

Divide-and-Conquer Politics
and the Logic of
International Hostility

UNITED WE STAND?



Aaron
BELKIN

United We Stand?

SUNY series in Global Politics

James N. Rosenau, editor

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International Hostility

Aaron Belkin

State University of New York Press

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

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Printed in the United States of America

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For information, address State University of New York Press,
90 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, NY 12207

Production by Marilyn P. Semerad
Marketing by Susan M. Petrie

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Belkin, Aaron, 1966-

United we stand? : divide-and-conquer politics and the logic of international hostility /
Aaron Belkin.

p. cm.—(SUNY series in global politics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7914-6343-5 (alk. paper)

1. International relations 2. Conflict management. 3. World politics. I. Title. II. Series.

JZ1305.B456 2005

327.1'6—dc22

2004045270



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Despite its intuitive appeal, the rally-around-the-flag hypothesis does not always provide a compelling explanation of the relationship between domestic and international outcomes. In this study, I turn the hypothesis on its head by questioning its twin assumptions that cohesion is preferable to divisiveness and that leaders use external conflict to promote internal unity. I focus on one realm, civil-military relations, and advance and test two hypotheses. First, I argue that when the risk of coups is high, leaders often divide their forces into multiple organizations that check and balance each other. Vulnerable leaders tend to be willing to pay high costs to reduce the risk of a coup, but alternative mechanisms for subordinating the military rely on fickle foundations. Because loyalties can be bought and sold, difficult to monitor, and subject to rapid change and because counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force, my argument is that vulnerable leaders almost always attempt to protect themselves by creating and exploiting cleavages among their own armed organizations.

Dividing the military, however, is only the first necessary step for avoiding a coup. Once they divide their forces, leaders must ensure that rival organizations refrain from conspiring, and they must promote jealousy and strife to prevent the development of lateral networks among potential conspirators. Hence, my second hypothesis is that counterbalancing can provide an incentive for leaders to engage in international conflict. International conflict can create interservice rivalries that drive wedges and promote mistrust among branches of the armed forces when they offer divergent threat assessments, use combat success to justify claims for autonomy, advocate particular missions, and attempt to take credit for success or avoid blame for failure. Although subordination of the armed forces is a critical domestic process that many new states confront, there is little work on the international implications of leaders' efforts to protect themselves from their own militaries. Contrary to the literatures on scapegoating and the rally-around-the-flag effect, in the realm of civil-military relations leaders sometimes use aggressive foreign policy to reinforce military divisions rather than to achieve cohesion.

After developing the argument, I use quantitative and historical evidence to test its plausibility. In a pooled, time-series analysis of almost every country in the world during the second half of the Cold War (1966–1986), coauthor Evan Schofer and I find that the possibility of a coup d'état is strongly and positively related to counterbalancing regardless of the specification of the variables, even after taking into account the nonindependence of the dependent variable over time. Vulnerable leaders are much more likely to counterbalance than leaders who are not vulnerable to their own forces. Then, we use event history analysis to show that counterbalancing is strongly and positively associated with international conflict. Our finding is that high-counterbalancing regimes are much more likely to become involved in international conflicts than low-counterbalancing regimes. While measurement problems often constitute threats to valid inference in social scientific studies, the large sample size in this analysis diminishes the influence of noisy data.

In a case study of Syrian civil-military relations under Hafiz al-Asad, I test the first of my two hypotheses by determining whether the possibility of a coup was an important driving force behind the creation of rival armies. When Asad became president in February 1971, Syria's ground forces included just a single army and a few lightly equipped militias. By 1976, Syrian ground forces consisted of six fully equipped armies. Alternative explanations for the creation of rival armies in Syria such as institutional and neorealist theory yield expectations that are not confirmed, while counterbalancing theory yields accurate predictions. In addition, I suggest that Syrian participation in the 1973 war helped Asad promote inter-service rivalries among his forces. Finally, I use a case study of civil-military relations in Georgia to test my second hypothesis. The case indicates that President Eduard Shevardnadze built the Georgian Army not in response to foreign threats but rather to balance other "power" ministries. Then, Shevardnadze inflamed Georgian-Russian relations to drive a wedge between the Army, which maintained close ties to the Russian armed forces, and the Border Guard, which was oriented toward Europe and the United States. Although there were several determinants of Georgian-Russian hostilities, one important consideration was Shevardnadze's use of diversionary tactics to promote antagonisms among his own forces.

Despite the sizable literature on domestic causes of international outcomes, scholars have noted the lack of scholarship linking *generalizable* theories of domestic political process to international outcomes. As Robert Keohane suggested, scholars should pursue "better theories of domestic politics . . . so that the gap between the external and internal environments can be bridged in a systematic way." This study seeks to address the gap by developing a rich, domestic theory of one particular domestic arena, civil-military relations, and focusing on international outcomes of that domestic political process.



Acknowledgments

I am extremely grateful for years of support, feedback, and encouragement provided by George Breslauer, Elizabeth Kier, Philip E. Tetlock, and Steven Weber. In addition, I thank Michael Rinella, my acquisitions editor at the State University of New York Press, as well as the anonymous reviewers who read the manuscript with great care.

Lynn Eden, Peter Feaver, Bruce Russett, Scott Sagan, Paul Stockton, and Harold Trinkunas offered helpful comments and advice on numerous aspects of international relations theory and civil-military relations theory. I am grateful for their assistance. Many colleagues assisted with the quantitative sections of this project, and I appreciate the input and feedback of Bear Braumoeller, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Ann Hironaka, my coauthor Evan Schofer, Judith Sedaitis, and John Squier. I thank Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett for providing much of the data on which this analysis is based. Many other scholars and experts provided advice, material, or tips that were helpful with my study of Syria under Asad, including Alain Chouet, Michael Eisenstadt, Aharon Neumark, James Paul, Abdul Aziz Said, Patrick Seale, Eyal Zisser, and former officials from American, French, Israeli, and Soviet military and military intelligence organizations whom I interviewed and who prefer to remain anonymous. My study of Georgian civil-military relations would not have been possible without the help, time, and support of Revaz Adamia, Levan Alapishvili, Jürgen Beiche, Chip Blacker, Valeri Chkheidze, Catherine Dale, David Darchiashvili, Manana Gnolidze, Rusudan Gorgiladze, James Howcroft, Arthur Khachikian, Gela Khutsishvili, Gail Lapidus, Guram Nikolaishvili, Ghia Nodia, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Dato Sikharulidze, Davit Tevzadze, Natia Tevzadze, Ned Walker, and Erika Weinthal. Florence Sanchez is the most generous and careful copyeditor I have every had the pleasure of knowing.

Finally, I would like to note several people, some mentioned above, who went beyond the call of duty for many years and who made possible my graduate education and early professional training. I offer most special thanks to Chip Blacker, James G. Blight, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Lynn Eden, Mark Garrison,

Alexander George, Jan Kalicki, Elizabeth Kier, George Marcus, Scott Sagan, the late Richard Smoke, Richard Snyder, Philip E. Tetlock, Steve Weber, and my grandparents, sister, and parents. All responsibility for errors, of course, is mine alone.

Portions of chapter 4 were previously published in “Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk: Concepts, Measurement, and Implications,” with Evan Schofer, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 47, No. 5, October 2003. Copyright © 2003 by Sage Publications, Inc.

Part One

Introduction

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Chapter One

Regime Vulnerability and International Conflict

When former president Bill Clinton launched a series of cruise missile strikes against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan just three days after testifying before a federal grand jury in August 1998, observers speculated that this was “a manufactured crisis to divert public attention from his personal troubles.” One columnist referred to the public’s reaction as “an almost textbook illustration of the rally-around-the-flag phenomenon” (*Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1998, p. B9; August 23, 1998, p. A20). Just six months before the attack, pundits wondered whether the administration would strike Iraq to minimize damage from the just-breaking sexual misconduct scandal. As I suggest below, the diversionary hypothesis is not just conventional wisdom among the public and the press. This idea is so well accepted that one scholar claimed it “to be a general law that human groups react to external pressure by increased internal coherence” (Dahrendorf, 1964, p. 58 cited in Levy, 1989b, p. 261).

But the diversionary hypothesis does not always provide an adequate explanation of foreign policy. In this study, I attempt to turn the diversionary hypothesis on its head by questioning its twin assumptions that cohesion is preferable to divisiveness and that leaders use external conflict to promote internal unity. In short, my claim is that under certain circumstances leaders use international conflict to promote divisiveness at home. My focus is one domestic political realm, civil-military relations, and I advance and test two hypotheses. First, I argue that when the risk of a coup d’état is high, leaders tend to divide their armed forces into multiple organizations that check and balance each other and protect the regime as a byproduct of their independent coercive capacity. (Along with others in the literature, I label this strategy “counterbalancing”).¹ While the combination of strategies that any particular leader selects is indeterminate, I expect almost all vulnerable leaders to include counterbalancing in the portfolio of coup-proofing strategies they pursue to protect themselves from their own militaries when the risk of a coup is high. Dividing the armed forces, however, is only the first step toward avoiding a coup. Once the military is divided, leaders often must make sure

that rival armed organizations stay apart and refrain from conspiring with each other. Counterbalancing, in other words, often requires leaders to promote jealousy and strife among their own forces to prevent the development of lateral networks among potential conspirators. Hence, my second hypothesis is that counterbalancing can provide an incentive for leaders to engage in international conflict. International conflict can create interservice rivalries that drive wedges and promote mistrust among branches of the armed forces when service branches offer divergent threat assessments, use combat success to justify claims for autonomy, advocate particular missions, and attempt to take credit for success or avoid blame for failure. Contrary to the literature on scapegoating and the rally-around-the-flag effect that suggests that leaders use international conflict to promote public unity, my argument is that in the realm of civil-military relations, aggressive foreign policy may reinforce military divisions.

Although I will explain how I conceptualize vulnerability to a coup in much greater detail in subsequent chapters, I address the scope of my argument here by noting that my theory is intended to apply to all regimes, regardless of whether they are democratic, authoritarian, military, civilian, praetorian, or post-communist. The theoretical story that I tell, in other words, is intended to apply to all regimes that are vulnerable to the possibility of a coup, regardless of their type. After developing my theoretical arguments in the second section of this book, I use statistical and historical evidence to test them in the third section.

In ancient Rome, the emperor Augustus was so concerned about the loyalty of the Praetorian Guard that he assembled another corps of body guards, the German *custodes*, who were “recruited from extreme points of the frontier so that they had no possible political or personal connections with anyone in Rome” (Webster, 1985, p. 101). In Iran, despite generous patronage, terrifying purges, and other control mechanisms designed to secure officers’ loyalty, the shah was sufficiently worried about the possibility of military insubordination that no general deployed outside Tehran was permitted to visit the capital city without his permission (Zabih, 1988, p. 5). And in postcommunist Poland, the threat of military conspiracy prompted Solidarity elite to make a “conscious effort to raise the social standing of the military in society” (Busza, 1996, p. 17). The new government ended negative media coverage of the armed forces, revived pre-1939 military ceremonies, removed Defense Minister Jan Parys when his purging campaign gave rise to resentment in the officer corps, and provided generous salaries and pensions despite considerable fiscal pressures. These examples show that in some political circumstances, the loyalty of the military cannot be taken for granted and that reducing the risk of coups d’état may require leaders to expend time-consuming, ongoing and costly effort. As Frazer notes, “multiple mechanisms of control [may] operate each day to keep military personnel in check” (1994, p. 197). Might coup-proofing strategies that leaders implement to protect themselves from their own armed forces sometimes result in international conflict?

This question is important because subordination of the armed forces is a critical domestic process that all new states must confront. Kier notes that “the

creation of every state requires that a bargain be struck about the control of the military within the state and society" (1993, p. 24). In Zaire, soldiers mutinied just five days after the country achieved independence, and Zaire is not an isolated example. At the constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787, Massachusetts delegate Elbridge Gerry worried that "if there were no restriction on a standing army . . . the representatives of a few states in Congress 'may establish a military government'" (Collier, 1986, p. 242). Indeed, only four years prior to Gerry's speech, Continental Army conspirators in Newburgh, New York, threatened to march on Congress to demand their pay at gun point (Kohn, 1975, p. 17–39). In Israel on June 20, 1948, the *SS Altalena* approached Tel Aviv to unload rifles and machine guns earmarked for right-wing Irgun units of the Israel Defense Forces. When Prime Minister David Ben Gurion insisted that Irgun commanders hand the weapons over to the Army's central command, gun fights ensued, and over twenty soldiers died. According to some, widespread violence between rival Israeli Army factions was only narrowly averted (Rothenberg, 1979, p. 62). These examples suggest that even legitimate, democratically elected leaders may be displaced by the military. According to Huntington, in the first few years after the end of the Cold War there were "more than 20 coups attempts against new democracies" (1995).

Certainly it is true that in some political contexts, subordination of the armed forces may be achieved quickly if leaders institutionalize stable arrangements that vitiate the possibility of a military takeover. In chapter 4 I conceptualize and operationalize coup risk in terms of factors that indicate when leaders are vulnerable to their own armed forces and when they are not vulnerable. In the (very common) situation of high vulnerability, however, subordination of the armed forces is prerequisite for the consolidation of political authority. Before leaders can turn to the multiple tasks of governance including extraction, institutional development, and pursuit of economic growth, they must implement strategies to protect themselves from their own militaries. If protective strategies lead to international outcomes, then states may be predisposed to certain patterns of international behavior by the imperatives of civil-military relations.

Civil-Military Relations and International Conflict

In addition, the question of whether international conflict might follow from leadership efforts to protect themselves from their own armed forces is important because for the most part it has been overlooked by the literatures on civil-military relations and security studies, and because those studies that do address or partially address the question tend to do so in unsatisfying ways. Of all domestic political processes that might be expected to entail international consequences, subordination of the armed forces may constitute a most likely candidate because of the military's external orientation as well as the importance that many vulnerable leaders attach to minimizing the risk of a coup. However, even though scholars have studied the international consequences of numerous other domestic processes (Stohl, 1980,

pp. 300–301), the literature on civil-military relations has paid almost no systematic attention to possible external implications of subordination of the armed forces.

The silence in the civil-military relations literature may, in part, reflect the fact that only a small minority of scholars with expertise on the armed forces are concerned with the causes of war and other central questions in international relations theory. Sociologists, comparativists, and area specialists who dominate the largest academic society in the field, the Inter-University Seminar, tend not to be trained in international relations theory and they tend to focus on organizational and domestic political issues such as the class origins of the officer corps, the determinants of unit cohesion, the relationship between civil-military relations and democratization, and the extent to which service in the armed forces undermines ethnic affiliations (Johnson, 1962; Janowitz, 1964; Bienen, 1983). Leading journals in the field, such as *Armed Forces and Society*, also tend not to include articles about the causes of war. As Kasza notes in a review of the literature, “comparativists rarely analyze the politics of the military in the context of its war-making mission or when the country under study is at war” (1996, pp. 355–356).

A few scholars do use civil-military relations as an independent or mediating variable to explain international outcomes. Some, such as Levy and Vakil (1992), are case-specific studies that do not develop generalizable theories. Others including Biddle and Zirkle (1993) explain outcomes such as military effectiveness that are not the focus of this study. Still others focus on causal processes that have little if anything to do with the subordination of the armed forces and the minimization of coup risk (Kier, 1999; Sagan, 1986; Van Evera, 1984; Van Evera, 1999; Posen, 1984; Snyder, 1984; Schumpeter, 1951). Van Evera, for example, argues that militaries cause war as an unintended side effect of efforts to protect their own organizational interests when they purvey myths that exaggerate the necessity and utility of force (1984, 1999). Posen argues that the degree of international threat influences whether or not civilians allow military preferences for offensive doctrines to prevail (1984). And Snyder (1984) traces the origins of military doctrine to a combination of rational decisions about the military balance, technology, and geography; motivated biases that reflect the military’s organizational interests as well as psychological limitations concerning the inability to manage value trade-offs; and military planners’ need for simplification.

Although this literature sheds light on important issues such as the origins of war, some scholars in this subfield tend to base their accounts on great powers, for whom the risk of coups d’état usually is low. For example, Snyder (1984) and Posen (1984) focus almost exclusively on the origins of strategic doctrine among European great powers. As a result, their analyses tend to ignore the risk of military conspiracies. Related to this point, some of the most important scholarship in this subfield tends to black-box important questions about domestic political process. Van Evera, for example, tends to emphasize the distribution of power at the expense of domestic political process (1999, pp. 7–11). Moreover, Snyder is quite explicit about his decision not to theorize interactions among political leaders and the armed forces (1984, p. 39). This is not to say that scholars in this subgenre have

ignored domestic politics. Quite to the contrary, they have theorized important individual, organizational, and domestic variables such as motivated bias, organizational culture, and institutional interests (Snyder, 1984; Kier, 1999; Posen, 1984). That said, scholars in this subfield have not theorized relationships among leaders who fear coups and military organizations that threaten them. For example, when Posen's civilians intervene into the planning and execution of strategic doctrine, usually they are responding to foreign policy failures, ambitions, or other external considerations (1984, pp. 225–226). While these important studies do answer essential questions concerning civil-military relations and the causes of war, they do not address international implications of the causal process that is central to this inquiry.

A few studies invert the question that I ask in the study by exploring whether international threats or participation in war might enhance leadership efforts to minimize the likelihood of a coup (Frazer, 1994; Andreski, 1968; Desch, 1996a; 1996b; 1999; Janowitz 1964). Frazer, for example, shows that involvement in anticolonial war may lower the risk of conspiracy in newly independent states by familiarizing political leaders with the management of the military (1994). Also, Desch (1999) shows that high levels of international threats help political leaders maintain stable civil-military relations and consolidate civilian control of the armed forces. International threats, as Desch shows, orient the military's attention externally and lead to a consolidation of civilian institutions that leaders can use to monitor the armed forces. Certainly it is important to know whether and how international conflict might influence civil-military relations, but until scholars determine if causal arrows flow in the opposite direction, knowledge of the relationship between civil-military relations and international conflict will remain one-sided and incomplete.

Finally, the two studies in the civil-military relations literature that do account for the causes of international conflict in terms of the military's potential threat to regime stability are premised on flawed assumptions. Dassel and Reinhardt argue that domestic instability is most likely to lead to international conflict when the military's interests are challenged (1999). However, their theoretical mechanism depends heavily on the assumption that domestic instability leads to coups (1999, p. 59). As the analyses in chapter 4 indicate, however, popular protest has, at most, a modest association with coups. To the extent that coups and domestic instability are statistically related, military disloyalty probably causes instability by opening a window of opportunity for protest. In addition, Dassel and Reinhardt assume that the military is a unitary actor, and they fail to theorize or even notice the origins and international implications of military fragmentation. Dassel (1998) does theorize the international implications of military fragmentation. However, as discussed below, his theoretical mechanism depends on the assumed validity of the rally-around-the-flag hypothesis. Subordination of the armed forces is a critical matter that may constitute a most likely candidate among all those domestic political processes that might be expected to lead to international conflict. It does not seem to be an overgeneralization, however, to claim that the literature on civil-military

relations has tended not to address whether international conflict might follow from vulnerable leaders' efforts to protect themselves from their own armed forces. And those studies that do address or partially address this question tend to provide unsatisfying answers.

Regime Vulnerability and International Conflict

Even though the civil-military relations literature tends not to address whether international consequences might follow from vulnerable leaders' efforts to protect themselves from their own armed forces, there is another literature, a subfield of international relations theory, that addresses the connection between regime vulnerability and international conflict. According to the diversionary or scapegoat hypothesis, leaders wage war to increase national unity and to divert public and elite attention away from domestic problems. Domestically vulnerable leaders or elite factions may use aggressive foreign policies to distract popular attention from internal discontent, fend off domestic enemies, consolidate their own support, buttress their position at home through success abroad, and appear to be the strongest defender of the national interest through a hard-line foreign policy (Levy, 1989b). According to one of many examples, Huth and Russett argue that when there is "dispute among high-level government elites . . . political leadership is more likely to adopt an aggressive foreign policy in the expectation that rally-round-the-flag effects will help to stymie elites who may have been considering a coup" (1993, p. 66).

Most scholarship on regime vulnerability and international conflict fails to notice the armed forces as a potential challenge to the regime. Two reviews of the literature on regime vulnerability and international conflict survey over 100 studies, but they mention the military as a source of regime vulnerability only once (Levy, 1989b, p. 264; Stohl, 1980).² Indeed, even the literature on regime vulnerability and the origins of war in the developing world, where coups are most frequent, tends to remain curiously silent on the military (Holsti, 1993; Azar & Moon, 1988; Midlarsky, 1992; Buzan, 1983; Job, 1992; Ayoob, 1991). According to these studies, competing ethnic and religious groups contest the central authority of regimes that rest on narrow social bases, and the administrative capacities of state agencies fail to keep pace with the demands of growing populations. As a result, war in the underdeveloped world occurs when domestic violence "spills over" into interstate conflict, as was arguably the case in the India-Pakistan war of 1970 (Holsti, 1993). State weakness, then, is identified as a cause of war. But its operationalization almost never includes vulnerability to the armed forces, depending instead on limited coercive capacity, scarcity of resources, institutional and administrative incompetence, and lack of national cohesion (Job, 1992, p. 22).

Perhaps more troublesome than its near-universal silence on the military as a source of regime insecurity, however, most scholarship on regime vulnerability and international conflict depends on the questionable assumption that leaders

seek to use external aggression to unify domestic challengers. According to Bodin, “the best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion and civil war is to . . . find an enemy against whom [the subjects] can make common cause” (1955, cited in Waltz, 1959, p. 81). Shakespeare advised statesmen, “Be it thy course to busy giddy minds/With foreign quarrels” (1845, cited in Levy, 1989b, p. 259). More recently, Walt has argued that revolutionary governments may “exaggerate . . . a foreign threat in order to improve [their] internal position, that is, by rallying nationalist support for the new leaders or to justify harsh measures against internal opponents” (1992, p. 343). Dassel and Reinhardt assume that militaries use external threats to protect their organizational interests because “international crises encourage a ‘rally ’round the flag effect” (1999, p. 63; Dassel, 1998, p. 121). In his explanation of brinkmanship crises, Lebow says that “domestic political instability or the fragility of the state itself was instrumental in convincing leaders to provoke a confrontation. They resorted to the time-honored technique of attempting to offset discontent at home by diplomatic success abroad” (1981, p. 66). Herbst says that war may allow “a highly extractive state . . . [to] cloak demands for greater resources in appeals for national unity” and that “the presence of a palpable external threat may be the strongest way to generate a common association between the state and the population” (1990, pp. 121, 122). And Desch argues that “an external threat will actually produce better civil-military relations . . . [and] will tend to unify the various potential and actual factions in a military, but orient them outward” (1996b, pp. 6, 8).

The ingroup-outgroup hypothesis is the notion that external conflict generates internal group cohesion, and it is consistent with several distinct sociological and psychological mechanisms (Brown, 1988). For example, Simmel’s conflict-cohesion hypothesis maintains that conflict with another group increases internal group cohesion if the group already perceives itself as a preexisting entity, if the outside threat is recognized as a menace to the entire group, and if group members believe that coordinated action can overcome the threat. A corollary of this hypothesis is that “groups may actually search for enemies with the deliberate purpose or the unwitting result of maintaining unity and internal cohesion” (Coser, 1956, p. 104, cited in Levy, 1989b, p. 261). To take another example, social identity theory claims that “people seek a positive self-identity that they gain by identifying with a group and by favorable comparison of the in-group with out-groups” (Mercer 1995, p. 241). Regardless of which mechanism is invoked to sustain the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis, external conflict is said to divert group members’ attention from internal dissent and to promote unity or ingroup favoritism.

The ingroup-outgroup hypothesis does much of the explanatory work in theories of regime vulnerability and international conflict, and it is an important driving force in each of the studies that I described. That said, and despite the robustness of the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis in laboratory settings as well as the many historical studies that explain leaders’ willingness to use force in terms of efforts to divert the public’s attention from domestic problems and bolster their own domestic standing, quantitative studies have found quite limited empirical

support for this proposition (Baker & Oneal, 2001; Levy, 1989b; Stohl, 1980; Wilkenfeld, 1973; Tanter, 1966). Hence, scholars have begun to debate conditions under which leaders might use aggressive foreign policies to promote domestic rallies and to consider mediating factors such as regime type, interaction opportunities, and the nature of domestic strife that might help explain when leaders use aggressive foreign policies to promote domestic popularity and when the use of force leads to a rally effect (DeRouen Jr., 2000; Leeds & Davis, 1999; Miller, 1999; Gelpi, 1997; Smith, 1996; Dassel & Reinhardt, 1999).

One realm in which the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis seems particularly ill-suited for sustaining the link between regime vulnerability and international outcomes is when regime insecurity stems from the threat of military conspiracy. As Bueno de Mesquita notes, external conflict does not always lead to domestic cohesion (1980). Stein reports that “once a war has begun . . . the process of waging it *always* decreases cohesion” (1978, p. 88, emphasis added). The argument does not necessarily invalidate the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis because many wars may fail to satisfy preconditions that are necessary for enhancing internal cohesion: the group must already perceive itself as a preexisting entity; the external threat must be recognized as a menace to the entire group; and group members must believe that coordinated action can overcome the threat. Still, if a sizable percentage of international conflicts undermine domestic cohesion because they do not satisfy the antecedent conditions of the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis, then surely the literature on regime vulnerability errs by placing so much explanatory load on the hypothesis.

In addition, even if it were true that external conflict promoted ingroup cohesion within the armed forces, leaders would not try to protect themselves from the risk of coups d'état by unifying the military. Cohesion is not equivalent to loyalty, and even if the armed forces were internally cohesive, officers would not necessarily show allegiance to the regime or to the leadership. Positive feelings about the group, in other words, should not be confused with positive feelings about the group leader. There are many instances in which the armed forces have unified around their common dislike of political authorities, and unified militaries pose a considerable threat to leaders when the risk of coup is high. When the risk of coup is high, I argue in chapter 2 leaders almost always divide the military and pit rival branches against one another to protect themselves from their own armed forces (Migdal, 1988). Yasir Arafat, for example, split the Palestinian security forces into nine organizations soon after achieving limited autonomy from Israel. As discussed in chapter 4, coup risk is the most powerful determinant of leadership efforts to divide the military. When regimes are vulnerable to the risk of coups, leaders do not seek to unify their armed forces because unified militaries are dangerous.

Of course, some theories that link regime vulnerability to international conflict do not depend on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis. According to Rosecrance, for example, “there tends to be a correlation between international instability and the domestic insecurity of elites” (1963, pp. 304, 306). Rosecrance's elites do not challenge international harmony to distract popular attention or overcome inner

antagonisms but rather to reshape other states' ideologies and political structures according to their own preferences. Similarly, Brody shows that the public rallies in support of the president not because foreign policy adventurism increases domestic cohesion but because opinion leaders sometimes refrain from criticizing the chief executive after limited uses of military force (1991). Still, these theories are exceptions. Most of the scholarship on regime vulnerability and international conflict ignores the military, and most depends at least partially on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis as an important driving force for linking domestic causes to international outcomes. The ingroup-outgroup hypothesis, however, is ill-suited for sustaining the link. International conflict seems as likely to lead to dissent as cohesion. And even if external conflict were a cause of internal cohesion, leaders who feared their own armed forces would not try to unify the military. In order to determine if and how leadership efforts to protect themselves from their own militaries might lead to international conflict, a different causal mechanism must be identified.

Plan of the Book

In this text, I explore whether or not strategies that leaders use to protect themselves from their own armed forces might provide an incentive for them to engage in international conflict. The purposes of this effort are to develop a generalizable mechanism of domestic politics, to link that mechanism to international outcomes, to correct for the failure of the literature to trace the international implications of regimes' vulnerability to their own armed forces, and to correct for the literature's overreliance on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis. The emphasis of this study is theory development, and my intent is to use data to test my theory rather than using theory to describe my data. While some philosophers of science argue convincingly that pure deduction is not possible, I try to approximate the deductive (theory-driven) approach as much as possible. Hence, I developed my theory first and then used statistical and historical evidence to test it. Certainly it is true that theory-driven research entails enormous intellectual costs, including the possibility that scholars might see what they expect to see when they approach their data with strong theoretical preconceptions. In other words, scholars might impose a story or explanation on their evidence rather than letting data and theory inform each other in a sort of dialectical conversation. Despite this risk, which I attempt to minimize by discussing confidence estimates of theoretical claims in the final chapter, theory-driven approaches offer the tremendous advantage of forcing scholars to ask nonobvious questions about their evidence that are derived from theory and that might not be posed by journalists, area specialists, or others who may sometimes be more concerned with data than theory. Rather than dismissing the critical value of data-driven scholarship or mixed approaches that blend deductive and inductive methods, I contend that all approaches can yield useful scholarship, that this study is as theory driven as possible, and that the disadvantages that result from my approach can be minimized by acknowledging them candidly and by

reporting confidence estimates of the extent to which my evidence establishes the plausibility of my theoretical claims.

In the next two chapters I develop a domestic theory of civil-military relations and then link that domestic mechanism to international conflict. Chapter 2 consists of a theoretical story pitched entirely at the domestic level. The independent variable in chapter 2 is coup risk, and the dependent variable is counterbalancing. The argument is that high coup risk usually is sufficient for causing leaders to divide their armed forces into rival factions because coup risk is too important a problem to ignore, because other strategies for reducing the risk of a coup rest on fickle foundations, and because counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force. The particular combination of coup-proofing strategies that any particular leader selects is indeterminate, but I expect almost all vulnerable leaders to include counterbalancing in the portfolio of strategies they pursue to protect themselves from their own militaries when coups are possible.

In chapter 3, I turn to the relationship between domestic and international politics, and I argue that counterbalancing at the domestic level can provide an incentive for leaders to engage in international conflict. Counterbalancing is not effective if rival organizations conspire with each other, and international conflict sometimes is the best available strategy for promoting mistrust within the military. International conflict can create interservice rivalries when service branches offer divergent threat assessments, use combat success to justify claims for autonomy, advocate self-serving missions, and take credit for success or avoid blame for failure.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 I turn from theory to data. Chapter 4 is a pooled, time-series analysis of almost every country in the world during the second half of the Cold War (1966–1986). Along with coauthor Evan Schofer, I find that the possibility of a coup d'état is strongly and positively related to counterbalancing regardless of the specification of the variables. Vulnerable leaders are much more likely to counterbalance than leaders who are not vulnerable to their own forces, and coup risk is a more powerful predictor of counterbalancing than other important determinants such as domestic violence. In addition, we find through an event history analysis that counterbalancing is strongly and positively related to international conflict behavior. Even though our two measures of international conflict overlap only partially, counterbalancing is associated positively with both conflict measures. Statistical analysis does not, of course, constitute proof positive of the theoretical claims advanced in chapters 2 and 3 but these tests provide some confirmation of the plausibility of the theoretical claims.

Chapters 5 and 6 are case studies that focus on the distinct theoretical claims developed in chapters 2 and 3. The case study of Syrian civil-military relations in the early 1970s (chapter 5) is intended to test the first claim, that coup risk usually is sufficient for causing regimes to divide their militaries into rival forces. Syria is a hard test for my theory, and the evidence shows that the possibility of a coup was an important driving factor behind the creation of rival armies. When Hafiz al-Asad became president in February 1971, Syria's ground forces included

a single army and a few lightly equipped militias. By 1976, Syrian ground forces consisted of six fully equipped armies. Alternative explanations of the creation of rival armies in Syria yield expectations that are not confirmed, while counterbalancing theory developed in chapter 2 of this study yields accurate predictions. Although I use the case primarily as a laboratory for testing my first theoretical claim, I also suggest that military counterbalancing provided Asad with an incentive for participating in the 1973 war.

The case study of Georgian civil-military relations in the mid 1990s (chapter 6) is intended to test the second claim, that counterbalancing can provide an incentive for international conflict. My argument is that President Eduard Shevardnadze built the Georgian Army not in response to foreign threats, but rather to balance other “power” ministries. Then Shevardnadze inflamed Georgian-Russian relations to drive a wedge between the Army, which maintained close ties to the Russian armed forces, and the Border Guard which was oriented toward Europe and the United States. Although there were several determinants of Georgian-Russian hostilities, my argument is that one important consideration was Shevardnadze’s use of diversionary tactics to promote antagonisms among his own forces.

I begin the study in the next chapter by developing a theory of civil-military relations.

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Part Two

Theory

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Chapter Two

Coup Risk and Military Division: Hostility within the Armed Forces and Regime Survival

What strategies do leaders use to protect themselves from their own military forces? In Machiavelli's time, "many more princes . . . lost their lives and their states by conspiracies than by open war" (Machiavelli, 1950, p. 410). An observer of the Brazilian armed forces assumes that "at all times there are some military officers anxious to overthrow the government for personal reasons, either selfish or ideological." (Stepan, 1971, p. 80). Finer wonders not "why [the military] rebels against its civilian masters, but why it ever obeys them" (1988, p. 5).

In this chapter, I develop a theory that predicts which strategies leaders are likely to select in their attempt to reduce vulnerability to their own armed forces. My argument is that when coups are possible, leaders usually create rival military organizations that they intend to check and balance each other and protect the regime as a byproduct of independent coercive capacity. (Along with others in the literature, I label this strategy "counterbalancing"). While the combination of strategies that any particular leader selects is indeterminate, I expect almost all vulnerable leaders to include counterbalancing in the portfolio of strategies they pursue to protect themselves from their own militaries when coup risk is high. Vulnerable regimes divide their armed forces into rival organizations because the possibility of a coup is too important a problem to ignore, because other survival strategies tend to rely on fickle foundations, and because counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits forces against force. I do not claim that the possibility of a coup is a necessary or sufficient cause of counterbalancing. Rather, I argue that the possibility of a coup is a facilitative or probabilistic cause that makes counterbalancing highly likely.¹

Counterbalancing can be caused by many factors. Like many if not most other phenomena that social scientists study, it is an overdetermined outcome. Hence, regimes that are vulnerable to the possibility of a coup are not the only regimes that counterbalance, and regimes that are vulnerable to a coup may counterbalance for other reasons that have little if anything to do with the possibility of a coup. In the statistical analysis in chapter 4, my coauthor and I address seven

possible alternative causes of counterbalancing and control for all of these factors, and in my case studies of Syria and Georgia, I discuss a number of possible alternative explanations of counterbalancing. Even though leaders may divide their own armed forces for many reasons, however, the possibility of a coup is an important driving factor, and I expect almost all vulnerable leaders to counterbalance when coup risk is high.

I explain how I conceptualize vulnerability to a coup in this chapter and in chapter 4, but it is important to note at this point that I intend for my theoretical story to apply to all regimes, regardless of their type. According to the theory of praetorian politics developed by Huntington, coup proneness typically is the result of “political systems with low levels of institutionalization and high levels of participation” (1968, p. 80). Military coups, in other words, often reflect the failure of political institutions to channel participation into nonviolent patterns. The literature on praetorianism has generated important insights into the causes of coups (Huntington, 1968; Nordlinger, 1977; Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1985; 1986, Zimmermann, 1983). That said, I argue throughout this study that coup risk can be high regardless of whether any particular regime is democratic, authoritarian, military, civilian, postcommunist, or praetorian. Indeed, the data on which chapter 4 is based indicate that all of these regime types have experienced coups. And, as argued in chapter 4, coup risk can be high even in the total absence of coups. As a result, rather than theorizing the international implications of one particular type of regime, the theory that I develop is intended to apply to all regimes that are vulnerable to the possibility of a coup, regardless of their type. After developing a theory of civil-military relations in this chapter, I will focus in the next chapter on the theoretical link between domestic and international politics. Finally, in the last section of this book I will turn from theory to data by using statistical analysis as well as historical case studies to test the theoretical claims that I develop here and in the next chapter.

The difference between vulnerable and invulnerable regimes is that in invulnerable regimes such as that of the United States there is almost no possibility of a coup. Regardless of officers’ preferences or the degree to which officers might be alienated from the president, there is very little possibility of a military conspiracy that would replace the regime. Such regimes are invulnerable to the armed forces, and their leaders need not implement survival strategies to protect themselves from their own militaries. It is possible and even likely that leaders of invulnerable regimes may face a variety of challenges in the realm of civil-military relations. But reducing the risk of a coup is not one of those challenges.

In vulnerable regimes, coups are possible. Without getting into the details of how regime vulnerability is operationalized in the statistical analyses that follow, here I note that the critical distinction between vulnerable and invulnerable regimes is that in vulnerable regimes the background causes of coups are present. These causes are factors that are linked through theoretical mechanisms as well as statistical correlation to the incidence of military conspiracies. The literature on the causes of coups d’état is vast, and one comprehensive review lists sixteen variables

that may cause a coup (Zimmerman, 1983, 284; Farcau, 1994; Finer, 1988; Nordlinger, 1977; Putnam, 1967; Huntington, 1968). Hence, my intent is not to provide a precise definition or a comprehensive list of all factors that distinguish vulnerable from invulnerable regimes. (This issue is addressed in chapter 4). Rather, I argue that such a distinction exists and offer guidelines for recognizing the difference.

