EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

# COUP D'ÉTAT

## A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK

REVISED EDITION

# COUP D'ÉTAT

## A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK

*REVISED EDITION*

**EDWARD N. LUTTWAK**



Harvard University Press

***Cambridge, Massachusetts***

***London, England***

**2016**

First published in Great Britain by Allen Lane
The Penguin Press 1968
Preface and Revisions copyright © 2016 Edward N. Luttwak
Appendix C. Figures copyright © 2016 Luther Patenge
Copyright © 1968, 1979 Edward N. Luttwak
All rights reserved

Jacket design: Tim Jones

978-0-674-73726-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)
978-0-674-96965-0 (EPUB)
978-0-674-96966-7 (MOBI)

*The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:*
Luttwak, Edward, author.
Coup d'état : a practical handbook / Edward N. Luttwak.—Revised edition.
pages cm
"First published in Great Britain by Allen Lane The Penguin Press 1968"—Title page verso.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Coups d'état—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Title.
JC494.L88 2016
321.09—dc23 2015033858

*To my father, Josif Luttwak z.l., 22 October 1968*
*And to my mother, Clara z.l., 6 July 1981*

# Contents

List of Figures
List of Tables
Acknowledgment
Preface to the 2016 Edition
Preface to the First Edition
Foreword by Walter Laqueur (1978)

**1.** What Is the *Coup d'État?*
**2.** When Is a *Coup d'État* Possible?
**3.** The Strategy of the *Coup d'État*
**4.** The Planning of the *Coup d'État*
**5.** The Execution of the *Coup d'État*

Appendix A. The Economics of Repression
Appendix B. Tactical Aspects of the *Coup d'État*
Appendix C. Statistics
Index

# Figures

**4.1.** Alternative forms of government
**4.2.** The formal government and the real one
**4.3.** Telecommunication facilities available to governments
**4.4.** The physical targets of the *coup*
**4.5.** Physical targets in a coastal city
**5.1.** Operational sequence and timing
**5.2.** Intelligence "noise" and analysis
**5.3.** Lead time required by teams to reach their targets
**5.4.** Simultaneous penetration of the defensive warning system
**A.1.** Political survival limit on taxation
**A.2.** The Duvalier formula
**B.1.** "Sophisticated" seizure of major defended targets
**B.2.** General structure of blocking position
**C.1.** Frequency of *coups d'état,* 1950–2010
**C.2.** Proportion of successful vs. failed *coups d'état,* 1950–2010
**C.3.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (stacked)
**C.4.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (unstacked)
**C.5.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1945–1965
**C.6.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1966–2010

# Tables

**3.1.** Formal structures and real chains of command
**3.2.** Country X: potential forces of intervention
**3.3.** Optimum infiltration strategy
**3.4.** The role of ethnic minorities in Syrian politics
**3.5.** Class of 19— at military academy of Country X: present career position
**3.6.** The Aref brothers in Iraq, 1958–1966: a study in loyalty
**3.7.** Battalion No. 1: recruitment prospects
**3.8.** Infiltration of the armed forces in Portugal
**3.9.** Infiltration of the armed forces in Germany
**4.1.** Groups that try to influence US policies in the Middle East
**4.2.** Alternative forms of government
**4.3.** Mass communications in the Middle East and North Africa, mid-1967
**4.4.** Police telecommunication facilities in Ghana, 1967
**5.1.** The mechanics of intervention of the loyalist forces
**5.2.** The first communiqué: a choice of styles
**B.1.** Eve of the *coup:* forces of the state fully subverted
**C.1.** Economic development and the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010
**C.2.** Basic list of *coups* and attempted *coups,* 1945–2010

**C.3.** The efficiency of the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010: outcome as a function of main party

**C.4.** The frequency of the *coup d'état:* region and time distribution of *coup,* 1945–2010

# Acknowledgment

I enlisted Sawyer Blazek, a scholarly practitioner with then recent African experience and now an adviser on national security affairs, to help me update the book. It was a fortunate decision because it was with talented acuity that he separated the old but instructive from the outdated that needed replacement.

Thanks to his work, my revision was greatly facilitated. I am happy to acknowledge his valiant assistance.

# Preface to the 2016 Edition

When writing what became the first edition of this book almost half a century ago, I scarcely imagined that it would have an entire existence of its own, remaining in print till today through seven editions in English and nineteen editions in foreign languages from Arabic to Russian, although the Chinese edition has been published, very elegantly, only in Taiwan.

• • •

A few things have changed since I wrote the original text. *Coup* plotters, for example, cannot expect to gain much these days by seizing "the radio station," first, because instead of a single national radio broadcaster there might now be a dozen, even in very small countries; but more, because broadcasting of any kind counts for less and less in a world of narrowcasting via social media.

This and other technical changes are duly accounted for in this revised text, but all through the years to the last *coup* recorded in 2015, the essence of the *coup d'état* has remained exactly the same: it is a special form of politics that requires guns as an aid to persuasion, although *coups* rarely succeed if guns are much used and fail totally if the situation degenerates into civil war—the polar opposite of the swift and bloodless *coup d'état.*

In reviewing the text to determine what changes might be needed for the 2016 edition, I found many small details in need of updating but also a major omission: corruption as the trigger of many a *coup d'état.*

It is all a matter of incentives. In the absence of significant corruption, the *coup* plotters who risk their necks to overthrow their seniors and seize control of the government can gain only an increase in status, but not vast wealth. The difference in salaries and pensions between colonels and presidents is downright negligible as compared to the risks.

With corruption, however, those who seize power can enrich themselves enormously, sometimes by simply taking what they want from the country's national bank with its foreign-exchange reserves, or, more discreetly, by taking their cut on all state purchases, by exacting bribes from all who need anything from the government, by securing loans from state banks that are never repaid, or by setting up family members as business agents—indeed there are myriad ways of converting state power into self-enrichment. The corrupt rulers of even the smallest and poorest countries can swiftly become billionaires. Corruption, therefore, actually generates *coups* because if successful their material rewards can be so very large.

One major change since the original text was published in 1968 has been the widespread implementation of specific anti-*coup* precautions and provisions. To some degree, they may have been stimulated by the original book itself—or so I have been told by the security officials of more than one country: while *coup* plotters have tried to benefit from its contents (more on this notion later), potentates and their minders have seemingly done the same in designing their anti-*coup* measures.

By far the most important is to maintain distinct, indeed entirely separate military, paramilitary, and other security organizations so that none has a monopoly of force. Typically, there is a "national," "presidential," or "revolutionary" guard equipped heavily enough to resist the regular army,

and also a militia of fellow ethnics in some cases. In addition, there is always some inner-core palace security force of several hundred at least, but sometimes of thousands, exceptionally well trained or at least very well equipped by local standards, and which must of course be commanded by a son or nephew of the ruler, with as many relatives, or at least fellow clan members, as possible in their cadre of officers, and even the other ranks enlisted from the clan or at least the ethnic group of the rulers. Sometimes openly labeled as a Presidential or Royal or Revolutionary guard division, brigade, or regiment, such inner-core forces may also bear deliberately nondescript designations, even though everybody knows that, say, the 12th Division or 27th Brigade or 355th Battalion is really the "it" force—the one with all the latest equipment, above-average facilities, higher pay, and the ruler's relatives in command.

Even safely democratic countries keep a variety of distinct military and security forces wearing different uniforms despite their overlapping functions. The difference, however, is that their distinct forces are constantly enjoined to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with each other, and usually come under "joint" commands staffed by all of them to better unify their actions.

When diversity has an anti-*coup* function, however, there is no joint operational headquarters, and far from being enjoined to cooperate, any communication among the different forces is discouraged, or even prohibited: social gatherings seemingly as innocent as a birthday party may well evoke acute suspicion, followed perhaps by interrogations if officers of, say, army, national guard, and gendarmerie are all present. This politically imposed absence of intercommunication and coordination is a major cause, incidentally, for the Arab military debacles that foreign observers routinely attribute to gross professional incompetence alone. The case of South Korea is also illustrative: It was precisely for the sake of

better coordination in responding to the threat of North Korean commando attacks that the United States pressed the South Koreans to merge their Army Security Command, Navy Security Unit, and Air Force Office of Special Investigations into a single organization. A fully integrated, authentically joint Defense Security Command was ceremoniously inaugurated in October 1977. Two years later, its two-star commanding general, Chun Doo Hwan, used his fully unified command and monopoly of immediate force to seize power when the country's president, Park Chung Hee, was assassinated. There was no one to restrain him when Chun investigated, judged, and condemned the country's top general, the army's chief of staff, and then jumped over all the three-star and four-star officers above him to make himself the country's president. It could not have happened if there had still been three competing security organizations instead of a monopoly.

• • •

Another anti-*coup* provision routinely employed in vulnerable countries is espionage of a particular kind, focused not outwardly on foreign countries but inwardly on the country's own armed and security forces—all of them, from the regular air force, army, even navy, to the national guard, revolutionary guard, and the inner-core security force of the regime as well. Because inner-core forces are literally closest to the ruler, they are also potentially the most dangerous. Inward espionage is the most valuable of anti-*coup* measures because there can be no sudden, overnight *coup* without prior agreements among the plotters; those agreements in turn require prior talks leading to detailed negotiations on who does what in the *coup* and who gets what the day after, when, power having been seized, its rewards by way of promotions and positions are divided up. All this implies a great deal of pre-*coup* communications that can be overheard—or even heard

face-to-face—if agents of the regime insert themselves among the *coup* plotters. Such agents can even initiate the plotting to identify potentially dangerous individuals who are best eliminated before they have a chance to plot a real *coup* of their own.

The problem with espionage, however, is that those who spy on the *coup* plotters are in the best position to join them, with all the incentives of power and riches if the *coup* is successful.

The remedy, of course, is to have multiple, entirely separate, inward espionage outfits to answer the ancient question of who will guard the guardians. Once known, this multiplicity deters regime spies from joining the *coup* plotters because of the possibility that the plotters include other regime spies who can expose them. Thus, in Syria, even before the civil war now under way, the ruling regime of President Bashar al-Assad already had five separate and competing espionage services: *(a)* the so-called Air Force Intelligence Directorate, which hardly bothers with enemy air forces but focuses instead on internal security against rebels and possible *coup* plotters (note that the last successful *coup* in Syria was executed precisely by an air force chief, Hafez al-Assad, father of the current president; *(b)* the General Security Directorate, which investigates, arrests, interrogates, and tortures suspected enemies of the regime, civil or military; *(c)* the Military Intelligence Directorate, which occasionally does or did some actual military intelligence work but now focuses exclusively on fellow Syrians who oppose the regime verbally or violently; *(d)* the National Security Bureau of the Arab Socialist Ba‘ath Party, which is officially the ruling party but which ceased to be a functioning political body long ago and is now merely a brand of the Assad family and clan; and *(e)* the Political Security Directorate, which originally focused on members of the nominally ruling Ba‘ath Party before spying on all potential enemies of the regime—resulting in a heavy workload as of late 2015, given that roughly

75 percent of the population is actively fighting or at least passively resisting the Assad regime.

What all these organizations have in common is that their key positions are mostly held by Alawites (or more accurately, Nusayris, prior to a 1920s rebranding), followers of a nominally Shi‘a religion, along with some Christians and Druzes (the latter being another heretical sect), but with very few Sunni Muslims, the country’s majority population. Not coincidentally, the Assads are also Alawites more accurately. Moreover, as of 2015, with civil war under way, the General Security Directorate and its four competitors are no longer alone in spying on fellow Syrians in the armed forces, the government, or the population at large; new security forces have been raised, manned primarily by Alawites, and some have now formed their own espionage units.

But even this abundant multiplicity would not have impressed Yasser Arafat. While ruling the Palestinian ministate established in 1994 under the Oslo Accords, he established some twelve separate espionage organizations, which focused on his fellow Palestinians rather than on Israeli or other Arab targets; they served him particularly well in 1997, when the Palestinian Liberation Council, the parliament in effect, accused Arafat of “financial mismanagement” (his widow lives very elegantly in Paris till now) and Arafat refused to resign his post. Council members were swiftly intimidated into silence.

Multiplicity works as an anti-*coup* measure, and it works best when there are competing armed forces, as well as rival internal espionage outfits. But such arrangements, of course, greatly increase the costs of operating the regime, reducing its ability to give out benefits to gain popularity and making it that much more likely that unrest will smolder, leading to violent repression, resistance, and even civil war. That is what happened in Syria

once the frozen immobility of prolonged dictatorship was shaken in 2011 by news of earlier uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

Over the nearly five decades since the original publication of this book, I have been told from time to time that it served as the guide for this or that *coup* (in the Philippines, its use has been documented in two successive coups). But the earliest case of actual use for which there is firm evidence would make a poor advertisement: the *coup* in question was a total failure. Its chief protagonist, Mohammad Oufkir, was Morocco's minister of defense and security plenipotentiary, the kingdom's most powerful person after King Hassan II—an exception he seemingly found irksome. On August 16, 1972, four F-5 jet fighters of the Royal Air Force, reportedly acting on Oufkir's orders, intercepted Hassan's Boeing 727 jet as it was flying back from France, firing their powerful 20mm guns at short range. Their aim was remarkably poor, and Hassan's aircraft managed to land safely at Rabat's airport. It was then strafed by air force jets, with the cannon killing eight and injuring forty, but not Hassan; loyal troops came to protect him, while others soon proceeded to the Kenitra Air Base of the rebellious air force officers, where hundreds were arrested. Oufkir was found dead of multiple gunshot wounds later that day. When his study was searched, a heavily annotated and blood-splattered copy of the French edition of this book was found on his desk. I could take refuge in the excuse that the book's prescriptions were not followed with sufficient care, but in reality it was not my purpose to supply a bona fide do-it-yourself manual. My true aim in writing this book was entirely different: it was to explore the meaning of politics in the many backward countries politely described as "emerging." Some, including South Korea, have well and truly emerged since then, but many others have not—Islam in particular seems to be an insurmountable obstacle to democratic governance.

When the ideas in this book were first conceived, the intellectual classes of the Western world were passionately interested in the affairs of what they then called the Third World. There was an atmosphere of hopeful expectation about the new states of Africa and Asia emerging on the world scene for the first time. Even for Latin America, there was a new interest and a new sense of hope—greatly stimulated by President John F. Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress," which, like all of Kennedy's projects, enjoyed excellent publicity. But it was undoubtedly sub-Saharan or Black Africa that stimulated the greatest interest, much of it remarkably emotional. The dissolution of the British and French empires was then still in progress, and the new states of Africa were the newest of all. Their abject poverty was not entirely concealed by the exotic scenery; the almost complete absence of an educated class was brutally obvious. Yet, it was only a few right-wing extremists, and the still smaller number of old African hands, who argued that independence was being granted too soon. This small minority was easily dismissed as reactionary and racist. The enlightened knew better: the new states would muster the fresh energies of the peoples liberated from the lethargy of colonial rule; their youth would soon be educated to provide technicians, professionals, and civil servants; given some aid from the West, a great upsurge of economic development was to be expected, and this would soon remedy backwardness and the contrived poverty caused by colonial exploitation. More than that, we were told to look for moral leadership from the new states. The idealistic young leaders who had struggled for independence would be a great spiritual force on the world scene.

As a student at the London School of Economics, I heard such things being said as if they were not merely true but obvious. I had no desire to join the small band of right wingers who alone opposed the accelerated devolution of the British Empire. But I found the common view to be

hopelessly removed from reality; even the best minds seemed to suffer a decomposition of the critical faculties when the subject was the Third World. This is not the place to speculate on the obscure emotional reasons that alone could explain such a failure of the intellect. What is certain is that a highly favorable vision of the future of the Third World was given wide currency, even though all the factual evidence in hand flatly contradicted all such predictions.

It was not the poverty of the new states that made me dubious of their future and entirely pessimistic about their contribution to international life. Poverty does not necessarily inhibit cultural or even social achievement, and, in any case, some of the least promising of the new states were not poor—they enjoyed vast unearned incomes from oil exports. As for the lack of adequate administrative structures, this was certainly not a fatal deficiency because few things grow as easily as state bureaucracies. Not even the ill effects of relative deprivation felt by the poor, confronted with luxuries by way of the mass media, seemed to me to be all that serious. It appears that the "revolution of rising expectations," yet another slogan made up by Western intellectuals to justify forthcoming depredations, has remained unrealized.

But there was one deficiency that was, and is, fatal—a deficiency that would inevitably cause the new states to misgovern at home while degrading international standards abroad. There was one thing that the new states lacked—something they could neither make for themselves nor obtain from abroad: this was a genuine political community. It is difficult to give a formal definition of *political community.* Perhaps it is best to begin by evoking the familiar concept of "the nation" as opposed to that of "the state." The new states came into existence because the colonial authorities handed over their powers to political leaders who had agitated for independence; more specifically, the new leaders were given control over

the army, police, tax collectors, and administrators who had worked for the colonial government.

The old servants of the empire served their new masters, ostensibly for new purposes. But their methods and their operational ideology were those of the imperial power—which were shaped by notions that reflected the values of *its* political community, including legality. There was no organic nexus between the native cultures and the instruments of state power, and neither could such a link be formed. For one thing, there were usually several native cultures, typically quite different and often inimical. Moreover, the methods and operational ideologies that the native cultures *would* organically sustain were usually unsuited to the needs of modern life —that is, Western life. The problem was not that this dissociation would make the state apparatus weak, but rather that it would leave it entirely unconstrained and much too strong.

The consequences soon became evident. The new rulers were vested with all the crushing powers over individuals that the entire machinery of files and records, vehicles, telecommunications, and modern weapons gave to the departed colonial states they had inherited. But their conduct was not constrained by any notions of legality or by the ethical standards that any functioning political community must enforce, even if only to the extent of requiring hypocrisy and discretion on the part of violators. Above all, their conduct was not restrained by ordinary political resistance because the first leaders who gained office with independence soon ensured their enduring monopoly of power. That was first asserted by outlawing or illegally shutting down any rival political party, but it was better assured by the feeble opposition of the oppressed majority, which lacked the social frameworks for effective opposition of any kind, whether peaceful or violent. Misgovernment was thus preordained, even before the proclamation of “one-party states” became fashionable; at the time, the new

dictatorships were even justified by the claim that they would accelerate economic development, a notion that now seems very strange but that derived from the then widespread delusion that the Soviet Union was advancing rapidly economically because its own one-party state was not hindered by democratic squabbling.

Always present, bribery became a normal part of any transaction with the state, while a pervasive if chaotic oppression replaced the distant authoritarianism of colonial days because neither bureaucrats nor policemen or soldiers were restrained by any form of legality. As a result, exactions could increase without limit, and no citizen was assured of liberty, life, or property merely by complying with the law, which was freely violated by its official custodians. (In Accra I once saw speeding tickets handed out to drivers stuck in traffic.)

If colonialism were a crime, its greatest offense was its abrupt undoing. It left fragile native cultures, embryonic modern societies, and minority peoples utterly ill equipped to protect themselves when power was abandoned into the hands of political leaders armed with the powerful machine of the modern state. It took the brutalities of Uganda's Idi Amin and other such extreme outrages to briefly attract the attention of Western observers, while many other autocrats more quietly exploited their unfettered control over the machinery of the state to indulge every vice and every excess of virtue: in one country, the alcoholic ruler could order executions arbitrarily; in another, alcohol might be forbidden to all; more commonly, the most useless of luxuries were abundantly imported while there was no foreign currency for essential vaccines and antibiotics. Above all, there was the abundant use of the instruments of national defense and public order for internal oppression, along with the diversion of public revenues to private pockets on such a scale that public services relentlessly declined in most places, often to nullity. That was the diseased reality I

anticipated in the early 1960s in place of hopeful fantasies. Naturally, one of the consequences of this corruption, along with countless tragedies, was a great number of *coups*.

Today's sub-Saharan Africa looks very different. Tyrants are few—the utterly destructive President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is now more of an exception than the rule—and it is more accurate to classify the majority of African states as democratizing rather than undemocratic. Along with political advancement has come a new kind of economic growth, the product of real enterprise and hard work rather than just the extraction of natural resources. Myriad problems remain in sub-Saharan Africa, including a still-pervasive culture of corruption, but it is no longer feckless optimism to expect cumulative progress in more places than not, in governance as well as economically. In the process, genuine political communities are emerging. It was their absence on any significant scale that left postcolonial African states so amply exposed to *coups* because it ensured the passivity of the population.

In North Africa and across the Middle East, the incompatibility between any wide degree of democratic participation—or democracy, more simply—and the cultural hegemony of Islam was less evident in 1968 than it is now. That incompatibility had not yet been reaffirmed by a succession of electoral passages that seemed very promising, but which unfailingly resulted in nondemocratic outcomes. Even in Turkey, with its decades of experience with political parties and elections, as soon as the strict secularism imposed by the armed forces retreated because of their own exclusion from political power (ironically, in the name of democracy), the rules of democratic governance were undermined by the advance of the Islamist party Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP). It won successive elections in 2002, 2007, and 2011 with ever-larger majorities by promoting regressive Islamic customs in the name of tradition, Islamic education, and

an increasingly Islamist foreign policy. It also started to abrogate democratic rights; imposed prohibitions on social media; arrested independent journalists; dismissed police officials, prosecutors, and judges probing the corrupt dealings of party leaders; and persistently asserted the right of the majority to rule the country as it saw fit, regardless of the vehement opposition of very many citizens.

The authoritarian and increasingly loud extremism of its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (in office as prime minister since 2002 and then as president since 2014), as well as the stench of corruption (Erdoğan's family has acquired great wealth), finally weakened the AKP in the 2015 elections, leading to its loss of a parliamentary majority; until then, the country's less-educated voters had persistently supported Erdoğan and the AKP—evidently because, in their eyes, the prohibition of alcoholic beverages (by stealthy administrative measures), the construction of mosques in universities where even headscarves were prohibited until recently, the embrace of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and of its Hamas offshoot, and Erdoğan's vehement Islamist diatribes counted for more than the preservation of democracy. And so it is across the Muslim world—and for a perfectly logical reason: given that god himself has already given the law in its entirety in the Qur'an, which none may debate or dispute, there is really no need for legislators, who can only do harm, for example by legislating the freedom to choose one's own religion, the equality of females, or the right to drink wine.

The incompatibility between Islam and democracy—forever denied by the well meaning, forever reasserted in practice, and sometimes obscured by elections that may in themselves be perfectly free and fair—ensures the prevalence of authoritarian governments in most Muslim countries most of the time; quite a few are dynastic, with a self-perpetuating ruling family that monopolizes political power. That, in turn, ensures the passivity of the

population in most places most of the time—*Islam* means "submission," after all—barring the occasional revolts, soon suppressed in most cases. Passivity, in turn, favors the *coup* in principle; in practice, however, the implementation of anti-*coup* precautions has proved effective, until now at any rate, even in the seemingly most vulnerable Arab dynastic states from Morocco to Arabia.

In first writing of the *coup d'état* back in 1968, I was, in fact, trying to present a specific way of understanding the political life of the world's less developed, less consolidated, and certainly less democratic countries of the world. Since then, humanity has advanced very greatly in wealth—even the poorest of the poorest countries are less poor—but democracy has advanced much less, for reasons that the democratic-minded should explore rather than deny. This new edition is, in part, a contribution to that quest.

# Preface to the First Edition

This is a handbook. It is therefore not concerned with a theoretical analysis of the *coup d'état,* but rather with the formulation of the techniques which can be employed to seize power within a state. It can be compared to a cookery book in the sense that it aims at enabling any lay person equipped with enthusiasm—and the right ingredients—to carry out his own *coup;* only a knowledge of the rules is required. Two words of caution: in the first place, in order to carry out a successful *coup,* certain preconditions must be present, just as in cooking bouillabaisse one needs the right sorts of fish to start with; second, readers should be aware that the penalty of failure is far greater than having to eat out of a tin. The rewards, too, are greater.

It may be objected that, should such a handbook be inadequate or misleading, the readers will be subject to great dangers, while if it is an efficient guide to the problems, it may lead to upheavals and disturbances. My defense is that *coups* are already common and if, as a result of this book, a greater number of people learn how to carry them out, this is merely a step toward the democratization of the *coup*—a fact that all persons of liberal sentiments should applaud.

Finally, it should be noted that the techniques here discussed are politically neutral and concerned only with the objective of seizing control of the state, and not at all with subsequent policies.

# Foreword by Walter Laqueur (1978)

*Coup d'État,* the brilliant and original book of a then very young man, first published in 1968, attracted immediate attention and appeared subsequently in the major languages. It is perhaps of even greater interest today, simply because it has become clearer during the last decade that far from being a fortunately rare exception in an otherwise civilized world order, the *coup d'état* is now the normal mode of political change in most member states of the United Nations. There are by now many more military dictatorships in existence than parliamentary democracies, and there are few cases on record in which such dictatorships have been overthrown by "popular revolts." Far more often, the military men are replaced by one or more of their colleagues. Yet, with all this, there has been a virtual taboo on the study of *coups d'état,* and some critics of the present book obviously did not know quite what to make of it. It is in many ways easy to see why: the idea that a *coup d'état* can be carried out in many parts of the world with equal ease by small groups of men of the left and the right (and, for all one knows, also of the center), provided they have mastered some elementary lessons of modern politics, is, of course, quite shocking. Marx and Engels wrote a great deal about revolution but hardly ever about the technique of revolution; the only nineteenth-century left-wing leader who provided detailed instruction in this respect was Auguste Blanqui, and he was not

very successful. There had been one other predecessor, Gabriel Naudé, whose work was published in Paris in the late seventeenth century; an English translation by Dr. William King appeared in 1711 (*Political Considerations upon Refined Politicks and the Master Strokes of State*). Some of this sounds very topical indeed:

> The thunderbolt falls before the noise of it is heard in the skies, prayers are said before the bell is rung for them; he receives the blow that thinks he himself is giving it, he suffers who never expected it, and he dies that look'd upon himself to be the most secure; all is done in the Night and Obscurity, amongst Storms and Confusion.

But Naudé has been forgotten for a long time, and his concept of the "master stroke" was, in any case, much wider than that of *coup d'état* in its present meaning.

In our time, whole libraries have been written on the objective conditions in which revolutions take place, about civil and peasant wars, about revolutionary and internal war, about guerrilla activities and terrorism, but almost nothing on *coups d'état,* and this despite the fact that there have been few, if any, revolutions of late and that "objective conditions" are always only one of several factors involved in their genesis. Seen in this light, *coups d'état* are annoying not only for practicing politicians but also from the point of view of the political scientist. For, on the basis of "objective conditions," models and patterns can be built without undue difficulty, whereas *coups* are quite unpredictable. Almost by definition, they are mortal enemies of orderly hypotheses and concepts: how does one account scientifically for the political ambitions of a few strategically well-placed individuals?

All this is highly regrettable, but it does not lessen the need for a more thorough and detailed study of *coups d'état.* For, according to all indications, this seems to be the "wave of the future"—much more than other, far more often discussed forms of political violence. A study of guerrilla warfare led me to the conclusion that the army in most Third World countries is the strongest contender for domestic power: during the last fifteen years, there have been some 120 military *coups,* whereas only five guerrilla movements have come to power—and three of these followed the Portuguese *coup* in 1974. The function of the guerrilla movement has reverted to what it originally was—that of paving the way for and supporting the regular army: it holds the stirrup so that others may get into the saddle, and the same applies, a fortiori, to terrorist groups. It is true that in some parts of the world it has become more difficult to stage a military *coup.* Once upon a time, the commander of a tank brigade in a Middle Eastern country was at least a potential contender for political power. This is no longer so, partly as the result of centralization in military command, partly because the political police have become more effective. But if in these parts *coups* have become less frequent, they are still the only form of political change that can be envisaged at the present time.

But even if *coups* are unpredictable, even if they defy known methods of interpretation (let alone of prediction), they contain certain ever-recurring patterns—"the same always different"—from the time the conspiracy is first hatched to the actual seizure of power. The present book is a major landmark in a field hitherto almost uncharted.

Walter Laqueur
*Washington—London*
*October 1978*

# *Chapter 1*

# What Is the *Coup d'État?*

I shall be sorry to commence the era of peace by a *coup d'état* such as that I had in contemplation.

—Duke of Wellington, 1811

… no other way of salvation remained except for the army's intervention …

—Constantine Kollias, April 21, 1967, Athens

Though the term *coup d'état* has been used for more than three centuries, the feasibility of the *coup* derives from a comparatively recent development: the rise of the modern state with its professional bureaucracy and standing armed forces. The power of the modern state largely depends on this permanent machinery, which, with its archives, files, records, and officials, can follow intimately and, if it so desires, control the activities of lesser organizations and individuals. "Totalitarian" states merely use more fully the detailed and comprehensive information available to most states, however "democratic": the instrument is largely the same, though it is used differently.

The growth of modern state bureaucracies has two implications that are crucial for the feasibility of the *coup:* the emergence of clear distinctions between the permanent machinery of state and the political leadership, and the fact that state bureaucracies have structured hierarchies with definite chains of command. The distinction between the bureaucrat as an employee

of the state and as a personal servant of the ruler is a new one, and both the British and the American systems show residual features of the earlier structure.[a]

The importance of this development lies in the fact that if the bureaucrats are linked to the leadership, an illegal seizure of power must take the form of a "Palace Revolution," which essentially concerns the manipulation of the person of the ruler. That ruler may be forced to accept new policies or new advisers, or may be killed or held captive; but whatever happens, the Palace Revolution can only be conducted from the "inside," and by "insiders." An insider might be the commander of the palace guard, as in ancient Rome or the Ethiopia of the 1960s, and if the dynastic system is preserved, the aim is to replace the unwanted ruler with a more malleable descendant.

The *coup* is a much more democratic affair. It can be conducted from the "outside" and operates in the area outside the government but within the state—the area formed by the permanent, professional civil service, the armed forces, and the police. The aim is to detach the permanent employees of the state from the political leadership, and usually this cannot be done if the two are linked by political, ethnic, or traditional loyalties.

In the last dynasty of Imperial China, as in present-day African states, it was primarily an ethnic bond that secured the loyalty of the state apparatus. The Manchu dynasty was careful to follow native Chinese customs and it employed Han Chinese in the civil service at all levels, but the crucial posts in the high magistracy and the army were filled by the descendants of the Jurchens who had entered China with their chiefs, the founders of the dynasty. Similarly, African rulers typically appoint members of their own tribe to the key posts in the armed forces, police, and security services.

When a party machine controls civil-service appointments, either as part of a more general totalitarian control or because of a very long period in

office (as in postwar Italy till the late 1980s), political associates are appointed to the senior levels of the bureaucracy, partly in order to protect the regime and partly to ensure the sympathetic execution of policies. In the Communist countries of yesteryear, all senior jobs were, of course, held by party apparatchiks.

• • •

Saudi Arabia provides an instance of "traditional bonds."[b] In this case, the lack of modern know-how on the part of the traditional tribal affiliates of the royal house has meant that what could not be done individually has been done organizationally. The modern army, manned by some 100,000 unreliable city dwellers, is outnumbered by the 125,000 or so enrolled in the "White Army" of the Bedouin—or at least nominally Bedouin—followers of the Saudis; officially known as the Haras al Watani (Guard of the Homeland) or National Guard, the so-called White Army, it includes a tribal militia of some 25,000 officially designated the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Mechanized Brigade, based in the capital of Riyadh, and plainly meant as an anti-*coup* force.

Such ethnic or traditional bonds between the political leadership and the heads of the bureaucracy and the armed forces are not typical of the modern state, while looser class or ethnic affiliations will tend to embrace groups large enough to be successfully infiltrated by the planners of the *coup.*

As a direct consequence of its sheer size, in order to achieve even a minimum of efficiency, the state bureaucracy has to divide its work into clear-cut areas of competence, which are assigned to different departments. Within each department, there must be an accepted chain of command, and standard procedures have to be followed. Thus, a given piece of information or a given order is followed up in a stereotyped manner, and if the order comes from the appropriate source, at the appropriate level, it is carried out.

In the more critical parts of the state apparatus, the armed forces, the police, and the security services, all these characteristics are intensified with an even greater degree of discipline and rigidity. The apparatus of the state is, therefore, to some extent a "machine" that will normally behave in a fairly predictable and automatic manner.

A *coup* operates by taking advantage of this machinelike behavior both during and after the takeover—during the *coup* because it uses parts of the state apparatus to seize the controlling levers over the rest, and afterward because the value of the levers depends on the degree to which the state really functions as a machine.

We will see that some states are so well organized that the machine is sufficiently sophisticated to exercise discretion, according to a given conception of what is proper and what is not, in the orders that it executes. This is the case in the most advanced countries, and, in such circumstances, a *coup* is very difficult to carry out.

In a few states, the bureaucracy is so small that the apparatus is too simple and too intimately linked with the leadership to allow room for a *coup,* as is still the case perhaps in the ex-British protectorates of southern Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Fortunately, most states are between those two extremes, with bureaucratic machines both large and unsophisticated, and thus highly vulnerable to those who can identify and seize the right levers.

One of the most striking developments of the twentieth century was the great decline in general political stability. Since the French Revolution, governments have been overthrown at an increasing pace.[c] In the nineteenth century, the French experienced two revolutions, and two regimes collapsed following military defeat. In 1958, the change of regime that brought Charles de Gaulle to enduring power was a blend of both those elements. Peoples everywhere have followed the French example, and the life span of

regimes has tended to decrease while the life span of their subjects has increased. This contrasts sharply with the relative attachment to the system of constitutional monarchy displayed in the nineteenth century: when Greeks, Bulgarians, and Romanians secured their freedom from the Turkish colonial system, they immediately went over to Germany in order to shop around for a suitable royal family. Crowns, flags, and decorations were designed and purchased from reputable (English) suppliers; royal palaces were built; and where possible, hunting lodges, royal mistresses, and a local aristocracy were provided as fringe benefits.

Twentieth-century peoples have, on the other hand, shown a marked lack of interest in monarchies and their paraphernalia; when the British kindly provided them with a proper royal family, unhappy Iraqis made numerous efforts to dispense with it before finally succeeding by massacre in 1958. Military and other right-wing forces have, meanwhile, tried to keep up with violent mass movements, using their own illegal methods to seize power and overthrow regimes.

Why did the regimes of the twentieth century prove to be so fragile? It is, after all, paradoxical that this fragility increased, while the established procedures for securing changes in government were becoming more flexible. The political scientist will reply that, although the procedures became more flexible, the pressures for change were also becoming stronger, and the increase in flexibility did not keep up with the increased social and economic stresses.[d]

Violent methods are generally used when legal methods of securing a governmental change are useless because they are either too rigid—as in the case of ruling monarchies where the ruler actually controls policy formation—or not rigid enough. It was once remarked, for example, that the throne of Russia was, until the seventeenth century, neither hereditary nor elective but "occupative." The long series of abdications forced by the great Boyar-

landlords and by the *streltsý*, the Kremlin palace guards, had weakened the hereditary principle, so that whoever took the throne became czar—precedence by birth counted for little.

Some contemporary republics have ended up in this position, which comes about when a long series of illegal seizures of power leads to a decay of the legal and political structures needed to produce new governments. Thus, Syria went through more than a dozen *coups* before the Assad family dynasty was established by Hafez al-Assad's 1970 coup, and the provisions for open general elections, written in the Hourani constitution, could no longer be applied because the necessary supervisory machinery decayed and disappeared. Assuming, however, that there is an established procedure for changing the leadership, then all other methods must fall within some category of illegality. What we call them[e] depends on what side we are on, but, skipping some of the details, we use one of the following terms:

# Revolution

The action is conducted, initially at any rate, by uncoordinated popular masses, and it aims[f] at changing the social and political structures, as well as the personalities in the leadership.

The term *revolution* has gained a certain popularity, and many *coups* are graced with it because of the implication that it was "the people" rather than a few plotters who did the whole thing. Thus, the obscure aims Abd al-Karīm Qāsim had in mind when he overthrew the Iraqi regime of King Faisal II and Prime Minister Nuri es-Said are locally known as the "sacred principles of the July 14th Revolution."

# Civil War

*Civil war* is outright warfare between elements of the armed forces and/or the population at large. The term is perpetually unfashionable: whenever there is a civil war, all sides typically deny its existence, variously passing it off as an international war (such as the "War between the States" of the Confederacy) or, more often, as a foreign aggression, though in Franco's Spain, the civil war of 1936–1939 was always *la cruzada*—"the crusade."

## *Pronunciamiento*

This is an essentially Spanish and South American version of the military *coup d'état,* but many recent African *coups* have also taken this particular form. In its original nineteenth-century Spanish version, it was a highly ritualized process: first came the *trabajos* (literally, "the works"), in which the opinions of army officers were sounded. The next step was the *compromisos,* in which commitments were made and rewards promised; then came the call for action and, finally, the appeal to the troops to follow their officers in rebellion against the government.

The *pronunciamiento* was often a liberal rather than a reactionary phenomenon, and the theoretical purpose of the takeover was to ascertain the "national will"—a typically liberal concept. Later, as the army became increasingly right wing while Spanish governments became less so, the theory shifted from the neoliberal "national will" to the neoconservative "real will" theory. The latter postulates the existence of a national essence, a sort of permanent spiritual structure, which the wishes of the majority may not always express. The army was entrusted with the interpretation and preservation of this "essential Spain" and the obligation to protect it against the government and, if need be, against the people.

The *pronunciamiento* was organized and led by a particular army leader, but it was carried out in the name of the entire officer corps; unlike the *putsch,* which is carried out by a faction within the army, or the *coup,* which can also be executed by civilians *using* some army units, the *pronunciamiento* leads to a takeover by the army as a whole. Many African takeovers, in which the army has participated as a whole, were, therefore, very similar to the classic *pronunciamiento.*

# Putsch

Essentially a wartime or immediately postwar phenomenon, a *putsch* is attempted by a formal body within the armed forces under its appointed leadership. The Kornilov putsch is a clear example: Lavr Kornilov, a general in charge of an army group in northern Russia, attempted to seize the then Petrograd (St. Petersburg) in order to establish a “fighting” regime that would prosecute the war. (Had he succeeded, the city would, perhaps, have borne his name instead of Lenin—as it did until 1991.)

# Liberation

A state may be said (by supporters of the change) to be *liberated* when its government is overthrown by foreign military or diplomatic intervention. A classic case of this was the installation of the Communist leadership in Romania in 1947. The USSR forced the then King Michael to accept a new Cabinet by threatening direct military force by the Soviet army.

## War of National Liberation, Insurgency, etc.

In this form of internal conflict, the aim of the initiating party is not to seize power within the state but rather to set up a rival state structure. This can be politically, ethnically, or religiously based, as with the Taliban, whose aim is an Afghanistan wholly converted to their own Deobandi,[g] or Wahhabi Islam, which contrives to be both the official state religion of Saudi Arabia and a rigorously fanatical ideology that denies any legitimacy whatever to any other form of Islam, let alone non-Muslim faiths.

As for secessionist insurgencies, they are necessarily ethnically based—though ethnicity can be all in the mind, as with Eritreans and Ethiopians, as with the Kurds of Iraq, as well as Iran and Turkey, the Somalis of Kenya and Ethiopia, the Karen people in Burma, and, formerly, the Nagas of India.

## The Definition of the *Coup d'État*

A *coup d'état* involves some elements of all these different methods by which power can be seized, but, unlike most of them, the *coup* is not assisted by the intervention of the masses or by any large-scale form of combat by military forces.

The assistance of these forms of direct force would no doubt make it easier to seize power, but it would be unrealistic to think that they would be available to the organizers of a *coup.* Because we will not be in charge of the armed forces, we cannot hope to start the planning of a *coup* with sizeable military units already under our control, nor will the pre-*coup* government usually allow us to carry out the propaganda and organization necessary to make effective use of the "broad masses of the people."

A second distinguishing feature of a *coup* is that it does not imply any particular political orientation. Revolutions are usually leftist, while the putsch and the *pronunciamiento* are usually initiated by right-wing forces. A *coup,* however, is politically neutral, and there is no presumption that any particular policies will be followed after the seizure of power. It is true that many *coups* have been of a decidedly right-wing character, but there is nothing inevitable about that.[h]

If a *coup* does not make use of the masses, or of warfare, what instrument of power will enable it to seize control of the state? The short answer is that the power will come from the state itself. The long answer makes up the bulk of this book. The following is our formal and functional definition of a *coup:*

A *coup* consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder.

[a] In Britain, there is the constitutional fiction that civil servants—as their name implies—are the servants of the Crown. In the United States, while the days when party hacks moved en masse to Washington after an election victory are long past, many top administrative positions are still given to political associates rather than left to professionals.

[b] The bonds are religious in origin, since the Saudi royal house is the traditional promoter of the extremely strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.

[c] Historically speaking, the trend was initiated by the American Revolution; its impact on the world at large was, however, attenuated by America's distance and exotic nature.

[d] Perhaps the ultimate source of destabilizing pressures has been the spectacular progress of scientific discovery and the resultant technological change. This is, however, a problem far beyond the scope of this book.

[e] The equation "Insurgency = Terrorism = War of National Liberation" is particularly familiar.

[f] In the initial stages, no aims are conceptualized, but the scope of the action may be clearly perceived.

[g] Deoband is an inoffensive Indian town north of Delhi, as well as the seat of the immense Darul Uloom Muslim school, which teaches a rigorously extremist Wahhabi Islam (of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), itself a revival of the maximalist Jihadist doctrine of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah. This brand of Islam was imported from northeast Arabia at its 1866 foundation, and its disciples have started perhaps 30,000 schools around the world. Its uncompromising fanaticism (it was a Darul Uloom sentence that authorized the Taliban's destruction of the colossal Buddhas of Bamiyan in 2001) is rewarded by tax-exempt status in India—all is forgiven of Darul Uloom because its extremism includes an anti-Pakistan stance, albeit motivated by its belief that all of India should be Muslim-ruled (!).

[h] The Greek *coup* of 1967 reinforced this image of the "reactionary *coup,*" but the Syrian *coup* of 1966, the Iraqi *coup* of 1958, and the Yemeni *coup* of 1962 were all essentially leftist, if hardly liberal or progressive.

# *Chapter 2*

# When Is a *Coup d'État* Possible?

> The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets … They must take power immediately … Victory is assured and there are nine chances out of ten that it will be bloodless … To wait is a crime against the revolution.
>
> —Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, October 1917

The process of decolonization that started soon after the end of the Second World War first doubled and then more than tripled the number of independent states, so that the opportunities open to us have expanded in a most gratifying manner. We have to recognize, however, that not all states make good targets for our attentions. There is nothing to prevent us from carrying out a *coup* in, say, the United Kingdom, but we would probably be unable to stay in power for more than a short time. The public and the bureaucracy have a basic understanding of the nature and legal basis of government, and they would react in order to restore a legitimate leadership.

This reaction renders any initial success of the *coup* meaningless, and it would arise even though the pre-*coup* government may have been unpopular and the "new faces" may be attractive. The reaction would arise from the fact that a significant part of the population takes an active interest in political life—and regularly participates in it. This implies a recognition that the power of the government derives from its legitimate origin, and

even those who have no reason to support the old guard have many good reasons to support the principle of legitimacy.

We are all familiar with the periodic surveys which show that, say, 20 percent of the sample failed to correctly name the prime minister, and we know that a large part of the population has only the vaguest contact with politics. Nevertheless, in most developed countries, those who do take an active interest in politics form, in absolute terms, a very large group.

Controversial policy decisions stimulate and bring to the surface this participation: pressure groups are formed, letters are sent to the press and the politicians, petitions and demonstrations are organized, and this adds up to a continuing dialogue between the rulers and the ruled.

This dialogue does not depend necessarily on the existence of a formally democratic political system. Even in one-party states, where power is in the hands of a few self-appointed leaders, a muted but nevertheless active dialogue can take place. The higher organizations of the party can discuss policy decisions, and, in times of relative relaxation, the discussions extend to the larger numbers in the lower echelons and to publications reflecting different "currents"—though only within the wider framework of the accepted ideology and the broad policy decisions of the leadership. The value of the dialogue that takes place in nondemocratic states varies greatly.

In the former Yugoslavia, for example, the Communist Party contrived to remain in control for decades while nevertheless functioning to an increasing extent as a semi-open forum for increasingly free, increasingly wide-ranging debates on major political issues; the press, though unable to assert truly independent opinions, at least echoed those debates. In the process, while there was still no democracy, the population evolved from subjection to participation, learning to scrutinize and question orders instead of simply obeying them, so that they were increasingly likely to resist a *coup*.

In the Arab world, by contrast, the nominal "ruling parties" that functioned from the 1960s—the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) of Egypt and the Ba'ath Party of Syria and Iraq—very soon degenerated into mere rubber stamps for the ruling dictators, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hafez al-Assad, and Saddam Hussein. As time went on, their pretended deference to party councils dissolved, but all along they had made every significant decision by themselves, while the parties could only cheer them on. (When the question came up of whether Egypt's ASU-dominated National Assembly would accept Nasser's withdrawal of his resignation following the June 1967 debacle known as the Six-Day War, an observer pointed out that the assembly "will jolly well do what it is told.")

With the Yugoslav Communist Party, the ASU, and the "ruling" Ba'ath Party now but a memory, the very greatest of questions across the entire horizon of global politics is, of course, the future of the Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng, the Communist Party of China. Until the 2012 appointment of Xi Jinping as party general secretary, president of the People's Republic of China, and the chairman of the Central Military Commission (significantly the most powerful of all three), the party's future seemed quite predictable: it was becoming a holding company for all the public wealth and much of the private wealth of China, whereby officials continued to receive their very modest salaries that did not exceed RMB 11,385 or US$1,854 per month in 2015, even in the very highest rank; meanwhile, the party officials collected large amounts in bribes, ensuring a degree of affluence even at the village level, rising to sometimes very great wealth at the top. (As a faithful fan of Beijing's top discos, I grew accustomed to seeing the young sons of party officials driving up in their Ferraris and Lamborghinis.)

But the continued transformation of the Communist Party of China into a megacorporation manned by the ambitious, duly rewarded with increasingly

overt payoffs, was interrupted by the decision of Xi Jinping's high-party colleagues to elevate him to a seat of unprecedented power. They did so, most likely, because they feared that the party's further degeneration into an openly corrupt enterprise would lead to an outright collapse—the problem with bribes is that their distribution is very uneven, generating corrosive resentments and embarrassing leaks. As a result, Xi Jinping is left with the pretty problem of finding a substitute for both a putrefying ideology and the lost incentive of corruption, with only Han nationalism ready at hand. Still, for the time being, the Communist Party persists, as does subjection rather than citizenship.

• • •

A running dialogue between rulers and the ruled that precludes any *coup* can only exist if there is a large enough section of society that is sufficiently literate, well fed, and secure enough to talk back. Even then, certain conditions can lead to a deterioration of the relationship, and this sometimes generates sufficient apathy, or outright distrust of the regime to make a *coup* possible.

The events of 1958 in France were marked by a formal adherence to the then constitutional rules but were, nevertheless, analogous to a *coup.* Twenty years of warfare, which had included the ignominious defeat of 1940, the German occupation, the installation of the authoritarian Vichy regime and, from 1946, long and losing colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria, had thoroughly undermined the country's democratic consensus. The continual changes of government had dissipated the interest and respect of most voters and left the bureaucracy leaderless because the complex business of the ministries could not be mastered by ministers who were only in power for months or weeks. The French army was left to fight the bitter Algerian war with little guidance from the Paris authorities because,

more often than not, the ministries were too busy fighting for their survival in the assembly to worry about the other, bloodier, war.

The cost of the Algerian war, in both money and lives, antagonized the general public from both the army and the government, and many of the French felt a growing fear and distrust of the army's leadership, whose nationalist sentiments and martial ideology seemed alien to many of them—and against the spirit of the times.

While the structures of political life under the Fourth Republic were falling apart, Charles de Gaulle, the grand heroic figure long in simulated retirement, gradually emerged as the only alternative to the chaos that threatened. When the army in Algeria appeared to be on the verge of truly drastic action and yet another government was on the verge of collapse, de Gaulle was recalled.

He was able to impose his own terms. On May 29, 1958, when René Coty, the last president of the Fourth Republic, called on him to form a government (which was invested on June 1), de Gaulle was given extraordinary powers to rule by decree for six months and to write a new constitution. Under the terms of this constitution, presented for consultation in mid-August and approved by referendum in September, elections were held in which de Gaulle's newly formed Union for the New Republic (UNR Party) won a majority. On December 21, de Gaulle became the first president of the Fifth Republic. He was an American-style president with wide executive powers, but without an American-style Congress to restrain them.

By 1958, France had become politically inert and, therefore, ripe for a *coup.* The circumstances were unique, of course, but while the political structures of all highly developed countries may seem too resilient to make them suitable targets, if acute enough, even temporary factors can weaken them fatally. Of those temporary factors, the most common are:

*(a)* severe and prolonged economic crisis, with large-scale unemployment or runaway inflation;
*(b)* a long and unsuccessful war or a major defeat, whether military or diplomatic;
*(c)* chronic instability under a multiparty system.

Italy is an interesting example of an economically developed, socially dynamic, but politically fragile country.

