Assessing the Strength of

Iranian Opposition Groups

A Report of the Bush School of Government & Public Service
for the RAND Corporation's Intelligence Policy Center

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Executive Summary

The capacity of Iranian opposition groups to achieve their strategic goals depends upon the will and capabilities of the regime. At present, the domestic balance of power in Iran strongly favors the regime, primarily because its control of the military and security ensures compliance from the population. Our research seeks to address the current strength of Iranian opposition groups, regime strategies to counter opposition and rally nationalistic support with the nuclear program, and the influence of Iranian military and security forces. Currently, the regime continues to effectively and efficiently counter opposition tactics—such as the use of social media to organize and communicate—in order to maintain a firm grip on power.

The Iranian example illustrates a fundamental tenet of opposition movements in many countries throughout history: opposition group strength is relative to regime strength. Thus, understanding regime type is the first step in any framework that attempts to explain opposition strength. This paper therefore analyzes 1) authoritarian regimes' strategies to consolidate support among key constituencies, and 2) opposition groups' politically opportunistic behavior to gain relative strength and weaken the regime. The Iranian regime has coup-proofed itself from the military by creating a parallel paramilitary organization in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as well as other intelligence and security institutions. These institutions counter-balance each other, compete for influence with the Supreme Leader, and at the same time monitor, infiltrate, and violently suppress opposition groups. As a result, even the most prominent and well-organized opposition, the Green Movement, remains relatively weak against the regime.

Our research also provides a framework to gauge opposition strength. The framework uses key indicators that identify both regime and opposition strength in various countries and periods of time. Determining the presence of these indicators will help analysts assess the

extent to which a regime can counter or is vulnerable to opposition. Likewise, indicators of opposition group strength demonstrate their resilience and ability to grow in power relative to the regime.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

For several decades, the United States has sought greater clarity of opposition groups' ability to induce reform and, at times, outright regime change. Although the predictive capacity of any framework to understand opposition group strength will never be perfect, there are certain characteristics of regimes and opposition that help explain their strength relative to one another.

Assessing the strength of opposition groups in Iran presents several challenges. First, Iran is a semi-authoritarian state with a well-developed domestic intelligence network and internal policing capabilities. The regime monitors and regulates all forms of media and communications, placing considerable strain on groups attempting to organize and operate in opposition to the government. The regime also routinely threatens violence, imprisonment, and torture to discourage individuals and groups from challenging the status quo. To date, these tactics have proven largely successful. Large opposition movements such as the Green Movement have failed to achieve their goals of reform and have been effectively driven underground. Numerous other groups have been attacked to the point of exile, disbandment, irrelevance, or absorption into other groups. Despite the regime's efforts to suppress opposition, several groups persist with objectives ranging from political reform to regime change.

Recent events in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region as well as technological innovations in social media have increased attention toward the role of opposition groups in countries of critical interest to the United States. The 2009 Green Revolution in Iran as well as uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and many other countries bring about a range of questions: Under what conditions can opposition groups successfully form? What are the characteristics and actions of regimes that mitigate the success of opposition groups? How does the military play a

role in regime leadership, and to what extent and under what conditions does the military have a "kingmaker" position?

The regime and its leaders retain power by consolidating their support networks, particularly the military and paramilitary forces. The opposition attempts to create fissures and break away blocs of necessary support in order to attain power and achieve their goals of reform. Appreciating the mindset of politically opportunistic actors and organizations is imperative to understand opposition strength and regime capacity to counter them.

Our project creates a framework to shed light on the central questions posed to us in the statement of work. Specifically, we seek to address:

- How strong are Iranian opposition groups?

- What are the regime's strategies to counter the opposition?

    - Can it rally support through a nuclear program?

- What is the role of the Iranian armed forces?

    - How much influence does it possess?

In addition, we also address social media and its use as a tool by both the regime and the opposition to gain support. We examine several other case studies also provided in the statement of work to further explain the relationship between regimes and oppositions; and in India in particular, how the nuclear program may be used as a tool to spark nationalism.

This paper will begin by addressing our methodology and the framework we have created to assess the contexts under which an opposition may find itself operating. From there, we provide three sets of indicators, related to regime strength, potential opposition strength, and the possibility of a changing balance of power. Finally, we apply the framework to Iran, focusing on how the regime effectively counters opposition and how it uses the nuclear card as a tool for

promoting nationalism. Our extensive case studies on China 1989, Egypt 2005-2011, and Pakistan 2008 have also been provided as an appendix.

Research Design

To answer these questions, we approached the project through a variety of angles. First, we examined the literature that theoretically gauges opposition group dynamics and motivations. We then evaluated case studies to identify similarities and differences between opposition groups in diverse settings (the statement of work identified Egypt, India, Pakistan, and China, which is where we focused our efforts). Next, we evaluated the presence and relationships of characteristics in individual opposition groups.[1]

From our research we elucidated one of our framework's core tenets, that *the strength of the group is inherently related to and in many ways dependent upon the strength of the regime*. Therefore, the first step to assess opposition strength is to first evaluate regime strength, and determine regime strategies to maintain power. We also focused on the state and evaluated key indicators of strong and weak regimes, and from these conclusions we can characterize opposition strength. Additionally, we addressed the situation in Iran, looking at the changes in government from the Shah's regime to today. Ultimately, we developed a framework to understand opposition group strength. While we focused on opposition in Iran, this framework

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[1] When analyzing case studies we looked at both opposition groups and opposition movements. We believe opposition groups are more structured, hierarchical, and consist of hardened opponents of the regime who feel that their opposition to the regime has a greater chance of success than the general population. Opposition movements, however, tend to be more grassroots, loosely structured, and likely attractive to greater elements of the population. Examples of opposition groups include the Naxalites of India and the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI), whereas a movement would be the Egypt 2011 uprising or the Tiananmen Square protests in China.

proves useful in that it is generalizable to other nations and can be used over time. We also provide sets of indicators to evaluate regimes, opposition groups, and group potential for affecting change in its context or environment.

Framework

As the focal point of our framework identifies that the strength of the opposition is inherently related to the strength of the regime, we began by addressing the context in which an opposition group operates. These are not strictly regime types, but rather environments based on the balance of power between the regime and opposition. After identifying regime contexts, our framework provides three sets of indicators, focusing on regimes, opposition groups, and the potential for a shifting context.

Regime Contexts: Based on Political Competition

The diagram below helps conceptualize the domestic balance of power, and broadly shows four contexts in which opposition groups may exist. The areas of greatest interest to our project are the Authoritarian and the Fragile Governance contexts. The ultimate goal of opposition, when living in the Authoritarian context, is to move towards Fragile Governance.[2] Egypt followed the path of recently moving from the Authoritarian context to Fragile Governance. However, Iran has not broken that boundary, and in our case study evaluations we will illuminate why this is the case.

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[2] From there, an opposition may try to consolidate power further and move the state back into the Authoritarian context, with a new regime in power, like in Iran 1979. In other cases, the opposition may institute democratic norms and move the state into the Liberal Democracy context. While these are important distinctions, for our purposes we are primarily focused on regimes moving from Authoritarian to Weak Governance.

Regime

	Strong	Weak
Strong	Liberal Democracies	Fragile Governance
Weak	Authoritarian	Failed Regimes
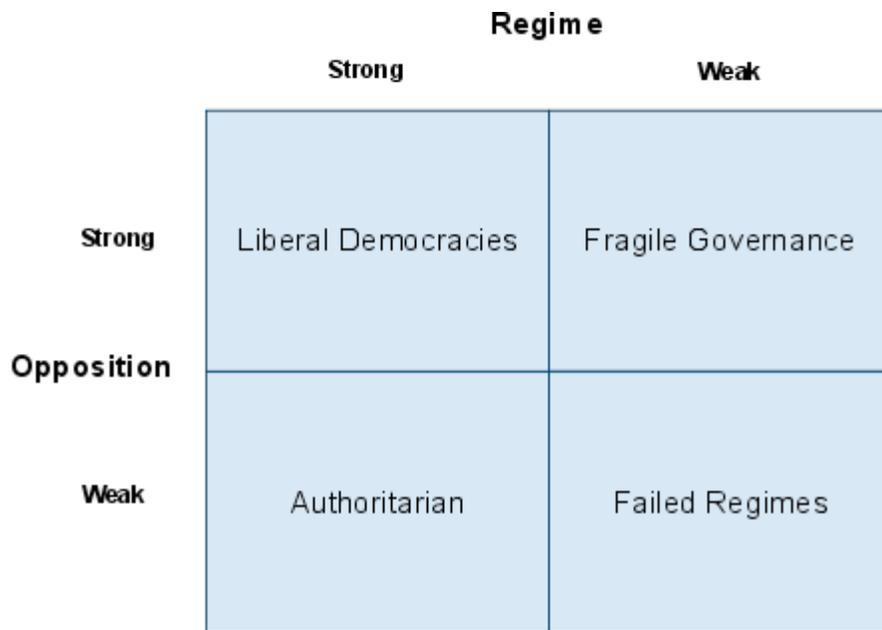
Opposition

This diagram articulates our understanding of the relative balance of power between opposition groups and the regime. It should be noted that this diagram is not intended to be comprehensive; rather, it provides a simple way to show tensions between state and opposition. The regime and its leaders aspire to hold and consolidate power by reducing divisions among its key support constituencies. The opposition attempts to create further divisions in the regime's support system in order to affect change and move from one context to another.

Indicators of Regime Context

The first step of the framework is to determine the strength of a regime, which we derive from three categories of indicators. We selected these indicators by case study review and combing literature on domestic governance to determine which held the most explanatory power. The sets of indicators are: 1) separation of central power, 2) transitions of power, and 3) compliance of government agencies/departments and the state's citizenry. When a regime can

demonstrate cohesion and strength, it is a strong regime. If the regime lacks one or more of those criteria, it begins to show vulnerabilities that an opposition group could exploit in order to augment its share of relative power.

In essence, a strong regime can demand and win loyalty. It has the will and the ability to gain the compliance of its populace. This definition falls within the classic Weberian concept of a state as one that monopolizes the legitimate use of force.[3] Conversely, a weak regime is one that cannot maintain leverage over power centers or the general population.[4] The following lays out our indicators of regime strength. Our framework asserts that all indicators must be present for a strong regime to be in place.

