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Three Nations Under a Crescent Moon

Rarely has there been a period of time so transformative as the 20th century. It was the century of the fall of empires and the rise of superpowers. It was the century of two World Wars that both caused the deaths of tens of millions of people, and of nuclear weapons that could wipe ten-fold the number of fatalities of both wars combined. Virtually every region of the world went through tremendous change during the 20th century, and the Middle East was no exception. Throughout the century, many nations in the region experienced events that changed the course of their histories forever. For some, their paths changed several times. Each country experienced their own individual journey through that tumultuous era, and countries in the same geographical region had different reactions to shared experiences, as well as to more local instances. Some responded in similar methods to countries around them while others took a completely different route than their neighbors. Three prime examples of countries that exemplified having similar and different reactions to shared or more local issues are Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. Although they are situated in lands quite close to one another, the path that each country took during the 20th century was an individual journey, with each country navigating their own unique way.

When it came to the turn of the century, the countries of the Middle East realized that they faced a common issue. The West had entrenched itself as a force to be reckoned with as its colonial fingers stretched across the entire world, as well as its industrial might causing it to create powerful armies with never-before-seen power as well as logistics, causing it to be able to respond quickly to any disturbance in the world. The Ottoman Empire, which is centralized in what would later become Turkey, once was a force of dominance in the world and now saw its empire crumbling in the wake of new world powers and

was determined to catch up. Egypt, which on paper was still under Ottoman control but in practice was its own political entity also saw the dangers of lagging behind, as well as Iran, which was entirely its own country. According to James Gelvin in his *The Modern Middle East: A History*: the leaders of these countries understood that the only way they can defend their independence from outside threats is if they modernize their armies. The methods they sought to do so were “borrow recruitment, disciplinary, organizational, tactical, and technological strategies from European states” (Gelvin 72). With the modernization of their armies, these countries also came to realize that other aspects of their political structures needed modernizing. Centralization of economies and closer economic ties to European countries was a popular method of modernization for these countries, as the supposed economic growth that would come from this would grant these countries the ability to expand and be able to fund modernization efforts as well as grow to rival European powers in strength.

Stemming from the economic modernization, was the rise of political modernization. The emulation of European methods to modernize resulted in “the emergence of a new class of professional soldiers, intellectuals, and bureaucrats who were educated in western techniques” as well as western ideas (Gelvin 73). Western ideas of the Enlightenment began to grow within these Middle Eastern nations among these growing classes of intellectuals. Increasingly, people began to view the archaic autocratic dynasties such as the Qajar’s of Iran and the sultans of the Ottoman Empire in a negative light, as according to Ali Ansari in his book *Iran’s Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and Narratives of the Enlightenment*, intellectuals in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran “were in favor of reform, modernization, and constitutional government” that were based upon the French ideas of the Enlightenment (Ansari 21). With the implementation of European methods to military and economy, it became easy for political ideas to spread to intellectual communities as well. As the Middle East became closer in their ties to Europe through trade and other means, people began to become more familiar with the ideas of constitutional monarchy, and representative governments based on the will of the people instead of a ruling monarch. With these ideas circulating around different spheres of the Middle East,

implementation of them became the issue as long-standing dynasties remained in power in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. To resolve this issue, intellectual and political groups turned to another method popularized by European powers: Revolution.

Along with the intellectual ideas of the Enlightenment, groups in both Iran and the Ottoman Empire adopted revolution as their method to change their government to adopt enlightened ideals. Such a measure would not come as a surprise. According to François Georgeon and Noémi Lévy's book *The Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman Empire: The Aftermath of 1908*, "a look on the historiography of different revolutions worldwide shows that the idea of continuity between ideas... is an established assumption to conceive revolutions" as from the French Revolution and the American Revolution showed, according to scholars of those conflicts, there is "a link between Enlightenment and the revolution" (Georgeon and Lévy 43). With these intellectual groups claiming to be the representatives of the Enlightenment, such as the Young Turks within the Ottoman Empire considering themselves as the "direct heirs of the Enlightenment", it was inevitable that these groups would turn to revolution to implement their ideas (Georgeon and Lévy 44). And so, within the Ottoman Empire, revolution embodied itself as the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which a mostly political independent Egypt chose to tie itself in Ottoman identity through. In Iran, revolution became embodied through the Constitutional Revolution of 1906.