For example, Luttwak identifies the following as factors that make coups possible: only a small fraction of the population can participate in the political life of the target state; the target state must be independent of the influence of foreign powers that could thwart attempted conspiracies; and the institutions of state must be concentrated in a political center (1979, pp. 28–56). Finer also specifies factors that make it possible for the military to intervene in politics, including civilian dependence on the armed forces during wartime, domestic crises such as civil wars or power vacuums; and military popularity (1988, pp. 64–76).

In this study, I conceptualize regime vulnerability as a deep, structural attribute of the government, of society, of political culture, and of state-society relations rather than a characteristic of specific military organizations. Hence, while absence of the rule of law and a weak civil society are background causes of coups that indicate regime vulnerability, I do not conceptualize officers' grievances, the size of the military, or military factionalism as background causes. Rather, these factors are triggering or immediate causes of coups. The distinction between background and triggering causes is similar to the difference between cholesterol, which increases the long-term risk of a heart attack, and jogging, which might induce a specific attack. The distinction can be fuzzy because in the real world many determinants such as internal and external wars can both trigger a coup and provide long-term, background opportunities that make coups possible. However, for the purpose of theory development it is necessary to preserve the distinction.

Whether or not a regime is vulnerable to the possibility of a coup has less to do with its type (democratic versus authoritarian, for example) than with whether or not background factors that make coups possible are present. Even legitimate, democratically elected leaders such as Haiti's Aristide, for example, may be displaced by the military, and Huntington found that in the first few years after the Cold War, there were at least twenty coups and coup attempts launched against newly-democratic regimes (Huntington, 1995). As the literature on civil-military relations shows clearly, all different types of regimes can be vulnerable to the possibility of a coup, including democratic, authoritarian, civilian, military, communist, and postcommunist regimes. Approximately one-half of all coups and coup attempts, for example, are launched against military regimes (Finer, 1983, p. 82). Chapter 4 includes an extensive discussion of specific background factors that render regimes of any type vulnerable to the possibility of a coup.

When a coup is possible, my claim is that leaders usually create rival military organizations to check and balance each other and protect the regime as a byproduct of their independent coercive capacity. Luttwak notes that "[i]n the newly-independent countries the para-military element of the police can be a very

serious obstacle to the coup” (1968, p. 90). Snyder suggests that the risk of coups d'état depends in part on “whether the dictator has a paramilitary force which functions as a counterbalance to the regular armed forces and whose members infiltrate and spy upon the military” (1992, p. 381).

Leaders may be willing to take costly steps to protect themselves because vulnerability to the military can entail serious personal consequences. In Iraq, on July 14, 1958, General Abdul Karim Qassem and a group of about 100 fellow officers overthrew the monarchy and assassinated King Faisal II and members of his family and staff. Five years later Qassem himself was deposed:

Night after night, they made their gruesome point. [Qassem's] body was propped up on a chair in the studio. A soldier sauntered around, handling its parts. The camera would cut to scenes of devastation at the Ministry of Defence where Qassem had made his last stand. There, on location, it lingered on the mutilated corpses of Qassem's entourage . . . Back to the studio, and close-ups now of the entry and exit points of each bullet hole. The whole macabre sequence closes with a scene that must forever remain etched on the memory of all those who saw it: the soldier grabbed the lolling head by the hair, came right up close, and spat full face into it. (al-Khalil, 1990, p. 59)

During the 1950s and 1960s a coup or attempted coup occurred every 4 months in Latin America, every 7 months in Asia, every 3 months in the Middle East, and every 55 days in Africa (Bertsch, Clark, & Wood, 1978), and since the end of the Cold War there have been a handful of coups or coup attempts each year (Facts on File annual reports). Although the numbers vary slightly depending on counting methods, there were approximately 357 attempted coups in the developing world from 1986 to 2000, and about half of all third world states experienced a coup during this period. Of these attempts, 183 coups (or 51 percent) were successful (David, 1985, 1987; Finer, 1983). More recently, militaries staged 75 coup attempts between 1986 and 2000. Many coups and attempted coups do not entail bloodshed, but between one-fifth and one-third of them do involve substantial violence, including execution of members of the displaced old guard (Zimmermann, 1983, p. 241).

While military officers orchestrate most conspiracies, even the police can initiate a coup d'état, as occurred in Argentina, Panama, and the Seychelles (Luttwak, 1968, pp. 198, 202, 204). On numerous occasions extremely small armed factions have taken control of the state: 150 paratroopers overthrew President M'Ba of Gabon in 1963, 60 paratroopers ousted General Soglo in Dahome, 500 troops from an army of 10,000 in Ghana “toppled supposedly one of the most formidable systems of political mobilization on the continent,” and 3,600 troops out of an army of 600,000 overthrew the South Korean government in 1961 (Finer, 1988; First, 1970, p. 4, cited in Zimmermann, 1983). In Zaire soldiers mutinied just five days after the country achieved independence (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982; also see Frazer, 1994, p. 196 on Kenya).

Many politically fragile regimes survive for decades, but the prospects of a coup d'état may lurk behind a veil of domestic stability. And as a result, the leadership may be forced to remain on constant vigil against the risk of overthrow. Syria's President Hafiz al-Asad, for example, remained in power from 1970 until his death in 2000. Yet when he fell ill in November 1983 his younger brother Rif'at took advantage of the occasion to attempt to displace the regime. Rif'at deployed his private army of 55,000 troops armed with artillery, tanks, air defense, and helicopters in downtown Damascus and engaged in battles with other paramilitary forces (Seale, 1988, p. 430). Although President Asad defused the crisis when he regained his health in early 1984, the case provides anecdotal evidence that even long-standing regimes may rest on extremely fragile foundations and that the risk of coups d'état may persist even after decades of regime survival.

Leaders may have more to fear from their own armed forces than from international war. While this point often is underappreciated by scholars of international politics, violent interstate conflict in the developing world rarely leads to border changes, regime transition, or absolute surrender. Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait constitutes an exception that confirms this rule. Although the Kuwaiti royal family was deposed for a short time, its reign was reestablished quickly, and it remains in power. As Herbst notes, there was not a single involuntary border change in Africa between the 1950s and 1990. He suggests that "the vast majority of Third World states most of the time do not face significant external threats. States like Israel, South Korea, or Taiwan, where national survival has been a real consideration in national politics, are exceptional and even these countries have survived intact" (Herbst, 1990, p. 123).

The possibility of a coup may increase the likelihood of popular protest or even revolutions. Only a handful of regimes have been toppled through revolution (Walt, 1992, p. 325), and a comprehensive review concludes that "attempts at revolutionary overthrow do not succeed in the face of a strong, loyal, and readily available army" (Zimmermann, 1983, p. 314). Skocpol and others concur that as long as the regime is able to retain the loyalty of the military, revolutionary opposition is not able to displace the government (Chorley, 1943; Gurr, 1967, 1970, p. 251; Russell, 1974; Skocpol, 1979).²

While there is a limited amount of evidence to the contrary, most studies confirm that popular protest does not cause coups d'état (Zimmermann 1983, p. 280). Most coups take place absent popular disorder (Thompson, 1972), and most disorder does not lead to coups (Hibbs, 1973). Indeed, to the extent that coups and domestic instability are related, it is probably the case that military disloyalty causes domestic instability by opening a window of opportunity for popular protest. Sanders notes that in seven out of nine African countries, "coups generally tend[ed] to precede internal war . . . rather than follow it" (1978, p. 125, cited in Zimmermann, 1983, p. 533). Leaders pursue numerous goals at any given time, but when coups are possible, the key to survival may have more to do with diminishing the regime's vulnerability to the armed forces than with avoiding war, revolution, or popular protest.

Finally, even if there were no external threats, regimes would require armed forces to maintain their authority. As Giddens notes, the “capacity to back up taxation demands through the use of forces remained the single most essential element of state power” (1985, cited in Barnett, 1992). Tilly argues that “the armed forces have historically played a large part in subordinating other authorities and the general population for the state. They backed up collection of taxes, put down rebellions, seized and disposed of enemies of the crown, literally enforced national policy” (1973, p. 446; Barnett, 1992, pp. 292–93). While it is typically assumed that dismantling the army would leave the state open to external threats, when Bolivia attempted to pursue this strategy in 1952 “the broad coalition of parties and labor groups which effected the Revolution soon fell out, and the government found the need of an army to oblige rebellious groups to comply with its directives” (Farcau, 1994, p. 196). Although the Costa Rican Army has been dismantled since 1948, there are 8,000 men in the police force, and some police units have been militarized to contain labor disputes and other social tensions (Rouquie, 1987, pp. 189–194). Even if there were no foreign threats, regimes could not eliminate the risk of coup by disbanding all armed forces because they would still require coercive capacity to maintain domestic authority. But those same forces place the regime itself at risk. Hence, the leadership must cope with a dilemma, which Feaver labels the “civil-military problematique”: there is both “the need to have protection by the military and the need to have protection from the military” (1995, p. 4).

The possibility of a coup may be too important a problem to ignore. But why do leaders turn to counterbalancing to reduce their vulnerability? Below I use a process of elimination to suggest that other survival strategies tend to be ineffective and to depend on manipulation of fickle preferences, while counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force.

Promote Corporate Spirit

Corporate spirit refers to the military’s capacity for self-determination inside its sphere (Pion-Berlin, 1992, p. 86). In particular, corporate spirit includes (a) the extent to which the military “gets its way” on issues such as promotion, recruitment, arms production and procurement, the military budget, military doctrine, and the organization of the defense establishment and (b) whether criteria for deciding personnel issues are institutionalized on a nonpersonalistic basis. The essence of corporate spirit, then, involves both the military’s right to settle issues within its own sphere without regime interference and the degree to which such issues are resolved according to merit-based, institutionalized, nonpersonalistic criteria. This closely parallels aspects of Stepan’s “new professionalism” and Pion-Berlin’s “autonomy” (Pion-Berlin, 1992; Snyder, 1992; Stepan, 1986, p. 135).

When coups are not possible, or when they are highly unlikely, the regime’s respect for military corporate spirit may enhance the armed forces’ sense

of their own status. However, I argue that this is not an effective strategy when coups are possible. In the absence of alternative institutional restraints, promotion of corporate spirit may encourage a sense of self-importance among the senior officer corps that inflates regime vulnerability to a coup (Perlmutter, 1977). In addition, the usefulness of this strategy is limited by the regime's need to diminish opportunities for conspiracy. By respecting the military's right to determine personnel issues according to its own criteria, regimes forgo a critical opportunity to establish networks of political loyalists within the armed forces. Hence, I suggest that this strategy is not effective when coups are possible, and it is not necessary when coups are not possible. Rather than conceptualizing promotion of corporate spirit as a strategy for lowering the risk of coups d'état, then, I claim that it is better conceived of as a blueprint for improving the armed forces' fighting capacity.

Indoctrinate

A second strategy consists of leaders' efforts to inculcate military personnel with the legitimacy of the state's or the regime's authority over the armed forces. Under this strategy I include indoctrination designed to infuse the armed forces with the particular political values of the regime as well as indoctrination designed to inculcate military personnel with the principle of civilian supremacy regardless of the political values of the particular regime. The key to both variants of indoctrination is education that seeks to persuade the armed forces to abstain from political conspiracy either because the regime and military share the same political values or because officers and soldiers internalize the principle of civilian supremacy and adhere to a politically neutral standard of civilian control. The aim of indoctrination strategies is not always to depoliticize the military, but rather to use persuasion to convince the armed forces to remain subservient to the regime. In Ghana in 1961, for example, President Nkrumah told the cadets at the Ghana Military Academy, "You must have confidence that the government is doing what is best for the country and support it without question or criticism. It is not the duty of a soldier to criticize or endeavor to interfere in any way with the political affairs of the country" (Nordlinger, 1977, pp. 12–13).

Indoctrination strategies may be particularly effective in the few cases in which the regime can credibly appeal to revolutionary credentials. Even in non-revolutionary cases such as Jordan, whose borders were carved artificially out of the remnants of the defunct Ottoman Empire, observers have commented on the importance of the manipulation of religious and nationalist symbols in the Hashemite regime's efforts to ensure the loyalty of the armed forces (Jureidini & McLaurin, 1984, pp. 37–39; Satloff, 1986, p. 60). At the same time, however, the usefulness of indoctrination strategies is limited by the fact that internalization of political ideas and ideologies requires consistent, long-term education (Janowitz, 1974, p. 128). When coups are possible, however, the regime may lack the time and institutional capacity to deliver and benefit from coherent persuasion and

indoctrination. While indoctrination may supplement other strategies over time, it is difficult to imagine it as the foundation of any regime's effort to protect itself from its own armed forces, especially if the state's right to make and enforce rules is contested. Even in the Soviet Union, which could credibly appeal to revolutionary symbols and which devoted considerable resources to an institutional apparatus dedicated primarily to military indoctrination, Colton argued that "even if we assume that Soviet state ideology is internalized by most officers and taken seriously as a guide to action . . . it is not hard to imagine an army coup being rationalized as merely another change in form of party leadership" (1979, p. 229). Indoctrination may have facilitated the quiescence of the military in the former Soviet Union, but its contribution probably was less important than often assumed (for a review, see Busza, 1996).

Professionalize

Professionalization as articulated by Huntington (1957a, 1957b) entails regime efforts to focus military attention on functional specialization and the strategic and technical demands of warfare. According to Huntington, preoccupation with military matters drains officers' desire to participate in the political realm and requires time and energy that might otherwise be available for conspiratorial activity. Huntington suggests that civilian control is achieved not because the military and the society share values and ideology but because the military is indifferent to societal values and ideology (1957a, p. 381; Stepan, 1986). Busy hands, in other words, are happy hands.

Although Huntington might disagree, I argue that professionalization does not constitute a distinct strategy for reducing the risk of coups d'état. When the notion of professionalization is disaggregated, it becomes clear that the concept reflects a fusion of two approaches discussed above, indoctrination and promotion of corporate spirit. Consider Huntington's recipe for professionalizing the armed forces. He claims that minimizing military involvement in politics is achieved by confining the armed forces to a restricted sphere and rendering it politically sterile (Huntington, 1957b, p. 84). How exactly is the military's political involvement to be minimized and objective civilian control to be maximized? On the one hand, the regime must furnish "a single concrete standard of civilian control which is politically neutral and which all social groups can recognize" (p. 84). On the other hand, the regime must focus the attention of the armed forces on military matters by recognizing a sphere of autonomous military concern (p. 83). I suggest that the former step is indoctrination based on the principle of civilian control, and the latter step is promotion of the military's corporate spirit. By disaggregating Huntington's formula for professionalization, then, it becomes clear that the process by which the regime encourages the military to become more professional consists of a combination of two strategies discussed above. Hence, there is little or nothing about professionalization per se that reduces the risk of coups d'état, and it should not be conceptualized as a distinct domestic survival strategy.

In addition, as *Finer* and others have observed, *Huntington's* professionalization thesis is empirically unsatisfying because even highly professionalized militaries launch coups d'état.³ *Perlmutter* argues that professionalization can lead to an increased tendency to intervene politically (1977), and *Barros and Coelho* note that "[i]t is not difficult to find examples of interventions in politics on the part of the armed forces in different states of the process of professionalization" (1986, p. 439). *Hurewitz* confirms that "[i]n a nonindustrial region such as the Middle East there were a few armies whose officers might be accurately described as professional—those of Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and Turkey. Yet Pakistani and Turkish officers seized political power" (1969, p. 103).

Remunerate

Regimes may be able to protect themselves by increasing military pay or pensions or by tolerating bribery and other forms of corruption that enhance soldiers' and officers' standard of living (*Harries-Jenkins*, 1978). In Mexico after 1920, "it became government policy to corrupt the Army. Senior officers were encouraged to enrich themselves with assorted business opportunities, sinecures. . . favors, and even illicit activities" The Nigerian Army has been referred to as "the largest outdoor welfare organization in the world" (*Kaufman*, 1978; *Riding*, 1985, cited in *Ball*, 1988). A study of 274 coups in 59 states between 1946 and 1970 determined that 36 percent of the cases were motivated by resource-related grievances including dissatisfaction over pay (*Thompson*, 1973). And Spanish, French, Turkish, and South Korean officers staged coups d'état when their salaries lagged behind the cost of living or when they experienced sharp declines in their relative wages (*Colton*, 1979, p. 262).

In the aftermath of most successful coups the salaries and living conditions of the armed forces are increased, at least temporarily (*Ball*, 1988, p. 65). Above-average pay may have been essential for the quiescence of numerous armed forces. In Nicaragua, for example, *Antonio Somoza Garcia* and his son *Anastasi* maintained military subservience by personally financing a patronage network that ensured senior officers' dependence on the dictator's personal goodwill. The Somoza family's holdings were so vast—\$500 million by one count—that it was possible for many years to purchase the loyalty of senior military personnel (*Snyder*, 1992).

At the same time, however, there may be significant constraints on the regime's ability to use remuneration to purchase the loyalty of its armed forces. Weak states, even rentier states, rarely have sufficient control of commodity prices, exchange rates, and other economic levers to protect the system from exogenous shocks and ensure the continuous revenue flow necessary to sustain military loyalty (*Ball*, 1988, p. 179; *Chaudry*, 1989; *O'Kane*, 1987). This is not to suggest that regimes' reliance on remuneration strategies is always constrained by lack of resources. South Korea, for example, simply absorbed cutbacks in U.S. military

assistance and increased its military expenditures from 4 percent up to 6 percent GDP in the 1970s. In Africa, one study found a negative relationship between military expenditures and GNP (Ball, 1988). However, under unstable economic conditions a system based on the use of financial rewards could exacerbate regime vulnerability by exposing military pay scales to the vagaries of international economic developments (O'Kane, 1987). In addition, as Farcau notes, "if an officer's loyalty can be bought for money, it can be sold to another for a higher price" (1994). This is not to say that salary increases or outright bribery can never be used to purchase military loyalty. Rather, my argument is that weak states may not be able to depend exclusively on remuneration strategies as the principal basis of their efforts to protect themselves from their own militaries.

Patrimonialize

According to the logic of a patrimonial strategy, regimes may attempt to wrest control over personnel issues from the military and to supplant merit-based standards for promotion and recruitment with personalistic criteria (Brooks, 1998, pp. 35–36; Heller, 1996, p. 43). Leaders may randomly shuffle, purge, and rehabilitate senior officers on a periodic basis; invoke personal loyalty, kinship ties, ethnicity, or group membership as standards for appointment and career advancement; and stack the officer corps with insiders who have a high stake in the regime's survival (Dreiszigler, 1990; Enloe, 1980; Janowitz, 1964). Under a patrimonial strategy, leaders attempt to control officers' career paths, head off potentially threatening concentrations of power, and replace merit with personal allegiance as the key to career advancement (Migdal, 1988). Before João Goulart's ascent to the Brazilian presidency in 1961, for example, 46.5 percent of the line officers promoted to general graduated first in their class at military academy. But during Goulart's tenure the number dropped to 17.2 percent (Stepan, 1971, p. 165).

The effectiveness of patrimonial survival strategies depends on leaders' ability to bind crucial elements of the officer corps to the regime and to prevent concentrations of power through frequent and random shuffles. In Zaire "Mobutu's frequent rotation of officers, periodic purges of the officer corps, and exploitation of ethnoregional tensions to divide the military have limited the armed forces' autonomy and, consequently, have reduced its capacity to turn against him" (Snyder, 1991, p. 381). In Chile after 1973, "all assignments in the Army, no matter how junior, were formally made by Pinochet himself, and it was difficult, if not impossible for other senior officers to lay a claim on the loyalty of subordinates in gratitude for promotion or job assignment" (Farcau, 1994, p. 190).

While patrimonial strategies are used widely, and while they are essential for regime longevity in some cases, their dependability is constrained by several factors. To begin, loyalty is often fickle, and family members, longtime friends, and other trusted subordinates may turn against the regime as a result of the constant shuffling, purging, and rotation that are cornerstones of patrimonial strategies.

A courageous stand against the Brazilian Army's use of torture, for example, earned Sylvio Frota a reputation as a liberal who would support President Ernesto Geisel's reform program. After Geisel recruited him to serve as army minister, however, Frota attempted to stage a coup against his former political ally (Stepan, 1988, p. 42). In addition, given the size of the military community and the fact that a very small number of conspirators may be sufficient to topple the regime, the effectiveness of patrimonial strategies may depend on the availability of precise information about which officers are contemplating a coup. In some cases such information may be common knowledge, or the regime may get lucky and protect itself simply by purging and shuffling on a frequent and random basis. But in most cases, the sheer number of potential conspirators cripples the effectiveness of patrimonial strategies in the absence of reliable, precise information that weak states may find difficult to obtain. Related to this point, patrimonial strategies may decrease the quality of information available to leaders. In Brazil in 1964, President Goulart's "tactic of appointing new service chiefs when the old ones did not agree with him . . . cut him off from accurate feedback about military feeling" (Stepan, 1971, p. 193). Third, shuffling and purging creates enemies. Ousted military elites can be rehabilitated but even rehabilitation may be insufficient for overcoming resentment that can result when officers are forcibly removed from posts they may have worked hard to obtain (Stepan, 1971, p. 193). Finally, purging may depend on prior, successful counterbalancing. When leaders issue arrest warrants they may depend on officers or troops from rival forces to arrest and detain the accused. Without members from alternative forces to make such arrests, it may be difficult to pursue patrimonial strategies.

Sell Autonomy

Leaders may sacrifice policy autonomy to powerful, foreign states who promise to offer protection in the event of a coup. In postcolonial Africa in the 1960s, for example, many regimes maintained and even strengthened their relations with France in order to obtain French military backing against potential military challengers. France maintained an army of 6,000 troops in Africa to deter military conspiracies on the continent, and the French were able to reverse the results of a successful coup in Gabon in 1964 simply by threatening the use of force (Luttwak, 1979, p. 41).

While selling autonomy may constitute an important element in leaders' attempts to protect themselves from their own armed forces, the strategy can be quite unreliable. To begin, foreign powers may fail to provide support during political crises. In the summer and fall of 1963, for example, the Kennedy administration abandoned the Diem regime in Vietnam and failed to keep Diem informed about a brewing conspiracy of generals who subsequently assassinated him. Tilly notes that between 1946 and 1984, foreign powers intervened to deter only 4 percent of all coup attempts in the developing world (1990, p. 213).

In addition, foreign powers who ostensibly support status quo regimes may switch sides and come to the aid of political opposition. After Eduard Shevardnadze permitted Georgia to join the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1993 in exchange for Russian support against Abkhaz separatists and followers of former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, evidence suggests that Russian forces may have helped plan an assassination attempt against Shevardnadze in the fall of 1995. Finally, selling autonomy can undermine leaders' legitimacy when they come to be identified among their own public as pawns or surrogates of foreign nations.

Strengthen Civilian Oversight

When coups are possible, leaders may strengthen governmental and non-governmental civilian oversight mechanisms such as courts, legislatures, and the media. These institutions can play a crucial role in the development of political control over the armed forces through their capacity to monitor, apply sanctions, and reinforce government legitimacy. A large subset of the literature underscores their importance for limiting opportunities for the armed forces to displace and supplant the government. Finer, for example, refers to mature political culture in which "the complex of civil procedures and organs which jointly constitute the political system are recognized as authoritative" and "public involvement in and attachment to these civil institutions is strong and widespread" (1988, p. 78). According to Finer, the armed forces may influence or even blackmail regime leaders in mature and developed political cultures, but they will not have an opportunity to displace the government (1988, p. 75). Other scholars such as Feaver (1995, 1996), Huntington (1957b, 1968), and Luttwak, (1979) agree that strong civilian oversight mechanisms are integral to limiting opportunities for the armed forces to foment conspiracies.

While even authoritarian and military regimes may attempt to develop strong governmental and nongovernmental institutions to subordinate the armed forces, few vulnerable leaders depend heavily on this strategy. The evolution of strong oversight mechanisms may require more time and resources than vulnerable leaders can afford. In addition, institutional development may prove difficult or impossible for the same reasons that give rise to the possibility of military conspiracy in the first place. In particular, if political life is not based on the rule of law, if leaders are not personally popular, and if the system of government is not grounded in widespread legitimacy, leaders may be unable to cultivate strong institutions without simultaneously unleashing forces that would undermine their hold on power (Migdal, 1988). My intent here is not to contribute to the rich literature on democratization and transitions from neopatrimonial rule. Rather, my point is that while some leaders who are vulnerable to their own armed forces may cultivate strong civilian institutions for myriad reasons, including reducing the risk of a coup, many vulnerable leaders tend to avoid relying on this strategy for the same reasons that make coups possible in the first place.

All seven strategies described above depend heavily for their effectiveness on persuasion and the manipulation of ideational factors such as preferences, attitudes, loyalty, and morale. The key to indoctrination, for example, is to persuade officers to align their preferences with the ideology of the regime or the standard of civil control. The goal of professionalization is to neutralize officers' political preoccupations by rendering them indifferent to political developments. Remuneration and patrimonialization depend on influencing personal loyalty that is cemented through money, family ties, religion, or friendship. Promotion of corporate spirit involves bolstering organizational morale, and strengthening civilian oversight mechanisms requires convincing politicians, officers, and the public to follow the rule of law and forego corrupt behavior. Finally, selling autonomy depends on securing the loyalty of foreign powers through the alignment of local policy and ideology with the politics of the patron.

Part of the reason that the strategies described above tend to be unreliable is that loyalties and attitudes are difficult to instill and to secure (Hirschman, 1970, pp. 92–98). Above I provided several examples of officers who switched sides even when their allegiances appeared cemented by money, ideology, or blood. Moreover, any military historian can attest to the fact that loyalties can change rapidly and unpredictably. In the midst of heavy fighting in Abkhazia in August 1993, for example, the head of the Sukhumi Brigade and the Gali Battalion, both previously loyal to the government of Eduard Shevardnadze, switched sides and joined Shevardnadze's enemy Zviad Gamsakhurdia (*The Georgian Chronicle* August, 1993, p. 6). Recall Rif'at Asad's attempt to seize Damascus in November 1983 while his brother was in the hospital, as well as Colton's claim that "it is not hard to imagine an army coup being rationalized as merely another change in form of party leadership" (1979, p. 229). As Frazer notes, loyalty is an important element of civilian control, but "attitudes are subject to change and can go either way" (1994, p. 8). Strategies that depend exclusively on manipulating loyalties and attitudes tend not to be reliable as the principal basis of protection when coups are possible.

Counterbalancing

Counterbalancing is division of the military into rival forces, a strategy that is common in coup-risk states. In Ecuador between 1981 and 1984, for example, the personal animosity between two rival generals, Gribaldo Mino Tapia and Rene Vargas Pazzos, "was such that, if either seemed bent upon overthrowing the government, the other would automatically declare himself the loyal supporter of the government" (Farcau, 1994, p. 191). In the Saudi desert in the 1930s, Ibn Saud created two armies, the standing Army and the White Army, and ensured that they would balance each other by drawing recruits for each army from distinct tribal backgrounds (Quinlivan, 1999, p. 143). In 1837 in Chile, Diego Portales created a civilian militia of 25,000 men to serve as a counterweight against the regular army (Rouquie, 1987, p. 52). In Brazil in 1964, just a few months after taking power via

coup, the new regime created the Serviço Nacional de Informações and then “tried to use the resources of the SNI to gain control over the army” (Stepan, 1986, p. 41). In India, “a proliferation of state security and military agencies has . . . represented a tangible counterweight to the regular military forces” (Migdal, 1988, p. 212). Kenyan president Jomo Kenyatta cultivated an eclectic mix of rival paramilitaries, militias, police units, and service branches after Kenya achieved independence in January 1964, and the consequent system of checks and balances deterred potential coup plotters in any single organization (Frazer, 1994). In Bolivia in the early 1980s, the Calama Armored Regiment was created to balance the Tarapaca Armored Cavalry Regiment, which had been responsible for several coups. (Farcau, 1994, p. 59). And in Syria, President Asad cultivated six different armies including the regular army, the Special Forces, the Presidential Guard, the Struggle Companies, the Popular Army, and the Defense Units, a heavily armed palace guard of at least 25,000 men that he charged with the defense of Damascus. Syria experienced 21 regime changes via coups d’état between 1946 and 1970, but as I argue in chapter 5, Asad’s use of the counterbalancing strategy put an end to this tradition and protected the regime for the past 30 years (Batatu, 1981; Dawisha, 1978; Drysdale, 1979; Hinnebusch, 1989; Michaud, 1982).⁴

Counterbalancing is the only strategy that depends on checks and balances. As Quinlivan argues, “Regimes create parallel militaries to counterweight the regular armed forces—forces that can be used against the regime in a coup . . . [T]he purpose of a parallel military is to protect the regime” (1999, p. 141; Brooks, 1998, pp. 36–40). It is the only approach that is built on deterrence and the pitting of force against force. If all the state’s military and police agencies were unified into a single organization, there would be little or nothing to prevent conspirators within that organization from staging a coup. I do not claim that counterbalancing is always sufficient for eliminating the risk of coups d’état, as many regimes that pursued this strategy have been toppled by their own militaries. Like the other strategies described above, counterbalancing can fail. Nor do I argue that regimes rely on counterbalancing exclusively. Rather, my claim is that although regimes may draw on many different combinations of the alternative approaches listed above, the possibility of a coup is very likely to cause them to include counterbalancing among the domestic survival strategies that they pursue. Indeed, statistical results presented in chapter 4 show that vulnerable regimes that counterbalance are 44 percent less likely to experience a coup or coup attempt than regimes that do not divide their militaries into rival factions.

There are several differences between this theory and other theories of civil-military relations. To begin, in this study I argue that different types of regimes all draw on the same strategies to subordinate their armed forces. Some of the civil-military relations literature is premised on the assumption that regime type is an important explanatory factor that accounts for how leaders achieve control over the military. For example, Nordlinger (1977) says that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European monarchies were most likely to adopt a traditional model of civilian control in which the regime and the military agree on basic

political values. By contrast, he says that the liberal model, in which military and civilian leaders confine themselves to separate spheres of expertise, “has been used most often . . . in non-Western states” (1977, p. 12). A corollary of the assumption that regime type accounts for how leaders attain control over the military is that a leader’s decision to adopt one coup-proofing strategy over another often depends critically on the type of regime that the leader represents.

While I do not doubt that regime type sometimes plays a partial role in determining which coup-proofing strategies leaders select, this study shows that regime type often is somewhat if not largely independent of the choice of coup-proofing strategy. In the previous discussion of coup-proofing strategies, for example, I showed that postcolonial leaders in Africa as well as the democratically elected president of Georgia sacrificed a degree of autonomy to foreign powers whom they expected to protect them from a coup. Both Chile’s Pinochet, a military dictator, and Brazil’s João Goulart, an elected civilian, used patrimonial strategies to minimize the risk of a coup. Indoctrination and professionalization strategies have, of course, been pursued aggressively by many types of regimes (Perlmutter, 1977). And the data presented in chapter 4 indicate that all types of regime leaders, including authoritarian dictators as well as democratically elected presidents, use counterbalancing strategies to protect themselves from their own armed forces. The data show that in the 1966–1986 period that is the focus of this study, 78.8 percent of high counterbalancing regimes were civilian, while 21.2 percent were military, and that 84.6 percent of high counterbalancing regimes were nondemocratic, while 15.4 percent were democratic. It would be a mistake to place too much significance in these numbers, especially since there were more civilian regimes in the world than military regimes, and because the 1966–1986 period preceded the post-Cold War growth in global democracy. What the numbers do seem to illustrate is that while regime type may have an impact on the selection of particular coup-proofing strategies, at least as far as counterbalancing goes, different types of regimes all seem to draw on the same strategy.

Perhaps as a result of their assumption that regime type plays an important role in shaping how leaders attempt to avoid coups, some scholars have devoted considerable effort to the clustering of various coup-proofing strategies into models that they then assign to particular regime types. However, the aggregation of strategies into models and the matching of models with regime types tends to create more confusion than clarity. For example, it is difficult to discern the critical difference between Stepan’s liberal and professional models of civil-military relations (1971, pp. 57–66). In the liberal model, “the political elite are intensely aware of the potential conflict between themselves and the military, and deliberately seek to ensure that the military has no legitimacy to act in the political sphere” (p. 58). In the professional model, “civilian control is ensured . . . by civilian toleration of the autonomous development of military influence within the military sphere” (p. 60). There is little if any difference between these two characterizations. To take another example, both Nordlinger’s traditional model and his penetration model depend on regimes’ attempts to convince soldiers to internalize “a set of strongly

held beliefs and values" (1977, p. 13). In this study I suggest that authoritarian dictators and elected presidents can draw from the same set of strategies to protect themselves from their own armed forces.

The handful of studies that do present comprehensive lists of strategies (rather than models) tend to focus on the question of civilian control rather than avoiding coups (Farcau, 1994, pp. 188–98; Pion-Berlin, 1992; Zagorski, 1992, pp. 75–83; Welch, 1976, pp. 313–27; Feaver, 1995, 1996, pp. 24–33). There is nothing wrong with focusing on civilian control rather than the avoidance of coups. At the same time, however, if the scholar's focus is explaining how leaders avoid coups, then it is important not to conflate this issue of coup avoidance with the attainment of civilian control because even military regimes must protect themselves from their own forces. Focusing on civilian control rather than the avoidance of coups misses half the problem, because half of all coups are launched against military regimes that, by definition, can never attain civilian control.

By presenting more fully elaborated lists of coup-proofing strategies, the studies mentioned in the previous paragraph tend to avoid the pitfall of packaging strategies into incoherent models. But by focusing on civilian control rather than the avoidance of coups, these scholars emphasize tactics they expect civilians to use and fail to notice similarities among how military as well as civilian regimes attempt to protect themselves from the military. In addition, the studies mentioned above do not specify counterbalancing as a likely strategy that almost all vulnerable leaders should be expected to pursue. Welch, for example, says that "Mounting a successful seizure of power becomes more complicated in a structurally differentiated military, due to the problems of building a coup coalition" (1976, p. 320). The point is embedded, however, as one of four different recommendations for limiting the political strength of the military. And Welch dismisses the importance of counterbalancing by noting that it "may backfire on civilian leaders" and by implying that consolidating military organizations may be a more useful strategy than fragmenting them (1976, p. 320). Other typologies of control mechanisms either ignore counterbalancing (Zagorski, 1992) or list it as one of several different strategies that leaders use (Feaver, 1995, p. 28; Quinlivan, 1999).

The single study that I have found that underscores counterbalancing as the most important survival strategy is a small-N analysis of postcolonial politics in Africa that does not purport to advance a general theory of civil-military relations (Frazer, 1994). Frazer identifies three methods of civilian control: establishing counterweights to balance the military; encouraging officers' loyalty; and using rewards and sanctions to promote civilian authority. She argues, "All three methods are important for maintaining civilian control over the long-run. However, the most critical is the utilization of balancing institutions since attitudes are subject to change or can go either way, and rewards and sanctions can be misread" (1996, p. 8). My purpose is not to criticize Frazer, but rather to note that her study is not a general theory. To my knowledge there is not a single general study of civil-military relations that identifies counterbalancing as the most crucial or most likely strategy when coups are possible. Indeed, many studies that address counter-

balancing emphasize its riskiness rather than its foundational importance for civil-military relations. As Feaver notes, “countries which face an external threat may deploy sizable armed forces but keep them divided . . . Of course, even this effort may erode the ability of the military to execute its primary function of defending society against external threats” (1996, p. 25).

Because we lack compelling theory for explaining how and why various types of regimes might select particular strategies or combinations of strategies, I have listed various strategies that all different types of leaders may draw on to protect themselves from their own militaries; avoided deterministic models that match particular regime types with particular strategies; and argued that the combination of strategies that leaders select is indeterminate, with the exception that I expect almost all vulnerable leaders to include counterbalancing in the portfolio of strategies they pursue to protect themselves from their own militaries when coup risk is high.

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Chapter Three

A Theory of Counterbalancing as a Cause of International Conflict

In the previous chapter I argued that when coups are possible, regimes usually create rival military and paramilitary organizations that they intend to check and balance each other and protect the regime as a byproduct of their independent coercive capacity. Unlike other theories of civil-military relations that ignore counterbalancing or list it as one of many possible strategies that vulnerable regimes might follow, I specify counterbalancing as a critical domestic strategy that almost all vulnerable regimes pursue. This expectation is based on the extent to which alternative survival strategies rest on fickle foundations, the fact that counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force, and the bloody consequences leaders often pay when they are vulnerable to their militaries and when they fail to take steps to prevent a coup. Although counterbalancing may be a crucial and widespread domestic process when coups are possible, dividing the armed forces is only the first step toward avoiding a military conspiracy. Once the armed forces are divided, leaders must make sure that rival military organizations stay apart and refrain from conspiring with each other. The hypothesis that I develop in this chapter is that counterbalancing may provide leaders with an incentive to engage in international conflict. Counterbalancing requires leaders to create interservice rivalries that drive wedges and promote mistrust among branches of their own forces, and international conflict can be a useful and effective strategy for promoting such divisiveness. After elaborating this hypothesis, in the last section of the book I will turn from theory to data by using statistical analysis and historical case studies to test the abstract claims advanced in this chapter and the previous one.