Indicator 1: The Separation of Power- Checks and Balances or Coup-Proofing

The separation of power helps create strong regimes. The French philosopher Montesquieu first introduced this concept in 1748.[5] In *The Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu delineates the benefits that arise when political power is functionally divided among legislative,

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[3] German sociologist Max Weber first introduced this concept in his 1919 essay "Politics as a Vocation." See Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (New York: Fortress Press, 2000). For further discussion on the theoretical underpinning of the state, see Gianfranco Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). Poggi discusses the nature of liberal-democratic regimes and the frequent disconnect between policy and politics found therein. Poggi also analyzes the distinctive features of one-party systems and discusses the difficulties they face in promoting economic development. He also examines the role of military affairs and the global economy on the state. For a more recent discussion of the state, see Stephen Krasner, *Power, the State, and Sovereignty* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[4] Michael Desch argues the end of the Cold War caused declines in the strength and cohesion of states in the absence of intense security competitions. See Michael Desch, "War and Strong States, Peace and Weak States," *International Organization,* Vol. 50, Vol. 2 (1996).

[5] Montesquieu, Baron de, The Spirit of Laws, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

executive, and judicial branches.[6] This concept creates a strong and cohesive regime when it is applied to the political institutions in a liberal democracy and the military institutions in an authoritarian regime.

Table 1:

INDICATORS	Strong	Weak
I - Separation of Powers		
Checks and Balances	X	
Coup-proofing	X	
II- Transition of Power		
Smooth Transition of Power	X	
Regular Transition of Power	X	
III - Compliance of Population		
Collect Taxes	X	
Police Institutions	X	

Checks and Balances

In a strong liberal democracy, having institutions that balance each other ensures that no single unit of government will be able to grab a majority of political power. This mechanism may incentivize a state's institutions to earn power by being responsive to the will of its citizens. An example of a strong, liberal democracy is the United States. In the United States, the legislative

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[6] See also Stephan Voigt and Eli Salzberger, "Choosing Not to Choose: When Politicians Choose to Delegate Power," *Kylos* Vol. 55, No. 2 (2002), 292.

and the executive branches are both chosen through electoral processes. The judiciary is appointed to ensure the other branches act within the constraints of the constitution. In a weak regime, such as Pakistan, the state's institutions are often unbalanced. In Pakistan, the military can co-opt the democratically elected branches by invoking its right to implement martial law as a matter of state necessity.[7]

Coup-Proofing

In an authoritarian state, a regime is able to "coup-proof" itself by co-opting institutions against one another so that no institution is able to single-handedly compete with the regime. The most important institution for an authoritarian regime to balance against is the military.[8] When security institutions compete against each other as a result of coup-proofing, it becomes hard for a small number of officers to successfully wrest power from state control.

As a result, authoritarian regimes innovate mechanisms to prevent coups. Fifty-five attempted coups occurred in the Middle East between the end of World War II and 1980, including in Iran, Pakistan and Egypt.[9] Coup-proofed regimes often create a paramilitary comprised of extremely loyal forces to balance the power of the regular military while establishing multiple domestic security agencies. Paramilitaries frequently report directly to the regime through an independent chain of command, and they are generally not housed within the state's regular ministry of defense. Paramilitaries often contain the regime's Special Forces

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[7] For a more detailed discussion on Pakistan's domestic politics, see Henry Sokolski, *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Reining in the Risk* (Washington, D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009) and Bhumitra Chakma, *Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[8] James Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security ,* Vol. 24, No. 2 (1999), 131-165.

[9] Ibid, 133.

capabilities and the most modern technologies. By weakening the power of the military, a regime is able to ensure that this key center of strength will not be able to overwhelm its power.

Indicator 2: Transitions of Power

A relatively uncontested transition of power (following the decision of the political or social elite, a committee, or another type of authoritarian apparatus) will indicate a regime's capacity to implement its policies, either by consent or by coercion. The ability to replace itself or ensure continuity of governance is a central indicator of a strong regime. Weak regimes such as Pakistan encounter great uncertainty and unrest during elections. Electoral contests bring out the contradictions present in democracies.[10] For example, incumbents sometimes resort to undemocratic means to ensure their survival in office. These undemocratic means range from gerrymandering to banning political parties to stuffing ballot boxes. However, these methods come at a risk – blatantly stealing elections will likely result in domestic conflict and international isolation. If a regime is able to effectively neutralize backlash during its transition in power, it is a strong regime.[11] In order to engage in risky measures such as electioneering or violence, a regime must have strong cohesion within its state apparatus.[12]

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[10] For a deeper discussion on the tensions present in illiberal democracies, see Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 6 (1997), 23-43.
[11] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2002), 51-66.
[12] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion After the Cold War," *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies,* Vol. 39 (2006), 387.

Indicator 3: Compliance - Tax Collection, Police Power

Our framework's third set of indicators relates to compliance. Levitsky and Way define strong regimes as having "strong coercive apparatuses, and/or cohesive ruling parties."[13] A strong regime must have the means and ends necessary to ensure the compliance of its apparatus. Analysts looking at regimes should observe whether government apparatuses follow orders and if citizens generally adhere to laws. In a liberal democracy, compliance will resemble Locke's social contract. In an authoritarian regime, the application of violence and creation of a climate of fear can ensure compliance by the population, while economic rents can help ensure key constituency support. Two indicators of compliance are a regime's ability collect revenues to pay for its state system and maintain societal stability using its policing institutions.

Policing Institutions

The presence of well-organized policing institutions indicates that the regime is strong and possesses the capability to monitor their populations and ensure compliance with regime mandates. Police departments maintain order using a form of low-intensity coercion that demonstrates the scope and penetration of the regime.[14] Laiton and Fearon argue the police and military capabilities of the government is the most likely determinant of an insurgency succeeding.[15]

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[13]Ibid 390.

[14]Ibid 393.

[15] James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War," *American Political Science Review,* (2002), 14. The authors argue "insurgents are better able to survive and prosper if the government and military they oppose is relatively weak – badly financed, organizationally inept, corrupt, politically divided, and poorly informed about goings on at the local level."

Policing institutions in authoritarian regimes tend to be more coercive and intrusive than those in liberal democracies. For example, policing institutions in Egypt, Iran and China are used to suppress civil liberties and quell dissidents. Secret police routinely monitor the contact between opposition figures. In an authoritarian state, the regime may use networks of secret police and incentives for informants to create a climate for fear and mistrust that dampens opposition activity because participants worry about betrayal.

Revenue Collection Capability

Strong regimes will also be able to extract revenue from their natural resources or taxable population. Collecting income, sales or other forms of taxes on a wide range of domestic transactions requires a certain level of administrative capability on the part of a regime. Consequently, international financial institutions such as the World Bank often use revenue collection rates as indicators of strong governance.[16]

Indicators of Group Strength within a Given Context

While the core tenet of our project is that opposition strength is relative to the strength of the regime, within a given context there are qualities opposition groups may possess which show its potential for strength. Thus, while opposition in an authoritarian context cannot by definition be relatively strong until the regime moves to the fragile governance context, it can be either weak or potentially strong. From our research, we have isolated indicators which show that an opposition group is either strong, or has the potential to be strong if it were within a

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[16] Stephen Knack, "Second-Generation Governance Indicators," *International Review of Administrative Sciences,* Vol. 69, No. 3 (2003), 352.

different context. It is important to note that while a strong regime requires all indicators to be present, a strong opposition group may have some of these characteristics but not all.

Table 2:

INDICATORS	Strong	Weak
Generate Response from Regime	X	
Organize and Coordinate Large, Numerous Protests	X	
Sustain and Replicate Protests	X	
Sustainable Communication	X	
Ability to Replace Strategic and Operational Leadership	X	
Geographic Safe Haven	X	
Diverse Membership Across Varying Sectors of Society	X	
Ability to Supply Public Goods When Regime Cannot	X	

Generate Responses from the Regime

Our first indication of opposition strength stems from the regime's recognition of their existence and, by extension, the regime taking steps to respond to the group. In a liberal democracy, opposition is recognized and legitimate in the eyes of the state. Opposition movements are able to participate in the political process, hold seats in government, and negotiate and extract concessions from the ruling party. In authoritarian states, opposition

strength may be recognized by the regime taking steps to counter the group in a coercive manner (which would be illegal in a liberal democracy).[17]   Regime responses may include arresting key leaders or activists, exiling the organization, violently subduing a protest, or other such coercive activities.

Ability to Organize/Coordinate Numerous, Large Protests

One indicator that an opposition group holds the potential for strength is if it has the ability to mobilize into numerous, large protests. The first step is to organize and coordinate a protest. However, in order for a group to be salient, the size of the protest should be considered. There is no specific number that we deem "large" – the number may vary based on the country's population or the regime's ability to respond relative to the size of the protest.

Ability to Sustain and Replicate Protests

While the ability to organize numerous, large protests is essential, it is also critical that the opposition movement retain the capacity to sustain these protests and replicate them. The diffuse nature of multiple protests--and that they occur in increasing numbers--makes it more difficult for the regime to ignore or to counter the opposition.[18]   This proves an easily

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[17]For example, the Chinese Ministry of State Security has an entire office, known as the 610 Office, devoted to countering the Falun Gong religious opposition movement.

[18] Kenneth Andrews and Michael Biggs, "The Dynamics of Protest Diffusion: Movement Organizations, Social Networks, and News Media in the 1960s Sit-ins." *American Sociological Review*, 71:5, (2006), 752-777. This indicator draws from the work of Kenneth Andrews and Michael Biggs, who looked at the diffuse nature of sit-ins in the 1960's as part of the civil rights movement. Andrews and Biggs argue that the formal organizations like CORE and the NAACP were instrumental in the organization and coordination of the protests across the American south, and that the diffuse nature of the protests and their sustainability is what led to the opposition's strength.

measurable indicator, as one can discern the length of a protest for sustainability and the number of cities in which protests occur for replication.

Resources for a Sustained Campaign

The opposition must be able to acquire the necessary resources for countering the regime and continuing their activities.[19] Resources may be financial, but they may also include access to media or Internet for advertising purposes or food and water for protesters, particularly if a protest must be sustained over a length period of time to achieve its strategic goals. There is no monetary threshold that indicates strong opposition, as the amount of resources necessary to sustain a counter to the regime will vary depending upon context.

Sustainable Communication

The opposition must have sustainable communication techniques.[20] The ability to coordinate activity among members is critical across all regime types in order to execute opposition strategy. Determining whether effective internal communications exist includes discerning whether the government can exercise significant scope to prevent organization and

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[19]John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). The resources indicator draws from the resource mobilization theory, specifically as presented by McCarthy and Zald. Charles Tilly and Doug McAdam first laid out their resource mobilization theory. However, Tilly and McAdam focus primarily on the social and political factors involved with resource mobilization, such as collective grievances and psychological state of the masses. These sociological factors are difficult to measure. Therefore, for our purposes, we focus on the more economic interpretation of resource mobilization theory, as articulated by McCarthy and Zald. McCarthy and Zald focus on an organization's access to funds and labor, and how these economic resources are able to turn non-adherents of an organization's ideology into adherents.