Although the Ottoman empire had experienced the previous implementation of an Enlightened government with the Constitution of 1876, the empire still struggled to progress politically in the modern era. Sultan Abdulhamid II suspended the Constitution only a year after its implementation and maintained the traditional structure of government of the sultan being the main ruling body. With the modernization efforts of the empire through the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th century, the desire to reinstall the Constitution became the forefront goal of the Committee of Union and Progress, an organization within the larger umbrella of the liberal Young Turk Movement, headed ideologically by figures such as Ahmed Riza. The revolution reached its climax when on July 23, 1908, military officers

such as Young Turks Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey announced in Manastir that the Constitution of 1876 had been restored (Georgeon and Lévy 15). The media spread the news across the empire, but as if it was a decision made by the sultan himself, and not a forced action from the revolution. This showed that the sultan still sat in a position of influence and importance, which eventually led to an armed insurrection in Istanbul that the CUP supported reactively. The so called “Action Army” took control of the city on April 24th, 1909, and removed Sultan Abdulhamid II from the throne on April 27th, effectively ceasing all control the position of sultan had over the empire (Georgeon and Lévy 15). The immediate outcome of the 1908 revolution was a success for the Young Turk movement, as it effectively relegated the sultan to a constitutional monarchy as well as re-instated as law of the land the Constitution of 1876 and finally implemented the ideas of the Enlightenment into an empire long ran by archaic dynasties of monarchical rulers.

When it comes to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution two years prior, the fundamental ideas and objectives behind it corresponded with that of the later Young Turk Revolution. In Iran, the influence of the Enlightenment saw the growth of animosity between the people of Iran and the ruling Qajar dynasty. Additionally, foreign exploitation from European empires created a wave of unpopularity throughout Iran within all spheres of society as “opposition to autocracy and... imperialist advances gradually assumed... form in some elite and non-elite circles” such as “segments of the merchant class, intellectuals, some members of the clergy, and...dissenting members of the political elite (Ansari 17). Some of the clergy, or *ulema* were experienced with resisting the Iranian shah, such as their efforts in the Tobacco Protests of the 1890’s, and so became key players in the revolution. The spark of the Revolution came from “the demand to set up a ‘House of Justice’” over issues such as severe punishments for merchants and tax increases (Ansari 34) Soon, this movement fell into a “wider demand for stability and order, and for protection of national interest from foreign interference” (Ansari 34-35) which soon exploded into revolution. As being a modernized and Enlightened revolution, the aims of it were not to remove one king to instate another, nor install a theocracy of clerics, but “aimed at changing the

monarchy to constitutional, and to adopt representative governance by introducing the country to a parliamentary system” (Ansari 22). These same ideas echoed two years later by the Young Turks also met with similar initial success. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution succeeded in implementing a modernized system of government in Iran and subjugated the shah into a symbolic role as constitutional monarch.

Although both revolutions were met with success during their initial takeovers, problems soon arose that compromised the Enlightenment ideals that were so fervently idealized in both revolutions. When it comes to the Young Turk Revolution, it was as social theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno say, “Enlightenment ideas of individualism, universalism, and liberty gave way to their opposites” (Ansari 16). When the CUP took control of the Ottoman government, one of the initial steps they took to further reduce the power of the sultan was to purge political offices of those who supported him, or who were suspected of supporting him. These purges soon became more totalitarian in nature, and less akin to the liberal and enlightened ideas they were supposed to embody as “gradually the purges aimed to remove opponents of the CUP, who had not necessarily been in the pocket of the Hamidian system” (Georgeon and Lévy 117). This inclining of authoritarian behavior grew further as eventually any political official who was in opposition to, or even wasn’t a member of the CUP was suspended from office. Although the Young Turk Revolution began as a movement seeking to promote the ideas of the Enlightenment, it resulted in a regime that became the same despotic system that it sought to overthrow.

Along with the failures of the Young Turk Revolution with its attempts to create a government in the image of the Enlightenment, the Iranian Constitutional Revolution also encountered problems that compromised its implementation. An uprising led by Mohammad-Ali Shah, son of the abdicated shah took back control of Iran with the help of the Cossack Brigade and aid from Russia. Pro-constitutionalists responded with another uprising but by de-centralized militias and tribal groups. According to Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr in their book *Democracy in Iran*, the “tribal and provincial insurgence that restored the Constitution also gravely weakened central authority and empowered regional actors”

(Gheissari and Nasr 33). The constitutionalist government was plagued with structural issues and internal conflicts that compromised the integrity of the government as well as the maintenance of law and order. The government of Iran became “characterized by factional conflict, weakness, and paralysis as it was also undermined by continuous foreign intervention” (Gheissari and Nasr 34). The ability for the Iranian government to project an ideal enlightenment government was prevented because of the weakness caused by factional conflicts. Foreign powers such as Britain and Russia took advantage of Iran’s weakened situation and resumed exploiting Iran for their own gain, signifying failure of the Revolution to achieve its overall objectives. Although the failures between the Iranian Revolution and the Young Turk Revolution were different in nature, they were similar in the fact that they both transformed into the systems they were trying to replace.

