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The Mukhabarat

by

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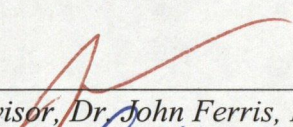
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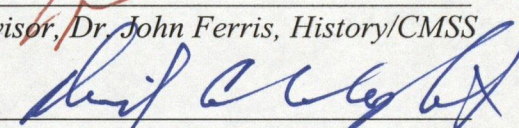
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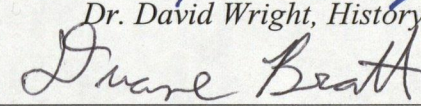
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Mukhabarat" submitted by Tammy Moharram in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Strategic Studies.



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The Mukhabarat are the agencies in Arab states that are in charge of intelligence gathering and state security. These states often have many such agencies which are extremely efficient, have their own armed forces, are well structured, and enjoy wide-ranging power and freedom in their actions. These agencies are designed to protect the state. Yet they are also a significant internal threat to their governments. This thesis explores the nature of the Mukhabarat, why they are a threat to their governments, how they came to be so powerful, and highlight various examples of the threat they pose. Jordan, Syria, and Saddam Hussein's Iraq are used as case studies, but the Mukhabarat threat can be found in most Arab states. Should their potential ever be realized, they have the power and means to remove their state leadership. The case of the Mukhabarat begs the question: who guards against the guardians?

The Mukhabarat

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The Mukhabarat

Introduction:

Many people talk about the Arab world, but few outside this dynamic region understand its government, politics or culture. Casual observers often are dazed by the confusing history and societies of this region, and the bureaucratic nightmare that characterizes Arab governments. Even experts get lost when navigating through it. This confusion occurs in part because Arab governments tend to be secretive about their internal structure and the activities of their state agencies. Mukhabarat (or intelligence/security) services are the most mysterious segments of these secretive governments. They also are the topic of this thesis. Large and powerful, Mukhabarat services are found in most Arab countries, where they can dominate the civil, political, and military spheres. There are few areas of government or society which the Mukhabarat can not influence, yet they have been virtually ignored by experts in the field of intelligence studies. One of the few exceptions to this rule, Andrew Rathmell, notes that “The need to study intelligence in the Arab world is especially pressing since these institutions are of the utmost domestic importance in a large number of Arab states.”¹ So too, most experts on Arab security or politics refer to the Mukhabarat only briefly or vaguely, instead focusing on regional conflicts or traditional internal threats. Generally, scholars discuss the Mukhabarat only in reference to particular activities like hiding weapons of mass destruction or conducting assassinations abroad. The topic is ignored when scholars discuss general issues like intelligence systems or structures. The descriptions of Mukhabarat services in the public domain are brief, and no one has attempted to analyze in detail the open source information available on

¹ Rathmell, Andrew. “Syria’s Intelligence Services: Origins and Development.” Journal of Conflict Studies, page 1.

Mukhabarat services in the Arab world. This gap is disturbing and unfortunate, considering the importance of the Mukhabarat to the politics of governments in the region. Without understanding the Mukhabarat and its roles in governments, one cannot really understand power and politics within most Arab states.

A key reason why scholars of intelligence studies or Arab politics have avoided deep discussion of the Mukhabarat is because available material is scarce. Most sources which mention the Mukhabarat generally are no more than a few pages long, and that space is heavily padded with examples of Mukhabarat exploits abroad. More information is available on Mukhabarat activities outside their borders than on their domestic activities, since when Mukhabarat agents are caught abroad foreign news services report the fact, while Mukhabarat domestic activities go unreported. Thus, the few researchers who examine these services concentrate on their international operations rather than their role in domestic security, but that is where their real power and potential lie.

Writings on Arab politics refer to Mukhabarat services casually in passing, remarking that they are crucial to the regime without explaining why they are significant, what they do, or how they are organized. Intelligence and Arab experts agree that the Mukhabarat are important, but no one seems to know anything about them. Another constant problem when comparing different accounts of Mukhabarat services is that any one service can have different names, while many agencies have overlapping functions. Arabic is difficult to translate into English, and most Mukhabarat services lack an established translation for their name. In an example from Iraq under Saddam Hussein's regime: "The Iraqi Intelligence Service - IIS [Mukhabarat] is also known as the Department of General Intelligence or the General Directorate of Intelligence (Al-

Mukhabarat Al-A'ma).”² This confusion is about a *main* Mukhabarat service. When dealing with smaller and more obscure agencies, it is even more difficult to discover if various names refer to one Mukhabarat service, or several. The difference between the “Special Apparatus,” the “Special Bureau,” “Special Security,” the “Special Branch (of Special Security),” and the “Special Protection Apparatus” can be hard to discern if the Arabic words for “bureau,” “apparatus,” or “branch” are translated differently into English in various accounts, since such translations are tricky and often subjective.

Mukhabarat services are much more than organs of the state and protectors of the regime. They represent a large and tangible risk to the leaders they serve. Their power in politics, armed forces, and interaction with civil society gives ambitious Mukhabarat leaders a support base from which to oust the leadership of their state. Contemporary discussions on internal security in Arab states focus on traditional threats such as the military, Islamic fundamentalists, or discontented ethnic groups. While many of these threats remain, new and possibly more dangerous perils to Arab leaders have emerged. One of them is powerful, has endangered the leadership of Arab states in the past, seems to be recognized as a danger by Arab leaders, and yet has not been detected by the world at large. The new threat facing Arab leaders is the part of their government created to deal with threats. It is the Mukhabarat.

In principle, Mukhabarat services exist to protect their government from any perceived threat like extremist groups, political opposition, rival states, or their own military. In order to remove any form of disloyalty to the leadership, these services have wide-ranging jurisdictions and powerful resources. Mukhabarat services have massive amounts of personnel, their own armed services, torture chambers for “information gathering,” sections for human and signals

² “Iraqi Intelligence Services.” in Federation of American Scientists Website, Iraqi Intelligence Service, page 1.

intelligence, agency security, political affairs, training, and many others.³ They are self-contained organs within states, with the power to threaten their state leadership. Hence, the Mukhabarat constitute a great internal threat to their state leadership. The machine created to protect the state leadership can be the mechanism that destroys it.

This thesis will examine how and why Mukhabarat services are a risk to Arab leaders and criticize Western misconceptions about contemporary internal security problems within Arab states, especially regarding the relationship between the Mukhabarat and militaries. This thesis will set the stage by discussing the cultural and social environment which shapes Arab governments. Next, it will discuss the main threat to Arab governments in the recent past, their military; and examine how and why this threat has changed while the literature on the topic has not. Then the thesis will examine in greater depth the specific threats which Mukhabarat services pose to their state leadership and why Mukhabarat leaders are so dangerous. Several cases of these agencies or leaders moving against their state leadership will be explored, as will corruption allegations against Mukhabarat leaders in Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, the role of Mukhabarat services in recent successions in Jordan and Syria, and the “new” Mukhabarat services in post-Saddam Iraq. Finally, the thesis will briefly test the universality of its argument by assessing how Mukhabarat threats may emerge in other Arab countries.

For simplicity’s sake, this thesis will focus on Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. While its premise can be applied to other Arab states, the most practical way to assess this issue is by concentrating

³ “Syria’s Intelligence Services: A Primer” Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol.2 No.6 1 July 2000; “Syria’s Intelligence and Security Services – An Overview.” In Jane’s Defence Weekly. 01 March 1995, Edition 1995, Vol. 007, Issue 003; “Jordan Intelligence Agencies.” Federation of American Scientists. Last updated 27 May 2003.; “Agency Profile: Iraqi Intelligence.” Ninth Edition of the N&O Column / Spooks Newsletter. 19 December 1998; “Inside Iraq’s Security Network: Part One.” In Jane’s Intelligence Review. 1 July 1997, Edition 1997, Vol. 009, Issue 007; “Inside Iraq’s Security Network: Part Two.” In Jane’s Intelligence Review. 01 August 1997, Edition 1997, Vol. 009, Issue 008; “Iraq Research and Documentation Project: Selected Documents.” The Iraqi Foundation.

on some case studies. Mukhabarat services may pose a threat to any Arab state, but their ability to do so varies in each country. Moreover, by limiting the number of states under examination, one can more clearly illustrate the many factors that make Mukhabarats into threats and thus develop general statements which can be more universally applied. Geographically, all three of these countries are in the historic Fertile Crescent and lie in the traditional boundaries of Greater Syria.⁴ They share many of the same tribes, have common histories from their experiences under the Ottoman Empire through to their “creation” as states by the colonial powers, and most of their populations are Muslim Arabs. Despite these similarities, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan also are sufficiently different to demonstrate that the Mukhabarat can threaten many types of governments -- indeed, any type found in the Arab world, whether a modern monarchy, a dictatorial Ba’thist government, or an authoritarian patronage-based regime. Syria and Iraq, having suffered through numerous coups and long experiences with Ba’thist governments, have more in common with each other than they do with Jordan, which has had a relatively stable government since it emerged from colonial rule.

I have chosen to use the Arabic term Mukhabarat to refer collectively to the security-intelligence services of Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, for several reasons. Above all, neither the modern Western terms “intelligence” or “security” service accurately describe any Mukhabarat. Often one Mukhabarat service will do its own intelligence gathering, interrogations, security operations, and covert operations, making the distinction between “security” and “intelligence” services meaningless. The term Mukhabarat generally implies a service with the jurisdiction to

⁴ “For the Early Arabs looking at the world from their Arabian homeland, Sham was a term applied to a largely undefined place across the deserts to their north. Sham is still used to signify the whole area -- Greater Syria -- and to underline that, despite political frontiers, there still exists a concept of unity. This greater area is today divided into the states of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and the West Bank of Jordan under Israeli occupation.” (Hopwood, Derek. Syria 1945 - 1986: Politics and Society. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, page 1.)

carry out all of these functions. Although some definitions of the term “counter-espionage” describe services of this sort, other usages of that phrase do not. Moreover, these services generally are called “Mukhabarat” in their own countries and often have that term in their name. Jordan’s main service, the General Intelligence Department (GID), translated from the Arabic name *Dairat al Mukhabarat*, is commonly referred to simply as the Mukhabarat. In casual discussion, people in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria use the term “Mukhabarat” to refer to any intelligence/security service, whether it has the term “Mukhabarat” in its name or not. When it is necessary to specify a particular Mukhabarat service, such as the Jordanian Military Intelligence (MI), then that section will be purposely named. The use of the term Mukhabarat makes it easier to understand which services this thesis will be examining. By “Mukhabarat,” this thesis will refer to organizations or services which fall under the jurisdiction of any Mukhabarat. For example, any service which reports directly or only to the Jordanian GID will be considered a Mukhabarat service.

Chapter 1: Arab Culture and Government

One can fully understand a threat only by assessing its environment. For Arab governments, that environment consists of confusing networks of bureaucracies, personal relationships, patronage, and kinship connections. A simple introduction to this environment is necessary to understand the recent and emerging role of the Mukhabarat in Arab politics.⁵

The Middle East was not made for national self-determination. Nonetheless, in 1919 a mixture of tribes, ethnic groups, and religious minorities were sliced up to fit state boundaries which the colonial powers dictated, and these boundaries continue today. Thus, modern Arab countries rarely are “nation-states.” Instead, they are filled with religious, ethnic, and tribal groups that cross state boundaries, like Bedouin or Kurds. Since state boundaries do not reflect the national or ethnic identities of their many minorities, these groups attempt to assert their independence or else are suppressed by the regimes they threaten. Many Arab states are not natural, homogeneous nations but rather polities which have spend the past half century coming to terms with their identity, borders, and independence.

Nor are Arab governments “democratic” in the Western sense, regardless of what they may claim. Instead, they hold elections where the results are predetermined, opposition leaders often “disappear” after announcing their desires to run for office, and legal opposition parties are

⁵ For further information on Arab politics, see Ayubi, Nazih. “Arab Bureaucracies: Expanding Size, Changing Roles.” In Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State, ed. Adeed Dawisha and I. William Zartman, New York: Croom Helm, 1988, pages 14-34; Barakat, Halim. “The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State.” Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993; Picard, Elizabeth. “Arab Military in Politics: From Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State.” In Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State, ed. Adeed Dawisha and I. William Zartman, New York: Croom Helm, 1988, pages 116-146; Marr, Phebe A. “The Political Elite in Iraq.” In Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975 109-149; Torrey, Gordon H. “Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria.” In Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, pages 151-161;

rare. An incumbent leader, when running for re-election, can expect 95 – 99.9% of the vote. The real power struggles in these governments occur not in elections but behind the scenes; meanwhile, political factionalism is dealt with quietly.

Arab governments often are plagued with large and inefficient bureaucracies⁶ and inundated with paper work, red tape, and corruption. Bribery and favoritism are commonplace in most Arab governments. Many government jobs pay little, and money on the side can be essential to support a family. Corruption is also a key component in patronage networks. Many government officials use their positions to amass personal fortunes. While this occurs everywhere in the world, it seems more commonplace in Arab states than Western ones, a routine part of life.⁷ Human rights also are commonly violated in Arab states. Mukhabarat forces often participate in these violations, which occur in prisons or detention centers under their control. Organizations like Amnesty International⁸ have long lists of grievances against the former Iraqi regime and Syria.

Personality cults often form around Arab heads of state.⁹ They tie a leader to the country, making him appear not as an office holder but as a symbol of the state. By making themselves appear as the central person in the government (which in fact is the case), these leaders make themselves father figure, or model citizen to inspire loyalty among their subjects and discourage usurpers. In Egypt, Iraq, or Jordan, massive portraits of the president or king hang in most banks,

⁶ Information on Arab bureaucracies is available throughout the following: Ayubi, Nazih. "Arab Bureaucracies: Expanding Size, Changing Roles." In Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State, ed. Adeed Dawisha and I. William Zartman, New York: Croom Helm, 1988.; George, Alan. Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom. New York: Zed Books, 2003, pages 2,6, 10, 11, 13.

⁷ For further information on corruption in Arab States, view the following : George, Alan. Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom. New York: Zed Books, 2003, pages 13, 14, 114; also, throughout the Transparency International Website. www.transparency.org which has a great deal of information on the topic.

⁸ Amnesty International Website. Library >Middle East And North Africa > Middle East >, Iraq summary; Syria summary.

⁹ Hopwood, Derek. Syria 1945 - 1986: Politics and Society. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, page 92

restaurants, hotels, and even people's homes-an image of their leader to inspire them. In many Arab states this phenomenon has been multiplied by the longevity of the leadership. Leaders can stay in power for decades until they are overthrown or die. Syria, Jordan, and Iraq all have had an iconic leader for the past 30 years: Hafiz Asad, King Hussein, and Saddam Hussein. However, all of these men recently have died or been overthrown, and the new generation of leaders has not yet established either the personality cults or the power their predecessors enjoyed. The same trend can be seen elsewhere in the Arab world.

Arab heads of state routinely have enormous authority in their hands. Their personal power has few domestic constraints, and they often can do largely as they please in the government. They focus such power in their own hands not only to use it but to deny it to others, making it harder for other figures to accumulate enough strength to pose a threat to them. Meanwhile, power politics is more personalized in Arab states than Western ones, though this phenomenon is more a matter of degree than kind. Arab leaders often give high-ranking positions to people they like and trust or remove those who anger the leader, regardless of their ability. An extreme example of such behavior came in Saddam Hussein's regime. His family held all the highest ranking positions in the government, while personal disagreements with Saddam (such as who should marry whose daughter) caused political trauma for those who challenged him. Personal relationships of this sort shape power relations in most Arab governments. The central positions in Arab governments frequently are given to family members of the president or king (who are considered to be the most loyal to the leader), with the rest generally allocated to people from the section of society most trusted. Thus, the loyal minority holds all power, and the majority of the population becomes irrelevant in politics. A person is either part of the elite or among the vast majority which is not.

Patronage and kinship relations are central to Arab societies and governments. Besides relying on close personal relations, aspiring leaders use these relations to create a support base which will increase their power.¹⁰ They believe that loyalty to them stems from ethnic, patron, or familial connections and give people from groups they deem reliable the highest positions in the government, Mukhabarat, and the military, posts which would be dangerous if held by disloyal elements.¹¹ The idea is that the groups which have the most to gain by having a leader stay in power, or to lose when he is removed, can also be relied on to be loyal. If one minority group is placed above all others, likely it will be the target for punishment if the regime falls because of its identification with the old regime. The same applies to the members of any patronage networks established by the leader.

Relying on familial, patronage, or religious association ensures that government positions are staffed not with the most qualified people but with loyal ones. This causes systematic problems in all aspects of administration. Yet for security reasons the longevity of the regime is bolstered by choosing people who need the leader to survive in power.

Kinship ties and patronage relationships overlap and co-exist within government systems in many Arab societies, yet they are not the same phenomena. Ernest Gellner defines patronage as,

¹⁰ Particularly good sources for patronage and kinship networks can be found in Weingrod, Alex. "Patronage and Power." In Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies. ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1997 pages 41-52, which emphasizes the effects of patronage relationships on social relations and power politics. Gellner, Ernest. "Patrons and Clients." In Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies. ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1997, pages 1-6 explains what these relations patron-client relationships are, and more importantly, what they are not. The rest of the collection in Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies. ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1997, is also informative. For other relevant sources, see: Frederick G. History and Tribes of Jordan. Florida: University of Miami Press, 1958; and the collected works in Minorities and the State in the Arab World. ed. Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999.

¹¹ A good explanation of this phenomenon with examples is : Quinliven, James T. "Coups-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East." In International Security. Vol. 24, No. 2, Fall 1999, pages 131-165.

“... unsymmetrical, involving inequality of power; it tends to form an extended system; to be long-term, or at least not restricted to a single isolated transaction; to possess a distinctive ethos; and, whilst not always illegal or immoral, to stand outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the society in question.”¹²

Essentially, patronage relationships are one-sided and can exist among diverse groups of patrons and clients, while kinship relations rest on tribal and familial relationships and can represent two-way obligations. Both relations play important roles in the politics of most Arab states.

In the three countries under discussion, specific minority groups hold the central positions in the government. In Iraq under Saddam Hussein the Sunni population (especially Tikritis) controlled the government, as Alawis do in Syria and, to a lesser degree, the Transjordanians do in Jordan.¹³ Members of other groups find it difficult to get positions in government or the military and are excluded from positions of power.

The Alawis, about 12% of the Syrian population, are a secret religious sect which is an offshoot of Shi'ism.¹⁴ They generally live along the coast of Syria, particularly in the Latakia

¹² Gellner, Ernest. “Patrons and Clients.” In Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies. ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1997, page 4.

¹³ For further information on kinship or patronage relations, see Bengio, Ofra. “Nationbuilding in Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Iraq.” In Minorities and the State in the Arab World. ed. Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999, pages 149-170; Rassam, Amal. “*Al-taba'iyya*: Power, Patronage and Marginal groups in Northern Iraq.” In Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies. ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1997, pages 157-166; Zizzeler, Eyal. “The ‘Alawis, Lords of Syria: From Ethnic Minority to Ruling Sect.” In Minorities and the State in the Arab World. ed. Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999, pages 129-145.