[20]Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.) McAdam posits that an integral factor in the civil rights protests included a "well-developed network linking the southern black college campuses into a loosely integrated institutional network."

communication (e.g. wiretapping, monitoring Internet activity, following group members, etc.). The "sustainability" criteria requires that the communication techniques be accessible regardless of regime counters; for example, if the main method of communication is social media, and the regime controls the Internet, the regime may block or control Internet access and swiftly debilitate the opposition. Measuring this indicator requires understanding how the organization communicates and how they circumvent regime counters.[21] Furthermore, if the regime shuts down social media after the opposition reaches a critical – and potentially irreversible – mass, then turning off the internet may have little effect if a very significant section of the population is already mobilizing and in the streets.

Ability to Replace Strategic and Operational Leadership

A critical indicator of an opposition's strength is its survivability, which is measured by their ability to train and replace leadership. In authoritarian states where the regime may imprison or execute opposition leadership, this characteristic proves essential. This indicator can be measured by studying how many generations of leadership an organization has gone through or the institutions an organization has in place to train new leaders.[22] Both operational and strategic leadership should be assessed. Strategically, if an organization has a figurehead, it should be discerned if that organization could survive if the figurehead was imprisoned or

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[21]The Falun Gong opposition movement in China has relied upon the outdated system of pagers for communication techniques, since they are no longer widely used among the public and the regime censors cell phone activity.

[22]Example of institutions used to train leaders are the "centers of learning" used within terrorist organizations. James Forest expands on the idea of "centers of learning" by describing them as both physical and virtual spaces in which an organization can train operatives on the social and physical conditioning, as well as provide them the materials, to become an effective terrorist. (Forest, James, "Training Camps and Other Centers of Learning," *Teaching Terror: Strategic and Tactical Learning in the Terrorist World*, 2006.)

died.[23] The opposition also needs operational leaders to organize and coordinate activities across the nation. This devolution of authority creates a line of succession and increased capacity to expand group activity across sectors of society, geographic locations, and time.

Geographic Safe Haven

A strong opposition requires a safe haven, or sanctuary, as a place to operate domestically. Safe haven may be nationwide, if the organization is free to move and operate as it chooses. However, in many authoritarian regimes, opposition organizations must find sanctuary among communities sympathetic to their cause or within communities to which the group provide goods and resources in exchange for safe haven.[24] Measurable indicators of geographic safe haven include the amount of bounty awards that remain outstanding within a nation. If a group has a considerable number of activists wanted by the regime, and the public is unwilling to turn them in, this is an indicator that the group enjoys sanctuary in the country.

Diverse Membership across Varying Sectors of Society

If an opposition group is only made up of one sector of society, like students, that organization is less likely to become a strong counter to the regime.[25] When opposition

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[23]Critics have claimed that the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI, also known as MEK) would not continue to exist without their leaders, Maryam and Massoud Rajavi. (Elizabeth Rubin, "The Cult of Rajavi," *The New York Times,* July 13, 2003.)

[24]This indicator is derived from insurgency doctrine; as Byman, et al. states, "Safe havens are essential to the success of any guerrilla movement, providing insurgents with sanctuary from government attacks and a place in which to arm, train, organize, and stage operations as well as to rest and recuperate." Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannon, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2001).

[25]David A. Wilder, "Perception of Groups, Size of Opposition, and Social Influence," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, (1977), 253-26. Wilder's work on perception of opposition within

movements begin to grow and include a variety of classes and social sectors, it indicates polarization against the regime, upon which the group can capitalize and increase its relative power. When the group expands to include a variety of participants, it also becomes more difficult for the regime to track. Lastly, appealing to different sectors of society provides a greater range of resources and additional opportunities to expand even further into other sections of society and possibly co-opt some of the regime's key support constituencies.

Ability to Supply Public Goods When Regime Cannot

When an opposition organization has the resources and opportunity to provide public goods to a nation's citizens, it clearly enjoys strength (this is also an indicator of a changing political context). Providing society with public goods effectively out-governs the regime, buying support and safe haven for the organization. This further indicates access to resources and the organizational capability to distribute the goods.[26]

Indicators of Shifting Contexts

Our next question asks under what conditions might a regime shift from an authoritarian context to a fragile governance context? How do we know when a strong regime like Iran weakens to the point that it would be vulnerable to a potentially strong opposition group? We have identified some indicators that point to the possibility of such a shift occurring.

The first set of indicators point to systemic issues within the regime itself. These include the development of fissures within the regime and weakening cohesion in the regime's security

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small groups indicates that the more dissimilar the opposition's participants, the better: "Thus, as the number of opposing entities increases, a person should attribute greater competence to the opposition."
[26] Examples of opposition organizations which provide public goods include Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

apparatus. We provide several concrete examples in our appendix of case studies that elucidate how and under what conditions a shift might take place. The Egyptian military's decision to back the protestors and remove Mubarak in 2011 shifted the context in which the regime operated.[27] Conversely, the PLA's decision to back the Chinese regime in 1989 prevented a shift in the domestic context.[28]

In addition, we also have lower-level indicators that address the possibility of the existence of fissures among the regime's key constituencies or, specifically, a lack of cohesion within its security apparatuses. These include the regime's decision to offer concessions, increase funding to key constituencies, or polarization against the regime. It is important to note that not all of these indicators equally indicate shifts in the relative balance of power. Some will matter more than others, depending on the specific domestic context in which the regime and opposition groups exist. Again, like with opposition strength indicators, not all indicators need to be present for a context shift to occur. And if all indicators are present, a context shift may still be prevented by the regime.

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[27] The Egyptian military has acted as the primary guarantor of state security since Gamal Nasser led the Free Officers committee in a coup to depose King Farouk I in 1952. It is the quintessential example of a key constituency that is able to make a difference in the domestic balance of power. The military's concern about who would succeed Hosni Mubarak and widespread public discontent with the Mubarak regime's inability to provide adequate public goods and services served to create a fissure between the regime and one of its key constituencies, the Egyptian military. See the case study on Egypt in the appendix for more information.

[28] The case of the PLA and the 1989 upheaval in China is another good example of how a key constituency of a regime, in this case the PLA, played a critical role in determining in which domestic context the regime would operate. See the China Case Study 1989 in the Appendix for more information.

Table 3:

INDICATORS	Potential Shift in Context
Developing Fissures In the Regime	**X**
Weakening Cohesion in the Regime's Security Apparatus	**X**
Regime Concessions	**X**
Increase in Funding to Regime's Key Constituencies	**X**
Suspension of Civil Liberties	**X**
Polarization of Opposition and Regime	**X**
Mounting Demographic Pressures	**X**

Developing Fissures in the Regime

One of the characteristics of a strong regime is that it effectively balances key constituencies against each other. An indicator that a regime may be moving from an authoritarian context into a fragile governance context is that one or more key constituencies grow dissatisfied with the regime. The reasons for potentially lower levels of support are myriad.[29] It is important to understand that this separation creates a fissure within the regime's support structure and provides an opening for the opposition to divide and weaken the regime.

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[29] Many of these reasons involve a lack of the indicators described above that make a strong regime. A regime's inability to provide goods and services or ensure compliance of its population might cause key constituencies, such as the military, to question the regime's effectiveness and future viability.

Furthermore, if the regime begins to increase funding to key constituencies, especially a part of the security apparatus, or offers concessions designed to meet the demands of wavering segments of their own support structure, then this may be evidence of fissures in the regime's support structure. These vulnerabilities are potentially ripe for exploitation by opposition groups that are capable of behaving opportunistically.

Weakening Cohesion in the Regime's Security Apparatus

In some cases, a regime must deploy police, military, and paramilitary forces to quash opposition groups. The regime's ability to do this hinges on the compliance of the various components of its security apparatus. If the paramilitary, police, or military forces lack cohesion and unity of purpose, the opposition will have more room to operate, while also straining a critical power base for authoritarian regimes.[30] In the case of Egypt in 2011, the police forces were willing and able to take action against the protesters, but the regular military stood on the sidelines and eventually backed the demands of the protesters (while also acting opportunistically in the moment to solve a succession crisis). This indicator is closely related to the development of fissures within the regime. Weakening cohesion in the regime's security apparatus points to a developing fissure in the regime's support structure. Again, examining patterns of funding and/or concessions the regime offers to opposition groups may help analysts understand the level of cohesiveness within the regime's security apparatus.

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[30] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War," *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39, (2006), pp. 387-410. Levtisky and Way make the same point in their discussion on coercive apparatuses in authoritarian states.

Regime Concessions

An authoritarian regime may choose to give concessions before or after it attempts to violently suppress the opposition. The regime may try to meet some of the opposition's demands in the hopes of satisfying them, preventing the regime from having to resort to violence and keeping in check any potential compliance issues in its security apparatuses. Conversely, the regime may attempt to violently suppress the opposition and, after failing to do so, offer some type of concession in a last ditch attempt to retain its hold on power.[31] Concessions may even be offered at the same time that the regime is employing more violent measures of suppression, as a way catch the opposition off guard or create divisions within the movement.

Increase in Funding to Regime's Key Constituencies

Much like regime concessions, this indicator points to a perception on the part of the regime that there is need to shore up support among its key constituencies. By increasing funding to key constituencies, the regime may indicate that a fissure is developing within its security apparatus, which, in turn, points to the possibility of a change in the context of the regime (i.e. authoritarian to weak governance).[32] Whether an increase in funding will prove successful is not as important as the fact that the regime sees the status quo as a potential

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[31] The back-and-forth between the Mubarak regime in 2011 and the opposition (later backed by the military) illustrates this point. Egypt in 2011 was marked by a combination of the regime offering concessions to the protesters and then using police forces to try and stamp out the demonstrations when the protesters rejected the concessions.

[32] See the case study on Egypt in the appendix for more information on how Mubarak increased the size of the Egyptian military budget in 2008 by 2.5 billion USD, the largest increase in the military's budget over the last decade.

threat to its survival.[33] This necessitates increasing the incentives for key constituencies like the military to remain loyal to the regime.

Suspension of Civil Liberties

If the regime perceives that concessions to the opposition are not working by themselves, it may decide to use the coercive side of its toolbox in combination with concessions. The suspension of civil liberties could involve arresting opposition leaders, quashing demonstrations and protests, and even using violent means to suppress all hints of opposition. Once a regime begins to suspend – or further suspend – civil liberties, it clearly considers the developing conditions threatening enough to merit a more coercive and even violent response to the opposition.[34] If the regime fails in its suppressive measures, then this may herald a change in domestic context.

