democratic nature and prevailing in war against the Axis of “Garrison States” in the course of the Second World War, there is no lack of warnings against the potential degeneration of the U.S.

(9) See Hewedy 1989.

into a "Garrison State". Just to mention two recent examples, suppression of the civil rights movement in the U.S. was considered a "Garrison State" tendency and explained by the seemingly permanence of the Cold War (Stanley and Segal 1997:127, Friedberg 2000). In a more contemporary critique, there are some warnings against "the Rise of the Garrison State" in the wake of the "War on Terror" and limitations of civil rights in the United States (Jasper 2002).

Has the Garrison State hypothesis any relevance to civil-military relations in present day MENA states? As Alan Richards and John Waterbury correctly point out, "the Middle East has had more than its share of military violence and, predictably, has devoted more of its human and material resources to defence and warfare than many other regions of the developing world" (Richards & Waterbury:330). In the same line of argumentation, Amin Hewedy studies security and militarization in the Middle East and demonstrates its debilitating impact on democracy and economic development (Hewey 1989). While in an earlier study, Ben-Dor points out that "armies tend to seize power after defeats on the battlefield [fearing] drastic decline in the status, prestige, or allocations of the military in the wake of defeat" (Ben-Dor 1977:165).

Another dimension of the "external threats" to the security of states is that of "external systemic factors". As Birthe Hansen establishes, the end of the Cold War and the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity in the international political system has had profound effects on the MENA region (Hansen 2000). Those effects include unification of Yemen, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, formation of an international coalition restoring the sovereignty of Kuwait, the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the Arab-Israeli peace process of the 1990's. The same logic could also be applied to the militarization in the internal politics of the foes of the only remaining superpower. The presidency of the former Revolutionary Guard Commander, Mr. Ahmadinejad of Iran, and the creeping militarization of the Iranian Parliament can be considered as a response to the dynamics of unipolarity in the MENA region in the post 9/11 era (Alfoneh 2006).

Therefore, external and external systemic threats deserve a renewed

interest in order to find out to what degree they shape “military influence” and determine the “Role” of the military in the internal politics of states.

Internal Factors

As A. R. Luckham correctly observes, there is an “enormous proliferation of ad hoc generalizations on the subject, particularly where the military in new nations is concerned” and the generalizations may well be contradictory (Luckham 1971:5). The military in newly independent states is said to have a higher degree of “national” consciousness than most other elites, including the politicians and this may be a factor which pulls it into politics rather than keeping it out (Janowitz 1964:63-64). But decades after independence some MENA countries show a greater tendency towards military intervention in the internal politics of states than others. How do we explain different developments in states with almost similar colonial past?

Eva Bellin offers a provocative hypothesis: “The more institutionalized the security establishment the more willing it will be to disengage from power and allow political reform to proceed. The less institutionalized it is, the less amenable it will be to reform” (Bellin 2005). So what is institutionalization? Here we invoke the constellation of qualities that Weber used to distinguish rational bureaucracies from patrimonial systems (Weber 1978:956). In this sense, one can imagine a continuum with Turkey the most highly institutionalized military Egypt also highly institutionalized and Jordan the most patrimonial, as symbolized by the king’s most important role as shaykh al-shayuk or shaykh al-mashayuk (the supreme tribal leader).

Patrimonialism implies co-optation, favouritism, patronage, and fostering divisiveness in society (Weber 1978:1010). Patrimonial regimes may be particularly resistant to democratization (as opposed to managed liberalization). In contrast, the suggestion is that highly institutionalized militaries have less to lose, are more confident of their continuity, and are less resistant to democratization. They will not be “ruined by reform” to cite Nancy Bermeo’s work on democratic transitions in Europe (Bermeo 1997). Any discussion of institutionalization leads logically to discussion of professionalism.

One component of military professionalism is a model of civil-military relations, including whether and how the military is subordinate to civilian authority. Indeed, whether there is a recognized distinction between the military and the political realms, in terms of political values in addition to discipline, distinctive dress, and etiquette. Specialized military training into a specialized military subculture associated with technology is also important. The social (and perhaps the political) behaviour of the officer corps reflects the technical sophistication of a military. In general, where there is a very high ratio of officer corps to the other ranks officers may be more imbedded in privilege. Imagine, for instance, the difference between an air force where the officer-enlisted ratio may be close to 1:1 in contrast to a low-tech infantry heavy army.

The development of professionalism in the military has been said to make civilian control easier to establish (Huntington 1957:i). Others claim that MENA militaries still are debilitated by ideological and political control, hence their lacking ability to prevail in war (Kamrava 2000, Rubin 2002:1-23). And as Janowitz claims: "professionalism makes the military less rather than more responsive to civilian control, because professional soldiers develop characteristic political ideas and are prone to the politics of wanting to be above politics" (Janowitz 1964:65-66). Janowitz, in contrast to Huntington, understands that the modern military is a political institution as a matter of course (Huntington 1957).

Halpern and Hurewitz claimed that the army is a modernizing force (Halpern 1963:251-281, Hurewitz 1969, Hurewitz 1975), but by late 1960's the military was not viewed with the same enthusiasm. Huntington and a decade later Perlmutter, observed the military as an obstacle to social and political change (Huntington 1968:192-264, Perlmutter 1981)¹⁰.

Finer considered the process of modernization and the development

(10) For a critique of Huntington and Perlmutter's general theory on authoritarianism see Gabriel Ben-Dor: "It seems highly unlikely that we can derive from the praetorian model hypotheses accounting for the prevalence of seemingly never-ending series of coups in Syria, for one, while Egypt, on the other hand, seems to enjoy a relatively stable period following the initial coup" (Ben-Dor 1977:162).

of a public opinion as a constraint against the political intervention of the military (Finer 1962: vii), while Huntington points out that economic development and modernization coupled with lack of political institution building would politicize all the institutions in the society, including the military (Huntington 1968:192-264).

Janowitz considered the characteristics of the army as a determining factor with regard to political intervention of the armed forces (Janowitz 1964:1, 27-29), while Huntington pointed at the unbalance between economic and political development in the course of the modernization of states as the main determinant for the political intervention of the military in the internal politics of states.

In a comparative study of Middle Eastern coups Dankwart A. Rustow claimed "Military coups follow upon a period of internal unrest in which civilian authorities have come increasingly to rely on armed forces to maintain themselves in power" (Rustow 1965:467); a clear point with few exceptions in recent Middle Eastern history.

It is certainly not an easy task to qualify or disqualify any of the hypotheses mentioned above. The choice of IV among internal factors must rely on a pragmatic foundation depending on the possibility to collect the relevant data and what IVs are most suitable in the general frame work of analysis.

The question of civil-society

The decade of the 1990s began with an expansion of hope for political reform in the Middle East, and especially the Arab world. Developments in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen, and to a lesser extent other Arab countries suggested that the grip of authoritarianism was loosening. The factors that contributed to this burgeoning hope included the growth of civil-society, the changing global scene and especially the end of the Cold war, the crisis of state-dominated economies, bright prospects for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the emerging global media of communication and proliferating discourses on human rights.

Considerable hope was invested particularly in civil society. Optimistic

expectations were based, in part, on cases from the Iberian Peninsula, Eastern Europe, and Latin America where as the liberalization door creaks open there was an upsurge in civic association and an excitement about expanding the terms of citizenship. These were not naïve hopes, and they were borne out in a number of Arab cases, including Palestine under occupation, Algeria prior to the January 1992 coup d'etat, Egypt for much of the past two decades, Jordan since the reopening of parliament in 1989, Kuwait for most of its independent existence and certainly Iran and Turkey. But one must avoid the "two aspirin fallacy": It is not as though you take two tablets of civil society at night and wake up in the morning a democracy. In fact, there has been much confusion about the relationship of civil society and democracy. Civil society is not a sufficient but a necessary condition for democratic transformation (Norton, 1995, 1996).

Behaviour is self-interested. The project of civil society, if we are talking about middle class associations of professionals, is decidedly not democracy, although it may be political liberalization. This may suggest that steps to demonstrate a commitment to the rule of law, for instance by curbing police abuses or stemming corruption, necessarily opens up space for civil society and therefore a richer, more vibrant political space without necessarily generating calls for democracy. One of the ironies of state policies in several Arab states, Egypt is an important example, is that the state has often acted to limit or suppress civil society while simultaneously attempting to appropriate an Islamist discourse. In the process, the state tends to lend momentum to Islamist movements that have a broader base in society and therefore enjoy a transparent interest in fostering democracy. If steps to open up political space do not magically create democracy they may still foster precisely the constructive dialogues and debates about tolerance and political rights that lend resilience to a political system. If steps to actually democratize Middle East politics are actually undertaken, then civil society becomes crucial because it is not possible to imagine a successful system of participant politics without a vibrant and tolerant civil society. This is why civil society, while not a sufficient condition for democracy, is a necessary condition for its survival. Certainly, the Iraqi case illustrates the

likely outcome of democratic political reform in the absence of a vibrant civil society.

While many of the conditions that gave rise to hope continue to be relevant, others have changed significantly in the early Twenty-first century, particularly the collapse of the “peace process” between Israel and Palestine and the deterioration of respect for human rights protections not just in the Middle East but in Europe and especially in the United States well. In addition, savage terrorism led and inspired by al-Qaeda, as well as the U.S.-led response to terrorism has catalyzed widespread disdain, anger and resentment throughout the Muslim world and especially in the Middle East. If there is a moment when values associated with civil society, such as civility and tolerance, are important, it is the present. Arguably, the invasion and occupation of Iraq, while rationalized by the United States as an opportunity to create an exemplar for reform and democracy has instead become an exemplar for disorder, divisiveness and mayhem, precisely what in Arabic is called fitnah. If the work of politics in the Middle East is left to the forces of order and the advocates of violence then the harvest of the present period will be the bitter fruit of repression and injustice.

Connecting the realm of Civil-Military Relations and Civil Society and Conclusions

Much, inevitably, turns on the attitude of institutionalized, professional militaries in countries like Turkey and Egypt. On the evidence of the record to date, there is only limited scope for optimism.

This paper’s brief study of the civil-military relations literature on the MENA region has identified a number of blind spots in the literature. The first point seems to be the fundamental question of what Middle Eastern regimes qualify as military regimes? In other words, we need to develop a model combining a modified version of Finer’s algorithm (1982:284) with Kamrava’s typology (Kamrava 2000). The second point is a general recommendation of studying civil-military relations in MENA politics beyond the coup-no coup dichotomy. The third point is the need of studying what external factors facilitate and dimension the influence of the armed forces and determine

the role of the military in the internal politics of states. Fourth, this paper recommends a study of the “militarization of the administration”. Fifth, this paper recommends a study of paramilitary organisations in states with no state monopoly on violence. Finally, this paper recommends the study of civil-military relations in the broader context of the societal development in the MENA region with a view to developing channels for constructive dialogue across the civil-military divide.

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Challenges to the Role of Arab Militaries

Birthe Hansen and Carsten Jensen

The role of Arab militaries a relevant research focus for several reasons: in the first place, the military is an important actor in Arab societies, and it typically constitutes a crucial part of the domestic power structure. In the second place, the profound transformations that are going on in the Middle East are affecting also the militaries and their previous role. In the third place, the on-going transformations challenge the previous analytical approaches to civil-military relations in the region.

The purpose of this chapter¹¹, Challenges to the Role of Arab Militaries, is to analyze the conditions of change, and to ask whether the role is changing into a third phase. The approach is based on an identification of the key elements:

- The transformation processes: the moment of democratisation, the unipolar impact, and the consequential challenges
- The roles of the military in a modern history comparative perspective: the previous phases, their characteristics, and their potentials for change
- The principal actors: the changing balance between the militaries and civil society

When analysing the role of Arab militaries it is evident that this role cannot be reduced to a single function. Actually, the militaries have had several roles. Domestically, the role have comprised socialization/integration of the conscripts and officers, contribution to societal development in terms of education, dissemination of technical skills and industrialization, absorption

(11) The authors want to thank the 2005 Copenhagen Workshop and particularly Dr. Mohammad El-Sayed Selim for valuable comments.

of surplus labour, a broader economic role, protection of the internal order and the institutions, and protection the regime¹². The external roles have mainly been to deter and guard against or fight external threats, and in some cases to carry out offensive campaigns. In addition to these ranges of roles, specific parts of the individual militaries have had specific roles – e.g. to balance each other. In this chapter the focus is on the domestic role of the military vis-à-vis the regimes and civil society.

