

ARBITERS OF SOCIAL UNREST: MILITARY RESPONSES TO THE ARAB SPRING

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What explains the variance in military behavior during popular uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East? Contrary to models which tout the internal characteristics of the military, the external political, social and economic conditions, the influence of Western economic and military assistance or the transformative experience of educating officers in Western schools, it is argued that it is instead a matter of the political restraints and interests of the military which determines the likelihood of military intervention in the political domain. Higher levels of restraints on the military will result in more reactive and slower decision making, and a lower propensity to intervene. Higher levels of interests will result in a higher likelihood of military intervention.

THE ARAB SPRING: A NEW PHENOMENON THAT REQUIRES NEW MODELS

2011 was a tenuous period for political leaders throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The removal of long time political leaders Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak, along with the death of the mercurial Muammar Qaddafi gave the appearance that autocrats throughout the region were doomed. Almost a year after the ripples of the Arab Spring began, however, the wave of popular unrest sweeping through the region may be dissipating. Why did it have such mixed results, and what trends can we discern through comparative analysis?

Not surprising given the history of conflict in the Arab-Israeli wars since the end of World War II, the role of Arab militaries figures prominently in seeking to answer this question. As a rule, the armed forces have long served as the most powerful domestic institutions across the region. The host of coups in the 1950s and 60s, the proliferation of Arab leaders with military credentials, the oft-highlighted narrative of Israeli aggression, and the vast resources committed to defense spending have given militaries roles of outsized prominence in domestic and international affairs.

During the Arab Spring, or what Aram Nerguizian from CSIS calls the “Long Winter of Arab Discontent,” militaries played the pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of widespread popular unrest. Moreover, Arab militaries did not respond uniformly despite numerous economic, social, and political similarities. Militaries have fractured, remained unified, staunchly supported the regime, boldly stood with the protesters, or remained neutral. Models created during a surge of academic research on military involvement in political affairs several decades ago failed to predict or explain the actions of Arab militaries in the past year. While past literature has highlighted internal or external factors as the determinants of military responses, none suffices to describe the stark differences evidenced in the region even when many of the external stimuli are similar.

* The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not reflect the position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

Conventional explanations of decision-making in the Arab world often stem from assumptions about the weight of U.S. influence in the region due to either American economic assistance or training in American military schools. While these assumptions are well-received among policy makers and are tempting to accept, qualitative research in the case of the Arab Spring presents a starkly different picture: one of militaries primarily driven by self-interest through cold cost-benefit analysis. As difficult as this pill may be to swallow for U.S. policymakers wishing to claim credit for past initiatives or arguing to bolster U.S. leverage in the Arab world through increased funding and International Military Education training (IMET) programs, this paper offers clear-eyed assessments of those factors that exercise the most influence on Arab military responses. In particular, this paper seeks to clarify the logic of these varied responses by addressing the following research question: *What explains the variance in military behavior during popular uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East?*

Our findings indicate that the combination of restraints and interests faced by Arab militaries is the best model to explain how they have responded to varied manifestations of the Arab Spring. In cases where the military enjoyed few restraints and had high interests in changing the status quo, the military supported “the street,” while in cases where the military operated under severe restraints and had low interests in overturning the regime, the military supported the current political leadership. Under low restraints and low interests, the military reluctantly supported the protesters, and under high interests and high restraints the military’s response was fractured in its support for the regime. We offer this model in an attempt to advance current scholarship and better understand Arab military decision-making. This model may also be used to predict military behavior during periods of social unrest outside of the MENA region, *ceteris paribus*, although scholars must conduct more research in this vein to explore the universalism of this model.

The paper is organized in the following sections: a literature review that surveys the most prominent trends describing the role of the military in Arab political transitions; a section detailing the research methodology we employed; case studies of the Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan, and Syrian militaries; and conclusions and suggestions for further research. This case study approach will illuminate the logic of our proposed typology, even though none of the cases is an ideal type. That states like those cited in this study are self-interested is not a new or surprising revelation. Nonetheless, our results belie the urgent need for a dispassionate and thoughtful reassessment of U.S. policies to influence militaries in the Arab world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on civil-military relations in the Middle East reached its zenith in the 1950s and 1960s. Responding to the spate of coups d’état throughout the developing world, scholars created a deep reservoir of models which sought to explain and predict civilian-military behavior in periods of social unrest. Unsurprisingly, scholars reached many different conclusions on the causal variables and models which would best explain military intervention in the political domain. After a half century of relative scholarly quietude, the widespread popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa are drawing scholars of Middle Eastern civil-military relations back to explain this watershed moment. However, thus far scholars have focused on the roots of the popular uprisings as well as the probability of their success, not the role the military plays in this transition. A review of the extant literature (then and now) reveals gaps which are insufficient to explain disparate military responses to the current popular uprisings in the

Middle East and North Africa. Specifically, neither military characteristics nor external social, economic, or political variables alone account for different military responses. Moreover, previous models treat the military as the progenitor of political intervention, not arbiters of massive popular upheaval.

Many scholars assert that military characteristics are a determining factor of armed forces' interventions in political affairs. Toward this end, scholars have used the ethnic composition, geographic region (rural vs. urban), class, professionalization of the military, and education in Western military schools to explain the military's propensity to meddle in the political domain.¹ We believe that these scholars are correct to assert the important role military characteristics play in determining political intervention. Militaries are not homogenous billiard balls which respond equally to external stimuli; they are products of their disparate cultures whose interests are differentiated by the variables outlined above.² Unfortunately, internal military characteristics have limited explanatory reach across states and suffer from omitted variable bias by neglecting the causal role of external political, economic, and social variables.

For example, while both Tunisia and Egypt have militaries reflective of their highly homogenous societies, their respective militaries behaved differently toward widespread protests. The Tunisian military refused to intervene in political affairs, while the Egyptian military forced Mubarak from office. Similarly, some literature posits a causal relationship between a higher percentage of officers from rural areas and intervention in political regimes which represent urban interests. The regional composition of the officer corps, however, also does not fully explain military responses to the Arab Spring. Egypt and Tunisia have a balance of officers from rural and urban areas, Libya has more officers from urban backgrounds, and Syria has more officers from rural areas.³ Finally, some scholars claim that a military will intervene in political affairs when a regime resists political and economic reforms. This too is a deficient explanation of military behavior during the Arab Spring. Many militaries crossed the civil-military divide not as "vanguards of modernization"⁴ but as defenders of the status-quo (e.g. Egypt, and elite military units in Libya and Syria).

Even a military's level of professionalization seems inadequate to explain recent military behavior. First, many Arab states do not have clear divisions between the political and military spheres.⁵ In many cases the military and political realms are indistinguishable. Thus, Huntington's 'objective control' seems to be a poor predictor of civil-military relations during the Arab Spring.⁶ Second, scholars such as Huntington and Janowitz wrongly assume that preference divergence only exists between the military and civilians. In many cases, there are several different preferences internal to both the military and civilian leadership. This was clearly evidenced by the fractured response of the Libyan military and political leaders to the popular protests as well as the contentious deliberations among Egyptian military elites on whether or not they should demand that President Mubarak step down.

Contemporary scholars and policymakers have also overemphasized the causal nexus of educating foreign officers in U.S. military schools with militaries choosing to uphold Western values. They support this claim with evidence that Tunisia and Egypt's militaries refused to fire on protesters because a large percentage of their officers receive training in U.S. schools. While undoubtedly important, the role of Western values shaping military interests is not perfectly clear (see Appendix B). Bahrain and Yemen also send a large portion of their officers to U.S. schools, yet their militaries fired on

civilian protesters. The Tunisian military may have refused to fire on protesters during the recent popular uprisings, yet they also displayed a heavy hand in dispersing public protests in 1978, 1984, and 2008. More importantly, it remains unclear on what Western values are being inculcated by foreign militaries whose officers are trained in Western schools. Egypt may have refused to fire on civilian protesters (violation of Western human rights), yet it actively resisted Gamal Mubarak's efforts to liberalize Egypt's economy. Tunisia may have refused to fire on civilian protesters, yet it also refused to support Tunisia's democratically elected president (Ben Ali). The Bahraini military subordinated itself to civilian rule, yet it allowed Saudi Arabia to crush civilian protesters. Furthermore, if the purpose of IMET is to cultivate professional and personal relationships between U.S. and foreign militaries so that U.S. policymakers might influence foreign military behavior, then one would expect to see U.S. military senior officers contacting IMET-trained officers in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Yemen in the midst of the Arab Spring to convey U.S. preferences. It is unclear whether or not this occurred. U.S. military officials conveyed a general frustration in both cases of not being able to contact Egypt and Tunisia's officer corps. Moreover, General Ammar (the key decision maker who decided to not support President Ali) was trained in France, not the U.S. The role of IMET may be of invaluable importance in promoting U.S. interests in foreign decision making, yet the extent and manner of its influence remain unclear.⁷

If internal military characteristics alone cannot explain different military responses to the Arab Spring, then perhaps a closer examination of external variables (political, social, economic, security) will reveal a pattern of military responses to the popular uprisings. Some scholars assert that a heightened level of external threats will, over time, elevate the status of the military over that of civilian leaders.⁸ Others cite a military's proclivity to seize power after a military defeat in order to recapture social prestige and material resources.⁹ Both theories fail to explain recent military behavior, however. Egypt is a powerbroker in the Middle East and maintains a large military as a counterweight to Israel and Iran as well as to protect its influential standing in the region. Egypt's last war, the War of 1973, was also an operational defeat. However, the Egyptian military loathes political intervention and was quite hesitant to intervene during Egypt's popular unrest. On the other hand, Libya, a state with minimal external threats and few external wars, relied heavily on its military to quell the popular uprisings from the onset.

Huntington, undoubtedly, was the fiercest critic of military characteristics determining political intervention. He contended that it was the imbalance between economic and political development, not variables internal to the military, which determined military intervention.¹⁰ Yet, an examination of political and economic conditions across the Middle East and North Africa reveal many striking similarities. Most states suffer from anemic political institutions incapable of handling the vast social (think youth bulge) and economic pressures facing the region. Governments are widely mistrusted due to perceptions of cronyism, corruption, mismanagement, and inefficiencies. Unemployment, inflation, and income inequality are high, while economic growth is low. States in the region also do not adequately represent the people's interests. Most states have low levels of political expression, are ruled by one political party, and routinely violate the rule of law and freedom of expression. Thus, an imbalance between economic and political development may explain broad social movements, but they do not, by themselves, explain military responses to these popular uprisings.

Domestic military responses to the Arab Spring also expose the limitations of U.S. economic and military financing as a means to advance U.S. interests in the region (see Appendix C). While U.S.

economic and military aid certainly promotes U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa, there is not a clear causal nexus between the level of U.S. economic and military aid received by a state (as a percentage of defense expenditures) and the military's decision to support either the government or the people. For example, recent U.S. economic and military aid to Tunisia and Egypt amounts to 2.4% and 41.6% respectively, yet both militaries sided with the people irrespective of U.S. funding. On the other hand, U.S. economic and military aid to Yemen and Jordan amounts to 7.6% and 47.3% respectively. The Yemeni military, however, has displayed fractured support toward the political regime, while the Jordanian military has remained steadfast in its allegiance to King Abdullah. The level of international support for a political regime (as measured by U.S. economic and military aid) may be important,¹¹ yet it does not appear to be the monocausal determinant of military responses to the Arab Spring. More research is needed on the role that foreign (other than U.S.) economic and military aid as well as international organizations played in determining military behavior.

The failure of military characteristics and external societal variables, by themselves, to explain disparate military responses to the Arab Spring logically leads us to an exploration of models which bridge both explanatory variables. Bellin argued that security forces would allow leader change if there was (1) poor fiscal health; (2) declining international support; (3) strong military institutionalization; and (4) high levels of popular mobilization.¹² Others inferred that military intervention in political affairs was due to military interests and political restraints. Risa Brooks suggested that Middle Eastern regimes co-opt military support through various carrots and sticks¹³ while Finer described military intervention as a "skein of motives and mood;"¹⁴ the military would only intervene during internal unrest if civilians were reliant on military power, and the public had a low attachment to civilian institutions. These models are a marked improvement over mono-causal explanations, yet they suffer from a lack of parsimony, they neglect the role of interior security forces, and they are limited in explanatory reach to other time periods and regions.

Finally, and just as significant, previous models of civil-military relations treat the military as the progenitor of political intervention, not as arbiters of massive popular upheaval. Across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, militaries found themselves reacting to unexpected conditions within the country, and they were quickly forced to decide whether to align with political leaders or protesters. Thus, traditional terms of military intervention into the political domain, such as Finer's 'man on horseback' or Huntington's 'praetorian guard,' seem inadequate to explain military behavior. In some cases the military 'fervently' supported the political system; in other cases, the military 'ambitiously' backed the protesters. In one case, the military was 'hesitant' to get involved; while in others, the military divisively 'fractured' into competing camps.

The military's role as arbiter between the political elite and civil society may mark the beginning of a third phase of civil-military relations across the Middle East.¹⁵ Instead of challenging or protecting the political elites, the military will guard the interests of civil society.¹⁶ According to Hansen and Jensen, this new phase of civil-military relations is due to a shifting "balance of power between the state, the military, and civil society."¹⁷ Persistent waves of democratization, endemic social and economic problems, and U.S. unipolarity across the region, they argue, have reduced the military's prominence.¹⁸ Hansen and Jensen got it half right. They are correct to point out that the balance of power across the MENA region is shifting toward civil society; however, their argument falls short in several areas. First,

this shift toward civil society is not consistent across states. In states such as Syria, Jordan, and Bahrain (at least in the near term) the popular protests have solidified the political and military elite's grip on society. Hansen and Jensen also neglect to mention the role globalization may play in this shift. It is not simply the value of democracy in and of itself, but civil society's perception of their domestic conditions as compared to other states in the region and across the world that seems to be more important. The world's interconnectivity (as measured by trade, transit, and communication) has accentuated the public's anger toward their political elite because they are more fully aware of their poor economic and social conditions as compared to the rest of the world. Hansen and Jensen also overemphasize the role U.S. unipolarity plays in explaining this shift. The U.S. invasion of Iraq may have convinced states such as Libya to give up their nuclear program, but it has also convinced states such as Syria and Iran to redouble their efforts in order to balance U.S. influence in the region. In these states, this has served to strengthen the military, not weaken it. Finally, Hansen and Jensen do not explain the conditions which would lead a military to support the political status quo, remain neutral, or defend the protestors.