The Dependent Variable: International Conflict

I seek to use civil-military relations to account for several related aspects of international conflict including preparation for hostility, nonviolent phenomena such as the invention of enemies, and actual uses of force such as military strikes, sabotage, troop mobilizations, and blockades. My claim is not that preparation for

conflict is the same as the use of force or that nonviolent behavior is the same as violence. At the same time, I lump these phenomena together, label the cluster “conflict” and proceed *as if* they were the same because all of the phenomena mentioned above can result from the same causal pathway. Since my interest is how the causal pathway produces international outcomes rather than distinctions that differentiate variants of the dependent variable, I group phenomena together to direct attention to the operation of the mechanism rather than distinctions among outcomes. This is the same as studying assembly line production without analyzing differences among minivans, automobiles, and light trucks. The outcomes are “close enough” to justify analysis of their production without concentrating on distinctions among them.

In addition, preparation for conflict, nonviolent actions, and engagement in low-level hostilities deserve attention because they can cause large-scale war (Van Evera, 1984; Jervis, 1976; Lebow, 1981). It is true that “[n]ot all diversionary actions lead to war . . . and an important question is whether those that do (and those that do not) follow any particular pattern” (Levy, 1989b, p. 282). At the same time, I justify focusing on the aspects of conflict mentioned above while neglecting the subsequent mechanisms by which they may or may not escalate to all-out war for the same reasons that a medical researcher might study the determinants of cholesterol levels without simultaneously analyzing when cholesterol leads to heart attacks and when it decreases the chance of a heart attack. In other words, I focus on preparation for conflict, nonviolent actions, and engagement in hostilities because sometimes they can be background causes of war (Welch, 1993).

The literature has a long history of defining domestic, unilateral, nonviolent, and even nongovernmental events as instances of international conflict. Rummel, for example uses thirteen different indicators for foreign conflict behavior, including (1) antiforeign demonstrations, (2) negative sanctions, (3) protests, (4) countries with which diplomatic relations were severed, (5) ambassadors expelled or recalled, (6) diplomatic officials of less than ambassador rank expelled or recalled, (7) threats, (8) military action, (9) war, (10) troop movements, (11) mobilizations, (12) accusations and, (13) people killed in all forms of conflict behavior (1963; cited in Stohl, 1980, p. 301).

Notice the different dimensions of conflict embodied in Rummel’s indicators. Some indicators such as people killed entail violence and the use of force, but others such as threats entail the possibility of force. Some indicators such as wars involve interactive phenomena, but others such as antiforeign demonstrations refer to unilateral, domestic outcomes. Some indicators such as troop movements involve government and military institutions, but others such as protests do not necessarily involve the agencies of state. Some of the indicators listed above may be more useful for deterrence, and others might be more effective for compellence. Given that the literature has used domestic protests and antiforeign demonstrations in the definition of foreign conflict behavior, it seems permissible to include other nonviolent, unilateral factors such as invention of enemies in the specification of international conflict.

Any generalized analysis of international conflict must handle tricky specification problems that arise from the fact that numerous types of events constitute conflict and that the distinction between the causes of conflict and conflict itself may be blurry. For example, a threat to defend territory can be a cause of conflict, a cause of peace, a result of conflict, or an aspect of conflict itself. As a result, any definition of conflict must brush aside complexities, invoke somewhat arbitrary criteria for deciding which aspects to emphasize and which to ignore, and group into the same category events that may be dissimilar. Consider Nikita Khrushchev's decision to deploy intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba in 1962. This decision could be classified as a military action, a threat, or a troop movement (as Soviet forces accompanied the missiles). Or, even if common sense suggests that the provocative nature of the deployment calls for its classification as an instance of conflict, the argument has another side. In particular, the deployment did not constitute conflict if conflict is defined exclusively as an interactive phenomenon. Should all weapons deployments count as instances of conflict? Even though including war preparations and nonviolent behavior may allow some nonconflictual events to be counted as conflict (false positives), excluding these dimensions would entail overlooking events that should be included.

Finally, my focus on international conflict is intended to avoid terminological clutter. While various terms such as *costly signals* (Fearon, 1992), *bashing the foreigners* (Russett, 1990), *limited probes* (George & Smoke, 1974), *manufacturing crises*, *fabrication of the national security state*, and *diversionary actions short of war*, reflect partially my conceptualization of conflict, these terms are too cumbersome for this analysis. Hence, I group different phenomena under a single term and avoid clutter by referring simply to *conflict*.

Levy claims, "Most of the literature on the diversionary theory of war exhibits a puzzling lack of attention to the question of the nature of the dependent variable" (1989b, p. 281). However, it should be clear that no clean solution is possible regardless of the care with which the dependent variable is specified. Problems of classification hinder conceptualization and operationalization of many social variables, and it is important to remain humble about analytical limitations that result from categorization and aggregation. At the same time, it is equally important not to sacrifice willingness to generalize about domestic and international political outcomes. With these caveats in mind, I plow ahead.

The Argument: Counterbalancing and International Conflict

As described in the previous chapter, counterbalancing is the establishment and maintenance of a system of rival military and paramilitary organizations. Here I note that counterbalancing is a variant of the strategy of *tertius gaudens*, "the third who benefits, . . . an individual who profits from the disunion of others" that has been articulated recently by network theorists such as Burt (1992, pp. 30–31), White (1992), Leifer (1998), and Padgett and Ansell (1993). These

theorists have developed the concept of “network” or “structural holes” to refer to relations among people (or in this case, organizations) that are not connected to each other. If B and C have no relations between them but they are both related to A, then a structural hole exists between B and C. As Burt notes, structural holes are “relations visible only by their absence” (1992).

Of course, network theorists were not the first to articulate a theory of divided power, and the notion of checks and balances is integrated into the fabric of American democracy. As is explained in the Federalist Papers—in particular No. 51—the authors of the Constitution carefully allocated roles and responsibilities to different branches of government in order to prevent any single branch from obtaining too much power. In a brilliant passage on divided power, James Madison argued that “the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means, and personal motives, to resist encroachments”.¹ Hence, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government were rendered partially autonomous but also partially mutually interdependent, and the legislature was further divided to prevent an additional check on the potential concentration of power.

In the military realm, counterbalancing is equivalent to the establishment and management of a network of military organizations that is rich in structural holes. In other words, vulnerable leaders seek to structure their forces such that armed organizations are not connected to each other in strong relationships. They pursue monopoly power to create and preserve structural holes among various military organizations so that they can broker relations among them. Burt says, “The *tertius* plays conflicting demands and preferences against one another and builds value from their disunion” (1992, p. 34; Simmel, 1902; Coser, 1975).

Network theorists describe two distinct *tertius* strategies, approaches for brokering relations in a network of structural holes. The first strategy (bidding war) is “being the third between two or more players after the same relationship” (Burt, 1992, p. 31). For example, when one seller faces the enviable possibility of offering a good to many potential buyers, all bidders seek the same relationship (to buy the product) from the seller. In this situation, the seller can prompt a bidding war as buyers compete for the right to enter into commercial relations with the seller. When star quarterbacks are sought by numerous different football teams or star professors are courted by multiple departments, they can pit rival bidders against one another to increase salary and other benefits. The key to this strategy is to put “redundant contacts into play against one another” (Burt, 1992, p. 229).

The second *tertius* strategy (exploit cleavages) is more closely analogous to counterbalancing among military organizations. In particular, this approach involves “being the third between players in two or more relations with conflicting demands” (Burt, 1992, p. 31). Unlike the first approach, the key to the second strategy does not entail cementing relations with one bidder to the exclusion of others. This strategy does not refer to the professor who plays suitors off one another and then signs a contract with a single department. Rather, this second strategy refers to

brokering and control that become possible when the tertius perpetuates conflict among third parties. The tertius puts players who have no relationship “into play against one another.” According to Burt, players “can be played against one another when they make conflicting demands on the same individual in separate relationships” (1992, p. 48). This second tertius strategy describes divide-and-rule approaches that leaders use to exploit antagonisms among followers. When followers compete with each other rather than with central authority, leaders can remain above the fray and consolidate their own control.

Tertius strategies deliver different types of benefits. On the one hand, tertius strategies provide control benefits by “giving certain players an advantage in negotiating their relationships” (Burt, 1992, p. 30). On the other hand, tertius strategies provide information benefits. When relations among people or organizations in a network are strong, then everyone “knows what the other people know and will discover the same opportunities at the same time” (p. 17). By promoting conflict among rivals and then standing above the fray, leaders increase the likelihood that rivals will not share information with each other and that information will flow up the chain of command rather than horizontally.

Tertius strategies that involve A’s exploitation of a cleavage between B and C are not effective when B and C collude. Counterbalancing strategies depend on promoting conflict and jealousy among military organizations in order to keep them apart. Otherwise, to borrow a phrase from Migdal, the balancing act can topple (1988, p. 202). When the rival organizations or factions that populate a hub-and-spoke system intermingle, communicate, overlap, and cooperate, potential challengers may form horizontal ties and undermine the center’s authority. Therefore, leaders face powerful incentives to promote jealousy among rivals and to keep them apart by reinforcing differences among them. As Feaver argues, “institutional checks work best when the interests of the two agents are in conflict . . . Otherwise, the two agents could collude” (1995, p. 28).

In the art world, Museum of Modern Art trustee William Paley “used many agents . . . and these agents were sufficiently differentiated from one another that he could keep control as principal” (White, 1992, p. 316). In Renaissance Florence, Cosimo de’ Medici’s ability to control the city-state depended on segregating elite partisans into distinct factions, one centered on commercial and neighborhood solidarity and the other based on marriage and friendship ties (Padgett & Ansell, 1993). In the corporate world, “large business firms are sites for dual hierarchies . . . [C]orporations are split into self-contained divisions each of which operates in a different market” (White, 1992, p. 271). In each of these cases, leaders’ control depends on structuring potential challengers into multiple hierarchies whose components are kept apart from each other.

In the military realm, counterbalancing strategies depend on leaders’ ability to promote conflict and jealousy among rival forces in order to keep them apart (Janowitz, 1964, p. 68; Zimmerman, 1983, pp. 277–279). Regimes must prevent their militaries from becoming cohesive by creating and exploiting cleavages among rival chains of command. The goal is to increase coup plotters’ uncertainty about

their peers' loyalty and to complicate the planning and implementation of any contemplated conspiracy. As plotters plan and organize their conspiracies, they must be able to persuade potential recruits that the coup will succeed. Farcau notes that "the ultimate enticement for the potential recruits to the ranks of the coup plotters . . . is the likelihood of success . . . The principal goal of the coup plotters in their recruitment approach, therefore, is to convince the 'critical mass' of the officer corps, not so much of the rightness of their cause, but of the likelihood that they will prevail" (1994; also Luttwak, 1968). Officers' willingness to support the coup or at least to remain neutral, in other words, depends on their beliefs about their peers' beliefs about the regime's vulnerability. And the regime, in turn, attempts to complicate each individual's ability to resolve this variant of the collective action problem (Olson, 1965). As Padgett and Ansell (1993, p. 1286) argue, "a 'revolt of the colonels' requires more than just comparing dissatisfactions. Colonels have to have confidence that other colonels are not just stabbing them in the back."

A fascinating pattern emerges from analysis of Luttwak's index of all coups and coup attempts between 1945 and 1978 (1979, pp. 195–207). For each attempt, Luttwak lists whether or not the coup was successful as well as the specific military, paramilitary, and police organizations that participated. Of the 173 coup attempts staged by a single military or domestic armed organization (army, navy, air force, paramilitary, or police), 80 (46 percent) were successful. Of the 63 coup attempts staged by two or more armed forces, 54 (86 percent) were successful. The large difference in success rates appears to indicate that when leaders fail to keep officers in different forces from colluding with each other, attempted coups are much more likely to lead to the toppling of the regime.

My argument is that counterbalancing can provide an incentive for vulnerable leaders to engage in international conflict to the extent that it facilitates divide-and-conquer politics at the domestic level and promotes competition among various domestic armed forces. International conflict can create and exacerbate interservice rivalries in several different ways. Indeed, each of the different aspects of conflict specified above—preparation for hostility (military build-ups and formulation of external military missions), nonviolent aspects of conflict (hostile rhetoric and invention of enemies), and actual uses of force (military strikes and blockades)—can cause service branches to compete with each other.

Preparation for conflict can foment interservice rivalry when service branches offer divergent assessments of threat, capabilities, or the balance of power. To take one example, as they considered Anwar Sadat's plan to attack Israel in October 1972, Egyptian military elites bitterly contested whether or not Egyptian forces possessed the capacity to prevail in a limited ground operation (Stein, 1985, p. 46). Preparation can promote interservice antagonism when service branches stress the doctrinal importance of particular organizational missions to secure favorable budgetary and procurement decisions. Throughout the Cold War, clashes among the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps often stemmed from doctrinal differences about how the Pentagon should prepare for war. The Air Force

emphasized the primacy of deterrence and “the efficacy of air power in the quest for service independence” while the Army tended to stress the importance of maintaining large reserve forces that would facilitate territorial seizure and control (Betts, 1991, p. 117). Betts shows how doctrinal differences became institutionalized and manifested themselves in numerous interservice disputes.

Nonviolent behavior such as the invention of enemies and use of hostile rhetoric can promote interservice rivalries when forces disagree on the danger posed by alleged, external threats. In chapter 6 I argue that in Georgia in the mid-1990s disagreements about the magnitude of the Russian threat have been a source of ongoing conflict between the Army and the Border Guard. The regime of Eduard Shevardnadze has inflamed its relationship with Moscow partially in order to drive a wedge between the army, which maintains close ties to the Russian armed forces, and the Border Guard, which is oriented toward Europe, Ukraine, and the United States.

Engagement in conflict can promote interservice rivalry by legitimating a service branch’s claim for independent status. In Israel, the air force’s outstanding performance during the 1967 war fueled its demands for autonomous status from the Israeli Defense Forces (Ben Meir, 1995, p. 82). In addition, conflict can prompt service branches to take credit for success or avoid blame for failure and it can unmask and exacerbate differences over tactics. During the Falklands/Malvinas war between Britain and Argentina, the Argentine Army and Air Force “became increasingly reluctant to accept direction of the war effort from a naval officer, when the navy’s ships lay impotent in their ports” (Hastings & Jenkins, 1983, p. 218). During the campaign for the island of Peleliu in the fall of 1944, U.S. Marines became livid at Army troops’ habit of retreating from exposed positions to regroup (Cameron, 1994, p. 153).

One might object that even if preparations, nonviolent behavior, and limited conflicts can generate interservice rivalry, perhaps during long-term wars Coser’s ingroup-outgroup hypothesis should apply, and battlefield experience should cause militaries to become cohesive. In addition, it is possible to object that my argument might apply only to poorly integrated militaries in the developing world in which service branches are not properly coordinated. But international conflict is such a powerful determinant of interservice rivalry that its impact can be apparent even in Western armed forces, even during battle. In the Second World War, the campaign in the Pacific theater inflamed bitter antagonisms among the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Cameron notes, “The marines’ growing insecurity concerning their elite status was reflected in the continued animosity directed toward the Army. It was impossible to avoid comparisons of Army and Marine Corps performance on Okinawa, and the marines continued to pad their pride at the expense of the Army” (1994, pp. 174–175). After the fight for Okinawa, “Navy admirals were furious about losing so many ships and men while the generals fought a long, slow campaign ashore, and the Army felt victimized by a public relations campaign suggesting that the Marine Corps’s proposed second landing on southern Okinawa might have brought the operations to a quick end” (Cameron, 1994, p. 169).

To develop the argument, it is important to explain why concealment is critical to the effectiveness of divide-and-conquer tactics. According to network theorists, divide-and-conquer (*tertius*) strategies depend on disguise because leaders must make sure that their opponents do not recognize how conflict among them promotes leaders' interests. In other words, concealment diminishes opportunities for rivals to collude by masking how their dispute produces control benefits for leaders. When A's selfish motives become visible, B and C may perceive their conflict as unnecessary or unjust, and in turn they may come to resent authority and cooperate to overthrow it (Padgett & Ansell, 1993). Michel Foucault argues that power operates most effectively when it is concealed. He claims that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (1978, p. 86). According to Foucault, those who are dominated by power would not accept their subjugation if they recognized the extent to which their freedom was curtailed (1978, p. 86; Douglas, 1986, pp. 92, 98, 103, 120).

Psychologists and economists have documented the difficulty of achieving control when authorities appear to be acting out of their own self interest. Public rioting, disobedience, and willingness to take high risks are more likely when leaders appear to have a personal stake in the outcome of a decision. In such cases, citizens are more likely to conclude that the government is unjust, and they are less likely to obey the law, accept personal sacrifice, and acknowledge the legitimacy of authority (Tyler, 1990).

In the realm of civil-military relations, rival military forces may collude and launch a coup if they come to believe that conflict among them advances leaders' interests (Simmel, 1902). Military elites are likely to resist efforts to promote strife among already-existing armed organizations if they believe that such interorganizational antagonisms are intended to advance leaders' narrow political interests (Migdal, 1988, pp. 200–203). If military elites conclude that the regime is promoting competition among them for its own sake and that consequent rivalries threaten military effectiveness and compromise national security, they are likely to question the regime's legitimacy and to take high risks to rectify the situation. To prevent officers from experiencing divide-and-conquer politics as an assault on their sense of fairness and corporate spirit and a threat to the state's ability to defend itself, I argue that leaders must conceal the benefits they accrue from counterbalancing. Failure to do so could prompt officers to portray themselves as victims of manipulative control efforts.

When leaders use international conflict to create interservice rivalries, they conceal control benefits they accrue. When international conflict is the source of interservice rivalries, military organizations tend to frame their disputes in terms of the pursuit of national security. As a result, leaders can arbitrate competition according to the standard of military effectiveness rather than narrow parochial concerns. In Israel, for example, bitter disagreements among the Air Force, Navy, and Army about each force's share of the defense budget "are invariably brought to the attention of the defense minister—who can then arbitrate among conflicting

views” (Ben Meir, 1995, p. 157). Rather than justifying favoritism in terms of the regime’s political survival, leaders can arbitrate disputes about international conflict in terms of how best to protect the national interest. In Argentina, for example, President Raúl Alfonsín justified development of the Condor II ballistic missile in terms of “defense of our sovereignty” even though his primary motivation appears to have been to seal an alliance with the Argentine Air Force against the Army (Tollefson, 1994). Richard Betts notes that during the Cold War in the United States, “interservice controversy enhanced civilian control by deflecting conflict away from civilian-military lines” (1991, p. 116). This is precisely the strategy of the *tertius gaudens* who profits from the interplay of conflicting demands. When leaders are called on to arbitrate disputes among their own forces, they profit from interorganizational antagonism by standing above the fray. They justify the evaluation, modification, selection, and rejection of options in terms of the national security rather than their own political survival.

When Does Counterbalancing Lead to International Conflict?

I have argued in this chapter that counterbalancing depends on leaders’ ability to keep rival forces apart by promoting conflict among them and that because international conflict can generate interservice rivalries among military forces, counterbalancing can provide an incentive for leaders to prepare for war, invent enemies, and engage in international disputes when their actual aim is to use counterbalancing to subordinate their own forces. As the evidence on war and counterbalancing indicates clearly, however, international conflict is a very rare phenomenon while counterbalancing is quite common.² Moreover, as the statistical evidence that Evan Schofer and I present in the next chapter shows, almost every regime that suffers from a high degree of coup risk counterbalances, but very few of these counterbalancing regimes engage in international conflict. When does the *incentive* that counterbalancing provides for engaging in conflict translate into conflictual behavior? When exactly, in other words, does counterbalancing lead to conflict? How can counterbalancing be a determinant of international conflict if the ostensible cause is much more common than its supposed effect?

In this section, I suggest that the following four triggering conditions may influence when counterbalancing should lead to conflict and when it should not. Specifically, counterbalancing should be more likely to lead to conflict when other strategies are not available for promoting interservice rivalries, when leaders believe they can control the likelihood of escalation to war, when leaders depend on counterbalancing to subordinate their own forces, and when the domestic costs of conflict are expected to be low. Before developing these points, however, I present several qualifications to explain the difficulties involved in providing fully compelling explanations of triggering conditions.

To begin, international conflict is both extremely rare and highly overdetermined. Conflict does not occur very often, but it can be caused by dozens of

factors (Van Evera, 1999). Hence, while it is true that international conflict occurs much less frequently than counterbalancing, conflict occurs less frequently than almost *all* of its causes. To take one of many examples, the literature on the liberal peace shows that democracies almost never fight each other (see for example, Russett, 1993). Conversely, differences in regime type can be thought as a cause of war, in that dyads that consist of a democracy and a dictatorship are much more likely to engage in war than dyads that consist of two democracies.³ That being said, however, only a tiny percentage of the dyads that consist of a democracy and a dictatorship engage in war, even though, again, such dyads are much more likely to engage in war than dyads that consist of two democracies.

The infrequency of conflict means that almost all of its causes are much more frequent than conflict itself. Because conflict is so highly overdetermined, it may not be possible to add more causal steps to the theory without sacrificing generalizability. There are, of course, many complicated and sophisticated theories of international conflict, but very few of these achieve the level of generalizability obtained by my theory. As Evan Schofer and I show in the next chapter, the theory does a good job of explaining conflict over a twenty-year period for almost every country in the world.

In addition, this analysis is not a study of decision making. In other words, the theory that I articulate explains why and how international conflict can benefit regimes that seek to ensure that their military forces remain divided. More specifically, the theory explains why international conflict may have a higher expected payoff for regimes that engage in counterbalancing than for regimes that do not. This is a very different theoretical project, however, than would be the case if leaders' decisions were my focus. In that case, the theory would identify a broader range of costs and benefits that shape leaders' decisions as well as how and why those factors might matter. In this study, by contrast, my focus is not the entire decision-making process but rather the more narrow questions of why and how international conflict might benefit some regimes (those that need to ensure that their militaries remain divided) in one particular way (by promoting interservice rivalries).

This is not to say that this study is logically flawed or that it does not meet disciplinary standards. After all, the literature includes rich theoretical traditions that use precisely the same approach that I take. For example, much of the diversionary literature avoids theorizing the entire decision process and posits instead that international conflict can benefit some leaders (those that are domestically vulnerable) in one particular way (by unifying followers and diverting their attention from domestic politics). Rather, my point is that in order to provide a more fully satisfying answer to the question of when counterbalancing should lead to international conflict, it would be necessary to take a different theoretical approach by focusing on the entire decision-making process and by including a much wider range of causal factors. The value of such an approach would be that a richer theoretical apparatus might do a better job of capturing decision-making factors, such as the costs of war, that this study ignores. The trade-off, of course, would be

that as scholars add more causal factors to their theories, it becomes more difficult to advance the type of highly generalizable claims that I develop and test in this study. And, it tends to become necessary to smuggle in more and more assumptions rather than taking time to fully develop each link and to interrogate each assumption in the argument.

As Elster argues, it may not be possible to provide fully-satisfying accounts of the actual conditions that should trigger the operation of a mechanism. He says that if scholars had access to laboratories and experimental control, they could “establish general propositions of the following type. In conditions $C^1, C^2 \dots C^N$, we observe mechanism M^1 . In conditions $C_1^1, C_1^2 \dots C_1^N$, we observe mechanism M^2 . In the real world, however, the number of possible permutations is too great for us to be able to establish the characteristic mechanism operating in each of them.” He continues that ideally, “we should be able to identify in advance the conditions in which one or the other mechanism would be triggered . . . My own view is that the social sciences are currently unable to identify such conditions and are likely to remain so forever” (Elster, 1993, p. 5).

Given these considerations, the critical standard for assessing the worthiness of any mechanism should not be the identification of triggers that may cause the mechanism to operate in some circumstances but not in others, but rather the extent to which the causal steps in the mechanism are plausible and counterintuitive. As explained throughout this study, my theory consists of a two-step mechanism whose links rely on a probabilistic model of causation. As I show in the remaining chapters of this study, significant evidence suggests that both of the steps identified in my causal mechanism are plausible. Moreover, the second step in my mechanism, the claim that high levels of counterbalancing provide an incentive for engaging in international conflict, is highly counterintuitive. The first step in the mechanism, the argument that high coup risk should almost always lead to higher levels of counterbalancing, is not as counterintuitive as the first claim. However, as explained in the previous chapter, it does make a potentially useful contribution to the literature by refining conventional understandings of the frequency and importance of counterbalancing.

Having presented several obstacles that should be considered in evaluating the plausibility of the triggers, I now speculate about possible triggering conditions that may cause counterbalancing to lead to conflict in some cases and not in others. First, counterbalancing should be less likely to lead to international conflict to the extent that leaders can pursue other strategies that promote interservice rivalries. Indeed, there are several other strategies that they can use to promote antagonism and mistrust among their own armed forces. When these strategies are expected to be effective, leaders may not need to rely on international conflict to promote hostility among their own forces.

Unification

Leaders can attempt to promote hostility among their own forces by unifying them under joint command structures. In the United States for example, Huntington (1961) and Caraley (1966) document how ongoing civilian attempts to unify American service branches within a single department promoted antagonism among the forces. As Huntington notes, “interservice competition in the postwar decade originated in unification, and efforts to increase unification usually produced greater interservice competition” (1961, p. 417). If leaders believe that they can promote interservice rivalries by unifying the armed forces, international conflict should become less likely. That said, unifying the armed forces may not always be sufficient for promoting interservice hostilities, and in fact unification may only rarely create or inflame such rivalries.⁴ Although scholars have not yet produced a comprehensive, historical account of efforts to unify the armed forces in various settings, anecdotal evidence does suggest that unification does not always exacerbate interservice hostilities, even in cases in which unification might be expected to lead to heightened difficulties. For example, the integration of the women’s auxiliary forces into the regular American armed services in the 1970s was followed by a backlash, but integration does not seem to have exacerbated issues of organizational cultural incompatibility that were not already present before the forces were unified (Meyer, 1996; Goldstein, 2001; Thomas & Thomas, 1996).

In addition, unified militaries may pose a considerable threat to leaders when the risk of coup is high. The reason is that in comparison to other nonmilitary domestic agencies, the armed forces are likely to be marked by “superiority in organization, highly emotionalized symbolic status, and monopoly of arms” (Luttwak, 1968). Unifying the armed forces undermines one of the critical ingredients of counterbalancing, the maintenance of separate, parallel chains of command that have little if anything to do with each other. Even in the United States, one observer worried that “nearly all the military forces based in the continental United States . . . were [recently] reorganized under the control of . . . a joint military organization answerable to a single uniformed officer . . . Thus, a military leader whose control over the United States military is second only to the president must study and plan operations to take control of American cities in crises” (Dunlap 1994, (p. 362).

Mission Overlap

Another strategy leaders can use to promote interservice rivalries is to assign overlapping missions to separate organizations. As Stepan notes, “no organization—least of all a military organization—wants to coexist with an alternative claimant to doctrinal and political authority in its sphere of action” (1988, p. 46). Huntington reports that in the American case during the Cold War, “Conflict developed when two services wanted to do the same thing” (1961,

p. 417). The delegation of joint, overlapping responsibility for the same task is an effective strategy in nonmilitary realms as well. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's practice of assigning the same job to different assistants, for example, is one of many illustrations of the use of mission overlap to promote divide-and-conquer politics among individuals, organizations, and groups. If leaders believe they can promote interservice rivalries by assigning overlapping missions to their forces, international conflict may become less likely. While mission overlap may be an effective strategy for generating interservice rivalries in some cases, however, it is important to note that military organizations tend to counter this strategy by specializing, carving out distinct functional niches that they can fill. For example, the U.S. Marine Corps developed its amphibious warfare doctrine in the interwar period to "avoid any appearance of redundancy with the Army" (Cameron, 1994, (p. 36).

Favoritism

Leaders can attempt to create interservice rivalries by criticizing certain organizations while praising others or they can take sides in interorganizational squabbles. In Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze managed to keep his paramilitary forces off guard by using a random mix of praise and criticism to bolster one force while undermining another, then reversing course and criticizing recently praised organizations for corruption, treason, military ineffectiveness, or other reasons. Despite the ease with which this strategy can be deployed, favoritism can erode military morale and, more important, make it appear that leaders' interventions in military matters are motivated by narrow political standards. Hence, the favoritism strategy requires leadership to sacrifice the appearance of neutrality that is essential for divide-and-conquer tactics. In Haiti in 1959, for example, personal animosities prompted militia members of the Tontons Macoutes to denounce members of the Army. When President François Duvalier "gave more credence and encouragement to what the Macoutes said against the words of the military officers and soldier," the regime alienated the army's officer corps and compromised its morale (Laguerre, 1993, p. 115). By arbitrating disputes according to their own parochial interests, leaders may forfeit their ability to play honest broker and conceal control benefits they accrue from interservice rivalry.⁵

A second triggering condition that may help explain when counterbalancing leads to conflict and when it does not is the expected controllability of escalation. In short, counterbalancing should be more likely to lead to international conflict to the extent that leaders believe that they can control the possibility of escalation and limit the likelihood of disastrous war. When leaders believe that there is a high risk that low-level conflict could escalate beyond their control, counterbalancing should be less likely to lead to conflict (Schelling, 1960, 1966). Several factors should influence leaders' beliefs about the controllability of their behavior. On the one hand, leaders who are domestically weak or who lack

military credentials may be more likely to believe that they could become locked in by their own rhetoric and that initiating low-level conflict could subsequently trap them in a position in which they would have to prove their toughness in order to avoid being labeled as weak (Lebow, 1981; Van Evera, 1999). On the other hand, the nature of any contemplated conflict may have implications for its subsequent controllability. For example, if large numbers of troops are deployed or if responsibility is delegated to commanders in the field, the possibility of military escalation increases (Fearon, 1992). By contrast, if leaders simply engage in hostile rhetoric or limited military operations, there is less of a chance that military contingencies could overwhelm leaders' ability to control events in the field.

Third, counterbalancing should be more likely to lead to international conflict to the extent that leaders believe that other strategies they have pursued for subordinating their armed forces are unlikely to be sufficient for minimizing or eliminating the risk of a coup. In the previous chapter, I addressed all alternative strategies that leaders can pursue to minimize the risk of a coup, and I argued that because of the limitations of these strategies, most leaders that are vulnerable to the risk of a coup must rely on counterbalancing to subordinate their own forces. In some cases, however, alternative strategies may be sufficient for minimizing the risk of a conspiracy. When wealth is extremely concentrated in the hands of leaders who control the regime, for example, financial bribes distributed to senior military leaders may be sufficient for minimizing or at least reducing the risk of a coup (Snyder, 1992). When leaders believe that other strategies are sufficient for minimizing the risk of a coup, they may still rely on counterbalancing as a sort of insurance policy. However, their reliance on counterbalancing may not be extreme enough to justify paying the costs of international conflict.

Finally, counterbalancing should be more likely to lead to international conflict to the extent that leaders believe that the domestic costs of conflict will be low. Myriad factors influence the calculation of the expected domestic costs, and the literature on domestic costs of conflict is extensive (for example, see Stein, 1976, 1978). Without going into extensive detail, some of the most important considerations include (1) expected financial costs of conflict relative to the state's financial capacity, including direct outlays as well as the possibility of causing an economic recession; (2) the possibility of provoking elite or military opposition to conflict, either for principled reasons or because conflict is expected to undermine the organizational interests of the armed forces (Betts, 1991; Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson & Woller, 1992); and (3) the possibility of incurring public reputational costs if the regime prepares the nation for conflict and then is perceived as doing a poor job of managing the situation (Levy & Vakili, 1992).

In sum, despite Elster's claim that social scientists may not be able to articulate fully convincing triggers that explain when a certain mechanism will operate and when it will not, it is possible to at least speculate that the following four conditions may influence when counterbalancing should lead to conflict and when it should not. Specifically, counterbalancing should be more likely to lead to conflict when other strategies are not available for promoting interservice rivalries,

when leaders believe they can control the likelihood of escalation to war, when leaders depend on counterbalancing to subordinate their own forces, and when the domestic costs of conflict are expected to be low.

Objections Anticipated

The argument I develop here may appear at odds with several tenets of conventional social scientific wisdom. To begin, interservice rivalry can undermine military effectiveness. Since divisiveness among the armed forces tends to compromise the state's fighting capacity, why would leaders intentionally fragment their own militaries and promote interservice rivalries? As Ben Meir notes, the technological complexity of modern warfare creates "an urgent need for inter-service coordination at the highest military level" (Ben Meir, 1995, p. 78; Biddle & Zirkle, 1993, p. 4; Coser, 1956, p. 88, 92). My answer is that when coups are possible, leaders tend to be more concerned about conspiracy at home than victory abroad. By several orders of magnitude, coups are much more likely than wars to lead to bloody regime change. Hence it should be no surprise that vulnerable leaders are willing to sacrifice military effectiveness to reduce the risk of conspiracy. For example, in 1970 and 1973 Syrian leaders kept their most powerful and loyal units in Damascus during battles against Jordan and Israel to ensure that no coup would take place during fighting (Seale, 1988). During and after the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein executed and incarcerated hundreds of officers, including two of his most successful generals, Maher Abd al-Rashid and Hisham Sabah Fakhri, because he feared they "would develop a local or national following" (Biddle & Zirkle, 1993, p. 13). In their analysis of Iraqi air defense during the Gulf War, Biddle and Zirkle show that Saddam Hussein refused to integrate multiple lines of command due to his fear of a coup even after it became clear that fragmentation entailed disastrous military consequences (1993).

Another objection is that unifying the armed forces may appear to be a better strategy for preventing a coup than dividing them. According to this perspective, when leaders are vulnerable to the possibility of a conspiracy, they should seek to bolster military loyalty and cohesion rather than fragment the armed forces. My response is that cohesion is not equivalent to loyalty, and even if the armed forces were internally cohesive, officers would not necessarily show allegiance to the regime's leadership. Positive feelings about the organization (military cohesion) should not be confused with positive feelings about the leader (loyalty to the regime). There are many instances in which the armed forces have unified around their common dislike of political authorities (Nordlinger, 1977; Perlmutter, 1977; Finer, 1988). In addition, as argued earlier, unified militaries pose a considerable threat to leaders when the risk of a coup is high.

Related to this point, some scholars such as Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1992) argue that war waging increases the likelihood of coups because military elites punish political leaders for failing to settle their international disputes

peacefully (1992; Lasswell, 1941). Why would leaders who fear a military conspiracy engage in international conflict if conflict tends to increase the likelihood of a coup? To begin, Bueno de Mesquita et al. did not control for coup-proofing strategies in their analysis, and as Evan Schofer and I show in chapter 4, high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance and engage in subsequent international conflict in the next five years are much less likely to have a coup than high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance but do not engage in conflict. As noted in chapter 1, other scholars also have argued that international threats as well as participation in international conflict can enhance leadership efforts to eliminate the possibility of a coup d'état or enhance their ability to prevail in domestic struggles with the armed forces (Frazer, 1994; Andreski, 1968; Desch, 1996a, 1999; Janowitz, 1964). In addition, the analysis of Bueno de Mesquita et al. is based on an indicator of coup risk that is quite biased (Belkin & Schofer, 2003).

A final objection is that international conflict might be expected to unify the armed forces. Two aspects of international conflict deserve consideration. First, Coser has argued that external conflict tends to increase group cohesion (1956). Although this claim has been confirmed in numerous experimental settings, it is important to remember that the armed forces are a network of organizations, not a group of people. Coser is quite explicit in mentioning that the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis is expected to apply only to groups that perceive themselves to be groups. Although it is possible that members of a state's military and paramilitary forces might perceive themselves to be part of the same group, collegiate sports provide a compelling analogy. Clearly, Stanford University's football team is a more likely reference group for the quarterback than the Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation. In the same way, the literature on civil-military relations shows that a sailor is more likely to self-identify as a member of the navy than of the Ministry of Defense (Builder, 1989). Hence, international conflict should be expected to increase cohesion within each force, but there is no reason to expect conflict to promote cohesion among distinct forces. The armed forces are best conceptualized as a network of organizations rather than a group and the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis does not apply to networks.

A related point is that preparing for international conflict tends to promote organizational specialization when navies focus on sea power, air forces focus on air power, and armies focus on ground combat (Huntington, 1957b, p. 12). As a reader of an early draft of this study noted, "functional specialization toward the accomplishment of a common task increases what Durkheim calls organic solidarity" (Durkheim, 1893). If international conflict promotes organizational specialization, and if specialization promotes cooperation, then how can international conflict lead to interservice antagonism? My response is that the literature on civil-military relations does not expect interdependence to lead to solidarity automatically (Huntington, 1961). This is why a recent U.S. General Accounting Office publication on naval operations was subtitled "Interservice Cooperation Needs Direction from Top" (USGAO, 1993). The intensity of inter-service hostilities that result from international conflict can prevent interdependence from

leading to cooperation even when lives are at stake. When U.S. Army reinforcements joined units of the First Marine Division in the South Pacific theater during World War II, for example, there was so much hatred between these two forces that Marine scouts refused to “introduce the new Army troops to the patrol routes and key terrain outside the perimeter” (Cameron, 1994, p. 128). While it is true that leaders who are not vulnerable to a coup and who are motivated to build effective fighting forces should be expected to try to integrate their militaries, I argue that when leaders are vulnerable to a coup they can try to obstruct military cohesion by using international conflict to promote mistrust among their own forces.