The distinction between the military respectively the regimes and civil society is an analytical distinction, as in effect the boundaries are not that clear. Nonetheless it is useful to make the distinction here: the purpose is not to investigate the various intertwinements, nor the so-called hidden influence of the military. Instead, the purpose is to discuss the balance of power between the military, the regimes, and civil society understood as the three decisive agents in societal development.

The military is understood as the armed forces, the security apparatuses, and paramilitary units. The regimes are understood as the civilian parts of the ruling elites, and civil society is understood as organized social activity independent of the state, that is, state independent organizations. Clearly, there are overlaps, but at the societal level it is possible to distinguish analytically between these three agents.

We should also be aware that the militaries are very different and play various roles in the region. In many cases it would be useful to deal with different regional categories such as the Gulf, North Africa, and the Arab-Orient. In this chapter, however, we analyse the challenges to the common features of the militaries in the light of the regional transformation process. In different studies it would be highly valuable to deal with sub-categories, but in this case the regional perspective is our focus.

Civil-military relations in the Arab states have so far gone through two phases since the 1950's (Rubin 2002): during the first phase in the 1950's and 1960's, the military was the prime challenger to the (non-democratic) governments. In the second phase from about 1970 and onwards, the role

(12) Manfred Halpern 1963.

of the military changed into becoming the principal protector of the (still authoritarian) regimes (Op. cit.).

The ongoing transformation processes in the Middle East spurred by the down-fall of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein regimes in the aftermath of 9-11, may lead to a third and different phase – a phase in which the Arab militaries will be subdued to civilian democratic control, and their role will change from underpinning authoritarian regimes into protecting the citizens and independent civil societies. This is not to neglect the negative effects of the 2003 Iraq War – such as the violence in Iraq, grievances related to the American-led invasion, the traumatic experiences among young Arabs (e.g., the 'Fallulah experience'), or the general sense of insecurity. Neither should we neglect the particular role of the militaries in times of change.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is to analyse the conditions for a third phase. The outcome of the current transformation processes is still to be seen. We cannot for sure conclude that the processes are going to result in democratisation and a new role for the armed forces, but so far we can discuss the conditions for this potential change.

During the 1990's, CIMIC (civil-military cooperation) became a catchword in the debate on civil-military relations. Civil society came on the agenda concerning military operations when the international community undertook a series of humanitarian operations during the 1990's and became aware of the potentials of civil society with respect to assist military forces in completing their tasks. Cooperation with civil society could add important resources, practical and technical skills, and provide local knowledge to the efforts undertaken by the military forces. This was important with respect to humanitarian operations in which numerous societal problems existed and arose in addition to the military ones. Furthermore, the civil-military cooperation was to a large extent approved by local citizens because the military dimension contributed to the stabilization of their communities and their personal security.

Since the humanitarian operations in the 1990's, at least three developments have taken place and caused us to rethink CIMIC as well as civil-military relations in general regarding the Arab Middle East. Firstly,

democratic winds have swept and revealed the importance of a third actor in addition to those of state and the market: civil society. Secondly, the recently initiated and fragile democratisation processes creates a range of new challenges that are unsolvable by military means exclusively but demands the inclusion of other instruments and actors (Orr 2004). Thirdly, the highly asymmetrical relations of strength in the international system profoundly affect the previous role of the conventional military forces in the Arab Middle East.

These three developments have in common that they affect the balance of power between the state, the military, and civil society. The argument here is that civil society is being strengthened in this process of balancing. In the long term, this may furthermore reduce the need for domestic as well as international military forces. In the short term, however civil-military relations are still a crucial combination in the vulnerable processes of democratisation.

A strengthening of civil society has implications for the civil-military relations regarding at least two other dimensions. One important dimension regards the potential cooperation between the two parties, while another regards the character of this cooperation in respect to the stabilization of societies (Compert and Gordon IV 2008).

Below, we analyse the three key conditions for a new phase in the relationship between Arab civil society and the military as well as the implications for civil-military relations: first, the moment of democratisation; second, the subsequent societal challenges; and third, the effect of the unipolar distribution of international strength in respect to Arab defence requirements. Finally, we discuss the future relationship between civil society and the armed forces as proposed above.

The moment of democratisation

9-11 caused the U.S. to change its Middle East policy (Hansen 2003). 9-11 took place against the background of regional decline. During the 1990's, economic, social and political problems in the region had severely increased (Henry and Springborg 2001). Two of the results were growing popular

dissatisfaction and the emergence of the al-Qaida terrorist network. In response, after 9-11, the U.S. government decided to use preventive warfare and to make democratisation a primary objective in the Middle East. In October 2001, an airborne invasion took place in Afghanistan, and Operation Enduring Freedom was launched against the Taliban regime. Less than six months later, a regime change was effectuated. The next major intervention took place in the spring of 2003 and the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq was removed. These two events paved the way for democratisation in the region. Before the two invasions, the Arab World had been subject to eras of authoritarian rule. About 1970, a series of authoritarian leaders and regimes came to power by rising from or by assistance from the military succeeded in consolidating their positions. They came so after a turbulent phase of coup d'états, rebellions and leadership changes during the 1950's and 1960's, in which the militaries had been the important instrument and vehicle. The stabilization of the authoritarian rule changed the roles of the militaries from regime challenge to regime protection (Rubin 2002).

This relationship lasted for decades, but the post-2001 development has seriously challenged its basis: in the first place, the regimes have been provided with strong incentives to change their power base from relying on the military to relying on a civilian mandate. In the second place, a return to the pre-1970 role of the militaries has become an unlikely scenario in the sense that the increased international focus on the Middle East and the engagement of international society would hardly tolerate a new phase of military coups.

The post-2001 development produced a number of democratic reforms in the region, and civil society organizations appear to have been strengthened. However, also contrasting developments have taken place, most notably in Iran.

The moment of democratisation thus provides the militaries in the region to rethink their role, as well as it provides the regimes with incentives to work for legitimacy and increased civilian influence. In addition to these two consequences of the moment of democratisation, we assume that the civilian organizations will gain an increased self-confidence, a wider room for

manoeuvre, and a greater degree of protection from the international society. If the Arab states choose to emulate the current trend, this will produce a greater degree of civilian control with the military and a change of its role.

Societal challenges

The moment of democratisation in the Middle East does not imply that the national militaries are becoming redundant. Democratisation processes are often violent, and the groups losing power may choose violent strategies in order to regain their position or to minimize the effect of democratisation. In the case of such violence, civilians and civil society are endangered. We may anticipate at least five scenarios regarding the relationship between civilians and the military during the processes of transformation:

- The military (or a part of it) trying to crush a rebellion
- The military (or a part of it) joining a rebellion
- The military (or a part of it) joining international forces in order to restore stability and introduce democracy
- The military (or a part of it) fighting international forces
- The military disintegrating

Also the regimes in existence face a series of concerns resulting from the moment of democratisation. These concerns comprise the reaction of the military if the regime reduces its role, the problem arising from the subsequent unemployment of young men, and the fear of popular rebellions and instability. These concerns may cause the regimes to either refrain from initiating increased civilian control with the militaries, or even to try to enhance the previous role of the military as a protector of the regime.

In addition to the concerns and variety of responses from the militaries and the regimes, the process of democratization will depend on the response of civil society.

The concept of civil society is understood as institutions and organizations constructed on the basis of meaning as its functional role and content – in contrast to the state, which is built on the basis of decisions,

and the market on productivity (Keane 1998). Civil society is assumed to comprise stabilizing potentials as it contributes to the creation of societal cohesion. However, while civil society as such is holding stabilizing potentials, elements of it may prove to hold destabilizing potentials. This is just like the market: the market as such contributes to the stability of society, but individual firms may possess destabilizing qualities by e.g. acting illegally or financially irresponsibly.

In the case of the Arab world, the role of civil society is a complex phenomenon to analyse (Jensen 2006 and Mussalli in this volume). In the first place, independent civil society is historically weak in the Middle East. In the second place, Arab authoritarian regimes have created a series of dependent or semi-dependent civil society organisations (the so-called GONGOs) that blurs the picture for both researchers and fellow citizens. In the third place, the authoritarian rule has fostered some very radical civil society organizations in the Arab world, i.e. political and religious movements with regime changes on their agenda. This provides us with a mixed picture and a series of unanswered questions.

In order to improve our understanding of the new roles of the military it would thus be relevant to discuss the roles and features of contemporary civil society in Arab Countries. This implies an investigation of whether or not civil societies have become stronger during the past few years, and if so, which parts of civil society have been strengthened? In particular, it would be relevant to investigate to what extent civil society organisations have taken an interest in issues related to the transformation of the military's role and the transparency of defence policy. Finally, the current concepts of civil society are relevant to the discussion of the new civil-military relations (Jensen 2006).

The unipolar development and impact

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the unipolar world order has been characterized by different US strategies – not least regarding relationship between the U.S. and the Arab Middle East.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 against the background of

uncertainty about the new international set-up. Saddam Hussein had talks with the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glasbie, and was not given unambiguous signals. Saddam Hussein mistakenly chose to interpret the talks as kind of a green light to invade Kuwait.

The U.S. gathered a broad international coalition and Iraq was forced to retreat. The U.S. efforts followed a period, in which the Middle East was 'shelved' in the light of the European implications of the German re-unification, and the potentially dangerous development in the collapsing Soviet Union (Hansen 2000). Furthermore, the efforts followed a period of general international uncertainty about the new international order. Operation Desert Storm, however, became a manifestation of the U.S. unipolarity, and it furthered a process of transformation in Middle Eastern international politics.

In the first half of the 1990's, the U.S. began a policy of what can be described as a consolidation of its unipolar position. The Clinton administrations gave priority to strengthening the U.S. economic status and competitiveness, and it left Middle Eastern affairs with less attention than during the first years after operation Desert Storm. A period of political stalemate followed in the region, which also became subject to further decline in terms of capabilities. Furthermore, problems were growing, and dissatisfaction spread. Some of it resulted in international terrorism, but not until after 9-11, the U.S. administration took serious action.

9-11 triggered the U.S. to changing its strategy from lenient 'minimalism' and economic priorities into a 'maximalist' strategy for change, which reflected a strong U.S. position as well as growing regional problems.

The most profound political results from the altered U.S. strategy were the invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like Operation Desert Storm, which illuminated the American strength and led to realignment in the region, the 2001 and 2003 invasions also had profound effects.

The down-fall of the Saddam Hussein-regime and the U.S. explicit emphasis on democratisation of the region resulted in democratic initiatives by the Arab governments as well as increased and open demands for such initiatives by Arab civil societies.

So far, the militaries in the region have kept a low profile and cautious-

ly watched the development. However, the War on Terrorism and the 2003 invasion of Iraq has exposed the changes in regional defence challenges. Whereas operation Desert Storm sent a clear message from the U.S. that interstate conquest was not allowed in the new world order, the War on Terrorism has shown that states are not allowed to support or benefit from terrorist activities, and the war on Iraq sent the message that most states are not allowed to rely on strategies for weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, the emphasis on democratisation implies a decreased tolerance vis-à-vis the oppression of authoritarian regimes. However, this pressure for democratization decreased after a few years as a result of the insurgency in Iraq. The U.S. allocated resources to counter-insurgency and gave priority to alliances rather than increasing the pressure for democratization on the allied regimes.

While the role of the Arab militaries changed its focus from external defence to domestic regime protection during the 1970's, the regimes could not exclude the risk of regional, external conflict. Following the emergence of unipolarity, however, this risk seems to have decreased even more. Instead, the risk of conflict with the U.S. has increased.

The unipolar world order comprises two opposing initiatives regarding the engagement in external conflict. On the one hand, unipolarity does not induce self-deterrence originating from the risk of conflict escalation to an apocalyptic level. Compared to the later phases of bipolarity (most notably since 1973), the states in the region are therefore less restricted in terms of warfare – and even more so is the U.S. On the other hand, the highly asymmetrical relations of strength between the U.S. and the states in the region combined with the message from operation Desert Storm, makes warfare an extremely costly option. When considering the use of armed force, the states have to incorporate calculations of U.S. reactions.

