

# The Monthly

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**MILITARY  
EXPENDITURES  
SALARIES: 93%  
VS.  
WEAPONRY: 1%**



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# TWITTER WILL NOT CLEANSE THY HANDS



It is not true that the people of this region lacked the will for change and the desire for liberty, as we are led to believe by the current media rhetoric. Before the Frenj (“Crusaders”) and till today, thousands have sacrificed their lives for higher causes and there was no Facebook or Twitter then. In spite of this, one must ask why we are the way we are. And the obvious answer is because we lack the vision and the leadership and institutions to achieve it. It goes without saying that neither Sharif Faisal nor Hosni Al Za’im or Jamal Abdel Nasser or King Faisal of Saudi Arabia knew how things would develop because of their alliances, gloating and feuding.

While rallying for Arab independence and cursing the Ottoman rule, Sharif Faisal, in 1916, and the “Great Arab Revolution” rebels unknowingly paved the road to the Sykes-Picot Pact and the creation of Israel. Hosni Al Za’im’s “Inqilab” (coup d’état) in 1949, a word not used before in Arab politics, started a snow ball effect in Syria and also Egypt and Iraq, finishing off the oligarchy which thought it could survive the Ottomans by subjugation to the French and the British. Sharif Faisal did not know that the focal point was French and British domination and not Arab liberation. Nasser and Qassem of Iraq did not know that the focal point was American dominance and the winding down of French and British rule and not Pan-Arabism. Otherwise, how can you have a cold war? You must also get rid of Shakhboot of Abu Dhabi, Sanousi of Libya, Sa’id of Oman, Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Khalifah of Qatar and bring in the high rollers and erectors of the biggest towers, airports and buyers of weapons ready for atrocities and lust. Gaddafi, Sadat, Ben Ali were a must for the legitimacy of Israel, stability and the rhetoric about modernization of the Arab world.

Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali were incapable, due to the aphrodisiac effect of power and their limited IQ, of envisaging the end. Saddam went down by brutal force and the other two by the soft chirping of “Twitter”.

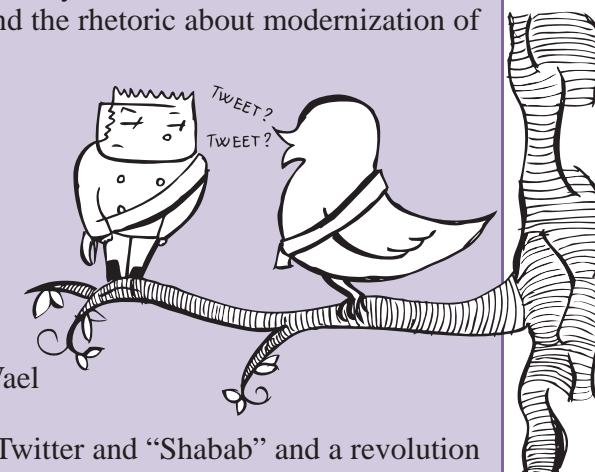
Oppression, corruption and lack of any progress are a recipe for disaster. The permanent presence of BBC, CNN, Al Hurra and Facebook is clear evidence that the end is near. One must really wonder why these networks kept quiet while more than 5 million died in Congo but were really enthused about what Wael Ghneim did or did not do in Egypt?

We are asked to believe that the end of Mubarak came because of Twitter and “Shabab” and a revolution without political parties and without leaders. We are also told that Sharif Faisal raised the Arab flag but we now know that Marc Sykes designed it in 1916. Should we not ask how the region would look like 20 years from now? Is the West preparing another disappointment for the Arab masses? Will there be an Arab awakening or another Sykes Picot?

One can further wonder about the romantic stories mentioned in history:

Did Al Qadi Al Khashab really burst into the Sultan’s mosque with the rebels and subsequently Jihad was declared against the Frenj in 1111?

Did the lady scream “Wa mu’tasamah” in 1258 and then the Khalifah recognized that his end at the hands of the Mogul had come and that he shouldn’t have been mocking the Egyptians because they allowed a woman called “Shajarat Al Durr” to rule them?



-Did Lawrence and Faisal simply hit it off and the Hashemites decided to turn against the Ottomans in 1916?

-Did Asma Andraos and her friends launch the 14 March movement by scribbling "Independence-05" on a mat and "people came to the tent, Christians, Muslims and Druze who hated each other and marched together," as Asma told the NYT?

-Is Wael Ghneim's departure from Dubai the sparkle that brought down Mubarak in 2011?

As if Cleopatra's nose has truly changed history...

The lesson from all this historical rhetoric is that people, leaders and the media will not decide the future of countries in the absence of a vision and a will. Historical developments are driven by socio-economic and political dynamics much more complex than what today's Facebook 'scholars' are telling us. For that purpose, four points ought to be noticed on the events of Tunisia and Egypt:

#### 1. The lifting of the element of fear

The element of fear was lifted by the direct intervention and supervision of the USA. Obama's address to the Egyptian people is a testimony to this, not to mention the instructions that the generals received from the US to side with the rebels or stay on the sides.

#### 2. Rise of basic food prices

Measures taken by the US Fed contributed to the major rise in basic food prices. No remedial steps were taken to protect poor countries.

#### 3. Homogeneous societies and tyrants

Tunisia and Egypt are among the least polarized countries in the Arab world that happen to be ruled by ruthless tyrants with highly centralized power and this is exactly where the "revolutions" took place. In other places, probability of strifes or civil wars is high.