Not only did these nations of the Middle East have to worry about internal political issues during the early 20th Century, but also had to worry about maintaining sovereignty during and after World War One. The aftermath of the war bore witness to the collapse of the archaic Ottoman Empire and the emergence of Turkey from its ashes, the fall of Egypt to British Imperialism, and a once weak Iran being transformed into strength.

With the end of the Great War, the Ottoman Empire was promptly taken over by its enemies of France and Britain and its territory was carved up between them. Along with the abolition of the empire, the CUP dissipated causing a massive power vacuum to open in the region. Ottoman war hero Mustafa Kemal became key in taking the reins and steering the crumbling empire into a new statehood. On July 23, 1919, 11 years after the Start of the Young Turk Revolution, Kemal was chosen to be chairman of congress in the wake of the CUP’s absence. He was also appointed to the Board of Representatives and as according to M. Şükrü Hanioglu’s book *Atatürk*, became a “leading role in the nationalist struggle” of Turkish Muslims that was growing in the Anatolian peninsula (Şükrü 99). He soon created an entirely Turkish congress in Sivas and declared a new government in Anatolia separated from the remnants of the empire. Concessions between Kemal’s congress in Sivas and the sultan’s congress in Erzurum were

shared, and elections were to be held to determine who had control over what remained of the Empire. To both the sultan's as well as the Entente's dismay, Kemal's nationalists won by a landslide. Their better networks and the omission of the antinationalist Liberal Entente Party ensured this. Now in control, Kemal's Sivas Congress passed the National Pact, which declared that the "territories that had not been under occupation... formed the indivisible homeland of non-Arab Ottoman Muslims" which was to later be named Turkey (Şükrü 101). It also said that the future of occupied Arab, Russian, and Balkan lands would be decided through plebiscites of the people (Şükrü 101).

Although the people now under Kemal rejoiced, the Entente powers were furious. In response, Britain occupied Istanbul, and the members of the congress now based in the city now fled to Ankara, where they reconvened. Now determined to rid Anatolia of Western occupation, Kemal made an effort to ally himself and his government with the newly established Soviet Union. By exaggerating his support for communism, the Soviets and the nationalists signed the Treaty of Moscow in 1921, in which the Soviets recognized the sovereignty of Turkey, as well as offer them support in their struggle against the west. Now backed by a massive regional ally, Kemal could confidently continue his fight against imperialist occupation. According to Şükrü, "it was the reliable flow of Russian gold and armaments that made possible the prosecution of the war against Greece and thus secured the independence of Turkey" (Şükrü 120). Seeing that the progress of the war was in Turkey's favor, the French decided to give up their claims in the southeastern regions of the Peninsula, as well as Cilicia in October of 1921. When it came to the Greek occupied lands of Eastern Thrace, the Turkey Nationalist government signed an armistice with Greece in exchange for the return of lands to Turkey that were held by the Ottoman Empire (Şükrü 128). Not only did Mustafa Kemal, who then was bestowed the name Atatürk, successfully created a government out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, but he also led the fledgling country of Turkey to remove imperialist powers from occupied territory and expanded the nation to encompass the entire Anatolian peninsula and more, effectively establishing a strong, independent country as well as setting up a republican system that has withstood the trials of the century.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Egypt experienced the full grasp of imperialism after the war and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Although Egypt in practice was relatively independent from the Ottoman Empire, it was still legally under its control. Because of this, as well as previous incursions and occupations, Britain saw it essential to bring Egypt under its full control when war broke out between them and the Ottoman Empire. Upon the war's conclusion, Britain maintained its control over Egypt. Many Egyptians became disgruntled with this, and according to Selma Botman in her book *Egypt from Independence to Revolution, 1919-1952* Egypt nationalist Saad Zaghlul rose up in 1919 and "harnessed already widespread anti-British sentiment into a nationalist movement... that demanded a British withdrawal from the Nile Valley" (Botman 27). Promptly, Zaghlul was arrested, but the damage was done. People rioted upon his arrest, and throughout the occupied territory, British installations and railways were attacked and damaged. A few years later, Britain "decided unilaterally in 1922 to allow Egypt formal independence" mainly out of fear of "the realistic possibility the 1919 revolution could recur" (Botman 29). Although the motion to give Egypt independence seemed like a victory for the Egyptian people, the reality of the situation seemed not to change. Although legally Egypt was free, there were many different spheres of Egyptian society, politics, economy, and military that were still under intense British influence. British individuals "controlled upper levels of the military and the government" as well as along with other Europeans "owned and operated the banks, hotels, textile factories and insurance companies (Botman 30). Similar to Turkey, Egypt legally received their independence out of the aftermath of World War One. However, whereas Turkey emerged a nation free of any imperialistic strings or influences, Egypt became infested with British and European influence, as many aspects of their society were still controlled by foreign individuals for imperialistic gain.