Polarization between Opposition and Regime

According to Dahl[35] and Wilder,[36] polarization between the opposition and regime has two effects. It can serve to increase the intra-group cohesiveness of the opposition, as well as

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[33] Theodore McLauchlin, "Loyalty Strategies and Military Defection in Rebellion," *Comparative Politics*, 42:3, (2010), pp. 333-350.

[34] See Edward N. Luttwak, "*Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice,*" Harper's Magazine, (2007), and Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War," *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, (2006), pp. 387-410. Every autocratic regime will reach a point where it must decide whether it is both able and willing to use high-intensity coercion against its population. At this point, opposition strength may not matter as much as the regime's willingness and ability to suppress the opposition.

[35] Robert A. Dahl, *Regimes and Oppositions*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

[36] David A. Wilder, "Perceptions of Groups, Size of Opposition, and Social Influence," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* Vol. 13, (1977), pp. 253-268.

serve as a rallying cry for the loyal segments of the regime to unite against a common threat.[37] As the distance between the opposition and the regime continues to grow, the effect of concessions becomes smaller and the likelihood of violent suppression by the regime increases. The increase in distance may also put more moderate constituencies of the regime into a difficult position, where they must choose whether to throw in their lot with the more extreme elements of the regime, to withhold their support until a clear victor emerges, or join the opposition. Polarization has the effect of clarifying the choices faced by more moderate elements of the society. For the regime, this could mean that it will start seeing fissures develop in its support structure. On the other hand, polarization might put the opposition in a position where it is increasingly isolated from the rest of society.

Mounting Demographic Pressures

Demographic pressures, such as a youth bulge, a large influx of immigrants, massive unemployment, or inflation are all background indicators. They are not necessarily causal in nature, but they could provide added impetus for growing discontent with the regime. If the regime is failing to provide public goods and the country faces enormous demographic pressures, some of the regime's key constituencies may determine that a change is needed for the country to remain politically and economically viable. Huntington described this phenomenon as a "political gap," where countries could become unstable when the slow development of political institutions clashed with "rapid social change and the rapid mobilization

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[37] The revolution to overthrow the Shah of Iran in 1979 is an example of an opposition movement that managed to attract various sectors of society, thus resulting in polarization against the regime.

of new groups into politics."[38] While Huntington posited that this was a primary causal factor behind the strength of opposition groups vis-à-vis the regime, case studies demonstrate that just because there are demographic pressures does not mean that regime will suddenly find itself operating in a different domestic context.[39] What demographic pressures can do is put more pressure on the regime so that when the regime's security apparatus becomes less cohesive, the regime is under even more pressure to resolve the crisis before they find themselves operating in a completely different domestic context.

Iran Today: Application of Framework

Iranian Regime Strategies

The Iranian regime maintains superiority by economically incentivizing key institutions, violently suppressing opposition, and coup-proofing itself through a series of overlapping and competing security organizations. These strategies have allowed the Iranian regime to maintain control over the populace despite a stagnant economy and intense demands for reforms that have toppled or jeopardized the rule of several Middle East regimes in recent months.

In Epstein's[40] evaluation of authoritarian regimes in South America, he discusses the importance of general economic growth and inflation controls as a means to increase institutional legitimacy and limit the growth or relevance of opposition groups. His conclusion suggests that as economic conditions deteriorate, public dissatisfaction increases. Under these

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[38] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

[39] China, for example, experienced inflation, a rapidly growing population, and other demographic pressures in 1989 but still managed to quell the dissent through violence.

[40] Edward C. Epstein, "Legitimacy, Institutionalization, and Opposition in Exclusionary Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Regimes," *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 17 (1984), pp. 37-54.

conditions, the likelihood of significant challenges to the regime increases. According to the CIA World Fact Book,[41] the rate of inflation in Iran continues to be among the worst in the world at 11.80%, unemployment exceeds 14% and young, and educated Iranians must often travel abroad to find work, draining the state of its brightest young adults. Despite a wealth of natural resources the regime has ineffectively managed funds and continues to suffer from international sanctions.[42] Yet, while other regimes in the region scramble to placate growing opposition, the Iranian regime has offered no such concessions.

Instead, the regime violently crushes dissent while co-opting powerful internal groups with economic incentives. For example, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members have been awarded lucrative natural gas and transportation projects[43] as well as primary holdings in a multi-billion dollar telecommunications company.[44] The practice of bribing key IRGC commanders has also put the IRGC in charge of significant portions of Iran's infrastructure.[45] As a result, the IRGC has become increasingly enmeshed in all levels of the Iranian regime and more powerful over time. Simultaneously the IRGC exists under the

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[41] CIA World Factbook: Iran, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html, (Accessed April 2, 2011).

[42] Abbas Milani, "Cracks in the Regime," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 20 (2009), pp. 11-15.

[43] . Fariborz Ghadar, "Behind Iran's Crackdown, an Economic Coup," *Current History,* Vol. 108 (2008) pp. 424-428. The IRGC has been awarded control over the South Par natural gas pipeline to Pakistan as well as a major metro transit contract to be implemented in Tehran.

[44] Scott Peterson, "*Let the Swords Encircle Me,"* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2010), pp. 556. Peterson notes the IRGC was awarded a $7.8 billion dollar telecommunications contract around the time of the 2009 election further cementing the groups hold on telephone and internet communications.

[45] Ali Alfoneh,"The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics," *Middle East Quarterly,* Vol. 15 (2008) pp. 3-14. There are questions as to how the IRGC has manage to "win" many of it's contracts in a variety of sectors. The IRGC's level of political integration and their connections to President Ahmadinejad place them in an ideal position to secure a variety of lucrative contracts that circumvent potential competitors. The IRGC's engineering wing, known as GHORB, has been internally criticized for its lack of transparency by the Supreme Audit Court.

hierarchical control of clerical/civilian leadership and continues to act at the request of the Supreme Leader.

According to Daniel Byman and colleagues,[46] the IRGC commands surface-to-surface missile forces. Additionally, IRGC veterans have secured a large number of seats in the majlis while President Ahmadinejad has placed several high-ranking members of the IRGC in his cabinet.[47] This affords the IRGC direct influence into major policy decisions such as the construction of nuclear weapons. Overall, this lends credence to the idea that, if nuclear weapons are being developed, then the IRGC would benefit most from their creation through direct physical control while the Supreme Leader would presumably have his "finger on the button," so to speak.

The complex and often overlapping decision-making bodies in the military, paramilitary, and intelligence communities provide the regime with a mechanism of coup-proofing. James Quinlivan articulates the practice of coup-proofing as a "reliance on groups with special loyalties to the regime and the creation of parallel military organizations and multiple internal security agencies."[48] Iran certainly fits this description. As Daniel Byman and colleagues state, "potential coup plotters must be sure of the loyalty, or at least the passivity, of the IRGC, the *Artesh (*regular army), the intelligence services, and even the Basij if they are to succeed."[49] Having a multitude of organizations increases competition between and within these groups, further

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[46] Daniel L. Byman, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*, (Washington D.C., RAND Publications, 2001).

[47] IRGC veterans took 80 of 290 seats in the 2009 Majlis elections and occupy over half of the positions in Ahmadinejad's cabinet. Rahigh-Aghsan, Ali and Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "The Rise of Iran How Durable, How Dangerous?," *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 64 (2010) pp. 559-573.

[48] James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East" *International Security,* Vol. 24 (1999) pp.131-165.

[49] Daniel L. Byman, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*, (Washington D.C., RAND Publications, 2001).

complicating efforts by opposition groups to develop alliances with prominent institutions and preventing any group from single-handedly having enough power to overthrow the regime.

The Nuclear Card

Various polls have been conducted over the years to measure public support for Iran's nuclear program, and while support for nuclear weapons development is fractured at best, support for a peaceful nuclear program remains high among the population.[50] This is consistent with the message put forth by the Iranian regime. They vehemently deny any nuclear weapons program, and assert that their program is for peaceful and research purposes only. The regime also asserts their right to a peaceful nuclear program as signatories of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Our research has shown that the regime message is consistent, and that approval for the program falls in line with the message that the regime has put forth as is shown by numerous polls conducted by various polling methods.

The regime uses the nuclear card to increase its support among the population by framing the pursuit of uranium enrichment as proof of Iran's great power status, and by the need to deter aggression from its Arab neighbors and the West. The regime also frames the issue of sanctions as a threat from the West, affirming that their pursuit of a nuclear program is for peaceful energy and technological purposes, a right they are granted as signatories of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Although Iran has become increasingly isolated from the

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[50] The Rand Corporation conducted a phone interview to respondents within Iran. This poll concentrated on economic views, security and the nuclear program. The subsequent report cites a number of polls where support for the nuclear program shows various degrees of support for nuclear weapons, but all polls show a majority of Iranians support the completion of a nuclear fuel cycle and a peaceful program under the NPT. For more information see Sarah Beth Elson, Sarah Beth and Alireza Nader. "What do Iranian's Think? A Survey of Attitudes on the United States, The Nuclear Program, and the Economy," *The Rand Corporation, National Defense Research Institute*, 2011.)

world as a result of its nuclear program, the regime has not lost domestic support for pursuing uranium enrichment in defiance of the U.N. Security Council.[51]

Iranians see nuclear development as a source of pride and an affirmation of the supremacy of Iran's technological industry, as well as a security deterrent for a nation that has suffered repeated intrusions from the West and a devastating war with Iraq.[52] The United States' support for Shah/Pahlavi dynasty and for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, even after Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Iranian forces in defiance of international norms, left the Iranian people with a deep sense of distrust of the West and the United States in particular.[53]

As a result of these factors, the regime is able to portray the United States and the United Nations as trying to undercut the progress of the Iranian state and, in nationalistic terms, the Iranian people. Sanctions have not worked to sway public opinion away from the nuclear program, as many affirm that nothing could be worse than the conditions Iranians lived in during the Iran-Iraq War.[54] Iranians also believe that many more countries will acquire nuclear

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[51]Barbara Slavin's, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the Twisted Path to Confrontation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), offers a descriptive account of the troubled relations between Iran and the United States. The author offers a detailed history from the time of the Shah to the period after 9/11 and the War on Terror, and how the population has grown to resent and distrust the U.S. as a result of multiple interventions, sanctions, concern over the nuclear program, and the Iran-Iraq war.