The asymmetrical relations of strength regarding conventional forces produce another set of incentives. While none of the Arab states is able to match another Arab state plus the U.S., of course none of the states is able to match the U.S. This induces an incentive to opt for nuclear deterrence in order to keep the unipole at bay.

So far, Iraq (until 2003) and Iran have pursued strategies for achieving

nuclear deterrence. The 2003 war showed that the Iraqi efforts were mere bluff – a strategy often pursued by threshold states. In the case of Iran, there seems to be a lot more substance to the nuclear ambitions.

The incentive to cross the nuclear threshold, however, was generally countered by the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Libya, which had earlier relied on WMD-programmes, officially abandoned all such programmes less than a year later. Iran engaged in negotiations, but kept the option open, and became more offensive in its efforts to preserve the option. However, the war on Iraq was a strong message to the states that pursuing the nuclear option is a dangerous choice.

In the other end of the continuum of means, (state-sponsored) terrorism previously proved a temptation to some states. The U.S. bombed Tripoli already in 1986, which contributed to the decline in state-sponsored terrorism but after 9-11 and the War on Terrorism, also the use of this means has become a very dangerous option. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in the end of 2001 was a clear signal from the U.S.

Unipolarity thus seems to provide different regional incentives but the U.S. policy since 1990-91, and particularly after 2003, has limited the range of armed options.

Figure 1: Means and the unipolar response

Means	Conventional warfare	State-sponsored terrorism	Nuclear deterrence
Unipolar response	Operation Desert Storm	War on Afghanistan	War on Iraq

If this is the case, Arab armed forces are bound for change. They are likely to remain huge in numbers as they traditionally absorb part of the labour force. However, the two world order-related developments are likely to affect the character of the armed forces:

- Even less focus on regional, inter-state conflict
- Conventional regional warfare, nuclear programmes and state-sponsored

-
- terrorism have become a limited option
- Consequently, training, competences, and role are all challenged

While the systemic related changes and development are likely to affect the Arab armed forces, lots of other factors seem to influence the specificity of the expected change.

Military bureaucracies often possess an ability to resist change and prevent reforms. In addition, they often serve several purposes rather than just performing their core services. As mentioned, in the Arab world they have served to absorb surplus labour, they have contributed to keep groups apart by integrating some while preventing others from participation, and they have served to protect the regimes from domestic opposition.

If we look at these dimensions, it seems as if the labour-absorbing role is depending on factors distinctively different from those originating from changes in the international system. In contrast, the two latter dimensions of the military's roles – that of separating populations and that of regime-protection – are seriously challenged.

Changing roles and different phases

Armed forces in the Arab Middle East have had different roles so far. As mentioned, their role changed internally from being the primary regime challenge in the 1950-60's into focussing on regime protection from about 1970 and onwards (Rubin 2002). Externally, their role changed from deterring and engaging in regional warfare in the 1950-60's, to providing a capacity for limited regional defence between about 1970 and 1989, and to managing unipolar influence and regional – including domestic – turbulence between 1989 and 2001.

During the decade beginning by the end of the Cold War, the Middle East was subject to a series of transformations within the realm of security. The U.S. became the single dominant foreign power in the region, and the political and economic conditions changed accordingly. Without another superpower ally, it became impossible to match the U.S. by means of conventional weaponry and strategy as shown by Operation Desert Storm.

Instead, the states were provided with an initiative to adapt to changing conditions or to rely on other means in order to be able to resist U.S. dominance. Such means included terrorism and WMD capabilities.

9-11 triggered the pursuit of a different U.S. security strategy, which tried to address terrorism and WMD armament as well as initiating democratisation processes in the region. The armed forces were thus deprived of another role at the same time as they were facing new challenges – the challenges arising from democratisation processes. If these challenges are to be faced in a fitting manner both the civil and the military players of the state sector must change roles in order to develop the regimes. The military must accordingly add participating in regime development to its menu of roles.

Across the phases, however, one role seems to have remained in function: the role of absorbing surplus labour. Since the end of the Cold War, this role has probably become even more important, as the Arab Middle East has suffered from economic decline during the 1990's, accompanied by a substantial growth of population.

In the light of the post 9-11 transformation processes, still another challenge may emerge. The Arab armed forces have previously contributed only modestly to nation-building and the creation of common identities because of the regimes' attempt to create loyalty respectively suppress groups by means of forming units on the basis of ethnic and religious affiliation (Rubin 2002; Horowitz 2000). However, the changing conditions may increase the role of the armed forces in the integration (and dis-integration) processes.

Figure 2 depicts the changing roles of the armed forces in the Arab Middle East from 1950 to the present. The first two phases are empirically well described, while the conclusions regarding the transformation from the second to the third are based on the argumentation in this paper, and the description of the post 2001 period is based on hypotheses as indicated by the question-marks.

Figure 2: The roles of armed forces in the Arab Middle East 1950-2008

Phase/roles	Internal role	External role	Other roles
Phase 1. 1950-1970	Regime challenge	Regional warfare	Developing state identity
Phase 2 App. 1970-1989	Regime protection (Bipolar conditions)	Limited regional defence	Absorption of surplus labour
Phase 3.a 1989-2001	Regime protection (unipolar conditions)	Managing unipolar influence through adaptation	Absorption of surplus labour
Phase 3.b 2001-	?Managing regime development by democratisation, protection of citizens?	?Managing unipolar influence through regional peace-making?	?Absorption of surplus labour, integration?

Following the changing role of the Arab armed forces, their characteristics have changed, too. Below, Figure 3 depicts the changed characteristics comprising the armies, equipment and predominant alignment strategies.

During the first three phases, the armies were huge, but their main purpose and equipment differed. Initially, they were trained to combat external enemies, but in accordance with their changed domestic role, they began to replace external combat power by abilities to secure internal order and to fight internal unrest. Equipment did not change accordingly, although the conventional capabilities decreased during the third phase – due to economic decline, lack of maintenance, and the loss of Soviet supplies to some of the states.

The alignment strategies initially reflected the power balancing among the Arab states and among the Arab states and Israel, and they also reflected the conflict-prone situation in the region. Furthermore, they reflected the in-secure position of the states in the beginning of their state-building processes.

In the second phase from about 1970 to the end of the Cold War, the alignment strategies to a larger extent became an integrated part of the

bipolar polarization process. In addition, the alignment strategies reflected the continuous regional competition – not least after the changed balance of power following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

The 1973 War had a double impact. First, it reshuffled the Arab balance of power by strengthening the oil-rich states (such as Iraq, Libya, and Saudi-Arabia) and weakening the previously strong military states with large populations (most notably Egypt, but also Syria). Second, it weakened the regional alignment game as the region became 'nuclearized' by the U.S. nuclear alert in the end of the short war (Garthoff 1985). The Middle East then became part of the escalation game, and following that the armed forces in the region saw their room for manoeuvre being restricted.

By the third phase from 1989 to 2001, the alignment game changed dramatically. Bipolarisation came to an end, and the regional balance of power was reshuffled once again – in favour of the then U.S.-allied states. The region in general also suffered a weakening from the end of the Cold War. Partly because it lost military support because of the end of the bipolarisation, and partly because it was poorly suited with respect to cope with the challenges from the new world order. The result was further economic decline.

Consequently, the focus of the alignment game shifted, and the focal point became the relationship with the U.S. The states had to choose whether to bandwagon with the unipole and the world order, or to balance the U.S. and oppose the world order. In general, the majority of the states chose to bandwagon – or at least to keep a low profile. However, a some states chose to seriously oppose the world order: (Saddam Hussein-)Iraq, Iran, Libya (until 2003), and Syria¹³. To back up their strategies, Libya, Iraq and Iran also relied on WMD-programmes and threshold-strategies. In the Iraqi case, the threshold-strategy turned out to be based on bluff, and Libya abandoned its efforts.

The U.S. position has been clarified during the post 9-11 phase, but this phase also reveals a number of uncertainties. The most important

(13) Initially, also the Republic of Yemen defied the world order, but changed its strategy.

uncertainty concerns the outcome of the democratisation process. Will the result of the process be the development of democratic states with armed forces protecting the citizens, contributing to regional peace-making operations, and encouraging the governments to prepare for benefiting from the world order? This is still an open question, so we have to put question marks around the descriptions in Figure 3 of the on-going period. The years to come will prove how far the challenges to the Arab militaries, to which direction and extent they will meet them and thus to which extent our hypothesis of a new phase is valid.

Figure 3 shows the previous characteristics of the armed forces in the Arab Middle East and possible changes in the post 9-11 era:

Figure 3: Characteristics of armed forces in the Arab Middle East 1950-2005

Phases/characteristics	Armies	Equipment	Alignment
Phase 1. 1950-60's	Big standing armies with combat skills	Conventional strength	Regional competition and alignment games
Phase 2. 1970-1989	Big standing armies, competitive and segregated units	Conventional strength	Polarization Regional competition and alignment games (including the changed balance of power following the 1973 War)
Phase 3.a. 1989-2001	Big standing armies, competitive and segregated units	Limited conventional strength	With or against the U.S. (possibly low profile)
Phase 3.b. 2001-	?Homeland defence, trained units, cooperation?	?RMA, interoperability, blue helmets?	?Cooperation with the U.S.?

Implications for future civil-military relations

Against this background, we conclude that the armed forces in the Arab Middle East face a series of new challenges in the light of the interaction

between emerging democratisation processes, a new regional security environment, and the U.S. commitment to regional change. Three of the main challenges for the regimes, the militaries, the external partners, and the Arab civil societies are:

- To increase civilian control over the military and the defence policy thereby disengage the military from the symbiotic relationship with authoritarian regimes, and to change the military's role into being able to protect the citizens
- To focus even less on external defence and redirect efforts to counter terrorism, engage in state-building efforts, and provide troops to engage in regional peace-making operations
- Subsequently to reduce the officers' previous privileges and high salaries, and instead to envisage the rising costs in relation to conscripts and professionals (salaries and education). This bullet also comprises the challenge regarding the change of culture with respect to human rights – both within the militaries and concerning the implementation of the militaries' tasks

The conditions point to a strengthening of Arab civil society vis-à-vis the military. If the military meets the challenges as above, the implication is a further strengthening of civil society. Consequently, civil society will become a crucial political actor in Arab domestic politics as well as in the relationship with external partners.

Obviously, civil society is a multi-faceted phenomenon (as is the military), and some civil society organizations have objectives very different from contributing to peaceful democratisation in the Middle East. This, however, is an issue to be dealt with separately (see Chapter 5).

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The Internationalization of the Arab Reforms and its Impact on the Question of Civil-Military Relations: An Arab Perspective

Mohammad El-Sayed Selim

Since the advent of the imperialist age to the Middle East in the nineteenth century, the Middle East has been well connected with the global system and highly influenced by its transformations. The global-Middle Eastern connection was characterized by the dependence of the Middle East on the global system. Such pattern of dependent relationship continued after the “political independence” of Middle Eastern states. Further, two main regional projects emerged in the Middle East: Arab regional and Middle Eastern. Each project implied a different set of assumptions, concepts, and security arrangements, and both competed for dominance in the Middle East during the Cold War.

The two projects competed for dominance in the Middle East during the 1950s and 1960s. The 1967 Arab defeat dealt a serious blow to the Arab regional project, as the weakness of the forces of Arab nationalism and radicalism was exposed. The Arab regional project was weakened even further, with the death of Nasser in 1970, the main champion of this project, the advent to power in Egypt of a new leadership that emphasizes upon Egyptianism, and the subsequent developments such as the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace Treaty in 1979, the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. That invasion resulted in a major rupture in the Arab regional project, which is still imprinted on it.

The Arab and Middle Eastern projects did not pay attention to the questions of democratic changes in Middle Eastern countries including the

question of civil-military relations. The emphasis was on the global and regional strategic struggles. Some of the advocates of the Middle Eastern project supported authoritarian regimes, brought to power military ones, and contributed to the overthrow of democratic governments, as was the case in Mosaddeq in Iran.

After the end of the Cold War, the struggle between the Middle Eastern and Arab projects was revived. This was a result of the major blow to the Arab regional project suffered as a result of the Second Gulf crisis of 1990-1991. The struggle was soon joined by two other regional projects, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) supported by the European Union (EU), and the NATO-Mediterranean Dialogue initiated by NATO. Whereas the first was a multi-dimensional one dealing with political, economic and social changes in Arab (called Mediterranean) countries, the second was mainly a forum for the exchange of intelligence information at least until 2004. The EU projects in the Middle East were the first attempt to raise the question of economic and political reforms in the Arab world from a broader perspective.