MODLING MILITARY DECISION-MAKING

A survey of the literature pertaining to military responses to popular unrest reveals a surprising gap in models that directly address our research question, namely: *What explains the variance in military behavior during popular uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East?* Given the deficiencies of military characteristics and external societal variables to explain military behavior, we created a model of the military as a rational actor formulating decisions in the context of a continual reevaluation of its interests and restraints. The following model predicts military decision making based upon several assumptions. First, we assume that only the senior officer corps is involved in decision-making regarding whether (and in what ways) to support the current political leadership or the protestors. This seems to be a valid assumption given the information available that documents highly centralized decision-making processes and structures reinforced by military cultures in which commanders below the rank of general are expected to execute orders rather than develop their own plans based on a commander's intent. Second, we assume the senior officer corps is a rational actor and, consequently, it will engage in cost-benefit analysis irrespective of its national context. The military leadership will primarily consider threats and opportunities in light of their authorities and influence as an institution rather than due to the overriding power of norms, ideas, or cognitive biases of individual leaders.

If the senior officer corps is a rational actor, then we deduce it will have certain objective interests irrespective of its state. These include bureaucratic freedom of maneuver, control over internal decision-making, and power derived from men, materiel, and funding. We will assess the data to determine whether this model or others that address internal military characteristics and external variables best explains military behavior in periods of social unrest.

Drawing on Brooks' and Finer's models and flowing from our assumption of the military as a rational actor, we chose to posit the central role restraints and interests play in bringing about military intervention in politics. We hypothesized direct causal relationships between restraints and interests and the likelihood of military intervention in the political domain:

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of restraints on the military will result in a) more reactive and slower decision-making and b) a lower propensity to intervene.

Hypothesis 2: Higher levels of interests will result in a higher likelihood of military intervention.

The independent variables of *restraints* and *interests* can be understood as falling along a continuum from low to high, with varying degrees of support for the regime or the protestors. Although this model does not hypothesize about the relative weight of various restraints and interests, further research could do so. We defined restraints as any mechanism that limited the military’s power, freedom of movement, or decision-making ability. We assessed formal structures and processes as well as practice to determine the level of restraints faced by military elites. We defined interests as any motive that might cause the military to lend its support to the popular uprising rather than the regime. Although interests can cut both ways, leading the military to either support or reject the status quo, we primarily assessed interests as those factors that might lead the military to push for a change to the status quo (either because of sticks imposed by the regime or opportunities potentially offered by the protestors). Conversely, low “interests” could refer to either carrots offered by the political leadership or few anticipated benefits (and consequently low aspirations) from supporting the protest movement. The variables we chose to assess the military’s level of interests are objective standards of a military acting in its own interests: prestige, funding, equipment, and autonomy in decision-making.

We found the interaction of three principle groups to be central to military decision-making. We defined the “regime” not in the traditional comparative political sense of the term but rather to refer to the current political leadership. Because the governments under consideration are authoritarian in nature, we focused on leaders in formal and informal government structures at the apex of national power. We defined protestors as the aggregation of people staging domestic demonstrations challenging the role or policies of the current political leadership. Finally, we defined the military elite as the senior ranks of career military officers (usually the general officer corps). In some cases it is extremely difficult to clearly distinguish between military and political elites, especially since in many Arab states military leaders play a role in both sectors. We attempted to account for this problem by clearly delineating the extent of military involvement in political decision-making in each case study.

To assess each of the independent variables, we developed a set of indicators to evaluate the level of restraints and interests of each military. The following table describes the chief indicators we evaluated for each variable:

<u>Restraints</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Ethnic Control	Is selection, promotion, or duty position of military officers conditioned on ethnicity?
2. Regionally Placed	Are military units prevented from serving in the same regions where they recruit?
3. Budget Mechanisms	Do political leaders control the military budget?
4. Oversight from Other Institutions	Do other government institutions check the authority and role of the military?
5. Military Organization	Is the military prevented from conducting operations above the battalion level?
6. Rotation of Unit Commanders	Does the regime rotate unit commanders often or with little warning?
7. Selection of Senior Level Officers	Do political leaders control selection of flag (general) officers?

8. Constitutional or Legal Restraints	Does domestic law severely limit the military's ability to act independently, its mission set, or its budget?
Classification – Restraints	LOW to HIGH
<u>Interests</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Want to increase public prestige?	
- Want to be seen as a trusted institution?	Does the military have a desire to overcome the stigma of past military defeats? Does the military want to improve its reputation in society? Does the military have a low approval / trust rating from the population? Does the military want to reshape its image such that being in the military is viewed as being honorable and praiseworthy?
- Want to be a path for social mobility?	Do career military officers want service in the military to be viewed as a path to social advancement? Are military officers considered to be among the state's elite class? Does the military earn less than other professionals with a commensurate level of experience in the private sector? Do career military officers earn enough for a comfortable standard of living?
2. Want to increase military autonomy?	Not merely the flipside of restraints, this has to do with the military's stated (or implied) desire and perception of its autonomy. Does the military consider its authorities to be constrained by political leaders?
- Want to make relative power gains with respect to the Ministry of the Interior (MOI)?	Is there friction or tension between the military and the MOI? Does the MOI have relatively more political power, higher budget, larger size, or broader functions than the military?
- Want to increase military budget or control over promotion and assignment of officers?	Does the military have a low budget that prevents it from achieving competence compared to regional militaries? Does it desire more control over officer assignments and promotions?
3. Want to increase military control over economy (scope and depth)?	Does the military have little or no control over the state's economy?
4. Want to increase military influence over political institutions?	Does the military have little or no control over the selection of political leaders, foreign policy, and domestic policy?
Classification – Interests	LOW to HIGH

A combination of the hypotheses listed above yielded predictions about the outcomes we might observe in MENA countries affected by varying levels of military restraints and interests. The resultant predictions are listed below. At one extreme, high restraints reinforced by low interests would seem to predict the military's steadfast support of the regime. With little to gain and much to lose in supporting the uprising, it seems likely that the military would resolutely support the regime. At the other extreme, low restraints reinforced by high interests would seem to result in a high likelihood of military intervention on behalf of the protesters. In this case, military elites might perceive lower risks and higher likelihood of successfully arbitrating the outcome because of their potential first-mover advantage.

In cases where high restraints are balanced by high interests, we predicted an ambiguous outcome. Intuitively it seems likely that fracturing of the military might occur as high interests might lead

some military leaders to turn against the regime whereas high restraints might lead other military leaders to support the regime as the most likely strategy for self-preservation; the military might, however, exhibit unified support for the regime (the status quo) due to its reactive and slower decision-making process. Because its freedom of action is more restricted, military elites might view their leverage over outcomes to be reduced. Therefore they might assess higher risks of failure should they attempt to overturn the status quo. Finally, in the fourth quadrant in which low restraints are balanced by low interests, we predicted an ambiguous outcome that could result in the fracturing of the military or its decision to side with protesters. In this case its freedom of maneuver and greater potential to influence outcomes by acting before the political leadership would allow it greater ability to overturn the status quo.

	Restraints High	Restraints Low
Interests High	<p>Outcome: Ambiguous; Fracture or Side with Regime</p> <p>High Restraints: Military more reactive and slower in decision-making; higher bar for military to intervene on behalf of protesters</p> <p>balanced by</p> <p>High Interests: increased likelihood of military intervention to change status quo</p>	<p>Outcome: Side with Protesters</p> <p>Low Restraints: Higher potential for military to be more proactive and rapid in decision-making; lower bar for military to intervene on behalf of protesters</p> <p>reinforced by</p> <p>High Interests: increased likelihood of military intervention to change status quo</p>
Interests Low	<p>Outcome: Side with Regime (regime doubly secure)</p> <p>High Restraints: Military more reactive and slower in decision-making; higher bar for military to intervene on behalf of protesters</p> <p>reinforced by</p> <p>Low Interests: Decreased likelihood of military intervention to change status quo</p>	<p>Outcome: Ambiguous; Fracture or Side with Protesters</p> <p>Low Restraints: Higher potential for military to be more proactive and rapid in decision-making; lower bar for military to intervene on behalf of protesters</p> <p>balanced by</p> <p>Low Interests: Decreased likelihood of military intervention to change status quo</p>

This model provides a plausibility probe into Arab military decision-making in the context of the widespread domestic unrest of early 2011. Given limited data and the challenges of discerning internal decision-making processes, it seems to explain military behavior during the Arab Spring better than models that highlight internal or external factors. It accounts for military decision making at any point in time during social unrest rather than solely at the “decision point” about whether or not to overthrow the political leadership. Rather than treating the military as the progenitor of involvement in the political arena, the model also allows for proactive or reactive responses. Finally the model is flexible as it can account for differing interests (or weights of interests) based on the specific context faced by military elites. The real power of this framework may, however, lie in its ability to predict future military behavior in other states facing significant social unrest beyond the MENA and the context of the Arab Spring.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rather than pursuing a quantitative analysis in which we would assign varying weights to each indicator of restraints or interests, we chose a qualitative approach focusing on select case studies for the following reasons. First, each state is unique in that certain restraints may be more or less significant in affecting military decision-making. For example, ethnic control offers much more explanatory power in Bahrain or Syria but much less in Egypt or Tunisia. Establishing finite values for each indicator would make the model less flexible in its application across the region or other areas in the world. Second, assigning weights would imply a level of precision that is impossible due to a severe lack of quantifiable and comparable data as well as a lack of transparency among governments in the region. It would suggest a rigid and formulaic approach to questions that are fundamentally fluid, subjective, and influenced by bias and irrationality. Thirdly, the lack of a sufficient survey size made quantitative approach suspect. The case study approach, on the other hand, offered the opportunity to delve into these difficult-to-measure qualities of military, political, and social structures by addressing the particularities of each context.

Across the Middle East and North Africa, we assessed each of the states in which the Arab Spring had manifested itself. We first searched for cases which were similar enough to be worth comparing. Specifically, we tried to control for similar political development, social and economic pressures. Next we eliminated several states that made them sufficiently dissimilar as to potentially introduce omitted variable bias: we eliminated Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia (among others) because their governments had not been sufficiently tested by massive popular unrest; we eliminated Yemen as its ongoing conflicts in the north and south coupled with the influence of Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula made it an outlier; and we eliminated Bahrain as the intervention by Saudi troops made its response fundamentally different. Lastly we looked for states whose militaries responded in sufficiently distinct ways to measure whether and how interests and restraints resulted in different behavior.

How did interests and restraints affect the Tunisian military's "ambitious support" for the protesters, the Egyptian military's "reluctant support" for the protesters, the Libyan military's "fractured support" for Qaddafi, and the Syrian military's "fervent support" for the Assad regime? These four case studies enumerated in the following pages reveal some insights into the causal mechanisms at work in the decision-making processes of Arab militaries. Although none of these states represents an ideal type, they nonetheless provide fertile ground to explore the relationship among restraints, interests, and military decision-making. Tunisia's military clearly fits into the extreme characterized by the second quadrant because of the combination of low restraints it enjoyed and its high interests in overturning the status quo. Syria, on the other hand, best exemplifies the opposite extreme in which low interests combined with high restraints. Rather than merely elaborating on these two cases whose results are somewhat intuitive, this paper also explores the ambiguous outcomes proposed in quadrants one and four. The Egyptian military case evaluates the impact of high interests balanced by high restraints, and the Libyan military case assesses the combination of low interests balanced by low restraints.

It is possible that the perception of staunch military support for a regime could dissuade protests from emerging and thus pose an endogeneity problem for this model. However, perceptions of the military's intimate ties to the regime in Syria, Bahrain, or even Egypt did not prevent popular uprisings from materializing in these states. Assessing military decision-making in the absence of a clear decision

would provide less clear-cut examples and muddle, rather than illuminate, the impact of interests and restraints on outcomes. Nonetheless, the model may be applied to militaries exhibiting a range of responses from neutrality to active support for either side.

To best address this important research question, we conducted qualitative analysis based on interviews with over 50 experts from across the MENA region who shared insights from their unique personal experiences and observations with officers and soldiers from militaries in the region. In particular, we leveraged contacts in the military community, diplomatic community, U.S. government, foreign military officers, and academics who have personal experience studying and evaluating Arab militaries. Interviews, in particular, shed light on the personalities of key military decision-makers and the institutional culture of Arab militaries that influenced their behavior.

Research to determine whether the data validate or disprove this model has been challenging. The limitations of evidence are substantial: our access to government and military officials was severely limited due to ongoing security concerns in the region and strict limits on contact imposed by foreign political and military leaders on their subordinates. Second, a lack of free media generally, and particularly during the height of civil unrest has made a clear assessment of facts on the ground difficult. Third, little transparency in government institutions in the region coupled with the confusion and dysfunction of institutions during the Arab Spring have presented their own set of problems. Fourth, scholarly analysis of Middle Eastern militaries has been largely overlooked for a quarter of a century and therefore little data exists upon which to draw. We sought to compensate for these limitations by engaging experts with direct personal observations and experiences with militaries in the region. We also sought to find proxies for the variables we were trying to measure that illuminate an otherwise cloudy picture. Finally, we tried to draw on a host of sources (interviews as well as media and reports from NGOs on the ground) to mitigate bias.