¹⁴ For more general information on the Alawis in Syria, see the following: Hopwood, Derek. Syria 1945 - 1986: Politics and Society. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988.; Ma'oz Moshe “The Emergence of Modern Syria.” In Syria under Assad: Domestic Constraints and Regional Risks. ed. Moshe Ma'oz and Avner Yniv, Australia: Helm Ltd, 1986. pages 9-36; “Syria: Country Study.” Library of Congress Studies. April 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sytoc.html>; Ryan, Curtis R. “Syrian Arab Republic.” In The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa. ed. David E. Long and Bernard Reich, Cambridge: Westview Press, 2002, pages 225-245. Finally, George, Alan. Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom. New York: Zed Books, 2003, a contemporary view of Syria's government and history, is an interesting counterpart to older books on Syrian history, presenting a new perspective on Syrian politics. For excellent information on the history of the racial/religious dynamic in

region. Many Alawis, like other minorities in this Sunni dominated region, were drawn to the military under the French colonial regime because it offered an uncommon opportunity for money and advancement. For similar reasons they were drawn to the Ba'th Party. After independence, the Alawis stayed out of politics until the mid 1960s, but when the Ba'th party came to power, they gained prominence in the government. By the time Hafiz al-Asad came to power, Alawis held most of its powerful positions. An Alawi himself, he made their dominance complete. Thus, the religious / tribal grouping of the Alawis achieved power through the Ba'th Party, even though ostensibly the latter was a national, secular political organization. Not all Alawis in the government are Ba'thist, but most are. While the idea of a Ba'thist Alawite seems a contradiction, three decades of Alawite-Ba'thist rule demonstrate otherwise.

Iraq has no 'majority' population, but instead is made up of three minorities.¹⁵ While technically the Shi'a population is estimated to include over 60% of Iraqis, these figures combine both Shi'a Kurds and Shi'a Arabs. Arguably, however, Shi'a Kurds identify more with their ethnic group than their religious one and would not rank themselves with Shi'a Arabs, as is assumed in the 60% statistic. Sunni Arabs, particularly from the region of Tikrit, dominated the former Iraqi regime. The Tikriti rise in Iraq is similar to that of Alawis in Syria, propelled to power by their Ba'thist affiliation and presence in the military. When Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr came to power in the Ba'th Coup of 1968, his Mukhabarat head – Saddam Hussein – eliminated potential opponents in the government and military and ensured that fellow Tikritis occupied the best positions. Patronage networks resting on the adage 'It's not what you know, it's who you know' also were particularly extensive when Saddam was president.

relation to politics in Syria, see Van Dam, Nikolas. The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarianism, Regionalism, and Tribalism in Politics, 1961-1978. London: Croom Helm LTD Publishers, 1979.

¹⁵ Further information on Iraq's ethnic divisions are available in : Bengio, Ofra. "Nation building in Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Iraq." In Minorities and the State in the Arab World. ed. Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999, pages 149-170.

Unlike the case in Syria and Iraq, the leadership in Jordan – the Hashemite Royalty – relies on groups with which it does not share kinship: the Bedouin and Transjordanian population¹⁶. This base of support is drawn from a minority of the country, but a large minority, only slightly outnumbered by the Palestinian population. Even though Transjordanians are disproportionately represented in the political and military structures of the country, they are a much larger minority in Jordan than are the Tikritis in Iraq or the Alawis in Syria.

The Hashemites in Jordan gained the loyalty of the Bedouin, in large part due to efforts by King Abdullah in the 1920s. As a prince from Mecca with prestige and years of political management in Arab disputes, he was greatly respected. “Wherever he camped, Abdullah held court in the traditional tribal manner, setting little store by courtly ceremony, and sometimes joining the tribal sheikhs who came to visit him in outdoor games... It was by such informalities, however, that Abdullah rapidly succeeded in winning the hearts of his tribal subjects...”¹⁷ King Hussein was not as close to the Bedouin, as he was more a city boy, but the Bedouin were still loyal to him out of loyalty to his grandfather, and through Hussein’s own attempts to cultivate that bond.

In Jordan, the Mukhabarat armed forces are primarily drawn from Bedouin because of this traditional loyalty to the Hashemites. Bedouin are Transjordanians, but a distinct segment among them with a nomadic culture. All Jordanian Bedouin are Transjordanians, but not all Transjordanians are Bedouin. Bedouin are relied on to staff military posts but rarely occupy leading positions in the government, conceivably because they are generally perceived to be

¹⁶ For more information on Jordan, see the following: Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993; Ryan, Curtis R. “Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.” In The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, ed. David E. Long and Bernard Reich, Cambridge: Westview Press, 2002., pages 246-266; and Dallas, Roland. King Hussein: A Life on the Edge. New York: Fromm International, 1999, which looks at the life of King Hussein, in a more personal look at Hussein than is available in most books about Jordanian history.

¹⁷ Hopwood, Derek. Syria 1945 - 1986: Politics and Society. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, page 100.

good warriors but indifferent bureaucrats, “Bedouin were considered to be effective guards, drivers and electricians, but were not fit for hard, tiring or monotonous physical labour.”¹⁸

Bedouin are the elite in the armed forces, but other Transjordanians dominate the government, whereas in Syria and Iraq, Tikritis or Alawis dominate every important post, military or otherwise.

Transjordanians are Jordanians who stem from inhabitants of that region from before 1948, excluding the refugees from Palestine who since have settled in Jordan. Before 1948 the Hashemites relied on the Bedouin to man their army, and they later made up a substantial part of their forces. Meanwhile, the Hashemites came to trust the Transjordanians because both groups distrusted the Jordanians of Palestinian descent, who are now the majority of the population. For example, after the fighting with the *fedayeen*¹⁹ in 1970-71, many Palestinians in the government or the military²⁰ either resigned or were retired, to be replaced by Transjordanians.

Members of the Hashemite Royal family are prevented from holding political posts by the Jordanian constitution,²¹ but they can participate in the military. This rule is intended to prevent state power from being concentrated in one family. The King relies on patronage and ethnic networks in the political arena and uses his family to hold the main military posts. Yet there have been Hashemite heads of Mukhabarat services, even though these services are politically influential. These heads seem to sidestep the law by treating Mukhabarat services as a military *type* organization (like Military Intelligence) even though these services are technically distinct from the regular military and do have a political role. So members of the Hashemite family have

¹⁸ Vassiliev, Alexi. “The History of Saudi Arabia.” London: Saqi Books, 1998, page 424. Although from a source discussing Saudi Arabia, this perception appears common in many Arab countries.

¹⁹ The *fedayeen* were mainly anti-Israeli Palestinian militants.

²⁰ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993 pages 241-244.

²¹ To view the Jordanian constitution, see The Jordanian Constitution www.kinghussein.gov.jo/constitution_jo.html, from the The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan website.

more political power in their hands due to their control of the Mukhabarat (and its association with the military) than it would seem if only looking at the constitution.

Since Syria and Iraq had Ba'thist governments for decades, this political party and structure must be examined to understand the environment within which the Mukhabarat have flourished.

Ba'thist ideology,²² defined in its founding documents from 1947 by the Syrians Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar, promotes socialism, democracy, and pan-Arabism. These three ideals appealed to many Arabs who had been under imperialist oppression for decades and wanted to rule themselves. Socialism attracted the impoverished masses, as pan-Arabism did those who believed they should stand with their neighbors against their enemies. The rejection of sectarianism allowed Arabs of all religious groups to join the party. Ba'thists respect Islam but do not think the religion offers the best way to run a contemporary Arab state because not all Arabs are Muslims and because those who are Muslims follow many different interpretations of Islam. This view has contributed to hostile relations between Ba'thist and Islamic governments down through the years. While Ba'thist ideology is distinct from Communism, its approach to party structure is akin to Marxist-Leninist organizations, with emphasis placed on loyalty, secrecy, and discipline. Ba'thists dislike the communist disregard for individualism and nationalism, however, ideals which are central to Ba'thist ideology. In Syria, Hafiz al-Asad tolerated communists, while in Iraq Saddam hated them. Historically Ba'thists cooperated well with communist countries, while treating communists within their own states as they did any rival ideology or party, as threats. In Syria and Iraq, the Ba'th Party was essentially a state within

²² For more information on Ba'thist ideology and roles in Syria / Iraq, see: Perlmutter, Amos. "From Obscurity to Rule: The Syrian Army and the Ba'th Party." In The Western Political Quarterly. Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1969, pages 827-845.

a state. Even though the government is not identical to the party, it is guided by the Ba’thists working in the bureaucracy. Christine Helms illuminates Ba’th party organization and structure in Iraq and Syria.

“A cellular organization such as the Ba’th allows no free transfer of information. Communication within the system occurs vertically, never horizontally, so that recruitment can be carefully controlled, information effectively restricted, and individual cells isolated so that discovery of one cell does not endanger the entire network. Low- and middle-ranking Ba’thists therefore may be not only reluctant but unable to discuss the party machinery; and even though members of the upper echelon are exceedingly articulate about Ba’thist policies, they remain reticent in discussing decision-making and internal party debates. Many members hesitate even to discuss their personal histories, although this characteristic has been less pronounced since the party was legalized.”²³

Beyond a cellular structure, Helms says that Ba’thist movements also can be organized into a string structure, where Ba’thists know only the people directly above them and below them, thus limiting the transfer of information and increasing the secrecy within the organization. Such secrecy and discipline are useful attributes in intelligence organizations, which also precondition Ba’thists to service with Mukhabarat agencies.

While Syria and Iraq both ostensibly have been Ba’thist for decades, they are pragmatic in their use of their ideology and do not aggressively work towards the traditional Ba’thist goals of democracy, pan-Arabism, or socialism.²⁴ Indeed, largely because they insisted that their ideology be exercised, Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar were both expelled from Syria by the military Ba’thists who took power in Damascus, which did not represent the state the founders had hoped for. Bitar was assassinated in 1980, almost certainly by the Syrian Mukhabarat.²⁵ Again, the Syrian and Iraqi Ba’th Parties often were on bad terms. Power politics and their different

²³ Helms, Christine Moss. Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1984, page 83.

²⁴ “Ideology was less of a preoccupation for Asad than it was for his predecessors. Power was far more important.” George, Alan. Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom. New York: Zed Books, 2003, page 9.

²⁵ Hopwood, Derek. Syria 1945 - 1986: Politics and Society. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988. Page 1.

interpretations of Ba'thism caused conflict, and neither party was willing to unify because each feared a loss of power.

Ba'thists appear to have a natural inclination towards having powerful Mukhabarats, which may challenge the government's power, but the Mukhabarat threat is not limited to them. It can occur in any Arab state that has turned over power to Mukhabarat services, which all of them did as a result of the threat of military coups during the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 2: The Mukhabarat

Researching any intelligence or security organization is difficult because all states try to keep details about them classified, but finding information on a Mukhabarat is particularly difficult. Open-source information is limited, while few intelligence experts and fewer regional ones attempt to analyze whatever information *is* available. The following assessment aims to provide the strongest generalizations and the most specific statements possible given the limits to the evidence available for public research, but at the same time to avoid speculation.

Few recent books on Jordan and Syria discuss their military or Mukhabarat, but more such books are available on Iraq. Accordingly, for recent information on Jordan and Syria this thesis relies heavily on articles in newspapers and journals. Many older books lack professional objectivity, given the types of governments that are in power; freedom of the press is rare in Arab countries, and many accounts are either speculative or heavily biased for or against the regime. Kamal Salibi, in his *Modern History of Jordan*²⁶ has a blatant bias towards the Hashemites, as does Roland Dallas in his *King Hussein: A Life on the Edge*,²⁷ but both are otherwise superb histories. Most contemporary authors have a strong (if understandable) bias against Saddam Hussein, like that found in Saddam: King of Terror²⁸ by Con Couglin. Material with such biases is still relevant and useful, as long as bias is taken into account when doing research. The government websites for Syria²⁹ and Jordan³⁰ provide little useful information on

²⁶ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993

²⁷ Dallas, Roland. King Hussein: A Life on the Edge. New York: Fromm International, 1999.

²⁸ Couglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002

²⁹ SyriaGate: Syria Government Website. http://syriagate.com/Syria/Government/Ministries_And_Establishments/ Provides links available Syrian government websites.

³⁰ Jordanian Government Websites: "General Intelligence Department." The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan General Intelligence Department. <http://www.gid.gov.jo/english.htm>. This website is uninformative and does not give any insight into the workings, operations, or structure of the Jordanian Mukhabarat. The complete lack of information

their Mukhabarat; indeed, Jordan's General Intelligence Department website³¹ does no more than explain that it exists to protect the country.

Of the three states under examination, information on the Mukhabarat of Jordan³² is the hardest to find. Wherever works refer to this topic, they say little more than "the Mukhabarat did this or that." Little information exists on its subsections or divisions, or their specific activities. Information on the Iraqi Mukhabarat,³³ conversely, is extensive and widely available, as tons of Iraqi government documents were smuggled out during or after the Gulf War of 1991. Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, even more information has become available. It easily is the best documented Mukhabarat of any Arab country, which provides a clear sense of the experiences of that population with their security services. Syrian Mukhabarat³⁴ services are less well

about the GID is in itself enlightening about the secretive organization.; "Glance of the Public Security." Jordanian Public Security Directorate. <http://www.psd.gov.jo/English%20site/main-e.html>; The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Prime Ministry Webpage. <http://www.pm.gov.jo/english/main.shtm>; The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Armed Forces Website <http://www.jaf.mil.jo/First10.htm>; The Jordanian Constitution www.kinghussein.gov.jo/constitution_jo.html

³¹ "General Intelligence Department." The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan General Intelligence Department. <http://www.gid.gov.jo/english.htm>.

³² For further information specific to the Jordanian Mukhabarat, see: "Glance of the Public Security." Jordanian Public Security Directorate; "Country Profile: Jordan." CIA World Factbook; "Jordan Intelligence Agencies." Federation of American Scientists, page 1.

³³ For further information specific to the Iraqi Mukhabarat (Saddam era), see: "Iraqi Intelligence Agencies." Global Security; "Inside Iraq's Security Network: Part One." In Jane's Intelligence Review. 1 July 1997, Edition 1997, Vol. 009, Issue 007.; "Inside Iraq's Security Network: Part Two." In Jane's Intelligence Review. 01 August 1997, Edition 1997, Vol. 009, Issue 008; "Iraqi Intelligence Services." Federation of American Scientists Website; Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis." Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs, Volume 6, No.3 September 2002; "Agency Profile: Iraqi Intelligence." Ninth Edition of the N&O Column / Spooks Newsletter. 19 December 1998; Escobar, Pepe. "The Roving Eye: The Mukhabarat's Shopping List." Online Asia Times, 24 April 2003; "Iraq Research and Documentation Project: Selected Documents." The Iraqi Foundation.

³⁴ For further information specific to the Syrian Mukhabarat, see: Rathmell, Andrew. "Syria's Intelligence Services: Origins and Development." Journal of Conflict Studies; "Syria's Intelligence and Security Services – An Overview." In Jane's Defence Weekly. 01 March 1995, Edition 1995, Vol. 007, Issue 003.; "Syria's Intelligence Services: A Primer" Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol.2 No.6 1 July 2000, this source provides a great overview of the Syrian Mukhabarat and its key services, including recent information regarding its leadership; "Syria's Praetorian Guards: A Primer." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 2 No. 7, 5 August 2000, this source provides a unique look at the armed forces in Syria not affiliated with the military, with insight into these armed forces by viewing their powers and roles within Syria.

documented, but more information has been released in recent years, particularly because tension between the Mukhabarat and Bashar Asad has become a popular topic in the media.

Great time and space would be needed to describe the structure, function, and activities of every Mukhabarat service in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, as they are extremely complex. Some authors have attempted to do so, but unfortunately their accounts often vary. Moreover, it is useless to put Mukhabarat services in a structural diagram or in the pattern of a decision-making tree, defining the rankings and roles of each service relative to each other. In reality, no such clear lines of authority or jurisdiction exist, and personal relationships further confuse the issue. Fortunately, however, most Mukhabarat services seem to share certain patterns of structure and most characteristics.

Mukhabarat³⁵ services have overlapping functions and responsibilities, so no one agency is exclusively responsible for one duty. Instead, several services are capable of, and responsible for, carrying out a given task. Any of these services can handle intelligence gathering, assassinations, fighting insurgent groups or spying on other Mukhabarat services, to varying degrees. They can have dozens of services under them, some of which in turn may have services under them, and so on. Power seems to be carefully distributed among the main services. The head of state generally stands at the top of the Mukhabarat structure, either officially or unofficially. All key Mukhabarat structures report directly to him or his office, while

³⁵ For various structures and types of Mukhabarat services, see: "Syria's Intelligence Services: A Primer" Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, Vol.2 No.6 1 July 2000; "Syria's Intelligence and Security Services – An Overview." In Jane's Defence Weekly, 01 March 1995, Edition 1995, Vol. 007, Issue 003; "Syria's Praetorian Guards: A Primer." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, Vol. 2 No. 7, 5 August 2000; Rathmell, Andrew. "Syria's Intelligence Services: Origins and Development." Journal of Conflict Studies; "General Intelligence Department." The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan General Intelligence Department; al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis." Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs, Volume 6, No.3 September 2002; "Agency Profile: Iraqi Intelligence." Ninth Edition of the N&O Column / Spooks Newsletter, 19 December 1998; "Iraqi Intelligence Services." Federation of American Scientists Website,

he remains free to create Mukhabarat services for his personal use, drawn from the most loyal elements in the government. Meanwhile, armed forces under the direct control of a Mukhabarat service, sometimes called “parallel militaries,” ensure the personal safety of the head of state. The term “parallel military” is taken from James T. Quinlivan,³⁶ who so describes military units which stand apart from the regular military forces and are primarily designed to protect the regime against coups, a topic and term which will be addressed later. These services protect the head of state by supplying bodyguards, guards for official residences, and even battalions stationed in and around the city.

The main Mukhabarat service normally consists of a general intelligence agency, military intelligence, an air force intelligence section, and a political intelligence service. The General Intelligence Departments in Jordan, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq,³⁷ and Syria maintain internal security, watching the civilian population for signs of dissent, as well as the government structure. Military intelligence services in Iraq, Syria, and (likely) Jordan primarily focus on gathering intelligence on the military rather than for it, watching for signs of anti-regime sentiment, along with their more traditional duties of gathering intelligence for the military. Air force intelligence handles the same role for the air forces but also often run foreign intelligence gathering and covert operations abroad, like support for terrorist groups, assassinations or subversion in rival states.

After Syria achieved independence in April 1946, many of the 2e Bureau³⁸ structures of French colonial rule survived,³⁹ but the Mukhabarat services were restructured to suit the needs

³⁶ Quinlivan, James T. “Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East.” In International Security. Vol. 24, No. 2, Fall 1999, pages 131-165.