#### 4. Arab moderates

Mediocre "Arab moderates" who were atrocious with their own people were spineless when it came to dealing with Netanyahu. They looked petty and behaved as such without delivering any success stories to their people. And so the fig leaf had to fall.

Back to Lebanon where apparently Siniora, was conspiring, perhaps with Nasser Qandeel, to overthrow

Mubarak. It is odd how conflicting parties in Lebanon, March 14 and March 8, were quick to claim victory in Egypt: Siniora, by declaring that the tactics of demonstrators in Tahrir Square were similar to those of 14 March 2005 in Martyr's Square and March 8 by declaring the victory of their cause and that of Pan Arabism, despite the obvious absence of its slogans or mention of the siege on Gaza.

On another note, especially for the Al Jazeera audience, Qatar is planning to spend billions of dollars to host the World Cup in 2020. Let us also all remember that Gaddafi was not always an enemy of the West as in the climax of the Cold War in 1971 he handed over the leaders of the Sudanese Communist parties to Jaafar Numeiri who executed them.

A window has been opened and the USA opened it for reasons that relate to its own interests and those of Israel; you can demonstrate, you can bring down tyrants as long as you don't threaten oil and Israel and it is ok if Omar Suleiman falls in Egypt by friendly fire or Hamad Al-Khalifa's rule is disturbed in Bahrain due to collateral damage. Your role model shall be Lebanon where there is no central power, no nation, no State but only tribes and confessions. You can follow Turkey, Iran or Israel if you wish but forget about being an Arab for the Twitter does not speak Arabic.

Soon, the policy makers in Washington will discover that this window is also open for perhaps an indigenous leadership that will not get high on the words of praise of western leaders levied to win the hearts and minds of the people of this region. These insulting words of praise will not erase the atrocities committed by those tyrants, which the US has and is still supporting, nor redress Obama's statement that the relationship with Israel is "sacrosanct" nor Hillary Clinton's photo posing proudly near the dividing wall in Palestine nor the peddling of weapons to Gulf states, or the recent American Veto at the UN Security Council regarding settlements in the West Bank. Yes, this window is open to those who have a vision and a will, as has been the case since the Crusaders to Sykes Picot to the July 2006 war. The question, metaphorically, remains: Is it an Arab awakening or another Sykes Picot? Unless we want to keep focusing on whether "to Tweet or not to Tweet," instead of remembering that all the twitting in the world will not cleanse thy hands.

*Jawad N. Adra*

# MILITARY EXPENDITURES (1990-2010): LBP 25,000 BILLION

The size and purpose of military spending is an issue over which politicians are divided. One group believes the substantial military spending has led to a budget deficit and a rise in public debt without really achieving security, which is normally sustained by political consensus. Another group considers the size of expenditures to be acceptable, even low, compared to other state expenditures, since it is mostly limited to the payment of salaries while spending on armament and equipment is negligible.

This study will look into the expenditures of the military and security organizations in Lebanon: the Ministry of National Defense (including the Lebanese Army), the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces (ISF), the Directorate General of General Security, the Directorate General of State Security (the article does not address the expenses of the military apparatus in the Directorate General of Customs). From 2006 to 2010, the budget laws were not ratified therefore the figures listed in the tables are those of the draft laws.

#### Main remarks

The classification of some of the expenditures adopted in the budget laws of 1990 through to 1996 was changed and as of 1997, a new one was implemented. For example, compensation and financial aid were now to be included in salaries and wages.

Based on the new classification, some expenditures are listed within the following provisions:

- ⊙ Services including: rent and maintenance of estates, mail, advertisements and publications, insurance, car rental, wages, housekeeping and cleaning expenses.
- ⊙ Consumables including: stationary, office supplies, fuel, pesticides, lab materials, plants, electricity, water and telephone lines.
- ⊙ Allowances, salaries and wages including: transportation fees, health and school grants.
- ⊙ Others including: secret expenditures, delegations and conferences, studies, travel and transportation in Lebanon and abroad, judicial rulings and financial settlements.
- ⊙ Maintenance of technical equipment and buildings.
- ⊙ Equipment including: furniture, office and technical equipment and IT equipments.
- ⊙ Construction including: buildings, roads and water and electricity extensions.

The figures listed in the tables are those of the state budget laws of 1990 to 2005 and of the draft budget laws of 2006 to 2010. The numbers represent an estimate of the expenditures and are not final.

Tables 1 (p. 6,7), 2 (p. 6,7), 3 (p. 8,9) and 4 (p. 8,9) show, respectively, the expenditures of the Ministry of National Defense, the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces (excluding prisons), the Directorate General of General Security and the Directorate General of State Security.

These tables demonstrate that:

- ⊙ The Lebanese Army enjoys the largest share of expenditures amounting to 67.3% of military spending, followed, in terms of size, by the ISF (25.4%), the General Security (5.3%) and State Security (1.91%).
- ⊙ Salaries, wages, compensation, and health and school grants form 93% of military spending.
- ⊙ Expenditure on military equipment is very low forming a mere 1% of military spending.
- ⊙ During the period studied (1990-2010), army expenditures increased by 1,534%, ISF by 2,292%, General Security by 2,712% and State Security by 6,068% while budget expenditures increased by 3,172%. The numbers show that the increase in military spending was lower than the percentage of increase of the total budget expenditures and this is evident in Table 5.

Table 5 (p.10) shows a drop in the size of military spending compared to the budget's total expenditures, from 22% in 1990 to 12.6% in 2010, forming 14.3% of total spending for that period.