A brief restatement of the main steps in the argument may be useful at this point. I claimed in chapter 2 that when coups are possible, usually leaders divide their militaries into rival armed forces that they intend to check and balance each other. Counterbalancing is a variant of *tertius gaudens* strategies that entail the exploitation of structural holes by brokers who profit from conflict among opponents. Then I argued that *tertius* or counterbalancing strategies cannot succeed when rivals collude. Hence, counterbalancing depends on leaders’ ability to keep rival forces apart by promoting conflict among them. The next claim was that international conflict can generate interservice rivalries among military forces. Hence, counterbalancing may provide an incentive for leaders to prepare for war, invent enemies, and engage in international disputes when their foundational objective is to ensure that their armed forces remain divided and mistrustful of one another. Finally, I argued that although leaders can use other strategies to promote mistrust among their own forces, international conflict sometimes is the best strategy because it is the only approach that conceals how leaders obtain the control benefits that follow from divide-and-conquer politics. In short, counterbalancing can provide an incentive for vulnerable leaders to engage in international conflict to the extent that it facilitates divide-and-conquer politics at the domestic level and promotes competition among various domestic armed forces.

According to the perspective developed here, the national security state may reproduce itself through “a string of performances” (Butler, 1993, p. 311). Nicole Ball notes, “Protection against external aggression provides the *raison d’être* for all armed forces” (1988, p. 33). But why do states often justify their militaries in terms of the possibility of international conflict? I conclude by suggesting that leaders often behave *as if* national security is at stake to conceal control benefits they accrue from that fabrication. Because inventing enemies can create real enemies, however, performing the national security state generates the possibility of actual violence. International conflict then becomes an “effect and consequence of the imitation of itself” (Butler, 1993, p. 313). In the next chapters, I test the plausibility of the argument. Evan Schofer and I conduct a statistical analysis of almost every country in the world during the second half of the Cold War, and then I use historical case studies of civil-military relations in Syria and Georgia to assess the plausibility of my theoretical claims.

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Part Three

Data

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Chapter Four

Regime Vulnerability, Counterbalancing, and International Conflict during the Cold War: A Quantitative Analysis

Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer

This chapter consists of a statistical test of the two theoretical claims developed in the previous section of this book. If the theory developed in the previous section is sound, then coup risk should be associated positively with counterbalancing, and counterbalancing should be associated positively with international conflict. Because the first author developed this theory before undertaking the statistical analyses below, this exercise is best conceptualized as a test of implications that should be true if the theory is valid. Our goal is not to prove that the theory is true, to provide a precise estimate of its validity, or to articulate the conditions under which it is more or less likely to be plausible. Rather, our aim is to subject the theory to a hard test that goes beyond the requirements of a plausibility probe (Eckstein, 1975; George, 1979). While the statistical findings in this chapter lend some plausibility to the theoretical claims developed in the previous section of the book, the next chapters consist of case studies that are designed to confirm whether the theory can help explain and illustrate actual historical cases.

In this chapter we focus on the years 1966 through 1986, roughly the second half of the Cold War, because it is a period of unparalleled access to data. While data from earlier periods are available for some of the variables in our study, it is not possible to measure counterbalancing prior to the mid-1960s when *The Military Balance* expanded its annual report to include almost every country in the world. A total of 121 nations are included in our data set, and our analyses contain, on average, 95 nations in any given year between 1966 and 1986. Others are excluded in certain years either because the country was not yet independent, because its population was less than 1 million, or because data are unavailable for one or more variables. Pooling data on each country for all available years results in a data set with 1,713 cases.¹

In this chapter we submit the argument to a somewhat demanding variant of King et al.'s procedure for evaluating theory (1994; Tetlock & Belkin, 1996a; Goodman, 1983). According to this approach, scholars who wish to assess the plausibility of causal claims should articulate implications of their arguments and

then test to determine if those implications obtain. To take an example from the natural sciences, if it is true that the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago was caused by the impact of an asteroid, then a host of verifiable implications should have followed including the existence of a crater and the distribution of various trace elements in particular geological strata (Tetlock & Belkin, 1996a). Verification of these implications does not mean that a crater impact was in fact the cause of the dinosaur extinction, but it constitutes supporting evidence.

The predictions we test in this chapter are that coup risk should be associated positively with counterbalancing and counterbalancing should be associated positively with international conflict. Both of these predictions are counterintuitive. The expected, positive relationship between counterbalancing and international conflict is counterintuitive because Simmel's ingroup-outgroup hypothesis, widely accepted throughout the social sciences, leads us to believe that war should unify the military. Desch, for example, claims that regimes invent international threats to *unify* the armed forces (1996a). If external conflict promotes military cohesion, there is no reason to believe that leaders should engage in international hostilities to promote and cement divisions within their own armed forces. Along similar lines, Dassel argues that when the military is divided and when political institutions are unstable, leaders tend to avoid international conflict (1996). Finally, most high-counterbalancing regimes are located in the developing world and scholars often claim that interstate conflict is rare there (Herbst, 1990).

The expected, positive correlation between coup risk and counterbalancing is counterintuitive because the availability of other survival strategies should have relieved regimes from the need to counterbalance during the second half of the Cold War. Several strategies, in particular, should have been sufficient for protecting vulnerable regimes from their own militaries. To begin, the second half of the Cold War witnessed the rise of professional militaries on a global scale. Both the United States and the Soviet Union promoted aggressively the professionalization of their allies' and clients' armed forces. Wendt and Barnett, for example, note that since the end of the Korean War the United States trained almost .5 million military personnel from the developing world in the International Military Education and Training program (1993, p. 339). The point is not that all or even most developing world militaries attained high levels of professionalization during the second half of the Cold War. Rather, we suggest that to the extent that professionalization ever was a viable strategy for subordinating the armed forces, then the latter part of the Cold War should have been a time when this strategy was extremely effective. Because of aggressive superpower efforts to promote the professionalization of their clients' and allies' armed forces, this option should have sufficed for protecting many regimes from their own militaries.

In addition, related to the spread of professionalization, indoctrination should have been an important and effective strategy during the second half of the Cold War. The Soviet Union and United States acted as powerful, global suppliers of international political norms underscoring the importance of civilian control as well as the legitimacy of particular political ideologies, including, of course,

communism and anticommunism. To the extent that indoctrination ever was a viable strategy for subordinating the armed forces, then the second half of the Cold War should have been a time when norms and ideas were very important. A variety of international as well as indigenous, nationalist ideas were widely available for any regime that sought to legitimate its control over the armed forces via indoctrination strategies.

Finally, remuneration strategies should have been sufficient or at least very important ingredients in regime efforts to subordinate their own armed forces during the Cold War. A number of vulnerable regimes such as Iran and the Gulf States should have been wealthy enough to purchase the loyalty of their own militaries, and even the poorest regimes tended to direct a disproportionate percentage of government spending to military salaries (Ball, 1988). Because the alternative strategies mentioned above should have been sufficient for subordinating the armed forces during the second half of the Cold War, it should not have been necessary for vulnerable regimes to pursue counterbalancing strategies.

As described earlier, coup risk refers to whether or not military intervention is possible in a given country at a given time. When coups are very unlikely, then there are almost no conceivable circumstances that could prompt the armed forces to intervene. When coups are possible, however, militaries may intervene for a variety of reasons. For example, even though military intervention was not likely in the Soviet Union, it was possible (Colton, 1979; Conquest, 1969). One difficulty in measuring coup risk is that coups may occur rarely in both high-risk and low-risk cases. In the latter case, coups are unlikely because structural factors including strong civil society and high legitimacy deter the military from intervening. In the former case, regimes may not experience coups if leaders implement survival strategies successfully. In Syria, for example, the absence of coups is not an indication that background causes of regime vulnerability have disappeared. Rather, the stability of the Syrian system results from the successful implementation of coup-proofing strategies. The regime remains structurally vulnerable because failure to continue to implement survival strategies probably would lead to subsequent conspiracies. In both high-risk and low-risk cases, then, the actual incidence of coups may be low and the result is that coup risk cannot be measured simply by the number of recent military conspiracies.

This observational equivalence (the fact that both high-risk and low-risk cases may not have coups) undermines the validity of the only other measure of coup risk that we were able to find in the literature (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1992). Bueno de Mesquita et al. conceptualize regime vulnerability in terms of past number of coups, but this approach is flawed for the reason specified above. Even regimes that have survived for decades without experiencing a coup may be structurally vulnerable. A high number of past coups certainly indicates that future coups are possible, but a low number of past coups does not mean that future coups are impossible. Specifying current risk as a function of the number of past coups also fails to capture factors behind a country's first coup. Hence, vulnerable regimes that have not yet experienced their first coup might be coded erroneously as invulnerable.

We attempt to improve on Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s measure by capturing whether or not a coup is possible in terms of two important background causes identified by the literature on civil-military relations: strength of civil-society and legitimacy of state institutions. According to the literature, when civil society is weak, and when the public and elites do not believe that the state is legitimate, there may be little to deter the armed forces from staging a coup (Hibbs, 1973; Huntington, 1968; Finer, 1988; Luttwak, 1968). Strength of civil society refers to whether nonstate organizations are voluntary, whether they adequately perform specialized social functions, and whether they are valued by citizens as a result of their providing meaning, resources, and strategies for coping with the problems of daily life (Fukuyama, 1995; Migdal, 1988, p. 26). Nonstate organizations constitute a powerful safeguard against military intervention when they "talk back" or resist a coup by mobilizing protests or refusing to comply with plotters' orders. As David notes, "[w]ithout strong independent trade unions, political parties, and voluntary associations, there will be very little standing in the way of successful military coups" (David, 1985, p. 5; Luttwak, 1968, p.p 33, 103; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982, p. 64; Migdal, 1988, pp. 206–237). On the basis of his analysis of 108 countries between 1948 and 1967, for example, Hibbs concludes that "institutionalization *alone* has a negative impact on coups . . . Weakly institutionalized societies, then, are far more likely than those with highly developed institutions to suffer . . . political interventions by the military" (1973, p. 102 emphasis in original).²

Finer attributes the failure of the Kapp putsch in 1920 to "the tradition of civil institutions in Germany, and the highly organized nature of the public which supported them" (1988, pp. 83–85). When the German government escaped to Dresden, and Kapp occupied the chancellery, Workers' Councils coordinated a general strike as well as violent civilian revolts in Saxony and the Ruhr, and Kapp and his family were forced to flee to Finland. In Bolivia in October 1979, an uprising by an army garrison in the Amazon Basin prompted the Bolivian Workers' Central labor union to organize protest strikes that sent the troops back to their barracks. In Spain in the 1930s, "there were simply too many individuals willing to fight, and too many organizations to enable them to do so to allow the luxury of a leisurely march on the capital" (Farcau, 1994, p. 150). It is true that the military can influence or even blackmail politicians when social forces are organized and strong (Finer, 1988, pp. 77–98). However, there have been only a handful of attempted coups under such circumstances, most recently including a failed attempt in Spain in 1982 (Colton, 1979, p. 222; Farcau, 1994, p. 198; Finer, 1988, p. 147).

We measure strength of civil society in terms of the number of associational memberships that individuals and groups maintain in international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). INGO membership has a strong, statistically significant correlation with available measures of nonstate organization. And, INGO participation reflects the type of associational politics that is the essence of civil society (Moon, 1997). Moon and Schofer (1998) have gathered data on nonstate scientific associations and the correlation coefficient between

international nongovernmental organization membership and domestic nonstate scientific associations is approximately .64.³ To ensure that our measure of civil society is not simply a proxy for regime type or wealth, we checked and found that INGO membership is only weakly correlated with regime type (-.161) but more strongly associated with wealth (.669).

The second determinant of coup risk is legitimacy or the degree of consensus among citizens, elites, and organizations about the state's right to make rules. There are several different ways to conceptualize this aspect of domestic politics and others have labeled this variable "state strength", "power", "capacity", and "loyalty of opposition" (Barnett, 1992; Linz, 1978, p. 155). We prefer the term *legitimacy* in order to focus on whether the state has the recognized right to legislate the rules that people and organizations follow and to avoid the misleading and tautological statement that the risk of a coup is lowest when the state is strong. According to Migdal, "in many societies, state officials have simply not gained the right and ability to make many rules they would like" (Migdal, 1988, p. 31). In Africa, "personal rule . . . is characterized by the seeming paradox of relative autonomy or freedom for the ruler and his clique to make policies but great constraint and incapacity to implement or enforce them" (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982, p. 30).

When nonmilitary actors agree about the state's right to make rules, when there is common willingness to pursue institutionalized procedures to redress grievances and to forego extrasystemic channels for dispute resolution, and when laws are sufficient for protecting individual and organizational interests from executive abuse, political opposition is unlikely to drag the military into politics. When the converse is true, however, elites may "find it expedient to grant the military a limited degree of legitimacy to perform these specific tasks . . . In such a pattern of civil-military relations, the military is repeatedly called into politics" (Stepan, 1971, p. 63). We measure legitimacy in terms of the competitiveness and degree of regulation of the political system. Competitiveness is a seven-step index ranging from "suppressed competition" in which no significant oppositional activity is permitted to "competitive" in which groups compete for political influence. Regulation of participation is a five-step index that ranges from a score of 1 if there are no enduring national political organizations to 5 if stable, enduring groups compete for influence (Gurr, 1990). To ensure that our index is not simply a proxy for regime type, we checked and found that legitimacy is only weakly correlated with regime type (-.245), which refers to whether the regime is military or civilian.⁴

Our combined coup-risk score provides a good measure of regime vulnerability.⁵ To begin, our score is based on theoretical insights. As noted earlier, the literature on civil-military relations identifies strength of civil society and legitimacy as important background causes of coups. In other words, we did not engage in "data fishing" to construct this score. We did not construct our score by beginning with a list of numerous potential correlates of coups and then selecting the most highly correlated measures. Rather, we started with theoretical insights about the most important background causes that make coups possible and then we chose the best available proxies for those causes. In addition, our score successfully

captures whether or not coups are possible. In the same way that cholesterol tests indicate whether or not a person is at risk for a heart attack without being able to determine if and when the attack will take place, our measure of regime vulnerability captures whether or not a coup is possible. There were only seven coup attempts, averaging one every 97 years, in the 680 cases in the lowest quartile of our coup-risk index. Hence, there was almost no opportunity for the military to attempt to displace regimes that fell in the low range of our coup-risk score. Out of 682 cases in the highest quartile of coup risk, there were 75 coup attempts, roughly one every nine years. Of the 34 regimes in the study that are in the highest quartile of coup risk, 22 (65 percent) experienced a coup attempt at some point during the period under consideration.

The dependent variable in our first model is counterbalancing, the effort by vulnerable regimes to protect themselves by dividing the military and pitting rival armed organizations against one another. Counterbalancing does not refer exclusively to the precise instant at which regimes decide to create new military institutions to check and balance old ones. Rather, counterbalancing entails the creation of new, rival military institutions as well as ongoing efforts to promote and exploit divisions and cleavages among military forces that already exist. As far as we know, there is no discussion in the literature on civil-military relations on how to operationalize and measure counterbalancing. We measure counterbalancing in terms of two dimensions, the number of military and paramilitary organizations and the relative size of the paramilitary compared to the total armed forces.

The first dimension, number of military and paramilitary organizations, reflects the diffusion versus concentration of the armed forces. If the military is divided into numerous branches and organizations, then leaders have more opportunities to create and exploit cleavages and rivalries among different institutions. However, if the military is divided into just a few organizations, then there are less potential cleavages that leaders can exploit to create a check-and-balance system. The second dimension, relative size of the paramilitary, is determined by the ratio of the number of troops in the paramilitary to the total number of paramilitary and nonparamilitary troops. When leaders seek to balance the power of the regular armed forces, often they depend on paramilitary organizations, defined as those organizations “whose training, organisation, equipment and control suggest they may be usable in support, or in lieu, of regular military forces” (International Institute of Strategic Studies 1994–1995, p. 5).

Measures of both dimensions of counterbalancing are based on data from annual editions of *The Military Balance*, which records relevant characteristics of militaries in nations around the world. In 1986, for example, the Ivory Coast receives a score of 7 on the first dimension of counterbalancing—(1) Army; (2) Navy; (3) Air Force; (4) Presidential Guard; (5) Gendarmerie; (6) Militia; (7) Military Fire Service—and a score of .38 on the second dimension as there were 8,000 paramilitary troops and 13,000 troops in the combined armed forces in 1986. We combined these variables into an index by computing z-scores for each dimension and summing them.⁶

Numerous factors can influence whether leaders divide or unify their armed forces, and we include these alternatives in our statistical analyses to avoid spurious results. For example, leaders may respond to international threat by unifying their militaries under joint command structures that increase their capacity for waging war (Ben Meir 1995). In our model below, we include a control for *international threat*, a continuous count of the number of wars among regional neighbors during the past five years.⁷ In addition, leaders may develop new forces to carry out internal missions such as the suppression of domestic violence. To control for this possibility, we include a measure of *domestic unrest*, an annual count of strikes, riots, assassinations, revolutionary actions, purges, antigovernment protests, and acts of guerilla warfare.⁸ Third, regimes may create new armed forces to compartmentalize and isolate rival linguistic, ethnic, or tribal groups in separate organizations (Rosen, 1996). Our model includes a measure of *ethnic fragmentation*, an indicator of the diversity of ethno-linguistic groups residing within the population of a given country.⁹ Finally, the decision to counterbalance may be influenced by a variety of national attributes of the political system. We include controls for *wealth*, measured by the natural logarithm of real gross domestic product per capita; *military size*, a continuous count of the number of troops in the regular armed forces including the army, air force, navy, and marine corps; and *regime type*, a dichotomous measure that is coded 0 for civilian regimes and 1 for military or combined civilian-military regimes.¹⁰

We present results of our fully specified model below, and our finding is that coup risk is related positively to counterbalancing.¹¹ Each unit increase in coup risk is correlated with a .25 unit jump in counterbalancing.¹² Because we scaled both the coup risk and counterbalancing variables to have similar standard deviations, the coefficient can be roughly interpreted as a standardized coefficient. That is, as coup risk increases by one standard deviation, counterbalancing grows by one-quarter standard deviation—a very substantial effect. As can be seen in Table 4.2, the countries that have the lowest level of coup risk tend to have very low counterbalancing scores: the average of the ten countries with the lowest coup risk is -1.61.

Table 4.1. The Impact of Coup Risk on Counterbalancing (OLS regression)

	Coefficient	Standard error	Probability
Coup risk	.255	.023	.000
International threat	-.210	.109	.055
Domestic unrest	.028	.006	.000
Ethnic fragmentation	-.004	.001	.002
Wealth	-.167	.055	.003
Military size	.00041	.000053	.000
Regime type	-.236	.088	.008
Constant	1.393	.448	.002
R2	.212		
N	1,713		

Table 4.2. Ten Countries with Lowest and Highest Average Coup Risk, 1966–1986

Country	# of NGOs	Legitimacy	Coup-risk score	# of paramilitary soldiers	# of regular soldiers	# of military & paramilitary branches	Counter balancing score
France	1,578	2.83	-3.84	79,000	497,000	5	-.39
Germany	1,520	2.83	-3.81	15,000	479,000	4	-1.63
U.K.	1,459	2.83	-3.78	0	359,000	3	-2.25
Belgium	1,456	2.83	-3.78	13,000	93,000	4	-1.14
Italy	1,449	2.83	-3.77	136,000	392,000	5	.02
Netherlands	1,438	2.83	-3.77	6,000	116,000	4	-1.08
Switzerland	1,353	2.83	-3.72	0	227,000	2	-3.24
Sweden	1,265	2.83	-3.65	0	256,000	3	-2.17
Denmark	1,246	2.83	-3.64	0	38,000	3	-2.44
Austria	1,183	2.83	-3.60	9,000	47,000	3	-1.86
Somalia	62	-.76	2.68	18,000	43,000	5	.45
Benin	118	-.84	2.76	2,200	5,300	4	-.05
Burkina-Faso	100	-.84	2.83	1,500	3,900	4	-.36
Honduras	174	-.85	2.88	3,400	12,100	4	-.61
Afghanistan	46	-.55	2.92	25,700	54,500	5	.41
Central African Republic	75	-.76	3.07	5,800	5,100	5	1.16
Kampuchea	49	-.82	3.31	102,800	123,200	5	1.81
Burundi	68	-.76	3.55	1,500	5,600	4	-.65
Laos	44	-.73	3.70	10,700	62,900	4	-1.71
North Yemen	32	-.51	4.11	20,000	27,000	4	.36

All values are averages of every year in our dataset for which data are available for each given country. Please see the text for an explanation of the coding and summary statistics of the variables.

By contrast, Table 4.2 shows that the countries with the highest level of coup risk tend to have much higher counterbalancing scores (.08 on average). Clearly, there are some exceptions to these trends. For example, Italy has a very low coup-risk score and a high counterbalancing score, while Laos has a high coup-risk score but a very low counterbalancing score. On average, however, Table 4.2 illustrates the clear and robust result of our multivariate model.

Although our theory does not offer any expectation as to whether coup risk might provide a better or worse explanation of counterbalancing than other factors, such as domestic unrest, our model suggests that coup risk is the most powerful predictor.¹³ As an additional check on our findings, we did a simple test to determine whether counterbalancing works. Our approach was to ask if high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance are less coup prone than high coup-risk regimes that do not counterbalance. Consistent with our expectations, counterbalancing does lower the incidence of coups: high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance are 44 percent less likely to have a subsequent coup or coup attempt than high coup-risk regimes that do not divide their militaries.

Our first set of results indicates that coup risk is associated positively with counterbalancing, and in this section of the chapter we determine whether or not counterbalancing might be related to international conflict. Our conceptualization of international conflict consists of a normative and a behavioral dimension that include hostile rhetoric, threats, troop mobilizations, blockades, limited uses of force, and war. Because the normative dimension of the dependent variable is difficult if not impossible to measure on a large-N basis, however, these analyses depend on indicators of the second, behavioral dimension of the dependent variable.

We include international conflict measures from two separate data sets, the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) data compiled by Gochman and Maoz and the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) data compiled by Brecher et al.¹⁴ The MID data identify “interactions between or among states involving threats to use military force, displays of military force, or actual use of force. To be included, these acts must be explicit, overt, nonaccidental, and government sanctioned” (Gochman & Maoz, 1984, p. 586 as quoted in Russett, 1993, p. 75). The ICB data define crises in terms of “an increase in the intensity of disruptive interaction between two or more adversaries, with a high probability of military hostilities” (Brecher, Wilkenfeld, & Moser, 1989, p. 5, as quoted in Russett, 1993, p. 75). Both data sets rank each dyad year according to a five-point scale that indicates the highest level of hostility reached during the given year.¹⁵ The levels are

“(1) no military confrontation, (2) verbal threat to use force, (3) display of force, as by mobilization or troop or naval movements, (4) limited use of force, including blockade, seizure of persons or territory, and clashes with some casualties, (5) interstate war with a minimum of one thousand battle-related fatalities and, for each participant, at least one hundred such fatalities or commitment of at least one thousand troops. (Gochman & Maoz, 1984, cited in Russett, 1993, p. 144) We collapse the second through fourth categories and assign a 1 to any case in which conflict occurs and a 0 to other cases.¹⁶ Between the years of 1966 and 1986,

the MID data set identifies 1,353 conflicts, and the ICB dataset identifies 305 conflicts among our cases.¹⁷

International conflict can be caused by many factors. For example, conflict may be caused by previous unsettled disputes or by threatening regional environments (Goertz & Diehl, 1993). In our model below, we include a control for *international threat*, a moving average of the number of recent disputes among regional neighbors during the past five years.¹⁸ A second possibility is that international conflict may result from a rally-around-the-flag phenomenon—leaders may engage in aggressive foreign behavior to divert the public’s attention from domestic problems. To control for this possibility, we include a measure of *domestic unrest*, an annual count of strikes, riots, assassinations, revolutionary actions, purges, antigovernment protests, and acts of guerilla warfare.¹⁹ A third, related possibility is that international conflict may be a direct result of coup risk, as leaders may use hostile foreign policy to focus the military’s attention on war. Hence, we include a control for *coup risk* in our model.²⁰ Fourth, international conflict may result from various attributes of the national political system. To account for this possibility, we include controls for *wealth*, a cross-national comparison of real gross domestic product per capita, logged; *military size*, a continuous count of the number of troops in the regular armed forces; *superpower status*, a dichotomous variable that we set to 0 for most countries of the world and 1 for the United States and Soviet Union; and *level of democracy*, a ten-point index of electoral freedom.²¹

Because our dependent variable, the act of a nation engaging in conflict, is a discrete event initiated at a single point in time, we used event history analysis to model the process. These models, explicitly designed to deal with dynamic time-varying processes, have several advantages over pooled time-series models. Most important, they do not suffer from the autocorrelation issues typically associated with pooled time-series analysis (Tuma & Hannan, 1984). The sign of the effect and level of statistical significance can be interpreted similarly to OLS regression. Models were estimated using RATE (Tuma, 1992). Our results, presented below, indicate that counterbalancing is associated with significantly higher rates of conflict over the 1966–1986 period, as measured by both the ICB and MID data sets. Our finding is that each 1-unit increase in counterbalancing results in a 17 percent increase in the rate of ICB conflicts and a 14 percent increase in the rate of MID conflicts.²² Moreover, the rate of ICB conflicts increases by 61 percent between regimes in the lowest and highest quartiles of counterbalancing, and the rate of MID conflicts increases by 74 percent.

The robustness of the two models is demonstrated by the fact that even though the dependent variables are taken from distinct data sets, the magnitudes of the coefficients of seven of the eight independent variables are very similar, and the directions are equivalent. As Russett notes, because only 27 percent of the MID disputes are identified by the ICB data-set, and 72 percent of ICB disputes are included in the MID data, “the use of both sets allows us to establish whether the conclusions we draw about the causes of conflict are robust” (1993, p. 74).

Table 4.3. The Impact of Counterbalancing on International Conflict (Event history analysis)

Dependent variable:	ICB conflicts		MID conflicts	
	Coefficient	(S.E.)	Coefficient	(S.E.)
Counterbalancing	.132**	(.052)	.159**	(.022)
International threat	.824**	(.160)	.445**	(.077)
Domestic unrest	.016**	(.007)	.011**	(.003)
Coup risk	-.132	(.077)	-.138**	(.029)
Wealth	-.237*	(.112)	-.163**	(.012)
Military size	.000	(.000)	.0002**	(.00004)
Superpower status	1.740**	(.433)	1.313**	(.150)
Level of democracy	-.059	(.039)	-.035**	(.017)
Constant	-.567	(.851)	.208**	(.067)

ICB Model: $X^2 = 94.79$; D.F. = 8; 186 events

MID Model: $X^2 = 564.12$; D.F. = 8; 1,184 events

* < .05; ** < .01 (2-tailed tests)

As an additional check on our results, we tested to determine whether high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance *and* that engage in subsequent international conflict are less coup prone than high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance and that do not engage in conflict. The result is striking. High coup-risk regimes that counterbalance and engage in subsequent conflict in the next five years are 27 percent less likely to have a coup than high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance but do not engage in conflict. Counterbalancing is a critical strategy for reducing the risk of a coup, but the most effective way to lower that risk is to divide the military and then to engage in international conflicts that drive wedges among rival armed forces.

Still, we were concerned that our findings might be the footprint of another theoretical process. For example, perhaps divided militaries are associated positively with international conflict because leaders use foreign disputes to unify their armed forces. In response to this possibility, we raise several points. To begin, our counterbalancing variable does not reflect instability or strife. Although we refer to counterbalancing many times in this study as “dividing the military,” our counterbalancing variable is a count of the number of military organizations and the size of the paramilitary, not the number of hostile cleavages within the armed forces.²³ Since the rally-around-the-flag argument is driven by hostile cleavages, and since our counterbalancing variable does not reflect such strife, there is no reason to believe that our statistical findings constitute evidence of the diversionary mechanism. Second, as we argue in the final section of this chapter, cohesion is not equivalent to loyalty, and military cohesion should not be confused with loyalty to the regime. Unified militaries can be dangerous when coup risk is high because their influence is unchecked by other armed organizations. Hence, there is little reason to suspect that leaders would try to unite their armed forces to lower the

risk of a coup. Third, the case study of Georgian civil-military relations presented in chapter 6 provides a concrete example of how international conflict can promote interservice rivalries that keep the military divided.

The analysis in this chapter indicates that during the second half of the Cold War, regimes that were vulnerable to their own armed forces were more prone to use counterbalancing strategies than invulnerable regimes. Counterbalancing, in turn, was positively related to international conflict involvement. These results, of course, do not constitute positive proof of the theory. Several commonsense qualifications need to be recognized. To begin, the approach advocated by King et al. (1994) for theory evaluation is incapable of providing absolute confirmation of social scientific arguments because of the absence of lawlike generalizations in the social and political worlds. O'Neill notes, "To yield an observable prediction, . . . theory . . . must be supplemented with . . . correspondence rules linking theoretical and observational concepts" (1995, p. 739). In axiomatic systems such as mathematics, the lawlike nature of correspondence rules makes it possible to articulate implications of a theory that must be true if a theory is true. For example, Tetlock and Belkin (1996a) note that "if and only if the number of prime numbers were finite, then there would exist a nonprime number x such that x equals the product of all primes plus 1 ($x = (p^1 p^2 \dots p^n) + 1$)." In nonaxiomatic systems that are the focus of the social sciences, however, the probabilistic nature of correspondence rules means that it is rarely if ever possible to claim that implications a , b , and c must be true if a theory is true. Correspondence rules that link the theoretical and the observational in social scientific theories consist of tendencies rather than lawlike statements. As a result, the King-Keohane-Verba approach to theory testing is rarely if ever conclusive. Typically the best that we can do is to argue that certain implications should be true if a theory is true. Hence while regime vulnerability should be associated positively with counterbalancing and counterbalancing should be related positively to conflict involvement if the theory is sound, failure to confirm these relationships would not falsify the theory automatically. Rather, it might be possible to spin a posthoc rationalization to explain why the positive relationships were not apparent in this particular period, the second half of the Cold War. Due to the ease of such rationalization, we must supplement the King-Keohane-Verba approach with other approaches including historical case studies.

In addition, selection bias, endogeneity (reverse causation), and a variety of other methodological pitfalls may have crept into the analysis. For example, the "treatment" variable in the models (coup risk in the first model, counterbalancing in the second model) may have been caused by the dependent variables. Although our selection rule (every country in the world whose population exceeds 1 million) is independent of the treatment variable, our findings still may be distorted by selection bias if reverse causality is present. As King et al. note, "endogeneity . . . is often an integral part of the process by which the world produces our observations" (1994, p. 198). Przeworski argues that "the observable world is not a random sample of the possible underlying conditions" (1995, p. 18; King et al., 1994, p. 135).

It is unlikely, however, that our findings are biased by backward causation. With regard to the first model, we conceptualize and operationalize coup risk in terms of deep, structural factors, and it is implausible to argue that the number of military organizations and size of the paramilitary are important causes of the strength of civil society as measured by INGOs or phones, students, and newspapers or level of legitimacy as measured by competition and regulation or age of the political system. Anyone trying to make such an argument would have quite a few dots to connect. With regard to our second model, we include a control for international threat as an independent variable, and we find that counterbalancing is associated positively with two distinct measures of the dependent variable even after accounting for the effect of previous international threat.²⁴

As King et al. note, “perfect designs are unattainable” (1994, p. 149). Moreover, we have followed an optimal selection strategy for minimizing bias when laboratory control is not possible: “[T]he best ‘intentional’ design selects observations to ensure variation in the explanatory variable . . . without regard to the values of the dependent variables” (pp. 140, 149). Our selection rule (all countries whose populations exceed 1 million) is consistent with guidelines for optimal selection strategies when laboratory control is not possible (p. 138).

Having advanced the qualifications mentioned above, we conclude this chapter by raising several points that lend support to the validity of the results and their importance for confirmation of the theory. To begin, while measurement problems often constitute threats to valid inference in social scientific studies, the large sample size in this study diminishes the influence of noisy data. By including a large number of countries over a two-decade time span, our aim is to improve on previous studies that limit themselves to narrow time periods or nonrepresentative samples. As Levy notes (1989b), many previous analyses that do cover extended time periods include only specific countries or regions (for example see Rosecrance, 1963). Many of the analyses that include broader samples of nations are restricted to quite narrow time periods. For example, Rummel’s (1963) study of 77 countries covers a period of only 3 years, (1955–1957), yet this study gave rise to an entire literature on the relationship between domestic and international conflict (Stohl, 1980). Clearly, consideration of such restricted samples or time periods can bias results. In Rummel’s case, for example, the period of 1955–1957 was generally peaceful (Levy, 1989b, p. 266). This study, by contrast, incorporates a 21-year time span and includes most countries of the world.

In addition, our findings are robust. As documented above, the positive, statistically significant relationships obtain regardless of the specification of the variables. While every statistical procedure requires assumptions of the data that may or may not be realistic, it is reassuring to know that the results are robust enough to be captured by dependent variables taken from completely distinct data sets. In addition, the results do not disappear when control variables are introduced into the models. When we include controls such as regime type, previous conflict, domestic unrest, relative power, wealth and growth, all of which have been identified by the international relations and civil-military relations literatures as

important causal factors, we find that the possibility of a coup is still positively and significantly related to counterbalancing, and counterbalancing is still positively and significantly related to conflict involvement in pairwise combination with each individual control as well as in completely specified models.

Finally, the tests in this chapter are difficult because of the counterintuitive nature of the predictions that we examine. As O'Neill notes, hard tests involve confirmation of expectations that are "highly unlikely without one's hypothesis" (1995, p. 738). Caporaso (1995, p. 458) argues that testing of risky, counterintuitive implications provides more confidence in the validity of a parent theory than confirmation of unsurprising implications. Hence, we suggest that the theory developed in chapters 2 and 3 appears to have passed a hard test.



Chapter Five

Regime Vulnerability as a Cause of Counterbalancing in Syria in the Early 1970s

This chapter is a test of my first theoretical argument, the claim that coup risk usually is a sufficient cause for leaders to divide their armed forces into rival organizations that check and balance each other. When Hafiz al-Asad became Syrian president in February 1971, Syria's ground forces consisted of a single army and a few lightly equipped militias. By 1976, Syrian ground forces included six fully equipped armies. However, Asad did not integrate Syria's new armies into a joint command structure, and he required them to report directly to the president's office rather than a centralized ministry. Coordination among Syrian military organizations was so poor that often they failed to fulfill their domestic and foreign policy missions. In the 1973 war, for example, Syrian combat troops filled an anti-tank ditch with shovels while under heavy Israeli fire because bridging tanks had been left behind (Cordesman & Wagner, 1990, p. 44). Why did Asad build so many military forces, and why did he prevent them from coordinating their efforts?

In this chapter, I argue that the possibility of a coup d'état prompted Asad to establish rival armed forces that checked and balanced each other and protected the regime as a by-product of their reciprocal monitoring. In the previous chapters I developed a theory linking civil-military relations to international outcomes. Then, along with coauthor Evan Schofer, I tested the theory statistically using a database of almost every country in the world over a two-decade period. While statistical tests lend some plausibility to the argument, it is important to determine if the theory can help explain particular historical cases. By narrowing the scope of inquiry to specific cases, my hope is to acquire a grounded, historically nuanced sense of whether and how the abstract, theoretical mechanisms developed in the first section of this study might operate in the real world. The plan of the chapter is as follows: I begin by arguing that the Syrian case is a difficult test for my theory because coup risk should not have prompted Asad to fragment Syria's military structure. If the possibility of a coup turns out to have been an important cause of counterbalancing in such a case, then we should gain more confidence in the theory presented in this study than aggregate data can provide alone (Eckstein, 1975).

Then I suggest that a coup was possible, that the Asad regime pursued a counterbalancing strategy, and that coup risk was an important driving force behind the establishment of a fragmented military structure in Syria in the early 1970s. Next, I argue that other possible explanations of Syrian counterbalancing do not seem plausible. Finally, although this case emphasizes a test of my first theoretical claim, I also address the implications of the case for my second theoretical claim by suggesting that military counterbalancing provided Asad with an incentive for participating in the 1973 war.

Hafiz al-Asad rose to power via a series of coups d'état, but Syria's civil-military instability began long before Asad's ascent. In 1949, after just three years of democratic rule that followed the collapse of the French mandate over Syria, army chief of staff Husni al-Za'im launched the first Syrian coup d'état.¹ The coup was backed by the American Central Intelligence Agency and American, French, British, Egyptian, and Iraqi intelligence services all subsidized Syrian newspapers and political parties in the late 1940s (Middle East Watch, 1991). Two additional coups followed within nine months and marked the beginning of a two-decade process of political instability that "progressively transferred power from the old generation to the new" (Lapidus, 1988, p. 648; Be'eri, 1970; Rathmell, 1995). The transfer of power that culminated in Asad's capture of the state must be interpreted in the context of two related themes: the rise of the 'Alawi community and that of the Ba'th Party (Pipes, 1989; Seale, 1965). Indeed, the parallel rise of the Ba'th Party and the 'Alawis can be traced to the Ba'thist Military Committee, organized in Cairo in 1960.² The committee formed in response to chaos that plagued the Syrian armed forces during the 1950s. It was made up of five Syrian officers, three of whom were 'Alawi: Hafez al-Asad, Salah Jadid, and Muhammed Umran.³ They "realized that absolute trust among politically active officers was a *sine qua non* to prolonged political survival" (Drysdale, 1979, p. 366). After returning to Syria, committee members planned and executed the coup of March 10, 1963, that brought the Ba'th Party to power.