³⁷ Although Saddam’s GID appeared to be more powerful, with wider ranging responsibilities than its counterparts in Syria and Jordan.

³⁸ The 2e Bureau was the French intelligence service operating in Syria prior to Syrian independence.

of the new state. Over the next decade, Syria was highly unstable, rocked by coups inspired by internal factions and external governments. After Nasser took control of Egypt, the Syrian and Egyptian Mukhabarat⁴⁰ services covertly started to cooperate in order to install a pro-Nasserist government in Syria. This occurred in 1955, after which the two countries joined into the United Arab Republic (UAR).⁴¹ On February 1, 1958 the Egyptian and Syrian Mukhabarat services were merged, with Egypt the dominant partner. The Syrian Mukhabarat was changed to more effectively assist the Egyptians, and many Egyptian Mukhabarat personnel were sent to Syria. The Syrian Abd al-Hamid Sarraj, former head of Military Intelligence and a loyal supporter of Nasser, became the Mukhabarat Chief in Syria, which he ruled from 1960-1961. Nasser encouraged Sarraj to crush suspected dissidents in the government and military, which he did ruthlessly. A combination of grievances, however, caused a military led coup in 1961. Army units marched on Damascus, arrested Sarraj and his supporters, and ended the Syrian - Egyptian UAR (although Egypt called itself the United Arab Republic until 1971).

For several years after 1961 the government was marked by instability. Egypt's Mukhabarat attempted to destabilize it, while the Syrian Mukhabarat returned the favour, focusing on operations abroad to destabilize its enemies and honing tools of political warfare like assassinations, support of terrorist organizations, and uprisings. Later the Syrian Mukhabarat became active in Lebanon during its civil war and continually maintained a large presence in the

³⁹ The Syrian Mukhabarat growth out of the 2e Bureau is discussed in detail in Rathmell, Andrew. "Brotherly Enemies: The Rise and Fall of the Syrian-Egyptian Intelligence Axis, 1954-1967." Intelligence and National Security. London: Frank Cass, 1998, pages 230-253.

⁴⁰ The following is an excellent source for information on Syrian and Egyptian Mukhabarat services before, during, and after the Syrian-Egyptian UAR: Rathmell, Andrew. "Brotherly Enemies: The Rise and Fall of the Syrian-Egyptian Intelligence Axis, 1954-1967." Intelligence and National Security. London: Frank Cass, 1998, pages 230-253.

⁴¹ For information on political relations during the U.A.R. see : Perlmutter, Amos. "From Obscurity to Rule: The Syrian Army and the Ba'th Party.' In The Western Political Quarterly. Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1969, pages 827-845

country. These Mukhabarat operated almost independently of the government in Syria. A continued power struggle among the military and civilian leadership in Syria sparked several military coups. They only ended in 1970, when Asad launched a coup against the civilian government, using his military and Mukhabarat connections. As often with a change in leadership, the Mukhabarat services were soon readjusted, in this case with obvious justification. When Asad became president, many of his allies in the government were assassinated in attempts to destabilize his government. This reflected badly on Asad's Mukhabarat since their responsibility was to ensure the personal safety of the leadership. Since Hafiz al-Asad took over, the Mukhabarat has been used to crush Islamic movements and any internal dissent, including a 1983 coup attempt by his brother Rifa'at Asad, when the President fell ill. Meanwhile a key and influential supplier of arms and equipment to Syria was the Soviets, who helped shape the Mukhabarat.

A series of coups rocked Iraq from the 1958 Revolution until the 1968 Ba'th coup. The latter was a civilian coup which deliberately minimized involvement from the military, with the specific aim of preventing the military from dominating the new government. The Ba'thists did not want a repetition of the coup of 1963, where they worked with the military, only to be ousted by them shortly afterward. Since armed force was needed to carry out the coup, the Ba'thists used their own party Mukhabarat and its armed forces, and a few trusted officers in the regular military.

After the Ba'th Coup of 1968, Saddam Hussein almost single-handedly shaped the Mukhabarat services in Iraq. He joined the Ba'th party in 1957 and made a name for himself as an assassin and loyal follower of his fellow Tikriti, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr. His experiences as a revolutionary and with the Mukhabarat services of the Iraqi regime no doubt shaped his views on

security and intelligence. While exiled in Egypt, Saddam was in regular contact with the Egyptian Mukhabarat (perhaps even on their payroll) and possibly also in touch with CIA personnel.⁴² These encounters perhaps shaped his views on Mukhabarat services. Again, though he despised communist ideology, Saddam admired Joseph Stalin, after whom he may have modeled himself and his Mukhabarat services.

When Bakr took over the government, Saddam achieved power as well. Immediately he revamped the Mukhabarat services, bringing them all under his direct authority and using them to pursue his agenda. Control over the Mukhabarat let Saddam remove personal enemies as well as any dissidents within the government or the population. A leading player in politics, Saddam was the Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, the government's main decision-making body. As the years passed and Saddam removed his enemies, he achieved greater power. President Bakr faded into the background while Saddam ran Iraq in all but title. Finally, on July 16, 1979, Bakr was replaced by his vice president, Saddam Hussein. How Hussein convinced Bakr to step down is unclear: it possibly stemmed from his failing health, but a few years later Saddam had Bakr killed.⁴³ Less than a week after becoming President, Saddam Hussein gathered all important members of the Ba'th Party for a conference, where he claimed to have "discovered" many anti-party elements among them. As he read off names from a list, those named (66 in all) were taken away by Mukhabarat personnel, and never seen again. For the remainder of Saddam's presidency, massive purges of the government, the Ba'th party, and the civilian populations of Iraq became the norm.

The Mukhabarat, powerful during Bakr's presidency, became more so under Saddam, who had run almost all of them under Bakr. He knew how to use them to achieve his goals and

⁴² Cougglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002. pages 36 – 40

⁴³ Cougglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, page 154.

how to control them. During the 1980s all these agencies were reorganized, purged, or given new direction. They became more directly responsible to the President's Office, further concentrating their power in Saddam's hands. The Soviets helped remodel Iraq's Mukhabarat services as well, as they had good relations with Iraq for several years and supplied them with military expertise and equipment.

Jordan had a distinctly different history with its Mukhabarat services than Syria and Iraq did with theirs. The state emerged directly from British colonial rule, rather than from a military coup or revolution. When it became independent, the British ensured the state possessed an army and administrative service specifically designed to sustain the regime. Jordan, a kingdom ruled by the ancient Hashemite family, has enjoyed relative stability since its independence, and there is little evidence of power-struggles within the Hashemite Royal family. If they existed at all, they were certainly far fewer than the problems Hafiz al-Asad and Saddam Hussein had to face. The Jordanian military also has been loyal to the Hashemite monarchy. Nevertheless, throughout the 1950s, King Hussein faced several coup attempts, country-wide demonstrations, and general unrest. The Abu Nuwar (military) Coup of 1957 was the most dangerous of these threats. As the chief of Military Intelligence was a co-conspirator with Abu Nuwar, King Hussein must have had strong control of his Mukhabarat and/or loyalist elements in the military in order to learn of the coup in advance and to foil it. As the Middle East flared with revolutionary fever, pan-Arabist sentiments, and coups, King Hussein had his hands full trying to keep the peace in Jordan. Nasserist elements constantly tried to destabilize the government, as did other anti-Hashemite groups. The responsibility of the Jordanian Mukhabarat was to defeat them, protect

the king from assassins,⁴⁴ and otherwise ensure the security of the regime, which was a difficult task given the countless attempts on King Hussein's life. The Mukhabarat responsible for his safety must have been in excellent form to keep Hussein from harm.

Again, rather than the military being the greatest threat to Jordan, the Palestinian uprisings after the 1967 war were. Jordan lost much territory to Israel, including the West Bank. An anti-Israeli movement, the *fedayeen*, launched terrorist attacks against Israel through Jordanian territory, supported by some Arab states. Even when *fedayeen* operations originated in other states such as Syria, they were forbidden from entering Israel through their own territory and simultaneously encouraged to move through Jordan so that any retaliation by Israel would strike King Hussein's state. Meanwhile the large border which Jordan shared with Israel made infiltration into Israeli territory easier than elsewhere.⁴⁵ Between 1967 and 1970, Jordan could not stop such groups from moving within its territory, but did monitor them through its Mukhabarat. Encouraged by the Israeli claim that "Palestine was Jordan," in 1969 some Palestinian leaders advocated the overthrow of the Jordanian regime in order to claim Jordan as an alternate homeland for the Palestinians. On September 15, 1970, the *fedayeen* pushed the government too far when it took over the city of Irbid and proclaimed a "people's government." The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had also recently hijacked a number of planes, landing three of them and hundreds of hostages, in an old Jordanian airfield. Finally, the king unleashed his army and Mukhabarat services against the main Palestinian camps, in what became known as Black September.⁴⁶ The Jordanian forces killed many of the *fedayeen* and forced the

⁴⁴ For some examples of the assassination attempts on King Hussein, see: Dallas, Roland. King Hussein: A Life on the Edge. New York: Fromm International, 1999 page 87; Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993, page 204.

⁴⁵ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993, page 215.

⁴⁶ More general information on Black September is available in: (BS) Dobson, Christopher. Black September: Its Short, Violent History. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974.

rest to flee. Throughout this crackdown, the government relied heavily on the Mukhabarat to plan and carry out the attacks.⁴⁷ In turn, the Mukhabarat used the military to crush this problem. The army, frustrated because it had not been allowed to attack the rampant *fedayeen* forces at earlier stages, eagerly jumped at the chance to do so.⁴⁸ While the military remained loyal to King Hussein during the clashes with Palestinian groups, without any clear attempt at mutiny from its Palestinian sections,⁴⁹ the latter nonetheless were removed as soon as the situation allowed. Despite Jordan's differences compared to other countries in the region, it still took measures to prevent the military from posing a threat and maintained a large Mukhabarat structure to protect the regime and maintain security. The Mukhabarat has foiled many terrorist plots in Jordan, and one source claims that the Mukhabarat defeats about two terrorist plots each month.⁵⁰ Jordan is targeted by terrorists for various reasons, such as its close relations with the West, its cooperation with Israel, and as a jumping off point for international personnel going to post-Saddam Iraq. The November 10th 2005 bomb attacks on hotels in Amman, resulting in over 50 dead, have caused speculation about the capability of the Mukhabarat, with one report saying that "Jordanians' confidence in their security services will have been severely shaken."⁵¹ However, given the number of attacks Jordan must defeat every year, missing one plot, while tragic in its consequences, is not enough to doubt the Mukhabarat's overall capability. No intelligence service anywhere is perfect. While lessons must be learned from the attacks in November, Jordan's Mukhabarat can still be considered extremely capable.

⁴⁷ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993, pages 235, 244. 230-246

⁴⁸ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993, pages 230-246.

⁴⁹ Brand, Laurie A. "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity." In the Journal of Palestinian Studies, Vol. 24, No. 4 (summer, 1995), page 46-61.

⁵⁰ "Jordan versus terrorism." in Jane's Online. Foreign Report of 28 July 2004, page 1.

⁵¹ "Jordan's trust in security shaken." in BBC News Online, posted 10 November 2005 page 1.

Compared to Jordan and Syria, the Mukhabarat of Iraq appear to have been the most elaborately organized, well-run, and integral to the state. These characteristics likely stemmed from Saddam Hussein's thorough understanding of his Mukhabarat, which allowed him to use them to suit his needs. Throughout the many uprisings, betrayals in the government, and sanctions, the Iraqi Mukhabarat had kept Saddam Hussein in power until he was forcibly removed in 2003. It defeated the efforts of all his many enemies to destroy him, an impressive feat, since his enemies ranged from nearby Iran to the United States.

Mukhabarat services share many characteristics with other intelligence and security services around the world, even if these sometimes are taken to an extreme. Arab Mukhabarat are unique not in their methods or structure, but rather in the manipulations of these structures and in the overarching powers they have been given. There are especially striking parallels between the Mukhabarat and the security services in Nazi Germany or Communist states. Nevertheless, in Germany or the U.S.S.R., the main security service was much more unified and powerful compared to its rivals, while neither Hitler nor Stalin had a background in running their own security services or were very personally involved with them, unlike the relationships of many Arab leaders with their Mukhabarat. Until recent decades, the Mukhabarat, like the intelligence services of China (and other less technologically developed countries), tended to emphasize human intelligence (HUMINT) as their primary source, since they lacked the technology to do anything else. However, as the services grew, and the technology for signals intelligence (SIGINT) became more readily available, they turned increasingly to other forms of technological intelligence gathering. Like the Chinese services, in many Arab countries the Mukhabarat have an established history of good HUMINT, and a growing capability in SIGINT.

Iraq's Al Hadi Project,⁵² a Mukhabarat service exclusively devoted to SIGINT, was greatly feared and respected. It gathered information on everyone, from ordinary citizens to visiting diplomats, and was exceptionally good at it. The Al Hadi Project essentially dominated SIGINT in Iraq and seemingly was impartial in its distribution of SIGINT to any of the other Mukhabarat services. This unique position made the Al Hadi Project very powerful and placed it above the squabbling found in the rest of the system.

Most powerful Mukhabarat services report directly to the president or king, who generally is the only person with access to all the intelligence from every service. Heads of state also have other unofficial connections with their Mukhabarat. In the Mukhabarat, as in other government structures in Arab states, people report not necessarily only to their nominal superiors, but to seniors in their patronage or kinship networks or to those who would best reward them for their information. These complex personal networks make it difficult to classify the relative positions of Mukhabarat services because unofficial considerations often outweigh formal ones.

Competition among Mukhabarat services is encouraged in order to produce rivalry, ensure that no one service becomes too powerful, and get a more varied intelligence picture. This idea, of course, is an old approach to intelligence. In theory, if several agencies gather information, a broader intelligence picture can be presented to decision-makers. Syria is reported to have around 165 Mukhabarat services, while many government officials have their own personal agencies which operate only within their area of control.⁵³ The number of overlapping Mukhabarat services makes it hard to determine their precise roles, actions, personnel, and

⁵² A good source for information on the Al Hadi Project is "Iraqi Intelligence Services." Federation of American Scientists Website.

⁵³ Rathmell, Andrew. "Syria's Intelligence Services: Origins and Development." Journal of Conflict Studies.

influence. Competition, however, forces each segment of the Mukhabarat structure to act almost independently, since they rarely coordinate their efforts or information. Western intelligence services often differentiate between covert action and intelligence gathering, but not the Mukhabarat, which routinely use both overt and covert means. Thus, the political section of the Syrian GID can gather intelligence on a dissident and then arrest and interrogate him in its own detention centre. Most such services appear to gather intelligence, analyze, and act on it without going outside their jurisdiction. The vast number of Mukhabarat services, as well as their fierce competitiveness, is unusual among intelligence/security services. Also, unlike most western intelligence services, the Mukhabarat have great armed forces, political power, and wide-ranging jurisdiction

Leaders commonly use the Mukhabarat to eliminate personal rivals as well as dissidents, routinely generating human rights abuses. Agencies in totalitarian regimes and dictatorships have been used for similar actions, from Stalin's NKVD in the 1930s to Pinochet's DINA in the 1970s, and such actions are not unknown in Western nations either. The Mukhabarat are also responsible for political assassinations domestically and abroad. In Syria and Iraq, such actions fall under the jurisdiction of Air Force Intelligence sections. These countries also are known for their support of terrorist organizations, which was managed through their Mukhabarat organizations. "Within Syria's intelligence and security services, sponsorship of terrorism reportedly was conducted by Air Force Intelligence, of which Major General Muhammad al Khawli, an air force officer, has served as chief since 1970... under his command Air Force Intelligence operatives had directed at least twenty-nine terrorist operations as of late 1986..."⁵⁴

⁵⁴ "Syria: Country Study." Library of Congress Studies.

Mukhabarat services are large, highly organized, and efficient. Saddam Hussein's Amn Al Khas alone had approximately 5,000 plainclothes officers/soldiers. In Syria, "As the country's total population is 16.7 million (in 2001), there is one full time secret policeman per 257 Syrians."⁵⁵ These figures do not include the many less formal "employees" of the Mukhabarat, like their armed forces, or informants. They control or influence much of their population and are an effective machine in the midst of an ineffective bureaucratic nightmare. They have a grip on many mundane and bureaucratic aspects of the government. Beyond gathering information at the ground level, the Mukhabarat watch the most powerful sections of the government and the military, which gives them access to all levels of government and all types of people.

So, what does it mean to live in a state where the Mukhabarat have a free hand to act as they will in the interests of the state, and what actions do they take to achieve their goals? These questions can only be answered by examining one state's Mukhabarat. Since information on the Iraqi Mukhabarat is the best available, and Saddam Hussein's Mukhabarat was the quintessential example of the power and control, it shall be the case study.

The Mukhabarat could affect the lives of every citizen in the country, from the wealthy urban elite to the rural peasants. They could detain people at any time, for any reason. There was no check on their power, and individual rights were quickly disregarded. One example of Saddam Hussein's Mukhabarat power and cruelty was demonstrated in wartime during the 1980s: "The Baathists had to contend with a rising number of deserters, although the security forces were easily able to deal with this particular problem. At first deserters who were unfortunate enough to be caught were returned to their homes, where they were executed. Later

⁵⁵ George, Alan. Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom. New York: Zed Books, 2003 page 2.

they were taken to the Abu Ghraib prison⁵⁶ on the outskirts of Baghdad...”⁵⁷ The deserter’s family was similarly dealt with.

In Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, almost everything was considered a state secret, and giving them away was punishable by death in the justice system. With vast numbers of employees and informants, the Mukhabarat were everywhere and could be listening in on any citizen at any time. They had over two hundred thousand employees in the 1980s⁵⁸ and likely many more informants not officially on their payroll.

When a person was suspected of being a dissident, they were taken and tortured by whichever agency suspected them. If that person eluded the Mukhabarat, his other family members immediately became targets. Other than simply torturing the family members or killing them, there is evidence of professional rapists on the government’s payroll whose job was “violation of women’s honor.”⁵⁹

If suspected dissidents were rich enough, or lucky enough, to escape Iraq, they would find the reach of the Mukhabarat was long. Along with the routine torture of family members in Iraq, various Mukhabarat services were designed to carry out assassinations of dissidents in foreign countries. The GID⁶⁰ had several agencies designed for this activity, as did Military Intelligence.⁶¹ Some examples of Iraqi assassination attempts abroad include a 1978 murder of an Iraqi dissident in London by well-known Mukhabarat agents who were subsequently arrested and imprisoned by the British authorities. Iraq then imprisoned British diplomats on bogus

⁵⁶ Abu Ghraib prison was run by State Internal Security / Amn al Amm / General Security

⁵⁷ Couglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, Page 198.

⁵⁸ Couglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, Page 198.

⁵⁹ “Iraq Research and Documentation Project: Selected Documents.” The Iraqi Foundation.