The model presented above paints a clear picture of militaries motivated by self-interest and governed by rational cost-benefit analysis when facing the dilemma of whom to support and how to respond. It presents a military-centric paradigm that downplays U.S. influence. This typology can be extended to other regimes in the MENA region and potentially serve as a rubric for determining other Arab militaries' responses to popular uprisings should they occur under similar circumstances. From it flow a host of policy choices that challenge U.S. strategy in the region and call for an unflinching reassessment of U.S. priorities.

CASE STUDY: THE TUNISIAN MILITARY'S "AMBITIOUS SUPPORT" FOR THE PROTEST MOVEMENT

The ripples of the "Jasmine Revolution" have not yet subsided. The events which took place in this seemingly miniscule and impuissant state along the southern Mediterranean have fundamentally transformed Middle Eastern politics. Much mystery still surrounds the events which led up to the departure of President Ben Ali on January 14, 2011, but it is clear that the military played the decisive role in his exodus. While many have applauded the Tunisian Army as an exemplar of military subordination to democratic values, a closer examination of Tunisian civil-military relations will reveal that the military's response was more than simple "heroics."¹⁹ When the military found itself in the

driver's seat during the revolution, it made a calculated decision based upon corporate interests and political restraints.

Anti-government protests began in Tunisia's hinterland in mid-December 2010. The self-immolation of a 26-year-old street vendor in Sidi Bouzid sparked a conflagration of popular discontent over high levels of unemployment, rampant corruption, and minimal outlets for political expression. By the end of December the protests had spread to the nearby cities of Kasserine and Thala, and on January 12, people took to the streets in Tunis, the seat of Tunisia's political power. President Ali attempted to quell public anger by removing cabinet officials, replacing the governor of the Sidi Bouzid region, promising the creation of 300,000 new jobs, and pledging to step down at the end of his elected term, all to no avail. When it became clear that police brutality would also not end the uprisings, and Army Chief of Staff, General Ammar, ignored Ali's order to fire on protesters, Ali quickly fled to Saudi Arabia on January 14th.²⁰

A nuanced look at the timeline of the "Jasmine Revolution" as well as a close scrutiny of the state of civil-military relations prior to the uprisings reveals that the military deliberately chose to maximize its institutional interests when competing political restraints began to crumble. In the initial stages of the popular uprisings, the Tunisian Armed Forces (TAF) promptly followed President Ali's directions to deploy into the streets, protect key infrastructure sites, and contain popular discontent. During this period, the military, similar to other political institutions, was still confused by the direction and purpose of the revolution.²¹ The military had poor situational awareness on the scope of protests in each village and it was not fully aware of the interior police's disposition and mission. Because of its meager size (30,000) the Army even had to hastily rely on cadets from the military academy to guard infrastructure sites.²²

As the protests expanded and jumped the firebreak into Tunis, it became clearer to the military that the public's rage offered a window of opportunity to improve its corporate interests. Public anger was being directed at the rampant corruption and abuse of power of President Ali, the Trebeli family, and the Ministry of Interior, not the military. Recent Wiki leak cables revealed the ubiquitous levels of corruption among Tunisian elites.²³ Surprisingly, more than half of Tunisia's commercial elite were related to the Trebeli family. The Trebeli clan was known as "the Family"²⁴ and Leyla Trebeli (the wife of President Ali) was disparaged by the public as the "Queen of Carthage." The Trebeli family restricted the freedom of investment and business activity of the middle and upper classes, and they used the national police to intimidate those who dared to resist. Tunisians widely resented the national police because the public viewed them as guarantors of a corrupt government and the Trebeli's privileged status, even though the rural areas suffered from extreme unemployment levels as high as 40%. As the "Jasmine Revolution" unfolded, the military leadership noticed that Trebeli businesses and police buildings and forces were being targeted, not those of the military. When it became clear that the Ali regime and internal security apparatus could not contain the protests without support from the armed forces, and that the people were generally in support of the military, General Ammar decided to ignore the orders from his civilian commander-in-chief. Instead, General Ammar advised President Ali to flee the country, telling him "You're finished".²⁵

The Tunisian Military's Low Restraints

The Tunisian case study demonstrates the military's ambitious support of the "Jasmine Revolution" because of low political restraints and an eagerness to improve the civilian-military status quo in a manner which would strengthen the military's hand. The most significant forms of political control of the military included an anemic defense budget, the selection of senior officers, and the control over military-to-military interaction. Under President Ali the military was poorly funded and deliberately isolated from political decisions. Even President Ali's predecessor, Bourguiba, kept the military small, under resourced, impotent, and busy defending the borders²⁶ due to his concern of subordinating the military to civilian control. The TAF boast the smallest force (Tunisia-37,000, Algeria-147,000, Egypt-469,000, Libya-76,000, Morocco-196,000) and defense budget (Tunisia-1.2%, Algeria-3.8%, Egypt-2.2%, Libya-2.8%, Morocco-3.3%) of all Northern African states.²⁷ Even domestically, the Tunisian National Guard, the cornerstone of the internal security forces, was allocated 50% more funds in 2010 than the Tunisian army, navy, and air force combined. Tunisia's annual budget for military procurement in 2010 was also \$70 million, the lowest in the Arab world.²⁸

President Ali also controlled the military by asserting his constitutional prerogatives of appointing high military officials. Article 44 of the Constitution states that the president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Article 55 stipulates that the president appoints high military officials, albeit on the recommendation of the government.²⁹ It was widely known that senior military officers would not dare approach Ali for a promotion list.³⁰ There are also rumors that Ben Ali had a former chief of staff of the military brought down by a missile while traveling in a helicopter to remove a possible competitor.³¹ Finally, much to the TAF's dismay, Ali would control the military's exposure to other militaries. He restricted land and naval military-to-military training, and he often intervened in the large scale equipment purchases from foreign militaries. Lastly, he would restrict officer emails, and monitor conversations of officers with the West. The U.S. military could only contact the TAF via one email address, and phone conversations were abruptly cut off after a mere ten minutes.³²

Political control of the military ended here, however. The military was not ethnically bifurcated as we see in other developing states. In fact, the Tunisian military boasts a very diverse military which is a rough sample of the population. The TAF is comprised of 18% women, a 50/50 balance of officers from the coastal and interior zones, and includes a healthy portion of each social class.³³ The government also did not prevent officers from commanding near their hometowns. The military had a hierarchy of command above the battalion level (three mechanized armored brigades and a chief of staff), and military commanders were not subject to surprise rotations.³⁴

The Tunisian Military's High Interests

While political restraint of the military during the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring proved inconsequential, the Tunisian Armed Forces had much to gain by ushering Ben Ali out of the country. Before the anti-government uprising, the military was politically weak, not considered a path of social mobility, possessed little autonomy, and was weaker than the Ministry of Interior. However, after General Ammar's decision not to fire on the public, the military gained political muscle, public prestige, bureaucratic autonomy, and priority in resources over that of other security forces. In a much publicized

speech, General Ammar conveyed the primacy of the military when he stated that the army would be “the guarantor of the country, the people and the revolution.”³⁵

Tunisians widely respected the armed forces prior to the anti-government protests. Yet this respect was more attributed to their position of authority and humanitarian assistance, not because of military strength or past military victories. More importantly, Tunisians valued the TAF simply because they were not part of the Ministry of Interior-Trebelsi ring of corruption. Tunisians do celebrate their military during the annual Army National Day on June 24, yet the military museum and statues in Tunis are of Hannibal, the great warrior-leader of ancient Carthage, not any modern battle or leader. Tunisians widely considered the armed forces as a lower middle class profession. Unlike many other states, the military was not a means of social advancement.³⁶ School teachers and taxicab drivers made more than some officers, a constant source of embarrassment for the officer ranks.³⁷

Forcing Ali from power also recalibrated the military’s power vis-à-vis the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Before the popular uprisings, the military was outclassed by the national police in every regard. The MoI had more political power, a higher budget, larger size, and broader functions. The MoI was the strongest institution of the state. The MoI, not the military, was the path toward political power. Ben Ali’s career progression exemplified this. After achieving the rank of Colonel in the army, Ali transitioned to the MoI and rose to the position of interior minister in 1986. Soon, he was appointed to Prime Minister in 1987 and succeeded President Bourguiba in what many considered a “soft coup.” The TAF was also considerably smaller in size than the MoI (37,000 versus 200,000).³⁸ Officers from the MoI were given preferential training assignments to France’s prestigious St. Cyr, and they enjoyed higher salaries and benefits. Many officers in the TAF resented that the MoI (in particular the National Guard, National Guard Special Forces, and Presidential Guard) had modern personal weapons and equipment, while the TAF struggled to maintain its decaying fleet of U.S. equipment from the 1980 and 1990s. The military also resented playing second fiddle to the National Guard in defending the border.³⁹ It appeared to the TAF that even the military’s traditional jurisdiction of border defense was being marginalized by elements of the MoI.

Finally, the anti-government protests presented the TAF with the opportunity to expand its influence into political institutions. The armed forces had little say in foreign policy and defense decisions. While a National Security Council existed formally, it never met. Foreign policy and defense policies were made by Ali and an inner circle of officials from the MoI. After the revolution, the military has expanded its political reach. It now controls four governorships, the director of prisons, and its heretofore competitor, the National Guard.⁴⁰ General Ammar has also been promoted to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs from that of Chief of Staff of the Army.

The behavior of General Ammar and the Tunisian Armed Forces during the “Jasmine Revolution” seem to be best explained by a rational calculation to promote corporate interests. Prior to the revolution, the TAF lived in obscurity. In the wake of the social upheaval, the TAF now has better equipment (taken from the MoI), increased social prestige, more autonomy, and more political clout. Low political restraints reinforced by high interests influenced the TAF to intervene on behalf of the protesters in order to improve the status quo. Now that the TAF occupies a position of privilege in society, look for

the TAF to continue to behave in a manner consistent with maintaining corporate interests, not those of the people.

CASE STUDY: THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY'S "RELUCTANT SUPPORT" FOR THE PROTEST MOVEMENT

Stunned by the power of the masses to bring down arguably the Middle East's strongest and most resilient leader, the world watched in disbelief as Hosni Mubarak was ousted from power on February 11, 2011. Exuberant youth and businessmen alike cried, embraced, and sang in Tahrir square with the news; overcome by emotion at their hard-won (and at times, doubtful) victory, thousands chanted, "The people, at last, have brought down the regime!" Soldiers were embraced and celebrated as heroes. Despite the generally effusive reception the Army received since its intervention to establish order, however, it displayed serious reluctance in siding with "the street." Only after expending all other options, and as a last-ditch effort to secure its own position of preeminence in Egyptian society did the military usher Mubarak out of Cairo.

Since the Egyptian revolution in 1952, the military has played a central and decisive role in Egyptian politics. Under Naguib, Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak the military formed not only the central institutional pillar of the government, but also the locus from which its generals-turned-president came. As the largest and most powerful in the Arab world, Egypt's military has enjoyed a close relationship with Western powers through frequent military training including the largest annual joint exercise in the world, Operation Bright Star. Although Egyptian Attaché Major General Mohamed Elkeshky limits the military's role to 1) protecting the constitution; 2) defending the borders; and 3) helping the people, and though he says that the military is beholden only to the state, it has nonetheless been a key player in Egyptian politics.⁴¹ In extreme circumstances it has even intervened internally: to quell the bread riots in 1977 and riots by conscripts in the central security forces over pay in 1986.⁴²

Egyptians see themselves as a country with a long and proud history spanning over 5,000 years; most look down on neighboring Gulf States as "tribes with flags."⁴³ They are "Egyptians first, Arabs second."⁴⁴ The 340,000 strong military,⁴⁵ likewise, has a strong corporate identity shaped by battles from as far back as the Battle of Qadesh in 1274 BC to as recent as the war with Israel in 1973 and its involvement in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Military officers pride themselves on their professionalism, military education and training.⁴⁶ Although the military's highest decision-making body, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), is headed by the President, the military generally sees itself as an institution separate from politics. The military's conscripts, in particular, which comprise 60-70 percent of its force, pride themselves on their extremely close linkage to Egyptian society.

The military has only become involved internally in extremis. Rising unemployment, unmet youth expectations,⁴⁷ government corruption, rigged elections in November 2010, lack of political freedoms and economic opportunity, along with the demonstration effect of Ben Ali's ouster from Tunis on January 14 led to the crisis that necessitated military intervention. Beginning with a protest called the "day of rage" against the repressive security services on January 25 by youth activists and some political parties, the Arab Spring manifested itself in 18 days of protests culminating in Mubarak's departure. Clashes with police began on day one across Egypt including Alexandria, Mansura, Tanta, Aswan, Assiut, and Cairo. Unrest spread in subsequent days to other population centers from the Nile Delta to as

far south as Aswan. The government responded by blocking Twitter and Facebook on 26 January and internet and cell phone service two days later. Friday, January 28th saw heightened violence as protesters were joined by a broader array of Egyptians from across the political and economic spectrum.

With the “complete and simultaneous breakdown in the security apparatus across the entire country on the 28th and 29th ... [and] the disappearance of the police forces, there was a complete security vacuum” that forced the hand of the military.⁴⁸ Military units arrived in force, “simultaneously deploy[ing] troops to all major urban areas ... Troops did not fire without authorization and appeared to have good discipline.”⁴⁹ Demonstrators responded with varying degrees of hope, fear, and uncertainty, but many in Tahrir chanted “we and the Army are one,” seeing the military as an ally rather than an aggressor. Mubarak refused to step down on 29 January, instead trying to placate demonstrators by dismissing the cabinet and appointing his intelligence chief, General Omar Suleiman, as the first Vice President during his tenure as president.⁵⁰ Three days later Mubarak announced he would not run for re-election but again refused to step aside. Instead, he promised constitutional and economic reforms. Mubarak’s feeble attempts at reconciliation were met only by outrage; protesters chanted “isqat al-nizam,” “the fall of the regime” and their ranks swelled to over 1 million in Tahrir Square alone. Fighting between pro- and anti-Mubarak supporters flared, turning, according to former Egyptian Ambassador to the U.S. Nabil Fahmy “the most passive Egyptian against the system and in support of the demonstrators ... there was no return from there on.”⁵¹ The military was left to impose order in this highly combustible environment.