Between 1948 and circa 1990, i.e., the end of the Cold War, the persistence of a large Communist Party that opposed Italy's alignment with the West (if less vehemently after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968) forced the moderate majority to keep voting for the increasingly corrupt Democrazia Cristiana (DC), which itself ruled with the smaller but even more corrupt Socialist Party (its leader, Bettino Craxi, would die a fugitive outlaw in Tunisia). Because even the two parties did not attain a parliamentary majority, every government required a broader coalition whose formation amounted to an intricate puzzle: the DC was the largest party, but with only 30 percent of the votes, it could not rule alone; even with the Socialists, it only reached the 40 percent mark. If it brought in the two small left-of-center parties (the Social Democrats and the Republicans), the right-of-center parties—including the MSI neo-Fascists—would not join in; but, if the latter were invited to join the coalition, the left would break away and no government could be formed. In the end, of course, votes were procured one way or another, mostly by handing over control of parts of the vast array of state-owned businesses (everything from oil and gas to ice cream) in exchange for parliamentary support. The votes, however, did not stay bought for long, and coalitions had short lives: between 1945 and 1994, there were 33 governments, until the 1994 election victory of the television and advertising tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, whose brand-new

party, Forza Italia, was originally formed by its own employees and the Milan football team's fan club.

While the DC was unable to modernize Italy's increasingly outdated state institutions, it nevertheless presided over decades of economic growth. The combination of Communist *and* Catholic anticapitalism made it impossible to introduce either American-style "hire and fire" labor flexibility or German-style economic discipline enforced by sophisticated trade unionists; but the DC had its own remedy: every time wage rates were pushed too high, it devalued the lira to restore the competitiveness of Italian exports. Equally, the inability to make the state efficient was offset by the lax enforcement of tax collection; thus, Italian entrepreneurs ill served by an inefficient state only had to pretend that they were paying their taxes. First one and then the other of these practices came to an end once Italy adopted the common European currency, the euro, in 1999 prohibiting competitive devaluations, and since then its economy has stagnated, with little or no growth, and chronically high unemployment.

Politically, on the other hand, Berlusconi's combination of *(a)* economic power (his enterprises could offer very many jobs, consultancies, and contracts), *(b)* media influence (through the control of publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, and three television channels), and *(c)* of course electoral power (through the votes he won by vigorous and well-organized campaigning) ensured his political preponderance from 1994 until 2011, even when out of office; as of 2015, the government of Matteo Renzi is sustained by a parliamentary majority that still requires Berlusconi's votes.

Berlusconi's leading role in Italy's public life over more than twenty years has coexisted with the most blatant conflicts of interest (he was operating state-regulated businesses), a long series of trials for tax evasion and vote-buying, and numerous personal scandals arising from his delight in cavorting with young or very young prostitutes. Hence, his prominence

in Italian politics is quite enough to describe the country's political order as fragile—he could not have survived in a fully functioning democracy that requires of its leaders some semblance of discretion in their personal conduct and the careful concealment of significant conflicts of interest.

# The Preconditions of the *Coup*

In 1958, France was a country where the dialogue between the government and the people had temporarily broken down. But much of the world's population lives in countries where a dialogue cannot take place at all. If we draw up a list of those countries that have experienced *coups,* we shall see that, though their ethnic and historical backgrounds differ very considerably, they share certain social and economic characteristics. By isolating these factors, we can develop a set of indicators that, when applied to the basic socioeconomic data of a country, will show whether it will make a good target for a *coup.*

## Economic Backwardness

In countries without a developed economy and the prosperity that accompanies it, the general condition of the population is characterized by disease, illiteracy, high birth and death rates, and periodic hunger.

Average citizens in this state of deprivation are virtually cut off from the wider society outside their village and clan. They have little to sell. They have little with which to buy. They cannot read the forms, signposts, and newspapers through which society speaks. They cannot write, nor can they afford to travel, so that a cousin living as a city dweller might as well be on the moon. They have no way of knowing whether a particular tax is legal or merely the exaction of the village bureaucrat; no way of knowing about the social and economic realities that condition the policies that they are asked to applaud. Their only source of contact with the outside world are mass media that may be governmental for all they know, but in any case they do know from past experience that mass media are invariably biased in some way, and may be outright deceitful.

The complexity of the outside world and the mistrust that it inspires are such that the defenseless and insecure villagers retreat into the safe and well-known world of the family, clan, and tribe. They know that the traditional chiefs of tribe and clan prey on their very limited wealth, and they often know that their mutual interests are diametrically opposed; nevertheless, the tribe and clan represent a source of guidance and security that the state is too remote and too mysterious to offer.

The city dweller has escaped the crushing embrace of traditional society, but not the effects of ignorance and insecurity. In such conditions, most people are politically passive, and their relationship with the political leadership is one-way only. The leadership speaks to them, lectures them, and rouses hopes or fears, but never listens; the bureaucracy taxes them,

bullies them, may take their sons away to serve in the army, and can take their labor for the roads, but gives very little in return. At best, in honest regimes, a dam or highway is being built somewhere, far away from their village. Such projects will not bring them any direct benefit, will not lift them from their misery, but at least they are a consolation, a hope of a better future for their sons. Elsewhere, the poor are even denied the consolation of hope—their taxes have been spent on palaces, weapons, imported champagne, and all the other bizarre and whimsical things that politicians and their wives absolutely need. The urban poor—living by expedients, barely surviving in the day-to-day struggle for the necessities of life—are treated to the spectacle of the cocktail parties, limousines, and grandiose villas of the ruling elite.[a]

The mass of the people is politically passive, but it is a passivity of enforced silence, not inertia. All the time the terrible anger caused by deprivation and injustice is there, and, at times, it explodes. The mob may not have a clear political purpose, but its actions do have political consequences.

The 1952 *coup* in Egypt, which led to the end of King Farouk's "white telephone" (phony-European) monarchy and the rise of the Nasser regime, followed over seventy years by the presidencies of Anwar Sadat and then Hosni Mubarak, was preceded by one of these sudden explosions. "Black Saturday," as it became known, January 26, 1952, was the appointed date of an organized demonstration against the presence and activities of the British forces in the Canal Zone. The poor of the city streamed out from their hovels and joined the procession, among them the agitators of the Muslim Brotherhood, who incited the crowd to arson and violence against the infidel and all his sinful doings.

The agitators succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. The poor seized the opportunity to destroy the facilities of the rich: hotels, department

stores, Cairo's aristocratic Turf Club, and the liquor stores and fashion shops in the center of the city, which was given the appearance of a battlefield in one short day; only the wealthy suffered, as these were places that had always been closed to the poor. The organizers of the original demonstration had no wish to destroy their own favorite gathering places; the nationalists did not want to deprive Egypt of the 12,000 dwellings and businesses that were destroyed. They spoke of anarchy, intrigue, and madness. For the poor, however, it was a general election: without voting rights, they resorted to voting with fire.

Apart from the violent and inarticulate action of the mob in response to some simple and dramatic issue, there is no arguing with the power of the state; there is no interest in, and scrutiny of, the day-to-day activities of government and bureaucracy. Thus, if the bureaucracy issues orders, they are either obeyed or evaded, but never challenged or examined.

All power, all participation, is in the hands of the small educated elite. They are literate, even educated, more certainly well fed and, therefore, radically different from the vast majority of their countrymen. The masses recognize this and accept the elite's monopoly of power; unless some unbearable exaction leads to desperate revolt, they will accept its policies. *Equally, they will accept a change in government, whether legal or otherwise.* After all, it is merely another lot of "them" taking over.

Thus, after a *coup,* the village police officer comes to read out a proclamation, the radio says that the old government was corrupt and that the new one will provide food, health, schooling, and sometimes even glory. The majority of the people will neither believe nor disbelieve these promises or accusations, but merely feel that it is all happening somewhere else, far away. This lack of reaction from the people is all the *coup* needs to stay in power.

The lower levels of the bureaucracy will react—or rather fail to react—in a similar manner and for similar reasons. Their own lack of political sophistication will mean that the policies and legitimacy of the old government were much less important to them than they were to their immediate superiors. The "bosses" give the orders, can promote or demote, and, above all, are the source of that power and prestige that make them village demigods. After the *coup,* the man who sits at district headquarters will still be obeyed—whether he is the man who was there before or not—so long as he can pay the salaries and has links to the political stratosphere in the capital city.

For the senior bureaucrats, army, and police officers, the *coup* will be a mixture of dangers and opportunities. Some will be too compromised with the old regime to merely ride out the crisis, and so they will either flee, fight the *coup,* or step forward as supporters of the new regime in order to gain the rewards of early loyalty. The course of action followed by this group will depend on their individual assessments of the balance of forces on the two sides. But, for the greater number of those who are not too deeply committed, the *coup* will offer opportunities rather than dangers. They can accept the *coup* and, being collectively indispensable, negotiate for even better salaries and positions; they can create or join a focus of opposition; or, as in Nigeria in 1966, they can take advantage of the temporary state of instability and stage a counter-*coup,* seizing power on their own account.

Much of the planning and execution of a *coup* will be directed at influencing the decision of the elite in a favorable manner. Nevertheless, if, in an underdeveloped environment, the elite choose to oppose the *coup,* they will have to do so as political rivals. They would not be able to appeal to some general principle of legality as in politically sophisticated countries because no such principle is generally accepted. So, instead of operating for the sake of legitimacy, they would be fighting the planners of the *coup* as

straight political opponents on the same plane. This would have the effect of bringing over to the *coup* their political or ethnic opponents. In any case, fighting the *coup* would mean facing organized forces with improvised ones, and under conditions of isolation from the masses, who, as we have seen, will almost always be neutral.[b]

As the *coup* will not usually represent a threat to most of the elite, the choice is between the great dangers of opposition and the safety of inaction. All that is required in order to support the *coup* is, simply, to do nothing—and this is what will usually be done.

Thus, at all levels, the most likely course of action following a *coup* is acceptance: by the masses and the lower bureaucracy because their interests are not tied with either side, and by the upper levels of the bureaucracy because of the great dangers of any opposition conducted in isolation. This lack of reaction is the key to the victory of the *coup,* and it contrasts with the spontaneous reaction that would take place in politically sophisticated societies.

In totalitarian states, the midnight arrests and the control over all associations (however nonpolitical) are part of the general tactic of insulating the individual who seeks to oppose the regime. In underdeveloped areas, the opposition is isolated from the masses almost automatically by the effect of social conditions.

Our first precondition of the *coup,* therefore, is:

> The social and economic conditions of the target country must be such as to confine political participation to a small fraction of the population.

By *participation,* we do not mean an active and prominent role in national politics, but merely a general understanding of the basis of political

life commonly found among the masses in economically developed societies. This precondition also implies that, apart from the highest levels, the bureaucracy operates in an unresponsive and mechanical manner because of its undereducated staff.

More generally, the "economic precondition" excludes the possibility of a system of local government—that is, *representative* local government. It is true that, in underdeveloped areas, there is often a system of local government based on traditional chiefs; of their two possible roles, however, neither usually functions as a representative one. They are either individually powerful in their own right, which means, in effect, that the commoner is subjected to dual control, or, if their power has collapsed, they are little more than somewhat old-fashioned civil servants. Neither of these roles allows the commoner to participate in the small politics of the village or town in the manner of his Western counterpart.

Thus, in an economically backward environment, the diffusion of power, which is characteristic of sophisticated democracies, cannot take place. There is either rigid centralized rule or, as a transitional phase, a degree of power for individual regions that makes them de facto independent states (as was the case in northern Nigeria before the *coup*). Everybody knows that it is easier to grab something concrete than something vague. Talking loosely, power in the centralized state run by a narrow elite is like a well-guarded treasure; power in a sophisticated democracy is like a free-floating atmosphere—and who can seize that?

This does not necessarily mean that *(a)* all underdeveloped countries are ipso facto vulnerable to a *coup,* nor *(b)* that the developed areas are never good *coup* territory. It does mean, however, that only the intervention of special circumstances will prevent a well-planned *coup* from succeeding in economically backward countries, while only exceptional circumstances will allow it to succeed in the developed areas.

## Political Independence

It is impossible to seize power within a state if the major source of political power is not there to be seized. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, for example, was totally successful, and its leaders quickly found themselves in control of all the traditional instruments of power: the armed forces, police, radio, and communication facilities. The one thing that could not be seized in the streets of Budapest happened to be the major source of power for the previous regime: the presence of the Soviet army in and around Hungary.

These armed forces—vastly superior to the Hungarian army—were a greater source of power to a Kremlin-backed government than any element within the country. The control of the Red Army was in Moscow; thus, the Hungarian Revolution would only have succeeded if it had been carried out in Moscow, not Budapest.[c]

Under such conditions, a *coup* can only work with the approval of the greater ally. The first *coup* in Vietnam, which overthrew the unpopular president Ngo Dinh Diem and his even less popular brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, was carried out by individuals who appreciated the realities of power. When the Catholic Diem went on a political offensive against the dissident Buddhist orders, the long-suffering generals decided to act: they sounded out the opinion of the US embassy in Saigon and asked through an intermediary whether the Americans would report to Diem "possible consultations on eventual changes in the prevailing political structures." When, after considerable debate between the CIA, the embassy, the White House, and the Pentagon, the US authorities informed the plotters that they would not be reported to Diem, the following sequence of events took place:

*May 1963:* Beginning of intensified conflict between Buddhists and Diem.

*May–September 1963:* Internal American debate on whether the Buddhists are neutralists (to be opposed) or nationalists (to be supported). The final conclusion reached was that Hinayana Buddhists were "bad" and Mahayana[d] Buddhists were "good."

*October 1963:* Standstill of all economic aid to Vietnam, i.e., to Diem's regime.

*October 22, 1963:* End of direct aid by CIA to Ngo Dinh Nhu's Special Forces. These forces were the main source of direct power to the regime, entirely financed and equipped by the CIA.

*November 1–2, 1963: Coup* occurs, resulting in the deaths of Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu.

The Viet Cong accused the generals and their frontman, Duong Van Minh, of being stooges of the Americans, but, in their dealings with the US authorities, they were merely being realistic. They saw that whatever power there was to be seized depended on the Americans. Seizing Saigon's fixtures and fittings without US support would have been seizing an empty symbol.

South Vietnam in 1963 was a clear case of dependence. Such cases are rare, unlike regimes that exist in the gray area between full independence and some degree of dependence. Former French colonies in West Africa are the most persistent examples of such dependence because the presence of the former mother country is very real—and very effective. Instead of large and expensive armies, there are military and economic "advisers," there is economic aid, and, above all, there is the tight web of long-established dependence in nonpolitical spheres. Thus, schooling follows patterns originally established in colonial days, and the organization of the

professions follows the metropolitan system. This is very important where the ruling elite is composed largely of lawyers, whose whole raison d'être is based on the use of a particular procedure and code of law. Trade is often tied largely to the ex-colonial power because of the hold of inherited tastes, habits, and the fact that trade links are typically based on established relationships and communications.

This level of influence has often sufficed to prevent, oppose, or consolidate a *coup*. Back in 1964, a few companies of British marine commandos quickly crushed mutinies in the three ex-British East African countries of Kenya, Tanganika (as it then was), and Uganda; almost fifty years later, a few companies of French troops inserted in January 2013 defeated the Islamist insurgents who were conquering the vastness of Mali. Although the French have generally opted for neutrality in the face of African *coups*, intervening only now and then, they have retained in Africa or in rapidly deployable form a force of several thousand air-transportable troops with efficient, albeit light, weapons. That may not sound like a large force, but it is huge when compared to the efficient bits of local armies (whose troops are worthless for the most part), so that French interventions have usually been decisive.

A very specialized type of dependence is a by-product of modern technology and is found outside the ex-colonial sphere. This is the heavy mortgage placed on political independence by the acquisition of sophisticated weapons, particularly combat aircraft. The jet fighter is the crucial case because, unlike ships or armored vehicles, jet fighters can confer an absolute advantage. Better training and morale can often overcome even a sharp equipment inferiority in ground combat, but not in the air. Therefore, it is vitally important for any country to match its potential rivals' combat aircraft. The political problem arises because *(a)* only a few countries make advanced combat aircraft, *(b)* these aircraft need

a continual supply of replacement parts, and *(c)* there is a long gestation period between the original order and the time when training is sufficient for operational use.

Thus, if a country wants to acquire jet fighters, it has to be reasonably friendly with one of six countries: Sweden, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, or Russia. Once a deal is made, it will need to stay friendly, otherwise the flow of spare parts and ancillary equipment will stop. And so the initial purchase is followed by years of dependence. Jet fighters don't grow in economically backward countries, where the whole industrial base is lacking. The constant updating of electronics, air-to-air missiles, radar equipment, and the like must therefore rely on imports. Both sides of the bargain recognize this dependence, and the supply of sophisticated weapons is usually aligned with general trade, ideological ties, and political links. At what point is the degree of dependence sufficient to affect the feasibility of the *coup?* Consider the following timetable of relations between the Soviet Union and Egypt from 1955 to 1967:

*1955 Czech arms deal:* This was the first arms supply contract between the Soviet Union[e] and any Arab state; it was of great political importance for Egypt because it broke the Western arms monopoly[f] and signified "true" independence.

*Effect:* The commitment of (future) foreign currency earnings, and the need to keep on friendly terms with the only possible supplier of spare parts.

*1956 Suez-Sinai War:* The Egyptian defeat in the Sinai resulted in the loss of much equipment; it was quickly replaced by the Soviet Union, and with better weapons.

*Effect:* The commitment to the USSR was reinforced and financial indebtedness increased.

*1962 Revolution and "civil war" in the Yemen:* After the death of Yemen's king Ahmad Ibn Yahya and the subsequent revolution, Egypt sided with the republicans and Saudi Arabia sided with the royalists in the ensuing civil war; Egyptian troops in increasing numbers were sent to support the republicans.

*Effect:* Soviet help was needed to keep 30,000–50,000 troops in Yemen. Moral and monetary debt increased.

*1966 final break with the United States, end of US wheat shipments:* The shortfall in food supplies could not be covered by Egypt's hard currency purchases in the world market.

*Effect:* Soviet food aid was initiated, making Egypt dependent on the USSR for a significant portion of its supplies.

*1967 June, Six-Day War, Egyptian defeat in the Sinai:* Israeli sources estimated that 80 percent of Egypt's Soviet-supplied military equipment was destroyed or captured.

*Effect:* As a condition for the re-equipment of Egyptian forces, the USSR required the close supervision of army training, a voice in the selection of senior military personnel, and the reorganization of intelligence services.

Thus, after twelve years, a limited relationship designed to free Egypt of its dependence on the West for arms supplies escalated to a much greater degree of dependence on the USSR: Egypt became dependent on Soviet goodwill for arms, wheat, and general economic aid. The Soviet navy was granted shore facilities in Alexandria and Port Said, and there were several hundred Russian instructors in the Egyptian armed forces. Was that enough to allow the Soviet Union to oppose or reverse a *coup?*

At the very least, the Soviet embassy in Cairo could have acted as a focus of counter-*coup* activity, coordinating the many Egyptians then

committed to the Soviet presence, and it could certainly regulate the flow of aid supplies. After a *coup,* the USSR could have punished a noncooperative new regime by cutting off all aid.

When countries fall into such a position of direct, material dependence, *coup* planning must include immediate post-*coup* foreign policy planning. If the political orientation of the *coup* is opposed to the greater power, then the *coup* may well fail unless this coloration can be concealed.

The second precondition of the *coup,* therefore, is:

> The target state must be substantially independent, and the influence of foreign powers in its internal political life must be relatively limited.

It is the cliché that countries are interdependent rather than independent; domestic political issues have international implications, while foreign political developments have domestic repercussions. The commercial, cultural, and military ties that link countries give each country a measure of influence in the affairs of other countries; and even the most powerful can be so influenced. Thus, in the period preceding the US intervention in the Second World War, British-influenced and German-influenced political groupings and pressure groups were operating within American domestic politics, just as today the parties in the various Middle Eastern conflicts try to exert pressure on US foreign-policy makers both directly and through their respective lobbies.

If even a superpower can be influenced by such weak powers, then any definition of independence must be as loose as such realities.[g] Nevertheless, some more definite guidelines can be formulated:

*(a)* A *coup* is not worth attempting if a Great Power has significant military forces in the country concerned. Thus, for example, no coup could have been possible in Iraq after the 2003 US invasion (in 2015, by contrast, if the Iraqi army were effective at all, it could attempt a *coup*). True, if the foreign troops were kept in places physically remote from the political center, and/or if the pre-*coup* regime was moving toward an unfriendly position vis-à-vis the Great Power, the rule does not hold.

*(b)* The *coup* must seek the endorsement of the Great Power if large numbers of that power's nationals are serving as military or civilian "advisers."

The application of these guidelines will no doubt exclude some otherwise potentially suitable targets, though at present it is only in African states with a French garrison that the rule applies.

## Organic Unity

In looking at the political consequences of economic backwardness, we saw that the crucial factor was the concentration of all power in the hands of a small elite. Conversely, in sophisticated political settings, power is diffuse and therefore difficult to seize in a *coup.*

We now face another possible obstacle to a *coup:* power may be in the hands of *sectional* political forces, which use the government as a front, or of *regional* forces whose dependence on the supposed political center is only theoretical.

In both these cases, the problem lies in the fact that the seizure of the supposed political center will not win the battle; the sources of political power may be in other centers that may be too difficult or too numerous to seize. And so the realities of power are in conflict with the theoretical structure of the state, just as in those cases where the political unit is not truly independent. Here, "power" exists within the country—but it is not where it is supposed to be because the political entity is not really *organic.*

### *Sectional Interests*

This is the age of giant, globalized business enterprises.

The same factors that led to the unprecedented prosperity of modern industrial ("post-industrial" remains a mere designer's pose) economies have also systematically favored larger business organizations over their smaller competitors; mass production and mass distribution are not diminished by the steady advance of (online) customization, and both imply large business units.

Where the advantages of large-scale production are particularly great, as in the automobile, chemical, and energy industries, only the very largest enterprise can survive. Elsewhere, even if there is no such economic

imperative, the giant corporation has developed because of the economies of large-scale marketing, or simply because of the natural dynamics of accumulation. The same is definitely true of the newer breed of information technology and online service enterprises. In every industrially developed economy, there are such giant firms that have been able to grow sufficiently to emerge from the rest of their industry, to become one of its focal points. This position gives them a great deal of power because their managerial decisions can affect the entire national economy—especially, of course, when they are monopolies or near enough.

There are many more monopolies in smaller economies—indeed, some consist of monopolies to a large extent, with the resulting high costs inflicted on hapless consumers. But even in the world's largest economy, the passenger airliner industry is monopolized by Boeing, with predictable results—unshakable complacency mostly, even after disastrous managerial errors. Why should Boeing bother, given that it has no competition aside from Airbus, the heavily bureaucratized multinational consortium on the other side of the pond? Together, the two form the most comfortably lethargic of duopolies (hence the sad lack of innovation, as the same basic pre-1950 tubular design remains in use in the twenty-first century, instead of more efficient aerodynamic forms). However damaging it is economically (and the United States suffers greatly from Boeing's domination of an entire industry), monopolies are all the more powerful because of their very defect.

In the context of the *coup d'état*, however, the power of giant corporations is just one more element within the business community as a whole, and this, in turn, is just one of the forces competing in the political life of the nation. The corporation may be a giant, but, in advanced economies, it is a giant among many.

The opposite is true in economically less developed countries. If the availability of mineral or hydrocarbon deposits leads to the development of industry, then, because of the nature of those sectors, there will be one large firm rather than many small ones. There is, by definition, little or no other industry; the tax revenues will be small—except for the company's taxes—and there will be very few jobs—except for the company's jobs. If there are roads and railways, they will have been built by the company as "company transport facilities"; most of the schools and hospitals will be "company welfare services"; "company housing" may dwarf nearby towns, and "company security guards" may be better equipped than the national police.

When the state is poor and fragile, the rich and well-organized mining company will be the great power in the land,[h] whether it seeks or eschews this power. In fact, it will almost always be forced to intervene in politics, if only to preserve the status quo. When the company does act, it has a wide range of different weapons it can use, and it can use them at many different levels. The company can slow the flow of tax income to the state by transferring production to some other country in which it operates;[i] it can boost a particular politician by giving real or sinecure jobs to his supporters; it can buy or bribe the press and generally exercise the power it derives from being very rich among the very poor.

Nor is it an improvement to replace wicked foreign exploitation with domestic exploiters, whether local tycoons (who will invariably get away with more tax-cheating) or the officials placed in control of nationalized enterprises: "state-owned" then becomes "employee-owned," with the executives in charge taking everything for themselves and favored employees, including investment essential to keep the business going, or with the union bosses in charge doing the same thing. Worst of all, they may simply and openly distribute all profits to all employees including themselves—again leaving little or nothing for investment. That has been

the fate of the potentially very great Mexican (Pemex), Venezuelan (PDVSA), and, to some degree, Brazilian (Petrobras) state-owned oil companies.

What an industrial empire can do, when set in a backward environment, was illustrated by the Katanga secession in the early 1960s. When the Congolese political leader Moïse Kapenda Tshombe (1919–1969) launched his independent Katanga Republic, he had only the meager resources of a provincial governor of the Congolese Republic. Yet, as the secession proceeded, Tshombe acquired a veritable army, with some combat jets, artillery, armored cars, and even well-organized propaganda bureaus in London and New York. Perhaps most important, he was able to recruit (and pay handsomely) competent mercenary soldiers, any number of whom could seemingly drive off any number of regular Congolese soldiers. Tshombe's Katanga had only one major source of wealth: the mining industry owned by the Union Minière, part of the interrelated mining groups operating at the time in the Copperbelt and South Africa. It was evident all along that Tshombe was financed by the Union Minière and acted largely as an agent for the company.

But even the Union Minière was operating in what was a relatively unfavorable environment. The Congo is a very large country (eleventh in the world), and there were other mineral deposits worked by other companies with different interests to protect. The typical large-scale enterprise operates in countries where it is the only major industry. Thus, Aramco, the oil company owned by Saudi Arabia's ruling family, is still by far the largest industrial organization in the country. Its "company towns," built to house employees, dwarf other towns in the area in importance and facilities, and its earnings constitute a very large part of all government revenue. The Saudi regime has always been efficient at retaining political control over what was, until recently, a loose coalition of tribes; the old

desert warrior and founder of the kingdom, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, was a past master at controlling the tribes, and until it was nationalized and became family owned, he treated Aramco as just another tribe, albeit a particularly powerful one.

A standard nationalist accusation against the large-scale foreign enterprise is that it functions as "a state within the state," and that it exercises political power, either through its direct influence over the country's government or by using the leverage of its home country on the "host" country. For decades, the banana-growing United Fruit Company was accused of exercising power in Central America through corrupt local cliques, while the oil companies in the Middle East were accused of using both tactics.[j]

A much less plausible accusation against foreign companies was that they engaged in covert activities against the state, sabotage and espionage among them. Just why they should undertake such activities was not explained, but the accusations were widely believed. When Brigadier General Husni al-Za'im seized power in Syria in 1949 by *coup d'etat,* one of its first actions was to limit the freedom of action of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), whose pipeline crossed Syria. IPC was informed that *(a)* its aircraft would have to obtain official permits for each flight, *(b)* the company's security guards would be replaced by public security forces, and *(c)* company personnel would need official permits to travel in border zones. However unfounded the allegations of complicity in espionage (which were the supposed reasons for the new rules), it should be noted that such restrictions (except for the last one) are commonplace in developed countries.

Even if the foreign company has no desire to interfere in the political life of the host country, it may be forced to do so merely in order to protect its installations and personnel. Typically, this is the case when the company is

operating in areas that are not under the effective control of the de jure government, especially remote areas inhabited by minority groups or controlled by local insurgents (which may be one and the same). Thus, the French rubber plantations that persisted in South Vietnam even in war were accused of financing the Viet Cong. But there was no reason to impute sinister motives: because the official government—which also collects taxes—was unable to guarantee their safety, the French plantations were simply paying their taxes to the de facto government.

This remains a common practice in conflict areas. Much of the money that the United States and other governments spent on road building in Afghanistan was, of course, simply stolen (some legally, as the US Agency for International Development [USAID] awarded contracts to very expensive general contractors, who applied a hefty override before hiring subcontractors, who in turn did the same before hiring sub-subcontractors). Of the part that did reach the mostly Turkish contractors who actually build roads, a significant proportion went to Taliban insurgents as well as local banditos, with both not infrequently playing a dual role as paid security guards. In this way, a kilometer of the simplest asphalt road in Afghanistan ended up costing as much as a kilometer of high-speed four-lane highway in Europe.

Much more economically usually, oil companies have routinely paid off those who introduce themselves properly—by, say, perforating a pipeline, or blowing it up in just one short segment to make their needs perfectly clear; it matters not if they are plain banditos or grace themselves with a revolutionary or religious appellation (now that sundry murderers call themselves the Party of God [Hezbollah], there is an understandable nostalgia for the days of the Popular Fronts for the Liberation of this or that, which competed with the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation

of … and their splinter groups, which naturally called themselves the United Front for the Liberation of …).

In the good old days of gunboats and plumed viceroys, the British oil company in Persia (originally named "Anglo-Persian" and later "Anglo-Iranian," before coming clean as British Petroleum) illustrated very well the phenomenon of a business enterprise forced to intervene in the domestic affairs of the host country under the impellent pressure of local political realities. Anglo-Persian received its concession from Shah Mozaffar al-Din of the Qajar dynasty, head of the modestly titled Sublime Government of Iran in 1901, but soon discovered that the Tehran government had very little control over the southwestern and coastal Khuzestan region, where the company was actually exploring and later producing oil. A local potentate, the Sheikh of Mohammerah, controlled the western part of Khuzestan at the head of the Persian Gulf, and the chiefs (khans) of the nomadic (or better, transhumant) Bakhtiari tribes controlled eastern Khuzestan; both the sheikh and the khans were nominally subject to the Tehran government, but, in fact, independent.

The company had to accept political realities. To protect the safety of its installations, it paid off the sheikh, a properly dignified extortionist. The British government, however, tried to regularize the situation by supporting the autonomy of the sheikh against the central government, and the company, being closely associated with the British government,[k] identified itself with the autonomy of the sheikh. When the energetic cavalry officer Reza Khan took power eventually as a new shah and restored the authority of the central government the British company found itself penalized for its support of the sheikh.

The relationship between the company and the Bakhtiari khans was even more complicated. The company realized that its wells and pipelines could only be protected by coming to an arrangement with the local de facto

power. This time, however, instead of one sheikh there were many different khans, all involved in contentious tribal politics, whose chronic, sometimes violent, instability prejudiced the security that the company was trying to buy. The "natural" solution was adopted: the company, together with British consular authorities, entered into tribal politics in order to promote a paramount chief who would clarify and stabilize the situation. The feuds among the khans, however, were never concluded, and the tribal politics of the company were brought to an end only when the central government of Reza Pahlavi finally disarmed the khans and gained control of the entire territory.

Thus the company, merely in order to protect its installations and to avoid paying double taxation to two rival authorities, had to enter politics at three different levels. It operated *(a)* in tribal politics to promote and maintain the power of the paramount chief of the Bakhtiari, *(b)* in national politics to preserve the autonomy of the Sheikh of Mohammerah against the central government, and *(c)* in international politics to "detach" the sheikhdom from Persia, acting in association with the British consular authorities in the Gulf.

What action must be taken by the planners of the *coup* in the event of the presence of such substates in the target country? In a few extreme cases, their consent may be necessary: they tend to have their ears to the ground and will probably be aware of the imminent *coup* before the official intelligence outfits. This consent can be obtained by a suitable mixture of threats and promises, and, in this case, promises do not always have to be kept. Elsewhere, they will act as just one more factor with which the *coup* has to deal, but increasingly—after the political education they have received at the hands of nationalist forces everywhere—foreign business interests have learned that neutrality is sweet.

*Regional Entities*

The essence of the *coup* is the seizure of power within the main decision-making center of the state and, through this, the acquisition of control over the nation as a whole.

We have seen that in some cases the decision-making process is too diffused through the entire state bureaucracy and the country at large; in other cases, the supposed political center is controlled by another, foreign center or by sectional forces independent of the whole state machinery.

A similar problem arises when power is in the hands of regional or ethnic blocs, which either use the supposed political center as an agency for their own policies or ignore the claims of the center and regard themselves as independent. Practically every Afro-Asian state has border areas, typically mountainous, swampy, or otherwise inaccessible, which are inhabited by minority tribes; the control exercised by the government in these areas is often only theoretical. Where this sort of de facto autonomy extends to major population centers, the problem of the lack of organic disunity arises; it is, however, of no importance for the *coup* if the organic unit is in itself large—the new regime can deal with local autonomies when it has seized power. Sometimes, however, the local units are so powerful that they control the center, or else the center rules only the immediate suburbs of the capital city.

This was often the case in the ex-Belgian Congo in the period 1960–1964, following independence and the mutiny of the Force Publique. Though the Congolese Republic was constitutionally a unitary state, not a federal one, it quickly lost control of most of the provinces, which behaved as if they were independent entities. Within each province, local factions were in conflict, and the central government's faction tended to be one of the weakest:

*Political situation in the South Kasai province of the Congo, 1960–1961* The following groupings were contending for the control of the province:

*(a)* The traditional chiefs. Forces available: tribal warriors.
*(b)* The South Kasai separatists led by the self-declared king, Albert Kalonji. Forces available: well-equipped, if undisciplined troops led by Belgian officers (nominally "Ex-Belgian" Belgians).
*(c)* The central government. Forces available: young and inexperienced administrators with loose control over small and far-from-combative "national army" (ANC) units in the eastern part of the province.
*(d)* The mining company Forminière. Resources available: financial support and air transport occasionally made available to Kalonjiist and other groups.

The situation in Katanga was even more unfavorable to the central government, while the northeast and the Stanleyville area were in the hands of the Gizenga forces. Much of the rest of the country could not be reached by government officials because of the breakdown in law and order, along with the disruption of transportation facilities. Thus, a successful *coup* in the Congolese capital of Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) would only have won control of a very small fraction of the great Congolese Republic. Several different *coups* would have been needed in the various de facto capitals (Stanleyville, Elizabethville, Luluabourg, etc.) in order to control the whole country.

Federal states represent the overt and constitutional recognition that regions have a local power base and are, therefore, granted a corresponding measure of local autonomy. In confederations, the power of the center

comes from the voluntary union of the regions, and, until the central institution develops its own sources of power and authority, it is the regions that rule, using the center only as an agency for their common policies.

The United States was the product of a voluntary union of diverse states and, until the growth of presidential authority in the course of the nineteenth century, the government in Washington was little more than an agency that served the states in the regulation of foreign commerce and for the common defense. Thus, a *coup* staged in Washington in, say, 1800 would have seized very little; by 1900, however, the growth of federal powers was such that a *coup* could ensure considerable control over much of the country. The Russian Federation, Canada, India, and Germany are all federal states, but the effective degree of autonomy of each component state or province varies greatly, from very little in Putin's Russia (even though governors are now again elected) to the broad autonomy of Canadian provinces. The fact that, constitutionally, the Russian republics are supposed to be fully autonomous (and even entitled to secede from the federation) is another example of the perpetual contrast between theoretical structures and political realities.

The inherent dynamics of power are inimical to federal systems, which are forever centralizing in less and less "federal" fashion, or else decentralizing with or without a consensual agreement, or orderly and agreed process, in a way that can easily evolve into outright separatism. That is what is happening now in both the United Kingdom, which was always more accurately the United Kingdoms, and in Spain, not a gathering of kingdoms under one crown as in the British case, but with regional autonomies only recently recognized; in each case, separatism has become a major political force in one of the parts—Scotland and Catalonia, respectively—which may well become independent states in the future.

• • •

The idea that political power should be concentrated in one controlling center for the nation as a whole derives from the presumption that the interests of each region are best served by decision making in a national framework. This presumption, interestingly enough, is usually accepted only after the destruction of the local power structures. Thus, it is agreed by most inhabitants of England (if not Scotland) and France that major political decisions ought to be made in London and Paris, rather than on a local level. But this intellectual recognition followed, rather than preceded, the crushing of the "barons" and of the independent states of Burgundy, Provence, Anjou, and Wales.

In many underdeveloped areas, the power of local "barons" is still very real, and local movements, based on linguistic or ethnic affiliations, are actively attempting to gain either greater autonomy or else full de facto independence. As of 2015, the central governments of India, Kenya, Mali, Myanmar, Pakistan, and China are all experiencing violent conflicts with separatist elements. Among all such instances, where local populations do not accept the superiority of centralized decision making, we have to differentiate between the various possible implications for the *coup:*

(a) *If the regions are the real centers of power:* the *coup* must either confine itself to one region or extend to all of them; the supposed center must be just one more target area. This extends and complicates the *coup,* while the weakness of the *coup*'s forces in each single capital may invite counter-*coup* activity.
(b) *If one or two regions dominate the whole country:* this was the situation in Nigeria before the momentous *coup* of January 15, 1966. The Northern Region, ruled by traditional Fulani and Hausa emirs, was the largest region by far. Its ruler, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, was in full control of its

> internal politics, whereas the situation in the other regions was more fluid—and more democratic. Thus, Ahmadu Bello, in association with political forces in one other region, dominated the whole federation. The young Igbo officers who carried out the first *coup,* therefore, had to allocate as much of their efforts to Bello and his capital as to the federal capital and the federal leadership. In the event, they killed both the federal prime minister (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa) and Bello. But they were overextended, so that Major-General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi, the senior officer of the army acting with the police and bureaucracy, staged a counter-*coup* and seized power on his own account.

The existence of regional forces strong enough to control the supposed center may make a *coup* impossible. If the regional or ethnic bloc is organized along tribal lines, the structures of its leadership will be too firm and intimate for a *coup* to function from within. There has never been a coup in Lebanon, for example, because it is based on such an arrangement: the Shi‘a, Maronite Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Druze blocs are all mutually hostile, but they recognize the fact that no single group can hope to dominate all the others—not even Hezbollah, now the strongest by far. Thus, the Beirut government functions as a common clearinghouse for those policies that are accepted by each ethnic bloc. If one carried out a *coup* in Beirut, it would immediately lead to the collapse of the system, since each group, backed up by their own armed forces, would seize power in their own region. The *coup* would therefore only capture parts of Beirut and suburbs; it would probably be unable to retain control beyond that area.

Lebanon provides an extreme example of the role of ethnic and regional forces in a *coup.* In each individual instance, there will be a particular

balance of power between the respective regions, as well as between each of the regions and the center. The efforts of the *coup* would have to be allocated so as to deal with each ethnic or regional bloc on the basis of an estimate of its role in the particular balance of forces. In a few cases, a *coup* may be impossible because the nature and extent of regional power is such as to require resources beyond those likely to be available. Elsewhere, it will be just one more obstacle to overcome.

The third precondition of the *coup,* therefore, is:

> The target state must have a political center. If there are several centers, these must be identifiable, and they must be politically, rather than ethnically, structured. If the state is controlled by a nonpolitically organized unit, the *coup* can only be carried out with its consent or neutrality.

"Ethnically structured" is a rather awkward phrase. It is intended to cover social groups whose leadership is evolved by clear-cut and well-established (usually hereditary) procedures. If a particular traditional leadership controls the state, we cannot seize power by carrying out a *coup* in the state's controlling center, nor can we penetrate the traditional leadership because we would be excluded automatically as usurpers and outsiders. In Burundi, for example, the traditional Watutsi hierarchy controlled the state; in order to seize power in Burundi, it would have been necessary to penetrate the hierarchy, but this would only be possible if *(a)* we were Watutsi and *(b)* we belonged to the aristocracy, though in that regard there has been a diffusion of power. In Rwanda, power was also controlled by traditional Watutsi chiefs who had subjected the Bahutu majority. Then there was a revolution, and the leadership became Bahutu-political rather than Watutsi-traditional, until the former launched a

genocidal campaign, followed, in turn, by a Watutsi reconquest, whose leadership is not traditional. A *coup* would, therefore, be possible.

If a political entity is actually controlled by a group that is not structured politically, then obviously political methods cannot be used to seize power. This is the case of a country dominated by a business unit. Imagine, for example, that "Wall Street" *did* control the United States, in the sense that the president and Congress acted as its stooges. If that were the case, power could not be seized in Washington.

Returning to reality, Katanga in the early 1960s and the Central American banana republics of the 1950s were examples of states whose real "centers" were politically impenetrable because they were not there in the first place.

[a] Even then, some of them retain their sense of humor; in some African languages, a new word was coined from the "Wa-" prefix, which indicates a tribe; where before there were only Wa-Kamba and Wa-Zungu, now new tribes have appeared: the Wa-Benz and the Wa-Rolls-Royce.

[b] Many observers have commented on the lack of popular support for fallen political idols, as in the case of the overthrow of Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah in 1966. Accra's citizenry seemed as happy to cheer his enemies as they had been to cheer Nkrumah himself shortly before the *coup.* This is not inanity but highly rational behavior in light of social and economic circumstances.

[c] The other cause of the failure of the revolution was, of course, the fact that Moscow's intervention was not stopped by Washington, but, again, the control of US policy cannot be seized in Budapest.

[d] See *Buddhism* by Christmas Humphreys (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1951). For a fuller discussion of Buddhism in South Vietnamese politics, see Chapter 4.

[e] The arms supply contract was Czech in name only. Kermit Roosevelt of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was then Nasser's adviser, and suggested that it should be called "Czech" to pacify Humphrey Trevelyan, the British ambassador to Egypt.

[f] Or, rather, oligopoly.

[g] In South Korea, for example, the civil disorders and subsequent *coups* of 1962 and 1979 do not appear to have been influenced by the large US military presence in the country.

[h] The material equipment available to the company, its aircraft, trucks, and telecommunication facilities will, in itself, constitute a considerable source of direct power.

[i] The risks in the mining and hydrocarbon industries are extremely high, both because of the uncertainties of costly exploration and because of very sharp price swings; therefore, most firms that endure are very large and tend to operate in several different countries. But that allows them to

switch production from one location to the other, with possibly drastic effects on the countries' finances.

[j] Joseph Conrad's novel *Nostromo* (New York: New American Library, 1904) is a brilliant and prophetic analysis of the causes and consequences of neocolonialism.

[k] The British government bought 50 percent of the shares of what was to become BP—certainly the best investment of taxpayers' money ever made.

# *Chapter 3*

# The Strategy of the *Coup d'État*

> Dean Acheson used to tell a story about Chief Justice Taft relating a conversation he had just had with an eminent man about the "machinery of government." "And you know"—Taft said with wonder in his voice—"he really did believe that it *is* machinery."
>
> —Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*

> Under totalitarian conditions knowledge of the labyrinth of transmission belts [of the machinery of government] equals supreme power.
>
> —Hannah Arendt (wrong, as usual), in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Overthrowing governments is not easy. The government will not only be protected by the professional defenses of the state—the armed forces, the police, and the security services—but it will also be supported by a whole range of *political* forces. In a sophisticated and democratic society, these forces will include political parties, sectional interests, and regional, ethnic, and religious groupings. Their interaction—and mutual opposition—results in a particular balance of forces that the government in some way represents.[a] In less sophisticated societies, there may be a narrower range of such forces, but there will almost always be some political groups that support the status quo and, therefore, the government.

If those who carry out the *coup* appear to shatter such a powerful structure merely by seizing a few buildings and arresting some political figures, it is because their crucial achievement passes unnoticed. This is the dangerous and elaborate process by which the armed forces and the other

means of coercion are neutralized before the coup, and the political forces are temporarily forced into passivity. If we were revolutionaries seeking to change the structure of society, our aim would be to destroy the power of some of the political forces; the long and often bloody process of revolutionary attrition can achieve this. Our purpose, however, is quite different: we want to seize power *within* the present system, and we shall only stay in power if we embody some new status quo supported by those very forces that a revolution may seek to destroy. Should we want to achieve fundamental social change, we can do so after we have become *the* government. This is perhaps a more efficient method (and certainly a less painful one) than that of classic revolution.

Though we will try to avoid all conflict with the "political" forces, some of them will almost certainly oppose a *coup.* But this opposition will largely subside when we have substituted our new status quo for the old one and can enforce it by our control of the state bureaucracy and security forces. A period of transition such as this, which comes after we have emerged into the open and before we are vested with the authority of the state, is the most critical phase of the *coup.* We shall then be carrying out the dual task of imposing our control on the machinery of state, while simultaneously using it to impose our control on the country at large. Any resistance to the *coup* in the one will stimulate further resistance in the other; if a chain reaction develops, the *coup* could be defeated.

Our strategy, therefore, must be guided by two principal considerations: the need for maximum speed in the transitional phase, and the need to fully neutralize the opposition both before and immediately after the *coup.* If, in the operational phase of the *coup,* we are at any stage delayed, then our essential weakness will emerge: we will likely acquire a political coloration, and this, in turn, will lead to a concentration of those forces that oppose the tendency we represent (or are thought to represent). As long as the

execution of the *coup* is rapid, and we are cloaked in anonymity, no particular political faction will have a motive or an opportunity to oppose us. After all, we could be their potential allies. In any case, a delay will cost us our principal advantage: the voluntary neutrality of the "wait and see" elements, and the involuntary neutrality of those forces that require time to concentrate and deploy for action.

The need for maximum speed means that the many separate operations of the *coup* must be carried out almost simultaneously—necessarily requiring the efforts of a large number of people. Therefore, assuming that we start the planning of the *coup* with only a small group of political associates, most of the personnel we will need must be recruited. Furthermore, our recruits must have the training and equipment that will enable them to take swift and determined action. There will usually be only one source of such recruits: the armed forces of the state itself.

Because ethnic minorities are often both antigovernment and warlike some may believe that they are ideal recruits for a *coup.* That has been true of the Alawites and Druzes of Syria, the Kurds of Iraq, and the Shans of Burma. But in most cases, a coup identified with minorities is likely to arouse nationalist reactions on the part of the majority peoples. Since the centers of government are usually located in the majority areas, their opposition would be a further important obstacle for us.

Another possible substitute for the subversion of the forces of the state is the organization of a party militia. When there is a combination of political freedom with an ineffectual maintenance of law and order, such militias are sometimes formed in order to "protect" party activities. In Weimar Germany, for example, apart from the Nazi Sturmabteilung (assault detachments, or "Brownshirts"), there were party militias of the Social Democrats, Communists, and the right-wing nationalist parties. Similar organizations—Blackshirts, Greenshirts, Redshirts, and, in the Middle East,

Silvershirts—spread in many countries in the wake of Fascist and Nazi successes. In spite of their military bearing, uniforms, and often extensive weaponry, in almost every instance of confrontation between such militias and the forces of the state, the former were defeated. Thus, when the Nazis tried to use the embryonic Brownshirts in the 1923 Munich coup attempt, they were easily overpowered by the police and Hitler was himself arrested. His subsequent rise to power was achieved by *political* means, not by the efforts of the Brownshirts.

In any case, in order to organize and equip a party militia, two scarce resources are needed: money and the freedom to do so. Recruiting forces from those maintained by the state requires neither. Therefore, while a whole range of forces will need to be neutralized, a distinctive approach must be used with the means of coercion of the state. In dealing with the armed forces, the police, and the security services, we will have to subvert some forces while neutralizing the rest; by contrast, in the case of the political forces, the objective will be limited to their neutralization.

Because of their capacity for direct intervention, the armed forces and the other means of coercion of the state must be fully neutralized *before* the actual *coup* starts; the political forces usually can be dealt with immediately after the *coup.* In some situations, however, the political forces may have an immediate impact on the course of events and must, therefore, be dealt with prior to the *coup.*

In Russia, during the period of instability that followed the first bourgeois February[b] 1917 revolution, the railwaymen's union emerged as a major source of direct power. Vikzhel (the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railroad Employees) played a decisive role in the defeat of General Kornilov's putsch by simply refusing to work the railways that were to carry his soldiers to Petrograd. Later, when Alexander Kerensky, the Russian Provisional Government's minister-chairman, fled

the city following Lenin's October *coup* and took refuge with Commander Pyoter Krasnov's army contingent, Vikzhel threatened to call a general strike (i.e., to leave Krasnov's troops stranded) unless Kerensky negotiated peacefully with the Bolsheviks. Since the Bolsheviks had no intention of negotiating seriously, this amounted to a request for unconditional surrender.

In the peculiar conditions of Russia in 1917, the railways and those who controlled them were of crucial importance to the military and to the planners of any coup—unless their forces were already in Petrograd, still then Russia's capital city. Elsewhere, other political forces have the power to exert similar pressures: in poor countries, where the majority of city dwellers can only buy food on a day-to-day basis, well-organized shopkeepers can bring great pressure to bear on the government by refusing to open their shops. Where there is a strong trade union movement, strikes can impede the vital process of establishing the authority of the new government immediately after the *coup.* Religious and ethnic leaders for their part can use the structures of their communities to organize mass demonstrations against the new regime. Therefore, we must identify and evaluate such political forces and, if necessary, their leading personalities and coordinating bodies must be neutralized before the *coup*.[c] Other political forces lacking such direct power will also have to be dealt with, but this will be part of the process of conciliation and accommodation that follows the *coup.*

# Neutralizing the Defenses of the State

One of the outstanding features of modern states is their extensive and diversified security system. This is a consequence of the general breakdown in external security and internal stability experienced in many areas of the world in the last two or three generations. Every state maintains armed forces, a police force, and some form of intelligence organization at the very least. Many states find it necessary to have paramilitary gendarmeries in addition to several police forces, duplicate security services, and other variations on the theme.

