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Using Israel as a case study, this article endeavors to account for the intriguing sociopolitical phenomenon that military coups and military regimes are thwarted not because of the resilience of democratic institutions and the absence of war but because the society is militaristic and is in a protracted state of war. This argument, hypothesizing an inverse relationship between militarism and praetorianism, is based on an examination of Israel from its establishment until the present day, its depiction as a nation-in-arms, and its comparison with other nations-in-arms that have also experienced nonpraetorian militarism.

## RETHINKING THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS PARADIGM The Inverse Relation Between Militarism and Praetorianism Through the Example of Israel

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**T**he extensive literature dealing with the political role of the army assumes that a constant state of war and a militaristic culture are major contributing factors to praetorianism: the military seizure of power. Suffice it to mention Lasswell's (1941, 1962) classic statement that perennial security threats may lead to a garrison state, a nondemocratic hypermilitaristic state, which is ruled by the "specialists of violence." Using Israel as a case study, and comparing it with some historical cases such as Prussia-Germany, Japan, and mainly France, this article endeavors to account for the intriguing sociopolitical phenomenon that military coups and military regimes fail to materialize not necessarily because of the resilience of democratic institutions and the absence of war but because a society is militaristic and is in a protracted state of war. To put it more schematically, militarism and praeto-

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rianism are not necessarily concurrent, and the existence of an inverse relationship between them is a distinct possibility.

That possibility, however, was not taken into consideration in the civil-military relations paradigm, which was developed after World War II mainly by Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, and S. E. Finer. Take Huntington's (1957) classic book, *The Soldier and the State*, in which he posited a low probability for praetorianism as long as army officers are true professionals, deeply committed to the military domain, and indifferent to politics. Huntington, then, depicted an inverse relation between professionalism and praetorianism.<sup>1</sup> For Janowitz (1957, 1960), changes in organizational style endow the armed forces with a civilian-like character, reducing the likelihood of a military coup. Janowitz counterposed civilianism to praetorianism, as did Finer (1962), who singled out the maturity of a political culture and its ability to function democratically as leading factors that would undercut praetorianist tendencies.

These different approaches should not obscure the civil-military relations paradigm's shared point of departure, namely, the existence of a balanced system of two separate spheres in which the military and the civilian realms offset each other. This assumption was severely criticized. A key question in this connection is whether it is possible at all to conceive of the civilian side of the equation in the same light as the military side. The military is indeed an institution, the critics claimed, but the civilian dimension is more complex and heterogeneous. Another problem concerned the political role of the military. Does the military constitute a professional neutrality that is violated only when a vacuum is created or a crisis arises within the civil sphere? Or alternatively the army, by definition, is a political actor that routinely plays a major political role (Burk, 1993; Edmonds, 1988, pp. 70-112; Schiff, 1992; Valenzuela, 1985).

In fact, the concepts of militarism and praetorianism fall outside the parameters of the military realm, which stands in contradistinction to the civilian realm. The edifice of separation will collapse like a house of cards if one takes into account that civilians are often involved in military coups; moreover, in military regimes close cooperation between the civilian and military elites is often virtually a *sine qua non* for the military to retain power (Finer, 1982; Maniruzzman, 1987, pp. 1-12; Nordlinger, 1977, pp. 108-147; Zagorski, 1988). On the other hand, that militarism is not associated exclu-

1. Huntington was justly criticized by many (e.g., Abrahamsson, 1972; Edmonds, 1988) for presenting an inverse relation between professionalism and praetorianism since professional armies are often involved in military coups and military rule.

sively with the military is shown by the phenomenon that Alfred Vagts (1959, pp. 451-452) called "civilian militarism." By this he meant that civilians are often involved at least as deeply, if not more so, than the armed forces in fomenting a militaristic culture and pursuing militaristic politics.

The conception of a separation between the civil and the military is hardly applicable to Western states. It did not exist in the former U.S.S.R. and in many other Eastern and Central European states, and it is not the case in the so-called Third World or in postcolonial states (Albright, 1980; Valenzuela, 1985; Welch, 1985). Nor is it found in either the historical cases presented in this article or in Israel.