⁶⁰ Also known as: Mukhabarat / Public Relations Office/ Party Intelligence / The Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) / General Directorate of Intelligence / *Al-Mukhabarat Al-A'ma* / Department of General Intelligence / The Special Apparatus / Jihaz al-Khas / The Yearning Apparatus / Jihaz al-Hanin

⁶¹ Also Known as: MI / Istikbarat / General Military Intelligence Directorate / Al-Istikhbarat Al-Askariyya

charges and imposed a goods embargo on England. Eventually, the two countries started talking again, and Iraq wanted to trade their British diplomats for the jailed Mukhabarat in London, but the British refused.⁶² Again, “In 1993, the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS)⁶³ directed and pursued an attempt to assassinate, through the use of a powerful car bomb, former U.S. President George Bush and the Emir of Kuwait. Kuwaiti authorities thwarted the terrorist plot and arrested 16 suspects, led by two Iraqi nationals.”⁶⁴ The Iraqi Mukhabarat have been accused of many other such assassinations, like that of Dr Ayad Habashi in Rome in 1986 and Ayatollah Mehdi Al Hakim in Sudan in 1988.⁶⁵

Iraq had assassins working abroad and at home to remove particular elements from the population, the Military, the Mukhabarat, or inside any government structure whose loyalty was in question. “Some secret service chiefs, including Nazim Kzar and Fadhil Barak, have also been murdered by the Mukhabarat on Saddam Hussein's orders.”⁶⁶ When the leadership wanted to remove vast numbers of “dissidents” from the population, the military, or government they used purges. This type of activity required more than just assassins. Purges were so frequent that Couggin noted, after Saddam took over the government from Bakr: “Given that Saddam’s security forces had already carried out an extensive purge of the Baath Party and the military during the early 1970's, it was quite an achievement that he was able to find any victims worth purging.”⁶⁷ The purges of the Kurdish population throughout Saddam’s time are particularly well known. Various Mukhabarat service compartmentalized themselves according to the various groups they were designated to monitor. Unit 999 of Military Intelligence was, “Responsible for

⁶² Couggin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, Page 198.

⁶³ Also known as the GID.

⁶⁴ “Iraqi Intelligence Agencies.” Global Security.

⁶⁵ “Iraqi Intelligence Agencies.” Global Security.

⁶⁶ “Iraqi Intelligence Agencies.” Global Security.

⁶⁷ Couggin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, Page 198.

domestic and international clandestine operations, sabotage and countering opposition groups. There are six battalions to counter opposition groups. Each battalion is responsible for a specific area. (From 1st to 6th: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Sea-born operations, and Kurdish or Shias operations respectively).⁶⁸ The Secret Service Directorate⁶⁹ has sections specifically focused on South Asia, Turkey, Iran, the US, Europe, Arab states, Africa, and the former Soviet Union⁷⁰.

Even the Mukhabarat were not safe from purges and assassinations and frequently underwent both. Directorate 19 of the Special Bureau⁷¹ was specifically designed to weed out dissent within the Mukhabarat services themselves and was thus a particularly ruthless service.⁷² Dissent was also monitored from within every individual service. “As a rule, each agency has an inner security unit that monitors any dissent in that agency. The head of this unit reports directly to the agency chief who reports directly to the president or the Office of the Presidential Palace.”⁷³ In this manner, Mukhabarat personnel were continually monitored by several different sources to ensure their loyalty. In Iraq anyone, from any part of society or the government, could be assassinated or purged without trial, or even knowing what treachery they were suspected of. Everyone appeared to be spying and spied upon constantly. With the later creation of the Al-Hadi Project, with its strong surveillance and capabilities, the Iraqi Mukhabarat appeared able to

⁶⁸ “Agency Profile: Iraqi Intelligence.” Ninth Edition of the N&O Column / Spooks Newsletter. 19 December 1998

⁶⁹ Part of the GID.

⁷⁰ al-Marashi, Ibrahim. “Iraq’s Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis.” Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs, Volume 6, No.3 September 2002

⁷¹ Under the GID Mukhabarat structure.

⁷² “Iraqi Intelligence Services.” Federation of American Scientists Website,

⁷³ al-Marashi, Ibrahim. “Iraq’s Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis.” Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs, Volume 6, No.3 September 2002.

find, and find information on, anyone, anywhere. Their success in protecting Saddam foiled a key part of United States policy during the 1990s to overthrow him.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Most famously the U.S. sponsored INS plot in the mid-1990s to remove Saddam.

Chapter 3: The Military And The Mukhabarat

The military – that is, the conventional military services, such as the air force, army and navy – traditionally has been seen as a primary internal threat to Arab governments. Many people still see armed services as maintaining that status today. However, while military coups were common in the 1950s and 1960s,⁷⁵ this is no longer the case. Over the past 50 years the military in many Arab countries has declined from being a powerhouse with political ambitions to a weakling closely monitored by the Mukhabarat and isolated from politics. As the military weakened, the Mukhabarat grew and filled the dangerous position once occupied by the military. An assessment of how and why the military threatened governments, and how they were contained, is crucial to understanding the status of the Mukhabarat today.

When the imperial powers left the Arab world, new and weak governments emerged in their wake, often with flimsy institutions, struggling with new borders, neighbors, and notions of community and authority. Some contained tribal populations, whose ideologies did not fit into a Western concept of state and government. Civilian governments were ineffective and had little legitimacy in the eyes of their populations. Many leaders were corrupt, more concerned with personal gain than helping their populations, which led to discontent. The problem of weak or corrupt states after imperialism was not purely a Middle Eastern condition; it happened in other

⁷⁵ For sources writing about the 1950s – 1970s period in the Arab world, see: Luttwak, Edward. Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979; Kent, Lorenzo. The Changing Pattern of Political Power in Iraq, 1958 to 1971. New York: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1972, a detailed look at the political situation in Iraq during the military coups period, the factions vying for power are discussed, and this book demonstrates the prevailing thought about Arab governments during this period; Marr, Phebe A. "The Political Elite in Iraq." In Political Elites in the Middle East. ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, pages 109-149; Torrey, Gordon H. "Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria." In Political Elites in the Middle East. ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, pages 151-161; Khadduri, Majid. Republican 'Iraq: A Study in 'Iraq Politics Since the Revolution of 1958. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; Perlmutter, Amos. "From Obscurity to Rule: The Syrian Army and the Ba'th Party." In The Western Political Quarterly. Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1969, pages 827-845.

parts of the world. Africa and South America had their share of coups. Still, a disproportionately large number of coups occurred in Arab states, for many reasons.

Officers were eager to overthrow the weak governments of the 1950s, largely because they could. Since they had the means to seize power, they did. The only official structures carried over from imperialism, which still were intact and respected, were Arab militaries. They were an organized and efficient element in the middle of a disorganized government and had many reasons to move against their weak governments.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the younger generation of military officers were often well educated and drawn to politics, even when, as in Iraq before 1958, they were not legally allowed to participate in it. Thus, a series of underground “Officers’ Movements” emerged during the 1950s. They had idealistic agendas and often saw themselves as protecting the population from a corrupt regime. They believed their duty was to ensure that government remained honorable and responsive to the people’s needs. The idea that a military should act as a public guardian was not just an Arab phenomenon. In South America such ideas, prevalent among military forces, were used to justify coups. When Arab officers decided that politics was too important to be left to the politicians, they took over their governments, and the literature on this period explores these issues in detail.⁷⁷ Sometimes officers acted alone or else

⁷⁶ For references about why militaries took over governments in the 1950s, see: Perlmutter, Amos. “From Obscurity to Rule: The Syrian Army and the Ba’th Party.” In The Western Political Quarterly. Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1969, p827-845; Khadduri, Majid. Republican ‘Iraq: A Study in ‘Iraq Politics Since the Revolution of 1958. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

⁷⁷ The following are typical of the literature of the period: Kent, Lorenzo. The Changing Pattern of Political Power in Iraq, 1958 to 1971. New York: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1972; Khadduri, Majid. Republican ‘Iraq: A Study in ‘Iraq Politics Since the Revolution of 1958. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; Marr, Phebe A. “The Political Elite in Iraq.” In Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, pages 10-9-149; Perlmutter, Amos. “From Obscurity to Rule: The Syrian Army and the Ba’th Party.” In The Western Political Quarterly. Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1969, pages 827-845; Torrey, Gordon H. “Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria.” In Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, pages 151-161.

instigated a coup to place in power political parties they favoured. Most officers movements of the 1950s were strongly anti-imperialist and anti-Israeli (especially among Arab militaries who participated in the 1948 war), possibly pan-Arab, and wished to replace their governments with ones holding similar beliefs. Most often officers wanted changes regarding specific policies rather than desiring to further large ideological systems like Communism or Islamism. Still, the strong desire for change led to military coups. These acts were popular in the Arab world because older elites prevented younger men, whether technocrats, officers or members of the lower classes, from entering their ranks. These people could not change their situation through normal political channels and so took these positions by force. Older elite were helpless to stop this movement.

In this thesis the term “military coup” means an attempt to overthrow the government by part of a state’s own armed forces, whether by the military, a parallel military, or Mukhabarat armed force, alone or in combination with civilian politicians. Not all coups were military coups. Sometimes factions tried to overthrow governments through their own strength or by political maneuvering without involving the armed forces, but military coups were far more frequent than any others because of the power these institutions possessed.

Syria suffered the largest number of military coups in the world during the 1950s and 1960s. About a dozen very bloody episodes occurred between 1948, with Husni al-Zaim’s military coup, and 1971, when Hafiz al-Asad seized power and took effective measures to prevent further strikes against the state. During this period successful coup leaders stayed in power for just a few years before being ousted. Governments in Syria were unable to accomplish any reforms for the country, further its interests, overcome personal rivalries, or secure their own power.

In Iraq, the first military coup after independence was accomplished by General Abdul Karim Kassam in 1958, who moved his army brigade into Baghdad and killed the royal family and its prominent supporters. Seemingly, the population welcomed the fall of the monarchy. However, in 1963 Kassam was removed by the disgruntled military working in concert with the Ba'th Party, angry at his corruption and ineffectiveness. The military removed the Ba'th later in the same year and created their own government. Years later Bakr overthrew the military government through a coup in 1968.

Despite its reputation for loyalty to the Hashemites, even Jordan's military was disgruntled in the 1950s, especially because it was commanded by an Englishman, Lieutenant-General Glubb. King Hussein relieved Glubb in 1956, and this reduced much of the military's animosity. However, members of the Jordanian military saw the success of officers' movements in neighboring countries, and hoped to create a republic in Jordan while much of its population lashed out against the monarchy. Glubb's replacement as Chief of Staff, General Ali Abu Nuwar, attempted to rally the officers against the Hashemites in 1958. This attempt, however, was easily foiled by good intelligence and loyalist soldiers.

Seizing power was easy, but keeping it was hard. When the fighting was over, the new leaders had to create a new government and run a country. Their first step usually was to purge the government. They killed or arrested all key members of the old regime as well as any other loyalist remnants and their own personal opponents. After the purges the new leadership gave its friends, tribal relations, or family members prominent positions to secure the high ground of the government. Former military officers often received civilian positions for which they were unqualified, adding to the inefficiency of the new governments.

Coup plotters may have been united by one or two goals such as hatred of the regime or Pan-Arab ideology, but once in power infighting among them emerged as they argued about specific matters.⁷⁸ In Iraq during 1958, officers were able to co-operate against the old regime but unable to share power. Brigadier Kasim and Colonel Arif, equal participants in the coup, immediately turned on each other after it. Kasim eventually won out, but Arif returned to Iraqi politics a few years later. Even after any new government achieved any level of stability, factionalism and divisions between the military non-military personalities disrupted governments and distracted leaders from matters of state.

Military coups still were popular in the 1960s, but eventually they declined in frequency and ended altogether in Iraq and Syria after 1970. This occurred for various reasons, but primarily because leaders discovered ways to protect themselves against military threats. The first step of any Arab government which wanted to survive was to tame the military. Leaders of states which experienced many coups like Syria, or just a few of them, like Jordan, used similar methods to achieve these ends. After Bakr, King Hussein, and Asad came into power, occasional military coups were plotted by military factions, but none overthrew the government. Coups plotters generally were discovered and removed before they could execute their intentions.

Iraq's Ba'th Party had bad experiences in 1963 when, after joining with the military to overthrow the government during February, the military decided the party was not running the country properly and overthrew it in November. Consequently in 1968 the Ba'thists acted against the military even before they seized power by deliberately excluding the military from its coup. Instead, the Ba'thists relied on the armed force of the Jihaz Hannen, the party Mukhabarat service that eventually became the basis for many government ones in Iraq. Jihaz Hannen's

⁷⁸ Khadduri, Majid. Republican 'Iraq: A Study in 'Iraq Politics Since the Revolution of 1958. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, pages 33, 63, 114.

armed force, led by Saddam Hussein, took the presidential palace with little aid from the military.

Routine purges were another method to reduce the military threat. In Iraq and in Syria, when Saddam and Asad came to power, they removed untrustworthy elements from the army and replaced them with more loyal Ba'thist's, which became a popular trend for their government. In Jordan, purges were less bloody but achieved the same results, such as when Palestinians were removed from military positions after Black September. Again, to prevent officers from being in one place long enough to build a support base which might be used against the government, they frequently were shuffled from one position to another. Hafiz al-Asad, conversely, kept those whom he felt loyal to him in the same posts for decades unless they showed signs of disloyalty or displeased him.

The militaries were structured to prevent anyone from accumulating too much power, by means of deliberately factionalizing units and dissipating central command. These factors and the constant shifting of unqualified personnel in high ranking positions have damaged the quality of the military and discouraged initiative among military officers.⁷⁹ These measures to reduce the threat of military coups have crippled military capability. Confronted with a choice between a powerful and capable military and their own political security, governments have preferred an incompetent army.⁸⁰ With their military so hobbled, however, Arab governments needed new expert and efficient armed forces able to achieve the key but narrow ends of keeping control of

⁷⁹ Rubin, Berry. "The Military In Contemporary Middle East Politics: Editor's Summary." In Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2001.

⁸⁰ For more information on military incompetence in the Middle East see: Brooks, Risa. "Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes." Adelphi Paper 324, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

the state and keeping themselves in power. Hence, governments turned, once again, to their Mukhabarat.

Chapter 4: The Fall of the Military and the Rise of the Mukhabarat

In order to prevent military coups, governments gave their Mukhabarat many of the responsibilities of the military, duties which were necessary for the security of the state but could no longer be trusted to the military. Thus, Mukhabarat power grew in both the political and military spheres of government. The Mukhabarat reduced the threat of a military coup in two key ways: By using military intelligence to monitor soldiers and ensure their loyalty to the leadership and by redistributing many traditional military roles and powers among Mukhabarat services.

Syria, Jordan, and Iraq all have multiple Mukhabarat services whose main objectives are to watch the military; watch for dissent, keep tabs on officers in power, and ensure armed forces do not threaten the regime. Each state has a Mukhabarat service called Military Intelligence, a key section that aims to supply intelligence *on* the military, such as the Special Bureau in Saddam's former regime. Supplying information *for* the military often is a secondary function of Military Intelligence. The Mukhabarat also have the resources to place informants in every level and section of the military and police services.

In Syria, these tasks are handled primarily by Military Intelligence (Shu'bat al-Mukhabarat al-Askariyya) and Air Force Intelligence (Idarat al_mukhabarat al-Jawiyya), in Jordan probably by Military Intelligence and a section of Special Operations Command, and in Saddam Hussein's government it was by the Military Security Service (MSS) (al-Amn al-Askari), and Military Intelligence (Istikbarat). Mukhabarat services in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan have all discovered coup plots, which no doubt reassured their governments about their effectiveness. In Iraq, Saddam exposed a plot in 1970 by Iraqi officials, supported by Iran, with significant political consequences. "Saddam, the ever-vigilant 'Mr. Deputy' was able to make the point that it was he

and his formidable security forces, rather than the military, which guaranteed the party's safety."⁸¹ His Mukhabarat discovered not just coups plotted by the military but also by those proposed by its own armed forces. In 1992 two Republican Guard brigades were accused of plotting a coup against Saddam. This coup, foiled by other Mukhabarat services, was followed by extensive executions. The apparent ability of the Mukhabarat to prevent coups reassured the leadership and ensured it would remain powerful as long as it accomplished this goal.

The obvious threat that a military poses is through its monopoly on force. Governments removed this monopoly by creating armed forces distinct from the military, which often were placed in the care of Mukhabarat services. Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and other Arab states each have many Mukhabarat services, with armed forces independent of the military. They serve as bodyguards or as an urban military force in case of emergency, but their central function is to siphon power from the military and redistribute it among other agencies as counterweights, for security reasons. Some armed forces created to offset the threat posed by the military remained independent rather than being incorporated into the Mukhabarat structure. This thesis will call armed forces which are not controlled by other regular military or any Mukhabarat, "parallel militaries." This is a different definition of the term than is used by most scholars, who generally include Mukhabarat armed forces in their definition. Although they are rarer than Mukhabarat armed forces, when parallel militaries exist alongside regular and Mukhabarat armed forces, the relative strength of Mukhabarat forces is reduced.

There are conflicting reports about non- "military" armed forces in Syria. The Special Forces, the Presidential/Republican Guard, and the Struggle Companies often are listed among

⁸¹ Couglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, page 81.

the Mukhabarat services of the country. Andrew Rathmell, however, suggests⁸² that some of these services may be independent “parallel military” forces, directly answerable to the president rather than to a Mukhabarat service. If so, the Mukhabarat services in Syria are weaker militarily than those in Iraq and likely even those in Jordan. However, most sources list these forces as part of the Mukhabarat, and even if they are a parallel military they probably would still have close Mukhabarat connections, since they have a natural association with each other due to their roles as protectors of the state and a balance to the military.

Almost all of Iraq’s Mukhabarat services had substantial armed forces under their control, more so than in Syria or Jordan. The Organization of Special Security (OSS), the largest Mukhabarat armed force, formed from the various Republican Guard units, fell under the jurisdiction of Amn al-Khass. In Jordan the Special Operations Command (SOC), created in the late 1990s, is probably the agency with the largest Mukhabarat armed forces. SOC, falling under the Interior Ministry, includes the Special Forces Brigade, the police public security brigade, the Royal Guard, intelligence units, and an airlift wing.

The central role which Mukhabarat armed forces took over from the military was control of urban centres. In Syria, Iraq, and likely in Jordan, the military is not allowed near major cities without permission from the highest leadership. Instead, Mukhabarat armed forces garrisoned in and around major cities like Baghdad and Damascus control urban security. In Iraq, the military was not even allowed to move from place to place while carrying ammunition, for fear of a potential course change to a city and a military coup.⁸³ Once Mukhabarat armed forces alone began to garrison the urban centres, the military was restricted to only being used against other armies and outside aggression. If the military moved against internal threats, apparently it did so

⁸² Rathmell, Andrew. “Syria’s Intelligence Services: Origins and Development.” Journal of Conflict Studies.