According to Drysdale, the goal of the new regime was "to destroy the largely reactionary traditional landowning and mercantile ruling class of Damascus and Aleppo and to create a secular, socialist Syria. Most of its leading figures were young officers, teachers, lawyers and physicians with peasant or petit bourgeois family backgrounds" (1982, p. 3). Despite the populist appeal of its agenda, the regime lacked political experience, a well-defined policy program, and an organized popular following, and it was divided into civilian and military wings. As defense minister, Hafez al-Asad consolidated the Ba'thist and 'Alawi hold over the Syrian armed forces by assuming control of officer assignments, purging Sunni and conservative officers and troops, and promoting hundreds of loyal 'Alawi Ba'thists through the ranks (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 93).

On February 23, 1966, Jadid and Asad staged a coup. Over the next four years the Ba'th regime destroyed or exiled small property owners and merchants, formed armed militias of workers and peasants, created mass-based popular organizations, and purged trade unions of unsympathetic followers (Middle East Watch,

1991). As a result of policy disputes over the regime's radical agenda as well as a personal rivalry between Jadid and Asad, two wings of the Ba'th Party vied for power throughout 1969 and 1970. Jadid's radical faction advocated drastic land-reform and income redistribution, but Asad's moderate approach endorsed a more gradual socialist program. In February 1969 Asad seized key organs of the Syrian media, and in October, 1970 he forced the resignation of Jadid's ally, President and Prime Minister Nur al-Din Attasi. Jadid's radical faction convened an emergency party congress and stripped Asad of his post. But Asad "immediately ordered army units to occupy the offices of the party and proceeded to arrest its top civilian leaders . . . He ousted all sixteen members of the Regional Command, installing himself as Premier and Secretary General" (Dawisha, 1978, p. 351). After formally assuming the Syrian presidency in February 1971, Asad sponsored elections, formed a parliament, and drafted a new constitution. He replaced Jadid's socialist programs by easing tight restrictions on private investment and trade.

From its inception, the Asad regime featured classic attributes of a weak, authoritarian state. All manifestations of dissent were suppressed violently, and personal, political freedoms never were tolerated (Middle East Watch, 1991). The regime depended on control over the police and armed forces, and the Ba'th Party provided an institutional facade for one-man rule (Migdal, 1988; Lawson, 1990; Hinnebusch, 1989). Asad relied on patronage by using oil rents, foreign aid, and drug money to finance a sizable public sector and by forcing "societal sectors [to] compete . . . for largess through clientalism partly organized along sectarian lines. This enabled the regime to play off a society fragmented along class, regional, and ethnic-sectarian lines" (Hinnebusch, 1993a, p. 246, 2001). Despite unmistakable evidence of the regime's ongoing willingness to use brutality to suppress dissent, Middle East Watch notes, "The atmosphere is one of chaos mixed with petty corruption and the exercise of bureaucratic power, not of a ruthlessly efficient police state" (1991, p. 46). In the early 1970s, Syria's population of 8 million was divided by religion, ethnicity, language, region, tribe, and class. Eighty two and one-half percent of the population were Arabic-speaking, and 68.7 percent were Sunni Muslims. Religious minorities included 'Alawis (11.5 percent), Druzes (3 percent), Isma'ilis (1.5 percent), and Greek Orthodox Christians (4.7 percent). Ethnic minorities included Kurds (8.5 percent), Armenians (4 percent), Turkomans (3 percent), and Circassians (van Dam, 1979, p. 15; Heller, 1983, p. 221; McLaurin, 1979; Kessler, 1987).

The Syrian case is a hard test for my theory. If the logic advanced in chapter 2 is correct, then the possibility of a coup should almost always motivate leaders to attempt to protect themselves from their own armed forces. The argument is that regardless of the particular combination of strategies they pursue, usually leaders should include counterbalancing in their portfolio because it is the only strategy that pits force against force and limits the armed forces' capacity for conspiracy. What conditions might prompt exceptions to the expected causal relationship between the possibility of a coup and counterbalancing? Presumably, leaders should select control mechanisms they expect to yield significant benefits

without incurring high costs. When counterbalancing is expected to be ineffective and to incur high costs and when leaders pursue numerous alternative strategies that should be sufficient for lowering the risk of a coup, then they should be less likely to rely on counterbalancing to protect themselves from their own armed forces. Syria in the early 1970s constitutes such a case. In the Syrian case, coup risk should not have caused President Asad to counterbalance in the early 1970s because he had reason to doubt that counterbalancing would work, because the costs of counterbalancing were expected to be particularly high, and because Asad pursued numerous alternative strategies that should have been sufficient for attenuating the risk of a coup.

Based on recent Syrian history, Asad had reason to doubt that counterbalancing would work. Previous attempts at counterbalancing in Syria failed to end the cycle of coups and countercoups that undermined political stability in the 1950s and 1960s. After the 1963 coup, for example, the Military Committee of the governing Ba'ath Party created a party militia of armed civilians as well as a party security force (Seale, 1965, p. 96; Foreign Area Studies Division, 1965, p. 352). Hinnebusch notes that these forces were "meant to counter the army's coercive monopoly" (1990, p. 159). After the 1966 coup, 'Abd al-Karim al-Jundi founded the Bureau of National Security of the Ba'ath Party and built it into one of Syria's most feared security agencies. Brigadier General 'Ali Haydar founded the Special Forces, an elite paramilitary, intelligence, police unit (Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 49, 51). Clearly, none of these efforts broke Syria's cycle of military instability, as they all predated Asad's coup of November 1970. Hence, there was no precedent of effective counterbalancing in Syrian civil-military relations. It is certainly true that Asad's reaction to previous, failed efforts at counterbalancing could have been to do a more effective job of playing divide-and-conquer politics with Syria's military and paramilitary forces. At the same time, recent national experiences during twenty-five years of independence should not have led Asad to see counterbalancing as the effective solution for achieving stable civil-military relations in Syria.

In addition, Asad should have expected to pay high financial and organizational costs for counterbalancing. Although the lack of transparency into Syrian domestic politics makes it impossible to determine Asad's expectation of costs in 1971, it is possible to show *ex post* that the regime paid a high price for the creation and maintenance of new, armed organizations. Exact budgetary figures are not available, but sufficient data exist to estimate the strain that counterbalancing placed on the Syrian state budget. In the early 1970s, Syria's annual national budget averaged about \$1.4 billion U.S. dollars, and by 1976 Syrian GDP was \$5.9 billion U.S. (Nyrop, 1978, p. 234). In 1970 Syria spent \$1.23 billion, and the figures for 1971 through 1973 are \$1.28 billion, \$1.36 billion, and \$1.58 billion, respectively. Of the total annual budget, Asad devoted an average of about 35 percent to military spending. In 1970 Syria spent 37.7 percent of its total budget on defense, and the figures for 1971 through 1973 are 29.2 percent, 29.6 percent, and 44.4 percent, respectively (p. 234).

The paramilitaries probably made up at least one-third of the size of the regular armed forces. The regular armed forces included about 100,000 troops in the early 1970s and the paramilitary forces (the Defense Brigades, Special Forces, and Struggle Companies) probably included 35,000 troops. Hence, the Syrian paramilitary was at least one-third the size of the regular armed forces. When the intelligence agencies and Third Armored Division are included in the cost of counterbalancing, the ratio increases considerably. (By comparison, the data in chapter 4 indicate that the median ratio of paramilitary troops to regular armed forces for all countries in the world in 1974 was 27 percent). Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that the regime devoted at least one-third of the overall military budget to counterbalancing. Asad probably spent at least \$150 million annually, or 11 percent of the total government budget and 1.5 percent of the Syrian gross domestic product on counterbalancing in the early 1970s. Given that the Syrian state's capacity for raising revenue via taxation, foreign aid, and borrowing was low (Midgal, 1988), counterbalancing put a severe strain on the national budget. In addition to financial costs, however, the cost of counterbalancing must be assessed in terms of organizational effectiveness. Later, I develop the argument that division of the military into rival organizations seriously compromised the Syrian armed forces' ability to pursue various foreign and domestic missions. Hence, counterbalancing should have been expected to incur large financial and organizational costs.

The final reason why the possibility of a coup should not have caused counterbalancing is that Asad pursued numerous other strategies that should have been sufficient for attenuating the risk of conspiracy. Asad implemented so many alternative coup-proofing strategies that it should not have been necessary to include counterbalancing in his portfolio of control mechanisms. To begin, Asad attempted to purchase the loyalty of his own armed forces through remuneration. As discussed in chapter 2, the fundamental element of remuneration strategies is the provision of resources, whether legally or extralegally, to purchase the loyalty of the troops. Regimes may use salary, benefits, bribery, or the tolerance of corruption for this purpose. Remuneration was an important element in Asad's efforts to reduce the likelihood of a coup in the early 1970s. According to Petran, officers "receive higher salaries than individuals of comparable civilian status. [They] get free medical care and generous traveling allowances. Army co-operatives provide them with every conceivable article at cost price as well as duty-free foreign imports not available to the rest of the population . . . Interest-free loans enable them to buy houses and villas" (1972, p. 248 as cited in Dawisha, 1978, p. 351; Nyrop, 1978, p. 212; Picard, 1990). Asad allowed officers to ignore the 200 percent duty levied on civilians when they purchased new cars (Nyrop, 1978, p. 212). And other aspects of military benefits such as housing, leave, dependent care, income supplements and retirement benefits compared favorably with Syrian civilian conditions (Dyer, 1979, p. 692; Nyrop, 1978, p. 212; Collelo, 1988, p. 263). Officers even received an allowance to pay for household servants.

In addition to generous salaries and benefits packages, soldiers and officers benefited from numerous corruption schemes, most of which appear to have enjoyed the regime's blessings. Amnesty International (1987) reported that Syrian officers stationed in Lebanon approached detainees' relatives and demanded up to 50,000 liras (\$12,700 U.S.) for prison visits and 200,000 Syrian liras (\$51,000 U.S.) for releases. Officers demanded bribes for passports, import licenses, exit visas and permits (Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 41–42). One paramilitary force, the Defense Brigades, established a market in Damascus to sell goods stolen from Lebanon: "Trucks of the Defense Brigades or the Third Division often travel the route from Beirut to Damascus loaded with contraband" (pp. 41–42). Hinnebusch concluded that "military officers have become patron-brokers allocating state goods and services to clients" (1990, p. 161).

In addition to remuneration, Asad used patrimonialization to obtain and maintain the loyalty of the armed forces. Patrimonialization refers to purging, shuffling, ethnic stacking, and other tactics designed to pack the armed forces with political loyalists. Regimes use patrimonial strategies to attempt to wrest control over personnel issues from the military and to supplant merit-based standards for promotion and recruitment with personalistic criteria. Patrimonialization was an essential element in Asad's survival strategy in the early 1970s. He maintained personal control over military appointments, possibly even at the middle levels of the officer corps, and he used purges, shuffles, imprisonment, and assassination to prevent individual officers from consolidating their own power bases (Hinnebusch, 1990, p. 159; Z. Ma'oz, 1986, p. 28; Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 167–168). For example, on March 14, 1972, Syrian agents assassinated Mohammed 'Umran, a former senior party and military official, in Tripoli, Lebanon, to thwart an attempted comeback (Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 152–153). In December 1972 the regime arrested at least 15 officers who were allies of the ousted Salah Jadid and charged them with attempted conspiracy (van Dam, 1979, p. 90). In the late 1970s Asad instigated "a wave of transfers and retirements in which most of the remaining senior officers who had been associated with President Asad in the preparation of the 1970 coup were removed from sensitive military positions" (Dyer, 1979, p. 687; Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 9, 10).⁴

As a supplement to the use of purges, shuffles, imprisonment, and assassination to prevent individual officers from consolidating their own power bases, Asad placed minority officers in command of military and paramilitary agencies. Collelo says that a "pillar of regime support was the tacit coalition of minorities that Assad has constructed" (1988, p. 207). Christians, Druzes, Ismailis, Yazidis, Kurds, and Circassians have been overrepresented in the armed forces under Asad, and they all "made common cause with the Alawi minority because of the shared fear that they would be persecuted under an orthodox Sunni government" (p. 208). In particular, Asad has sought to bind the fate of the 'Alawi community to the fate of the regime (Michaud, 1982, pp. 29–30). In the early 1970s, 'Alawi officers commanded almost all paramilitary agencies as well as units at the brigade and division levels of the regular armed forces (Middle East Watch,

1991, p. 93). Over half of the senior officer corps and two-thirds of the students at the Military Academy have been 'Alawi (Z. Ma'oz, 1986, p. 28; Heller, 1983, p. 232; Hinnebusch, 1990, p. 160; Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 40). Examples include Rif'at al-Asad, former head of the Defense Brigades; Adnan al-Asad, commander of the Struggle Companies; 'Ali Haydar, former head of the Special Forces; Adnan Makhluf, commander of the Presidential Guard; Ibrahim al-Ali, head of the Popular Army; Muhammed al-Khuli, head of Air Force Intelligence; 'Ali Duba, head of Military Intelligence; General Shafiq Fayyad, former commander of the Third Division; General Ibrahim Safi, commander of the First Division; and 'Adnan Badr Hasan, commander of the Ninth Division (Hinnebusch, 1990, p. 160). Van Dam concludes, "The supremacy which Hafiz al-Asad's faction held after November of that year [1970] considerably reduced the chances for non-Alawis to form independent power blocs which would have any potential to endanger the position of the established regime" (1979, p. 89).

Indoctrination was yet another strategy that Asad used to protect himself from his own armed forces. Indoctrination strategies entail regime efforts to persuade service members to share the regime's particular political values or to inculcate them with a neutral standard of civilian control. In the case at hand, Asad strove to create an ideological army by identifying membership in the Ba'th Party and loyalty to Ba'thist ideology as essential criteria for promotion in the senior echelons of the officer corps (Collelo, 1988, p. 260). In 1971, Asad established a political directorate "to supervise political activity and indoctrination in the Syrian army. Among other things it directed a network of agents (*muwajihun siyasiiyyun*) charged with the political and ideological education of the army as well as with the raising of individual standards of discipline and devotion" (Rabinovich, 1982, pp. 269–270).⁵ Syrian authorities have not released official statistics on the partisan composition of the military in the early 1970s, but in 1975 Asad claimed 80 percent of officers killed in the 1973 war were party members (Dawisha, 1978, p. 353; also Seale, 1988, pp. 89–90).

The regime attempted to protect itself by promoting the armed forces' corporate spirit. Promotion of corporate spirit refers to regime efforts to lower the risk of a coup by boosting military morale and prestige and by deferring to military preferences on issues such as promotion, recruitment, procurement, the military budget, and doctrine. In addition, corporate spirit refers to whether criteria for deciding personnel issues are institutionalized on a nonpersonalistic basis. The essence of corporate spirit then involves both the military's right to settle issues within its own sphere without regime interference and the degree to which such issues are resolved according to merit-based, institutionalized, non-personalistic criteria. Although Asad violated corporate spirit in many ways (detailed above in the discussion of patrimonialization), he promoted the military's prestige, reputation, and morale as well. According to Ma'oz and Yaniv (1986, p. 63), military spending almost doubled in the early 1970s, from \$384 million in 1970 to \$624 million in 1974 (in constant 1978 U.S. dollars), even though welfare and development spending declined as a percentage of the Syrian state budget

(Michaud, 1982, p. 30). Asad enhanced military morale dramatically by expanding the armed forces and procuring the latest Soviet armaments in the 1970s (Rabinovich, 1982, p. 270).⁶ Collelo concludes, "Under Assad, the top army ranks have felt more secure. The ambitious rebuilding of the armed forces . . . increased the prestige and morale of the military" (1988, p. 263).

Finally, Asad attempted to lower the risk of coups by professionalizing pockets of the Syrian military. Professionalization, according to Huntington, entails efforts to ensure the loyalty of the armed forces by focusing their attention on military matters and by draining officers' time and energy that might otherwise be available for conspiratorial activity. According to a professionalization strategy, civilian control is achieved not because the military and the society share the same values and ideology, but because the military is indifferent to societal values and ideology. I argue in chapter 2 that professionalization is better conceptualized as a strategy for improving the armed forces' fighting effectiveness than as a strategy for minimizing the risk of a coup. Still, much of the literature on civil-military relations identifies professionalization as a key to reducing the risk of coups. Hence, I note briefly that Asad attempted to instill professional standards and merit-based criteria in pockets of the regular Syrian Army, in particular among junior officers and enlisted personnel. Ba'ithization of the Army allowed Asad to establish higher standards of competence and military discipline by protecting the military from the politicized, factional infighting that had characterized civil-military relations in the 1960s (Drysdale, 1979, p. 370). Asad replaced some officers who lacked professional training by basing recruitment "on professional competence or promise rather than on the purely political grounds of the 1960s" (Dyer, 1979, pp. 685, 692). These steps improved the Syrian Army's performance in the 1973 war as compared to its disastrous efforts in previous conflicts (Ma'oz & Yaniv, 1986, p. 74; Dupuy, 1978). Hinnebusch claims that in the early 1970s "[i]n the larger army charged with external defense a new stress was put on professional competence and discipline" (1990, p. 159; see also Rabinovich, 1982, p. 269).

The argument I developed in chapter 2 suggests that the possibility of a coup should almost always prompt regimes to pursue counterbalancing strategies. To the extent that there are exceptions to this claim, however, regime vulnerability should be less likely to cause counterbalancing if the benefits of counterbalancing are expected to be low and the costs are expected to be high. Syria in the early 1970s constitutes such a case.

Hafez al-Asad was president of Syria for three decades, but he could have been overthrown by a coup in the early 1970s. Two factors might explain why Asad was not deposed. On the one hand, Asad's survival might be attributed to the impossibility of a coup, the structural stability of the domestic political system in Syria in the early 1970s. On the other hand, Asad's survival might attest to his success in compensating for the regime's structural vulnerability by effectively implementing coup-proofing strategies that blocked the military's capacity for conspiracy. In this section of the chapter, I favor the latter interpretation by arguing that a coup was quite possible in Syria in the early 1970s. Even though Asad was

not deposed by a coup, the Syrian political system was structurally vulnerable: Had Asad failed to implement domestic survival strategies effectively, the Syrian military could have overthrown him. Consider the following points.

To begin, numerous attempted conspiracies launched against the Asad regime suggest ex post that a coup was possible in the early 1970s. By 1978 Nyrop concluded that “a power struggle among personal factions within the community of Alawite officers is an ever-present danger” (1978, p. 218). Asad may have fabricated some accounts of attempted coups to justify martial law or other aspects of his heavy-handed rule. But the number of independent reports of mutinous behavior lends credibility to the notion that the possibility of a coup was high in the early 1970s. In December 1972, for example, Asad arrested military supporters of the ousted Salah Jadid and charged them with attempted conspiracy (van Dam, 1979, p. 90). In the spring and fall of 1976, Syria’s intervention in Lebanon prompted mutinies among officers and enlisted men throughout Syria (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 8). In July 1977 the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* reported the discovery by Syrian officials of clandestine military organizations that had been responsible for assassinating senior ‘Alawi officers (Nyrop, 1978, p. 218). Van Dam reports numerous ‘Alawi-backed military conspiracies against the regime (1979, pp. 42, 77, 87, 89–90, 160). And by 1991, a conservative estimate of Syria’s prison population reported that several hundred soldiers were incarcerated as political prisoners (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 69).

In addition, the Syrian political system was plagued by background factors that have been identified by the literature on civil-military relations as important determinants of coups. Numerous pre-Asad coups and attempted coups increased the risk of military conspiracy in Syria in the early 1970s. As Zimmerman (1983) notes, past coups are important predictors of future attempted conspiracies because often they reflect alternative factors that can trigger coups such as military grievances or the lack of regime legitimacy. Past coups also may have a causal impact when officers come to believe that political disputes can be solved through direct intervention in the political process. Between its achievement of independence from France in April 1946 and Asad’s bloodless coup in November 1970, Syria experienced 21 regime changes via coups d’état (Dawisha, 1978, p. 341). This fact alone suggests that the Syrian political system was structurally vulnerable in the early 1970s and that the military may have been able to stage a successful coup against Asad.

Syrian civil society was weak in the early 1970s. As argued in chapter 4, the strength of civil society is an important determinant of the degree of regime vulnerability to the military. Strong, nonstate organizations constitute a powerful safeguard against military intervention as a result of their ability to “talk back” or resist a coup by mobilizing protesters who refuse to comply with plotters’ orders (Luttwak, 1968, p. 103). In Syria in the early 1970s almost all elements of civil society were penetrated and monitored by the Ba’th Party or by the nonparty security and intelligence apparatus (Drysdale, 1982). In the late 1960s the brutally authoritarian regime of Salah Jadid crushed civil society’s vitality by using the state to

penetrate social and professional organizations and by replacing indigenous grass-roots clubs and institutions with officially sanctioned popular organizations such as the National Union of Students and the Peasants Union. Hinnebusch notes, "The state victimized some of the most developed parts of civil society, the *sug*, merchants, and industrialists" (1993a, p. 246). In addition, the regime prohibited non-Ba'th parties from organizing among students, workers, women, and peasants (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 79). The regime controlled lawyers, doctors, and other professionals by requiring them to hold licenses issued by closely monitored associations, and the Ba'th Party screened all candidates for association office. Meetings were permitted only under the observation of a party representative (p.80).

Finally, neither the officials who comprised the regime nor institutions of government enjoyed public legitimacy in Syria in the early 1970s. As argued in chapter 4, when citizens and elites contest the state's right to make rules and when there is common unwillingness to pursue institutionalized procedures to redress grievances, political opposition may attempt to drag the military into politics to protect its interests (Stepan, 1971, p. 63). In Syria, neither the regime nor the institutions of state enjoyed public legitimacy in the early 1970s. After a honeymoon sparked by hopes that Asad would put an end to the brutality of his predecessor, by the regime's initial economic performance, and by "the establishment of a pseudo-democratic facade," the Sunni Muslim majority soon came to resent the regime's brutality and its narrow social base (Dyer, 1979, p. 684). Cartoons of the president, even favorable ones, were not permitted in the Syrian press in the early 1970s and Syrian newspapers were not allowed to use the word *'Alawi* (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 116). Drysdale refers to the regime's "perennial legitimacy problem" that resulted because "[t]hose whose influence and wealth were destroyed by land reform and nationalization . . . dismissed the regime's secularism and socialism as a way to dress the transfer of power to the minorities and to the rural sector" (1982, p. 3). During the 1978 and 1979 elections for professional association officers, the one occasion when Syrian elections featured "a real opposition slate, in some cases not a single Ba'th candidate won office" (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 37).

It is difficult to quantify the degree of regime vulnerability in Syria in the early 1970s. On the one hand, 25 years of purges, coups, and countercoups exhausted previously dominant Sunni and Druze officer factions by the time Asad became president (Batatu, 1981; van Dam, 1979). On the other hand, even though participants in previous military conspiracies found themselves considerably weakened by the beginning of Asad's tenure, other military challengers could have emerged. The bottom line is that attempted conspiracies that did take place as well as the presence of background causes of coups gesture at the fundamental vulnerability of the Syrian political system in the early 1970s.

According to Batatu, "At the heart of Syria's regime stands a cluster of military officers . . . [who] cling together and act in concert" (1981, p. 331). While elite cooperation may characterize Syrian economic policy, I argue that Asad did not permit coordination in the realm of security issues. Leaders of various Syrian

military organizations reported directly to the president and coordinating bodies such as the Defense Ministry retained little authority. Later, I chronicle counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s, when President Asad created and strengthened five different paramilitary armies that were designed to check and balance one another and to protect the regime as a byproduct of their reciprocal monitoring. Although my focus is the creation of new military and paramilitary forces, it is also important to note that Asad pursued a counterbalancing strategy with Syrian intelligence agencies and that he has relied on at least seven different services (*mukhabarat*) to provide information on regime opponents.⁷ These forces include Military Police, Bureau of National Security of the Ba'ath Party, Military Intelligence, General Intelligence, Political Security, Air Force Intelligence, and Military Security. After describing the five paramilitary armies that Asad created or significantly strengthened in the early 1970s, I describe the forces that existed when Asad came to power.

Brigades for the Defense of the Revolution

Asad probably established the Defense Brigades, Saraya al-Difa' 'an al-Thawra, in 1971, and he placed them under the control of his brother Rif'at.⁸ Headquartered in the al-Mezze area of Damascus, the Defense Brigades consisted of more than 10,000 troops by the late 1970s and by 1981 had grown to include between 12,000 to 25,000 men, more than a full army division (Batatu, 1981, p.332; Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 180; *New York Times*, January 11, 1980, p. 2). Most troops were heavily armed commandos from Asad's tribe and probably even his village. The Defense Brigades were led and manned by 'Alawis and members of other minority communities including Christians, Druze, and Ismailis, and they deployed the most modern weapons of any Syrian force, including the regular Army. Their arsenal included Soviet T-72 tanks, surface-to-air missile batteries, and advanced attack helicopters (Dyer, 1979, p. 687). The Defense Brigades included four elite brigades (one mechanized and three armored) and an intelligence branch under the command of Rif'at's son-in-law Mu'in Nassif. They controlled all routes to the capital, surrounded Damascus, guarded the presidential palace, and acquired a reputation for violence and corruption that made them the most hated and feared army in Syria (Middle East Watch 1991, p. 180). After the Defense Brigades attempted a coup in 1984, Asad replaced his brother Rif'at with Mu'in Nassif, who oversaw their reorganization as a standard armored division (Collelo, 1988, p. 269).

Struggle Companies

Asad created the Struggle Companies, Saraya al-Sira, in 1973 and placed them under the command of his cousin Adnan al-Asad. Many of its noncommissioned officers came from Asad's village of Qardahah. The Struggle Companies controlled key access routes to the capital and guarded important command posts (Hinnebusch,

1990, p. 160). Batatu notes that this force of 5,000 men probably was intended to protect the regime from domestic challengers (1981, p. 331).

Presidential Guard

Asad established the Presidential Guard, al-Haras al-Jumhuri, in 1976 after Syria's invasion of Lebanon prompted a series of assassination attempts. Also known as the Republican Guard, it was charged with maintaining Asad's personal security as well as general security in Damascus. Soon after its formation, the Guard grew to include 10,000 troops. It divided into paramilitary and intelligence branches, and its size increased after the demise of the Defense Brigades in the mid-1980s. Since its inception, the Guard has been under the command of Asad's wife's nephew 'Adnan Makhluḥ. One of its subunits, Presidential Security (al-Amn al-Riasi) was headed by Asad's son Basil prior to his death in an automobile accident in 1994.

Third Armored Division

The Army's Third Armored Division, al-Firqa' a-Thalitha, was formally subordinate to the Army chief of staff, but in practice it operated independently as a regime shield. Garrisoned just outside Damascus, the Third Armored Division was under the command of Asad's cousin Shafiq Fayyad, who replaced Mustafa Sharba in 1973 or 1974 (Aker, 1985). It was an elite armored force whose strength in the early 1970s was estimated at 10,000 men equipped with over 250 tanks and 250 armored vehicles (Dupuy, 1978, p. 441; Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 52; Seale, 1988, p. 327). The Third Armored Division has carried out internal as well as foreign policy missions including the invasion of Lebanon in 1976, the occupation of Aleppo in 1980, and the suppression of the 1982 Hama revolt (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 41).

Special Forces

Special Forces, al-Wahdat al-Khassa, was formed in 1968 before Asad became president. It was a minor organization before Asad strengthened it to its current size of between 5,000 and 15,000 heavily armed commandos and paratroopers. Headquartered in Damascus, Special Forces was equipped with helicopters, tanks, and other advanced weapons and has been described as the regime's praetorian guard (Dyer, 1979, p. 687). It has carried out numerous domestic and foreign policy missions. In addition, it has acted as an intelligence and police agency and imprisoned thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians since 1985. Commanders of the Special Forces have included 'Ali Umran, Ali Haydar, and 'Ali Duba (Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 38–39; Batatu, 1981, p. 332).

Below I describe armed organizations in Syria that were formed before Asad became president in February 1971.

Army

The regular Army was the largest and most powerful of Syria's armed forces. In the mid-1970s it deployed 2,500 Soviet tanks and maintained its own air defense system, including antiaircraft guns and artillery as well as 48 surface-air missile batteries (Heller, 1983, p. 237; Fitzgerald, 1983). Manpower increased from about 60,000 in 1968 to 135,000 in 1973. Out of a population of 8.1 million people, the Army included 227,500 regular soldiers and 102,500 reservists in 1978 (Dyer, 1979, p. 686). In 1977 most active duty personnel served in the Army's one armored division (that included one mechanized and two armored brigades) and three mechanized divisions (each consisting of one armored and two mechanized brigades) (Nyrop, 1978, p. 208). These figures do not include the Third Armored Division described earlier as a semi-independent paramilitary force.

Navy

Syria's tiny Navy included only 2,500 regular forces and 2,500 reservists in the early 1970s. Subordinate to the local army commander, its mission consisted of coastal defense. In 1977 it was commanded by General Fadl Hussain and based in Latakia and Baniyas. The Syrian Navy deployed only 25 vessels, including two frigates and 12 patrol boats (Nyrop, 1978, p. 208).

Air Force

The Air Force was formed in 1948 after the first class of Syrian pilots graduated from British flight schools. The 25,000 members of the Syrian Air Force were divided into 9 fighter-ground attack squadrons and 11 interceptor squadrons that included about 395 combat aircraft, almost all of which had been provided by the Soviet Union (Dyer, 1979, p. 686). Major bases were located near 12 Syrian cities, including Damascus, Hama, and Aleppo (Nyrop, 1978, p. 208).

Air Defense

Air Defense consisted of 15,000 men drawn from the Army and Air Force and organized according to the Soviet model. It was commanded by Major General Ali Salih and deployed 24 surface-to-air missile batteries that were independent of the Army's SAM batteries (Dyer, 1979, p. 687).

Gendarmerie

The Gendarmerie consisted of 8,000 men (Dyer, 1979, p. 686). Nyrop noted that it was a “single national police force under the Ministry of Interior [that] was responsible for routine police duties” (1978, p. 221).

Desert Guard

The Desert Guard, or *Hajjana*, consisted of 1,500 soldiers who were responsible for monitoring and controlling the bedouin communities of the eastern Syrian deserts.

Did the possibility of a coup cause President Asad to counterbalance in the early 1970s? Above I claim that a coup was possible and that Asad divided the structure of the armed forces into rival organizations. In this section of the chapter, I argue that the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing. Consider the following points. To begin, it is likely that Asad was extremely concerned about the possibility of a coup in the early 1970s. As noted above, there were 21 coups in the two decades preceding Asad’s rise to power in February 1971. Some of these were quite bloody. During the coup of August 14, 1949, for example, “Lieutenant Fadlallah Abu Mansur led a task force of six armoured cars through the silent streets to the presidential residence . . . Fadlallah shot his way in and confronted [President] Za’im in pyjamas in the hall. He struck him in the face and . . . Zai’im was bundled into an armoured car and taken to a prearranged rendezvous” (Seale, 1965, p. 75). Za’im was then sentenced to death and executed on the spot. Given the violence that characterized previous Syrian coups, it is reasonable to assume that had Asad been deposed by force, he could have been tortured or killed. Although Asad never admitted his fear of a coup to the Syrian public, on occasion Syrian officials acknowledged their concerns in the Western press (Morgan 1975, as cited in Drysdale, 1979, p. 372).

Numerous military purges that Asad initiated (van Dam, 1979) indicate the regime’s concern about the possibility of a coup in the early 1970s. As Migdal argues, purging often signals fear of a conspiracy because it may reveal leadership efforts to undermine potential challengers’ power bases (1988). In addition, Asad’s use of rival intelligence agencies to spy on the military and to arrest and harass military personnel suggests that the regime was concerned about the possibility of a coup. In 1984, for example, Asad ordered ‘Ali Duba’s military intelligence agents to place Rif’at and other senior leaders of the Defense Brigades under surveillance (Seale, 1988, p. 430). Regular Army soldiers who expressed dissatisfaction with the regime have been subject to arrest, detention, and torture by the various intelligence services. Sulaiman Mustafa Ghaibur, for example, a soldier from the village of ‘Aqarib who was stationed at the Aleppo Infantry School, probably was tortured to death in 1986 by military intelligence (Amnesty International, 1987, pp. 10, 18). According to Middle East Watch, Asad “orders agencies to watch one another.

It is a costly exercise, but the mutual suspicion and 'competition' gives Asad complete control" (1991, p. 42). Dyer reports that "extensive use is made of the technique of maintaining rival and overlapping intelligence services, some of which concentrate on the armed forces" (1979, p. 690). Syria's bloody, conspiratorial history and the regime's use of purging and spying indicate that Asad probably was concerned about the possibility of a coup in the early 1970s.

In addition, Asad prevented rival armies from communicating or cooperating. If Asad had established rival forces for functional reasons such as national defense or domestic suppression, he would have integrated them under joint command forces. The fact that he kept Syrian armed organizations apart constitutes evidence in support of my argument because, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3, counterbalancing requires leaders to prevent their forces from conspiring with each other. In the Syrian case, Asad reinforced organizational boundaries that kept military forces apart even though foregoing coordination incurred domestic and international costs. While Asad used rival armed organizations to spy on one another, he did not allow communication or cooperation among different military, paramilitary, and intelligence forces. Nyrop claims that "the internal security apparatus was known to consist of myriad organizations with overlapping missions . . . Each organization was directly responsible to the president and his closest advisers; there was no coordination among them or knowledge of each others' activities" (1978, 221).

Considerable evidence suggests that Asad kept his armies apart. All branches of the armed forces reported directly to the president in the early 1970s (Amnesty International, 1987, p. 7). The chiefs of the Air Force and Navy as well as important General Staff directorates such as personnel and political administration, for example, circumvented the Ministry of Defense by reporting straight to Asad (Heller, 1983, p. 230). Even lower level military officers reported to Asad. Middle East Watch notes, "Key field commanders in the army report directly to the president rather than through a chain of command to the chief of staff and the defense minister" (1991, p. 28). As a result of this highly centralized system, coordinating bodies had little power, and cooperation among different armed service branches was prevented. The Defense Ministry was unable to coordinate military activities and neither the General Staff nor the Defense Minister, Mustafa Tlas, retained much actual power (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 191; Seale, 1988, p. 428). Even Asad's personal staff was quite small, thus limiting the potential for any official or assistant to coordinate the activities of the various armies (p. 341). In the military realm, the Syrian regime literally was a one-man show.

The lack of coordination and cooperation among branches of the armed forces was reflected in the intelligence community as well. For example, security agencies often conducted separate searches for the same individual, and one agency sometimes continued its search even after a suspect had been detained by another agency. In some attempted arrests, "two teams arrive simultaneously from different agencies. While each heatedly disputed the other's right to make the arrest, their quarry managed to escape" (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 42). To preserve the

autonomy of the different intelligence agencies, Asad directed each one to establish and maintain its own courts, interrogation centers, and prisons (p. 77). Hence, political prisoners typically were arrested, detained, questioned, tried, tortured, and imprisoned by a single intelligence agency that also was responsible for investigating the case (Amnesty International, 1987, p. 8).

Asad kept the organizations, branches, and agencies that comprised the regular armed forces, paramilitary, and intelligence communities apart by requiring them to report directly to the president, by undermining coordinating bodies such as the Ministry of Defense and General Staff, and by discouraging cooperation among different organizations. Collelo concludes, "The [security] organizations operated independently and had no clear boundaries to their areas of jurisdiction and no coordination among them" (1988, p. 278; Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 40; Amnesty International, 1987, p. 7).

Finally, counterbalancing worked. Division of the armed forces into rival, armed organizations enabled Asad to thwart attempted coups. It is possible that thwarting coups was an unintended consequence of counterbalancing. As Kier notes, just because something appears functional, we should not assume "that it was designed to serve that function" (1997, p. 24). At the same time, the fact that counterbalancing enabled Asad to suppress attempted coups suggests that the strategy may have served its intended effect. In the spring and fall of 1976, for example, agents from Military Intelligence arrested hundreds of mutinous officers and troops in the regular Army who objected to Syria's intervention in Lebanon in support of right-wing Maronite Christian militias (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 8). In February and March 1984, counterbalancing enabled Asad to stifle his brother Rif'at's attempt to use the Defense Brigades to overthrow the regime. While Hafez recovered from an illness in the hospital, Rif'at ordered the Defense Brigades to occupy strategic points throughout Damascus. Brigade commandos were "confronted by the Special Forces, the Third Division, and the Presidential Guard—all loyal to Hafez" (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 42). Seale reports,

"By 27 February 1984 Syria seemed on the verge of a bloodbath with both sides confronting each other angrily, guns at the ready . . . 'Ali Haydar's Special Forces in maroon berets faced Rif'at's Defence Companies in cinnamon berets, while Adnan Makhluf's Presidential Guard put on a show of force in the boulevards around the palace. At night, sporadic shooting was heard but there was no decisive clash of arms (1988, p. 430)."