[52]See Michael Slackman's "Nuclear Dispute Arouses Patriotism among Iranians," *The New York Times* (February 5, 2006). New York Times reporter Nazila Fathi conducted a series of interviews in Tehran after the IAEA announced that it would report Iran to the U.N. Security Council for suspicion of enriching uranium for purposes other than nuclear energy. Most respondents were weary of sanctions, but supported the program. Fathi reported that Iranians responded with a sense of anger over the Iran-Iraq War and the fact that the peaceful pursuit of nuclear technology is permitted under the NPT.

[53]See Barbara Slavin's, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the Twisted Path to Confrontation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007) for a detailed account of the decades long distrust and resentment from strained U.S. relations with Iran.

[54] Michael Slackman, "Nuclear Dispute Arouses Patriotism among Iranians," The New York Times (February 5, 2006).

weapons in the future, and that Iran's completion of the fuel cycle cements its place amongst the great powers of the world.

The regime has a history of playing the nuclear card to rally support amongst the population. In 2005, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) voted to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council for suspicion of clandestine enrichment under the guise of a peaceful nuclear power program. The threat of increased sanctions did not dissuade many Iranians from supporting the program.[55]

On April 9, 2006, Iran celebrated its National Day of Nuclear Technology in the city of Mashhad. Iranians celebrated the completion of the nuclear fuel cycle in which scientists were able to enrich uranium to 3.5%, concentrated enough to power a nuclear reactor but not weapons-grade. The celebration included a parade and elaborate performance in which vials of the enriched uranium were carried by traditional dancers. State-run media televised the event nationally, and President Ahmadinejad asserted that Iran had "joined the nuclear countries of the world."[56] April 9th continues to be the National Day of Nuclear Technology and a national holiday, and a number of important announcements and revelations are made on that day. For instance, on April 9, 2007, President Ahmadinejad announced the construction of thousands of new centrifuges, and on the holiday in 2009, the country inaugurated its first Fuel Manufacturing Plant (FMP) in the city of Isfahan.

Students and the scientific community rally around the nuclear issue for the academic, technological, and scientific advancements that the Iranian regime attributes to these

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[55]Various polling data shows support for the nuclear energy program. See "Public Opinion in Iran and America on Key International Issues," *Search for Common Ground, the Program on International Policy Attitudes* (April 7, 2008 and January 24, 2007) as well as Barbara Slavin's, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the Twisted Path to Confrontation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007).
[56]Nazila Fathi, "Iran Says It Is Making Nuclear Fuel, Defying U.N." *The New York Times* (April 12, 2006).

innovations. All those invested generally frame the nuclear program in nationalistic terms. The completion of the nuclear fuel cycle verifies a high-level of technical expertise and guarantees the employment and legitimacy of these sectors of society. For the military and clerical elites, the possession of this technology is enough to guarantee international attention, and possession of nuclear weapons would be a powerful deterrent against aggression from regional actors or intervention from the West.[57] The issue of sanctions also plays into the hands of the regime, as they assert that any incursion into the nuclear program from the West is an attempt to bolster Israel's security.[58]

After the 2009 Green Movement, President Ahmadinejad used the nuclear issue to bring cohesion to a populace rocked by the uprising and brutal crackdown. All presidential candidates favored the nuclear program, and no one in the country or in the opposition proposed ending it. Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi indicated that no politician would dare propose cutting the program, stating that, "aside from being economically justified, it has become a cause of national pride for an old nation with a glorious history. No Iranian government, regardless of its ideology or democratic credentials, would dare to stop the program."[59]

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[57]Ray Takeyh's, "A Nuclear Iran: Challenges and Responses," *Council on Foreign Relations* (March 2, 2006), attributes the combination of a deep resentment over international isolation, a feeling of being singled out for enriching uranium under the NPT, and a desire to become a regional power as the main reasons the nuclear card is successfully used by the regime.

[58]Martin Fletcher, "Iran's President Ahmadinejad Plays Nuclear Card to Rally his Fractured Nation," *The Times* (December 14, 2009).

The Times quoted Iranian history professor Ali Ansari as saying that economic sanctions would be better received by the public if they were aimed at punishing Iran for its subversion to democracy or human rights violations. Imposing sanctions on the issue of the nuclear program plays into the regime's hands.

[59]Ibid. .

Opposition to the nuclear program is minimal. Some members of the reform movement see the nuclear issue as sparking a possible confrontation with the West.[60] It is also expensive, and the money allocated to the nuclear program in recent years has come at the expense of other services in Iran. Nonetheless, critical internal voices and those concerned with cost are not at the forefront of the domestic political discourse on the nuclear issue.[61]

In 2006, the Search for Common Ground (SCG) and the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) conducted an unprecedented public opinion poll inside Iran.[62] PIPA developed a questionnaire of 134 questions regarding a variety of topics, and the survey polled 1,000 Iranians from every province in face-to-face interviews.[63] Within the questionnaire were a number of questions about Iran's nuclear program. There are significant limitations to the poll, as it was conducted under the supervision of an Iranian official. Additionally, investigators were not allowed to ask about Iran's nuclear weapons program, as the regime's official position is that Iran's program is strictly peaceful and within the limits of the NPT. Nevertheless, the poll's conductors asked about the completion of a nuclear fuel cycle and of the importance of nuclear weapons in the region. The poll was recreated again in 2008 with interviews of 710 Iranians, and the results of that polling, along with data from various other Iranian public opinion polls, show strong support for a nuclear program and fractured support for nuclear weapons.[64] Iran's position on the nuclear issue is that it has the right to a full fuel cycle nuclear energy program

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[60]Neil MacFarquhar, "Across Iran, Nuclear Power is a Matter of Pride," *The New York Times* (May 29, 2005).

[61]Martin Fletcher, "Iran's President Ahmadinejad Plays Nuclear Card to Rally his Fractured Nation," *The Times* (December 14, 2009).

[62]Public Opinion in Iran and America on Key International Issues, *Search for Common Ground, The Program on International Policy Attitudes* (January 24, 2007).

[63]Ibid.

[64]Public Opinion in Iran and America on Key International Issues, *Search for Common Ground, The Program on International Policy Attitudes* (April 7, 2008).

but that it opposes Iran having nuclear weapons. The 2008 PIPA poll included this question in their polling, and 66% of respondents agreed with the official regime position.[65]

Both the 2006 and 2008 PIPA polls have been studied and interpreted by a number of organizations, and they have concluded that while the polls are flawed in some respects, the findings are genuine. Criticism centers on the presence of an Iranian minder, certain questions being prohibited, and that a few of the nuclear questions were not asked to all participants.[66] Despite these flaws, scholars regularly cite the PIPA polls. Other polling methods have been used to measure public opinion in Iran, and each method has its own flaws.[67] Regardless of polling method or type, the polling information consistently finds that support for a full fuel cycle remains high in Iran, while support for nuclear weapons remains fractured.

Key findings of the poll show that an overwhelming majority of Iranians support a full nuclear fuel cycle for Iran. The primary reasons cited are: 1) to secure energy needs, 2) to enhance technological competence, 3) to enhance Iran's great power status, 4) to preserve Iran's rights under the NPT, and 5) for deterrence purposes. While a majority of respondents feel that Iran should remain a party to the NPT and pursue the nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, a majority also believes that a large amount of countries will eventually acquire

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Reuven Pedatzur, "Checking Public Support for Nuclear Policy-the Inevitable Results," *Contemporary Security Policy* (Vol.29, Issue 3, 577-581, 2008).

[67] Flaws in other polls include the 2000 survey done by The World Values Survey which predated the 9/11 attacks, the June 2005 poll by the Tarrance Group and a May 2005 poll done by Readers Digest and Zogby relied on random digit dialing (RDD) into Iran. These results are skewed in the sense that many younger people do not have landlines. Many also did not include questions about the nuclear issue. See Christine C. Fair and Stephen M. Shellman's, "Determinants of Popular Support for Iran's Nuclear Program: Insights from a Nationally Representative Survey," *Contemporary Security Policy* (Vol.29, Issue 3, 538-558, 2008).

nuclear weapons. Iranians also reject negotiations with the United States that could result in halting Iran's uranium enrichment programs.

Playing the Nuclear Card: The India Precedent

Using the nuclear issue to garner support from the population carries some precedent. Scott Sagan challenges traditional understandings of proliferation by asserting that nuclear weapons not only serve a nation's security interests, but they also are a powerful domestic issue and as symbols of identity and modernity.[68] Under his Domestic Politics Model, Sagan uses India's nuclear program to highlight the benefits of a nuclear program on domestic politics. He argues that India did not develop a weapons program as a result of China's 1964 nuclear test. Rather, he convincingly argues that pro-bomb scientists of India's Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) pushed the weapons program, while members of the civilian nuclear program supported increases to in funding for nuclear weapons development. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi consulted only a small circle of advisors prior to authorizing the program, and she did not ask the military about any implications of a nuclear-armed India. Overall support for the Gandhi-led government fell in the months prior to the program due to a recession; however, support for Indira Gandhi quickly increased by one-third after India's first nuclear test. Polling within India at the time reveled that a full 91 percent of literate Indians believed that the nuclear program was a proud achievement.[69]

India's nuclear tests in 1998 are a prime example of a regime using its nuclear program to reap domestic political dividends. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) decided to test when it

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[68]Scott D Sagan's, "Why do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* (Vol. 21, Issue 3, p. 55, 1996).

[69] The Indian Institute for Public Opinion concluded that, "both she [Gandhi] and the Congress Party have been restored to the nation's confidence"; Sagan, (1996, p. 68).

did because of the particular political culture it faced, not because of new developments in South Asia's threat environment.[70] In many ways, Prime Minister Vajpayee's survival and consolidation of power depended on managing the opposition and its allies, as well as warding off hard-liners within his own party. Most of all, he needed to change his image, which was of a weak, ineffectual leader.

Testing a nuclear device was not controversial according to the platforms of most Indian political parties. Vajpayee hoped that the negative international blowback from the nuclear tests would benefit him domestically because competing parties would find it difficult to criticize the tests. Bolstering his image as a true nationalist was crucial for Vajpayee because he had little room for flexibility on other issues. The tests protected the Prime Minister politically in some failures and crises that followed while he was in office.[71]

Opposition in Iran

Our research indicates Iranian opposition groups are *not* strong relative to the regime. However, we can still rank the opposition in terms of their overall capabilities. Using our framework, we conclude the following four groups pose the greatest challenge to the formidable regime in Tehran:

1. *The Green Movement.* This group gains strength in its ability to coordinate and sustain multiple large protests, diverse membership, and its ability to generate responses from the regime.

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[70] Ibid, 10.
[71] Kanti Bajpai, *Inside Nuclear South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

2.   *Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF).* This group gains strength in its diverse membership and the ability to generate a response from the regime.