⁸³ Cougglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, pages 202-203.

under the supervision of Mukhabarat services. Berry Rubin has argued that many Arab militaries actually preferred to lose responsibility for internal defense.⁸⁴ Perhaps so, but such a division of labour must produce animosity between the Mukhabarat and the military, especially since Mukhabarat armed forces and “parallel militaries” generally receive the best equipment first and are better paid than the regular forces.

With this transfer of responsibilities the Mukhabarat used all its characteristics, such as information gathering, informants, detention centres, covert operations, and armed forces, as weapons against local uprisings, riots, and other internal threats. The Jordanian Mukhabarat guided the fighting against Black September. In Iraq, the Republican Guard ended the Kurdish and Shi’ia uprisings after the Gulf War, as Defence Companies in Syria did with those of the Ikhwan in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

By 1980 military coups became rare in the Arab world, yet the academic literature still assumes they remain a large threat to their governments. This belief exists because recent studies of military-government relations in Arab states are rare, while old beliefs are hard to change. The idea that Arab militaries are able and willing to overthrow their governments is well-established and once was true. Unfortunately, times have changed while the literature has not. In the 1960s and 1970s, the literature on Arab politics focused on the role of the military in the government, because military coups often had occurred in the region. In particular, Edward Luttwak’s classic work of 1968, *Coup d’Etat*,⁸⁵ illuminated how, where, and why coups could be carried out, using many Arab examples for its narrative. It described what conditions needed to exist for a coup to succeed, and how plotters could carry out a coup. Luttwak’s definition of a coup is “... the

⁸⁴ Rubin, Berry. “The Military In Contemporary Middle East Politics: Editor’s Summary.” In Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs. Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2001, page 7.

⁸⁵ Luttwak, Edward. Coup d’Etat: A Practical Handbook. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.

infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder.”⁸⁶ Coups could be politically neutral and occur in the absence of support from the military or masses. Luttwak described preconditions for coups which characterized most Arab states of the time: economically backward countries with large and unsophisticated bureaucracies; ineffective legal means for changing governments; weak governments with questionable legitimacy; states independent from foreign influence; and containing a political centre (i.e. one clear political target which can be overthrown). For the rest of his handbook, Luttwak described in great detail exactly how to conduct a coup.⁸⁷

This brilliant and frequently cited work pointed out many of the inherent weaknesses in Arab states which made them susceptible to coups. Later authors took his arguments further, concluding that military coups were a huge internal threat to Arab states, given their structure, and predicted that they would continue to be. Most books on Arab politics written in the 1960s and 1970s about Syria, Iraq, and other Arab regimes concluded that these governments were unstable, which led to numerous coups as factions fought among themselves, the real power rested in the military – because serving or retired soldiers or airmen held all prominent government positions, and the military could remove governments through force. Authors rarely stated that the military was the greatest internal threat to governments, but they always treated it as a powerhouse that must be appeased by the government. Such works include Lorenzo Kent’s *The Changing Pattern of Political Power in Iraq*,⁸⁸ Majid Khadduri’s *Republican ‘Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics Since the Revolution of 1958*,⁸⁹ and Phebe Marr’s *The Political Elite in Iraq*⁹⁰,

⁸⁶ Luttwak, Edward. *Coup d’Etat: A Practical Handbook*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979 page 27.

⁸⁷ Luttwak, Edward. *Coup d’Etat: A Practical Handbook*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979

⁸⁸ Kent, Lorenzo. *The Changing Pattern of Political Power in Iraq, 1958 to 1971*. New York: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1972.

⁸⁹ Khadduri, Majid. *Republican ‘Iraq: A Study in ‘Iraq Politics Since the Revolution of 1958*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

all of which emphasised the power of the military in the Iraqi regimes. Gordon Torrey's *Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria*⁹¹ of 1975 asserted that the military ultimately was in charge of the state, while Ba'th membership was essential to climb the ladder to power. It emphasised that serving or retired military men occupied the highest levels of government. Conversely, books written about Jordan during this period tended to focus on the Palestinian question as Jordan's biggest problem.

Scholars concluded that from 1950 to 1970 the military was a primary figure in Arab politics and a threat to regimes. Since then, politics in Arab states has changed, but instead of accounting for the new environment, authors have fallen back on outdated assumptions. For example, Risa Brooks's *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes*⁹² outlines how governments have reduced the military. This otherwise excellent work still claims the military is a big threat.

Underlying these misconceptions about military power in politics are several basic problems. Writers often assume that because revolutions place officers in power, these men must retain an inherent loyalty to the military. This view is central to conclusions about military power in politics. Just because military or former military officers hold high ranking positions, however, does *not* mean they act for the military establishment as a whole. In the 1950s and 1960s, military factions attacked military governments no less than they did civilian ones. So too military governments, run by former officers, still feared coups from the military and acted against them. Hafiz al-Asad ran a military government but used his Mukhabarat to keep the

⁹⁰ Marr, Phebe A. "The Political Elite in Iraq." In *Political Elites in the Middle East*. ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975.

⁹¹ Torrey, Gordon H. "Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria." In *Political Elites in the Middle East*. ed. George Lenczowski, Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975.

⁹² Brooks, Risa. "Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes." Adelphi Paper 324, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

military in check. Again, ethnicity, religion, patronage and kinship relationships shape which people receive what positions of power. Naturally, an officer who seized power through a military coup would use his friends, many of whom also would have a military background, to man his government, but he may not trust many other officers.

Abundant problems of terminology also confuse the study of Arab militaries and Mukhabarat. The terms “military,” “Mukhabarat,” and “security forces” are often used interchangeably, even though they do not necessarily refer to the same things. A clear distinction must be made between “military” and “Mukhabarat,” and caution should be taken when applying the term “security forces” to the Middle East. The military belongs to one section of government, the Mukhabarat to another. Key Mukhabarat agencies generally are under the prime ministry or the ministry of domestic affairs, while the military is exclusively under the ministry of defence. Despite some interaction between the two, the Mukhabarat works *independently* from the military and occasionally against the latter. It works to reduce the power of the military and insure its loyalty to the regime. They are separate entities often working towards different goals and have no structural association with one another.

Yet authors often refer to the Mukhabarat armed forces as the “military.” “In the Jordanian capital, as in other cities and towns, the presence of the Mukhabarat was felt everywhere, while desert patrols kept watch over the countryside.” Shortly after this quote, Kamal Salibi continues: “The military control of the country was remarkable for its thoroughness and efficiency, leaving hardly any room for internal dissent.”⁹³ As the author does not signify a switch in topics, this statement implies that the Mukhabarat and military are the same thing. Often, references to the military, Mukhabarat. and “security services” are so vague that one cannot discover what aspect

⁹³ Salibi, Kamal. The Modern History of Jordan. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993 page 244.

of government the author really is discussing. Matters are made even more confusing by use of the term “security forces,” which has become popular in recent discussion. In the 1970s and 1980s, authors tended to rank the Mukhabarat armed forces as part of the military, but now group all such services as “security forces,” perhaps reflecting increasing awareness that Mukhabarat armed forces are distinct from the regular military. The imprecision of the term, however, can cause analytical problems. “Military and security personnel increased from 100,000 in 1970 to 530,000 in 1991. In the same period, the national workforce as a whole did little more than double, from 1.7 million to 3.7 million.”⁹⁴ Here the author lumps “security forces” and the regular military into one group, possibly because determining the differences between them would have been difficult.

Again, authors may confuse the military with Mukhabarat armed forces because they may not know what aspect of government controls them or because they do not think the difference matters. Thus, in the influential MERIA journal, Berry Rubin’s *The Military in Contemporary Middle East Politics*⁹⁵ repeatedly confuses military, Mukhabarat, and parallel military forces. Even though he acknowledges that the regular military, non-regular armed forces and Mukhabarat agencies exist in order to balance each other out, he still uses the terms “military,” “army,” and “armed forces” interchangeably, making it difficult to know when he is talking about the Mukhabarat, their armed forces or parallel militaries, or the regular military. Indeed, Rubin does not mention that the Mukhabarat has any armed forces of its own, nor does he recognize that many of the armed forces to which he refers fall under Mukhabarat jurisdiction. At best, he hints that various armed forces have intelligence sections. Rubin claims that the Iraqi

⁹⁴ George, Alan. *Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom*. New York: Zed Books, 2003, page 10

⁹⁵ Rubin, Berry. “The Military In Contemporary Middle East Politics: Editor’s Summary.” In *Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs*. Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2001.

army fought the Kurds in the 1960s and 1970s and suppressed the Shia and Kurdish rebellions in 1991. But these activities were *principally* the work of Mukhabarat forces, specifically the Republican Guard. He says that in 1970-1971 the Jordanian army put down the Palestinian dissidents when, once again, the Mukhabarat organized and carried out most of the attacks. He holds that “For Middle East governments, the armed forces play an important role in maintaining internal security.”⁹⁶ Yet simultaneously he notes they are not responsible for internal security, which had been taken over by other armed forces. He also believes that leaders in the Middle East need a strong and happy military to survive. In fact, ample evidence suggests that leaders want weak and incompetent militaries and happy Mukhabarat/parallel military forces.

These misclassifications of force damage any analysis of power in Arab states. It is like reporting a robbery to the police by stating that one saw someone break into a house without being able to describe what the robber look like or what he or she took. Even worse, sometimes it is like providing a description of the wrong culprit. If a rebellion was quenched by an armed force but authors do not indicate whether it was the military, police, or Mukhabarat, further investigation into the crackdown becomes impossible. Vagueness may even reinforce error.

Some authors, however, recently have challenged established ideas about the military in Arab states, proposing that some Arab states are “coup-proof”. The primary advocate of this theory is James T. Quinlivan. His excellent and informative article *Coop-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East*⁹⁷ argues that governments have reduced the potential for military coups by creating parallel militaries, increasing the expertise of the regular military and using multiple Mukhabarat services to spy on disloyal elements. *Coup-Proofing* explains why

⁹⁶ Rubin, Berry. “The Military In Contemporary Middle East Politics: Editor’s Summary.” In *Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs*. Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2001, page 6.

⁹⁷ Quinlivan, James T. “Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East.” In *International Security*. Vol. 24, No. 2, Fall 1999. Harvard: MIT Press, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, 1999.

and how states have become coup-proof, focusing on Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq and finishes with a discussion about how to remove a coup-proof regime like that of Saddam Hussein.

Quinlivan credits Luttwak as being among the reasons Arab states are coup-proof – implying that *Coup d'Etat* was effective in demonstrating how to prevent them. Much of Quinlivan's theory is based on observations of what he calls parallel militaries. He appears to have created the term “parallel military” and describe them as: armed forces designed to counter the regular military; not part of military hierarchy; which report to the leadership through different channels. The Mukhabarat is better paid, better trained, with better equipment than the regular military. It must potentially be capable of fighting the regular military if a coup were to occur.

Quinlivan, however, fails to recognize that many of his parallel military forces are under the jurisdiction of the Mukhabarat, even though he looks at these agencies and parallel militaries in detail. For example, he refers to Iraq's Popular army and Republican Guard as parallel militaries even though both fell directly under the jurisdiction of the Mukhabarat. The Republican Guard was under the jurisdiction of Amn al Khass, and Iraq's Popular Army is frequently referred to as part of the Mukhabarat structure. He never states they are *not* part of a Mukhabarat, or that they are, though he recognizes that the Mukhabarat have uniformed armed forces in Saudi Arabia, and that various parallel militaries have intelligence sections. In effect, Quinlivan evades the Mukhabarat as a factor in his analysis by referring merely to smaller Mukhabarat armed forces. Other authors discussing “coup-proof” states like E. Blanche, reason that while regimes have seemingly become “coup-proof,” the military is still a powerful force within the state.⁹⁸ Consequently, no participant in this debate draws any conclusions about the prominence of the

⁹⁸ Blanche, E. “Coup-Proof Arab Leaders Must Tread Carefully.” In Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst (Online). 1 May 2002.

Mukhabarat. A recent New York Times article⁹⁹ by Neil MacFarquhar goes as far as to discuss the wide-ranging powers of the Mukhabarat and their influence on people's everyday lives, but is purely focussed on their suppression of reform movements. This article does not look at the inherent threat that Mukhabarats may pose to their own state. The point is not just that military coups in Arab countries are unlikely, or that their governments have taken deliberate measures to bring militaries under their control. It is that Arab militaries were weakened primarily through the actions of Mukhabarat services, which in turn gained enormous responsibilities and power. But who guards against the guardian?

⁹⁹ MacFarquhar, Neil "Heavy Hand of the Secret Police Impeding Reform in Arab World." in The New York Times November 14, 2005.

Chapter 5: The Mukhabarat Political Threat

Mukhabarat services can threaten their state leadership with their own armed forces and also through more insidious ways. They have great political power within their governments which they often use with little restraint. In Iraq, Syria, and Jordan at various times the Mukhabarat were able to operate with impunity, without regard for human rights or legal concerns. So long as the Mukhabarat remains loyal to the regime, there are few restraints on its behaviour, although Jordan has a better record than Iraq or Syria in this regard. In Iraq, the state simply let their Mukhabarat act freely. In Syria and Jordan, this freedom was enabled by the continuous State of Emergency which both countries had for decades.

Martial law was maintained not because of a clear and present danger to the government, like a war or insurrection, but because it let the state act without having to worry about human rights or laws. Even in times of peace, governments hesitate to remove their official “state of emergency”. Syria, for example, has had a continuous state of emergency since 1963. Its Mukhabarat services also have been well documented abusers of human rights for years. In recent years these abuses have declined, likely due to international pressure, but they still exist; they are just not as obvious. In Jordan, a state of emergency existed continuously from 1967 until 1994 and was ended by King Hussein under international pressure during the process of internal reforms. The Mukhabarat in Jordan recently have drawn little criticism from human rights groups compared to other countries in the region, although abuses occasionally are reported. After Bakr came to power in Iraq, all state power was heavily concentrated in the central leadership, while the government routinely ignored human rights abuses. The Mukhabarat were allowed to act as they wished regardless of rights, laws, or international reactions, even without

the excuse of a state of emergency. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the ultimate centre of power in the state, was free to act as it wanted without checks by other aspects of the government or population. So too, the Mukhabarat, which committed brutal atrocities.

Mukhabarat services tend to have a lot of independence. While often supervised by the head of state, he cannot manage every aspect of the Mukhabarat, particularly given his other duties. Thus he entrusts its overall management to loyal officials. Mukhabarat services are designed to work independently and officially distribute information according to a strict hierarchy. Knowledge is power, which is only given on a need-to-know basis. In the competitive environment of the Mukhabarat, each service officially reports only to its superior. Official information is transferred in a linear fashion. For example, Mukhabarat service A reports to its findings to the larger service B, which reports to a higher service C, which disseminates the intelligence from several services to Leader D, likely the head of state.¹⁰⁰ This process attempts to limit access to intelligence, but there are cracks in the system. Patronage relationships and kinship ties bypass these traditional channels and can leak information to individuals in other sections of the government. These unofficial information channels are extensive and important in power politics. Mukhabarat services may even not necessarily depend wholly on the government for funding. Many are involved in illegal activities that provide an independent source of revenue, such as smuggling. As head of the Mukhabarat under Bakr, Saddam ran gambling and

¹⁰⁰ For further information, see: "Syria's Intelligence Services: A Primer" Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol.2 No.6 1 July; "Syria's Intelligence and Security Services – An Overview." In Jane's Defence Weekly. 01 March 1995, Edition 1995, Vol. 007, Issue 003; "Syria's Praetorian Guards: A Primer." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 2 No. 7, 5 August 2000; Rathmell, Andrew. "Syria's Intelligence Services: Origins and Development." Journal of Conflict Studies; "General Intelligence Department." The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan General Intelligence Department; al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis." Meria Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs, Volume 6, No.3 September 2002;; "Agency Profile: Iraqi Intelligence." Ninth Edition of the N&O Column / Spooks Newsletter. 19 December 1998; "Iraqi Intelligence Services." Federation of American Scientists Website.

smuggling operations which helped fund his services. Pepe Escobar discussed Mukhabarat business dealings just before the fall of Saddam's regime,¹⁰¹ which he maintained often were independent of the state. This phenomenon is well documented in Iraq, but there is reason to believe that Mukhabarat services in Syria do the same.

The threat is not that every Mukhabarat service of a state will rise up against the leadership. That is highly unlikely, because these services are used to competing among themselves, not cooperating. To unite so many services towards a single cause would be extremely difficult, and involve so many people and factions that the plot likely would be leaked. The more services involved in a plot to overthrow a leader, the more widespread the distribution of power when the new one takes control, as every plotter would expect rewards. Yet support from all Mukhabarat services in a country is not needed to supplant the leadership; in many cases, just one or two important services with a strong leader could do the trick. The threat is that an influential part of the Mukhabarat could use its power to seize control of the country, and in doing so would short circuit all the defences in place against a coup.

Thus, a Mukhabarat leader might launch a palace coup, using his support base and service to kill the head of state and his closest followers. Alternately, a faction of a service, a whole one, or several of them might work together against the leadership of their state, perhaps backed by an outside power. For example, the United States could back an anti-Qadhafi Mukhabarat movement in Libya, or Al-Qaida could back a coup against Egypt or Jordan. In any case, the biggest and most influential Mukhabarat service in any state often is the greatest internal threat to its regime. Lesser but serious problems come from smaller services with political power, such as those closest to the head of state, or specifically designed to monitor

¹⁰¹ Escobar, Pepe. "The Roving Eye: The Mukhabarat's Shopping List." Online Asia Times, 24 April 2003.

other Mukhabarat services. Mukhabarat coups are unlikely to be ideologically motivated, but rather mere grabs for power by factions. Once it eliminates a leadership, the new one might keep most of the government unchanged. This characteristic redoubles the potential danger of a Mukhabarat coup.

Any head of a powerful Mukhabarat service must be considered very loyal to the leadership. They frequently are part of the elite that run the state. As no 'loyal' supporter would be expected to attack the government, naturally he would have the element of surprise if he tried to do so. Ethnic or family ties also would provide paradoxical aid for a Mukhabarat coup. So long as a coup is launched by members of the ethnic or tribal minority which runs the government, the new leader probably can rely on them for support, though not necessarily so with personal or patronage style relationships, which rest on individual relations. While anyone with particular loyalty to an ousted leader would lose their ranking positions, most personnel could remain. A ruling minority would fear a coup launched by another group, but not necessarily one within its own community. They might not like the change of power, but they would not necessarily fight it to the death.

Again, a relative or close personal relation of a head of state might find it even easier to take control of the government by making paradoxical use of familial ties.

"In 1977... 'Ali Hasan al Majid, his (Hussein's) paternal cousin, became a member of the Ba'th Party military bureau and 'Adnan Khayrallah Talfah, his maternal cousin and brother-in-law (Husayn is married to his sister Sajida) became Defence Minister. However, since these two were related to President Bakr as well (they were his sons-in-law), it is impossible to know whether their rise was due to Husayn's efforts to implant his supporters in key roles or to Bakr's attempts to check Husayn's powers and counter-balance him by appointing his own relatives (or both)."¹⁰²

¹⁰² Bengio, Ofra. "A Republican Turning Royalist? Saddam Hussein and the Dilemmas of Succession." In Journal of Contemporary History. Vol. 35, No. 4, October 2000, page 644.