Despite a restoration of the internet on 2 February after five days of blackout, announcements of constitutional and legislative reforms by the Vice President, and even the reopening of some banking and other services, the uprising swelled again with widespread strikes of labor unions on 9 February and the country’s economy grinding to a halt. The SCAF met on 10 February (without Mubarak) and announced its “commitment to protect the people.”⁵² Despite speculation that he would step down, Mubarak stated he would oversee a “peaceful transition” in September. The following day, Suleiman finally announced Mubarak’s departure and relinquishment of power to the military. The military was now completely in charge of the state with Field Marshal Tantawi at its head.

Models of military decision-making based on external political relations did not explain the Egyptian military’s response. U.S. leaders, IMET funding, and economic assistance had little impact on the Egyptian military’s decision-making calculus. Military and diplomatic channels were immediately employed, yet to no avail. According to former Ambassador to Egypt Daniel Kurtzer, The U.S. made multiple phone calls every day from State, DOD, and the NSC. However, the only calls that seemed to have an impact were those from Admiral Mullen to the Chief of the General Staff LTG Sami Anan and Field Marshal Tantawi. “The other calls were considered noise.” They only listened to Admiral Mullen because of security calculations in preserving their military power.⁵³ Former CENTCOM Commander Tony Zinni advised Mullen to “glue himself to Tantawi” to be able to advise him about how to respond.⁵⁴ Even these calls, and the dispatch of former Ambassador to Egypt Frank Wisner, seemed to have little impact on military decision-making. As Nabil Fahmy recounts, “this had to be an Egyptian thing.”⁵⁵

Previous models of the military as progenitor of political intervention also proved inadequate. Over the 18 days of popular unrest the military responded to, rather than shaped, events. After the

internal security apparatus crumbled on the 28th of January and in the face of the massive mobilization of the Egyptian populace, the military was forced to step in and provide order. As the country's most respected institution (and the only functioning one at that point), and since it had distanced itself from the security services' overreaction to the demonstrators, the military was able to portray itself as the guardian of the Egyptian people. In minimizing the use of violence and enforcing strict discipline among its soldiers,⁵⁶ the military tried to maintain a neutral position "above the political fray."⁵⁷ In so doing, military leaders hoped to preserve their position as the most powerful institution in Egyptian society.⁵⁸ Rather than taking sides with the regime or the street, as former CENTCOM commander John Abizaid said, the "Army put its own interests over those of the state. The Army view[ed] itself as the state."⁵⁹

Egypt's military actions were both responsive and indecisive. According to Kurtzer, the military was responding to societal pressure rather than controlling events on the ground. With tanks, vehicles, radios, weapons, and soldiers at their disposal, and since they were not hindered by a civilian decision-making apparatus apart from Mubarak himself, the military leadership could have rapidly acted to shape the developing crisis. However military commanders were always "a ½ step behind the protest events" and one to two days late for every major decision. The appointment of Suleiman as Vice President wasn't announced by the SCAF until after Friday's mosque meetings, when the decision should have been made on Thursday evening or Friday morning. Secondly, Wisner met with Mubarak on Tuesday February 1 to convince him not to run for reelection and to promise that his son would not stand for election, but Mubarak refused to rule out his son Gamal's shot at the presidency. Finally Mubarak declared he would not step down on Thursday, which, predictably, led to a furious reaction on Islam's holy day, Friday. Rather than shaping societal events with some overarching plan to remove Mubarak from power and potentially take control themselves, the military leadership found itself reacting as events unfolded.⁶⁰ The military's final card to play was the removal of Mubarak on February 11, which it might have averted had it forced deeper and more rapid concessions from the president before protests swelled out of control. A senior Egyptian general confirmed that "as long as the regime and the people are one unity the military's role is to support. [This changes] once we feel there is a crack between these two forces ... if the presidential institution [had been] able to succeed, nothing would have happened. We would have pulled our people back to the barracks."⁶¹ These statements exemplify the military's hesitance to drive outcomes even when it had the ability to do so.

The SCAF's indecisiveness was further compounded by internal division among its key leaders. According to Kurtzer, support for the regime versus the street broke down along generational lines. Contrary to popular wisdom, the older generation, led by Tantawi, was "scared" about the outcomes of the popular unrest and therefore was more willing to entertain the demands of the demonstrators; the younger generation, on the other hand, headed by the leaders of the 2nd Army Division and Military Intelligence, advocated a hard-line response to reassert control. Despite the personal relationship the older generation enjoyed with Mubarak, they remembered the immense difficulties faced by the Army when it intervened in politics in the 1970s as a result of the instability of Sadat's rule. The younger generation, however, "believed it was easy to govern the masses" because of the relative stability Egypt had enjoyed for the past few decades. The younger generation also viewed the older as "weak" because Tantawi had conceded representation on the constitutional reform committee from the Muslim Brotherhood, they permitted Sheikh Qaradawi's return to Egypt, and they promised to adhere to a rushed

elections timeline despite the political instability it might engender. Although it appears that the older generation has prevailed, these internal frictions contributed to its irresolute response.⁶²

Not only was the elite military leadership divided, but it was also responding to events as they unfolded; the combination of its internal dysfunction and unpreparedness delayed military action (even though it had the potential to act more decisively and rapidly). Its decision-making throughout the crisis is best explained by the intersection of the military's parochial restraints and interests. In short, its lack of significant restraints from the Mubarak regime coupled with its low interests in seeing a change to the status quo gave the military significant freedom of action in responding but made it highly reluctant to throw out their protector.

The Egyptian Military's Low Restraints

The Egyptian military had few restraints as an institution; in fact it retained a privileged position in relation to Mubarak, other political institutions, and social elites. Based on the relative freedom of action that it enjoyed under the Mubarak regime, there was little dissatisfaction among military leaders. Thus the military's slow and irresolute actions are understandable; since it was not chafing at the bit of bureaucratic and social constraints the status quo was largely perceived as a position to be protected, not one that should be hastily overturned.

Unlike Syria, Libya, or Jordan, ethnic controls on entry or promotion in the officer ranks did not significantly hamper the military's leadership. Egypt is ethnically homogeneous with over 99% of its inhabitants self-identifying as Egyptian. The country is divided among Sunni Muslims (90%) and Christian Copts (9%) (see Appendix A), yet these religious differences are not a source of strife within the military. The military's composition is 60-70% conscript and generally representative of the religious and class makeup of the country. Many of the soldiers, therefore, come from the peasantry.⁶³ As a result, says Attaché MG Elkeshky, the military has an intimate relationship with the Egyptian people: "we are from the people."⁶⁴

The Egyptian military similarly is not significantly limited by geographic restraints, organizational structure, or rotation of unit commanders. According to MG Elkeshky soldiers cannot serve in their hometowns but otherwise are able to serve throughout the country in any of the five regional commands.⁶⁵ Unlike other Arab militaries (such as Libya) the Egyptian military enjoys wide autonomy in the control and organization of its units. The army is fully capable of mobile combat and possesses a robust military organization with the 2nd and 3rd Field Armies serving as its largest units. Mubarak did not routinely rotate unit commanders to undermine the military since he was not remotely worried about a coup.⁶⁶

The military also enjoyed relative autonomy in the control of its budget. Egypt's annual military expenditures totaled approximately 3.36% of GDP in 2007, 2.9% in 2008, and 2.2% in 2009—moderate levels by international standards.⁶⁷ Military elites may have been dissatisfied with this declining trend yet the military still experienced minimal political interference in the disbursement of its funds. Budget decisions were made among the top brass of the SCAF without even disclosing them to the parliament.⁶⁸ The military also had separate sources of funding that made it less beholden to political elites: first, the U.S. provided military assistance of about \$1.3 billion annually since the Camp David Accords in 1978.

Second, Mubarak allowed the military to develop its own corporate identity through business pursuits in the 1990s during a period of economic stagnation in the hopes that the military would remain loyal, regain its social prestige, and relieve budgetary pressures on the government. Mubarak consequently “lost the power of the purse” over the military.⁶⁹

The Egyptian military was widely recognized as the most autonomous and powerful institution in the country. As such, it did not consider other components of the security apparatus as legitimate competitors or sources of restraint. Although it served alongside the Ministry of Interior, State Security (*mabaheth amn al-dawla*, the political police), and intelligence service (*mukhâbarât ‘âma*)⁷⁰ the division of responsibility was clear; the military primarily addressed external defense and social programs while other services focused on internal threats. The military existed in a world unto itself with its own legal code, military courts, and hierarchy that answered only to Mubarak. The military’s independence is illustrated well by its ubiquitous presence in Egyptian society – it runs hospitals, recreation centers, hotels, clubs, libraries, cinemas, construction businesses, bottled water plants, and gas stations – even using conscripts for a portion of the labor force.⁷¹ Furthermore, the military’s privileged status was protected by Omar Suleiman, who was viewed as the voice of the military. As the powerful head of the General Intelligence Directorate and briefly, the apparent successor to Mubarak, he had the ear and the trust of the president.⁷²

While Mubarak granted the military wide autonomy in some areas, he used statutory and constitutional constraints to limit the military’s freedom of action. The constitution grants the president the power to appoint and dismiss military officers (Article 143), proclaim a state of emergency (Article 148), and act as commander in chief (Article 150); however, none of these powers was a point of contention with senior military leaders. Mubarak controlled the selection of flag officers in a highly opaque manner. Promotion through the rank of Colonel seemed to have been largely on the basis of merit quantified by evaluation reports and performance at a host of military schools. For flag officers, though, demonstrated personal loyalty and family connections to Mubarak were the key criteria for assigning command. According to Abizaid, for example, “the Cairo military district commander was hand-picked for his willingness to do whatever Mubarak wanted.”⁷³ Tantawi and Suleiman were highly loyal to Mubarak, and according to writer and regime critic Abdullah al-Senawy Mubarak would not consider replacing them “because he simply couldn’t guarantee the loyalty of the generals of the second row in the army.”⁷⁴ Although Tantawi was not particularly smart, he was extremely loyal.⁷⁵ Because military elites were promoted by Mubarak based on their personal loyalty, it seems intuitive that these very officers would not seek political change.

In sum, the Egyptian military suffered from few restraints that would make it inclined to support any significant changes to the status quo. The freedom of action enjoyed by the military largely satisfied its elites and predisposed it to avoid, rather than embrace, any upheaval in Egyptian politics.

The Egyptian Military’s Low Interests

Although its prestige has declined slightly in the past decade, the Egyptian military occupied an important position in Egyptian society prior to the uprising; it had more interest in preserving the status quo than supporting regime change. First, the military wanted to maintain its image as a trusted institution. With a history of protecting the people for 8,000 years, the military was seen as a loyal and

dependable institution. Public opinion polls consistently showed the public saw the military as “the most efficient, most modernizing and least corrupt institution in the country, the one which contains the largest number of intelligent, dedicated and honest people ... [and] as a bastion of Egyptian identity.”⁷⁶ Because part of its prestige stemmed from its positive image in contrast to the hated Ministry of Interior (MOI), protesters responded much more positively to the military’s presence as crowds swelled. As Ashraf Khlalil witnessed during the height of the demonstrations, protesters were “chatting happily” and posing for photos with soldiers in Tahrir square. Less than a mile away soldiers squared off against 800 protesters trying to destroy the state TV building; there a senior military officer calmed the most vocal of the protesters and then they embraced one another – something “unthinkable” had the officer been from the police.⁷⁷

Despite its heel-dragging and initial unwillingness to shepherd the events of the popular uprisings, once military elites decided to force Mubarak to step down they saw a unique opportunity to remake the national myth. With the narrative of the military’s glory from the 1973 war fading with generational turnover, the military saw its role as the guardian of the uprising as a means to secure its status in society and renew it for another generation. The statements of the SCAF are illustrative: on 31 January and 10 February the military affirmed its recognition of “the legitimate demands of the people”⁷⁸ in stark contrast to Mubarak’s scorn for the protesters; on 13 February the SCAF identified its “historical and constitutional responsibility to protect the country and to preserve the safety and security of its territory.”⁷⁹ This language seems to indicate the SCAF’s desire to recast its image of solidarity with the Egyptian people.

In addition to securing the public’s trust in the institution, military elites also wanted to secure (not overturn) their social mobility in Egypt. Although not showered with as many perks as the heady years after the 1973 war (referred to by Egyptians as “October Victory”), and salaries are slightly lower than peers in private industry for low- and mid-level officers, the military’s top brass were considered members of the social elite. Military officers enjoyed life inside a unique military subculture – a “little Disney World” including theaters, playgrounds, and officer clubs.⁸⁰ Flag officers could expect a car, a piece of land, a house, and a stipend.⁸¹ Rents from the for-profit enterprises run by the military and a “systematic” process of distributing money to top ranking officers supplemented basic salaries and other subsidies.⁸²

Not only did the system under Mubarak protect military elites’ financial and social status, but it also offered numerous opportunities to transition to positions of responsibility elsewhere in the government. In the office of the Presidency, for example, the military was represented by two active duty officers (the Commander of the Republican Guard and the Senior Protocol Officer). Retired or active duty officers serve in the three most senior posts in the General Intelligence Directorate, four of 29 cabinet posts, 14 of 27 governors, 11 of the 13 key leaders in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, 15 of 19 of the leaders in the Ministry of Military Production, 9 of 10 of the Chairmen of the Arab Organization for Industry, the CEO of the Suez Canal Authority, and all 13 of the key posts of the Seaport Authority in the Ministry of Transportation. In sum, few incentives existed to lead the military to pursue greater prestige through supporting an overthrow of the regime.