Contrasting the initial experience of Turkey and Egypt during World War One, Iran was not directly involved in the war, nor was allied with neither side. But that did not spare them from foreign meddling in its affairs. As the centralization of Iran's government was extremely weak, imperialistic powers sought to take advantage for their own gain. Instead of dealing with the central Iranian

government, Britain and France looked “to regional leaders to protect their interests, which in turned promoted division of Iran into spheres of influence” (Gheissari and Nasr 34). The only thing that prevented Iran being carved up like the Ottoman Empire was the Soviet Union’s insistence in combating imperialist intentions of Western Powers. That being said, the problem of a fractured and weak government remained a substantial issue. Seeing the opportunity, Brigadier General Reza Khan from the Cossack Brigade sought to use the military to seal the power vacuum in Iran.

At the head of the Cossack Brigade and the South Persia Rifles, Reza Khan staged a coup and easily toppled the weak government. However, Khan sought not to re-create a democratic system. To him, “he saw Iran’s experiment with parliamentary democracy as having failed to solve the real issues before the country” (Gheissari and Nasr 37). The only solution in his eyes was “concentrating power in the executive office” which would then allow Iran to “achieve effective governance and policymaking, resource mobilization, constraints of... regional power brokers and tribal leaders, and national independence” (Gheissari and Nasr 37). He surmised that the strong executive power would act in the context of the constitution and would even be able to promote the values of it. Soon enough, Reza Khan appointed himself a monarch and became Reza Shah Pahlavi, and implemented a monarchical system rooted in modernity. Reza Shah saw his position as a way to push modernization, treating the position of Shah more through its executive ability rather than its traditional and symbolic implications. Although bringing back the monarchy went against the enlightened ideas expressed in the Constitution, the people of Iran were more concerned with the weakness and failures of the government than they were with Constitution. With Reza Shah offering the Iranian people strength, direction, and action, they rallied behind him as well as his modernization efforts that helped Iran grow after years of stagnation and inaction.

With the aftermath of the First World War resulting in the formation of Turkey, as well as a reversal of dynamics between pre-war and post-war Egypt and Iran, the Second World War came around

the corner. Although the war itself had little direct effect on the region except for in Iran, the years following saw several drastic developments within these Middle Eastern nations.

Being untouched from the war, Turkey enjoyed a relatively uneventful transition from the war into the Cold War period. Its neutrality in the war prevented it from immediately being drawn into the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, due to its geographic location, it became worried with the Soviet's desire of Turkey's waterways, and according to Şaban Çalış in his book *Turkey's Cold War: Foreign Policy and Western Alignment in the Modern Republic*, Turkey told the Western powers that it "was determined not to cede any territory or bases to Russia, and that it was ready to defend its territorial integrity" (Çalış 61). Although it received no assistance from the Western powers, Turkey joined NATO in 1952. Other than this, Turkey positioned itself to be uninvolved with external affairs, and so for virtually the remaining decades of the twentieth century, only internal affairs confronted the nation.

Modernization was an important aspect of Turkish politics throughout the 20th century. When the Democratic Party came to power, concerns were raised over the seeming regression of modernist ideals. The military was one group that held concern over the party. In Asli Daldal's article "The New Middle Class as a Progressive Urban Coalition: the 1960 Coup d'état in Turkey", he states that "the coup was actually a genuine act of modernization" with "Turkey catching up with the West through the leadership of a progressive urban coalition" (Daldal 75). Supporters of the coup sought to modernize Turkey's economy. Many of the coups' advocates came from the bourgeois class and sought to see Turkey's economy emulate more like the capitalist systems of the United States and the West. In turn, the coup was effective in pushing "Turkey to become a more developed capitalist society organized along a modern industrial capitalist model" (Daldal 77). Setting the direction for Turkey's economy, the established National Unity Committee surprisingly didn't dictate the nation with an iron fist. The coup did not seem to take control over Turkey for its own gain as according to Clement Dodd, the coup "did not allow itself time to carry out effectively... its economic and social policies" as it began to demilitarize itself which

gave the impression that it acted more like “orthodox politicians” than power hungry soldiers (Daldal 86). With the Turkish coup of 1960, the perpetuating forces sought not for their own gain, but what they saw was the good of the nation. They sustained the political process of the Republic and did not change it to suit themselves and even went so far as to ramp down their power and demilitarize themselves so that the model of Turkey they set up could be run in the legal manner regulated by the Constitution, and not their own desires.