Here, close familial relations bound the highest leadership together. As these bonds were close, it would be very difficult to tell the true loyalty of family members. The Arab proverb “*My brother and I against my cousin, my cousin and I against a stranger*” may predict behaviour in many instances, but relationships can be more complicated than this, particularly when the leadership is heavily interrelated as was that of Saddam, where everyone was a brother, cousin, or brother-in-law. In a palace coup, a high-ranking family member may turn his family against the leader, who also is a family member.

By their job description, Mukhabarat services have great experience with spycraft. Inherently secretive, they are guarded about their operations, activities, and surveillance, particularly those of its sections dealing with intelligence gathering and covert operations. Outside sources cannot easily determine what is going on in Mukhabarat services, which are designed to gather information on others and to protect secrets of their own.

If a Mukhabarat service wanted allies to support a move against the government leadership, it would be easy for them to discover who would cooperate with them, who could be convinced to cooperate, and who would likely oppose their plans and should be eliminated or avoided. Mukhabarat plotters also would know how to infiltrate organizations in the government which had not already been penetrated or would pose a problem unless checked, because of their experience in years of infiltrating government, the military, civilian society, or opposition groups. Again, certain Mukhabarat personnel have unorthodox views on ethics. Some Syrian or Iraqi Air Force Intelligence personnel have carried out assassinations, planned coups in enemy states, and sponsored terrorist organizations. They have interrogation, torture, and detention centres. All these resources and abilities could aid a Mukhabarat coup.

This threat is not just theoretical: it has been practised. For decades, Mukhabarat heads have tried to take over their governments. Examples of this phenomenon will be separated into three categories, where governments are threatened by 1) Mukhabarat services as organizations, 2) Mukhabarat heads, as the leadership of certain influential or powerful Mukhabarat services and 3) heirs of the state leadership who run Mukhabarat services. The record on this issue is probably incomplete, with many attempts to remove the leadership having been discovered and stopped before they could start and be covered up by the state. Even so, some cases are in the public record.

A clear example of a Mukhabarat service moving against a government, without being led by a major figure, happened in Iraq with the Republican Guard uprising in 1992.

“In the summer of 1992 two mechanized Republican Guard brigades were linked to a plot to depose him. The plot - assuming it had existed - was foiled by Saddam’s ever-watchful security forces, and resulted in another round of executions and purges.”¹⁰³ In this interesting example, one set of Mukhabarat forces beat a coup launched by another. After this incident, the Republican Guard was purged and a new “Golden Division” of the force was built from its most loyal units, creating the elite of an elite force.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, Mukhabarat heads have attempted to overthrow the leadership. The Abu Nuwar coup in Jordan during 1957 was a military coup, but it was backed by the chief of Military Intelligence who fled with Abu Nuwar when the coup failed. A coup in Iraq was attempted in 1973 by Nadhim Kazzar, chief of the Security Police and an old ally of Saddam’s. This plot was not very well thought out, partially because Kazzar was unstable and psychotic. He thought that merely to kidnap and murder a few key people would let him take control of the

¹⁰³ Couglin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002. page 287.

¹⁰⁴ This force was the Gold Division of the Republican Guard.

country. He kidnapped General Hammad Shihab, defence minister, and Saadoun Ghaydan, the interior minister, and then tried to kill Saddam and Bakr but failed. Thinking his plot had been discovered, Kazzar tried to leave the country, taking his two hostages with him. On route to Iran, Kazzar sent demands to Bakr, who dispatched Saddam after him. Kazzar was caught, but not before he killed Shihab and injured Ghaydan. Saddam's forces killed Kazzar and his associates and some others who may have known what was going on.¹⁰⁵ However, the only case so far in which a Mukhabarat head actually took over a government may have occurred with Saddam Hussein in 1979. No one really knows how Saddam convinced Bakr to step down in this bloodless affair, which may not qualify as a "coup", but at least it demonstrates the power behind Mukhabarat heads. Saddam used his Mukhabarat services to remove his personal enemies, then built up his powerbase and took over the government with little resistance.

In recent years the leadership of many Arab states has altered substantially. The "old guard" is changing. Two of the iconic leaders who were closely associated with the image of their countries have died, King Hussein and President Asad, while an American-led invasion removed Saddam Hussein. These changes have created a series of succession crises.

Arab leaders tend to lean on their immediate families. If a coup were to overthrow the leadership, the people closest to the ousted leader would be removed from power as well, with close relatives high on the list. In a recent example of this phenomenon, on 17 March 2003, President Bush gave Saddam and his sons two days to leave Iraq,¹⁰⁶ whereas other high ranking (and equally dangerous) members of the government simply were warned out of the country.

Excluding monarchies, the leaders of Arab states are reluctant to name heirs or vice presidents, worried that this will lead to their assassination by the successor or by factions who

¹⁰⁵ Coughlin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, page 95-98.

¹⁰⁶ "Timeline: Iraq." BBC News Online, U.K.

might prefer to put the latter in power. First-degree relation, however, often have the most to gain from maintaining the status quo, and therefore are the most common people to be named heirs. While in theory the presidents of Iraq and Syria could not officially groom their sons to succeed them, unofficially it was understood that they would be the successors. In a presidency, to name a first degree relation as “vice-president” would damage the semblance of democracy, so often the decision that the son will succeed the father is unspoken but accepted. Thus, Afiz al’Asad’s son Bashar was “elected” president shortly after his father’s death by an overwhelming majority in rigged elections.

In Syria, Jordan, and Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq, all but one of the heirs to the leadership were first-degree relations to the leader. More significantly, each of these men commanded a Mukhabarat service. The original heirs to the leadership in Syria, Jordan, and Iraq were either brothers or close relatives, but the leaders wanted their sons to replace them and continue their legacy. As time passed and sons of the heads of states grew older, they replaced the previous heirs, who in turn became threats (or were suspected of becoming one).

In Jordan, King Hussein named his brother Hassan as his heir in 1966, but shortly before his death in 1999 Hussein surprisingly made his eldest son Abdullah crown prince, whether because of a natural wish to be succeeded by his own child or because Hassan was overstepping his boundaries.

Saddam was never open about his successors. For a while it seemed his brother-in-law and cousin Adnan Khairallah was the logical choice, but after the Iran - Iraq war, and talk in the Arab press and the general population that Adnan would make a better leader than Saddam, tensions mounted between the two. A family scandal involving Sajida, Saddam’s wife, and Adnan’s sister may have prompted Saddam’s vengeance. Adnan died in an “accident” which was later revealed

as an assassination ordered by Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁷ By the mid 1990s, after this messy family dispute dissipated, Hussein's eldest son Uday began to enjoy his father's favour again, as did his brother Qusay. Bengio Ofra¹⁰⁸ wrote an excellent article studying of the powers of, and relations between, Uday and Qusay. He discusses how Qusay generally controlled some Mukhabarat and military services, while Uday was involved in government matters, with more distant relations to some Mukhabarat services. Uday, considered volatile, was severely disliked by the Iraqi population and many government leaders. Uday took citizens, seemingly at random, to the Iraqi Olympic Committee headquarters, where they were tortured in its many cells, then ransomed off.¹⁰⁹ Uday's power was reduced when he was disabled by an assassins botched attempt to kill him. Qusay, considered more stable than his brother, became the natural choice as the next heir because of his positions in the military and Mukhabarat, but Uday retained enough power to challenge him.¹¹⁰ Rivalry between the two was evident long before the fall of Saddam's regime. A fight for power probably would have occurred had Saddam died while still in control of Iraq.

All the heirs to the leadership in Syria, Jordan, and the former Iraqi regime had control over major Mukhabarat or military services. In Syria, Rifa'at, Basil, and Bashar all held Mukhabarat posts. Rifa'at was heir and tried to take over the government with his Defence Companies¹¹¹ in a fit of pique in 1983, but had his power and his position in the Mukhabarat reduced to nothing after his attempt. Even so, he initially posed a threat to Bashar after the latter came to power, using guerilla, mercenary, and Mukhabarat forces against his nephew in hopes of

¹⁰⁷ Coughlin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, page 154.

¹⁰⁸ Bengio, Ofra. "A Republican Turning Royalist? Saddam Hussein and the Dilemmas of Succession." In Journal of Contemporary History. Vol. 35, No. 4, October 2000, pages 641-653.

¹⁰⁹ Coughlin, Con. Saddam: King of Terror. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002, page 293.

¹¹⁰ Bengio, Ofra. "A Republican Turning Royalist? Saddam Hussein and the Dilemmas of Succession." In Journal of Contemporary History. Vol. 35, No. 4, October 2000, pages 641-653.

¹¹¹ Also known as the Special Forces.

becoming president. Meanwhile, Basil, a commanding officer in the Republican Guard, had many other military connections. Bashar took over these roles after his brother's death.

In Iraq, Adnan Khairallah was Minister of Defence between the late 1980s and early 1990s. Uday Hussein had a few high-ranking positions in the Mukhabarat and Quasy held many high ranking military and Mukhabarat positions, including Chief of Amn al-Khass, supervisor of the Presidential Guard.

In Jordan, Hassan Bin Talal, brother of King Hussein and Crown Prince from 1966 until 1999, was considered an Honorary General. Of all the successors, he seems to have had the smallest connection with the Mukhabarat. Conversely, before he became King, Abdullah Bin Talal had run the Special Forces Brigade and Special Operations Command.

To appoint a family member as a successor does not necessarily eliminate all risk to a leader, as the case of Rifaat al-Asad demonstrates. When Hafiz al-Asad was ill in 1983, Rifaat immediately and publicly began to promote himself as Syria's next ruler, even though he was not officially named the successor. After Hafiz's health improved, he quickly got into an argument with Rifa'at about restructuring the military command. Rifa'at, head of the Defence Companies, marched with these Mukhabarat armed forces on Damascus. Hafiz al-Asad eventually won the standoff with the help of other loyal armed forces and lulled his brother into complacency. He convinced Rifa'at to leave the country on a diplomatic mission where he remained several years, his strength waning while Hafiz consolidated his power. Later his heir apparent Basil began to consolidate his power, but Basil's accidental death in 1994 caused a succession crisis. Bashar, Asad's second son, training to be an optometrist in London, was quickly called back to Syria and given a crash course in the military academy before assuming command of Basil's forces. He had to consolidate his power quickly. Just before Hafiz al-Asad died, he relieved Rifa'at from his

token position as vice-president, presumably to help strengthen Bashar's succession. Rifa'at immediately went on the offensive and attacked Hafiz's forces with his own loyalists, but was beaten.

Chapter 6: The Current Threat

In 2006, Mukhabarat services are strong and well respected. Their threat is subtle but dangerous. Changes of leadership have caused shifts of power within Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. In Damascus and Amman, new leaders had to consolidate their power quickly after their predecessors died, in the process overcoming opposition from their fathers' governments, including an entrenched "old guard" which might challenge them. In Iraq, an attempt is being made to create an entirely new government and intelligence network, aided by the CIA. Increasingly, Arab leaders seem to understand their Mukhabarat's powers and danger, resulting in a shifting of Mukhabarat personnel, the creation of new services, and increased incidences of corruption charges against old leaders. Events are changing so quickly in the Middle East that it is difficult to analyse all the most contemporary events. So much is changing so often, such as the recent November 2005 bombings in Jordan or the October release of the U.N. Report on Rafic Hariri's assassination, that time is needed to truly understand the relevance and context of these events in relation to the Mukhabarat.

In Jordan, Abdullah had little chance to consolidate his power before he became king, because Hassan had been the heir for so long. As Abdullah began to establish his rule, he took measures to increase his personal power such as imposing "temporary laws" and dissolving parliament in 2001.¹¹² These measures let Abdullah reduce popular freedoms while gaining political power. Since becoming king, Abdullah has reshuffled personnel, shifting family members and other leaders according to their perceived loyalty to him or his uncle Hassan. Though Hassan gracefully left the political scene without, apparently, challenging his nephew,

¹¹² "Jordan's Intelligence Scandal." In Jane's Intelligence Digest (Online). 22 March 2002.

Abdullah could not take any chances. Meanwhile, the Mukhabarat presence rose in Jordan, with personnel stationed ostentatiously in places like airports. While officially explained as a response to an increased threat from Islamic extremists, this increase in the Mukhabarat presence simultaneously increased the king's security against any usurpers. In 1999,

“Throughout the country, the rising power of the GID is being felt, and the old interrogation and interception practices involving individuals suspected of criticizing the regime are being reintroduced at airports.”¹¹³

This activity occurred under the supervision of the head of the GID, General Sameed Batikhi, a central figure in King Hussein's government and a key supporter of Abdullah.

On March 2002, however, after retiring as head of the GID, Batikhi was charged with corruption. Along with others, he was accused of involvement in a multi-million dollar bank fraud while he was head of the GID.¹¹⁴ Since Batikhi was considered extremely loyal to both King Hussein and Abdullah, this corruption charge is unusual. There are two likely reasons why corruption charges were brought against Batikhi: Either he was corrupt (or thought to be) and the King wanted to remove corruption in the government, or else Abdullah used these charges simply as an excuse to remove Batikhi. The possibility that Abdullah wanted to jail Batikhi to stop corruption is unlikely. Corruption is commonplace in Arab countries, sometimes the norm in many government dealings and generally an accepted practice. However, since corrupt dealings are illegal, they can lead to criminal charges, though in Jordan they are rarely brought against prominent politicians. Of the charges brought on Batiki, an article in *Jane's Intelligence*

¹¹³ Andoni, Lamis. “King Abdullah: In His Father's Footsteps?” *In The Journal of Palestinian Studies*. Vol. 29, No. 3, (Spring 2000), p77-89. California: University of California Press. page 86.

¹¹⁴ For more information on the Batikhi corruption scandal, see: Al-Khalidi, Suleiman. “Jordan's Former Spy Chief Jailed in Fraud Case.” *In Arab News Online*. 11 July 2003., which is a brief look at possible ulterior motivations behind the corruption charges laid against Batikhi, and questionable legal practices during the trial; “Jordan's Intelligence Scandal.” *Jane's Intelligence Digest*. 22 March, 2002. “Jordan's Intelligence Chief on Trial.” *In Jane's Intelligence Review*. 27 July 2003; “Jordan's Intelligence Scandal.” *In Jane's Intelligence Digest (Online)*. 22 March 2002.; Habib, Randa. “Jordan's Batikhi Jailed for Four Years for Fraud.” *In Middle East Online*. 10 July 2003.

Digest notes: "This is an unprecedented event in a country where few senior officials have ever been convicted or imprisoned."¹¹⁵

King Abdullah launched an anti-corruption campaign upon coming to office, with a particular focus on bank fraud, and so evidence that Batikhi was corrupt may have led the king to charge him. But such an action seems unlikely if King Abdullah was on good terms with Batikhi. Perhaps corruption charges leaked out to the public before the king could stop it, and to avoid signs of favoritism, Abdullah let them stand. Yet instead of having a civilian court deal with Batikhi, the king gave the trial to a military court, which deals harsher punishments. These proceedings, moreover, were held behind closed doors, locking out the media, which added suspicion about the court and the charges. Since the case against Batikhi was not a secret, why would the proceedings be?

Some reports suggest that the trial was dubious in several ways. Members of Abdullah's government questioned the handling of the Batikhi case, and others have claimed that the evidence used against Batikhi was dubious. One respected news agency reported:

"Earlier this week former government ministers said they believed the case was flawed. One of them said there were problems with the procedures and evidence used in the case. The ex-minister, speaking on condition of anonymity, singled out the "crystal object" used by the prosecution to prove Batikhi was guilty of corruption. 'A photograph was published in the press and it seems that this was a glass globe bought locally for 17 dollars,' he said."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ "Jordan's Intelligence Chief on Trial." In *Jane's Intelligence Review*. 27 July 2003.

¹¹⁶ Habib, Randa. "Jordan's Batikhi Jailed for Four Years for Fraud." In *Middle East Online*. 10 July 2003.

It seems probable that the king deliberately sought to destroy Batikhi. In 'The Political Dimensions of Corruption Cleanups: A Framework for Analysis,'¹¹⁷ Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik discuss the types of state corruption cleanups and the reasons behind them. They claim that such cleanups are politically motivated, commonly used by leaders who want to eliminate enemies and strengthen their own positions. The Batikhi case seems to fit this pattern. If Abdullah did not have a hidden agenda in charging Batikhi, presumably he would have put a civilian court in charge of the trial and let the media report on the case. Batikhi was sentenced to eight years, reduced to four by General Saad Kheir Sadeq, the current GID director. Still, Batikhi's career was ruined. The Jordanian leadership apparently wanted to remove the powerful GID head from the political scene in a humiliating manner. The question is, why?

The Syrian leadership is directly threatened by its Mukhabarat services and chiefs. This threat became evident shortly before Hafiz al-Asad died and continues today. The challenge was at first limited to a faction of the Mukhabarat which wanted Rifa'at al-Asad's son Sumar to inherit the presidency, instead of Bashar al-Asad. Some people thought Bashar unqualified to be president since he had no political or military background until 1992 and was legally too young to become president, being only 36 when his father died (the constitution required the President to be at least 40). Others worried that Bashar would start reforms that might harm the Alawi elite. Against this, neither Rifa'at nor his son Sumar, were considered good alternatives to Bashar because of personal and professional problems.

In order to keep Rifa'at from threatening Bashar, Hafiz attacked his brother in 1999, charging him with corruption and stripping him of his position as vice president. Since these corruption charges concerned activities common among high-ranking Syrians, they were clear

¹¹⁷ Gillespi, Kate and Gwenn Okruhlik. "The Political Dimensions of Corruption Cleanups: A Framework for Analysis." In Comparative Politics. Vol. 24, No. 1 October 1991, p77-95.

attempts to reduce Rifa'at's power. Hafiz used the same technique against Rifa'at that King Abdullah later did against Batikhi. Rifa'at gathered supporters to fight for his cause, including loyalists from his former Defence Companies as well as other important factions of the Mukhabarat force. He even sought to buy mercenaries abroad. Fighting soon occurred in the Latakia region between Rifa'at and Hafiz's forces, but eventually Mukhabarat forces loyal to the president defeated Rifa'at's men.¹¹⁸

While Bashar stormed up the ranks of the military, he had become deeply involved in Syria's corruption cleanup. Unlike the case in Jordan, there was little ambiguity about Bashar's intentions. This cleanup was an excuse for him to remove government officials he disliked.¹¹⁹ Immediately following Hafiz's death, his loyalists amended the constitution to make 34 the legal age to take office as president, enabling Bashar to run for the post. After he became president, Bashar continued to use corruption charges to remove undesirables from his government. He restructured the Mukhabarat, military, and government, in the process purging many key members of Syria's power elite. Aided by his right-hand-man Assef Shawkat, Bashar systematically took many powerful men out of the Mukhabarat. But they did not suffer without striking back.