Unlike its counterparts in other Arab states, the Egyptian military enjoyed tremendous benefits (financially and reputationally) from its significant involvement in the state economy. More than any other factor, the military's tentacles, which reached far and wide through the goods and services sectors, made the military extremely reluctant to side with protesters in the upheaval of early 2011. The military had enjoyed two decades worth of profits from its growing business enterprises and viewed any instability as a threat to this source of power and quality of life. By some accounts 30-40% of Egypt's production comes from the military.⁸³ The National Organization for Military Production, for example, includes 14 factories that produce medical and diagnostic equipment, domestic appliances, computers, cars, and more.⁸⁴ In another telling incident the Egyptian military's surgeon general said to a group of U.S. military officers, "let me give you my card. If you ever need anything come see me in my private practice." The use of military position for private gain is widespread and accepted.⁸⁵

As might be expected in any bureaucracy, the military harbored a rivalry with the Ministry of the Interior; however, the MoI primarily functioned as a foil for popular perceptions of the military that served the military's self-interest. In general, the military saw the MoI as doing the "dirty work of black ops, torture, interrogation, and spying internally on Egyptians. The military loathes internal security matters."⁸⁶ The public, likewise, contrasted their hatred of the police with their love and admiration for the military. Friction surfaced over competition for funds from the government, but little evidence indicates a zero-sum game existed between the military and the MoI in terms of political power, size, or roles.⁸⁷ Mubarak's and Suleiman's backgrounds as Army officers likely helped ease military concerns though. Furthermore any desire to make relative bureaucratic gains with respect to the MOI would have been overshadowed by the military's abhorrence of soiling itself with the internal security affairs of the state.

Egypt's military leadership evidenced a desire to protect, rather than increase, its autonomy within the Mubarak regime. The military was satisfied to "[play] an ambiguous role" siding with the people but also comprising an "integral" element of the regime. Thus the military "found itself almost literally on both sides of the barricades."⁸⁸ Playing the middle ground gave military leaders maximum flexibility to protect parochial interests rather than being strong-armed into a particular course of action. Retired army General Hosam Sowilam confirmed, "we shall obey the president because he will be accepted by the people ... but we will not accept any interference by the political parties into our military affairs."⁸⁹ Tantawi, according to former U.S. military Attaché LTC Mark Victorson, was "intelligent, wily" but did not seem like someone who was "excited about change ... he never struck me as an innovative person, but [rather] an inside player."⁹⁰ Zinni characterizes Tantawi as "having no political aspirations ... overtly apolitical ... without a lot of political sense."⁹¹ In sum, military elites demonstrated little appetite for regime revisionism but profited from their balancing role.

One area of concern to the military, however, was Mubarak's succession, according to an interview with three Egyptian generals.⁹² Issandr el-Amrani, the author of the Arabist blog, regards the military "as the only institution that is able to block succession in Egypt."⁹³ Until Mubarak began grooming his son, Gamal, to follow him as president, the military elites assumed that the presidency, like the four previous ones, would be filled from among its ranks. Since around 2005 though, there was a "silent uproar within the military over the rise of Gamal and like-minded businessmen, as they were imposing a hegemony over banking, industry and even the media," claimed Abdullah al-Senawy, one of

the regime's critics.⁹⁴ Gamal was viewed with disdain by the military due to his lack of military credentials and his close association with business elites. Reforms of the constitution in 2007, furthermore, were seen by military elites as a "deliberate power play" to remove the military from decisions over succession.⁹⁵ According to an April 2007 U.S. Embassy cable, an Egyptian member of parliament detailed growing friction between Tantawi and Gamal over prospects for the presidency.⁹⁶ Kurtzer confirms strong resistance within the military to Gamal's political ambitions.⁹⁷ The military then might have seen the protests as an opportunity to sideline Gamal, but the appointment of (former General) Suleiman as Vice President on 29 January would have satisfied any appetite to secure their influence over the next president.

Actions by the SCAF in the wake of the revolution seem to indicate the military's opportunistic attempts to secure its political influence. The SCAF has suspended the constitution, dissolved the People's Assembly and the Shura Council, twice sacked the cabinet, arrested businessmen and former regime members, and enabled the formation of political parties.⁹⁸ Each of these actions, while they could be seen as merely a response to the demands of the Egyptian people, represent relative power gains for the military as an institution since they diffuse political power and decrease the power of the presidency.

In short, evidence is weak to nonexistent that military elites supported the popular uprisings in January and February 2011 due to any interests in recasting their role in Egypt's power structure. Coupled with the lack of restraints imposed by Mubarak's regime, the military's response was slow, irresolute, and hesitant. Only when it had no other options did its leaders succumb to Mubarak's departure and the inherent risk of the unknown that his departure represented.

CASE STUDY: THE LIBYAN MILITARY'S "FRACTURED SUPPORT" FOR THE REGIME

On the streets of Tripoli skepticism abounded about whether the Arab Spring would spread to Libya. Qaddafi had implemented economic reforms and the country was flush with oil which the regime used to co-opt domestic support. Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, Libya's economy was not stagnant.⁹⁹ Their skepticism was misplaced. On 15 February 2011, Libyans in Benghazi, a city of economic and social prominence in the East, erupted with a flood of demands for Qaddafi to step down. Like the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, the people of Benghazi chafed at years of political repression, corruption, mismanagement, economic inequality, and regional discrimination. Moreover, there was a growing disillusionment from the widening divergence between political rhetoric and daily reality. Qaddafi cloaked himself in Arab socialism, yet many Libyans perceived a bifurcated society of haves and have-nots since the end of international sanctions in 2003. Housing shortages were widespread, and many Libyans held two jobs to improve their standard of living. Libya also had a small population (6 million) with a large reservoir of oil, yet it lagged far behind the advanced economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council.¹⁰⁰

Qaddafi responded to the protests in Benghazi with both spear and olive branch in hand. He quickly dispatched his security forces along with 4,000 mercenaries to suppress the rebellion. Qaddafi's assault on Benghazi killed at least 230 people and critically injured another 30.¹⁰¹ This heavy-handed attack only emboldened popular unrest, and the ranks of the protesters quickly swelled in Benghazi, Misrata, and the Berber highlands northwest of Libya. At the same time Qaddafi used propaganda to deflect popular angst. He attempted to commandeer the scheduled "day of rage" on February 17 by

calling for a rally against the government.¹⁰² He also pledged political reforms as well as raised salaries, and he sought to convince Libyans that the protesters were members of Al Qaeda, Algerians, drugged youth, and mercenaries. The core message was that the rebels were not Libyans¹⁰³ and that Qaddafi was still the champion of their social and economic interests.

Qaddafi's strategy failed. Soon protests broke out in Tripoli, the heart of Qaddafi's power. On 20 February, thousands of people surged into Tripoli demanding Qaddafi's removal. When they entered the main square of Tripoli, they were gunned down by security forces on top of Hotel Kabeer. The protests continued over three to four nights until a critical mass of people were killed. People then went into hiding inside Tripoli or fled the city.¹⁰⁴ Events quickly unfolded after Qaddafi's security forces expelled protesters from Tripoli. Libyans formed into pro and anti-Qaddafi camps and focused on either the protection or overthrow of the regime.¹⁰⁵ A majority of Qaddafi's inner political circle, interior security forces, and elite military units remained loyal to Qaddafi. On the other hand, a number of regular army units and political leaders outside the inner circle crossed over to the opposition. Libya settled into a period of protracted civil war. NATO and the West soon gave their support to the anti-Qaddafi camp, and after a long period of inconclusive battles, the rebels took control of Tripoli on August 21st.

Similar to other states encountering popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, the military response in Libya was the key variable which determined the outcome of political-social conflict. The Libyan military response was unlike that of Tunisia and Egypt, however. While the military behavior of Tunisia and Egypt were widely unified, the Libyan military response was bifurcated along regular and elite unit lines. Elite military units had high restraints and low interests in disobeying Qaddafi's orders. Thus, they exhibited "fervent support" for the regime. The two major elite military units, the 9th and 32nd mechanized brigades, were the only military units intact when the war began.¹⁰⁶ Regular military units had high restraints and high interests in disobeying Qaddafi's orders. Thus, they exhibited "fractured support" for the regime. Some regular military units, such as those in the East and around the Tobruk region, defected wholesale to the rebel movement when their leaders made their defections known.¹⁰⁷ Most regular military units simply disintegrated: some joined the rebel movement, others joined Qaddafi, and still others remained at their posts. When queried about the whereabouts of his men, one officer stated that 10 percent had joined Qaddafi, 30 percent went underground to join the rebels, and 60 percent remained at their post with their fellow soldiers, refusing to take sides.¹⁰⁸

The Libyan Military's High Restraints

The focus of Qaddafi's regime was self-preservation. During his forty-two years of leading Libya, Qaddafi had survived at least two documented coups (1975 and 1993) and countless undocumented ones. He was a survivor. A cornerstone of regime security was emplacing a high number of restraints on his security forces, including the military. Qaddafi did this through ethnic control, budget oversight, military organization, the periodic and random rotation and selection of senior officers, and oversight from other security institutions.

One notable scholar has described Libya as a hodge-podge of different tribes, languages, clans, regions, and cities.¹⁰⁹ Libya has roughly 140 tribes and influential families who are loosely connected by the arbitrary boundaries drawn by Western powers. Qaddafi maintained control of his military by using a center hub and spoke approach with his family at the center and key tribes along the periphery.¹¹⁰

Qaddafi's sons, Saadi and Khamis, commanded the elite military units, the 9th and 32nd brigades, respectively. Qaddafi also relied on his tribe, Qadhadhfa,¹¹¹ as well as the powerful Warfalla and Magharha tribes to fill key security and political positions. His close advisers were referred to as Rijal al-Khaimah ("the men of the tent") and included General Khuwaildi al-Humaidi (whose daughter married Saadi Qaddafi), the general inspector of the armed forces; Mustafa Kharroubi, former head of the military intelligence; and Abu Bakr Yunis Jabr, commander in chief of the armed forces.¹¹² Qaddafi's reliance on other tribes was essential since the Qadhadhfa tribe numbered only 125,000 out of a country of roughly six million. Even though Qaddafi publically downplayed the role of tribes in a socialist Arab society, behind the scenes he used patronage (such as key military positions) to maintain their loyalty.¹¹³

Qaddafi also leveraged the military's budget and organization to restrain military ambition. The annual defense budget was 2.8% of GDP, yet it was widely used for the acquisition of weapons and equipment and not for training.¹¹⁴ While the elite military units centered on Tripoli received better weapons and equipment than that of the regular units in the East and South,¹¹⁵ the regular military was widely sidelined in Qaddafi's regime. Military units outside of Tripoli were issued only one uniform, rarely shot their weapons, and usually focused on base defense, not tactical maneuvers.¹¹⁶ In a rare window into Libyan decision making, Sayf al-Islam confirmed this regime strategy when he lamented to Russian TV that he wished [the regime] had spent more money on the military.¹¹⁷

Qaddafi also ensured that the military remained a decentralized organization, lest a rogue general wrest military control away from the regime. Regular army units were organized around the battalion. Among these were ten armored, ten mechanized, twenty-two artillery, and seven air defense artillery battalions.¹¹⁸ A battalion is a smaller level of organization which has a limited fighting capability than compared to other Northern African militaries organized around the brigade or higher echelons. Abu Bakr Yunis Jabr was the commander in chief of the armed forces, but Qaddafi exercised wide informal control over the activities and deployments of military units. Even the elite 9th and 32nd brigades would be split into battalions for training and deployments. During the uprising, sources witnessed piecemealed deployments of the 32nd brigade which would fight alongside other security, militia, and mercenary units. This presented an unusual sight of T-72s and pick-up trucks rolling down the highways together.¹¹⁹ Finally, Qaddafi would often rotate and replace unit commanders in an unpredictable manner.¹²⁰ Qaddafi wanted every military commander to be afraid and uncertain if others inside the military were reporting on them.¹²¹ In sum, Qaddafi's exercise of budgetary and organizational control over the military ensured military officers gave their fidelity to the regime over one another.

Finally, Qaddafi created a myriad of internal security organizations to monitor military (and each other's) activity as well as to counter military strength. An important monitoring service was the Revolutionary Committees Movement which was initially created in the 1970s to safeguard Qaddafi's Arab revolution. They were to be philosophical champions of Qaddafi's pan-Arab socialist philosophy, a third way other than American capitalism or Soviet communism. However, they also came to serve as a paramilitary security force which allowed Qaddafi to place a battalion in each province to serve as informers on individual, tribal, and military activity.¹²² An organization named the External Security Organization (ESO) or "brown shirts" was another organization which embedded into local neighborhoods in order to gather intelligence.¹²³ Probably the most despised organization by the military was the domestic military intelligence, which served primarily to prevent coups. Al-Obeidi, a colonel and

the first officer who defected from the Libyan regime, was threatened by the military intelligence and ultimately removed from his senior military position in the East and sent to a remote military position in the West when he became aware that Qaddafi was placing mines on the Libyan-Egyptian border and blaming the Italians for it. Military intelligence (DMI) officials would also accompany Libyan military delegations when they traveled outside the country in order to observe their loyalties to Qaddafi.¹²⁴

To counter the military's fighting capability, and thus coup potential, Qaddafi also constituted a web of confusing and redundant security forces. There was a Quwwat al-Muqawama al-Shabiya, the People's Militia, also created in the 1970s which was a 40,000 strong reserve force used to patrol rural areas and protect key infrastructure. There was also a Revolutionary Guard Corps, named al-Haras al-Thawri, which was comprised of 3,000 soldiers, main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, and helicopters.¹²⁵ Qaddafi also relied on mercenaries from sub-Saharan Africa, although the first time he used them internal to Libya was to quell the popular uprising in 2011.¹²⁶ Finally, there was an elite Presidential Guard unit to protect Qaddafi directly, eight well-equipped security battalions which provide state security in major cities and military regions, and six paratroop and commando battalions used for special missions.¹²⁷ In short, both the elite and regular army units faced high restraints. Not only did Qaddafi exercise ethnic and budgetary control over the military, but he also organized the military internally and security forces externally to keep the military weak and uninterested or afraid to change the status quo.