Rif'at's attempted coup ended on March 30 after shock troops from the Special Forces and tanks from the Third Armored Division resisted his attempted seizure of downtown Damascus (Seale, 1988, p. 432).

Many observers agree that regime vulnerability to a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing. Although few scholars have engaged in systematic analysis of Asad's coup-proofing strategies (Eisenstadt, 1989; Migdal, 1988), many casual remarks in the literature suggest that the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing. Dawisha, for example, notes that by "creating the impressively-equipped and highly-trained 'Defence Companies' to act as

presidential guard, commanded by the President's own brother, Rif'at, Asad was careful to take personal measures to ensure the compliance of the military if and when the need arose" (1978, p. 353). Other similar conclusions are drawn by Middle East Watch (1991, pp. 41, 52, 174); Heller (1983, pp. 229–230); Nyrop (1978, p. 216); van Dam (1979, p. 90); Batatu (1981, p. 331); Drysdale (1979, p. 372); and Rabinovich (1982, p. 269).

Taken together, the points offered above suggest that the possibility of a coup caused counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s. Asad was concerned about the possibility of a coup, and he used rival forces to spy on each other. He prevented Syrian military forces from cooperating with one another even though (as argued below) foregoing coordination entailed significant organizational costs. These behaviors do not make sense unless the possibility of a coup was an important driving force behind the establishment of rival military forces. In addition, counterbalancing worked. When the Defense Brigades attempted a coup in early 1984, Asad used the Special Forces, the Presidential Guard, and the Third Armored Division to send the challengers back to the barracks. Unless thwarting coups was an unintended effect of counterbalancing, then counterbalancing served its intended effect by providing rival forces to deter potential challengers and send them back to the barracks when necessary. It seems likely that the anticipation of this effect prompted Asad to counterbalance in the early 1970s.

Having argued that the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s, I turn to the possibility that the relationship between these two variables might have resulted from backward causation (endogeneity) or from some alternative causal factor (epiphenomenality). Below I claim that counterbalancing did not cause the possibility of a coup, and that some alternative factor or factors did not cause the possibility of a coup as well as counterbalancing.

To assess whether the possibility of a coup caused counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s, it is important to determine if the correlation between these two factors resulted from backward causation. To show that counterbalancing was not the cause of regime vulnerability, I note that coup proneness preceded counterbalancing in Syria. The first Syrian coup, on March 30, 1949, resulted from Syrian defeat in the 1948 war and predated President Husni al-Za'im's summer 1949 effort to "draw up plans for a private body guard of Yugoslav Muslims swearing allegiance only to himself" (Seale, 1965, p. 61). During the two-decade history of military instability that began in 1949, regime vulnerability was caused by weak institutions, military defeat in war, underdeveloped civil society, and political strife that accompanied early stages of state building, all factors that were independent of counterbalancing (van Dam, 1979; Seale, 1965). These fundamental causes of regime vulnerability would have persisted whether or not Asad pursued a counterbalancing strategy. Hence, the possibility of a coup predated counterbalancing in Syria, and counterbalancing did not cause the cycle of coups and countercoups in the 1950s and 1960s. The correlation between the possibility of a coup and counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s was not due to backward causation.

Even if the correlation between the possibility of a coup and counterbalancing was not due to backward causation, it may have been epiphenomenal: some alternative factor may have caused both regime vulnerability and counterbalancing, or they may have been caused by distinct alternative factors. It is true that counterbalancing can be overdetermined, that it can be caused by many factors. Consider the following possibilities: (1) Domestic unrest: in domestically unstable situations, leaders may create distinct paramilitary forces for internal-use missions, including suppression of domestic dissent. (2) International threat: when leaders anticipate involvement in war, they may enhance fighting effectiveness by unifying their military forces under joint command structures. (3) Legitimacy: regimes may create new armed forces to mimic institutional structures or patterns that prevail in other states. (4) Social compartmentalization: leaders may create separate organizations to keep distinct religious, ethnic, or kinship groups apart from one another (Rosen, 1996).

Earlier I argued that the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing in Syria by showing that predictions generated by my theory were confirmed in the Syrian case. When the possibility of a coup causes counterbalancing, according to the theory developed in chapter 2, regimes are expected to use rival forces to spy on one another, to keep rival forces apart, to undermine coordinating agencies such as general staffs and ministries, and to rely on rival organizations to suppress attempted coups. Few of these predictions make sense unless the possibility of a coup is the cause of counterbalancing. All were confirmed in the Syrian case. The same cannot be said for predictions generated by alternative explanations of counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s. While some of the alternative factors mentioned earlier may have been consistent with Asad's decision to counterbalance, the theories that link each factor to counterbalancing yield predictions that are not confirmed.

Domestic Unrest

Asad used paramilitary forces to suppress violent, domestic challengers on many occasions. In 1982, for example, the Special Forces played an instrumental role in the massacre at Hama. Despite a honeymoon with the Syrian public in the early 1970s, Asad was aware of the regime's narrow social base and the need for reliable coercive force to deter and resist violent protest (Seale, 1988). Hence, the expectation of domestic unrest was consistent with Asad's decision to create new, armed organizations in the early 1970s. At the same time, however, the possibility of domestic unrest probably was not an important cause of counterbalancing. If the possibility of domestic unrest were a primary cause of counterbalancing, then Asad should not have used the regular military for internal-use missions, and he should not have used the new paramilitaries for foreign policy missions. The domestic explanation depends on the assumption that Asad created new paramilitary forces to avoid diluting the mission of the regular Army by allowing it to focus on foreign policy while the paramilitary armies focused on domestic order.

However, neither of these expectations followed. Asad has used the regular armed forces to quell domestic disturbances, and he has deployed the new paramilitary armies abroad. In the suppression of the Hama revolt in January and February 1982, for example, the Forty-seventh Armored Brigade engaged members of the Muslim Brothers in a prolonged battle: "Army sappers blew up many of the buildings that still stood, sometimes with tens of people inside . . . Army bulldozers arrived to flatten the smoking shells of buildings" (Middle East Watch, 1991, p. 20). In 1983 the regular Army created and staffed a series of courts throughout Syria for trying and sentencing civilian political prisoners (Human Rights Watch, 1996, p. 25). Between 1979 and 1982, the Army participated in the summary execution of "several thousand people in Hama, Aleppo, and elsewhere" (Middle East Watch, 1991, pp. 14–15; 61). While the regular Army has participated in domestic repression, the new paramilitary armies have participated in foreign policy missions. For example, members of the Special Forces, al-Wahdat al-Khassa, have arrested and imprisoned thousands of Lebanese in Tripoli since 1985 (p. 52). And the Third Armored Division, al-Firqa' al-Thalitha, "led the Syrian invasion of Lebanon" (p. 52). If Asad created new paramilitary armies to maintain the integrity of the armed forces' mission by allowing the regular Army to focus on foreign policy while the new paramilitaries focused on domestic order, then it is hard to explain why he used both the regular Army and the new paramilitary armies for both domestic and international missions.

In addition, if the possibility of domestic unrest were an important motive for counterbalancing, and if the new paramilitaries were intended to maintain domestic order, Asad should have encouraged various paramilitary and intelligence forces to specialize and then he should have coordinated their domestic efforts. As argued above, however, Syrian paramilitary and intelligence forces have had highly similar, overlapping structures and functions. They all investigate similar types of crimes and arrest, interrogate, try, torture, and imprison suspects. It is unlikely that Asad created new armed organizations to avoid diluting the mission of the regular military by allowing the regular Army to focus on foreign policy while the new paramilitary armies focused on domestic order.

International Threat

Asad said that strengthening Syria's fighting capacity was one of his top priorities when he became president, and he may have anticipated fighting either a defensive or an offensive war with Israel or other neighbors (Seale, 1988, pp. 117–141, 181–182; Lebow, 1981, pp. 278, 253). As a former combat pilot, chief of the Air Force, and minister of defense, Asad was aware of Syria's recent military humiliations, and "[f]rom the start [his] principal preoccupation lay in foreign affairs" (Seale, 1988, p. 182). In addition, as noted above, Asad deployed Syria's new paramilitary armies in Lebanon in the mid 1980s. The creation of new paramilitaries served Asad's foreign policy ends by allowing him to strengthen the

regular army without increasing the risk of a coup. Despite these points, however, anticipation of international conflict probably was not a primary determinant of Asad's decision to counterbalance. When leaders create new military forces to increase fighting effectiveness, typically they provide specialized missions to their forces and subsume them under joint command structures that coordinate organizational efforts (Huntington, 1961; Hammond, 1961; Morison, 1958; Morton, 1962). Leaders who create new armed forces in order to increase fighting capacity must assimilate these organizations under joint structures if they wish to avoid pathologies that arise from poor interunit coordination and multiple lines of command. Biddle and Zirkle note, "Divided lines of command make it difficult to integrate weapons with supporting systems and complementary weapons types. Yet as weapon technology advances, effectiveness increasingly depends on the close cooperation of 'systems of systems' that cover one another's weaknesses and create opportunities for another's strengths" (1993, p. 4). As documented in the final section of this chapter, however, Asad refused to let the various military and paramilitary organizations that constituted Syria's armed forces coordinate as they prepared for the 1973 war. Asad's failure to integrate Syria's multiple armed forces was so detrimental and so apparently deliberate that it seems unlikely that he created multiple forces to enhance Syria's capacity for engaging in international conflict.

International Legitimacy

While international symbolic considerations may be important for explaining the proliferation of advanced weapons in the developing world (Wendt & Barnett, 1993), two considerations undermine the plausibility of this perspective for explaining Syrian counterbalancing in the early 1970s. To begin, if symbolic or reputational factors caused counterbalancing, then Asad should not have devoted significant expenditures to the creation of new paramilitary forces in the early 1970s. One implication of institutional theory is that leaders should be more concerned with institutional appearances than organizational effectiveness. Eyre and Suchman note, "It is quite common for developing nations to maintain only a single 'squadron' of four or five advanced aircraft—too few to offer any substantial strategic or tactical benefits in any but the rarest of circumstances, but enough to constitute a reasonable air show" (1996, p. 93). Asad did take many steps that undermined the effectiveness of his own armies, including purging, spying, and keeping rival forces apart. At the same time, however, the creation and maintenance of new paramilitary and intelligence forces absorbed about one-third of the overall Syrian military budget, and some of the new forces were better equipped than the regular Syrian Army. The new armies did not appear to be symbolic, organizational shells.

In addition, Syria was not highly connected to the world system in the early 1970s. Connectedness to the world system refers to the degree to which states are likely to be influenced by international normative and cultural pressures. Indeed, an inverse relation between world culture and Syrian connectedness to that

culture emerges from a study of the factor basis of developing world militarization by Wendt and Barnett (1993). They suggest that the ratio of major weapons to military personnel may result from global normative and cultural pressures. According to their measure of capital intensity, Syria received the ninth highest score in the world. To the extent that there was a global military culture that influenced most states, and to the extent that the ratio of weapons to personnel was produced by connectedness to that culture, then Syria's outlier score indicates that it was connected to the global culture in a different way or to a different degree than most of the rest of the world. In that case, it would seem implausible to argue that Asad structured Syria's military forces to imitate legitimated patterns of other states' armed forces.

It is also important to note that according to Wendt and Barnett's measure, the Syrian capital intensity score of 11.054 was dissimilar to the scores of Egypt (2.625), the United States (14.672), France (4.877), and the Soviet Union (18.283). Scores ranged from 0 to 32, but 118 of 137 countries in the sample scored below 8. Although Wendt and Barnett's data are from 1986 and 1987, a period that falls after the focus of this study, these four countries were the most likely referents for Syrian legitimacy due to American and Soviet superpower status, the French colonial legacy in the Middle East, and Egypt's position as the leader of the Arab world. If Syrian capital intensity did not at least roughly reflect patterns in the rest of the world or in one of the four most likely referents for government legitimacy, then it seems difficult to claim that international cultural norms influenced Syrian military policy.

Social Compartmentalization

While it is certainly true that social considerations influenced Syrian civil-military relations in the early 1970s, they did not cause the Asad regime to counterbalance. If social structures caused counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s, then the Asad regime should have used newly created military organizations to compartmentalize different social groups. For example, he might have created one agency for 'Alawi troops, one for Sunni Muslim troops, one for Druze troops, one for Circassian troops, and so on. This was not the case, however. On the one hand, Asad used universal conscription to create a mixed regular Army whose rank and file reflected the highly heterogeneous demographics of Syrian society (Collelo, 1988, p. 260). The majority of officers in the regular Army under Asad were 'Alawi but the 'Alawi already dominated the officer corps when Asad came to power (Batatu, 1981; Drysdale, 1979). On the other hand, Asad ensured that most troops and officers in the newly created paramilitary and intelligence forces were 'Alawi (Batatu, 1981; Drysdale, 1979). However, ethnic composition of the new forces did not reflect social compartmentalization because many non-'Alawi troops served in these organizations as well (Lawson, 1996, p. 120). Hence, it is highly unlikely that counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s was caused by the desire to compartmentalize social groups.

Counterbalancing and the 1973 War

Although the emphasis of this case is a test of my first theoretical claim, I also address the implications of the Syrian case for my second claim and suggest that military counterbalancing provided President Asad with an incentive for participating in the 1973 war. While chapter 6 provides a fully elaborated empirical test of my second hypothesis, the claim that counterbalancing can provide an incentive for leaders to engage in international conflict, this chapter gestures at the plausibility of the hypothesis.

At 1:58 P.M. on Saturday, October 6, 1973, low-flying Syrian aircraft accompanied by 700 pieces of artillery pounded Israeli fortifications, headquarters, tank parks, and other targets on the Golan Heights. Ten minutes later, three motorized infantry divisions with 45,000 troops and 600 tanks advanced along the entire Golan front, concentrating their efforts in several different sectors. Simultaneously, Egyptian forces launched an invasion across the Suez Canal (el-Shazly, 1980, pp. 221–270; Sadat, 1977, pp. 232–270; Heikal, 1975, 207–256; Insight Team, 1974; Dupuy, 1978, pp. 441–583; Asher, 1987; Safran, 1977; Herzog, 1975). Within 26 hours, Syria's ninety-first Tank Brigade under Colonel Shafiq Fiyad swept across the Golan and was only four and a half miles from the Jordan River and Israel's densely populated Hulla Valley.

While it is unclear exactly when Asad finalized the decision to engage in military hostilities with Israel, the best available evidence suggests that planning began at least a year before the 1973 war. In October and November 1972, Asad authorized a number of battle days, limited one-day artillery and tank engagements with Israeli forces on the Golan Heights. These probably were designed to embarrass the Egyptians and to establish Asad's anti-Zionist credentials. This strategy resulted in a public relations coup for Asad as "Syria was perceived in the Arab world as carrying the banner for justice, while Egypt, the self-proclaimed premier Arab state, did nothing" (Asher, 1987, pp. 47–48). Observers do not agree as to whether Asad invited Sadat to join Syrian preparations for war, or whether Sadat initiated plans to attack Israel.⁹ What is known is that throughout the summer of 1973 Syrian and Egyptian senior military staffs negotiated details of their coordination. Late in the summer, probably August, 28–29, Asad and Sadat compromised on the date and timing of the attack and coordinated a plan of deception designed to conceal the forthcoming invasion from Israel (Dupuy, 1978, pp. 393–94). As part of this plan, both sides maintained strict secrecy and even issued false statements concerning their inability to cooperate.

To what extent might Syria's participation in the 1973 war have reflected Asad's desire to use international conflict to promote divisions and mistrust among his various military and paramilitary organizations? Before attempting to answer this question, I suggest that the boldness of Syrian behavior poses an extremely difficult puzzle for any theory of international conflict. Indeed, the Syrian attack on October 6 was a highly risky venture because the threat of Israeli nuclear retaliation was real. While it may never be possible to confirm whether Israeli

officials threatened to retaliate against an attack on the Golan with nuclear weapons before the 1973 war, several sources report that nonpublic threats were issued by senior Israelis to Arab leaders as war became more likely in 1972 and 1973 (Inbar, 1986 p. 202 n. 10; Aronson, 1992, p. 139). A thorough and careful analysis of the Israeli nuclear program notes that “there were more than twenty-five bombs in the [Israeli] arsenal by the Yom Kippur War in September 1973,” and most scholars believe that Asad was aware of Israel’s nuclear capability.¹⁰

During the war, two Syrian MIGs attacked a refinery in Haifa, and the Syrians launched a FROG missile into Israeli territory (Insight Team 1974, pp. 182–183; Aronson, 1984, pp. 118–119, 128–129; Asher, 1987, p. 61; Wakebridge, 1976, pp. 22–24; Yaniv, 1986, p. 170; Harkavy, 1976, p. 76; Aronson 1992, p. 143). The FROG launch may have been intended to warn Israel not to attack Syrian cities, and the bulk of available evidence suggests that Syrian war aims were limited to reconquering the Golan Heights and that Syria did not intend to attack the Galilee or cities within Israel proper. Syria rejected Egyptian requests for deep-strike bombing attacks and failed to take full advantage of its full arsenal of military options. And, when the ninety-first Tank Brigade under Colonel Shafiq Fiyad came within 4.5 miles of the Jordan River an hour before sunset on October 7, it simply stopped in its tracks despite a lack of opposition (Slater, 2002, p. 94). That said, and although the Golan was not annexed by Israel and thus not officially part of its homeland, it was highly valued as a buffer zone due to its proximity to Israeli cities (M. Ma’oz, 1988, p. 91; Seale, 1988, p. 209; Herzog, 1975, p. 128). In addition, Asad never communicated the limited nature of his war plans to the Israelis, and Damascus had no way of knowing that Israel would understand the limited nature of its war aims (Slater, 2002, p. 94). At one point during Syria’s attack, Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan reportedly became so desperate that he called a nuclear alert and said, “[T]his is the end of the Third Temple . . . Everything is lost. We must withdraw.”¹¹ Asad’s decision to attack thus invited at least a remote possibility of Israeli nuclear retaliation. Why did Asad engage in such adventurism?

When Asad came to power in November 1970, recall that his regime was highly vulnerable to the possibility of a coup. The most immediate risk of a coup originated from three related factors, each of which obstructed his ability to consolidate control over Syria’s military and paramilitary forces. Syria’s participation in the 1973 war allowed Asad to create, exacerbate and reinforce interservice hostilities that, in turn, helped him overcome or contain each of these three factors. The primary obstacles that Asad first encountered in the realm of civil-military relations were as follows. To begin, while the Air Force was completely loyal to Asad, he could not trust the reliability of the regular Army. Asad served as commander of the Air Force after 1964, and his alliance with Muhammed al-Khuli, head of Air Force Intelligence, had provided a crucial base from which to purge political rivals throughout the late 1960s (Seale, 1988, p. 164). Despite the reliability of his Air Force allies, however, as well as the fact that he installed loyal followers from his ‘Alawi tribe into senior leadership positions of the paramilitary as well as the regular Army as soon as he became president, Asad could not count

on the loyalty of Sunni officers in the regular Army or of the Sunni troops who made up the majority of the Army's enlisted personnel. Related to this point, and as described above, the regular Army was much larger and stronger than the various paramilitary forces when Asad assumed power. As a result, the paramilitary forces were too weak to serve as a counter weight to the Army. As Alain Chouet, a former French military analyst who served in the French embassy in Damascus in the mid-1970s told me, as soon as Asad took office "everybody understood and assumed that he had to raise an armed counterbalance to any armed initiative of the Sunni officers within the Army" (Personal communication, 2003).

The third risk factor for a coup d'état in the first few years of Asad's rule was the cohesiveness that characterized relations among his senior 'Alawi supporters in the regular Army and the paramilitary. One Middle Eastern specialist with expertise on the early history of Asad's rule in Syria said "Asad's military advisors were very cohesive in the early days of the regime."¹² Alain Chouet, the former French military analyst cited above, also confirmed, "At the beginning of the Asad regime, there was more cohesion than division among senior military and paramilitary leaders" (Personal communication, 2003). The origins of the group's cohesion is no secret, as Asad quite consciously assembled a network of loyal 'Alawi followers during his tenure as commander of the Air Force and subsequently as minister of defense. He relied on his followers to purge allies of his rival, Salah Jadid, from power during the late 1960s. Asad and his core 'Alawi followers then cooperated to displace Jadid himself from office in 1970 (Seale, 1988).

While the cohesion of Asad's group of followers was essential for the seizure of power, this cohesion posed an enormous threat to Asad once he assumed the presidency. As argued throughout this book, vulnerable leaders fear cohesion among their senior military advisors because such cohesion can be used against the regime if followers cooperate to launch a coup. While coup risk usually prompts leaders to divide their armed forces into rival organizations that check and balance one another, creating multiple organizations is rarely sufficient for coup proofing. A crucial next step is the promotion of mistrust and jealousy among rival organizations. Commanders of various armed forces, in other words, must be encouraged to mistrust each other because absent such mistrust, they could join forces to orchestrate a conspiracy. As Padgett and Ansell (1993, p. 1286) note, "a 'revolt of the colonels' requires more than just comparing dissatisfactions. Colonels have to have confidence that other colonels are not just stabbing them in the back." In the Syrian case, van Dam confirms that in the early years of his presidency, "any risks of a challenge to al-Assad's position in fact originated mainly within the Alawi community" (1979, p. 89). Asad thus had a strong incentive not simply to create rival organizations, but to promote mistrust among them.

Syria's participation in the 1973 war allowed Asad to create, exacerbate, and reinforce interservice hostilities that, in turn, helped him overcome or contain each of the three risk factors described above. Hence, Asad likely saw the establishment of an effective system of checks and balances among his various forces as a powerful incentive for Syrian participation in the war. For example, Asad used

preparation for the 1973 war as an occasion for strengthening the paramilitary but also for promoting a competition between the regular Army and the paramilitary forces. By channeling state-of-the-art weaponry to the irregular forces while forcing the regular Army to accept dated equipment, Asad both created a paramilitary that would be strong enough to balance the Army and ensured that Army leaders would resent the preferential treatment of their organizational rivals. Asad convinced the Soviets to help Syria prepare for the 1973 war by striking a massive deal for the provision of state-of-the-art weapons in the summer of 1972. Hardware started to arrive in Syria in the fall of that year (Golan, 1990, p. 147). As Eisenstadt notes, the

Defense Companies [a paramilitary force] enjoyed preferential access to new equipment, receiving many weapon systems before any other unit in the Syrian Army. These included the T-62 and T-72 main battle tanks, the BMP infantry fighting vehicle, the BM-21 multiple rocket launcher, the 2S1 (M-1974) 122 mm self propelled howitzer, and SA-9 and SA-9 surface to air missiles (SAMs). This magnified the image and reputation of the unit as the best equipped and trained unit in the ground forces. (1989, p. 3; also Lawson, 1996, p. 127)

During the war itself, the Soviets provided extensive military assistance (Golan, 1990, p. 148).¹³ Moscow's postwar resupply allowed Asad to strengthen Syria's forces beyond their prewar capacity (Dyer, 1979, p. 689). Perhaps most important, Asad ensured that the paramilitary forces enjoyed access to the best equipment throughout the resupply process. Hence, resupply not only allowed Asad to continue to use his control over the distribution of Soviet-provided weapons to strengthen the paramilitary's capacity to serve as a counterweight to the regular Army, but also allowed him to promote jealousy between the Army and the paramilitary by diverting superior equipment to irregular forces. Given that there was good reason for Asad to believe that Moscow would help rebuild Syria's armed forces after the war (Golan, 1990, p. 146), it is reasonable to suspect that Asad recognized both preparation for and participation in the 1973 war as opportunities for using externally provided military equipment to strengthen the paramilitary's ability to balance the regular Army and also for promoting interservice rivalries between Syria's regular and irregular forces.

Asad used the 1973 war simultaneously to motivate the 'Alawi commanders of the paramilitary to serve as a balance against potential Sunni challengers in the regular Army and also to lower the likelihood that the cohesiveness of his 'Alawi supporters could be used against the regime itself. Recall that Asad depended heavily on the loyalty of the 'Alawi for deterring coups. He installed 'Alawi officers from his own region and tribal subsection into much of the senior leadership of the regular Army and the paramilitary, as well as the crack troops of the palace guard (van Dam, 1996, p. 124; Hinnebusch, 1990, pp. 160, 163; Michaud, 1982, pp. 29–30; Batatu, 1981). Sunni Muslims formed the majority of the rank-and-file of the regular army, but commanders of both the Army and the paramilitary as well as most troops in the key paramilitary forces were members of minority communities, in particular the 'Alawis.

Syria's participation in the 1973 war motivated Asad's 'Alawi followers to serve as a balance against potential Sunni Muslim challengers in the regular Army by binding the fate of 'Alawi to the fate of the regime. Asad calculated correctly that if he mistreated the Sunnis, his 'Alawi followers would become more loyal to the regime out of fear that an eventual Sunni regime might take revenge on them. By treating the Sunni majority badly, in other words, Asad enhanced the loyalty of his 'Alawi military and paramilitary followers. The wrath of the Sunnis thus cemented the loyalty of Asad's 'Alawi followers, therefore ensuring that their cohesion would not be a source of threat to the regime, and also motivated the 'Alawis to protect the regime from potential Sunni Muslim challengers.

While Asad exploited numerous tactics to bind the fate of the 'Alawis to that of the regime, participation in the 1973 war contributed to this end by incurring the wrath of Sunni troops. Asad deployed Sunni-dominated units of the regular Army into the riskiest sectors of the battle, and these units sustained the majority of Syria's 3,100 casualties in the 1973 war. Meanwhile, most higher-quality and better-armed 'Alawi-dominated units remained in Damascus and avoided the bulk of the fighting (Chouet, 1995). The regime took few steps to achieve the release of Sunni prisoners of war captured by Israel (Eisenstadt, 1989, p. 6; Asher, 1987, p. 63; M. Ma'oz, 1988, p. 5). These decisions incurred the bitter resentment of the Sunni rank-and-file in the regular armed forces and led 'Alawi officers and troops to fear revenge should the Asad regime fall. When a former senior American defense analyst who served extensively in the Middle East in the early 1970s was asked whether Sunni members of the regular Army resented the deployment patterns of the 1973 war as well as the fact that most of the 'Alawi members of the paramilitary were positioned near Damascus while they were sent to fight on the Golan Heights, he said, "There is no question about that. They [the Sunni] realized they were cannon fodder. I know this from a range of impeccable sources I had access to. The Syrians have always deployed their worst [Sunni-dominated] divisions near the front" (Personal communication, 2003).

The effects of Asad's efforts are evident in an anecdote about an 'Alawi colonel from the Defense Brigades who approached French officials in 1978 to request directional parachutes and ultralight planes. According to Chouet, "We asked him half laughing: 'Do you intend to attack Israeli troops from the Golan Heights?' He answered very seriously, 'I don't care for Israel. It's not my job, I just want my guys to be able to fall on the back of the Sunnis if they attack our mountain from the Ghab valley'" (Personal communication, 2003). Surely my analysis simplifies an extremely complicated sectarian situation in many ways, for example, by ignoring alliances among Asad's regime and certain segments of the urban Sunni bourgeoisie. That said, the evidence suggests that in the realm of civil-military relations, sectarian hostilities played an important functional role in Asad's divide-and-conquer strategy, and that participation in war played an important role in arousing such hostilities. Indeed, the 1973 war was not the only conflict that inflamed Sunni animosities toward the 'Alawis. As Hinnebusch notes, Syria's 1976 intervention on behalf of Maronite Christians in the Lebanese civil war deeply

offended many Sunni Muslim members of the Syrian Army (1990, p. 164). Despite important differences between the 1973 and 1976 wars, both conflicts allowed Asad to promote sectarian tensions by antagonizing Sunni members of the regular Army and hence binding the fate of the 'Alawi even more closely to the fate of the regime. Moreover, while some might suggest that Asad did not need to inflame sectarian animosities since Sunni resentment of the minority foundations of the regime were politically and historically overdetermined, van Dam (1977) argues that sectarian rivalries in the Syrian military in the early 1970s may not have been as salient as some scholars assume. My argument is that Asad had to reinforce and exploit such rivalries because their salience as meaningful categories of difference for various members of the regular and irregular forces was not a given.

Finally, participation in war allowed Asad to create, reinforce, and legitimize two different organizational cultures that enabled members of the regular and paramilitary forces to understand their professional identities as completely distinct from one another. As Drysdale notes, Asad

create[d] what amounts to two armies, one to look outward, the other inward; one in which professional competence was the primary criterion for promotion to all but the most sensitive posts, which continued to go to Alawis, the other in which unquestioned political loyalty was a precondition of membership . . . The cohesion [of the regular army] depended on discipline and a sense of national mission, . . . [while the palace guard was] bound by primordial ties of family, region, and ethnic group. (Drysdale, 1979, pp. 371–372)

Hinnebusch (1990, p. 159) and Dawisha (1978, p. 352) confirm that participation in war legitimized Asad's policy of creating a dual military culture by focusing the regular military's attention outward and placating its hawkish orientation toward Israel. The result of this external orientation was not the elimination of the regular military's internal role. After all, the regular forces remained critical for checking the influence of the paramilitary. As mentioned above, the paramilitary forces were not restricted exclusively to domestic missions. Rather, Syria's involvement in war has legitimized the regular military's doctrinal focus on national security issues. And, in turn, the regular military's external orientation has constituted a cultural boundary that helped keep the regular military and the paramilitary apart by enabling members of these forces to understand their professional identities as completely distinct from one another. As Chouet told me, Asad's system of military checks and balances worked because each force "had its own purposes and its own hierarchy" (Personal communication, 2003).

Some scholars who have studied the 1973 war explain Syrian foreign policy adventurism in terms of the regime's narrow sectarian basis and the use of aggressive international behavior to unify the public and divert popular attention from domestic crises (M. Ma'oz, 1988, p. 84).¹⁴ Even if Asad realized that Syria was militarily incapable of recovering the Golan Heights, in other words, he may have wanted to *appear* to try to conquer previously lost territories in order to rally

various domestic audiences around the regime. While this account may seem intuitively plausible, the regime enjoyed a popular honeymoon in its first few years. Due to the brutality of its predecessor and its initial willingness to experiment with limited forms of democratization and to encourage private sector activity, the regime enjoyed considerable public support at its inception (Batatu, 1982, p. 19; Dyer, 1979, p. 684).¹⁵ Given that rally-around-the-flag effects usually are pursued by leaders who are domestically unpopular, it seems difficult to explain Asad's willingness to risk nuclear war in terms of this factor. Asad was, of course, quite vulnerable to a coup. But at the time of the war he was popular with the public. Rather than tracing Syrian participation in war to a desire to unify the public and divert popular attention from a domestic crisis, the relationship between the regime's narrow sectarian basis and its participation in the 1973 conflict should be understood in terms of Asad's use of the war to bind the fate of 'Alawi commanders and members of the paramilitary to the fate of the regime.

Other scholars have explained Syrian participation in the 1973 war in terms of Asad's personal foreign policy agenda, in particular the desire to recapture Syrian territory that had been lost in previous Arab-Israeli wars. For example, Slater says that "Asad was primarily committed to recovering the Golan" (2002, p. 93). Seale explains the Syrian decision for war in terms of Asad's desire to wipe away the stain of defeat from 1967, to express frustration after two decades of border skirmishes with Israel, to restore confidence, to recover land, and to redress the regional balance of power in order to reach a negotiated settlement (1988, p. 185). Lebow accounts for Syrian participation in the 1973 war in terms of "overt hostility [that] is muted only by perceptions of cost" (1981, pp. 253, 278).

Due to the authoritarian basis of the Syrian system, Asad's personal priorities cannot be discounted, and there is little doubt that the possibility of recapturing the Golan may have been an important factor in Asad's calculation for war. In a system as centralized as was Syria under Asad, it is almost unthinkable to dismiss the importance of the leader's foreign policy agenda in any major decision concerning international conflict involvement. Despite the importance of Asad's foreign policy motives and his desire to recapture the Golan, two points deserve consideration. First, Asad's decision making for war took place in the context of tremendous Israeli military superiority, a lesson that was underscored decisively by the 1967 war. Syria is, of course, not the only weak power to initiate a war against a much stronger rival (Paul, 1994), and as discussed earlier Syria increased its military strength in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There is a long tradition of leaders ignoring or underestimating their rivals' strength (Jervis, 1976; Lebow, 1981), and hindsight bias may inflate scholars' confidence that Asad should have been mindful of Israel's advantage at the time. That said, given Asad's reputation for pragmatism (Seale, 1988; M. Ma'oz, 1988), as well as the extremely one-sided nature of Israel's 1967 military victory, it seems difficult to maintain that Asad went to war in 1973 primarily or exclusively to recapture the Golan.

In addition, the regime engaged in a series of apparently intentional planning and coordination failures surrounding preparation for and participation in the

1973 war. The failures were so serious that if Asad's goal was to use the war to recapture the Golan, it is difficult to explain the pathologies that he apparently intentionally structured into the planning process for the campaign. In Syria in the early 1970s, Asad prevented collaboration among his armed forces even when doing so entailed significant foreign policy costs. As noted above, he undermined centralized ministries and coordinating bodies by requiring military and para-military organizations to report directly to the president. The lack of coordination that Asad institutionalized into the structure of the Syrian military was reflected in preparations for the 1973 war. Prior to the war, Syrian "armor, infantry, and artillery were trained and organized as separate branches . . . [C]oordination between the branches tended to break down the moment follow-on attacks had to be organized" (Cordesman & Wagner, 1990, pp. 54–55). Asad took the highly unusual step of sending forces into battle "without having conducted a single significant armored exercise above the division level" (p. 51). The lack of coordinated preparations jeopardized Syrian performance in the war. For example, up to one-fourth of Syria's 131 air losses in the war were caused by friendly fire but only 2 of 109 Israeli air losses resulted from fratricide. In addition, "the branch-oriented command system in Arab forces kept maneuver unit commanders from getting proper control over, or responsiveness from, their fire support" (pp. 67, 44, 55).

It is possible that failure to coordinate war preparations reflected a simple mistake rather than a deliberate, systematic effort on the part of the regime to keep various branches and organizations of the military apart from one another. Friendly fire losses, for example, can result from poor air combat maneuvering skills, bad maintenance, dated technology, and undisciplined air defense operators (Biddle & Zirkle, 1993, p. 22–28). While these factors contributed to Syrian military failures, the number of friendly-fire losses suggests that divided lines of command had the same effect on Syrian performance in the 1973 war that they did on Iraqi performance in the Gulf War, when

poor inter-unit coordination also contributed to the Iraqis' problems with friendly fire losses: with each element forced to operate semi-autonomously, the result was frequent confusion as to the identity of aircraft, and frequent mistaken engagement of Iraqi aircraft by Iraqi ground based air defenses. (p. 27)

It will never be possible to determine with certainty whether Syrian military mistakes in 1973 resulted from Asad's deliberate prevention of coordinated preparations. That said, it seems likely that if Asad went to war to recapture the Golan Heights, he would have provided specialized missions to the various Syrian forces and then subsumed them under joint command structures to coordinate their efforts. My conclusion is that despite the importance of Asad's personal foreign policy motives, the desire to recover land or redress the balance of power probably was not a sufficient explanation for war. In addition to these factors, it seems more likely that Asad was motivated by the desire to protect himself from a coup.

Finally, some scholars explain Syrian foreign policy adventurism in terms of capital accumulation crises that exacerbated cleavages among Syria's ruling

coalition and prompted elites to use international conflict to reinforce the stability and coherence of the regime (Lawson, 1996, 12–19). While Lawson's argument may help account for Syrian foreign policy adventurism in several cases between 1967 and 1994, including the 1967 war with Israel, Lawson's own data show that Syria boomed economically in the early 1970s (1996, pp. 81, 87–88; Dyer, 1979, p. 684) and that there was no capital accumulation crisis in Syria in the years leading up to the 1973 war.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s. I supported this claim by showing that different predictions generated by my theory all were confirmed in the Syrian case. The same cannot be said for predictions generated by alternative explanations of counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s. While some of the alternative factors mentioned above may have been consistent with Asad's decision to counterbalance, the theories that link each factor to counterbalancing yield predictions that are not confirmed. Hence, it is unlikely that they were important causes. Regime vulnerability need not have caused counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s. Asad used numerous alternative strategies to ensure military loyalty, and he should have expected counterbalancing to yield few benefits while incurring significant costs. However, the possibility of a coup was an important cause of counterbalancing in Syria.

The analysis of Syrian civil-military relations in the early 1970s supports my theoretical claim that the possibility of a coup usually causes regimes to pursue counterbalancing strategies. While other strategies such as remuneration and indoctrination may constitute important elements of regimes' efforts to secure the loyalty of their own armed forces, counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force and reduces the military's ability to displace the regime. Alternative strategies, however, reduce the military's willingness to stage a coup. While military preferences are important, and while it is important for leaders to placate hostile officers, preferences can change quickly. Hence, when coups are possible, regimes often attempt to limit the military's ability to stage a coup by implementing counterbalancing strategies.