In the pre-1914 world, states were not noticeably less aggressive than they are in present-day international society, but the lack of off-rail transport and a residual attachment to diplomatic convention resulted in a certain span of time between hostility and hostilities. The modern pattern of military operations—the surprise attack and undeclared war—has as a natural consequence the "military" peace. Instead of small professional armies acting as cadres for wartime expansion, many states attempt to maintain permanent armies capable of immediate defense—and therefore offense.

In countries with Muslim populations, local or immigrant, the rise of Islamist insurgent and terrorist movements has led to an expansion of internal security forces; paramilitary and undercover police outfits have become common in many states, including democratic ones.

In the 1930s, the United States had fewer than 300,000 troops in its armed forces; the only significant intelligence operation was a small (and supremely efficient) US Navy code-breaking outfit, while internal security forces were limited to the Treasury's Secret Service that was mostly active against currency forgers, though it supplied the presidential bodyguard and

the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), whose high ambitions were constrained by small budgets.

In 2015, the US Marine Corps alone has some 184,000 men and women in uniform, while the entire uniformed military establishment has a population of some 1.4 million even after many large reductions, thereby still outnumbering the total population of some seventy UN member states.

Moreover, while the armed forces have greatly diminished in numbers since the end of the Cold War, notwithstanding all subsequent intervention wars, the intelligence community has grown enormously into a many-headed bureaucratic monster, largely because each intelligence failure caused by gross errors induces Congress to give even more money to those who fail, instead of the opposite.

I am old enough to have heard Secretary of State Dean Acheson deplore the State Department's failure to retain the intelligence function within its purview in the formative years of 1945 to 1947, when the abolition of the wartime stand-alone Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was followed by the formation of the very small and improvised Central Intelligence Group with some OSS people as a temporary expedient. At that point, the State Department could have easily absorbed that orphan entity, but the career Foreign Service Officers of those days disliked its ex-OSS "émigré" (read Jewish) intellectuals and assorted tough guys and, therefore, allowed the rise of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an entirely independent agency—which over the years has gained ever greater funding (regardless of its abysmal performance) and has become a powerful competitor in the policymaking process.

Worse still, the CIA itself failed to live up to its name from the start because the army, navy, and the air force retained their own separate intelligence organizations. The subsequent merging of those organizations beginning in the mid-1960s did not ensure centralization either because its

instrument, the Defense Intelligence Agency, did not include the code-breakers—a handful of talents pre-1941, in the thousands by 1945, and later embodied into the immense National Security Agency (NSA), whose ambition to intercept any and every electromagnetic transmission, including the idle chatter of infants with cell phones, was merely dented by the revelations of Edward Snowden, the most patriotic of traitors. But the hydra has many more heads, 19 of them at the last count, though there may be more:

1. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)—an additional bureaucratic and would-be analytical echelon established after the 9/11 Intelligence debacle, and given the impossible task of coordinating the work of the remaining 18 entities and the even more impossible task of "fusing" their intelligence into a coherent whole.
2. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whose thousands of employees include very few people who know any foreign languages other than Spanish perhaps, even fewer people who know any *useful* language, and very few undercover operators (the so-called NOCS, "non-official cover") as opposed to general-purpose "analysts," and an infinity of managers, very few of whom have any field experience other than service in foreign "stations," i.e., offices within US embassies abroad. The overall result is that CIA operatives do not emulate their British and Israeli counterparts by infiltrating terrorist organizations; indeed they have so little field experience of any kind that

most of the CIA employees killed overseas were the victims of their own inexperience or those of their managers safely at home. The frequency of its drastic "reorganizations" (the 2015 version is labeled "from the ground up") shows that the CIA's leaders are aware of its incompetence, but to gain quality by cutting it down to a small number of truly expert experts and truly operational operatives goes against the bureaucratic logic of unceasing growth.

3. The very much larger NSA, with the world's largest gathering of computers and an ever-growing number of linguists who can translate an ever-shrinking proportion of all communications intercepted. (It also intercepts and analyzes missile telemetry, radar emissions, etc.)
4. The Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (OICI) of the US Department of Energy, responsible for all nuclear-related information, with a major role in monitoring the nuclear activities of Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan. This role, however, is impeded by the CIA's inability to insert its own agents even in the proximity of installations, let alone inside them, very understandably in the case of fully closed North Korea, not so in the other cases.

5, 6, 7. The separate intelligence organizations under the colossal US Department of Homeland Security, hurriedly established after the 9/11 attacks by merging very diverse agencies, which include the US Secret Service (to repress

counterfeiting as well as for presidential protection), the intelligence units of the border and customs services, the US Coast Guard Intelligence, the office of Homeland Security Investigations, and so on.

8. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) of the US Department of State, the smallest, cheapest, and most useful of the lot.
9. The Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence of the US Treasury Department.
10. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the US Department of Defense.
11. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).
12. The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), which operates satellites.
13. The US (military) Cyber Command, a "Specified" Command.
14. The US Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency (ISR).
15. The National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC).
16. The US Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM).
17. The National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC), part of the US Army, yet "National."
18. The US Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA).
19. The US Navy Department's Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI).

Finally, under the Department of Justice:

20. The FBI's National Security Branch.
21. The Office of National Security Intelligence (ONSI) of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The nominally highest-ranking ODNI was established under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 in the futile hope of coordinating all these separate intelligence organizations and fusing the knowledge scattered in a huge number of separate brains sitting in separate buildings. The much more economical alternative of unifying them instead was not even considered because to cut down and consolidate went against the post-disaster mood of doing more rather than less. That more *is* less when it comes to intelligence will no doubt be recognized one day.

One peculiarity is that the US Congress specifically legislated a strong suggestion that the director should be an active-duty military officer ("it is desirable that either the Director or the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence [not both] should be an active-duty commissioned officer in the armed forces"). That, no doubt, was meant to stop presidents from appointing their unqualified friends and campaign contributors to the job, regardless of qualifications, as they do with ambassadors.

Another peculiarity is that the DNI may not serve concurrently as director of the CIA, a position theoretically greatly diminished by the very existence of the DNI; so far, however, it is the CIA director who continues to visit the White House most often—even though the *President's Daily Brief* has been produced by a joint group, and not just the CIA, since February 15, 2014.

In any case, the greatest limitation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence is the Defense Department's continuing control of the three intelligence organizations that have by far the largest budgets—the NSA, the NRO, and the NGA—and of all military intelligence activities,

except for US Coast Guard Intelligence, which comes under the US Department of Homeland Security.

• • •

Nothing can remedy the confusions, gaps, and disjunctions caused by the fragmentation of information flows into so many different organizations, certainly not the ever-growing new bureaucracy of the Director of National Intelligence. Indeed, its six "centers" and fifteen "offices" (so far) are further fragmenting knowledge so that more data equals less intelligence—i.e., knowledge both useful and timely.

Contrary to popular legend, and contrary to the 2015 US Senate Intelligence Committee Torture Report, the CIA has never been an excessively independent, let alone a rogue entity, and excessive independence is not the problem of any other US intelligence organization, either. The problem, rather, is their persistent failure to perform effectively because their people will not go where the vital information might be found (not even, these days, to join the Islamic State, which takes in all comers as volunteers with no way of investigating them). Clearly, the attempt to obtain all knowledge from overhead images and electronic intercepts alone is less and less successful, as adversaries design their activities around their limitations: even fledgling terrorists now understand the need to stay away from cell phones and to use the Internet without being caught, while Chinese and Russians who cannot hide their aircraft and submarines can nevertheless operate them evasively.

No state has been able to emulate such a luxuriant growth, not even the Soviet Union in the 1970s, when its military expenditures were growing without limit and wrecking the economy, and not even today's China, which gets by with military intelligence services and the Ministry of State Security Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó Guójiā Ānquánbù, albeit abundantly

manned and well funded (its sin is an over-reliance on ethnic Chinese agents-in-place, which exposes all overseas Chinese in sensitive positions to inevitable suspicion). Without being able to keep up with the United States, most states have done their very best. Even a medium-sized country like Italy, with no hostile neighbors of any military consequence, found it necessary to maintain substantial internal security and foreign intelligence services even before the advent of post-9/11 Islamic terrorism, which also occupies the attention of the national police (Pubblica Sicurezza) and the paramilitary Carabinieri (uniquely, an independent service in Italy, on a par with the navy, etc.).

More embattled states enroll large parts of the entire population in various kinds of defense and security forces. Israel used to be surrounded by declared enemies (it now has allies on two sides). With no natural defenses, very little strategic depth, and no protection from any military alliance, it is an extreme case: even in 1967, when it only had the population of a medium-sized city (it has almost tripled since), Israel was able to field more than 250,000 men and women in the June 1967 war.

From the point of view of the *coup* planners, the size and power of the armed forces, police, and security agencies is both a great obstacle and a great help. On the one hand, as Leon Trotsky pointed out long ago, the technological improvement of weapons, means of transport, and communications has widened the capability gap between organized military forces and civilians equipped with improvised weapons. Trotsky noted that, while the French mobs of 1789 could "rush" positions defended by infantry soldiers with their one-shot muzzle loaders, in 1917 a Russian mob—however large and determined—would be cut down by "modern" automatic weapons. By "modern," he meant the clumsy, very heavy water-cooled Maxim machine gun on its tripod; today, every single soldier on mob control can be armed with an automatic weapon with a similar rate of fire.

On the other hand, the increase in the size of uniformed forces and their technological evolution have improved the characteristics of the state's security apparatus as a recruitment ground for the *coup.* The modern army or security force is usually too large to be a coherent social unit bound by traditional loyalties; the need for technically minded personnel has broken the barriers that often limited recruitment to particular social groups within each country. Tribesmen and Bedouin may be politically reliable as well as picturesque, but they are often technically inadequate as pilots, tank crews, or even to staff a modern police force.

The fact that the personnel of the state security system are both numerous and diverse means that we, the planners of the *coup,* will be able to infiltrate the system. In doing so, we will have the dual task of turning a few of its component units into active participants of the *coup,* while neutralizing the others. This does not mean that we have to fight them, but merely that we have to prevent their possible intervention against us for the limited span of the *coup.*

Whether the purpose of our infiltration and subversion of the defenses of the state is to turn the unit concerned into an active participant of the *coup,* or whether it is merely defensive, the methods to be followed will depend on the character of each particular organization. The raw material for our efforts is the whole spectrum of the coercive forces of the state, and as these vary substantially in their equipment, deployment, and psychological outlook, we shall examine them separately.

## Neutralizing the Armed Forces

In June 1967, the Israelis, having defeated the other Arab armies, were turning to deal with Syria. The head of Syria's ruling junta (National Revolutionary Council), Salah Jadid, kept the two best brigades of the Syrian army in their barracks at Homns and Damascus.[d] Syria's war minister (and the country's future ruler), Hafez al-Assad, begged Jadid to allow him to send the Fifth and Seventieth Brigades to the front, but Jadid —after physically assaulting him—pointed out that, though the brigades might save a few square miles of territory, to send them to the front would jeopardize the survival of the regime. The leftist Ba'ath government was not popular with any important section of the population,[e] and the two brigades were the main supports of the regime.

Though hardly patriotic, Jadid was at least realistic. When he had taken power in February 1966, he had done so by means of the two crucial brigades whose officers were politically and ethnically allied to him, and which displaced the previous strongman, Hafez, from power when his brigades happened to be away from Damascus—or were infiltrated by Jadid's men.

Everywhere in the world, while the number of doctors, teachers, and engineers was only increasing slowly, the numerical strength of armies expanded rapidly after 1950, and only declined again when the Cold War ended in 1990, give or take a year. It is interesting to note that while technical improvements in, say, agriculture have allowed a diminishing number of farmers to produce ever larger amounts of food, armies needed an ever larger labor force during that 40-year period, even though their productivity—or rather destructivity—per head also increased very rapidly. A modern platoon of thirty men has several times the effective firepower of

its 1945 counterpart; it is doubtful whether farming techniques have improved to the same extent.

The effectiveness of modern soldiers, with their rapid transport, reliable communications, and efficient weapons, means that even *one* single formation loyal to the regime could intervene and defeat the *coup*—if, as is likely, our forces are small and the mass of the people and the rest of the state's forces are neutral. Our investigation of the armed forces of the proposed target state must, therefore, be a complete one: we cannot leave out any force capable of intervention, however small.

Though most states have naval and air forces as well as armies, we shall concentrate our attention on the latter because the procedures to be followed are usually the same for all three services, and because—with some exceptions—only land forces will be important from the point of view of the *coup*. It is, of course, possible to use fighter-bombers to take out a presidential palace instead of sending a team to arrest the occupant (this was done in the 1963 Iraqi *coup*), but it is a rather extreme way of playing the game. Although the ratio of firepower achieved per person subverted is very high indeed, tactical bombing of one's future capital city—and prospective post-*coup* residence—is not calculated to inspire confidence in the new government.

In certain geographical settings, however, the transport element of naval and air forces make them even more important than the army, as, for example, in the case of Indonesia. With major population centers scattered over two large islands and hundreds of small ones, and with the very limited road facilities on the lesser islands, a unit of naval marines—or paratroopers—will be more effective than some much larger army unit located in the wrong place. When the Communist-attempted coup-cum-revolution unfolded in Indonesia on September 30, 1965, the military commanders were able to use their control of air transport to great advantage: though

Communist-infiltrated army units were very powerful, they were in the wrong place; while many sat in the Borneo jungles,[f] the anti-Communist paratroopers and marines took over Jakarta and, eventually, the country.

Armies are divided into certain traditional formations that vary from country to country, such as divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons. Beyond this formal structure, however, the focus of decision making is usually concentrated at one or two particular levels. It is very important for us to identify which level of command is the important one and then concentrate our efforts on it. Table 3.1 illustrates several possible alternatives that we may face, though in order to achieve infiltration in depth we may in fact have to operate on many levels below the real center; operating above it would be pointless.

In *(a)* in Table 3.1, the operational echelon is the battalion; if there are persons holding the rank of divisional commanders, they will probably be officers who have been eliminated from the real chain of command and given gaudy uniforms and exalted ranks as a sweetener. If, in this case, we were to subvert a brigade or divisional commander, and he would then issue orders on our behalf to the battalion, the latter—used to receiving its orders direct from GHQ—would probably query or report the order. Thus, apart from mere ineffectiveness, there could also be a further risk in operating at the wrong echelon.

In *(b),* where almost every echelon is operational, we can subvert the control mechanism at almost any level, and orders given on our behalf will be obeyed at each lower level. In (*c*) again we can operate at all levels except those of division and battalion.

**Table 3.1.** Formal structures and real chains of command

| *(a) Centralized formal command* | *Real chain of command* |
|---|---|
| GHQ | GHQ |
| army area HQ | |

| | |
|---|---|
| division | |
| brigade | |
| battalion | battalion |
| company | company |
| platoon | platoon |
| *(b) Decentralized formal structure* | *Real chain of command* |
| GHQ | GHQ |
| army area HQ | army area HQ |
| division | division |
| brigade | brigade |
| battalion | |
| company | company |
| platoon | platoon |
| *(c) Modern NATO-style formal structure* | *Real chain of command* |
| GHQ | GHQ |
| army area HQ | army area HQ |
| division | |
| brigade | brigade |
| battalion | |
| company | company |
| platoon | platoon |

Though it may seem that the location of the main focus of control and communications is an arbitrary one, in reality it depends on very firm psychological and technical factors. Unless the standard of training and motivation is high enough, soldiers have to be welded into great uniform blocs under the firm control of their superiors because they have neither the discipline nor the capability to fight as individuals. Even highly motivated soldiers cannot be allowed to operate far from the concentration of troops unless they are linked by an efficient system of communications that enables them to receive new orders and to report on their situations. In general, the easier the terrain, the lower the degree of discipline and efficiency, the larger the size of the unit that will be allowed to operate independently. Conversely, the more sophisticated the troops and

equipment, and the closer the terrain—as in jungles or swamps—the smaller the unit operating on its own.

The two extremes came face-to-face in the Sinai in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, when the Egyptian army was organized into three large blocs under rigid HQ control and incapable of independent action; the Israelis, on the other hand, operated in many small brigade-sized groups, which concentrated for mass and separated to infiltrate in a fluid and flexible manner. In the 1973 war, Egyptian forces were much better trained and their leadership was much more determined, but their command system was still very rigid and they were again outmaneuvered. For the coup, it means that if orders are properly issued, they will be obeyed uncritically, and that is how general Abdul-Fattāḥ Sa'īd Ḥusayn Khalīl al-Sīsī became Egypt's ruler in 2013.

When we have determined which is the true operational echelon in the various formations of the country concerned, we can go on to the next stage —namely, identifying which formations have the capability to intervene for or against the *coup.* We shall follow two main criteria: the nature of the unit concerned and the location of the particular unit. These are explored in a case study of the Portuguese armed forces, chosen because they are representative of many others.

# The Portuguese Armed Forces (in 1967)

The Salazar regime in Portugal was based on a partnership between the land-owning classes, the newer industrial and business elites, and the bureaucratic middle class (which staffed the civil service and the officer level of the armed forces). As in Spain, air force and navy officers tended to be rather less conservative than army officers; also as in Spain, the two services were deliberately kept thin in numbers and resources.

ARMY: The total strength was about 120,000 men, distributed as follows (excluding administrative personnel):

*I infantry division,* with some medium tanks, partially used as a training formation and at about one-half of its theoretical establishment. Of the total number of soldiers in the unit, only about 2,000 had any motor transport, apart from the small number equipped with armored vehicles. At any one time, many of the troops were new conscripts, with little training or discipline.

*Location:* central Portugal

*II infantry division:* this formation was usually much below strength, with perhaps 3,000 soldiers with some degree of training. Transport, however, was sufficient for perhaps half this number.

*Location:* northern Portugal

*Rest of the army:* the largest number of troops, around 100,000, with the highest degree of training and with the best equipment, were then spread over Portugal's African territories: Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea.

NAVY: Though the Portuguese had a great naval tradition, and though the overseas provinces would justify a larger navy (for which the US military assistance program could have partially paid), for the reasons suggested above it has been kept relatively weak: one destroyer, fourteen smaller combat ships, three submarines, and thirty-six other vessels. Of greater interest to us: twelve support ships, four landing-craft, and half a battalion of marines of the Corpo de Fuzileiros. Because of the distance of the African provinces, even if the navy were particularly loyal to the regime, it could not have brought over many troops from Africa. The Fuzileiros themselves were then mostly in distant waters, and, in any case, their number was hardly significant.

AIR FORCE: About 14,000 troops. It was then equipped with a variety of old American and Italian aircraft. Its 3,000 paratroopers were then stationed in the African provinces (now the independent states of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau), while the transport wing could carry back to Portugal only about a thousand men every twenty-four hours.

In the case of Portugal, therefore, although the armed forces numbered about 150,000, only a small fraction of this total could be relevant in the event of a *coup*. Most of them would be prevented from intervening physically in the Lisbon area because of their location and their lack of suitable transport. Others would only be able to intervene ineffectually, since their training and equipment was unsuitable. Thus, out of the entire armed forces, only three or four battalions (perhaps 4,000 individuals) had an effective intervention capability. The small size of this force reduced the possibility that the *coup* would be defeated, but it would also have limited our potential area of recruitment.

If the air force or the navy did bring back to Portugal some of the troops stationed in Africa, we would be the government by the time of their arrival; therefore, they would be under our orders. If we should fail to impose our authority by then, the *coup* would have failed anyway and their arrival would not change matters. Unless, that is, we had first subverted the troops in Africa, which would be a rather tortuous way of going about things.

This suggests the principal criteria by which we separate out the forces relevant to the *coup,* whether military or not:

> The forces relevant to a *coup* are those whose locations and/or equipment enables them to intervene in its locale (usually the capital city) within the 12- to 24-hour block of time that precedes the establishment of its control over the machinery of government.

## Infiltrating the Armed Forces

Our initial survey of the armed forces of the target country will have isolated two items of information crucial to the planning of the *coup: (a)* the nature and composition of the units that have an intervention capability and *(b)* the real operational echelon within them. These data are illustrated in Table 3.2.

Up to this point, we have been thinking in terms of formal military units, but we must now carry our analysis further in order to identify the key individuals within each particular unit. If we were dealing with a primitive military organization, we could readily isolate those who effectively lead the unit concerned. In the tribal-war band, for example, there will be a few obvious "leader" types, distinguished by their appearance and less obviously by their descent or personal repute; the other warriors will only be functionally different from each other because of their individual strength or dexterity. In modern military organizations, it is otherwise: the efficiency of the organization depends on the use of many different types of weapons and other facilities handled by specialized personnel. In each situation, there will be an appropriate mix of these, and the system therefore depends on two kinds of key individuals: "the technicians" and those who coordinate them, "the leaders."[g]

**Table 3.2.** Country X: potential forces of intervention

| |
|---|
| *(a) Battalion-size force* |
| 1,000 men, organized in 10 companies, with mechanical transport and anti-tank weapons. |
| *Location:* capital city. Operational echelon: battalion HQ. |
| *(b) Division-size force* |
| 1,500 men, organized in 20 companies, with armored carriers, 25 tanks. |
| *Location:* 30 kilometers from capital city. Operational echelon: brigade HQ; separate tank battalion HQ. |
| *(c) Brigade-size force* |
| 3,000 men, organized in 3 battalions. |

*Location:* 300 kilometers from capital city; air transport available. Operational echelons: brigade HQ and air force squadron HQ.

Our next problem, therefore, is to identify the key individuals within those units of the armed forces that are capable of intervening, for or against us, during the *coup.* As we have already determined the operational echelon within each particular formation and thus implicitly identified the leaders, we can now turn to the identification of the technicians. Who they are will depend on the nature of the organization and the task to be carried out. If, for example, during the course of the *coup* the government calls on the help of force *(c)* in our notional Table 3.2, its arrival in the capital could be prevented with the cooperation of just one of these groups:

—the staff operating the communication system between the political leadership and force *(c);*
—the pilots and/or ground staff of the air transport squadron;
—the guard force at the airport or airports;
—the control-tower personnel at either airport, especially in difficult flying conditions.

In general, the more sophisticated the organization, the greater its efficiency—but also its vulnerability. Either force *(a)* or force *(b)* in Table 3.2 could, for example, operate successfully even if quite a few of its personnel were not cooperating with the leadership. For these forces, losing the cooperation of 10 percent of their personnel would mean losing approximately 10 percent of their effectiveness; in the case of force *(c),* however, the loss of perhaps 1 percent of its men could lead to a *total* loss of effectiveness for some particular tasks (such as intervening in the capital city).

This indicates that when we are trying to neutralize a formation of the armed forces, we should do so through the cooperation of "technicians," rather than "leaders," because the former are both more effective individually and easier (and safer) to recruit. The second rule, other things being equal, is that we should choose for neutralization those units with the most complex organization, while choosing the simplest ones for incorporation. This will both reduce *our* vulnerability from a sudden defection and minimize the total number of people who must ultimately be recruited.

Before we go on to approach and persuade the key individuals to join us (thus giving us effective control of their units), we must have collected sufficient information on the armed forces to know:

*(a)* which of the military units could intervene at the time and place of the *coup;*
*(b)* the real command structure within the relevant units, and who the leaders are;
*(c)* the technical structure of the units, and who the technicians are.

To "incorporate" a unit, we will need the active cooperation of a number of its leaders, and, in the case of a technically simple unit, the defection of some technicians will not matter greatly. If, in otherwise well-infiltrated units, some of the leaders should remain loyal to the pre-*coup* regime, this should not prove to be a major obstacle.[h]

Whether we concentrate on leaders or on technicians will depend on the particular structure of the effective forces of intervention and on the particular political climate. If there is a sharp political division between the troops and their officers, we may be able to incorporate units without the cooperation of any formal leaders at all. The problem of identifying the

unofficial leaders will, however, be a very difficult one; in any case, there is no reason to believe that we are planning the *coup* at a time when such a division has hardened. The technical structures, however, are more stable, and one of our principal considerations will be to avoid being dependent on too many links in the technical chain. Table 3.3 shows our optimum strategy in infiltrating a typical set of potential intervention forces.

Of course, in countries prone to *coups,* those who order these things are aware of their vulnerability to the defection of parts of their armed forces. It is quite likely, therefore, that the "easy" battalion No. 1 has been carefully chosen for its reliability, and its commanders are trusted associates of the ruling group. If this is the case, we may have to work on battalion No. 3. What we must *not* do is to rely on battalion No. 2 because the defection from our cause of even a few of its technicians would have dramatic consequences.

Until we actually start to collect information about the individuals and make the first approaches, we may not know which units are politically tied to the regime; more generally, we will not know what our ultimate recruitment prospects look like in each unit. Though we will have a rough classification in mind, when dividing the units into potential allies and potential neutrals, we should keep the distinction flexible. As we build up a picture of the recruitment potential in each unit, we will concentrate our efforts on the units to be incorporated; the reliability of a unit "allied" to the *coup* will be increased if we infiltrate it in depth, but there is little point in over-infiltrating a unit that will eventually be neutralized. Every approach to an individual will involve an element of risk; every increase in the number of those who know that "something is up" will reduce our overall security level. We must, therefore, avoid over-recruitment.

**Table 3.3.** Optimum infiltration strategy

| *Unit* | *Battalion No. 1* | *Battalion No. 2* | *Battalion No. 3* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Command* | 10 company commanders and 5 effective "leaders" at the HQ of each battalion. For infiltration in depth, 30 platoon commanders may have to be subverted in each battalion. | | |
| *Key men* | *15–45 "leaders"* | *15–45 "leaders"* | *15–45 "leaders"* |
| *Technical structure* | Very simple. Relies on ordinary communication and transportation equipment. | Very complex. To bring the force to the scene of the *coup,* airlift and sophisticated communications are required. | Medium. Relies on land transport, but radio links are needed to operate communications. |
| *Key men* | *No "technicians"* | *40 "technicians"* | *5 "technicians"* |
| *Optimum strategy* | Bring a proportion of the "leaders" over to the *coup* (unit incorporated). | Secure the passive cooperation of some of the "technicians" (unit neutralized). | If Battalion No. 1 proves difficult to infiltrate, this one would be the second choice. |

If we go up to an army officer and ask him to join in a projected *coup,* he will be faced (unless he is a total loyalist) with a set of options that offer both dangers and opportunities.

The proposition could be a "plant" of the security authorities to determine one's loyalty to the regime. Alternatively, the proposition could be genuine, but part of an insecure and inefficient plot. Finally, the proposition could come from a team that has every chance of success.

Should the proposal be a plant, accepting it could lead to an officer's loss of a job and much more; on the other hand, reporting it might gain the officer the rewards of loyalty. Should it be a genuine proposal, the officer has the uncertain prospect of benefiting after a *coup,* as against the certain prospect of benefiting immediately from reporting it. The natural thing for someone in this position to do, therefore, is to report it.

The whole technique of the approach is designed to defeat this logic. Apart from the rewards of being part of a successful *coup* (which can be portrayed as being significantly greater than the rewards of loyalty), there is another factor operating in our favor. This is that the person to whom an approach is reported may actually be a supporter of the *coup.* We must

emphasize, therefore, these two points as much as possible, while underplaying the risk element. But, hopefully, our potential recruits will be motivated by some considerations beyond greed and fear, with other interests and affiliations entering their choice: links of friendship with the planners of the *coup* and a shared political outlook will be important, but usually the crucial considerations will be family, clan, and ethnic links with those planning the *coup*.

In most economically backward countries, different ethnic groups retain their identity, and mass education and mass communications have not broken down traditional rivalries and suspicions among them. In any case, the first steps toward economic progress usually reinforce these conflicts, and we may often find that ethnic links are far more important than more recent political affiliations.

For example, when no factories were being built, there could be no regional conflicts on where to build them; when civil-service jobs were all given to citizens of the imperial power, there could be little conflict between ethnic groups on the "fair" allocation of jobs. Conflicts over jobs or the location of factories are necessarily more intense than the old conflicts over land: while before, only the geographical fringes of the tribe were in contact with the rival, now each tribe fights the other on the national stage. Although a conflict over land can reach a compromise at some middle line, a factory has to be located either in area A or in area B. (The alternative, of course, is to put it on the border of the two provinces; even though this location is usually far from roads and other facilities, it is sometimes done.)[i]

As old conflicts widen in scope and intensity, the instinctual solidarity of the ethnic groups hardens. African tribalism is merely an extreme case of a very general phenomenon—for example, sophisticated and utterly unreligious Jews will "happen" to marry other Jews, though they may regard themselves as thoroughly assimilated. When there was still a

Czechoslovakia, and Communist to boot, despite Czech and Slovak protestations of national unity, capital investments had to be assigned carefully to each area on an exact percentage basis, and conflict over this was one of the factors that brought down the government of Antonin Novotny ("the great survivalist") in 1968. In fact, all over the Communist Eastern Europe of those days the old rivalries and enmities were just below the surface, and the new socialist-national policies of the later 1960s and 1970s vigorously revived them. In Romania, almost half a million Germans and a million and a half Hungarians felt that they were not getting a fair deal, while in Yugoslavia, the Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians, Macedonians, and Slovenians were all involved in a complex balancing act that ultimately broke down in bloody civil war. In many places, ethnic divisions are complicated by superimposed religious conflicts. The Igbo nation in Nigeria, for example, has been in endemic conflict with the Muslim northerners for a very long time, but the introduction of Christianity among them has meant that the old Ibo/Hausa conflict has been intensified by a newer Muslim/Christian one.

We will try to make the fullest use of the "ethnic matrix" without aligning our *coup* with any particular ethnic faction. In terms of petty tactics, we will match each potential recruit with a recruiter who shares the same affiliation and, if necessary, the image of the *coup* will be presented in a similar vein. But we must also take account of a special factor that can be considered a postcolonial phenomenon. Colonial regimes developed the habit of recruiting army personnel from among minority ethnic groups—groups that were reputed to be more warlike and, even more important, could be trusted to join in the repression of the majority group with enthusiasm. After independence, these minorities naturally regressed in terms of political power and social position, but they still staffed much of the armed forces. This has led to the strange spectacle of minorities acting

as the official protectors of the very regime that is exerting the pressure on them.

The Alawites and Druzes of Syria were in that position once the French departed in 1945, and it is hardly surprising that disaffected officers of the two groups played a prominent role in most of the many *coups* that followed independence (see Table 3.4).

In many parts of Africa, the majority peoples are the reputedly "soft" coastal tribes,[j] who have captured the political leadership because of superior numbers and education, while much of the army is made up of members of smaller tribes of the interior. Originally this resulted from the superficial ethnographic theory that the British learned in India and the French learned in Algeria, but which, in African conditions, was little less than absurd. As soon as the officers of the colonial country landed in a new territory, they set about finding the hills, or at least the "bush," the more primitive interior; once there, they tried to re-create their semi-homosexualizing relationship with the "wily Pathan" or *"le fier Kabyle,"* by recruiting the supposedly "tough" hill men into the army.

Without setting the stage for an intertribal civil war, there is every incentive to make use of this factor; to the extent that there is an effective political life, however, the ideological outlook of the potential recruit will also be important. As far as we are concerned, combining all ranges of the political spectrum against a right or left extreme will give the most suitable political "cover" to our *coup.* The regime of Abd al-Karīm Qāsim in Iraq, which lasted for five years as a pure balancing act, was finally brought down in 1963 when the moderate nationalist Abd-el-Salam Aref persuaded all political factions, from left-wing Ba'ath to right-wing conservatives, to combine against the supposed Communist penetration in the government.[k]

**Table 3.4.** The role of ethnic minorities in Syrian politics

*The Druzes*

*April 1949*

The first postcolonial regime of President Shukri al-Quwatli tries (and fails) to destroy the power base of a major Druze clan. This was one of the factors that led to the pioneering *coup* of Husni al-Za'im (the first military dictator in the Arab world).

*August 1949*

Husni al-Za'im is overthrown by a group of officers, many of whom are Druzes; this followed the attempt to intimidate the Jabal Druze area. The crucial armored-unit commanders were Druzes whose cooperation had been enlisted by the planners of the *coup.*

*December 1949*

The new regime starts its attempt to unite Syria with Iraq, and a new *coup* is planned to overthrow it and stop the union. Druze officers of the armored unit carry out the new *coup,* which leads to Adib Shishakli's military dictatorship.

*February 1954*

Shishakli's regime is overthrown. This was preceded by his military occupation of the Jabal Druze area and his arrest of a Druze delegation, which led to disturbances and reprisals. The group that carried out the *coup* was composed of three factions, of which the Druze was perhaps the most important.

*The Alawites*

*February 1966*

*Coup* by the leftist Ba'ath against the rightist Ba'ath regime of Yasin al-Hafiz and the party founders, M. Aflak and S. Bitar. The *coup* was supposedly based on an ideological rift within the Ba'ath movement. In fact, the government of the leftist Ba'ath was a cover for a group of Alawite officers headed by Salah Jadid, himself an Alawite.

*February 1967*

The chief of staff, a Sunni Muslim, is replaced by an Alawite; political power is retained by the Alawite-controlled National Revolutionary Council, with Sunni and Christian Arab ministers as figureheads.

*1965–2015*

Alawites dominate the security forces and elite army units; naturally, they also govern in the persons of Salah Jadid, who was followed by Hafez al-Assad and then his son Bashar, who is still president in Damascus (2015). At the same time, insurgents control large parts of Syria in what is now a Sunni-Shi'a conflict, although the heterodox Alawites are only very loosely Muslim at all (they revere the Virgin Mary and drink wine—two decidedly non-Muslim practices). The regime remains officially Ba'athist, but nothing of that nonsectarian identity is left now that the regime is sustained by Shi'a Iran and by the Shi'a Hezbollah militia it finances.

---

If there is no extreme faction available, we will have to be content with the petty tactics of claiming political kinship with potential recruits. But apart from the virtues of honesty, there is a need for consistency; a systematic presentation of the *coup* in terms of divergent political lines may eventually lead to our undoing.

Finding out the ethnic group to which a particular officer belongs is relatively easy; finding out about his political outlook is more difficult. But the hardest thing of all will be determining whether he is personally alienated from the higher military leadership. Only the family and the closest friends of an officer will know whether he feels that his superiors are treating him unfairly, or running things badly, to the extent that he would welcome a radical change in the whole regime. Unless we have a direct line to the individual concerned, we will have to use outside information to determine his inner feelings.

A standard intelligence procedure is to follow the career pattern of officers, in order to find out which ones have been passed over for promotions, assuming—other things being equal—that they will make good prospects for recruitment. In many countries, promotions within the armed forces are announced in official gazettes, and starting from a particular class at the military academy, one can follow the career of each officer from their graduation to the present. In some countries, where promotions are not published (for security reasons), one can carry out the exercise by using back-copies of the telephone directory if they still exist, where their names will be printed along with their changing ranks. In places where neither telephone directories nor official gazettes are good sources of information, we could use more desperate expedients: getting an old boy from the relevant years to circulate proposals for a reunion, or building up mini-biographies from personal acquaintances; by whatever means, our aim would be to trace a reasonably accurate career history for each graduating class from the military academy. The competitive position of each officer will be established vis-à-vis others of his year, rather than the other officers of the formation in which he serves. Table 3.5 presents the information in the appropriate framework.

The seven lieutenants will probably make eager recruits for anything that will disturb—and rearrange—the order, but their low rank may be a correct assessment of their abilities, in which case their "help" may be a liability. More generally, and more usefully, we know that the captains and majors in our table may well be less enthusiastic about the regime than the colonels,[1] while the two brigadiers—if not actually appointed for their political reliability—have probably become staunch supporters of whoever gave them their exalted jobs.

**Table 3.5.** Class of 19— at military academy of Country X: present career position

| | |
|---|---|
| lieutenant | 7 |
| captain | 55 |
| major | 33 |
| colonel | 18 |
| brigadier | 2 |
| deceased or civilian | 15 |
| Total | 130 |

Ethnic affiliation, political outlook, and career patterns will all serve as guides to the likely reaction of the potential recruit when the approach is made. There are, however, two points that we have to bear in mind: the first not only organizational but deeply human. While alienated personnel will make good recruits, we must remember that we need people who will not only cooperate personally, as in the case of the technicians, but also bring the units they command over to the *coup.* Thus, while the leaders we recruit could (and should) be estranged from the superior hierarchy, they must not be "outsider" figures who are not trusted by their fellow officers and men. There will often be a danger of attracting the inefficient, the unpopular, and corrupt when trying to recruit the disaffected. If we allow our *coup* to be assisted by such individuals, we will be endangering the security of the

*coup* and discouraging the recruitment of the better elements, and—most important of all—we may find that our "leader" recruits will fail to bring their units with them.

Nor can we ever lose sight of the basic unpredictability of human behavior. We have so far been trying to establish which links could override the loyalty of army personnel to their superiors and, of these affiliations, the strongest may be expected to be a family link. We should not, however, place total reliance on this factor. Despite the Arab proverb that states, "I and my brother against my cousin; I and my cousin against the world," we should remember the Aref family history in Iraq between 1958 and 1966 (see Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6.** The Aref brothers in Iraq, 1958–1966: a study in loyalty

President Abd-el-Rahman Aref was chosen in April 1966 as a compromise candidate by the army after the accidental death of his brother, Abd-el-Salam, the previous dictator of Iraq. The career pattern of the two brothers shows that, while both were prominent army leaders, one did not always cooperate with the other:

| | *Abd-el-Salam* | *Abd-el-Rahman* |
|---|---|---|
| *July 1958: Coup* overthrows the monarchy. | Coauthor of the *coup* with Abd al-Karīm Qāsim. | Unaware of the plans and only intervenes at the end—though commander of an important armored unit. |
| *November 1958:* | Qāsim arrests Abd-el-Salam. Accused of treason and given a (remitted) death sentence. | Promoted, and placed in charge of a large army contingent. |
| *1962:* | Remains incarcerated. | Placed in retirement. |
| *February 1963:* Ba'ath *coup.* Qāsim deposed and shot. | Released and made president. | Placed in charge of the 5th armored division, promoted to brigadier-general. |
| *November 1963:* | Planned by brothers together. | |
| Anti-Ba'ath *coup.* | Assumes full control. | Promoted. |
| *April 1966:* | Dies. | Emerges as compromise presidential candidate of the army. |

The relationship between the brothers illustrates the difficulty of predicting human behavior. Between 1958 and 1962, one brother was in

prison under a suspended death sentence, while the other was in charge of a force that could probably have moved on the capital at any time. The Ba‘ath leaders, mindful of this precedent, allowed Abd-el-Rahman to remain in charge of the important armored units near Baghdad, and this was their undoing. There was a period immediately after the first *coup* of 1963 when the position of the presidential brother was weak, and the Ba‘ath party militia, totally untrained but heavily armed, could have been used to remove the military brother from his command. The Ba‘ath leaders, however, assumed that Abd-el-Rahman would not collaborate with his brother and would behave as he did in 1958–1962. But this time he behaved differently, in spite of the fact that he was helping a brother who needed help much less badly than in 1958–1962, when he was captive and under a death sentence (or perhaps because of this).

Despite such instances of human unpredictability, and bearing in mind the individuality of our prospective recruits, we can nevertheless use the information we have collected to rank the leaders in terms of their probable response. Having established the career histories and ethnic and political affiliations of possible recruits, we can proceed to weigh our prospects as illustrated in Table 3.7.

In evaluating the information we must, of course, bear in mind that the importance to be attached to each factor will differ from one environment to another: in Latin America, for example, the social/racial background would also have to be added, while in Western Europe and North America political allegiance would be paramount—ethnic affiliation, if any, would be less important.

Thus, out of fifteen potential recruits, we see that No. 3 is the only totally good prospect from the point of view of the factors here taken into consideration; No. 5 is a totally bad one, and probably dangerous to approach at all; the others, however, will be somewhere in the middle.

**Table 3.7.** Battalion No. 1: recruitment prospects (see Table 3.3)

Recruitment prospects of 15 officers of higher rank. Experience, opinions, and affiliations from the point of view of the *coup*. (Repeat for 30 platoon commanders.)

| x = favorable<br>xx = very favorable | | n = unfavorable<br>nn = very unfavorable | | o = unknown | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Approach | | |
| Officer no. | Political views | Ethnic affiliations | Career pattern | Yes | No | Doubtful |
| 1 | o | x | xx | √ | | |
| 2 | n | xx | n | | √ | |
| 3 | xx | xx | xx | √ | | |
| 4 | nn | x | n | | √ | |
| 5 | nn | nn | nn | | √ | |
| 6 | x | x | x | √ | | |
| 7 | o | xx | nn | | | √ |
| 8 | o | n | xx | √ | | |
| 9 | n | xx | n | | √ | |
| 10 | o | nn | xx | √ | | |
| 11 | x | n | o | | | √ |
| 12 | x | x | x | √ | | |
| 13 | n | n | n | | √ | |
| 14 | xx | xx | x | √ | | |
| 15 | o | n | xx | √ | | |

Once we have repeated the procedure followed in the case of battalion No. 1, covering all the other formations of the armed forces with an effective intervention capability, we will know the overall recruitment prospects of each unit and, within them, of each individual. We will never be able to achieve 100 percent coverage; in some cases where the armed forces are very large in relation to our resources, or frequently redeployed, our coverage may be very incomplete.

This will not matter greatly if the "unknown" units can be neutralized *technically*. If, however, their intervention capability does not depend on elaborate and vulnerable facilities, then the *coup* may be jeopardized. We will not, however, depend on incorporation and neutralization procedures

alone, and we will also be able to isolate physically those units that appear on the scene unexpectedly, as well as those we have not been able to infiltrate at all. Before looking at the problems involved in the third, and least desirable, of our methods of dealing with armed opposition, we must turn our attention to the subversion of individuals in the units where we *do* have the requisite information.

As soon as we emerge from the close security of the planning and information stage, the danger factor in our activities will increase very sharply. As we have pointed out earlier, every single individual we approach will be a potential informer who, by telling the authorities about our efforts, could lead to the collapse of the *coup.* The most dangerous person to approach will be the first in each particular formation because until we have *that person's* cooperation, we will not have a really intimate source of information about the unit and its members. Our first recruit must, therefore, be a long-standing member of that particular formation and, if at all possible, a senior officer, or even the commander. Once we have chosen our first recruit, the initial step will be to arrange a meeting and "sound" him out in vague and generalized terms about the "possibilities of achieving political reform." These soundings must be conducted by someone who fulfills certain exacting qualifications: he or she must be a trusted associate of high caliber, but *not* in the inner group planning the *coup.* In other words, the person must be both valuable and expendable. This is an ideal that we can only try to approximate, but it could be fatal to expose a member of the inner group to the possibility of being betrayed to the authorities. In the *coup* country par excellence, Syria, political leaders used to go around the barracks "canvassing" for (armed) support, but the special conditions of Syrian political life were not likely to be reproduced elsewhere.

Once the potential recruit has been brought to the state when the possibility of a *coup* has been openly discussed, he should be told three

things about the *coup: (a)* the ostensible if not actual political aim; *(b)* that we have already "recruited" other individuals and units; and *(c)* the nature of the task that he will be asked to perform. Everything we say, or arrange to be said, to the potential recruit will have to be studied carefully, and we will work on the assumption that every recruit may be a "double" who is working for the security services.

We will not, of course, identify our *coup* with any particular party (whose policies would be known) nor with any political faction (whose leading personalities will be known). We will, instead, state the aim of the *coup* in terms of a political attitude rather than in terms of policies or personalities because the latter are necessarily more specific and therefore liable to evoke specific opposition. The attitude we project must be calculated carefully: it should reflect current preoccupations in the target country, imply a solution to the problems felt to exist, and mirror the general political beliefs of the majority of its people.

In Latin America, the attitude presented may, for example, imply that the "sacred trust of the armed forces" requires intervention to "clear the mess made by the politicians" in order to achieve "social/national progress, while respecting property rights/individual rights."

If the pre-*coup* government is itself the product of a seizure of power, then the aims of the *coup* can be presented purely in terms of restoring "normal political life," or, if we are outré leftists, we can speak about "the need to restore Democracy."

Making up slogans may seem to be an easy game, but in fact our slogans will have to be calculated carefully to satisfy a political optimum. We must, for example, avoid being specific; at the same time, though, if the attitude we present is too general, it will stimulate the suspicions of the shrewder of our listeners, while failing to fire the enthusiasm of the more idealistic ones. We must also remember that the armed forces of many countries are often

politically and psychologically out of tune with civilian society, and that they could have distinct—and perhaps antagonistic—preoccupations and beliefs. As citizens, army officers may share the belief that there ought to be economies in government expenditure, but simultaneously feel that the armed forces are being starved of funds. Where the social status of military personnel has suffered a decline because of defeat in battle, or just a long peace, we will always emphasize the need "to restore the defenders of society to their proper place within it."

In presenting the aims of the *coup* to potential recruits, we should exercise a measure of flexibility in order to reach a good fit with what we know to be their beliefs: we cannot, however, run the risk of being exposed as being grossly inconsistent. Whether we hold the views that will make up our image does not matter at all as long as the other conditions are satisfied. It is, incidentally, polite to indicate that the *coup* is only being carried out with extreme reluctance, and that we appreciate that this reluctance is shared by our recruit.

Once the idea of the *coup* has gained a measure of acceptance in the mind of our potential recruit, we should define the *coup* in terms of his role within it. This will not imply that we will reveal any of the operational detail, but we should make it quite clear that:

*(a)* his role will be limited to a few specific actions,
*(b)* almost everybody in his unit is already with us, and
*(c)* therefore, his role will be a safe one.

When, and only when, the recruit becomes actual, rather than potential, can reveal to him the nature of his actual task. This will be described in the greatest possible detail, but not so as to enable the recruit to work out the implications of the task he is asked to perform. If, for example, the recruit

in question is destined to use his unit to provide "muscle" for a roadblock team, he will be told what equipment his men should have, how many will be required, and how he will receive the go-ahead signal. He will not be told the date of the *coup,* the place where the roadblock will be, or what the other teams will be doing.

Information is the greatest asset we have, and much of our advantage in the planning stage will derive from the fact that, while we know a great deal about the defenses of the state, those who control them know very little about us. We must make every effort to avoid giving any information beyond what is actually required. In any case, while a recruit may feel that he ought to know more about the *coup* before he agrees to participate in it, he will also feel more secure if we show concretely that the operation is being run with great caution, and, therefore, is secure.

After successfully recruiting the first few people in each unit, the others will be much easier to persuade; there will also be more people to do the persuading because this is the purpose to which we will put our first recruits in the interval between their initial recruitment and the actual *coup.* Also, a "snowball" or, hopefully, an "avalanche" effect will be generated by the first recruits, who will gradually create a climate in which it will be easy to recruit further.

After the approach and persuasion of the "key" individuals has begun to give its results, we will be able to identify the units that will eventually be used as active participants in the *coup.* These will be a small part of the armed forces as a whole but, hopefully, the *only* part that will be able to play an active role at the time and place of the *coup.* We will concentrate our further efforts on them because their infiltration in depth will be of value to us, whereas the over-neutralization of the other forces will merely involve further risk. Ideally, we will have neutralized all those formations that we have not incorporated, but this is not likely to be the case. The

methods that we will follow to "isolate" those formations that we have not been able to penetrate will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The degree of success required of our infiltration program before we can proceed to the operational phase will depend on the military, political, and geographical factors involved; the same degree of penetration may ensure success in one country while being inadequate in another. In our 1967 Portuguese example, because of the extensive deployment of the active troops in the remote African provinces, along with the lack of training and mechanization of the troops stationed in Portugal, we could have gone ahead with minimal penetration (Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8.** Infiltration of the armed forces in Portugal (notional)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total armed forces (army, navy, and air force) | | 150,000 |
| Incorporated as active participants: | | 3,000 |
| Neutralized by the subversion of "key technicians": | | 12,000 |
| Neutralized by unsuitable training and equipment: | | 45,000 |
| Neutralized by their location: | Angola | 45,000 |
| | Mozambique | 25,000 |
| | Portuguese Guinea | 20,000 |

This was an extreme example of a small and poor country trying against all odds to retain its African empire to the bitter end, and therefore leaving only a very small force in its own metropolitan territory. The degree of incorporation achieved here is only about 2 percent, yet the *coup* would not find any military opposition in its way unless it failed to impose its authority within the time required to bring the troops stationed in the African provinces into Lisbon.

If, however, we take the case of a developed country with good transport links and with no overseas commitments for its troops, the same percentages of incorporation and active neutralization that in the Portuguese

case would guarantee success would lead to certain failure, as illustrated in Table 3.9.

Because there is nothing that we can do to prevent the large forces capable of intervention from doing so, we would almost certainly fail—unless we *were* the higher leadership of the armed forces.

Most situations will be between the two extremes, with a small percentage of the armed forces incorporated, a larger percentage neutralized by our efforts, and a very small percentage to be "isolated" by severing communication and transport facilities from the outside. Apart from the military forces, the government will also be defended by police forces and their paramilitary extensions, and we now turn to the problem of their neutralization.

**Table 3.9.** Infiltration of the armed forces in Germany (notional)

| | |
|---|---|
| Total armed forces (army, navy, and air force) | 450,000 |
| Incorporated as active participants: | 9,000 |
| Neutralized by the subversion of "key technicians": | 40,000[1] |
| Neutralized by unsuitable equipment (mainly air force and navy): | 180,000 |
| Balance of forces under the control of the government: | 221,000 |

1. In a densely populated area with extensive civilian telecommunication facilities and a highly developed transport system, this figure could be reached only with very great efforts.