After September 11, 2001 these projects converged in three directions, (i) emphasizing on the priority of bringing about economic and political changes in the Arab countries and making such changes a pre-requisite of solving the security questions in the region, (ii) considering this priority an international responsibility vested mainly in a Euro-American consortium of powers, and (iii) raising the question of civil-military relations within the NATO ranks for the first time.

This paper purports to review the main changes in the strategic environment in the Middle East after September 11, 2001 with a view of outlining Euro-American proposals to introduce reforms in the Arab world articulating Arab responses, with a view of determining the position of the question of civil-military relations in these projects and identifying the main pre-requisites for establishing "democratic civil-military relations" in the Arab world.

The main argument of the paper is that the question of civil-military relations in the Middle East is a part of the overall question of democracy. Genuine democratic changes would necessarily bring about similar changes

in civil-military relations. It is also a part of the overall security environment of the region. The dominance of the military threats and the possession of certain powers of weapons of mass destruction tend to legitimize the role of the militaries. With the change in the security environment, a meaningful change in the role of the militaries will occur. Finally, the question of civil-military relations is a concern for all Middle Eastern countries, not only for the Arabs, and it should be approached as such.

The Middle Eastern Project after September 11, 2001

The September 11, 2001 events in the USA have dramatically changed the strategic environment in the Middle East. The USA claimed that the attacks emanated from the Arab countries and viewed them as an outcome of the "authoritarian character" of their regimes. It claimed that the war against terrorism required social changes in the Middle East in the direction of economic and political reforms. In September 2002, the USA issued the National Security Strategy Paper (NSSP), which reiterated a new security doctrine for the USA. The NSSP envisaged the use of American resources to promote democracy, and introduce economic measures to liberalize international trade and cut-off the financial supplies to terrorists and most importantly that the USA will use the doctrine of military preemption to foil threats to American security. The Middle East was the arena of the implementation of the new American strategy, as the "terrorist" threats to the US were viewed as emanating from that region. The prelude to this process was the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 which was considered a prelude to the change of the entire region.

Parallel with these developments, the Middle East witnessed vigorous attempts to revive the Middle Eastern project. The Middle Eastern project was revived in the wake of the convening of the Madrid Arab-Israeli peace conference in October 1991. The Madrid conference was branched off into two main tracks, namely, a bilateral track and a multi-lateral one. The bilateral track focused upon the negotiations to reach a political settlement of the territorial issues on a bilateral basis between Israel and each of the neighboring countries whose territories are occupied. The second dealt

with future economic and security arrangements. In this respect five working groups were formed, namely: Arms Control and Regional Security, Regional Economic Cooperation, Refugees, Water, and Environment. Many non-Middle Eastern countries took part in the multi-lateral tracks. In fact, the working groups were chaired by big powers and their meetings were held in different places in and outside the Middle East, in order to emphasize the “internationalization” of the multi-lateral track.

One of the most important manifestations of the Middle Eastern projects in the post Cold war era was the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) series of conferences held to formulate a pan Middle Eastern regime for economic cooperation. The conferences were held in Casablanca (1994), Amman (1995), Cairo (1996), and Doha (1997). These conferences were convened after the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993 which provided for a framework to establish A Palestinian Authority in the Palestinian occupied territories and establishing a Palestinian state by 1998. Also, Simon Peres, the then Foreign Minister of Israel, issued a book in 1993 entitled *The New Middle East*, in which he envisioned a new regional cooperation system.

Washington seized the opportunity to persuade the Swiss-based Davos Forum to call for the convening a regional economic cooperation conference for the Middle and North Africa. The Casablanca conference represented the second official launching of the concept of a Middle Eastern regional system. The conference issued the Casablanca Declaration, which reiterated that building the foundation of an economic group for the Middle East and North Africa required the flow of goods, capital and labor in the region including the establishment of a development bank. It also established a steering committee and an executive secretariat. It was also decided to hold the conference annually. The last of these conferences was held in Doha as most Arabs refused to proceed on this track after the election of the hard-line Netanyahu government in Israel in 1996.

It is obvious that since its inception, the Middle East project has been focusing mainly on politico-security issues and that issues related to democratization were not one of the concerns of this project. The Middle

Eastern dependent relationship with the global system and the rivalry between the superpowers in the region during the Cold War over dominance in the region helped to marginalize the issue of democracy. Further, the region was ridden with so many conflicts, which rendered the issue of democracy a low priority one.

This situation changed after the end of the Cold War from the direction of the European Union. In 1994, the EU announced a Proposal called the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). The Barcelona Declaration issued by the first ministerial conference of the EMP in November 1995, and the following declarations of the EMP paid special attention to the question of democratization in the Mediterranean countries that is in the eight Arab participants in that project. The EU presented the strategy of democratization of Arab countries to achieve security in the Mediterranean. This included promotion of democratic institutions, the rule of law, support for judicial reform, institution building and freedom of expression, and the strengthening of independent media and good governance. The assumption here was that democratization will lead to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and to domestic changes in the power structures in Arab countries including civil-military relations, although such relations were never mentioned.

The EMP failed to bring about any significant change in the region. Because the EU's main interest was to bring the Arabs and the Israelis in a European framework at a time it was marginalizing the Arab security agenda by detaching itself from the Arab-Israeli conflict resolution process, insisting on establishing a free trade area in the Euro-Mediterranean world in the fields in which it enjoys a relative advantage (manufactured goods), and presenting to the Arab countries cultural ideas which can hardly be sold in the region.¹⁴

After September 11, 2001 the USA revived the Middle Eastern Project and gave it a democratizing component. There are five main indicators to corroborate this argument. Firstly, On 9 May 2003, President Bush suggested

(14) Mohammad Selim, Arab Perceptions of the Euro-Mediterranean Projects, Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, Strategic papers series no 47, 2000.

establishing a free trade area between Middle Eastern countries and the USA within ten years provided these countries had introduced economic and political reforms. The most important of these reforms are, adhering to the World Trade Organization, protecting intellectual property rights, establishing a Middle Eastern finance facility to help small and medium-sized businesses, promoting education and knowledge, and promoting freedom and justice through establishing a regional forum for judicial reform, and regional campaign schools to provide skills to women seeking elective office in the region, media reading and media law projects, and training for new parliamentarians and support for civil society organizations.¹⁵

Secondly, In October 2003, Colin Powell, the American Secretary of State, delivered a speech at the Arab-American Economic Forum held in Detroit. Powell outlined the elements of a new American vision in the Middle East based on three main elements, (i) the first is what Colin Powell called the Millennium Challenge Account, " ... according to which the USA will only provide assistance to countries of the Middle East which apply the rule of law. He added that the USA has earmarked US\$10 billion to be increased by US\$5 billion every two years, and that these funds will only be provided to countries which apply the rule of law, (ii) the second element of the American strategy is free trade. He argued that "... free trade has helped people to defeat poverty and learn the habit of freedom." The USA will help Middle Eastern countries to introduce economic reforms, and enter the WTO. It will also sign bilateral trade agreements with these countries; (iii) the third element of the new American Middle Eastern strategy is the "Middle East Partnership Initiative." (MEPI) according to which the USA will support those who work to expand the economic capabilities, increase public participation, and reform education. Powell added that "... we are the ones who can bring about the desired change in the Arab world, because we are Americans who believe in change, believe in the future, and we could help our Arab friends." On November 2003, President Bush formalized the MEPI in his speech at the National Endowment for democracy. The MEPI entailed four "pillars." In

(15) usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/summit/text2003/0509freetrade.htm).

the economic pillar, the focus is on region-wide economic and employment growth driven by the private sector. In the political pillar, MEPI champions an expanded public space and participation and the rule of law. In the education pillar, there is a great deal of emphasis on enabling people to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to compete in today's economy. Finally, there is a women pillar which refers to granting women full and equal opportunities.¹⁶ The MEPI was later expanded into the "Greater Middle East Partnership" to which we will refer.

Third, the USA has persuaded the Davos Forum, the sponsor of the MENA conference in 1994, to hold an extra-ordinary meeting to draft a plan for Middle Eastern cooperation. The meeting was held in Jordan on 21-22 June 2003. Various projects were submitted, the most important of which was the Jordanian-Israeli project to connect the Red Sea with the Dead Sea through a canal. In the conference, Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State announced that the Bush Administration asked the Congress to allocate US\$500 million to support Middle Eastern projects.

Fourth, In February 2004, the USA announced a new project titled, "The Greater Middle East Partnership." (GME). The concept of a Greater Middle East was a new one. It referred to countries of the Arab world, plus Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Israel. The new American-sponsored project focused on introducing reforms in the "Greater" Middle in three main areas. These are promoting democracy and good governance, building knowledge society; and expanding economic opportunities. The first area referred to reforms in the fields of holding free elections, parliamentary training, independent media, anti-corruption efforts, and civil society. The area of knowledge society focused on basic education initiatives especially in the field of literacy, and education reform, and digital and business education initiatives.

Finally, the area of expanding economic opportunities emphasized upon the centrality of finance for growth initiatives, partnership for financial excellence, and trade initiatives. The GME suggested creating new institutions

(16) <http://mepi.state.gov/mepi>.

to implement these suggestions such as “the Greater Middle East Finance Corporation, and “the Greater Middle East Development Bank.” The GME Project envisioned a major role for the G-8 Group to assist in implementing the suggested reforms and creating these institutions.¹⁷

The Democracy Consortium in the Middle East

The question of economic and political change in the Middle East has been internationalized more than ever before. In 2003, the EU initiated a New Neighbourhood Policy (NNP) which focuses almost exclusively on the questions of domestic reforms in Arab countries. The NNP offered the Mediterranean countries more cooperation built on “common values principally within the fields of the rule of law, good governance, and respect from human rights, including minority rights, and the principles of market economy and sustainable development.” The new policy established a system of monitoring the progress of Mediterranean countries in these fields. It seemed that the EU was retreating from its multi-dimensional EMP towards more emphasis on the question of democratization and linking that process with economic assistance. After the presentation of the Greater Middle East Project, Germany presented a Middle East proposal in February 2004 entitled “the Wider Middle East Initiative.” It became later a Franco-German one. The proposal was presented after the USA announced its “Greater Middle East Partnership” Initiative and more or less carried the same title. The European proposal differed from the Greater Middle East Project in only one area, that is, it linked the democratization process to the resolution of regional link. However, such links was not clearly operationalized in the proposal as the emphasis continued to be on bringing about domestic changes in Arab countries. No wonder the European abandoned their proposal and endorsed the American one later on.

The month of June 2004 witnessed the convergence of various Euro-American projects through a series of summits. These were the G-8 summit held in the USA in June 2004, the Euro-American summit held in Dublin, and

(17) <http://English.daralhayat.com/Spec/02-Article-200402213-ac40bbdaf-c0a8-0led-00>

the NATO summit held in Istanbul. These summits have generally resolved to endorse the American views on Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, and on the questions of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Security threats were viewed as mainly emanating from the domestic structures of the Arab countries, which call for an international intervention to reform them.

The most important manifestation of the internationalization of reform arrangements in the Middle East is the documents issued by the G-8 summit held in the USA in June 2004. The summit issued three major documents which correspond more or less with the American Greater Middle East project. It established a mechanism of communication between the G-8 countries and "Greater" Middle Eastern countries to ensure that the later are fulfilling the tasks outlined in the American project and holding them accountable for the lack of implementation. Different powers were allocated certain roles to play in the field of domestic reforms in different countries. For example, Japan was entrusted with the task of women empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. Further, the NATO summit held in Istanbul on June 28-30, 2004 has shifted its strategy towards a strategy, called "the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative" (ICI), which represents a drastic shift from past policies which restricted NATO's role to exchange of information. The ICI offered a "menu" of bilateral activities that Arab countries can choose from in six areas, the first of which was "advice on defense reform, defense budgeting, defense planning, and civil-military relations." Cooperation in the area of civil-military relations is optional.