Although it occurred with the intention to set Turkey in the position of economic growth and success and allow it to achieve these things in a constitutional manner, the 1960 coup unfortunately created a precedent of erupting coups whenever there is disgruntlement of the Turkish government. In 1971, a coup took over the government because according to Göze Orhon’s book *The Weight of the Past: Memory and Turkey’s 12 September Coup*, it sought to reinstating the “public order believed to be jeopardized by the growing popularity of the left-wing both in and outside parliament” (Orhon 14). The public order, however, was effectively worsened. The decade of the 1970’s was plagued with intense political violence. The rise of left-wing groups was counteracted with the rise of right-wing groups that quite often clashed with bloody results. Bombings, assassinations, and violent riots became widespread in Turkey. From 1978 to 1979, 2,457 people were killed, and tens of thousands were injured (Orhon 16). With the mass political violence and instability surging through Turkey, the army sought to resolve the issue on September 12th, 1980, by staging a coup with the goals of “enabling national unity and cooperation” as well as “avoiding a probable civil war and fraternal fight” through the methods of dismantling the parliament and declaring martial law all across Turkey (Orhon 17). The coup forces soon established the 1982 Constitution that carried on for thirty more years. The government set up by the coup sought to diminish the power of unions, influence the market through military means, and other socialist ideas such as collective bargaining and industrial action (Orhon 18).

In order to ensure that these implementations are followed, the 1980 coup ruled over the country with a totalitarian fist, causing the lives of people to be marked with “social fear, anxiety, and suspicion

against one another” as “thousands of people were either placed under surveillance or arrested” soon after the coup (Orhon 19). The martial law instated by the coup lasted for years causing the government to control the lives and actions of the Turkish people for a long duration. Dissent or opposition to the state was met by the most severe punishment by the military power. Fear was widespread amongst the people as they went through their lives living underneath more a draconian and tyrannical dictatorship than a progressive and modernist Republic, fundamentally based around Enlightened ideas.

Throughout the war as well as into the post war period, Egypt still struggled with its attempts to liberate itself from British interference and influence. The highly popular Wafd party attempted to pass reforms throughout the 1940’s and on into the 50’s, but to no effect. Many Egyptians began to lose faith in the abilities of their political parties as “none of the mainstream groups [were] able to accomplish national liberation or modernization” (Botman 61). As a result, in a case similar to Reza Shah in Iran, the military was used to oust a perceptively weak government and replace it with one of strength. Gamal Nasser was a lieutenant colonel in the Egyptian Army, as well as leader of the Free Officer’s movement, which was a nationalist movement of Egyptian military officers. Seeing the failures of the Egyptian government to break free from Britain grasp, as well as the increasing internal turmoil, such as guerilla campaigns against the British by the Muslim Brotherhood as well as increasing riots in Egypt, Nasser and the Free Officers saw that the time was right to take control of the Egyptian government.

Declaring their aims in a manifesto according to Anthony Nutting in his book *Nasser*; they sought the “destruction of colonialism, the elimination of feudalism, the eradication of monopolies and capitalist exploitation” as well as strengthening “social justice” and “the institution of a stable democratic life” (Nutting 34). Within the first few hours of July 23rd, 1952, the military forces of the Free Officers took over the military headquarters and with assistance from supporting military servicemembers, soon took over the radio station, telegraph offices, police stations, and governmental buildings, effectively taking control of the capital and in turn, the country (Nutting 37). Although General Neguib’s name was used as a symbolic leader of the revolution, it was truly Nasser who was the key architect of the coup.

The aftermath saw Nasser in a difficult position as he and the Free Officers initially had no intention of running Egypt themselves. Originally, Nasser intended to give Egypt back over to the Wafd party, as well as appoint previous Prime Minister and seasoned politician Ali Maher back in office. Soon however, Nasser saw that the Wafd party was in refusal to enact policies the Free Officers and their established Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) directed them too, such as abolition of feudalism, in fear of losing powerful electoral support as well as the failure of Maher to enact agrarian reforms he was directed to, Nasser came to the conclusion that “the RCC would have to take over and run the government themselves” (Nutting 53). Neguib was appointed Prime Minister and Nasser and the RCC went to work enacting the policies they envisioned for Egypt during the coup.

The most pressing issue at hand was the removal of Britain from Egypt. Britain staunchly refused their removal from Egypt and especially the Canal Zone by the Suez Canal. At first, Nasser resorted to seigeing British bases near the zone as well as allowing fedayeen commandos to harass bases and negotiating with American diplomats to receive military aid. But the result saw Britain only digging in more and Britain imposing an embargo on Egypt. Nasser dropped the fedayeen commando assaults and resumed negotiations with Britain, and finally with Secretary of State for War Antony Head, “signed a document which laid down the heads of agreement for the withdrawal of British forces” on July 27, 1954 (Nutting 69). Although Egypt seemed finally free from Britain, the two nations as well as France and Israel would butt heads in an event that would immortalize Nasser.