## Neutralizing the Police

The flags and uniforms of the military forces of different countries are very different, but their structure and organization tend to be similar because they reflect the universality of modern technology. The tactical implications of weapons and ancillary equipment impose a certain uniformity on military organization. This has enabled us to study their infiltration in terms that are generally applicable.

Police forces, however, are shaped by local social and political conditions and are therefore very diverse. Police officers can be armed very heavily or not at all; they can be concentrated in mobile and hard-hitting units, or dispersed in small groups; they can be controlled by the Ministry of Defense, and thus have a military training and outlook, or by the local community, and be extremely civilian minded.

Though their structure is so diverse, police forces resemble each other in the purposes they serve. The prevention and the detection of crime,[m] and the maintenance of public order, which is the task of separate paramilitary forces in some countries where there are no such forces, is secured by concentrating and deploying ordinary police taken from their other work. Police work also includes an intelligence element. Information is gathered informally by the entire police apparatus (and their informers), but there will usually be a special section of the police whose only function is in this area. The intelligence aspect of police work will be effectively neutralized by our general defensive effort, vis-à-vis the security services, which is discussed in the next section.

Paramilitary forces do not exist in the United Kingdom, where there are provisions for the army to act in support of the civil power, or in the United States, where the part-time soldiers of each state's National Guard can be called out instead, but such forces are extensively employed in many other

countries. In France, for example, there is a civilian police force—the Police (formerly Sûreté) Nationale—but there is also a paramilitary force—the Gendarmerie—that normally acts as the rural police. The Gendarmerie is controlled by the Ministry of Defense, and its officers are integrated in the ranks of the armed forces; its members receive light infantry training as well as police training. It numbers about 90,000 men and women and is organized into departmental forces that are scattered in small groups all over the countryside, as well as "mobile" groups concentrated in large units (Legions). We can ignore the departmental forces because they would probably be unable to intervene within the short time frame of a *coup*. But the mobile units, each of which consists of seven squadrons of trucked gendarmes and one armored car squadron, represent a formidable force that would have to be neutralized or isolated.

The mobile Gendarmerie live in military-type barracks and are equipped with submachine guns and heavier infantry weapons; their armored cars (13-ton wheeled vehicles with 40-mm armor) can only be stopped with standard anti-tank weaponry. Officially, the Gendarmerie—unlike the other two police forces—has no intelligence service; but, during the Algerian war, a security section was set up and, as bureaucratic organizations often do, has survived the demise of its original function.

The Police Nationale, which carries out police work in population centers of more than 10,000 inhabitants, is largely composed of units of detectives and a mass of ordinary police officers, but it also has a paramilitary force of its own, the Compagnies Républicaine de Securité (CRS). It numbers about 13,500, trained and equipped like the mobile units of the Gendarmerie, minus the armored cars. The CRS is staffed with personnel who have been carefully screened politically, and it is headed by an assistant director of the Ministry of the Interior. The Police Nationale also has an intelligence service that concentrates on the more sophisticated

forms of crime and a counterintelligence service that also carries out "political" work and the surveillance of aliens. Both intelligence organizations operate all over France.

All police work in the Département de la Seine (the Paris area) is the exclusive province of the Préfecture de Police (now part of the Police Nationale), which has been made internationally famous by one of its fictional inspectors, novelist Georges Simenon's Jules Maigret. The Préfecture has influenced the organization of police forces in many countries in southern Europe and the Middle East, and we will study it in greater detail than other French police forces.

*Anatomy of a Police Force: The Paris Préfecture*

It is our hope that the police of the capital city, which is the locale of the *coup,* will be less powerful than the Paris Préfecture. It consists of about 34,000 officers and is organized in several directorates, of which the following concern us directly:

(a) *The Police Municipale* is the largest directorate and controls the familiar uniformed flics, with their largely symbolic pistols and their much-used truncheons. They are dispersed in 20 district stations in the city and 26 suburban ones; their standards of training and discipline have varied over the years but their capacity for individual brutality does not add up to an effective intervention capability. In the event of a major disturbance, they are deployed in columns of civilian-type buses that could be stopped by suitable roadblocks; their training and mentality will probably make them "neutrals" if we can prevent their concentrated deployment.

(b) *The Police Judiciaire* is the Paris investigative police and one of the global pioneers of scientific detection. Apart from the incidental intelligence aspect of their work, we can ignore this directorate.

(c) *The Intelligence Service,* like its counterparts in the Police Nationale is mainly concerned with sophisticated crime: drugs, vice, and high-class gambling. But it also has a political section that carries out surveillance work, nowadays focused on Islamic terrorism. As in the case of other security agencies, we will cover the appropriate defensive tactics in the next section.

(d) *Aliens' directorate* is a small group, mainly concerned with the bureaucratic routines of issuing and checking residence permits. It exercises general surveillance over transient foreigners (the *fiches* you fill in at the hotel are collected by this directorate), and over the more sensitive immigrant communities. Its work will only affect us if we have some connection with foreign elements—particularly those foreign communities that have a history of political activity in its more violent forms.

(e) *Safety of the President* is a directorate concerned with the physical protection of the president, but it also carries out a preventive intelligence function. Following the repeated assassination attempts organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and its affiliated organizations in the early 1960s, this section of the Préfecture was reinforced with carefully screened personnel taken from the entire security apparatus, and a tradition of very careful personnel selection persists. The security system at the Élysée Palace would be a serious obstacle to its seizure during a *coup.*

*(f) Garde Republicaine.* Though controlled by the Préfecture, this is part of the Gendarmerie and is equipped with light infantry weapons and a variety of transport equipment. It provides the horsed, helmeted, and plumed presidential guard on ceremonial occasions, but its two regiments are hard-hitting mobile forces whose neutralization would be an essential requirement in the event of a *coup.*

The existence of separate police organizations is one of the problems of neutralizing this part of the state security apparatus. In Britain, the division is largely territorial and its purpose is to give the local interest a measure of control over the police force, but there are also specialized forces that reflect functional divisions. Apart from the county-based police (long since amalgamated into larger groups), there are the following independent police forces:

—Admiralty constabulary
—Air Ministry constabulary
—Atomic Energy Authority constabulary
—Five independent harbor police forces
—British Transport Commission police
—Civil aviation constabulary
—Ministry of Defence constabulary

All these police forces are strictly confined in their operations to the installations they protect, but similar organizations in other countries, where bureaucratic propensities are subject to weaker controls, have shown a remarkable ability to grow and diversify.

Though the French police system is particularly extensive, its basic features are shared by police forces in most of Africa, Asia, and the Middle

East. The paramilitary element is usually present in the form of a "field force" attached to the regular police, or else in the form of armored car units. The riot-control element is reproduced in the special squads of Middle Eastern police forces, which can be very effective in spite of their small size. Whereas in most parts of Asia a serious insurgency situation has been experienced, this common pattern has been distorted by the proliferation of ad hoc police forces that carry out combined internal security and administrative functions. South Vietnam was once the extreme example, with no fewer than five different security organizations with police functions.[n]

If the British police system can be said to be divided into largely territorial units, and the French one into largely functional ones, in the United States the division is largely constitutional. Except for the specialized work of the police agencies attached to various departments of the federal government, only the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have nationwide jurisdictions, and then only for certain crimes legally defined as "federal." Most ordinary police work is carried out by purely independent local forces maintained at the municipal, county, or state level. The fragmentation[o] of the system means that the police as such would have a very limited intervention potential, in spite of its extensive stock of weaponry and communication equipment. There is, of course, the National Guard, but this has not so far been organized in a manner that would give it a real intervention capability; in America's riots the Guard forces routinely fail to perform efficiently, even against untrained civilians.

The strategy of the *coup* with respect to the police system of our target country will, therefore, have to be as diversified as its component parts:

*The Paramilitary Element*

Paramilitary forces are usually able to perform a military as well as a police function. This versatility has resulted in their rapid growth, partly because they may be a genuinely economical way of improving the security system in general, and partly because funds are often easier to secure for them than for the regular police. An opposition party, or public opinion, which may resist an increase in the police budget, can often be persuaded to allocate funds for the Ministry of Defense, and paramilitary forces are usually under its administrative control. In the newly independent countries, the paramilitary element of the police can be a very serious obstacle to the *coup* because, while the army is often a recent postcolonial development, the police—and its paramilitary units—are usually old, established organizations. This means that the police can be larger than the army, and also sometimes superior in the quality of training and equipment. If this is the case, it will not be possible to control the paramilitary units by using that part of the army we have "incorporated" against them.

Fortunately, governments have striven to increase the size of their armed forces in a great many countries; in postcolonial settings, the unfavorable (for us) balance of strength between the army and the paramilitary police was usually reversed within a few years of independence. This is perhaps one of the explanations for the sudden spate of *coups* in Africa in the course of 1966–1967, which came after a phase of very rapid expansion in the armed forces. It is interesting to note that, while the "ruthless oppression" of the colonial powers was often carried out by means of a village constabulary with few military pretensions, the new era of freedom often required the creation of heavily armed paramilitary police forces.[p]

In Ghana, for example, the police system was expanded after independence in 1957, and armored car units were added to the already existing mobile police; the communication system of the police was made independent of civilian services; and the "escort police," which used to be a

fezzed and barefooted force of amiable illiterates, was turned into an effective riot-breaking unit. If the paramilitary police is large, as compared to those units of the armed forces that we can incorporate, it will be necessary to repeat the whole analysis and infiltration procedure within it. We may, indeed, be able to concentrate on the paramilitary police and content ourselves with neutralizing the army by technical means. Normally, however, the balance of forces between the means of coercion of the state will not require this, and we will be able to *isolate* the police for the duration of the *coup* by using the army.

The first step in our neutralization of these forces is to establish the size, deployment, and organization of the paramilitary police. This is usually easier than in the case of the army because, unlike the latter, paramilitary forces are usually stationed in permanent barracks. Next, we will try to find out their degree of attachment to the present regime. But this will not involve the sort of study in depth we made of the army, and it will only be a matter of finding out about their *corporate,* rather than individual outlook. The mentality of the paramilitary police may be *bureaucratic*—i.e., concerned with jobs and careers, as in the case of the Italian Pubblica Sicurezza and its Celere paramilitary units; if this is the case, a minimal degree of intervention can be expected. On the other hand, their mentality may be parallel to that of the army—i.e., concerned with loyalty and honor[q] (as well as jobs and careers)—or reflect a political association, as was the case of the Soviet Union's KGB or Haiti's Tonton Macoutes of the Duvalier era.

If the equipment, deployment, and mentality of the paramilitary police is such as to make them an effective intervention force, we will have to control them in the same manner as the hard-core loyalist forces of the army. (The ways and means of this forcible isolation will be discussed in Chapter 5.) Usually, however, we will find that the paramilitary police force

is essentially bureaucratic, and, therefore, in spite of its impressive military bearing and equipment, it will not intervene against the armed support of a *coup.* I have been unable to find a single case in the last twenty years of a paramilitary police force that has actually defended its political masters during a *coup*—though there are several cases of their intervention on behalf of a *coup.*

*The Rural Police*

In poorer countries this element of the police force is numerically the strongest; this is only to be expected since most of the population of such countries lives in villages and works in agriculture. In spite of its large size, this part of the police will almost never have an intervention potential against a *coup.* They are often commanded by retired noncommissioned officers, fully integrated in the rural society in which they live, and, even where there are provisions for their mobilization and concentrated use, they are unlikely to be assembled, equipped, and prepared in time to intervene against us. Whether the rural police officer is a garde champétre with an ancient pistol inscribed La Loi, or a Middle Eastern Zaptié who plays the village boss, he will hardly want to rush to a remote capital city to protect an equally remote government.

*The Urban and National Police*

Though this part of the police system will be considerably less dispersed than the village-based rural police, its main components will be just as ineffective against a *coup.* The personnel of the urban police will fall into three broad categories: *(a)* crime detection and investigation, *(b)* normal surveillance, and *(c)* traffic duties. The detective element will be small, very bureaucratic minded, and, apart from its incidental intelligence aspect,[r] it can be ignored by us. The uniformed police, which carries out all the usual

surveillance duties, will be more numerous, but though they may be useful as a riot-breaking force when suitably concentrated, they are unlikely to act against armed opponents in a major political crisis. The municipal police, largely concerned with traffic duties, will usually be staffed by middle-aged men of retiring disposition, with small and rusty pistols. There have been, however, exceptions, such as the Spanish Policia Armada y del Tráfico of the Franco regime, whose personnel were politically screened and which was equipped with adequate transportation and telecommunications to intervene in major political disturbances. A detailed analysis of our target country's police system will probably reveal a problem of composition: after dividing the police force into so-called hard and soft forces, we may find sizable hard subdivisions within the soft elements.

Our brief survey has shown that only a small part of the police force is likely to be able to intervene against us, and of this a yet smaller part is likely to do so with any enthusiasm. The natural inclination of the police will be to ride out the crisis and, as individuals, to avoid endangering their positions vis-à-vis their possible future employers. The *coup* may well be planned as a military operation, but it will not—unless partially or totally unsuccessful—involve any actual *fighting*. Thus, the fact that the police are not heavily armed does not fundamentally explain their low intervention capability as compared to the army. The real difference between the two is in their degree of integration in the civil society. While the army can develop a corporate ideology and mentality that is divergent—or even opposed—to the civilian one, the police are usually too intimately involved in civilian life to do so.

This can be either an advantage or an obstacle from our point of view. On the one hand, the eccentricity of the army will mean that a regime can retain its appeal in the closed world of the military barracks after losing it in society at large. This might interfere with our recruiting, but it could work

the other way, i.e., we may find that the army is fundamentally opposed to a government that much civilian opinion accepts. Recruiting our forces among the police will almost always be more difficult than in the army. First, the lower level of (automatic) discipline will mean that recruiting an officer may not bring over that officer's men as well. Further, the fact that police live among the public will mean that the internal dynamics generated in the closed world of a military unit would be dissipated in this more open environment and the snowball effect that would bring entire units over to us after a limited degree of infiltration will not operate. All these factors point in the same direction: the low degree of intervention capability—for us, as well as against us—and the difficulty of incorporation both indicate that while the army should be penetrated, the police forces can be dealt with—defensively—after the *coup.*

## Neutralizing the Security Agencies

The security agencies of our target country will be numerically the smallest of the professional defenses of the state, but often also the most dangerous. Unlike the armed forces and the police, the security agencies will be actively trying to identify and defeat threats posed by groups such as ours; unlike the armed forces and police, their organizations, deployment, and personnel cannot usually be studied with precision from the outside, and even their existence may not be known to us. Almost every state has some sort of "secret service." Many have several such organizations that operate both within and outside the national territory, and which we have so far described with the blanket term of "security agencies." Our first task is to try to identify them more precisely.

It is well known that the bureaucratic animal in its natural state has certain characteristic patterns of behavior: it grows in size and extends its sphere of action until checked by some outside force. This role is usually played by the financial bureaucracy, which fulfills its instincts by opposing the growth of all other bureaucratic organizations. Equally important as a limiting factor is the concerted pressure of individual bureaucracies, each of which is fighting to preserve and extend its territory. The cumulative effect of these pressures is to limit to some extent the growth of the bureaucracy as a whole. Perhaps without them, *all* the inhabitants of developed countries would by now be employed by the state bureaucracy.

These pressures operate weakly or not at all in the case of the security services: their budgets are usually secret so that they cannot easily be scrutinized, let alone reduced; other bureaucratic organizations cannot prevent them from poaching in their territories because their activities may go undetected and thus cannot be declared off-limits. Finally, the relative prestige of undercover operatives of all kinds allows them to break rules

other bureaucrats must obey and to operate in all areas of social activity. The result of this freedom is predictable: in many countries, security agencies have grown in a more dynamic and disorderly fashion than the rest of the bureaucracy and tend to have overlapping spheres of activity.

Before a zoologist studies animals, he or she classifies them and tries to relate them to the nearest known species. We will follow this procedure both in functional terms (which are generally applicable to all countries) and in organizational terms (which are particular to each one).

*The Pure Intelligence Function*

This classification covers the collection and analysis of published and unpublished information of all kinds and, because of the high degree of specialized knowledge often required, many different bodies can enter this field, which is the most crowded of the whole sector. *Tactical* military intelligence (which answers the question, What is the opposition doing?) may be collected by separate agencies working for the separate branches of the armed forces; in traditionally seafaring nations, naval intelligence is often the largest and most developed service. *Strategic* information (which answers the question, What is the opposition planning?) may be the province of separate and competing agencies run by the general staff, the defense ministry, and the ministry in charge of foreign affairs. *Scientific* information may be collected by the administrative entity in charge of science and also by specialized bodies in charge of particular sectors, including atomic energy, aeronautics, and telecommunications. *Economic* intelligence is one of the worst areas of duplication, with demographic, energy, and agriculture authorities operating alongside the entity in charge of economic affairs in general. *Political* intelligence may be handled by the foreign affairs ministry openly through the diplomatic service and also covertly by a separate agency.

*The Counterintelligence Function*

This covers the prevention of the activities listed above and may be carried out by both generalized and specialized bodies. The military may run their own agency, and the police of each branch of the armed forces may do the same. The Ministry of the Interior will almost always have a "spy-catching" service (like the Security Service, popularly "MI-5," of the British Home Office), and particular bodies will have a service to protect their installations (but these rarely go beyond the ordinary police stage). From our point of view, this sector will be the most important. We may—if we fail to preserve our security position—come into contact with *(a)* the police agency, such as Special Branch in the United Kingdom or the FBI in the United States, *(b)* the separate ministerial body, or *(c)* the military agencies. Much of our planning and infiltration work will be indistinguishable from that which could be carried out by a foreign intelligence service; therefore, it will enter into the territory of the counterintelligence agencies.

*The Counterespionage Function*

This is the most subtle and sophisticated of all the functions. It covers deliberate contacts with opposition intelligence services in order to feed them disinformation and penetrate, or even disrupt their organization. It is unlikely that more than one agency carries out this work because it requires an extremely precise control over operations. The agency may be a subsection of any of those mentioned above, but, in order to function efficiently, it must be able to exercise some form of control over all competing agencies—especially over counterintelligence, which relates to counterespionage as a butcher does to a surgeon.

*Internal (Political) Security*

This is another sensitive area from our point of view. Its specific function is the prevention of exactly what we aim to do: overthrow the government. In many countries, there is a "political" police, with both uniformed and covert agents, and it may be controlled by the bureaucracy of the Ministry of the Interior or by the inner political leadership, either directly or, in one-party states, through the party. Elsewhere, in more or less democratic regimes, the police have a political department (as in France, Italy, and Germany), and its primary function is the surveillance of extremist groups. In military dictatorships, the territory of military intelligence often extends to this area; in some countries, the agency in charge of the physical protection of the higher leadership may be running an information service as well as providing the bodyguards.

*Internal Intelligence*

This function is carried out by the information services attached to the police and paramilitary forces of the state. Thus, in Italy, apart from the police (Pubblica Sicurezza), which has a "political" squad, the paramilitary Carabinieri has an internal security information service that is also responsible for military counterintelligence but primarily operates internally, these days mostly against Islamic terrorism.

Our behavior in the midst of this bureaucratic jungle will be purely defensive, unless we have a direct line to one or another of the security agencies. If that is the case, the security agency concerned would provide an ideal cover for all our activities. Failing such a fortunate coincidence, we will not try to create a direct line by infiltrating any security service because if we do so there will be the very great danger that they will use any contact in order to infiltrate *us*. This is a standard procedure for the security services to follow, and the elementary defensive techniques used when

infiltrating the armed forces (cut-outs, one-way communication, etc.) will probably fail to work in their case.

In order to run a secure operation, we will follow rules that derive from the basic assumption that all information about our activities is a source of danger as soon as it exists outside the minds of our inner group. From this, all the standard procedures emerge: *(a)* no information will be communicated except verbally; *(b)* no information will be communicated except on a "need-to-know" basis; *(c)* all communication links from inner to affiliated members must be on a one-way basis; *(d)* no activity should be carried out by an inner member if an outer member can do the job.

These rules are simple and well known; the problem is to keep to them under the pressure of work and the emotions it generates. The most sensitive of our activities will be the approach and persuasion of new affiliates to the *coup,* and the nature of the security agencies can add an extra measure of danger: in many countries some of the security services are hidden within totally unexciting administrative bodies. Where, as in the case of the US Treasury's Secret Service, this reflects an administrative convenience, the fact is well known; elsewhere, however, the department-within-a-department system is deliberate. Consequently, we may unwittingly try to infiltrate a "safe" department and discover that we are dealing with a security agency. All we can do is to list some of the places where it seems natural for security services to exist: census and cartography services; central bank anti-counterfeiting agencies; post office departments; press bureaus; customs and immigration departments; and the taxation authorities. It must not be thought, however, that our entire operation will automatically collapse if it is penetrated by a security agency.[s]

If we have followed the security procedures, the chances are that only a small part of our total effort will be identified, and, therefore, its ultimate purpose may not be discovered. Even if it is discovered that a *coup* is being

planned, the security agency may wait before taking any action in order to capture all the planners—and this could be too late. As soon as our teams are on the road, actually executing the *coup,* it will be too late for the security services to oppose us on the "information" side, while their fighting power will usually be unimportant as compared to the army units we have incorporated. Finally, political security agencies are necessarily sensitive to political trends, and they may decide to join the group planning a *coup* if they know that it is well organized and ready to seize power.

[a] The language of celestial mechanics should not obscure the inevitable distortions that affect the balance of political forces.

[b] Old Calendar. Otherwise March and November.

[c] See Chapter 4, in which the neutralization of political forces is discussed.

[d] R. Atallah, "Six jours d'irresponsabilité," *Jeune Afrique* 343 (August 6, 1967): 13–15. Also *Der Spiegel,* October 23, 1967.

[e] Aside from the Alawites.

[f] It is ironic that ex-President-for-Life Sukarno sent them there in order to oppose the Malaysian Federation in the "confrontation," which the new government eventually liquidated.

[g] The leaders will usually be the operational officers of the unit concerned, but this need not always be so. See next footnote.

[h] Senior officers especially are amazingly expendable. In both France and Russia, many such abandoned their commands following the respective revolutions, yet the armies they left behind experienced a sudden increase in their effectiveness. Certainly, the French military record after 1789 was a great improvement on the preceding 30 years, and so was the Russian after 1917.

[i] The problem is compounded by the fact that development programs are usually focused around one or two big projects that attract much of the country's attention—and investment funds. The "donor" countries usually resist the fragmentation of industrial projects to appease local feelings, and this further complicates the political problem.

[j] Nigeria is the exception, where the coastal nations are much more developed but fewer in number than the inland Hausas.

[k] One of the danger signs was the fact that Qāsim started calling his opponents "fascist Hitlerites." Adolf Hitler is a popular figure with most shades of Arab opinion and only an unthinking transposition of Soviet habits could have led to the use of this epithet.

[l] Of course, colonels have always been prominent in military *coups,* but these have been *coups* that they initiated on their own behalf. Our purpose is to *use* army officers, and captains are less likely to take the *coup* out of our hands than more senior officers.

[m] By *crime* I mean an infraction of the laws of the land, and this means very different things in different countries—in Turkey (2015), people are being arrested for "insulting" President Erdoğan, who himself lets not a day go by without insulting entire populations.

[n] Regional Forces, Popular Forces, Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, the regular police, and the supposedly elite Police Field Force.

[o] Of course, the fragmentation of the police in the United States has resulted largely from the *deliberate intention* of denying the federal government a possible instrument of tyranny.

[p] But see Appendix A.

[q] The corporate mentality will of course be somewhat more complex than is suggested here by way of illustration.

[r] See the next section, "Neutralizing the Security Agencies."

[s] The Okhrana, the czarist secret police, was extremely efficient and had infiltrated the Bolshevik and other revolutionary parties without impairing their activities. Roman Malinovsky, who was the leader of the Bolshevik organization inside Russia in 1914, was working for the Okhrana, and *they* edited *Pravda,* whose chief editor was also one of their agents.

# *Chapter 4*

# The Planning of the *Coup d'État*

Even barricades, apparently a mechanical element of the uprising, are of significance in reality above all as a moral force.

—Lev Davidovich Bronstein (Leon Trotsky)

In the early morning of April 23, 1961, elements of the First Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment seized the key points of the city of Algiers in the name of Generals Maurice Challe, André Zeller, Edmond Jouhaud, and Raoul Salan. The four generals, because of their personal prestige and their position in the French hierarchy, quickly asserted their control over the local military command and started to extend their authority over all the armed forces in Algeria. At this time, de Gaulle's government was in the process of opening negotiations with the Algerian nationalists, and the generals were determined to replace him with a leader who would carry the war to a victorious conclusion. The French armed forces in Algeria were much more powerful than those stationed in France and Germany, and the four generals were hopeful that, once their allegiance was assured, they would find it easy to take effective control of the French government. After all, de Gaulle himself had come to power after a similar episode in May 1958, and there seemed to be no major obstacle to a successful second edition of the famous *treize mai.*

When the four generals made their declaration over Algiers Radio, the First, Fourteenth, and Eighteenth Colonial Parachute regiments rallied to the *coup.* A few infantry units, some of the marines, and much of the air force remained loyal to de Gaulle (as in May 1958 they had remained loyal to the Fourth Republic), but most of the armed forces in Algeria were *attentiste.* Wait-and-see is the attitude that usually favors a *coup,* and when General Henri de Pouilly withdrew his headquarters in Algeria from Oran to Tlemcen to avoid having to choose between fighting or joining the *coup,* he was objectively favoring the *coup.*

The four generals seemed to be on the verge of victory. The determined *pieds noirs* population of Algeria was 100 percent behind them. The powerful parachute units gave them a hard-hitting force of intervention, and the bulk of the armed forces were either for them or neutral. Even the forces loyal to de Gaulle's government did nothing to actively oppose the *coup.*

While the leaders of the *coup* started to gather support, the French Defense Minister was on a visit to Morocco; Maurice Papon, the head of the Paris police, was on vacation; Michel Debré, the prime minister and chief "firefighter" of the regime, was ill; and de Gaulle himself was entertaining the visiting president of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Other ministers were on visits to Algiers itself, and were promptly captured and held in confinement, together with other representatives of the president. Everything pointed to an early victory of the *coup,* and, yet, a few days later, General Challe was being flown to Paris for eventual trial and imprisonment, Salan and the others were fleeing to the interior on their way to exile or capture, and the 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment drove back to their barracks singing Edith Piaf's *"Je ne regrette rien"* ("No, I Regret Nothing"), though their officers were under arrest and their unit was to be disbanded.

Why did the *coup* fail? Perhaps the main reason was that the four generals had utterly neglected the "political" forces and had allowed the immediate power of the armed forces to obscure the somewhat less immediate, but ultimately decisive role that they could play. In the Gaullist *coup* of May 1958, the action of the military and the population of Algiers had been supported by the Gaullist infiltration of the civil service and by the steady corrosion of the will of other political groups to oppose the dissolution of the Fourth Republic. This time, the generals had simply ignored the civilians.

De Gaulle went on television and asked for help from the population at large: *"Françaises, Français, aidez-moi."* Debré, who followed him on the screen, was more specific: "Go … to the airports … convince the soldiers who are misled." He also started to arm a militia drawn from the Gaullist party. More important, the trade-union organizations, the Communists (CGT), the Christian Democrats (CFTC), and the Force Ouvrière, all rallied around the government while most political parties did the same; the left-wing Catholic movement started to organize sit-down strikes among the national servicemen in Algeria; and, in general, most organized forces of French society intervened and refused to accept the authority of the *coup.*

The effect of this refusal was decisive; the larger part of the "wait-and-see" element in the armed forces stopped waiting and declared its support for de Gaulle, and this was the end of the *coup.*

We will only be able to avoid a repetition of the crucial error made by the generals if we can neutralize the political forces as effectively as the military ones.

Immediate political power is always concentrated in the country's government, but, in every country and under all political systems, there will be groups outside the government—and even outside formal politics—which also have political power. Their source of strength can be their ability

to influence particular groups of voters (as in democratic societies) or their control over certain organizations important in the country's political life. Whether these groups, which we have called "the political forces," are pressure groups, political parties, or other associations does not greatly matter. What is of importance is their ability to participate in the formation of governments, and, later, to influence the decisions of those governments. The nature of the forces important in the political life of a particular country will reflect the structure of its society and economy, and it will also depend on the particular context of decision making (see Table 4.1 for an American example).

If, for example, we were asked to list the most important forces in British political life, we could produce the following (rather conventional) list:

—the major political parties
—the regional parties
—the major unions
—the Confederation of British Industry
—the senior civil-service-academic complex
—the city and its corporations
—the press

**Table 4.1.** Groups that try to influence US policies in the Middle East (formal and unofficial participants)

| |
|---|
| *Official* |
| The president and the White House staff |
| The Department of State |
| The Pentagon |
| The CIA (as supplier of information) |
| The key congressional committees |
| *Unofficial* |
| Politicians with significant Jewish populations in their constituencies. (These naturally follow a visible pro-Israel line on congressional voting and make appropriate speeches.) |

Pro-Zionist organizations of American Jewry.

Anti-Zionist organizations, including those with a Jewish identity.

Think tanks and lobbies with a special interest in Arab or Middle Eastern studies. (They usually identify with Arab views and seek a sympathetic hearing of Arab claims.)

---

But if we were asked to isolate the groups that would matter in foreign policy decision about, say, the Middle East, we would come up with a quite different list:

—the two major British and part-British oil companies
—the Foreign Office–academic "Arabist" group
—British defense industry exporters

In a sophisticated society, with its complex industrial and social structure, there are hundreds of organizations that, regardless of their primary purpose, also act as pressure groups and attempt to influence political decisions in a manner that serves their members' interests. These organizations will reflect in their divergent attitudes the diversity of a complex society. In economically backward countries, however, the structure of society is simpler, and any conflict of interests, though just as strong, is played out in a much smaller arena and with fewer participants. In sub-Saharan Africa, with few exceptions, religious groups are generally fragmented and apolitical, and where the local business community is still relatively small and weak, the major political forces are limited to a few groupings:

—tribal and other ethnic groups
—trade unions
—students' and graduates' associations
—civil-service officials and officers of the armed forces

—the activists of the ruling political party

In much of West Africa, one would have to add the local market traders' association and, in immediate sub-Saharan areas, the traditional Muslim leadership structures. In Asia, religious groups and their leaders would have to be added to the list, and in some countries (such as Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, and Hong Kong) the local business class will be of importance. Missing from all the lists are the foreign business interests which may play an important role but which represent a special problem already dealt with in Chapter 2. Whatever groups dominate the political scene of our target country in normal times, the special circumstances of the *coup* will mean that only a few elements among them will be important to us.

Political forces can intervene against the *coup* in two ways:

*(a)* they can rally and deploy the masses, or some part of them, against the new government;
*(b)* they can manipulate technical facilities under their control in order to oppose the consolidation of our power.

The action of individual political, religious, ethnic, or intellectual leaders, who could use the framework of their party or community against us, is an example of the first kind of intervention; a strike of the staff of the radio and television services is an example of the second. A general strike would, in effect, combine both kinds of intervention.

# Neutralizing the Political Forces I: General

Politics, like economics, has its infrastructure. Just as industry and commerce require a background of facilities such as roads, ports, and energy sources, direct political action requires certain technical facilities. The mobilization of French public opinion that took place during the attempted *coup* in Algiers—and was the principal cause of its failure—could not have taken place without the use of a whole range of technical facilities. The government appealed to public opinion by means of the mass telecommunications media, chiefly the radio and television services—today of course it would primarily use social media; the trade unions and other organized bodies coordinated the agitation of their members by means of their network of branches, connected to the central headquarters by means of the public telecommunications facilities; finally, the mass demonstrations could not have taken place without the use of public and private transport.

Our *general* neutralization of the "political" forces will be conducted in terms of this infrastructure. We will seize and hold such facilities as we require for our own purposes, while temporarily putting the others out of action. If the means of communication and the transport system are under our control, or at any rate do not function, the potential threat posed by the "political forces" will be largely neutralized: the leaders of the pre-*coup* government will be arrested, since they are part of the infrastructure and they would probably be the major sources of inspiration of any opposition to the *coup*.[a]

We will neutralize some political forces in *particular* by identifying and isolating their leadership and by disrupting their organizations; this will only be necessary for those forces sufficiently resilient and sufficiently militant to intervene against us even though the infrastructure has been neutralized.

Both forms of neutralization will involve the selection of certain objectives that will be seized or put out of action by teams[b] formed out of those forces of the state which we have fully subverted or, in our terminology, "incorporated."

Unless our target country is particularly small and its physical and political structures particularly simple, its system of government will be complex, its physical facilities will be extensive, and its political forces will be many in number while their intervention capabilities will be difficult to forecast.

We will, therefore, start by analyzing the governmental leadership in order to determine which personalities must be isolated for the duration of the active phase of the *coup* and which can be safely ignored. Next, we will study the physical facilities and select those most likely to be relevant during the *coup,* in order to plan their seizure or neutralization. Finally, we will investigate the nature of those political forces that could still retain a degree of intervention capability after our "general" measures have been implemented, in order to prepare for their individual neutralization.

## Personalities in the Government

However bloodless our *coup,* however progressive and liberal our aims, we will still have to arrest certain individuals during and immediately after its execution. Of these, the most important group will be formed by the leading figures of the pre-*coup* regime or, in other words, the leaders of the government and their close associates, whether they are formally politicians or not. The members of a cabinet will form a fairly large group, from 10 to 50 people; adding their associates and intimate advisers, who could organize opposition against us, we could easily reach a figure four or five times this number. Apart from being uncomfortably large, this will also be an especially determined and dangerous group. The personal repute, presence, and authority of its members might enable them to rally against us the disorganized forces of the state—or the unorganized masses: it could also enable them to impose their will on the team sent to capture them, turning their would-be captors into their allies. General Challe, for example, was regarded as the patron by the NCOs of the French Army in Algeria, and even after the total failure of his attempted *coup,* the Paris government could not entrust him to a military escort on his way to France and arrest; the government instead had to use the CRS,[c] whose members had never experienced his personal authority. After all, if a young soldier acting outside his familiar roles is facing a political personality whose whole behavior is calculated to make people obey him, it is difficult to be absolutely certain that he will carry out his orders, and not the counter-orders he may be given.

The large number of separate targets, along with the possibility of "radiation" effects, indicates that the teams sent to arrest them should be both large and particularly well chosen. Since our resources will be limited, we will have to concentrate our efforts on the most important figures within

the group, leaving the others to be picked up later when our means will have been expanded by the allegiance of the "wait-and-see" element. We cannot arrest all those who may constitute an eventual danger, but we must make sure that we do arrest the really dangerous figures—that is, the key figures within the leadership, who may or may not be the first in the formal order of precedence.

The formal structure of most modern governments falls into two broad categories (illustrated in Table 4.2): the "presidential" type, in which the head of state is also the main decision maker (as in the United States, France, the Russian Federation, and most African states), and the "prime-ministerial" type, where the head of state has largely symbolic or ceremonial duties and the real decision-making duties are carried out at a theoretically lower level (as in Britain, India, and most of Europe).

A third alternative form—which is not a structure at all, but rather a denial of one—is the "strongman" form of government.

The "strongman" may not be a top minister, and may hold no official position at all, but actually rules by using the formal body of politicians as a screen. This type of regime evolves when the fabric of the state has been weakened to such an extent that only the actual leader of some part of the armed forces or police can control the situation and remain in power. A person even minimally acceptable as a political leader can take over the formal posts as well, becoming the visible head of the government. Nasser in Egypt, and Reza Shah (the father of the present shah of Persia) both accomplished this after a short period of transition, but there can sometimes be racial or religious reasons that bar the strongman from an official position. The man who controls the bayonets may be totally unacceptable as a public figure, but he can still rule indirectly by manipulating the official leaders he keeps under control by the ultimate sanction of force.

**Table 4.2.** Alternative forms of government

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Presidential* | | |
| Real decision-making level: | King | (e.g., seventeenth-century England) |
| | President | (e.g., twentieth-century United States) |
| | Emperor | (e.g., twentieth-century Ethiopia) |
| | Ruler | (e.g., twentieth-century Kuwait) |
| Prime (or chief) minister | | |
| Ministerial level | | |
| Junior ministers and civil service | | |
| *Prime-ministerial* | | |
| Ceremonial head of state: | King | (e.g., Belgium) |
| | President | (e.g., Italy) |
| Real decision-making level: | Prime minister | (e.g., United Kingdom) |
| | President of council ministers | (e.g., Italy) |
| Cabinet-level ministers | | |
| Junior | | |
| Higher civil servants | | |

When, in early 1966, the Syrian government of the moderate wing of the Ba‘ath Party—headed by Michel Aflak, Salah Bitar, and the army leader Hafiz—was overthrown by an extreme left faction of the party, the new leadership found out that though it controlled the army and the country, it could not rule openly. The army officers who led this latest *coup* were too young, too unknown, and, above all, they were Alawites. Salah Jadid, their leader, was a dark, brooding figure who inspired fear and hatred among that small part of the public that knew of him. And of all the communities of Syria, the Alawites were among the least prestigious. In colonial times, the French had recruited most of their forces of repression, the Troupes spéciales du Levant, from the minority communities, chiefly the Alawites, and they had given the Alawite area in northern Syria a form of autonomy in order—so the nationalists claimed—to break up Syrian national unity. After independence, the Sunni majority community regarded the Alawites as renegades, and public opinion would only have accepted an Alawite head of state with difficulty.

Salah Jadid overcame this problem by appointing a full set of cabinet ministers, carefully chosen so as to balance the various communities, while retaining the real decision-making power within a separate body, the National Revolutionary Council, headed by himself. Thus, though Syria had a president (Nureddin al-Atassi), a prime minister (Youssof Zwayeen), and a foreign minister (Ibrahim Makhous), all major political decisions were made by Jadid; the ministers would go on state visits, make the public speeches, and appear in all ceremonial occasions, but power was not in their hands. The Assads (father and son) followed this model faithfully, placing Sunnis in the nominally important positions but keeping the key positions for Alawites, Druzes, and Ismailis ("Sevener Shi'a").

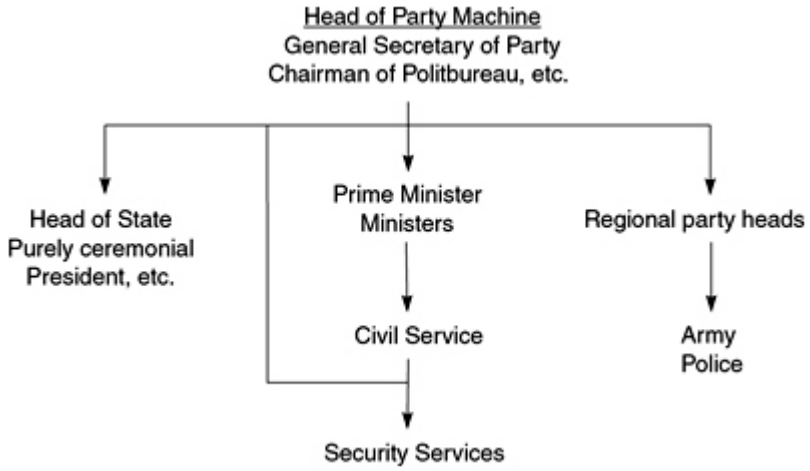



**Figure 4.1.** Alternative forms of government. Party government in "socialist" countries and "People's Republics."

The sometime Socialist countries were formally ruled by party governments, but they tended to break down into one of the two other types. In its original form, real political power was concentrated in the hands of the central committee, or some other higher party council, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Once the purely ceremonial figures have been excluded, the number of people still to be dealt with will be reduced, and by applying our time-span

criterion, we can reduce their numbers still further. The Minister of Economic Planning may be a crucial figure in the government, his position as a technocrat may be unassailable, but he may be unable to rally public opinion against us or to assert his authority over the armed forces. The dramatic nature of the *coup* will reduce political life to its ultimate rationale, sheer force, and we will concentrate on those figures in the government who could deploy it. The obvious personalities, therefore, will be:

*(a)* the Minister of the Interior and his associates (who control the police force);
*(b)* the Minister of Defense and his associates (who control the armed forces);
*(c)* the party leaders (if there is a party militia);
*(d)* the Prime Minister or other central figure (who coordinates all these).

We must remember that, for various reasons, figures in the government may not always be what they appear to be. We may discover that the apparently innocuous Minister of Education controls an important students' militia, or the Minister of Labor a powerful workers' militia. More important, the effective power may be held by an inner association of a particular group of ministers who, between them, control the means of coercion of the state. Thus, the government of Czechoslovakia between the elections of May 1946 and the final Communist takeover in February 1948 was a coalition of all democratic parties, but the Communist ministers within it effectively monopolized the control of the means of coercion, the police, and the security service. The existence of a group of associates

whose alliance transcends the formal order of government is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

In this particular case, out of the eighteen or so members of the government, the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Defense, Labor, and Education, and the Under Secretaries of State for the Army and Police, actually hold the reins of power, though of course they need not be especially cohesive at any particular time.

The process of selection so far discussed should result in the classification of the personalities of the pre-*coup* regime into three categories:

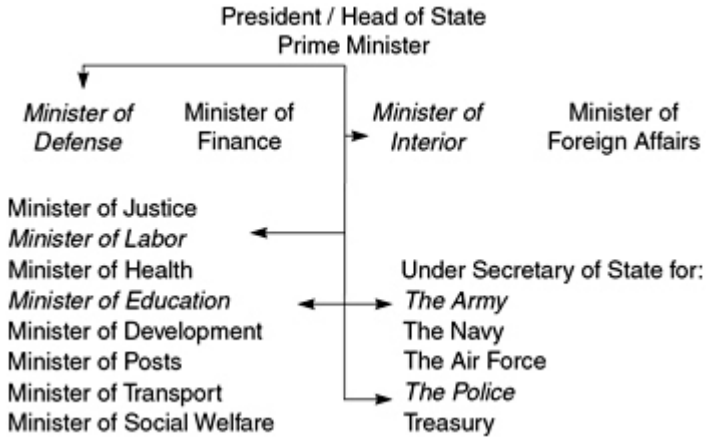



**Figure 4.2.** The formal government and the real one. Members of inner power group are shown in italics.

### *The Ceremonial Figures*

They will not be arrested. If the head of state is generally popular, he or she should be used as a symbol of continuity who will help us to establish our legitimacy, provided he or she can be safely manipulated and made to play this role. The other, lesser ceremonial figures can simply be ignored.

### *The Inner Council and the Controllers of the Means of Coercion*

This small group must be sequestrated and held in isolation until our authority is safely established. Apart from the service ministers, etc., any government leader who is personally particularly popular should be included in this category.

*The Other Ministers and Top Civil Servants*

This larger group should be subdivided into priority groups, to be dealt with as and when our resources expand, or become available when other more urgent tasks have been carried out.

## Personalities outside Government

The political weight of an individual in any large-scale political community will usually only be important within the framework of an organization which he heads or manipulates. It is sometimes possible for an individual to achieve political importance by becoming identified with an ideology or an attitude in which some significant part of the public believes. Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian nationalist movement in the 1848–1849 Revolution, was a poet by profession and had no party machine behind him, but he did have considerable power because the masses (in the cities, at any rate) identified his person with Hungarian nationalism. Gandhi, who operated largely outside the Congress party machine, also achieved personal power because to many Indians he was the embodiment of nationalism. The remoteness of the examples indicates that such figures are very rare, and if we do have them in our target area they should be treated as ceremonial figures.

## Physical Facilities

*Mass Media*

Regardless of the pervasive reach of interpersonal social media and of the Internet in general (unless blocked by effective firewalls), control over the mass media emanating from the political center will still be our most important weapon in establishing our authority after the *coup.* The seizure of the main means of mass communication will thus be a task of crucial importance. One, though only one, of the causes of the failure of the Greek king's counter-*coup* in late 1967 was this inability to communicate with the masses, literally and otherwise. When Radio Larissa broadcast the king's messages, it only reached a fraction of the population: the transmitter was weak and the wavelength unusual; instead of the booming voice of authority, the declaration took the form of a weak appeal for help. We must not make a similar mistake.

**Table 4.3.** Mass communications in the Middle East and North Africa, mid-1967

| | |
|---|---|
| Estimated circulation of daily newspapers | 1,500,000 |
| Estimated number of television sets | 1,000,000 |
| Estimated number of radio sets | 7,000,000 |

Because of the short time frame for the *coup,* and because of the likely social background of our target country, the press need not be a primary target; we will establish our authority over it after the *coup,* as with other aspects of the nation's life. Inevitably, the press can only play a marginal role in countries where illiteracy is widespread; and, in any case, it is the radio and television services that are mainly associated with the voice of the government. The approximate comparative data for the Arab world in Table

4.3 illustrates the importance of the different media, in one part of the Third World.

Even these figures understated the contemporary importance of radios and television sets, because while the press figures refer to circulation, i.e., estimated number of readers, rather than copies sold, the radios and television sets reach a much wider public even among the poorest groups, since every café has one.

There are two problems associated with radio and television facilities from our point of view: *(a)* there will often be many different broadcasting services and associated facilities and *(b)* they are particularly difficult to seize. In some countries where the internal security position is precarious, the governmental radio is heavily guarded, but even where this is not the case, these facilities are difficult to seize because their staff have a uniquely extensive way of raising the alarm. As for the duplication of broadcasting facilities, even Haiti, a very small and extremely backward country, had eighteen different radio stations even back in 1967, and they were controlled by independent networks. Our objective is not merely to control but also to monopolize the flow of information; therefore, we must deal with every single facility. This would be difficult (and would also lead to a dispersal of our forces) if we tried to seize and hold every facility. Our strategy will therefore be to seize and hold just one facility, the one most closely associated with the voice of authority, while neutralizing the others. This is best done with the cooperation of some technical member of their staff who would be able to sabotage the facility from the inside. A single cooperative technician will be able to temporarily put out of action a radio station that would otherwise require a full-scale assault team.

If we are unable to recruit an internal saboteur, the next best alternative will be external sabotage. There is no need to cause any extensive damage, since it will usually be possible to remove or destroy a small but essential part of the transmitter(s), thus effectively neutralizing the facility. The one

broadcasting facility which we do have to seize and hold will present a special problem: on the one hand, our need for the facility is absolute; on the other, because it is such an obvious target, the governmental forces will certainly try to recapture it. This means that the team assigned to this target will have to be adequately staffed and equipped and, in order to obviate the need for the cooperation of the facility's personnel, should also include a skeleton technical staff. (Appendix B, on the military aspects of the *coup,* deals inter alia with the composition of the various teams.)

*Telecommunications*

In spite of the advent of the Internet and social media, technical progress has on balance evolved in our favor, because all the communications between our own teams can be carried out by the cheap, reliable *and secure* two-way radios now universally available. We must, however, deny the opposition the use of their own communication systems; by doing so, we will paralyze their reaction and prevent them from deploying against us such forces as they still control. As Figure 4.3 shows, the neutralization of the telecommunication facilities will be complicated by their multiplicity, and it will be essential to achieve full coverage. Only power cuts can *reduce* Internet communications and that too only gradually, though any specific social network can be blocked. The Left Socialist Revolutionary *coup* against the Bolsheviks in July 1918 failed partly because it failed to comprehend the need for a monopoly of *all* telecommunications. The Left Socialist Revolutionaries had infiltrated a group of the Cheka, the main instrument of Bolshevik power, and various army detachments; with these, they arrested the head of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky, and seized many public buildings and the Moscow telegraph office. They failed, however, to seize the telephone office as well, and while they were sending cables all over Russia asking for generalized political support, Lenin used the telephone service to mobilize his fighting forces. With these, the *coup* was quickly crushed.

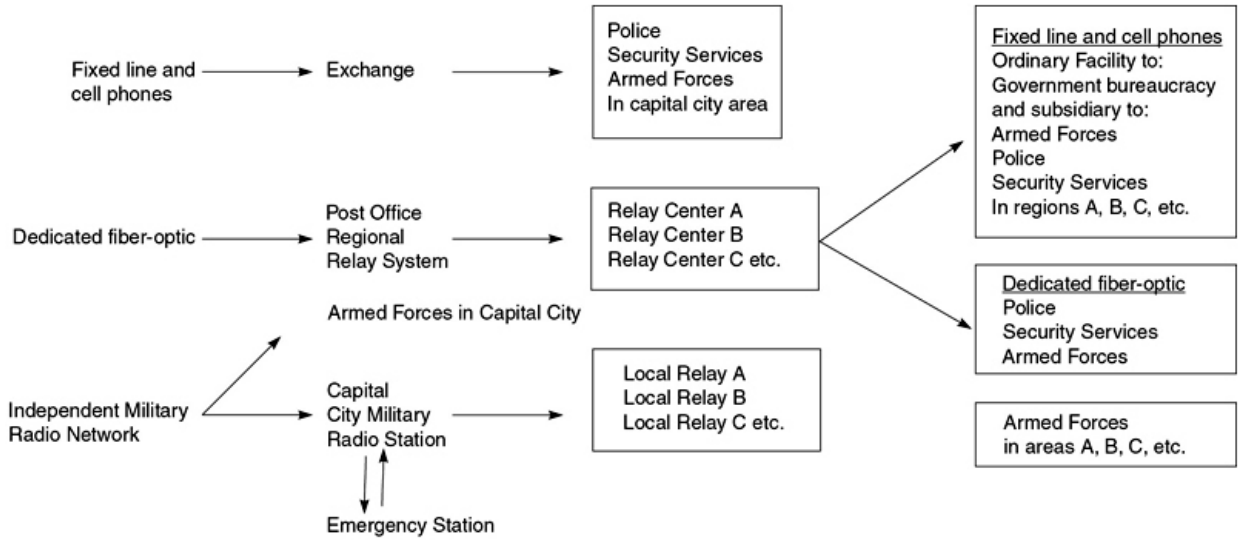



**Figure 4.3.** Telecommunication facilities available to governments.

**Table 4.4.** Police telecommunication facilities in Ghana, 1967

| |
|---|
| 63 fixed wireless stations, both high frequency and VHF radio telephones |
| 6 dual-purpose mobile radio stations |
| Numerous man-portable radio sets |

Internal security authorities are aware of the need for efficient communications, and apart from the facilities illustrated in Figure 4.3, there may also be independent networks for the exclusive use of the security forces. The French gendarmerie has a system of regional links which bypasses the public telephone and cable wires, and even in smaller countries, such as Ghana, the police force has long had a fully independent system (Table 4.4).