In this context, Western institutions are playing the role of agenda-setters and monitors. The consortium defines the agenda, the issues, and the mechanisms, and hold regional (Arab) countries accountable for the implementation. The Arab-Israeli conflict is viewed outside the Western agenda. It is argued that once all the items of the Western agenda are settled, the conflict will be heading towards a solution. It is our argument that such strategy will not necessarily lead to a genuine change in the status of civil-military relations in the Arab world. This is essentially because of the main deficiencies in the Western democratization projects which will necessarily spill-over the question of civil-military relations.

Arab Perspectives on the Strategies of the Democracy Consortium

The convergence of trans-regional forces to re-structure the Middle East was received mixed reactions in the Arab world. Whereas some governments and intellectuals subscribed to the basic philosophy of the consortium, others have rejected it, or at best gave it a lukewarm endorsement. The advocates in the region argued this is the only chance available to the Arabs to democratize as local regimes are not likely to move in this direction. The Arabs should seize the moment to bring about meaningful change in the dismal record of the local regimes. However, other viewed the trans-regional projects with a great deal of suspicion. It was viewed as an attempt to dominate the Arab world in favor of Israel and to dilute the identity of the Arabs. The trans-regional projects were viewed as attempts to dominate Arab countries and dilute the Arab-Islamic identity of its people, as was clearly stated by Ahmad Maher, the former Foreign Minister of Egypt.

They were also viewed as a new Euro-American power consortium to re-arrange the Middle East in favor of Israel, as these projects give lip service to the Arab-Israeli conflict and argue that the conflict could only be solved after domestic reforms have been introduced to Arab societies. After introducing these reforms, there will be no Palestinian territories to negotiate about as Israel had got enough time to colonize them. The question of civil-military relations in particular was either ignored, suspiciously viewed, or criticized. The following main reservations were raised:

a. Reform projects were not formulated in consultation with Arab countries: Virtually all the international projects for reform in the Arab world were unilaterally designed by the Western sponsors. Arab countries were viewed as a domain for implementation rather than partners in the agenda formulation and implementation. The concepts of "the Greater Middle East," or the "Wider Middle East," descended on the region from above and local actors have to accept them and deal with as if there were facts. This is reminiscent of the old Middle East project of the 1950s which had the same view of the region as a mere geographical extension. It is also a continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean project of the 1990s in which the association agreements

were formulated unilaterally by the EU and handed to Mediterranean countries for negotiation with no basic changes in the agreement allowed. In the G-8 summit held in the USA in June 2004 some Arab leaders were invited, but as "legitimizers" of the Western plans rather than as partners in the process. No wonder some Arab leaders declined to participate. The "menu" suggested by the ICI was also prepared without consultation with the actors concerned. The image that the West is out to reform the Arab world brought to Arab memories the 19th century image of the "human man's burden," and image which is not likely to be accepted in the age of globalization.¹⁸

b. The democracy consortium assumes that the sources of instability and dominance of the military in region are mainly domestic. External sources, created mainly by Western powers, are often overlooked: Western projects in the Arab world assume that most of the problem in the region emanate from within.

The Middle East is viewed as an anarchic and underdeveloped region, ridden with various forms of domestic instability, controlled by authoritarian regimes lacking legitimacy, engulfed with deep economic deformities and crises, and lacking democracy. Arab countries are viewed as incapable of formulating a genuine strategy of reform and that Western powers should assume that responsibility.

(18) The concept of the "Greater Middle East" was coined in the early 1990s in the Rand Corporation in Manta Monica, California under the leadership of Zalmay Khalil Zadeh, the present American Ambassador in Iraq. The author met him at the Rand in July 1994 and Dr. Zaheh presented himself as the director of the Greater Middle East Center. When he was asked about the meaning of this new concept he replied that this is a new concept that he was trying to develop. For example, Nonneman listed fourteen variables which account for Middle Eastern instabilities such as the lack of political legitimacy, the lack of development, population explosion, the lack of political participation, the gap between the rich and the poor states, ethno-religious fragmentation and tension, foreign domination and foreign involvement, the Arab-Israeli dispute, the arms race, lack of credible mechanisms for settling disputes, and the lack of regional integration. Most of the variables mentioned by Nonneman are mainly internal and relate to the image of domestic anarchy in Arab countries, called southern Mediterranean. Nonneman, Gerd, 1994: 'Obstacles to stability in the Middle East: An overview of context and linkages', in Couloumbis, T. T. Veremis; and To. Dokos (Eds.), *The Southeast European Yearbook*, (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy): 105-134.

The dominance of the military is viewed as a part of the authoritarian characters of the Arab regimes.¹⁹

The roots of the dominance of the military can be also found in the centrality of regional territorial conflicts the strategic imbalance in the region reinforced by Western powers, and the unbalanced Western interventions in the Middle East. These factors have created an Arab agenda dominated by military threats and conflicts to the detriment of the domestic changes agenda.

For example, Western full endorsement of Israeli policies has created deep awareness in the Arab world about any other proposals that may come from the West. Further, the West has traditionally supported Arab authoritarian regimes and military regimes as long as they served its own interests in the region. The West has also helped authoritarian leaders to seize power through unconstitutional means.

c. In approaching Arab domestic problems, Western powers are obsessed with the American-Japanese and Franco-German models. But these models assume the defeat of the other side and as such they are inapplicable in the Arab world. In thinking of the question of reforms in the Arab world, Western powers tend to project the Franco-German, or American-Japanese post Second World War political transformation models. In fact, in his 5 April 2002 speech, President Bush referred to the peace achieved between the USA on one hand and Japan, Germany, and Russia on the other hand as a model for Middle Eastern countries. If one reviews the three models referred to by the American President, one concludes that the three powers share one common denominator, that is, they were defeated powers in the Second World War or the Cold War. The message was clear to the Arabs; changes would be achieved in Arab countries from a position of defeat, either directly through

(19) In his analysis of Mediterranean security, Lesser referred to internal, regional, and extra-regional dimensions for the instability in the Mediterranean. At the internal level, Lesser focused on the lack of political legitimacy and internal stability, expanding urbanization, and the rise of political extremism. Among the three dimensions, Lesser gave the internal ones a more prominent role in accounting for the limited level of security co-operation in the Mediterranean. Lesser, Ian, 1996: "New dimensions of Mediterranean security", (Santa Monica, CA, Rand), mimeo.

occupation, or indirectly through massive pressure. This message can hardly be accepted in the Arab world. Further, Arab cultures are different from those of the three defeated powers referred to by George Bush. It is hardly possible to convince the Arabs to acknowledge defeat and make peace and democratic change from that point. After all, one must remember that Sadat would have not been able to make peace with Israel without the partial victory he achieved in October 1973. The obsession of Western powers with the American-Japanese and Franco-German models of democratic change which brought to them Western style models of civil-military relations is not likely to lead to any breakthroughs in the Middle East.

d. In approaching the question of reforms in the Arab world, Western powers tend to marginalize the Arab-Israeli conflict: The emphasis in Western projects is one domestic change in the Arab world. Although the G-8 summit Declaration of June 2004 referred to the importance of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, it added that such resolutions should not delay the reform process. More importantly, no single action was suggested in the Declaration to deal with the Arab Israeli conflict.

The rationale of emphasizing upon the centrality of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is not only rooted in the Arab agenda, but also in the historical experience of former Middle Eastern projects, such as the New Middle East Project of Shimon Perez²⁰, the need to create a better environment for democratization, and bring about a genuine change in the dominant pattern of civil-military relations. Rand Corporation analysts have predicted that democratization in the Middle East could bring some regional instability in the short run, as such it will bring to power governments which are more inimical to the West than the present one²¹. This is true. But the only way to avoid such prospective instability is to reduce the perceptions

(20) According to the Israeli scholar Ben-Porat, the Perez New Middle East Project of 1993 failed because of its emphasis on "the economization of politics," and bypassing the regional conflicts. Guy Ben-Porat, 'A New Middle East? Globalization, Peace and the Double Movement,' *International Relations (UK)* 19 (1), 2005, pp. 39-62.

(21) Nora Bensahel: 'Political Reform in the Middle East', in Nora ensahel and D. Byman, eds. *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East*. Santa Monica, Rand 2004, p. 15-56.

of injury and hatred of the new governments towards the West by resolving the sources of these perceptions. This is the only way to make sure that democratization will not lead to a further deterioration in the region.

Further, as long as the geo-political agenda is dominant in the Middle East, Arab and Israeli militaries will always find ways to legitimize their dominant roles in society. The dominance of the military threat perception certainly reinforces the roles of the militaries. As these perceptions disappear, civil society groups will be in a better position to question the role of the military. But the members of the democracy consortium do not seem to comprehend this process and argue that the Arab emphasis on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is just a pretext to avoid democratization and bringing about changes in civil-military relations.

e. In approaching the Middle East, Western powers focus exclusively on Arab countries and Iran, and ignore the question of civil-military relations in Israel. The reform agenda in the Middle East is a problem for Arab countries and Iran. Israel is viewed as "an oasis of democracy in the Middle East surrounded by authoritarian regimes." Nowhere in the documents or deliberations of the international consortium of democracy on the Middle East can one find references to the question of democratic reforms in Israel including the question of civil-military relations. In her analysis of civil-military relations in Israel, Etzioni-Halevy "... documented connection (lack of separation) between the military and the government/political elites in Israel...The connection forged by informal social ties between the two elites and the transitions from one to the other has remained formidable and officers' involvement in policy formation and advocacy has recently increased."

She went on to argue that "the connection between the two elites expressed by military participation in the shaping and advocacy of government policy has injected military glory and expertise-as a legitimacy device and an electoral asset-into Israeli politics ... By unfairly augmenting the power and electoral changes of the government over the opposition, it contravenes the spirit of democratic principles. It thus distracts from the health and well being of democracy in Israel. And unless a deliberate effort is

made to loosen the connection, it may do so to an even greater extent in the future." ²²

Nevertheless, the democracy consortium has never raised the issue of civil-military relations in Israel and the question is considered as one for the Arabs which raises suspicions among Arab elites and masses that the objective of such emphasis on the question of civil-military relations is not really tied to the question of democracy.

f. Members of the international consortium for democracy in the Arab world link the question of democratization and civil military relations with questions related to the overall defense strategies of Arab countries, and the questions of intelligence sharing and combating terrorism: The question of civil-military relations has been presented in the ICI as a part of an overall "menu of choice." The menu include issues such s defense reform, defense budgeting, defense planning, intelligence sharing, combating terrorism, participation in military exercises, etc. Such context touches upon the strategies of the defense establishments in Arab countries which are considered "high politics" issues. The reluctance of Arab countries to cooperate with Western security institutions in areas related to high politics necessarily spills over their perception to cooperate in the area of civil-military relations. Further, linking civil-military relations with controversial questions such as anti-terrorism is a

(22) In his lecture given to the Royal Society for Asian Affairs in 1992 Sir James Craig, dealt with selected five major seismic stresses which underlie the Middle Eastern anarchy. He listed five main stresses, namely (i) an underlying hostility to the West in general and the United States in particular, (ii) Islamic fundamentalism, (iii) chronic instability connected with the absence of democracy, (iv) an extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth among the states of the area and domestically inside them; and (v) the Arab-Israeli conflict. Sir Craig added that he would have preferred to delete the Arab-Israeli dispute from the list and for that reason he would not dwell on it leaving us with the conclusion that the first four sources, which are internal, are the major sources of instability. Craig, James, 1992 'What is wrong with the Middle East?' in *Asian Affairs*, 2, 23 (June): 131-141. Recently, Gary Gregg issued a book entitled, *The Middle East: A Cultural Psychology*, in which referred to five main perceptions of the Arab-Muslim world which dominate Western thinking. There are: Despotism and strife stem from a tribal mentality equipped with modern weapons, 'the code of honor' monopolizes the Middle Eastern psyche, and subverts modernization, Islamic 'fatalism breeds inaction and stalls development, the momentum of tradition resists modernization, and terrorism springs from a vein of fanaticism in Arab culture and the Arab psyche. Gary Gregg, *The Middle East: A Cultural Psychology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 13.

non-starter as the parties disagree on the definition of terrorism. Civil-military relations issues should be look at as a part of the strategy of democratization rather than defense cooperation.

g. Western powers are not really sincere about building democracy in the Arab countries. They are using that process to pressure Arab governments to provide concessions on issues related to Israel and their other interests in the region: It was noticed that Western powers have reduced the pressure on local governments to proceed on the road of democratization, once those governments began to give concessions on issues directly related to interests of these powers in the region. This has been acutely manifested in Egypt, where the USA turned a blind eye to the authoritarian practices of the regime on the issue of the 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections once it began to warm up its relations with Israel and facilitate the American approach to peace in the region. This has led some Arab intellectuals to question the sincerity of Western powers in pursuing the democracy drive for its own merits, rather than a strategy to extract concessions.