The first evidence that the Mukhabarat was moving collectively against Bashar came in 2000 when Bashar promoted reformist policies, releasing many political prisoners and relaxing political restrictions on reformist movements. Soon afterwards, the Mukhabarat cracked down on these same reformers, which was discussed widely in the media. It is commonly believed that

¹¹⁸ "Rifaat Assad and the Syrian Political Crisis." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 1, No. 10, October 1999.

¹¹⁹ Information on Bashars involvement in the corruption cleanups available in: Ryan, Curtis R. "Syrian Arab Republic." In The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, ed. David E. Long and Bernard Reich, Cambridge: Westview Press, 2002 page 241. ¹¹⁹ For further specifics on Bashars corruption cleanups in 2000, an excellent source is Gambill, Gary C. "Syria's Night of Long Knives." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 2, No. 5, June, 2000.

these crackdowns were perpetrated by Mukhabarat forces without direction from the president. If so, then the Mukhabarat were directly threatening the president's authority and had become much bolder than they had been under Hafiz al-Asad.¹²⁰ Consequently, foreign governments viewed Bashar as weak and unable to control his own Mukhabarat. One journalist noted: "Western governments have avoided publicly criticizing Assad, believing that this will weaken his power vis à vis the security apparatus he inherited from his father."¹²¹

One analyst, however, Gary C. Gambill,¹²² argues that no "old guard" stopped the president's reformist ambitions, but that Bashar himself did so. Unfortunately, he leaves some large questions unanswered. By publicly supporting the reformist movement, but not the crackdown on it, Bashar let the Syrian Mukhabarat appear insubordinate. If he wanted to divert blame away from himself and towards the Mukhabarat, then he made himself appear incompetent or weak, damaging his position for no obvious gain.

Another major incident several years later appears related to this issue. In February 2005, Rafic Hariri, a prominent political figure in Lebanon, was assassinated. Syria was immediately blamed for this action, and a public outcry grew against its presence in Lebanon. Bashar retired his head of military intelligence, Gen. Hassan Khalil, one day after the assassination took place,¹²³ and these two events were too timely to be a coincidence. There are several

¹²⁰ Gambill, Gary C. "Continuing Detentions and Disappearances in Syria." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol.3, No. 6, June 2001; Gambil, Gary C. "The Myth of Syria's Old Guard." In Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 6, No. 2/3 February – March 2004; Gambill, Gary C. "Syria Arrests Leading Dissidents." Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 3, No. 9, September 2001; Moubayed, Sami. "Reform Gathers Momentum." In Al-Ahram Weekly (Online). 7-13 February 2002, Issue No. 572.

¹²¹ Al-Khalidi, Suleiman. "Jordan's Former Spy Chief Jailed in Fraud Case." In Arab News Online. 11 July 2003.

¹²² Gambil, Gary C. "The Myth of Syria's Old Guard." In Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Vol. 6, No. 2/3 February – March 2004.

¹²³ For more information on Khalil and his dismissal, see: "Syria Replaces Intelligence Chief." In BBC News Online; Hosari, Danielle. "Lebanon Opposition Declares Uprising: Syria Replaces Intelligence Chief." In Arab News Online. 19 February 2005; "Syria Gets New Intel Chief After Bombing." In The Seattle Post. 18 February 2005; "Al-Assad Appoints Asef Shawkat as Chief of Military Intelligence." In Arabic News Online. 19 February 2005.

explanations why Khalil (formerly a close supporter and ally of Bashar) was removed from office. Notably, most public references to this issue come from newspaper sources and occasional articles in journals, mostly carbon copies of each other, often using exactly the same sentences.¹²⁴

The least likely explanation for Khalil's retirement is the one given by the Syrian government – that he had reached retirement age. This explanation is implausible because the retirement age is 60, and Khalil already was that age when he became head of MI in 2000. Since 2002 there have been rumours of his impending retirement, but never a set date. Retirement age is rarely enforced in Syria, but is probably another method Bashar uses to remove members of his government when it suits him. It is ludicrous to think that the 65-year-old Khalil was coincidentally retired right after the assassination in Lebanon. Some sources from Syria, moreover, claimed that Khalil had just turned 60, which suggests that Syria decided to arbitrarily change Khalil's age and birthday to support their unlikely positions.

It is possible that Syria was not responsible for Hariri's assassination, but aware that no one would believe its claims of innocence, the Syrian government had to do something conciliatory. By retiring Khalil quickly after the assassination, Syria looked like it was punishing the guilty party without actually admitting guilt. Again, Bashar and the Syrian Mukhabarat could have been behind Hariri's assassination, with Khalil later offered as a scapegoat. This explanation seems less likely because no charges have been brought against Khalil, as usually is the case when undesirable political elements are removed in Syria. Had it wanted a scapegoat, it would have been more public and aggressive with Khalil.

¹²⁴ See the following for information on Khalil: Ghattas, Sam. "Syria Gets New Intel Chief After Bombing." In The Seattle Post. 18 February 2005; Hosari, Danielle. "Lebanon Opposition Declares Uprising: Syria Replaces Intelligence Chief." In Arab News Online. 19 February 2005.; "Syria Replaces Intelligence Chief." In BBC News Online. Posted 18 February 2005.

The most plausible explanation is that the Syrian Mukhabarat carried out the assassination of Rafic Hariri without Bashar's permission and that the president removed Khalil because he was behind the assassination or involved in it, undermining the president's authority by acting without orders. This explanation is probable because Syrian Mukhabarat services are suspected of acting without the president's approval in their crackdown on the reformers and enjoy much autonomy in Lebanon. If the Mukhabarat did act in opposition to Bashar's policies, then their threat to him is growing. Also, parts of the Mukhabarat which want to replace Bashar may gain from the international bad press caused by Hariri's assassination. If the leadership of Syria was removed, countries which have bad relations with Bashar might start fresh, as occurred after the death of Yassir Arifat. The "suicide" of Ghazi Kanaan,¹²⁵ formerly the head of the Syrian Mukhabarat in Lebanon, is another sign that important power struggles are occurring within the Mukhabarat and between it and the President. Kanaan supposedly killed himself just before the United Nations report on Hariri's killing was released, implying that he had some guilt in the assassination.¹²⁶ Kanaan also was questioned by the U.N. in the previous month about Hariri's death. However, since the U.N. had already questioned him and the damage had been done, why would he have killed himself afterwards? It seems more likely that he was assassinated for domestic political reasons. The final UN report on Hariri, released in October, implicated both Syria and Lebanon, specifically their Mukhabarat.

"... There is converging evidence pointing at both Lebanese and Syrian involvement in this terrorist act. It is a well known fact that Syrian Military Intelligence had a pervasive presence in Lebanon at the least until the withdrawal of the Syrian forces pursuant to resolution 1559 (2004). The former senior

¹²⁵ For information on Ghazi Kanaan, see the following: Nassif, Daniel. "Maj. General Ghazi Kanaan: Head of Intelligence in Lebanon." In *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin Online*, January 2000, Vol.2 No.1.; Aji, Albert. "Syria: Interior Minister Commits Suicide." In *Guardian Unlimited Online*. 12 October 2005; Hardy, Roger. "Syrian 'suicide' sparks theories." In *BBC News Online*, 12 October 2005.

¹²⁶ Aji, Albert. "Syria: Interior Minister Commits Suicide." In *The Guardian Unlimited Online*. 12 October 2005; Hardy, Roger. "Syrian 'suicide' sparks theories." In *BBC News Online*, 12 October 2005.

security officials of Lebanon were their appointees. Given the infiltration of Lebanese institutions and society by the Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services working in tandem, it would be difficult to envisage a scenario whereby such a complex assassination plot could have been carried out without their knowledge.”¹²⁷

While it is clear that the Mukhabarat services were involved in the assassination, the report does not clearly point to any involvement on behalf of Bashar. Besides, he refused to be interviewed and had disagreements with Hariri. The withdrawal of Syrian Mukhabarat and military forces from Lebanon could present domestic problems for Bashar as many powerful Mukhabarat figures return to Damascus.

The “new” intelligence services of Iraq look rather like its old Mukhabarat. The latter were designed to control internal dissent, not external attacks. Their armed forces were intended to prevent internal military coups, not stop a large invasion force. Consequently, they could not defend Saddam’s regime. After it failed, some of Saddam’s Mukhabarat continued to fight against the coalition forces in Iraq, while others have been employed by the new Iraqi intelligence service.

The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) is the new face of intelligence in Iraq, alongside the General Security Department (GSD), which deals with terrorism. The American occupation forces and the CIA wanted to establish local security and intelligence services quickly because they were unequipped linguistically or culturally to handle Iraqi insurgents. Since the coalition forces destroyed all of Saddam’s Mukhabarat, military, and government structures, the CIA had to create new intelligence and security services from the start. It did so by turning to its allies among Iraqis. The INIS is heavily influenced by the former Iraqi National Accord (INA), an anti-Saddam, Jordanian-based group led by Iyad Allawi, primarily consisting

¹²⁷ “Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission Established Pursuant to Security Council: Resolution 1595 (2005)” From the [United Nations Website](#) page 5

of Mukhabarat and military defectors from Iraq. Nuri Badran and Muhammad Abdullah al-Shehwani were also members of the INA. Along with the Iraqi National Congress, led by Ahmad Chalab, the INA was supported by various American intelligence services. It gathered intelligence and attempted to subvert Saddam's regime.¹²⁸ This history made the INA a natural choice to establish new Iraqi intelligence services. American intelligence was used to working with it, and the group had experience in intelligence-like activities. In December 2003 Badra and Allawi visited the US and toured the Department of State and CIA headquarters, where they discussed the future Iraqi intelligence and security services with their American counterparts. The INIS is heavily influenced by the CIA and also received training from the Egyptian and Jordanian Mukhabarat. As a result, probably the CIA, Jordan, and Egypt all have informants working within the new Iraqi intelligence services, which can have future consequences. In April 2004 the new INIS began to function, run by Shehwani.

Against many objections, the INIS hired members of Saddam's Mukhabarat on the grounds that they needed experienced individuals. However, to rely on such people endangers Iraq's intelligence services and government. These former Mukhabarat personnel probably would receive high-ranking positions. If the INIS wanted people for low-ranking positions, they would likely have hired more politically correct people from the population *not* associated with Saddam's Mukhabarat. Many of these personnel can not be trusted. They have links with former Mukhabarat colleagues who are now insurgents and could work with them. Indeed, members of the Iraqi intelligence services already claim that Ba'thist elements have infiltrated key sections of

¹²⁸ For a good source regarding the connections between the INIS, the INS and the CIA see: Boyne, Sean and Ed Blanche. "Iraqi Intelligence Agencies Face Uphill Struggle." In Jane's Intelligence Review. 01 January 2005.

the security services.¹²⁹ Again, former Mukhabarat personnel have questionable ethics, including human rights abuses. The Iraqi intelligence services claim they can prevent ethically unsuitable people from entering the new services, but this seems unlikely. Former Mukhabarat members are accustomed to operating the way they did under Saddam's system. His Mukhabarat were corrupt, designed for the specific purpose of keeping him in power, and allowed to let personal ambitions outweigh their duties. The leader of the INIS, Muhammad Abdullah al-Shehwani, believes that the gains outweigh the risks when hiring former Mukhabarat personnel. "In fact, prior to his (Sheshwani's) appointment as INIS chief, he went on record as saying that one of the biggest mistakes of the Coalition was to disband Saddam's army and security forces. He told Inter-Press Service in November 2003 of how Iraq had a good intelligence network under Saddam."¹³⁰ Shehwani argues that Saddam's Mukhabarat had records on every group and individual in Iraq, which would aid the coalition forces. Iyad Allawi holds similar opinions regarding the Ba'thist government, which he believes should not be discarded. Given the terrible history of the Iraqi Mukhabarat, these opinions are disturbing. Ahmad Chalabi, who ran for Prime Minister, strongly opposes any former Mukhabarat being allowed into the new Iraqi intelligence services because they could not be trusted. He is not alone in that assessment. Some officials in the United States share his fears.¹³¹

Saddam's Mukhabarat were predominantly Sunni. So too, in April 2004,

¹²⁹ Boyne, Sean and Ed Blanche. "Iraqi Intelligence Agencies Face Uphill Struggle." In Jane's Intelligence Review. 01 January 2005. Posted December 2004.

¹³⁰ Boyne, Sean and Ed Blanche. "Iraqi Intelligence Agencies Face Uphill Struggle." In Jane's Intelligence Review. 01 January 2005. Posted December 2004.

¹³¹ Some of the reservations held by U.S. officials are explored in: "Iraq Spy Service Planned by U.S. to Stem Attacks." In Washington Post. 11 December 2003, page 1.

“...the INIS service roster... was two-thirds Sunni and one-quarter Shi’a – Iraq is about 60 per cent Shi’a.”¹³² A predominantly Sunni-based INIS service may threaten the leadership of the new Shi’a dominated government. Iyad Allawi and his party, the Iraq List, decided to form a Sunni coalition to challenge the Shi’a government. Allawi, with an extensive intelligence background, undoubtedly can count on support from some former INA personnel if needed. These former colleagues include Nuri Badran and Shehwani, men who would be very powerful allies if Allawi were to try to become prime minister. Allawi and his friends could also be dangerous enemies should the new Shi’a government take actions the Sunnis or Allawi do not approve. This is exactly the type of problem that Iraqis should avoid at all costs if they want to avoid a return to a Saddam-style system. The gains from having old regime members in new Iraqi intelligence services are far smaller than the problems that they would cause.

¹³² “Iraqi Intelligence Agencies Face Uphill Struggle.” In Jane’s Intelligence Review. 01 January 2005.

Conclusion

The premise of this thesis is applicable to other Arab governments. While time and space prevent a detailed examination of the potential Mukhabarat threat in all Arab states, it is useful briefly to see how the threat manifests itself in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the two most powerful Arab states.

Egypt

Egypt, unlike many of its neighbours, has a strong national identity. It was not sliced up by the colonial powers, and its national boundaries have changed relatively little in thousands of years, filled with a population that identifies itself as Egyptian. It was in Egypt that the Free Officers movements began and achieved their first success, with the overthrow of the monarchy in 1952. For the next two decades, Cairo sent Mukhabarat agents to all corners of the Middle East in attempts to promote pan-Arabism and Nasserism by subverting rival governments and supporting insurgents. After the 1960s, however, the Mukhabarat power changed and declined, moving from focusing on external activities like subverting rival governments to internal security.

The Mukhabarat in Egypt are extremely hard to research, precisely as is true with those of Jordan. Information is scarce, but the Mukhabarat presence is felt in Cairo. Unlike the case in other countries, the Mukhabarat of Egypt is currently dominated by a single service, the *Mabahath el-Dawla* (General Directorate of State Security Investigations), also known as the GDSSI. Its roles are similar to those of Mukhabarat in other Arab states, with a particular focus on curtailing the activities of Islamic extremists.

Unlike most other Arab states, since 1952 Egypt suffered few coup attempts from the military. The Egyptian military has shown little interest in politics since the 1960s, for various reasons which P.J. Vatikiotis describes:

“The army of the 1970s was nearly 500,000 strong, and the officer corps was proportionately large. Many of the officers, moreover, were one- to two-year conscripts, usually with direct commissions as university graduates. Consequently conspiracies were difficult to organize and the risk of detection was high. At the same time, periodic purging of the officer corps – a practice begun under Nasser – continued, even though it many not have been as massive or frequent. There was also a reluctance on the part of the soldiers to intervene in political matters, also largely motivated by the vagaries of past experience.”¹³³

This reluctance of the military to participate in politics is evidenced by their actions during the 1977 food riots – when they refused to get involved for political reasons, and the 1986 revolt by the Central Security Forces, when the army was in a perfect position to mount a successful coup and yet did not. Consequently, Egypt has had a relatively stable and secure government throughout President Mubarak’s terms in office, and the government is unlikely to be threatened by a coup from the military or from other ambitious officials in the near future. However, this situation can not last forever.

The security risk posed by Mukhabarat services was demonstrated in the Central Security Forces (CSF) revolt of 1986.¹³⁴ This rebellion was unlike anything yet discussed in this thesis. It was led by the CSF, underpaid conscripts in charge of guarding embassies, public buildings, and other wealthy or prominent places, who were seen as uncouth and illiterate peasants. A rumour that the government would extend the military service from three years to four set off the revolt, which began in the tourist area of Giza. The CSF burned down anything that spoke of wealth,

¹³³ Vatikiotis, P.J, The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak. Fourth Edition. London: Weidenfeild and Nicholson, 1991, page 419.

¹³⁴ For further information on the CSF revolt of 1986, see Vatikiotis, P.J, The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak. Fourth Edition. London: Weidenfeild and Nicholson, 1991, page 453, and Ayubi, Nazih N. The State and Public Policies in Egypt Since Sadat. Oxford: Ithaca Press Reading, 1991, pages 240 – 241.

such as villas and hotels, and soon rioted in other parts of Cairo. The incident lasted a few days because the army subdued the CFS quickly and the rioters had no public support. This revolt is rarely discussed but is significant. A country with few coup attempts in its history and apparently with tight control over its military and Mukhabarat forces found it hard to control even the lowest of its Mukhabarat services. In 1990, measures were taken to reduce the power of the Mukhabarat,¹³⁵ but they remain a force to be reckoned with.

President Hosni Mubarak's refusal to name an heir produces a problem for Egypt. Mubarak has never named a vice president or anyone who clearly would take over the presidency should anything happen to him. As the president is getting older, and assassination attempts always are a hazard for Arab leaders, the need for an heir to be named is great. As it stands, there are several main contenders for this role.¹³⁶

The first is Gamal Mubarak, Hosni Mubarak's son. He has steadily gained political power through the National Democratic Party and also appears to be setting the stage for his succession through subtle political maneuverings.¹³⁷ However, he is not a popular choice among the Egyptian population, and his father denies that he is grooming his son to succeed him.¹³⁸ That means little since Mubarak has yet to groom *anyone* to succeed him. Due to his unpopularity, if Gamal Mubarak were to take over the presidency anytime soon, aid would be needed from Hosni Mubarak's loyal supporters, which probably would cause a crisis.

The second contender is the Defence Minister Tantawi, with his strong connections among the Mukhabarat el-Khabeya (Military Intelligence Service) which falls under his jurisdiction, as well as the other connections afforded to him as Defence Minister. As Commander-in-Chief, Tantawi

¹³⁵ "Egypt: Intelligence Agencies" in Federation of American Scientists Website.

¹³⁶ Although Mubarak may also be voted out of office in an election, that is highly unlikely given the vast majorities he has won in any election since becoming President.

¹³⁷ El-Din, Essam, "Out with the old?" in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 22-28 August 2002, Issue No. 6000.

¹³⁸ El-Din, Gamal Essam, "It won't happen here" in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 8-14 January 2004, Issue No. 672.

has an impressive military history and strong connection with the armed forces.¹³⁹ He has been sent on some diplomatic missions abroad and is a contender for the presidency.