In the United States, there is no national police, nor a national police network as such, but the Department of Defense maintains a nationwide and international system that is the largest single network in the world and connects every US military installation with every other throughout the world.

We cannot, of course, hope to seize every two-way set in the hands of the police and the military authorities, but we should neutralize, by external or

internal sabotage,[d] those facilities which can be identified and located. There is no need to seize and hold any of these facilities; therefore, it will simply be a matter of penetrating the central organization of each communication system for the brief period required to sabotage its operation—though, again, internal sabotage will be easier and safer.

*City Entry-Exit Road Links*

During the active phase of the *coup,* the unexpected arrival of even a small contingent of loyalist or uninfiltrated forces could seriously endanger our whole effort. When a government discovers that troops of its own armed forces are taking part in a *coup* in the capital city, its logical reaction may be to call on troops stationed elsewhere, in the hope that the infiltration of the armed forces is limited to those in the capital city. As it is not easy to infiltrate forces in the entire national territory, the government's hope may not be unfounded. We will attack the mechanism that could lead to the arrival of the loyalist troops in the capital city at each separate level: we will arrest those who would call them in, we will disrupt the telecommunications needed to reach them, and we will also try to isolate identified loyalist forces by direct (though purely defensive) military means. We must also prevent the intervention of these forces by controlling the last level: the perimeter of the capital city and scene of the *coup.*

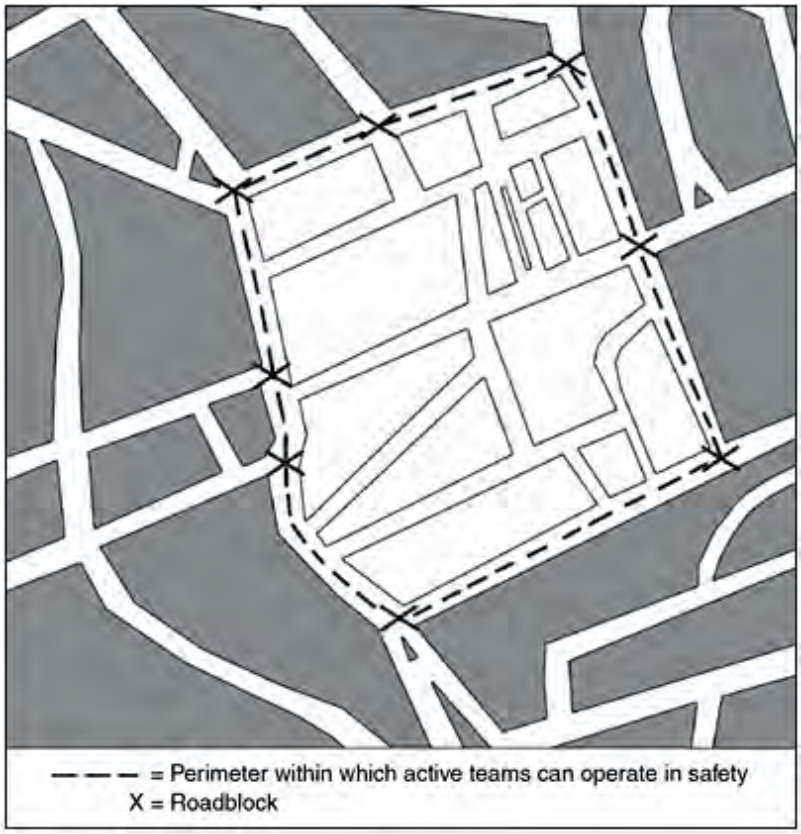



**Figure 4.4.** The physical targets of the *coup*.

If the loyalist forces are to intervene in time, they will have to move rapidly. This will require the use of either the major roads or, alternatively, air transport. If we can set up efficient defensive roadblocks at the appropriate places, we should be able to deny their entry into the capital city for the short period required—that is, until we have established ourselves as the government and received the allegiance of the bulk of the state bureaucracy and military forces. Thus, by the time the forces of intervention have reached the scene of the action, they will be the isolated band of rebels. The most suitable places to block a road with a small number of men and limited equipment, as well as the techniques and implication of such actions, are discussed in Appendix B and also in Chapter 5, where we deal with the direct neutralization of the identified loyalist forces. Figure 4.4 illustrates the locations that would be chosen in a particular (synthetic) example. But our control of the physical access to the capital city will also serve other

purposes. It will be one of the ways in which we will establish the physical presence of the new regime, and it will also allow us to prevent the escape of governmental leaders and other personalities we have been unable to arrest. One of the dangers we will face will be the revitalization of counter-*coup* opposition, which could result if a major governmental figure escapes from the capital city and joins loyalist elements outside it. After all the efforts we have made to neutralize such forces by internal means and by interference with their transport and communications, our whole work could be endangered. The loyalist forces could fail to reach the capital, but the political leadership could reach them. The means at our disposal will not be sufficient to hermetically seal the entire capital city, though, of course, much will depend on its location and spatial spread. Brasilia, though open on all sides, would be easy to seal off simply by closing the airport, because distances preclude rapid road movements from/to the other major centers of the country. Helsinki, on the other hand, would be spatially convenient because, though not remote from the rest of the country, it is surrounded by sea and a lake so that a small number of roadblocks would effectively seal it.

*Focal Traffic Points*

The sight of tanks in the main squares of the capital city has become a symbol of the *coup,*[e] but is also an expression of a very real practical requirement: the need to establish a physical presence in the center of political activity. Every capital city has an area that is the local equivalent of Whitehall in the United Kingdom or the Pennsylvania Avenue blocks near the White House in the United States, where the main political-administrative facilities are concentrated. We will select and defend certain positions around and within this area, and, by so doing, we will achieve a variety of aims: *(a)* the positions will form a ring around the main area within which our active teams will operate so as to protect them from any hostile forces that may have penetrated the capital city, *(b)* they will assist in

establishing our authority by giving visual evidence of our power, and *(c)* they will filter movement to and from the area, thus enabling us to capture those whom we have been unable to arrest directly.

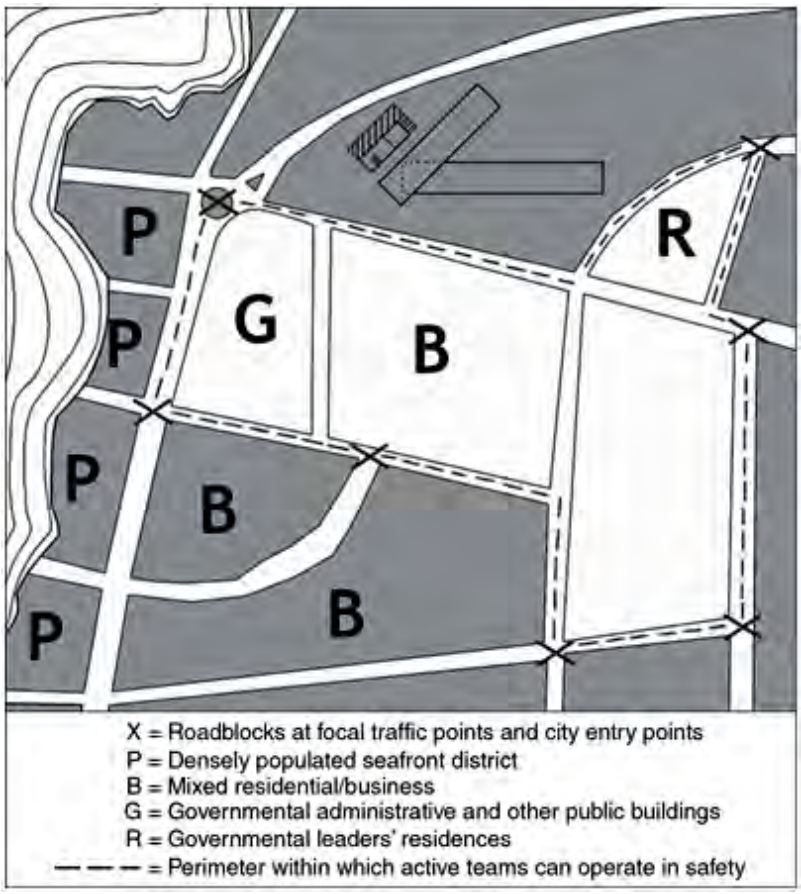



**Figure 4.5.** Physical targets in a coastal city.

In order to achieve these different objectives, our blocking positions must be individually strong; otherwise they may tempt any extant loyalist forces into a counterattack. In any case, unless adequately staffed, they will be unable to act as efficient filters to individual movements. We must, therefore, resist the temptation to secure every important location by blocking positions that are individually weak. As only a few of the possible locations will, in fact, be covered, it is essential to select them with special care. Focal traffic points will be easier to select in a coastal or riverine city, where a definite shape has been imposed on the capital city and on the traffic

flows within it. This is illustrated by Figure 4.5. In each particular case, the area which is the center of political and bureaucratic activity will be well known to the local inhabitants; therefore, it will be a matter of selecting a perimeter of straight and fairly broad streets at the intersection of which we will establish our blocking positions. (The avenues and boulevards of Paris are ideal from this point of view.)

*Airports and Other Transport Facilities*

One of the classic moves in the period immediately following the *coup* is the closure of airports and the cancellation of all flights. This is part of the general tactic which aims at "freezing" the situation by preventing the uncontrolled flow of people and information. There will also be other, more specific objectives: By closing the airport, we will prevent the escape of those governmental leaders whom we have been unable to arrest. We will also prevent any inflow of loyalist forces into the area of the capital city. Because of the short time frame in which the *coup* takes place, air transport will be of very great importance; either we or the government could tip the balance of forces by flying in quite small contingents of our respective supporters. The size of the forces that can be moved by air may well be very small, but in the context of the delicate balance of the active phase of the *coup,* they could still play a decisive role.

Air transport is, however, very vulnerable insofar as it still relies on long and uninterrupted landing strips; therefore, if at all possible, we should avoid having to rely on it. To the extent that we are independent of support arriving by air, we should prevent the use of all airfields in and around the area of the capital city. Some of these airfields will be military ones, but even if they are not they may still be heavily guarded. This could be a serious obstacle if the government still controls significant military forces outside the capital city and if transport planes are available to bring them into it. Seizing a defended airfield will certainly be difficult, but denying the use of one is very easy. A

few vehicles parked on the runway, either by covert means or with a little cooperation from the inside, and "covered" by a small fire-team to prevent them from being moved, will suffice to neutralize an entire airport. A few warning shots from suitable positions could also prevent any landings taking place.

Other organized forms of transport will only rarely be important in modern conditions. In many undeveloped countries, railways play a very marginal role in the transport structure. Even where they are important economically, they will often be removed from the main population centers, having been built to connect mines and plantations with deep-sea ports as part of the colonial export economy rather than as links between the main population centers. In Europe and those parts of Latin America where this is not the case, railways will still be unimportant from our point of view because of the time element. In any case, railways are extremely easy to neutralize. In the 1926 *coup* in Poland staged by Józef Pilsudski, a great deal of the action revolved around the railway system, but railborne troops never arrived in time to decide the issue: both sides found it easy to prevent the other's movements, though not to ensure their own. Where, as in Ethiopia, the railways are important—or rather the single Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway line is important—technical neutralization should be used.

Railways rely on a technical chain system par excellence and if a single section of rail or signals is sabotaged, the whole system will temporarily stop. The gap between two sections of rail is easily crossed, but probably there will be no rolling stock on the other side.

*Public Buildings*

The need to provide the bureaucracy and the masses with visual evidence of the reality and power of the *coup* is one of the continuing elements in our analysis. Otherwise, this will be the least defined and coherent of our groups of targets. The buildings we will have to seize include the residences of

those government leaders whom we have selected for arrest, and those buildings that house facilities we require, such as the radio/television building. In the first case, it will be a matter of a brief penetration to achieve capture or arrest; in the second, however, we will have to seize and occupy the building—and perhaps resist attempts made to recapture it. But there will be other official buildings we will also have to occupy or, at any rate, control the access to. Those can only be loosely defined as those buildings whose possession is associated with the possession of political power.

Most countries have some form of elected assembly, a parliament or its local equivalent, but in many of them political power emanates from the palace of the president or other ruler (or the central committee of the party); we should not be deceived by constitutional fictions, and after spending so much effort distinguishing between effective political power and its symbols, we will not make the mistake of using our scarce resources on the latter.

Nevertheless, there will be certain symbolic buildings which could play an important role in the crucial transitional phase of the *coup:* their possession by one side or the other will act as a signal to the masses and the rank and file of the bureaucracy in the confused period when it is unclear which side is in control. Our possession of those symbols will then give us the allegiance of those who were waiting to choose one side or the other. Thus, though useless in direct material terms, it may be worthwhile to seize those buildings which have a powerful symbolic value. In the Ghana *coup* of 1966 that brought down the Nkrumah regime, the very efficient and practical-minded leaders of the *coup* felt it necessary to fight their way into the presidential residence, Flagstaff House, though it contained neither Nkrumah himself nor any important technical facilities. They realized that though it was an empty symbol par excellence, its possession was essential to secure the support of the Accra masses who naturally associated the control of political power with that particular building. Fortunately, by the

very nature of such symbols, there will be one—or at most two—such symbolic buildings whose possession will be an essential requirement. Apart from the purely symbolic buildings, there will be others whose possession is highly desirable. These are the administrative headquarters of the army, police, and security services. Thus, in each case, this group of targets will include the following:

(a) *The seat of effective political power.* This could be the royal or presidential palace or the building of the elected assembly or of the party presidium or central committee.
(b) *The main administrative buildings.* The Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, police and military headquarters, if separate.
(c) *Symbolic buildings.* Often the appropriate building will fall into one or another of the classifications above; where, however, there is a "cultural" lag between the development of the country's political life and the traditional attitudes, the masses will still associate political power with an "obsolete" building.

The *coup* will be practically over (in its "active" phase) by the time the citizenry wakes up and starts to investigate the possession of buildings symbolic or otherwise. We can, therefore, postpone the occupation of some of these targets to the later stages. Since, in direct practical terms, other targets will be more important, or at any rate more urgent, the best way of dealing with the symbolic and administrative targets will be to use them as assembly points for those teams which have already completed their primary mission.

# Neutralizing the Political Forces II: Particular Groups

Which organized groups will be sufficiently strong to oppose us, even if the voice of the government is silent and the capital city is visibly in our hands? Not many, but we must remember that even one well-organized demonstration, or a well-timed strike, could pose a serious threat to the *coup* in the delicate transitional phase. And so it is essential to identify such groups and, once identified, to neutralize them before the *coup.* Once it is known that a *coup* has taken place, the leaders of the militant organization(s) concerned will immediately prepare for action; they themselves will then be more difficult to arrest, and their organizations will be halfway underground.

In countries where political conflict is limited to the verbal dimension, this kind of dramatic and rapid response to political change will be unknown; but elsewhere, where political conflicts can be violent and where all organized forces—whether primarily political or not—can be drawn into them, this type of response is more or less automatic. Islamist militias in the Middle East and trade-union movements in southern Europe have little in common except *(a)* their ability to respond in this way and *(b)* that even without the weaponry that some of them have, they could be a real threat to the *coup.* We will conduct our analysis in terms of those three types of "political" forces because their features will largely subsume those of other kinds of organized groups, which may be relevant in particular countries. In the United States or the United Kingdom, for example, where neither trade unions nor religious groups nor political parties are sufficiently militant to oppose a *coup* after it has seized its initial targets, the groups which may

have this capability (such as paramilitary movements of the paranoid right) will be organized in a manner that includes features of all three.

One of the points we must bear in mind is that not all the organized groups considered important in normal political life will also be important in the highly restricted and spasmodic politics of the *coup.* Conversely, groups which in ordinary political life are of very limited importance could emerge as real threats. If, for example, we failed to neutralize the organization of, say, the National Rifle Association (NRA) in the United States or the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom, their reaction—however ineffectual per se—could still endanger the *coup* by slowing down the process of political stabilization inasmuch as they could provoke conflicts that might re-open the whole issue. Other, more prudent groups would then re-examine the possibility of challenging our position, while the use of violence to stop the agitation of the groups we have overlooked could lead to further opposition, since the side effects of violence would increase the awareness of and hostility to the *coup.*

Finally, there are certain "political" forces which must not be neutralized (apart from those groups that have agreed to support us). These are those groups that are generally regarded as extremist but whose effective powers are limited. By allowing them a certain freedom of action, we will give them an opportunity to oppose us, and their opposition will have two favorable by-products: *(a)* we will be able to gain the support of those political forces which fear *them* more than us; *(b)* we will be able to step forward and fight *other* groups after having associated them with the extremists in question. This can, however, be a dangerous game to play; in the confused and dramatic situation of the *coup,* the extremists could gain in power and political support, and it is possible that the time we have allowed them to discredit the opposition will work in their favor.

## Religious Organizations

In economically developed countries, religious organizations no longer have much political power, though they may still be an important social force. The leaders of religious groups can be influential in social and, to a degree, political life, but the allegiance of the believers is rarely expressed by direct and forceful action in the political field. In economically backward countries, and in those whose development is limited or very recent, it is otherwise. Where the newer technology of humans has only been recently applied, or not at all, the older technology of God is still of paramount importance. This can be a source of very considerable political power to the organizations identified with the appropriate beliefs and able to channel the sentiments of the believers. Leaving aside local cults, which are too fragmented to be important in terms of national politics and which, in any case, tend to be apolitical,[f] we see that even universal religions will differ in their degree of political involvement.

The role of the Catholic Church in Italy since the Second World War illustrates the power that can be accumulated by a well-organized religious group, even when operating in circumstances considered unfavorable from the *religious* point of view. Though most male Italians seldom or never go to church, Italian women are keen and regular churchgoers. Italy being a democratic country where women have the vote, it is obvious that if the organized Church is willing to direct its followers to vote for a particular party, that party will gain the bulk of the women's vote before it even opens its electoral campaigns. Until the late 1960s, the Church was generally willing to give such specific directions, and one particular party used to benefit: the Democrazia Cristiana (DC). Aided by its assured majority of the female vote, the DC ruled Italy, alone or in various coalitions, from 1948 until its 1990–1991 collapse under the attack of investigative

magistrates (corruption accumulates when there is no alternation of moderate ruling parties, long precluded in Italy by the weight of the Communist Party), and it did so largely because of the support it received from the Catholic Church. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Church was able to dominate the DC and that, through the DC, it influenced every aspect of Italian national life. After 1991, however, Italy discovered that no other political grouping could replicate the DC's successes in steering the Italian economy; the post-DC technocrats made the fatal mistake of taking the muddled Italian economy into the all-too-clear waters of the euro; after 1994, Berlusconi arrived to teach the Italians that there was something worse than corruption, i.e., institutional paralysis that persists while the supreme leader looks after his own business and his own fun-filled personal life. Hence, Italy underwent the socially tragic consequences of prolonged economic stagnation and chronic youth unemployment, which post-Berlusconi leaders had failed to remedy as of 2015.

This is no vague influence exercised on a plane of generalized authority, but rather a constant supervision of political activity, conducted at the provincial level by the bishops and at the national level by the pope and his associates. At each level of the state bureaucracy, the Church, directly or indirectly, exercises its influence: on civil-service jobs and promotions; on the allocation of investment funds and of the various kinds of government grants; on administrative decisions dealing with zoning and building regulations. This influence has brought its rewards. While the facilities of the state bureaucracy have steadily deteriorated compared with the dynamic private and semistate sector, the Catholic Church's educational and religious facilities have steadily expanded; money to build and the permissions required to do so have never been lacking.

If we failed to neutralize the organization of the Church in Italy, it could inspire and coordinate opposition to us through its capillary network of

parish churches. Parishioners are used to hearing political messages from the pulpit;[g] priests are used to receiving detailed political briefs from their bishop, and the latter receive their instructions from the Vatican. Our neutralization of the telecommunications facilities will not prevent the flow of instructions: the Vatican maintains its own radio station, and this could be used to contact directly the organization throughout the country.

The Catholic Church plays a similar role in certain other countries, where it has a 99.9 percent nominal membership and the status of the national religion, but the stronger state structure of Spain and Portugal, let alone France, has denied it the preeminent position it has in Italy. The intervention of the Church would, however, be a powerful factor in much of the Catholic world, including South America, especially if the motive behind the *coup* was identified as being anticlerical.

Islam, which has the comprehensive nature of a religion, a political system, and a civilization, is much decayed culturally, but the "doctors" of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, one of the main theological institutions of the Muslim world, are periodically prompted by the ruler of the day into openly political declarations. No single leader in Islam has the authority of a pope but in each country local religious leaders can still be important. Even before its abrupt disappearance, the once very noisy theater of "Arab Socialism" did not impair in any way the position of Islam, and governments that followed an extremely left-wing line in all foreign and some domestic matters were still unwilling (or unable) to challenge the status of Islam as the state religion. When such a course was tentatively suggested by an obscure member of the nominally Ba'athist (hence nominally secular) Syrian government, the leadership was forced to denounce him officially. Whether this resilience means that the Islamic leadership of particular countries could function as an *active* political force is another matter. The structures of Islam as an organized religion are

fossilized; the fluid and dynamic Islam of its early days of conquest has been replaced by a dogmatic and extremely conservative set of beliefs, whose inflexibility is the major cause of the present travails of the Muslim world.

By contrast, there has been a great deal of fluidity and dynamism in the more or less violent Islamist movements that exist outside official or traditional religious institutions—ranging from the historic (1928) Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn), which spread to Syria in the 1960s, and the jihadi movements of Pakistan that spread to Afghanistan after 1979, including Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, which, for a while, had global pretensions; to the newest, the Islamic State (Dawlat al-ʾIslāmiyyah), which as of 2015 boasted of its own Caliph, i.e., the sole legitimate ruler of all Muslim nations everywhere, and of any territories ever ruled by Muslims, such as Spain's Andalusia.

What the jihadi groups have in common are four rather odd characteristics. First, for reasons that are not easy to explain, they are utterly obsessed with the role of women in society, or rather the importance of their exclusion from society, and their reduction to a status not far from that of (valuable) domestic animals—a status limited to procreation (as a cow-calf cattle rancher, I get the point) and the servile service of their husbands in and out of bed. Some groups are less restrictive, but none of the jihadi movements afford females any political role whatsoever (they can fight, but only as suicide bombers); none allow women to be educated beyond some capacity for reading the Qur'an, if that; and none believe that an unmarried woman can have any professional existence of any sort or even drive a car, though widows might take in laundry and such.

Second, the jihadi groups always speak in the name of Islam, period, but they only act for Sunni Islam, habitually persecuting or simply killing any non-Sunni Muslim who falls into their hands—whether the Twelver Shi'a

of Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Syria; the Fiver (Zaidi) Shi‘a of Yemen; or the Sevener (Ismaili) Shi‘a scattered worldwide but also present in Syria. In that regard, while Iran’s Great Satan is the United States (as, indeed, it is for the ayatollahs who must rule incurably pro-American educated elites), for the jihadis the Great Satan is Iran, not an unhappy conjunction inasmuch as it sets equally murderous Shi‘a Hezbollah and Sunni jihadis against each other.

Third, the jihadi groups are, of course, anti-Western and reject Western artifacts (clothing, etc.) as well as Western ideas, but they are keen and sometimes talented emulators of Western media techniques.

Fourth, the jihadis consistently attract volunteers who are notably more committed and, therefore, potentially more effective than the salaried soldiers and police who confront them across the Muslim world; and because of their skill in utilizing Western media techniques, members of the jihadi movement are able to attract volunteers from the West, who bring their valuable Western skills with them (the leader of the 9/11 attack on New York, for instance, was a German engineer of Egyptian origin).

• • •

The political sterility of *official* Islam in recent times has meant that, though it has been used by governments to propagate their political initiatives, Islamic leaders have only spoken out in response to direct attacks on religious orthodoxy.[h] Consequently, unless our *coup* has a definite anti-Islamic coloring, religious leaders in Muslim countries will not initiate any action against us. Clearly, we must prevent our opponents from imposing such a coloring on our *coup.*

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, in the intermittent political warfare between Arab Socialists and the monarchies, while the latter were accused of being “tools” of the “Zionist-imperialist oil monopolies,” the former

were accused of wanting to eradicate Islam with their godless beliefs. Actually, even the self-styled "progressives" did not dream of challenging Islam. These days, with Arab Socialism long dead, the competition of rulers with ultra-Islamist jihadis has resulted in the further Islamization of the Arab world. Such a phenomenon is equally present in Turkey, but for a very different reason: the downfall of the military-based and fiercely secular establishment has allowed the village Islam of the unwashed Anatolian masses its democratic expression, and what they want is a decidedly illiberal return to Ottoman practices, starting with headdresses on all women. This is a regression that the loudly Islamist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or AKP) has been happy to deliver, along with frenetic mosque building even on previously strictly secular university campuses, and Sunni-Islamic policies on all matters, starting with foreign policy. The Turkish AKP's semiliterate leaders seem to honestly believe that democracy means the absolute rule of the majority, forgetting the bits about the consent of the minority, individual rights, the rule of law, and so on. They have ruled accordingly with just over 50 percent of the vote, utterly ignoring acute secular unhappiness, as well as the substantial (15–20 percent) minority of Alevis whose faith is entirely too moderate for the AKP.

Hinduism is another faith that has no central institutions or hierarchies. Indeed, it is a gathering of many diverse cults that share the same library of ancient texts (some magnificent) and the same cast of godly characters—each emphasizing this or that text or god—and which was only represented as a unitary religion under British rule. None of this prevents parties and politicians from trying to harness Hindu sentiments for their own advantage, and there are organized Hindu militant groups, including some that repudiate the serene tolerance of most Hindus by murdering Christian missionaries and organizing anti-Muslim riots. The banning of cow

slaughter attracts more mainstream support, and it has been legislated in several jurisdictions (US hamburger chains serve chicken in India, or simply go vegetarian). But if we stay well clear of cows and temples, we can ignore Hinduism as a factor.

An extreme example of the potentialities of a dynamic religious leadership was the mainline Buddhist movement of South Vietnam as it then was, before its political identity was obliterated by the Northern/Communist conquest of 1975. The almost continual warfare of its last fifteen years, along with the politically destructive effect of the Diem regime and its military successors, resulted in the collapse of the social and political structures of the country, while its economy was reduced to localized subsistence agriculture, allied with urban dependence on US aid and US military spending. Precarious conditions weakened more modern economic, political, and social movements, allowing older groupings based on religious affiliations to emerge as the only valid civilian political forces in Vietnamese society. Apart from the Buddhist movement led by the monk Thich Tri Quang and other regional leaders, by early 1968, on the eve of the momentous Tet offensive by the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese that ultimately induced the United States to abandon Vietnam, the following array of religious and political groups could be found in the country:

*Hoa Hao:* A reformed Buddhist sect with a large following in the southern (Delta) part of the country. Their leadership was politically oriented and, except for strictly local alliances, was anti-Vietcong. They had acquired the rudiments of an armed militia.

*Cao Dai:* An important Buddhist sect with a history of political participation.

*Binh Xuyen:* A small but very active part-sect and part–secret society. Its main area of strength was in the Saigon region, and before the Diem regime displaced them, the Binh Xuyen were said to "own" both the city's police force and its underworld. The sect had been influenced by the Chinese secret societies from across the river in Cholon (Saigon's vast Chinatown), and the effect of repression at the hands of Diem was to drive it underground rather than destroy it.

*Catholics:* Until Diem's fall, the substantial Catholic minority was able to dominate the Buddhist majority. Many of the South Vietnamese Catholics were refugees from the North and, as such, fiercely anticommunist; moreover, under the French, many Catholics had cooperated actively with the colonial power and served in the French armed forces. As the South became increasingly weak and the prospect of a conquest by the North approached, the Catholic community reached a desperate impasse. Their activity against any pro-Vietcong (or just pro-peace) *coup* would have been immediate—and probably very effective.

All these religious groups could have intervened against a *coup:* their meeting places could have been used to assemble and shelter our opponents; the priesthood could have inspired and coordinated mass agitation against us; finally, their direct influence on the army and the bureaucratic rank and file could have been used to resist the imposition of our authority.

The religious groups that can be important in particular countries will differ doctrinally, but they will tend to be sufficiently similar organizationally to permit us to rely on the same general method of

neutralization. Their access to Internet social media must, of course, be impeded, if not blocked; if they operate private broadcasting facilities, such as the Vatican Radio or the small radio stations of American missionary sects in many parts of the world, we will put them temporarily out of action. Religious meeting places should not be closed by administrative orders, which are liable to foment rather than stifle opposition, but access to them can be impeded or even barred by "incidental" roadblocks.

The leadership of religious organizations presents a special problem when it comes to neutralization: because of their particular psychological role in the minds of their more committed followers, it will usually be extremely unwise to arrest the hierarchic leadership, as well as any prominent preachers (who will, in any case, be stripped of their social media access). Fortunately, the actual decision makers within religious organizations will often be younger men who are not in the public eye but who are the key figures from our point of view. If the real decision makers are not also the hierarchical leaders, we will arrest them; but if the two roles are embodied in the same person or persons, we will not. In concrete terms, a Thich Tri Quang, who was very much an effective decision maker in South Vietnam but not formally in the higher leadership, could have been and should have been arrested; but a pope, who is both the representational and the effective leader, cannot be arrested without stimulating a great deal of opposition, the impact of which will outweigh any advantage to be gained from the arrest.

• • •

In jihadi movements, the military, political, and religious leadership is usually embodied in the same person, evoking the caliphate, which Muslims of all stripes, even the most moderate, must view as their ideal of governance for the Ummah, the planetary community of all Muslims, and

indeed for all humans once voluntarily converted in due course, or killed if stubbornly pagan.

But modern advocates of a revival of the caliphate—they amount to a substantial semipublic movement in many countries—hardly ever refer back to the famous caliphates of history: from the splendiferous Umayyad, defeated by the longer-lasting Abbasid, which were then extinguished by the Mongols in 1258, or the Egypt-based and tolerant Shi‘a Fatimid in between, or the Ottoman that lingered till 1924, let alone the extant and genuinely moderate Ahmadiyya caliphate that most Muslims condemn as heretical.

Instead, supporters of the caliphate wax lyrical about the rule of Muhammad’s first four “rightly guided” successors, the al-Khulafa’ al-Rashidun, who followed one another after his death in 632. Unable to assume Muhammad’s prophetic role, his best-placed followers took control of his movement as his “successors,” or khulafaa, hence the English “caliphate.”

In greatly celebrating the Rashidun, as modern Muslims afflicted by the contemporary difficulties of the Muslim world are wont to do, the violent instability of the institution is disregarded, no doubt because what they celebrate are the colossal victories over the infidels who now very regularly defeat them (undermining Islam’s central promise of victory). But from the very start, the institution was violently unstable: the first caliph, Abū Bakr as-Siddīq (632–634) had to fight tribal secessionism throughout his short reign to impose his rule. His struggle was further intensified by the very first Shi‘a, the partisans of Alī ibn Abī Tālib, Muhammad’s son-in-law (there was also a bitter property dispute over the date-palm orchards of Fardak).

Abū Bakr died of illness, a privilege denied to the second caliph, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb (634–644), killed by a resentful Persian soldier, or the third,

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (644–656), lynched in his own house in Medina, or the fourth and last, Alī ibn Abī Tālib (656–661), Muhammad’s son-in-law, who was assassinated by a more extreme extremist of the Kharijites sect, which demanded unending war against all non-Muslims and denounced all who disagreed as apostates deserving of death; Muhammad had done the same, sending assassins to behead apostates and irreverent poets.

• • •

Muslim violence around the world is, therefore, perfectly traditional, and allows us as coup planners, presumably Muslims in a Muslim target country, to act accordingly. The patron saint of modern jihadis, Sayyid Qutub, was hanged by the Egyptian military dictator Gamal Abdel Nasser, who nevertheless remained wildly popular; as of 2015, the contemporary military dictator of Egypt, a fine fellow by all accounts, has procured death sentences against the leaders of the Ikhwan, the Muslim Brotherhood, without losing his considerable popularity. Hence, any Muslim religious leader who crosses our path can be straightforwardly eliminated—so long as our own Muslim credentials are solid (it helps to have a dark spot on the forehead, left by the bruising of enthusiastic worship in bowing down to the ground).

## Political Parties

Unlike the other groups that constitute a potential source of opposition to the *coup,* political parties are our direct competitors, in the sense that their primary purpose—like our own—is the accumulation of political power.[i] This will not necessarily make them the main, or even a significant, potential threat to us, but it will mean that their response to the *coup* will be particularly prompt. Whether this response will be verbal and purely declaratory, or perhaps more direct and effective, will depend on a variety of factors, including the nature of their leadership, organization, and membership. Because political parties are as diverse as the countries within which they compete for power, we will classify them in certain categories as a prelude to examining the methods of their individual neutralization.

### *"Machine" Parties*

Where politics is a business like any other, parties take the form of an association whose purpose is the procurement of votes in exchange for specific and material rewards. The local "boss" secures votes for the party at election time in exchange for cash and/or bureaucratic jobs for himself or his nominees. The deputies in the assembly then deliver their votes to the government in exchange for definite favors, some of which are retained and some of which are passed down to those who secured their election. The "machine" party can flourish in societies as different as early twentieth-century America, Egypt between the wars, and present-day South America. It needs two main ingredients: an elective parliamentary democracy and a socially backward electorate. In the United States at the beginning of the century, the immigrant communities were largely composed of eastern and southern Europeans, whose mother countries were economically, and often politically, unsophisticated. Thus, the newly arrived immigrants lacked the

political awareness required to obtain direct concessions from the government in the shape of social welfare legislation or labor codes. They soon learned, however, to obtain indirect favors by promising their support to the local ward organization of the party—i.e., if the votes were delivered on election day and the candidate elected, rewards would eventually be received in return. Present-day "machine" parties do not distribute their rewards as widely as the old municipal machines in the United States. That is so because such parties participate in the *empleocracia* (jobs-for-the-boys politics), which dominates political societies in which industry and commerce are undeveloped. In such societies, politics and its associated jobs in the state bureaucracy are the main avenues of middle-class advancement, if not enterprise, and the party is the vehicle (with legal training) for the middle-class activity of office-hunting.

"Machine" parties have their rationale in the contrast between constitutional structures and the social order in countries that are both poor and "democratic." Their whole manner of operation revolves around the exchange of votes for rewards at every level; in other words, it requires the functioning of the parliamentary apparatus, with its periodic elections. In the event of a *coup,* this institutional framework would be frozen and the machine made powerless. Even if the machine has a base of mass support, its leadership, being a coalition of local power structures without a national presence, will not be able to mobilize it. We will, therefore, ignore the "machine" parties and will not need to take any particular action in their regard.

*"Insurrectional" Parties*

Such parties may or may not participate in open political life (if it exists in our target country), but the primary purpose of "insurrectional" parties[j] is to destroy the system rather than to work it. Like the Bolsheviks before 1917,

these parties live a semi-legal existence with a cellular organization, an "underground" mentality, and, frequently, a paramilitary element. Such parties are characterized by their adherence to a set of definite ideological beliefs, a rigidly centralized organization, and their preoccupation with the use of direct methods to achieve political ends.

In the social and economic conditions of Western Europe and North America, insurrectional parties are insignificant numerically and their challenge to the system usually unfolds in an atmosphere of unreality, though from time to time they can gather a mass following among certain sectors of the population which are outside the mainstream of national life. The Black Power movement in the United States, for example, had all the traits of an insurrectional party, but only operated among the black communities in areas whose social and economic conditions were those of an economically backward society. In the Third World, however, the constant pressure of economic deprivation can generate a revolutionary mentality among wide sections of the population, which insurrectional parties try to channel and exploit. Their organization, however, is often inadequate to the task.

Insurrectional parties can oppose us in three main ways: *(a)* through the agitation of the masses, to the extent that they have a mass following; *(b)* by direct means, such as assassination and sabotage; *(c)* by syndicalist agitation. Insurrectional parties usually have an authoritarian leadership structure; much of their strength in the confused circumstances that would follow a *coup* would derive from the coherence of a centralized leadership. With that in mind, we should make every effort to identify and isolate their key decision makers. The emphasis on party discipline and the habit of waiting for directives from the higher leadership render many insurrectional parties powerless once the leadership has ceased to function. The social pressures that act as the sources of strength of an insurrectional party may

lead to its revival, but this would not take place in the short period of time that concerns us. This vulnerability of insurrectional parties was strikingly demonstrated in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, a major force in Egyptian political life after the war. Its large mass following, its network of economic and educational activities, and its paramilitary youth groups gave it a great deal of direct power. Its effectiveness, however, derived largely from the coherent leadership of its founder, Sheikh Hasan al-Banna, and the movement rapidly declined after his death (in unexplained circumstances) just after the failed *coup* of late 1948. Where necessary, therefore, the committee or personal leadership of the insurrectional party should be arrested and held in isolation for the duration of the *coup.* Because of the emphasis on party discipline, the beheaded movement will probably abstain from action in the short but critical period following our seizure of power.

*Parabureaucratic Parties*

In one-party states, such as China most notably, the party itself has lost its major role of securing the allegiance of the masses. Because it is a monopoly, the party is also in danger of appearing superfluous. But, like any other bureaucratic organization, the party can survive the loss of its primary function, either as a system of spoliation or as an ancillary or supervisor of the administrative bureaucracy of the state. African parties, formed during the political struggles which preceded independence, tended to legislate their monopoly of power as soon as they had attained it. Some, like the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU), have turned into constructive galvanizers of the communal and state development programs; others, like Nkrumah's old party in Ghana, became adjuncts to the personal leadership and a system of outdoor relief for his "activist" followers. The majority, however (until swept away by the military dictatorships), have acted as the principal agent in the main local industry—politics.

The parabureaucratic party treats the state bureaucracy as its subordinate. It investigates its activities, reports on its behavior to the higher leadership, and often demands special privileges and concessions. These parties do not have a mass following, except within the framework of normal political life, when they can be relied upon to produce demonstrations *for* this or that stand of the leadership. As soon as the hold of the leadership is threatened, as soon as the police apparatus no longer acts as its "muscle," the parabureaucratic party dissolves; therefore, we can ignore it in the active stage of the *coup.* However, its secondary function—that of intelligence and security—will be important and will be dealt with as part of our general defensive measures toward such organizations.

*Parties in Developed Countries*

Whether it is a two-party system as in much of the Anglo-Saxon world, where parties are in effect coalitions of pressure groups, or whether they are the class- or religion-based parties of much of continental Europe, the major political parties in developed and democratic countries will not present a direct threat to the *coup.* Though such parties have mass support at election time, neither they nor their followers are versed in the techniques of mass agitation. The comparative stability of political life has deprived them of the experience required to employ direct methods, and the whole climate of their operation revolves around the concept of periodic elections. Even where there are still nominally revolutionary parties, as in France and Italy, two or more decades of parliamentary life have reduced their affinity with revolutionary methods.

The apparatus of the party, with its branches and local organizers, can, however, allow them to perform a role of information gathering and coordination, which could be potentially dangerous. Even though their leadership may not take any action, the apparatus can still serve as the

framework for anti-*coup* agitation. Closing—administratively—the network of branches should be sufficient to neutralize this particular threat.

The only serious threat from this direction will come from the trade-union movements affiliated with the mass parties of the left. Their experience of industrial agitation has provided a natural training for mass intervention against a *coup,* but this will be dealt with separately below.

## Trade Unions

Wherever there is a significant degree of industrial development, and in many countries where there is not, trade unions are a major political force. Because of their experience with industrial agitation, which can be readily applied to political purposes, the response of trade unions to the *coup* could constitute a serious danger to us. The mass following of trade unions—unlike that of political parties—is in continuous session: polling booths are only open once every five years, but factories work all year round. The immediacy of the threat presented by trade unions will depend on their size, cohesion, and degree of militancy: the fragmented syndicalism of the United Kingdom, with its purely electoral politics, would not, for example, add up to the threat of, say, the Italian movement with its centralization and long history of political strikes.

The experience of Bolivia after its April 1952 revolution, which upended the social order, illustrates how a single trade union and its activities can dominate a country's political life. Bolivia was the poorest country in all of Latin America, with an economy characterized by subsistence farming and the activities of the large tin industry. Before the revolution and the nationalization of the mines owned by the Patino, Aramayo, and Hochschild families, the miners had worked in physical and economic conditions of extreme harshness. Following their emancipation, they naturally wanted to achieve immediate and substantial improvements in these conditions, and Comibol, the state tin-mining organization, started immediate reforms.

It was soon discovered, however, that the geological and economic conditions of the industry required an increase in productivity which could only be achieved by introducing much new machinery and reducing the labor force. As the only source of capital was the United States, the miners'

leaders opposed the reforms on the dual plank of no *yanqui* (read "Yankee") capitalism and no redundancies.

Such problems are familiar from nearer home, but the crucial difference was that the miners were also an *army.* They had been armed by the middle-class leaders of the revolutionary Movimento Nacionalista Revolucionario Party (MNR) in order to act as a counterweight to the old army dominated by associates of the mine owners. The revolution disbanded the army so that the miners could not only exert political and economic pressures but also more direct military methods. Until the MNR leadership found a counterweight in the unions organized among the peasant farmers—the Indian campesinos—who were also armed, the miners had things pretty much their way. Led by militants of the Catavi-Siglo Veinte mines, the miners imposed their control on Comibol, and, therefore, on the country which depends on it as the major source of foreign exchange. Certainly, no *coup* could have held on to power without the miners' consent, and had the central institutions in La Paz been seized, the real power base in the mines would still have been under the control of the union leaders.

Even without the special circumstances that existed in Bolivia, trade unions will often be a major political force, especially in terms of the situation immediately following a *coup.* But much will depend on the particular organizational structure of the trade unions, and crucially on the degree of effective centralization and the nature of their political affiliations. In the United Kingdom, with its much-weakened trade unions, their main focus of decision making is the executive of individual unions, but, in some of them, it can easily shift to the shop floor. Apart from this fragmentation, which would at least impair the speed of reaction to a *coup,* the largely mainstream politics of British labor would not be a suitable framework for direct measures.

In France and Italy, the trade-union movement is not divided on craft lines, as in Britain, or on industrial lines, as in the United States and much of northern Europe, but on political lines. Individual industrial unions are affiliated with central organizations, which, in turn, are associated with particular parties. In both countries, the largest organization was long controlled by the country's Communist Party, with smaller Social-Democratic and Catholic trade-union organizations affiliated to the respective parties. The Communist labor organizations, CGL in Italy and CGT in France,[k] expressed their militant activism in "political" and "general" strikes, but all that ended long ago with the collapse of the respective Communist parties.

Unless our *coup* is directly linked to them, the central organizations of French and Italian trade unionism would react to it, and do so in predictable ways. Immediately after the *coup,* they would: *(a)* try to establish contact with other "democratic forces" to form a popular front opposition, *(b)* contact their national network of branches to coordinate a general strike, and *(c)* put into execution their contingency plans for "underground" activity and illegal survival. The only tactic which would present a threat to us is the general strike, which would be organized with the deliberate intention of "confronting" the forces of the *coup.* Our general measures would affect the overall performance of this emergency program, but specific action would be needed as well in order to avoid the confrontation that the unions would probably seek. Both the CGT and the CGL have memories of the wartime resistance movements: both are aware of the destabilizing nature of open repression, and they would therefore try to provoke us into using violence.

Though some form of confrontation may be inevitable, it is essential to avoid bloodshed, because this may well have crucial negative repercussions among the personnel of the armed forces and the police. The avoidance of

bloodshed in tense crowd situations is a matter of technique, and competent handling of our incorporated armed and uniformed forces will be essential.[l]

The incidents of Reggio Emilia in Italy in the summer of 1964, in which seven people died following a "political" strike, illustrated how an incompetent police force can impair the authority of the government it is trying to protect.[m]

If the trade unions of our target country approximate to Franco-Italian levels of political effectiveness, it will be necessary—assuming that our *coup* is not politically linked with them—to identify and arrest their leaders and close their headquarters in order to impede the operation of their secondary leadership. Elsewhere, it will be a matter of orienting our general measures to deal with the particular threats which trade-union movements could present.

[a] In seizing the leaders of the government, we will also contribute to the isolation of those segments of the army and police that we have been unable to infiltrate, though more direct measures will be required as well.

[b] The nature and composition of the active teams of the *coup* are discussed in Appendix B.

[c] Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité, part of the police and outside the military community.

[d] The normal way of neutralizing an electrically powered facility is to detonate small plastic charges on the grouped wire links between the facility and the public power supply (and independent generators, if any). These are usually not difficult to reach from the outside.

[e] Tanks in the main squares are a feature of the Middle Eastern and Latin American, but not of the African, military *coup.* Most African armies have only wheeled armored vehicles.

[f] Local cults may be important from the point of view of the local administration, but not in terms of national politics.

[g] In a very successful Italian film, the parish priest was shown explaining to his flock that he did not want to give them a pre-election brief, but merely asked them to vote for a party that was Democratic and that was Christian, *"Democratico e Cristiano, Cristiano e Democratico,"* i.e., the DC.

[h] This and subsequent statements about Islam and the Arab world refer to Sunni Islam; the heretical Shi'a sects and their offshoots are a different matter. Their political and religious leadership is often embodied in the same person, and they are politically very active.

[i] This is their *purpose.* Their *function,* however, is to aggregate interests.

[j] The alternative term, “revolutionary parties,” has left-wing connotations, while “insurrection” covers both extremes of the spectrum.

[k] Confederazione Generale del Lavoro and Confédération générale du travail.

[l] Cf. the events of May 1968 in France.

[m] The study of mass psychology and the development of assorted gadgetry should not obscure the fundamental principles of mob control. These are: *(a)* the need to keep the mob in open spaces so that claustrophobic and physical pressures are avoided and *(b)* the need to break down the anonymity of the individual in a mob by making *selective* arrests.

# *Chapter 5*

# The Execution of the *Coup d'État*

As soon as the moral power of national representation was destroyed, a legislative body, whatever it might be, meant no more to the military than a crowd of five hundred men, less vigorous and disciplined than a battalion of the same number.

—Madame de Staël, referring to Napoleon's *coup d'état*

I came in on a tank, and only a tank will evict me.

—Abu Zuhair Yahya, Iraqi prime minister, 1968

The active phase of a *coup* is like a military operation—only more so. If the general principle of tactics is the application of force at the right place, the *coup* achieves this with surgical precision by striking at the organizational heart of the whole state; if speed is very often important in military operations, in the *coup* it is an essential requirement. But the *coup* differs from most military operations in one crucial respect: while in war it is often advantageous to retain some forces as reserves to be used in later (and possibly more critical) phases of the fighting, in a *coup* the principle of total commitment applies. The active stage takes place in one short period of time, and forces held back today will be useless tomorrow: all our forces must be used in our single decisive engagement.

The fact that the *coup* has practically no time dimension means that we will not be able to correct significant errors made during its execution; in war, tactics can be changed, weapons can be replaced, plans reshaped, and

soldiers retrained on the basis of combat experience; in the *coup,* however, there will not be sufficient time for any feedback mechanism to work. In this, the *coup* is similar to the most modern form of warfare, the strategic missile strike, and the time factor places the entire burden of decision making in the planning stage. Every target must be studied in detail before the *coup.* The team assigned to seize it must match it in terms of size and composition; its every move must be planned in advance, and no tactical flexibility can be allowed.