Generally speaking, the literature on civil-military relations in Israel has not shirked the question of why the Israeli army, despite its influence, never developed praetorian tendencies (Ben-Meir, 1995; Gal, 1979; Mintz, 1985; Peri, 1983). However, the answers to this question rarely deviate from the basic assumptions of the civil-military relations paradigm. Praetorianism is generally identified with militarism—the proposition being that the presence of the one necessarily implies that of the other—and both phenomena are counterposed to civilianism.<sup>2</sup>

A good example is Finer's introduction to the Hebrew edition of his book, *The Man on Horseback* (1982a). Finer acknowledges the tremendous influence exercised by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Israeli public policy, but immediately adds: "The Israeli army, in contrast to the armies in the countries surrounding Israel . . . does not pose a threat to the civil government. And as for the next question—why not?—the short answer is: 'Because it is itself a civil institution.'"

Finer knew that in Israel there is no separation between the civilian and the military. How, then, is the problem to be solved? Simply stated, the army is transferred from the military to the civilian sphere. Finer, of course, is not alone in accounting for the IDF's noninterventionism by citing its "civil"

2. On the rare occasions in which research on Israel has addressed the phenomenon of militarism, that research has concentrated on some of its "symptoms." These include survey studies in which Israelis demonstrate support for forcible rather than diplomatic solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict (Barzilai, 1992, p. 15); the routinization of conflict, that is, the evolution in Israeli culture of a mentality that perceives the conflict as a permanent condition or destiny of society (Kimmerling, 1983); and a stance marked by jingoistic and machoistic elements and a rather ritualistic commemoration of the fallen via a whole industry of memorial books (Aronoff, 1993; Shohat, 1987, pp. 217-222). However, few of those who probed the symptoms were willing to acknowledge that there was also an "illness," much less to trace its origins or the reasons for its persistence. Probably, they were leery of appropriating the term *militarism* from its (German-Japanese) historical context and turning it to analytical use, as required of a social scientist. Exceptional examples are Baruch Kimmerling's (1993) article on the various forms of Israeli militarism and Ben-Eliezer's (1995) book on the origins of Israeli militarism.

character: the fact that its bulk consists largely of civilians called up to do reserve duty; its ethos of voluntarism that coexists with state conscription; and its broad role expansion by which it has helped build a new society in fields such as immigrant absorption, the conquest of the wilderness, the elimination of illiteracy, and the promotion of popular culture (Azarya & Kimmerling, 1980; Halpern, 1962; Horowitz & Kimmerling, 1974; Lissak, 1971; Perlmutter, 1969). Nothing is missing in such theories except for one small detail: an army, by definition, is an instrument of organized violence in the society. Certainly, this definition fits the Israeli army.

Interestingly, even research on Israel that no longer sees the IDF as a means for modernization, nation building, or economic development insists on remaining within the narrow framework of the civil-military relations paradigm, the social system metaphors, and the structural-functionist theories. Thus, the following arguments are put forward concerning the Israeli case: that a partially militarized society is counterbalanced by a civilianized military (Horowitz, 1977, 1982; Horowitz & Lissak, 1989; Lissak, 1995); that the partnership between the military and the political elites is an indicator of civilianizing that prevents the emergence of a self-interested military elite, alienated and insulated from society (Peri, 1981); and that Israel's democratic system keeps militarism and praetorianism in check by demarcating two types of time—routine time and the time of social interruption, with the society able to shift quickly and efficiently back and forth between the two modes of time (Kimmerling, 1985).<sup>3</sup>

The spirit of Janowitz informs most of these studies. The result is the "importation" of a theory that is unsuited to many societies, including Israel's, in which there is no civil tradition (Ben-Eliezer, 1993; Schiff, 1992), and where preparations for war, war itself, and the legitimation accorded this situation become questions equal in importance to the possibility of military coups or their absence—so much so, indeed, that often this is precisely the reason that military seizures of power do not occur.

The following is an attempt to describe the conditions under which an inverse relation between militarism and praetorianism exists. These conditions are bound up with interrelations between elites, state power, and nation formation—variables that are not sufficiently factored into the civil-military paradigm. Israel serves as a case study, but is systematically juxtaposed to several other examples that exhibit significant similarities to the basic claim.<sup>4</sup>

3. Since then Baruch Kimmerling has completely changed his perspective on civil-military relations in Israel (see Note 2).