Due to its vitality to trade as well as the vast wealth it generated, the Suez Canal became a important problem to Nasser. Nasser intended to take it over from the Suez Canal Company as he believed “Egypt, as an independent nation could not allow foreigners indefinitely to control such an important element of her national revenue and resources” (Nutting 142). Britain became infuriated with Nassers nationalization of the Canal Company and sought military action after Nasser refused an ultimatum from Britain as well as France. Soon, a joint effort of Britain, France, and Israel launched an invasion of Egypt on October 29, 1956. Nasser begged for United States support, but to his dismay, was

refused. However, Nasser put up a very strong defense. Though refused support at first, Eisenhower demanded Britain “to agree to an immediate ceasefire” and that it would “not help to save the now tottering British pound or finance alternative supplies of oil from dollar sources” unless hostilities cease (Nutting 180). With too much at stake now, Britain and France proclaimed a ceasefire on November 7th. Nasser had successfully defended his nation from the imperialist powers that once occupied it. Egyptians and Arabs all over the region rejoiced in Nasser’s victory. He showed the world that Egypt was a nation of strength, that was able to stand up to once seemingly unstoppable powers.

Just as Nasser was raised to legendary status by the Suez Crisis of 1956, he would experience a subsequent downfall just 10 years later during the Six Day War. With arising conflicts with Israel due to increased opposition in Palestine, Nasser soon pledge allegiance with Syria as Israel began to raid Syrian lands to target Palestinian guerillas operating there. The Israelis baited an Egyptian response with further strikes to tug on Egypt’s “prestige throughout the Arab world” and too concerned with Egypt’s reputation, Nasser decided to fall into Israel’s trap and mobilized forces in the Sinia region in May of 1967 (Nutting 400). Israel sprung to action and obliterated Egypt’s and Syria’s air force on June 5th. Without air support, the Egyptian and allied armies were easily crushed by an Israeli army that had been preparing itself ever since 1956. Within 6 days the Arban forces were destroyed, and Israel took the Gaza Strip as well as the Sinai Peninsula, and the east bank of the Suez Canal. This was a monstrously humiliating defeat for Nasser, which not only was a crushing defeat to his symbolic reputation, but also his political one as his “policy was now in ruins” as it had “completely disintegrated into dust and ashes” (Nutting 423). The quick and horrific loss to Israel that cost Egypt the Sinai Peninsula and the destruction of his reputation was an overwhelming burden on Nasser’s shoulders. On June 9th, 1967, the once glorious leader of Egypt stepped down from his position.

In the wake of Nasser’s resignation, elite players of Egypt’s political sphere, including Nasser’s vice president Muhammad Anwar al-Sedat, came together to determine who was to succeed him. They agreed that, according to Kirk Beattie’s book *Egypt During the Sedat Years*, “no single individual could

possibly assume the superhuman responsibilities that Nasser carried” (Beattie 43). This system came to be known as “collective leadership” and Sadat was soon elected to become a member. Resenting the fact that he, a central figure to the 1952 coup had to share positions with what he saw as lesser men, he soon began to garner his own personal support by pleasing important figures in areas such as in the military, police, as well as the government. He also made sure to cultivate friendships from all spheres of Egyptian society. Soon after his election, Sadat consolidated power to himself, effectively dismantling the proposed collective leadership model of succession, and ardently began campaigning a war against Israel.

In order to prepare for war, Sadat called “for political union by Egypt, Libya and Syria” which on April 17, 1971, these Arab nations formed the Union of Arab Republics (Beattie 59). Sadat prepared for two more years until he authorized an attack to drive Israel out of the Sinai Peninsula on October 6th, 1973. The war lasted for three weeks and ended up in an Israeli victory. However, in the eyes of Sadat and Egypt, it was a boost in shattered national confidence as although Sadat’s forces were not able to take the whole peninsula, their aggressive action provided “impetus for political negotiations that ultimately brought the return of their lost land” (Beattie 135). After the war, and riding on a boost of Egyptian pride and confidence, Sadat sought to reform Egypt’s economy to further boost it out of its downfall. Sadat’s model tried to be an in-between capitalism and socialism. In 1974, the October Paper was introduced. It detailed that “public sector companies” in huge industries, such as “textiles, iron and steel, aluminum, weapons production, and pharmaceuticals” were to be “among Egypt’s largest”, but also allowing for “joint venture arrangements” in “other public sector companies” (Beattie 143). But soon, privatization of businesses began to take over, straying far from the socialist economic system it sought to represent.