With this degree of detailed planning, there will be no need for any sort of headquarters structure in the active stage of the *coup;* if there is no scope for decision making, there is no need for decision makers and their apparatus. In fact, having a headquarters would be a serious disadvantage: it would constitute a concrete target for the opposition—one that would be both vulnerable and easily identified. As soon as the *coup* starts, the ruling group will know that something is happening, but unless *coups* are very frequent in the country, they will not know what that something is; it could be a mutiny, an insurrection, the opening of a guerrilla war, or even the beginning of an invasion by a foreign power. All these forms of conflict represent threats to the regime, but they are all different in terms of their immediate significance and—more important—in terms of the measures required to meet them. We should avoid taking any action that will clarify the nature of the threat and thus reduce the confusion that is left in the defensive apparatus of the regime. Our teams will emerge from their bases and proceed to seize their designated targets while operating as independent units; their collective purpose and their coordination will remain unknown until it is too late for any effective opposition. The leaders of the *coup* will be scattered among the various teams, each joining the team whose ultimate target requires his presence; thus, the spokesmen for the *coup* will be with the teams that will seize the radio/television stations, and the prospective

chief of police will be with the team whose target is the police headquarters. As each team will be both small and highly mobile, and as there will be no functioning headquarters throughout the active phase of the *coup,* the opposition will not have any single target on which to concentrate its forces. In this way, their numerical superiority will be dissipated, and the smaller forces of the *coup* will have local superiority in the area of each particular target. This will be the key to the victory of the *coup.*

# On the Eve

In Chapters 2 and 3 of this book, we surveyed the planning of the *coup* in terms of the neutralization of the "professional" defenses of the state and the selection of those targets that would assist the neutralization of the "political" forces. We analyzed the structure of the armed forces and of other means of coercion, and we saw that much of the armed forces, a significant part of the police system, and some of the security services could not intervene—either for or against us—in the event of a *coup.* This was due to their remote location, dispersed deployment, or because their training and equipment were inadequate, unsuitable, or overspecialized. Then, we infiltrated the relatively small part of the apparatus that did have an intervention capability, so that much of it was technically neutralized and some of it totally subverted. This will ensure for us the neutrality of much of the defenses of the state and the active cooperation of some of its parts. The infiltration of the army and police has given us an instrument: the units that we have incorporated and that form the forces of the *coup.* Additionally, we have prepared for the utilization of this instrument by selecting the targets on which it will be used: we have identified the physical targets that must be seized and those that will have to be sabotaged or otherwise interdicted, and we have selected the leading personalities among the potential opposition, both in and out of the government, and prepared for their arrest.

But one major task has not been covered in the planning stage: the forcible isolation of the "hard-core" loyalist forces. Hopefully, the strength of those forces we have been unable to infiltrate (assuming they have an intervention capability) will not be very great. But even if they are weak in absolute terms, we dare not ignore them. To do so would be to invalidate all the measures we have taken to insulate the capital city—and ourselves—

from the intervention of hostile forces. The extreme instability of the balance of forces during the active phase of the *coup* means that what in other circumstances would only be a minor threat could then have disastrous consequences. If the "hard-core" loyalist forces are large in relation to our own, we will indeed have to divert a considerable amount of our forces to their isolation.

Though we have been unable to penetrate these "hard-core" loyalist forces, two things will probably have been achieved: (1) their number, quality, and location will be known to us, and (2) our general measures of neutralization will have reduced their overall effectiveness. Their fighting capability will not have been eroded, but, as Table 5.1 illustrates, their intervention against us will be delayed and disrupted.

**Table 5.1.** The mechanics of intervention of the loyalist forces

| *Phase* | *Effect of our general measures* |
|---|---|
| 1. Police/security agency personnel raise initial alarm and seek to contact their HQ. | Telephone exchanges have been seized, and cell phone relays are switched off. They must, therefore, send a verbal message. |
| 2. Police/security agency HQ verify the reports and realize the seriousness of the threat. HQ tries to communicate with political leadership. | As above for communications. Some messengers fail to arrive as focal traffic points are gradually occupied. |
| 3. Political leadership calls for army and police intervention. | As above for communications. Some units missing from their barracks; others refuse to move; others cannot move because of technical neutralization. |
| 4. Political leaders begin to realize the extent of our infiltration of the armed forces and police. Loyalist troops respond. | As above for communications. Only military radio links can be used to communicate with loyalist forces. |
| 5. Uninfiltrated forces assemble and prepare for intervention. They try to reach political leadership for a confirmation of their orders. Some defect to us, others choose neutrality, but some remain under the control of the government. | Many political leaders no longer available; some have been arrested and some are in hiding. |
| 6. Loyalist forces move on to the capital city or, if already within the area, move in to the city center. | Airports closed and landing strips interdicted. Railways interrupted and trains stopped. City entry points controlled by our roadblocks. |
| *Loyalist forces in capital city area are then isolated by direct means.* | |

Our purpose is not to destroy the loyalist forces militarily (we can deal with their cadres administratively, after the *coup*) but merely to immobilize them for a few crucial hours. The tactics that will be used must be exclusively defensive: a ring of blocking positions around each concentration of loyalist forces or, if this is not possible, a similar ring around the capital city. Thus, though we will be on the strategic offensive (in the sense that we are the ones who want to change the situation in general), we will also be on the tactical defensive, and this will give us important technical and psychological advantages. By using defended roadblocks to isolate the loyalist forces, we will put the onus of initiating any fighting on them: our forces will be content to wait, and it will be the loyalist forces that will try to pass through. Should a column of loyalist forces arrive at the roadblock, their leaders will be faced by opposite numbers wearing the same uniform and belonging to the same armed force, perhaps even to the same regiment. Both sides will state that they are "obeying orders," but interestingly enough, the "orders" of the leaders of our forces will probably appear more legitimate than those of the leaders of the loyalist troops. Owing to our arrests and our interdiction of the physical facilities, the "legitimate" orders will probably have taken an unusual form: the source of the orders to the loyalist troops will probably be somebody other than the appropriate superior in the hierarchy; the method used to convey them will probably be an unusual emergency one; *and the actual orders will likely be indistinguishable in form from ones that might have been issued by the planners of a* coup.

Thus, the officers of the loyalist forces may have received orders stating, "Move into the city center, hold the Parliament building and the radio station." The leadership may have added that they would be acting against the forces of a *coup,* but, even so, such orders would have "insurrectional" undertones. When army officers find themselves doing unusual things, their

natural reaction is to try and fit them into familiar patterns; the most familiar pattern of all will be to arrive at the conclusion that the "politicians are guilty of yet another 'mess.' " The most probable course of action will be to request clarification from their superior officers. It is to be hoped that these officers will have decided to remain neutral or else have been arrested; in either case, the "clarification" will never arrive.

If, on the other hand, the loyalist units decide to force the roadblock, we will benefit from the tactical advantages of the defensive. These include the opportunity of choosing the place (natural obstructions such as bridges and tunnels) and the opportunity of deploying and camouflaging weapons and men. In order to make the fullest use of both the psychological and the tactical advantages, the blocking position should have a dual structure: a (largely symbolic) first line composed of some suitable physical obstacle, such as cross-parked heavy vehicles, with a few men bearing "orders" to forbid all passage; beyond this, there will be a second (military) line, much stronger numerically, with weapons and men deployed to repel an eventual assault (the operational detail involved is discussed in Appendix B). The idea is not to ambush the loyalists to inflict maximum damage—on the contrary, the defenders of the blocking position should inform the incoming loyalist forces that there is such a second line of defense in order to deter them. Because the strength of a camouflaged force is hard to assess, it can serve as a deterrent even if it is numerically weak as compared to the opposition.

The situation at each blocking position will require delicate handling, and it will be necessary that the soldiers on our side understand that their primary function is to avoid combat rather than to engage in it successfully. In concrete terms, their mission will be a delaying operation rather than a decisive one, and this will have precise implications in terms of the weapons and tactics to be employed.

## Timing, Sequence, and Security

Ideally, the timing of the *coup* will be completely flexible so that we can take advantage of any favorable circumstances that may arise—the temporary absence of the leadership from the capital city, for instance, or the outbreak of some coincidental civil disorders (see Figure 5.1). This flexibility, which would be highly desirable, is only rarely possible, however, because the infiltration of the army and police will be a dynamically unstable process: the circle of those who have decided to join us will grow and continue growing as a bandwagon effect is generated; but unless the *coup* materializes, there will eventually be a movement into neutrality or even opposition. Meanwhile, the danger of denunciation will also increase as more and more people become aware that a *coup* is being planned, or, at any rate, that "something is up." The timing of the *coup* will therefore be dictated by the progress of our infiltration of the armed forces and police; as soon as a satisfactory degree of penetration is achieved, the *coup* must be executed. This implies that it will not be possible to designate a date well in advance of the *coup* that can be communicated to the various teams. This is just as well because it means that the date cannot be leaked to the security agencies. Actually, it is quite likely that some information about us will have reached the security agencies, but this should not affect the outcome. As the preparations for the *coup* proceed, more and more truthful information about our actions ("signals") will be in circulation, but it will also be increasingly obscured by "noise."[a]

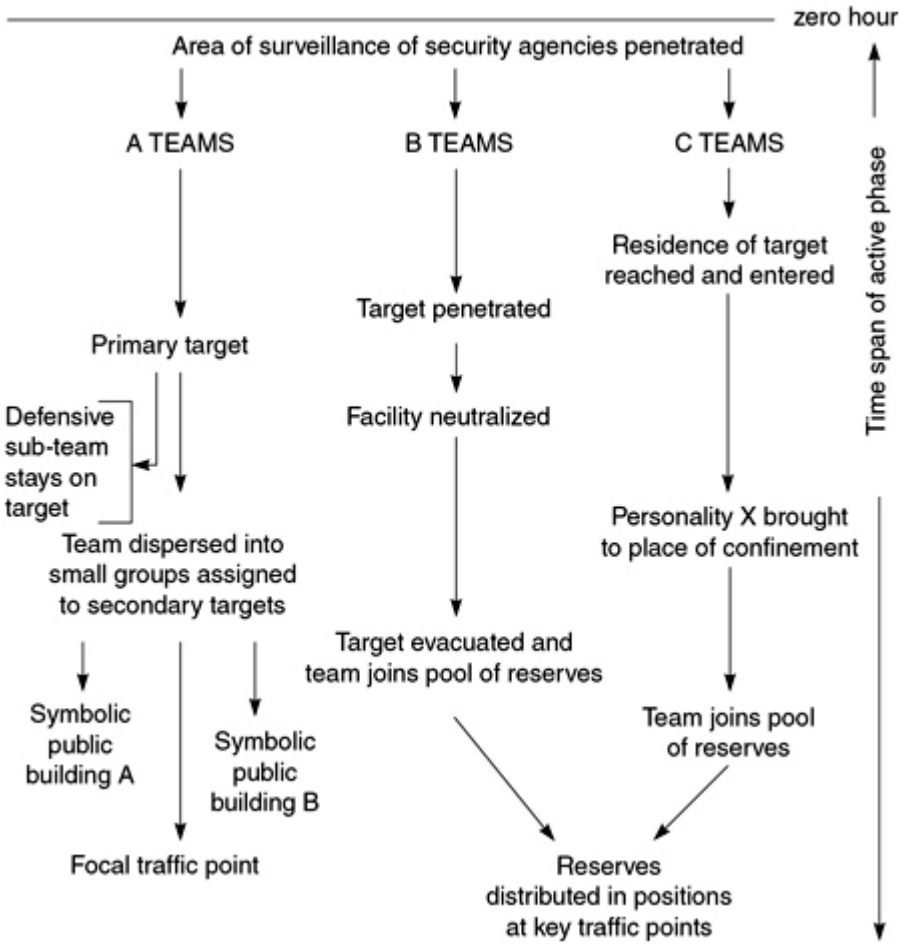



**Figure 5.1.** Operational sequence and timing.

Every move we make will generate information that could eventually reach the security agencies, but the consequences and misinterpretations of our actions will generate an equal or greater amount of "noise." This will make it increasingly difficult for the analysts of the security agencies to identify the nature of the threat because their capacity for processing information is not unlimited. This process is illustrated by Figure 5.2, in which *O–Z* is the normal level of "noise" received at all times, *O–A* is the processing capacity of the analysts at the security agencies, and *X* is the point beyond which the total flow of data exceeds processing capacity so that each item of real data is accorded a diminishing amount of attention.[b]

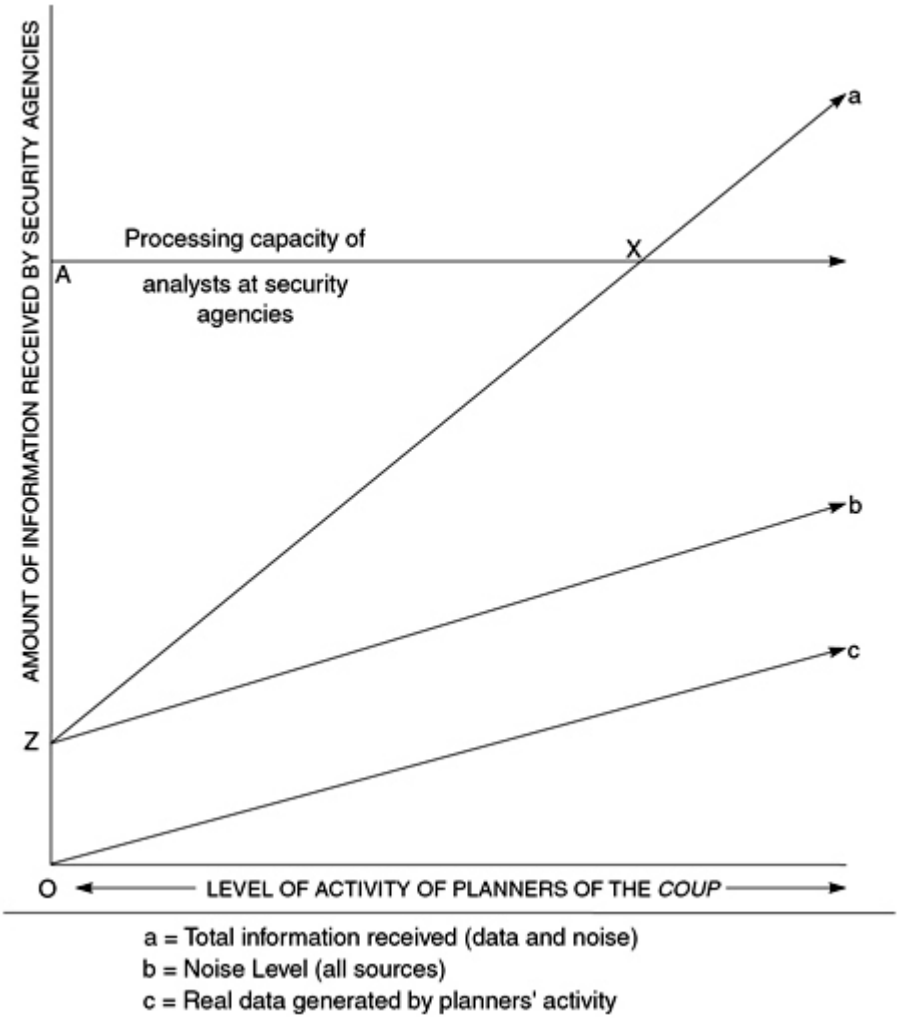



**Figure 5.2.** Intelligence "noise" and analysis; area of surveillance of security agencies penetrated.

Even if the security agencies could isolate the real data from the "noise," they will not usually take immediate action. Their professional instinct will be to try to uncover all the ramifications of the plot so as to be able to arrest all its participants. And it may be hoped that the *coup* will be executed while the security agencies are still engaged in their investigations. But their people will be aware of this timing problem and, therefore, are quite likely to respond to a possible threat by going ahead to arrest those of the planners of the *coup* that they have identified. This nervousness presents a special problem on the eve of the *coup:* our final preparations will probably generate a sharp increase in the total flow of "signals" received by the

security agencies. Even without separating them from "noise," the mere increase in the total flow of information could be interpreted as a danger signal (as it certainly would be by competent analysts) and this might trigger the arrests.

In practice, it will rarely be possible to achieve total security within all the forces of the *coup,* and we should assume as a working hypothesis that they have, in fact, been infiltrated by the security agency. This leads to the general defensive procedures discussed in Chapter 3, but it will also have precise operational implications:

*(a)* Each team will be told well in advance what equipment and tactics will be required to seize its particular target, but not the exact designation of the target.

*(b)* Each team will only be told its designated target when it actually receives the signal to proceed to its seizure.

*(c)* Each team will be alerted individually, with only as much advance warning as it requires to prepare for its particular task, instead of a general go-signal for all teams.

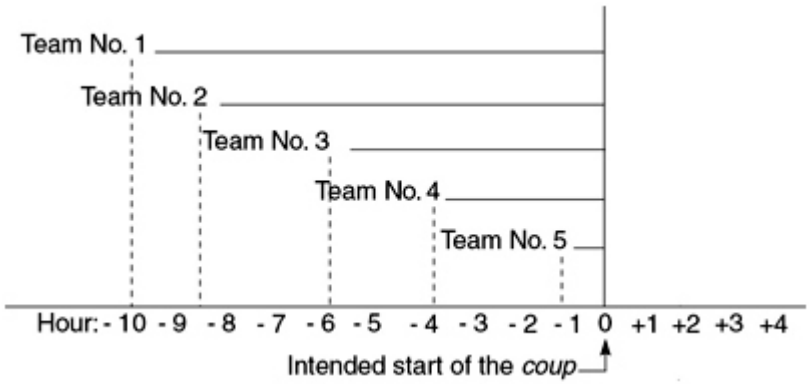



**Figure 5.3.** Lead time required by teams to reach their targets by zero hour.

Because the teams will have different starting points and different targets to go to, the use of any one general signal would either give insufficient

warning to some teams or an unnecessarily long one to others. The longer the time between the announcement that the *coup* is "on" and its actual execution, the greater the likelihood that information will reach the security agencies in time to prevent the successful execution of the *coup* because this will be the moment at which their operatives in our ranks could send out warnings.

The problem of warning time and lead time is illustrated in Figure 5.3. If we give all our teams a ten-hour warning period by sending out a general call at hour –10, then team No. 1 will just about reach its target in time, but all the other teams will have received "excess warning"; in other words, information will have been distributed before it was essential to do so. If we give all the teams a two-hour warning period, then "excess warning" will be zero but team No. 5 will reach its target several hours before team No. 1 and those defending it will probably be on a full alert. The solution appears to be a simple one: make warning time equal to lead time so that each team is alerted just in time to allow it to reach its target by the zero hour.

In reality, the problem is more complex. It is not a matter of simultaneous arrival at the target but rather of the simultaneous penetration of the early warning system maintained by the security agencies of the state. If, for example, team No. 2 has to cross the entire capital city to reach its target, the security agency will probably be alerted as soon as it enters the city at, say, hour –2. Thus, by the time team No. 4 reached its target, the opposition would have had two hours to prepare for its defense. We may have very little information on the functioning of the security apparatus, but we can operate on the assumption that a team (if it is large and/or equipped with armor) will be noticed and reported as soon as it enters the capital city. We must therefore ensure: *(a)* the protection of our security position against an internal threat, which is achieved by minimizing "excess warning time,"

and *(b)* the protection of our security position against external observation, which is achieved by simultaneous penetration of the capital city area.

Both aims will be achieved by sending the teams into action at a time corresponding to their "lead times" to the capital city boundary (or other applicable perimeter). This is illustrated in Figure 5.4.[c]

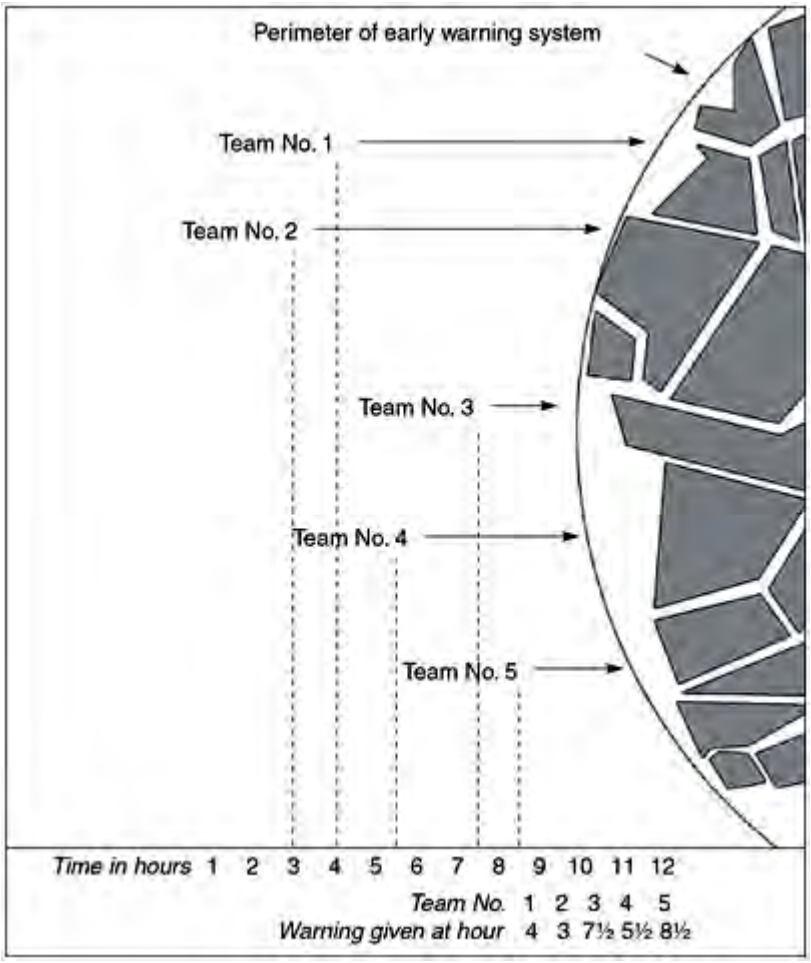



**Figure 5.4.** Simultaneous penetration of the defensive warning system and team warning time.

# Into Action

The actual execution of the *coup* will require many different qualities: skillful off-the-cuff diplomacy at a blocking position confronted by loyalist forces; instant personnel management at radio and television stations to persuade their technical staff to cooperate with us; and considerable tactical abilities in the case of targets that are heavily defended. Our resources will probably be too limited to form fully specialized teams out of the pool of those units and individuals that we have incorporated, but we should nevertheless match broad categories of targets with appropriate teams. We can distinguish between three such categories of targets and their corresponding teams:

## A-Targets

These are the more heavily protected facilities with armed guards and strict access-pass control, such as the royal or presidential palace, the central police station, and the army HQ. In times of crisis, of course, such facilities may be provided with full-fledged military defenses, and, in many countries, the crisis is permanent. Partly in order to minimize bloodshed, which could have a destabilizing effect on the situation, and partly in order to reduce the total manpower required, these targets will have to be seized by sophisticated teams using various blends of infiltration, diversion, and assault.[d]

Though it will usually be necessary to prepare for a fairly extensive military operation (and a complex one as well, unless we have great numerical superiority in the area of the target), this should not result in much actual combat: when those who guard the target in question are confronted by our extensive preparations, they are unlikely to put up much serious resistance. The fact that our general measures of neutralization have cut off or impeded their contacts with the leadership, the fact that the clear patriotic issues of international warfare will be missing in an internal conflict, and the fact that we will make every effort to allow them to give in gracefully by simply leaving or giving up their weapons, will all militate against a prolonged defense.

If we are fortunate enough to have incorporated a very large number of troops, and especially if they are equipped with impressive weapons such as armored vehicles, it will be still less likely that actual combat will take place. These targets will nevertheless indirectly present us with a very serious problem, though it is political rather than military: the formation of the large teams required by these targets will raise the delicate issue of the *coup*-within-the-*coup* danger. During the active phase of the *coup,* the

situation will be confused and extremely unstable; while the other teams will be too small to tempt their leaders into trying to usurp our control, the operational leaders of the A-teams may well succumb to temptation. The man who leads the tanks that have just seized the presidential palace may easily persuade himself that he can also seize power on his own behalf, and if the A-team is sufficiently powerful, he may do just that. Our satisfaction at having carried out a *coup* successfully would be an insufficient reward for all our efforts unless we also retain power afterward. It will be necessary, then, to adopt measures to prevent the leaders of these large teams from challenging our position: this can sometimes be done by forming the A-teams from many small subunits under the overall command of an inner member of our own group. Where this is not possible, the A-teams will have to be dispersed into smaller groups assigned to secondary targets as soon as they have fulfilled their primary mission. Thus, the possible threat presented by the A-teams will be deflected by applying the energies of their leaders to other tasks. The operational commanders of the A-teams will probably need a certain amount of time to readjust to the fact that they are no longer isolated individuals engaged on a dangerous endeavor and to start thinking in more ambitious terms. Matters should be so arranged that they are deprived of their large and unified teams before the transition is made in their minds.

## B-Targets

These are the technical facilities that will not usually be heavily guarded, and which in any case we want to neutralize rather than seize, among them any central telecommunications facility, and radio/television stations. Each of those targets will be assigned to a small team whose personnel will include a technician whose presence should help to minimize the amount of physical damage resulting from sabotage. If it is possible to interdict these targets by minor and external sabotage, the B-team may consist of just one or two technically competent operators. Even if the actual building has to be entered for a short time, the B-team will still be a small one; in this case, however, it should be overt and consist of uniformed soldiers or police.

## C-Targets

These are the individuals we wish to hold in isolation for the duration of the *coup.* In the case of the main leader(s) of the government, the arrests will be subsumed in the seizure of the presidential palace and similar A-targets; the other C-targets should not present a penetration problem, but they will present an evasion problem. A radio station or a royal palace can be very difficult targets to seize, but at least they cannot escape or conceal their identity. The personalities whom we wish to arrest will try to do both. It will therefore be essential to devote our early attentions to these targets to ensure that they are seized before they can evade our teams. This will usually imply that the C-teams will go into operation marginally earlier than the other teams, and they can do so without breaking the rule of simultaneous penetration of the "early warning system" because they should be sufficiently small and dispersed to act covertly.

Because those targets are human, they will be inherently more problematic than some of our other objectives; the individuals concerned, apart from escaping or concealing their identity, could also try to subvert the very teams sent to arrest them. In the case of particularly charismatic figures, our teams will have to be formed from especially selected personnel; in some cases, it may even be necessary to include an inner member of our group. These C-teams will be small, since their task will be a matter of entering a private residence and overpowering one or two guards. The exact size of each team will depend on the overall balance of resources and requirements under which we operate, but will rarely exceed a dozen men or so.

Once the individuals that form this group of targets have been arrested, we will have to ensure that they are kept under a secure form of control. Our purpose in arresting them is to prevent them from using their command

authority and/or personal charisma against us, and this can only be achieved if we can insulate them from their public for the whole duration of the *coup.* Such individuals are often the only casualties of otherwise bloodless *coups* because it is often easier to eliminate them rather than keep them as captives; if we do keep them, the ad hoc prison used must be both secret and internally secure. The liberation of a popular public figure could be a powerful focus of counter-*coup* actions on the part of the opposition, so secrecy will be a more reliable defense than any physical barrier.

While the teams are on their way to their respective targets, our other allies will also come into action: the individuals we have subverted in various parts of the armed forces and bureaucracy will carry out their limited missions of technical neutralization. And the groups assigned to the blocking positions will be moving to take up their planned locations designed to isolate the loyalist forces. In the case of these dispersed individuals, whose contribution will be extremely important though almost totally invisible, there will be a signaling problem: since they are scattered throughout the sensitive parts of the state apparatus, it will be difficult to reach them individually. Furthermore, they may include informants of the security agencies because, unlike the personnel of the various teams and blocking forces, they have been recruited as isolated individuals—hence the mutual surveillance exercised on our behalf in the teams will not operate. It would be dangerous to give them advance warning of the *coup,* and their signal to go into action will have to be our first broadcast on the radio/television station, except in particular cases where the facility to be neutralized requires early attention.

Our operational control over the various groups cooperating with us will aim at achieving two objectives: *(a)* as always, maximum speed in the execution of their tasks, and *(b)* the use of the absolute minimum of force. This will be important not only because of the psychological and political

factors previously mentioned, but also for a more direct, technical reason: the external uniformity between the two sides of the conflict. Our teams will, of course, be nationals of the country in which the *coup* is being staged, and most of them will be soldiers and police officers wearing the same uniforms as those of the opposition. This uniformity will give us a measure of protection since the loyalist forces will not readily know who is loyal and who is not. Usually it would be a mistake to prejudice this protective cover by adopting distinctive armbands or other conventional labels, since we will need all the protection we can get. Thus, as the teams move around the capital city (probably at night), they will probably not be fired upon, unless they open fire first; to do so, however, would be to facilitate the work of the opposition since this will be their only way of distinguishing between their own forces and ourselves. And since our teams have always been kept separate, initially to prevent the penetration of the security agencies and now to protect our own position within the forces of the *coup,* there will be a danger of conflict between our own teams. The confusion we generate in the minds of the opposition could, therefore, exact a price in confusion within our own ranks; this may have serious consequences unless our forces respect the rule of a minimal and purely defensive use of force.

## The Immediate Post-*Coup* Situation

Once our targets have been seized, the loyalist forces have been isolated, and the rest of the bureaucracy and armed forces have been neutralized, the active (and more mechanical) phase of the *coup* will be over. But everything will still be in the balance: the old regime will have been deprived of its control over the critical parts of the mechanism of the state, but we ourselves will not yet be in control of it, except in a purely physical sense and then only in the area of the capital city. If we can retain our control over what we have seized, those political forces whose primary requirement is the preservation of law and order will probably give us their allegiance. Our objective, therefore, is to freeze the situation so that this process can take place. Until the actual execution of the *coup,* our aim was to destabilize the situation; afterward, however, all our efforts should be directed at stabilizing, or rather restabilizing, it.

We will be doing this at three different levels: *(a)* among our own forces, where our aim is to prevent our military or police allies from usurping our leadership; *(b)* within the state bureaucracy, whose allegiance and cooperation we wish to secure; and *(c)* with the public at large, whose acceptance we want to gain. In each case, we will be using our leverage within one level in order to control the next one, but each level will also require separate and particular measures.

## Stabilizing Our Own Forces

During the planning stage, our recruits in the armed forces will be fully conscious of the fact that the success of the *coup*—and their own safety—depends on the work of coordination that we perform. Immediately after the *coup,* however, the only manifestation of all our efforts will be the direct force that they themselves control. In these circumstances, they may well be tempted into trying a *coup* of their own, and they could do this by establishing contact with the other military leaders we have recruited so as to secure their agreement to our exclusion from the leadership. Apart from the dispersal countermeasures discussed earlier, our only effective defense will be to retain full control over all horizontal communications, or, in other words, to remain the only contact between each military leader we have recruited and his colleagues. This can sometimes be done technically, by keeping under our control the actual communication equipment linking the various units, but this would only be effective in unusually extensive capital cities and would, in any case, break down after a relatively short period of time.

Typically, we will need somewhat more subtle political and psychological methods to keep the various military leaders we have recruited well separated from each other. This may involve promises of accelerated promotion to selected younger officers who could not otherwise expect very rapid advancement, even within the limited context of those who have participated in the *coup.* It will also be useful to remind our military and police allies that their colleagues outside the conspiracy may try to displace them en bloc unless they—and we—form a tight and mutually supporting group. In general, we should ensure that all those who could pose an internal threat are kept occupied on tasks which, whether essential or not, will at least absorb their energies, and that there are

divisive factors operating between them. As soon as we begin to receive the allegiance of military and bureaucratic leaders who were previously outside the conspiracy, our leverage with our military and police recruits will increase very substantially. The problem of retaining control against such internal threats will, therefore, be largely short term.

As soon as our position has been established, our best policy may be to dispose of our dangerous allies by using all the usual methods available for the purpose: diplomatic posting abroad, nominal and/or remote command positions, and promotions to less vital parts of the state apparatus. Because it is possible that an embryonic *coup*-within-our-*coup* has existed within our forces from the very beginning, the general security measures we designed to protect ourselves against the penetration of the security agencies will also serve a useful supplementary function: they will prevent the lateral spread of the conspiracy. If our internal security procedures are sufficiently good to prevent all contact between the separate cells, so that any infiltration by the security agencies is contained, they will also prevent the coordination of this inner opposition.

It has been calculated[e] that in a defensive military situation, even if only 20 percent of the troops of a unit are actively loyal, the units concerned should operate successfully and perform their assigned function. And though, in aggregate terms, our forces will be operating offensively vis-à-vis the uninfiltrated forces of the state, their outlook will be defensive both psychologically and tactically. Thus, even though it would be unusual to have the complete loyalty of those who (since they joined our *coup* in the first place) must be to some extent inherently disloyal, our forces should still perform successfully.

## Stabilizing the Bureaucracy

Our attitude toward the second level, the armed forces and bureaucracy which were not infiltrated before the *coup,* will depend partly on the degree of control that we have over our own "incorporated" forces. Assuming that we have a reasonably firm hold over them, we should not try to extract any early commitment from the majority of soldiers and bureaucrats whose first information of our existence will be the *coup* itself. Not knowing the extent of the conspiracy, their principal preoccupation will be the possible danger to their positions in the hierarchy: if most of the officers of the armed forces or the officials of a ministry have joined the *coup,* those who have not are hardly likely to be rewarded subsequently by rapid promotion. If the soldiers and bureaucrats realized that the group participating in the *coup* was, in reality, quite small, they would also realize the strength of their own position: the fact is that they are collectively indispensable to any government, including the one to be formed after the *coup.* In the period immediately after the *coup,* however, they will probably see themselves as isolated individuals whose careers, and even lives, could be in danger. This feeling of insecurity may precipitate two alternative reactions, both extreme: they will either step forward to assert their loyalty to the leaders of the *coup,* or else they will try to foment or join in opposition against us. Both reactions are undesirable from our point of view. Assertions of loyalty will usually be worthless because they are made by men who have just abandoned their previous, and possibly more legitimate, masters; opposition will always be dangerous and sometimes disastrous. Our policy toward the military and bureaucratic cadres will be to reduce this sense of insecurity. We should establish direct communication with as many of the more senior officers and officials as possible to convey one principal idea in a forceful and convincing manner: that the *coup* will not threaten their positions in the

hierarchy and the aims of the *coup* do not include a reshaping of the existing military or administrative structures.[f] This requirement will, incidentally, have technical implications in the planning stage, when the sabotage of the means of communication must be carried out so as to be easily reversible.

The information campaign over the mass media will also reach this narrow but important section of the population, but it would be highly desirable to have more direct and confidential means of communication with them. The general political aims of the *coup* as expressed in our pronouncements on the radio and television will help to package our tacit deal with the bureaucrats and soldiers, but its real content will be the assurance that their careers are not threatened. In dealing with particular army or police officers who control especially important forces or with important bureaucrats, we may well decide to go further, in the sense that an actual exchange of promises of mutual support may take place. We should, however, remember that our main strength lies in the fact that only we have a precise idea of the extent of our power. It would be unwise to enter into agreements that show we need support urgently; more generally, any information that reveals the limits of our capabilities could threaten our position, which is essentially based on the fact that our inherent weakness is concealed. Again, as in the case of our own incorporated forces, we should make every effort to prevent communication between the cadres of the armed forces and bureaucracy outside our group. Such communication would usually be indispensable to those who may seek to stage a counter-*coup;* the ignorance of the extent of the conspiracy will discourage such consultations: it is obviously dangerous to ask somebody to participate in the opposition to a group of which he is himself a member. But we should also interfere with such consultations directly, by using our control of the transport and communications infrastructure.

## From Power to Authority: Stabilizing the Masses

The masses have neither the weapons of the military nor the administrative facilities of the bureaucracy, but their attitude to the new government established after the *coup* will ultimately be decisive. Our immediate aim will be to enforce public order, but our long-term objective is to gain the acceptance of the masses so that physical coercion will no longer be needed in order to secure compliance with our orders. In both phases, we shall use our control over the infrastructure and the means of coercion, but as the *coup* recedes in time, political means will become increasingly important, physical ones less so.

Our first measures, to be taken immediately after the active phase of the *coup,* will be designed to freeze the situation by imposing physical immobility. A total curfew, the interruption of all forms of public transport, the closing of all public buildings and facilities, and the interruption of the telecommunication services will prevent—or, at any rate, impede—active resistance to us. Organized resistance will be very difficult because there will be no way of inspiring and coordinating our potential opponents; unorganized resistance on the part of a mob will, on the other hand, be prevented because the people who might form such a mob would have to violate the curfew while acting as individuals, and not many will do this without the protective shelter of anonymity that only a crowd can provide.

The impact of our physical measures will be reduced outside the capital city, but, to the extent that the capital city is the focus of the national network of transport and communications, both physical movement and the flow of information will be impeded. The physical controls will be purely negative and defensive in character, and our reliance on them could be minimal because their concomitant effect is to enhance the importance of the armed forces we have subverted.

Our second and far more flexible instrument will be our control over the means of mass communications; their importance will be particularly great because the flow of all other information, notably social media via the Internet, will be filtered or blocked by our controls. Moreover, the confused and dramatic events of the *coup* will mean that the radio and television services will have a particularly attentive and receptive audience. In broadcasting over the radio and television services, our purpose is not to provide information about the situation but rather to affect its development by exploiting our monopoly of those media—in the context of filtered or blocked social media. We will have two principal objectives in the information campaign that will start immediately after the *coup: (a)* to discourage resistance to us by emphasizing the strength of our position and *(b)* to dampen the fears that would otherwise give rise to such resistance.

Our first objective will be achieved by conveying the reality and strength of the *coup* instead of trying to justify it; this will be done by listing the controls we have imposed, by emphasizing that law and order have been fully restored, and by stating that all resistance has ceased (see Table 5.2). One of the major obstacles to active resistance will be the fact that we have fragmented the opposition so that each individual opponent would have to operate in isolation, cut off from friends and associates. In these circumstances, the news of any resistance against us would act as a powerful stimulant to further resistance by breaking down this feeling of isolation. We must make every effort, therefore, to withhold such news. If there is, in fact, some resistance, and if its intensity and locale are such as to make it difficult to conceal from particular segments of the public, we should admit its existence; but we should strongly emphasize that it is *isolated*—the product of the obstinacy of a few misguided or dishonest individuals who are not affiliated with any party or group of significant membership. The constant working of the motif of isolation, the repetition

of long and detailed lists of the administrative and physical controls we have imposed, and the emphasis on the fact that law and order have been reestablished should have the effect of making resistance appear both dangerous and useless.

**Table 5.2.** The first communiqué: a choice of styles

*The romantic/lyrical*

"This is not a communiqué, but an avowal, an undertaking and an appeal. It is an avowal of the situation in which the Army and the People have been reduced by a handful of evil men … it is an undertaking to wash clean the shame and disgrace suffered by the Army … it is finally a call to arms and to honour."

*Captain Mustafa Hamdun, Aleppo Radio, 6:30 A.M., February 25, 1954*

*The messianic*

"The bourgeoisie is abolished … a new era of equality between all citizens is inaugurated … all agreements with foreign countries will be respected."

*Colonel Jean-Bédel Bokassa, Central African Republic, January 15, 1966*

*The unprepared*

"[This rebellion has been made for] a strong united and prosperous Nigeria free from corruption and internal strife … Looting, arson, *homosexuality,* rape, embezzlement, bribery, corruption, sabotage and false alarm will be punishable by death." (emphasis added)

*Major Nzeogwu, Radio Kaduna, Nigeria, January 15, 1966*

*The rational-administrative*

"The myth surrounding Kwame Nkrumah has been broken … [He] ruled the country as if it were his private property … [his] capricious handling of the country's economic affairs … brought the country to the point of economic collapse … We hope to announce measures for curing the country's troubles within a few days … the future definitely bright."

*Radio communiqué of Ghana's National Liberation Council, February 1966*

The second objective of our information campaign will be to reassure the general public by dispelling fears that the *coup* is inspired by foreign and/or extremist elements, and to persuade particular groups that the *coup* is not a threat to them. The first aim will be achieved by manipulating national symbols and by asserting our belief in the prevailing pieties: in the Arab world, the new regime will announce its belief in the Arab identity and Islam; where the Ba'ath party was institutionalized, as in Syria, it would have been necessary to assert our loyalty to the "true" Ba'ath, not the

corrupted one of the deposed dictator. In Africa, the new regime will announce its intention of fighting tribalism at home and racialism abroad; in Latin America, the need to secure social justice will be invoked. Everywhere in the Third World, nationalist rhetoric will be used and references made to the glorious people of X and the glorious land of X, which the last regime has degraded; above all, repeated denunciations of neo-, and not so neo-colonialism are de rigueur. Such denunciations will be particularly important where there is a large foreign business enterprise operating in the country in question; the inevitable suspicions that the *coup* is a product of the machinations of "the company" can only be dispelled by making violent attacks on it. These, being verbal and not unexpected, will pacify the public without disturbing the business interests, and the attacks should be all the more violent if these suspicions are, in fact, justified.

While the religious attitude leads to the praise of the gods for one's successes and self-blame for one's failures, the nationalist attitude is to attribute successes to the nation and to blame foreigners for its failures. Similarly, the chants in praise of the gods have been replaced by ritualized curses variously addressed to different groups of foreigners and their activities. Thus, for the phrase "the imperialist-neo-colonial power bloc," read the Americans—or the French if it is spoken by Africans of their former colonies; similarly, the phrase "Zionist oil monopolist plotters" translates into Jews and Christians in the subconscious of the Muslim Arabs who make use of it.

There may be a purely ideological element in these denunciations, but even in the 1950s—when the American extreme right used to denounce "the international conspiracy of godless Communism"—it is significant that they stigmatized it as "un-American" rather than anticapitalist. We shall make use of a suitable selection of these unlovely phrases; though their meaning has been totally obscured by constant and deliberate misuse,[g] they

will be useful as indicators of our impeccable nationalism, and if that is not, in reality, our position, they will serve to obscure our true policy aims.

The flow of information emanating from all the sources under our control should be coordinated with our other measures: the impositions of physical controls will be announced and explained, and the political moves, to which we now turn, will be suitably presented. Physical coercion will deter or defeat direct opposition, while the information campaign will lay the basis of our eventual acquisition of authority, but only political means will secure for us a base of active support. Where the pre-*coup* regime was exceptionally brutal, corrupt, or retrograde, the leaders of the *coup* will have little trouble in gaining a generalized form of acceptance; even then, however, the active support of specific groups can only be gained by political accommodation, i.e., by sponsoring policies that serve the interests of particular groups, thus giving them reasons for becoming committed to (or at least interested in) our survival. In some Latin American countries, for example, we could gain the support of the landless peasants by announcing our intention of carrying out a program of agrarian reform. In West Africa, we could announce our intention of increasing the prices paid to peasant producers by the cocoa marketing board. In Greece and Turkey, where there is a heavy burden of agrarian indebtedness, we could announce a general cancellation of bank debts. Each of these policy announcements will bind the interests of a large and politically powerful group to our government unless we are overtaken by other rival announcements, but it will also lead to the hostility of other groups, whose interests are damaged by our intended policies. In Latin America, where the peasants would benefit, the landlords would lose; in Africa, the urban population would be the loser; in Greece, the taxpayer would bear the burden of agricultural debt relief. Thus, the backing of one interest group will generally have as its concomitant the loss of support of—or even actual hostility from—other

groups. Clearly, it will be necessary to estimate the net political support that a given policy announcement will generate. This will mean taking into account not only the political significance of each group but also the immediacy of its political power. In the context of a Latin American post-*coup* situation, for example, the goodwill of remote and dispersed peasants will not help us much against the immediate and powerful opposition of bureaucratic and military cadres. If, on the other hand, our short-term position is strong but we are threatened by a longer-term usurpation of power on the part of our military allies, our objective will be to create a counterweight capable, eventually, of becoming a source of direct strength —a peasants' militia, for example. Thus, whether we opt for a "left" policy of land reform and longer-term campesino support or for a "right" policy of peasant repression and immediate landowner support will depend on the balance between the strength of our short- and our long-term positions.

The almost mechanical elements that are important in the special climate of the immediate post-*coup* period will distort the normal balance between the political forces of the country concerned. If, therefore, our short-term position is not fragile, we should repress the agitation of those forces that possess a disproportionate strength in the short term and concentrate instead on cultivating the support of those groups whose longer-term strength is far greater.

An element in our strategy after the *coup* is halfway between the information and the political campaign: the problem of "legitimizing" the *coup*.

Clearly the *coup* is, by definition, illegal, but whether this illegality matters—and whether it is possible to counteract its effects—will depend on the total political environment of the country in question.

We have seen in Chapter 2 that in much of the world—except for the "rule of law" countries—the legitimacy or lack of legitimacy of the

government will not matter greatly. For example, as of 2015, Italy is ruled by Matteo Renzi's government, whose ministers included young and attractive female parliamentarians of his own Partito Democratico, as well as defectors from the Forza Italia Party of Silvio Berlusconi (who also promoted female parliamentarians, so long as they were pretty), and members of several minor parties, giving Renzi a total of 395 seats out of 630, enough to rule. But all were elected (along with Renzi himself) in 2013, when his party was headed by Pier Luigi Bersani, not Renzi. In fact, Renzi only became the head of government by winning an internal party primary and then cutting a deal with Berlusconi; essentially, Italians ended up being ruled by a politician whom they never elected except as a parliamentarian. But this in itself generates opposition to the young and personable Renzi. First, what Renzi did is allowed by the constitutional system in place, even though it allows a postelectoral primary that leaves most Italians unrepresented. Besides, in Italy legality is, in any case, optional, especially in politics, with contempt for the law much intensified by the transparently politicized prosecutions of Italian magistrates, who openly consort in political groupings of their own, notably the left-wing Magistratura Democratica. As far as we are concerned, Italy is definitely not a rule-of-law country, and our illegitimacy will be easily swallowed if all else is in place.

• • •

One way of legitimizing the post-*coup* government has already been mentioned in the discussion of the selection of the personalities to be arrested—the retention of the nominal head of state (where such a constitutional role exists) as our own highly nominal head of state as well. In this way, the appearance of continuity will be maintained and with it the appearance of legitimacy. Where the head of state is not nominal, as in

presidential regimes, other tactics will have to be used: the announcement of forthcoming elections or a referendum (as a sort of ex-post facto legitimization) or, alternatively, the *coup* can be openly admitted as an extra-constitutional intervention, but one made against an unconstitutional regime. One illegality will then be represented as being the cause of the other, but we shall declare that whereas the illegality of the pre-*coup* regime was *voluntary* and *permanent,* ours is *necessary* and *temporary.*

Such techniques will be of limited value in conducting the political processes required to create a base of active support and to secure our authority because everything will depend on the specific political environment in which we shall be operating; one particular problem, however, requires further exploration: recognition by foreign powers. This is almost always important, but for the poorest countries whose *pays réel* lies outside their own borders, it will be a crucial problem. When much of the available disposable funds come from foreign aid both official and via non-governmental organizations, and when foreign cadres carry out vital administrative, technical, and sometimes even military functions, the maintenance of good relations with the particular donor country or countries concerned may well be a determining factor in our political survival after the *coup.*

Premature recognition by a foreign power, i.e., recognition granted while the old regime still retains some degree of control, is becoming regarded as a form of aggression in international law. Beyond that, however, recognition is usually granted even to very illegitimate governments after a polite interval if there are convincing assurances about their continuity in terms of foreign relations. These assurances are conveyed simply and publicly by formal announcements stating that membership in alliances and groupings will be maintained, that foreign agreements and obligations will be respected, and that legitimate foreign interests in the country concerned will

not be harmed. Thus, the leaders of Ghana's well-named National Liberation Council, formed after the overthrow of the historic independence leader Nkrumah, announced that Ghana would retain her membership in the Commonwealth, the Organization of African Unity, and the United Nations, and would respect all obligations assumed by Nkrumah's regime. Similarly, Arab post-*coup* regimes habitually announce that they will remain in the Arab League, and Latin American regimes pledge to remain members of the Organization of American States. Far more important than these declarations is the considerable diplomatic activity that will take place after the *coup* (and sometimes even before it). The purpose of these diplomatic exchanges will be to clarify the political situation and, nowadays, to indicate—or to dissemble—the ideological orientation of the planners of the *coup.* Most countries of the world follow British diplomatic doctrine in granting recognition to regimes on the basis of the effective control of their territories, if only after a decent interval (at present, the rabidly Islamist AKP government of Turkey opposes the overthrow of Egypt's Islamist government by the armed forces—fearing that Turkey's armed forces might do the same—but does not withhold recognition). In any case, the doctrine of effective control is as flexible as definitions of "control," so that recognition can sometimes be withheld if the pre-*coup* regime retains even a tenuous hold over some part of the national territory.

After the necessary exchanges of information and assurances, the new government will usually be recognized; this will occur even if its illegality is an embarrassment, as in the case of the United States and Latin American *coups,* or if its ideological orientation is distasteful, as the Ghanaian and Indonesian *coups* were for the Soviet Union at the time. Prolonged nonrecognition is a rarity—one example was the widespread refusal to recognize Madagascar's Haute Authorité de la Transition, which came to

power by force in 2009 and did not organize elections till the end of 2013 (it did, however, restore democratic rule in 2014).

Diplomatic recognition is one of the elements in the general process of establishing the authority of the new government; until this is achieved, we will have to rely on the brittle instruments of physical coercion, and our position will be vulnerable to many threats—including that of another *coup d'état.*

[a] An expression used in the intelligence community to describe false, irrelevant, obsolete, or premature information that is reported alongside valid "signals," i.e., "accurate" data.

[b] The specialized nature of the security agencies' work impedes a rapid expansion of their capacity, and even if such an expansion could take place, it would only be carried out if and when the real threat is identified. This is precisely what the "noise" problem prevents them from doing.

[c] In the figure, the "early warning system" is shown as a clearly delineated perimeter, but in reality, it will be a general area with vaguely defined borders. We will adopt as a perimeter whichever approximation suits the circumstances.

[d] The operational detail involved is discussed in Appendix B.

[e] The calculations are based on the performance of ex-Soviet Ukrainian and Uzbek troops used by the Germans in defensive positions during the Normandy landings in the Second World War.

[f] Even when the *coup* is a vehicle for a political group that seeks to achieve fundamental social change, the short-term objective is to stabilize the bureaucracy and the armed forces. Later, when alternative sources of direct force and political support have been established, the machinery of the state can be re-shaped into an instrument suitable for revolutionary change.