4. A case study presents illustrative material that appears to either support or reject propositions derived from the more theoretical literature. In fact, I provide what Arend Lijphart (1971)

Of particular relevance to the Israeli case are 19th-century Prussia, Japan from the Meiji restoration until 1931, and France in different periods during the last two centuries. All can be termed nations-in-arms, that is, societies characterized by militarization and militarism but not by praetorianism.<sup>5</sup>

The first part of the article examines the coexistence of the concepts of militarism and praetorianism. The second part describes the classical model of militarism and absence of praetorianism, that of the nation-in-arms. The following two sections deal with the army's attitude and political influence within the nation-in-arms context. The final part considers the conditions that might nullify a situation of nonpraetorian militarism and thus eventuate in a military coup.

### PRAETORIANISM AND MILITARISM

Praetorianism describes a situation in which military officers play a predominant political role owing to their actual or threatened use of force (Norlinger, 1977, p. 2; Perlmutter, 1977, p. 90; Rappoport, 1982). Militarism, on the other hand, is a different phenomenon. Despite disagreement on the meaning of militarism—and certain claims that in the modern era the term is no longer relevant and has been superseded by militarization, a more objective and neutral concept depicting the way society organizes itself for the production of violence (Gillis, 1989; Ross, 1987)—the term is useful for describing a tendency to view organized violence and wars as legitimate means of solving political problems. It is a social and cultural phenomenon that usually has political consequences for the decision-making process. Viewed through the prism of militarism, the army is a desirable institution, soldiers are objects of admiration, and military symbols and practices are so exalted that war is perceived as the right, optimal, “no-choice,” and ultimate means of solving political problems (Ben-Eliezer, 1995b; Berghahn, 1981; Eley, 1986; Holloway, 1982; Kimmerling, 1993; Mann, 1988; Skjelsbaek, 1980; Willems, 1986). To make an analogy with Clausewitz's (1982, p. 119) famous notion of war as the “continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means,” the notion of militarism goes one step further: it is a belief in the inevitability of war.

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termed a “theory-informing case study”; a case study that does not constitute a historical accident, but rather is an example of an affinity between parameters that appear as well in other cases.

5. On nations-in-arms in general, see Ben-Eliezer (1995a). Here, the main purpose is to present nonpraetorian aspects of the militaristic nation-in-arms.

As defined here, praetorianism does not necessarily lead to militarization or to militarism, since military regimes are usually too weak to render a whole society militaristic and to initiate wars (Looney, 1990; Rappoport, 1982; Shaw, 1991, pp. 97-98). The possibility of nonmilitaristic praetorianism is thus real. Likewise, militarization and militarism are not dependent on military coups or praetorianism. Since Stanislaw Andreski (1980) alluded to the idea that "the more intensively they [the armed forces] are . . . involved in war, the less amenable and dependable they become as tools of internal repression" (p. 4), little has been written on the hypothesis of nonpraetorian militarism.

By definition, armies—if one ignores momentarily the Clausewitz-Huntington assumption that was presented and critiqued above—bear a latent praetorianist potential. At the same time, armies are often partners, together with various bodies and organizations in the society, to the creation of cultural militarism and its dissemination throughout the land (through conscription, for example), and pressure the political leadership to subject its decisions to a militaristic orientation. Consequently, the relations between the army chiefs and the state government often become a central problem in a political system. This is certainly the case when the social origins of the two elites—the military and the political—are different and give rise to divergent perceptions of reality. A case in point is Israel; on the eve of its achievement of political independence, near the end of the 1940s, the political leadership and the heads of the armed forces belonged to different sociological generations, to borrow Karl Mannheim's term (Mannheim, 1952, pp. 297-298).