The last candidate is Oman Suleiman, chief of Egyptian intelligence. A trusted associate of Mubarak and unchallenged master of the Mukhabarat,¹⁴⁰ he is considered the second most powerful man in Cairo. Suleiman is the main Egyptian envoy with Israel and has been the man to watch in Egyptian politics for the past few years. While there is no reason to suspect that Suleiman would launch a coup against Mubarak, he certainly would be a contender for leadership once Mubarak dies. His popularity in the press, Mukhabarat connections, and close relationship with Mubarak make him a favourite in any power struggle.

If President Mubarak were to die soon, each of these men would be in the running for president. The power struggle between them, particularly the two men with Mukhabarat connections, will cause great instability throughout the country.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has many similarities with, and significant differences from, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. It is a rich country with a small population run by a massive royal family whose members are above the law in most regards. This state centres on kinship and patronage relationships on a massive scale, with the King and his immediate family at the centre of a huge and intricate web. Although it is a monarchy, it otherwise has almost nothing in common with the monarchy in Jordan.

¹³⁹ Egyptian Armed Forces Website, www.mmc.gov.eg.

¹⁴⁰ Sobelman, Daniel "Oman Suliman Egypt's 'rope-puller'" in Haaretz.com.

Unlike many other Arab leaders, the Saudi Royal Family weathered the storm of unrest and coup attempts by Ba'thists and restless military officers that plagued the region in the 1950s and 1960s. Even so, they had reason to fear their regular military, as abortive coups were attempted by dissatisfied officers, such as the 1955 coup plot, which included Saudi military officers aided by the Egyptians. In 1960, the military was prohibited from involvement in politics.¹⁴¹ Due to fear of their military, since the 1960s the Saudi government steadily increased the power of their Mukhabarat. The National Guard, a Mukhabarat armed force with substantial military capability and saturated with Bedouin loyalists, were particularly enhanced and assigned the task of protecting the important urban centres and oilfields.¹⁴² The following quotation aptly describes the power distribution between the regular forces and the Mukhabarat or National Guard in 1980:

“The Saudi security services were expanded and strengthened with the active assistance of advisors from the CIA and from the French and West German secret services. The salaries paid to the military and the National Guard were doubled over several months, and the government turned a blind eye to the ‘commercial’ activities engaged in by many officers. As a security measure, regular troops were dispersed along the borders, armored units were withdrawn from towns and issues of ammunition were reduced to a minimum. In January 1980 joint US-Saudi exercises were held in Saudi Arabia as part of large-scale military maneuvers in the region.”¹⁴³

The Saudi Mukhabarat¹⁴⁴ seems to be structured like those of Syria, Jordan, and Saddam Hussein's Iraq and includes a vast network of parallel military forces, most of which can be considered Mukhabarat armed forces. After the events of September 11, 2001 they have been

¹⁴¹ Vassiliev, Alexi. “The History of Saudi Arabia.” London: Saqi Books, 1998.

¹⁴² Vassiliev, Alexi. “The History of Saudi Arabia.” London: Saqi Books, 1998.

¹⁴³ Vassiliev, Alexi. “The History of Saudi Arabia.” London: Saqi Books, 1998. Page 397

¹⁴⁴ For detailed information on the Saudi Arabian Mukhabarat structure and functions, see: Cordesman, Anthony H. and Arleigh A Burke. “Saudi Security and the War on Terrorism: Internal Security Operations, Law Enforcements, Internal Threats, and the Need for Change.” Rough draft circulated for comment and discussion. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 22 April 2002.

criticized for not cracking down enough on terrorists from their state.¹⁴⁵ In recent years the Mukhabarat heads have been targeted specifically by Islamic extremists.¹⁴⁶

Mukhabarat coups in Saudi Arabia would be substantially different than those which have been examined above. At present, the regime appears stable, and so a coup is unlikely. But in Saudi Arabia members of the royal family hold all prominent positions in the government. Its Mukhabarat services are divided among the high-ranking officials and princes.¹⁴⁷ Any coup here would be launched by one royal against another. Still, a prince with a Mukhabarat organization or connections would probably be more successful in a palace coup than a prince with no such links. Like other countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has recently lost its king, a powerful figure in Arab politics for over two decades. But the transition of power from King Fahd to his son Abdullah was relatively smooth, aided by the fact that Crown Prince Abdullah was de facto ruler since his father's stroke in 1995.¹⁴⁸

Although Egypt and Saudi Arabia are different from Jordan, Iraq, and Syria, they also have striking similarities regarding their Mukhabarat threat. First, they all experienced the period of instability which rocked the Arab world during the 1950s. Egypt in started the period of unrest, which Saudi Arabia weathered. Here, as in other Arab countries, this phenomenon caused governments to limit the power and the threat of the military, the main source of the problems.

¹⁴⁵ For more information on the criticisms of the Saudi Arabian stance on Islamic extremists, see Cordesman, Anthony H. and Arleigh A Burke. "Saudi Security and the War on Terrorism: Internal Security Operations, Law Enforcements, Internal Threats, and the Need for Change." Rough draft circulated for comment and discussion. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 22 April 2002.

¹⁴⁶ Blanch, Ed. "Saudi Extremists Target Intelligence Chiefs." In *Jane's Intelligence Review (Online)*. 1 February 2004.

¹⁴⁷ Cordesman, Anthony H. and Arleigh A Burke. "Saudi Security and the War on Terrorism: Internal Security Operations, Law Enforcements, Internal Threats, and the Need for Change." Rough draft circulated for comment and discussion. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, page 7.

¹⁴⁸ Rathmell, Andrew. "Succession Worries in Saudi Arabia." In *Jane's Intelligence Review*. 1 May 1998. Edition 1998, Vol. 005, Issue 005.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt did so by increasing their parallel military forces and Mukhabarat forces, and in Egypt by reducing the army's political potential.

Like Jordan, Iraq, and Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are threatened by having increased the power to their Mukhabarat. Saudi Arabia diminished this threat by developing parallel militaries to offset the domination of the Mukhabarat, while Egypt had to have its army fight a part of the Mukhabarat in the streets of Cairo before attempting to reduce the strength of their Mukhabarat.¹⁴⁹

All of these states have moved to secure their Mukhabarat services by placing family members or friends of the leadership in their highest positions. In Saudi Arabia the entire state is basically run by this use of kinship networks, and the closest, most reliable family members of the king receive the strongest military and Mukhabarat posts, as was the case in Jordan, Saddam's Iraq, and Syria. In Egypt, conversely, Mubarak until recently has kept his family relatively removed from politics. Even the recent activities of Gamal Mubarak are limited to the National Democratic Party, far from a Mukhabarat command. However, Mubarak, surrounds himself with close friends and military companions he can trust to be loyal, like Omar Suleiman.

A final similarity among all of these states is caused by the new leadership replacing long established iconic figures and how these leaders have to manage the Mukhabarat threat. In a country like Syria, there are obvious problems with the Mukhabarat threatening Bashar Al-Asad, but in Saudi Arabia, the transition appears to have been much smoother, likely due to the close familial ties holding all involved and because King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was the de-facto ruler for so long, adding to his legitimacy and enabling him to structure the Mukhabarat as he

¹⁴⁹ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, President Mubarak took measures to reduce the power of the Mukhabarat. See: "Egypt: Intelligence Agencies" in Federation of American Scientists Website. Last updated April 6, 2005.

chose. Egypt is on the cusp of a succession crisis, and with no clear successor the Mukhabarat will doubtless become involved in any fight for the presidency, led by Omar Suleiman.

The past few years have seen the Mukhabarat increasingly at the heart of various political incidents (as discussed above) with the growing threat that they represent, research must be done to better understand them. The Mukhabarat threat is not limited to any specific government. It exists when an Arab government gives too much power to its Mukhabarat services in hopes of safe-guarding internal security, and it strikes when leaders are weak or governments are unstable. This can happen in any government found in the Arab world. The Mukhabarat are huge and have gained huge political influence over the years. They can easily influence any area of government or society and have the military completely at their mercy through their Mukhabarat surveillance. They have their own armed forces which are designed to counter the state's military apparatus. Through purges they may remove anyone they dislike, and there appears to be no real checks on Mukhabarat powers or ambitions. Their strong organization and structure, combined with their inherent espionage, covert, and surveillance abilities make them an ideal organization to take over a state's leadership.

The point of this thesis is not that the Mukhabarat in all Arab countries will soon rise up against their leadership and take over the state; it is simply that the Mukhabarat services have the potential to cause huge internal problems. Jordan, for example, is not likely to be toppled any time soon by any kind of internal threat, but a Mukhabarat threat is still the most likely internal threat such a stable regime faces.

It is important to look at this issue and understand that many of our preconceptions about the power and politics of the Middle East are wrong. Armies are no longer the greatest threats to these regimes, and we must explore the other internal security risks threatening the Arab world.

While conventional threats, such as Islamic extremists and ethnic minorities, continue to be a problem in many nations, these are not their only problems or even their biggest ones. There are more security issues in the Middle East that need to be addressed besides the constant attention paid to Arab-Israeli relations, and it is time to explore these issues. The need to learn more about the politics and governments of this dynamic and important region is obvious. We cannot rely solely on decades-old texts on the topic. Without understanding the current threats, structure, and organs of these governments, we cannot understand Arab governments at all.

Jordanian Timeline

- 1921 - Abdullah became King of Transjordan under British protection.
- 1946 - Gained independence as Transjordan.
- 1951 - July - King Abdullah killed at the al Aqsa Mosque. His son Talal becomes King.
- 1952 - Jordanian parliament decide to depose the king and hold the throne for his son Hussein, when he comes of age.
- 1953 - August - Hussein turns 18 years old and becomes King.
 - *Fedayeen* began coming into Jordan from neighboring states to attack Israel. This would start a trend that continued for decades.
- 1955 - December - Large anti-government riots.
- 1956 - Glubb Pasha, the British head of the Jordanian armed forces, is sent back to Britain, ending the tradition of British officers running the Jordanian military.
- 1957 - British troops withdraw from Jordan.
 - Hussein is warned by officers in Zerqa of traitors in the military.
 - April - Abu Nuwar Coup – military coup attempt against the government, failed because the king had previous knowledge about Abu Nuwar's plotting and was able to crush it.
- 1957 - Bedouin Royal Guards formed.
- 1958 - February – The Hashemite Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan created the Arab Federation, in an effort to counter the UAR.
- 1959 - February – During King Hussein's state visit to the United States, a military coup plot was discovered in Jordan, reportedly headed by General Sadek al-Sharaa.
- 1960 - August – Prime Ministers Office bombed.
- 1961 - Al-Tall became Prime Minister.
- 1963 - Pro-Nasserist riots in Jordan.
- 1964 - At the first Palestinian National Conference in Jerusalem, it was decided that the PLO executive committee would be in Amman.
- 1965 - Jordan closes all PLO offices in Jordan, and arrests suspect PLO and Fateh personnel.
- 1966 - Hassan Bin Talal, brother of King Hussein, became the Crown Prince.
 - *Fedayeen* step up their actions against Israel.
- 1967 - After defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War with Israel, Jordan loses about half of its territory, including the west Bank and Jerusalem.
 - *Fedayeen* movements increase in Jordan.
- 1968 - March – Israel attacked a Fateh stronghold in Jordan and were repelled by the *fedayeen* and the Jordanian army.
- 1970 - Some Palestinian leaders began calling for the overthrow of the Jordanian government.
 - June – *Fedayeen* opened fire on the Mukhabarat headquarters in Amman, and the Jordanian government responded with attacks on several refugee camps.
 - September - Black September
 - *Fedayeen* attacked King Hussein on his way to the airport.
 - *Fedayeen* hijacked 3 international flights.

- Another plane was hijacked by the *fedayeen*. Eventually all the passengers were released and three of the planes were blown up. Some hostages were held for several weeks.
- *Fedayeen* took over the city of Irbid and proclaimed a peoples government.
- Military Rule declared throughout Jordan, army and Mukhabarat attack the refugee camps and *fedayeen* areas in an attempt to remove the *fedayeen* presence in Jordan.
- Cease-fire between the *fedayeen* and the government.
- Many Palestinians in the military left or were removed.
- Martial Law was instated.
- 1971 - Prime Minister Al-Tall was assassinated by Black September in Cairo.
- 1973 - Jordan did not actively participate in the Yom Kippur war.
- 1974 - The U.N. Rabat resolution made the PLO responsible for recovering the West Bank, a responsibility taken away from Jordan.
- 1979 - Jordan broke off relations with Egypt after the Camp David Accords.
- 1985 - Amman Accord signed, stating Jordan's acceptance of Israel's right to exist.
- 1986 - Jordan closes the PLO offices in the country.
- 1987 - Intifada popular uprising begins.
- 1990 - Prince Abdullah takes control of the Special Forces brigade.
- 1991 - Jordan supports Iraq in the Gulf War.
- 1994 - Official end to the State of Emergency in Jordan.
 - October – Jordan and Israel sign a peace treaty.
- 1995 - Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated and King Hussein gives the eulogy at the funeral.
- 1998 - King Hussein treated for cancer in the United States.
- 1999 - King Hussein replaces his brother Hassan as heir to the throne with his son Abdullah.
 - February - Hussein dies of cancer. Abdullah becomes king.
- 2002 - General Sameed Batikhi charges with corruption.

Syrian Timeline

- 1920 – Syria falls under French Mandate Authority.
- 1946 – Syrian independence from the French.
- 1947 – Arab Socialist Ba’th Party is founded.
 - First Syrian elections, Nationalists won.
- 1948 – Army Chief of Staff Husni al-Zaim takes over the government through a military coup.
- 1949 – Colonel Adib al-Shishakli led a coup to overthrow al-Zaim and takes over the government.
- 1951 – Shishakli engineers a second military coup to increase his personal power.
- 1954 – Military coup removed Shishakli from power and restored a civilian government.
- 1955 – Elections. Shukri al-Quqatli becomes President.
- 1958 – Syria and Egypt form the United Arab Republic (UAR).
- 1961 – Military coup ousted the government and ended the UAR relationship.
- 1963 – March – Military coup on behalf of the civilian Ba’th party.
 - November – Military Coup to remove the civilian government.
- 1966 – February Coup – Salah Jadid’s military coup overthrew the Amin al-Hafiz government. Hafiz al-Asad becomes Minister of Defense.
- 1966 – September – Failed military coup planned by Fahd al-Sha’ir.
 - November – Syria and Egypt created a ‘Joint Defense Command’.
- 1967 – Syria involved in Six-Day war.
- 1969 – Al-Asad uses the Mukhabarat to prevent communication between key sections of the government.
- 1970 – Hafiz al-Asad’s military coup against the civilian government.
- 1971 – February – Hafiz al-Asad become president of Syria.
- 1973 – Syria involved in the Yom Kippur war.
 - Muslim anti-regime riots.
- 1975 – Civil war in Lebanon.
- 1976 – June – Syrian troops move into Lebanon.
- 1980 – Opposition groups strike in Aleppo, and there are riots in various cities.
 - Syria sides with Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war.
- 1981 – Jaulan annexed by Israel.
- 1982 – February – Start of the Hama uprising.
 - June – Israel invades Lebanon.
- 1983 – Asad falls ill.
 - Rifaat Asad brings his Defense Companies into Damascus.
- 1984 – Rifaat becomes vice president. Soon after Rifaat is sent to Russia, and his Defense Companies reduced and placed in the army.
- 1987 – Syrian Troops move into Lebanon to enforce a cease-fire.
- 1990 – Syria joins in the coalition against Iraq.
- 1994 – Assad’s son and heir-apparent Basil dies in a car crash.
- 1999 – Rifaat Asad removed as vice president.
 - Fighting between Rifaat’s and Hafiz Al-Assad’s armed forces.

- 2000 – Hafiz al-Asad dies. His son Bashar becomes President.
- 2002 – Syria is placed on the United States list of the ‘Axis of Evil’.
- 2005 – February – Rafic Hariri assassinated in Beirut.
 - April – Syria pulls out its last troops from Lebanon.
 - October – United Nations report on the Hariri assassination.

Iraqi Timeline

- 1953 - King Faisal comes of age and is crowned king of Iraq.
- 1955 - Saddam moved to Bagdad with his uncle Khairallah.
- 1957 - Saddam joined the Ba'th Party.
- 1958 - Saddam arrested for assassinating a communist.
 - July – 1958 Revolution, a military coup by Brigadier-General Abdul Karim Kassem. King killed, many government officials arrested.
- 1959 - October – Saddam botched an assassination attempt on president Kassem, and fled in exile to Cairo for three years. In Cairo Saddam allegedly was in the pay of the Egyptian Mukhabarat and had contact with the American CIA.
- 1963 - February – Military coup, Kassem executed. Abdul Salem Aref became president, and Colonal Ahmed Hassan Bakr named Premier. Saddam Hussein returns to Iraq, and works with improving the Ba'th security structure.
 - November – Military coup to oust the civilian Ba'th structure.
- 1966 - April - President Abdul-Salem Muhammad Aref died in helicopter accident. Eventually president Aref's brother, major-General Abdul-Rahman Aref, succeeded him through elections.
- 1967 - War with Israel.
- 1968 - July - Ba'th Party Coup – bloodless coup. Led by the Ba'thists under Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr with little 'military' support outside their own armed forces. Saddam Hussein becomes head of major Mukhabarat services. Many purges occur in the government, as well as in the general population. Jews specifically targeted, accused of being spies.
- 1970 - Saddam exposes an anti-government plot/military coup, supported by Iran.
 - Well-known terrorist Abu Nidal moves to Bagdad.
- 1973 - Failed coup attempted by Nadhim Kazzar, Chief of Security Police.
- 1977 - October – Adnon Khairallah, Saddam's cousin, became minister of Defence
- 1979 - July – Saddam becomes President of Iraq.
 - Conference of Ba'th Party members, where President Saddam purges the party.
- 1980 - September – Start of the Iran-Iraq war
- 1982 - Officers criticize the manner in which Saddam is conducting the war, and suggest changes. These officers are all executed
- 1983 - Possible coup attempt by Saddam's half brothers, led by Barzan
- 1984 - Saddam replaces the Ba'th military forces with his own, the revitalized Republican Guard.
- 1986 - General Maher Abdul Rashid criticizes Saddam's tactics in the war.
- 1990 - August - Iraq attacks Kuwait.
- 1992 - Mechanized Republican Guard Brigades attempt to depose Saddam, but caught by the Mukhabarat services.
- 1993 - 'Golden Division' of the Republican Guard created.
- 1995 - Hussein Kamil defected to Jordan.
- 1996 - Hassan Kamil defected back to Iraq and was assassinated days later.
 - INA plot to overthrow Saddam stopped by the Mukhabarat services.
- 2003 - March – United States gives Saddam and his sons two days to leave Iraq.

- 2003 - December - Badra and Allawi visited the United States and have meetings with the heads of the intelligence services.
- 2004 - April – INIS starts up, with Shehwani as its head.

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