While I focused on the relationship between coup risk and counterbalancing in this chapter, I also argued that counterbalancing provided President Asad with an incentive for participating in the 1973 war. Asad was highly motivated to promote mistrust among his rival forces, and participation in the war helped him exacerbate interservice rivalries in various ways. The destruction of Syrian military equipment during the war prompted a Soviet resupply initiative that allowed Asad to inflame interservice jealousies by granting preferential access to the best weapons to some services but not to others. By sending predominantly Sunni regular military forces into battle while deploying 'Alawi-dominated

paramilitary forces in rear areas, Asad aroused the resentment of Sunni members of the regular military and thus helped exacerbate sectarian tensions and bind the fate of the 'Alawi leadership of the paramilitary more closely to the fate of the regime. Finally, participation in war helped Asad create and reinforce two distinct military cultures that allowed members of the regular military and the paramilitary to understand themselves to belong to very different organizations. Because other explanations of Syrian participation in the 1973 war do not appear to stand up to scrutiny, it is at least plausible that Asad engaged in the conflict at least in part to pursue the critical objective of promoting divisiveness among his own forces.

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Chapter Six

When Dividing the Military Provides an Incentive for Conflict: Fragmented Military Forces and International Conflict in Shevardnadze's Georgia

This chapter is a test of my second theoretical argument, the claim that dividing the military can provide an incentive for vulnerable leaders to engage in international conflict. My hypothesis, developed in chapter 3, is that dividing the military is only the first necessary step for avoiding a coup. Once they divide their forces, vulnerable leaders must ensure that rival organizations refrain from conspiring. For that reason, sometimes they seek to produce rivalries and consequent mistrust within their own militaries. International conflict can produce such rivalries when service branches offer divergent threat assessments, use combat success to justify claims for autonomy, advocate particular missions, and attempt to take credit for success or avoid blame for failure. In chapter 4 I tested this theory statistically along with coauthor Evan Schofer by using a database of almost every country in the world over a two-decade period. Here I narrow the scope of inquiry to a specific case, Georgian civil-military relations in the mid-1990s.

On September 27, 1993, Georgian forces were defeated by Abkhazian separatists during the battle for the city of Sukhumi. The next day, President Eduard Shevardnadze consented to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, reversing his previous efforts to pull Georgia away from Moscow's orbit.¹ Shevardnadze had few alternatives because fighting in Abkhazia nearly destroyed Georgia's armed forces and because followers of the previous Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, were threatening to march on Tbilisi. During the next two years, Shevardnadze remilitarized by cultivating no less than five different ground forces, including the Army, Border Guard, Interior Troops, Special Units of the Ministry of State Security, and Government Guard. Then, in early 1996, despite his previous decision to ally with Moscow, Georgian-Russian relations soured when Shevardnadze reversed course and pursued an openly defiant anti-Russian policy that entailed border incidents, accusations, and threats. Why did Shevardnadze develop so many armies, and why did Georgian-Russian relations sour in early 1996? My claim is that President Shevardnadze built the Georgian Army not in response to foreign threats, but rather to balance other "power" ministries. Then,

Shevardnadze inflamed Georgian-Russian relations to drive a wedge between the Army, which maintained close ties to the Russian armed forces, and the Border Guard, which was oriented toward Europe and the United States. Although there were several determinants of Georgian-Russian hostilities in the mid-1990s, one important factor was Shevardnadze's use of diversionary tactics to promote antagonisms among his own forces. After explaining my case-selection strategy, I will develop the argument presented above. Finally, I will suggest that other explanations of the case do not seem plausible.

Several considerations motivated my decision to focus on Georgia. To begin, Georgia and Russia have been involved in a recent dispute, and the regime of Eduard Shevardnadze was vulnerable to a coup after coming to power in March 1992. Hence, it was possible to probe recent Georgian history to determine if coup-risk was related causally to international conflict via the counterbalancing mechanism I specified.² In addition, senior Georgian officials were willing to provide access to decision-making processes in the Border Guard, Ministry of Defense, president's office, Parliament, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A final motive for considering the case was the nearly total destruction of the Georgian armed forces after Tbilisi's defeat in the war with Abkhazia in September 1993. As a result, post-1993 remilitarization presents a rare opportunity to trace the establishment of a network of security organizations from the initial phase until the regime brought extralegal paramilitary groups under control in 1995 and 1996. By focusing on early militarization during the very first stages of state building, it may be possible to determine if patterns of international conflict become locked in by strategies that vulnerable leaders pursue during preliminary stages of consolidating the state.³

The Shevardnadze regime was vulnerable to the possibility of a coup after coming to power in March 1992. My claim is not that military conspiracy was imminent at all times. Rather, I argue that the Shevardnadze regime was structurally vulnerable: the military refrained from toppling the regime not because of the underlying, structural stability of the political system itself, but rather because Shevardnadze implemented survival strategies successfully. Consider the following structural attributes of the Georgian political system, all identified by the literature on civil-military relations as important causes of coups: personalistic rule, low systemic legitimacy, recent coups, weak civil society, national poverty, and foreign troop presence.

Despite sincere and ongoing efforts to institutionalize Georgian politics and the rule of law, the system was based on one-man rule. Aves refers to "the almost total domination of the main political institutions by President Shevardnadze and his supporters . . . [P]olitical rule still depends to a worrying extent on the survival of Shevardnadze himself" (1996a, pp. 58-59). After his election as head of the Georgian parliament on October 11, 1992, observers witnessed "the launching by former senior communist party functionaries of a new cult of personality centered on Shevardnadze that would have been grotesque were it not so chillingly reminiscent of the veneration of his most notorious fellow countryman [Stalin]" (Fuller, 1993d, p. 23). Georgian politics were more institutionalized

than the highly personalistic regimes of Haiti under Duvalier, Iran under the shah, Zaire under Mobutu, and the Philippines under Marcos. At the same time, however, Shevardnadze retained vast powers as parliamentary chairman, head of state, and then president. In addition to his formal powers, structural problems in the parliament complicated the legislative opposition's ability to check the executive branch (Tarkhnishvili, 1996).

The legitimacy of the political system was questionable. Although Georgian elections in 1992 and 1995 may have been freer than elections held in other former Soviet republics, international observers reported instances of electoral malpractice including unfair voting rules and the use of humanitarian aid to bribe officials. In June 1994, the Georgian newspaper *Sakartvelos Respublik'a* noted that out of 301 young men ordered to report to a recruiting station, only 15 people reported for duty (*Georgian Chronicle*, June, 1994, p. 6). Tax evasion and noncompliance with the law have been common problems (Karatnycky, Motyl, & Shor, 1997, p. 174). Finally, Georgian courts have been only minimally capable of administering justice. According to one account,

[T]here are reports of widespread judicial incompetence and of members of the judiciary engaging in various corrupt practices, including accepting bribes, being influenced by political leaders and gangsters, excluding defendants and their lawyers simultaneously from court trials, and denying defendants and lawyers access to material connected with their cases. (Aves, 1996a; Karatnycky et al., 1997)

The government experienced several coup attempts. On the evening of August 29, 1995, a bomb was detonated by remote control in the courtyard of the parliament building as Shevardnadze entered his car. Bodyguards helped Shevardnadze out of the burning car, and he suffered only minor wounds (*Georgian Chronicle*, October 1995, p. 1). Although he accused the minister of state security, Igor Giorgadze, of planning the attack, Giorgadze was never brought to trial because he escaped to Moscow with the help of Tbilisi-based Russian troops. Almost a year before the bombing, on November 13, 1994, armed groups and armored equipment under the command of former Minister of Defense Tengiz K'it'ovani gathered in a Tbilisi suburb and threatened to take over the government before their efforts were thwarted by loyal troops of the Ministries of State Security, Defense and Internal Affairs (*Georgian Chronicle* November 1994, pp. 1–2). On June 23, 1992, supporters of ex-President Gamsakhurdia attempted to unseat the new Shevardnadze regime (MacFarlane, Minear, & Shenfield 1996, p. 5). While Gamsakhurdia's supporters were disarmed in 1993 and 1994, "there remains a small section of the Georgian population which clings to Gamsakhurdia as a symbol of Georgian independence . . . In a crisis . . . it is not the number of Zviadists that will count but the intensity of their commitment" (Aves, 1996a, p. 8; Dale, 1997, p. 16).

Civil society remained weak. Jones notes, "The Soviet past has left Georgians without constituencies, institutions and practices conducive to a pluralistic power structure" (1993b, p. 298). By late 1996 there were only 200 nongovernmental

organizations in Georgia, and it is likely that many of these were inactive. Most Georgian NGOs were dependent on foreign or government grants rather than financial contributions from their own members (Nodia, 1996b, p. 11; Karatnycky et al., 1997, p. 165). They tended to be based in Tbilisi and to cater to the elite and intellectuals. Most trade unions were “remnants of the Soviet period when unions were administrative bodies concerned with property and finance, but not workers’ rights” (Karatnycky et al., 1997, p. 166). Freedom of the press existed, but it was precarious because the government continued to control the distribution of newspapers. A few months after Gamsakhurdia’s 1992 ouster, supporters of the former President documented systematic governmental harassment of the independent media. While “most newspapers may print what they like, there is widespread self-censorship among journalists when expressing open opposition to the government” (Karatnycky et al., 1997, p. 167; Fuller, 1992a, p. 76). In mid-1996, the government shut down Rustavi-2, considered to have been the most professional and independent television station in Georgia.

Georgia remained a poor country as gross domestic product per capita hovered around \$2,000 U.S. in the mid-1990s. As Londregan and Poole have shown, national poverty is correlated strongly with regime vulnerability to the armed forces (1990). Huntington advances the strong claim that “countries with per-capita GNPs of \$3,000 or more do not have coup attempts. The area between \$1,000 and \$3,000 per-capita GNP is where unsuccessful coups occur” (1995, p. 15).

Finally, the presence of Russian troops in Georgia was a destabilizing factor because the Shevardnadze regime had little if any control over them. It is true that Russian troops protected Shevardnadze on various occasions such as late 1993 when they helped Georgian forces defeat the followers of former President Gamsakhurdia in western Georgia (Darchiashvili, 1996b, p. 17). At other times, however, they have been a thorn in the regime’s side. For example, Russian troops probably helped the Ministry of State Security plant the bomb that almost killed Shevardnadze in August 1995. Whether or not the aggregate effect of Russian troops in Georgia has been stabilizing or destabilizing, there is little doubt that they have had the capacity to cause a coup.

Many observers of Georgian politics would object to the notion that the Shevardnadze regime was vulnerable to a coup (Interviews, Tbilisi, July 1997). Indeed, the regime has disarmed paramilitary opposition, and since 1995 the armed forces have appeared more loyal than at any time since Georgia declared independence. Two points should be emphasized, however. First, my intent is to show that the Shevardnadze regime was vulnerable during the period under consideration (1992–1996) rather than the subsequent period. Second, despite this point, I contend that the regime remained vulnerable in the late 1990s as a result of the factors mentioned above. Even if the military became more loyal, all of the risk factors identified above made coups possible. The military did not topple the regime in the late 1990s because Shevardnadze implemented survival strategies successfully, not because of the underlying, structural stability of the political system. As one military official said in the summer of 1997, “after the Tbilisi war

[of 1991–1992], we don't want to kill each other. But money makes anything possible" (Interview, Tbilisi, July 1997).⁴

The first part of my argument is that Shevardnadze sought to reduce the risk of a coup by establishing a network of military organizations that checked and balanced each other. When he came to power in March 1992, Georgia's armed forces consisted of two paramilitary organizations. Over the next few years, Shevardnadze destroyed the paramilitaries and developed five ground forces, including the Army, Border Guard, Government Guard, Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Special Units of the Ministry of State Security.⁵

By the end of 1995 the Army probably consisted of about 12,500 to 14,500 troops divided into seven brigades, including five mechanized infantry brigades and one ground mechanized brigade (*Army and Society in Georgia*, October, 1996, p. 9). Precise estimates of the Georgian Army's strength are difficult to obtain because official statistics may overstate manpower by as much as a factor of two (*Georgian Military Chronicle* January–February 1996, p. 4; Strategic Affairs Group, 1996). Despite the imprecision of government data, most Georgian scholars and experts I interviewed agreed that the actual number of troops in the Georgian Army probably grew from almost nothing after the Sukhumi collapse in 1993 to 12,500 to 14,500 in 1995 and stabilized at that level for the past several years. Almost all Army soldiers have been conscripts recruited through the national draft. The Army's equipment in the mid-1990s included 40 Russian T-55 tanks and 30 Russian T-72 tanks, as well as 80 to 100 towed artillery guns. The official 1996 budget of the Ministry of Defense was 53,693,100 lari (about \$41.9 million U.S.) although a small portion of these funds was devoted to the Air Force, Air Defense Forces, and Navy, all of which were the Ministry's responsibility. Corruption was reported to be widespread as individual military commanders supplemented income by using troops under their command to run tax-exempt enterprises and small-scale businesses. The Ministry also received some NATO assistance including training, medicine, food, clothes, and heaters, as well as training and weapons from Russia ("Program of Individual Partnership Between Republic of Georgia and NATO," no date; *Georgian Military Chronicle*, January–February 1996, p. 3; Mihalka, 1994).

The Border Guard probably consisted of about 3,000 troops by the end of 1995, and its 1996 budget was 11,339,100 lari (about \$8.9 million U.S.) (Interview, Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, July 1997). After a working group for border problems was founded in April 1990, the State Border Defence Administration was established on October 15, 1991. The Defense Administration was reorganized on April 1, 1992, and on April 4, 1994, Shevardnadze upgraded it to department status ("Border Troops of Georgia Today and Tomorrow," 1994). As of 1994, the Border Guard had only 800 soldiers, but 2,000 more joined in 1995 (*Georgian Military Chronicle*, November 1995, p. 2). Unlike the Army, the Border Guard received almost all of its funding from the state and has not engaged in corrupt financial practices. The organization's mission was to defend the Georgian border from foreign military threats, as well as illegal refugees, drug trafficking, and arms smugglers. The Border Guard was equipped primarily with light weapons

but on a tour of a Border Guard installation outside Tbilisi I was shown antitank rockets, armored personnel carriers, towed artillery pieces, and three tanks.

Shevardnadze created the Government Guard in 1994, probably to balance the threat posed by the Ministry of State Security, the successor of the KGB. (Interview, Tbilisi, July 1997). The Government Guard is responsible for protecting the president as well as commercial structures, buildings and less senior government officials. By the end of 1995 the Government Guard probably consisted of 1,000 to 2,000 individuals including professional volunteers as well as recruits. It is divided into two branches: unarmed guards and body guards outfitted with pistols. It was not equipped with infantry or artillery and according to one Georgian government official, it was the least corrupt Georgian military or police organization (Interview, Tbilisi, July 1997).

The Internal Troops of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs were formed on September 12, 1991, to prevent mass disorder inside of Georgia. After mid-1996 they were commanded by Colonel Georgi Shervashidze, their sixth commanding officer in six years (Aladashvili, 1996). By the end of 1995 they probably included about 5,000 to 7,000 troops, making them the third-largest armed force in Georgia after the Russian troops and the Army. The Internal Troops included a patrol brigade, a special brigade for guarding prisons, the first operational motor-rifle brigade in Tbilisi, the second operational motor-rifle brigade in Kutaisi, the Batumi separate battalion, and a helicopter squadron with at least 2 MI-8 helicopters. They were equipped with at least 10 heavy and light tanks as well as antitank weapons (Interview, Tbilisi, July 1997). The official 1997 budget of the Internal Troops was 5,312,000 lari (about \$4.2 million U.S.). Official salaries, however, have been quite low, and corruption was reported to be widespread. Despite their corrupt financial practices, however, the Internal Troops were loyal to Shevardnadze.

The Special Units of the Ministry of State Security include three commando battalions (known as Alpha, Omega, and Delta) and an airborne brigade of about 1,000 troops deployed in Mukhrovani. Shevardnadze created the brigade on December 18, 1993, probably with the assistance of the Russian military. The Special Units, despite being small, probably were the most disciplined and “the most powerful and efficient subunits” in Georgia (*Georgian Chronicle*, December 1994, p. 3). Their mission was to combat international drug smuggling, terrorism, and organized crime, and they possessed at least seven T-72 tanks as well as mobile anti-aircraft, armored vehicles, and artillery (Interview, Tbilisi, July, 1997; *Georgian Military Chronicle* May–June 1996, p. 2). The official 1997 budget for the entire Ministry of State Security was 15,040,300 lari (approx. \$11.8 million U.S.), but the government has not disclosed the percentage of the budget that was earmarked for the Special Units. It is not known if the Special Units continue to engage in corrupt financial practices; however, it is likely that until September 1995 they reaped considerable profits from involvement in the black market. In August 1995, the minister of state security as well as members of the Alpha Unit probably participated in the bombing attempt on President Shevardnadze. The Alpha Unit was

purged and reorganized, and the minister, Igor Giorgadze, fled to Moscow (*Georgian Chronicle*, December 1995, p. 4).

My claim is that the possibility of a coup was the critical driving force behind Shevardnadze's decision to establish and cultivate multiple, armed organizations. To support the claim, I advance the following points. To begin, Georgian officials acknowledge that they created new armed forces to balance one another, that counterbalancing was an important regime priority, and that the regime played various armed organizations off against one another. As one parliamentary official said in the summer of 1997, "We are trying to balance MoD [Ministry of Defense] and Border Guards (Personal Communication)". In March 1997 a senior official said that the Border Guard was created to balance the Army, and he noted that Shevardnadze "made the decision to balance the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defense" (Author interviews, Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, Tbilisi, July 1997; March 1998).

In addition, counterbalancing worked. It was the most important and effective strategy for subordinating the Georgian armed forces. When former Defense Minister Tengiz K'it'ovani threatened to take over the government in November 1994, for example, his forces were disarmed quickly by loyal troops of the Ministries of State Security, Defense, and Internal Affairs (*Georgian Chronicle* November 1994, pp. 1–2). The regime deployed six armed units in the Tbilisi area, including a special detachment of the Government Guard responsible for protecting the president; a commando unit of the Ministry of State Security, probably consisting of about 100 troops; a unit of paratroopers of the Ministry of State Security of about 1,000 troops; several battalions of Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 1,000 to 2,000 soldiers armed with tanks, antitank weapons and armored personnel carriers; the Army National Guard Brigade of about 2,000 to 3,000 troops; and a motorized unit of about 300 border guards deployed adjacent to the Tbilisi airport and armed with three tanks, several armored personnel carriers, and an unknown number of antitank weapons. Each of these units deterred potential conspirators in other organizations as a result of its ability to come to the regime's immediate assistance.

Other strategies that Shevardnadze used to subordinate the Georgian armed forces were loosely implemented and only minimally effective.⁶ For example, although the regime attempted to enhance the professionalization of the officer corps through overseas training and the establishment of a small military academy, the officer corps was only weakly professionalized (Strategic Affairs Group, 1996). Civilian institutions responsible for monitoring and controlling the armed forces were unable to obtain information, monitor compliance, or influence policy. Troops of the Ministry of State Security, among the most well paid in the Georgian military, probably were responsible for the bombing attempt on Shevardnadze's life in August 1995. Because lowering coup risk was an extremely important regime priority, the ineffectiveness of other survival strategies lends support to the claim that Shevardnadze relied on counterbalancing to reduce the likelihood of a military conspiracy.

Finally, counterbalancing cannot be explained by other theories of institutional development or militarization. Perhaps, for example, Shevardnadze developed a network of military organizations to separate domestic from international forces and to focus the regular army's attention on external threat while delegating responsibility for domestic security to the paramilitary. This possibility appears to have little plausibility as the regime used all ground forces except for the president's personal body guard for domestic and international missions. Indeed, domestic and international rationales are written into the founding documentation of all Georgian ground forces.

Perhaps Shevardnadze established multiple armed organizations to reflect institutional structures that prevailed in other states. As Meyer argues, regimes may seek to acquire the trappings of the modern state by mimicking institutional patterns they associate with legitimate governance (Wendt & Barnett, 1993; Meyer, 1983). However, it is hard to see how counterbalancing could have been expected to reflect military patterns in other states as several of Georgia's new armed organizations (such as the Rescue Corps and Rapid Reaction Corps) had no institutional precedent in the Soviet Union or the West.⁷

A final possibility is that national security and territorial integrity arguments can account for counterbalancing in Georgia. For example, army building may have been intended to protect the country from foreign threats and to allow for the eventual recapture of the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Even if Georgians had no intention of pursuing military solutions to secessionist conflicts, perhaps counterbalancing was intended to strengthen Georgia's hand in negotiations with Russia by allowing it to threaten the use of force. Unlike institutional theories discussed earlier, these arguments share the premise that the Georgian armed forces, in particular the Army, were cultivated to serve as fighting forces. However, the development of five armies did not establish a war-waging capacity because the regime struggled to keep its forces apart rather than integrate them into a coordinated fighting force. All five Georgian ground forces reported directly to the president rather than to central coordinating agencies, and they did not engage in joint training, planning, or threat assessment. If the regime had designed its ground forces primarily for waging war, then it would have attempted to coordinate military forces and to institutionalize that coordination (Ben Meir, 1995). Even Georgian security experts do not believe that the armed forces were built for war. As one Georgian military specialist asked, "Why do we need an army? It is not related to external threat. It . . . has no real mission" (Darchiashvili, 1997).

Having argued that high coup risk was an important cause of counterbalancing in Georgia after 1992, I advance my second claim that dividing the military provided an incentive for President Shevardnadze to engage in international conflict. More specifically, I argue that Shevardnadze inflamed Georgia's relationship with Russia in early 1996 in part to drive a wedge between the Army and the Border Guard. Before developing the argument, I note that open friction between Georgia and Russia became apparent in early 1996 when President Shevardnadze assumed a bolder regional and anti-Russian stance. According to a

Clinton administration official whom I interviewed, Shevardnadze approached the White House in mid 1995 and asked if the United States would object if he adopted a more assertive line vis á vis the Russians, in both word and deed. With Washington's blessing, Georgia began to take a more openly defiant stance toward Moscow in early 1996. Georgian-Russian conflicts have included nonviolent as well as violent dimensions since that time (Darchiashvili, 1997). For example, the Shevardnadze government trained, equipped, and supported the White Legion, a paramilitary force whose systematic campaign of attacks on Russian forces in the Gali region of Abkhazia led to the deaths of over forty Russian troops over the past few years (Walker, 1997, p. 11). Shevardnadze used acrimonious language to characterize the Russians on many occasions. In 1996, for example, Georgian officials criticized the establishment of a Russian checkpoint on the Chechen border and argued that the presence of Russian border guards in Georgia was illegal (Darchiashvili, 1996b, p. 3). On October 27, 1997, Shevardnadze accused Russia of joining "the few countries that shelter terrorists, assiduously hiding the group that committed terrorist acts in Georgia" and "[c]heat[ing] us with regard to Abkhazia."

I advance several arguments to support my claim that dividing the military provided an incentive for Shevardnadze to engage in international conflict and that he inflamed Georgian-Russian relations in part to drive a wedge between the Army and the Border Guard. My arguments are that the regime was highly motivated to foment military divisiveness, that a serious rivalry did in fact divide the Army and the Border Guard, that conflict with Russia was an important cause of that rivalry, that other factors do not appear sufficient for explaining that rivalry, and that other accounts of Georgian-Russian hostilities are not sufficient for explaining the case. To begin, the Shevardnadze regime was highly motivated to promote military divisiveness. Shevardnadze's predecessor, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, did not foment conflict among Georgia's two most powerful armies, and this oversight led directly to his downfall when the two forces collaborated to remove him from the presidency in December 1991.⁸ Recall that fragmenting the armed forces is only the first step toward avoiding a coup and that once the military is divided, leaders must make sure that rival organizations refrain from conspiring with each other. Feaver notes that "institutional checks work best when the interests of the two agents are in conflict . . . Otherwise, the two agents could collude" (1995, p. 28). As argued above, Shevardnadze was quite vulnerable to the possibility of a coup, and Georgian officials conceded that the regime played various armed forces off against one another. Hence, it is not an exaggeration to claim that Shevardnadze was highly motivated to promote military divisiveness.

Georgian armed forces (in particular the Army and the Border Guard) did not trust each other in the mid 1990s. Senior officials in the Army, Border Guard, and Parliament acknowledge that the Army and Border Guard have been quite jealous of each other and that cooperation among them has been rare and marginal (Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development, 1996, p. 47). One senior Border Guard official told me, "[w]e don't need the Army." The forces prepared their own budgets without consulting one another because, as

another senior official told me, “[we have] separate tasks, and we need to budget ourselves.” The commander of a Border Guard base near Tbilisi told me that he had no contact with a neighboring army outpost located just a few meters away, and a senior Army official said that there was no department in the entire Defense Ministry responsible for coordinating with the Border Guard (Author interviews, Tbilisi, Ministry of Defense, State Department of the State Frontier Guard June 1997; July 1997; March 1998).

The serious rivalry that characterized relations between the Army and the Border Guard was the result of Georgian-Russian conflict. Georgian-Russian hostilities drove a wedge between these two forces because the Army was allied closely with Moscow, and the Border Guard was oriented toward the West during the mid-1990s. Relations between the Georgian Army and Moscow were so tight that Georgian journalists referred to former Defense Minister Vardiko Nadibaidze as a borrowed minister, a foreign agent, and a “stooge of Moscow”.⁹ Nadibaidze barely speaks Georgian, and before his appointment as Georgian defense minister in 1994 he served for 35 years in the Soviet military, most recently as deputy commander of the group of Russian troops in Caucasia. He began each day with a visit to the Tbilisi headquarters of the Russian army. In 1995, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev was baptized by the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and Nadibaidze was christened as Grachev’s godfather. Soon after his appointment as defense minister, Nadibaidze and his assistants “cut down contacts with the military circles in the Western World and . . . [pursued] a policy of cooperation exclusively with the armed forces of Russia” (Radio Free Europe 80, April 27, 1994; Darchiashvili 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, *Army and Society in Georgia* August–September 1996, p. 6; *Georgian Military Chronicle*, December 1994, p. 1). Nadibaidze stated on many occasions that the deployment of Russian troops in Georgia served Georgian national interests. According to Nadibaidze, the Army was designed explicitly on “the former Soviet army model” (*Georgian Military Chronicle*, December 1996, p. 3). Nadibaidze rejected numerous opportunities to cooperate with NATO’s Partnership for Peace initiative, and he did not represent Georgia at important PFP summits. The Ministry’s training exercises were undertaken in coordination with Russian forces, and despite healthy Georgian-Turkish relations as well as protests from Ankara, field exercises continued the Cold War practice of using Turkey as the imagined enemy. Finally, much of the Ministry’s doctrinal and planning documentation was translated from Russian templates with few if any modifications to reflect particularities of Georgia’s security requirements.

Unlike the Army, the Border Guard rejected Russian influence over Georgian security affairs. The Border Guard received naval vessels from the United States Coast Guard, Germany, and Ukraine, and its leaders embraced opportunities to cooperate with the West. On October 2, 1996, for example, Border Guard commander Valerie Chkheidze greeted two Ukrainian warships in Poti and used the occasion to criticize the deployment of Russian frontier troops in Georgia as illegal. Chkheidze has denounced Russia many times and accused Moscow of ignoring Georgian interests. In a September, 1996, meeting of the commanders

of frontier troops of the CIS, Chkheidze refused to sign six documents on military and financial cooperation. While the Ministry of Defense was unwilling to allow soldiers or officers to conduct interviews with journalists, Border Guard representatives participated in conferences, spoke with the press on a regular basis, and allowed outsiders to inspect their facilities. Whereas the Georgian Army intentionally modeled itself on the Russian Army, the Border Guard explicitly differentiated itself from Russian frontier troops. As one senior official said, "Russian border troops never did these functions that we perform now" (Author interview, Tbilisi, State Department of the State Frontier Guard, July 1997).

As a result of their divergent orientations, conflict with Russia drove a wedge between the Army and the Border Guard by embarrassing the Army and providing ammunition for the Border Guard to criticize the Army's ties to Moscow. For example, after Russian forces detained the Ukrainian ship *Almaz* on December 4, 1996, near the Georgian city of Batumi, Shevardnadze declared the seizure to be an act of piracy and noted that the presence of Russian frontier troops in Georgia was illegal. The Border Guard reacted by affirming the illegality of the Russian presence in Georgia. However, Defense Minister Nadibaidze said, "If the ship has violated law it must be detained and, generally speaking, I am not interested in the case. I have too many problems on myself . . . and, actually, frontier troops are beyond our competence" (*Georgian Military Chronicle*, December 1996, p. 4).¹⁰ Numerous similar disputes provided ammunition for the Border Guard to criticize the Army, embarrass it, and keep it on the defensive. As one Border Guard official told me, "the Army is Russia."

Alternative explanations do not seem to account for the rivalry between the Georgian Army and the Border Guard. Perhaps, for example, the rivalry resulted from accidental or random considerations. Recall, however, that Georgian officials acknowledged creating new armed forces to balance one another and playing various armed organizations off against one another. It is highly unlikely that senior government officials would have admitted playing divide-and-conquer politics with their own armed forces if interservice rivalries had been unintended.

Another possibility is that interservice rivalries resulted from favoritism and unequal allocation of budget resources. However, the Border Guard and the Army tended not to compete for the same funds. While the state provided most of the Border Guard's budget, most of the Army's funding came from local governments, rents and profits derived from land and businesses under Army control, and bribery paid by recruits who were eager to avoid the draft.¹¹ Since the Border Guard and the Army tended not to compete for the same funds, the budget was an unlikely source of interservice rivalries.

A third possibility is that the rivalry between the Army and the Border Guard could have resulted from regime attempts to unify its forces under a joint command structure. As argued in chapter 3, unification is a common source of tension among military organizations that are anxious to preserve their autonomy. In the Georgian case, however, this is not a possibility as the regime took pains to make sure that its forces remained separate. A senior official in Parliament told

me that the National Security Council, ostensibly the body that is responsible for coordinating the Army, the Border Guard, and other security agencies, did not integrate the different branches of the Georgian armed forces. Rather, the NSC served as a fig leaf to conceal the fact that ministers reported directly to the president and that their efforts were not integrated (Interviews, Tbilisi, July 1997).

A final possibility is that mission overlap was the cause of interservice hostilities. As Stepan notes, “no organization—least of all a military organization—wants to coexist with an alternative claimant to doctrinal and political authority in its sphere of action” (Stepan, 1988, p. 46). It is certainly true that mission overlap was a partial cause of interservice rivalries in Georgia as both the Army and the Border Guard were responsible for frontier defense. Despite this, however, my argument in chapter 3 was that mission overlap tends not to be a sufficiently powerful determinant of interservice hostilities because military organizations can specialize and reconceptualize their roles in terms of unique functions. As a result, leaders may need to resort to other means to promote hostility among their own forces. In the Georgian case, officials in the Army and the Border Guard appeared to engage in organizational spin-control designed to cast their missions in terms of distinct functions. The comments of one senior Border Guard official were typical: “We have nothing to do with the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Defense defends threats from outside the country, and every day they train for this. We, the Border Guard, actually stand on the border. Only on the border.” Another senior Border Guard official explained that the Army “has different functions compared to the structure of the Border Guard. The Border Guard are not a defense structure” (Author interviews, Tbilisi, Ministry of Defense, State Department of the State Frontier Guard June 1997; July 1997; March 1998). Another official said that the Army was responsible for defending the country’s territory, while the Border Guard was responsible for defending the country’s sovereignty. My purpose is not to assess whether such claims represent fabrication or honest understanding of organizational missions. Rather, my point is that even when regimes assign the same roles to different military forces, mission overlap is not always sufficient for promoting long-term interservice rivalries because organizations can specialize and reconceptualize their roles and missions in terms of unique functions. In the Georgian case, mission overlap may have been a partial cause of the rivalry between the Army and the Border Guard, but it was not the only cause.

My final argument is that other accounts of Georgian-Russian hostilities do not appear sufficient for explaining the case. One important possibility, for example, is that Russian obstructionism was the critical determinant of the intensification of Georgian-Russian hostilities after early 1996. The long list of Tbilisi’s valid complaints against Moscow included Russian support for Abkhazian separatists, refusal to deliver promised military hardware, assistance in attempted assassinations on President Shevardnadze’s life, and other grievances (Darchiashvili, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c). While there is no doubt that such considerations provide a partial explanation of Shevardnadze’s decision to inflame Georgian-Russian relations in early 1996, it is important to remember that Russia never ceased interfering in

Tbilisi's affairs after Georgia attained its independence. Since Moscow's meddling has been constant, it is not possible to invoke Russian interference as the sufficient or exclusive explanation for the change in Georgian foreign policy that occurred in early 1996.

Another possibility is that changes in the international opportunity structure and availability of allies explain why Shevardnadze inflamed Georgian-Russian relations after early 1996. According to this perspective, Shevardnadze turned against Russia and oriented Georgia toward the West once Washington came to appreciate the Caucasus' potential to serve as a buffer against Russia and a transit corridor for oil. It is true that the Clinton administration became more attuned to post-Soviet republics in 1995 and 1996 after senior White House officials concluded that Russia's encirclement by weak states would always provide an unwelcome temptation for sinister forces in Moscow (Author interview, 1998). At the same time, however, two factors suggest that changes in the international opportunity structure provide only a partial account of Shevardnadze's decision to inflame Georgian-Russian relations in early 1996. To begin, military assistance had been available to Georgia through NATO's Partnership for Peace program since early 1994. If changes in the international opportunity structure were critical determinants of Georgia's reorientation away from Moscow and toward the West, it is hard to explain the two-year time lag that separated NATO's offer to provide assistance and Georgia's open defiance of Russia (Mihalka, 1994). In addition, Shevardnadze's turn toward the West coincided roughly with the Western betrayal of Georgia at the May 1996 Review Conference on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE).¹² One American official told me that he felt terrible about selling out Georgia at CFE because the incident showed that Washington's word could not be trusted. Another told me that Tbilisi had the Russians backed up against the wall before the American sell-out (Author interviews, March 1998; April 1998). If the prospect of American support was an important driving force behind Shevardnadze's decision to turn against Russia, it is hard to explain why Shevardnadze continued to move Georgia away from Moscow and toward the United States even after the CFE betrayal signaled that Washington's word could not be trusted in important security matters.

A final possibility is that the enhanced strength of the Georgian state can explain the recent intensification of Georgian-Russian hostilities. According to this perspective, Shevardnadze decided to bandwagon with Moscow after the disintegration of the Georgian armed forces in September 1993. As the strength of the Georgian state increased over the following two years, however, Shevardnadze became confident enough to stand up to Russia in a more openly defiant way. This explanation founders, however, on the fact that as of early 1996, Georgia was still a terribly weak state. Recall the points above that the system was based on one-man rule, that tax evasion and noncompliance with the law were widespread, and that Georgian courts were only minimally capable of administering justice. Civilian institutions responsible for monitoring the armed forces were ineffective, and Revaz Adamia, chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Defence and Security,

admitted in April 1996, “To say that our commission controls law-enforcement structures would be grossly exaggerated” (Darchiashvili, 1997, p. 10). Vice-Premier Tamaz Nadareishvili was replaced after he criticized the close relationship between Defense Minister Nadibaidze and Moscow, and Giorgi Chanturia, former chairman of the National Democratic Party, was assassinated four days after accusing Nadibaidze of having a pro-Russian orientation (*Georgian Military Chronicle*, December 1994, p. 3). Shevardnadze reconfigured the institutions responsible for military oversight on at least six different occasions, and the state was just as weak militarily as it was institutionally. The one-one brigade, supposedly the Army’s finest elite unit, was not “able to be involved in any fighting longer than a week. ‘Ours is the best brigade,’ sarcastically says one of the officers” (*Army and Society in Georgia* December 1996, p. 14). While the Georgian state was a bit stronger in early 1996 when Shevardnadze inflamed relations with Russia than it was in 1993 when Shevardnadze bandwagoned with the CIS, it seems implausible to claim that enhanced state strength can account for the decision to defy Moscow openly. Both militarily and institutionally, the Georgian state was somewhat of a hollow shell. As Walt argued, extreme state weakness is more likely to account for bandwagoning behavior than defiance because small states are vulnerable to pressure and only loosely in control of their destinies (1987). The fact that Georgia chose to defy Russia suggests that the state strength was not the critical driving force behind Georgian national security decision making.

My conclusions are that high coup risk was an important driving force behind President Shevardnadze’s decision to counterbalance and that counterbalancing provided an incentive for Shevardnadze to engage in conflict with Russia. In the absence of smoking-gun evidence such as a secret memo, I make the case indirectly by arguing that the regime was highly motivated to foment military divisiveness, that a serious rivalry did in fact divide the Army and the Border Guard, that conflict with Russia was an important cause of that rivalry, that other factors do not appear sufficient for explaining that rivalry, and that other accounts of Georgian-Russian hostilities do not seem sufficient for providing a complete explanation of the case.¹³



Chapter Seven

Conclusion

In this study, I attempt to turn the rally-around-the-flag hypothesis on its head by questioning its twin assumptions that cohesion is preferable to divisiveness and that leaders use external conflict to promote internal unity. My claim is that under certain circumstances, military counterbalancing provides an incentive for leaders to engage in international conflict. My focus is one domestic political realm, civil-military relations, and I advance and test two hypotheses. First, I argue that when the risk of a coup d'état is high, leaders tend to divide their armed forces into multiple organizations that check and balance each other and protect the regime as a byproduct of their independent coercive capacity. Vulnerable leaders divide their armed forces into rival organizations because the possibility of a coup is too important a problem to ignore, because other survival strategies tend to rely on fickle foundations, and because counterbalancing is the only strategy that pits force against force. I argue that the possibility a coup should almost always prompt leaders to divide their armed forces.