3.   *Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS).* This group exists mostly outside of Iran, so many of the indicators automatically do not apply, such as coordinating and sustaining multiple and large protests in a domestic context, or generating a response from the regime.

4.   *People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI or MEK).* This group also exists outside of Iran, and faces many of the same issues that CIS faces.

Therefore, while all the groups are not strong at present, the Green Movement has the most potential for challenging the regime, based on its large domestic presence and diverse membership. While much attention has been given to PMOI by the Western press, its lack of support within Iran makes it the weakest of our opposition groups, as there is no chance for coordinating domestic protests and safe haven does not exist for them.

Conclusion

The age of the Iranian reformist surge that dominated conventional politics in the mid-90's and early 2000's failed to change the context in which the Iranian regime considers alternatives to its revolutionary ideology. Rather than softening to reformist efforts, hard-line elements such as the IRGC have increased their numbers in popularly elected bodies like the majlis and at the highest levels of government within President Ahmadinejad's cabinet. At the same time, sanctions against the regime continue to incentivize investment in black market activities that strengthen the financial position of many of the most anti-reform factions in Iran. This snapshot represents a confluence of factors that contribute to the growing strength of Iran's

security forces and the financial apparatuses that supports these institutions. Overall this bodes poorly for the future goals of Iranian opposition groups and provides a stark context in which to view the success or failure of other opposition movements.

This context can be witnessed throughout the Middle East today by performing a surface level evaluation of those regimes that have fallen, those that remain, and those likely to remain in control of their respective governments. Such control is predicated upon a balanced security force with the will to act on the regime's behalf and the provision of resources that sufficiently bolster its coercive capabilities. Those states that monopolize and co-opt and coerce at the economic, political, and security level are likely to maintain power.

Iran, along with Syria, China and Saddam's Iraq, are extremely difficult to effectively challenge from within. The imperative question we have attempted to address in this manuscript is, why? In each of these countries, groups may be able to coordinate protests, collect funds, and garner "symbolic" short-term concessions, but this in no way suggests the regime is in danger of falling or capitulating to demands. So, while our indicators help to explain the relative balance of power between the regime and opposition, these characteristics only begin to explain the complexities underlying a shift in regime context from strong to weak.

To tell the story of how a regime may shift from operating in an authoritarian context to a fragile governance context, we have isolated several indicators, which point to the possibility of such a shift actually taking place. We have defined these indicators, but the next step is to determine how they work in practice. Not all of these indicators are equally indicative of a shift. Some will matter more than others, depending on the specific domestic context under which the regime and opposition groups operate. Furthermore, these indicators may emerge in a specific domestic context in an interrelated fashion. For example, as fissures begin to develop in the

regime, the regime may perceive the threat and increase funding in various manners. It may offer concessions to key constituencies that might be persuaded to join the opposition. The regime may even offer concessions to the opposition in the hopes of at least appearing to meet their demands. If these tactics do not work, the regime may decide to unpack the coercive side of its toolbox and suspend, or further suspend, civil liberties. Security forces may arrest opposition leaders without trial and violently suppress demonstrations to prevent the opposition from reaching any form of critical mass. In the process of attempting to coerce the population, evidence of weakening cohesion in the regime's security apparatus may emerge, such as army units refusing to fire on civilians or entire regiments deserting and going over to the side of the opposition. This would be very worrisome for the regime, which may prompt it to offer more concessions, and/or attempt to suppress the opposition more violently and swiftly. The regime could also increase funding to its paramilitary units to ensure their support in the event of a split in the regime's security apparatus. This is one example of how these different indicators might function together to force a change in the context in which a regime operates. The way in which each of these indicators interact with one another to force a shift in the domestic context will depend on the specific characteristics of the regime, the opposition, and the domestic balance of power in that country. What is clear is that once shifts in relative power start to occur, the changing domestic contexts provide openings for a strong opposition group to accomplish its goal of revolution or reform in that country

Future Considerations

With this in mind, the follow-up question, and perhaps the aim of future research efforts, is: what would it take for opposition groups in a country like Iran to achieve their goals? We approach this question from the perspective of both the opposition and the regime.

To influence a shift in regime contexts from authoritarian to fragile governance, the opposition would need to co-opt one – if not several – institutions to passively or actively provide support. These would include the various components of the Iranian regime's security apparatus (i.e. the IRGC, regular military, the Basij, etc.), factions within the clerical elite, and large swaths of the population living in rural and urban settings. An alternative strategy would be to obtain resources, training, and other forms of assistance from an external stakeholder to "level the playing field" between opposition and regime. However, determining the level of external support necessary to bolster an opposition group in a "strong" state like Iran is difficult to gauge and perhaps unrealistic to assume, especially in light of which external actors have the will and capacity to intervene and whether opposition groups would embrace them.

For the regime, losing the support of key constituencies, such as the IRGC in Iran, would signal a lack of control and create exploitable opportunities for opposition groups. Even the strongest regimes make errors and miscalculations that create these exploitable, albeit limited, opportunities for opposition groups to shift the balance of power in their favor. Such opportunities may be fleeting and provide only a brief window in which the regime is vulnerable. If this is the case, quickly identifying fissures and moving to rapidly exploit them will be critical for an opposition group to have a chance at achieving its goals.

APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES

While reviewing the literature we isolated various opposition groups and assessed what characteristics of groups and regimes that help explain opposition strength. In order to focus our efforts we chose to focus on the following groups: the Tiananmen Square movement in China, the political opposition in Pakistan, and the 2011 reform movement in Egypt.

China 1989

In looking at the Tiananmen Square movement of 1989, we see a mass movement, diffuse throughout the nation, and a regime that was not coup-proofed or able to provide for the public. And yet the regime's co-optation of the military led the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to fire on its own citizens, resulting in a solidification of power for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and ending hopes of a strong opposition.

Background

In the lead up to the Tiananmen Square movements of 1989, underlying social anxieties and aspirations began to form amongst the populace. The leadership, specifically CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang, started to allow open dissent within the country, beginning with the 1986 "Democracy Wall" movement, in which Beijing citizens voiced complaints as graffiti on a city wall.[72] Economically, the country was rapidly changing because of the market reforms that began in 1978. The state laid off many workers owing to the privatization of the work force, and inflation increased rapidly. The combination of these events created widespread urban

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[72]Jean-Phillipe Beja and Merle Goldman, "The Impact of the June 4th Massacre on the pro-Democracy Movement." *China Perspectives*, Vol. 2, (2009). 18.

discontent, which helped catalyze the public's request for democratic reforms to go alongside the new economic changes.[73] In this environment, the opposition was able to capitalize on a catalyzing event, the death of party leader Hu Yaobang, who had been a reform-minded leader that Deng Xiaoping had purged. The regime refused to permit a full state funeral for Hu, which the student leaders believed disrespected his memory. The march began as an effort to restore Hu's legacy.

The Chinese Communist Party Regime

In assessing our indicators of regime strength, China in 1989 lacked several of the strong regime indicators, thus weakening it to protests. However, the CCP crackdown solidified regime strength, and many of those indicators remain in place today. Taxes were collected, policing institutions existed, and the regime enjoyed compliance in 1989.[74] In terms of a smooth transition of power, the transfer to party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang went well, but his sympathy for the protestors in Tiananmen cost him his position. Thus, Deng Xiaoping re-solidified himself as the ruler of China, despite the fact he was technically in retirement. The regime also created balancing institutions, between the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police, but they were not balanced against each other in a coup-proofing manner. Part of the reason the regime cracked down on the protestors was because they felt

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[73]Ibid, 22.

[74]Regarding compliance, since Tiananmen the regime focused on solidifying its legitimacy through cooptation of the nation's elite, as opposed to focusing on the worker class as it had previously done. Jean-Phillipe Beja, "The Massacre's Long Shadow," *Journal of Democracy*, 20:3, (2009), 5-16.

the protests had gone on too long, and they were worried the military might deem the CCP unfit to continue ruling.[75]

Indicators of a Shifting Context

In Tiananmen there were no meaningful concessions made and the opposition was unable to polarize society against the regime. Several of the indicators of a shifting context appeared during Tiananmen, such as the suspension of civil liberties, through instating martial law, and the regime's inability to supply public goods. Owing to the reform and opening plan put into place by Deng Xiaoping, inflation and unemployment were rising. The regime was never particularly successful at providing public goods for its citizens, considering the millions that died in the famine known as the Great Leap Forward from 1958-1961, or the minimal amount of food people generally received at their communes. The most significant issue that hindered the provision of public goods, however, was corruption. One of the protestors' primary demands was for the regime to curb the widespread corruption. The protestors also wanted democratic reforms so that another Cultural Revolution could never occur.[76] This could be considered as asking for the public good of order and peace within society, as the Cultural Revolution was a period of fear and widespread violence.

In contrast, certain indicators of shifting contexts were not present. For example, the regime never made distinct concessions. The Tiananmen movement was marked by a repeated

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[75]"The elders also came to fear they might be physically overthrown. They were apparently deeply worried about a military coup d'etat and the possibility of civil war." (Andrew Scobell, "Why the People's Army Fired on the People: The Chinese Military and Tiananmen," *Armed Forces & Society*, 18:2, (1992), 198.

[76]Jean-Phillipe Beja and Merle Goldman, "The Impact of the June 4th Massacre on the pro-Democracy Movement," *China Perspectives*, (2009), 22.

refusal by the CCP to negotiate with the protestors. Certain regime elements found to be sympathetic to the opposition, like Zhao Ziyang, were quickly purged. The regime's lack of meaningful concessions shows that the balance of power was clearly not shifting in the way many opposition supporters desired. In addition, there was not the polarization element, as seen in Iran 1979. Daniel Byman notes, "the protesters in China were not able to reach out and mobilize other classes beyond the elite student community. In Eastern Europe, in contrast, protests involved more of society."[77] It should be noted that many elements did join the students, like workers for the party newspaper, *The People's Daily*, but it was mostly the intelligentsia. Had the protests continued, "a fledgling workers movement" was looming, but it had not reached that broader level of society yet.[78]

Indicators of the Opposition's Strength

When addressing the opposition movement's strength during Tiananmen, it is clear that the students had many of the qualities necessary for a strong group. The opposition had the capability and resources to organize, coordinate, sustain and replicate numerous, large protests. It was a leaderless mass movement, so the ability to replace strategic and operational leadership was not present at the time or needed for the short duration of the protests.

The opposition did not have geographic safe haven or diverse membership. The group had a place to organize in Tiananmen Square, and other cities around the nation. But even their sheer numbers did not protect them, as the PLA clearly took control on June 4th. Additionally,

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[77]Daniel Byman, "What Sways Armies' Allegiance in Mideast?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, (February 15, 2011).