This situation was the product of historical circumstances in which, throughout the decade that led up to Israel's establishment, a large number of young people acted together to set up new military units and launched military careers. This young generation formulated an ethos holding that there was a different way to solve the problems of the Zionist movement—the way of force—and challenged the relative moderation of the veteran leaders. Disputes and rivalries existed among the military groups that operated within the Jewish community of Palestine, some due to differences of a military character, others to contrasting political viewpoints, mostly between the Right and the Left. But a common denominator, the will to fight for independence against the British and the Arabs, gradually overrode all the rivalries. The young generation's view of reality bore a praetorianist potential, which was reflected in the tension that prevailed between them and the leadership during the whole decade. The political leaders were barely able to

constitute their status as the leaders of the embryonic state and to obtain a monopoly on the means of violence. Their demands that the military groups accept their authority often produced violent conflicts. However, toward the end of the decade a kind of trade-off took place between the political and military elites. The latter obeyed the political leadership and discarded any possible threat to its rule, whereas the politicians gave the young people the freedom to operate according to their lights (Ben-Eliezer, 1995b).

The sweeping autonomy that the army obtained in the 1948 war was translated into the conquest of territories and the expulsion of some of the Arab inhabitants, actions carried out with the tacit acquiescence of the political leadership. Whatever differences may have existed between the military and political levels at the war's outset gradually faded as the war continued and the army, with the leadership's consent, took the initiative (Gelber, 1986; Shapira, 1985). In the last months of the 1948 war, when hostilities took a new character as Israel conquered territories beyond the boundaries of the UN partition plan, Ben-Gurion himself articulated a militaristic politics for which Carl Von Clausewitz's concept was too moderate: "War is said to be a continuation of policy by other means," Ben-Gurion quoted, but added, "That is not always so. . . . Beginning with the first truce [June 1948], our military activity constitutes a kind of political act" (Ben-Gurion's Diary, November 27, 1948).

Friction and rivalry between the military and political levels, and also the finding of solutions to those problems, are of course quite common. But in the Israeli case one finds an incipient exchange of great interest, in which nonpraetorianism was assured in return for the practice of militarism. This kind of informal agreement between sides is inherently temporary, and dependent on the persons involved. But after Israel's establishment it became possible to institutionalize and formalize it, and thereby to invest it with validity and continuity.

### A NATION-IN-ARMS

The enactment of Israel's Military Service Law (August 1949) gave legal validity to the establishment of a strong mass army. Particularly notable was the creation of a four-tier military system: a career army, a regular army (men and women), border settlements, and a reserve army (Knesset [Israeli parliament] Record, August 29, 1949). Likewise, in France, war preparation had taken the form of compulsory service in 1793—the *levee en masse*, which expressed the aim of creating a strong, patriotic, mass army ready to repulse a Prussian invasion. Eventually, Napoleon's *Grande Armee* would number

over one million soldiers and be engaged in wars for more than 20 years (Hayes, 1931, pp. 43-83; Vagts, 1959, pp. 104-128). Almost a century later, the Republic introduced new rules that turned France once again into a nation-in-arms. The laws of 1872, 1873, and 1875 laid down principles that were supposed to place the French army on a new foundation, most significantly universal conscription.

In Prussia the reforms in the army, which brought about a nation-in-arms, followed the 1807 defeat at the hands of Napoleon. The reforms included a gradual transition from a standing army composed of mercenaries and foreign troops to a citizens' mass army and a national militia (Kitchen, 1968; Vagts, 1959, pp. 129-152). As for Japan, another example of a nation-in-arms, intrusions by Western states into its internal affairs were crucial in triggering the Meiji Restoration at the advent of the 20th century, which entailed universal conscription and sweeping reforms in the army (Cook, 1978; Sunoo, 1975).

A nation-in-arms is characterized by a blurred distinction between the civil and the military. In France, the ideal was described by Barere, the strongman of the Jacobin state: "The soldier is a citizen, and the citizen is a soldier" (Hayes, 1931, pp. 43-83). In Japan, General Tanaka Gi'ichi, one of the founders of the Imperial Military Reserve Associate, expressed the same idea in 1911 (Cook, 1978, p. 271). In Israel, it was General Yigael Yadin who first described the Israeli citizen, in the early 1950s, as "a soldier on ten months' leave." The idea in each case was to stimulate a desire within the citizenry to serve the nation-state that went beyond the legal obligations of army service.