Conclusion

The quest for Arab resurgence has long been a major concern for the Arabs since the Ottoman Empire began to decline and the European imperialist powers began their onslaught on the Arab countries in the 19th century. Arab and Muslim thinkers, such as Al-Afghani, Mohammad Abdou, Rashid Reda, have posed the question of the reasons of the decline of the Arabs and Muslims and the rise of the Europeans and presented strategies for the renewal of Arab societies. The strategies of democratization and liberalization were viewed as crucial for salvaging Arab societies from the ruins of the Ottoman and European onslaughts. They were also quite aware that resurgence did not mean Westernization, but falling back to the basic values of Islam which were tarnished throughout the ages. The European imperialist onslaught on the Arab countries in the last two centuries was largely responsible for the delay in the implementation of these strategies as the Arabs were distracted by the national liberation agenda to the detriment

of the domestic renewal one. Arab engagement in the geo-political agenda of regional security threats after the Second World War reinforced this trend. In our judgment had such agenda been absent, the Arabs today would have achieved a level of democratization similar to what has been achieved in countries such as Indonesia, and Malaysia. Further, the historical legacies of the relations between the Arab and the West have created deep suspicions in the Arab world about Western-sponsored projects in the region.

The creation of the international consortium for democracy in 2004 has been largely viewed from this historical perspective. It was viewed by Ahmad Maher, the former foreign Minister of Egypt, as an attempt to weaken the Arab-Muslim identity and by others as reminiscent of the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 according to which the British and the French divided the Arab Orient. The main problem is that the consortium was established without consultation with the Arabs, governments and civil society groups and assigned foreign powers specific tasks to monitor the change in certain areas, which again reinforced the image of Sykes-Picot agreement. The question of civil-military relations got entangled in this context. It was viewed as an attempt to contravene the role of the militaries and weaken them at a time in which the geo-political agenda was dominant.

However, that does not necessarily mean that the international consortium cannot make positive contributions to the process of domestic renewal of Arab societies, and consequently to the question of civil-military relations in societies characterized by the dominance of the militaries. It can make such contribution provided that it is not using it to extract concessions from the ruling elites for its own interests, and proceeding simultaneously on the domestic and regional fronts. At the domestic front, it should restrict its role to support of main rules of democratization and liberalization without getting involved in the agenda-setting or implementation. They could use some instruments of persuasion and punishment provided that these are used fairly and indiscriminately.

As a sign of commitment to the question of healthier civil-military relations in the Middle East, member states in the consortium should show similar interest in all countries in that region. The question of civil-military

relations should be viewed as a consequence of the democratization process rather than a separate issue. It should not be linked with other issues related to defense strategies. At the regional level, a firm commitment to the fair resolution of regional conflicts would reinforce the change momentum in the area of civil-military relations.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has served as a legitimizing device of the dominance of the militaries on grounds of protecting society from the Israeli threat. This continues to be the case. The disappearance of the conflict will bring about a major change in the social agenda and help civil society groups to demand a major change in civil-military relations. At present, civil society groups never question the role of the militaries because of apprehensions that such questioning would impinge of national security at a time in which the geo-political agenda was salient.

The Military and the developments in its role in the Arab world

Dr. Mohamed Abd Elsalam

During the recent years, a series of successive political developments have been escalated in the Arab world. These developments as a whole constitute what is normally called "democratization" which has effects, by different degrees, on the internal situations in most countries. In this regard, many issues have been raised regarding the implications of the use of military force by external powers to change political regimes as in Iraq case, and what has been evoked about Syria. Democratization has effects on stability in the Arab countries such as in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This wave further caused cracks in the structures of some Arab countries like Iraq and Sudan. In many cases these political transformations coincided with escalating religious, sectarian or racial factors and finally the effect of the dominant social-cultural values on the future of democracy in the region. So there are many factors which affected developments in the Arab world.

In this context, some issues have been raised about the military establishments and its relations to the political transformations in the region. The focus has been on two issues, the first concerns with the attitude of the military and security establishment as a whole toward the current political transformations inside the Arab countries. The second is focusing on whether this current reform process inside these countries could extend to reforming the security and military organs. But there is a wide gap separating the two issues. Although the first issue was relatively put forth on a large scale by media and in some academic symposiums, the second issue has not been much raised, in a time where there is a conviction that reforming military establishments is still not urgent and has no definite timetable. However a low-key debate has been raised on security organs calling for diminishing

their interference in electoral processes and for a limitation of their role to only secure these processes.

The Attitude and Role of the Military

The inquiry into the attitudes of military establishments toward the current developments in the Arab region is based on the assumption that the pattern of civil-military relations, which traditionally prevailed in the Arab region during post-colonial period after World War Two, is still in persistence to great extent. According to this assumption, the military establishments still have the same power and positions that they had in the past in the political regimes, the role of military in politics is still to great extent direct and political processes cannot be imagined without some level of intervention by military, especially in what seem to be direct intervention in cases such as Mauritania, Lebanon and Syria. Also, some countries which go through this process face challenges which almost threaten their security and internal stability, in a way that indicates that the military could be feared to play some political role.

This paper seeks to analyze the authenticity of these assumptions and thus the next two parts deal with two points in trying to approach the evolving role of the military in the Arab countries, and the extent to which the current stage has developed. The first part focuses on the features of the military's traditional position in the Arab regimes, the second focuses on transformations of the Military's political role in the Arab countries, based on the experience of the main Arab countries. Some features of both roles and attitudes persisted, whereas other changed, as will be explained bellow.

The traditional position of the Military in the Arab political regimes

It is noteworthy that the term "military establishment" is not referring, in the context of the Arab experience, to the same traditional meaning that the term has in the experience of many European countries or the United States. Sometimes some military leaders protest to the use of this term, because in many cases there are no clear lines separating what is military and what is civilian in the Arab countries. The military is not an establishment completely separated from the civil life; there are no independent military towns or

many military schools or completely special hospitals. Large portions of the military units are staffed by conscripts. There are no huge military institutions comprising armies, veterans, defense industries and large academies. Despite the presence of huge armies in the Arab countries and sometime defining lines between what is civil and what is military, these lines are not clearly separating the two sides in a way that would form a military society and a civil society.

However, the military establishments have always represented the most powerful existing institutions among the components of the political regimes in Arab world, for they are the only institutions that own main battle weapons, not owned by other institutions even the security forces. The number of the troops were always big compared with the armies of similar countries around the world, pursuant to the calculations of military balances with neighbouring countries such as Iran, Israel and Turkey, and sometime by their military ambitions such as Iraq whose troops had reached nearly 650,000 in 1991. In the same year the Syrian troops have reached 400,000, and the Egyptian troops reached 420,000. Sometimes the defence budgets in Arab countries account for 15 to 25% of the country's national budget.

The continuation of state of war for long time helped these establishments to maintain their powerful positions in the political regimes. According to the traditional wisdom prevailing in many countries, the utmost priority was given to defence at the expense of development. This situation was expressed in Egypt by the phrase "no voice rises above the voice of battle" after Israeli occupation of Sinai in 1967. In the meantime, the weakness of the civilian establishments and political parties inside the countries, especially in the era of the powerful leaders like Abdul-Nasser, Hafez Assad, and Saddam Hussein, has contributed in continuation of this situation. Additionally two points are much discussed in the Arab world: The emergence of what is called the developmental role of the armed forces: Apart from the theories that examine the performance of the military systems in regard with the development issue, some armies in the Arab world formed some internal organs practicing roles that have economic nature. These roles started with an attempt by some armies to achieve

self-sufficiency in the field they need such as military industries or food and medicine industries, to relieve the national economy from the burden of providing these needs. These activities were expanded to include dual activities for preparing the country for war like paving the road and erecting bridges as well as construction industries, by exploiting the human power surplus in the armies, perhaps in a way which not passively affects combat capabilities. But the activities of some armies expanded to penetrate deeply into country's economic activities. These activities have raised, sometimes, objections in business communities, driving armies to stop some of them and maintain some others. But these roles have been continued.

The emergence of what is called "militarizing the administration": While militaries in many countries withdrew, in certain stages, from political life, another phenomenon appeared in which many of retired military officers are deployed in some of positions in higher administration throughout state's civil agencies and the leadership of governorates and local councils. There are no specific numbers on how far the retired military officers exist in the civil administration. But there is a general impression that their existence is wide. However it is important to remember that their existence in these positions is not connected with the military establishment, as they are practicing their new assignments in a different context, based on normal work relations, and that they are not attached to military establishment or taking orders from it. Meanwhile, there is a tendency to put military officers in civil positions in border regions for considerations related to control in the case of military operations.

Many changes in various countries, have transformed the level of power of the military establishment in the political regimes. The power of some armies collapsed as in Iraq in 1991 and again in 2003 as a result of wars against the United States. The Iraqi army was no longer considered a powerful institution in the state. In some cases states have developed "para-militaries" which provide a counterweight to the conventional armed forces either to suppress internal riots threatening political stability or to counterweight the regular armed forces if they are feared to directly influence the political life. These military units took different names such as National

Guards, Republic Guards or Central Security Forces. The power of these internal security organs has increased as a result of rising organized terrorist operations or the acts that could disturb national security. Some countries formed armed militias attached to the governing party in the state, making the militaries no longer the only establishment that own weapons inside the country.

On the other side, political parties and other political groups emerged inside the countries. The influence of legislative and judicial institutions in the political regimes has increased. The role of civil society organizations and public opinion tendencies has escalated in the public life. Also, internal lobby groups such as businessmen and religious or racial minorities emerged, whereby the components of the political regimes have become highly complicated. In various cases militaries have turned into internal interest group working inside the political regime. But the military establishments are still powerful in the current stage. This is always been evident in times where countries face internal crises or natural disasters, where militaries intervene in a way which reflects their power, speedy movements and effective performance compared to other state's organs. This situation as a whole, among other factors, led to the transformation of military role in politics

The evolving political role of the military officers in the Arab countries

To a certain level there is a political role which differs from one regime to another in the Arab world. In a certain stage militaries involved directly in the political regimes. This is what happened in Syria during three successive coup d' etats at the end of the 1940s, and in Egypt in 1952 during what was called at that time the Free Officers Movement. In addition there has also been military coups in Sudan between 1965 and 1989, in Libya in 1969, as well as there has been many attempts of military takeovers as witnessed by most of the Arab countries. Later, military officers played central roles in Ba'athist coups in Syria and Iraq, in power struggles in Egypt in 1971, as well as in the 1989 coup of the Islamic Front in Sudan. But this stage of military coups has totally diminished during the 1990s till 2005. The region did not

witness any such coup with the exception of the Mauritanian coup in 2005 which was more a power struggle than a military coup.

During the early stages of military takeovers in the Arab countries military regimes was established as a common phenomenon. In these regimes militaries took direct control over civil life, but there were indications that these regimes have not been "military regimes" in the narrow sense in many Arab countries. This statement is based on many indicators:

1: The leaders of the military coups tried immediately after their coups to maintain control over the militaries themselves, fearing from anti-coups. This was evident in the intensive purgation operations that targeted armed forces immediately after military coups. Some leaders payed attention to the separation of the military from politics inside the countries, perhaps as a result of fear of continuity of military coups, or in order to use them as threats in their own power struggles. Nasser, for example, put a choice before his colleagues after Free Officers Movements coup in 1952: to hold political positions or go back to the armed forces. Additionally, he prohibited those who held political position from making contacts whatsoever with the military.

2. The military officers who held power in the Arab countries tried to acquire civilian legitimacy after they took power, and did not depend on the power of militaries in maintaining their regimes. This came through taking popular political decisions transforming coups to revolutions, and starting to establish civil political organizations used as a base in administrating ruling systems, and as a base for legitimacy, as well as organizing formal referendums to select the head of state that provided some kind of political legitimacy based on public support. In recent years, many coup leaders have tried to justify their coups through different formulas claiming that they had to perform these coups in order to avoid national crises, and by setting specific time limits for their ruling and transferring power to civil parties, which is what happened during Sower El-Dahab's 1989 coup in Sudan or in the Mauritanian coup of 2003.