[78]Andrew Scobell, "Why the People's Army fired on the People: The Chinese Military and Tiananmen," *Armed Forces & Society*, (1992), 198.

they did not incorporate enough sectors of society to sufficiently polarize the nation against the regime.

China Conclusion

In summary, the Tiananmen Square movement was not strong. China then, and now, remains in the authoritarian context, where the regime is strong and the opposition is weak. While the opposition had many indications of the potential for strength, and certain indications were also present regarding a shifting context to fragile governance, the regime's willingness and ability to use force to solidify its power kept the nation from a successful democratic movement. The PLA, serving as the role of kingmaker, sided with the government, forcing the protesters out of the streets and ending the prospects for a democratic China in 1989.

Egypt 2005-2011

Influenced by the global financial crisis, North Africa and the Middle East have been rocked by revolutions during the spring of 2011. For years, Egypt has suffered from high inflation, unemployment, and political oppression as its youth population rose along with social media.[79] Though not the sole causes of the Egyptian revolution, these elements assisted in creating a volatile environment that ignited after the Tunisian Revolution. In order to better understand opposition group strength, regime strength, and the role of the military in Egypt, the

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[79] From 2004 – 2010, inflation has risen in Egypt, averaging approximately 10 percent. Egypt's Unemployment rate has fluctuated around 10 percent for nearly a decade, but some scholars suggest that in reality Egypt's unemployment rate could be as high as 20 percent. ("Egypt- Unemployment Statistics." *International Labor Organization.* (Accessed May 2, 2011). "Data Indicators: Egypt," The World Bank. (Accessed May 2, 2011). Aladdin Elaasar, "Is Egypt Stable?" *Middle East Quarterly,* Vol. 16, No. 3, Summer 2009, pp. 69-75.)

case should be addressed by analyzing three specific time frames, Egypt 2005, Egypt 2008 and Egypt 2011.

Egypt 2005

The 2005 Egyptian presidential election was the first publicly contested presidential election under the Mubarak regime. Though President Mubarak stayed in power, 2005 marks the beginning of public political opposition towards Mubarak and his government. Protests occurred mainly in Cairo and Alexandria. The opposition group known as Kefaya ("Enough") is credited with organizing most of the protests.[80]

Regime Strength Indicators 2005

In 2005, the Mubarak regime was strong. The government maintained a steady collection of revenue to provide public goods and enforce its authority over the public. The Mubarak regime's source of power and protection was the military. The Egyptian military is considered to be the "kingmaker" within Egyptian politics, which means that Mubarak must constantly keep the military's support.[81] President Mubarak's status as a former military officer has acted as a form of institution balancing or coup-proofing within Egypt. During 2005, police and military units supported the Mubarak regime. Police would disperse demonstrations to maintain civil order and Mubarak's authority over the people.

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[80] Kefaya is an opposition group created in 2004 which used social media to organize the 2005 presidential election protests.
[81] Majid Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Middle East Politics," *The American Political Science Review*, 47:2, (1953), pp. 511-524.

Opposition Strength Indicators 2005

In 2005, opposition groups, such as Kefaya, organized and coordinated multiple large protests in Cairo and Alexandria, but were unable to sustain support for the protests.[82] This was mostly due to the inability of Kefaya and other opposition groups to mobilize the majority of Egyptian society. Despite being a small and relatively new organization, Kefaya had a resilient communications structure that could disseminate information and sustain group efforts, thanks to the Internet and mobile phones. Opposition groups have found a virtual sanctuary through the Internet.[83] With opposition groups turning to the Internet, every person with Internet access is a potential opposition leader, capable of disseminating information to others. Most of the opposition consisted of either students or Islamists and not a diverse membership. Through open protests and other forms of civil disobedience, Kefaya and the Muslim Brotherhood, generated mostly coercive regime responses.[84] Unfortunately, Kefaya and other groups lacked either the will or the resources to sustain their opposition campaign.

The opposition group strategies conflicted with each other during the 2005 presidential election. Kefaya conducted open protests against the re-election of President Mubarak, the suspected succession of his son, Gamal, election restrictions, and the continuation of the Emergency Laws.[85] Kefaya called for a boycott of the elections with the objective of showing their open disapproval for an unfair electoral process and to call into question the regime's

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[82]"Hundreds Defy Egypt Protest Ban," *BBC News*, (March 30, 2005).

[83]Omayma Abdel-Latif, "Cyber-Struggle: Islamist Websites Versus the Egyptian State," *Arab Reform Bulletin*, (December 20, 2004).

[84] The Muslim Brotherhood is the oldest and largest Egyptian opposition group and is considered to be the most likely to obtain power in a post-Mubarak Egypt. (Jayshree Bajoria, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 3, 2011.)

[85]Prominent Kefaya's protest chant: "no to extension no to hereditary succession." Amira Howeidy. "Enough is Still Enough," *Al-Ahram*, 2005. The Emergency Laws increase police powers, legalize government censorship, and limit civil liberties within Egypt.

legitimacy. The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, encouraged their members to vote, thus mitigating Kefaya's ability to achieve their objectives.[86]   The Mubarak regime's strategy against the opposition protests consisted of violence. There were reports of plain clothed police beating protesters, riot police allowing pro-Mubarak protesters to assault Kefaya members, and numerous suspected opposition leaders being arrested.[87]   Because the regime was strong and fought back against the opposition, the opposition remained in a position of weakness.

Opposition capabilities and efforts were not sufficient enough to successfully counter the regime's actions. However, by surviving the oppressive regime tactics, opposition groups, such as Kefaya, contributed to the creation of a new political environment that would foster future opposition movements.[88]   The government responded by extending the Emergency law which has been continually renewed since 1967.[89]   Though an outlawed political organization, the Muslim Brotherhood continued to challenge the Mubarak regime through the Internet and international media.

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[86]Amr Hamzawy, "Opposition In Egypt: Performance in the Presidential Election and Prospects for the Parliamentary Elections," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (October 2005).

[87] "Security Forces Attack Opposition Demonstrators," *Human Rights Watch,* Press Release, August 1, 2005,http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/08/01/egypt-security-forces-attack-opposition-demonstrators. (Accessed May 1, 2011)

"Calls for Reform Met with Brutality," *Human Rights Watch,* Press Release, May 25, 2005, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/05/25/egypt-calls-reform-met-brutality. (Accessed May 1, 2011)

[88]Nadia Oweidat, Cheryl Benard, Dale Stahl, Walid Kildani, Edward O'Connell, and Audra K. Grant, "The Kefaya Movement: A Case Study of a Grassroots Reform Initiative," *RAND Corporation*, 2008.

[89]"Government extends Emergency Law," *New York Times*, May 1, 2006.

Egypt 2008

In 2007, Egypt experienced approximately 580 demonstrations, a significant increase from prior years.[90]   Also, in an attempt to co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood's nuclear weapons platform, the Mubarak regime announced an increased investment in future nuclear power initiatives.[91] These events helped create the political momentum for the 2008 Bread Protests, caused by the severe shortage of subsidized bread as well as high inflation.[92]

Regime Strength Indicators

At the start of 2008, Egypt was still a strong regime. But by the end of 2008, the Mubarak regime became weak. Fissures began to emerge within the government and Egyptian society. Uncorrected rumors suggested that Mubarak's son, Gamal, would succeed his father as president, which concerned military elites. With the thought of a future nonmilitary affiliated person as president, Mubarak's status as a former military officer ceased to act as a balancing institution. In addition, high inflation rates and bread shortages created regime legitimacy problems in the eyes of the population.[93]   The Egyptian citizens started losing faith in the government's ability to provide public goods, blaming government corruption for the bread

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[90] In previous years, the average number of demonstrations was approximately 200. The 2007 demonstration statistic source is cited as News Report: "Workers Leadership Forms Preparatory Committee for Workers," *The Socialist*, Center for Socialist Studies, 2009. (Quoted by Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, "Protest Movements and Political Change in the Arab World," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (January 28, 2011).

[91] The Muslim Brotherhood used the topic of nuclear weapons as a way to challenge the regime within the realm of domestic politics. (Sammy Salama, "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Presses Government for Nuclear Weapons." *WMD Insights*, 2006. "Egypt Unveils Nuclear Plants Plan," *BBC News*, (2007). Quoted in Richard L. Russell's "Off and Running: The Middle East Nuclear Arms Race," JFQ, 3rd Quarter (2010).

[92] Joel Beinin, "Egypt: Bread Riots and Mill Strikes," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 2008. Amr Hamzawy, "Egyptian Unrest Rises with Inflation," *The Daily Star*, June 2, 2008. Ray Bush, "Food Riots: Poverty, Power and Protest," *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol.10, Issue. 1, (2010), pp.119-129.

[93] Amr Hamzawy, "The Limits of Egypt's Ruling Party Reform," *Arab Reform Bulletin, (*November 20, 2004*).*

shortage, for example.[94] Furthermore, by the end of 2008, the government dramatically increased the military's budget in addition to increasing state employee and workers' wages.[95] These increases in funding were signs that the regime thought its power was eroding.

Opposition Strength Indicators 2008

During the 2008 Bread Protests, the opposition organized and coordinated at the grassroots level by employing the Internet and social media.[96]   Diverse sectors of society mobilized to protest against the government.[97]   Opposition members were mainly from urban centers and ranged from students to industry workers, crossing multiple social boundaries. Numerous issues fueled these protests, bread shortages, increasing inflation, and the continued existence of the Emergency Laws that prohibits public demonstrations.[98]   Within a matter of days these groups caught the regime's attention and generated regime responses.

Opposition groups such as the April 6 Youth Movement and government industry workers called for a unified strike on April 6th. The Muslim Brotherhood did not officially support the strike, but did not prevent the Brotherhood members from participating. Opposition groups

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[94] Michael Slackman, "Day of Angry Protest Stuns Egypt," *The New York Times* (April 6, 2008).

[95] Regime increases military budget by approximately 2.5 billion dollars (largest budgetary increase in nearly a decade). Miltary Balance, Vol. 110, Issue.1 (2010), pp.235-282. This could be a method of securing the military's loyalty to President Mubarak. This incentive strategy is described further in Theodore McLauchlin's "Loyalty Strategies and Military Defection in Rebellion," *Comparative Politics*, 42:3, 2010, pp.333-350. Wages increased 30%, double the already approved 15% increase. Amr Ismail Ahmed Adly. "When Cheap is Costly: Rent Decline, Regime Survival and State Reform in Mubarak's Egypt (1990-2009)," *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 47, Issue. 2 (March 2011), pp.295-313.