[g] On June 12, 1967, East German radio referred to the "Nazi atrocities committed by the Jews against the Arabs of Gaza," who were described as "victims of a Zionist-revanchist-imperialist plot."

# *Appendix A*

# The Economics of Repression

Once we have carried out our *coup* and established control over the bureaucracy and the armed forces, our long-term political survival will depend largely on our management of the problem of economic development. Economic development is generally regarded as "a good thing," and almost everybody wants more of it, but for us—the newly established government of X-land—the pursuit of economic development will be undesirable because it militates against our main goal: political stability.

An economy develops by extending and improving its stock of human and physical capital, and this requires investment, whether to train people or to build factories. In order to invest, current income has to be withdrawn from would-be consumers and channeled away to create capital. Clearly, the higher the rate of investment, the faster the development of the economy, but also the lower the *present* standard of living. The governments of economically backward countries—where the need for development is manifest—are, therefore, faced with the alternative of either slow economic development or further reduction of the already desperately low standard of living. The more that can be taxed from current incomes, the nearer the beautiful dawn of prosperity—even if it is the prosperity of Spain rather

than that of North America. But there are limits to the amount of savings that can be forced out of a population whose annual income per head is already very low: there is an economic survival limit below which the population—or a large part of it—would simply starve (or retreat into the pure subsistence economy), but well before this point is reached, there is a political survival limit below which we, as the government, would be overthrown. The economic survival limit is more or less rigid: in any particular environment with a given climate, pattern of nutrition, habits, and traditions, there will be a minimum annual income that an inhabitant of average resourcefulness will need to satisfy his and his family's bodily needs. The "political survival limit" is, however, very flexible, and it will depend on psychological, historical, and social factors, as well as on the efficiency of the system of state security and of the propaganda machine.

The problem was particularly acute in the newly independent states of the Third World. The colonial regimes may or may not have tried to achieve economic development, but, if they did try, it was without the urgency that the new postcolonial regimes tried to achieve. Immediately after independence, then, instead of the increase in the standard of living that the native population had been led to expect, the opposite took place. The new "independence" government had to increase taxes and import duties in order to finance the great projects with which economic development often starts: roads, hydropower dams, harbors, and the like. Foreign aid, which many in the "donor" countries have been led to believe to be very substantial,[a] only contributes a fraction of the necessary funds. Except to the extent that foreign investment arrives—and it does, but only in some countries—most of the money has to come out of current incomes so that if development efforts are serious, the level of private consumption actually falls. This impoverishment of those who are already very poor is not easily

tolerated—especially when the mechanism of expectations has been built up.

Our basic problem, therefore, is to achieve economic development—in order to satisfy the aspirations of the elite and would-be elite[b]—without taxing the masses beyond the politically safe limit, which could lead to their revolt. There are two main instruments with which we can persuade the masses to accept the sacrifice of present consumption for the sake of an increased future income: propaganda and repression[c] or, more efficiently, by a mixture of both. Imagine, therefore, that we have inherited a country with a backward economy, a poor but not particularly poor country, with a gross domestic product per head of US$2,000 per year, and that US$200 of this was paid out in various taxes while US$1,800 was spent on current consumption, or saved. Now we know that only US$500 per inhabitant per year is needed for economic survival, and the problem is to get ahold of some of the difference in order to finance development—and to do so without being overthrown. If we simply increase taxes, the chances are that part of the population will refuse to pay them, and if administrative methods are used in order to enforce payment, a violent reaction may ensue. We will, therefore, divert some of the modest tax payments received, now US$200 from other uses, and spend it on propaganda and the police.

By spending just US$10 per person per year on propaganda and an efficient police system, we have lowered the political survival limit by US$100, and after deducting the amount spent on the system of repression and persuasion, we still have US$90. If we spend another US$10 per person per year, the chances are that we will be able to “liberate” some more of the possible margin above the survival limit; however, as we spend more and more money on repression, we are likely to find that it will lower the safety limit by less and less (see Figure A.1). And, of course, as we spend more and more on the police and propaganda, we will find that while the first

extra US$100 of taxes costs us US$10 to obtain with safety, the next US$100 will cost, say, US$20. Eventually, the point is reached where (as shown in Figure A.1) further expenditure brings us no increase in taxation at all. At that point, we spend an extra amount per year and get no increase at all in the taxes that can safely be collected. Well before that point is reached, however, there will be an earlier stage when we will spend, say, an extra US$10 on repression and persuasion and get exactly the same sum in further taxes. Immediately before *that* point is the *maximum efficiency* level of expenditure on the police and propaganda machine.

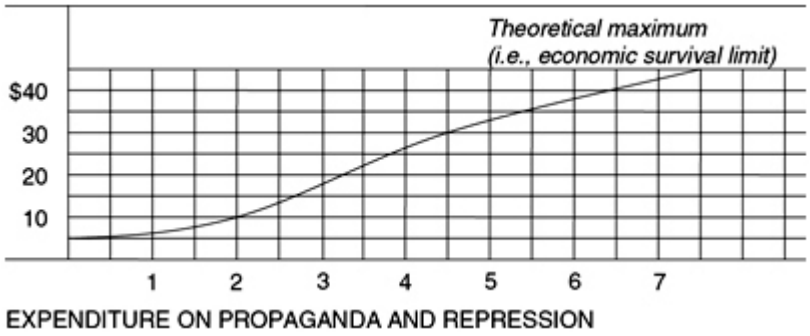



**Figure A.1.** Political survival limit on taxation.

# Maximum Safety and Zero Economic Development

This is the formula that Haiti's dictator François "Doc" Duvalier applied in Haiti with increasing thoroughness from his rise to power in 1957 till his unlamented death in 1971 (see Figure A.2). Taxation, which was heavy for a country with an extremely low income per head, was spent almost entirely on the army, the police, and Duvalier's very own Tonton Macoute militia, credited with some 30,000 murders, and on propaganda designed to inculcate fear of Duvalier's powers, including his voodoo magic. The only major project was useless: the building of a new capital, "Duvalierville," which, in any case, was suspended and then abandoned.

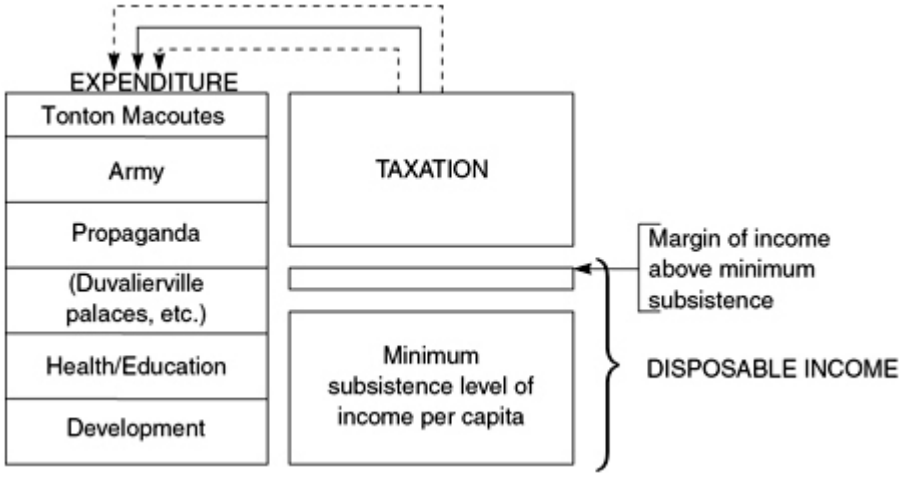



**Figure A.2.** The Duvalier formula: political security = maximum economic development = zero.

The Duvalier mix of efficient repression, pervasive propaganda, and no economic development at all paid off: he lasted in power continuously for fourteen years, and was then followed by his son Jean Claude "Baby Doc," who lasted fifteen more years. The Tonton Macoutes operated as a semipublic presidential guard and were able to add to their generous salaries by private exactions from the diminishing business sector. The propaganda machine, which involves ceremonial parades, laudatory films, and the projection of Papa Doc as a voodoo master, was almost as expensive to run as the Tonton Macoutes—but evidently useful. The extreme poverty of the population meant that their level of political awareness and even physical vitality was extremely low; meanwhile, the Tonton Macoutes who terrorized everyone else were themselves captive to Duvalier's will because, without his voodoo authority, the army and police would combine to massacre the Tonton Macoutes.

Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and many other African leaders now dead, in prison, or in exile, differed radically from Duvalier's formula by following policies of high taxation and investment associated with clearly insufficient propaganda and repression efforts. Nkrumah, in spite of his eccentricities, was largely defeated by his own success: the by-product of the considerable economic development achieved by Ghana was to

stimulate and educate the masses and the new elite; their attitude to Nkrumah's regime became more and more critical in light of the education the regime itself provided. When this happens, more and more repression and propaganda are needed to maintain political stability. In spite of considerable efforts, Nkrumah was unable to build a sufficiently ruthless police system. The cause of his downfall was not, therefore, the mismanagement of the economy—which was considerable—but rather the success of much of the development effort.

The middle way—efficient repression, extensive propaganda, and vigorous economic development to create new elites that accept or even support the regime—has long been followed successfully in China. Repression, propaganda, and economic growth are all interchangeable up to a point, and the most effective mix to preserve the regime will depend on the particular country and its political culture.

[a] Foreign aid has been *falling* as a percentage of GNP in the developed countries for many years.

[b] For the elite, economic development subsumes the national goal of modernization with the personal goal of expanded career opportunities. For the new generation of educated citizens (the would-be elite), economic development is a guarantee of employment—and the unemployed intelligentsia is a major threat to many regimes in the Third World.

[c] By "propaganda," we mean the whole range of activities whose content is information or entertainment and whose function, in this case, is *(a)* to distract attention from present hardship and *(b)* to justify it in terms of assured future happiness. This may or may not involve the presentation of the outside world as even less well off, but it will almost certainly present the past standard of living as much inferior. An equally important aim of propaganda will be to persuade the masses that the present leadership is the most efficient vehicle for modernization; this can be done in rational terms by using statistical images, or by irrational ones that present the leadership as superhuman. By "repression," we mean the whole range of political police activities that aim at: *(a)* suppressing individual political activity by surveillance and imprisonment, *(b)* intimidating the masses by displays of force, and *(c)* preventing the circulation of rival information by controlling the media and inhibiting public discussion.

# *Appendix B*

# Tactical Aspects of the *Coup d'État*

In the decisive (active) phase of the *coup,* the forces we have acquired by infiltrating and subverting the system of state security will be used to seize certain objectives or to neutralize selected facilities. To do this, force will be essential, but because bloodshed could have unfortunate destabilizing effects, we should arrange matters so that the threat of force rather than its actual use will suffice to achieve our objectives. In this appendix, we will analyze two main problems: *(a)* the formation of the active teams and their operational use and *(b)* the deployment of the blocking forces. In both cases, our two major preoccupations will be to avoid or minimize bloodshed and—more important—to ensure that our position is not threatened after the *coup* by a usurpation of our power on the part of the soldiers and police we have recruited.

## The Formation of the Active Teams

Our infiltration of the armed forces and police of the state may have been either general and diffuse or concentrated within a few large formations. In the first type of infiltration, the forces we have subverted will consist of many small subunits, whose commanders have decided to join us while their more senior colleagues—who command the unit as a whole—have

remained outside the scope of our infiltration; in the second type of infiltration, a few large units have come over to us en bloc with all, or most, of their entire establishment. The two alternatives are illustrated in Table B.1.

**Table B.1.** Eve of the *coup:* forces of the state fully subverted (notional)

| *Diffuse*—infiltration | *Concentrated* |
|---|---|
| 3 companies of brigade X | 2 battalions of brigade X |
| 6 companies of brigade Y | 1 battalion of brigade Y |
| 7 companies of brigade Z | |
| 1 battalion of brigade V | |
| 4 companies of brigade U | |
| Total forces = 3,000 men | Total forces = 3,000 men |

Both types of infiltration have their advantages and disadvantages. If we have subverted many small subunits, we will have some additional protective cover because the supporters of the pre-*coup* regime will not be able to readily identify which units have remained loyal and which have joined us; it will also be useful to be able to confront loyalist forces with teams made up from their own cadres. The subversion of a few large units, on the other hand, will minimize the problems of coordination and recognition and, more important, will increase the security level before the *coup* because within each large unit there would be a measure of mutual surveillance that would deter defections to the regime or leaks to the security agencies. After the active phase of the *coup,* however, a composite force made up of many small subunits will be much more secure because it will reduce the risk of a usurpation of our position on the part of our military allies. There are three main reasons for this: *(a)* the rank of the officers concerned will obviously be lower if they are the appointed commanders of small units rather than large ones, *(b)* it will be easier to

disperse our forces after the active phase of the *coup* if their concentration is not organic but a construct of our own, and *(c)* the larger the number of independent unit leaders involved in the *coup,* the less likely they are to combine in order to exclude us from power.

Whatever the sources of the forces that we have incorporated, it will often be necessary to restructure them for the purposes of the *coup* because the many specialized tasks will require widely different teams; only if we have numerical superiority or its equivalent over the loyalist forces will we be able to use the formations we have subverted in their natural state. We will need three types of teams, as well as the blocking forces, and these will correspond to the three types of targets discussed in Chapter 5; we will, therefore, draw on the pool of subverted units and individuals to form the required number of A-, B-, and C-teams.

The A-teams will be needed in order to seize the major defended objectives, among them the residence of the ruler, the main radio-television station, and the army and police headquarters. These will be both larger in size and more sophisticated in structure than the other two types of teams. Each A-team will consist of four elements whose relative size will vary with each particular target:

*(a)* A "civilian" penetration group. This will be very small and will consist of a few men in civilian clothes carrying concealed weapons or explosives. Their function will be to enter the target as open and legitimate "visitors" in order to assist in its seizure from the inside. This assistance can be a direct internal assault, or it can take the form of an internal diversion; in the case of the broadcasting facility, however, their main function will be to prevent the use of its installations to raise the alarm.

*(b)* A "diversion" group. This group will be important in proportion to the size of the forces deployed to protect the target. Where there might be an entire infantry formation assigned to protect the target (as in the case of the royal or presidential palace), a diversion designed to attract part of the loyalist forces will be essential. The diversion group will carry out its function by creating a disturbance, or by actually carrying out an assault on a nearby secondary target. The diversion should be timed to include the reaction time of the loyalist forces and their route time to the scene of the disturbance, after which the main assault on the primary target will take place.

*(c)* A "covering fire" group. This will be a small group, but it will include troops with heavier weapons, especially armored fighting vehicles. Its function will be to deter resistance on the part of the loyalists by giving demonstrations of firepower, and to prevent the intervention of loyalist forces from elsewhere by covering approach routes.

*(d)* An assault group. This will be, by far, the largest group, and its members should be chosen on the usual criteria of combat proficiency, though hopefully their skills will not be needed.

The integrated operation of the different groups of each A-team is illustrated in Figure B.1.

The B- and C-teams, whose functions are, respectively, to arrest political personalities and to sabotage selected facilities, will not face significant tactical problems. Their organization will be a matter of forming small teams equipped with suitable transport, of designating the target, and of coordinating the timing. Each team will consist of a *couple* of jeep-loads of troops or police accompanied by a member of our inner group—in the case

of the major political personalities—or by a technician—in the case where the sabotage requires a measure of expertise.

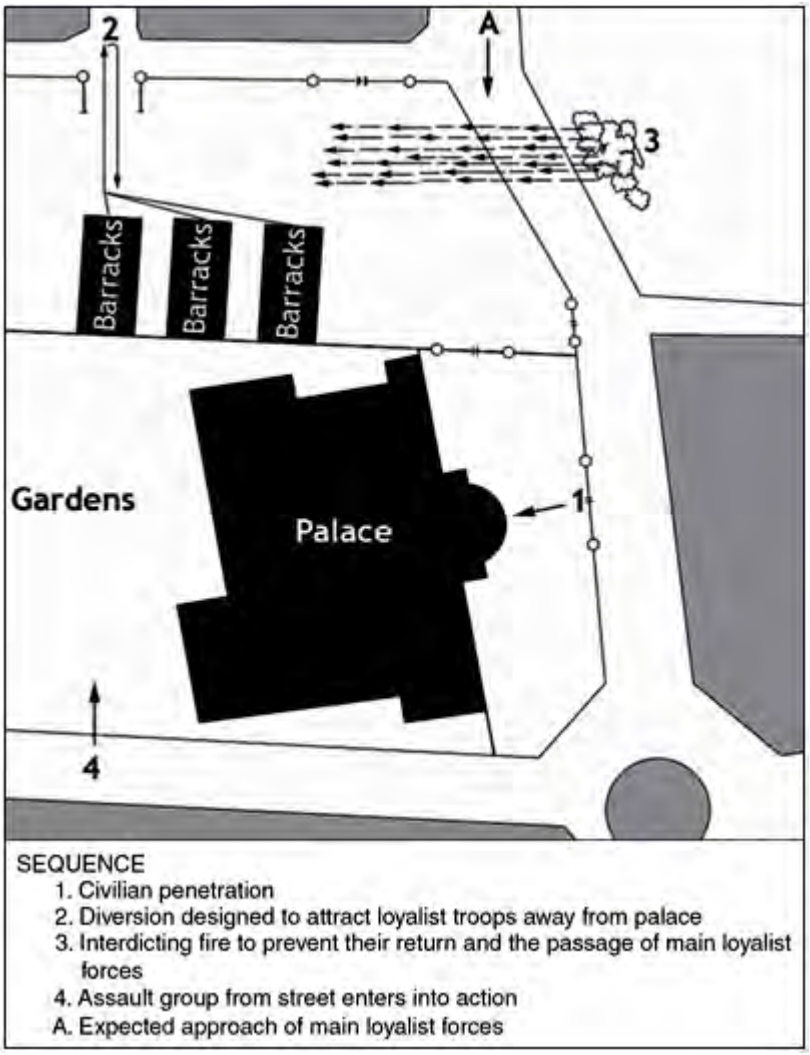



**Figure B.1.** "Sophisticated" seizure of major defended targets.

# The Deployment of the Blocking Forces

Although it is to be hoped that the pre-*coup* regime will be unaware of the timing of our particular *coup,* it will probably be conscious of the danger from *coups* in general. Regimes in politically unstable countries often go to great lengths to maintain a force of politically reliable troops or armed police on which they rely against threats to internal security. Its officers

often share the ethnic and/or religious affiliation of the ruling group, and special safeguards are employed to ensure the force's political reliability. The infiltration of such "palace guards" is very difficult, and we may well have deliberately decided to exclude them from the scope of our infiltration. Elsewhere, even where every major force has been fully subverted or internally neutralized, we will still be vulnerable to unexpected defections or coincidental transfers of uninfiltrated troops. For all these reasons, therefore, the blocking forces designed to insulate the capital city from the intervention of loyalist forces will be essential because, as has been repeatedly emphasized, the intervention of determined loyalist forces—however small in number—could have effects disproportionate to their size.

The operation of a blocking force is the exact opposite of an ambush: while the objective of an ambush is to inflict maximum damage without controlling passage, the objective of the blocking force is to prevent passage while inflicting minimum damage. The general structure of the blocking position is shown in Figure B.2, but two essentials are missing: *(a)* correct intelligence about the location and intentions of the loyalist forces and *(b)* the efficient use of natural barriers (such as bridges, tunnels, densely built-up areas, etc.) and of subsidiary roadblocks to channel any loyalist force into the blocking position.

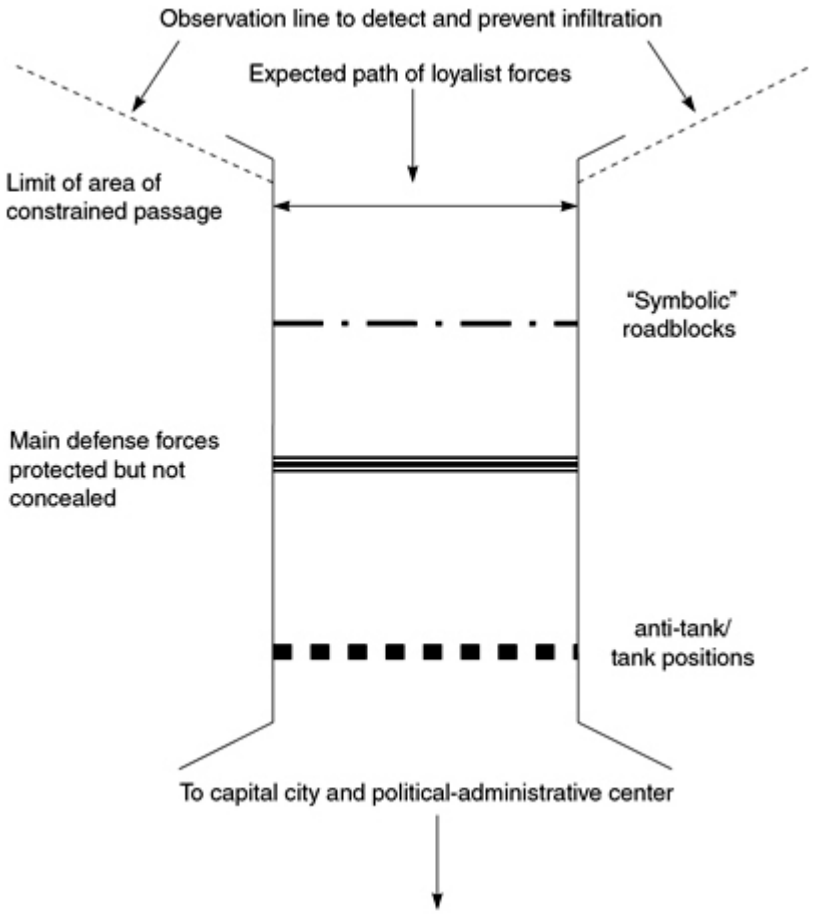



**Figure B.2.** General structure of blocking position.

The area of constrained passage on the diagram represents the group of roads or streets that an intervention force must use in order to enter the city from a particular direction; it is not generally meant to represent a single road or street, though, in particular settings, this may be the case.

The "observation line" (or "screen" in military terminology) attempts to infiltrate around the blocking position that may be made by dismounted loyalist troops. The "symbolic" roadblocks deployed across the set of roads or streets concerned will dissuade the loyalist forces by appealing to "orders" and comradeship; if dissuasion fails, they will try deterrence by pointing out the main defensive forces and the anti-tank positions (or the tanks if available). The operational leadership of the main defensive forces, the "teeth" of the blocking position, will have to be chosen carefully to

ensure a determined defense if force is in fact used by the loyalist troops; they must also be made aware of the damaging consequences that might ensue if the blocking position degenerates into an ambush.

# *Appendix C*

# Statistics


**Table C.1.** Economic development and the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010

**Table C.2.** Basic list of *coups* and attempted *coups,* 1945–2010

**Table C.3.** The efficiency of the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010: outcome as a function of main party

**Table C.4.** The frequency of the *coup d'état:* region and time distribution of *coup,* 1945–2010

**Figure C.1.** Frequency of *coups d'état,* 1950–2010

**Figure C.2.** Proportion of successful vs. failed *coups d'état,* 1950–2010

**Figure C.3.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (stacked)

**Figure C.4.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (unstacked)

**Figure C.5.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1945–1965

**Figure C.6.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1966–2010


**Table C.1.** Economic development and the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010

Revised and updated by George Schott, August 8, 1978, and Sawyer Blazek, September 8, 2010.

Note: All data for the individual countries are from *World Development Indicators: 2010* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2010); and *World Economic Outlook: 2010* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2010).

| Country | Per capita gross domestic product figures in USD (2008) | Gross domestic product figures in millions of USD (2008) | *Coup* or *coup* attempt? | Date of last successful *coup* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Sub-Saharan Africa* | | |
| Angola | $4,713.75 | $84,945 | Yes | — |
| Benin | $771.21 | $6,680 | Yes | 1972 |
| Botswana | $6,982.20 | $13,414 | No | — |
| Burkina Faso (previously Upper Volta) | $521.75 | $7,948 | Yes | 1987 |
| Burundi | $114.04 | $1,163 | Yes | 1996 |
| Cameroon | $1,225.67 | $23,396 | Yes | — |
| Cape Verde | $3,193.14 | $1,592 | No | — |
| Central African Republic | $458.17 | $1,988 | Yes | 2003 |
| Chad | $769.70 | $8,400 | Yes | 1990 |
| Comoros | $823.70 | $530 | Yes | 2001 |
| Congo, Dem. Rep. of (previously Zaire) | $181.59 | $11,668 | Yes | 1997 |
| Congo, Rep. of | $2,966.16 | $10,723 | Yes | 1997 |
| Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) | $1,137.08 | $23,414 | Yes | 1999 |
| Equatorial Guinea | $28,102.53 | $18,525 | Yes | 1979 |
| Eritrea | $335.69 | $1,654 | No | — |
| Ethiopia | $316.98 | $25,585 | Yes | 1991 |
| Gabon | $10,036.65 | $14,535 | Yes | — |
| The Gambia | $488.58 | $811 | Yes | 1994 |
| Ghana | $713.18 | $16,653 | Yes | 1981 |
| Guinea | $386.32 | $3,799 | Yes | 2008 |
| Guinea-Bissau | $272.69 | $429 | Yes | 2003 |
| Kenya | $783.04 | $30,355 | Yes | — |
| Lesotho | $791.47 | $1,622 | Yes | 1994 |
| Liberia | $222.10 | $843 | Yes | 1994 |
| Madagascar | $495.14 | $9,463 | Yes | 2009 |
| Malawi | $287.55 | $4,269 | No | — |
| Mali | $687.90 | $8,740 | Yes | 1991 |
| Mauritania | $888.98 | $2,858 | Yes | 2008 |
| Mauritius | $7,345.00 | $9,320 | No | — |
| Mozambique | $439.88 | $9,846 | No | — |
| Namibia | $4,149.04 | $8,837 | No | — |
| Niger | $364.13 | $5,354 | Yes | 2010 |
| Nigeria | $1,369.72 | $207,118 | Yes | 1993 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rwanda | $458.49 | $4,457 | Yes | 1994 |
| São Tomé & Príncipe | $1,090.13 | $175 | Yes | 2003 |
| Sénégal | $1,086.99 | $13,273 | Yes | — |
| Seychelles | $9,579.74 | $833 | Yes | 1981 |
| Sierra Leone | $351.51 | $1,954 | Yes | 1997 |
| Somalia | — | — | Yes | 1969 |
| South Africa | $5,678.01 | $276,445 | Yes | 1994 |
| Sudan | $1,352.59 | $55,927 | Yes | 1989 |
| Swaziland | $2,429.24 | $2,837 | Yes | 1973 |
| Tanzania (Tanganyika and Zanzibar) | $496.42 | $20,490 | Yes | 1964 |
| Togo | $448.78 | $2,898 | Yes | 2005 |
| Uganda | $452.55 | $14,326 | Yes | 1985 |
| Zambia | $1,134.20 | $14,314 | Yes | — |
| Zimbabwe | $273.99 (2005) | $3,418 (2005) | No | — |
| | *East Asia and Pacific* | | | |
| Brunei Darussalam | $30,390.64 (2006) | $11,471 (2006) | No | — |
| Burma | — | — | Yes | 1997 |
| Cambodia | $711.04 | $10,354 | Yes | 1997 |
| China, People's Rep. of | $3,266.51 | $4,327,000 | Yes | 1976 |
| Fiji | $4,252.98 | $3,590 | Yes | 2009 |
| Hong Kong (China) | $30,863.00 | $215,355 | No | — |
| Indonesia | $2,246.50 | $510,730 | Yes | 1998 |
| Japan | $38,454.86 | $4,910,840 | Yes | — |
| Kiribati | $1,414.32 | $137 | No | — |
| Korea, Dem. Rep. of | — | — | Yes | — |
| Korea, Rep. of | $19,114.96 | $929,121 | Yes | 1979 |
| Laos | $893.29 | $5,543 | Yes | 1975 |
| Macau (China) | $36,249.24 (2007) | $18,599 (2007) | No | — |
| Malaysia | $8,209.45 | $221,773 | Yes | 2009 |
| Marshall Islands | $2,654.73 | $158 | No | — |
| Micronesia, Federated States of | $2,334.39 | $258 | No | — |
| Mongolia | $1,990.59 | $5,258 | No | — |
| Palau | $8,910.81 | $181 | No | — |
| Papua New Guinea | $1,252.73 | $8,239 | Yes | — |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Philippines | $1,847.39 | $166,909 | Yes | 1972 |
| Samoa | $2,926.07 | $523 | No | — |
| Singapore | $37,597.29 | $181,948 | No | — |
| Solomon Islands | $1,262.80 | $645 | Yes | 2000 |
| Thailand | $4,042.78 | $272,429 | Yes | 2008 |
| Timor-Leste | $453.32 | $498 | Yes | — |
| Tonga | $2,686.56 | $278 | No | — |
| Vanuatu | $2,521.09 | $590 | Yes | — |
| Vietnam | $1,051.43 | $90,645 | Yes | 1965 |
| *Europe and Central Asia* | | | | |
| Albania | $3,911.47 | $12,295 | Yes | — |
| Armenia | $3,872.68 | $11,917 | No | — |
| Azerbaijan | $5,314.99 | $46,135 | Yes | 1993 |
| Belarus | $6,230.15 | $60,313 | No | — |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | $4,906.18 | $18,512 | No | — |
| Bulgaria | $6,545.69 | $49,900 | No | — |
| Croatia | $15,636.56 | $69,332 | No | — |
| Cyprus | $31,410.00 | $24,910 | Yes | 1974 |
| Czech Republic | $20,672.74 | $215,500 | Yes | 1948 |
| Estonia | $17,454.35 | $23,401 | No | — |
| Georgia | $2,969.92 | $12,791 | Yes | 1992 |
| Greece | $2,848.00 | $355,876 | Yes | 1973 |
| Hungary | $15,408.01 | $154,668 | No | — |
| Kazakhstan | $8,513.11 | $133,442 | No | — |
| Kosovo, Rep. of | $3,035.23 | $5,664 | No | — |
| Kyrgyz Republic | $958.44 | $5,059 | Yes | 2010 |
| Latvia | $14,908.30 | $33,784 | No | — |
| Lithuania | $14,097.54 | $47,341 | No | — |
| FYR Macedonia | $4,664.30 | $9,521 | No | — |
| Moldova | $1,693.78 | $6,047 | No | — |
| Montenegro | $7,859.27 | $4,891 | Yes | 1989 |
| Poland | $13,845.38 | $527,866 | Yes | 1981 |
| Portugal | $22,923.00 | $243,497 | Yes | 1974 |
| Romania | $9,299.74 | $200,071 | Yes | 1989 |
| Russian Federation (previously USSR) | $11,831.52 | $1,679,480 | Yes | 1993 |
| Serbia | $6,810.83 | $50,061 | No | — |
| Slovak Republic | $18,211.64 | $98,463 | Yes | 1948 |
| Slovenia | $27,018.60 | $54,613 | No | — |
| Tajikistan | $751.01 | $5,134 | No | — |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkey | $9,941.96 | $734,853 | Yes | 1980 |
| Turkmenistan | $3,038.96 | $15,327 | No | — |
| Ukraine | $3,898.87 | $180,355 | No | — |
| Uzbekistan | $1,022.71 | $27,934 | No | — |
| | *Latin America and Caribbean* | | | |
| Argentina | $8,235.71 | $328,465 | Yes | 1976 |
| Belize | $4,218.26 | $1,359 | No | — |
| Bolivia | $1,720.04 | $16,674 | Yes | 1980 |
| Brazil | $8,205.13 | $1,575,150 | Yes | 1964 |
| Chile | $10,084.42 | $169,458 | Yes | 1973 |
| Colombia | $5,415.55 | $243,765 | Yes | 1957 |
| Costa Rica | $6,564.02 | $29,664 | No | — |
| Cuba | — | — | Yes | 1959 |
| Dominica | $4,882.80 | $357 | Yes | — |
| Dominican Republic | $4,575.70 | $45,541 | Yes | 1965 |
| Ecuador | $4,056.39 | $54,686 | Yes | 2005 |
| El Salvador | $3,605.30 | $22,115 | Yes | 1979 |
| Grenada | $6,161.99 | $638 | Yes | 1983 |
| Guatemala | $2,848.37 | $38,983 | Yes | 1983 |
| Guyana | $1,513.32 | $1,155 | No | — |
| Haiti | $729.47 | $7,205 | Yes | 2004 |
| Honduras | $1,823.14 | $13,343 | Yes | 2009 |
| Jamaica | $5,438.48 | $14,614 | No | — |
| Mexico | $10,231.53 | $1,088,130 | No | — |
| Nicaragua | $1,163.22 | $6,592 | Yes | 1979 |
| Panama | $6,792.91 | $23,088 | Yes | 1968 |
| Paraguay | $2,561.27 | $15,977 | Yes | 1989 |
| Peru | $4,477.25 | $129,109 | Yes | 1992 |
| Suriname | $5,888.09 | $3,033 | Yes | 1990 |
| Trinidad & Tobago | $18,108.21 | $24,145 | Yes | — |
| Uruguay | $9,653.77 | $32,186 | Yes | 1973 |
| Venezuela, Bolivarian Rep. of | $11,245.76 | $314,150 | Yes | 1948 |
| | *Middle East and North Africa* | | | |
| Algeria | $4,845.18 | $166,545 | Yes | 1992 |
| Bahrain | $28,240.48 | $21,903 | Yes | — |
| Djibouti | $1,029.96 | $875 | Yes | — |
| Egypt | $1,990.53 | $162,283 | Yes | 1952 |
| Iran | $4,027.79 (2007) | $286,058 (2007) | Yes | 1953 |
| Iraq | $2,845.06 | $86,525 | Yes | 1968 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Israel | $27,651.80 | $202,101 | No | — |
| Jordan | $3,595.92 | $21,238 | No | — |
| Kuwait | $54,260.08 | $148,024 | No | — |
| Lebanon | $6,978.06 | $29,264 | Yes | — |
| Libya | $14,802.20 | $93,168 | Yes | 1969 |
| Malta | $18,209.38 (2007) | $7,449 (2007) | No | — |
| Morocco | $2,768.74 | $88,883 | Yes | — |
| Oman | $15,272.89 (2007) | $41,638 (2007) | Yes | 1970 |
| Qatar | $62,451.14 (2007) | $71,041 (2007) | Yes | 1995 |
| Saudi Arabia | $19,021.60 | $468,800 | No | — |
| Syria | $2,682.26 | $55,204 | Yes | 1970 |
| Tunisia | $3,902.96 | $40,309 | Yes | 1987 |
| United Arab Emirates | $45,530.92 (2007) | $198,693 (2007) | Yes | — |
| West Bank & Gaza Strip | $1,123.41 (2005) | $4,016 (2005) | No | — |
| Yemen | $1,159.64 | $26,576 | Yes | 1978 |
| | *South Asia* | | | |
| Afghanistan | $366.08 | $10,624 | Yes | 1979 |
| Bangladesh | $497.21 | $79,554 | Yes | 1982 |
| Bhutan | $1,868.68 | $1,283 | No | — |
| India | $1,016.85 | $1,159,170 | No | — |
| Maldives | $4,134.93 | $1,261 | Yes | 1975 |
| Nepal | $437.87 | $12,615 | Yes | 2005 |
| Pakistan | $990.53 | $164,539 | Yes | 1999 |
| Sri Lanka | $2,012.52 | $40,565 | Yes | — |

**Table C.2.** Basic list of *coups* and attempted *coups,* 1945–2010

Revised and updated by George Schott, August 8, 1978, and Sawyer Blazek, September 8, 2010.

| Country and date | Main party | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| | *Sub-Saharan Africa* | |
| Angola | | |
| October 27, 1974 | army faction | failed |
| May 27, 1977 | army faction | failed |
| Benin | | |
| October 28, 1963 | army faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| December 22, 1965 | army faction | successful |
| December 17, 1967 | army faction | successful |
| July 12, 1969 | army faction | failed |
| October 21, 1969 | army faction | failed |
| December 10, 1969 | army faction | successful |
| February 28, 1972 | army faction | failed |
| October 26, 1972 | army faction | successful |
| January 21, 1975 | army and political faction | failed |
| October 18, 1975 | political faction | failed |
| January 16, 1977 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| March 26, 1988 | army faction | failed |
| May 1992 | political faction | failed |
| November 15, 1995 | army faction | failed |
| Botswana | | |
| — | — | — |
| Burkina Faso (previously Upper Volta) | | |
| January 3, 1966 | army faction | successful |
| November 25, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| November 7, 1982 | army faction | successful |
| August 4, 1983 | army faction | successful |
| October 15, 1987 | army and political faction | successful |
| Burundi | | |
| October 19, 1965 | army and political faction | failed |
| July 8, 1966 | prince and army faction | successful |
| November 28, 1966 | prime minister and army faction | successful |
| November 1, 1976 | army and tribal faction | successful |
| September 3, 1987 | army faction | successful |
| March 4, 1992 | political faction | failed |
| July 3, 1993 | army and political faction | failed |
| October 21, 1993 | army faction | failed |
| April 25, 1994 | army faction | failed |
| July 25, 1996 | army faction | successful |
| April 18, 2001 | army faction | failed |
| July 22, 2001 | army faction | failed |
| Cameroon | | |
| April 6, 1984 | army faction | failed |
| Cape Verde | | |
| — | — | — |
| Central African Republic | | |
| December 22, 1965 | army faction | successful |
| January 1, 1966 | army faction | successful |
| April 12, 1969 | army faction | failed |
| July 12, 1974 | army faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| September 21, 1979 | political faction | successful |
| September 1, 1981 | army faction | successful |
| March 3, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| May 18, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| May 28, 2001 | army and political faction | failed |
| March 15, 2003 | army faction | successful |
| Chad | | |
| August 26, 1971 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| April 13, 1975 | army faction | successful |
| April 13, 1976 | political faction | failed |
| March 31, 1977 | army and tribal faction | failed |
| June 7, 1982 | army and political faction and foreign mercenaries | successful |
| April 1, 1989 | army faction | failed |
| December 1, 1990 | army faction | successful |
| October 13, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| February 21, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| June 18, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| January 27, 1993 | army faction | failed |
| May 16, 2004 | army faction | failed |
| March 14, 2006 | army and political faction | failed |
| April 16, 2006 | army faction | failed |
| February 2, 2008 | army faction | failed |
| Comoros | | |
| August 3, 1975 | army and political faction | successful |
| June 4, 1977 | army and political faction and foreign mercenaries | failed |
| May 13, 1978 | foreign mercenaries | successful |
| February 14, 1981 | army and political faction | failed |
| November 25, 1981 | political faction | failed |
| March 8, 1985 | army faction | failed |
| August 8, 1985 | army and political faction | failed |
| November 30, 1987 | army and political faction | failed |
| November 26, 1989 | army and foreign mercenaries | successful |
| August 3, 1991 | army and political faction | failed |
| September 26, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| September 27, 1995 | foreign mercenaries | failed |
| April 30, 1999 | army faction | successful |
| March 21, 2000 | army and political faction | failed |
| November 4, 2000 | army faction | failed |
| August 9, 2001 | army faction | successful |
| December 19, 2001 | army faction | failed |
| February 12, 2003 | army and political faction | failed |
| Congo, Dem. Rep. of (previously Zaire) | | |
| September 14, 1960 | political faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| November 25, 1965 | army faction | successful |
| May 30, 1966 | political faction | failed |
| May 19, 1997 | rebel faction and foreign troops | successful |
| January 16, 2001 | presidential guard | failed |
| March 28, 2004 | army faction | failed |
| June 11, 2004 | army faction | failed |
| Congo, Rep. of | | |
| August 15, 1963 | army and labor unions | successful |
| June 28–29, 1966 | army and tribal faction | failed |
| August 3–31, 1968 | army faction | successful |
| September 4, 1968 | army faction | successful |
| November 8, 1969 | army faction | failed |
| March 23, 1970 | army faction | failed |
| February 22, 1972 | left-wing army faction | failed |
| March 18, 1977 | army faction | failed |
| October 15, 1997 | political faction | successful |
| Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) | | |
| July 23, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| December 24, 1999 | army faction | successful |
| September 19, 2002 | army and political faction | failed |
| Equatorial Guinea | | |
| March 5, 1969 | army and political faction | failed |
| August 3, 1979 | political faction | successful |
| April 10, 1981 | political faction | failed |
| May 11, 1983 | army faction | failed |
| July 19, 1986 | political faction | failed |
| March 4, 2004 | foreign mercenaries | failed |
| Eritrea | | |
| — | — | — |
| Ethiopia | | |
| December 13–17, 1960 | army faction | failed |
| September 12, 1974 | elements from three services | successful |
| November 22–24, 1974 | faction in ruling Military Council | successful |
| February 3, 1977 | faction in ruling Military Council | failed |
| May 16, 1989 | faction in ruling Military Council | failed |
| May 28, 1991 | rebel faction | successful |
| Gabon | | |
| February 18, 1964 | army faction | failed |
| The Gambia | | |
| July 29, 1981 | left-wing political faction | failed |
| July 23, 1994 | army faction | successful |
| November 10, 1994 | army faction | failed |
| January 27, 1995 | army faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ghana | | |
| February 24, 1966 | army faction | successful |
| April 17, 1967 | army faction | failed |
| January 13, 1972 | army faction | successful |
| January 15, 1972 | army faction | failed |
| July 5, 1978 | army faction | successful |
| May 15, 1979 | army faction | failed |
| June 4, 1979 | army faction | successful |
| December 13, 1981 | army faction | successful |
| November 23, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| June 19, 1983 | army faction | failed |
| Guinea | | |
| November 22, 1970 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| May 13, 1976 | army and political faction | failed |
| April 3, 1984 | army faction | successful |
| July 4, 1985 | army faction | failed |
| February 2, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| December 23, 2008 | army faction | successful |
| Guinea-Bissau | | |
| November 14, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| June 9, 1998 | army faction | failed |
| May 7, 1999 | army faction | successful |
| September 14, 2003 | army faction | successful |
| October 6, 2004 | army faction | failed |
| May 25, 2005 | political faction | failed |
| August 8, 2008 | army faction | failed |
| June 5, 2009 | army and political faction | failed |
| Kenya | | |
| August 1, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| Lesotho | | |
| January 30, 1970 | political faction | successful |
| January 15–20, 1986 | army faction | successful |
| February 21, 1990 | army faction | successful |
| April 29–30, 1991 | army faction | successful |
| June 7, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| August 17, 1994 | political faction | successful |
| September 18, 1998 | army faction | failed |
| Liberia | | |
| April 12, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| April 14, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| May 18, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| November 12, 1985 | army faction | failed |
| September 7, 1994 | political faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| September 15, 1994 | army faction | failed |
| Madagascar | | |
| April 1, 1971 | left-wing army faction | failed |
| May 18, 1972 | political faction | successful |
| February 5–12, 1975 | army faction | successful |
| May 13, 1992 | political faction | failed |
| November 18, 2006 | army faction | failed |
| March 16–17, 2009 | army and political faction | successful |
| April 18, 2010 | army faction | failed |
| Malawi | | |
| — | — | — |
| Mali | | |
| November 19, 1968 | army faction | successful |
| April 7, 1971 | army faction | failed |
| March 25, 1991 | army faction | successful |
| July 14, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| Mauritania | | |
| July 10, 1978 | army faction | successful |
| June 3, 1979 | army faction | successful |
| January 4, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| March 16, 1981 | army faction | failed |
| February 6, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| December 12, 1984 | army faction | successful |
| June 9, 2003 | army faction | failed |
| August 3, 2005 | army faction | successful |
| August 6, 2008 | army faction | successful |
| Mauritius | | |
| — | — | — |
| Mozambique | | |
| — | — | — |
| Namibia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Niger | | |
| April 15, 1974 | army faction | successful |
| August 2, 1975 | army and political faction | failed |
| March 15, 1976 | army faction | failed |
| October 5, 1983 | army faction | failed |
| January 27, 1996 | army faction | successful |
| April 9, 1999 | army faction | successful |
| February 18, 2010 | army faction | successful |
| Nigeria | | |
| January 15, 1966 | army faction | successful |
| July 29, 1966 | northern army faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| July 29, 1975 | army faction | successful |
| February 13, 1976 | army faction | failed |
| December 31, 1983 | army faction | successful |
| August 27, 1985 | army faction | successful |
| April 22, 1990 | army faction | failed |
| November 17, 1993 | army faction | successful |
| Rwanda | | |
| July 5, 1973 | army and police faction | successful |
| April 6, 1994 | army faction | successful |
| São Tomé & Príncipe | | |
| July 16, 2003 | army faction | successful |
| Sénégal | | |
| — | — | — |
| Seychelles | | |
| June 5, 1977 | police and political faction | successful |
| November 25, 1981 | foreign mercenaries | failed |
| Sierra Leone | | |
| March 23, 1967 | army faction | successful |
| April 18, 1968 | army faction | successful |
| March 23, 1971 | army faction | failed |
| March 23, 1987 | political faction | failed |
| April 30, 1992 | army faction | successful |
| December 28, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| October 2, 1995 | army faction | failed |
| January 16, 1996 | army faction | successful |
| September 8, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| May 25, 1997 | army faction | successful |
| Somalia | | |
| December 10, 1961 | political faction | failed |
| October 21, 1969 | army and police faction | successful |
| April 21, 1970 | army and political faction | failed |
| May 25, 1971 | army and political faction | failed |
| April 9, 1978 | army faction | failed |
| January 26, 1991 | rebel faction | successful |
| South Africa | | |
| September 24, 1987 (Transkei) | army faction | successful |
| December 30, 1987 (Transkei) | army faction | successful |
| February 10, 1988 (Bophuthatswana) | political faction | failed |
| March 4, 1990 (Ciskei) | army faction | successful |
| April 5, 1990 (Venda) | army faction | successful |
| November 22, 1990 (Transkei) | rebel army faction | failed |
| February 9, 1991 (Ciskei) | army faction | failed |
| March 10–11, 1994 (Bophuthatswana) | political faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| March 22, 1994 (Ciskei) | police faction | successful |
| Sudan | | |
| August 18, 1955 | army and tribal faction | failed |
| November 17, 1958 | army faction | successful |
| March 4, 1959 | army faction | failed |
| April 21, 1959 | army faction | failed |
| December 28, 1966 | left-wing army faction | failed |
| May 25, 1969 | left-wing army faction | successful |
| July 19–22, 1971 | left-wing army faction | failed |
| September 5, 1975 | army faction | failed |
| July 2, 1976 | army faction | failed |
| February 2, 1977 | air force faction | failed |
| April 6, 1985 | army faction | successful |
| September 25, 1985 | army faction | failed |
| June 30, 1989 | army faction | successful |
| April 23, 1990 | army faction | failed |
| Swaziland | | |
| April 12, 1973 | political faction | successful |
| September 1, 1984 | army and political faction | failed |
| Tanzania | | |
| January 12, 1964 (Zanzibar) | political faction | successful |
| January 20, 1964 (Tanganyika) | troop mutiny | failed |
| Togo | | |
| January 13, 1963 | army and tribal faction | successful |
| July 4, 1964 | army faction | failed |
| November 21–22, 1966 | political faction | failed |
| January 13, 1967 | general's faction in army | successful |
| August 8, 1970 | army and political faction | failed |
| September 23, 1986 | army and political faction | failed |
| August 26, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| October 1, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| November 28, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| December 3, 1991 | rebel faction | failed |
| February 6, 2005 | army and political faction | successful |
| Uganda | | |
| January 23, 1964 | troop mutiny | failed |
| January 25, 1971 | army and police faction | successful |
| March 23, 1974 | army faction | failed |
| September 9, 1974 | army faction | failed |
| May 12, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| July 27, 1985 | army faction | successful |
| Zambia | | |
| October 16, 1980 | army and political faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| June 25, 1990 | army faction | failed |
| October 28, 1997 | army faction | failed |
| Zimbabwe | | |
| — | — | — |

*East Asia and Pacific*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brunei Darussalam | | |
| — | — | — |
| Burma | | |
| September 26, 1958 | army faction | successful |
| March 2, 1962 | elements from three services | successful |
| July 24, 1974 | left-wing political faction | failed |
| September 18, 1988 | army faction | successful |
| July 27, 1990 | army faction | successful |
| November 15, 1997 | army faction | successful |
| September 28, 2007 | army faction | failed |
| Cambodia | | |
| March 18, 1970 | right-wing army faction | successful |
| March 26, 1975 | army faction | failed |
| April 17, 1975 | army faction | successful |
| July 1975 | army faction | failed |
| August 1975 | army faction | failed |
| August 1977 | army faction | failed |
| June 24, 1978 | army faction | failed |
| November 11, 1978 | army faction | failed |
| January 7, 1979 | left-wing army faction | successful |
| July 5–6, 1997 | army and political faction | successful |
| China, People's Rep. of | | |
| September 8, 1971 | army faction | failed |
| October 6, 1976 | political faction | successful |
| Fiji | | |
| May 14, 1987 | army faction | successful |
| September 28, 1987 | army faction | successful |
| May 19, 2000 | army and civilian faction | successful |
| May 27, 2000 | army and rebel faction | failed |
| July 7, 2000 | army and rebel faction | failed |
| November 2, 2000 | army and rebel faction | failed |
| December 5–6, 2006 | army faction | successful |
| April 10, 2009 | president | successful |
| Hong Kong (China) | | |
| — | — | — |
| Indonesia | | |