During the next stage of the direct intervention in political regimes in the Arab world, the civil-military relations witnessed important developments. For example in Egypt, the military establishment was separated from the structures of the political regime. Nasser was no longer the military head of state in the real meaning. Instead, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer who was the general commander of the armed forces, put his total control over the armed forces, and engaged into bitter conflict with the head of state since the early 1960s. After the six-days war in 1967, the ideas of "military professionalism" and the separation of military from politics began to appear. There was a tendency to keep the military away from politics. In the meantime professional leaders took command of the military to rebuild it with the aim of liberating the occupied Egyptian lands. This tendency took root during the 1970s. During the 1970s and the 1980s the idea of professional army took root decisively in Egypt. Although President Sadat chose his vice president from the military forces, he didn't aim to reengage military in politics, but believed decisively in the necessity of keeping military away from politics. Certain events proved that this tendency has been practically established. When "the violent public protests" erupted in Egypt in 1977, the armed forces were initially reluctant to intervene, and when they had to intervene they returned immediately to their garrisons after restoring order. This also happened in 1986, when Central Protection Force rioted and the Egyptian army intervened to suppress the rebellion, the army troops returned to their barracks immediately after ending their mission in the capital's streets.

The central idea is that the principle of civil control over the ruling system and military professionalism has been established in a country like Egypt. The recent period which witnessed a wave of democratization has linked with many indications emphasizing this tendency, including: The Egyptian military are not politicized. There is no specific political guidance in the military academies or inside the army. There are no political cadres in the armed forces, un-like the situation which prevailed during the rule of Ba'ath party in Iraq or Syria. The military personnel don not have the right of vote in the general elections, whether presidential elections or parliamentary

elections. The army has no relations with political life. Even the idea of a civilian person assuming the ministry of defence has been discussed. In the Egyptian constitution's text the central role of the army is to defend the country from external dangers and to protect the constitutional legitimacy. The phrase "constitutional legitimacy" means, according the prevailing interpretation, only intervention in the case of wide range riots threatening political stability of the state or the regime based on the standing political process. Some judges called for the armed forces to protect ballot stations when violence escalated during the 2005 legislative elections.

President Mubarak' amendment of the article 76 of the constitution which organized the way of electing the president, ended decades-long tradition of choosing military officer as vice president then president. Now the choosing process of the president comes through direct vote of the citizens in favour of a person who candidates himself according to certain provisions, and not through referendums which always put the vice president in power. Thereby, even if a military officer assumed the position of vice president it will not be enough to assume power, unless he wins elections.

Some political parties like Al-Wafd presented in their political platforms during the presidential elections some idea regarding developing the military, such as the talks about separating the position of defence minister from the position of general commander of the armed forces, and not pushing the armed forces into external conflicts that did not threaten the Egyptian national security.

Issues of defence policy such as exercises and army's weapon sources and the question depending on qualified soldiers has become subject to civilian discussion.

The recent events in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East have provoked clear debates on different issues concerned the Egyptian military in independent newspapers. This happened when the Mauritanian military coup took place, and when a military commander seemed to openly support President Mubarak in the presidential elections. It has also been raised by some in relation to what they see as the "nightmare scenario" of military interference in politics. On one hand these the form of these debates proves

that issues concerning the military are still sensitive, but since they are being carried out with a certain kind of transparency, they also prove that military professionalism is the rule to which the Egyptian armed forces are committed.

Thus the stage of direct military rule in the region has ended. But assumptions still exist about the reliance of some political regimes in the region on the military establishment. The majority of Arab presidents for the time being are from military institutions, and some leaders of military organs also have direct influence through special patterns in the regime as it is the situation in Syria. The assumptions also exist on the continuity of military political role in the region, exceeding defence and security decision-making, but there are not any specific indications of this expanded role in the contemporary political fields in which this role could emerge. However during the current stages witnessed by the countries, there are political roles played by dominant organs inside the countries, including the military, which varies from country to country. But military roles in particular are no longer as they used to be. They are controlled by certain limitations proving that they have gone long towards military professionalism and keeping away from politics.

Conclusion

The military role in Arab political system differs from country to country. We cannot compare the situations in the Persian Gulf with the situations in countries like Egypt, Syria or Iraq, or with what is happening in Arab Maghreb region. Noticeably, most analyses which earlier discussed the military role in politics focused on what happened in the main Arab countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq whose policies formed the modern Arab world. In these countries the military officers played powerful role in forming internal political systems and in devising the tendencies of foreign policy. Their militaries took part in continued wars against neighboring countries or against Israel and effectively intervened in other countries' affairs. So due to the focus on these countries the military role seemed much bigger than it was in reality in the rest of the region's countries, at least based on the criteria of direct intervention in the political regimes which happened in Syria and Iraq repeatedly, and to

less extent in countries like Libya, Morocco and Algeria, and clearly diminished in the Gulf Sheikhdoms.

But the developments in these countries with the current wave of political reform prove that military establishments have far distanced themselves from politics, and they no longer occupy the same past position in the countries. They are no longer playing the previous roles in the political regimes, in the time of prevailing international values stressing on lack of legitimacy of any political situation that not come through political means. However, although the new formula of civil-military relations in Arab countries has been relatively firmly established, the current democratization process will likely continue to raise questions in a time where this process is connected with the prospects of external pressures on the countries, the prospects of radical instability as a result of the reform process, and what is seen to be reversal results of election process' itself. One should remember that although militaries went to the corner, they didn't go completely out of the picture's frame.

The Challenges of Civil Society

Ahmad Moussalli

Islamic movements have become an important part of the political and social segment of contemporary Muslim societies and the role of most of them has increased to include cultural, civilization, social, and political spheres. Their goals are multiple and their means are diverse. Some of these movements have taken the form of political parties and have chosen to legally participate within the legal frameworks and legitimate institutions of the state while others have taken the form of social or economic organizations.²³

The Islamic movements can be viewed as social movements that seek to bring about changes in society and its institutions. There are many academic studies and social theories on this matter that seek to define the concept and nature of social movements, the causes for their emergence, to analyze their ideological discourse, the symbols they use, the internal interactions of these movements, the types of their transformation and their relations with the existing regimes. While one can recognize the specificity of the Islamic movement, it participates with other social movements in many manifestations, and therefore we can benefit from these studies in our analysis of the nature of Islamic movements and the causes for some to adopt moderate methods, and for others to choose extremism and violence.

It is possible to say that the phenomena of violence, revolution, and extremism do not deny the social movements their quality and the existence of legitimate demands. It is natural and expected as well that any social movement, Islamic or otherwise, reflects a conscious commitment at the theoretical and organizational level and the level of practice. This

(23) For a complete version of the causes, see Ahmad Moussalli, trans, *The Islamic Movements and its Impact on Political Stability in the Arab World* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), article by Emad El-Din Shahim.

commitment that comes from a movement that is regarded as being in its early stages is a small part of a larger society where its members posit a different or distinct interpretation of the conditions and problems of society. They seek to offer an alternative to solve these problems, which normally lead to great tension and sometimes to a conflict within society that might hesitate, for many reasons, in accepting and adopting the change while the members of this movement believe that they possess the truth and the means of salvation for this society.

The sociologists classified the social movements into many kinds of isolationist and utopian groups that focus in the first place on the individual and his internal transformation and not on the transformation of the institutions and structure of society because they do not aim at political action to make this transformation or to solve the problems of society. But these groups tend to isolation and separation from society to protect their members from falling under the influence of its corrupt values. These groups believe in possessing the truth and in the correctness of their positions and the wrongness of the positions of the others. From among the Islamic movements emerged groups with such positions such as Jamaal al-Takfir wa al-Hijra and other groups that claimed that they are the Society of Muslims or the saved group and that other groups are erroneous. These groups did not hesitate to excommunicate the entire society or to separate their members from the rest of society through actual migration or by creating an existential severance from society.

The other kind of social movements are known as the protest movements, whose nature is more unintentional, discontinuous, and intermittent. They appear suddenly for a specific cause and to achieve a demand. Then they disappear with the same speed, immediately after they receive the proper response to their demand or as a result of the success of the regime in their repression and dispersion. Demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins are examples of this kind of movements. These movements might be successful in bringing about some sort of change but they are distinguished by the absence of an organized and continuous collective action. When considering this kind of movements in isolation from other social movements

they normally lack ideological coherence and a clear vision for change.

The third kind of social movements are the revolutionary movements that are distinguished by their total rejection of the values and institutions of society and the existing regime and seek to bring about comprehensive change of society in a radical fashion and in using violence in an extensive manner. It is supposed that this kind includes the jihadist Islamic movements, that is, those that adopt jihad and violence as the instrument of change.

This is somehow true in terms of using violence, but the specificity of these groups and their difference from other revolutionary movements must be noted. In reality, we find that these groups do not aim to change the values of society in a radical way, for as Islamic and religious groups, their ideological base is not different from the values of the other members of the Muslim society. The last kind of social movements is the reform movements that are distinguished by legitimacy or seeking to acquire it and the readiness to act from within the regime and its existing institutions through the margin of action allowed for the movements. These movements adopt gradualism and peaceful means to arrive at power. They may go as far as accusing the regime of giving up some basic principles and values of society and even shedding doubt of the legitimacy of the existing institutions. But the strategy for change depends on focusing and attracting attention to the existing problem of society and proposing and developing the programs that facilitate solving these problems.

Extremism has many diverse and interwoven causes. Some causes are related to insufficiency in understanding true religion, others are related to the environment that the movements work within. Some of these causes are weak understanding of true religion, the tendency to understand the texts literally and being occupied with side battles instead of the great issues, the over emphasis on prohibition, the confusion of concepts (belief and unbelief), following the ambiguous and giving up the prohibited, the weakness of knowing history, reality, and rules of the universe, alienating Islam in the land of Islam, the public attack and the secret conspiracy against the Islamic nation, prohibiting free call to comprehensive Islam, and resorting to violence and repression to resist the Islamic movements.

Challenges Imposed by the State

Many analysts refer the roots of religious extremism back to Sayyid Qutb and his judgment that society renegaded from Islam and thus has fallen into a state of jahiliyya because of its refusal of divine governance and its preference for human governance. Qutb called for setting up a unique believing group that separates itself existentially from the jahili society and attempts to change it radically by the means that it sees fit, including non-peaceful means. Many analysts referred the emergence of this thought back to the conditions that Qutb went through in the prison, and the torture that he underwent that made him believe that its doers could not be part of the Muslims. The leaders of the Muslim Brothers refuted directly, and also from prison, this orientation for fear that the group would follow the path of extremism and violence, which would in turn lead to the dispersion of the group and its fragmentation.

What concerns us here is the attempt to link the Qutbist thought with the major transformations that were going on in the Arab world, especially after the emergence of the post independence state and its distinguishing features without denying the validity of those who considered other factors (the individual, the social, the economic or the political) as causes for the extremism of some movements. But we see that these factors may encourage extremism but do not create it.

What is meant by the post-independence state is the Kemalist, or Kemal Attatürk's, model that many Islamic countries look up to as the model, although it is applied in different degrees in one country or another. This exiting model is based on many foundations that contradict what Islam calls for and differs in many aspects from the form of the existing modern state of many Western states. Some of its features are:

- The separation between religion and state either by declaring that there is no religion in politics and no politics in religion or by secularizing state institutions and subjecting religion and its scholars and symbols to the authority of these institutions.
- The centrality of the state, its domination over society and its replacement of the nation. It is the leader or organizer of economic

development and the sponsor of the intellectual and cultural innovation and the controller of social mobilization.

- The domination of one party and prevention of true pluralism and prohibiting differences even when there is political pluralism.
- The nationalism that is based on the race and bias towards the land and glorifying the pre-Islamic history, as is the case with Pharaohism, Phoenicianism, and Ashurism, and reproducing that history and sometimes inventing it.
- The demagogic popularism which is controlled by the state and driven by the charismatic individual, 'the inspired leader' or the 'great Muhjahid' who came as the preordained destiny to represent the hopes and ambitions of his nation, to move it from backwardness to progress and from subordination to independence.