Using the concept of the state as a variable, I shift from examining the relations between two institutions—the armed forces and civilian society, as in the civil-military relations paradigm—to an analysis of how armed struggles and external wars are socially and politically relevant to internal state/society relations (Giddens, 1985; Shaw, 1989; Tilly, 1988). All nations-in-arms strive to imbue the society at large with a militaristic spirit. Germany at the outbreak of World War I represents the extreme case. At that time some of the German professoriat were called upon to guide the "mobilization of minds" and revived, for example, Hegel's idea that war had a cleansing effect on society (Willems, 1986, pp. 80-81).

Even in less extreme case of militarism, military heroes, military symbols, and even military methods and practices become part of the dominant discourse. In the Israeli case, the cross-border reprisal raids in the 1950s were highly esteemed, and the special units that executed them were revered. They also attested to the enormous political influence wielded by the IDF under the chief of staff, Moshe Dayan, at the time (Golani, 1994; Morris, 1995). Concurrently, a definition of security was developed that was so broad, it

embraced almost all aspects of life, such as settlement of the empty areas, population dispersal, the establishment of industries, the development of agriculture, and the fostering of research and scientific skills (Ben-Gurion, Knesset Record, November 7, 1955).

The nation-in-arms ethos is one of the means states have used in order to mobilize the population, materially and mentally, for war purposes. It should not come as a surprise that in October 1955, when the Israeli political and military elites decided that Israel must go to war, the public had already absorbed the idea that war was a reasonable, justifiable, "no-choice" means of solving the country's political problems with the Arabs (Bar-On, 1992, pp. 59-64; Ben-Eliezer, 1995a). Ever since, this rationale has become a central element of Israel's culture, invoked during most of its wars. Militarism is thus one side of the equation; lack of praetorianism, the other.

### AN ARMY WITH PRESTIGE

Nations-in-arms are disinclined to foster segmented, divided, and rigidly hierarchical armies, which may be prone to praetorian tendencies and thus unsuited to win wars. Prussian reformist generals had to work hard to convince their Junker counterparts that the concession of some of their military privileges and prerogatives was essential to military success (Vagts, 1959, pp. 104-128). Similarly, Japan's leaders completely eliminated the Samurai warrior caste by abolishing its privileges in order to create a vast national army (Cook, 1978). In Israel, too, the 1948 disbanding of the various prestate military groups—especially the ultraprestigious *Palmach*, which was identified with the opposition and the left-wing parties—was aimed at preventing cleavages within the new army (Gelber, 1986). Interestingly, the dispowering of these military groups in Prussia, Japan, and Israel did not deter the respective state leaderships from idealizing the Junker, Samurai, and Palmach ways of life, or from disseminating the perceived ideals they stood for through their nations. Here, the cardinal logic of the nation-in-arms is revealed: as long as these values were carried by privileged military groups they could be exploited for praetorian purposes, whereas when shared by all they could easily be used for militaristic purposes.

Leaders of nations-in-arms have frequently attributed the absence of praetorianism to the democratic and civil nature of their states, but the real reason was the existence of militarism. For almost 150 years, and throughout the 19th century, the French army was termed *la grande muette* (the great mute). Democracy, however, did not exist in France during most of that period. As in the Israeli case, debates over the character of the French

army—should it be *une armee de metier*, a professional army, embodying aristocratic values, or *une armee de citoyens*, an army of all French citizens—generated domestic political repercussions, particularly with regard to the relations between the republicans and their opponents: the monarchists and the conservatists (Challener, 1965; Silver, 1994). But in France, too, the obsession of using the army for war purposes was the shared outlook of all “schools,” as the French historian Menard (1967) wrote: “The spirit of *revanche* [revenge against Prussia] was more powerful than disagreements over the army’s internal role and it became an institution placed above factional strife, an object of veneration and respect” (p. 18). Concomitantly, the army was granted an enormous military budget and absorbed new technologies, and its soldiers won the respect of the Republic. As Girardet (1953) wrote, “[N]ever in the course of French history, was the social esteem of officers so high as in the twenty years that followed the defeat to Prussia” (p. 124). Under these circumstances, why would a military elite give up its traditional combatant role and intervene in politics?

On the rare occasions when the potential for praetorianism emerges in nations-in-arms, it does not meet with public indifference and usually generates mockery, perhaps even hostility and contempt. In France, everyone laughed at General Boulanger’s unsuccessful coup attempt in the late 1880s.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this blatant public response is clear: As a consequence of compulsory conscription and other participatory methods of blurring the distinction between the civil and the military, the army “belongs” to everyone. Therefore, the public finds it ludicrous that members of a nation would rebel against themselves, and infuriating that they would divert the army from its main purpose.