Not only did Sadat’s economic plan stray from the way it presented itself, but his political stances also changed. He sought to impose a system of “political liberalism” that “represented steps in Sadat’s... gradual move toward democracy” which contrasts his usurpation of absolute power to himself upon his election to the “collective leadership” system upon Nasser’s death (Beattie 211). Most striking of all was his relationship with Israel. On November 20, Sadat did something unthinkable to the Arab World at the

time. He appeared in front of the Israeli Parliament in order to make peace. This move came about as he figured in his own words if “[he had] to make peace with Israel, [he would] talk to them directly” (Beattie 228). By securing peace, further strengthened by the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1979 between Egypt, Israel, and the United States he effectively set Egypt in a favorable position to receive its lost lands, which it received the Sinai Peninsula. The consequence, however, was an enraged Arab population in both Egypt and abroad who were furious at Sadat’s attempts to make peace. This enragement came to its climax on October 6th, 1981, where members of Egypt’s military assassinated Sadat during a 1973 war parade.

The aftermath of Sadat’s death saw the rise of his vice president, Hosni Mubarak to power. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, throughout the 1980’s the effects of Sadat’s economic system that increasingly put economic power in the private sector and away from the public sector showed to be detrimental when the price of oil fell in the 1980’s (Mubarak Regime). The failure of workers abroad to return to Egypt also worsened the issue and caused the economy of Egypt throughout the duration of the 20th century to suffer, and civil unrest due to Islamist extremist groups.

Unlike the experience of Turkey and Egypt, The Second World War had a direct effect on Iran. Although Iran declared itself neutral from the conflict, the dynamics at play in the country caused its neutrality to be put into jeopardy. At the onset of the war, there was a significant German presence in the country, where according to the article “Britain and the abdication of Reza Shah” by Shaul Bakhash, “Germany supplied almost all of the machinery for Iran’s industries and was the principal purchaser of Iranian raw materials and goods” (Bakhash 321). There was heavy German investment in Iran, which made Britain uneasy. Despite assurances from Iran that its German presence will not affect its neutrality in the war, Britain remained worried about Iran. When Germany launched Operation Barbarossa and brought the Soviet Union into the war, the Soviets became concerned with the German influences of Iran, and along with Britain they “began to coordinate plans across a wide front...in Iran” which they launched on August 25, 1941 (Bakhash 323). When it came to Reza Shah, the leader of Iran, the British concluded

the best option was to remove him from the throne and devised a plan with the Soviets to move into Tehran. But Reza Shah had made plans to abdicate beforehand. When the Soviets invaded, he made and signed a document of abdication as well as later handing his possessions over to the state. Although he left “on his own”, he was “no longer a free man” as the British took control over him and forced him to live in exile of their choosing (Bakhash 330). The once powerful Reza Shah, one who brought the splintering Iran to power and who stood up to imperial advances tragically fell to those imperial powers due to their unfortunate circumstance in location, as well as economic partners.

Upon the War’s conclusion, the future of Iran was a great topic of debate inside the country. The political direction it would assume was up to speculation upon the withdrawal of British and Soviet forces, as these same forces toppled its king, Reza Shah. With the stirring of national sentiments due to Britain’s refusal to pay Iran more for its oil, the people elected Mohammad Mosaddeq to prime minister in 1951, where he promptly “capitalized on the public mood and successfully campaigned for the nationalization of the oil industry in 1951” (Gheissari and Nasr 53). This was a major victory for Iran. For the time, it showed independence resilience from the foreign powers that had just recently occupied the country. But Mosaddeq’s tenure was short lived as a coup headed by Reza Shah’s son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi as well as the Iranian military ousted him from power in 1953. Although the shah and the Iranian military were determined to remove Mosaddeq from power because of “the threat [they] perceived in Mosaddeq’s idealism” to “preserving Iranian national interest” such as territorial integrity, which many people saw was at stake due to Mosaddeq, it is important to note that “the American CIA and British MI6 were instrumental in the success of the coup” (Gheissari and Nasr 54). Even though the coup was in favor by many in Iran, it ultimately was advantageous to foreign powers. The Shah would be more cooperative towards Western powers than Mosaddeq and so foreign powers interfered and pushed for their own favorable outcome, signaling a remaining meddling of foreign powers in Iran’s affairs.

A beneficial outcome for Iran from this meddling, however, was the emphasis of the shah to build up Iran. He sought to put “emphasis on order and development as national goals” and maintained

institutions that declared themselves to be “the embodiment of national will” and was “responsible for realizing [their] aspirations” with help from financial and technical aid from the United States (Gheissari and Nasr 54). The downside to this, however, was the loss of the enlightened system of government the Constitutional Revolution sought to implement, as the shah “weakened institutions of civil society and ultimately the parliament” which “dimmed the prospects for democracy” (Gheissari and Nasr 55). Throughout the re-instated Pahlavi monarchy, the country of Iran experienced a growth of authoritarianism and control over its people, and the diminishing of the people’s ability to participate in government.