The Libyan Military's High Interests

The popular uprisings presented the regular army with a rare opportunity to improve their position in society. Libya's institutions, outside those of Qaddafi's inner circle of political and military advisors, were quite anemic. Those serving in regular military units placed their fidelity with that of their region and tribe, not to Qaddafi as an individual, his much-maligned philosophy of Arab socialism, or to the corporate identity of the military as a profession. Unsurprisingly, elite military units had a low interest in replacing Qaddafi because his demise would mean an end to their source of social and economic largesse. On the other hand, those in regular military units had a high interest in replacing Qaddafi because their economic and social standing could not sink any lower.

The social and economic standing of those serving in regular military units was lackluster. Most Libyans viewed service in the regular military as a job of last resort. One diplomat characterized society's view of the military as the "big blah."¹²⁸ The military had weapons and equipment, yet they were not feared, loved, or respected. There was conscription, yet draft dodging was ubiquitous.¹²⁹ Military units outside of Tripoli's "ring of steel" of elite units were poorly equipped and funded. Officers only had one uniform which they would only wear on special occasions, and it was quite common to meet with officers in civilian attire. Training was nonexistent. Conscripts would go on active duty once a year only to spend a week standing guard at a military base, not firing their weapons or conducting military exercises. Military officers were also poorly compensated. A Libyan colonel in the regular army made \$500-600 a month, a salary widely eclipsed by those who served in the private sector. Serving as an officer was considered a lower-middle class job, and officers and soldiers alike usually worked two other jobs to supplement their military pay.¹³⁰

Qaddafi attempted to elevate the social standing of the military, but Libyans ridiculed these attempts behind closed doors. On 1 September 2009 Qaddafi celebrated the 40th anniversary of his coup with a large military parade in Tripoli. However, there were more people in parade than those in the stands. Qaddafi has also tried to incorporate a famous saying from Oman Muktar, a famous Libyan figure who fought Italian colonial efforts in the 1920s. Oman Muktar rallied people to resist Italian colonialism with the phrase “victory or martyrdom.” Qaddafi used this phrase to symbolize that the military belonged to the Libyan people. However, Libyans widely regarded this phrase as a symbolic sham.¹³¹

Not only did those who served in regular military units chafe at their low social and economic status in Libya compared to those in other sectors, but they also resented their second class status to those in elite military and security units. Those serving in elite security units received higher salaries and benefits. It was not unusual for them to receive bonuses from Libya’s oil wealth. Qaddafi would also give them subsidies for homes, cars, food, and fuel. Elite security units also had superior equipment and training. For example, the 9th and 32nd brigades were equipped with T-72s while regular army units dealt with antiquated T-55s.¹³² Even Qaddafi’s Revolutionary Committees, widely despised by most Libyans, received higher pay than military officers, even though most were recruited directly out of high school and only received six months of training.¹³³

The military response to the popular uprisings in Libya is best characterized as “fractured support.” The high level of restraints coupled with a high level of interests created a muddled response from individuals and units in the military. Some individuals and units in the regular Libyan military defected to the opposition due to high interests in improving the status quo. Those in elite military units pledged their allegiance to Qaddafi because the outcome of the revolution was uncertain and sticking with Qaddafi presented the highest probability of sustaining their long term interests. Most sat on the fence due to high levels of restraints and the uncertain outcome. These individuals and military units exhibited a reactive and slow decision-making process until it became clearer which side would best maximize their interests. Qaddafi’s decision to crackdown on the protesters in Benghazi crystallized the zero-sum struggle, which quickly moved the armed forces into either a pro or anti-Qaddafi corner.

CASE STUDY: THE SYRIAN MILITARY’S “FERVENT SUPPORT” OF THE ASSAD REGIME

Distinct from its regional counterparts, the elite Syrian military has withstood mounting strife and domestic unrest since the Arab Spring ignited in Dara’a in mid-March. With a minority-led government and military, secretive but ubiquitous security services, little connection to the United States, and a President, Bashar Assad, who has enjoyed a measure of popular support, Syria exhibits some unique features that distinguish it from its neighbors. Nonetheless, underlying dissatisfaction with a corrupt government, high unemployment, high inflation, wealth disparities in the population, and a lack of political freedoms unleashed powerful but fractured waves of public dissent that have challenged Assad and Baath Party rule. The military’s elite, dominated by Alawite officers personally and professionally indebted to the regime, have displayed fervent support for the regime’s policies because of its perception that its survival is codependent with that of the regime.

Understanding the Syrian military's response presents a host of problems and is likely a fundamental reason why it is little studied or understood. The regime is secretive, opaque, and oversees a highly controlled police state. With power highly centralized in this authoritarian state, Assad and a handful of other Ba'ath Party leaders in the regime's inner circle have used state security services, in combination with military units, to brutally stamp out demonstrations. With fabrications on both sides, little foreign media, and blame cast on regional players to include Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Islamists, the long-term decision making calculus of the military remains an open question. So far, however, military elites have staunchly supported the regime, calculating that there is little to gain and much to lose from switching sides.

Hardly a unitary actor despite misleading reporting in the press, there are several militaries within Syria. Security forces compose the "first line of defense" for the regime; the intelligence services are another chief actor, and finally the regular army, which serves nominally to protect the state from external threats, particularly Israel.¹³⁴ Within the army, elite units like the Republican Guard and the 4th Mechanized Division (both commanded by the Assad's brother Maher) form an inner ring protecting Damascus. Composed of around 200,000 soldiers (of which around 175,000 are conscripts), the military's actions have been further confused by the involvement of a pernicious armed militia group called the "Shabiha" who appear to be Alawi and are doing much of the regime's dirty work.¹³⁵

The regime itself occupies a precarious position. Dominated by elites from the Alawi sect, a people who compose 1.5 to 3 million of Syria's 22 million people, the country's leadership has been able to garner support through co-opting the Sunni, Christian, and business communities. However it suffers from a lack of "confident primacy" due to its minority status.¹³⁶ It is moreover perceived by many as having a set of interests separate from those of the people.¹³⁷ Its insecurity has gradually deepened over the course of mounting popular unrest as different segments of the population and even the military itself face the dilemma of how staunchly to support the regime.

After the ouster of Ben Ali in early January and Mubarak's fall the following month, demonstrations evolved in a much more piecemeal manner and were much slower to spread across Syria. Even after protests began in March, months later Damascenes remained largely unaffected by the severe repression taking place. The uprising can broadly be interpreted as a manifestation of broad dissatisfaction with the regime rather than a violent civil war or conflict among religious sects.¹³⁸ A 2010 poll suggested that the underlying causes of the unrest stem from four basic grievances: a politically and economically weak state, poor governance, widespread corruption, and anger over the State of Emergency that had not been lifted since 1963.¹³⁹

Tensions first came to a head on Friday, March 18, when protesters demonstrated against the government's treatment of 15 children who had scrawled "The people want to bring down the regime" on their school wall in Dara'a.¹⁴⁰ Security forces killed six people over the course of the day in that Sunni-dominated town in southern Syria; the ensuing funeral procession quickly morphed into a volatile protest as 20,000 people joined ranks. Spiraling violence led to a total of between 15-50 deaths in Dara'a. As protests spread to other locations in the country in April the death toll reached into the hundreds. Clips on *youtube* which apparently documented extreme acts of violence against civilians abounded. The use of military units to support security services became more widespread as exemplified by tanks deploying to

Dara'a on April 25, but conflicting reports and the sequestering of the media made it unclear which units were involved. The month of May saw an increase in the use of lethal force as military units put down protests in Homs, Baniyas, and other locations. According to unconfirmed reporting the military (working alongside the shabiha) arrested men, raided houses, cut power and phone lines, and abused protesters. In June, the uprising spread northward, highlighted by the military's successful fight to retake the town of Jisr al Shoghour.¹⁴¹ While protests and repression have erupted over the course of the end of the summer, the fall, and the winter, they have not coalesced into a nation-wide and unified uprising despite the protesters' popular chant: "One! One! One! Syrians are one!"¹⁴² Protests instead have been widespread but uncoordinated. Surprisingly, Damascus and Aleppo (by far the largest cities in Syria) have largely escaped the growing reach of this social movement.

Assad has responded to mounting violence by dispatching security services and the military to isolate and suppress protesters, usually through brutal means. He has offered limited political concessions such as the dismissal of the cabinet on March 30, the lifting of the Emergency Law on April 19, increased subsidies on heating fuel, a vote on a new constitution on February 26, and promises for further reforms, but none have sufficed to quell widespread angst. The military's involvement, according to a mid-level U.S. government official, has been characterized by regular army units establishing an outer cordon while Special Forces and military intelligence raid houses, employ snipers, and abduct opposition leaders. According to this source regular army units are not trusted to do the "bloody work" because they tend to be too sympathetic with the population.¹⁴³ Moreover, a former Army attaché in Damascus asserted that the military's tactics were not new: "the technique they used to suppress the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s is the same technique they are using now."¹⁴⁴

Attempts by U.S. diplomats to influence Assad have fallen flat. In his 31 January interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Assad bristled at the notion of U.S. influence. "Syria...does not accept any dictates from the outside. ... nothing has changed in reality, even with regard to the bilateral relations, because what we have been doing for the last two years is just signals."¹⁴⁵ His insistence on the ineffectiveness of U.S. attempts to leverage the regime has not waned; U.S. sanctions imposed in 2004, 2006, and in the past year along with executive orders on April 29 and May 18 have only hardened the regime's crackdown rather than incentivizing reform. U.S. Ambassador Ford's abbreviated tour in Damascus has likewise brought few tangible results.

Despite numerous reports of defections by soldiers and some junior officers, the military elite have fervently supported the regime's suppression of the popular uprisings. Almost none of the heavily Alawi-dominated military elite have turned against the regime, and very few mid-level officers have done so. Lack of credible data, however, complicates any assessment of the extent of the defections. In early July 2011 Wissam Tarif, director of the Syrian human rights group INSAN claimed "We're talking about around 2,000 soldiers, maybe more, who left [the military]."¹⁴⁶ Thousands more claim to have defected since then. Reports of the formation of the Khalid ibn al-Waleed Brigade, Hamza al-Khateeb Brigade, Al-Qashoosh Brigade, the "Free Syrian Army" and the "Free Officers Movement" from among defectors also abound.¹⁴⁷ Notably, First Lieutenant Abd Al-Razzaq Muhammad Tlas, a Fifth Division officer from a powerful family with ties to the regime defected in early June. In his youtube video he lamented, "I can no longer be a part of the Arab Syrian army, in light of what the army is doing in Dara'a and elsewhere."¹⁴⁸ A U.S. government source said that military leaders hailing from eastern tribes have begun

to defect as well.¹⁴⁹ Claims of a clear split developing in the military have been unsubstantiated, however; defections have been largely comprised of individuals acting on their own moral conscience or among groups of soldiers who have no ability to mount serious resistance because of their severe lack of training, lack of equipment, and ability to mobilize.

Despite a death toll of over 9,000 Syrians since the uprising began, and despite widespread castigation by the international community including the Arab League, the regime and its loyal military elite have remained resolute, repressive, and committed to a path from which there are few opportunities to escape. The military's best chance to maintain a position of influence, it has calculated, is to side with the regime. Their low interest in changing the status quo overrides any chafing they might feel due to the high level of restraints imposed by Assad.

The Syrian Military's High Restraints

Data concerning restraints on the military's organization, budget authorities, rotation of commanders, and regional placement is mixed. In terms of organization, the army's three corps are subdivided into three mechanized and seven armor divisions, one special forces infantry division, one Republican Guard armored division, one Special Forces Group (division equivalent) and ten artillery regiments. The 3rd and 4th armored divisions and the Republican Guard division (commanded by Alawis close to Assad) are the most combat-ready and have been employed to put down protesters. Across the board, however, the military is hampered by poor equipment maintenance, limited training, an ineffective logistics structure,¹⁵⁰ and a low per capita defense expenditure that ranks Syria 14th out of 19 states in the region.¹⁵¹ Since almost 90% of the Army is composed of conscripts who serve for only 18 months, the effectiveness of the military as a whole is poor, but the relative power of career military officers is enhanced. Conscripts are generally sent to areas away from their hometowns as well.¹⁵² Organizationally, then, restraints on the majority of the army and the power of its conscripts are very high whereas its elite and Alawi heavy units have more freedom of maneuver.

Perhaps to avoid the history of coups in 1954,' 63,' 66, and '70, Bashar al Assad, according to a local journalist, manipulates bureaucratic and legal processes to restrain the military elite. Assad rotates senior officers often (contributing to their incompetence).^{153 154} Both Bashar al Assad and his father, Hafez, have consolidated power through instituting the emergency law, exercising their authorities as commander-in-chief, and appointing and dismissing military officers. Even though the emergency law gives the military virtually unrestricted power relative to the populace, the law grants even more power to Assad relative to the military. Although the constitution calls on the military to "[defend] the homeland's territory and ... [protect] the revolution's objectives of unity, freedom, and socialism,"¹⁵⁵ in practice the regime has emphasized only two functions: to defeat Israel and protect the regime.¹⁵⁶ Legal and constitutional restraints furthermore carry little weight because of the lack of checks and balances in the Syrian regime.