The Dreyfus affair—in which a French Jewish officer was mistakenly convicted of treason by a military court at the turn of the century—also exposed the praetorian potential of the French army based on the differences in social origins and mentality that existed between the French officers and the political leadership (Bredin, 1983, chap. 2; Porch, 1981, pp. 54-72; Ralston, 1967, pp. 203-251). But the political elite mollified the army, even spoiled it, allowing its autonomy and militaristic spirit to go unchecked, especially in the conquering of colonies, which came to be known as “overseas France” (De La Gorce, 1963, pp. 40-42; Porch, 1981, pp. 134-168; Welch & Smith, 1974, p. 215). Indeed, Menard’s (1967) observation of the relationship between the government and the military in France implies an

6. After winning some by-elections to the Chamber of Deputies in the late 1880s, General Boulanger and his supporters believed the moment was ripe for a coup d’état. His plans, however, collapsed, with a complete failure of his movement (Menard, 1967, pp. 21-22).

inverse relation between militarism and praetorianism when he writes: "Civilians were pleased with the army's special status, rendering it homage from time to time . . . [and] generally leaving it to itself. In return, the army left politics [key political posts] to the civilians" (pp. 40-42).

### POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE ARMY

In Prussia, Japan, and France, the military was contemptuous of the small-minded, compromise-seeking, intrigue-ridden behavior of politicians and political parties. Direct concrete intervention in politics appeared to conflict with the army's professional and militaristic mentality and with its role as guardian of the nation through its involvement in wars, mainly in the international arena (Menard, 1967, p. 7; Nakamura & Tobe, 1988; Willems, 1986, pp. 72-74).

In Israel, too, the image of politicians is anything but glamorous, whereas the generals enjoy the highest prestige. It is no accident that one finds in Israel an interesting pattern of the transition by generals to politics, known as "parachuting." Indeed, many of Israel's prime ministers and Cabinet ministers had impressive military careers before entering politics. Interviews with them invariably expose their conception that politics in Israel is the continuation of military service, that the difference between the two spheres is not great—Israel's security being the common ground—and that they bring to politics their military approach and values: efficiency, integrity, unequivocal solutions to problems, determination, and courage—qualities with which, they claim, the average Israeli politician is not endowed.<sup>7</sup>

With such frequent and unimpeded transitions to politics, who needs military coups? It may not be exactly the situation that prevailed in Germany during World War I, where the politicians, and certainly the conservatives and the bourgeoisie, genuinely welcomed the idea that the needs of the war would also be realized through the transformation of two generals—Hindenburg and Ludendorff—into "silent dictators," without violence or the threat of violence and without taking over the office of chancellor or any other senior position in the government (Willems, 1984, 105-106). Naturally, there is no question of a dictatorship of military personnel in Israel, but there is no

7. Among the senior officers that have been making rapid and relatively unhampered transitions into politics in Israel are Lieutenant General Itzhak Rabin, Lieutenant General Chaim Bar-Lev, Lieutenant General Mordechai Gur, Lieutenant General Rafael Eitan, Lieutenant General Ehud Barak, Major General Ezer Weitzman, Major General Shlomo Lahat, Major General Ariel Sharon, Major General Rechavam Zeevi, Major General Itzhak Mordechai, and so on.

ignoring the fact that in Israel, too, most politicians welcome the entry of generals into politics and find no problem for democracy in this phenomenon.

The parachuting syndrome is only one manifestation of the enormous political power wielded by the army in nations-in-arms. This was the case in France, in Prussia, and in Japan, and it is also the case in Israel. Israeli scholars have traced extensively the IDF's involvement in shaping foreign affairs and the so-called defense policy (Ben-Meir, 1995; Horowitz & Lissak, 1989; Peri, 1983). The IDF also exercises inordinate influence through its articulation of military doctrines that constrain political decisions to initiate or escalate military operations; the 1982 Lebanon War is a striking example (Barzilai, 1992, pp. 174-219; Schiff & Yaari, 1984; Yaniv, 1987, pp. 128-137). The army's influence is felt not only in war time but in peace time; peace time being for a nation-in-arms a time for war preparation.<sup>8</sup>

That influence, however, does not signal a potential praetorian danger. On the contrary, like the armies in other nations-in-arms, the IDF has almost never given an indication that it might pose a serious praetorian threat. In fact, why would it have recourse to praetorianism to achieve its political goals when it was the beneficiary of so many social and political arrangements, its senior officers were honored (not to say lionized), it wielded enormous political influence, and its military way of life was a model for universal emulation?

