

Political–Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes

Risa Brooks

Adelphi Paper 324



Risa Brooks

**Political–Military
Relations and the
Stability of
Arab Regimes**

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Adelphi Paper 324

First published December 1998 by **Oxford University Press** for
International Institute for Strategic Studies
23 Tavistock Street, London WC2E 7NQ

This reprint published by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN
For the International Institute for Strategic Studies
Arundel House, 13-15 Arundel Street, Temple Place, London, WC2R 3DX
www.iiss.org

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
By Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© International Institute for Strategic Studies 1998

Director John Chipman
Editor Gerald Segal
Assistant Editor Matthew Foley
Design and Production Mark Taylor

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or photo-copying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Within the UK, exceptions are allowed in respect of any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of the licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside these terms and in other countries should be sent to the publisher.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

ISBN 0-19-922420-X
ISSN 0567-932X

contents

7	Glossary
9	Introduction
13	Chapter 1 The Stability of Arab Regimes
19	Chapter 2 Maintaining Power
	• <i>Expanding a Regime's Social Base</i> 20
	• <i>Servicing the Military Constituency</i> 24
	• <i>Stacking the Deck</i> 32
	• <i>Managing the Military</i> 34
45	Chapter 3 Political Control and Military Capabilities
	• <i>Instruments of Political Control</i> 46
	• <i>Sources of Reform</i> 51

55	Chapter 4	Challenges to Stability: Leadership Succession
	•	<i>Syria</i> 56
	•	<i>Egypt</i> 60
	•	<i>Jordan</i> 65
	•	<i>Regional Implications</i> 71
73		Conclusion
77	Appendix	Extracts from the Constitutions of Egypt, Jordan and Syria
81		Notes

- 14 **Table 1**
Arab Heads of State

- 25 **Table 2**
Defence Expenditure in the Middle East and North Africa, 1985, 1996–1997

- 29 **Table 3**
Arms Deliveries to the Middle East, 1987, 1992–1997

- 30 **Table 4**
Arms Orders and Acquisitions in Egypt, Jordan and Syria

- 42 **Table 5**
Force Sizes in the Middle East and North Africa, 1997

- 66 **Figure 1**
King Hussein's Branch of the Hashemite Line

- 68 **Figure 2**
Article 7 of the Jordan–Israel Peace Treaty, 26 October 1994

This page intentionally left blank

glossary

AOI	Arab Organisation for Industrialisation
CPF	Central Protection Force (Egypt)
EDA	Excess Defense Articles (US)
FIS	<i>Front Islamique de Salut</i>
FMF	Foreign Military Financing (US)
GDP	gross domestic product
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation

This page intentionally left blank

By contemporary standards, the longevity of many Arab regimes is striking. One of the region's most resilient leaders, Jordan's King Hussein, acceded to the throne in 1953; Hafez al-Assad assumed the Syrian presidency in 1970; Hosni Mubarak took control in Egypt in 1981; and Saddam Hussein became Iraq's official head of state in 1979. After decades of rule, these leaders are among the Arab world's most enduring figures. This durability is all the more remarkable given the turbulence that marked most Arab states' early years of independence. Nearly every Arab regime endured at least one, and often many, serious attempts at a military takeover in the aftermath of the Second World War.¹

Although coups have become less frequent, the military remains a key force in most Arab regimes. Maintaining its loyalty is essential to retaining office, and regimes have used a range of methods to ensure its backing, or at least its acquiescence. These include increasing non-military support by cultivating social, economic and religious groups; courting the high command and officer corps with corporate and private benefits; appointing members of specific groups – often privileged minorities – to key posts in the armed forces; and preventing officers from building a support-base within the military by purging potential opponents, monitoring military activity, rotating commands and establishing independent security services reporting directly to the presidency or the palace. Filling the military with religious or tribal minorities has been