It is a state that is independent from its society and linked to the outside. The model of this state in Egypt stresses its independence from society so that it does not become a hostage to one of its classes (the examples are Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir who wanted to build a socialist state without real socialists and the current model that claims to attempt to have a democratic transformation but without democrats).²⁴ The state is run by a military, cultural, and political elite which is separated from the common values of its society and pay complete allegiance to the head of the regime. Even the middle class that expanded after independence, it is still controlled by the state because it lacks material and economic independence. This state is tied to the outside either through following a method of development that integrates it with the world economy and hinders its true independence or through a direct security or economic foreign support to secure its stay in power. The secularization, domination, and subordination of this model contradict the Islamic system. Also, the model cannot maintain this status and receive the agreement and satisfaction of the public. However, to

(24) See Nazih Ayyubi, *Al-Dawla al-Markaziyya fi Misr* (Beirut: Center for the Studies of Arab Unity, 1989). See also Ghassan Salame, ed. *Democracy without Democrats?* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994).

maintain the continuation of this model the state resorts to impose it by force and violence and economic and intellectual fabrication, that is the falsification of awareness and history through distorting education and changing the values of society, busy people with their livelihood to refrain them from politics and the attempt to change that becomes very expensive.

In addition to the issues about the nature of the regime as one factor that may lead to extremism, there are political causes related to the political structure and practices within the political entity that might fuel the tendency to extremism or moderation of the opposition organizations: The level of firmness and stability of state institutions and the administration of these institutions in a rational and constitutional form provides the necessary legitimacy and helps to predict actions and reactions and draws the legal borders between the different forces within the political entity. The state of unsteadiness and instability of these institutions hinders the development and growth of opposition and makes it subject to immediate and individual decisions that cannot be predicated. Also, it leads the forces of opposition to distrust working through these institutions.

The state insists on not integrating the moderate opposition, which enjoys an active existence and popular support within the legal channels. Not recognizing the existence of such parties and closing down the legitimate framework that they could work within transforms the opposition parties that are prone to moderation and adherence to the rules of political game to an opposition that is irresponsible and radical in its positions where the possibility of participation in the political process in addition to arriving at power through peaceful means is reduced.

The incoherence of state policies towards the opposition groups creates an unstable environment for the opposition that is allowed to exist and act during any period. The clash between the regimes' policies and those of moderate opposition that are encouraged at times for temporary known reasons and then limiting and suppressing it after that weakens the moderate opposition and strengthens the radical wings within the opposition, which regard resorting to violence as the appropriate means towards resisting the violence of the state and changing the regime.

Challenges Imposed by the Islamic Movements ²⁵

What is at stake here is whether the existing Arab regimes will disengage from clashing and confronting the movements of political Islam and use it in the process of national renaissance. Are the Arab governments going to maintain the status quo in terms of seizing freedom of expression and opinion and the active political participation of different social trends, including the movements of political Islam? It is only possible to study and understand the role of the movements of political Islam in the Arab world by reference to the public behaviour of the existing elites and political regimes and by showing how it deals with both the Islamic and the secular opposition. In this context, the topic will be dealt with here through seven points.

First point: There is not doubt that movements of political Islam have played an organic role in shaping the political scene in the Arab region since the seventies and until now. This does not mean that such movements did not exist before on the political and social map but it means that their ability to mobilize the population did not become clear until the sixties and especially after the defeat of June of 1967 by Israeli forces in six days, which shook the Arab conscience and social and political structures. Religiosity, which is now universal and international, transcends the borders of the Arab and Islamic region. The main question in this context is how to interpret the phenomenon about the spread of religiosity among human societies in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

It must be noted that the most important and influential fundamentalist movements exist in the United States of America and India in particular and other countries in the world. They are not restricted to the Arab region. The role of Christian, Jewish, and Hindu fundamentalisms in their societies are more widespread, influential, and important than Islamic fundamentalism. These fundamentalisms are distinguished by their

(25) For a complete version of the stability, see Ahmad Moussalli, trans, *The Islamic Movements and its Impact on Political Stability in the Arab World* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), article by Fawaz Gerges.

ambitious political, philosophical, and intellectual agendas and visions that transcend spiritual and religious issues and try to introduce dramatic and radical changes in the structure of their societies and regimes, and not only to increase the love of religion among the populace. Religion and politics are two sides of the same coin. Some fundamentalisms have made tremendous victories in India and the United States in relation to their ability to influence national decision-making and other vital issues.

There is no peculiar characteristic for the Arab region at the level of the historical development of Islamic movements in the last three decades. For the Arab world, like others in the West and the East, has witnessed a massive development and a qualitative leap of the religious trend and active organizational mobilization, which have shown the real weight of different social and political forces in the balance of power. The Arabs and Muslims are not alone in trying to politicize religion and its use as an active strategy or mechanism to confront the exiting regime and change the status quo and the political logic of the old and modern language and sociology whose legitimacy are derived from the local cultural heritage. Therefore, Islamic fundamentalism is not different in terms of substance and logic from other fundamentalisms in the United States and India or Israel.

There is no doubt that Islamic movements have constituted a main challenge to governing elites and regimes since the late seventies to the present, and that these elites have not been ready to accept any active political participation in the running of state affairs or the peaceful transfer of power to other social forces. The way the existing ruling regimes dealt with the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements has increased tension and hegemony of the logic of exclusion and isolation instead of dialogue, cooperation, and constructive participation. The causes for the armed conflict and clash between some regimes and the Islamic movements cannot be understood except through understanding the state of terror that engulfed the governing elites from the rise of popular fundamentalist trends and their uncertainty about their positions, cadres, and achievements. In this context, it must be noted that the reactions of political authorities in the Arab region against the Islamic phenomenon are characterized by high tension and

violence in order to curtail, reduce, and paralyze the phenomenon. Political authorities started the explosive confrontation that is still going on, but this does not mean that the leaderships of Islamic movements are exonerated or are only victims of a conspiracy executed by the existing regimes with support from influential Western powers.

Second point: The regimes' awareness of the new danger coincided with the beginning of the collapse of the socialist camp and the failure of development programs in most of third world countries, including the Arab states. Such a failure showed the fragility of the Arab nation-state, its weakness, inability to launch wars, to protect the homeland, and to provide food and clothing to its citizens. Moreover, regional and international developments removed from the Arab regime its Arab ideological legitimacy and cover without providing an alternative.

Moreover, the ruling regimes and elites have not been used to confront active internal opposition that has the ability to mobilize the population and to take the initiative and to compete with the authorities over issues that are of concern to the citizens. The governing elites will not voluntarily give up power since such an act leads to its exclusion and even annihilation.

One of the important theoretical achievements that the process of peaceful democratic transformation in Latin America in the eighties and nineties have achieved is the production of knowledge of mechanisms for power transfer and co-operation between the authoritarian military regimes and the opposition on the basis of a gradual transfer of power without punishing or excluding the influential governing elites.

In the Arab case, some Islamic movements have behaved in a rash manner and generally increased the burden of the influential elites and governing leaderships. They have fallen prey to their own imagination and wrong analyses and have given a great opportunity to the exclusivist members of the elites who considered the Islamic phenomenon a danger that cannot be ignored since it is a malignant disease that must be eradicated. Thus, some Islamic movements have given the exclusivists and

radicals within the power structure an excuse to attack them in an attempt to bring about their destruction.

Third point: The Islamic movements have not only opposed and threatened the current political regime but have also launched a fierce campaign against what they have described as their tyrannical masters, that is the Western powers, especially the United States. Thus, some of these movements have entered in a costly confrontation not only with the local governing authorities but also with the West without due attention to the consequences of such a confrontation. Indeed, the radical trend in the West employed the collapse of the Soviet Union in late eighties and early nineties to redraw its military and security strategy to locate new enemies that can pose new dangers to vital Western interests.

Therefore, some radicals in the United States and other Western states found their enemy in the Islamic phenomenon, or what is referred to as Islamic fundamentalism. It has been considered to be one of the main dangers that face the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some even have gone beyond this and considered the conflict between the West and Islam to be a cultural conflict that transcends ideology, history, and security. Thus, the Cold War has been seen as no more than a marginal civil war within the same European family. However, the conflict with Islam, according to radical propagandists, is natural, civilizational, and permanent.

After a short period of indecision and doubt, Western powers, especially the United States and France, have entered the conflict on the side of their allies in the Middle East in an attempt to strike at the Islamic fundamentalist movements in order to bring about their end or weakness. The logical conclusion for antagonizing Western powers is tipping the balance in favour of the allies of the West in the Arab regions who have been successful in bringing painful strikes against the Islamic phenomenon.

Fourth point: It relates to the failure of the main Islamic fundamentalist movements in Arab countries to announce clearly its refusal of bloody means and mechanisms that the Jihadist movements used to confront security

authorities. Some Islamic movements issued statements and declarations from time to time criticizing terrorist operations of Jihadist movements and especially those that led to civilian casualties. But these statements were not sufficient to convince the regimes and elites in the region and the West that the Islamic phenomenon is a civil social movement that refuses to employ violent means to seize power.

There was almost a consensus among the U.S. foreign policy elite that the Islamic movements should be distinguished from each other as relates to the use of violence and relations with the West and their treatment of their own societies and regimes. There was also a consensus that there was no field coordination between the Jihadist organizations and movements of political Islam. Instead, there is a state of enmity and hatred on both sides. Nonetheless, the Clinton Administration was forced then by pressure exerted by Arab countries to cancel its unannounced meetings with some leaderships of the Islamic movements in Egypt, Algeria, and other countries that had been started in the nineties in order to build bridges with the movements and avoid a new failure similar to the seventies in Iran. In fact, the American Administration started in the nineties to provide unlimited support to its allies in order to confront the Islamic movements and indirectly accepted the regimes' views of these movements as threatening international and regional stability. All of the Islamic movements have been lumped together, and the United States put all of its weight behind its friends in their war against the movements of political Islam.

Fifth point: The objective of seizing power blinded many Muslim leaderships from investing their vast intellectual, human abilities and resources in building a solid popular base focused on socio-economic issues that are of a general interest to citizens. What is important is that the precedence for what is political has brought the Islamic movements into an inevitable confrontation with the authoritarian regimes that are not used to voicing of opinions but to cannibalizing all the legitimate means related to political participation.

The emphasis of some Islamic movements on the political factor and their competition with the governing elites, in addition to increasing

the confrontation and showing the dangers in their political discourses and literature, lead to plant the seeds of political instability in the region during specific times in the eighties and the nineties.

It should be noted that among the Islamic movements there is pluralistic and qualitative differences in programs and treatments of societies and regimes. While the Islamic movements in Egypt and Algeria have chosen ambitious offensive strategies and mechanisms to seize power, others have preferred, as is the case of Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, and Kuwait, cooperation and gradual change. The behaviour of the first group of movements has led to a state of chaos and confrontation and political instability, while the second group has developed further. The importance of such a development is that it protects society from internal dangerous shocks that could arrest the development of the movements and their gains in the last few decades.

Sixth point: It relates to the great loss that the Jihadist movements have incurred in the field in Egypt and Algeria that were brought about by the existing authorities, but without the latter being able to disengage the conflict from civil society or succeed in isolating the Islamic movements from the public scene. The elections of parliaments and unions proved the popular weight that the main Islamic movements enjoy and the failure of the regimes of Egypt and Algeria in eliminating the dynamic and vital Islamic movements, even though thousands of their members have been jailed and many strong blows were directed at their cadres and leadership.

Seventh point: It is that the experience of confrontation between the Islamic movements and the regimes during the eighties and nineties contributed somewhat to the political maturity of the Islamic movements. Such an experience produced a negative impact on the political discourse and agenda of the Islamic movements. Although there were attempt to exclude the Islamic movements, their young and experienced leaderships move now to organize themselves in political parties and shun underground actions and publicly adopt peaceful political actions. More importantly, these leaderships have started revising their old tactics and strategies, recognizing the

movements' mistakes that have been committed since their beginning up till the present.

So far, it does not seem that the ruling regimes have a long-term strategic vision that allows them to take into consideration the new developments and try to disengage and absorb the Islamic movements instead of excluding and curtailing them. The regimes are still persecuting the Islamists and arresting their leaders and cadres and refusing to allow them to form political parties to peacefully participate in the political game.

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Northern Africa and the Middle East