An interesting case in Israel was the so-called "generals revolt" in 1967. In the "waiting period" of May 1967, as Egyptian forces entered the Sinai peninsula, some high-ranking officers exerted direct pressure on the government to launch a war. Three meetings held between Prime Minister Eshkol and groups of generals produced sharp confrontations. Some generals warned that the time had come for those in the military to ask themselves whether the good of the state took priority over the government's directives. This was a typical "guardian" reaction, especially when the chief of operations, Brigadier General Ezer Weizman (now Israel's president), stalked into the prime minister's office, tore off his rank insignia, and threw them on Eshkol's desk (Glick, 1974; Peri, 1983, pp. 244-245).

Besides the demand for immediate war, the generals, with public backing, put forward other demands, including the appointment of the hawkish Moshe Dayan as minister of defense. Ultimately, the old equation, between the endorsement of organized violence for political purposes and the principle of obedience to the leadership, remained valid, since all the generals' demands

8. Indeed, Emergency Laws are still in force in Israel; from Israel's beginning, they have blurred the distinction between war time and peace time (see Hofnung, 1991).

were fulfilled and Israel went to war (Luttwak & Horowitz, 1975, p. 221; Peri, 1983, pp. 249-250; Rabin, 1979, pp. 154-181).

Following the 1967 war, with its lightning victory and conquest of new territories, significant differences between the military and political elites disappeared. This was the finest hour of the nation-in-arms, and even when its luster was dimmed in the wake of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the commission of inquiry that blamed the army for the "blunder," the IDF displayed no praetorianist tendencies. After all, no doubts were raised about its centrality and its abiding importance. However, this situation has changed in the past 10 years. In both France and Israel, albeit at different times, decolonizing processes, accompanied by a process of peace, generated a danger of praetorianism.

### CONDITIONS FOR PRAETORIANISM

Israel's decision to withdraw from parts of the territories, as part of the 1993 "Oslo Agreement" with the PLO, left the country, with its nonpraetorian militarism, at a crossroads. The French-Algerian precedent proved that the French army could not accept the end of the dream of *Algerie Francaise* and reacted by manifesting, in 1958 and again in 1961, a praetorian attitude. The road that led to the French army's uprising in Algeria can be traced back to some crucial earlier events. The defeat in 1940 had smashed the army's glorious tradition. Its already low popular esteem suffered further from the debacle in Indochina. Army generals started to blame the politicians and the government for the situation. General Navarre, the former commander-in-chief, who was defeated at Dien Bien Phu, declared: "The real reasons for the defeat in Indochina are political . . . the army had been stabbed in the back" (Girardet, 1962, p. 124). However mean spirited, the general's remark reflected a certain reality. Paris was tired of conscripts and wars. Gradually, the army found itself isolated, as France turned increasingly antimilitaristic and anticolonialist (Ambler, 1966; Menard, 1967; Welch & Smith, 1974).

Recent years have witnessed a number of trends in the relations between army, politics, and society in Israel, which resemble the French case. To begin, the IDF itself has undergone something of a sea change. It has become less a people's army and more a professional organization—a trend that was especially pronounced during the tenure of Ehud Barak as chief of staff. The phenomenon of "discharge in order to reduce the budget" had previously been unknown in the Israeli discourse (Cohen, 1995). In the same vein, the army is increasingly less involved in civilian enterprises, such as rehabilitation projects and others (Yediot Ahronot, March 29, 1993; December 21, 1994).

Another symptom is a decline in the IDF's status, in no small measure due to the relentless public criticism of its performance. The loss of prestige was evident in the 1982 Lebanon War, in which the army failed to fulfill its missions and finally had to withdraw. In the Palestinian *Intifada* a few years later, the army's image was severely battered due to soldiers' brutality toward civilians, including arbitrary killing, and the fact that the IDF was effectively defeated, or humiliated, like the French army in Algeria.