Dividing the armed forces, however, is only the first step toward avoiding a coup. Once the military is divided, leaders must make sure that rival armed organizations stay apart and refrain from conspiring with each other. Counterbalancing, in other words, requires leaders to promote jealousy and strife among their own forces and to prevent the development of lateral networks among potential conspirators. Hence, my second hypothesis is that counterbalancing may provide leaders with an incentive to engage in international conflict to create interservice rivalries that drive wedges and promote mistrust among branches of their own forces. International conflict can create interservice rivalries when service branches offer divergent threat assessments, use combat success to justify claims for autonomy, advocate particular missions, and attempt to take credit for success or avoid blame for failure. Contrary to the literature on scapegoating and the rally-around-the-flag effect that claims that international conflict often is intended to promote public unity, my argument is that in the realm of civil-military relations aggressive foreign policy may reinforce military divisiveness.

Statistical evidence presented in chapter 4 indicates that the possibility of a coup d'état is strongly and positively related to counterbalancing regardless of the specification of the variables, even after taking into account the nonindependence of the dependent variable over time. Vulnerable regimes are much more likely to counterbalance in any given year than regimes that are not vulnerable to their own forces. Statistical evidence in chapter 4 also indicates that counterbalancing is strongly and positively associated with international conflict. High-counterbalancing regimes are much more likely to become involved in international conflicts in any given year than low-counterbalancing regimes. The robustness of this result is confirmed by the fact that coauthor Evan Schofer and I confirm the positive, significant relationship between counterbalancing and international conflict with two distinct measures of the dependent variable that overlap only partially. While measurement problems often constitute threats to valid inference in social scientific studies, the large sample size in this study diminishes the influence of noisy data. A final result was that high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance and engage in subsequent conflict in the next five years are 27 percent less likely to have a coup than high coup-risk regimes that counterbalance but do not engage in conflict. Counterbalancing is a critical strategy for reducing the risk of a coup, but the most effective way to lower that risk is to divide the military and then to engage in international conflicts that drive wedges among rival armed forces.

In addition to statistical methods, I use historical case studies to test the two theoretical claims advanced and developed in this study. The study of Syrian civil-military relations in the early 1970s is a test of my claim that the possibility of a coup usually is sufficient for causing leaders to divide their armed forces into rival organizations that check and balance each other. When Hafiz al-Asad became Syrian president in February 1971, Syria's ground forces included just a single army and a few lightly equipped militias. By 1976, Syrian ground forces consisted of six fully equipped armies including Brigades for the Defense of the Revolution, Struggle Companies, the Presidential Guard, the Third Armored Division, and Special Forces. I argue in chapter 5 that the possibility of a coup was an important driving force behind Asad's creation of rival forces and that alternative explanations of the creation of rival armies in Syria are not plausible. The Syrian case is a hard test for my theory because coup risk should not have caused President Asad to counterbalance. Asad had reason to doubt that counterbalancing would work and to expect the costs of counterbalancing to be particularly high, and he pursued numerous alternative strategies that should have been sufficient for attenuating the risk of a coup. While I emphasized the evaluation of my first theoretical claim in chapter 5, I also showed that military counterbalancing provided Asad with an incentive for engaging in the 1973 war against Israel.

The case study of Georgian civil-military relations under Eduard Shevardnadze is a test of my claim that counterbalancing can cause international violence when leaders engage in conflict to create interservice rivalries among their own forces. Research in Tbilisi indicated that counterbalancing depended on President Shevardnadze's ability to use the Russian threat as a wedge for promoting

jealousy and competition among his own forces. Shevardnadze built the Georgian Army not in response to foreign policy threats, but rather to balance other “power” ministries in order to lower the risk of a coup. Then he used conflict with Russia to promote a rivalry between the Army and the Border Guard.

This book is not intended to disprove any prevailing theories in the literatures on international relations, international security, and civil-military relations. Rather, my primary purpose is to shine a spotlight on one understudied path to international conflict. That having been said, however, the identification and specification of the mechanism developed in this project may entail implications for other theoretical approaches. Those implications include the following. To begin, analysis of domestic-international linkages may profit by addressing dynamic processes at the domestic level and then tracing the international implications of those processes. Unfortunately, there is little scholarship that links generalizable theories of domestic political process to international outcomes. Scholars have studied the international consequences of specific events such as riots, general strikes, and assassinations. However, much of this work is correlational and fails to spell out general theories of domestic politics. As Robert Keohane noted, scholars should seek “better theories of domestic politics . . . so that the gap between the external and internal environments can be bridged in a systematic way” (1986, p. 191). In a review of three studies on domestic sources of international conflict, Russett noted that none of the books under consideration “develops a serious theory of how domestic political process affects foreign policy choice” (1995, p. 280). According to Jack Levy, who has compiled the most comprehensive reviews of the literature to date, scholarship on domestic sources of international conflict is undertheorized. Better theories, he says, require “additional analysis of the causal mechanism through which aggressive foreign behavior advances the domestic political interests of decisionmakers” (1989b, p. 283). Still, despite calls for a more engaged, systematic conversation between comparativists and international relations theorists, there is little scholarship that links generalizable theories of domestic political process to international outcomes. This study seeks to address the gap by articulating a generalizable theory about an important aspect of domestic politics and then using that theory to account for international outcomes.

This work suggests that the literature’s overemphasis on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis may have led scholars to underemphasize how international conflict can promote divide-and-conquer strategies. As noted in chapter 1, much of the scholarship on regime vulnerability and international conflict depends at least partially on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis as an important driving force for linking domestic causes to international outcomes. However, the hypothesis can be ill-suited for sustaining the link between domestic and international politics in some cases because international conflict can lead to domestic fragmentation (Bueno de Mesquita, 1980). This study attempts to correct for the literature’s overreliance on the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis by directing attention to another possibility, that leaders might in some cases use international conflict to cement domestic institutional division rather than popular cohesion.

An underlying premise of this book is that the military is best conceptualized as a network, not an organization. Focusing on the armed forces as a network leads almost automatically to unpacking and disaggregation of the concept of “the military” and to subsequent questions about divergent interests among organizations that make up the network. In addition, focusing on the armed forces as a network leads to interrogation of mechanisms that leaders use to encourage and profit from competition within their own militaries. These questions reflect closely the emphasis on structural holes that has become central to network analysis in recent years (Burt, 1992). The network-based conceptualization of the armed forces also helps explain why Coser’s ingroup-outgroup hypothesis does not apply to the military. Although the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis has been confirmed in numerous experimental settings, Coser was quite explicit in saying that it is expected to apply only to groups that perceive themselves to be groups. Although it is possible that members of a state’s military and paramilitary forces might perceive themselves to be part of the same group, the literature on civil-military relations shows that a sailor is more likely to self-identify as a member of the navy than of the ministry of defense. Hence, international conflict should be expected to increase cohesion within each force, but there is no reason to expect conflict to promote cohesion among distinct forces. The armed forces are best conceptualized as a network of organizations rather than a group, and the ingroup-outgroup hypothesis does not apply to networks.

This study attempts to improve on the only other large-N measure of coup risk available in the literature. Although this point sometimes is underappreciated in the literature on international relations, this work suggests that coup risk tends to be a critical problem that is a much more frequent and potent problem than war. Hence, its measurement should be a high scholarly priority. Bueno de Mesquita et al. measure regime vulnerability in terms of the number of successful coups experienced in the previous 10 years (1992, p. 644). But this measure does not pick up the many high coup-risk countries that do not have coups. As argued in chapter 4, many regimes do not experience coups during a long period of time because regime leaders have implemented domestic survival strategies successfully. (Such is the case in Iraq and Syria). In these cases, the absence of coups is not an indication that the regime is structurally sound. Rather, the absence of coups results from successful implementation of survival strategies. These regimes remain structurally vulnerable because failure to continue to implement survival strategies probably would lead to subsequent conspiracies. Because the measure of regime vulnerability by Bueno de Mesquita et al. only measures the number of past coups, it does not pick up many highly vulnerable regimes. In this book my coauthor and I attempt to improve the measure of this variable by operationalizing regime vulnerability in terms of civil society, legitimacy, concentration of power, and participation, all of which are factors identified by the theoretical literature in civil-military relations as important background causes of coups. As described in chapter 4, this index does a very good job of separating those cases in which coups are quite possible from cases in which a coup is almost impossible.

A final implication for theory concerns the relative effectiveness of power and ideas in different domestic and international political realms. Despite recent and useful trends in the literature that underscore the importance of norms and ideas as critical determinants of behavior and policy outcomes, this work is somewhat dismissive of civil-military strategies that depend on persuasion and other normative considerations. Even though strategies such as indoctrination can be important components of leadership efforts to reduce the risk of a coup, these approaches tend to rely on less robust foundations than counterbalancing, the only strategy that pits force against force. While some typologies of civil-military strategies that are available in the literature do not include counterbalancing and others list it as one of many available strategies, my argument is that almost all vulnerable leaders select counterbalancing as the central strategy they rely on to protect themselves from their own armed forces. The difference between this claim and conventional wisdom in the literature is the difference between a medical theory that predicts that there are many drugs for treating a particular disease and doctors might select any combination of them versus a theory that predicts that there are many drugs available for treating a disease, and because few are likely to work in isolation, doctors usually select one particular drug as a necessary component of any treatment therapy. Unlike other analyses of civil-military strategies that depend on a small number of cases, this study provides an operationalization of counterbalancing that is useful for assessing the frequency of this strategy in a large-N context.

Unanswered Questions

This work attempts to provide preliminary answers to two questions. First, what do leaders do to subordinate their own armed forces when coups d'état are possible? Second, do the steps that leaders take to reduce the probability of a coup increase or decrease the likelihood of international conflict? Despite my attempt to address these questions, related and important questions remain unanswered. To begin, what factors might influence the likely success or failure of counterbalancing? Although I have suggested that almost all vulnerable leaders should be expected to divide their armed forces into rival factions that check and balance one another, my theory does not address the question of why counterbalancing might lower or eliminate the risk of a coup in some cases while failing to remove that risk (or even increasing it) in other cases. Answering this question requires moving beyond the focus of this project into the realm of speculation, and no answers are apparent from the research I have conducted. The Georgian case, for example, indicates that development of civil society, strong political institutions, and the rule of law may be important for the long-term “locking-in” of counterbalancing strategies, and the Syrian case demonstrates that counterbalancing can in some cases minimize the risk of a coup over the long term even in the absence of strong, representative political institutions capable of monitoring the armed

forces. Statistical evidence indicates that vulnerable regimes are very likely to employ counterbalancing strategies, but I did not use quantitative evidence to attempt to determine why counterbalancing might work in some cases and fail in others. Answering this question would require focused comparative case histories of successful and unsuccessful attempts at counterbalancing.

This book does not specify the relationships among various strategies of civil-military relations. Which strategies do leaders implement when the risk of coup is high and how might implementation of some strategies influence the likely impact of other strategies? I provide a partial answer by suggesting that counterbalancing is the most important strategy because other strategies tend to focus on manipulating offers' preferences, while counterbalancing is the only approach that pits force against force. But I do not intend to imply that other strategies are irrelevant. Indeed, in both the Syrian and the Georgian cases, patrimonialization (stacking the armed forces with political loyalists) was a very significant ingredient in the subordination of the military. This analysis claims that counterbalancing is the only strategy that vulnerable leaders should be expected to pursue on a regular basis and that the implementation of other strategies is indeterminate. But there may be patterns of implementation concerning alternative strategies that merit consideration.

Finally, it would be useful to determine whether path dependence predisposes states toward international conflict even after coups are no longer possible and leaders cease to rely on counterbalancing strategies. This book concentrates on regimes that are structurally vulnerable to the possibility of a coup. If leaders eliminate the possibility of a coup by allowing the rule of law, civil society, and political institutions to flourish, and if they no longer rely on counterbalancing to protect themselves from their own armed forces, do international conflicts that emerged during early stages of the consolidation of political order persist? This project does not address the question of path dependence and enduring disputes, but it would be interesting to trace the evolution of conflicts that emerged during early periods of state building to determine if they disappear if and when leaders become invulnerable to their own militaries.

This study casts some doubt on the claim that anarchy may be what states make of it (Wendt, 1992). Wendt argues that in the state of nature, whether states choose to participate in collective security arrangements or to view security in zero-sum terms depends on "[interactive] processes by which conceptions of self evolve" (p. 402). Because "security dilemmas are not given by anarchy or nature," Wendt argues that states can choose to define their security and interests collectively in terms of a broad international community. While this study does not focus on the state of nature, I suggest that counterbalancing might be essential to the consolidation of political order and might constitute a fundamental developmental process in some hypothetical state of nature. If institutional arrangements that leaders use to protect themselves from their own armed forces are built into early stages of political development, and if these arrangements lead to international hostility, then the imperatives of civil-military relations may be sufficient for predisposing

states toward conflict. Even if there were no pressures toward conflict generated by psychological misperception, entrenched bureaucratic interests, or Waltzian structure, the result of civil-military relations might still be that anarchy is not what states make of it.

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Notes

1. Regime Vulnerability and International Conflict

1. I define coups d'état as efforts by military coalitions to replace the regime. For a typology of coups, see Zimmermann, 1983. Following Gurr 1970, p. 185, I define regimes as the incumbents who control the government. The state refers to governing institutions. Finally, I equate civilian and military regimes because both must protect themselves from coups. Indeed, approximately half of all coups are launched against military regimes. See Finer, 1983, p. 82. Thus, I refer to civilian and military leaders as the regime and the “military-as-institution” as the military. On this distinction, see Stepan, 1988, p. 30.

2. A portion of the literature on state building and war addresses the impact of war or preparation for war on the structure of the military (Hintze, 1975; Finer, 1988; Barnett, 1992).

2. Coup-Risk and Military Division

1. On probabilistic causation see Skyrms, 1975, 1988; Humphreys, 1989; Cartwright, 1979, 1983.

2. For an opposing view, see Snyder, 1992.

3. There have been many critiques of Huntington's professionalization thesis. For reviews of other critiques, see Zimmermann, 1983; Feaver, 1995; and Taylor, 1995.

4. Two dimensions distinguish alternative variants of counterbalancing strategies. One dimension refers to the type of organization that leaders establish to balance existing threats. While some leaders may create military, paramilitary, or police forces that check potential conspirators through the threat of violent force, others may develop nonmilitary institutions such as intelligence agencies or networks of political watchdogs that monitor and infiltrate the chain of command. Another dimension refers to the location of the balancing force. Leaders can create new service branches or paramilitary forces outside the established chain of command, or they can cultivate power centers within existing organizations. In this study I focus on the most common form of counterbalancing, the creation of new militarized

forces outside the chain of command. I do not address the establishment of political or intelligence organizations or power centers within existing forces.

3. A Theory of Counterbalancing as a Cause of International Conflict

1. See Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, 1961. An excellent introduction to the Federalist Papers is Millican, 1990. For classic discussions of the Federalist Papers, see Bailyn, 1967 and Wood, 1969. For a recent application of the arguments set forth in the Federalist Papers to modern political debates, see Brinkley, Polsby, and Sullivan, 1997. Also on divided power, see Polybius, 1962 and Montesquieu, 1899.

2. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for underscoring the importance of this point.

3. However, dyads that consist of two dictatorships are about as likely to engage in war as dyads that consist of a dictatorship and a democracy.

4. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this argument to my attention.

5. A fourth alternative approach, *promotion of budget competition*, can allow leaders to cultivate rivalries among their own armed forces. However, I do not address budget competition as a distinct strategy because it is subsumed under other strategies. In particular, budget competition is a variant of favoritism.

4. Regime Vulnerability, Counterbalancing, and International Conflict during the Cold War

1. Each case consists of a regime year. For example, Spain-1969 is one case and Spain-1970 is another case.

2. Three of the variables that comprise Hibbs's measure of institutionalization reflect the strength of nonstate organizations: union membership as a percentage of the nonagricultural work force, age of the largest political party divided by the number of parties; and age of the largest political party (Hibbs, 1973, p. 99).

3. To determine whether our findings are sensitive to decisions about operationalization, we also measure civil society in terms of newspapers, phones, and students, all standardized by population. The respecification does not influence the direction or significance of our findings and only minimally influences the magnitude of coefficients. Data on INGO membership are available in Union of International Associations, 1966, 1977, 1982, and 1986.

4. However, to determine whether our findings are sensitive to decisions about operationalization, we also measure legitimacy in terms of the age of the political system as coded by Gurr, 1990, p. 41. Jackman argues that age is a useful proxy for legitimacy because rules take time to set in and because old political regimes are more likely to depend on legitimacy to sustain themselves than young regimes. See Jackman, 1993. The respecification does not influence the direction or significance of our findings and only minimally influences the magnitude of coefficients.

5. We calculated our measure of coup risk by computing z-scores for civil-society and legitimacy and summing them. Then we reversed the sign of the index to make it intuitively understandable. Hence, a high score indicates a high level of coup risk. Summary statistics follow: *Coup-risk index*: mean = -.40, min. = -4.53, max. = 5.34; *INGOs* (logged): mean = 5.48; min. = 0; max. = 7.67; *competition*: mean = 2.60; min. = 1; max. = 7; *regulation*: mean = 3.98; min. = 1; max. = 5. The Pearson correlation coefficients for these dimensions are as follows: *INGOs-competition*: $r = .451$, $p < .000$; *INGOs-regulation*: $r = .521$, $p < .000$; *regulation-competition*: $r = .397$, $p < .000$.

6. Summary statistics follow: *counterbalancing index*: mean = .01, min. = -4.03, max = 5.75; *number of military organizations*: mean = 4.50; min. = 1; max. = 12; *relative size of the paramilitary*: mean = .28; min. = 0; max. = .9. The Pearson correlation coefficient for these two dimensions is .443; $p < .001$. As scores were quite stable over time, we measured each dimension for every country in every fourth year and then used the SPSS linear interpolation function to compute scores for intermediate years.

7. Conflict data were taken from Brecher, Wilkenfeld, and Moser, 1988. We also ran our models using a different specification of this variable that reflected recent individual conflict involvement instead of the presence or absence of recent regional dispute. We set this dichotomous measure to 1 if the regime was involved in an international dispute in the previous ten years and 0 if it was not involved in such a conflict. The alternative specification did not influence the direction or significance of any of the coefficients in the model, and it had only a slight impact on the magnitude of other coefficients.

8. Taylor and Jodice, 1983. We ran our models with another variant of this variable that emphasized recent economic instability rather than political strife. This was a dichotomous variable that identified nations in which the prior moving average (over three years) of Gross Domestic Product was less than 1.0. In other words, the variables indicate if a nation experienced three or more years of economic stagnation or a short-term economic crisis in which current GDP dropped below the GDP of the prior three years. Economic crises did not influence the direction or significance of our findings, and it had only a slight impact on the magnitude of other coefficients.

9. This variable reflects the probability that any two people randomly chosen from the country are of the same ethno-linguistic group. A score of 100 indicates a totally homogenous country. Taylor and Hudson, 1976.

10. For the latest wealth data previously published by Summers and Heston, 1991, see the Penn World Tables, Mark 5.6. For military size, see Singer and Small, 1990. For regime type, see Gurr, 1990.

11. These findings were quite robust, regardless of the specific variables included in the model. This stability between bivariate and multivariate models and between different combinations of variables in multivariate models makes us confident that our results are not an artifact of multicollinearity. As described above, both dimensions of the counterbalancing variable are censored. However, we employed a variety of operationalizations of counterbalancing including interval, ratio, and discrete measures. In all cases, results were consistent. Thus, we do not believe that results are affected by the truncation/censoring of this variable or characteristics of its distribution.

12. To interpret the meaning of this result, recall that our coup-risk score ranges from a minimum of -4.53 to 5.34 , and the counterbalancing score ranges from -4.03 to 5.75 .

13. Our finding is not biased by serial correlation even though many of our variables are correlated over time. For example, the level of coup risk in any country at any point in time likely is related strongly to the level of coup risk in the previous year. However, corollary analyses make it clear that our findings are not biased by such autocorrelation. We ran our model 21 times (once for each year in the data set) and the direction and magnitude of the effect of coup risk on counterbalancing are consistent at *every* point in time over the 1966–1986 period. The variable was statistically significant at the .05 level in 18 of the 21 years and nearly so in the others.

14. Jones, Bremer, and Singer, 1996; Gochman and Maoz, 1984; Brecher et. al. 1988.

15. On dyadic versus regional conceptualizations of interstate interactions see Solingen, 1998, pp. 83–87.

16. Because our interest is the initiation of conflict rather than the length of a dispute, we set our conflict variables to 1 for any regime year in which a dispute began and 0 for all other years.

17. To ensure that our results are not sensitive to coding decisions, we ran our models with several different specifications of the dependent variable. In the second specification, we assign a 1 to any case in which a full-scale war occurs and a 0 to other cases. In the third specification, we collapse the second through fifth categories and assign a 1 to any case in which conflict occurs and a 0 to all other cases. We report the results of our first specification, although alternative specifications do not influence the direction or significance of our coefficients, and they have only a slight impact on the magnitude of other effects.

18. We scaled this variable in proportion to the number of actors in the region to account for the fact that regions with many nations are likely to have more conflict. Conflict data were taken from Brecher et al., 1988. Because of the importance of past dispute involvement as an explanation of subsequent international violence, we ran our models with several different specifications of this variable that emphasized individual dispute involvement rather than recent regional war. We used dichotomous variables indicating nations that were in a dispute within the last 5 years, or within the last 10 years. Our models confirm that recent involvement in conflict does have a positive effect on subsequent conflict involvement. However, alternative specifications do not influence the direction or significance of our other coefficients, and they have only a slight impact on the magnitude of other effects.

19. Taylor and Jodice, 1983. We ran our models with another specification of this variable that emphasized recent economic instability rather than political strife. The alternative specification did not influence the direction or significance of other coefficients in the model, and it had only a slight impact on the magnitude of other effects.

20. Here we use the same coup-risk score that we developed for the first model and that we explained above.

21. For wealth, see the Penn World Tables, Mark 5.6. For military size, see Singer and Small, 1990. For level of democracy, see Gurr, 1990.

22. To interpret the meaning of this result, recall that our counterbalancing index ranges from -4.03 to 5.75 .

23. Indeed, it is because counterbalancing does *not* lead automatically to interservice rivalries that we argue that leaders use international conflict to promote mistrust among their own forces. Dassel's conceptualization of divided militaries reflects political cleavages. See Dassel, 1998, p. 136.

24. Although alternative procedures are available to correct for bias in our second model that might result if our dependent variable (conflict) causes our treatment variable (counterbalancing), these procedures are unreliable (Lee, 1978). When observations are not produced randomly and are a function of the dependent variable, elimination of bias requires "model[ing] explicitly the way in which observations are produced." Then, hypothetical values of the dependent variable that would have obtained if the treatment were not produced by the outcome must be compared with the actual values of the dependent variable (Przeworski, 1995, p. 21). However, statistical procedures designed for this purpose are not robust. As Przeworski and Limongi (1993, p. 64) note, "Selection models turn out to be exceedingly sensitive: minor modifications . . . can affect the signs in the equations that explain [the dependent variable]."

5. Regime Vulnerability as a Cause of Counterbalancing in Syria in the early 1970s

1. For histories of modern Syria see Antonius, 1946; Tibawi, 1969; Lapidus, 1988; and especially Khoury, 1983.

2. The Ba'th Party was founded in Syria in 1940 by two French-educated intellectuals, Salah Bitar and Michel Aflaq. Their doctrine of "Arab unity, social justice, democracy, and freedom . . . [was] anti-colonialist in international orientation and socialist in domestic programs. They espoused not only a political doctrine but a mystical feeling for the rejuvenation of the Arab nation" (Lapidus, 1988, p. 647; Dawisha, 1978, p. 342; Dawisha, 1974; Kaylani, 1972). The party recruited heavily among 'Alawi military officers. Secular, pan-Arab, and socialist doctrine was attractive to members of Syria's rural, peasant minority communities.

3. For centuries, most 'Alawis lived in the Latakia region in northwest Syria as impoverished, food-producing peasants accountable to absentee, Sunni Muslim landlords. Although they make up only about 10 percent of Syria's total population, the 'Alawis were over-represented in the *Troupes Spéciales* under the French, who encouraged minority communities to join because they believed that minority soldiers would willingly oppress the Sunni majority. After independence the 'Alawi military presence continued to grow as a result of depressed economic conditions in rural Latakia, Sunni disdain for the Army, and the ability to purchase service exemptions that few 'Alawi could afford. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, 'Alawi soldiers rose quickly through the lower ranks as coups decimated the Sunni-dominated, upper echelons of officer corps. By the early 1960s the 'Alawis had "a plurality among the common soldiers and a clear preponderance among the non-commissioned officers" (Batatu, 1981, p. 341).

4. That said, Van Dam (1996, p. 118) notes the remarkable stability that characterized the very senior echelon of the Syrian military and paramilitary power structure after Asad came to power.

5. Collelo (1988, p. 258) says that the directorate was established in 1970.
6. For Soviet-Syrian relations in general, see the excellent studies by Golan, 1990 and Karsh, 1991.
7. See Rathmell, 1996, and Wege, 1990, for the history of Syrian intelligence organizations.
8. Eisenstadt says that Asad established a few airfield defense units after his 1966 coup and that he expanded and consolidated them into the Defense Brigades after the 1970 coup (1989, p. 2; van Dam, 1996, p. 184).
9. See Insight Team, 1974, p. 73; Seale, 1988, p. 191; M. Ma'oz, 1988, pp. 87–90 for the argument that Asad initiated planning. For the claim that Sadat initiated plans for attacking Israel, see Asher, 1987, pp. 45–65; Heikal, 1975, pp. 11–45, pp. 155–206; and el-Shazly, 1980, pp. 31–39.
10. See Hersh, 1991, p. 178; Slater, 2002, p. 93; Harkavy, 1977, pp. 5–11; Aronson, 1992, pp. 114–131; Aronson, 1978; el-Shazly, 1986, p. 39; Steinberg, 1986, p. 33; Special Report, 1976. However, for the argument that Arab leaders were uncertain as to whether Israel possessed nuclear weapons see Feldman, 1982, pp. 10–15, especially n. 27; Hersh, 1991, pp. 219, 221, 174; Harkavy, 1976, p. 12; Evron, 1984, p. 154. See Solingen, 1994 for a theoretical discussion of regional nuclear dynamics in the Middle East.
11. Dayan's quotes are reported by Hersh (1991, p. 223). Also see Green, 1988, pp. 89–91; Special Report, 1976, p. 39. Despite extensive evidence that "something inside Dayan . . . seemed to have snapped," it is possible that reports of Dayan's reaction were overblown to blackmail Washington into providing Israel with conventional military assistance.
12. As with almost all expert sources whom I interviewed for this chapter, the specialist who provided this quote preferred to remain anonymous. Please see the reference list for more information.
13. Cobban concludes that Moscow allowed Syria to participate in the war (1991, p. 114), but others report that the Soviet Union opposed Syria's plan to attack Israel (Golan, 1990, pp. 147, 184). For a fascinating account of Kremlin decision making during the war, see Israelyan (1995).
14. Scholarship on Syrian involvement in the 1973 war is voluminous. Three sets of authors have contributed to the literature: military-diplomatic historians, regional specialists on the Middle East, and international relations theorists. For military-diplomatic historians, see for example Asher, (1987, pp. 46–48) and Dupuy, (1978, p. 389). For regional specialists, see Seale, (1988, p. 185); M. Ma'oz, (1988, p. 84); Hinnebusch, (1991, pp. 392–394); and Rabinovich, (1978, pp. 226–227). For international relations theorists, see Aronson, 1992, p. 141; Aronson, 1984, pp. 107–142; Yaniv, 1987, p. 148; Yaniv, 1986, p. 170–171; Evron, 1984; Lebow, 1981, pp. 278, 253; Huth and Russett, 1993, p. 63; Mearsheimer, 1983, p. 255; and Z. Ma'oz, 1990a, pp. 492, 415).
15. For the definition of legitimacy, as opposed to popularity, see chapter 4.

6. When Dividing the Military Provides an Incentive for Conflict

1. In exchange for protection, Moscow forced Shevardnadze to permit Russian troops to remain on Georgian soil. At the time there were 20,000 to 25,000 Russian troops already deployed in Georgia, but according to a treaty signed in May 1993, these forces had been scheduled to leave by the end of 1995 (Fuller, 1993a, p. 82). After joining the CIS, however, Russia forced Georgia to permit its forces to remain.

2. For discussions of selection on the dependent variable, see Dion (1994).

3. It is important to emphasize that this analysis does not present a comprehensive account of Georgian foreign policy or Georgian-Russian relations. There are numerous aspects of Georgian foreign policy that this study does not seek to explain, such as international economic policy and arms control. In addition, there are many determinants of Georgian foreign policy that this analysis does not consider. In these two senses, then, the analysis is not comprehensive. Rather, the chapter is a test of one theory that underscores foreign policy implications of one particular causal factor (counterbalancing) during a specific historical period in Georgia.

4. On October 19, 1998, Shevardnadze experienced yet another civil-military crisis when a mutiny involving 400 troops and 22 tanks took over its garrison in the city of Senaki in western Georgia. The coup attempt failed when loyal Army units prevented mutinous troops from capturing Kutaisi, Georgia's second largest city.

5. Shevardnadze developed three additional military organizations—Air Defense Forces, Air Force, and Navy—but these tiny forces were not cultivated to protect the regime from coups. See Jones, 1996, p. 37; Allison, 1993, p. 69; *Georgian Chronicle*, November 1995, p. 4.

6. One exception to this claim is that the regime did use patrimonialization effectively to reduce the risk of a coup. Aside from counterbalancing, this was the only important survival strategy. Patrimonialization refers to purging, shuffling, and other tactics designed to replace adversaries in the armed forces with political loyalists. From 1992 until 1995, eleven different ministers ran the Ministries of Defense, Internal Affairs, and State Security. See *Georgian Chronicle*, December 1992; September 1993; December 1995. In addition, Shevardnadze appointed incompetent subordinates to senior military posts. In 1992, for example, he appointed thirty-one-year-old philosopher Irakli Batiashvili to head the Bureau of Information and Intelligence, the successor to the Department for National Security and the Georgian KGB. See Jones, 1993a, p. 5.

7. For the story of the development of the Rescue Corps and Rapid Reaction Corps, see Belkin, 1998.

8. In January 1992, a junta known as the Military Council ousted Gamsakhurdia from office. The council was led by Tengiz K'it'ovani and Jaba Ioseliani, warlords who ran private paramilitary forces that were the two most powerful armed organizations in Georgia. K'it'ovani commanded the National Guard, which was established by decree of the Supreme Council of Georgia on December 20, 1990 (Fuller, 1993a; Jones, 1996, p. 40). By the end of 1991, the Guard included 14,500 to 16,500 troops, but its formal structure was practically meaningless as it consisted of a poorly organized conglomerate of separate units (Darchiashvili

& Aladashvili, 1996). Ioseliani commanded the Mkhedrioni, a confederation of mafia members, criminals, and “street boys’ from town’s districts and villages” (Darchiashvili, 1997, p. 1, 1995b). It was established in the fall of 1988 as an illegal paramilitary outfit and consisted of between 2,000 and 5,000 members at the time of the coup (Jones, 1996).

A prominent dissident during the Soviet period, Gamsakhurdia emerged as a human rights advocate and subsequent spokesman of the nationalist movement under Perestroika. Elected president of Georgia in May 1991 with 87 percent of the vote, he came to power on “a wave of militant nationalism, which included a drive for ethnic homogenization, Georgian cultural hegemony, the removal of Soviet occupation troops, and the revival of Christian Orthodoxy” (Jones 1996; 1990; 1994). However, Gamsakhurdia soon alienated opposition as well as members of the armed forces by using hostile rhetoric to demonize political opponents and curtailing enemies’ civil rights (Ekedahl & Goodman, 1997, p. 262).

In February 1991 Gamsakhurdia disbanded the Mkhedrioni with the help of Soviet troops and imprisoned Jaba Ioseliani without trial (Jones, 1993b). When Gamsakhurdia tried to disarm the National Guard in September, K’it’ovani and 13,000 to 15,000 followers retreated to their barracks on the outskirts of Tbilisi, leaving behind only 1,500 troops who remained loyal to government (Fuller, 1993a, p. 81). With the help of Ioseliani (released recently from prison), K’it’ovani overthrew Gamsakhurdia on January 6, 1992, after a bloody, two-week battle in the center of Tbilisi (Jones, 1996, pp. 39–40).

9. Nadibaidze was replaced by a Western-oriented defense minister, Davit Tevzadze, in 1998.

10. The name of this publication was changed to *Army and Society in Georgia* in 1996.

11. For example, about 35,000 Georgian men were eligible for the draft each year. However, only 5,000 to 8,000 new recruits were needed to serve. Because service conditions were extremely harsh, potential recruits were desperate to avoid their two-year service commitment. According to one Western expert, most new recruits were individuals who could not afford to pay the bribe of about \$500 that was necessary for avoiding service. Hence, this source alone probably yielded a total of over \$14 million per year for the Army. The total Army budget for 1997 was only about \$50 million, and the form of bribery just described was only one of the Army’s unofficial mechanisms for funding itself.

12. At the May 1996 CFE negotiations at Vienna, Russia was permitted to exceed limitations on armaments that it could deploy in its southern flank zone. Georgia had been prepared to trade part of its CFE quota to Moscow in exchange for desperately needed Russian hardware. When Russia was allowed to exceed previous zone limits, the Georgians were left empty-handed.

13. It is important to acknowledge the presence of endogeneity or backward causation in the Georgian case. In particular, the conflict with Russia was a partial cause of coup risk. Even though Russians helped plan at least one attempted coup, however, Georgian-Russian conflict was not the critical determinant of regime vulnerability.

7. Conclusion

1. The ingroup-outgroup hypothesis is that external conflict promotes internal cohesion.



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Syria

Interviews

I interviewed and corresponded with eight former officials from American, French, Israeli, and Soviet military and military intelligence organizations who had expertise on the Syrian armed forces in the early 1970s. All except one, Mr. Alain Chouet, preferred to remain anonymous. In addition, I consulted with eleven American, British, French, Israeli, and Syrian academic experts on the Syrian military.

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Georgia

Periodicals

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- Georgian Chronicle* (1992–1997). Tbilisi.
- Georgian Military Chronicle* (1994–1996). Tbilisi.
- Sakartvelos Respublik'a* (1992–1995). Tbilisi.

Interviews and Site Visits

I interviewed 24 officials in Tbilisi, Georgia, in June and July, 1997. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 1 hour. I interviewed officials of the following institutions:

- German Embassy
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Office of the President

Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security
 State Department of the State Frontier Guard
 U.S. Embassy

In addition, I conducted two visits to military bases near Tbilisi and consulted with scholars in two nongovernmental organizations in Tbilisi.

Documents

“For the Working of the Law of Georgia on the National Security Council,” Decree of the Parliament of Georgia, January 24, 1996.

“Georgian Military Doctrine,” Ministry of Defense, no date.

“Georgian Military Doctrine,” Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, no date.

“Georgian Military Perfection Program,” Ministry of Defense, no date.

“Law on Defense of Republic,” Republic of Georgia Law, December 22, 1992. (FBIS-SOV-93-015, January 26, 1993, pp. 79–81)

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“Number of the Armed Forces of Georgia,” Parliamentary Commission on Defense and Security, January 1, 1997.

“On the Approval of the Program for Establishment and Development of Provisional-Technical Base with the Military-Technical Specialists Training Centre at the Ministry of Defense during 1996–1997 to Train Groups of the young conscripts for the Military Forces of Georgia,” Order of the President of Georgia #578, September 3, 1996.

“On the Changes in the List of the Enterprises Subordinated by the Ministry of Defense,” Order of the President of Georgia #366, June 6, 1996.

“On the Complex Measures for Developing of the Armed Forces of Georgia,” Order of the President of Georgia #6, December 1, 1995.

“On the Establishment of the National Security Council,” Decree of the President of Georgia #137, January 31, 1996.

“On the Establishment of the State Border Defense Department of the Republic of Georgia,” Order of the Head of the State of the Republic of Georgia #220, July 5, 1994.

“On the Joining of the Administration of the National Guard to the Ministry of Defense and Efficient Subordination of the Department of the State Border Defence to the Minister of Border Troops Defence,” Order of the Head of the Republic #337, October 8, 1994.

- “On the Joining of the Air Forces into the Military Air Forces of the Ministry of Defense,” Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers #545, July 7, 1993.
- “On the Military Draft,” Law of Georgia, June 27, 1996.
- “On the National Security Council,” The Law of Georgia, January 24, 1996.
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