December 3, 1950 navy faction failed

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| April 26, 1950 | elements from two services | failed |
| October 1, 1965 | Communist Party | failed |
| November 16, 1965 | elements from three services | failed |
| July 27, 1996 | army, police, and civilian faction | failed |
| May 21, 1998 | ruling political faction | successful |
| Japan | | |
| November 25, 1970 | civilian faction | failed |
| Kiribati | | |
| — | — | — |
| Korea, Dem. Rep. of | | |
| 1991 | army faction | failed |
| 1995 | army faction | failed |
| Korea, Rep. of | | |
| October 20, 1948 | army faction | failed |
| May 16, 1961 | elements from three services | successful |
| October 17, 1972 | president | successful |
| December 12, 1979 | army faction | successful |
| Laos | | |
| August 9, 1960 | neutralist army faction | successful |
| April 19, 1964 | right-wing army faction | successful |
| January 31, 1965 | army and police faction | failed |
| October 21, 1966 | air force faction | failed |
| August 20, 1973 | air force faction | failed |
| December 2, 1975 | Communist faction | successful |
| Macau (China) | | |
| — | — | — |
| Malaysia | | |
| February 5, 2009 | political faction | successful |
| Marshall Islands | | |
| — | — | — |
| Micronesia, Fed. States of | | |
| — | — | — |
| Mongolia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Palau | | |
| — | — | — |
| Papua New Guinea | | |
| March 16–17, 1997 | political faction | failed |
| Philippines | | |
| September 21, 1972 | president | successful |
| July 6, 1986 | army and civilian faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| November 22, 1986 | army faction | failed |
| January 27–29, 1987 | army faction | failed |
| April 18, 1987 | rebel army faction | failed |
| July 8, 1987 | army faction | failed |
| August 28, 1987 | rebel army faction | failed |
| December 1–9, 1989 | rebel army faction | failed |
| July 27, 2003 | army faction | failed |
| February 24, 2006 | army faction | failed |
| November 29, 2007 | army faction | failed |
| Samoa | | |
| — | — | — |
| Singapore | | |
| — | — | — |
| Solomon Islands | | |
| June 5, 2000 | militant faction | successful |
| Thailand | | |
| November 9, 1947 | army faction | successful |
| June 29, 1951 | navy faction | failed |
| November 29, 1951 | army faction | successful |
| September 16, 1957 | army faction | successful |
| October 20, 1958 | army faction | successful |
| November 17, 1971 | prime minister | successful |
| February 24, 1976 | army faction | failed |
| October 6, 1976 | elements from three services | successful |
| March 26, 1977 | army and political faction | failed |
| October 20, 1977 | elements from three services | successful |
| April 1, 1981 | army faction | failed |
| September 9, 1985 | army faction | failed |
| February 23, 1991 | army faction | successful |
| May 24, 1992 | army faction | successful |
| September 19, 2006 | army faction | successful |
| December 2–15, 2008 | judicial faction | successful |
| Timor-Leste | | |
| April 28, 2006 | rebel army faction | failed |
| February 11, 2008 | rebel army faction | failed |
| Tonga | | |
| — | — | — |
| Vanuatu | | |
| October 12, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| Vietnam | | |
| November 12, 1960 | northern army and political faction | failed |
| November 1–2, 1963 | elements from three services | successful |
| January 30, 1964 | elements from three services | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| January 27, 1965 | elements from three services | successful |
| February 21, 1965 | elements from three services | successful |
| | *Europe and Central Asia* | |
| Albania | | |
| September 15, 1998 | opposition faction | failed |
| Armenia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Azerbaijan | | |
| June 27–29, 1993 | Communist faction | successful |
| October 5, 1994 | prime minister and army faction | failed |
| March 13–17, 1995 | police and army faction | failed |
| Belarus | | |
| — | — | — |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | | |
| — | — | — |
| Bulgaria | | |
| — | — | — |
| Croatia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Cyprus | | |
| July 15, 1974 | national guard | successful |
| Czech Republic | | |
| February 21, 1948 | Communist Party | successful |
| Estonia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Georgia | | |
| December 22, 1991– January 22, 1992 | national guard | successful |
| May 25, 2001 | army mutiny | failed |
| May 5, 2009 | army mutiny | failed |
| Greece | | |
| April 21, 1967 | right-wing army faction | successful |
| December 13, 1967 | king | failed |
| May 24, 1973 | naval mutiny | failed |
| November 25, 1973 | army and naval faction | successful |
| Hungary | | |
| — | — | — |
| Kazakhstan | | |
| — | — | — |
| Kosovo, Rep. of | | |
| — | — | — |
| Kyrgyz Republic | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| August 19, 1991 | political faction | failed |
| March 24, 2005 | political faction | successful |
| April 6–15, 2010 | political faction | successful |
| Latvia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Lithuania | | |
| — | — | — |
| FYR Macedonia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Moldova | | |
| — | — | — |
| Montenegro | | |
| October 7, 1988 | opposition faction | failed |
| January 10, 1989 | political faction | successful |
| Poland | | |
| December 12, 1981 | army faction | successful |
| Portugal | | |
| January 1, 1962 | army mutiny | failed |
| April 25, 1974 | army and political faction | successful |
| September 24, 1974 | army faction | failed |
| March 11, 1975 | right-wing air force faction | failed |
| July 31, 1975 | elements from three services | failed |
| November 25, 1975 | left-wing paratroopers | failed |
| Romania | | |
| December 16–25, 1989 | elements from three services | successful |
| Russian Federation (previously USSR) | | |
| October 12–14, 1964 | ruling faction | successful |
| August 19–20, 1991 | political faction | failed |
| September 21, 1993 | president | successful |
| October 2–4, 1993 | army and political faction | failed |
| Serbia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Slovak Republic | | |
| February 21, 1948 | Communist Party | successful |
| Slovenia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Tajikistan | | |
| — | — | — |
| Turkey | | |
| May 27, 1960 | elements from three services | successful |
| May 20, 1963 | army and air force faction | failed |
| March 2, 1968 | army faction | failed |
| March 12, 1971 | general’s faction in army | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| March 2, 1975 | army faction | failed |
| September 12, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| February 28, 1997 | army faction | successful |
| April 27, 2007 | army faction | failed |
| Turkmenistan | | |
| — | — | — |
| Ukraine | | |
| — | — | — |
| Uzbekistan | | |
| — | — | — |
| *Latin America and Caribbean* | | |
| Argentina | | |
| September 28, 1951 | elements from three services | failed |
| June 16, 1955 | navy faction | failed |
| September 16, 1955 | elements from three services | successful |
| November 13, 1955 | army faction | successful |
| June 13, 1960 | army faction | failed |
| March 28, 1962 | elements from three services | successful |
| August 8, 1962 | troop mutiny | failed |
| April 2, 1963 | general's faction in army | failed |
| June 28, 1966 | army and navy generals | successful |
| June 8, 1970 | elements from three services | successful |
| March 23, 1971 | elements from three services | successful |
| May 11, 1971 | army and political faction | failed |
| August 22, 1971 | army faction | successful |
| October 8, 1971 | army faction | failed |
| March 1, 1974 | police | failed |
| December 18, 1975 | right-wing air force faction | failed |
| March 24, 1976 | elements from three services | successful |
| Belize | | |
| — | — | — |
| Bolivia | | |
| May 16, 1951 | army and air force faction | successful |
| April 9, 1952 | army and political faction | successful |
| November 3, 1964 | army and air force faction | successful |
| August 21, 1968 | army faction | failed |
| September 26, 1969 | army and air force faction | successful |
| October 6–7, 1970 | army and air force faction | successful |
| January 10, 1971 | right-wing army faction | failed |
| August 19–22, 1971 | right-wing army faction | successful |
| May 17, 1972 | left-wing political faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| May 15, 1973 | right-wing army faction | failed |
| June 5, 1974 | army faction | failed |
| December 9, 1977 | army faction | failed |
| July 28, 1978 | army and political faction | successful |
| July 17, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| August 4, 1981 | army faction | successful |
| Brazil | | |
| October 29, 1945 | elements from three services | successful |
| November 11, 1955 | army faction | successful |
| August 26, 1961 | elements from three services | successful |
| April 1, 1964 | elements from three services | successful |
| Chile | | |
| June 29, 1973 | right-wing army and political faction | failed |
| September 11, 1973 | elements from three services | successful |
| Colombia | | |
| June 13, 1953 | elements from three services | successful |
| May 10, 1957 | elements from three services | successful |
| Costa Rica | | |
| — | — | — |
| Cuba | | |
| March 10, 1952 | army faction | successful |
| April 4, 1956 | army faction | failed |
| April 17–19, 1961 | foreign-supported army faction | failed |
| Dominica | | |
| April 27, 1981 | foreign-supported political faction | failed |
| Dominican Republic | | |
| January 13, 1962 | army faction | failed |
| September 25, 1963 | army faction | successful |
| April 25, 1965 | army and air force faction | successful |
| November 26, 1965 | right-wing army and political faction | failed |
| Ecuador | | |
| March 14, 1947 | elements from three services | failed |
| August 23, 1947 | elements from three services | successful |
| September 1–3, 1947 | elements from three services | successful |
| November 7–9, 1961 | elements from three services | successful |
| July 11, 1963 | elements from three services | successful |
| March 29, 1966 | political faction | successful |
| February 15, 1972 | elements from three services | successful |
| September 1, 1975 | military and political faction | failed |
| January 11, 1976 | elements from three services | successful |
| January 21, 2000 | army and police faction | successful |
| April 20, 2005 | army faction | successful |
| El Salvador | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| December 14, 1948 | army faction | successful |
| October 26, 1960 | military and political faction | successful |
| January 25, 1961 | right-wing political faction | successful |
| March 25, 1972 | army and political faction | failed |
| October 15, 1979 | left-wing army faction | successful |
| Grenada | | |
| March 13, 1979 | Communist army faction | successful |
| October 19, 1983 | army faction | failed |
| October 25, 1983 | foreign-supported army and political faction | successful |
| Guatemala | | |
| July 9, 1949 | army faction | failed |
| June 27, 1954 | foreign-supported rebel faction | successful |
| January 20, 1955 | political faction | failed |
| October 25, 1957 | elements from three services | successful |
| November 13, 1960 | left-wing army and political faction | failed |
| March 30, 1963 | army and air force faction | successful |
| March 23, 1982 | foreign-supported army faction | successful |
| August 14, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| October 20, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| August 8, 1983 | army faction | successful |
| May 11, 1988 | army faction | failed |
| May 10, 1989 | army faction | failed |
| May 25, 1993 | president | failed |
| Guyana | | |
| — | — | — |
| Haiti | | |
| January 11, 1946 | army faction | successful |
| May 10, 1950 | army faction | successful |
| June 14, 1957 | army faction | successful |
| August 5–7, 1963 | armed political faction | failed |
| February 7, 1986 | army faction | successful |
| June 20, 1988 | army faction | successful |
| September 17, 1988 | army faction | successful |
| April 2, 1989 | army faction | failed |
| April 5, 1989 | army faction | failed |
| January 7, 1991 | army faction | failed |
| September 30, 1991 | army faction | successful |
| September 19, 1994 | foreign-led faction | successful |
| October 10, 2000 | army faction | failed |
| December 17, 2001 | ex-army faction | failed |
| February 29, 2004 | foreign-supported political faction | successful |
| Honduras | | |
| October 21, 1956 | army and air force faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| October 3, 1963 | army faction | successful |
| December 3, 1972 | army and air force faction | successful |
| April 22, 1975 | army faction | successful |
| October 21, 1977 | right-wing political faction | failed |
| August 7, 1978 | army faction | successful |
| July 30, 1999 | army faction | failed |
| June 28, 2009 | army faction | successful |
| Jamaica | | |
| — | — | — |
| Mexico | | |
| — | — | — |
| Nicaragua | | |
| May 26, 1947 | army faction | successful |
| January 22–23, 1967 | right-wing army and political faction | failed |
| August 28, 1978 | army faction | failed |
| July 19, 1979 | rebel army faction | successful |
| November 17, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| September 9, 2005 | political faction | failed |
| Panama | | |
| November 20, 1949 | police faction | successful |
| May 9, 1951 | army and political faction | successful |
| January 2, 1955 | army faction | failed |
| October 12, 1968 | national guard faction | successful |
| December 16, 1969 | national guard faction | failed |
| March 16, 1988 | army faction | failed |
| October 3, 1989 | national guard faction | failed |
| Paraguay | | |
| March 7, 1947 | army faction | failed |
| June 3, 1948 | political party faction | successful |
| December 30, 1948 | political party faction | successful |
| February 26, 1949 | political party faction | successful |
| May 5, 1954 | army faction | successful |
| February 3, 1989 | army faction | successful |
| April 22, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| May 18, 2000 | army faction | failed |
| Peru | | |
| October 3, 1948 | navy faction | failed |
| October 27, 1948 | right-wing army faction | successful |
| February 16, 1956 | right-wing army faction | failed |
| July 18, 1962 | elements from three services | successful |
| March 3, 1963 | elements from three services | successful |
| October 3, 1968 | elements from three services | successful |
| August 29, 1975 | army faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| July 9, 1976 | right-wing army faction | failed |
| April 5, 1992 | president | successful |
| November 13, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| Suriname | | |
| February 25, 1980 | army faction | successful |
| March 15, 1981 | army faction | failed |
| March 11, 1982 | army faction | failed |
| December 24, 1990 | army faction | successful |
| Trinidad & Tobago | | |
| April 21, 1970 | army mutiny | failed |
| July 27, 1990 | Islamist faction | failed |
| Uruguay | | |
| June 27, 1973 | army faction | successful |
| June 12, 1976 | army faction | successful |
| Venezuela, Bolivarian Rep. of | | |
| November 23, 1948 | army and political faction | successful |
| November 11, 1950 | political faction | failed |
| December 2, 1952 | elements from three services | successful |
| January 23, 1958 | navy faction | successful |
| June 24, 1960 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| May 4, 1962 | right-wing navy faction | failed |
| June 3, 1962 | left-wing navy faction | failed |
| October 30, 1966 | national guard faction | failed |
| February 3, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| November 27, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| April 11, 2002 | army faction | failed |

*Middle East and North Africa*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Algeria | | |
| June 19, 1965 | elements from three services | successful |
| December 13, 1967 | army faction | failed |
| April 25, 1968 | army faction | failed |
| January 10, 1992 | army faction | successful |
| Bahrain | | |
| December 16, 1981 | foreign-led faction | failed |
| Djibouti | | |
| January 8, 1991 | ethno-political faction | failed |
| December 7, 2000 | police faction | failed |
| Egypt | | |
| July 23, 1952 | army faction | successful |
| February 5, 1966 | left-wing political faction | failed |
| September 24, 1966 | political faction | failed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| August 27, 1967 | army and political faction | failed |
| June 1, 1975 | political faction | failed |
| Iran | | |
| August 16, 1953 | army faction | failed |
| August 19, 1953 | army faction | successful |
| January 16, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| June 27, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| Iraq | | |
| July 15, 1958 | army faction | successful |
| March 8–9, 1959 | left-wing army faction | failed |
| February 8, 1963 | army and air force faction | successful |
| November 18, 1963 | air force faction | successful |
| September 5, 1964 | army faction | failed |
| September 17, 1965 | army faction | failed |
| June 30, 1966 | Nasserist army faction | failed |
| July 17, 1968 | right-wing Ba‘athist army faction | successful |
| January 20, 1970 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| June 30, 1973 | police and political faction | failed |
| March 1–29, 1991 | rebel army and civilian faction | failed |
| July 1, 1992 | army faction | failed |
| Israel | | |
| — | — | — |
| Jordan | | |
| — | — | — |
| Kuwait | | |
| — | — | — |
| Lebanon | | |
| December 31, 1961 | army and tribal faction | failed |
| May 8–14, 2008 | army and political faction | failed |
| Libya | | |
| September 1, 1969 | elements from three services | successful |
| December 10, 1969 | foreign-supported faction | failed |
| August 14, 1975 | army faction | failed |
| October 17, 1993 | rebel army faction | failed |
| Malta | | |
| — | — | — |
| Morocco | | |
| July 10, 1971 | general’s faction in army | failed |
| August 17, 1972 | air force faction | failed |
| Oman | | |
| July 23, 1970 | Sultan’s son plus palace guard | successful |
| Qatar | | |
| February 22, 1972 | royal faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| June 27, 1995 | royal faction | successful |
| February 20, 1996 | royal faction | failed |
| Saudi Arabia | | |
| — | — | — |
| Syria | | |
| March 30, 1949 | army faction | successful |
| August 18, 1949 | army faction | successful |
| December 17, 1949 | army faction | successful |
| November 28, 1951 | army faction | successful |
| February 25, 1954 | army faction | successful |
| September 28, 1961 | army and political faction | successful |
| March 28, 1962 | army faction | successful |
| April 1, 1962 | Nasserist army faction | failed |
| March 8, 1963 | left-wing army faction | successful |
| February 23, 1966 | left-wing Ba‘athist army faction | successful |
| September 8, 1966 | army faction | failed |
| February 28, 1969 | army faction | successful |
| November 13, 1970 | right-wing Ba‘athist army faction | successful |
| February 2, 1982 | Sunni rebel faction | failed |
| Tunisia | | |
| November 7, 1987 | army faction | successful |
| United Arab Emirates | | |
| January 24, 1972 | political faction | failed |
| June 16, 1987 | political faction | failed |
| West Bank & Gaza Strip | | |
| — | — | — |
| Yemen | | |
| November 5, 1967 | political faction | successful |
| March 2, 1968 | left-wing political and tribal faction | failed |
| July 25, 1968 | army faction | failed |
| January 26, 1969 | army faction | failed |
| June 13, 1974 | army faction | successful |
| October 11, 1977 | army and political faction | failed |
| June 26, 1978 | army faction | successful |
| October 16, 1978 | army faction | failed |
| | *South Asia* | |
| Afghanistan | | |
| July 17, 1973 | army and police | successful |
| November 30, 1976 | retired army officer | failed |
| April 27, 1978 | army and air force | successful |
| March 27, 1979 | left-wing army faction | successful |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| December 27, 1979 | foreign-supported faction | successful |
| March 6, 1990 | army faction | failed |
| April 15, 1992 | rebel faction | successful |
| October 7– December 17, 2001 | foreign-supported faction | successful |
| April 4, 2002 | rebel faction | failed |
| Bangladesh | | |
| August 15, 1975 | army and political faction | successful |
| November 3, 1975 | rebel army faction | successful |
| November 7, 1975 | army mutiny | successful |
| October 2, 1977 | army and air force faction | failed |
| October 17, 1980 | army faction | failed |
| May 30, 1981 | army faction | failed |
| March 24, 1982 | army faction | successful |
| May 20, 1996 | army faction | failed |
| January 11, 2007 | army faction | successful |
| Bhutan | | |
| — | — | — |
| India | | |
| — | — | — |
| Maldives | | |
| March 10, 1975 | president | successful |
| April 27, 1980 | ex-president and foreign mercenaries | failed |
| November 3, 1988 | foreign-supported army faction | failed |
| Nepal | | |
| December 15, 1960 | king plus army faction | successful |
| October 4, 2002 | king plus army faction | successful |
| Pakistan | | |
| October 7–27, 1958 | elements from three services | successful |
| July 5, 1977 | elements from three services | successful |
| October 12, 1999 | army faction | successful |
| November 3, 2007 | army faction | failed |
| Sri Lanka | | |
| January 29, 1962 | political faction | failed |
| April 5–23, 1973 | army and rebel faction | failed |

**Table C.3.** The efficiency of the *coup d'état,* 1945–2010: outcome as a function of main party

| Main party | Successful | Failed | Total | Success rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Army faction | 203 | 263 | 466 | 44% |
| Political faction | 52 | 77 | 129 | 40% |
| Foreign-supported | 11 | 19 | 30 | 37% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| President | 6 | 1 | 7 | 86% |
| Prime minister | 2 | 1 | 3 | 66% |
| Royal faction (prince, king, etc.) | 5 | 1 | 6 | 83% |

**Table C.4.** The frequency of the *coup d'état:* region and time distribution of *coup,* 1945–2010 (based on starting date of *coup*)

| ALL REGIONS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time period | Successful | Failed | Total | Proportional success |
| 1946–1950 | 19 | 8 | 27 | 70% |
| 1951–1955 | 17 | 7 | 24 | 71% |
| 1956–1960 | 16 | 9 | 25 | 64% |
| 1961–1965 | 34 | 23 | 57 | 60% |
| 1966–1970 | 34 | 33 | 67 | 51% |
| 1971–1975 | 38 | 46 | 84 | 45% |
| 1976–1980 | 35 | 35 | 70 | 50% |
| 1981–1985 | 17 | 32 | 49 | 35% |
| 1986–1990 | 24 | 32 | 56 | 43% |
| 1991–1995 | 23 | 37 | 60 | 38% |
| 1996–2000 | 18 | 21 | 39 | 46% |
| 2001–2005 | 13 | 20 | 33 | 39% |
| 2006–2010 | 11 | 14 | 25 | 44% |
| Totals | 299 | 317 | 616 | 49% |
| *Sub-Saharan Africa* | | | | |
| 1946–1950 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 1951–1955 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0% |
| 1956–1960 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50% |
| 1961–1965 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 58% |
| 1966–1970 | 18 | 12 | 30 | 60% |
| 1971–1975 | 13 | 16 | 29 | 45% |
| 1976–1980 | 14 | 17 | 31 | 45% |
| 1981–1985 | 11 | 20 | 31 | 35% |
| 1986–1990 | 12 | 10 | 22 | 55% |
| 1991–1995 | 12 | 25 | 37 | 32% |
| 1996–2000 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 59% |
| 2001–2005 | 6 | 14 | 20 | 30% |
| 2006–2010 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 36% |
| Totals | 109 | 136 | 245 | 44% |
| *East Asia and Pacific* | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1946–1950 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 25% |
| 1951–1955 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 1956–1960 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 80% |
| 1961–1965 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 70% |
| 1966–1970 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 33% |
| 1971–1975 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 45% |
| 1976–1980 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 50% |
| 1981–1985 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0% |
| 1986–1990 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 36% |
| 1991–1995 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50% |
| 1996–2000 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 45% |
| 2001–2005 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 67% |
| 2006–2010 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 44% |
| Totals | 41 | 44 | 85 | 48% |
| *Europe and Central Asia* | | | | |
| 1946–1950 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 100% |
| 1951–1955 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 1956–1960 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100% |
| 1961–1965 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 33% |
| 1966–1970 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 33% |
| 1971–1975 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 40% |
| 1976–1980 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100% |
| 1981–1985 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 1986–1990 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 29% |
| 1991–1995 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 75% |
| 1996–2000 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 2001–2005 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 2006–2010 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100% |
| Totals | 19 | 19 | 38 | 50% |
| *Latin America and Caribbean* | | | | |
| 1946–1950 | 13 | 5 | 18 | 72% |
| 1951–1955 | 12 | 4 | 16 | 75% |
| 1956–1960 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 55% |
| 1961–1965 | 13 | 8 | 21 | 62% |
| 1966–1970 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 58% |
| 1971–1975 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 45% |
| 1976–1980 | 10 | 5 | 15 | 67% |
| 1981–1985 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 40% |
| 1986–1990 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 42% |
| 1991–1995 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 38% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996–2000 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20% |
| 2001–2005 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 40% |
| 2006–2010 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100% |
| Totals | 86 | 68 | 154 | 56% |
| | | *Middle East and North Africa* | | |
| 1946–1950 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 100% |
| 1951–1955 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 80% |
| 1956–1960 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 1961–1965 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 60% |
| 1966–1970 | 7 | 12 | 19 | 37% |
| 1971–1975 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 25% |
| 1976–1980 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20% |
| 1981–1985 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0% |
| 1986–1990 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 1991–1995 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 33% |
| 1996–2000 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0% |
| 2001–2005 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 2006–2010 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0% |
| Totals | 27 | 38 | 65 | 42% |
| | | *South Asia* | | |
| 1946–1950 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 1951–1955 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 1956–1960 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 100% |
| 1961–1965 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0% |
| 1966–1970 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 1971–1975 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 83% |
| 1976–1980 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50% |
| 1981–1985 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 1986–1990 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0% |
| 1991–1995 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100% |
| 1996–2000 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| 2001–2005 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 67% |
| 2006–2010 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| Totals | 17 | 12 | 29 | 59% |

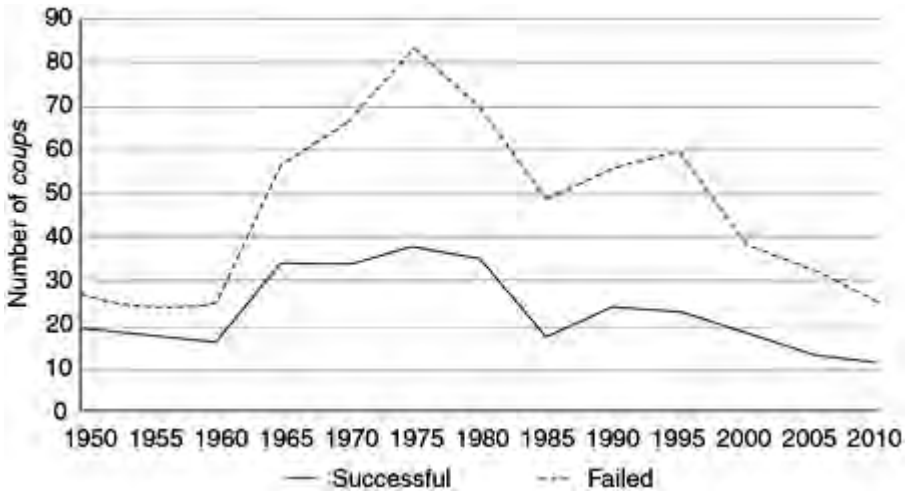



**Figure C.1.** Frequency of *coups d'état,* 1950–2010.

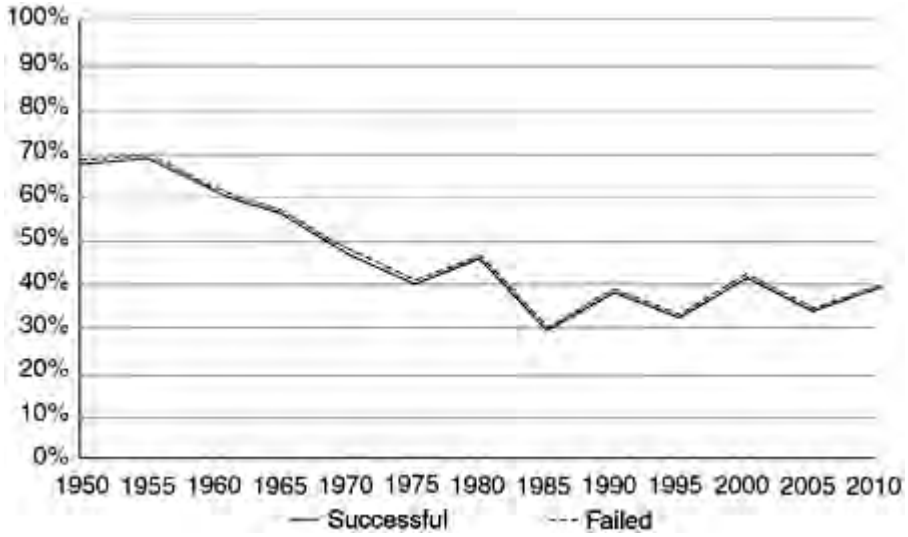



**Figure C.2.** Proportion of successful vs. failed *coups d'état,* 1950–2010.

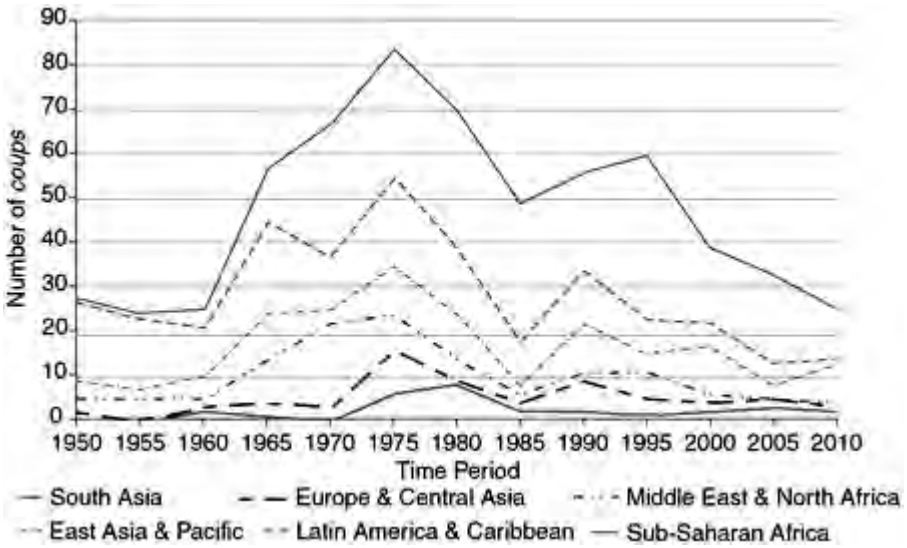



**Figure C.3.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (stacked).

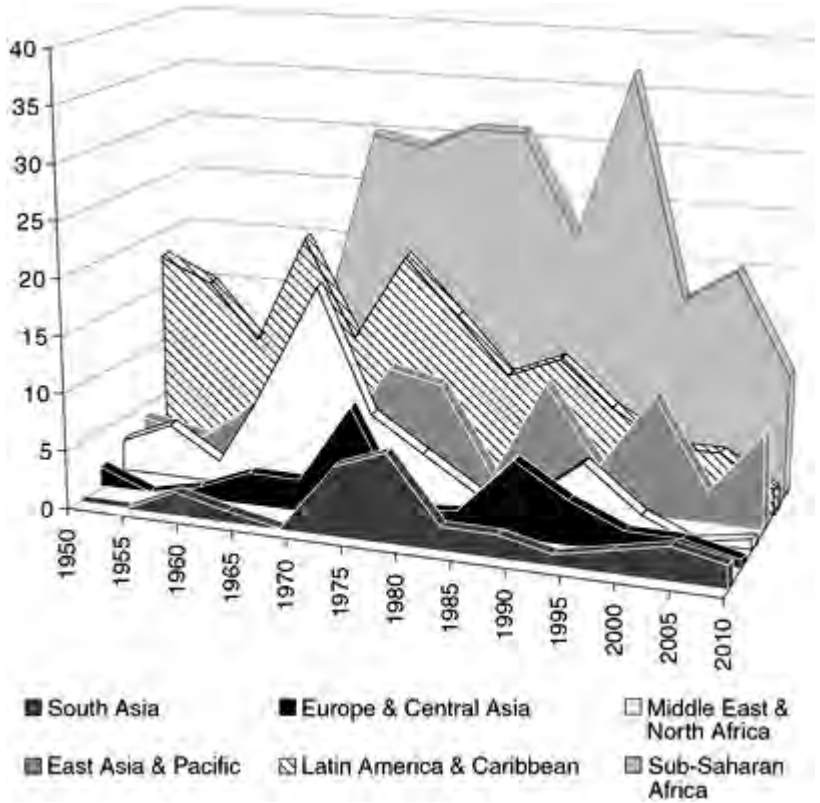



**Figure C.4.** Frequency of *coups d'état* by region, 1950–2010 (unstacked).

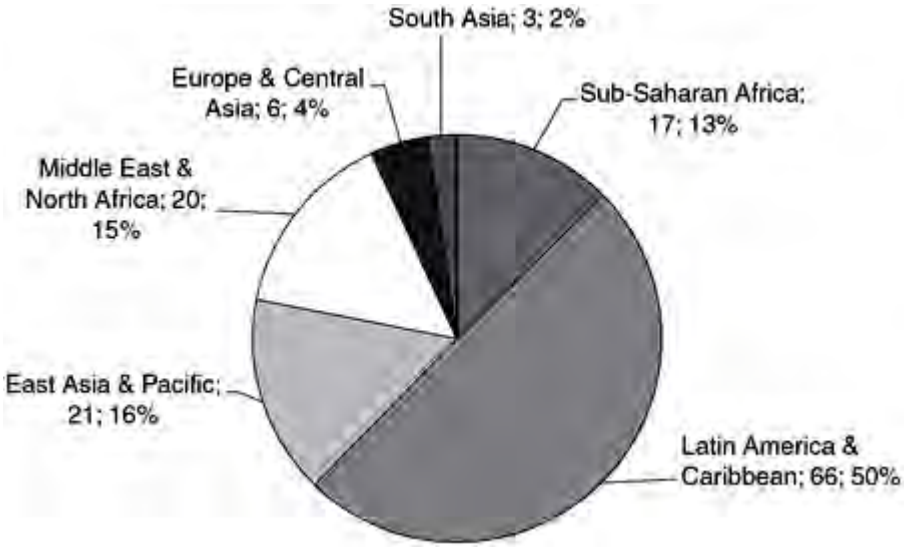



**Figure C.5.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1945–1965 (by region; no. of attempts; percent of total attempts).

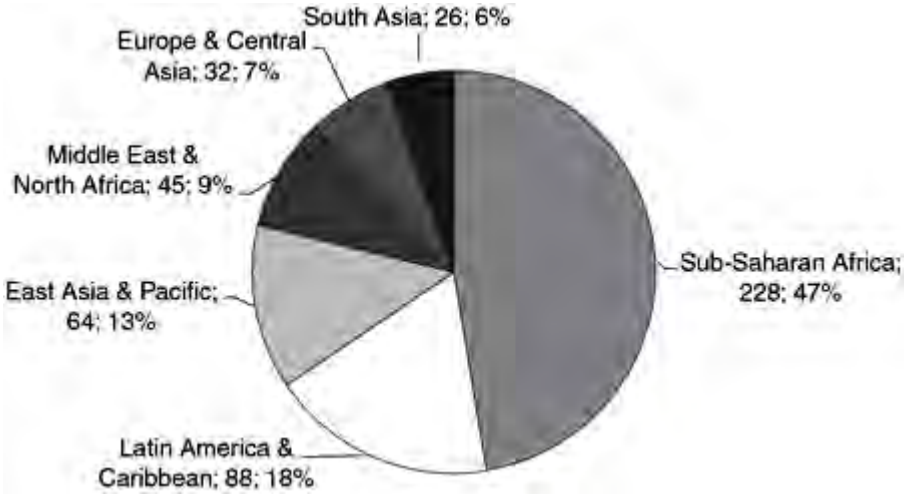



**Figure C.6.** Distribution of *coups d'état* by region, 1966–2010 (by region; no. of attempts; percent of total attempts).

# Index


Acheson, Dean, 59
Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) party, xxvii, 153
Afghanistan, US road building payments, 41
Africa: colonial powers, ethnographic theories of, 83; groups that influence political policies, 121
Africa, sub-Saharan: transition from colonial rule, problems of, xxii–xxv; postcolonial misgovernment, xxv–xxvi; emergent democracies, xxvi–xxvii; political forces in, 121
Aguiyi-Ironsi, Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe, 49
al-Assad, Bashar, xix, 127
al-Assad, Hafez, 15, 66, 127
Alawites. *See* Syria
Al-Azhar University (Egypt), 150
al-Banna, Hasan, 163
al-Din, Shah Mozaffar, 42
al Qaeda, 151
al-Sīsī, Abdul-Fattāḥ Sa'īd Ḥusayn Khalīl, 71
al-Za'im, Husni, 40
Amin, Idi, xxvi
Anti-*coup* provisions: separation of military and security forces, xvi–xviii, 4; internal espionage, xix
Arab-Israeli War, organization of forces, 71
Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, xx, 15
Arafat, Yasser, xx–xxi
Aref, Abd-el-Rahman, 85, 88, 88–89
Armed forces: communication among services discouraged, xvii–xviii; distinct uniforms of military and security, xvii; officer corps and *pronunciamiento,* 9; internal security forces in Muslim countries, 58; control of civilian population, 65; modern military effectiveness, 65, 67–68; senior officers, effectiveness of, 77
Armed forces, infiltration strategy, 96–97; loyalty factor and, xvii, 65–66; level of command and decision making, 69–71; character of units and, 78–80, 89–90; regional differences, 89–90; initial individuals and others, 95; concentrated or diffuse, 215–216
Armed forces, recruitment of key individuals, 74–78; possible informants, 78–80, 91; disgruntled officers, 85–87; family ties, 87–89; danger in finding first recruit, 91–92, 188;

slogans and early information, 92–93; actual role in *coup,* 94, 188
Armed forces, response to events during *coup,* 175–176

Ba'ath party, 67, 84, 89, 151. *See also* Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party
Belgian Congo. *See* Congolese Republic
Bello, Ahmadu, 48–49
Berlusconi, Silvio, 19–20, 149, 201–202
Bokassa, Jean-Bédel, 197
Bolivia: Comibol, trade unions after 1952 revolution, 166–167; Movimento Nacionalista Revolucionario Party, 166–167
Bolsheviks, 56, 134, 161
Britain: Bakhtiari khans and, 42–44; regional police force, 102; MI-5, counterintelligence function, 111; political forces in, 119; trade unions by craft, 167
British Petroleum in Iran, 42–44
Buddhism, in Vietnam, 154. *See also* Vietnam
Bureaucrats and bureaucracy: top level, allegiance of, 2; machinery of government, 4–5; stabilizing and obtaining loyalty, 192–194
Burundi, Watutsi religious hierarchy, 50

Catholicism and the Catholic Church: Vietnam, 28, 156; France, 118; Italy, 148–150; trade unions in Italy, 167–169
Central African Republic, *coup* radio announcement (1966), 197
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 59
Challe, Maurice, 116–117, 124–125
China: Manchu dynasty and Jurchens, 3; Communist party, 15–16; propaganda, repression and economic improvement, 213
Civil servants. *See* Bureaucrats and bureaucracy
Civil war, xvi, 8
Congolese Republic: Katanga Republic, 39, 46; provincial rejection of central government, 45–46 Constitutional monarchies, 5–6
Corruption as a trigger for *coups,* xvi
*Coup,* definition of, 2, 11–12
*Coup*-within-a-*coup,* 185, 190–191
Czechoslovakia, 82; arms supplier to Egypt, 32; identity of true power post–World War II, 129. *See also* Eastern Europe, ethnic rivalries in

Darul Uloom Muslim school, 10
de Gaulle, Charles, 5, 17–18, 116–117
Developed countries, factors for *coup* in, 18
Diem, Ngo Dinh, 28–29, 155–156
Doctrine (diplomatic) of effective control, 204
Druzes. *See* Syria
Duvalier, François "Doc," 211–212
Duvalier, Jean Claude "Baby Doc," 212

Eastern Europe, ethnic rivalries in, 82

Economically backward countries: isolation of citizens, 21–22; political passiveness but underlying anger, 22–24; bureaucrats, response to *coup,* 23–24; elites, response to *coup,* 25–26; participation limited to the few, 26–27; political power in, 27
Egypt: Arab Socialist Union, 15; 1952 *coup,* 23; Muslim Brotherhood and "Black Saturday," 23; Soviet influence through weapons deals, 32–33; centralized command of military, 71
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, xxviii
Ethiopia, Addis Ababa—Djibouti railway line importance, 142
Ethnic bonds and rivalries, 3, 4, 49–50; role in insurgencies, 10; minorities, role of, 45, 54–55; separatist elements and, 48; importance of, 81–82

Federal systems, centralized government and, 46–49
France: regime change in, 5; Fifth Republic, beginning similar to *coup,* 16–18; Union for the New Republic Party, 18; failed *coup* to overthrow Fifth Republic, 116–118; groups opposing *coup,* effect of, 118; Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité, police not military, 124–125

Gendarmerie and Police Nationale (France): Paris Préfecture, 100–102; communication and, 136
Germany (Nazi): party militia, 54–55; Munich *coup* attempt (1923), 55
Ghana: Nkrumah response to overthrow, 25; police expansion to include paramilitary (1957), 105; Nkrumah overthrow and presidential residence, 144; Nkrumah's party and personal leadership, 164; radio announcement Nkrumah overthrow (1966), 197; recognition of the National Liberation Council, 203–204; education and standard of living under Nkrumah, 213
Greece: Radio Larissa and counter-*coup,* 132; promise of cancellation of bank debts, 200

Haiti: radio/television in, 133; propaganda and repression under Duvalier, 211–212
Hamdun, Mustafa, 197
Hinduism, 154
Hungary, 1956 Revolution, 28
Hussein, Saddam, 15

Ibn Saud, Abdul Aziz, 40
Indonesia, naval and air transport (1965), 68–69
Information campaign, post-*coup,* 196–197; minimize news of resistance, 197–198; reassure populace of beneficial nature of *coup,* 198; slogans demonizing outside forces, 198–199
Insurgents, payments to: French rubber plantations in Vietnam, 41; US road building payments, 41–42; oil companies and local control, 42–43
Intelligence agencies, foreign, 64
Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, 62
Iran, British Petroleum in, 42–44
Iraq: 1958 revolution, 6; Ba'ath Party, 15; 1963 *coup,* overthrow of Communists, 85; 1963 *coup,* and role of family, 88–89
Iraq Petroleum Company, 40–41
Islam: Qur'an basis for law, xxviii; Wahhabi, 3, 10; Sunni-Shi'a conflict, 84; influence in particular countries, 150–151, 153; militants and jihadi groups, 152–153, 157–159; Muslim

violence, 159; *coup* alliance with status quo, 198. *See also* Syria
Islamic State, 152–153; al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun, 158
Israel: Six-Day War, 33; intelligence in, 60, 65; defense forces of, 65; defense forces of, 71
Italy: fragile democracy in, 18–20; Carabinieri, internal security function, 113; Catholic Church and Democrazia Cristiana party, 148–150; ruled by parliamentarian from Partito Democratico, 201–202

Jadid, Salah, 66–67; National Revolutionary Council and, 127
Jouhaud, Edmond, 116

Kornilov putsch, 9, 56

Latin America: recruitment of military, 92; promise of agrarian reform, 200; recognition of *coup,* 204
Leadership, isolation of: in trade unions, 122–123; in government, 123; pre-*coup* government individuals, 124–125; identity of true power, 129–130; ceremonial figures, 130, 131; in government, 217–218
Lebanon, division of power among religious groups, 49–50
Legitimacy, principle of, 13–14; head of state and, 201–203; recognition by foreign powers, 203–204
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 56, 134
Liberation, 10

Madagascar, Haute Authorité de la Transition, foreign recognition of, 204–205
Mass communication, use by government or *coup,* 122
Military forces of Great Powers, influence over government, 35
Monopoly corporations in small economies, 36–39; state-owned oil companies, 39; Union Minière and Aramco, 39–40; United Fruit Company, 40; French rubber plantations in Vietnam, 41
Morocco, failed *coup* against King Hassan II, xxi–xxii
Mugabe, Robert, xxvi
Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, 151, 163

Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 15, 126, 159
National Security Agency (US), 59
Neutralization: of military, 53–57, 66–67, 91, 95–96; Gendarmerie and Police Nationale (France), 99; paramilitary forces, 105–106; security agencies, 109; of political forces, 119, 121–123; religious groups, 156–157; technical facilities, 186
Nigeria: division of power in *coup* of 1966, 48–49; Muslim/Christian rivalries, 82; *coup* radio announcement (1966), 197
Nkrumah, Kwame. *See* Ghana
Novotny, Antonin, 82
Nzeogwu, Major, 197

Office of Strategic Services (US), 59

Opposition groups, militant: Islamist militias, 146; political parties, 146; trade-union movements, 146; extremist groups, 147
Organic or diffuse government, 35, 44; political center, 50–51
Organizations, political: "machine" parties, 160–161; "insurrectional" parties, leadership of, 161–163; parabureaucratic parties, 163–164; developed countries and, 164–165; trade unions, 165–169
Organizations, role of: religious groups, 147; religious groups, neutralization, 156–157
Oufkir, Mohammad, xxi–xxii

Palace guards. *See* Success of *coup*
Palestinian ministate, internal espionage services, xx–xxi
Paramilitary forces, 97–98, 102; roadblocks to *coups,* 104
Paramilitary forces, France. *See* Gendarmerie and Police Nationale (France)
Physical facilities: radio stations, loss of importance, xv; neutralization of railways in Russia, 56; seizure or neutralization, 123; radio/television minimum need, 131–133, 194; communication within *coup* and government, 134–135; roads and roadblocks, 137–138; physical presence in capitol, 139–141; airports and railways, 141–142; public buildings, symbolic and strategic, 143–145; seizure or neutralization, 216–217
Pilsudski, Józef, 142
Poland, railway failure in *coup* (1926), 142
Police, organization of, 97–98; functional in France, 100; regional in Britain, 102; constitutional in United States, 103
Police, rural and urban: threats in a *coup,* 106–108; recruitment possibilities, 108–109
Political forces: dialogue in nondemocratic states, 14–15; passivity or opposition to *coup,* 53
Politically independent countries, 27; outside power and, 28–30, 34–35; colonial ties and, 30–31; role of jet fighter manufacturers, 31; ability to stage a *coup,* 34
Political stability, and standard of living, 207–208
Populace: passivity in Muslim countries, xxviii; isolation in poor countries, 20–21; neutrality of, 25; isolation in poor countries, 106; mass communication to reach, 122; access to radio and television, 133; response to *coup,* 195, 208; propaganda and repression, 209–211
Portugal: armed forces organization and strength, 72–74; effect of colonial empire on military, 95–96
Postcolonial regimes, economic stability of, 208–209
Post-*coup* actions: establishing control, 189–190; communication with participants, 191; dangerous allies, 191; identifying loyal actors, 192; information campaign, 194; physical immobility to prevent resistance, 195–196; seeking loyalty of populace through promises, 200
Preconditions for *coups*. *See* Economically backward countries; Organic or diffuse government; Politically independent countries; Regional or ethnic blocs, control of
*Pronunciamiento,* 8–9, 11
Putsch, 9, 11

Qāsim, Abd al-Karīm, 7–8, 85
Qutub, Sayyid, 159

Railways, 142–143, 174

Regional or ethnic blocs, control of, 45
Religious rivalries, 82
Revolution, 7–8; distinction from *coup,* 53
Rival state structure, Taliban, 10
Romania, Communist leadership takeover, 10
Russia: throne seized by might, 7; 1917 revolutions of, 56; railwayman's union, role in revolution, 56; Okhrana, the czarist secret police, 114; 1918 revolution failure to secure telecommunication, 134. *See also* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Rwanda, Bahutu takeover and Watutsi response, 50–51

Salan, Raoul, 116, 118
Saudi Arabia: "White Army" of Bedouin, 3–4; Imam Muhammad bin Saud Mechanized Brigade, 4; Aramco, and, 40
Security agencies: anti-*coup* measures, xvi–xvii; lack of constraints on, 109–110; counterintelligence, 111; counterespionage, 112; internal security and intelligence, 112–113; communication and, 113, 136; "hidden" within safe agencies, 114–115; response to information of ongoing *coup,* 178–181. *See also* Gendarmerie and Police Nationale (France); United States security agencies
Shah, Reza, 126
Snowden, Edward, 59
South Korea, security services merger and *coup* (1977), xviii
Success of *coup:* isolation of "hard-core" loyalist forces, 173–175, 219–221; confusion of military and individual loyalty, 188–189. *See also* Neutralization
Success of *coup,* personnel: armed forces, police, security services, 54–55; party militia, 54–55
Success of *coup,* speed, 54, 171–172
Syria: internal espionage services, xix–xx; Alawites (Shi'a) and Druzes, xx, 54, 83–84, 127–128; reaction to regional uprisings, xxi; Hafez al-Assad 1970 *coup,* 7; Ba'ath Party, 15, 67, 126–127; Iraq Petroleum Company accused of covert activities, 40–41; Sunni-Shi'a conflict, 84; Sunni majority opposition, 127; Troupes spéciales du Levant, 127; balancing of sects in, 127–128; Aleppo *coup* radio announcement (1954), 197

Tanzanian African National Union, 163
Targets during *coup:* heavily protected facilities, 184–185; technical facilities to neutralize, 186; individuals to isolate during *coup,* 186–187; tactics for controlling, 217–218
Time element of *coup,* 170–171; circumstances vs. need for speed, 177; coordination among teams, 180–182; informing other key individuals, 188
Tonton Macoutes, 211–212
Trade unions, 19, 56, 165–169
Transport facilities. *See* Airports; Railways
Trotsky, Leon, 65
Tshombe, Moïse Kapenda, 39
Turkey: resurgence of local conservative practices, xxvii–xxviii, 153–154; Sunni policies in, 154

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: control of Hungary, 28; influence and power over Egypt, 32–33
United States: political associates of president, 2; federation with gradual centralized power, 47; expansion of military and intelligence forces, 58–59; groups that influence Middle East policy, 120; Department of Defense communication system, 136
United States security agencies, 60–63: electronic monitoring and overhead images, 64; shortcomings and problems of, 64. *See also* Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); National Security Agency (US); Office of Strategic Services (US)
US Senate Intelligence Committee Torture Report (2015), 63

Vietnam: 1963 *coup,* 28–30; religious and political groups of, 155–156
Vikzhel, 56

West Africa, promise of increased price of cocoa, 200

Xi Jinping, 15–16

Yugoslavia, participation of population in debate, 14–15

Zeller, André, 116