[96] Drew Kumpf. "Food-Riot Watch: Egypt Protests Spook Government," *Foreign Policy* (April 7, 2008). Ahmad Zaki Osman, "Second Generation Internet Users and Political Change in Egypt," *Arab Reform Bulletin* (May 12, 2008).

[97] Amr Hamzawy, "Rising Social Distress: The Case of Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (June 2009).

[98] Beinin asserts that the reason for all of Egyptian society uniting in protest is that the Mubarak regime violated the social contract with the people by being unable to supply bread. (Joel Beinin, "Egypt: Bread Riots and Mill Strikes," *Le Monde Diplomatique*. May 2008)

used social media was to mobilize multiple groups together and immediately report police brutality to others. However, just as the opposition used social media, the regime monitored websites to locate online instigators.[99] The opposition's ability to use the bread shortage and high inflation rate to their advantage enabled them to receive minor concessions from the Mubarak regime. The government agreed to concessions only after seeing a large number of protesters in the streets, workers striking at factories, and government coercive measures failing to disperse protesters.

The 2008 protests marked the first time that opposition groups conducted unified operations while using a diverse membership that represented a large portion of Egyptian society. As a result, the regime granted concessions, including increased wages for state workers, increased bread production, and a promised end of the Emergency Laws.[100] The regime even announced a new nuclear energy deal with Russia, perhaps as a means to unite Egypt under a banner of nuclear nationalism and co-opt the Muslim Brotherhood.[101] With their demands met, protesters returned home. No longer under pressure form the populous, however, Mubarak later reneged on his promise to revoke the Emergency Laws and extended them once again.[102]

Egypt 2011

As the start of 2011, many Egyptians, including the military had doubts that the aging President Mubarak would be able to finish another six-year presidential term. Owing to the

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[99]Ahmad Zaki Osman, "Second Generation Internet Users and Political Change in Egypt," *Arab Reform Bulletin* (May 12, 2008). Marko Papic and Sean Noonan, "Social Media as a Tool for Protest," *STRATFOR* (February 3, 2011).

[100] "Egypt Eyes Public Sector Pay Rise," *BBC News*, April 30, 2008. (Accessed 7 May 2011)

[101] "Russia-Egypt Nuclear Deal Signed," *BBC News*, March 25, 2008. (Accessed 7 May 2011)

[102] "Egypt Renews Emergency Law Powers." *BBC News*, May 26, 2008. (Accessed 7 May 2011)

restrictive election laws many Egyptians expected Gamal Mubarak to be President Mubarak's designated successor candidate. This was a tenuous moment for Egypt. For 30 years, Egypt never experienced a transition of power and the military was not willing to comply with the possible succession of Gamal.[103] Without the support of the military, transition would most likely be anything but peaceful. As a result, the Mubarak regime at the start of 2011 was weak.

Opposition Strength Indicators

In 2011, opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and National Association for Change,[104] organized and coordinate large sustained protests throughout Egypt. This massive political movement consisted of all social sectors, especially various youth groups.[105] With the tacit support of the military and massive popular support, opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood benefited from geographic, and virtual sanctuary. These opposition groups as a whole generated regime responses and were able to survive and counter those government responses.

After observing the fall of the Tunisian government, the Mubarak regime enacted a quick strike against the opposition's preferred protest tool by shutting down Internet servers.[106] Unlike previous protests, opposition groups prepared "hard-copy" material and used landline phones to continue protest efforts.[107] Soon after, Internet was restored and a unified opposition message was clear: Mubarak must resign. As citizen participation increased, the military decided not to

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[103] Stephan Roll, "Gamal Mubarak and the Discord in Egypt's Ruling Elite," *Arab Reform Bulletin* (September 1, 2010).

[104] An umbrella opposition group, consisting of various members, led by Mohamed El Baradei, former head of the IAEA. The group's main goal is to end the Emergency Laws.

[105] Kieron Monks, "Could Egypt's Revolution be Stolen?" *Aljazeera* (April 18, 2011).

[106] "Internet Shutdown. Amid Egypt Protests; Social Outcry Strengthens," *Infowars.com* (January 28, 2011). http://www.infowars.com/internet-shut-down-amid-egypt-protests-social-outcry-strengthens/.

[107] Marko Papic and Sean Noonan, "Social Media as a Tool for Protest," *STRATFOR* (February 3, 2011).

intervene and disperse the protesters. The military quickly brought order to the protest areas and then returned to observing the crowd. This was a key point of issue between the military and the regime, because stopping violence by Mubarak's security forces effectively meant a significant break between Mubarak and Egypt's army. Out of options, President Mubarak attempted to co-opt the crowds through concessions, such as announcing that he would not run for reelection and effectively remain president in name only. Nonetheless, a point of no return had been reached, and the protesters continued to call for Mubarak's removal.[108] Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman subsequently announced President Mubarak's resignation and the military take-over of the Egyptian government.[109]

Conclusion: Egypt 2011

Egyptian opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and National Association for Change, helped organize and keep the Egyptian people motivated and focused on demanding President Mubarak's resignation. But it was ultimately the Egyptian military, acting as kingmaker, which determined the final political outcome. Now in power, the Egyptian military maintains order despite continued public demonstrations by frustrated opposition members who feel disenfranchised.

Pakistan 2008

The primary political parties in Pakistan are the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by President Zardari, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML or Quaid-e-Azam) and the Pakistan

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[108] Jim Muir, "Egypt Protests: Hosni Mubarak's Concessions Rejected," *BBC News* (February 8, 2011).
[109] "Red Alert: Mubarak Resigns, Military is in Charge," *STRATFOR* (February 11, 2011).

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). None of the political parties in opposition has a clear-cut mandate with voters because of the country's ethnic and regional factions.

Islamic religious parties compete with mainstream political parties, but Islamic parties have never secured more than 3% of votes (except in October 2002 when the umbrella Muthida Majilis-e-Amal (MMA) party allied both Shia and Sunni constituencies). Military rulers have traditionally used Islamic parties to neutralize secular ones.[110]

Indications of a Strong Regime

Pakistan is effectively a military state. It wavers between being an illiberal democracy checked by the country's security institutions and a military regime checked by the country's democratic institutions. Pakistan has remained under martial rule for at least half of its history since partition with India in 1947. The Pakistani Army, the state's most powerful institution, has entrenched itself in the country's economy. The military-industrial complex is $20.7 billion USD, and the military is the nation's largest landowner. The military takes certain actions to co-opt the regime such as buying off the judiciary, invoking martial rule using the doctrine of "State Necessity," and electioneering to seize power. In addition, the military enjoys a generous pension scheme. Its paramilitary force, including the Frontier Corps and Pakistan Rangers, is roughly half the size of the regular armed forces.[111] In the past, the regime deployed military force against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. It reacted most severely when the Taliban gained ground toward nuclear facilities.[112]

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[110] Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan's 2008 Elections: Results and Implications for U.S. Policy," Washington, D.C: *Congressional Research Services* (2008).
[111] "South and Central Asia," *The Military Balance. International Institute for Strategic Studies (*2010)*.
[112] Bhumitra Chakma, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons," *Security in Asia Pacific* (2009).

General Pervez Musharraf followed a long tradition of Pakistani Army Generals exercising the constitutional right of the military to seize power in a coup in October 1999. Under President Musharraf, Pakistan's regime transitioned from Fragile Governance to Authoritarian using our framework's contexts. Under Musharraf, Pakistan's ability to gain compliance from state bureaucracies and the general population improved. Musharraf broadened the tax base and bolstered policing institutions. The security services perform extralegal detentions and arrests.[113]

In Pakistan, the country's nuclear program is the most important aspect of its security strategy. It also comprises a major source of military strength relative to the regime and the opposition. The National Command Authority (NCA) is the key decision-making body regarding the employment and development of strategic nuclear systems. The President chairs the NCA. On paper, Pakistan ought to have a civilian-checked, stable command and control system. However, in practice, Pakistan is likely to opt for a more delegative control of its nuclear weapons. Currently, the Army and Air Force have total control of nuclear assets. The President, Prime Minister (often supported by Army), and the Army Chief are likely to be the prime decision makers. On a committee of three, the Army will likely have the strongest voice.[114]

Opposition Strength Indicators

Following Benazir Bhutto's assassination in 2007, popular support for her widower Asif Zardari and the PPP rose. Discontent with deteriorating social conditions solidified the population's preference for new leadership through democratic processes, which was one of the

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[113] "Data Indicators: Pakistan," *The World Bank*, 2011. (Accessed 2 May 2011)
[114] Vipin Narang, "Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability," *International Security,* Vol. 34, No. 3 (2009).

primary legacies of Benazir Bhutto. The PPP and the PML-N formed a ruling parliamentary coalition in the National Assembly. These parties also lead coalition governments in the two most populous of the country's four provinces, Punjab and Sindh.[115] Because these groups united to form a popular alliance, they demonstrated the ability to replace leadership, diversify membership, secure resources, and employ geographic safe havens. The coalition was also able to generate a regime response and force Musharraf's resignation. The critical mass necessary to remove Musharraf from power was achieved because the comprehensive backlash against him mounted to the point that he lost control of the military, Pakistan's kingmaker.

Indicators of a Shifting Context

Although the country's general stability improved under his rule, opposition against President Musharraf mounted. In November 2007 when Musharraf tried to extend his Presidency another five years through the Electoral College rather than an election, his competitors found space to oust him. His administration fired the Chief Justice and then jailed opposition members and lawyers who opposed the abrogation of the rule of law in the thousands. It also suppressed independent media outlets. Sixty judges resigned in protest to his "re-election," and Musharraf responded by firing them. All of these actions to regain his political control ignited a wave of popular backlash that led to Musharraf's descent from power.[116]

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[115] Kronstadt, K, Alan, "Pakistan's 2008 Elections: Results and Implications for U.S, Policy," Washington, D.C: *Congressional Research Service* (2008) pp. 4-5.
[116]"Musharraf's Gloom: The President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, Faces the Prospect of Impeachment," *The Economist,* (August 7, 2008).

In 2008, Zardari ran for election against the country's army ruler, then-President Musharraf, and forced him to resign under the threat of impeachment in August 2008.[117] Opposition candidates polarized themselves against the Musharraf regime in order to have a democratic transition of government. Fissures in Musharraf's support further developed as Pakistan's four provincial assemblies passed resounding motions of "no confidence" in his presidency. The army under General Ashfaq Kayani failed to support its former chief.[118]

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[117] "In the Face of Chaos," *The Economist, (*February 19, 2009).
[118] "Exit Musharraf: Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, Jumps Before he is Pushed," *The Economist,* August 18, 2008.

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