The shah believed he kept the interests of the people as he worked diligently towards the growth and development of Iran, and made great strides in his efforts, but as the decades rolled along, anti-monarchal, pro-democratic, and most importantly, Islamist ideas soon became widespread amongst the people of Iran, and with the political tumultuous years of the 1960’s, protests and political movements would become more common place, but would be put down violently. This cycle continued until the late 1970’s where Iran would yet again be re-shaped and would remain so through the end of the century.

By the end of its duration, the Pahlavi regime, according to Evran Abrahamian in his book *Radical Islam: The Iranian Mojahedin* was “conspicuously lacking in social support” and the fact that it was “structurally weak, socially isolated, and politically alienated from the general population” made it “perpetually unstable and susceptible to revolution” (Abrahamian 27). Seeing the disheveled nature of the government and the growing resentment against it, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini sought an opportunity to take over Iran, and create a new country based around Islam.

Khomeini had been involved with politics since the 1940’s and became a voice later on for denouncing the Pahlavi regime on grounds of “corruption, constitutional violations, dictatorial methods, ... undermining Shia values, and the neglect of... merchants, workers and peasants” (Abrahamian 21). He and other clerics took to demonstrations, such as the 5 June Uprising in 1963, which was violently

suppressed, killing many. Khomeini continued throughout the years spouting revolutionary rhetoric and claiming that it was the responsibility of the clergy to take over the corrupt government for the good of Islam. Many of his students followed suit and began spreading revolutionary rhetoric. This embodied itself through several demonstrations in 1978, which were met with violence. Many middle class and bazaari class people began to rally under this revolutionary fervor due to their increased oppression by the state.

In September of 1978, people came out by the hundreds of thousands, including people from “the Liberation Movement, the National Front, and the Society of Merchants Traders and Craftsmen” as well as others from the bazaars and universities and schools attended a rally “tightly organized by a joint committee of clerics” to demonstrate resentment against the Pahlavi regime, while carrying pictures of Khomeini, who was in prison at the time, as well as other leaders (Abrahamian 34). On September 8, the rally became a bloodbath as similar to other demonstrations, a crowd in Jela Square were fired into by army commandos without restraint in an event known as Black Friday. Soon, violence in the streets between anti-government protestors and government forces became commonplace as revolutionary fervor grew. After being granted freedom, Khomeini was exiled to Paris where he further stirred the revolutionary flame and became a massive rallying figure. Tensions increased higher and higher until January 13, 1979, when “an estimated 2 million marched in some thirty towns to demand Khomeini’s return” as well as “the Shah’s abdication” (Abrahamian 40). Khomeini still directed the revolutionaries from afar as the people further took over the nation. The Shah left the country three days later and Khomeini returned to Iran in early February. However, Khomeini wanted a full takeover of the country and the people continued to arm themselves and assault government installations and receive further support from more volunteers as well as military mutineers. The revolution ended on February 11, with the takeover of the Niyavaran Palace, and the fleeing of the Provisional Government. Khomeini was successful in both the revolution, as well as the ceasing of the monarchy and an effective establishing of an Islamic based government named the Islamic Republic.

The new Islamic Republic was structured, according to Nikki Keddie and Eric Hooglund's book *The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic* with a "central role of the [supreme clergy] in the new social order" (Keddie and Hooglund 57). Khomeini assumed absolute ruler status and oversaw a government "more and more monopolized by the clerical radicals of the Islamic Republican Party" as well as himself (Keddie and Hooglund 11). Whereas Egypt and Turkey possessed secular governments run on secular ideals, Iran was a theocracy. It was one of the very few countries in the world that was run by religious clergy and structured its political atmosphere as well as society around religious principles.

The ability for Khomeini to maintain this new Islamic Republic was tested when shortly after the revolution, Saddam Hussain of Iraq invaded in 1980. Expecting a quick victory against the fledgling Islamic Republic, the Iranian forces were stronger than expected, and put up a formidable fight, causing the war to end up in a relative stalemate until its end. The trials of the war showed that the "clergy and their lay supporters in the IRP...are capable of ruling Iran" (Keddie and Hooglund 29). The Islamic Republic of Iran continued to exist throughout the remaining years of the twentieth century, remaining a country whose political system is rooted within the religion of Islam.

Throughout the 20th century, the Nations of Turkey, Egypt, and Iran went through several episodes of change and reactivity to affairs both internally and externally. The countries that went into the 20th century were completely different coming out with Turkey only forming as a sovereign nation after the Ottoman collapse, and Iran becoming the Islamic Republic shortly before the century's end. Despite existing in the relatively same region of the world, each country possessed its own story and its own unique journey through the trials and tribulations of the 20th century. Each went through a whole sort of different political ideologies, leaders, and political structures. The stories of these three nations show to the world that the path of each and every country is entirely unpredictable. There are many important aspects of each country's history that show to the world that in the course of human events, nothing is for certain.

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