A principle restraint on the military derives from widespread patrimonialism in the regime. First, evidence seems to support a highly centralized officer selection process that is conditioned on allegiance to the regime. As Mara Karlin, a former member of the National Security Council, states, "this is not a meritocracy or a professional institution ... it is based on patrimony and sectarian ties."¹⁵⁷ A small fraction of career officers hail from minority groups, but key posts such as air traffic controllers and most

military commands are assigned to Alawites, says CSIS's Aram Nerguizian. Sunnis are assigned to the periphery rather than the defense of Damascus, few Sunni officers are granted promotion,¹⁵⁸ and Alawites serve in the military's elite units such as the 4th Armored Division, Republican Guard,¹⁵⁹ and Special Forces.

A cursory survey of officers in influential positions confirms Assad's promotion of Alawites close to the regime. In 2009, Assef Shawkat, a military officer married to Bashar's sister, was promoted to Lieutenant General and appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the armed forces. He was singled out by the U.S. Treasury when it froze his assets in 2006.¹⁶⁰ The 3rd Armored Division was formerly commanded by General Shafiq Fayyad, a cousin of Hafez al Assad.¹⁶¹ The 4th Armored Division and the Republican Guard are commanded by the President's brother Maher. Hafiz Makhoul is a cousin of the president and head of the Damascus branch of general intelligence. Iyad Makhoul, a cousin of the president, is an officer in general intelligence. Manaf Tlass, a close associate of Bashar, is a high-ranking officer in the Republican Guard.¹⁶² Assad's first cousins Fawaz al-Assad and Munzer al-Assad are reported to be the leaders of the militia group Shabiha.¹⁶³ Rather than serving as an independent and professional institution then, the military is best characterized as an organization manipulated by Assad and his close advisors to serve their interests rather than those of the state.

Finally, the military is further constrained by the Assad family's centralization of power. Bashar has been able to gradually consolidate power at the pinnacle of the Ba'ath Party over the last decade.¹⁶⁴ The "inner circle" of his brother, Maher, his brother-in-law and the current army deputy chief of staff Assef Shawkat, and Rami Makhoul, Bashar's wealthy cousin, is backed up by a second rank called the "sons of power" comprised of the rich sons of former military officers close to Hafez al Assad.¹⁶⁵ Even within the military, power is determined more by proximity to the regime than military rank. One of Assad's former assistants says that the president's family pays little heed to the state's formal power structures and instead "controls the country itself."¹⁶⁶

Far from the most powerful institution in the government, the military is checked by Syria's four security directorates: Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, State Security, and Political Security. While the first two services are led by Alawites, the last two are led by Sunnis, likely in an attempt to placate the public. General Hisham Ikhtiya, head of the National Security Council, oversees these four directorates and has a direct line to Assad.¹⁶⁷ As an example of the antipathy between the army and intelligence services, a former U.S. Army attaché said that when he met a high-ranking Syrian corps commander, the general disparaged his service as a military intelligence officer since the Syrian general couldn't imagine an intelligence service that served any function other than to ensure loyalty to the regime.¹⁶⁸ In Syria's case, says Andrew Terrill, there is little potential for the army to "show an independent voice and start to tell the regime what to do."¹⁶⁹

Analysis of the military's role in society demonstrates a high level of restraints that might make it seem profitable for the military to side with "the street" against the Assad regime. The degree of restraints, however, coupled with the inability to mobilize widespread support have contributed to a situation in which prospects for elites to successfully oppose Assad and craft a more desirable future are dim.

The Syrian Military's Low Interests

In addition to the effective restraints imposed by the regime that have led to greater retrenchment by the military in support of Assad, the military also has few interests in seeing a dramatic change to the status quo.¹⁷⁰ The Syrian military occupies a peculiar position in Syrian society that does not clearly indicate an overwhelming interest in overturning the current arrangement. On the one hand, the military is accorded respect as an institution that has protected the state against Zionist aggression, but on the other it is feared because of its historic propensity to use repressive methods.

The military cannot help but hope to regain some of its past status as an honorable, proud, and trusted institution. Its employment by the regime to brutally put down internal unrest is well-documented; its involvement in killing around 20,000 people in Hama in 1982 and 30 in the 2004 Kurdish uprising are but two of the most salient examples.¹⁷¹ Violence directed at the Army since the beginning of the popular uprising in 2011 (as contrasted with Egypt and Tunisia where the military was not targeted) is indicative of the antipathy of the populace.¹⁷² Its status has also declined, in contrast to the business sector, since its zenith in the 1970s when it enjoyed substantial Soviet economic and military support. Over subsequent decades, Soviet support dried up, its equipment fell into disrepair, and “its reputation plummeted.” Bashar’s focus on corruption in the military rather than other institutions as well as the humiliation of abandoning Lebanon in 2005 contributed to legitimate grounds for dissatisfaction in the army.¹⁷³ Israel’s assassination of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in 2004, its destruction of the Syrian nuclear reactor in 2007, and the U.S. cross-border raid in Abu Kamal in 2008 have all contributed to the declining prestige of the military.¹⁷⁴ A source close to the regime claims, “Military officers, together with the army as a whole, have been on a steep decline. They used to be able to pick up their phones to get whatever service they requested. Today, a minister won’t feel compelled to take a call from an army general.”¹⁷⁵

Despite its declining prominence in Syrian society, however, the military still enjoys some popular support. The national anthem, sung by many protesters, celebrates the military as “defenders of our home ... [and] the lion-abode of Arabism.”¹⁷⁶ According to a former U.S. Army Attaché in Damascus, society respects the military for its valiant efforts to defend the state against steep odds and an Israeli military backed by the United States. The mantra of the regime and in military training is “you are the only force that protects the Arab world against Zionism.”¹⁷⁷ A military museum in Ben Alrama emphasizes the military’s prestige, highlighting a victory in a 30 minute fight in the Golan Heights during the 1973 War before the army’s crushing defeat.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, the military is much more trusted by the populace than the security services, which have carried out the vast majority of domestic repression.

There is little evidence that military elites would want to drastically alter the status quo merely for reasons of achieving greater social mobility. Even though proximity to Assad trumps any other measure of influence, military elites have enjoyed relatively high social standing in Syrian society. Officers see the military as a social safety net and usually do not retire until their 50s or 60s. Even though many military officers come from lower or middle class families, their level of pay is commensurate with other government employees. Subsidized food, housing, and social clubs, coupled with “graft” on the side usually contributed to a decent quality of life.¹⁷⁹ A former U.S. Army attaché recalls attending the graduation of a family’s son from the Syrian military academy and observing the pride of the family in their son. They viewed his position as a means to access a “wide social network” and as a means to “make it big from rural areas ... now their [son] could do great things.”¹⁸⁰ Far different from the

conscripts, who are viewed by society as “pitiful” and “hapless,” who earn little pay and sometimes resort to begging for handouts,¹⁸¹ military elites had little reason to expect that supporting protesters would lead to any measurable improvement in their position in society.

Even though the military had little autonomy under Bashar’s autocratic regime, it has not displayed a desire to gain more freedom of maneuver under a new regime. We were unable to find any evidence that the military wanted to have more control over the economy, its decision-making abilities, or influence over promotions. It is likely that military elites would want to increase the army budget to ameliorate the impoverished condition of its conscripts and the deterioration of its equipment, and the military also wanted to make power gains relative to the intelligence services. However, there has been no guarantee that supporting “the street” would result in any more autonomy or political influence. In short, military elites have thus far vehemently supported Bashar’s regime “because they’re scared to death of what’s going to happen if Alawite control ends in Syria.”¹⁸²

Military elites in Syria, as a rule, have little influence over political institutions. But in a regime where power is granted to individuals based upon their ties to Assad, the fact that Bashar’s brother Maher (the military’s most powerful commander) and his brother-in-law Assef Shawkat (the army deputy chief of staff) are arguably his two closest confidantes means that the military’s interests are secure. The “sons of power” whose fathers were former military officers also likely favor military elites. Bashar, and of course his father Hafez, are military men as well. Even if its interests were not protected by these key players, however, leaders across the military are caught on the horns of a dilemma. For those units who have been involved in the brutal suppression of protesters, there is little chance that they will be spared retribution from the populace if the regime falls. Reports of attacks on army units in Banyas and Homs have substantiated this fear.¹⁸³ Even leaders who have been confined to the barracks or relatively quiescent areas because of their questionable willingness to carry out the desires of the regime fear they may be tarred with the same reputation as their more ruthless counterparts. Assad may be calculating that forcing the military into this dilemma will make it even more committed to his preservation.

Despite suffering from a declining status in Syrian society, the military elite have little interest in siding with protesters during the Arab Spring. With little to gain and much to lose, the military has fervently supported the Assad regime due to its low interest in overturning the status quo paired with the strict restraints imposed by the Assad regime. Increasingly the military elite views its response to the Arab Spring as a zero-sum game; not only are the results of the struggle uncertain, but its close association with the regime and the brutal crackdown have left it with little alternative other than wholesale support for Assad. The high restraints employed by Assad and his circle of power have been reinforced by the military elite’s low interests in overturning the status quo; as a result military elites have staunchly supported the regime. Just as Bashar has restricted his own freedom of maneuver with limited concessions and a breach of trust with the populace, so too military elites have no good alternatives; they are in a position in which their survival may require them to hold onto power at all costs.

CONCLUSION

What explains the variance in military behavior during popular uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East? Contrary to models which tout the internal characteristics of the military, the external political, social and economic conditions, the influence of Western economic and military assistance, or

the transformative experience of educating officers in Western schools, we have argued that it is a matter of political restraints and interests of the military which determines the likelihood of military intervention in the political domain. A higher level of restraints on the military will result in a) more reactive and slower decision-making and b) a lower propensity to intervene. A higher level of interests, on the other hand, will result in a higher likelihood of military intervention.

Combining the two independent variables led to four distinct cases. The results in two cases are most intuitive: low restraints reinforced by high interests would present few obstacles and significant incentives to siding with the protesters; the Tunisian military’s response exhibited this logic. On the other hand, high restraints reinforced by low interests would severely constrain military decision-making and disincentivize turning on the regime. Syria’s military seems to best evidence this case. In situations of high restraints and high interests we predicted the military would be reactive and slow to make decisions, waiting to see what strategy would best ensure self-preservation. Since there is a higher bar for the military to intervene on behalf of protesters, militaries will most likely defend or exhibit “fractured support” for the regime; some individuals and units will side with the protesters, while other individuals and units will remain loyal to the regime. Libya appears to follow this behavior. Finally, in cases of low restraints coupled with low interests we predicted an ambiguous outcome that could result in the fracturing of the military or its decision to side with protesters. The military will exhibit a higher propensity to side with protesters since its freedom of maneuver and broader ability to influence outcomes would allow it greater ability to overturn the status quo. Egypt’s “reluctance” to support the people’s demands is an example of a low restraint, low interest outcome.

A quick survey of all of the states in the region confronted by widespread protests lends support to this model. In eight of ten cases it seems to accurately explain outcomes seen thus far. Due to space limitations we did not explain the unique situations faced by Algeria and Iraq

Fit of Model to States in MENA Region

Country	Restraints	Interests	Military Supported	Fit?
Algeria	Low	Low	Regime	No
Bahrain	High	Low	Regime	Yes
Egypt	Low	Low	Protesters	Yes
Iran	High	High	Regime	Yes
Iraq	Low	Low	Regime	No
Jordan	High	Low	Regime	Yes
Libya	High	High	Regime / split	Yes
Syria	High	Low	Regime	Yes
Tunisia	Low	High	Protesters	Yes
Yemen	High	Low	Regime	Yes

	Restraints High	Restraints Low
Interests High	<p>Outcome: Ambiguous; Fracture or Side with Regime</p> <p>Libya</p> <p>“fractured support”</p> <p>Other: Iran</p>	<p>Outcome: Side with Protesters</p> <p>Tunisia</p> <p>“ambitious support”</p>
Interests Low	<p>Outcome: Side with Regime (regime doubly secure)</p> <p>Syria</p> <p>“fervent support”</p> <p>Others: Bahrain, Jordan, Yemen</p>	<p>Outcome: Ambiguous; Fracture or Side with Protesters</p> <p>Egypt</p> <p>“reluctant support”</p>

Further research should explore the following: (1) what are the interests and restraints of other militaries? We cannot assume that the template of interests and restraints outlined in this paper apply to other regions or other time periods. Are some restraints and interests more important than others in explaining military behavior in periods of social unrest? (2) How best can the United States influence a foreign military’s restraints and interests? How influential are IMET, military training, and funding in the decision making calculus of foreign militaries? (3) How well and in what ways is the military playing its new role as “arbiter” between the regime and society? We need a new body of literature with new terms to describe this new role the military finds itself in. (4) Finally, how well does this interests/restraints model apply to other regions and other time periods?

The United States has been widely criticized, both at home and abroad, for failing to create a grand strategy to guide U.S. foreign policy across the Middle East. All too often, the United States reacts to events as they unfold across the region instead of setting the conditions which might strengthen (or at least preserve) U.S. interests despite ongoing political, economic, social and security issues. The United States suffers from a lack of a viable grand strategy in the Middle East and North Africa in part because the United States simply does not understand the decision making calculus of governments and institutions in the region. Our research offers a clear-eyed assessment of military behavior in this strategic area. By understanding the restraints and interests of MENA militaries, U.S. policymakers should be more equipped to understand and predict the viability of political regimes in periods of widespread social unrest and, therefore, devise a policy response which improves or preserves U.S. interests in the region.