A striking aspect of the public criticism is the unprecedented number of challenges to and protests against the army, particularly by parents of soldiers killed in training accidents. The parents are demanding that the army throw the book at those responsible, not cover up for senior officers, and in fact that the investigation of such incidents be placed in the hands of external committees (Yediot Ahronot, November 18, 1993).

Nor should one overlook the dramatic global changes: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Arab states' loss of support as a result. They have embarked on a road of peace, Egypt having been joined by Jordan and the PLO. Pronouncements by Israeli leaders about a "new Middle East" also bespeak a thrust toward demilitarization and decolonization. But immediately the question arises, Does this decline in militarism increase the chances for praetorianism?

The fact that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and after his assassination, Shimon Peres, continued to involve the IDF in the peace process, despite criticism by the opposition, shows that even if the likelihood of a praetorianist attitude being adopted by high-ranking military officers is limited in the Israeli context, the idea of making peace without having high-ranking officers participate is just as unlikely.

But the picture is actually far more complex, since, as in the French case, settlers are involved in the conflict along with the army and the government (Lustick, 1993; Sprinzak, 1989). They all bear arms, and for the last two decades the younger generation has attended *hesder yeshivot*, special programs that combine religious studies with military training and active service in separate platoons and companies (Yediot Ahronot, March 3, 1994). Some of these young settlers have now become career officers. Within the Israeli army there is now a stratum of ultranationalist, religious colonels who live in the territories (Ha'aretz, April 5, 1994). Will they obey government orders to withdraw the IDF from the territories?

This is no hypothetical question. In recent years, propaganda films, posters, and bulletins have repeatedly called on Israeli soldiers to disobey a possible command to evacuate settlers. In March 1994, three prominent rabbis of the settlers, who exert enormous influence, published a rabbinic

edict calling on IDF soldiers to disobey any order to evacuate settlers from the territories (Yediot Ahronot, March 31, 1994).

This article will be published not long after the change of government in Israel in May 1996. The political path that will be adopted by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his concrete approach to the Oslo accords are not yet clear. But the possibility cannot be ruled out that if he pursues the peace process, as he promised in his campaign, some in the military, as in French Algeria, will join the settlers in resisting a decision to evacuate settlements or territories. Of course, this will not encompass the entire army, but if even a small group, led by a few colonels, refuses to obey orders, Israel will be confronted with a new reality that will have untellable consequences. In any event, it is not a modification of the civil-military equation that brings about possible praetorianism but the decline in Israeli militarism, in the nation-in-arms form.

## CONCLUSION

The absence of praetorianism is not due to the army's civilianization or to the existence of a mature, liberal, democratic system—the latter is not found in many states, including Israel. Nonpraetorianism is, rather, related to a tendency to solve political problems through military means.

The possibility of an inverse relation between militarism and praetorianism, as depicted in this article, should not be understood mechanically. Many factors are involved in both a high level of militarism and a low threat of praetorianism, only some of which are touched upon in this article. The main point, however, is to demonstrate that militaristic societies are less prone to produce military coups. The trade-off between political and military elites backed by a nation-in-arms, which turn the affairs of the military and the imminence of war into the business of the whole population, obviate praetorianism; it also begets militarism. Although this article's level of generalization is limited, being confined to nations-in-arms, one can still hypothesize that the same inverse relation between militarism and praetorianism exists in other social structures. Suffice it to mention that praetorianism in Russia arose with the fall of the militaristic Soviet regime, and not before (Desch, 1993; Zhong, 1992).

In the 1970s an Israeli officer said: "If I give my men orders to march to Cairo, they will follow me blindly . . . but if I tell them to march on the Knesset [Israeli parliament], they will just stand there and laugh at me" (Glick, 1974). There could be no more fitting conclusion than this remark to demonstrate the existence of nonpraetorian militarism in Israel in the past.

Probably, it might be less certain now for Israeli soldiers to march to Damascus or to Beirut. Still, it cannot be ignored that for some of them it will seem just as reasonable to march on the Knesset.

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