Annex B: IMET Participation Compared with Military Response

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total IMET participants	size of military in 2009	% of military participation in IMET	military response *
Iran											0	523000	0.00	
Syria											0	293000	0.00	G
Libya								1			1	76000	0.00	G
Saudi Arabia	35	4	12	12	12	7	62	28	15	51	226	222000	0.10	G
Kuwait	65	3	8	3	2	2	2	2		1	86	16000	0.54	
Algeria	36	22		273	104	76	122	66	34	64	797	147000	0.54	
UAE		54	60	17	12	5	158	11	3	15	335	51000	0.66	
Morocco	110	172	259	559	119	153	176	164	162	125	1999	196000	1.02	
Iraq	22	51	18	9071	121	246	160	90	130	96	10005	577000	1.73	
Qatar	20	109	10	20	7	2	70	8	5	17	268	12000	2.23	
Egypt	1540	1347	960	1315	1066	1168	1202	1493	768	797	11656	469000	2.49	P
Yemen	108	38	59	117	376	236	474	133	91	50	1682	67000	2.51	G
Oman	367	91	92	99	36	124	261	139	96	113	1418	43000	3.30	
Israel	820	842	739	733	1099	491	516	219	743	653	6855	177000	3.87	
Tunisia	148	113	271	94	155	152	165	123	149	59	1429	36000	3.97	P
Jordan	670	336	231	281	335	495	511	592	452	452	4355	101000	4.31	G
Lebanon	178	94	212	201	166	513	206	230	277	362	2439	56000	4.36	
Bahrain	87	90	35	96	110	68	294	135	106	129	1150	8000	14.38	G

* military response coded simply as G = military supported government or P = military supported protesters; cell highlighted if military response did not correlate with increasing level of IMET participation

** IMET numbers are listed by fiscal year; data available at U.S. Department of State "Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest" webpage: <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/fmtrpt/index.htm>

*** source: International Institute of Strategic Studies Military Balance 2009; available at <http://www.iiss.org/publications/military-balance/the-military-balance-2009/>

education, graduate and senior officer level education, technical schooling, participation in sessions at the Near East South Asia Center, the Africa Center for Strategic studies, National Defense University, service academy exchanges, and Joint Combined Exchange Training

Annex C: Total US Military and Economic Assistance to MENA States Compared with Military Response

Country	2006			2007			2008			2009			avg assistance as % of annual military expenditure	military response *
	Total US Econ and Mil Assist	Defense Expend	Assist as % of Mil Expend	Total US Econ and Mil Assist	Def Expend	Assist as % of Mil Expend	Total US Econ and Mil Assist	Def Expend	Assist as % of Mil Expend	Total US Econ and Mil Assist	Def Expend	Assist as % of Mil Expend		
Saudi Arabia	2	29541	0.0	0.9	35466	0.0	0.7	38223	0.0	0.5	41276	0.0	0.00	G
Kuwait	0.7	5024	0.0	1.3	5250	0.0	0	6812	0.0	0.1	4184	0.0	0.01	
UAE	0.9	9482	0.0	11.5	11253	0.1	0.9	13733	0.0	0.4	7957	0.0	0.03	
Iran	3.6	8864	0.0	4.8	8040	0.1	7.3	9595	0.1	0.7	8636	0.0	0.05	
Qatar	1.4	1072	0.1	1.2	1266	0.1	0.4	1756	0.0	4	2500	0.2	0.10	
Algeria	3.9	3096	0.1	6.3	4270	0.1	12.9	5179	0.2	12.1	5281	0.2	0.19	
Oman	19.9	4076	0.5	15.9	4376	0.4	23.8	4671	0.5	19.3	4018	0.5	0.46	
Syria	2.9	1330	0.2	2.4	1376	0.2	37	1941	1.9	18.6	2229	0.8	0.78	G
Libya	26.8	593	4.5	4.5	656	0.7	9.7	800	1.2	10.7	1708	0.6	1.76	G
Bahrain	18.6	532	3.5	18.8	579	3.2	5.2	553	0.9	9.1	742	1.2	2.23	G
Tunisia	11.3	502	2.3	11.6	491	2.4	10.9	534	2.0	15.6	532	2.9	2.40	P
Yemen	48.6	1066	4.6	41.3	1211	3.4	37.2	1492	2.5	174.9	883	19.8	7.57	G
Israel	2,718.70	11582	23.5	2,606.70	11607	22.5	2,461.90	14772	16.7	2,432.30	13,516.00	18.0	20.15	
Lebanon	186.3	589	31.6	217.2	733	29.6	201.2	751	26.8	215	1426	15.1	25.78	
Egypt	1,910.30	4337	44.0	2,048.50	4464	45.9	1,514.20	4562	33.2	1,784.60	4,118.00	43.3	41.62	P
Jordan	600.8	1115	53.9	562.7	1621	34.7	892.3	2127	42.0	816.3	1393	58.6	47.29	G
Morocco	57.1	2161	2.6	85.4	19	449.5	533.1	2977	17.9	243.8	3061	8.0	119.50	
Iraq	11,290.60		UNK	8,266.70		UNK	7,618.50		UNK	4,873.70	4,118.00	118.4	UNK	

Economic and Military Assistance from US Overseas Loans and Grants (the "Greenbook") available at: <http://gbk.eads.usaidalinet.gov/index.html>

2006 defense expenditure data from: International Institute of Strategic Studies Military Balance 2009; available at ; defense expenditure data for 2007-2009 available from

IJSS Military Balance 2011; available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/04597222.2011.559843> p. 474

Military assistance and defense expenditure data listed as obligations in millions, constant 2009 US Dollars

* military response coded simply as G = military supported government or P = military supported protesters; cell highlighted if military response did not correlate with increasing level of U.S. assistance

¹ For ethnic composition see S. E. Finer. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962; For rural vs. urban influences see Edward Shils, "The Military in the Political Development of the New States," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, eds. John Johnson Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962, 7-68; For middle class influence see Manfred Halpern, "Middle Eastern Armies and the New Middle Class," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, eds John Johnson Princeton: PUP, 1962, 277-315; For the size of a military see Edward Feit, *The Armed Bureaucrats*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973; For the role of Western education see Carol Atkinson, "Constructivist Implications of Material Power: Military Engagement and the Socialization of States, 1972-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 509-537; Carol Atkinson, "Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980-2006," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6 (2010): 1-22; For professionalism see Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, and Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: a Social and Political Portrait*, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960.

² See Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, on military cultural influences.

³ Information gleaned from multiple interviews with Middle East military officers and U.S. defense analysts over the summer of 2011.

⁴ Halpern, 1962.

⁵ Janowitz, 1960.

⁶ Huntington, 1957. Huntington believed that a form of 'objective control' would discourage military intervention into the political domain. Civilians would decide on the use of military force, but they would defer to the military in regards to strategy, tactics and logistics.

⁷ See "International Military Education and Training (IMET)," Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Last accessed on October 10, 2011 at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/65533.htm>.

⁸ Harold Lasswell, *Essays on the Garrison State*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997.

⁹ Gabriel Ben-Dor, "The Politics of Threat: Military Intervention in the Middle East," in *World Perspectives in the Sociology of the Military*, eds. George Kourvetaris and Betty Dobratz, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1977.

¹⁰ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

¹¹ Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36 (2) (Jan 2004): 144-149.

¹² *Ibid.*, 139-157.

¹³ Risa Brooks, "Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Adelphi Paper 324.

¹⁴ Finer, 1962, 84-85.

¹⁵ See Barry Rubin and Thomas Kearney, eds., *Armed Forces in the Middle East: Politics and Strategy*. London: Frank Cass, 2002, for an explanation of the first two phases of civil-military relations in the Middle East. Phase one was during the 1950 and 60s when the military was the prime challenger to non-democratic governments. Phase two was from the 1970s onward in which the military was the principal protector of authoritarian regimes.

¹⁶ See Birthe Hansen and Carsten Jensen, "Challenges to the Role of Arab Militaries," in *Developments in Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East*, Royal Danish Defense College, 2008, pgs, 29-46 for an explanation on this third phase of civil-military relations in the Middle East. In many ways, their research was an accurate prediction of civil-military strife which we are witnessing in the Arab Spring.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

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- ¹⁸ U.S. unipolarity in the region has decreased state and military power in the following ways: First, states are hesitant to invade other states. Second, states are hesitant to support international terrorism. Third, states are hesitant to develop nuclear weapons (Hansen and Jensen, 2008).
- ¹⁹ Interview with Alexis Arieff, Analyst in African Affairs, Congressional Research Service, July 19, 2011.
- ²⁰ Alexis Arieff, "Political Transition in Tunisia," *Congressional Research Service*, June 27, 2011, 7-8.
- ²¹ Interview with U.S. defense analysts, AFRICOM, 2011.
- ²² Interview with military official familiar with Tunisia's Armed Forces.
- ²³ A recent U.S. ambassador to Tunisia attended a dinner hosted by the Trebelsi family. A brother of Leyla Trebelsi (the wife of Ben Ali) hosted the dinner with Siberian tigers and French ice cream flown in overnight. He was a school teacher who made \$300/month. Interview with Elaine Paplos, Assistant Foreign Policy Advisor, Libya/Tunisia Desk Officer, AFRICOM J5, July 26, 2011.
- ²⁴ Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring." *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90 (May/June 2011).
- ²⁵ "RPT-Tunisia Army to Ben Ali Ousting-Reports," *Reuters News* 18 January 2011.
- ²⁶ Interview with Gawdat Bahgat, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington D.C., July 18, 2011.
- ²⁷ IISS, "The Military Balance," September 2011.
- ²⁸ "Note on Tunisia's Military," *Lenin's Tomb* January 17, 2011, <http://leninology.blogspot.com/2011/01/note-on-tunisia-military.html#>.
- ²⁹ "The Constitution of Tunisia." <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Tunisiaconstitution.pdf>. Last accessed on September 29, 2011.
- ³⁰ Interview with Gawdat Bahgat, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington D.C., July 18, 2011.
- ³¹ Interview with Lawrence Velte, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington D.C., July 18, 2011.
- ³² Interview with U.S. defense analysts familiar with the Tunisian Armed Forces.
- ³³ Information gleaned from "Tunisian Army Chief Promises to Protect Revolution." *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television* January 24, 2011; Interview with U.S. defense analysts.
- ³⁴ Interview with U.S. defense analysts familiar with the Tunisian Armed Forces.
- ³⁵ "Tunisian Army Chief Promises to Protect Revolution." *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television* January 24, 2011.
- ³⁶ Interview with U.S. defense analysts familiar with the Tunisian Armed Forces.
- ³⁷ A TAF lieutenant makes roughly \$300/month. English teachers in Tunisia make roughly \$2000/month. Interview with U.S. defense analysts familiar with the Tunisian Armed Forces.
- ³⁸ Eric Goldstein/Human Rights Watch, "Dismantling the Machinery of Oppression," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 16, 2011.
- ³⁹ Interview with U.S. defense analysts familiar with the Tunisian Armed Forces.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Interview with Major General Mohamed Elkesky, Egypt's Defense Attaché to the U.S., July 21, 2011.
- ⁴² Tefwick Aclimandos, "Reforming the Egyptian Security Services: A Review of the Press, Conventional Wisdom, and Rumors," Arab Reform Initiative, June 2011. http://www.arab-reform.net/IMG/pdf/Security_Sector_Reform_Tefwick_Aclimandos.pdf (accessed June 23, 2011), 2.

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- ⁴³ Interview with former U.S. Defense Attaché to Egypt, July 7, 2011.
- ⁴⁴ Interview with former U.S. Assistant Army Attaché to Egypt, July 12, 2011.
- ⁴⁵ “Egypt,” Jane’s World Armies.
- ⁴⁶ Elkeshky.
- ⁴⁷ Only 29% of young Egyptians from 15-29 polled in a Gallup poll in 2010 said Egyptian leadership maximized youth potential, down from 39% in 2009. Magali Rheault, “Young Egyptians Increasingly See Their Potential Untapped,” <http://www.gallup.com/poll/146018/young-egyptians-increasingly-potential-untapped.aspx> (accessed June 29, 2011).
- ⁴⁸ Interview with U.S. military expert on Egypt, July 2011.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Robert Springborg, “Game Over: the Chance for Democracy in Egypt is Lost,” http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/02/game_over_the_chance_for_democracy_in_egypt_is_lost (accessed September 30, 2011).
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- ⁵² “Statement of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (1),” February 10, 2011, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=53690> (accessed September 20, 2011).
- ⁵³ Interview with former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Daniel Kurtzer, June 30, 2011.
- ⁵⁴ Zinni.
- ⁵⁵ Fahmy.
- ⁵⁶ Ashraf Khalil wrote, “Even on Friday evening, when army tanks first deployed in the streets of Cairo, there were already scattered signs of friction ... I witnessed protesters openly berating and shoving soldiers -- who once again showed impressive patience. A few protesters behaved so aggressively toward the soldiers, without achieving a reaction, that I could only conclude the soldiers were under direct orders not to retaliate” in “Egypt’s Military in the Crosshairs,” *Foreign Policy* (January 30, 2011) http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/30/egypt_s_military_in_the_crosshairs.
- ⁵⁷ Kurtzer.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with General (retired) John Abizaid, former Commander, U.S. Central Command, September 8, 2011.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
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- ⁶² Kurtzer.
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- ⁶⁴ Elkeshky.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Zinni.
- ⁶⁷ The Military Balance 2011, 474.

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- ⁶⁸ Interview with a former U.S. Army Defense Attaché in Cairo, July 2011.
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Kenneth Pollack, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution, July 21, 2011.
- ⁷⁰ Aclimandos, 3.
- ⁷¹ Some of these enterprises are listed on the military's website at <http://www.mmc.gov.eg/>; some are observations of a U.S. military officer at U.S. Embassy Cairo.
- ⁷² Kurtzer.
- ⁷³ Abizaid.
- ⁷⁴ Ahmed Zaki Osman, "Powerhouse and Powerbrokers: A Profile of Egypt's Military," *Al Masry Al Youm*, June 29, 2011.
- ⁷⁵ Pollack.
- ⁷⁶ Aclimandos, 6.
- ⁷⁷ Khalil.
- ⁷⁸ "Statement of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (1)," February 10, 2011, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=53690> (accessed September 20, 2011).
- ⁷⁹ "The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces: Constitutional Proclamation," February 13, 2011, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=53709> (accessed September 20, 2011).
- ⁸⁰ Zinni.
- ⁸¹ Interview with former U.S. Assistant Army Attaché to Egypt, July 12, 2011.
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